

21.06 HOUSING

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21.06-1 Overview

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The City of Whitehorse is a middle ring municipality providing housing for a wide range of household types, ages and cultural groups. In general, the population is slightly older than the metropolitan average, indicating an ageing population, however the majority of households are families with or without children. The types of residential development in the City vary between medium rise apartment buildings around Box Hill metropolitan activity centre, small unit developments in areas with good access to public transport and amenities, and standard detached dwellings in the majority of the residential areas.

The City of Whitehorse is under increased pressure to accommodate more people who are attracted to the area due to its strategic location, high amenity residential areas and quality services and facilities. The community is concerned about maintaining the high quality residential environment and ensuring that areas of environmental, heritage or special character are protected as the City's population grows. The municipality's leafy character is particularly valued, strengthened by the presence of quality canopy trees and other native and exotic vegetation. Tree preservation and regeneration is therefore of vital importance if the character of residential areas is to be maintained and enhanced.

Change and growth in urban areas with good public transport access can occur while contributing to the City's valued neighbourhood character. Areas such as the Box Hill metropolitan activity centre are able to accommodate increased housing growth in an urban setting while providing high levels of amenity for residents.

The Council's *Housing Strategy 2014* identifies areas of substantial, natural and limited change for housing growth, and these are reflected in the neighbourhood character statements prepared for each area and planning controls applying to the land. These statements and controls aim to direct housing growth across the municipality in a way which reflects the community's neighbourhood character aspirations, while balancing the future housing needs of Whitehorse.

The City also needs to respond to issues of housing affordability and promote environmentally sustainable development. Sustainable and well-designed housing can improve affordability over the long term, and contribute to the preferred neighbourhood character of residential areas. Non-residential uses in residential areas continue to require monitoring and control to ensure that amenity issues are managed.

21.06-2 Vision

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The vision for housing in the City is *“To ensure that housing in the City of Whitehorse meets residents' needs in terms of location, diversity, sustainability, accessibility, affordability and good design.”* There are a number of key challenges facing the City of Whitehorse in relation to housing. These are:

- Accommodating an additional 12,997 dwellings to house the projected population growth in the City to 2036.
- Ensuring established residential areas to continue to play an important role in providing additional housing.
- Ensuring activity centres can accommodate additional housing growth and are the focus of increased housing and employment densities, public transport and service provision. Each activity centre in Whitehorse has a different level of capacity and is equipped in different ways to support increased housing density.
- Preserving areas of valued character and vegetation or landscape significance.
- Better utilising transport corridors including train and tram routes for medium and higher density housing.

- The pressure of higher property prices on housing affordability and the type of dwellings constructed due to Whitehorse’s attractive leafy character, dominance of detached dwellings and locational attributes.
- A higher demand for private rental housing – a proportion of which will need to be affordable to low income tenants.
- A higher proportion of lone person households may require smaller housing types including town houses, units and apartments. However in some instances, these housing types are more costly to buy or rent than older housing stock, and can contribute to housing affordability problems.
- The provision of specific assistance to access appropriate accommodation for new and first generation migrant populations in suitable locations.
- The need to provide more accommodation for students, and accommodation which better meets their needs in terms of quality and affordability in areas near Deakin University Burwood Campus and Box Hill Institute of TAFE.
- The need to develop or implement Structure Plans with objectives to improve housing affordability and special needs housing opportunities in activity centres.

Key Housing Principles

- Develop housing in Whitehorse that shapes the City’s urban structure to support environmental and social sustainability, resilience and the health and well being of residents.
- Encourage housing that supports preferred neighbourhood character objectives and urban design aspirations for the City.
- Promote housing growth and diversity in locations within walking distance of public transport and local services such as shops, parks and education.
- Limit residential growth in areas of valued landscape or built form character, and/or with infrastructure limitations.
- Support the housing directions of existing and future adopted Structure Plans and Urban Design Frameworks for activity centres.
- Provide a mix of housing that meets the life stage and cultural needs of residents.
- Ensure housing in substantial change areas is designed to achieve and enhance sense of place and identity, and facilitate neighbourhood participation.
- Support environmentally sustainable building, design and innovation in new housing development.
- Advocate for increases in affordable and social housing stock.

