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Date: 28 September 2021

Sustainability Background Report
Plan2Place on behalf of Macedon Ranges Shire Council

HIP V. HYPE

WHO WE ARE

HIP V. HYPE Sustainability provides advice that is commercially grounded, yet ambitious. We pursue exceptional outcomes that are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable and enable action across government, institutions and organisations.

We seek to partner with those who are willing to think strategically to achieve better. We lead, collaborate and support others to deliver impact and build Better Cities and Regions, Better Buildings, and Better Businesses.

DISCLAIMER

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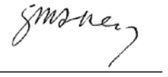
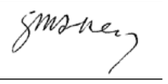
HIP V. HYPE

REV	DATE	DETAILS	NAME, POSITION	SIGNATURE
0.1	17.09.21	Draft	Gavin Ashley, Lead	
1.1	28.09.21	Final	Gavin Ashley, Lead	

Contents

Introduction

Romsey is a township approximately 75 kilometres north-west of Melbourne, with a population of 4,315[1] and an annual growth rate which has been above the regional Victorian average since 2017[1].

A revised structure plan is being developed at the request of Macedon Ranges Shire Council to guide land use and development and accommodate a range of growth scenarios.

This report presents the environmental and sustainability issues and opportunities that exist within Romsey – to ensure the towns development is sustainable and adheres and responds to the impacts of climate change, while elevating the natural assets and connection with the environment.

PROJECT CONTEXT

HIP V. HYPE has been engaged by Plan2Place to provide this environmental and sustainability input into the structure plan. The project team, led by Plan2Place also includes:

- Design Urban (Urban design and landscape)
- Cardno (Urban infrastructure and stormwater)
- Movement and Place (Transport planning)
- Tim Knott (Economic development)
- Wayfarer Consulting (Community engagement)
- Obliqua (Bushfire and land management)

Macedon Ranges Shire Council has engaged the project team to develop a structure plan and associated planning controls to guide the towns development over the next 15-20 years.

Due to recent population growth and the increased pressures on Romsey (and regional towns) as a result of COVID-19, ensuring development is climate responsive, fosters economic development and creates community is critical.

Structure of the report

This report can be broken into three sections:

1. Context Summary: A snapshot of what is currently happening in Romsey from a sustainability and environmental perspective. High level issues and opportunities will be identified.
2. Key strategic support: A list of Council plans and strategies reviewed, and their support to address the identified issues within the town.
3. Opportunities: Six opportunities will be presented in a ‘dashboard’ format, allowing a range of information and analysis to be communicated. Each dashboard will provide a description of the opportunity, the mechanism type, the issue/s it is addressing, key benefits, strategic justification and implementation considerations.

A service lane parallel to Main Street, Romsey. Photography by Mattinbgn

1. id Community (2021) Romsey Profile

Context Summary

The following general observations were made in relation to sustainability and environmental outcomes within Romsey, which may be addressed by the structure plan.

ROMSEY OBSERVATIONS

Large lots

Romsey's housing stock is dominated by single dwellings on large to very large lots, generally 1,500-4,000 m² [1]. A continuation of this pattern for any new development will put further pressure on the town boundary and surrounding agricultural land and landscape value.

The opportunity exists to densify areas of the existing township within proximity to services to allow these larger lots to enjoy their amenity and the increase in economic activity (stemming from density along Main Street).

Vacant lots / disused premises

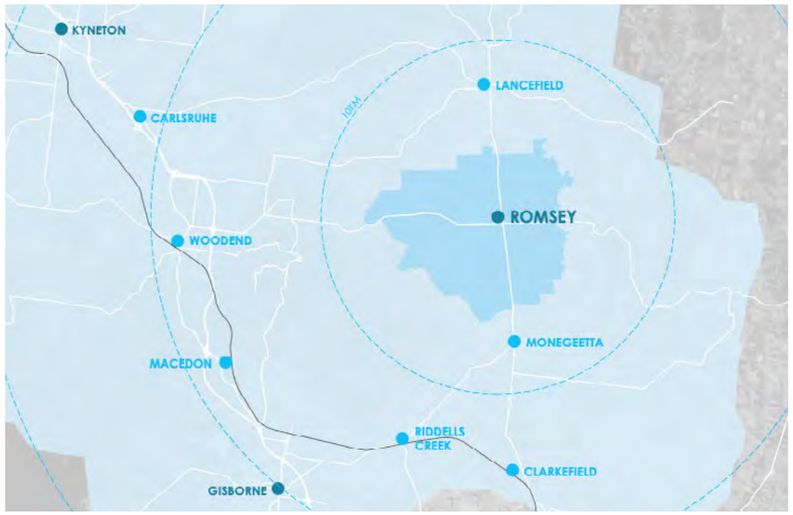
A number of vacant lots within the town boundary, and underutilised premises along Main Street also contribute to a larger town footprint than is necessary to support the population.

