

# Amess Road PSP

SITE ANALYSIS AND KEY IDEAS SUMMARY PAPER

JUNE 2022



# 01

## OVERVIEW

This Paper has been prepared by Echelon Planning and UrbanFold to:

- Record the findings of the site analysis and character assessments
- Identify the place-based ideas which have emerged and could be integrated into the Structure Plan for the Amess Road Precinct
- Provide a succinct summary of the assessments and ideas to seek feedback from the community.

The paper builds on technical work completed in 2020/2021 and seeks to better respond to matters raised in the initial community consultation in 2019 and by Macedon Rangers council officers during 2020/2021.

The technical background assessments are currently being finalised and will become available for public review. The next summary paper will include an overview of this technical work as it relates to informing the place-based plan.



# 02

## SITE ANALYSIS

The starting point was to walk the land and speak with the landowners to understand the day-to-day condition of the land. Echelon Planning and Urban Fold then took photos and stood at various vantage points both within and surrounding the site to appreciate the aspect, character and landscape. The design of the Precinct will draw on the character and site features and consider its integration into the existing landscape and the township of Riddells Creek. The on-site analysis was then supplemented by a review of technical data / analysis and discussion with state and local agencies.

### WHAT IS THE CHARACTER OF RIDDELLS CREEK?

The character of Riddells Creeks is largely defined by a vegetated landscape, incised creek valleys and rolling topography set against the magnificent backdrop of the Macedon Ranges. The Riddells Creek township has historically been concentrated along Main Street but has in more recent years expanded east of Racecourse Road along the railway. The township is characterised by its historic country village with leafy tree-lined streets.

The Amess Road PSP area will create an attractive extension to the existing Riddells Creek township, providing long term residential growth for Macedon Ranges Shire. The Precinct will not compete with the commercial and social heart of the Township, but rather will need to build on its attributes and provide housing diversity in addition to complementary community facilities and recreational amenities.



### WHAT IS THE CHARACTER OF THE AMESS ROAD PRECINCT?

The Amess Road Precinct is located to the north east of the Riddells Creek Town Centre. Bounded by Frost Lane to the north, rural Farming Zone land to the east, Amess Road to the south and Gisborne-Kilmore Road to the west, the precinct covers around 131 hectares. The Precinct is characterised by its rolling topography, existing creek corridors, long range views to the Macedon Ranges, its combination of grassy paddocks and existing native and exotic vegetation, its connection to the Riddells Creek Township and the important heritage features of the site.

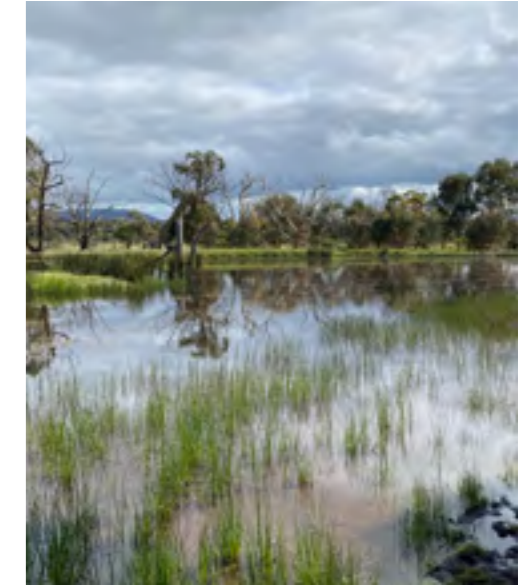
The key characteristics of the precinct are outlined in more detail over the following pages.

### ROLLING TOPOGRAPHY



Rolling topography of Riddells Creek is ideal for a new community. It is largely free of steep slopes, however there is enough slight or moderate slope to create an interesting series of neighbourhoods which will capitalise on the primarily northern aspect.

