02.03 Strategic Directions

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02.03-1 Settlement

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Maroondah's well-established urban environment and the need to preserve extensive areas of natural environment leave limited opportunity to accommodate growth through greenfield development. Population growth will be accommodated via greyfield housing consolidation opportunities and medium density development.

Activity centres, particularly Ringwood and Croydon will provide opportunities for housing growth. Clustering housing with a greater mix of land uses around quality transport services will strengthen these thriving centres.

The following Activity Centres are located in Maroondah:

- Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre.
- Croydon Major Activity Centre.
- The Neighbourhood Activity Centres of Ringwood East and Heathmont.

The four Activity Centres are complemented by a network of Local Shopping Centres and Restricted Retail Precincts. The existence of a comprehensive network of retail and commercial activity centres is important for income generation, employment and service provision within the municipality.

Council's strategic directions for settlement are to:

- Promote greyfield and activity centre renewal, particularly through land consolidation opportunities.
- Maintain the hierarchy of Activity Centres.
- Reinforce the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre as the principal retail, commercial, community, entertainment and employment focal point of the municipality.
- Provide opportunities for integration and mixed uses of residential, business and commercial activities in the Croydon Major Activity Centre.

02.03-2 Environmental and landscape values

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The retention, enhancement and connection of patches of remnant vegetation that provide habitat for local indigenous plants and animals is critical to maintaining and increasing biological diversity in Maroondah.

The natural landscape in Maroondah is dominated by the Wicklow Hills Ridge and the Loughnan-Warranwood Ridge. They are characterised by low density subdivision, developed with a variety of housing styles and covered by an extensive canopy of native and exotic vegetation. The extensive coverage of indigenous vegetation in the elevated parts of Maroondah plays a prominent role in defining the landscape and character significance of the municipality.

Waterways, wetlands and floodplains provide important habitat in Maroondah. The value of these natural assets can be enhanced by improvements to riparian and aquatic vegetation, along with management of flow extremes, and improved water quality including litter reduction.

The attractiveness of many areas of Maroondah is created by the presence of vegetation, including exotic, native and indigenous tree canopy cover, exotic and native gardens, and patches of remnant vegetation.

Council's strategic directions for environmental and landscape values are to:

- Protect and improve identified sites of biological significance and strategically important areas for expanding and connecting these sites, such as wetlands, waterways, floodplains and ridgelines.

- Encourage the re-establishment of indigenous riparian and aquatic vegetation.
- Prevent the overdevelopment of the ridgelines by managing the design, siting and density of development in these areas.
- Protect and enhance the landscape of the Wicklow Hills Ridge and Loughnan-Warranwood Ridge and encourage their regeneration.

02.03-3 Environmental risks and amenity

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Environmental risks

The waterways of Maroondah extend to major catchment areas that ultimately lead to Port Phillip Bay. The northern portion of the municipality drains to the Yarra River Catchment and the southern section drains to the Dandenong Creek Catchment.

Major threats to the natural environment include the loss of native vegetation due to clearing and the drying of soils, waterway degradation due to stormwater runoff and high flows causing erosion, pollution and climate change.

Storm water and runoff from nearly all of Maroondah drains to the major creeks via pipes. Ditches, dykes and more pipes have been installed on flood plains to drain former wetlands and reduce the incidence of flood.

Council's strategic directions for environmental risks are to:

- Minimise the adverse impact of development on waterways.
- Retain waterways in a natural state.
- Minimise the volume of stormwater runoff flowing overland.

Residential amenity

Non-residential uses in residential areas can be important in serving the needs of the local community, but they can also intrude on residential character and amenity.

Council's strategic direction for non-residential uses in residential areas is to:

- Support the establishment of appropriately located and designed non-residential development in residential zones that does not adversely affect residential amenity.

02.03-5 Built environment and heritage

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Built environment

Maroondah is characterised by attractive streetscapes, dense canopy vegetation and a high-quality natural environment. There are two defining and distinct built form areas within Maroondah that have shaped the way the municipality has developed:

- The main commercial areas (Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre, Croydon Major Activity Centre and the Bayswater North Industrial area).
- The Wicklow Hills Ridge and the Loughnan-Warranwood Ridge.

The urban character of Maroondah's residential areas is typified by individual dwelling design, varied building setbacks and the extensive use of vegetation.

Designing buildings to reduce their environmental impact can assist in protecting and enhancing our environment. This includes reducing energy, water use and the embodied energy of a building.