The opportunity exists to provide planning and financial incentives to prompt development of these land holdings to provide benefit to the local community.

Public Transport

Romsey is approximately 15 kilometres north of the V-line (Clarkefield Station), and without adequate bus routes to provide meaningful public transport connection to Melbourne and the regional centres around it (i.e. Woodend, Kyneton, Kilmore).

This lack of public transport has in turn created car dependence, with many commuters relying on vehicles to travel south to Clarkefield to access the V-line or driving to neighbouring towns.



Local Context. Image by MRSC

The reliance on vehicles is not uncommon in regional areas, however the potential to improve connections could lead to numerous positive outcomes for the economy, emissions and health of the residents.

Cycling and pedestrian infrastructure

The pedestrian and cycling network is fragmented and limited in its coverage throughout the town. This creates poor connectivity between areas in town for pedestrians and cyclists[1]. This is particularly impacts young children and older demographics which may not have access to independent transport.

This lack of infrastructure also reinforces car dependence, reducing the incentive for residents to walk or ride between their homes, community and retail infrastructure.

1. MRSC (2018) Issues and Opportunities Paper

Context Summary

Five Mile Creek (Deep Creek), presents a exceptional opportunity to provide an east-to-west pedestrian link (discussed below), with upgrades to Main Street servicing the north-to-south connection.

Cycling connections north to Lancefield, and south to the Clarkefield Station are also lacking, and discussed further in this report as a key opportunity.

Environmental assets

While Romsey is known more for its agricultural setting, surrounded by a belt of productive land supporting various farming practices and wineries, the town itself has a number of environmental assets which could be rehabilitated.

Five Mile Creek, is of course the primary opportunity – with a masterplan and WSUD study already conducted which outline the design intent of the ecological restoration and pedestrian infrastructure to the west of Main Street.

Beyond this, there is an opportunity to improve streetscape vegetation and ensure habitat fragmentation is mitigated, in addition to the provision of a healthy urban forest for shade and urban cooling purposes.

Community infrastructure

Romsey's pub has been closed for many years. This is symptomatic of an over-reliance on surrounding towns for basic retail and cultural amenity. It also represents a constraint for the type of community connection that can support a range of environmental and other community driven projects.

The Structure Plan can plan a role in incentivising private sector investment to respond to this specific need and others, potentially through broadening the cultural offering of the town alongside planned improvements to sports and recreation.

Rehabilitation of the creek along with pedestrian infrastructure has benefits for ecology and the community. Image by Romsey Five MIle Creek Facebook

1. MRSC (2018) Issues and Opportunities Paper

Key Strategic Support

DOCUMENT	GOAL / ACTION / OBJECTIVE	OPPORTUNITY
Romsey Issues & Opportunities Paper 2018	– Township character, housing and heritage – Town centre, tourism & employment – Open space, environment & community facilities – Transport & movement – Infrastructure and utilities	– Opportunity 1: Urban Consolidation – Opportunity 2: Five Mile Creek Restoration – Opportunity 3: Solar PV for Wastewater Treatment Plant – Opportunity 4: Climate Responsive Town Expansion – Opportunity 5: Inter-town Bike Path & Public Transport Upgrade – Opportunity 6: Build Social Capital
Council Plan 2017-2027 (year 4: 2020-2021)	– Priority 1. Promote health and well-being – Priority 2. Protect the natural environment – Priority 3. Improve the built environment – Priority 4. Enhance the social and economic environment	– Opportunity 1: Urban Consolidation – Opportunity 2: Five Mile Creek Restoration – Opportunity 3: Solar PV for Wastewater Treatment Plant – Opportunity 4: Climate Responsive Town Expansion – Opportunity 5: Inter-town Bike Path & Public Transport Upgrade – Opportunity 6: Build Social Capital
Biodiversity Strategy 2018	– Objective 1: Protect existing biodiversity and native vegetation – Objective 2: Improve existing biodiversity and native vegetation across public and private land – Objective 3: Extend and connect native vegetation and fauna habitat – Objective 4: Improve Council and the community's understanding and connection to biodiversity	– Opportunity 2: Five Mile Creek Restoration – Opportunity 6: Build Social Capital
Climate Change Action Plan 2017	– Action 1.6 ESD Guideline for Council Buildings – major works – Action 1.12 Large scale renewable energy generation – Action 3.2 Electric vehicles – Action 4.5 Encouraging sustainable development	– Opportunity 3: Solar PV for Wastewater Treatment Plant – Opportunity 4: Climate Responsive Town Expansion – Opportunity 6: Build Social Capital
Climate Change Risk Assessment and Response 2012	– Action CW-4d Ensure that low-income energy efficient housing options are included in new developments – Action CW-15 Undertake review of shade structures to ensure appropriate protection (underway and on-going) – Action AO-12b Investigate and recommend appropriate vegetation to replace old and dying trees in urban environments (also identified in PE-16) – Action PE-16 Incorporate climate change adaptation into community planning and communications (also identified in AO-4b)	– Opportunity 1: Urban Consolidation – Opportunity 2: Five Mile Creek Restoration – Opportunity 3: Solar PV for Wastewater Treatment Plant – Opportunity 4: Climate Responsive Town Expansion – Opportunity 6: Build Social Capital

