

# **Draft Alpine Shire Land Development Strategy 2023**

## Consultation Discussion Report

FINAL

July 2024

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## Overview

The draft Alpine Shire Land Development Strategy 2023 (draft LDS) shows how population growth will be accommodated in Alpine Shire for at least 15 years and up to 2041.

The draft LDS considers projected population growth, and future housing and employment needs. It particularly focuses on the four Service Towns (Bright, Mount Beauty-Tawonga South, Myrtleford and Porepunkah), which will accommodate the majority of the municipality's future growth. It acknowledges the constraints to growth including bushfire risk, flood prone land, and infrastructure and servicing needs. It also highlights the key trends that have shifted demand for housing and identifies key actions and objectives to deliver planning outcomes that are respectful of the unique character, landscape and natural landscape of Alpine Shire.

The draft LDS was informed by significant community consultation from late 2022 to early 2023 that included:

- Community Reference Groups - 3 x 2.5hr sessions
- Technical Reference Group - 1 x 2.5hr sessions
- 3 x Saturday Market Pop-ups (Bright, Mount Beauty and Myrtleford)
- 4 x Street Pop ups (Bright, Mount Beauty/Tawonga South, Myrtleford and Porepunkah)
- Survey open for 3 months
- 1 on 1 meetings at residents' request with Strategic Planning officers
- Facebook and social media posts weekly
- Letter box drop for landowners directly affected
- Email submissions received

The submissions received during this community consultation and Council officers' responses to these submissions are summarised in the Your Town, Your Future Community Engagement Report May 2023.

The draft LDS was subject to community consultation from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023 to the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 and it included the following:

- 3 x Saturday Market Pop-ups (Bright, Mount Beauty and Myrtleford)
- 1 on 1 meetings at residents' request with Strategic Planning officers
- Facebook and social media posts weekly
- Letter box drop for landowners directly affected

- Submissions received via Engage Alpine

Council officers are of the view that this community consultation on the draft LDS has been extensive and appropriate.

Council received 24 submissions including a number of late submissions. The key themes identified in submissions and Council officers' responses to these submissions are outlined below.

### Key Themes

- The Rezoning of Land, including process and timelines
- Affordable Housing and Short-term Rentals
- Housing Density
- Traffic and Transport Infrastructure
- Bushfire Risk
- Community Infrastructure and Facilities
- North East Water Capacity and Assets
- Environmental, Neighbourhood Character and Heritage Impacts
- Water Sensitive Urban Design and Integrated Water Management
- Stormwater Drainage

Of these key themes, most queries and feedback has already been reflected in the Implementation Plan appended to the draft LDS. Discussion of this and further work outlined in the draft LDS is noted below, along with amendments to the draft LDS proposed following this draft engagement.

### **The Rezoning of Land**

It is important to note that the implementation of any final LDS that continues to identify land for future urban growth will not result in the land or any land being rezoned. The draft LDS makes it clear that significant further work is needed to confirm whether the land is suitable for any urban development. This further work includes the preparation of a structure plan for each Service Town (Bright, Mount Beauty/Tawonga South, Myrtleford and Porepunkah) by Council, which will include further detailed technical

investigations including community, flooding, open space, stormwater drainage, traffic and social needs. It will also include detailed design and infrastructure planning. This will involve further consultation with landowners and the community, and they will be invited to make a submission at that time.

Once, the structure plan is complete, owners of land identified for future urban development who wish to rezone land will be invited to begin preparing technical background reports further investigating the specific development constraints of the land. This will provide the strategic justification to rezone the land through a subsequent planning scheme amendment.

It is important to note that the preparation of these technical background reports and any planning scheme amendment/s seeking to rezone land identified for future urban development would need to be funded by landowners and managed by Council as they will not be Council-led.

### **Affordable Housing & Short-term Rental**

Concerns were noted regarding housing affordability and key worker housing, particularly the impact of such a high rate of short-term rental properties on the local rental market, and capacity for local workers to live and work in Alpine Shire.

