

ARARAT PLANNING SCHEME

AMENDMENT C34

EXPLANATORY REPORT

Who is the planning authority?

This amendment has been prepared by the Ararat Rural City Council who is the planning authority for this amendment.

Land affected by the amendment

The amendment applies to all land within the Rural City of Ararat.

What the amendment does

The amendment will update the Ararat Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and enable implementation of the *Ararat Sustainable Growth Future (SGF) Strategy*, adopted in February 2014 and the *MSS Review 2014*. The plan provides an integrated framework for managing the future growth and development of the municipality over the next 25 years. It provides objectives and strategies to managing residential growth, economic changes and increased opportunities for tourism, leisure and community infrastructure, within Ararat's settlements.

The amendment makes the following changes to the Ararat MSS:

- Update Clause 21.01 to provide up-to-date statistics and information about the growing municipality and by including additional information under two new headings: Infrastructure and Community Development.
- Update Clause 21.02 to provide a clear vision statement that sets the scene for Ararat's future and to make clear the intentions of the revised Ararat MSS.
- Update Clause 21.03 to provide a hierarchy of the townships in the municipality and to focus its objectives and strategies around settlements in general, rural living and infrastructure.
- Update Clause 21.04 to update the further strategic work based on work completed and work to be considered and minor policy neutral changes
- Update Clause 21.05 to provide up-to-date information around Ararat's economic development, primarily based on the findings of the SGF Strategy and especially around industrial development.
- Insert new Clause 21.06– Community Development to provide the strategic guidance required to support the growth of social infrastructure. The new clause provides objectives and strategies to support future community development in Ararat and within smaller settlements The existing Clause 21.06 Reference Documents is proposed to be relocated to Clause 21.08.
- Insert new Clause 21.07– Local Areas to provide more specific detail and greater guidance around each of the municipality's settlements. It provides an introduction statement, objectives and strategies for each town within Ararat Rural City, based on the SGF Strategy. Detailed implementation measures and opportunities for further work are provided, along with revised framework plans for each town to support the strategies outlined.

- Relocate existing clause 21.06 Reference Documents to a new Clause 21.08 (Reference Documents) and update to include the following Reference Documents:
 - Ararat Sustainable Growth Future, February 2014
 - Infrastructure Design Manual 2013
 - Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013
 - Wickliffe Flood Investigation 2012

Strategic assessment of the amendment

Why is the amendment required?

Council has recently completed a strategic review of the Ararat Township and Small towns in the municipality titled *Ararat Sustainable Growth Future Strategy* which was undertaken by consultants Planisphere and Urban Enterprise. It was adopted by Council in February 2014. Amendment C34 has been prepared to implement and give statutory effect to the strategic directions of this strategy by amending the Ararat MSS to give clearer guidance to decision makers.

Objectives of the SGF Strategy are to:

- Encourage residential consolidation within and in close proximity to the retail/commercial core (as identified on the Framework Plan), hospital and anchor retailers.
- Seek to diversify the range of housing choices available in Ararat through the provision of medium density and affordable housing opportunities.
- Ensure growth occurs where it will not impact on agricultural viability and supports organic growth.
- Reinforce Ararat as the major retail, commercial and industrial centre of the Rural City and ensure sufficient land is available to allow for the growth of these uses.
- Encourage and promote the development of the local tourism sector.
- Consider the ongoing physical infrastructure needs of the settlements and direct growth to settlements that are well serviced.

The proposed changes to the MSS will implement the *Ararat Sustainable Growth Future Strategy* objectives and provide clear strategic guidance for the growth of the Rural City.

How does the amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

The objectives of Planning in Victoria include:

- To provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use and development of land.
- To provide for the protection of natural and man-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and ecological processes and genetic diversity.
- To secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria.
- To conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value.
- To balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

Amendment C34 will implement these objectives by providing for future economic and population growth while preserving the rural character and amenity of Ararat Rural City. The amendment provides the strategic guidance to direct future growth and development into the

settlements and specifically commercial/industrial growth into Ararat, thereby facilitating local economic growth and sustainable living practices.

How does the amendment address any environmental, social and economic effects?

