

Southern Palusplain Strategy 2021



Contents

1	Introduction	1
	Study Area and Planning Context	1
	Consultation	2
2	Vision and Key Objectives.....	3
3	Strategy.....	4
	Figure 1 – Strategy Area	6
	Figure 2 – Coolup Townsite area	8
	Rural Area.....	10
	Description	10
	Objectives	11
	Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines	11
	Implementation Actions	13
	Rural Residential Area	14
	Description	14
	Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines	14
	Implementation Actions	14
	Rural Small Holdings – Equine Living Precinct.....	15
	Description	15
	Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines	16
	Implementation Actions	18
	Coolup Townsite Area.....	18
	Description	18
	Objectives	19
	Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines	19
	Implementation Actions	20
	Special Use.....	21
	Existing	21
	Proposed.....	21
	Tourism Activity.....	23
	Description	23
	Objectives	24
	Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines	25

Implementation Actions	25
Local Biodiversity Protection Measures.....	26
Description	26
Objectives	27
Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines	28
Implementation Actions	29
Places of Heritage Value.....	30
Description	30
Objectives	31
Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines	31
Implementation Actions	31
Visual Landscape Protection Measures	31
Description	31
Objectives	32
Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines	32
Implementation Actions	33
Access and Movement Network.....	33
Infrastructure and Services	34
Basic Raw Materials	36
Bushfire Hazard Risk	37
Firefighting Resources.....	38
Wheeler Airfield	39
Road Network	39
Climate Change Impacts.....	39
4 Implementation.....	41

Part 2 – Appendices (separate cover)

1 Introduction

The Southern Palusplain Strategy (Strategy) has been prepared by the Shire of Murray (Shire) in order to guide rural land use planning and provide some clear direction on economic development opportunities within the Strategy area over a 10 -15 year timeframe.

The Strategy area is situated in the southwest sector of the Shire and lies entirely within the Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment area, which is a highly sensitive environment. Land is primarily used for cattle and mixed grazing interspersed with intensive agricultural pursuits such as feedlot and piggery operations. The agricultural sector is however undergoing transition from traditional farming practice to a more diverse range of rural pursuits including horticulture ventures, boutique farming and tourism style operations. The area is also experiencing increasing pressure for rural lifestyle and equine properties.

The Strategy recognises the environmental importance and historical context of the Southern Palusplain as a slow moving interconnected seasonal wetland system with extensive cleared areas and drainage corridors that were constructed to facilitate agriculture. Underpinning all land use is the protection of the natural environment through the minimisation of environmental impacts in particular excessive nutrient export and the maximisation of the local biodiversity.

Planning for the Southern Palusplain is required to ensure the area is able to respond and take advantage of new opportunities in agriculture, while supporting existing landowners during this transition period. Planning will minimise land use conflicts, enhance the natural environment and protect the highly valued 'rural character' of the area.

The final Strategy will replace the Shire's 1994 Local Rural Strategy for the study area and will be incorporated into the Shire's proposed Local Planning Strategy that is being reviewed in conjunction with the Shire's new Town Planning Scheme.

Study Area and Planning Context

The Strategy area incorporates the area west of South Western Highway including the Coolup Townsite, extending to the Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary, south to the municipal boundary with the Shire of Waroona and north to Greenlands Road and Paceway Court (see Figure 1.)

The total area of the Strategy area is 26,000ha and in a planning context, the Southern Palusplain is the last remaining portion of the Shire's rural land area that requires an updated strategic plan to provide land use guidance. Land immediately to the east of South Western Highway is included within the Hills Landscape Precinct Plan endorsed by the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) in February 2012.

The Strategy area is primarily used for rural and agricultural purposes, including extractive industry, piggeries, cattle feedlots, turf farming and some low-key tourist uses. Increasing use of the area by the recreational and racing equine industry sector is an important land use that is growing in

popularity with significant potential for expansion to capitalise on development of the Murray Regional Equine Centre and the Pinjarra Paceway and Harness facility. Some of these uses generate significant land use buffer requirements.

A variety of factors have affected the nature of agricultural operations in the Strategy area, including de-regulation of the dairy industry, a trading decline in traditional commodities and greater focus on processed products, as well as increasing competitiveness and operating costs. As a result of less viable farming operations, the number of multi-generational farming families has decreased, which has led to land holdings being gradually sold off and a transition from broad acre farming to more boutique operations, hobby lifestyle farming, increased tourism interest and equine activity. The area has a future and this Strategy aims to support diversification and intensification as a means to address rural viability.

Consultation

Extensive community consultation was undertaken throughout the preparation of the strategy with Government agencies providing specialist input. At the start of the process Council called for nominations for the creation of a Community Advisory Reference Group (CARG) comprising land owners and ratepayers within the Coolup Townsite and broader rural area. Several meetings of the CARG were held to seek input into the project scope and advice was sought on the best means of consulting with the wider community. The Council formed Rural Landholders Advisory Committee was also consulted periodically.

The wider community was consulted in a number of ways to gauge opinion on issues and opportunities within the Strategy area. This included; preparation of a Community Survey Questionnaire distributed to land owners within the study area in late 2012; a series of Community Stakeholder Focus Group meetings held in late 2014; a further on-line community survey posted on the Shire's website in 2014 and a broader Community Workshop held in April 2015. Consultation was also undertaken with local Noongar elder Clarry Walley, the Murray Districts Aboriginal Association and the Gnaala Karla Boodja Working Party via a briefing organised through the South West Aboriginal Land Sea Council.



A number of strong themes emerged from the community consultation:

- Agriculture has a future in the area and is strongly supported by the community. Traditional forms of farming are generally supported and closed loop intensive agriculture such as horticulture is seen as having potential for the area. However large sections of the community raised concerns with agri-industry type uses for example tanneries and biofertiliser plants locating in the area.
- Landuse conflict, particularly in the Rural zoned areas is a major concern.

- Rural based tourism is generally supported and is seen as an opportunity for the area. There is strong support for tourism activities which are complimentary to the agricultural use of a property. There is also support for eco-tourism ventures such as walk trails as well as managed access to wetlands, reserves and the Estuary.
- Acknowledgement of the growing equine industry and the associated potential economic benefits for the area as well as the potential environmental impacts. Generally supportive of equine living lots close to town which have mechanisms to limit landuse conflicts and minimise the environmental impact of horses.
- The natural environment and the 'rural character' of the area is highly valued by the community. There is strong support for incentives and assistance for landowners to manage natural assets. Management and protection of these natural assets is a shared responsibility.
- The community would like to see increased opportunities for businesses in Coolup as well as improved community and visitor facilities to serve the local community and to attract tourists off the South West Highway.

The key outcomes of the consultation have provided a basis for the preparation of this Strategy. A copy of the outcome of the Community Workshop consultation process is included in Appendix D.

2 Vision and Key Objectives

The following Vision statement has been formulated for the Strategy area:

“The Southern Palusplain Strategy area supports a strong, diversified and sustainable rural economy that encourages increased agricultural productivity and innovation, supports the growing equine industry and recognises the agri-tourism potential of the area and the importance of the rural landscape character. Underpinning this is the recognition, protection and restoration of the natural environment.”

This vision is predicated on the overall goal of seeing the Southern Palusplain Strategy area promoted for diversified agricultural production and recognising the comparative economic and social benefits of the area's equine and agri-tourism potential and its strategic location close to transport links for access to Metropolitan, regional and overseas markets.

Any changes in land use will be required to demonstrate that the environmental values of the area, in particular the Peel – Harvey Estuary System, will not be adversely impacted. Best management practice for containing nutrient export and for protecting the local biodiversity shall be incorporated

into all new development. Any land use intensification will be required to contribute to environmental restoration in the study area.

To facilitate this Vision, the key objectives of the Strategy are to:

- To protect general agricultural land from conflicting land uses and fragmentation and to support a diverse range of agriculturally based economic activities
- To protect and enhance the natural environmental assets of the area and its scenic landscape qualities
- To promote and manage opportunities for equine based activities and recreational pursuits in the area
- To support and promote appropriate small scale rural based tourism activities
- To consolidate growth of the Coolup townsite and identify local servicing and community facility needs.
- To identify and protect significant Indigenous and European heritage and cultural sites
- To support improvements in nutrient export retention, water quality monitoring and drainage management measures
- To protect and enhance local biodiversity values and support vegetation, land care and wetland restoration programs

3 Strategy

The Southern Palusplain Strategy makes provision for retention of general agriculture pursuits including intensive and extensive farming operations, and describes changes in agricultural operations and the overall farming environment. The strategy acknowledges the lack of critical infrastructure as a limitation to residential expansion within Coolup townsite.

Provision for limited Rural Residential development opportunities has been made through an amendment to the Town Planning Scheme, for land along Greenlands Road at the northern boundary of the study area. Existing small rural lots on the periphery of Coolup Townsite are identified for rural residential zoning to improve land management controls. The importance of the newly establishing Murray Regional Equine Centre is highlighted as a key infrastructure development to influence further attraction of equine pursuits to the area. The Strategy identifies areas where visual landscape protection measures should apply and supports promotion of small-scale agricultural tourism and places considerable importance on the protection of environmental features and biodiversity values.

Specific objectives and development guidelines have been developed for each of the land use and zoning category areas with consideration of new Town Planning Scheme provisions and a range of other initiatives that can be implemented to generate employment prospects and foster diversified economic development opportunities.

Part 2 of the report, contained in separate Appendices, includes relevant background information and planning research, including State, Regional and local policy context, opportunities and constraints, economic factors and implications for changing land uses in the Strategy area.

Extensive consultation has been undertaken in the preparation of this Strategy. This highlighted that the community generally value the rural/agricultural nature of the area, the natural environment, the growing Equine industry and the proximity to recreational activities and larger centres. Rural tourism is seen to be an opportunity for the Strategy area. Key issues to be addressed in the Strategy area were identified relating to infrastructure provision, the existing local planning framework, protection of environmental and agricultural values, recognition and protection of Indigenous and European Heritage.