Key Strategic Support

DOCUMENT	GOAL / ACTION / OBJECTIVE	OPPORTUNITY
Environment Strategy 2019	– Action CC9 Support, promote and investigate partnership opportunities in community initiatives for climate change action and renewable energy generation – Action B9 Work with traditional owners to understand and identify cultural heritage or areas of significance in reserves and areas managed by Council – Action LWM4 Incorporate water sensitive design treatments when designing roadworks (like grass swales and filtration ponds), where feasible and practical. Continue to seek opportunities for funding and partnerships to invest in works, in development and application of related construction and maintenance guidelines, and in monitoring the effectiveness of treatments and works – Action WM6 Work with key agencies and land owners in managing waterway reserves, to improve waterway health and restore riparian corridors as biolinks as a means of improving ecosystem connectivity across the Shire	– Opportunity 2: Five Mile Creek Restoration – Opportunity 6: Build Social Capital
Heat Response Plan	– No specific actions	– Opportunity 2: Five Mile Creek Restoration – Opportunity 5: Inter-town Bike Path & Public Transport Upgrade – Opportunity 6: Build Social Capital
Romsey Movement Network Study - Transport Plan 2009	– B1 – Action recommendations set out within the Macedon Ranges Shire Council bicycle strategy – B4 – Relocate the bicycle lanes along Main Street to run against the nearside kerb – B5 – Provide secure bicycle parking facilities through the town and other strategic locations such as the recreation area – B7 – Extend bicycle routes down to the areas identified for new residential subdivisions growth – P9 – Require new residential subdivisions to be designed so that pedestrian linkage is given priority and footpaths follow logical desire lines as closely as possible – PT3 – Investigate the possibility of increasing off peak services and linking to other nearby towns	– Opportunity 1: Urban Consolidation – Opportunity 2: Five Mile Creek Restoration – Opportunity 4: Climate Responsive Town Expansion – Opportunity 5: Inter-town Bike Path & Public Transport Upgrade
Romsey Five Mile Creek Masterplan	– All actions / steps outlined in masterplan	– Opportunity 2: Five Mile Creek Restoration – Opportunity 5: Inter-town Bike Path & Public Transport Upgrade
Five Mile Creek WSUD Design Report	– Delivery of option 2 as per report	– Opportunity 2: Five Mile Creek Restoration – Opportunity 4: Climate Responsive Town Expansion

Note: A number of additional regional and state strategies and plans were reviewed, and support the opportunities identified, however the documents highlighted in the table above provides specific justification for action within Romsey.

Opportunity 1: Urban Consolidation

OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

This opportunity explores urban consolidation, in an attempt to capture infill opportunity and promote walkability in the central core either side of Main Street and also north of Barry Street where the general residential zoning has to date promoted almost no consolidation.

This may require rezoning land currently listed as General Residential (GRZ) and/or amending overlays to incentivise urban consolidation and a more compact development typology within proximity to Main Street, providing an increased focus for economic development.

In addition, long standing local tensions and other factors has led to various lots in prime locations being left undeveloped or vacant. Penalities for holding but not improving or acting on land opportunities should be considered through a rates mechanism which disincentivises land holders from 'sitting on' prime development parcels.

