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# Rockbank Major Town Centre Urban Design Framework

## Background Report

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for **Melton City Council**

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# 01 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Purpose of the document

As part of the Urban Design Framework (UDF) process, a background report is required in order to identify any issues and opportunities prior to beginning the UDF.

This allows for an understanding of the site constraints to be completed in more detail, enabling the design framework to be produced with accuracy in response to the existing conditions.

The Background Report will include:

- Summaries of current State & Local policy and contexts and key influencing documents
- Summary of Movement & Transportation Technical Report (including recommendations)
- Summary of Economic Technical Report (including recommendations)
- Summary of Utility and Servicing Technical Report
- Benchmarking
- Key site opportunities & constraints
- Broad UDF recommendations

## 1.2 Purpose of the project

This project will set out a clear vision for the Rockbank Major Town Centre (MTC) and guide its use and development. It will deliver planning and urban design policies and principles that will enable Council to assess planning permit applications.

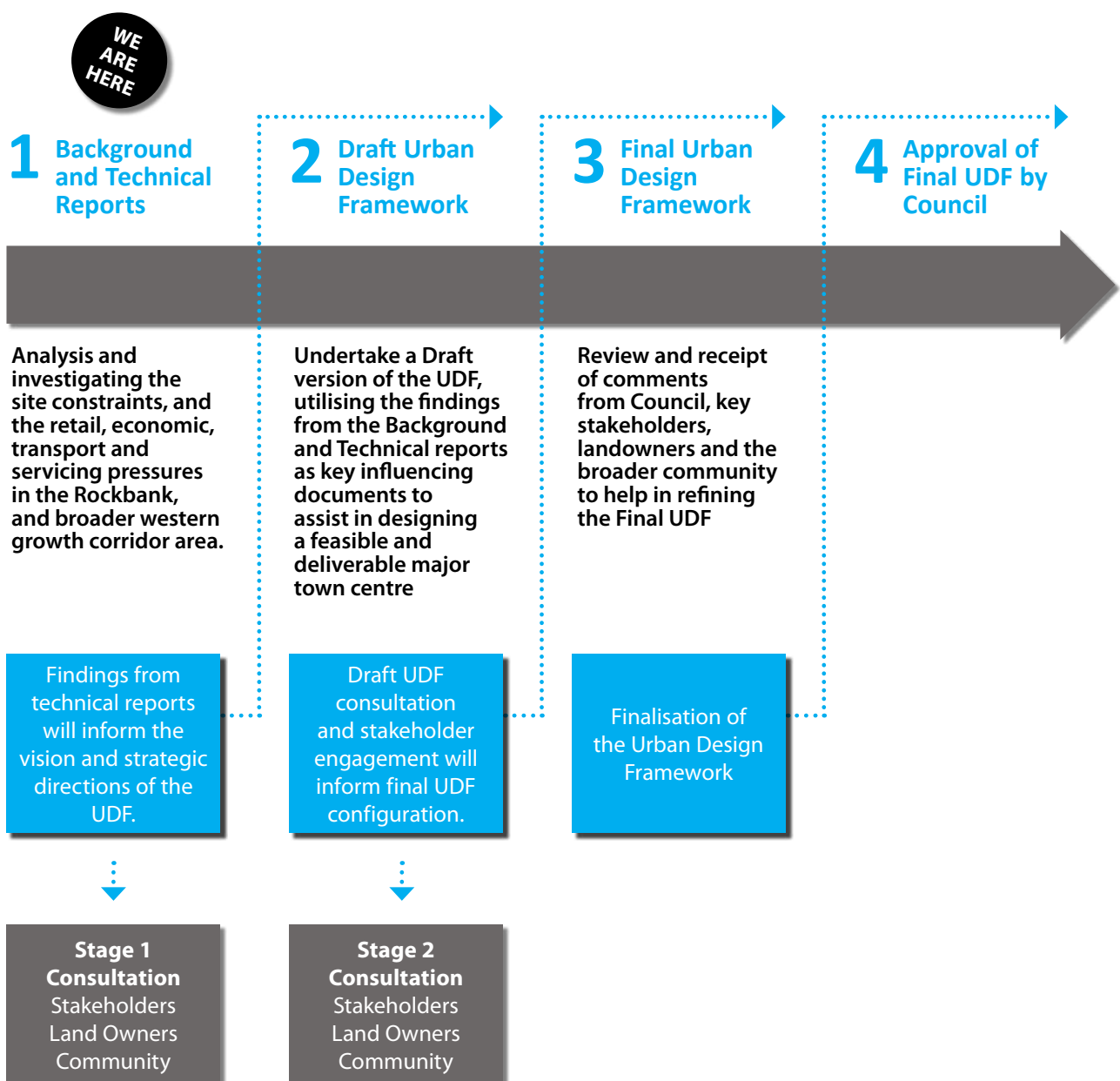
The UDF will:

- Establish a clear and integrated vision for the Major Town Centre Land;
- Guide the use and development of the area through objectives and planning and design requirements and guidelines;
- Establish an implementation program of statutory and strategic initiatives;
- Include internal and external consultation with landowners, occupiers (businesses) relevant stakeholders, Council staff, Councillors and the wider community;
- Establish a process for monitoring and review; and,
- Include a staging plan directing how the MTC can be effectively developed in a commercially feasible and community oriented manner.

A set of technical reports will accompany this document, located in Appendix 01-05.

### 1.3 Methodology and process

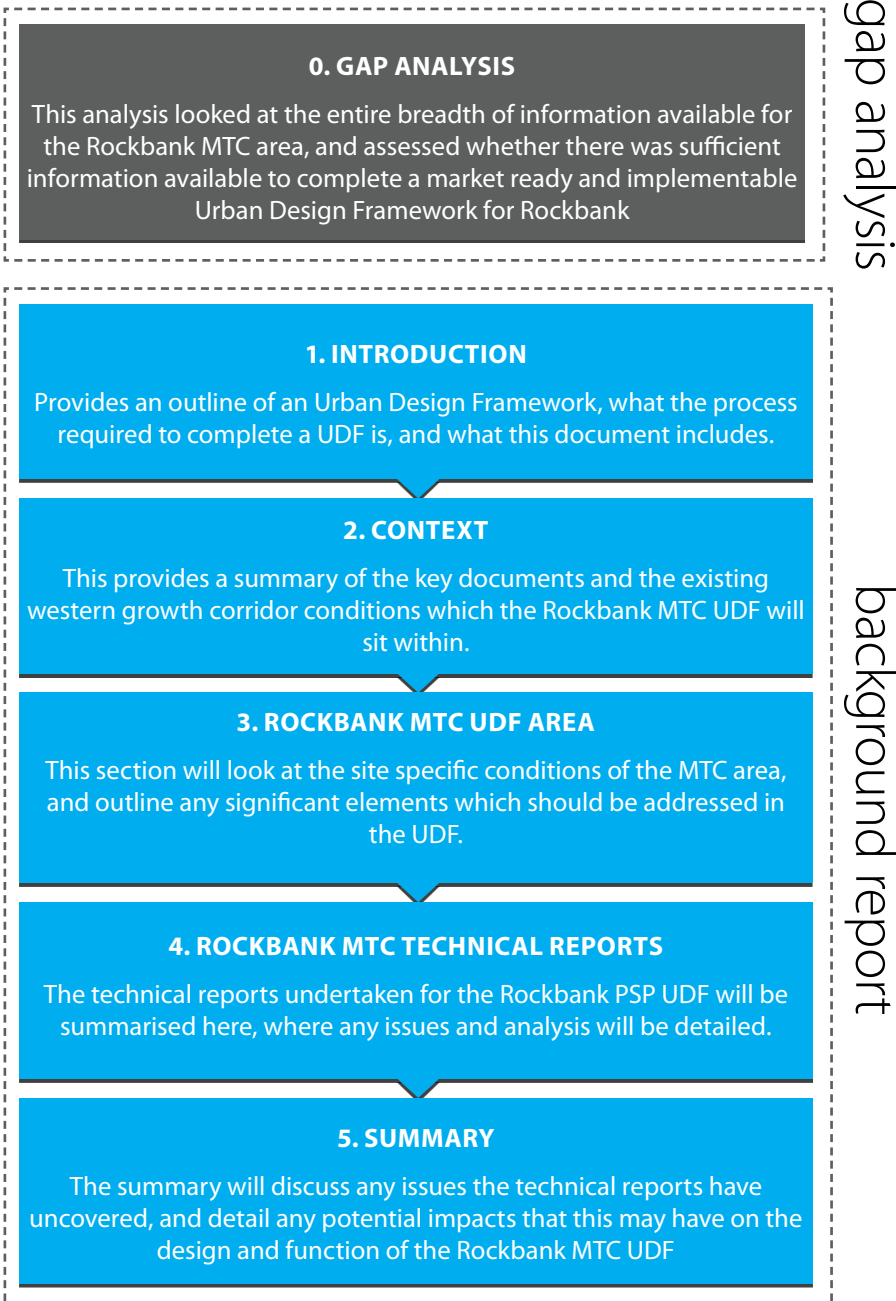
The development of the Rockbank Major Town Centre Urban Design Framework will occur throughout 2018 and 2019, and will be made up of the stages below.



## 1.4 Structure of the document

Previously a Gap Analysis was completed in order to assess the existing information available.

This report is a collation of relevant background information identified in the Gap Analysis, and forms a critical component in understanding the site prior to beginning the Urban Design Framework. The structure of the Background Report achieves this in the following format.



## 1.5 What is an Urban Design Framework?

An Urban Design Framework (UDF) is a tool used to create a set of strategic planning policies and design guidelines which inform the future development of an urban place, usually a town centre. It includes a vision for how a centre may develop, and sufficient detail to allow for testing the application of the framework.

A UDF is required for the area identified in the Rockbank PSP as the Major Town Centre. The Rockbank PSP directs the development and future land uses in the PSP area, and the UDF will expand on urban design principles illustrated and outlined in the Rockbank PSP and its appendices. The Rockbank PSP identifies the Rockbank Major Town Centre as including a vibrant mixed use centre with the retail core supported by a range of commercial, civic, educational, community, entertainment and recreational uses that generate business investment and provide local residents with local employment opportunities and easy access to a wide range of services.

The aim of a UDF is to provide guidance for local government to assess and critique development applications located within the UDF area. UDF's should aim to be flexible by identifying key principles, objectives and design guidelines, whilst not dictating the actual design of the built form.

Planning permits can not be issued within areas where a UDF is required until one had been approved by Council.

## 02 CONTEXT

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### 2.1 The Municipality

The City of Melton is located in the outer western area of Melbourne, within 19 kilometres of the Melbourne CBD. The City of Melton consists of a series of townships and communities; the larger being Caroline Springs and Melton (Caroline Springs is located 19 kilometres west of Melbourne's CBD and Melton Township is 35 kilometres west of Melbourne's CBD). The City of Melton is bounded by Moorabool Shire in the west, Macedon Ranges Shire in the north, the Cities of Hume and Brimbank in the east and Wyndham City in the south. The context map at Fig. 1 provides a high level overview of the Rockbank area.

The City of Melton is one of metropolitan Melbourne's growth areas, and is estimated to have a population of 241,000 people by 2031 with an ultimate build-out of over 400,000 people. At present, the majority of the municipality is undeveloped; however, this will change in the coming years, with large areas of land now within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

### 2.2 Rockbank PSP

The Rockbank PSP (Fig. 2), which applies to the Rockbank MTC area, also applies to over 750 hectares of land in Melbourne's Western Growth Corridor, one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. The Rockbank PSP will direct the construction of over 8,000 dwellings, four primary schools and a secondary school, community facilities, open spaces and local shopping centres as it connects in with the existing Rockbank township, the developing Thornhill Park PSP in the west, and the future Rockbank South PSP to the south.