The Strategy covers the following key areas:

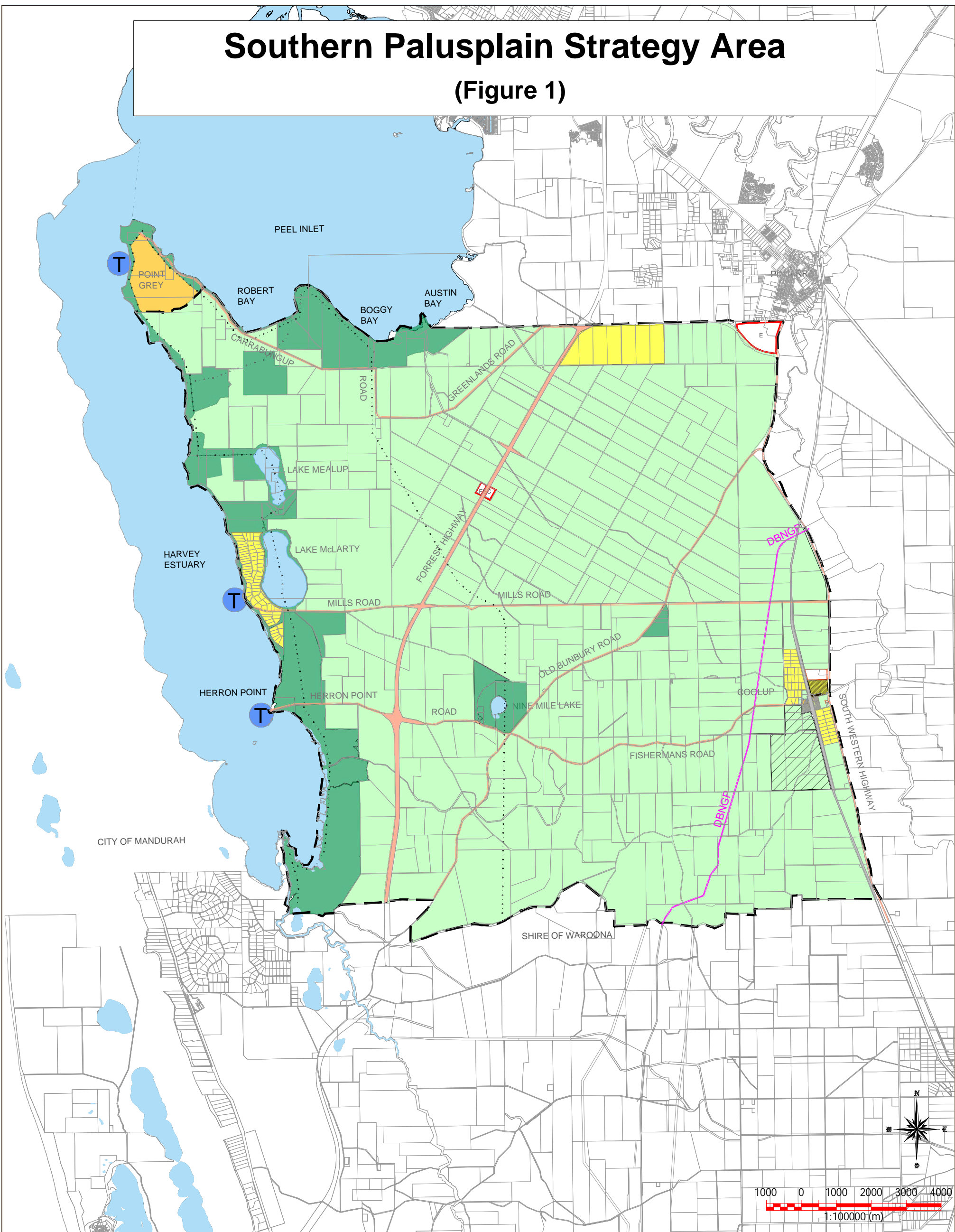
- Land Use and Zoning Categories
- Rural Zone
- Rural Residential Zone
- Rural Smallholdings
- Coolup Townsite
- Special Use
- Tourism Development Activity
- Local Biodiversity Protection Measures
- Places of Heritage Value
- Visual Landscape Protection Measures
- Access and Movement Network
- Infrastructure and Services
- Basic Raw Materials
- Bush Fire Hazard Risk
- Climate Change Impacts

Each of the above land use categories and measures are explained in more detail below with an outline of the Description, Objectives, Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines and Implementation Actions that need to be met when considering development proposals or requests for change in zoning of land under the Shire's Town Planning Scheme.


Figure 1 – Strategy Area


Southern Palusplain Strategy Area


(Figure 1)




ZONES:



CIVIC and COMMUNITY



MURRAY REGIONAL EQUINE CENTRE RESERVE



SPECIAL USE:


FSC - Freeway Service Centre
E - Equine
V - Various (see scheme text)


RURAL RESIDENTIAL



RESIDENTIAL


COMMERCIAL



RURAL



PRIVATE CLUBS & INSTITUTIONS


RESERVES:


RESERVES

REGIONAL OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION



RECREATIONAL RESERVE



RAILWAY RESERVE



RESERVES


ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION


OTHER:


TOURIST ROUTE


TOURIST ACTIVITY NODE


SOUTH WEST ECOLOGICAL LINKAGE


EQUINE LIVING

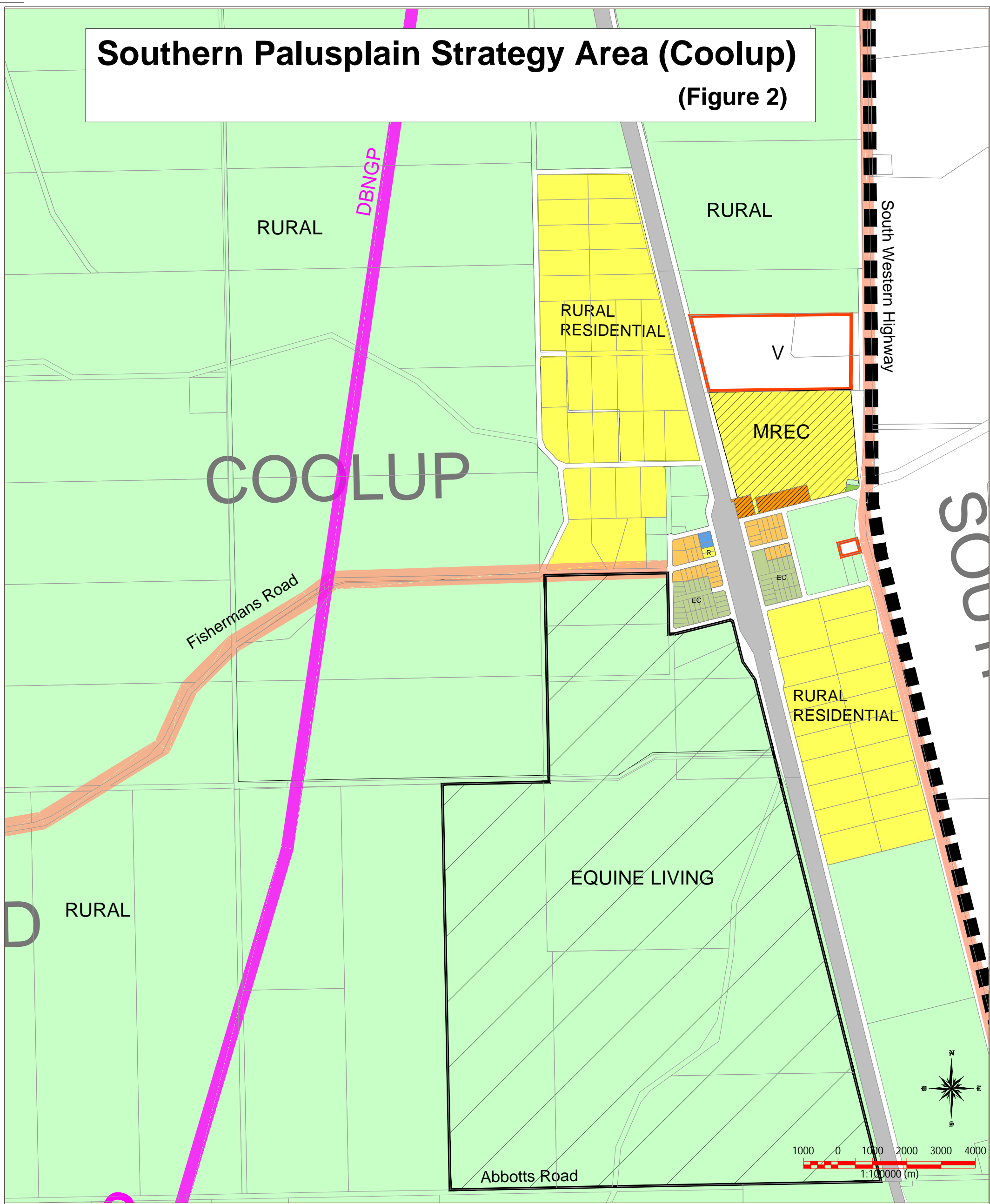

DBNGP (gas pipeline)

E-A NEW FOLDER FOR NEW PC\From UJans Folder\Palusplain\FEB2

Figure 2 – Coolup Townsite area

Southern Palusplain Strategy Area (Coolup)

(Figure 2)



ZONES:

	CIVIC and COMMUNITY		RURAL RESIDENTIAL
	MURRAY REGIONAL EQUINE CENTRE RESERVE		RESIDENTIAL
	SPECIAL USE: FSC - Freeway Service Centre		COMMERCIAL
	E - Equine		RURAL
	V - Various (see scheme text)		PRIVATE CLUBS & INSTITUTIONS

RESERVES:

	RESERVES - REGIONAL OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION
	RECREATIONAL RESERVE
	RAILWAY RESERVE
	RESERVES - ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

OTHER:

	TOURIST ROUTE
	TOURIST ACTIVITY NODE
	SOUTH WEST ECOLOGICAL LINKAGE
	EQUINE LIVING
	DBNGP (gas pipeline)

Rural Area



Description

The purpose of the Rural Zone is to protect and support the area for agricultural activities into the future, consider the potential for diversified innovative farming and food production pursuits, support the area for equine activities such as horse agistment, breeding and training and to maintain the rural landscape character of the area.