The amendment will deliver positive environmental, social and economic outcomes by providing an integrated planning framework to guide preferred land use and built form outcomes in the Rural City. Benefits include:

Environmental

It is considered that the amendment will have positive environmental effects. The *Ararat Sustainable Growth Future Strategy* seeks to focus new development within settlements to optimise the efficient use of existing infrastructure.

The SGF Strategy seeks to promote and preserve key environmental assets, encourage the use of land for urban agriculture and garden projects and continue greening initiatives throughout the townships.

Through changes to the MSS, the amendment aims to:

- Ensure rural residential growth occurs in areas where it will not impact on the viability of productive agricultural land.
- Ensure any development is sympathetic to the natural environment.
- Enhance the visual appearance of the townships through streetscape greening initiatives.

Social

The amendment introduces a new Clause 21.06 – Community Development, within the MSS, to provide strategic guidance for provision of community infrastructure and facilities.

The key objective provided within this clause is to encourage the development of social infrastructure within Ararat to support healthy lifestyles and the needs of a growing population.

It aims to support the development of facilities and services within Ararat and smaller settlements that meet the needs of various community groups and an ageing population. The MSS changes include supporting the establishment of community hubs, encouraging physical activity and improving transport services.

Economic

It is considered that the amendment will have positive economic effects. The *Ararat Sustainable Growth Future Strategy*, implemented through the MSS, seeks to:

- Maintain and promote a viable sustainable agricultural industry.
- Ensure that the fragmentation of viable agricultural land does not occur.
- Encourage new industrial activities in the municipality in preferred locations.
- Reinforce the role of the Ararat Township as the key retail centre of the Rural City and support consolidation of the retail/commercial core.
- Promote and maximise the benefits of tourism for the municipality.

Growing opportunities exist for Ararat within the tourism industry, especially through nature-based tourism and wine tourism. The MSS changes and the SGF Strategy identify and recognise these opportunities and provide the support to manage tourism growth.

Does the amendment address relevant bushfire risk?

The *Ararat Sustainable Growth Future Strategy* recognises bushfire risk and the need to consider bushfire hazards in the growth of settlements and identifies the bushfire hazard for each of the townships. The new framework plans have been developed in consultation with the CFA to ensure growth and future development is encouraged away from hazards. In particular it recognises the bushfire risk to Ararat in the north and west of the town and the need to control development in response to its environmental and physical constraints.

The strategy notes that community resilience will be strengthened by prioritising human life, applying a precautionary approach to planning, taking advantage of existing settlement patterns where new development will not expose the community to increased risk and supporting growth where bushfire risk can be managed and resilience is provided.

Does the amendment comply with the requirements of any Minister's Direction applicable to the amendment?

The amendment is consistent with the Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Schemes under section 7 (5) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The Amendment complies with Ministerial Direction No 11 Strategic Assessment of Amendments under Section 12 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. The purpose of this Direction is to provide a consistent framework for the evaluation of a proposed planning scheme amendment and the outcomes it produces. The Strategic Assessment Guidelines identified in this Direction are addressed in this Explanatory Report.

How does the amendment support or implement the State Planning Policy Framework and any adopted State policy?

The amendment supports and implements the State Planning Policy Framework including objectives under the following Clauses.

11 Settlement

The amendment supports the concentration of retail, commercial and industrial developments in the Ararat Township and smaller settlements where appropriate.

The amendment implements the *Ararat Sustainable Growth Future Strategy*, which facilitates effective planning and management of the land use and development of the town settlements and their immediate surrounds.

15 Built environment and heritage

The MSS objectives proposed as part of the amendment will ensure that the settlements develop as functional centres with good quality environments with a sense of place and cultural identity.

16 Housing

The proposed MSS objectives will encourage appropriate residential development within and around the townships that support diversity, character and affordability objectives generally.

17 Economic development

The implementation of the SGF Strategy through the amendment will encourage development that meets the community's needs and provide net community benefit in relation to accessibility and efficient infrastructure use.

It will support providing appropriately for commercial and industrial growth within Ararat and support the increasing tourism opportunities within the smaller settlements.