It is Council officers' view that until the Victorian government permits local government to consider or manage short stay accommodation, Council has little jurisdiction in restricting the use of residential land for this purpose.

The below action highlights this within the implementation plan appended to the draft LDS:

*A4.2: Advocate to the Victorian Government to introduce a tool that will enable the proportion of short-term accommodation available in townships to be managed. (For example, creating a definition in Clause 73.03 for short term accommodation, and making it a section 2 use in the residential zones).*

Council can then consider how to proceed to strike a balance between the role of short-term rental properties and the need for key worker and more affordable housing solutions.

## **Housing Density**

Some submitters expressed concerns about higher density housing particularly lots less than 200sqm. It is acknowledged in the draft LDS that there is a lack of 1–2-bedroom housing, and smaller housing options that support an ageing population, key workers and younger individuals should be encouraged. Councils are required to support a diversity of housing to provide inclusive housing outcomes for all residents.

However, the implementation plan appended to the draft LDS states that neighbourhood character assessments should be prepared for each of the Service Towns. Council is currently preparing neighbourhood character assessments for the four Service Towns. These assessments will identify the existing and preferred neighbourhood character to protect or realise as development occurs, and, if appropriate, where higher density development is and is not supported. This work will inform the future structure planning process.

## **Traffic & Transport Infrastructure**

Concerns were raised regarding single point of access from the Great Alpine Road to new residential development and similar concerns with traffic volumes at peak periods.

The Great Alpine Road is an arterial road, and any future residential development accessing the route will need to comply with the requirements of Regional Roads Victoria.

The draft LDS envisages that the majority of future residential development will be accommodated in the four Service Towns. As outlined above, before any future rezoning of land can occur in these towns, a structure plan will need to be prepared. Further detailed technical investigations will be required to inform the future structure planning process and one of these will be a traffic impact assessment.

Amongst other things, a traffic impact assessment will need to understand the existing and future traffic volumes that any future urban growth areas will generate, what new infrastructure is needed to support them, how this can be integrated with the existing road, pedestrian and cycling networks, and what cost apportionment, if any, is required to realise it. This work will also identify any required upgrades to existing intersections and other infrastructure.

## **Bushfire Risk**

Concerns were raised regarding bushfire risk for the areas nominated for future urban growth.

Council has undertaken a Bushfire Planning Study to inform several strategic planning projects including the final LDS. Amongst other things, it will consider the future urban growth areas and confirm whether they are appropriate or what bushfire mitigation measures must be considered as part of a future structure planning process. The Bushfire Planning Study was informed by the requirements of the CFA.

Findings of the July 2024 Bushfire Planning Study have now been considered and incorporated in the final LDS.

## **Community Infrastructure and Facilities**

Some submissions note the need for additional community and educational facilities, public open space, retail premises and other social infrastructure to come first prior to considering further urban growth. As outlined above, further detailed technical investigations will be required to inform the future structure planning process. Council is currently undertaking a Community Infrastructure Needs Assessment to inform several strategic planning projects. This assessment will inform a final structure plan for each of the four Service Towns, which will understand these needs and identify sufficient land to accommodate them.

The below action highlights the investigative work that Council will undertake to understand the community infrastructure requirements for each of the Service Towns to support population growth.

*A10.2: Prepare a community infrastructure needs assessment based on the existing and projected population growth that identifies what community infrastructure will be required, and when it is likely to be required.*

The Implementation Plan appended to the draft LDS highlights additional work required including:

- Sustainable Tourism Strategy
- Utilities Assessment

## **North East Water Capacity and Assets**

There was some concern from submitters regarding the capacity of reticulated services provided by North East Water (NEW) to accommodate future urban development and population growth.

NEW has provided a submission to the draft LDS, in which it notes the growth forecasts in the document and states that it will continue to work closely with Council to ensure this data is incorporated into its master planning process that it is currently undertaking. This master planning process will assess the capacity of the existing reticulated services network, acknowledge the population growth projections and determine the future reticulated services network needed to support this growth.