The rural area incorporates land located immediately southwest of Pinjarra Townsite and bounded by Greenlands Road and Paceway Court to the north, South Western Highway to the east, both sides of Forrest Highway and extending to the southern municipal boundary with Waroona Shire.

The area supports a number of diverse activities with cattle grazing being the predominant agricultural activity. A number of intensive agricultural industries also operate in the area including a cattle feedlot, an intensive piggery, turf farm, aquaculture, nursery and hothouse operations. Extractive industries for sand operate, as do a number of equine industries including horse agistment and training facilities.

While it is recognised that traditional forms of agriculture are changing and economic returns for many forms of general farming are diminishing, agriculture is important and it is essential that agricultural land is protected from incompatible uses, ad-hoc subdivision and land speculation to ensure the area is able to take advantage of new opportunities as they arise.

Intensive agricultural proposals will be considered, however they will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, must be 'closed loop' hydroponic minimal discharge production systems and must demonstrate environmental impacts can be effectively managed. Traditional in ground proposals will not be supported.

Any agri-industry proposals such as tanneries, fellmongering and bio fertiliser plants, are not considered appropriate in the Strategy area due to the small size of landholdings, amenity issues

and due to objections by the local community to this type of development. Such proposals are considered more appropriate in the Nambeelup Business Park or the Napier Road industrial area.

Tourism and other rural based pursuits may be supported where they are secondary to the primary agricultural use of the land, are compatible with the surrounding land use and are sensitive to the rural character of the area.

Objectives

The objectives of the Rural Area are:

- To protect the rural area, and encourage continued operation of agricultural activities including extensive agriculture, intensive agriculture and basic raw material extraction, to ensure the best prospects for continued or expanded productive use.
- To provide for a sustainable agricultural industry that is sufficiently flexible in response to changing industry circumstances by protecting the long term availability of suitable land for a diverse range of innovative agricultural and food production purposes.
- To recognise the importance of the Equine industry to the regional economy and the Shire of Murray and to accommodate the continuing demand for land suitable for horses and equine related activities in the Peel Region.
- To encourage value-adding opportunities for agricultural production and provide for low impact tourist development where this is incidental to the primary agricultural use of the land and where such uses will not conflict with agricultural objectives of the land.
- To ensure agricultural development and equine activities do not have an adverse impact on the environmental values of the area.

“..provide for a sustainable agricultural industry that is sufficiently flexible in response to changing industry circumstances..”

Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines

Land in this precinct will be retained in the Rural zone.

In accordance with State Planning Policy 2.5 and Development Control Policy 3.4 the creation of new or smaller rural lots will be by exception.

Applications for the following land uses (as defined in the Planning and Development (Local Planning Schemes) Regulations 2015) will be considered where these meet the applicable land use and environmental criteria, including minimal nutrient export.

Agriculture – extensive
Agriculture – intensive
Animal Husbandry – intensive
Industry - extractive

These will be assessed according to the criteria outlined in Town Planning Scheme No. 4 and include:-

Compliance with applicable government policies (including *State Planning Policy 2.1 Peel Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment* and *Environmental Protection (Peel Inlet- Harvey Estuary) Policy 1992*); *State Planning Policy 2.5 Rural Planning 2016*, *Peel Region Scheme Priority Agricultural and Rural Land Use Policy 2017*

Preparation of Nutrient and Irrigation Management Plan and Water Management Plan

Land restoration plan (extractive industry)

Buffers (to other land uses, environmental assets and to ensure landscape amenity)

Landscape protection controls

Protection of natural assets

Applicable licences (e.g. Water Licence, Works Approval Licence)

Some proposals may require additional approval or licencing under the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

Traditional in ground intensive agriculture and intensive animal husbandry pursuits are unlikely to be supported due to the potential for excessive nutrient export to the Peel Harvey Estuary and wetland systems. New closed loop Intensive Agricultural pursuits that can demonstrate minimal impact on the environment may be considered. Horticultural proposals are to refer to the Shire of Murray Local Planning Policy – Horticultural Development within the Peel-Harvey Coastal Plain Catchment for guidance.

Development shall be compatible with the continued agricultural use of subject site as well as the surrounding area. Potential impact on the natural environment and heritage sites are to be assessed as part of any development application.

Proposals must demonstrate that nutrient levels will not increase in surface or groundwater due to the proposed land use.

“..encourage value adding opportunities for agricultural production and provide for low impact tourist development..”

The Shire will consider developing provisions for equine related activities to minimise impacts on the local environment, including paddock trees, as well as impacts on the rural landscape.

Agri-tourism uses such as farm stays, rural produce stalls, short stay holiday chalet units, bed and breakfast accommodation and farm gate sales shall be supported in accordance with the current Town Planning Scheme requirements and local planning policies, subject to site-specific assessment. These will not be supported where they are incompatible with agricultural ventures.

Applicable buffers and separation distances to existing rural operations are to be addressed by the applicant.

Location and design of service infrastructure in the area should minimise impacts on land resources, agricultural operations and natural resource management areas.

Access to groundwater to support proposed intensive agricultural pursuits and pasture irrigation shall be subject of more detailed groundwater testing and be assessed in accordance with the Murray Groundwater Allocation Plan. A groundwater abstraction licence will also need to be obtained from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

Implementation Actions

Shire to work in partnership with community Landcare groups, landowners and Peel Harvey Catchment Council for strategic improvements in arterial drainage systems, revegetation and rehabilitation programs focused on improving habitat and water quality.

Promote the suite of tools developed to support investment decisions for new horticulture developments in the Peel Harvey coastal catchment. These include 'Horticulture in the Peel-Harvey – A Guide for Investors and Growers' brochure, and a Local Planning Policy with land capability mapping.

Shire to incorporate provisions in new Town Planning Scheme for implementation of measures through the planning and development approval process addressing:

- Rehabilitation and protection of vegetation, including paddock trees
- Establishment and maintenance of vegetation along drainage, property and paddock fence lines
- Management of wetlands and drainage lines
- Demonstration of nutrient targets outlined in the Peel;-Harvey Water Quality Improvement Plan
- Revegetation of ecological linkages

Shire to promote best practice soil management under the guidance of the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Peel Harvey Catchment Council.

Shire to support implementation of recommendations of the Peel-Harvey Water Quality Improvement Plan including strategies to improve rural fertiliser management (Recommendation 10) Enforced through bagged fertiliser regulations that were introduced through the Environmental Protection (Packaged Fertiliser) Regulations 2010.

Training assistance programmes for farmers and agricultural producers to be explored in partnership with DPIRD and Peel Development Commission to help develop sustainable farming methods using latest technology advances

Shire to raise awareness of and work with landowners and local groups such as the Peel-Harvey Biosecurity Group to control weeds and feral animals in the Strategy area.

Any intensification of land use will require a commitment from proponents towards environmental restoration within the study area. This may include revegetation of ecological linkages and drainage lines, vegetation rehabilitation or protection and management of wetlands. Details on the exact requirements for environmental repair or restoration shall be outlined in further policy guidelines.

Rural Residential Area

Description

The purpose of this zone is to provide rural living areas in close proximity to existing townsites and services. The Rural Residential Areas are confined to the existing already developed areas within the Coolup Townsite that contain lot sizes ranging from 2-4 hectares and other existing zoned special rural areas in the north and west of the Strategy area.

Properties located between Deeble Road and Fawcett Street are currently zoned Rural in Town Planning Scheme No. 4 and have limited land use management controls in place. It is considered logical in a planning and land use management sense that this land be rezoned Rural Residential in the Shire's new Town Planning Scheme consistent with other similar developments.

In addition there is approximately 47ha of rural zoned land divided into 19 blocks ranging from 2-4ha in size located south of Herron Street and between the South West Highway and the Railway line. This land is currently undeveloped with one main landowner, however given the block sizes it is considered appropriate that this land also be rezoned Rural Residential to ensure improved land use management controls will be possible in the future as ownership changes.

The only other Rural Residential land within the Strategy area includes 290 hectares of land on the southern side of Greenlands Road in the West Pinjarra locality that has recently been rezoned Rural Residential via Scheme Amendment No. 275 and the existing zoned Rural Residential estate at the western end of Mills Road, in Birchmont.

Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines

Incorporation of existing Coolup semi-rural lifestyle properties into the Rural Residential zone shall be subject to site-specific special land use and development control provisions to be included in the Shire's Town Planning Scheme. This will formalise the existing lifestyle use and significantly improve land use controls compared to the current rural zoning.

The other Rural Residential precincts are already zoned under Town Planning Scheme No. 4.

No additional land is identified for Rural Residential development in the Strategy area.

Implementation Actions

Shire to consider the rezoning of existing (2-4 ha) Rural landholdings within the Coolup Townsite area for 'Rural Residential' purposes consistent with other similar zoned nearby Special Rural landholdings and introduce specific land use and management provisions for these areas into the new Town Planning Scheme.

Shire to liaise with Water Corporation regarding servicing requirements for any proposed Rural Residential zoned area and for firefighting purposes for the town of Coolup.

Any intensification of land use will require a contribution to environmental restoration within the study area. This may include revegetation of ecological linkages and drainage lines.

Rural Small Holdings – Equine Living Precinct

Description

The Peel Regional Investment Blueprint identifies Peel as the premier region for the expansion of the equine industry in regional Western Australia. The Peel Region Equine Industry Steering Committee developed the Peel Equine Strategy (2017) to strengthen Peel's position as a premier equine destination in Western Australia. The Murray Regional Equine Centre (MREC), catering for non-racing equine activity and the proposed Pinjarra Special Use Equine Training Facility (Lot 462 South Western Highway) and surrounding areas will play an important role in realising this goal. Both of these facilities are located in Southern Palusplain Strategy area.