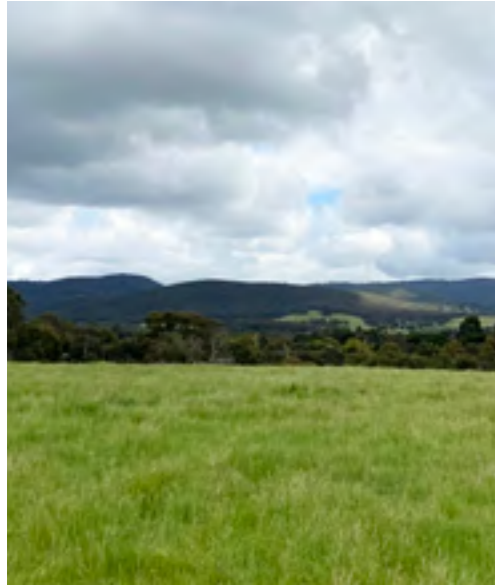
### WATER & DRAINAGE



Water is a major feature of this site, with two creek corridors, the Sandy Creek and Wurundjeri Creek, crossing the site from east to west, and numerous other smaller drainage lines.

The creek corridors will become key features of the community in terms of habitat retention and creation, and drainage. Additionally, they will provide significant linear open space and recreation opportunities.

## VIEWS



Long- and short-views are a significant feature of this site. There are three types of views to take into consideration when preparing the ultimate site design:

- Views from the site out to surrounding landscapes and specifically the Macedon Ranges.
- Views within the site taking advantage of the elevated parts of the site and the many views through to existing stands of vegetation and creek corridors.
- Views from beyond the site boundary back into the site which must ultimately ensure good interfaces with surrounding areas.

## VEGETATION



Whilst much of the site is already cleared there are several pockets of existing native vegetation which could be retained as part of the open space network and areas of conservation.

Retention of existing vegetation as part of this new community will only enhance the parks, streets and open space network.

## ADJACENCY TO RIDDELLS CREEK TOWNSHIP



The close proximity to the Riddells Creek Township is a distinct advantage for this new community. Being within walking and biking distance of the town will give all residents the opportunity to share facilities.

The Amess Road parcel is a logical extension of the town of Riddells Creek and its urban area.

## CONNECTION TO HERITAGE



Set on substantial grounds, Dromkeen provides an important link to history of the place. The house and gardens have retained their integrity and now operate as a gallery space. This sits within a large patch with mature pines and exotic planting. How to retain the presence and character of Dromkeen in a more urban environment will require consideration.

# 03

## IDENTIFICATION OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS

The PSP sets the framework for change in the Precinct outlining areas to be set aside for parks, community facilities, roads, waterways and homes.

It can also provide guidance on matters relating to street cross sections, housing types and response to sensitive interfaces.

The site analysis undertaken identified the key characteristics of the site, where UrbanFold have considered how these characteristics could be deliberated and embodied in the PSP.

The future development of land within the PSP via a subdivision and creation of public assets of the land will enable these characteristics to really be embellished through design choices relating to:

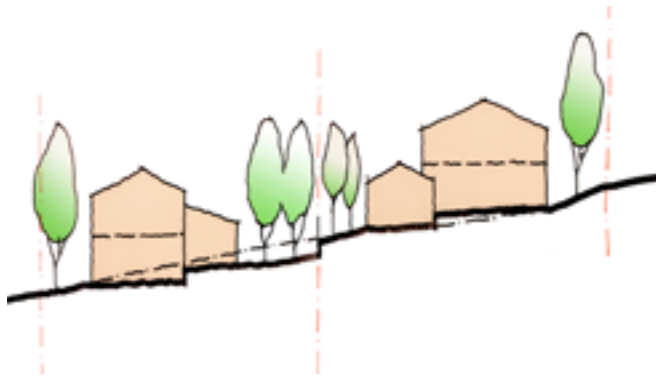
- Type of tree species and planting layouts
- Programming of local parks
- House design
- Material selection for footpaths, streets and homes
- Design of a community facilities, the pavilion and oval concepts



Photo of one of the existing dams on site

## WORKING WITH THE SLOPE

Where possible, it is advantageous to work with the slope by designing roads to run along the slope and designing housing lots that step incrementally up the slope. Staying as close as possible to existing grades ultimately minimises bulk earthworks and allows for the opportunity to retain as much vegetation as possible.



Housing can step incrementally up the slope to minimise bulk earthworks and allow for maximum tree retention.