NEW also provided specific feedback on the servicing of Barwidgree Creek, Harrietville and Wandiligong, greenfield development in Porepunkah, and consideration of proposed urban growth areas in close proximity to the Mount Beauty Wastewater Treatment Plant as there may be amenity impacts on these areas.

Council officers will continue to work closely with NEW, as well as other referral agencies and authorities, on future planning to ensure the orderly and timely development of each of the four Service Towns.

## **Environmental / Neighbourhood Character / Heritage Impacts**

Many submitters acknowledged environmental values, neighbourhood character and heritage places as also being of significance. The draft LDS outlines key directions and actions to be undertaken in the Implementation Plan in each of these areas to ensure they are considered and protected in the future. Actions 2.1 and 8.1 in the implementation plan highlights further strategic planning work, which will seek to review existing controls and determine if further amendments to planning controls are required in each of these areas.

The implementation plan highlights the work required:

- Neighbourhood Character Assessments for the Service Towns
- Assessment of Significant Landscapes

Council officers are currently undertaking a review of existing places of heritage significance and the application of the Heritage Overlay in the Alpine Planning Scheme. This work will ensure that planning controls for all places in the Heritage Overlay meet the requirements of Planning Practice Note 01: Applying the Heritage Overlay, and it will update and address any gaps found.



As outlined above, Council is currently preparing neighbourhood character assessments for the four Service Towns. Once implemented, these assessments will ensure neighbourhood character considerations will be addressed in future decision-making processes.

Council officers are of the view that the Victorian Government must support the preparation of the Victoria's High Country and alpine regions Significant Landscape Assessment. Once the assessment is complete, a group council or GC planning scheme amendment must then be prepared to implement the assessment in the planning scheme of those municipalities included in the assessment. Council will continue to advocate for this outcome.

### **Water Sensitive Urban Design & Integrated Water Management**

Council is participating in the Integrated Water Management Forum led by NEW and is also actively working with the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) on the development of the Sustainable Subdivisions Framework. This, along with the Victorian Government's amendments to the Victoria Planning Provisions to include consideration of Environmentally Sustainable Development, which is likely to occur later in the year, will continue to inform further work in this area.

The below action in the Implementation Plan acknowledges this as a key area required in future planning.

*A2.2: Prepare and implement stormwater drainage studies / integrated water management plans for urban areas to identify all infrastructure required to ensure water quality in receiving environments is appropriate.*

### **Stormwater Drainage**

Council is aware of stormwater drainage and flooding issues in Porepunkah, which have been a consideration in the draft LDS. The draft LDS envisages that future residential development in Porepunkah will be accommodated within the existing settlement boundary and to the north of Station Street. As outlined above, before any future rezoning of land can occur, a structure plan will need to be prepared for Porepunkah. Further detailed technical investigations will be required to inform the future structure planning process and one of these will be an integrated water management plan, which will consider stormwater drainage and flooding issues. This plan will identify all new and upgraded stormwater drainage infrastructure needed to support future residential development.

Further to this, Council is currently identifying stormwater drainage upgrades and other works required to alleviate existing stormwater drainage issues.

### **State Policy Changes that may implicate infill capacity**

It is acknowledged that the Victorian Government's direction in the Housing Statement has now allowed small secondary dwellings of 60sqm in residential zoned areas. This may have a positive impact on the potential for infill areas to cater for a greater proportion of future population growth. It should also have positive implications to improve the diversity of housing offered in Alpine Shire. However, given the infancy of this policy change and the significant bushfire risk evident across the shire, the impact of this will need to be reviewed against actual growth numbers every 5 years in alignment with the findings of technical investigations and structure planning outcomes, and, critically, the finalisation of the bushfire planning study. Council officers consider it inappropriate to review capacity figures in infill areas at this time, however, they will be reviewed in further work on a biennial or five yearly basis.