Mechanism Type

Planning reform and changes to Council rate structure

Sustainability Category

Sustainable Transport

Issue it is addressing

_ Walkability of Romsey town centre
_ Misalignment of planning controls and strategic direction
_ Lot vacancy and underutilised land development
_ Loss of economic activity

Romsey in 2040

With increased density contained along Main Street and consolidation in the north east of the town, Romsey has been able to increase their population without excessive greenfield develoment, in turn creating a more walkable and amenity-rich town centre. This approach has allowed traditional, large-lots to retain their character, while supporting economic development within the town centre – giving greater access to services and amenity for Romsey as a whole.

KEY BENEFITS

_ **Walkable neighbourhoods:**
+ Smaller lots and/or medium density development (townhouses and potential 2-3 storeys on Main Street) will support increased services, amenity and more walkable communities.

_ **Affordable housing:**
+ Increased density and diversity of housing allows more affordable products to be developed to meet the growing needs of smaller households.

_ **Community:**
+ Consolidation creates increased opportunities for interaction and economic development.

_ **Health & wellbeing:**
+ Denser neighbourhoods with high access to services and amenity also see health & wellbeing benefits associated with walking and cycling.

_ **Lower GHG emissions:**
+ Reduced reliance on vehicles to access immediate services and amenity will in turn reduce the GHG emissions associated with transportation.

_ **Higher local spend:**
+ Increasing the activity within proximity to Main Street will entice, and justify increased economic development (with a larger population to serve), resulting in less trips outside of Romsey to access key services and amenity – keeping those dollars and associated benefits within the township.

STRATEGIC JUSTIFICATION

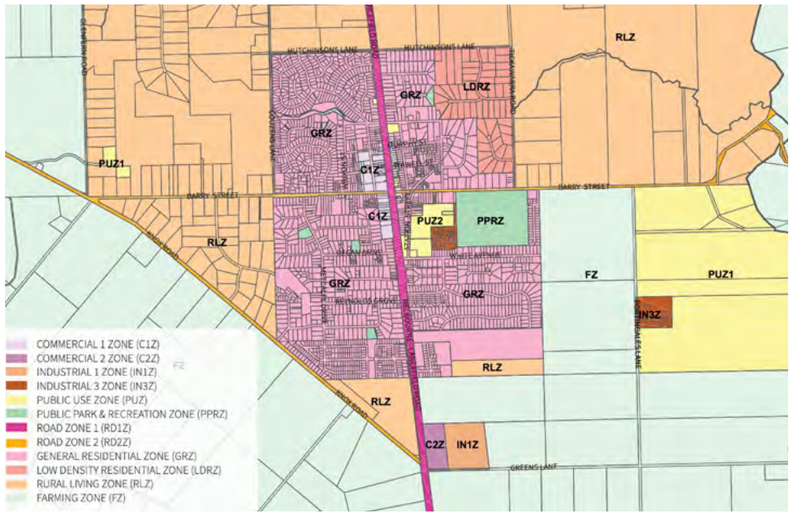
Policy Rationale

– Romsey Issues & Opportunities Paper 2018
– Council Plan 2017-2027 (Year four 2020-2021)
– Climate Change Risk Assessment and Response (2012)
– Romsey Movement Network Study - Transport Plan 2009

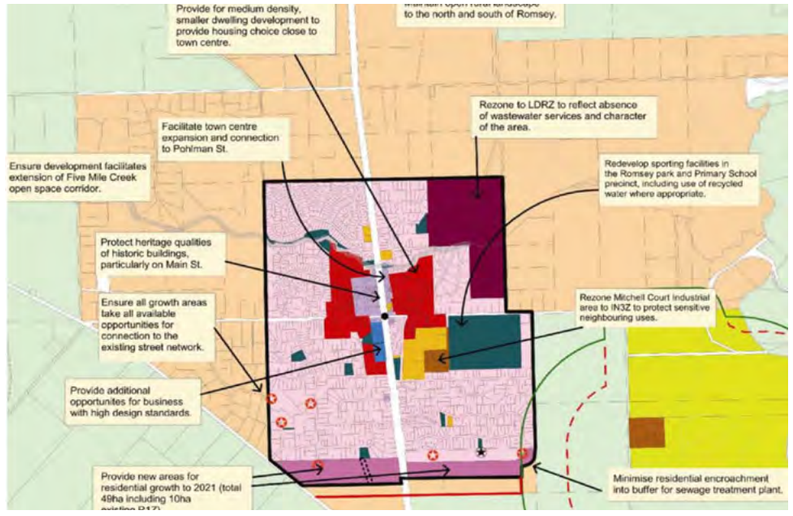
This opportunity also broadly aligns with Plan Melbourne, and the desire for 20-minute neighbourhoods and liveable, connected and sustainable communities.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