## FEATURING WATER BODIES

Locating parks and open space along creek corridors will celebrate and feature the existing water bodies and drainage lines. There is also the opportunity to design lots to front onto the creek corridors maximising open space accessibility and connectivity.



There is significant opportunity to provide excellent public access and recreational opportunities along the creek corridors.

## RETAINING KEY VIEW CORRIDORS

The views to and from the Amess Road Precinct are magnificent and should be maintained throughout the site's development. Retaining key view corridors to Macedon Ranges can be achieved through techniques such as alignment of roads and placement of parks to ensure that the ranges are always the backdrop of this new community.



The views to the Macedon Ranges are superb and should be retained throughout the development of the Amess Road Precinct

## RETAINING TREE CLUSTERS & PLANTING MORE

Retaining trees clusters and wind rows will retain habitat whilst also allowing mature trees to add to the character of the community. Planting new complementary trees as both street trees and park trees will further strengthen the overall canopy and provide significant aesthetic and environmental amenity.



Retaining existing vegetation brings instant character and charm to a new community.

# 04

## PLACE-BASED DESIGN

Place-based approaches identify the character and specific features of a place, and then integrate it into the development of that place.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) identify the key characteristics of place-based design are to:

- Respond to complex, intersecting local drivers that require a cross-portfolio and sectoral response
- Develop a shared understanding of local context drawing on a broad range of evidence, from data to research to lived experience and local knowledge
- Are based around shared outcomes that reflect locally agreed priorities and unite local stakeholders
- Embed deep engagement and collaborative governance structures that engage across sectors and with a diverse cross-section of the community
- Are implemented through shared action, with an iterative approach and progress monitoring that supports continual learning
- Apply formal approaches to evaluation to enable accountability and guide strategy

The Amess Road 'Place-Based' Plan will seek to respect and leverage the natural characteristics of the precinct by:

- Maintaining key view lines to the Macedon Ranges and east to the farming hinterland
- Providing green spaces which connect to waterways and wetlands system
- Designing streets and lots so that they respond to the unique and undulating nature of the land.
- Retaining existing site vegetation as much as possible

A set of draft objectives have been set to guide the precinct planning and which will be refined and included within the PSP to drive the intended outcomes.

### PRECINCT OBJECTIVES

- 1 Protect the amenity values of highly visible slopes and respond to the existing topography of the land.
- 2 Support a neighbourhood character which recognises the need for a transition from the low density existing development surrounding the Precinct to a more conventional mix of lot sizes internal to the Precinct.
- 3 Protect heritage places and landscapes and incorporate these areas into the new urban environment in a manner that celebrates and interprets their significance.
- 4 Achieve a diversity of streetscapes to enhance local distinctiveness and amenity, including the use of street trees.
- 5 Creating a series of neighbourhoods with discernible character and which provides for housing choice.
- 6 Facilitate active and healthy living through the urban environment that encourages cycling and walking. The creation of a range of off-street pedestrian and cycling links along paths and waterways and green links throughout the precinct where appropriate.
- 7 Encourage a sense of connection within the precinct and with existing Riddells Creek, surrounding growth fronts by providing strong external connections to the surrounding transport network.
- 8 Support the development of a local park network to provide local amenity to each part of the precinct to complement the unique open space opportunities presented by conservation reserves.