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Housing Location

Key Issues

- Encouraging appropriate residential development within the municipality’s established network of activity centres.
- Providing appropriate housing growth in locations with potential amenity considerations (eg. sensitive interfaces, rail corridors, tram lines, main roads).
- Ensuring timely provision of infrastructure and public realm improvements to support the growth of the municipality.
- Encouraging housing in locations with good access to public transport and services, which can minimise demand on the road network and better target the delivery of community and physical infrastructure and services.

Objectives

Limited Change Areas

- Conserve and enhance those elements which contribute to the valued environmental, heritage and neighbourhood character of the place.
- Ensure new development protects and reinforces the environmental, heritage values and / or preferred future neighbourhood character of the area.
- Ensure new development mainly takes the form of renovations to existing houses, replacement of single dwellings with new dwellings and some limited medium density development.

Strategies

- Ensure residential development is of a scale, form and character that is consistent with the surrounding area, and will predominantly comprise:
 - Detached dwellings
 - Semi-detached dwellings
- Provide some diversity of dwelling sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, where feasible.
- Ensure the scale and appearance of new housing respects the appearance of surrounding development and the environmental, heritage and neighbourhood character values of the area.
- Encourage the retention of older dwellings in areas where these buildings dominate, and limit new development to two dwellings per lot.

Natural Change Areas

- Support increased housing choice by allowing for a diversity of dwelling types, sizes and tenures.
- Ensure new development contributes to the preferred neighbourhood character of the precinct.
- Encourage new development applications to include landscape guidelines that show how the retention of existing vegetation where possible will be achieved, at the outset of the design process.

Strategies

- Encourage low and medium density housing in the following forms:
 - Detached houses
 - Semi-detached dwellings, townhouses, row or terrace houses
 - Units or townhouses
- Support new medium density developments in Natural Change Areas that:
 - contribute to the preferred neighbourhood character for the location.
 - provide a sensitive and appropriate interface with adjoining streetscapes, buildings and residential areas.
- Provide a range of dwelling types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in larger developments.
- Locate medium density housing, in the form of townhouses or units, close to transport, activity centres and community infrastructure.
- Ensure that the siting and design of new dwellings is respectful of surrounding development.
- Consider the retention of older dwellings in areas where these buildings dominate.

Substantial Change Areas

- Support increased residential densities.
- Support increased housing choice by allowing for a diversity of dwelling types, sizes and tenures to suit a range of household types.
- Facilitate achieving a new, preferred character for these areas over time through quality developments.
- Support the master planning of larger sites to facilitate the development of diverse, high amenity precincts which have an identifiable sense of place.
- Encourage the provision of shop-top dwellings and low scale apartment developments in activity centres, particularly within key Neighbourhood Activity Centres and on sites abutting the Principal Public Transport Network and main roads.
- Provide space for planting, communal spaces and rooftop gardens to improve the amenity and liveability of dwellings.

Strategies

- Encourage the following forms of housing in Substantial Change areas:
 - Townhouses
 - Units
 - Apartments
- Shop-top dwellings and low scale apartment developments in activity centres:
 - Are encouraged at locations within key NACs identified in the Housing Framework Plan and on sites abutting the PPTN and main roads
 - Should provide a sensitive and appropriate interface to adjoining streetscapes, buildings and residential areas
- Provide a range of dwelling types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, in larger developments
- Ensure buildings interfacing sensitive areas and uses have a scale and massing appropriate to the character and scale of their context
- Create a new, higher density urban character in areas located away from sensitive interfaces
- Prioritise works to improve the appearance, function and safety of the public realm in locations subject to the greatest increase in residential density
- In new street layout, add to and extend the pattern of surrounding streets, and provide convenient, safe and frequent pedestrian connections into surrounding areas
- Ensure streets and other spaces are designed and managed as public spaces with unconstrained access, with high quality and durable finishes
- Ensure new development provides space for planting, communal spaces and rooftop gardens to improve the amenity and liveability of dwellings
- Ensure adequate infrastructure is in place to support substantial change areas.