_ Planning instruments to encourage consolidation
_ Effective rates or similar instrument to encourage development of underutilised commercial lots
_ Clear community narrative that densification of the core preserves the lower density nature of the surrounding township



The light pink areas are zoned General Residential (GRZ). Image by MRSC



The red areas indicate where medium density is desired. Image by MRSC

Opportunity 2: Five Mile Creek Restoration

OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

The restoration intent of Five Mile Creek has already been documented in the Romsey Five Mile Creek Masterplan, and the Five Mile Creek WSUD Design Report. This opportunity leverages that intent into the Structure Plan to create a complete east-to-west open space and active transport corridor that elevates the ecological value of the creek, and increases accessibility to the natural environment, key services and amenity.

The segment west of Main Street is largely uninterrupted from private lots, with the potential for planning controls to ensure buffers to dwellings are maintained. The Eastern portion (east of Main Street) however will require further intervention to transition to public ownership, which could be incentivised through a range of planning instruments.

Whilst this outcome will take time to achieve, the linear pedestrian connection (to the east) should be explored (From Murphy Street, to Roger Street, past Thomas Circuit and up to Bentley Circuit), and any new developments to the east and west of Romsey should integrate and provide connection to, and elevate the objectives of the Five Mile Creek Masterplan.

Mechanism Type

Planning and Investment

Sustainability Category

Ecology / Water / Sustainable Transport

Issue it is addressing

_ Preservation and enhancement of environmental assets
_ Leisure and recreation
_ Cycling and pedestrian accessibility to town centre

Romsey in 2040

With a fully restored creek-line and high-quality cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, Romsey is more connected to their principal natural asset. Main Street, is more vibrant and supports new local businesses, is accessible by a large portion of the township by foot or bike, and vehicle transport for short trips is reduced, while ecological communities along the creek flourish.

KEY BENEFITS

_ **Ecological restoration and waterway health:**
+ The restoration of vegetation and provision of the sedimentation basin and wetland will increase the ecological value and waterway health significantly.

_ **Connectivity and sustainable transport:**
+ The creation of an east-to-west link (in addition to urban consolidation and economic development) will enable residents to access key amenity and services without reliance on vehicles.

_ **Community connection with natural assets:**
+ As the creek is restored and visited by more residents, connection to the natural asset is increased - with opportunities for increased environmental knowledge and social capital.

_ **Health & well-being:**
+ With more access points to the re-vegetated creek, health benefits from walking and mental health and well-being associated with connection to nature are generated.

_ **Lower GHG emissions:**
+ A central pedestrian connection along the creek has the potential to entice, what would otherwise be short vehicle trips into town, to walk and thus reduction transport related emissions.

_ **Climate Adaptation:**
+ A pedestrian connection with vegetated with climate resilient plant species will allow safe movement during heat events between residents and key services.

STRATEGIC JUSTIFICATION

Policy Rationale

- Romsey Issues & Opportunities Paper 2018
- Council Plan 2017-2027 (Year four 2020-2021)
- Biodiversity Strategy 2018
- Climate Change Risk Assessment and Response 2012
- Environment Strategy 2019
- Heat Response Plan
- Romsey Five Mile Creek Masterplan
- Five Mile Creek WSUD Design Report

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

_ Funding and staging of western area works
_ Potential planning instrument for creek protection
_ Incentivisation and acquisition of private land parcels
_ Integration with potential new development to east and west of town

Merri Creek in Melbourne's North is a great example of a creek-line pedestrian connection. Image by Bloke on Bike

The Armstrong Creek restoration won three Landscape Victoria Awards in 2017, including Landscape of the year. Image by Australian Ecosystems

Opportunity 3: Solar PV for Wastewater Treatment Plant

OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

This opportunity involves integrating renewable energy into the wastewater treatment plant (WTP), with the potential to support any new development on the eastern side of town (within proximity) to share and match the load between the two sites.

Either the existing 600-1000m buffer zone or the WTP land itself (or a combination) could provide an opportunity for a large solar array to be located, allowing for a higher use of the land, mixed with some re-vegetation and ground cover.

An excellent example of this is Salt, Torquay - an 81-dwelling subdivision being constructed across the road from a Barwon Water storage site that has recently been equipped with a 720-panel solar array. The arrangement will allow Barwon Water to reduce its electricity costs through selling surplus energy to the neighbouring residential development, in turn reducing their electricity bills and providing a steady flow of renewable energy.