# 05

## KEY IDEAS

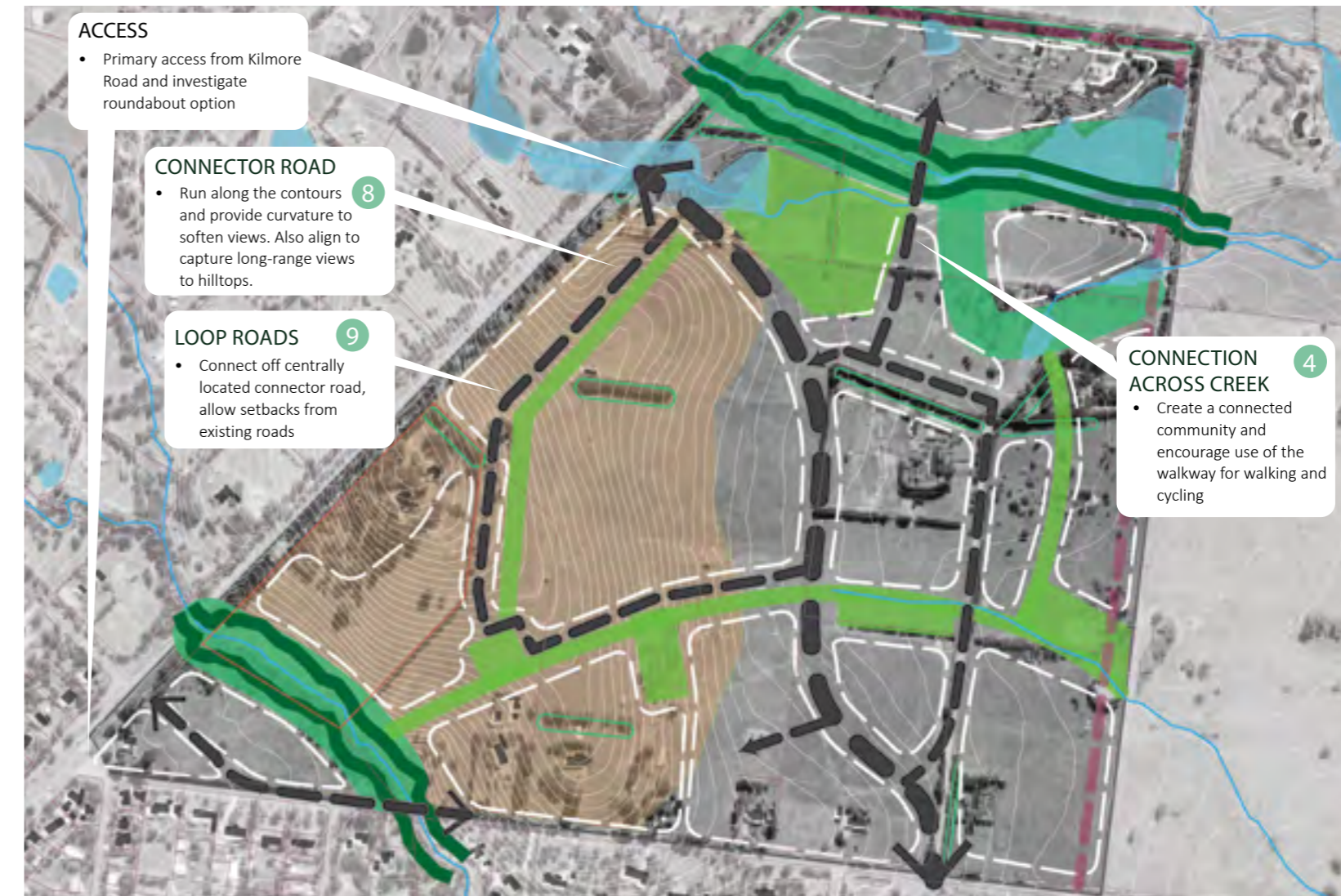
The plans over the next few pages illustrate some of the key ideas being tested through the preparation of the structure plan and which would meet the objectives set for the project.

- 1 Create a network of parks of different sizes which can be programmed to provide for passive play/recreation as well as to cater for early years.
- 2 Deliver an active open space facility, co-located within the waterway, open space network and adjacent to the community facility.
- 3 Establish a green link within the precinct which would connect each of the local parks as well as with the waterways. This link could provide for walking, cycling, exercise stations and horse trails providing a circuitous link of some 2.5 km.
- 4 Ensure that the overall open space network of some 30 hectares will support recreational amenity and a healthy community
- 5 Provide a village hub with local shops and community facilities.
- 6 Locate parks to enable retention of high quality trees and grasslands as a valued asset for the neighbourhood.
- 7 Create distinct neighbourhoods within the precinct which are linked to their unique site context. This allows for deliberate identification of land for a variety of dwelling typologies such as larger blocks along rural interfaces, and smaller housing products close to amenities.
- 8 Design the roadway network and key access points to take advantage of the site's topography and views.
- 9 Create large setbacks fronting key interfaces by using loop roads and landscape edges.

## OPEN SPACE / COMMUNITY FACILITY PLAN



## ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY





## NEIGHBOURHOODS