State government has also released a housing target in June 2024 for all municipalities across Victoria. The draft housing target of 1,700 homes to 2050 was released for Alpine Shire, and Council has been engaged to provide input.

## Amendments to the Draft LDS

The below reflects the outcome and actions of feedback that is supported by Council officers and not yet included within the draft LDS implementation plan.

### Stakeholder Response

Theme	Outcome
North East Water Assets	Consideration of proximity of proposed urban growth areas to the Mount Beauty Wastewater Treatment Plant as there may be amenity impacts to future residents. Council officers support the preparation of an amenity impact assessment to investigate the extent of this impact.
CFA	The CFA did not show support for the Draft LDS and in response to this, the Bushfire Planning Study was commissioned and completed in July 2024. Findings in this document that are supported by Officers have been considered in the Final LDS.

### Community Response

Theme	Outcome
Rezoning	Adjustments to future growth areas based on community response, NEW feedback and landowner submissions that also reflect a good planning outcome will be updated in the final report. This includes outcomes from the Bushfire Planning Study.
Traffic & Transport	Include a Traffic Impact Assessment or Strategic Traffic and Transport assessment within the technical investigations for structure planning to ensure adequate infrastructure upgrades for traffic and transport are considered.
Waterway Health	Update Strategic Direction 1 and actions regarding principles to support waterway health in collaboration with North East Catchment Management Authority. This may include seeking grant

	funding to assess issues associated with poor stormwater drainage, dumping and regeneration of existing waterways that effect water quality.
Neighbourhood Character & Street trees	Council will consider preparing a Street Tree Master Plan and Replacement Plan for urban areas as part of a future strategic work program.
Stormwater Drainage	Council to include additional commentary in the final LDS that relates to stormwater drainage, and, specifically, the impact of natural springs for ongoing maintenance and run off that may influence the development potential of certain areas.
Bogong Village	Consider revising the wording from no growth in Bogong Village to no significant development in Bogong Village, but consideration for refurbishment of existing buildings for the purpose of seasonal, school camps, seasonal key worker housing or other short-term accommodation uses. This will only be known with the finalisation of the LDS.
Rural Land	There was some concern regarding certain townships such as Harrietville and Freeburgh that have similar land use issues as Wandiligong from a land use conflict perspective. Wandiligong was utilised as an example in the draft LDS but will not be the only area Council is aware of that poses issues with conflict of land use. This wording will be reviewed to include these rural places as an example of locations that require further review and investigation to ensure planning controls reflect the extent of the existing built form of the township and the risks to development. All rural will be considered as part of the preparation and finalisation of the Alpine Shire Rural Directions Strategy that will commence later this year.
Future Growth	The level of future growth for each of the township is dictated by the settlement hierarchy; however, the final LDS could more clearly define the term “future growth” to ensure it is better understood.

### Next Steps

Council officers have utilised feedback from community consultation and the results from any outstanding technical reports including the Bushfire Planning Study, to finalise the LDS.

When adopted, Council officers will begin implementing the findings and directions of a final LDS and the associated final Implementation Plan. The high-level policy objectives and directions of a final LDS will be implemented into the Alpine Planning Scheme through a planning scheme amendment.

Council officers will begin preparing a structure plan for each Service Town (Bright, Mount Beauty/Tawonga South, Myrtleford and Porepunkah), which will identify and resolve site level constraints, determine appropriate allocation of residential, employment and community uses, determine infrastructure and servicing needs to accommodate additional development, and ensure that any development contributes positively to the environment, neighbourhood character and places of heritage significance. There will be additional input for community consultation as part of the structure planning process.

Once the structure plans have been finalised, they will also need to be implemented into the Alpine Planning Scheme through a planning scheme amendment. This will provide the strategic justification required to rezone land or amend planning controls to accommodate the urban growth supported in the final LDS through subsequent planning scheme amendments.