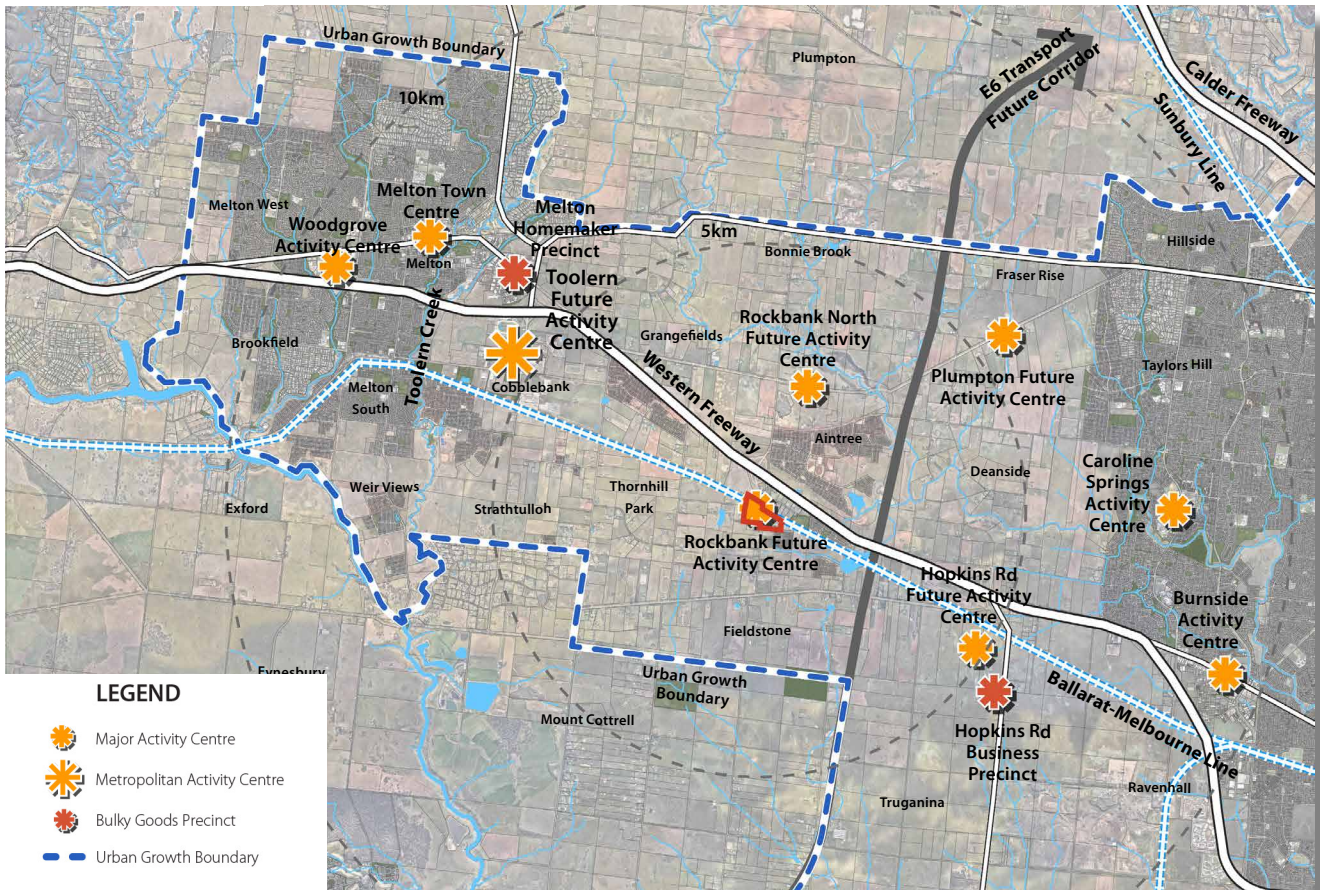


Fig. 1 Regional Context Map

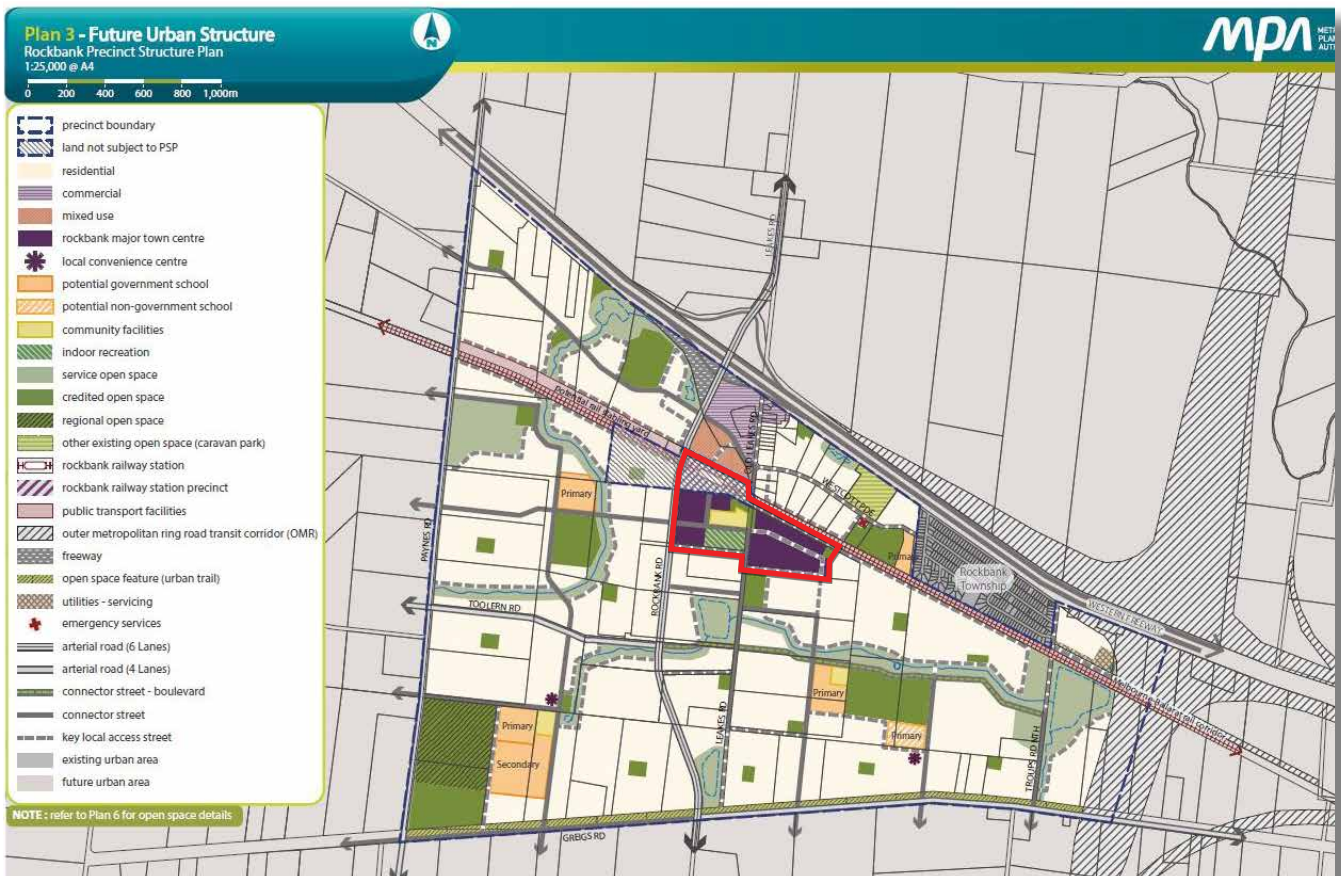


Fig. 2 Rockbank PSP



## 2.3 Project History

The Rockbank area was brought into Melbourne's Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) and zoned Urban Growth Zone as part of the 2010 review of the UGB after the release of 'Melbourne @ 5 million'.

The Rockbank PSP was prepared by the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), the City of Melton, and various other stakeholders, and was approved by the Minister for Planning on 25th October 2016, and gazetted on 17th November 2016.

Recently ground some residential development has begun within the PSP area since its gazettal in late 2016, however there is a significant amount of development pressure, and a number of planning permits issued, and subdivided land sold prior to construction beginning.

## 2.4 Existing Rockbank Township

The expansive Rockbank locality includes a distinct township, straddling the Melbourne to Ballarat Railway line, immediately south of the Western Freeway. This township contains a large portion of the approximately 650 dwellings and 1,500 people within the Rockbank suburb (ABS Census data, 2016), located north-east to the future Rockbank MTC.

This is unusual to many greenfield developments, where usually there is no existing community or infrastructure. This provides an existing community for new developments to engage with, and some existing community groups and events for potential future partnerships.

To the north of the Rockbank Major Town Centre area is an existing primary school and kinder, and the Ian Cowie recreation reserve and associated football/cricket oval, netball and basketball courts, cricket nets, skate park and playground. The local CFA, heritage listed general store and community hall also provides for an existing network of community facilities and volunteer associations which can help foster relationships in new communities alongside the existing Rockbank Township.

Rockbank is also one of the very few PSP's to be completed which has an existing regional railway station in operation. Upgrades to Rockbank Station are underway, with sections of railway to be duplicated and electrification of the railway line being planned for the future. This provides an immediate advantage to Rockbank over other greenfield sites.

Figure 3 shows the location of some images relating to Rockbank township.



Photo 01: Rockbank community hall (2001)



Photo 02: Rockbank general store (2001)



Photo 03: Rockbank Primary School



Photo 04: Serbian Orthodox Church



Photo 05: Ian Cowie Recreation Reserve



Photo 06: Recreational Activities - Skate park



Photo 07: Local Playground



Fig. 3 Images of existing facilities



## 2.5 Current State Government Policy and Key Influencing Documents

### 2.5.1 Plan Melbourne Metropolitan Planning Strategy 2017-2050

- Identifies Rockbank as a future place of local significance, given its future status as a major activity centre.
- Locates Rockbank in close proximity to large future employment bases, such as Toolern Employment and Mixed Use area, Plumpton, Rockbank North, and Mt Atkinson.
- Identifies the Ballarat rail line upgrade as funded and in the delivery stage.
- Activity centres aim to provide diverse range of jobs, activities and housing for regional catchments that are well served by public transport.
- These centres will be important for government, health, justice, education, retail and commercial services.
- Opportunities exist to partner with private sector to enable future diversification, investment and employment growth.



Fig. 4 Plan Melbourne

### 2.5.2 Rockbank Precinct Structure Plan

The Rockbank PSP has been prepared by the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) in consultation with Melton City Council, and other various government stakeholders.

This document is the long term plan for urban development in the Rockbank area, which provides guidance on future land use allocation, servicing and utilities, and the community infrastructure items required which help to deliver a new residential community.

Generally, the PSP:

- Sets out plans to guide the delivery of quality urban environments in accordance with relevant Victorian Government guidelines listed in this section
- Enables the transition of non-urban to urban land
- Sets the vision for how land should be developed and the outcomes achieved
- Outlines the projects required to ensure that future residents, visitors and workers within the area can be provided with timely access to services and transport necessary to support a quality, affordable lifestyle
- Sets out objectives, guidelines and requirements for land use and development
- Provides Government agencies, the Council, developers, investors and local communities with certainty about future development
- Addresses the requirements of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act
- The PSP indicates that the Rockbank MTC will have 30,000m<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace (without a permit), and will be supported in the centre hierarchy by two local convenience centres situated, respectively, in the south-eastern and south-western parts of the PSP

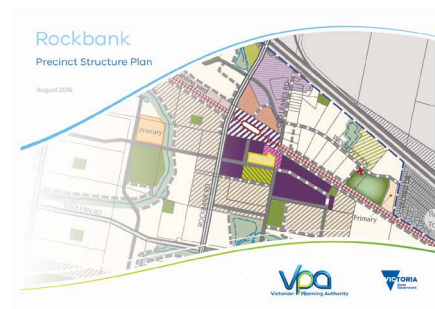


Fig. 5 Rockbank PSP

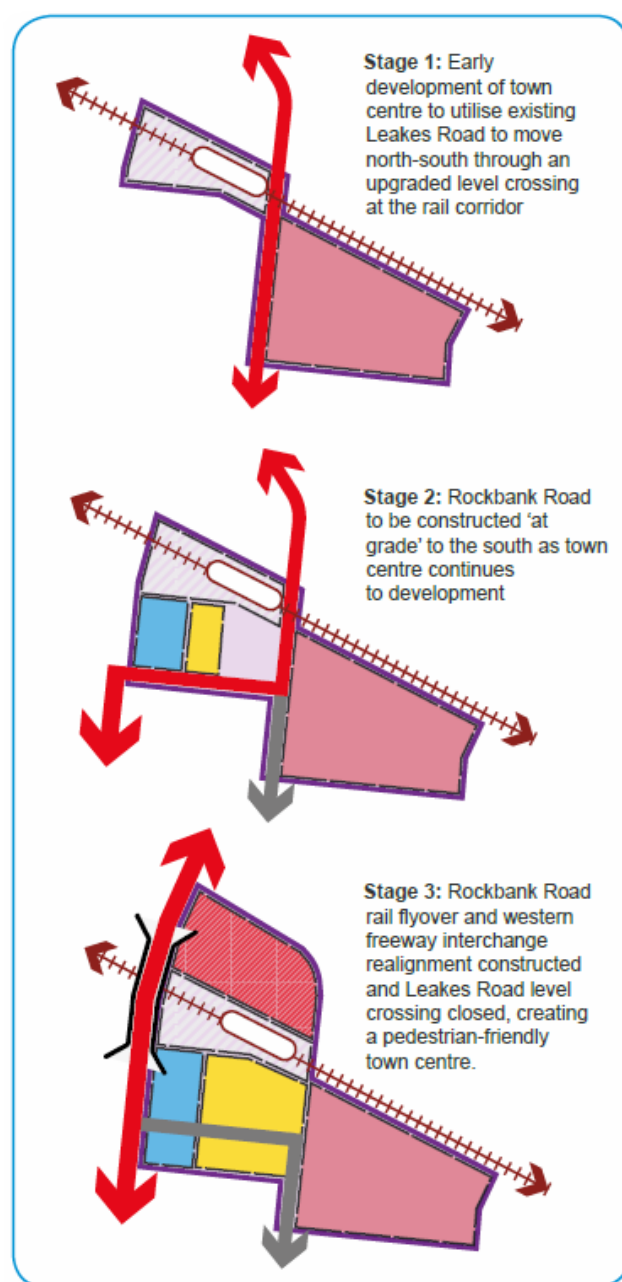
The Rockbank Future Urban Structure Plan details some of the broader land use configurations for the PSP area, while also providing information regarding to future public transport routes, and locations of open spaces and community facilities.

In addition, the Rockbank Major Town Centre (MTC) Urban Design Framework (UDF) Concept Plan provides a high level vision for the MTC, and how it may develop, with specific locations of buildings, location for parking, loading and active frontages.

Another key aspect that the PSP covers is the staging for the MTC (shown in Fig. 6), which due to the nature of the site being located adjacent a level-crossing that will ultimately be removed, there are complex staging considerations to be made. As the primary access configuration will change as the centre develops, care has to be taken to ensure that any early stages of development will still be economically and commercially viable once the primary access way has changed.

Initially Leakes Road will service the development, with initial stages of retail, commercial and community development occurring on this key road. At some point, the level crossing will be removed, and traffic will cross the railway line via Rockbank Road overpass. This will change the vehicle traffic movement away from the initial stages of the original commercial and retail sites, and locate it 400m to the west along Rockbank Road, with new retail centres located in between.

The ultimate design of the UDF will need to respond to the staged delivery of infrastructure in order to ensure that the MTC can be built in a way that is feasible for all retail and commercial parties involved.



**Fig. 6** Rockbank PSP: UDF Potential Staging

Another aspect that the PSP identifies is housing, and housing densities throughout the PSP area (Fig. 7).

Overall, an average minimum density of 16.5 dwellings per hectare is proposed, comprised of higher densities at 24 dwellings per hectare are proposed in the area surrounding the MTC, which will realise approximately 1000+ dwellings within a walkable catchment of the Rockbank Station, bus interchange and the MTC.

Within the MTC, some areas are expected to include densities of up to 30 dwellings per hectare. An important part of the discussion around housing in an urban context is the interface between public and private areas, creating a sense of place for residential character that is well located to retail and commercial areas.

Creating appropriate transitions from retail and commercial areas to medium density housing surrounding the MTC is also important in order to encourage and facilitate the early construction and delivery of higher densities in Rockbank. This allows for a diverse range of users and occupants within and surrounding the MTC from an early stage in the project.

AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT	APPROXIMATE MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREA (TOTAL)	AVERAGE MINIMUM DWELLINGS PER NET DEVELOPABLE HECTARE	LOT YIELD FOR IDENTIFIED MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREA
Rockbank Major Town Centre	Determined by urban design framework	30	Determined by urban design framework
Land surrounding Rockbank Major Town Centre	44 hectares	24	1056 dwellings
Land surrounding local convenience centre (Rockbank East Community Hub)	14 hectares	24	336 dwellings
Land surrounding local convenience centre (Rockbank South Community Hub)	15 hectares	24	360 dwellings

Fig. 7 Rockbank PSP Housing Densities

### 2.5.3 Rockbank Development Contributions Plan

The Rockbank Development Contributions Plan (Fig. 9) sets out the requirements for development proponents to make contributions toward infrastructure required to support the development of the precinct. The DCP is a separate document incorporated into the Melton Planning Scheme. The Rockbank DCP applies to the same land area as within the Rockbank PSP.

- Some of the key infrastructure items related to the Rockbank Major Town Centre include:
  - BR-02: Rockbank Road Bridge.
  - BR-05: Rockbank East Pedestrian Bridge, connecting pedestrians over the railway line to Ian Cowie Recreation Reserve.
  - BR-06: Leakes Road Level Crossing Upgrade (interim solution), and ultimate removal of the crossing and truncating Leakes Road at a later date.

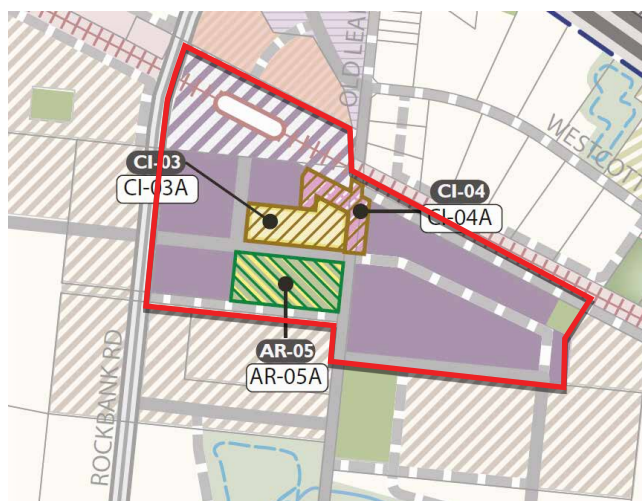


Fig. 8 Rockbank DCP Community Infrastructure Projects

- IT-01, IT-10: Construction of interim and ultimate signalised intersection at Rockbank Road and Westcott Parade (Extension).
  - IT-08: Construction of an interim and ultimate signalised T-intersection on Rockbank Road and 'RB East West Road 2'.
  - IT-09: Construction of an interim and ultimate signalised four-way intersection on Rockbank Road and 'RB East West Road 1'.
  - Some of the key community infrastructure items (Fig. 8) to be completed in relation to the Rockbank Major Town Centre include:
    - AR-05: Rockbank Recreation Reserve includes the purchase of land within the MTC and the construction of an indoor recreation centre.
    - CI-03: Rockbank Community Centre includes the purchase of land within the MTC to construct a multipurpose community centre.
    - CI-04: Station Plaza, includes the purchase of land to construct a pedestrianised town square linking the Rockbank Railway Station to the high street within the Rockbank Major Town Centre.
- CI-04 Station Plaza will be a public space, which will include part of the closed Leakes Road reserve, and interact with the station precinct area. This will be a public space linking pedestrian movement between the station and the Rockbank MTC retail area.