When complete the MREC will be a multipurpose equestrian and entertainment facility serving the Peel Region, southern suburbs of Perth and parts of the South West. It will be a high-class venue with an anticipated \$10-12million of tourism related regional economic benefit and around 100 regional tourism jobs (Syme Marmion, 2015). Stage One of the redevelopment is complete and includes of multi-purpose fields, on-site effluent disposal facilities, polocrosse grounds, access road and parking space. Subsequent stages will deliver a range of facilities including the Peel Events and Equestrian Arena (an undercover arena for regional equestrian activities and main stream events such as trade shows, concerts and exhibitions), dressage, endurance trails, parking areas for floats, stables and administration buildings.

An Economic Benefits Analysis undertaken for the Murray Regional Equine Centre by Syme Marmion consultants (2015) forecasts the number of horse-owning households (non-racing) in the MREC catchment to grow by almost 50% and by almost two-thirds in Peel in the period 2012-26. The transition of the peri-urban areas closer to Perth is displacing horse ownership to other areas and there is a general shortage of lifestyle lots especially of a size suitable to accommodate 2-3 horses. This combined with increased visitor usage and spectator growth for major equine sporting events and associated club involvement is anticipated to result in increased interest for Equine living opportunities close to Coolup townsite with easy access to the Murray Regional Equine Centre.

Having regard to recommendations in the Peel Equine Strategy (2017) a diversity of lot sizes in the Coolup area is required to support the infrastructure and investment in the Murray Regional Equine Centre (MREC). An area of land south of the existing Coolup townsite has been identified for Rural Small Holding - Equine Living development, catering for lots in the 4 -10 hectare size range (refer Figure 2 Coolup Strategy Plan). Development proposals in this area will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that they will be compatible with equine uses.

A new zoning category, 'Rural Smallholdings - Equine Living' is being considered for inclusion into the Shire's new Town Planning Scheme. The purpose of this zone is to recognise the social and

economic importance of the Equine sector in the Peel Region and provide a separate zoning category that allows for recreational equine activities to compliment the proposed expansion of the Murray Regional Equine Centre.

Creation of the Rural Small Holding - Equine Living area is to be subject of an overall demand analysis, staging plan and formulation of an overall Local Structure Plan prepared by proponents to guide future development. Rezoning proposals will not be entertained until this work is completed.

In terms of livestock carrying capacity, the Shire has undertaken an analysis of stock carrying capacity of a precinct south of Coolup Townsite that shows a 'fair' horse stock carrying capacity. The area is mapped as Pinjarra Plain soil type which is characterised by clay and sand/ sandy loam over clay with seasonally wet areas. Department of Primary Industry and Regional Development has mapped the soils in the area with a general carrying capacity of 6 DSE (dry sheep equivalent) per hectare, which equates to 0.6 horses per hectare of unirrigated land (excluding wetland areas). A minimum lot size of 4ha will be required for any Equine Living development and this would allow the keeping of two horses on unirrigated paddocks.

The area is subject to seasonally high ground water levels, seasonal watercourses and drains, which will influence the lot sizes achievable in the precinct.

Objectives

- To recognise the importance of the Equine industry to the regional economy and the Shire of Murray and to accommodate the continuing demand for land suitable for horses and equine related activities in the Peel Region.
- To provide a range of lots sizes suitable to support 2 or more horses without causing environmental degradation and to minimise land use conflicts.
- To protect Local Natural Areas and require landscape revegetation measures to ensure the equine areas blend with the rural character.

Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines

Proposed Special Provisions for the Equine Living Zone include:

1. The land may be only used for the keeping of horses (non-racing) and associated activities including; stabling, residential, agistment
2. The land shall not be subdivided into lots of less than 4ha in size
3. Building envelopes and stable overlay plans are to be identified

Lot sizes should generally range from 4-10ha depending on site constraints, land capability and intended stocking rates. The stocking rate will be calculated on the area of the lot intended to be used for grazing. Some of the lots may need to be larger than 4ha to cater for larger horse agistment properties, and a range of lot sizes is preferred.

An overall structure plan is to be prepared for the entire Rural Small Holding - Equine Living precinct to support the land being rezoned.

The spatial footprint of the Rural Smallholding precinct shall not exceed that identified on the plan accompanying this strategy.

The maximum lot yield should not exceed 45 lots for the precinct, based on an average lot size of 5.5 hectares.

Water Corporation presently has no planning or capital funding to build a water scheme for the town. Therefore, it is unlikely that the precinct can be serviced with a reticulated water supply, based on the cost of connection. Rezoning proposals will need to address provision of potable water for domestic and fire-fighting purposes in accordance with the considerations outlined in State Planning Policy 2.5 and Rural Planning Guidelines

Rezoning proposals shall also address a range of issues including:

- Availability and access to services, facilities and amenities
- Land capability (including soil quality, drainage and nutrient management, water supply) for stocking of horses, including the need for site specific equine management plans.
- Local Water Management Strategy and Nutrient and Irrigation Management Plan to be prepared as part of the rezoning and endorsed by both the Shire of Murray and Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, and should consider supplementary feeding, pasture fertilisation, treatment of manure and potential for soil amendment to improve phosphorus retention.
- Appropriate wetland buffers and a minimum 30 metre stock protection buffer for swamps, drains and watercourses.
- Physical features, slope, topography, natural vegetation, wetland features
- Areas of native vegetation, wetlands and drains are to be fenced to exclude stock. Individual paddock trees may also require fencing for protection.
- Access arrangements, drainage management and proposals should make use of connection to local road network
- Provision of alternate on-site effluent disposal system
- Provision of electricity supply provided by a licensed service provider
- Vegetation retention and additional tree planting measures consistent with Council Vegetation Management policy and Local Biodiversity Strategy Local Natural Area protection targets
- Heritage site assessment
- Fire risk and management measures consistent with Bush Fire Management Guidelines
- Provision of bridle trail networks, community and public purpose facilities
- Relationship of the land to its environs, nearby agricultural activities and local settlements
- Development of the identified precinct is to be guided by development take up rate;
- Staging of development to be considered within a Local Structure plan

Flora and fauna surveys shall be prepared for rezoning/development proposals that may be affected by remnant vegetation and Local Natural Areas in accordance with the Shire of Murray's Local Biodiversity Strategy.

Once the area is rezoned there will be a requirement for

- planning approval for any proposed stable construction
- Equine Management Plan being approved prior to the stocking of horses on any lot.
- Soil testing and ongoing property monitoring to determine if nutrient export targets are being exceeded

Implementation Actions

The revised Master Plan prepared for the Murray Regional Equine Centre in April 2015 and the Project Implementation Plan (2014) endorsed by Shire of Murray are to be used as the basis for further Government funding submissions for staged development of the Murray Regional Equine Centre.

Shire to introduce a new 'Rural Small Holding - Equine Living' Zone under the new Town Planning Scheme with special provisions for land use and development control measures.

Creation of the Equine Living development area is to be subject of a staging plan and formulation of a Local Structure Plan by the Shire and/or proponents to guide future development and co-ordination of services.

Shire to consider inclusion of measures at rezoning stage addressing soil testing and ongoing monitoring and compliance

Any intensification of land use will require a contribution to environmental restoration within Rural areas in the study area. This may include revegetation of ecological linkages and drainage lines.

Coolup Townsite Area

Description

This planning area deals with land situated within the current gazetted Coolup Townsite boundary and identifies opportunities for consolidation of rural residential settlement, along with protection of high conservation value bushland, improvements to community facilities and services and potential economic and tourist opportunities associated with the Murray Regional Equestrian Centre.

The development of the Murray Regional Equestrian Centre as a high-quality multipurpose equestrian and entertainment venue in Coolup is anticipated to bring significant economic benefits to the Peel Region. Stage 1 and Stage 2 have been completed with Stage 3 to follow. The development of this venue is likely to provide the stimulus for growth in equine activity and in associated commercial businesses as well as tourism related businesses. While the MREC is a long-term project, it is important that this Strategy be flexible enough to support the associated spin off economic development when it occurs.

Consideration is to be given for establishment of complimentary commercial services for example stockfeed; veterinary clinic; saddlery; horse transport services, food distribution centre close to the Murray Equine Centre in the Coolup Townsite to support the emerging equine industry.

Increased visitor usage and spectator growth for major equine sporting events and other non-equine entertainment events could result in further land being required within town for short stay accommodation and overflow camping with horse float parking areas and short-term horse agistment. Opportunities may also exist for a café /tea rooms to operate possibly in conjunction

with a tourism/ equine related business. Minor expansion of commercial development is therefore proposed in the townsite commensurate with population growth of the town.

Further smaller residential lot development expansion is presently constrained due to lack of reticulated sewer and water. At this stage Water Corporation have no plans to extend these services and it is considered cost prohibitive for a developer to fund such infrastructure at this point in time. Demand for population increase is also limited due to higher growth potential in other nearby townsites such as Pinjarra and Ravenswood.



Objectives

The objectives of the Coolup Townsite area are:

- To provide for future Coolup Townsite consolidation taking into account current servicing limitations and low demand for additional housing.
- To cater for the expected growth in visitors and short stay accommodation needs associated with the expansion of the Murray Regional Equine Centre.
- To recognise the potential service center and workforce function of Coolup for the surrounding Agricultural activities and equine related activities.
- To examine appropriate community facilities and services required to support townscape improvements and local community needs

Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines

There are a number of unallocated Crown lots (7ha) within the Coolup Townsite which are zoned Residential under Town Planning Scheme No. 4 and Urban under the Peel Region Scheme. These lots are identified as Urban under the South Metropolitan Peel Planning Framework, reflecting the region scheme zoning. However, these lots contain locally and regionally significant vegetation (Guildford complex) and are identified in the Shire's Local Biodiversity Strategy and in the Swan Bio Plan policy for retention. This Strategy recommends that this land be identified as Conservation Reserve in the local planning scheme with the requirement for a management plan be developed for the area.

Coordination and integration of a future water supply scheme to service Coolup townsite needs to be subject of further liaison with Water Corporation. Water supply in the case of a bushfire emergency also require discussion with the Department of Fire and Emergency Services.