Implementation

- Zone residential areas identified for Limited Change to Neighbourhood Residential Zone.
- Zone residential areas identified for Natural Change to General Residential Zone.
- Zone residential areas identified for Substantial Change to General Residential or Residential Growth Zone as appropriate.
- Apply a Significant Landscape Overlay or Neighbourhood Character Overlay to areas of significant neighbourhood character or landscape.
- Apply the Heritage Overlay to buildings, structures and natural features of historical significance.

21.06-4 Housing Diversity

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Key Issues

- Meeting the continuing high demand for private rental accommodation, which puts pressure on housing affordability.
- Providing high quality and accessible housing to meet the needs of the students that will continue to be attracted to Deakin University Burwood Campus and Box Hill Institute of TAFE and will require housing with high quality accessibility and services.
- Improving access to the housing market for the City’s large proportion of first and second generation residents from non English speaking backgrounds, many of whom currently experience barriers inhibiting their entry to the market.
- Encouraging a broader range of housing types to meet the differing needs of the future population through the lifecycle.

Objectives

- Diversify the variety of housing types in the City of Whitehorse.
- Provide housing that meets the specialised requirements of particular residents.
- Monitor housing development trends and engage with relevant stakeholders.

Strategies

- Promote activity centres with high accessibility that offer a range of services and provide a high level of amenity to residents as key locations for housing diversity.
- Support the renovation and redevelopment of single houses in Limited Change Areas as a means of providing accommodation for larger household types and choice for other households.
- Encourage appropriate student housing close to the university campuses in a form that respects the existing or preferred character of the area.

21.06-5 Housing Affordability

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Key Issues

- Meeting an increasing demand for more affordable housing across the municipality.
- Ensuring student housing is consistent with the location and design requirements of Council Policy.

Objectives

- To increase the supply and distribution of affordable housing in the City of Whitehorse.
- To reduce housing stress in the City of Whitehorse.

Strategies

- Continue to identify opportunities for affordable housing in designated structure plans including specific location, localised need and design, and incentives for developers.

21.06-6 Housing Designxx/xx/xxxx
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- Ensuring new developments do not result in a loss of the existing vegetation coverage and tree canopy.
- Encouraging appropriate development within the municipality's established areas.
- Maintaining the preferred neighbourhood character of Limited Change Areas.
- Providing adequate space for substantial vegetation in Limited and Natural Change Areas.
- Strengthening and improving the preferred neighbourhood character in Natural Change Areas.
- Creating a valued and identifiable sense of place in Substantial Change Areas and providing an appropriate design response in locations with potential to support additional housing.
- Ensuring new developments adjoining or close to environmentally significant and sensitive areas are carefully and respectfully designed.
- Ensuring that physical and community infrastructure is adequate and maintained at a standard to meet the future demand.
- Encouraging private sector provision of housing that improves the environmental performance of the municipality and minimises ongoing running costs for the residents.
- Encouraging continued improvement in housing design for better functionality, universal access and adaptability to improve access for people with mobility or other physical limitations and to lessen future costs in modifications to meet the current or future occupants' needs.

Objectives

- To enhance the design quality and character of residential development.
- To build resilience in the City's housing stock to the impacts of climate change.
- To improve the environmental performance of new and existing housing.
- To protect environmentally sensitive areas from inappropriate development.
- To encourage the provision of well designed, adaptable and accessible housing.

Strategies

- Amend the Municipal Strategic Statement to provide policy support for improving the design quality of residential development in the municipality.
- Implement the Neighbourhood Character Precinct Brochures with Preferred Character Statements and Design Guidelines to provide guidance and support for future residential development and assessments.
- Investigate two identified precincts for potential additional controls:
 - Precinct Garden Suburban 16 (GS16), which requires detailed survey and analysis to determine its suitability for Neighbourhood Character controls; and
 - Precinct Bush Suburban 9 (BS9), which includes several areas that may be suitable for further Significant Landscape Overlay controls.
- Investigate other precincts for potential additional controls, utilising the Neighbourhood Character Overlay, Heritage Overlay and Significant Landscape Overlay, as appropriate.
- Prepare and adopt design guidelines for identified opportunity sites to ensure their redevelopment positively contributes to their surrounding context, provides high

quality and innovative building design and facilitates high levels of residential amenity for new and adjoining residents.