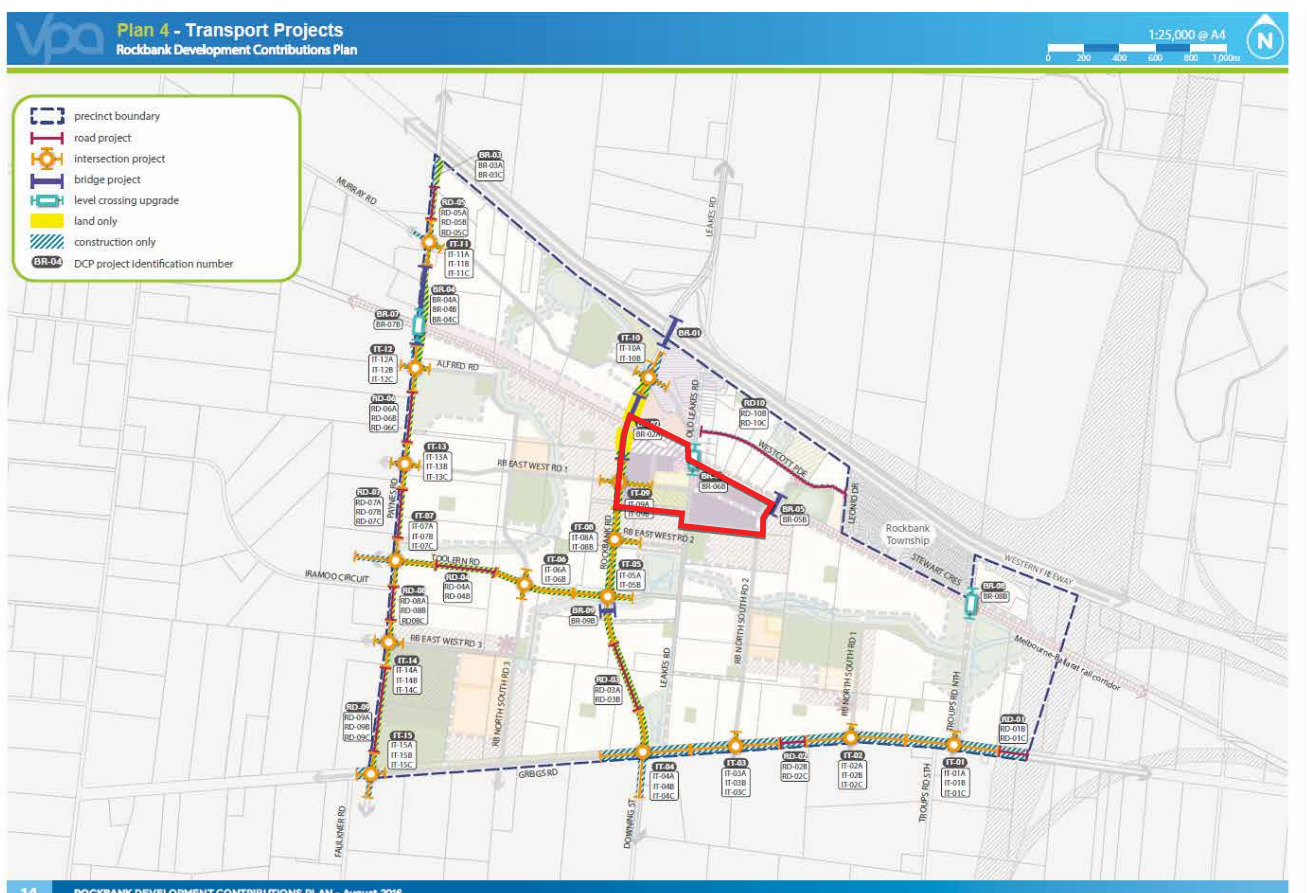


Fig. 9 Rockbank DCP Transport Projects

### 2.5.4 Current Zoning and Overlays

The land is currently zoned Urban Growth Zone Schedule 7, which refers to the applied zones based on the approved Rockbank PSP.

The PSP directs land in the Rockbank Major Town Centre location to the applied zones of either General Residential Zone 1 and Commercial Zone 1.

Planning overlays which cover the land include Heritage Overlay (HO204 Greigs Road Dry Stone Wall Precinct), Environmental Significance Overlay-Schedule 1 (ESO1 remnant woodlands, open forests and grasslands), and Development Contributions Plan Overlay Schedule 7, (DCPO7).

The specific zones and overlays are shown on the following pages at Fig 10-13.

#### Zoning:

The Urban Growth Zone Schedule 7 sets out a table of applied zones, which relate to the proposed uses as per the Rockbank PSP. They are as follows:

Land use/development (carried out or proposed) generally in accordance with the precinct structure plan applying to the land	Applied Zone
Arterial Road	Clause 36.04 - Road Zone
Commercial	Clause 34.02 - Commercial 2 Zone
Connector Street	Clause 36.04 Road Zone
Major Town Centre / Local Convenience Centre	Clause 34.01 - Commercial 1 Zone
Mixed Use	Clause 32.04 - Mixed Use Zone
Medium Density Residential	Clause 32.07 Residential Growth Zone
All Other Land	Clause 32.08 - General Residential Zone

Other zones which currently apply to the land within the Rockbank PSP include the Public Use Zone 4, Road Zone Category 1, and the Public Park and Recreation Zone.

#### Heritage Overlay (HO240):

Heritage Overlay 204, relates to the Greigs Road Dry Stone Wall Precinct, which features a number of locally significant dry stone walls constructed between 1850 and 1870.

These walls are to be retained and situated in a public reserve, or be incorporated into a subdivision design to minimise disturbance to the walls.

#### Development Contributions Plan Overlay (DCP07):

This overlay relates to the Rockbank Development Contributions Plan, of which a development infrastructure levy is payable by all development per net developable hectare as set out in the Rockbank Development Contributions Plan.

#### Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1):

The Environmental significance overlay aims to protect and conserve remnant native woodlands, open forests, and associated under storey and discourage inappropriate use and development. The ESO associated with this land is located within the railway reserve, and not developable land which the proposed UDF can affect.

#### Development Contributions Plan Overlay Schedule 7 (DCPO7):

The Development Contributions Plan Overlay directs land affected by the DCPO to implement the projects set out in the Rockbank DCP, including works, services and facilities to be funded through the plan, including the staging of the provision of those works, services and facilities.



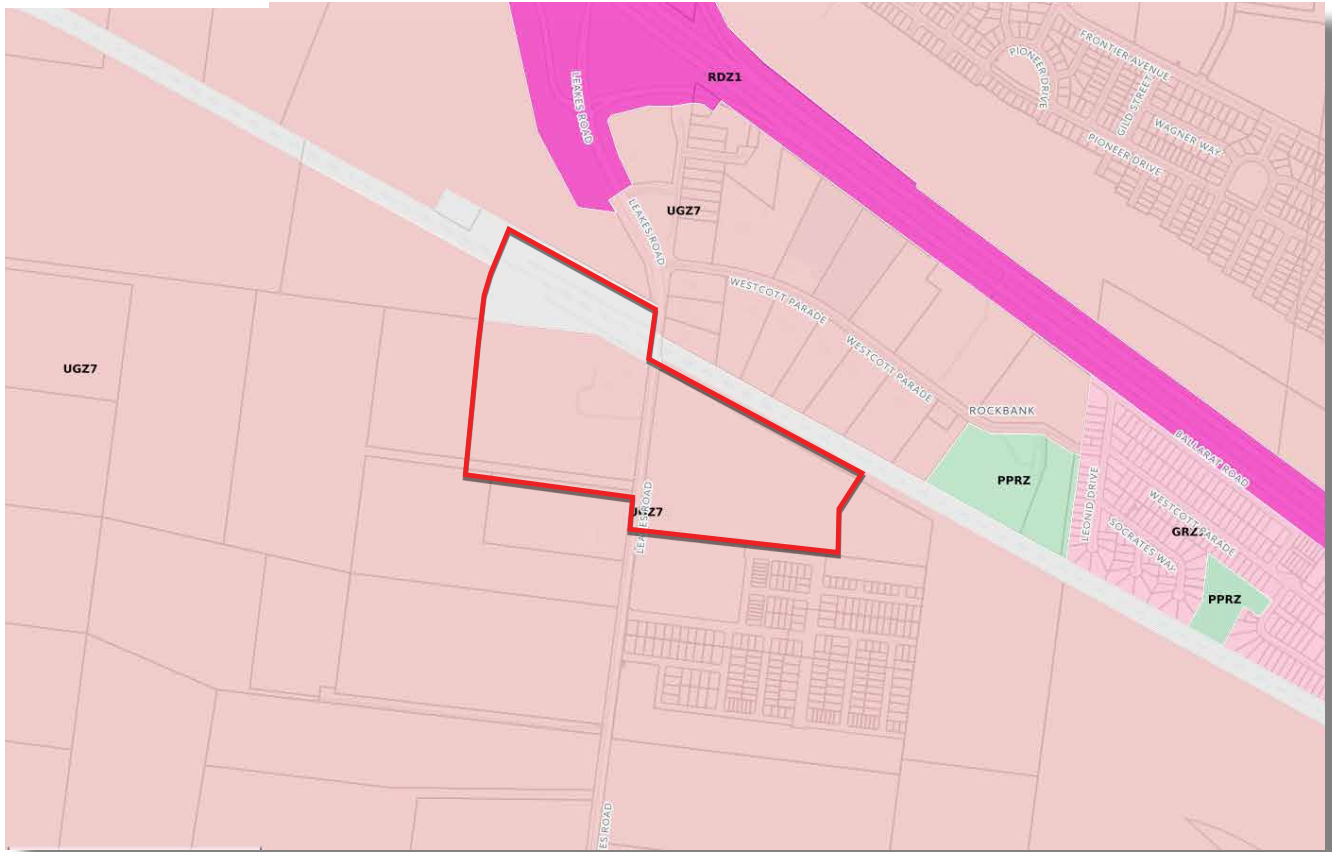


Fig. 10 Current Zoning Plan

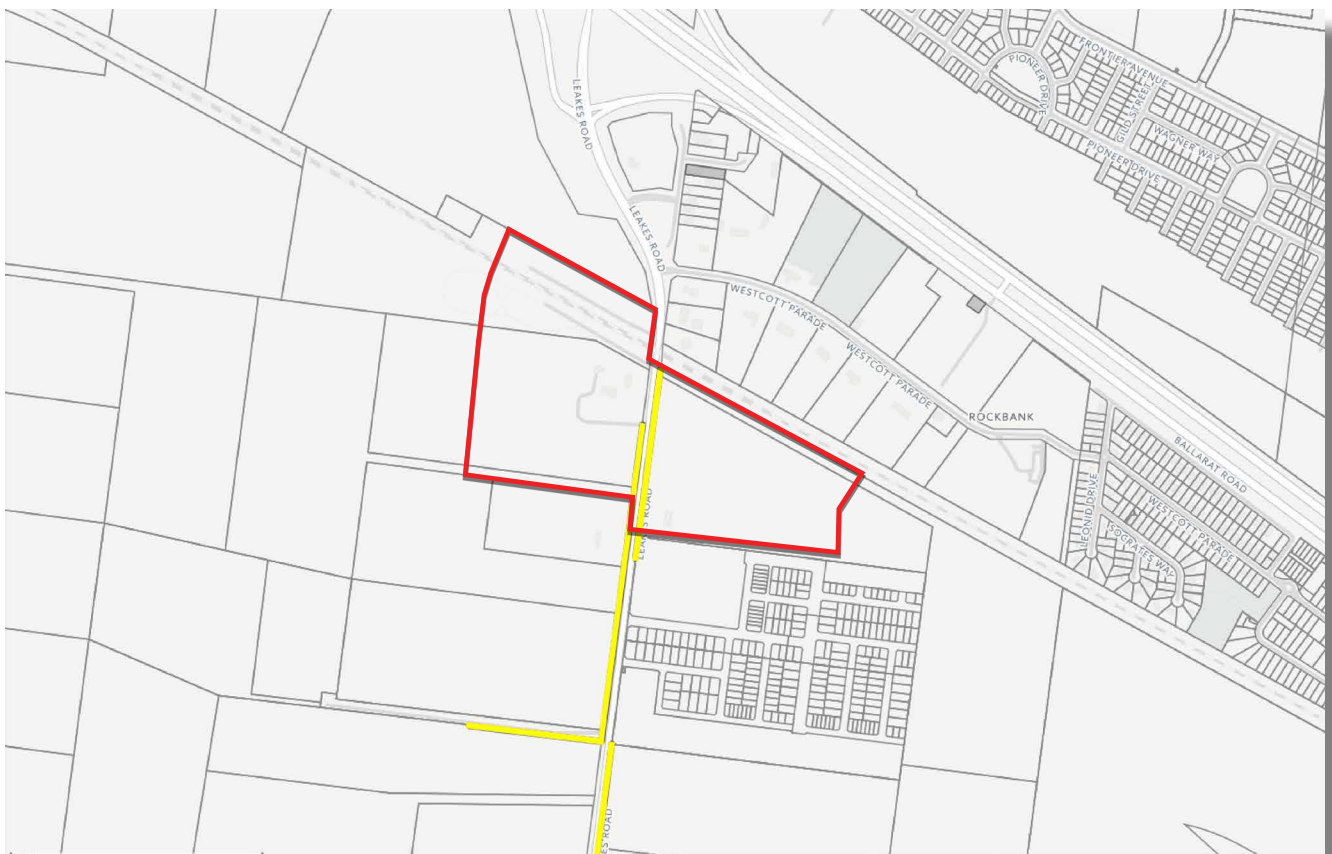


Fig. 11 Heritage Overlay 204 (Dry Stone Walls)