Mechanism Type

Investment / partnership (supporting Greater Western Water)

Sustainability Category

Energy

Issue it is addressing

_ Underutilised land
_ Renewable energy transition
_ Climate responsive development

Romsey in 2040

The wastewater treatment plant, has now increased its activity due to growth of Romsey, and Lancefield (which it also services) is run entirely on renewable energy generated on the land within the WTP boundary and the buffer zone. A neighbourhood level battery has also been integrated. New residential development within proximity have been able to connect to the asset, reducing the demand for mains power and the risk of transmission line disruptions (particularly during storm events), increasing the climate resilience of the town, while reducing carbon emissions.

KEY BENEFITS

_ **Reduce GHG emissions:**
+ The generation of renewable energy for the WTP and surrounding residential lots will significantly reduce the GHG emissions associated with consuming typical grid electricity.

_ **Reduce reliance on transmission lines:**
+ Creating a renewable energy source close to consumption reduces the reliance on electricity from the grid which requires extensive transmission lines. During storm events (or through failure) these can be damaged, cutting power to communities and key services.

_ **Increase climate resilience:**
+ As a result of the above, communities and services are less susceptible to disruption during climate events, and therefore more resilient and adaptive.

_ **Financial benefit**
+ The infrastructure investment provides a financial benefit to the WTP and low cost, locally sourced electricity for local residents

_ **Partnership development**
+ Mutually beneficial partnerships have been developed with developers, Greater Western Water and local community

STRATEGIC JUSTIFICATION

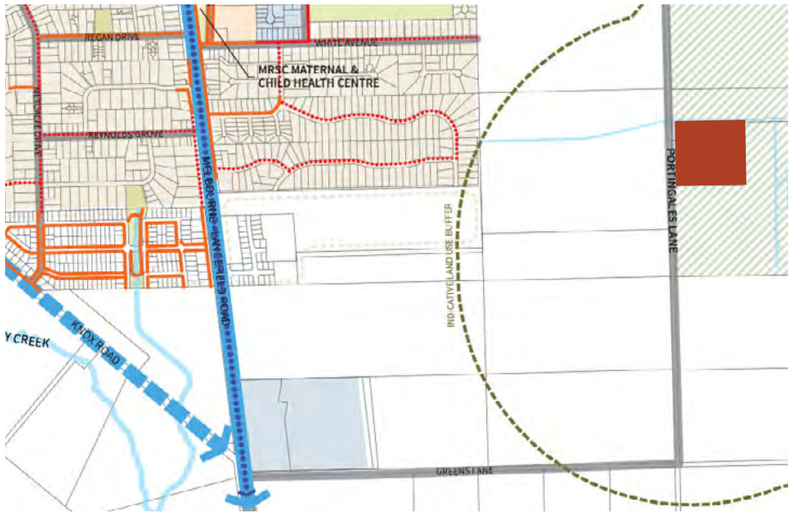
Policy Rationale

_ Romsey Issues & Opportunities Paper 2018
_ Council Plan 2017-2027 (year 4: 2020-2021)
_ Climate Change Action Plan 2017
_ Climate Change Risk Assessment and Response 2012

This opportunity also broadly aligns with the Victorian Climate Change Strategy (2021) and state emission reduction targets.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

_ Feasibility and dependency on development to the east of the township
_ Partnering / governance arrangements with / supporting Greater Western Water
_ Land ownership within buffer zone and planning instruments to support a renewable energy facility



The buffer zone (dashed line) around WTP (red square). Image by MRSC

An example of a racked solar PV array. Image by Tolotola

Opportunity 4: Climate Responsive Town Expansion

OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

This opportunity involves embedding planning mechanisms within any major town expansion to ensure climate responsive subdivision and housing design.

This might include embedding the Sustainable Subdivision Framework (SSF) as a planning tool for assessing individual subdivision applications (note: MRSC is already trialling the SSF), and developing a set of Housing Design Guidelines to ensure development delivers exceptional ESD outcomes at the lot scale.

The Design Guidelines can assist in communicating and advocating for better housing outcomes, particularly those single lot projects which may not trigger the anticipated state-wide ESD policy.

