



## SUMMARY

# Managed Growth Strategy

DRAFT ISSUES AND  
OPPORTUNITIES PAPER



CITY OF GREATER  
**BENDIGO**





## Greater Bendigo offers the best of regional living and our population is growing, welcoming around 2,000 new residents each year.

The municipality is one of Australia's largest inland cities, supporting a local population of approximately 120,000. If the region continues to grow at the current rate of 1.6 to 1.7 per cent, around 80,000 more residents will call Greater Bendigo home by 2050 (a population of 200,000). This will mean meeting the needs for more than 33,000 new homes and upwards of 35,000 jobs.

To manage future growth, a proactive approach is required in planning and directing this growth to locations which are most suitable. This includes areas which are closer to existing or planned services, facilities and transport, and have limited environmental constraints such as bushfire and flooding risk. For

example, areas around commercial centres or along main roads.

In determining where new housing can go, it is also important to consider the many features which contribute to making the municipality so desirable. This includes preserving native vegetation, open space, places of cultural heritage value and heritage buildings. It is important to ensure these features remain for future generations and as such many of these areas will not be suitable for more residential development even if they are well located.

The Managed Growth Strategy needs to be developed to balance all these needs and to accommodate growth.



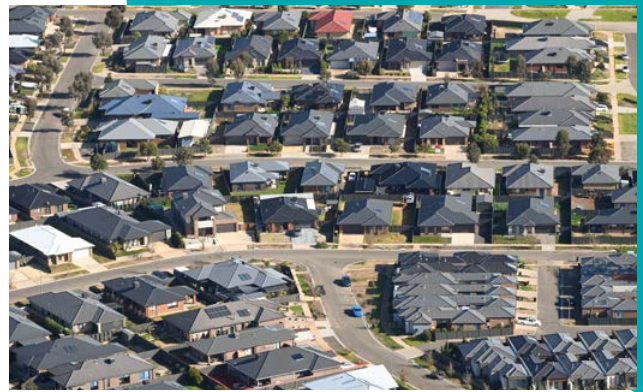
## What does this mean for me?

All residents have an interest in a growing and changing Greater Bendigo. For example:

- Residents generally want to work close to their home to reduce commuting distances
- Households with younger children want to be able to easily access schools and kindergartens
- Households want to be able to access homes which suit their needs and that they can afford without being under financial stress
- Residents want to be able to easily get around the municipality whether by walking, cycling, public transport or through driving
- Housing in areas prone to bushfire or flooding may have impacts with insurance
- Planning controls mean that different types of development are suitable in certain locations
- There is technology that supports remote working
- Consideration and protection of the environment in how we live, travel, work and play

## What is the Managed Growth Strategy?

The Managed Growth Strategy (MGS) will provide a residential framework plan for growth over the next 30 years. This includes considering the opportunities for growth within the existing urban area of Bendigo, as well as if and where the Urban Growth boundary should be changed. It will provide a series of priorities for more