Improvements to the vehicular crossing of the railway line and upgrading pedestrian access to provide better linkage networks between the Coolup townsite residential area, the MREC and the community recreation facilities to be considered by the Shire in consultation with Main Roads WA and Public Transport Authority.

Possible future specialised retail/mixed business activities that can provide complimentary uses for the longer term functioning of the Murray Regional Equine Centre are to be considered within the Commercial zone.

The provision of new and or the upgrading of existing community facilities are to be considered by the Shire. Where possible any existing or new facilities should be multi-purpose and where practicable the MREC including the Peel Events and Equestrian Arena is to be used by other community groups for community events.

Expansion of local commercial facility needs is proposed via zoning land adjoining the existing General store in Fawcett Street to Commercial and showing the small recreation playground area as Public Open Space (Recreation reserve).

Implementation Actions

The unallocated Crown lots, comprising approximately 7Ha, within the Coolup townsite which are mapped as regionally significant natural areas under Swan Bio Plan are recommended to be 'Reserve for Conservation' under the new Town Planning Scheme, with a Management plan to be developed for this area.

Lot 70 Fawcett Street and Lot 3 Murray Street, currently zoned Residential are recommended to be rezoned as Commercial under the Town Planning Scheme.

Lots 71 and 72 Fawcett Street (Don Spark Reserve) is vested with the Shire for the purpose of Park and Recreation but is currently zoned Residential under Town Planning Scheme No. 4 and Urban under the Peel Region Scheme. It is recommended that these lots be reserved as a Public Recreation Reserve under the Town Planning Scheme.

Shire to implement the Council endorsed Master Plan for the upgrade of the Don Spark Reserve, in consultation with the Coolup Progress Association.

Shire to investigate the feasibility of providing 24hour free camping and pit stop amenities for travellers in the short term until the camping facilities at the MREC are developed.

Shire to encourage small businesses, which will improve services for the local community, tourists and the growing equine community.

Shire to investigate with Water Corporation and Department Fire and Emergency Services over future water supply and sewerage infrastructure servicing requirements.

The Shire will continue to work with the Coolup Progress Association to investigate the holding of community events (such as farmers markets) and the provision of additional services and townscape design improvements for the benefit of the local community.

Any intensification of land use will require a contribution to environmental restoration within the study area. This may include revegetation of ecological linkages and drainage lines.

Special Use

Within the study area there are a number of lots zoned Special Use and these accommodate various land uses. The Strategy proposes to make some minor changes to the permitted uses on one of these sites and identifies a new site.

Existing

Lot 601 and Lot 602 Forrest Highway

These sites are zoned Special Use - Freeway Service Centres (FSC)

Lot 182 South Western Highway

Currently zoned Special Use – Service Station. The site has not been used for a Service Station for many years and the zoning is very restrictive. It is proposed to change the existing Special Use zoning provisions to allow a broader range of land uses that can cater to passing highway traffic and the needs of Coolup.

Lot 3 South Western Highway and 7020 South Western Highway (Lot 2)

(Previously 1213 South Western Highway)

These lots are zoned Special Use – Various (equine related uses may be permitted).

Stables are permitted ('P')

The following uses may be permitted at the discretion of Council ('AA')

- Equestrian Training Facility
- Private Club
- Stock Feed Supplier
- Veterinary Clinic
- Veterinary Hospital
- Other land uses, provided the use is for equestrian purposes or ancillary to such.

A Caretakers Dwelling is only permitted if incidental to the predominant use of the land ('IP')

Proposed

Special Use – Equine Training Facility

Lot 462 South Western Highway is currently zoned 'Rural' and this Strategy identifies this area as 'Special Use – Equine Training Facility' to accommodate complimentary uses associated with the adjoining Pinjarra Paceway complex. The Peel Equine industry, which includes Racing and Non Racing, is significant in its size, scale and economic impact. This site has been identified as suitable for the development of a commercial equine training and stabling facility to enable the Peel Equine Industry to grow into the future.

The site is approximately 67ha, is highly accessible and is adjacent to established equine facilities (including Pinjarra Paceway). It is located within a 10km equine industry 'hotspot' that already accommodates the established regional facilities of Pinjarra Park (racecourse), the Murray Regional Equine Centre and the Pinjarra Paceway. The site is unlikely to experience urban growth pressures and is separated from the nearest residential development so the likelihood of future land use conflict is considered unlikely.

Tourism Activity



Tourism development is supported in the Rural Zone where it is incidental to the primary use of the land and is of a scale and style that is sensitive to the rural character.

Description

The natural landscape features; the close proximity to Mandurah and Perth; the transport links; the development of the Murray Regional Equine Centre, mean the Southern Palusplain is well placed to become a short stay or day trip tourist destination.

The Peel Harvey Estuary and associated reserves and wetlands are popular with locals and visitors especially during the crabbing season. Other popular activities include camping, fishing, bird watching and other recreational activities. Lake McLarty, Nine Mile Lake and Lake Mealup are important Conservation reserves, which contain a high level of biodiversity value and are internationally significant for water bird habitat. These areas attract interest from Ornithologist groups. There is an opportunity for increased access to these natural areas for tourists; however, this must be managed to ensure the environmental attributes of the area are protected. The results of the community survey generally supported well-managed access at strategic sites that have appropriate facilities. There were concerns with management of these sites to ensure they are not degraded due to overuse or by inappropriate activities.

A low-key tourist camping area is located at Herron Point under Shire caretaker management. Further potential exists to provide an Indigenous Heritage trail network along the eastern side of the Harvey Estuary that would complement the establishment of the Peel Regional Park and broaden the scope for nature based eco-tourism opportunities. Further feasibility for such a Heritage Trail requires consultation with local Indigenous Bindjareb Nyoongar elders/traditional owners and Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attraction.

The development of the MREC is anticipated to increase tourist numbers to the area for both equine and non-equine entertainment events. In addition agri-tourism activities may present further opportunities for the area.

Establishment of Heritage trails along the Harvey Estuary as well as improved connections with scenic tourist routes are important elements for consideration in this area.

A Draft Shire of Murray Tourism Strategy is currently under preparation. This document identifies key success factors to achieve growth and expansion in the tourism sector – specifically to deliver strong investment flows, employment, growth in export orientated income, knowledge generation and local capacity, infrastructure, and a strong local brand. Visitor support infrastructure such as accommodation is an important component of this.

Under the Draft Tourism Strategy six tourism target areas have been identified – these are matched to local strengths and advantages and are deemed most likely to deliver sustainable growth. These areas are

1. Experiential and Adventure Tourism
2. Eco-tourism and Geo-tourism
3. Agricultural/ food tourism
4. Business, corporate, industrial and education tourism
5. Heritage, Arts, Culture and Events
6. Developing sustainable destinations

The Southern Palusplain is well positioned to deliver high quality tourism activities in each of these target areas. This Strategy supports the development of new tourism activities that are compatible with the predominantly agricultural use of the area and the sensitive natural environment.

The current Town Planning Scheme does not include a specific Tourism zone and this is not proposed to change under the new Town Planning Scheme. Tourism activity generally takes place in the Special Use zone or as a discretionary use in the Rural zone.

“..the Southern Palusplain is well placed to become a short stay or day trip tourist destination.”

Objectives

- To recognise the potential for increased tourist activities associated with the Peel - Harvey Estuary, the expanded Murray Regional Equine Centre and improved access via the Forrest Highway into the rural hinterland.
- To actively support new tourism developments in the Strategy area.
- To recognise that the area is a predominantly agricultural area and so ensure tourism activities are sited in areas away from land uses, which may generate offsite impacts, such as noise, dust, increased traffic and odour.

Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines

Shire to develop Local Planning Scheme provisions and prepare appropriate Local Tourism strategies within the draft Local Planning Strategy that supports development of new short stay accommodation, tourism establishments and attractions within the Strategy area.

Tourism proposals are to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. They should only be approved where they will not constrain the existing or potential future uses in the Strategy area.

Separation distances and buffers to existing land uses, which potentially have off site impacts such as noise, odour and dust, are to be addressed by the applicant.

Tourism ventures should preferably be located in close proximity to the identified tourist drive routes, having regard to access considerations for sites abutting Forrest Highway and South Western Highway, to maintain the function as inter-regional transport routes.

Implementation Actions

Shire to support development of new tourist attractions and encourage greater levels of short stay accommodation options and visitor servicing.

Shire to continue to work to improve tourism signage, marketing and branding across the Strategy area. Signage on the South West Highway could promote the MREC and a tourist drive from Coolup along Fishermans Road to Herron Point. Other identified tourist drives may require some road upgrading improvements and signage.

Shire to promote the Harvest Highway Initiative as an alternative scenic drive from Perth to the South West, in consultation with Shires along its route.

Shire to investigate a range of short term accommodation options including Horse float parking, Bed & Breakfast, Chalet development and temporary short term camping options to cater for large scale events at the MREC.

Shire to implement the actions identified in the Management Plan for the Herron Point Recreation//Conservation Reserve.

Shire to investigate the development, promotion and management of eco-tourism activities such as walk trails, bird hides and other low impact activities near the Peel-Harvey Estuary and Lake McLarty in consultation with Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. Investigate short-term accommodation options and improved road access to complement these activities.

Shire to work with other land managers to determine strategic public access sites along the Peel-Harvey Estuary, which are suitable for low impact recreational activities. Once these sites are determined, the level of amenity provision will need to be agreed. It is recommended that education material on the sensitive nature of the environment, bushfire risk, littering concerns and information on fisheries catch and size rules be provided at each of these sites. An increased Ranger presence and covert surveillance measures in these areas is also recommended.

Shire to liaise with the Peel Development Commission for development of a Business Plan and feasibility for the establishment of a Heritage Walk and Food Trail along the Eastern Harvey Estuary in consultation with Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and Traditional Bindjareb Nyoongar owners. This trail was first identified as part of the Peel Cultural Landscapes Project, which was undertaken in consultation with the local Noongar community including Joe Walley. Consultation undertaken to assist with the preparation of this Strategy has indicated that the local Noongar groups would be supportive of the development of this trail. The development of this trail is also identified in the Shire of Murray Trails Master Plan (2009-2018).