Mechanism Type

Planning

Sustainability Category

ESD / Climate Resilience / GHG Emissions / Ecology

Issue it is addressing

_ Carbon emissions
_ Climate adaptation
_ Environmental conservation and enhancement

Romsey in 2040

Romsey has grown its population, but in a sustainable way. New development is climate resilient, rich with ecology and has stronger connections to each other and the town centre. Renewable energy ensures emissions are reduced and stormwater management improves the quality of waterways such as Five Mile Creek.

Housing level guidance has further embedded these outcomes, guiding lot scale development to achieve exceptional ESD outcomes, incorporating passive design into dwellings to reduce heating and cooling loads, while providing healthy homes capable of withstanding the impacts of climate change.

KEY BENEFITS

_ **Climate Adaptation:**
+ Subdivisions and dwellings that are designed with climate change in mind are better equipped to deal with the impacts. Orientation, the provision of vegetation and shade canopy, and thermal performance all contribute to healthier homes.

_ **Sustainable growth:**
+ Climate responsive subdivision (using frameworks such as the SSF) ensure new communities are both sustainable in their own right and create connections to nearby community infrastructure

_ **Community:**
+ Increased vegetation and open space provision within new communities promotes social cohesion, with any new development within proximity to Five Mile Creek creating synergies and connections back to the town centre.

_ **Lower GHG emissions:**
+ Sustainable homes with rooftop solar PV support a reduced carbon footprint ensuring local emissions don't rise in line with population growth.

_ **Sustainable transport:**
+ Urban design and landscaping promotes reduced vehicle trips and more walking and cycling.

STRATEGIC JUSTIFICATION

Policy Rationale

_ Romsey Issues & Opportunities Paper 2018
_ Council Plan 2017-2027 (year 4: 2020-2021)
_ Climate Change Action Plan 2017
_ Romsey Movement Network Study Transport Plan 2009
_ Five Mile Creek WSUD Design Report

This opportunity also broadly aligns with the objectives of Plan Melbourne in delivering climate responsive communities.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

_ Embedding sustainable subdivision principles and policy in to local planning controls
_ Buy-in from development community to elevate urban design and housing outcomes
_ Creation of community support for climate responsive development

Subdivision outcomes at The Cape, in Cape Patterson. Image by Kim Landy

Sunvale Park in Sunshine is a great example of a naturalised swale in a suburban streetscape. Image by Emma Cross

Opportunity 5: Inter-town Bike Path & Public Transport Upgrade

OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

This opportunity is focused on delivering strong bicycle links south from Romsey to Clarkefield Station, and north to Lancefield – coupled with upgrades to both the V-line and bus servicing and timetable to ensure alignment with community needs.

The cycling connection aims to reduce the reliance on vehicles to access the V-line (and connection to Melbourne), as well as provide recreation opportunities between Romsey and Lancefield.

The existing bus timetable is not aligned with community needs, and needs significant revision and investment in consultation with the community to deliver a service that entices residents to leave their vehicle at home when commuting to work and/or to surrounding towns for services and recreation. A bus service (potentially electric) to Clarkefield Station, with additional V-line services should also be explored.

Mechanism Type

Planning / Investment / Advocacy

Sustainability Category

Sustainable Transport / GHG Emissions

Issue it is addressing

_ Public transport
_ Cycling and pedestrian infrastructure

Romsey in 2040

With a safe and efficient shared use path between Lancefield and Clarkefield (with Romsey in the middle), residents can now choose to ride their bike to the train station for broader connections, or inter-town trips for recreation and/or work. The health and well-being of Romsey is elevated and a cycling culture is flourishing.

The use of public transport, with express bus services to Clarkefield for Melbourne commuters supports a more sustainable commuting lifestyle, and an aligned bus timetable and service that serves the residents with purpose. Romsey is as active and mobile as ever, but uses vehicles far less frequently as regular trips are covered with sustainable transport modes.

KEY BENEFITS

_ **Sustainable Transport:**
+ The provision of a cycling connection from Lancefield to Clarkfield Station not only allows Romsey residents to actively commute north and south, but also increased internal movements within town, linking with the Five Mile creek east-to-west connection.

_ **Health & well-being:**
+ The increased volume of active commuters (walking and cycling) promotes health, increased connection to the environment and associated well-being outcomes.

_ **Lower GHG emissions:**
+ The increase in cycling and walking and public transport leads to reduction in private vehicle usage and subsequent GHG emission reductions.