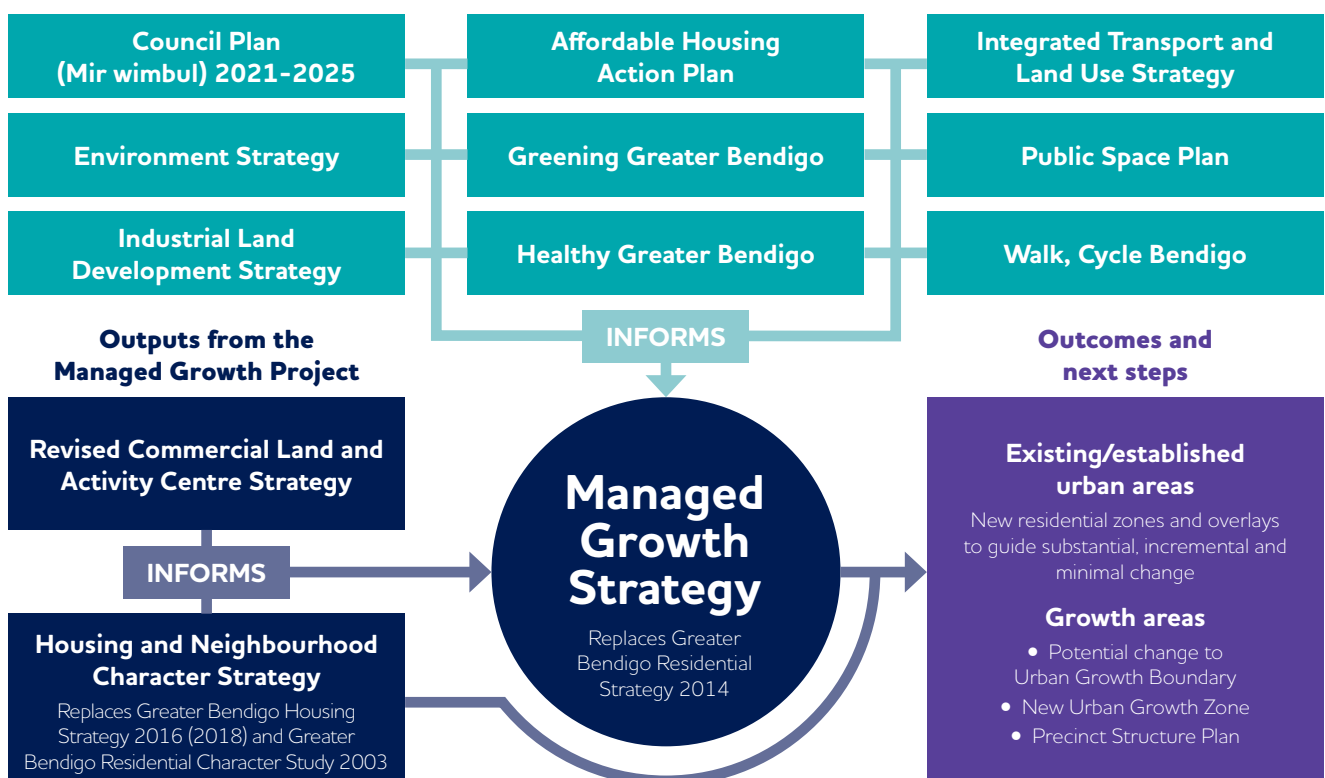
detailed investigations of individual precincts and suburbs to accommodate growth. While rural areas and their role will be considered as part of the MGS, more detailed analysis will be the subject of a new Rural Areas Strategy likely to commence later in 2022.

The MGS will replace the City's existing Residential Strategy which is now six years old. It will also be informed by the following strategies and documents which will be developed at the same time as the MGS:

- Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy
- Revised Commercial Land and Activity Centre Strategy
- Agricultural Land Use Assessment
- Municipal Bushfire Risk Assessment

These documents will be prepared at the same time as the draft Managed Growth Strategy. We hope to consult on these documents in the second half of 2022.

### Summary of the relationship between existing strategies and outputs from the Managed Growth Strategy







## **Why have we prepared an MGS – Issues and Opportunities Paper?**

The purpose of this paper is to identify any constraints or enablers for development early in the preparation of the MGS. It has been prepared to provide some context to the community, landowners, government/servicing agencies and developers around the changes occurring in Greater Bendigo, what might happen in the future and the various factors that need to be considered in making decisions about where new housing and other development should go.

## **How does this fit with house prices and land supply?**

There has been lots of interest from the media, community and developers around house prices and land supply particularly in recent months.

It is State planning policy that all municipalities across Victoria plan to accommodate population growth over minimum of a 15 year period and be clear on where this growth should occur.

As part of the Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy, the City has appointed consultants to complete a Housing Capacity Analysis. This will enable the City to report back to the community and other stakeholders around the current housing supply.

The Housing Capacity Analysis will be used along with population and dwelling projections as a basis to inform what supply is needed over and above existing zoned supply, and land that is already proposed to be rezoned to residential over time such as land around the Marong Township.

## **Principles**

There are some fundamental principles which must be considered when preparing a Managed Growth Strategy.

Principles which need to be considered in planning for growth:

- Housing must be directed to areas with a lower bushfire risk
- A range of different types of housing including affordable housing is to be encouraged particularly in well serviced locations to meet different household needs
- Environmentally Sustainable Design is necessary and can improve health outcomes
- Development areas need to be serviced with water, sewer, electricity and other services
- Development is prioritised in areas that can be supported with cost effective water and sewer services, and developments are to include integrated water principles
- Access to shops, facilities and employment opportunities is important
- Habitat and native vegetation loss is to be avoided wherever possible, and open space reserves and links for flora and fauna are to be increased
- Productive agricultural land is to be retained
- Buffer distances (e.g. between industry and residential development) need to be considered
- Contaminated land is to be remediated prior to development
- Waterways are to be protected from residential impacts
- Recognition and Settlement Agreements that are in place with the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung land use corporations need to be considered
- Levies, such as the Windfall Gains Tax and Development Contributions, need to be considered



# Issues and Opportunities

The following section provides an overview of the issues and opportunities identified so far by referring to existing strategies, policy and other documents as well as State Agency and Developer workshops. The issues and opportunities have been identified by City staff, as well as State Government agencies and our community. The City aims to build on these issues and opportunities by seeking further community feedback.