The Shire of Murray Trails Master Plan (2009-2018) identifies the Murray Bridle Trail as having great potential as a regional trail. This plan recommends that the Shire work with the Peel Trails Group to assess this trail, address any safety concerns and then improve promotion of the trail. The Shire is currently involved in the development of a 'Peel Regional Trails Strategy'. This draft document will identify current trails across various disciplines and will identify opportunities and areas for improvement.

Shire to liaise with Tourism WA for improvements to Regional Tourism branding and promotion of Murray Shire as a popular tourist destination.

Local Biodiversity Protection Measures

Description

The aim of this measure is to protect and restore areas of conservation, landscape and environmental value and maintain their viability into the future. The natural areas in the study area are important assets of environmental, social and economic value. They add to the character and identity of the area and attract visitors, new residents and investment (Del Marco, 2013). The protection of natural areas is fundamental to sustainable development. The Shire has developed a Local Biodiversity Strategy, which identifies biodiversity conservation objectives and targets for the protection of natural areas.

95% of the study area has been cleared of vegetation, not including the Kooljerrenup Conservation Reserve and vegetation in the Peel Region Scheme Regional Open Space reserve. The remaining vegetation identified in figure 6 is a high priority for protection and there is a presumption against clearing, with potential impacts of development and land use being assessed against the local biodiversity and environmental values of the area.

The South West Ecological Linkages Project identified regionally significant ecological linkages across the Strategy study area. The project defined an Ecological linkage as 'A series of (both contiguous and non-contiguous) patches which, by virtue of their proximity to each other, act as stepping stones of habitat which facilitate the maintenance of ecological processes and the movement of organisms within, and across, a landscape' (Molloy et al, 2009). These linkages are identified on the overall Strategy plan (Figure 1). Protection and restoration of these linkages contributes to the retention of native vegetation and fauna habitat and reduces the loss of biodiversity and key ecological functions.

The Peel – Harvey Estuary which forms part of the internationally significant (Ramsar listed) Peel –Yalgorup wetland system is the dominant natural feature adjacent to the Strategy area. Improving the long-term health of this system is a priority for both the government and the community. Improving the water quality of this system by reducing nutrient inflows is essential for improving the long-term health and protecting the biodiversity values of the system.



Protection of existing Regional Open Space reserves under the Peel Region Scheme is reinforced by the Shire's Local Biodiversity Strategy, which identifies the need for preparation of Management Plans to administer, manage and control activities within these Reserves.

The creation of an Environmental Conservation Zone under the new Town Planning Scheme as well as a Conservation Incentives Strategy are being considered to encourage and assist landowners to manage and protect biodiversity values on their properties.

Objectives

- To preserve the Shire's biodiversity and environmental values through appropriate protection of ecological linkages, areas of wetlands, significant native vegetation, valuable habitat areas and other areas of environmental value.
- To recognise and implement the biodiversity conservation objectives and targets identified in the Shire's Local Biodiversity Strategy.
- Maintain ecological connectivity at the regional and local scales at 2013 levels or better consistent with Local Biodiversity Strategy sub precinct targets.
- Protect all Conservation Category and Resource Enhancement Category Wetlands plus their buffer to maintain ecological values.

- Shire to seek a reduction in nutrient levels entering the waterways system as per Environmental Protection Authority guidelines and Water Quality Improvement Plan targets when assessing development proposals.
- To take advantage of changing land use in the area to contribute to environmental restoration projects.
- To encourage rural landowners to participate in environmental restoration programs in consultation with community volunteer groups to protect the conservation values on private property.
- To identify areas where revegetation projects would have the biggest ecological restoration impact.

“The natural areas in the study area are important assets of environmental, social and economic value.”

Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines

There is a presumption against clearing in the Strategy area. Where development is proposed, opportunities to improve connectivity through revegetation are to be identified. Priority areas for revegetation are to be determined in consultation with the Shire.

The majority of the study area is zoned Rural and is classified as ‘Rural South’ in the Shire’s Local Biodiversity Strategy (LBS). Some land in the north of the study area, located between the Forrest Highway and South Western Highway is classified as ‘West Pinjarra’. Under the LBS, the Shire is divided into Biodiversity Planning Precincts to enable the setting of natural area protection targets. These targets have been developed according to biodiversity priorities, land zoning and proposed future land use.

Rural South includes LBS Precincts 36, 37 and 38. There is a presumption against any clearing in these areas (100% retention). The focus in these Precincts is on providing incentives for private land conservation. If such a scheme were introduced, an indicative protection target of 10% of the highest conservation assets would likely be sought. This is in addition to those areas already protected in Regional Open Space.

West Pinjarra includes a number of Precincts. Part of Precinct 31 is located in the southern Palusplain Strategy area. All of the remaining vegetated areas contain significant biodiversity value and so the LBS recommends 100% retention.

Ensuring any future Rezoning proposals for Rural Residential or Environmental Conservation Zone recognise specific Biodiversity feature targets and sub-precinct protection targets as they apply to the Scheme Amendment area. Where development or land use change is proposed, protection of Local Natural Areas under the Biodiversity Strategy targets is required

Where proposed change of land use, zoning, structure plans or subdivision of land is situated within 250 metres of a South West Regional Ecological Linkage and gaps greater than 500m exist between vegetation patches on or adjacent to the subject site, opportunities for revegetation are to be considered to improve ecological connectivity.

In August 2016, the Federal Minister for the Environment and Energy classed 'Banksia Woodlands on the Swan Coastal Plain' in Western Australia as a Threatened Ecological Community in the endangered category under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, 1999*.



The Banksia Woodlands ecological community provide vital habitat for a number of nationally threatened species such as Carnaby's Cockatoo and Forrest Red-tailed Black Cockatoos. It also provides significant ecosystem services, natural amenity and recreation. In the study are the vegetation complexes that may contain Banksia woodlands include Bassendean Central and/or South, Southern River and Cannington complexes. Any action that has, will or is likely to have a significant impact must not occur without approval by the Minister. Potential Threatened Ecological Communities will require vegetation surveys to determine their status.

Ensure the applicable buffers and stock exclusion areas for wetlands, watercourses and drains are implemented.

Where there is the potential for nutrient export a Nutrient and Irrigation Management Plan will be required to be submitted with the development application.

“Any intensification of land use will require a contribution to environmental restoration within the study area.”

Implementation Actions

Creation of an Environmental Conservation Zone for protection of local natural areas with significant conservation value and special control provisions to be considered for inclusion in the proposed new Town Planning Scheme.

Shire to establish a policy and contribution scheme for environmental restoration (such as revegetation of ecological linkages and drainage lines) in the Strategy area. This will be triggered when intensification of land use is proposed.

Existing fragmented management responsibilities for Regional reserves, including the Peel Regional Park are to be rationalised by State Government.

A Local Planning Policy to be developed to protect roadside vegetation in the Strategy area.

Introduction of a voluntary private land conservation incentive strategy to be explored by the Shire for landowners to protect the remaining few local natural vegetated areas as identified under the Council's adopted Local Biodiversity Strategy.

Lots 501 and 199 located east of Nine Mile lake to be shown as future 'Conservation/recreation' reserves



Shire to liaise with relevant Government agencies, local indigenous groups and the Peel Harvey Catchment Council over preparation of Management plans within Regional Open Space reserves to better manage and control activities.

A Conservation Heritage Trail linkage between Robert Bay and Birchmont and further south to the Harvey River be considered by the Shire to strengthen the Peel Regional Park network and eco-tourism potential.

Shire to explore the establishment of 'Friends Of' environmental groups to assist with the management of natural areas.

Shire support the implementation of programmes such as 'Healthy Habitats', which support private landowners to source funding and manage their natural areas.

Shire to investigate the options for policing the dumping of rubbish, including garden waste in public owned natural areas.

Places of Heritage Value

Description

The protection of European and Aboriginal Heritage sites is very important, with many of the sites around the Estuary being of cultural significance to the local Bindjareb Noongar people and of social and recreational significance to the wider community. There are twelve sites of European significance identified in the Strategy area. These are listed in the Local Government Heritage Inventory, which was adopted by Council in August 2013. The Shire is currently undertaking a Scheme Amendment to recognise this Inventory as the Scheme Heritage List under Town Planning Scheme No. 4.

The Southern Palusplain Strategy study area intersects within the DPLH administered boundary of five Aboriginal sites and twelve Aboriginal heritage places. The Strategy area contains a number of Aboriginal Heritage sites, which are culturally significant. These sites are of mythological importance and are generally associated with wetlands and the land abutting the Peel Inlet. These

sites will need to be addressed as part of any development proposal in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 1972*.

Objectives

- To protect and recognise areas of Indigenous and European cultural heritage significance and assist in achieving the heritage conservation objectives as listed under the Shire of Murray's Local Government Inventory and Town Planning Scheme heritage list.

Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines

Planning Approval is generally required for any works affecting a Place of Heritage value.

Preparation of Heritage related policies and guidelines for inclusion within an Amendment to Town Planning Scheme No. 4 were being prepared in accordance with Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990 provisions.

Most of the subject area has been surveyed and a number of Indigenous sites have been identified. These sites should be formally identified and protected as part of any development application.

Implementation Actions

A previous proposal to introduce transfer of development rights and policy guidelines for an updated Heritage List being prepared under Shire Scheme Amendment No. 273 is now no longer being pursued, as Heritage requirements are addressed via part 3 of the Deemed provisions under Schedule 2 of the Planning and Development (local planning Scheme) regulations 2015.

Visual Landscape Protection Measures

Description

The aim of the Visual Landscape Protection measure is to maintain the landscape character of the Strategy area and to protect important viewing locations and experiences.

A Visual Landscape Assessment of the Strategy area was undertaken by the former Department of Planning in 2010. Two landscape character units and one sub unit were identified (see figure 3 and Appendix C).