STRATEGIC JUSTIFICATION

Policy Rationale

_ Romsey Issues & Opportunities Paper 2018
_ Council Plan 2017-2027 (year 4: 2020-2021)
_ Heat Response Plan
_ Romsey Movement Network Study - Transport Plan 2009
_ Romsey Five Mile Creek Masterplan

This opportunity also broadly aligns with the objectives of Plan Melbourne in transitioning towards sustainable transport, and state objectives to reduce emissions from transport.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

_ Investment / resourcing to fund cycling infrastructure
_ Feasibility / justification for public transport enhancement
_ Buy-in / behavioural change to support community to use infrastructure instead of continuing to drive

Castlemaine to Maldon rail-trail. Image by Bendigo Region

EV buses are now being made in Victoria. Image by Volgren

Opportunity 6: Build Social Capital

OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

Social capital is the networks and shared norms, values and understanding that facilitates co-operation within or among groups[1].

Romsey is not at sufficient size (and is unlikely to be in the short to medium term) to justify significant investment in secondary schools and other major community centres such as an aquatic centre. The Structure Plan however has an opportunity to guide delivery of social infrastructure which can help consolidate community connection. The closure of the existing pub, and a general lack of venues and community spaces within Romsey, represents a missed opportunity to build social capital within the town – connections which ultimately underpin community climate action and the delivery of opportunities identified which require behaviour change and cooperation. Whilst a community infrastructure analysis was not part of this work, the Structure Plan can articulate the need to provide spaces for these connections to occur. An opportunity exists to broaden the offering in the sports and recreation area to complement the bowls, golf club and football / netball club to draw in the wider community to these places of local connection.

A flexible governance model between Council, operators and licensees can be explored allow the use to expand and provide a hub not only for sports and recreation within the community, but provide for live music, events and more. There is also the opportunity for any structure to present as a safe-hub during heatwave events, and play a critical role in support a safe and cohesive community.

Mechanism Type

Planning / Investment / Partnership

Issue it is addressing

_ Community infrastructure

Romsey in 2040

The Romsey community has improved local community connection by expanding its cultural offering. The town is now home to a variety of local events, and has demonstrated strong partnerships between Council, community and local businesses.

KEY BENEFITS

_ **Social Cohesion**
+ Providing more spaces for the community to gather and exchange ideas inherently fosters social cohesion among various individuals and community groups. It also provides a space for community events, fund-raisers and other activities that only help build these key relationships.

_ **Climate Action:**
+ With expanded opportunities for community engagement, projects and programs aimed at delivering climate action (particularly those that require community feedback and participation) can be more effectively addressed by the community. Community connections built socially can support delivery of environmental outcomes.

_ **Climate Adaptation:**
+ A holistic model for assessing adaptive capacity is the 5-Capitals approach. These include: Physical, Financial, Environmental, Human and Social. Social capital is therefore key in developing a resilient community. With connections and trust between individuals and groups within the community, responses during climate events (e.g. heatwaves) are more coordinated and effective, and recovery times are quicker.

STRATEGIC JUSTIFICATION

Policy Rationale

_ Romsey Issues & Opportunities Paper 2018
_ Council Plan 2017-2027 (year 4: 2020-2021)
_ Biodiversity Strategy 2018
_ Climate Change Action Plan 2017
_ Climate Change Risk Assessment and Response 2012
_ Environment Strategy 2019
_ Heat Response Plan

This opportunity broadly aligns and supports all strategies, as increased social capital and connection often leads to stronger climate action from the community.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

_ Conduct community infrastructure assessment which includes assessment of cultural activities (such as space for farmers markets, festivals and other events, live music etc.)
_ Funding to conduct a feasibility study in delivering new social connection spaces, including existing community facilities that may be fit for purpose
_ Investment / partnership approach to develop commercially attractive private investment to facilitate delivery

Potential community-activation at sports and recreation area. Image by HV.H / QGIS

Community attendance at a climate panel discussion at M-Pavilion. Image by Kim Landy

1. EOCD (2007) Human Capital: How what you know shapes your life

We respectfully acknowledge that every project enabled or assisted by HIP V. HYPE in Australia exists on traditional aboriginal lands which have been sustained for thousands of years.

We honour their ongoing connection to these lands, and seek to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians in our work.

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For additional information, questions unturned, collaboration opportunities and project enquiries please get in touch.

293 Barkly Street
Brunswick VIC 3056
T. (03) 8060 1252

12/7 Grevillea Street
Byron Bay NSW 2481
T. (03) 8060 1252

wedeservebetter@hipvhype.com
hipvhype.com

HIP V. HYPE Sustainability Pty Ltd is a Climate Active certified carbon neutral business.

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