## HOUSING

### Issues

- Lack of housing diversity particularly in growth areas of Bendigo
- Areas with predominantly lower density housing make it difficult to attract businesses and services
- Limited understanding around the market demand for different types of housing in Greater Bendigo, for example units and apartments
- Limited understanding of the existing housing capacity in Greater Bendigo
- There are over 6,000 buildings in a Heritage Overlay which creates development challenges and limitations
- Lack of understanding on the extent of single dwelling covenants\*, particularly across the established areas of urban Greater Bendigo
- Housing affordability is an increasing problem exasperated by social housing wait lists
- An outdated Residential Character Policy which provides limited direction for preferred character outcomes in Greater Bendigo
- Limited direction in terms of legislation/rules to improve environmental sustainability outcomes in the majority of new houses
- The high cost of servicing new housing areas with water, sewerage, electricity and roads

### Opportunities

- Introduce residential zones that provide clarity around suitable housing for different areas
- Develop Urban Design Frameworks that provide guidance around the design of new developments in Commercial centres to encourage better housing design and diversity
- Undertake a survey to determine market demand for medium density development
- Undertake further investigation to determine the potential of rezoning some areas of farming and low-density residential land within the Urban Growth Boundary
- Better integrate new housing in heritage precincts including secondary dwellings to the rear of properties or contemporary extensions
- Maximise opportunities through the Big Housing Build for housing in Greater Bendigo
- Maximise existing planning tools to encourage a proportion of affordable housing in new developments
- Investigate density incentives when a positive community benefit will be delivered as a result of a new development
- Investigate alterations to the Urban Growth Boundary that could progress the supply of residential land

*\*Covenants are written agreements on title which restrict how land can be used and developed. These are often between the landowner and developer and run with the land unless they are removed or lapse at a certain time. The planning system is only involved if there is a planning application to remove or vary a covenant.*





## ENVIRONMENT

### Issues

- Greater Bendigo is likely to be hotter and drier in the future, and experience more extreme weather events
- With patches of native vegetation on many sites, this can make it difficult to develop these sites or it can be difficult or costly to obtain vegetation offsets (where vegetation is provided elsewhere to make up for vegetation loss)
- Planning for growth whilst managing bushfire risk is a challenge and timely strategic planning advice from the CFA is needed
- We need to consider the impacts of building housing in flood prone areas, this includes the impacts to homes downstream. While not a planning consideration it also may impact on insurance
- Retrofitting existing dwellings to be more energy efficient can be costly upfront. Not doing this however will likely lead to growing costs to heat and cool these dwellings in the future which is likely to impact on those least able to afford it
- New mining exploration licences may further limit suitable development areas
- While there are a number of ex-mining sites in well located areas, the cost and ability to remove the contamination on these sites and get them ready for development can be challenging
- Mine shafts and mine vents can add to new development costs and often the location of these shafts is not always known
- Currently groundwater discharges into several points across Greater Bendigo
- Erosion is a challenge in certain areas and may make some locations unsuitable for development

### Opportunities

- Continue to advocate for the remediation of former mining land to enable residential and other uses
- Protect and enhance vegetation and tree canopy coverage
- Establish and promote a native vegetation offset bank, that will not only permanently protect vegetation but increase opportunities for locally sourced vegetation offsets
- Complete a municipal wide bushfire assessment prior to the draft Managed Growth Strategy to ensure residential development is directed to low-risk locations
- Develop and implement flood studies (also identified in the Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026)
- Encourage more housing in areas with fewer environmental risks
- Encourage greater consideration of Environmentally Sustainable Design at the design stage of development by providing ready access to information and tools to make the process as easy as possible
- Encourage residents to continue to reduce their water use including outside of droughts
- Partner with Coliban Water to improve household and business water use efficiency (also identified in the Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026)





### Issues

- Need to ensure that the wastewater treatment plant is protected from residential encroachment and the development of more housing nearby
- Improve access to reticulated services such as water and sewerage into the small towns so they can offer housing opportunities
- There is a large number of community buildings across the municipality which are not currently aligned with need (i.e. some areas are well serviced with community buildings and others not as well serviced)
- There are gaps in the provision of public space, recreation and sporting facilities in certain areas - some of these gaps have been identified in the Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan
- Limited opportunities for expansion of the certain schools due to their location
- Currently secondary schools in Greater Bendigo are all located within the established areas of Greater Bendigo
- Development Contribution Plans only collect part of the cost of what infrastructure and services actually cost