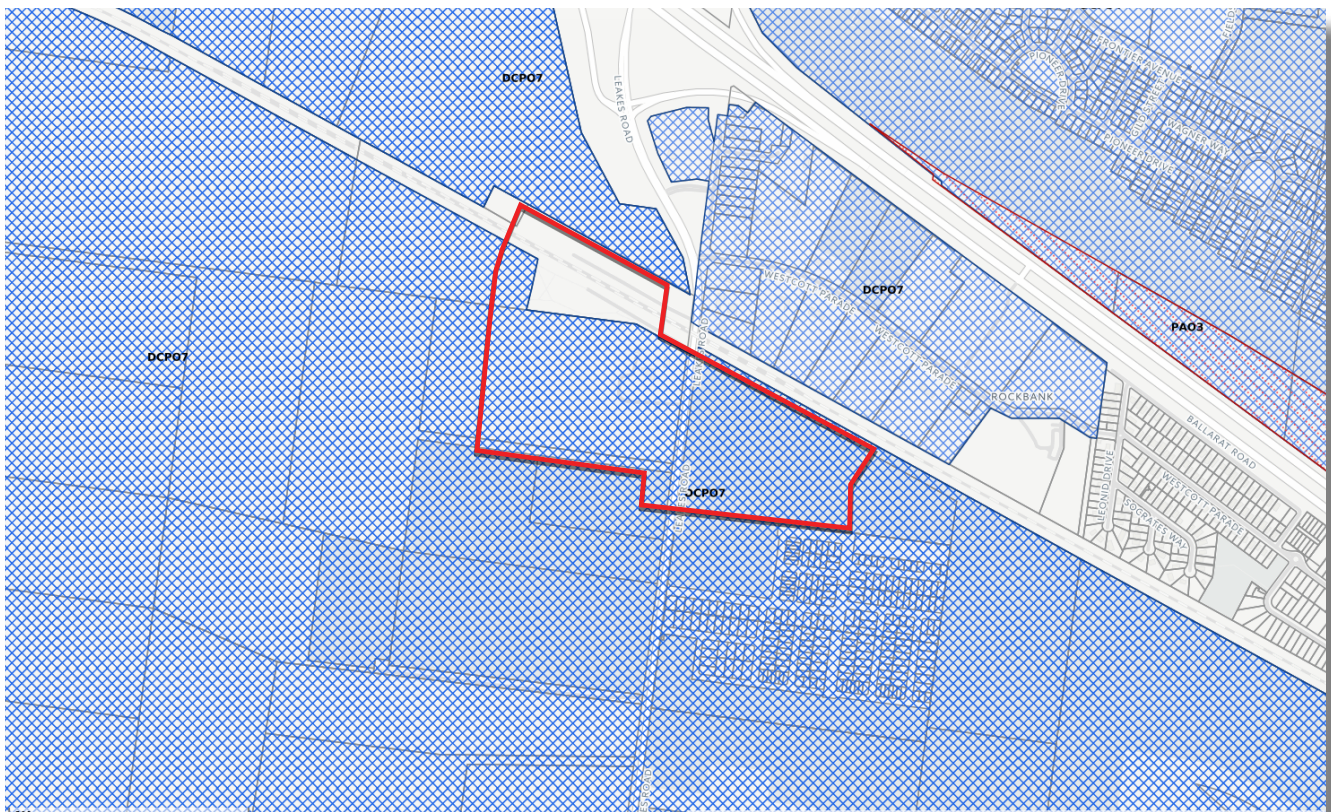


Fig. 12 Development Contributions Plan Overlay, Schedule 07

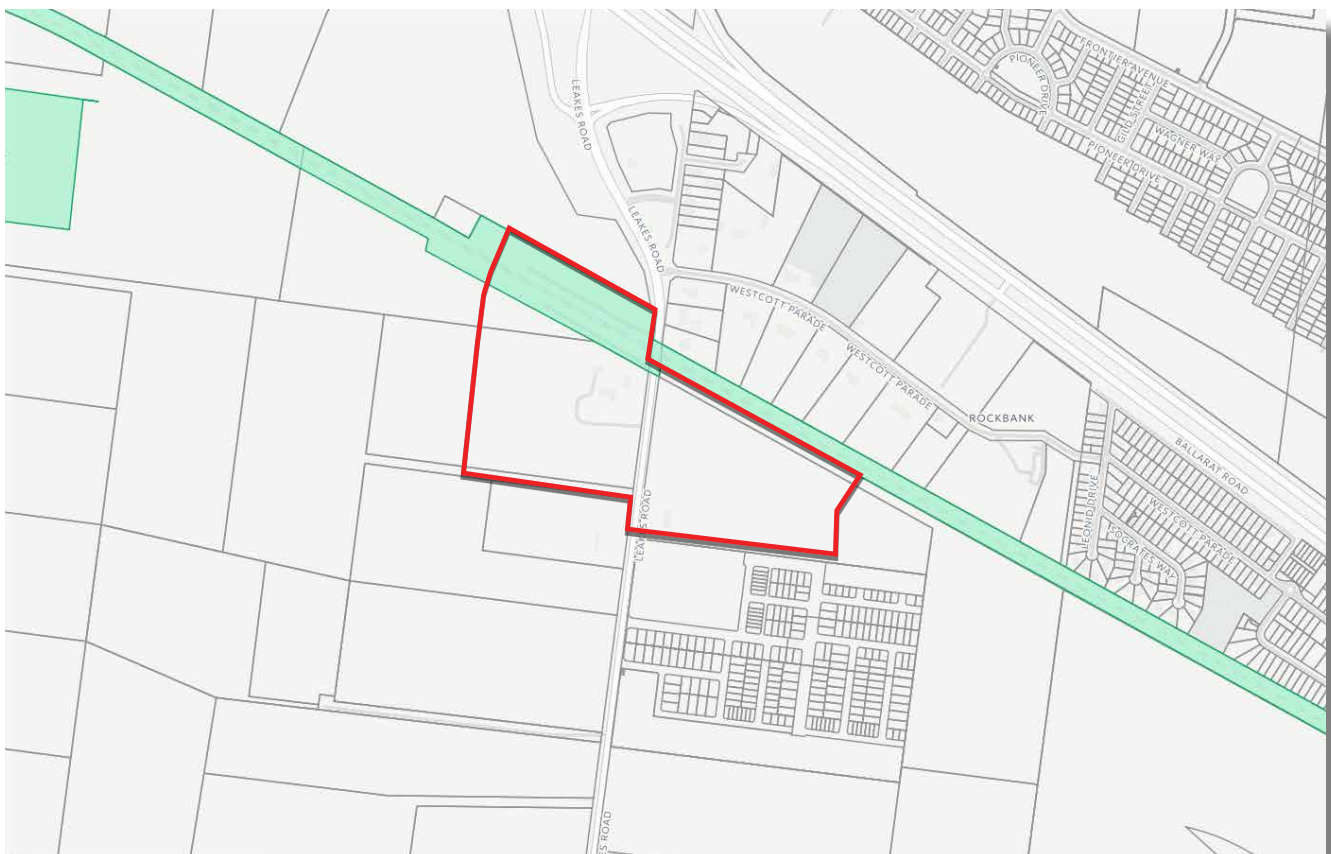


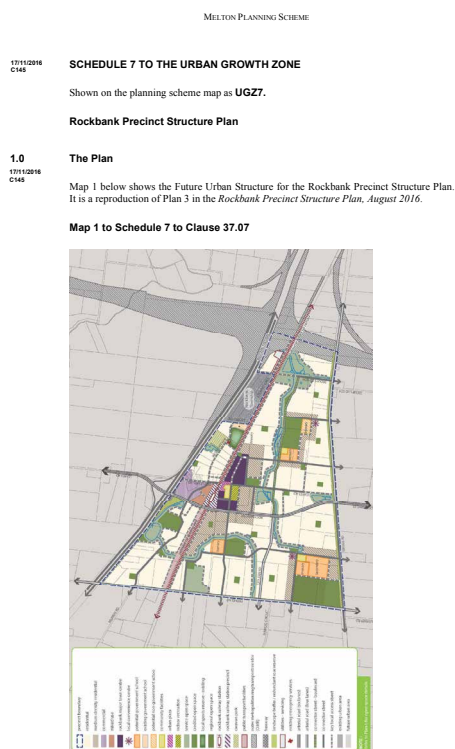
Fig. 13 Environmental Significance Overlay Plan, Schedule 01

### 2.5.5 Urban Growth Zone Schedule 7 in the Melton Planning Scheme

- UGZ Schedule 7 specifies that all land marked as 'Major Town Centre' in the Rockbank PSP will assume the applied Commercial 1 Zone.
- Residential and open spaces will assume the applied General Residential Zone 1.
- Except with the consent of the Responsible Authority, and the VPA, a permit must not be granted to subdivide land or carry out works within the Rockbank Major Town Centre until a UDF has been prepared to the satisfaction of the responsible authority and the VPA.
- A UDF must be generally in accordance with the Rockbank PSP.
- Any application for development within the Rockbank Major Town Centre must be consistent with any UDF approved under this Schedule.

### 2.5.6 Planning Practice Note 17: Urban Design Frameworks (DELWP, July 2015)

- PPN17 identifies that a UDF should:
  - Involve the generation of realistic design concepts based on consultation, research and analysis.
  - Stakeholder and community consultation is essential in order to obtain broad support of the strategic vision of the plan.
  - Be a vehicle to help control the overall direction of a particular place.
  - Provide flexibility in it's strategic vision, by identifying key principles and objectives rather than finite solutions which may be superseded.
  - Contain enough detail to allow for rigorous testing regarding economic and functional viability.
  - Be easy to assess a development application against, with clear controls for council officers to be able to cross check and critique a planning application.
  - Set out an implementation strategy that involves short, medium and long-term time frames for objectives.



### 2.5.7 PTV Network Development Plan

PTV have prepared the Network Development Plan (Fig.15), a 20 year, four stage plan in order to implement a suite of upgrades to cater for the unprecedented growth rate in public transport patronage.

By 2031, Victoria is expecting to see one billion public transport trips per year. On trains alone, average weekday boardings are expected to reach 1.7 millions trips per day by 2031, more than double current rates. Planned upgrades as per the PTV Network Development Plan include increasing train capacity, level crossing removals, and up to 300 kilometres of existing non-metropolitan track will be electrified to bring metropolitan services to growth areas at and beyond Melbourne's fringe such as Melton, Geelong and Wallan.

**Fig. 14** Urban Growth Zone Schedule 7 in the Melton Planning Scheme



Stage Two of the plan identifies a number of key infrastructure projects, which includes the duplication of the railway line from Deer Park to Melton. This will improve peak capacity from Melton and Ballarat, improve off-peak services on the Ballarat and Bendigo corridors, and improve efficiency, capacity, reliability and travel times on the Geelong line.

In addition to duplicating the Melton railway line, implementing high capacity trains, and increasing frequency of other trains in the northern corridor, overcrowding is expected to occur on the Melton line in the mid 2020's.

Stage Three also includes projects that will improve public transport options in Rockbank, through the electrification of the railway line from Sunshine to Melton. This will allow metropolitan-class trains to reach Melton, and improve efficiency, capacity and reliability on the railway line through to Melton. Trains will also be able to connect from Melton through to Dandenong through the new Melbourne Metro tunnel.

This will assist in increasing train frequency from 2 services per peak hour (in 2012) through to 6 services per peak hour by 2026, and 1 service per hour in off peak (2012) through to 6 services per hour in off peak in 2038.



Fig. 15 Network Development Plan - PTV

### 2.5.8 Moving Melton: Melton Integrated Transport Strategy 2015

The Strategy provides the State Government and Council with short, medium and long term actions to improve integration for all modes of transport including walking, cycling, buses, trains, cars, and freight.

Our vision: a sustainable integrated transport network to meet the needs of the city now and in the future.

Melton City Council will work with the community, developers and other levels of government to make improvements to the transport system and seek to achieve this vision. The principles of Moving Melton to deliver on the vision are as follows:

- Improved, resilient and sustainable mode choices.
- Easy to use, safe, reliable and frequent transport network and facilities.
- Connected transport network – Connecting the communities of the City of Melton to each other and beyond.
- A transport system to develop City of Melton as a centre for employment, services and recreation to provide social and economic opportunities.

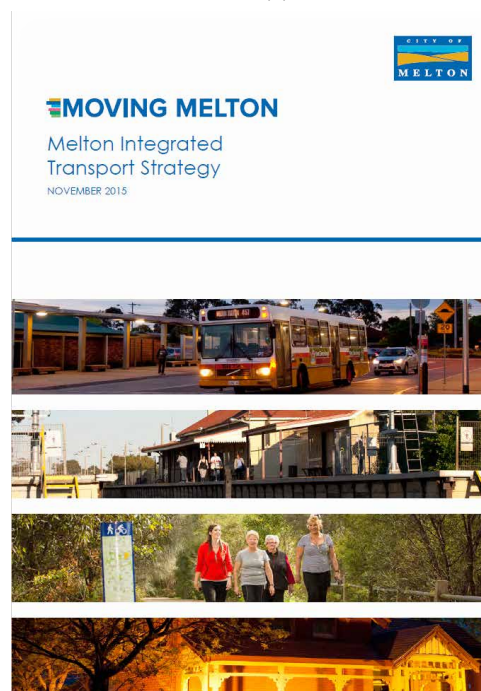


Fig. 16 Melton Integrated Transport Strategy

## 2.6 Current Local Government Policy and Key Influencing Documents

### 2.6.1 City of Melton Retail and Activity Centres Strategy 2014

The strategy aims to provide new communities with effective, equitable and sustainable services and opportunities for employment, with a target of one job per household - this equates to 140,000 new jobs required to satisfy this with emphasis for growth on activity centres.

- Principles include:
  - Equity of access to jobs and services,
  - Improving sustainability of urban development,
  - Improving local employment opportunities,
  - Providing community focal points,
  - Encouraging viability of services, and improving quality of service.
- The strategy proposes a network of centres including:
  - Neighbourhood centres,
  - Activity centres,
  - A metropolitan activity centre, and
  - Local centres.

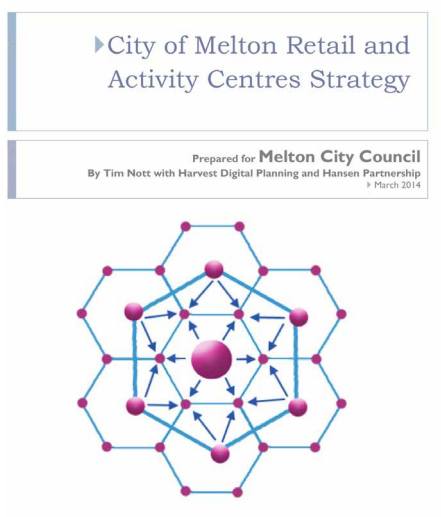


Fig. 17 City of Melton Retail and Activity Centres Strategy 2014

### 2.6.2 City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021

The Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021 (Fig. 17) addresses all aspects of post-contact heritage within the City of Melton, focusing on Council's role and obligations to respect, protect and preserve these important heritage assets which are important to the broader community. This Strategy builds upon the 2013-2017 Heritage Strategy by reviewing and updating where appropriate, and acknowledging the successes to date and areas for improvement through community consultation.

The Strategy uses four themes to direct the way we understand protect and know our heritage, and ways it can be supported. These four themes are, Knowing, Protecting and Managing, Supporting, and Communicating and Promoting. Goals, objectives and implementable actions address each theme to assist in understanding its purpose, and providing a clear way forward for further protection of the City's heritage assets.

The Heritage Strategy 2017-2021 will be reviewed in 2020-2021 and a new Heritage Strategy will be prepared.

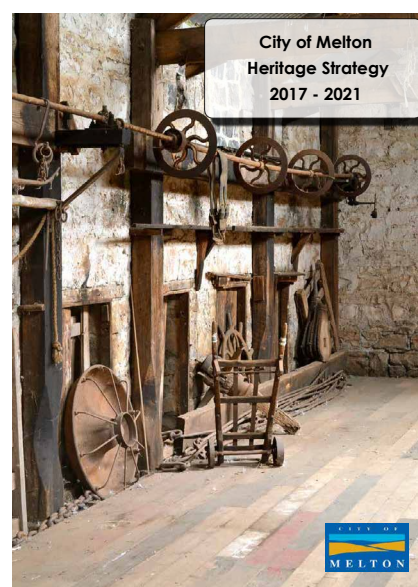


Fig. 18 City of Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021

## 2.7 Summary of Key Influences

The key document which influences the development of the Rockbank Major Town Centre Urban Design Framework is the Rockbank PSP.