19 – Infrastructure

The amendment will facilitate the use of existing infrastructure within proximity of the settlements including the public transport network, road and bicycle network, public open spaces and community facilities.

The MSS changes encourage future growth of the settlements to make use of existing physical infrastructure services.

How does the amendment support or implement the Local Planning Policy Framework, and specifically the Municipal Strategic Statement?

The Amendment proposes to make changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement to reflect the strategic direction given in the *Ararat Sustainable Growth Future Strategy* which aims to:

- Provide an integrated land use strategy to manage the future growth and development of Ararat and small towns within the municipality; and
- Provide high level strategic direction to inform the update of Council's MSS.

The existing MSS includes the following structure:

- 21.01 Municipal Profile
- 21.02 Vision – Strategic Framework
- 21.03 Settlement and Housing
- 21.04 Environment
- 21.05 Economic Development
- 21.06 Reference Documents

Amendment C34 will update this MSS by providing a detailed vision statement at Clause 21.02 reflecting the preferred future direction for Ararat. It also adds 'infrastructure' and 'community development' as key issues to be considered.

Clause 21.03 Settlement and Housing is updated to provide much greater policy direction by taking out the township specific objectives and focussing on the settlement hierarchy, general objectives relevant to all settlements, rural living and general infrastructure. A new Clause 21.07 'Local Areas' will provide the objectives and strategies around each township and include two new towns – Elmhurst and Buangor, which currently are not referred to in the MSS. New updated framework plans have also been included for all relevant townships.

Minor policy neutral changes have been made to clause 21.04 Environment, especially to ensure wildfire mapping is used to guide development.

Amendments to Clause 21.05 Economic Development are based on the *Ararat Sustainable Growth Future Strategy*, primarily under the headings of 'Industrial Development', 'Ararat Commercial Centre' and 'Tourism'. These amendments reflect the changing needs of Ararat and include a review of the industrial land supply, tourism opportunities and revised further strategic work.

Finally, a new Clause 21.06 'Community Development' is being introduced to recognise the importance of community infrastructure and facilities and to guide their future development within Ararat and in smaller settlements.

Does the amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?

The amendment makes proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions by utilising the Local Planning Policy Framework to give effect to the strategic direction for the growth and development of Ivanhoe as described in the *Ararat Sustainable Growth Future Strategy*.

The Amendment has been prepared with reference to the following VPP Practice Notes and General Practice Notes:

- Incorporated and Reference Documents
- Writing Schedules

All overlay schedules proposed are consistent with relevant VPP Practice Notes.

How does the amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

Consultation was carried out during the preparation of the SGF Strategy, which has influenced the strategy and this amendment.

Further opportunity will be provided through the formal public notification period for additional input by relevant agencies.

Does the amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?

The amendment seeks to encourage a more efficient use of public transport that is more frequent and accessible to residents. It recognises that Ararat is the commercial centre within the region and it has good access to public transport, road and freight infrastructure that can continue to be optimised as patronage increases over time.

The amendment also recognises that adequate infrastructure and services to key smaller settlements is important to ensure growth and liveability and aims to direct this growth where infrastructure services are available.

Resource and administrative costs

What impact will the new planning provisions have on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority?

The updated MSS is not expected to have any additional impact on the resource and administrative costs of Council.

Where you may inspect this Amendment

The amendment is available for public inspection, free of charge, during office hours at the following place:

Rural City of Ararat Council
Ararat Municipal Offices
Cnr Vincent and High St
ARARAT VIC 3377

The amendment can also be inspected free of charge at the Department of Transport, Planning, and Local Infrastructure website at www.dtpli.vic.gov.au/publicinspection

Submissions

Any person who may be affected by the amendment may make a submission to the planning authority. Submissions about the amendment must be received by **Monday 22nd December**

A submission must be sent to:
Rural City of Ararat Council
Ararat Municipal Offices
Cnr Vincent and High St
ARARAT VIC 3377

Panel hearing dates

In accordance with clause 4(2) of Ministerial Direction No.15 the following panel hearing dates have been set for this amendment:

- directions hearing: **To commence in the week of 2 February, 2015**
- panel hearing: **To commence in the week of 2 March, 2015**