### Opportunities

- Encourage households to design their gardens to better capture stormwater and minimise runoff
- Discourage gas connections within new housing estates consistent with the Greater Bendigo Climate Change and Environment Strategy
- Ensure Development Contribution Plans are developed concurrently with (Precinct) Structure Plans for new Growth Areas to fund infrastructure and open space
- Work with school building authorities to develop a shared understanding of growth, and impacts for schools
- Ensure community facilities are planned alongside population growth and directed to the most appropriate locations
- Make it clear where new growth is encouraged, particularly within established areas with the necessary, existing infrastructure







## TRANSPORT

### Issues

- If car ownership patterns remain unchanged there could be 30,000 more cars on the road by 2036, an increase of more than one third on current numbers
- If car ownership continues to grow, the cost of maintaining, upgrading and adding additional lanes to roads will increase, and there will be amenity and environmental impacts due to road widening projects
- Lack of safety when riding a bicycle on roads in Greater Bendigo
- Lack of incentives for an alternative transport mode given the time and ease of car travel in Greater Bendigo
- Lack of pedestrian and cycle connections in some suburbs and estates discourages walkability
- Upfront cost of introducing separated bike lanes, footpath improvements etc to encourage walking and cycling
- Reliance on a high portion of grant funding from State and Federal governments to deliver infrastructure which is prioritised at a state-wide level
- Lack of train services to Eaglehawk, Elmore, Goornong, and Epsom Stations and time between services
- Direct and frequent public transport in low density urban areas is not financially viable
- Servicing growth areas with public transport often occurs after the majority of the new population has moved in and have already established their daily travel behaviours which predominantly rely on driving
- Growth in trucks on roads, including through the residential areas of Bendigo

### Opportunities

- Advocate for more direct, cross city and new bus services where there are gaps, such as Marong and other small townships
- Continue to advocate for Bendigo Metro Rail and the delivery of more stations and services across Greater Bendigo, such as Golden Square, Maiden Gully, Marong and Kangaroo Flat South
- Encourage new development in and around current and proposed train station
- Advocate for the development of vacant land owned by State Government for future train stations in Bendigo including Bendigo Station, Eaglehawk and Golden Square
- Encourage the provision of bicycle parking requirements and end of trip facilities in new developments over and above the requirements at Clause 52.34 of the Planning Scheme
- Ensure new developments are well connected to existing pedestrian and cycle networks
- Respond to the growing proportion of our community using e-bikes and scooters as modes of transport by providing safe cycling infrastructure
- Encourage electric charging stations in new subdivisions
- Guide development to established areas with good transport opportunities, including frequent bus and safe walking and cycling infrastructure
- Encourage the establishment of a car sharing scheme in Greater Bendigo to reduce private car ownership
- Work with the Department of Transport to develop a priority project list to optimise funding opportunities at Federal, State and local government levels







## ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT

### Issues

- Challenges with land use conflict, particularly between heavy industries, intensive animal industries and residential development
- Lack of industrial land supply and potential impact on employment opportunities
- Growth in online shopping may have a negative impact on some existing retail stores and the composition of the various activity centres
- Difficult to project what the longer-term impacts of COVID will have in planning for commercial floorspace and commercial development

### Opportunities

- Continue to encourage a range of business activities in different areas to ensure a diversified economy
- Encourage and facilitate greater circular economy outcomes
- Encourage more opportunities for active commercial space at ground floor and residential above particularly within the City Centre and along transport corridors such as High Street, Bendigo

- Encourage better landscaping, tree canopies and pedestrian access to new commercial developments to encourage walking to access daily goods and services
- Encourage a diversity of dwelling types surrounding existing or future activity centres
- Consider the transition of some industrial land located adjacent to residential development to an alternative zone, following detailed precinct planning
- Prepare a masterplan for the Charleston Road, East Bendigo precinct
- Discourage more residential development adjacent to existing industrial/ landfill precincts
- Identify areas of high value agricultural land now and into the future given the importance of the agricultural industry to Greater Bendigo
- Potential for new employment opportunities and growth aligned with the release of mining exploration licenses