The supporting context provided in the PSP allows for a degree of certainty around the periphery of the UDF area, allowing for some comfort in the network of supporting streets and land uses.

The PSP also outlines a number of key social, community, and transport infrastructure pieces which also assist in providing the context required for the UDF.

The concept Urban Design Framework in the Rockbank PSP provides a level of detail surrounding the development of the UDF that allows an adequate response to be prepared, and to begin the discussion regarding land use issues, and anchor retail configuration.

The Rockbank DCP also outlines the critical pieces of road infrastructure required to connect Rockbank to the broader community. In addition, it also outlines the required community infrastructure and social spaces which will provide a sense of place and community in the detailed phases of this project.

Other influencing documents include:

- The Melton Retail and Activity Centre Strategy, which encourages strategic thinking in town centres, local job creation, and advocates for greater localised community infrastructure.
- The Urban Growth Zone Schedule 7, which directs what can be achieved within the Major Town Centre, however this is not in conflict with what would typically be considered within a Town Centre of this scale.
- Planning Practice Note 17: Urban Design Frameworks (DELWP, July 2015) also provide structural guidance throughout the process, and the
- The Melton Heritage Strategy 2017-2021 provides guidance on the retention and protection of dry stone walls located within the Rockbank MTC, and will inform management strategies for these heritage elements.

## 2.8 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is a useful tool to assist in understanding the scale and complexity of a site. Understanding how these best practice trends have been developing can be useful when critiquing and posing potential cutting edge ideas for new areas.

Summaries of some trends are located below, with further investigations located in Appendixes 4 and 5.

### 2.8.1 Town Centre Trends

Street-based town centres have become favourable as opposed to internal or 'mall' style centres which were once the popular form of retail and shopping formats. This will be taken into account when designing the Rockbank UDF, noting that the PSP Concept UDF was designed as a main street based retail centre.

One way that smaller 'mini-major' tenants are gaining a foothold in larger centres is by aggregating together with other non-anchor tenants to in effect form one, 'core' tenant, as opposed to a traditional individual anchor (such as a supermarket or discount department store - DDS). This provides centres with greater market reach, larger demographic catchment and foot traffic for non-DDS and non-supermarket retail experiences due to the diversity of retail destinations. These tenants will complement one another in a way that provides for additional levels of activation, and disengages the reliance on activity from a single store. As Rockbank has a relatively large retail offering, there is the possibility that some form of mini-major aggregation could occur to form a typical anchor tenant role in the MTC.

The pedestrian flow and the reduction or minimisation of major barriers between key destinations in a town centre is critical to its success. This is emphasised and complemented by a stronger emphasis on the quality of the public realm which needs to offer a variety of passive and active spaces at differing scales. Provision also needs to be made for outdoor spaces that are accessible for all, and do not need to be activated through a transaction. This can be a particular consideration when designing the urban plaza located between the Rockbank Railway Station and the MTC.

When considering food and beverage outlets in retail centres, it is important to acknowledge the shift towards a higher quality food and hospitality culture within retail strips and shopping centres and an increase in food based retail exposure. This can change the location of food and restaurants within a centre, and what types of retail offering they should be co-located with. Food and hospitality can now generate their own destinational foot-traffic. This new food and experience culture must permeate throughout the whole centre rather than having highly social food based places in one quadrant and the retailing component in another, the integration of the two is one of the new trends in the retail and hospitality offering.

Providing for localised employment spaces is also occurring in urban centres, as a way of providing diversity of work places. It is also predicted that more localised employment will further extend the activation times and types of activities. There is almost an integration of town centres and contemporary business parks in a way that will extend retail opening times, and provide for longer levels of activation, particularly in close proximity to the train station. This can be investigated in the co-location of the commercial and retail uses planned for the Rockbank MTC.

As town centre design is constantly evolving, there should be contingencies and future proofed options for dramatic changes in retail delivery experience. In addition, transport modes may also impact how a centre operates. The evolution of autonomous vehicles may change the current car parking ratios required for shopping centres, increases in funding for public transport and increases in localised residential density in walkable catchment may further change the existing car parking provisions and potentially lower the car parking ratios.

## 2.8.2 Transport Oriented Development

Some local and international best practice transport oriented developments have been investigated to find how transport and connectivity surrounding a transport hub operates, and what the opportunities are for land use planning, best practice design, and opportunities for public open space. The current trends include multi-modal transport hubs, bus exchange, bike share, dedicated off-road or separated bicycle paths, connected retail providers (where to buy milk and bread on the walk home) and

applying CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) best practice principles.

CPTED includes designing the urban environment for public safety and to reduce the incidences and fear of crime. This includes incorporating passive surveillance into any design, with active frontage and 'eyes on the street' through elevated views of an area allowing people on the ground to feel safe. Other CPTED principles include delineating public and private spaces clearly, and providing clear signage and access points in order to define areas of exclusion or ones for public use.

Appendix 4 covers the following case studies:

- Subi Centro, Perth
- Moe, Victoria
- New Lynn, Auckland
- Plaza Roberto Maestas, Seattle
- Luchtsingel Pedestrian Bridge, Rotterdam

## 2.8.3 Sustainability

The Rockbank urban Design Framework should embed sustainability into the design rather than it just being an 'add-on'. Many recent developments are showcasing their sustainability credentials, and the trend in sustainability now is that of going beyond 'green' design and moving towards a form of regenerative design where the goal is to actually improve the existing environment. This can take the form of new social and environmental practices, reduced energy uses/energy harvesting, recycling of grey and black water for irrigation purposes and crop production.

Appendix 5 covers the following case studies:

- Alkimos Beach, WA
- Aura, QLD
- Bowden, SA
- Ecco Ripley, QLD
- Barangaroo South, NSW

In addition, a compilation of easily implementable Water Sensitive Urban Design practices has been included as part of a suite of practical solutions to assist in developing a sustainable town centre.

## 03 ROCKBANK MAJOR TOWN CENTRE UDF

### 3.1 Current Land Use and Ownership

Current land use within the Rockbank Major Town Centre area (Fig. 18) is predominantly agricultural without any intensive farming practices in operation.

There are six landowners in the area covered by the Major Town Centre, comprising of public and private entities.

The land includes the Serbian Orthodox Church, which includes a community hub with some broader community engagement functions.

The Serbian Orthodox Church is going to be retained, and is being incorporated into the final UDF.

#### Rockbank MTC land take and Ownership:

- Property 64: 4.669ha
- Property 68: 0.713ha
- Property 69: 9.866ha
- Property 70: 0.259ha
- Property 92: 10.441ha
- Property 94: 1.019ha
- Leakes Road Reserve: 0.771ha

**Total Area: 36.739ha**

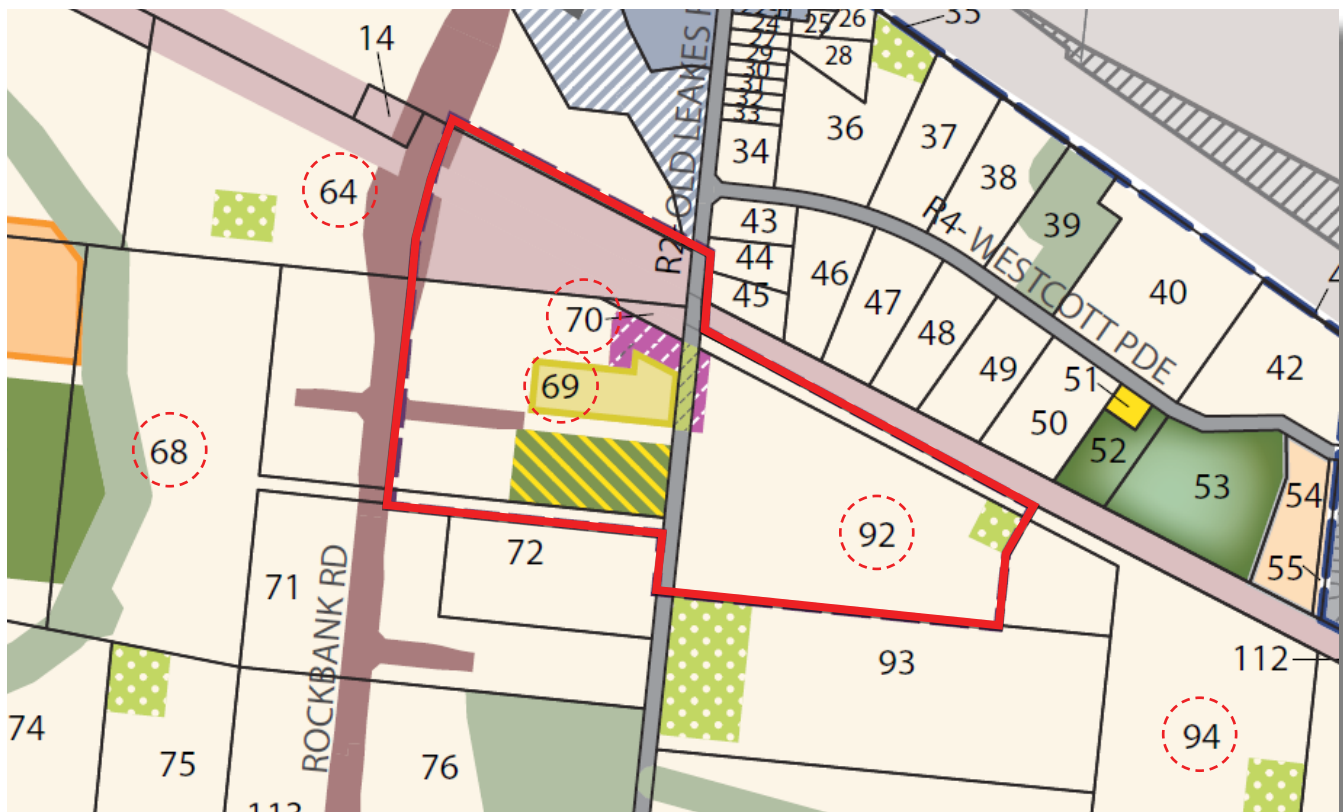


Fig. 19 Land Ownership Plan



## 3.2 Surrounding Plans

### 3.2.1 Westcott Parade Precinct

North of the railway line, east of Old Leakes Road, and west of the existing Rockbank Township, the Westcott Parade Precinct (Fig. 19) provides guidance for development of existing larger lots into conventional density residential development. It also guides future interfaces and landscaping requirements, along with future drainage and road infrastructure upgrades. Westcott Parade will connect existing and future residents through to the Rockbank MTC.

The Westcott Parade Precinct is subject to a future UDF.

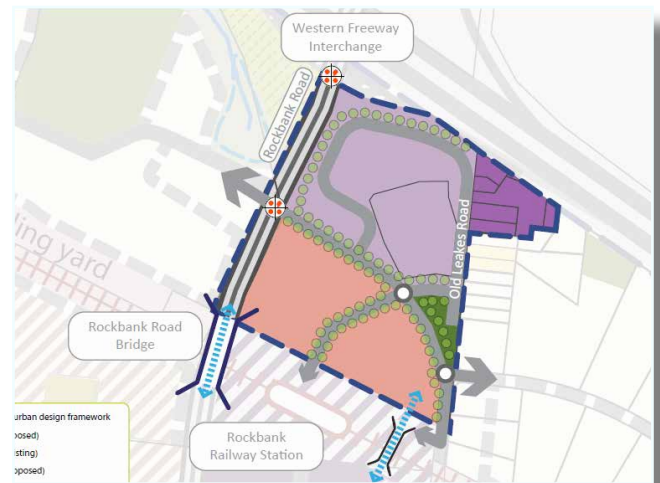


**Fig. 20** Westcott Parade Precinct UDF

### 3.2.2 Mixed Use Precinct

The Mixed Use Precinct (Fig. 20) is immediately north of the Rockbank Railway Station, bound by the Westcott Parade precinct, and the future Rockbank Road overpass to the west. The precinct incorporates existing commercial uses and proposes additional commercial land and future mixed use opportunities in close proximity to the Western Freeway interchange. The precinct also provides direct connectivity to the train station and platforms, and the proposed pedestrian overpass to the Major Town Centre.

The Mixed Use Precinct is subject to a future UDF.



**Fig. 21** Mixed Use Precinct UDF

### 3.3 Physical Environment

#### 3.3.1 Heritage

The Rockbank area is contested by three parties, The Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, the Boon Wurrung Foundation Ltd and the Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Compensation Cultural Heritage Council. Therefore, there is currently no Registered Aboriginal Party that covers the UDF area.

The Rockbank PSP indicates that there are no highly significant Aboriginal cultural heritage sites located in Rockbank, however localised artefact scatters may occur across the land.

Since European settlement, the land has been used for agricultural purposes, and a small scale semi-rural settlement.

A significant number of dry stone walls (covered by HO240) are evident across the site, representing early European settlement, which will be retained in any new development, and integrated into the material palette of the Major Town Centre.

Heritage buildings, such as the Rockbank General Store, and the Rockbank Community Building, lie to the north of the Melbourne to Ballarat railway line, and are located outside of the Major Town Centre precinct.

No other identified heritage constraints apply to the land.

#### 3.3.2 Topography and Drainage

The expansive area of the Volcanic Plains extends across most of Melton, with distinctively flat and open topography punctuated by volcanic hills and cones, and crossed by dry stone walls, shelter belts and waterways. The landscape features extensive grasslands and cleared agricultural paddocks.

The Major Town Centre location shows very little topographic change (Fig. 21), with seasonal dams capturing a small portion of water run off. The small number of drainage lines running through the Rockbank PSP are located south of the Major Town Centre. The Kororoit Creek is the closest major waterway, located north of the Western Freeway (Fig. 22).

#### 3.3.3 Interfaces

The site has a number of boundaries and interfaces which need to be addressed through the design process of the MTC including the surrounding future residential land.

The existing railway line provides great access into the site, while also creating a physical barrier limiting north-south movements through the site. The noise associated with the railway line and associated station will need to be considered when allocating areas for sensitive uses, such as residential development and any medical or community facilities.

Across the railway line there is an existing low density residential precinct, which may be negatively affected by the increase in traffic and congestion generated by a new town centre. This existing low density residential area is covered by the Westcott Parade Precinct Urban Design Framework, which will assist in facilitating appropriately designed residential development.

Interfaces are discussed further in section 3.4 Site Analysis and 3.5 Opportunities and Constraints.