- Encourage and promote examples of housing design that enable future adaptation or modify existing dwellings to meet changing needs with minimal current or future expense.
- Promote the use of the *Liveable Housing Design Guidelines* to new home owners and developers.

21.06-7 Non-Residential Uses

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Key Issues

- Ensuring non-residential uses are designed in a way that integrates these uses and their built form into their residential environments and that there is no detriment to the community or the surrounding residential amenity.
- Ensuring that residential activity in non-residential areas is mindful of a lower expectation of amenity protection than in a residential area.

Objectives

- To ensure buildings for non-residential uses are designed to integrate with and respect the surrounding neighbourhood character.
- To ensure that non-residential uses do not cause detriment to the community or the surrounding residential area.
- To ensure residential development in areas where non-residential activity is encouraged are designed to ameliorate the potential impact of non-residential activity in the vicinity.

Strategies

- Implement policy to direct non-residential uses to appropriate locations, and provide parameters for the operation.
- Apply the Neighbourhood Character Precinct Brochures with Preferred Character Statements and Design Guidelines to provide guidance for future non-residential development in residential areas and assessments.

21.06-8 Policy and the exercise of discretion

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It is policy to:

- Ensure that all development applications comply with the Residential Development Policy at Clause 22.03.
- Ensure that all development applications are assessed in accordance with the Residential Development Policy at Clause 22.03.
- Ensure that all non residential use and development applications within a residential zone comply with the Non-Residential Uses in Residential Areas Policy at Clause 22.05.
- Require that landscape buffers between commercial parking areas and abutting residential properties be of suitable size and dimensions to provide for a range of screening vegetation and upper canopy trees.
- Ensure that all new applications for gaming machines or gaming venues comply with the Gaming Policy at Clause 22.18.
- Use local planning policy to manage student accommodation in accordance with the Student Accommodation Policy at Clause 22.14.

21.06-7 Reference documents

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- Guidelines for Areas of Special Significance and Beauty.*
- Box Hill Transit City Activity Centre Structure Plan June 2007*
- KLM City Of Whitehorse, Neighbourhood Character Study Review Of Areas 14 and 16 February 2004*
- Walker Estate Special Character Area Urban Character Study, May 1999*
- Review of Neighbourhood Character Implementation Recommendations, Part 2 Review Areas, July 2004*
- 131 Central Road, Nunawading: Vegetation Assessment by Stephen Mueck, Biosis (November 2007)*
- Flora, fauna and habitat hectare assessment of 15 Virgillia Street Blackburn North Victoria, Biosis Research, April 2008*
- Burwood Heights Activity Centre Structure Plan, June 2006*
- Review of Three Precincts in Character Areas 16 & 18, May 2008*
- Burwood Village Neighbourhood Activity Framework Plan, May 2008*
- City of Whitehorse Responsible Gambling Policy, 2011*
- Nunawading/MegaMile Major Activity Centre and Mitcham Neighbourhood Activity Centre Structure Plan, April 2008*
- Tally Ho Major Activity Centre Urban Design Framework, 2007*
- MegaMile (west) and Blackburn Activity Centres Urban Design Framework, July 2010*
- City of Whitehorse Landscape Guidelines, 2012*
- Whitehorse Housing Strategy, 2014*
- Neighbourhood Character Study, 2014*
- Neighbourhood Activity Centre: Urban Design Guidelines, 2014*
- Liveable Housing Design Guidelines*

HOUSING FRAMEWORK PLAN

LEGEND

Change Area

- Limited Change
- Natural Change
- Substantial Change
- Commercial Zone
- Activity Centre with structure plan or urban design framework

Neighbourhood Activity Centre

- Category 1A
- Category 1B
- Category 2A
- Category 2B
- Category 3