## RURAL AREAS

### Issues

- An increased appetite for lifestyle and rural living resulting in demand for more dwellings
- Lack of servicing or cost to service some rural areas with infrastructure, including reticulated sewerage, which limits growth
- Potential land use conflicts due to the way townships have developed (for example having industry near residential development)
- Limited access to public transport in certain areas

### Opportunities

- Undertake a new Rural Areas Strategy to provide greater direction for rural townships
- Continue to develop township plans to provide direction for the growth and change in bigger townships

- Better understand the economic and tourism opportunities in different townships, facilitate development to meet these needs and increase employment opportunities
- Continue to build on tourism opportunities through the delivery of infrastructure, for example the O'Keefe Rail Trail
- Ensure there are community facilities fit for purpose that meet community needs
- Work with the Department of Transport to deliver transport options which meet community needs
- Continue to advocate for improved telecommunication infrastructure to improve access for business and households





## Expressions of Interest (EOI)

To coincide with consultation on the Managed Growth Strategy 's Issues and Opportunities, the City is also calling for expressions of interest from landowners who are interested in their land being considered for residential development. Their land may currently be zoned Farming, Low Density Residential or another zone. For potential sites to be considered, they must meet the following criteria:

- Be over one hectare in size (or there is agreement from adjoining land owners to deliver one hectare)
- Be within or close to the existing Urban Growth Boundary
- Be subject to minimal environmental constraints (such as being of a low bushfire and flooding risk and not have high levels of contamination)
- Not be heavily vegetated
- Not have a steep topography
- Not be heavily impacted by groundwater
- Be close to existing services such as sewer, water and power if not already serviced

## What are we asking from you?

At this stage we are asking for residents to complete a short survey, provide feedback on the paper and if there are any topics that you believe need to be considered in the Opportunities and Issues paper. Your feedback will help inform the preparation of the draft MGS.

We are also asking for landowners with parcels of land which meet the criteria for investigation to submit an EOI. These submissions will be further investigated in the next stages of the project.

### Further information

 [letstalkgreaterbendigo.com.au](http://letstalkgreaterbendigo.com.au)

 [strategic.planning@bendigo.vic.gov.au](mailto:strategic.planning@bendigo.vic.gov.au)

 1300 00 2642 or (03) 5434 6000





## Residential Zones

The Managed Growth Strategy and Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy will inform the application of residential zones. The majority of residential land in Greater Bendigo is zoned General Residential. The municipality also has areas of Low Density Residential Zone, Mixed Use Zone, Residential Growth Zone, and Township Zone in some of the rural communities. Below is a summary of the different zones.

### Overview of different residential zones

Zone	Low Density Residential Zone	Mixed Use Zone	Township Zone
<b>Objective</b>	Provide for low-density lots, which can treat and retain wastewater where there is no access to reticulated sewerage	Provide for a range of range of complementary uses including higher density housing	Provide for a range of uses in small towns
<b>Building height</b>	No maximum building height specified	No maximum building height specified. However, a mandatory maximum building height can be specified in the schedule to the zone	Discretionary maximum height – 9m but mandatory height of at least 9 m can be specified in the schedule to the zone
<b>Subdivision area</b>	None specified	None specified	None specified
<b>Garden area</b>	None specified	None specified	None specified
Zone	Residential Growth Zone	General Residential Zone	Neighbourhood Residential Zone
<b>Objective</b>	Housing of up to and including 4 storeys in locations well serviced by services and facilities including activity centres	Encourage a diversity of housing types particularly in well serviced locations while respecting the neighbourhood character of the area	Ensure development respects identified neighbourhood character, heritage, environmental or landscape characteristics
<b>Building height</b>	Discretionary maximum height – 13.5m but mandatory height of at least 13.5m can be specified in the schedule to the zone	Mandatory maximum height 11 metres and 3 storeys	Mandatory maximum 9 metres and 2 storeys
<b>Subdivision area</b>	None specified	None specified	Minimum subdivision area requirement
<b>Garden area</b>	None specified	Minimum garden area but potential for requirement to be exempted	Minimum garden area with no exemption

Source: Adapted from DELWP Planning Practice Note 91, Using the Residential Zones





### City of Greater Bendigo

**A:** 15 Hopetoun Street, Bendigo

**M:** PO Box 733, Bendigo VIC 3552

**P:** 1300 00 2642 or (03) 5434 6000

**E:** [requests@bendigo.vic.gov.au](mailto:requests@bendigo.vic.gov.au)

**W** [www.bendigo.vic.gov.au](http://www.bendigo.vic.gov.au)



CITY OF GREATER  
**BENDIGO**