Fig. 22 Topography Plan

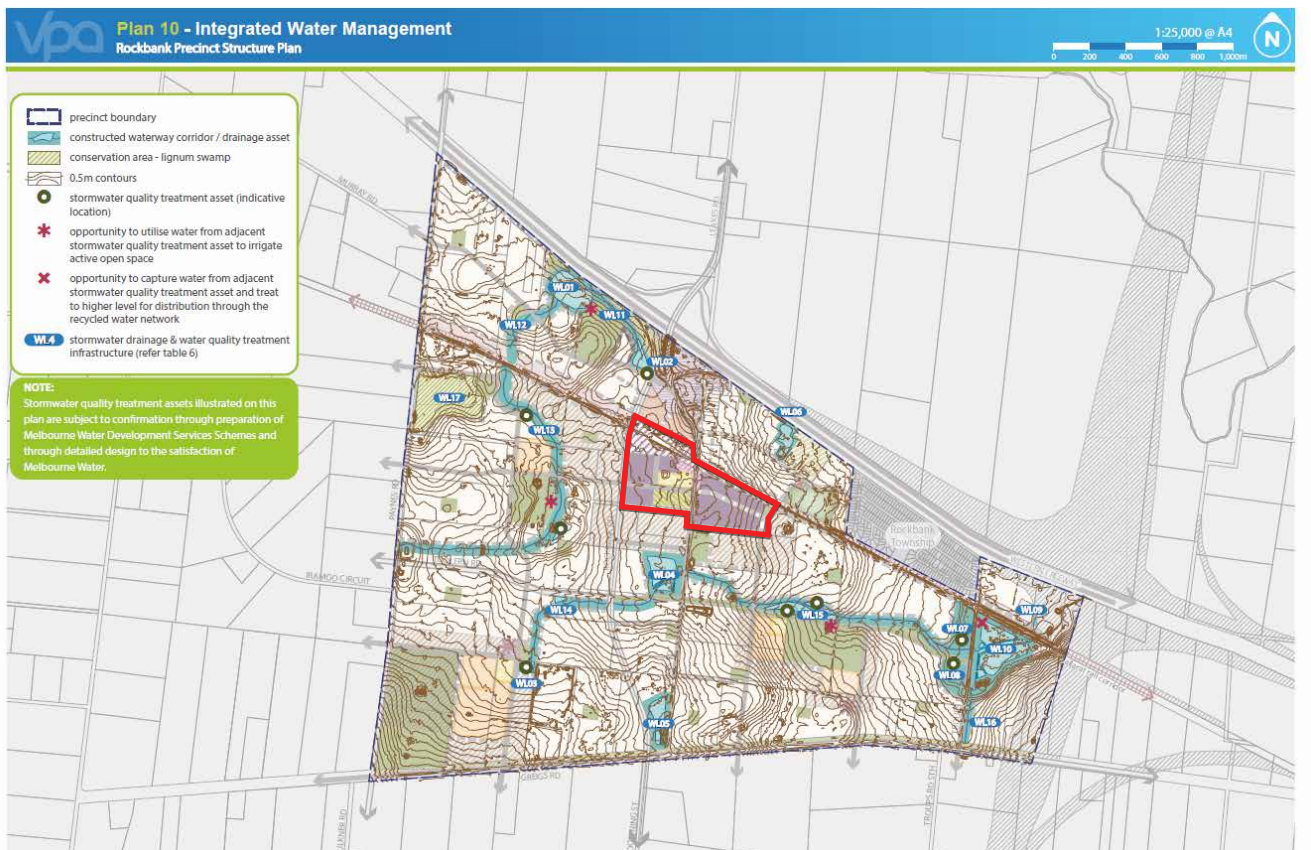


Fig. 23 Rockbank PSP Integrated Water Management Plan



### 3.3.4 Flora and Fauna

#### Flora

Due to long term grazing and pastoral activities, most indigenous vegetation has been significantly degraded, with much of the study area covered with Plains Grassland. The Rockbank Major Town Centre area does not include any native vegetation that is required to be retained. As such, the Rockbank PSP area has been assessed as containing low levels of biodiversity significance due to the highly modified nature of the site. There are opportunities to increase the ecological values of the site through the planting of indigenous grasses and tree species, as well as providing habitat to local fauna.

There are ten recorded remnant trees across the Rockbank PSP area, with only a few required to be retained, and none of them culturally significant scar trees (Fig. 23).

#### Fauna

The 2013 Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) is intended to address issues of national environmental significance protected under Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC), and matters of state significance. As part of the BCS, three species specific Sub Regional Strategies were prepared, two of which relate to the Rockbank PSP area, being the Growling Grass Frog, and the Golden Sun Moth.

The biodiversity assessment as part of the PSP recorded one state significant fauna species in the area, the Eastern Great Egret.

The Rockbank PSP precinct provides low quality habitat for the Golden Sun Moth, Striped Legless Lizard, and the Growling Grass Frog.

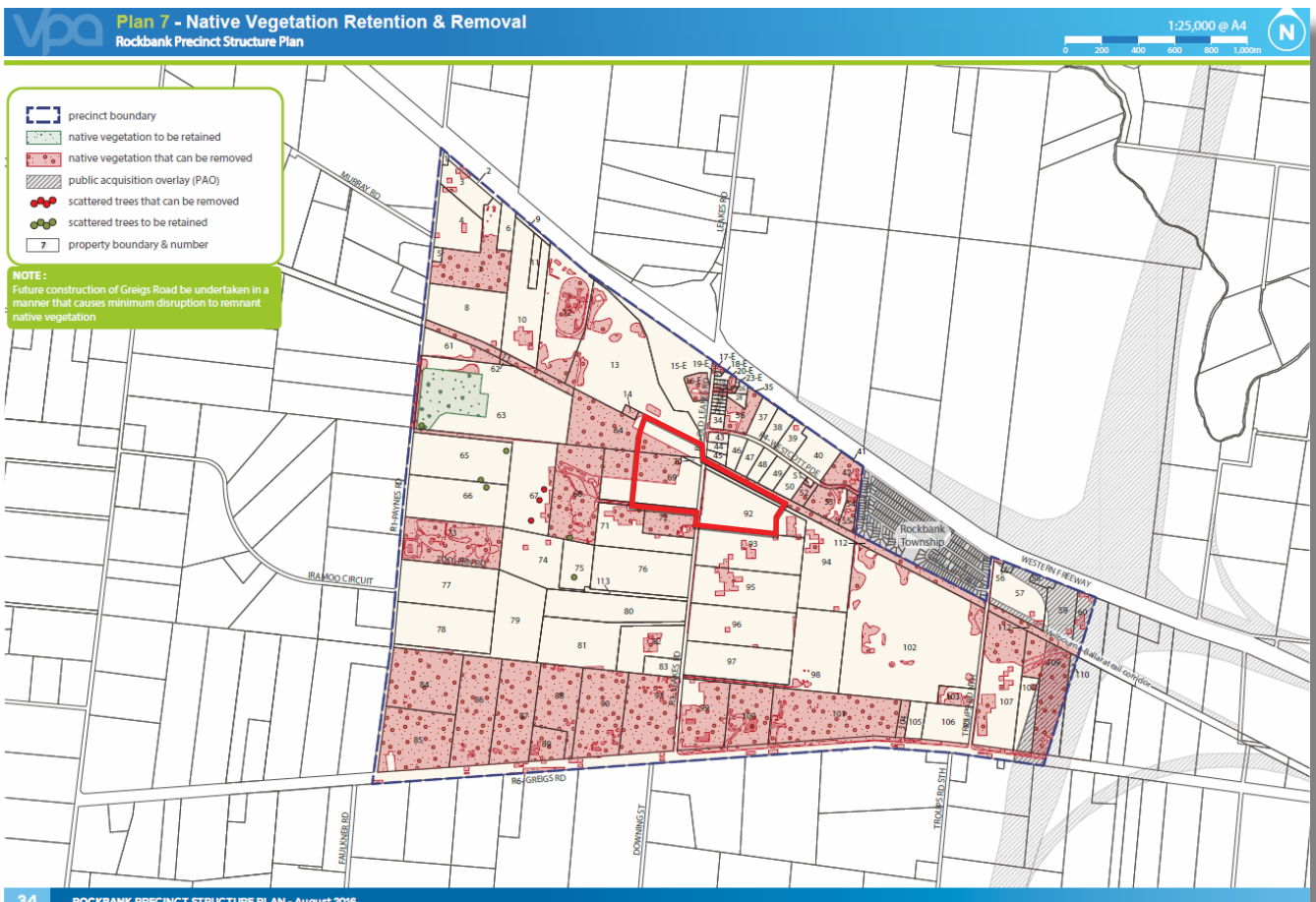


Fig. 24 Native Vegetation Retention and Removal Plan

### 3.3.5 Utilities and Servicing

Based on the information provided in the Rockbank PSP, all services are provided along Leakes Road, including potable and recycled water, electricity and sewer. Some of the services continue into private allotments, with majority of the services continuing along the Melbourne to Ballarat railway line as well.

The PSP outlines some requirements and guidelines regarding utility provision which can be found in the PSP.

### 3.3.6 Key View-lines

Maintaining visual connection to surrounding open spaces, key civic and retail buildings, and important culturally significant sites is important in placemaking, and enabling a sense of connection to a particular location.

This can be established by designing the street network to align with key views to a significant natural or built form element, providing break in built form, or allowing for views across open spaces to significant topographical landforms in the distance.

The Rockbank PSP mentions viewlines in a number of requirements and guidelines, including:

#### 2.2 Town Centre and Employment Objectives

- Design interesting public realm supported by strong view lines and landscaping in Rockbank Major Town Centre that will compel visitors of all ages to move and pause between destinations, with pedestrians and cyclists prioritised.

#### 3.1 Image and Character Guidelines

- Street networks and subdivision should be designed to maximise the number of connections and direct views to the open space network and the closest community hub.

#### 3.2.1 Major Town Centre Requirements

- Key views to the surrounding area and open space and the creation of vistas through the town centre to create interest in the streetscape and provide opportunities for fine-grained urban design outcomes.

#### 3.7.2 Utilities Requirements

- Above-ground utilities should be located outside of key view lines and screened with vegetation as appropriate.

### 3.4 Site Analysis

The site, while relatively small, has a manageable set of existing and future interfaces to deal with. Due to the small number of land owners, consistent land use of the site, and no topographical constraints, the analysis (Fig. 24) focuses on existing and planned interfaces, as well as:

- Heritage Drystone Walls must be protected and retained throughout the development, rebuilt to a high standard and included within the future character of the site.
- The existing railway station will be upgraded in 2018/19, and will feature new platforms and station facilities, new car parking, bus interchange, and pedestrian overpasses.
- Existing Ian Cowie recreation reserve will be linked into the MTC via a pedestrian overpass, linking it to the future open space in the eastern portion of the MTC.
- Future open space immediately south of the MTC area will need to be addressed appropriately, and feature back of house loading facilities and car parking.
- The Rockbank PSP identifies medium-density housing as the interface surrounding the MTC. Medium density housing is not usually the first residential typology to be constructed, as it benefits the most from close proximity to retail and community facilities, which may not be realised in the initial stages of the centre. This may create a distinct 'gap' between the developing centre and the conventional density residential located outside the medium density ring.
- The existing Serbian Orthodox Church is located adjacent to the existing Rockbank Train Station, and is expected to be retained.
- Railway line interface to the north will need to be managed to retain cyclist connectivity east and west, while also managing acoustic amenity. The users of the train services should be considered as part of the group that utilise the site - meaning their engagement of the site is as important as the view of a pedestrian at ground level.
- The batter down from the future Rockbank Road overpass will need to be considered when planning for car parking and retail locations without creating unsafe environments.
- At least five road connections to the broader PSP area are currently planned for the Rockbank MTC. Linking into Leakes Road, and through a residential development to the south, two connections onto future Rockbank Road, and one linking under Rockbank Road overpass.
- Leakes Road will be truncated in the future as the Rockbank Road overpass is constructed. This will leave two legs of Leakes Road providing only very local connections.
- Viewlines should be protected along the heritage drystone walls along Leakes Road, Rockbank station will be a key destination and should be retained in key view lines. Future links to open space and views from elevated locations (future pedestrian bridges and Rockbank Road overpass) should be considered.



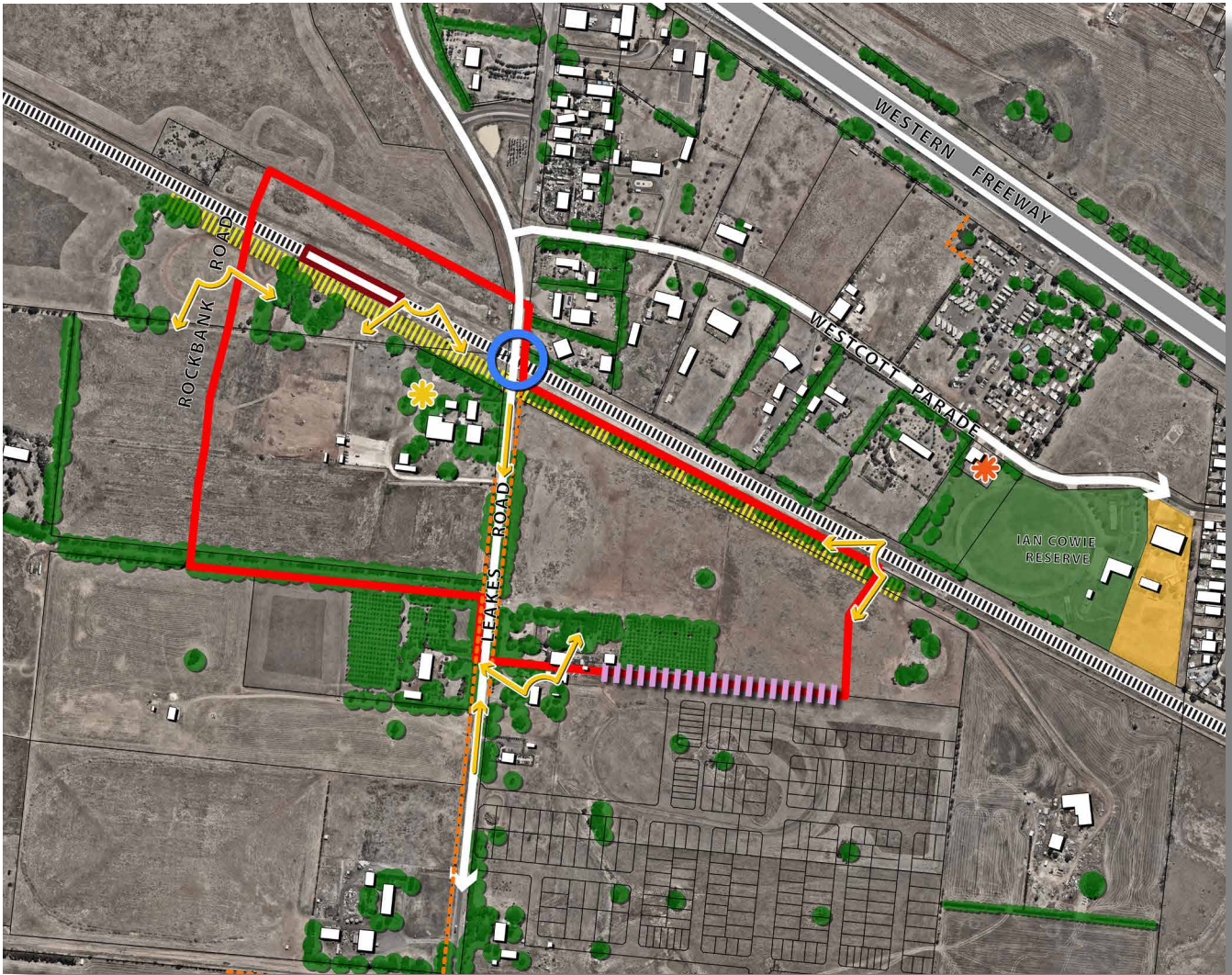


Fig. 25 Site Analysis Plan

**LEGEND**

- UDF Boundary
- Cadastre
- ← Arterial Road
- ← Local Road
- Railway Line
- Drystone Wall
- Existing Railway Station
- Existing Open Space
- ✻ Existing Church
- ✻ Existing CFA
- Rockbank Primary School
- Railway Interface
- Residential Interface
- Existing Level Crossing
- Existing Buildings
- Existing Vegetation
- ↔ Viewlines

### 3.5 Opportunities and Constraints

There are a series of opportunities and constraints related to the subject land (Fig. 25). Opportunities mostly occur around the potential connections and future networks which can be created through the UDF. Whilst the constraints relate to the level crossing removal, unknown medium density residential interfaces, and the railway line interface.