- 'Rural Pasturelands Character Unit', (including the 'Central Wetlands Sub-Unit')
- 'Estuary – Dune Ridge Natural Character Unit'.

Important landscapes within the study area include; the Harvey Estuary and Peel Inlet; the 'rural character' of the majority of the Strategy area; the remnant vegetation, particularly that



found in and around wetlands and road verges. Panoramic views westerly across the landscape towards the Peel Harvey Estuary and easterly to the Darling Scarp are also important. From outside the study area the natural characteristics of the Peel-Harvey system is highly valued.

Any development in close proximity to a Ramsar site shall adhere to the recommendations outlined in the Peel – Yalgorup System Ramsar Site Management Plan (2009). This includes the minimum development setback of 100m from any Ramsar listed wetland boundary, in many cases this is from the outer edge of the fringing vegetation and not the high water mark.

Objectives

The objectives of the Visual Landscape Protection measure are:

- To protect the natural characteristics of the Peel-Harvey Estuary including views from the Estuary
- To maintain the rural character of the Strategy area
- To maintain important panoramic views across the Strategy area
- To recognise and protect the scenic value of important tourist routes



Planning Considerations and Development Guidelines

Special development provisions for setbacks and the visual appearance of building structures will be considered for inclusion within the new Town Planning Scheme via the introduction of Special Control Areas.

Introduction of development controls for land 200 metres both sides of Forrest Highway, South Western Highway and the identified scenic tourist routes (see Figure 1). Special control areas and other policy measures to be considered. These may include design guidelines for visual amenity, development setbacks and visual buffer requirements.

Any future development adjacent to the Peel Harvey Estuary should be sited appropriately into the landscape so that it is not visible from the Estuary.

Development should not obscure significant views to the Darling Scarp or to the Estuary from within the Strategy area, nor should views from the western side of the Estuary be impacted. The treatment of land adjoining Forrest Highway, South West Highway and Old Bunbury Road warrants careful consideration for visual landscape impact. The Forrest Highway would benefit from some planting of native vegetation; however, this should be intermittent so that important views across the landscape are maintained.

Signage controls apply in the Strategy area as per the current Shire Local Planning Policy. Signage along major Highway routes to be considered in accordance with Shire policy guidelines and Main Roads WA advice.

New development or land use within the Strategy area should be sympathetic to the 'rural character' of the area. Applications for development are to consider the impact of development on the landscape this may include the siting and scale of the development, the building materials and colours and the impact on existing vegetation.

Remnant vegetation and Local Natural areas shall be retained and enhanced particularly around wetlands, road verges and creek lines.

“..ensure new development and land use are sympathetic to the ‘rural character’. This character is highly valued..”

Implementation Actions

Shire of Murray to liaise with the State Government for a suitable governance framework to establish the Peel Regional Park in order to rationalise existing fragmented management arrangements for reserved land adjoining the Peel-Harvey Estuary.

Inclusion of scenic tourist routes for Forrest Highway, South Western Highway, Carrabungup Road/ Greenlands Road (west of Forrest Highway); Mills Road; Fishermans Road/ Herron Point Road and Old Bunbury Road in the new Town Planning Scheme with development setback provisions, building and visual amenity controls and protection of the existing native vegetation adjacent to these routes. Development adjacent to the tourist routes will require planning approval to ensure the rural character is protected.

Shire to consider introducing development design guidelines for the whole Strategy area to ensure new development and land use are sympathetic to the 'rural character'. This character is highly valued by the local community and visitors and provides a sense of place.

Access and Movement Network

Key transport corridors traverse the study area and provide good accessibility into, within and out of the Strategy. They include the Forrest Highway, the South Western Highway, Old Bunbury Road

and the Perth-Bunbury narrow gauge railway line, which transports passengers and freight movement.

The Forrest Highway is an important inter-regional transport route. It is important that this function is maintained and that development in the study area is consistent with this purpose.

Local east-west road linkages are provided via Mills Road, Fishermans Road, Paull Road and Carrabungup Road/Greenlands Road extending out to Point Grey.

Two Highway Service Centres are located on land either side of the Forrest Highway just south of Paull Road to cater for the travelling public and to service freight transport needs accessing the South West region.

Important tourist road routes are identified within the Strategy area (see Figure 1, overall Strategy map). These are:

- Forrest Highway
- South Western Highway
- Fishermans Road and Herron Point Road, Coolup to Herron Point
- Mills Road to Birchmont
- Old Bunbury Road
- Greenlands Road and Carrabungup Road, West of Forrest Highway to Point Grey

Tourism activities located in close proximity to these routes will be considered favourably and on their respective merits, subject to access considerations and the need to preserve the integrity and function of inter-regional transport routes.

A small public boat ramp exists within the Birchmont Special Rural Estate, which is popular for recreational boating and fishing pursuits. A larger scale Marina and boat launching facility is proposed on the western foreshore of the Point Grey development site, which has received conditional State and Federal Environmental approval.

Upgrades to the existing road network is recommended to improve vehicular movement during a bushfire event. Priority areas for upgrades are; Birchmont Estate, Herron Point camping ground and Coolup townsite.

This Strategy recommends further investigation and development of a number of trails including bridle, Aboriginal heritage, farm food, producer and tourist eco trails.

Infrastructure and Services

The Strategy area contains the Coolup settlement located on the South Western Highway, which is situated in close proximity to the Pinjarra town centre 10 kilometres to the north. The Coolup townsite consists of a population of 200 people and offers basic conveniences including a general store, community hall, volunteer fire brigade station, tennis courts and skate Park, and stockfeed supplies. Coolup is also home to the Murray Equestrian Association, which encompasses

equestrian related sports clubs and has a strong local membership. A Master Plan has been prepared by the Shire of Murray, for the Murray Regional Equestrian grounds, to accommodate a covered multi-purpose use arena, cross country course, polo-crosse and other associated equine recreational activities

Potable reticulated water is not available within the Strategy area, including the Coolup townsite. Any expansion of the Coolup townsite is dependent on a potable reticulated water supply. Water Corporation has been consulted on the viability of connecting the townsite to a reticulated scheme water supply. The Water Corporation's main water pipeline to Perth passes to the west of Coolup and a recent duplication of the pipeline has made provision via a 'T' junction for a future connection to service the townsite. Water Corporation has, however indicated that any extension of the water pipeline service would need to be funded by subsidisation from future developers. In light of recent devastating bushfires, the Shire considers water supply provision for emergency management and safety of inland communities is essential.

Most of the Strategy area has a low to very low capability for on-site effluent disposal therefore more intensive land uses are limited by the capability for appropriate wastewater disposal. For any proposed intensification of land use, environmentally acceptable wastewater management will be required.

Key transport corridors traverse the study area and provide good accessibility into, within and out of the Strategy area. They include the Forrest Highway, the South Western Highway, Old Bunbury Road and the Perth-Bunbury narrow gauge railway line, which transports passengers and freight.

The area is traversed by trunk supply lines for electricity, water and gas including the High Pressure Gas Network, and Dampier-Bunbury Natural Gas Pipeline (DBNGP). Australian Gas infrastructure Group has advised that consideration of existing and future infrastructure corridors is required for any proposed Scheme amendment, including rezoning, as well as any proposed structure plan, local development plan, subdivision plan or development application. Land within or adjacent to the DBNGP corridor or subject to a petroleum pipeline licence is subject to restrictions originating from the Dampier to Bunbury Pipeline act 1997 and Petroleum pipelines act 1969, which seek to protect the integrity of the pipeline. Development that would be inconsistent with these restrictions is unlikely to be permitted or approved.

The initiator of any planning Scheme amendment, structure plan, local development plan, subdivision application or development application on land within the pipeline measurement length as defined in Australian Standard 2885 (660 metres for the DBNGP) should consult with the pipeline owner/operator to obtain advice on what risk assessment and mitigation measures (which may include buffers/setbacks) are required in order to ensure any proposed development does not increase the risk to the integrity of the pipeline and the safety of people.

132kV & 330 kV electricity transmission lines (as shown in Appendix A). Consideration of existing and future infrastructure corridors is required in the determination of any application for development or closer settlement.

The Strategy area contains an extensive drainage network consisting of both privately owned drains and Water Corporation owned and managed main drains. The drains were constructed with the purpose of alleviating water logging to enable the land to be used for agricultural purposes. The drains discharge into the Harvey Estuary and the Harvey River and are a significant source of nutrients into the Peel Harvey System.

Basic Raw Materials

Basic raw materials are an important resource, which are becoming increasingly constrained due to population pressures, depletion and important environmental considerations. This Strategy recognises the economic importance of these resources. They are generally a short to medium term land use that requires management to remove conflicts with other land uses, minimise environmental impacts and ensure appropriate rehabilitation of the site.

State Planning Policy 2.4 'Basic Raw Materials' identifies several extraction areas in the Shire. These sites are not currently operational and the policy is subject of review by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage.

Within the study area, there are three operating quarries with an Extractive Industry licence under the Planning & Development Act, 2005.

- Lot 605 Lake Mealup Road
- Lot 101 Old Bunbury Road
- Lot 100 Mayfield Road – extraction has finished at this site and rehabilitation is underway.

These existing quarries are recognised in the Strategy and are to be protected from sterilisation due to incompatible development and land uses. Incompatible development, for example land use which is sensitive to noise or dust, will not be approved in close proximity (approximately 1,000m) to an existing site. Further intensification of land use within close proximity to an identified resource area is generally not supported by State policy, until mining and rehabilitation of these sites is completed or the resource extraction process is declared no longer viable.

New extraction proposals are to consider the following as a minimum:

- Protection of the amenity of adjacent land uses
- Impact on the visual landscape
- Existing remnant vegetation
- Ground water levels
- Rehabilitation
- Offsets proposed if the proposal is approved and vegetation is to be cleared
- Buffers
- Noise and dust
- Transport
- Statutory licences and approvals
- Ensure that the proposed rehabilitation of the land is consistent with its long-term future use.