Council's strategic directions for the built environment are to:

- Encourage residential development that contributes to achieving the preferred future character for each of the neighbourhood areas.

- Protect and enhance the ridgelines, vegetation, neighbourhood character, local history and cultural heritage.
- Protect and enhance the visual amenity of residential, commercial and industrial precincts and streetscape.
- Encourage variations in residential development that respects the sensitive visual and physical characteristics of different residential locations within Maroondah.
- Encourage environmentally sustainable forms of development.

Heritage

Maroondah has a diverse range of heritage places which date from both the indigenous and post contact settlement periods. Protection of Maroondah's heritage is crucial to the development of a vibrant and confident community. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups and assist with creating this sense of community. Heritage places have been identified on scattered sites throughout the municipality.

Council's strategic direction for heritage is to:

- Plan for the protection, enhancement and complementary use of heritage places.

02.03-6 Housing

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Maroondah is predominantly a residential municipality. Therefore the provision of a high quality residential environment is paramount. Maroondah has a unique blend of residential precincts, from high density housing in the Ringwood and Croydon Activity Centres, to conventional residential precincts and areas of high environmental quality.

The 'Greening the Greyfields' concept seeks to help manage growth and changing housing needs through better subdivision and development outcomes.

The three key future housing challenges in Maroondah are: affordability of housing; diversity (a need for greater housing choice); and infrastructure.

Council's strategic direction for housing is to:

- Facilitate the renewal of greyfield precincts through opportunities for land consolidation.

02.03-7 Economic development

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Retailing and related commercial activity is an important sector within the City of Maroondah. The delivery of essential goods and services to residents, businesses and other users provides employment opportunities and generates significant income within the municipality.

Industrial developments and land use form the basis of a strong local economy in Maroondah. Appropriately located manufacturing, processing and service industries provide a range of employment and development opportunities. The provision of high-quality industrial estates and development is critical for the local economy. This is particularly relevant where significant levels of development investment by industrial companies and the operation of industrial uses can be achieved without impact on the local environment.

Council's strategic directions for economic development are to:

- Reinforce the Ringwood Metropolitan Activity Centre as the principal retail, commercial, community, entertainment and employment focal point of the municipality.
- Facilitate retailing and related commercial activity by encouraging a conducive physical form and tenant mix in commercial centres.
- Encourage industrial development that contributes to the development and maintenance of a sustainable economy and high-quality urban form.
- Strengthen the industrial role of the Croydon Major Activity Centre.

02.03-8 Transport

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The provision of appropriate and accessible transport is a major determinant of urban form. Both private and public transport have a significant impact and in turn are impacted by land uses, shaping the physical form of our suburbs. To ensure the movement of people and goods within and through Maroondah meets community expectations, long term planning of our activity centres, employment precincts and suburbs must include strategies for public transport, freight, general traffic, cycling and pedestrians. It is also important that transport systems in Maroondah are provided in an environmentally and socially responsible and sustainable manner.

The provision of bicycle and walking paths, which link open space reserves with activity centres and commercial facilities, assist with decreasing reliance on private motor car travel and increasing physical activity and wellbeing. Transport provides accessibility to schools, work places, shopping and community facilities. Good transport ensures that no members of the community are deprived of opportunities to access services and participate in the broad range of activities available within the municipality.

Council's strategic directions for transport are to:

- Support the development and use of alternative modes of transport to the private car.

02.03-9 Health Precinct

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Maroondah Hospital services the outer eastern metropolitan area with comprehensive, state-of-the-art medical services. Maroondah Hospital plays a vital part in providing easy access to general, surgical, emergency and specialised medical services.

Council's strategic direction for health facilities is to:

- Encourage specialised medical land uses to locate in the medical precinct so that a comprehensive array of medical services can be provided in a single location.

02.03-10 Open space

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The network of public open space is a valuable community asset. It is vital for the physical, mental, social and environmental wellbeing of residents and contributes to a quality urban environment. Waterways, creeklines and the adjacent riparian provide major linear corridors through the municipality for passive and active recreation.

Council's strategic directions for open space are to:

- Provide an extensive, high quality open space network.
- Provide equitable access and distribution of open space that caters for a diverse range of formal and informal leisure uses for the entire community.
- Enhance existing creeks and waterways as linear open space.
- Support development adjacent to open space that respects the function and sensitivities of that open space.