#### Opportunities

- Future connections between the upgraded Rockbank Railway Station and the proposed main street of the UDF.
- Pedestrian bridges over the railway line linking the existing Rockbank community to the MTC.
- The character provided by the existing Serbian Orthodox Church instantly provides a sense of place and identity.
- New vehicle, pedestrian, and cycle connection over the railway line with the Rockbank Road overpass.
- Opportunity to integrate the drystone wall character into the materials / colour palette of the MTC.
- Surrounding residential network provides some fixed locations for future roads connecting into the MTC.
- Open space interface to the south, Rockbank Park, provides an opportunity for viewlines to and from open space.
- Station upgrade will provide access and bus priority links, bringing more people through the town centre.
- Create viewlines to and from the Rockbank Train Station.
- Planned off road cycle path long the railway line can provide additional access into the town centre without negatively affecting the amenity of the area through higher traffic volumes.
- Planned Development Contributions items such as signalised intersections, design and locations provide certainty regarding the road network and connections points.

#### Constraints

- Future Rockbank Road overpass interface, on western edge of the MTC as the road elevates over the railway line - what will this treatment look like (landscape batter, concrete retaining etc).
- Changing function of Leakes Road during the development of the MTC, from a key arterial route, through to a truncated connector road.
- How to stage the MTC in a way that it creates an effective space in it's interim stage, while also not compromising the ultimate configuration.
- Managing and promoting the delivery of early medium and higher density housing options within and surrounding the MTC
- If early delivery of medium and higher density housing does not occur, a large area of developable land separates the MTC and surrounding conventional development densities
- Railway interface (noise and visual amenity) to be considered, and how to screen or reduce the impact of the interface effectively to ensure strong connection between north and south.





## 04 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

### 4.1 Engagement and Consultation Summary

Good communication and consultation efforts are key to the success of the project. To date, there have been four separate consultation events, with more scheduled throughout the design phases of the project in 2018.

So far, this has included:

- A briefing session held in October to inform both the Melton City Council Project Control Group (PCG) and the Project Working Group (PWG),
- A briefing session held in October to inform the Melton City Councillors,
- A one month long consultation period for the project, and
- A stakeholder summit which included attendance from relevant authorities, landowners and community members.

Further information regarding the above communication and consultation events are summarised below.

#### 4.1.1 Briefing Sessions

On 17 October a project summary was presented to both the PCG and the PWG. The presentation included project goals, timelines and a summary of the Draft Background Report including the technical reports.

On 30 October a project summary was presented at a Councillor Briefing Session. The presentation included project goals, timelines and a summary of the draft Background Report including technical reports.

#### 4.1.2 Consultation Period

A month long consultation period on the draft background report and technical reports between 13 November and 13 December 2017 was undertaken, which included the opportunity for formal submissions to be made during this period. This consultation period included the development of a project website, with instruction on how to make a submission, and the placement of ads in the Melton and Moorabool Star Weekly in November 2017 which advertised the project website.

Letters were also sent to the landowners, relevant authorities and stakeholders of the one month consultation

period for the project, who were invited to make a submission, and attend the upcoming stakeholder summit in November.

Included as part of the upcoming Stakeholder Summit was an after business hour's community drop in session. This was also advertised through the Melton and Moorabool Star Weekly, and advertised via Facebook.

#### 4.1.3 Stakeholder Summit

On Tuesday 21 November and Wednesday 22 November Melton City Council hosted a 'Stakeholder Summit' at Western BACE, Cobblebank to inform stakeholders, landowners and the community of the Rockbank Major Town Centre UDF. This was the first interaction with stakeholders, landowners and community for this project.

#### Stakeholder Session Tuesday, November 20

This two hour session included a presentation by the project team about the project to date and the draft background report including the technical reports. A representative from each stakeholder group introduced themselves and their agency and gave a brief statement about their interest in the project. In mixed small groups, attendees were then asked to consider the three biggest challenges to realising the Rockbank Major Town Centre UDF, and the three biggest opportunities, which were then reported back to the overall group. The consultation methods included round table/small group discussions and Q&A discussion.

Attendees included:

- Melbourne Metro Rail Authority (MMRA)
- Transport for Victoria
- Victorian Planning Authority (VPA)
- Vic Roads
- Melbourne Water
- Western Water
- Aboriginal Victoria
- Office of Suburban Development (OSD)
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)
- Melton City Council (relevant departments)

### **Landowner Session Wednesday, November 22**

This two hour session also included a presentation by the project team about the project to date, and including excerpts from the draft Background Report. A brief summary of the Stakeholder Session held the previous day was included in the presentation. Due to the small number of landowner attendees and representatives present (two out of the six landowners were represented in the session, the two attending were also the largest land holders), the discussion covered quite a lot of detail around the contents of the Background Reports to date, with free flowing questions and answers between the two represented land owners, Council and Tract. Due to the rapid pace of residential development occurring around Rockbank, the discussion turned to timing of key infrastructure items, such as road overpasses and level crossing removals, and how they would factor into the interim and ultimate design of the Rockbank UDF, and what impact that may have on any retail/commercial offerings included within the UDF area. One of the landowners had progressed their designs for the Rockbank MTC quite substantially, which directed some detailed comments around what the next steps are for them in regards to their plans for retail and commercial development on their land.

Due to the location of the land owned by the landowners represented at the session (side by side), there was discussion about how a co-operative and collaborative approach to developing the Rockbank MTC would benefit both parties. There was discussion around the co-locating and sharing of community facilities, and early delivery of some items of community infrastructure if developed in conjunction with Council. However, guidance on when and what facilities Council are planning on including within the Rockbank area was an unknown for the parties present.

The landowner session included input from Council and the sub-consultant group on how the town centre could develop, with planning, engineering and traffic contributions to the discussion.

The consultation methods include broad discussion around the Rockbank MTC UDF, and more detailed discussion around the timing and delivery of the town centre and other important infrastructure items.

### **Community Information Session Wednesday, November 22**

The Community Information Session was a three hour drop-in session from 5pm to 8pm. Excerpts from the draft Background Report were printed in large format and located around the room, with Council representatives and the consultant team available to explain the project and answer questions for any community members who attended during the three hour period. The consultation methods included an informal drop in session where project information was displayed both on the wall around the room. The MMRA team also set up a drop-in booth to answer any questions relating to the Ballarat line upgrades, which included the Rockbank Station Upgrade.

Between 15-20 people attended throughout the three hour drop-in session, with those attending provided with the information required about the upcoming process of the UDF and community engagement opportunities through the Background Report and the next stage, the draft UDF.

Community members were given the opportunity to fill in a brief form outlining any opportunities or constraints that they saw as arising from the upcoming Rockbank MTC UDF process. They were also invited to make a formal written submission as part of the consultation period as well if they wished.



## 4.2 Stakeholder Summit Responses

### 4.2.1 Stakeholder Responses

The stakeholders realised the opportunity to develop a true TOD (Transit Oriented Development) around an existing station, which included density and diversity of housing (including affordable housing), along with commercial and retail businesses. This also included locating council facilities in close proximity to private businesses, and fostering a diverse town centre environment.

Stakeholders acknowledged the existing communities located around the MTC, including Rockbank Township, Woodlea Estate, Rockbank Primary School, CFA, Rockbank Netball and Football Club, the Serbian Orthodox Church and the future residents of Bridgefield Estate to the south. The existing communities were seen as advantageous in creating a ready to use centre, and provided opportunities for engagement during the design stages to allow communities to be aware and involved with the UDF.

Heritage, both Aboriginal and European, was discussed as having an important influence over the design of the town centre. Aboriginal stories and artefacts can have a part to play in the developing story of the centre, along with European references in the restoration of dry-stone walls lining Leakes Road. This can assist in fostering a local identity which is meaningful and relevant to site.

There was a general consensus regarding the location of car parking adjacent the train station, that it should be located in areas of lower urban amenity and not be the dominant urban environment between the train station and the town centre. The bus interchange was discussed as an important part of the town centre, with bus parking located in close proximity to the train station, but in a way that does not provide a negative pedestrian environment for public transport users. The issue was raised about the lack of a design for the south side of the train station area, and how the centre can be designed to allow that area to be more than just a car park.

Discussion of early provision (somehow) of feeder bus services to surrounding communities to foster good practice public transport usage from an early stage, before the catchment for a dedicated bus route is available. This was discussed in relation to the delivery of infrastructure items such as Rockbank Road timing and Leakes Road closure.

Water and water management were raised by both water authorities and Council staff. The inclusion of water sensitive urban design within the MTC environment is a particularly good opportunity, given the large amount of hard and impermeable surfaces. This allows for the re-use in irrigation or recycling as required for a centre of this scale. Linking the water story into the public open spaces and the natural environment can provide a connected pedestrian network to all major elements of a town centre. This connects with the potential for flora and fauna habitat along the cycle paths lining the south side of the railway line, and provides potential irrigation for large shade canopy trees throughout the centre

Transport for Victoria made a formal submission where they outlined the importance surrounding the integration of bus interchanges to the north and south of Rockbank station to minimise the walking distance between station platforms and bus pick up/drop off. Their submission also mentioned the importance of creating appropriate pedestrian links, adequate bus interchange bays, reduction of at grade parking in key locations, and the inclusion of higher order land uses in proximity to the station as opposed to at grade parking.

Some of the overarching comments have been translated into recommendations below:

#### Land Use

- Ensure an integrated approach to the town centre, open space, natural environs and public transport
- Explore housing diversity options to address affordability
- Investigate options for co-location of services (particularly Council facilities)

#### Traffic and Transportation

- Ensure an early feeder bus network to support early use of train/bus connections (as opposed to park and ride)
- Seek forward funding of the Rockbank Road overpass to kick start the ultimate alignment of the future town centre
- Resolve future Rockbank Station car parking and bus

network – MMRA Design only shows car parking and bus services to the north of the station

- Plan for the ultimate scenario, with Rockbank Road the ultimate higher order road (Leakes Road is the interim connection to be truncated)
- Review parking requirements to ensure compatibility with the spirit of the UDF objectives with a town centre

### Unique opportunities and innovation

- Celebrate heritage values and entwine them in the design process
- Include the Leakes Road Dry Stone Wall as a defining element within the town centre
- Ensure the design is people oriented, and not car dominated
- Utilise the rail corridor for additional uses habitat for flora and fauna
- Reduce the use of potable water, and promote recycled water and water re-use

### Design

- Ensure that the design connects into surrounding network
- Integrate with the St Petka Serbian Orthodox Church
- Incorporate high quality landscaping and shade trees within the public realm

### Identity

- Foster, create and embed a sense of identity through the design process

### Values

- Promote environmental sustainability as a cornerstone of the design process
- Ensure that there is a community focus and interaction with the surrounding groups and organisations

The stakeholder comments are summarised in Comments Matrix Part 1: Summary from Stakeholder Session, located in Appendix 6.

Transport for Victoria made a formal submission after the stakeholder session where they outlined their concerns around the appropriate integration of the proposed train station which included recommendations around bus infrastructure and integration of at grade car parks. Their recommendations call for a review of location and extent of at grade car parking provisions so close to the Town Centre. Their comments are summarised in Comments Matrix Part 2: Additional Stakeholder Submissions, located in Appendix 6.

#### 4.2.2 Landowner Responses

One formal written submission was received from a landowner after the landowner engagement session, which detailed their current design for their portion of the land located within the MTC to date. The submissions included a summary of their design objective in relation to the PSP UDF Concept Plan, and some of the key points of difference between their thinking, and a response to the information included within the Background Report.

There were no other submissions (formal or informal) of any kind from landowners.

#### 4.2.3 Community Responses

No written responses were received during the drop in session or the formal submissions process from community members as part of the feedback session. Concern was raised by one participant that the community consultation was a box ticking exercise rather than a genuine chance to have an input; however this feedback was received verbally.

### 4.3 General Stakeholder Sentiment

There were some general themes running through the three stakeholder sessions that are summarised below:

- Rockbank Station upgrade is an important catalyst to development, which needs to be complimented with appropriate and early delivery of surrounding retail/commercial and community services
- Staging is an important issue to understand, given Leakes Road closure and Rockbank Road overpass timing.
- Creating a centre that is unique and relevant to the existing Rockbank communities.
- Innovation was mentioned by several participants, particularly in light of water management and re-use and recycling of water
- Regular updates and engagement with transport authorities is important to understand the ultimate road and rail networks, and how Rockbank can complement these, and not negatively affect them
- The UDF must work through the initial stages, and also be successful once the road hierarchy changes from all traffic utilising Leakes Road to when it changes across to Rockbank Road to the west.

### 4.4 Conclusions

Further work in close consultation with the major landowners of the Rockbank Major Town Centre will be integral to the development of the UDF, as the current landowners may ultimately deliver a large portion of the overall site. Their vision will need to be considered and worked into a consolidated Urban Design Framework which meets best practice development principles, including those promoted by the Victorian Planning Authority and Melton City Council.

Further engagement through the draft UDF stage will be important with the key stakeholders to ensure that the proposed UDF meets and manages to accommodate the required standards for each authority.

## 4.5 Recommendations

- Continue to engage with prominent landowners and further discuss their plans for the land in their control, and how that can integrate into the broader plan for the UDF.

In summary, the Stakeholder Summit was a informative start to the engagement process, and valuable for all involved to understand the process to be undertaken, and be abreast of all the issues and opportunities related to the Rockbank Major Town Centre UDF.

As summarised above, further engagement with key stakeholders and landowners will be necessary.

## 05 ROCKBANK TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

As part of the initial stage of this project, prior to undertaking the Background Report, a Gap Analysis was undertaken in order to assess the volume and relevance of the information available in relation to the Rockbank PSP. This was necessary to understand if there was a suitable amount of information which could assist in creating a market ready Urban Design Framework.

Melton City Council had already identified that Technical Assessments in relation to traffic and transport should be commissioned, along with an economic study, a peer review of the servicing and utilities background report prepared as part of the Rockbank PSP, and an acoustic assessment relating to railway noise.

Taking into account these aforementioned reports, the Gap Analysis concluded that there were no outstanding additional documents or studies that were necessary or required which could have further influenced the development of the Rockbank Urban Design Framework.

The Technical Assessments completed as part of the Rockbank MTC Background Report were identified initially as critical to understanding the capacity of the Rockbank area to support a fully developed Major Town Centre.

Economic, Traffic and Transport, and a Utility and Servicing assessments were to be completed as part of this Background Report process to understand the various constraints in the development of a successful MTC prior to the design phase.

The Rockbank UDF will respond to the PSP and Urban Growth Schedule in respect to acoustic requirements for the MTC.

### 5.1 Economic Assessment (Essential Economics)

A summary of the information gleaned from the Economics Assessment is included below:

#### Rockbank MTC

The Rockbank MTC is an important component in the Rockbank PSP and in the wider West Growth Corridor plan. The PSP indicates that the MTC will have a total of 30,000m<sup>2</sup> in 'shop' floorspace (without a permit). While planning for the Rockbank MTC is comprehensive in terms of components, location and layout, it will be important to assess the type and extent of the retail components that will comprise the centre.