Bushfire Hazard Risk

Bushfires are a part of the Australian environment and they pose a serious threat to people, property and infrastructure. Reducing vulnerability to bushfire is the collective responsibility of the whole community. The State Government has implemented a risk-based system of land-use planning and development, which aims to manage and reduce the risk of bushfire. In December 2015, the following were introduced:

- *Planning and Development (Local Planning Scheme) Amendment Regulations 2015,*
- *State Planning Policy 3.7: Planning in Bushfire Prone areas and*
- *Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas*



These apply to development that is proposed on a site in a 'bushfire prone area' as designated by the Fire and Emergency Services Commissioner under the *Fire and Emergency Services Act 1998*. The *Map of Bushfire Prone Areas* designates which sites are 'bushfire prone'; it is reviewed annually and can be viewed on the Department of Fire and Emergency Services website at www.dfes.wa.gov.au/bushfireproneareas.

The planning documents set out a range of matters that need to be addressed at various stages of the planning process, to provide an appropriate level of protection to life and property from bushfires and avoid inappropriately located or designed land use, subdivision and development on land where a bushfire risk is identified. A plan showing the designated Bushfire Hazard Risk Areas is included in Appendix A, Figure 5. Significant portions of the bushfire prone areas along the Estuary are reserved as Regional Open Space.

Any change of land use that will result in intensification of development in an extreme bushfire risk area would not normally be approved unless it could be demonstrated that the hazard could be reduced to an acceptable level. It should be noted that in some bushfire prone areas, development may not be able to meet the requirements of the guidelines without clearing of native vegetation; and therefore would be unacceptable on the basis of impact on landscape protection and/or conservation values.

Intensification of land use or development within the study area is to adhere to the most recent requirements for Bushfire risk management. The Shire encourages compliance with WAPC guidelines, AS3959 (Construction of buildings in bushfire prone areas) and application of Building Attack Levels (BALs), consistent with State Planning Policy 3.7 and the revised Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas (2019).

Firefighting Resources



The Coolup Volunteer Bushfire Brigade provides an important fire prevention and suppression service to the community. The Brigade is supported by the Shire of Murray and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services. The Brigade maintain their equipment, undertake controlled burns on Shire reserves and private property, and undertake firefighting activities when required.

Birchmont – 50,000L tank and pump owned and maintained by the Shire, a bore automatically fills this.

50,000L tank owned and maintained by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

50,000L tank owned and maintained by the Shire located in the Herron Point Road reserve, south of the Nine Mile Lake Reserve (R16907). This tank is manually filled as required.

Herron Point Reserve

The Shire plans to install a 50,000L water tank to be used for potable and firefighting purposes in the coming years. This tank will be plumbed into the existing roof structures located in the campground and manually filled when required.

Coolup

There are two tanks located at the Coolup Volunteer Bushfire Brigade Depot a 100,000L tank and a 10,000L overhead tank. Both are owned and maintained by the Shire. A bore automatically fills these tanks.

Murray Regional Equine Centre;

120,000L tank fitted with Storz outlets, owned and maintained by the Shire.

A firefighting Water Hydrant is located at Lot 500 Boar Swamp Road; this is connected into the Water Corporation's Stirling-Harvey Trunk Main.

Wheeler Airfield



The Wheeler Airfield Water Bombing facility located at Lot 7 (270) Mounsey Road, Coolup is available to fire-fighting agencies to attack major regional fires from the air. On the property is a 1300m long compacted gravel airstrip, oriented in an ENE/WSW alignment. The facility was used extensively in the 2016 Yarloop Waroona fire and has since been upgraded. This included an extension and widening of the main runway, creation of a second runway, a cross runway, upgrades to the dam, installation of a bore and the installation of rest facilities and conveniences for volunteers and pilots.

Road Network

Birchmont Estate and the Herron Point camping ground have only one road in and out which is identified as a risk in an emergency bushfire situation. Under the 'Guidelines for Planning in Bushfire Prone Areas, 2015' it is necessary for the public to have two safe access/egress options leading to two different destinations that can withstand all weather conditions. All access should be suitable to accommodate type 3.4 fire appliances and ideally these should be public roads. It is recommended that an additional exit be investigated to the north of the Birchmont Estate to link up with Lake Mealup Road and then Greenlands Road. The exact alignment should take into consideration the biodiversity values of the area, land tenure and the most appropriate access.

An alternative access for Herron Point is more difficult due to its location within Kooljerrenup Reserve. Illegal vehicular access into this Reserve is a problem and the creation of a public road through the Reserve is likely to exacerbate this problem and impact on the biodiversity of the area. The foreshore at Herron Point could be considered as an Emergency Evacuation point should Herron Point Road be cut in an emergency situation. The estuary is relatively shallow and there is a beach area which is partially cleared of vegetation. It is recommended that the suitability of this option be investigated.

Point Grey

Although outside the study area, once developed, Point Grey will introduce more people into a bushfire prone area and the bushfire risk will be required to be addressed at each stage of development.

Climate Change Impacts

Australia faces significant challenges due to climate change. The 2013-17 period was the hottest five-year period ever recorded worldwide, with 2016 the hottest year on record. Climate change is a major factor in driving this (Steffen et al (Climate Council of Australia) 2018). Climate change is exacerbating extreme weather events across Australia and around the globe.

The south-west of Western Australia has been experiencing a drying trend with annual rainfall declining 10-15% since 1970 and a 0.8°C increase in temperature since 1910 (Indian Ocean

Climate Initiative, 2012) and climate models suggest that this drying trend will continue. Future projections indicate that across the State, rainfall will decrease by up to 20 per cent and summer temperatures will increase by up to 2.1°C by 2030, relative to 1960 – 1990 levels.

The likely impacts of climate change include less water availability, increased risk of more frequent and intense drought and bushfire events, decreased average annual rainfall and sea level rise. While the exact impacts of climate change on the study area are unknown, it is important that any planning for the area provides flexibility for the current land uses to adapt, and supports the development of new land uses, while protecting the environmental assets.

It is widely recognised that there will be impacts on the agricultural industry and some adaptation will be required. In the study area, decreased rainfall will likely impact on pasture growth and potentially stocking levels. Less water availability will require greater efficiencies in irrigation. Water requirements will need to be considered when approving new proposals in the Strategy area. The capability of the land to support a proposed land use, including any potential impacts, for example nutrient export, will need to be assessed to ensure future land uses are sustainable for the long term. The Strategy recognises the importance of agriculture in the area and aims to protect valuable agricultural land while providing some flexibility for the industry by supporting a diverse range of rural pursuits.

The Regional NRM Strategy for the southwest notes the following relevant impacts of climate change on the natural resource assets in the Peel:

- Reduced rainfall will limit the available surface and groundwater in the region that can be diverted for agricultural, industrial and domestic water use. Maintaining water flows in the region's streams and wetlands (e.g. environmental flows) will be required to maintain ecological functioning, which will further affect yields.
- Degradation processes for nutrient-rich streams and wetlands and biodiversity remnants will be exacerbated by a drying and warming climate. Endemic biodiversity in remnant vegetation areas may not be able to adapt to the changed circumstances and will not thrive in their confined locations (South West Catchments Council, 2005).
- Projected sea level rises, however small, will have an impact on the extensive areas of low-lying land adjacent the Peel Harvey Estuary and the lower reaches of the contributing waterways. Habitat losses may occur with increased salt water intrusion and there has been evidence of some vegetation losses along the eastern Estuary foreshore environment from the increased tidal movement
- One possible impact of a drier climate with less recharge of superficial aquifers is the potential for exposure of acid sulphate soils, with the generation of acidic water bodies and flows that could damage natural resources (e.g. bushland and wetlands) and human uses.

Adaptive responses to these concerns include careful planning to secure adequate water resources for the future and intervention measures to maximise the prospects of maintaining the important biodiversity by linking remnant vegetation in corridors that can assist the native biota to adjust to changing circumstances.

Climate change is also influencing fire danger weather and bushfire events. Hot days are getting hotter and heatwaves are longer, more intense and are occurring more often. The fire season is

getting longer which results in reduced opportunities for controlled burns and places increased pressure on firefighting resources (Steffen and Fenwick (Climate Council of Australia) 2016). Bushfire events often have tragic results with loss of livestock, wildlife, property and in the worse cases loss of life. This results in large financial costs and the social costs can continue for years following the event. This Plan recognises bushfire risk in the Strategy area and makes recommendations to address this

4 Implementation

The Southern Palusplain Strategy will guide the use and development of land in the south western sector of the Shire and replace the current Local Rural Strategy planning guidelines that have been in place since 1994. An updated Local Planning Strategy covering the whole Shire is in progress along with formulation of a new Town Planning Scheme and recommendations, actions and land use proposals contained within this WAPC endorsed Strategy are to be incorporated into a comprehensive document addressing the whole Shire municipal district.

Once the Southern Palusplain Strategy has been revised in accordance with WAPC requirements and recommended modifications finalised to the satisfaction of DPLH, the Shire can introduce new zoning controls and land use provisions into the new Scheme.

Any future proposals for rezoning will need to be accompanied by supporting information that demonstrates how the proposals meet the development guidelines and performance criteria outlined in Section 3 of this Strategy and any other relevant planning and policy instruments.



Subdivision of land for Rural Residential, Rural Small Holdings and Environmental Conservation Zone will not be supported unless the land is specifically identified in this Strategy and subsequently zoned for these purposes in the local Planning Scheme.

Most of the closer settlement opportunities are distributed either within or near to existing developed townsite areas of Pinjarra and Coolup to take advantage of existing community services, transport networks and extension of essential service infrastructure. Services located in Pinjarra include; primary and secondary schools, hospital, aged care facilities, cemetery, recreational facilities, doctor and allied medical providers and public transport connections to Mandurah and Perth.

While the Palusplain Strategy aims to provide a 10 -15 year vision for development of the Shire's south western rural sector, it is likely that demands placed on it and the rapid pace of population growth and demographic characteristics will continue to change over time. It is therefore recommended that the Plan undergo regular review to ensure that it still reflects contemporary planning principles while maintaining the needs and aspirations of the local community and business industry sectors.

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