The Rockbank MTC has the potential to accommodate a variety of uses considered essential for its role as a MTC including retail, commercial, mixed-use, community, health and higher-density residential, combined with open space and at-ground parking. At full-development the Rockbank MTC has the potential to accommodate to approximately 30,000m<sup>2</sup> of core retailing floorspace, including a DDS, 3-4 supermarkets, mini-major retailers and speciality shops. In addition, potential may also exist for a small restricted retail/bulky goods precinct of up to 10,000m<sup>2</sup> of floorspace that would complement the centre's role as a MTC, separate from the 30,000m<sup>2</sup> of core retailing floorspace.

#### MTC Trade Area

The Rockbank MTC, with a 'shop' provision of up to 30,000m<sup>2</sup> (without a permit) would be expected to serve a trade area located generally within a 3km radius of the MTC. However, the extent to which the centre captures trade will be influenced by the location and size of competing centres at Rockbank North MTC and Toolern MTC and other centres including Plumpton and Mt Atkinson; accessibility to the Rockbank MTC; public transport access to the MTC, including bus and regional train services; and physical barriers to movement.

Two trade areas are identified for the Rockbank MTC: a Primary Trade Area (PTA) which is located to the south of the Melbourne-Ballarat rail line, and comprises the Rockbank PSP and part of the Rockbank South PSP; and a Secondary Trade Area (STA) that comprises parts of the 3km radius from the Rockbank MTC. The MTC would be expected to draw only a small share of its trade from the STA as residents in the STA will most likely visit the nearby and larger centres at Toolern MTC to the west and Rockbank North MTC to the north.



## Rockbank MTC Trade Area Population

The MTC's total trade area would have an estimated 58,000 persons at full development, noting that 43,000 persons would be resident in the PTA, with a further 15,000 persons in the STA (and these STA residents would also be incorporated into the PTAs of the Toolern and Rockbank North MTCs).

## Retail Role of Rockbank MTC

The Rockbank PSP states that a 'shop' floorspace of 30,000m<sup>2</sup> (without permit) would be appropriate for the Rockbank MTC. In broad terms, the Rockbank MTC would be expected to account for approximately 25% of all retail expenditures by trade area households. The balance in household expenditures would be directed to higher-order centres (sub-regional, regional and CBD) and smaller local centres.

30,000m<sup>2</sup> of 'shop' or core retail activities within the centre may include anchor retailing (supermarkets and discount department stores), mini-majors and specialty retail. The indicative allocation of retail floorspace for the MTC is as follows:

- Supermarkets (3-4): 10,000m<sup>2</sup>
- Specialty retail / mini major: 14,000m<sup>2</sup>
- Large format retail (3-4): 6,000m<sup>2</sup>
- Total: 30,000m<sup>2</sup>

Variation around these floorspace estimates by retail type may apply, depending on the type of retailers attracted to the MTC and allowing for changes to retail formats over time.

## Other Activities in the MTC

Other activities included in the Rockbank MTC include the following:

- Small bulky goods/restricted retail precinct (<10,000m<sup>2</sup>)
- Commercial (office) activities (7,500m<sup>2</sup>)
- Mixed-Use (eg, office, residential)
- Community (eg, community centre, child care, library)
- Health (eg, doctor, dentist, etc)
- Medium and high-density residential development

## Recommendations for MTC

- Plan for the co-location of the four Anchor Retail components, thereby ensuring consolidation (rather than dispersal) of these important components in the MTC.
- Where possible, plan for the orientation of Anchor retail in closer proximity to the train station and the major access points to the centre, including Rockbank Road which will eventually be the main north-south connection for the centre.
- The Anchor Retail components located to the east of the MTC do not appear to have 'priority bus link', in contrast with the area to the west in immediate proximity to the railway station. It would serve the important retail function of the MTC if this bus services was extended to these other parts of the MTC which include the Anchor Retail as well as Mixed-Use and Commercial (above ground level) activities.
- The schedule for development staging of the overall PSP and the MTC component will be important in terms of ensuring that sufficient retail floorspace and associated retail anchor and specialty retail tenancies in place. This will ensure that residents establishing in the Rockbank PSP area are provided with an appropriate range of retail and other facilities to support their emerging community.

## 5.2 Traffic and Movement (GTA Consultants)

The guiding principles, and issues and opportunities relating to traffic and transport have been identified and are summarised as follows:

- Rockbank represents one of the key PSPs in the West Growth Corridor, as it is centred on an existing railway station and has direct access to the Western Freeway.
- State Government has announced their commitment to upgrading the Rockbank train station as part of the Ballarat Line Upgrade. The train station will result in a significant increase in accessibility of the area by public transport, and help unlock its proposed development. Also, given its upgrade at the start of Rockbank's development, it provides an opportunity to help develop more sustainable travel behaviours from the outset and not over provide road infrastructure.
- The planning of the Rockbank PSP will provide sufficient road capacity, but in areas of high population and employment densities, such as the Rockbank Town Centre, more space efficient modes (walking, cycling and public transport) must be prioritised.
- The proposed Rockbank Road has been included in the PSP with the purpose to form the central north – south spine of the precinct and provide direct access to the town centre and the Western Freeway. The timeframes for the development of Rockbank Road are not yet established. However, given its current rural two-lane arrangements, it is recommended to be provided when Leakes Road exceeds 7,000vpd, which relates to traffic volumes associated with a typical urban arterial road.
- Bus services providing access to the Rockbank Town Centre are proposed via a route through the town centre. This arrangement will be beneficial as long as priority bus measures are provided along the proposed route, and internal vehicle movements are minimised. Such potential measures would include, bus head starts, on-board transponders, and in lane bus stops to further help minimise vehicle intrusion and perform a traffic calming measure.

### Recommendations for MTC

- The Rockbank PSP road network modelling indicates there will be potential congestion points in the Rockbank Town Centre on the southern side of the station and the town centre access point via the

intersection with Rockbank Road. In order to resolve such potential congestion issues, the following approaches are recommended:

- Limit/minimise pick-up activities occurring on the northern side of the town centre. Rather, provide suitable areas with direct access to Rockbank Road and Old Leakes Road
- Limit property and car park access from the town centre main road (more from the surrounding arterial and connector roads)
- With the Rockbank Train Station, part of its success will be based on the integration with bus services, via a well located transport hub. There is proposed to be direct road connections on each side, that bus services could use to access and integrate with this station. This facility would ideally be bus only and not shared with private car use to achieve a high level of service to users, help prioritise connecting bus use, and minimise the intrusion of high turnover kiss and go activities through the Town Centre.
- The bus network must provide a high level of coverage throughout the Rockbank PSP, i.e. 95% of residents and jobs within 400m of a bus route.
- Within the Rockbank Town Centre, the road environment and pedestrian crossing arrangements are expected to prioritise pedestrian movements. This is expected to be delivered through the following design elements:
  - Provide a low speed environment (30km/h or less) through suitable surfacing and traffic calming measures, and/or being shared spaces, to make them a place for people to spend time.
  - Crossing facilities on each intersecting road that prioritise pedestrians, such as zebra crossings and/or wombat crossings.
  - Traffic signals that prioritise pedestrian crossing movements.
- It is expected that broadly the following bicycle facilities will be provided within and connecting the Rockbank Town Centre, as follows, which is based on the VicRoads Guidance for planning Road Networks in Growth Areas:
  - Separated bicycle facilities along all arterial roads.
  - On-road bicycle lanes on connector level roads with 60km/h or lower sign posted speed

limits(separated facilities on roads with higher speed limits).

- Mixed traffic conditions on low speed locate roads (i.e. 30km/h or less).
- Prioritised crossings when linking to the path network, key destinations and public transport facilities.
- End-of-trip facilities will be also required at key gateway and destination places. These are recommended to be provided as public facilities and not solely relied on to be provided as part of private development.
- Integrate behaviour change initiatives with infrastructure projects to achieve an increased shift away from private car use
- Start adopting and planning for the upcoming technology disruptions to transport use, such as better, connected and real time data, as well as electric and autonomous public and private vehicles.

### 5.3 Utility and Servicing Peer Review (GHD)

The Utility and Servicing peer review has reopened the lines of communication with the relevant utility service authorities (gas, electrical, sewer, potable water, recycled water and telecommunications) to confirm if the information contained within the 2013 Spiire Services Report as part of the Rockbank PSP is still accurate and up to date, if new infrastructure has been installed, or if limited capacity has been reached.

This peer review was not intended to provide recommendations, but to provide an update as to the status of the 2013 Spiire Services Report.

#### Key findings of the investigation were:

- A new sewer pump station with capacity to cater for up to 5,000 lots within the Rockbank Town Centre has been constructed recently and is located north east of the Troups Road North Railway Crossing. This station will be augmented to increase its overall capacity when required.
- Additional sewer infrastructure has been installed to connect the new Troups Road sewer pump station to the wider sewerage network.
- Detailed sewer design for planned developments

has been completed by Western Water and will be constructed once development within the precinct commences.

- A new water main along Leakes Road has been installed and currently terminates just south of the Melbourne to Ballarat Railway. Future developments within the precinct will obtain water supply from this main.
- It is anticipated that the future water demand for the precinct will be supplied via a new tank at Mt Cottrell which will be constructed once the Leakes Road main reaches capacity.
- Western Water is no longer mandating recycled water to the Rockbank Town Centre. This decision has been discussed with the Victorian Planning Authority, Melton City Council and developers within the precinct.
- Developers are now required to implement a water management plan in coordination with Western Water which focuses on reducing water consumption.
- A new City Gate has been installed in the vicinity of the Mt Atkinson Road and Middle Road intersection however it is now anticipated that the supply for the Rockbank Town Centre will be via the existing City Gate located on Taylors Road.
- A new high pressure gas main has been installed along Taylors Road which would ultimately service the Rockbank Town Centre.
- NBN is responsible to service the Rockbank Town Centre with telecommunications. NBN have advised that the Government has changed the telecommunications infrastructure in new developments (TIND) policy to include infrastructure contributions which provides greater flexibility for developers.
- Telecommunications supply to the Rockbank Town Centre would be via the extension of the existing distribution network if capacity permits.

## 5.4 Urban Design

The Urban Design recommendations for the Rockbank MTC address the specific site conditions relating to the Rockbank MTC environs, and the future environment planned as part of the Rockbank PSP. They also address best practice design ideas and thinking, and reflect some of the key findings from the consultation period.

### Site Specific Recommendations:

- Utilise the existing Serbian Orthodox Church as a key landmark - in an area with few vertical elements, this can be utilised as a way finding landmark in the scheme of the broader Rockbank community, and assist in the strategic positioning of the initial and ultimate stages of the Rockbank MTC.
- Interfaces to the railway line to the north should be considered; ensure that 'backing on' is not the default position.
- Rockbank Road overpass batter will need to be considered from an aesthetic perspective.
- Where car parking is located on the periphery of the MTC, a landscape buffer should screen the parking from the surrounding residential context.
- Reference the heritage drystone walls in the materials palette for the MTC to anchor the centre in its context.
- Urban plaza to act as way finding and connect the Rockbank station and main street.
- Integrate different modes of housing within the MTC, achieving the required density of 30 dwellings per hectare as specified in the Rockbank PSP.
- Provide for 'active streets' with opportunities for businesses to operate extended hours and provide activation and engagement with residents, public transport users, and commercial/office staff located within the MTC.
- Ensure that the UDF is stageable, ultimate road configuration is considered through the design process, and that ultimate and interim design stages can operate independently.
- Engage with the land holders to understand their vision and experience.

### General Recommendations:

- The residential component within and surrounding a town centre is critical to ensure a range of dwelling types in proximity to the retail core, including medium density, high density, and shop-top housing to facilitate activity and accessibility for all potential users.
- Residential activity near and within town centres can provide a diverse mix of users and uses that adjust how a typical town centre may operate.
- Appropriate interfaces to visual barriers need to be considered when designing public spaces.
- Design guidelines can be used to screen/reduce the impact of:
  - Back of house retail and loading bays.
  - Train station and inter-modal transport hub, and associated car parking and access into the town centre.
  - Transition from retail and commercial hub into conventional residential development.
- Building proportion, scale and design aesthetic needs to be related to their context, ensuring suitable interfaces with the proposed residential context surrounding the site to the east, south and west.
- Street frontages need to be activated to ensure CPTED principles are followed, with car parking and service areas to the rear, allowing for 'eyes on the street' wherever possible.
- Pedestrian priority zones will need to cater for waves of activation in conjunction with train arrivals and departures, and frequent bus services, whilst protecting and encouraging people 'slow' down in the public space.
- High quality public realm is required to ensure that all users feel comfortable and safe, with adequate services and facilities to allow people of all abilities to engage.
- Utilise best practice Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) initiatives in order to reduce and reuse rain water, and recycle grey water where appropriate.
- Include appropriate landscaping proximate to the climate, available water, maintenance regime and intensity of use.



## 06 ROCKBANK MTC UDF STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

**Advocate for the appropriate redevelopment of the Rockbank Railway Station.** The station will be one of the key pieces of infrastructure necessary to unlock and support future development. It can provide the catalyst for future residential and retail development, enabling greater public transport options for residents, and allowing greater access via the proposed public transport interchange. It must interact with the early provision of retail providers to offer an initial sense of place and intensity.

**Create a truly multi-modal environment.** This must exist from stage 1, providing interim connections until ultimate design and connections exist. The connections into the surrounding context are as important as the connections within the Town Centre, and networking them adequately will be a critical piece of the puzzle.

**Be deliverable.** The discussion around staging is an integral part of the design process to better avoid 'gaps' in development, given the planned closure of the Leakes Road level crossing, and truncating of that road, and the affect that will have on retail and commercial development.

**Be current.** Rockbank will be competing with a number of other Major Activity Centres located in close proximity. Therefore it needs to set the bar high for retail and community areas to capture the long term occupier, intrinsically linked to shoppers spending money and enjoying the retail experience.

**Be realistic.** The Urban Design Framework must be founded upon economic realities. For example, it is clear that the retail component from the draft concept plan in the Rockbank PSP does not satisfy a staged approach to long term retail delivery. The economics of retail and commercial spaces need to assist in driving the design of a successful economic and commercial venture.

**Ensure the environment and sustainability is a focus not an add-on.** Highlight environmental design and sustainability as a key feature in all aspects of the UDF and ultimately the development.

**Be bold.** This is the chance to push the status quo. The City of Melton Retail & Activity Centres Strategy suggests that Activity Centres are meant to demonstrate design excellence due to the important role they play in everyday life. This can be utilised to facilitate bold community engagement initiatives, to foster creativity and sense of ownership in the MTC.

**Create the catalyst.** This could be the train station, or early delivery of a retail element, or an integrated community facility. Most importantly, it needs critical mass to create a comfortable meeting point in the early stages of the town centre development in order to justify development and to prompt change.

**Be collaborative.** There needs to be a sense of 'buy-in' from the surrounding developers and land owners to ensure that the development can commence with a sense of support for the Urban Design Framework

## **Appendix 01**

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Essential Economics :  
Rockbank MTC UDF Economic Technical Report

## **Appendix 02**

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GTA Consultants :  
Rockbank MTC UDF Transport Technical Report

## **Appendix 03**

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GHD :  
Rockbank MTC UDF Utilities and Services Technical Report

## **Appendix 04**

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Benchmarking Examples:  
Transport Oriented Development

## **Appendix 05**

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Benchmarking Examples:  
Sustainability and Water Sensitive Urban Design

## **Appendix 06**

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Community Consultation Matrix



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## Rockbank MTC UDF Background Report

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