21.10 NATURAL AND BUILT ASSETS

21.10-1 Context

Casey has extensive non-urban areas which are valued because of their outstanding agricultural, landscape, cultural or environmental attributes. These areas should generally be regarded as finite resources which if developed will be irretrievably lost to the community.

The expansion of Casey’s urban boundaries and improvements in road networks will bring many rural settlements much closer to built up areas. This will place expansionary pressures on these settlements, many of which have limited social and physical infrastructure which in turn will affect the surrounding areas of agricultural, landscape and environmental significance.

The areas and their assets include:

- Rural areas to the south of the municipality which possess high quality soils used for intensive farming such as vegetable and flower growing.
- Non-urban areas to the north of the municipality (including Harkaway and Narre Warren North) which have landscapes of high scenic value.
- Coastal areas to the south of the municipality which constitute the northern shores of Western Port. These are areas of great biological diversity, containing a wide range of habitats including melaleuca thickets, mangroves, saltmarshes and inter-tidal mudflats. These habitats support many interdependent bird, plant and marine communities. The area is also covered by an international convention on wetlands protection and by international agreements on migratory birds.
- Waterways that provide a significant environmental, amenity, economic, hydraulic and cultural contribution to the municipality. The more notable waterways include Cardinia, Dandenong, Eumemmerring and Troops Creeks, Hallam Main Drain and Western Port Bay. They also include smaller creeks and tributaries, the nearby Port Phillip Bay and human-made features, such as, the ornamental lakes and ponds being developed within new residential estates. While often performing important hydraulic functions, the broader value of the watercourses is largely dependent upon the quality of the water passing through them. Accordingly, there is the need to protect stormwater quality in order to protect important ecological values, to provide attractive and useable recreational areas, to enhance property values and the economic use of the waterways and to protect sites of aboriginal, heritage and cultural significance.
- Compared to other municipalities closer to Melbourne, Casey has relatively few buildings and places of historical significance. The retention of prime examples of our built heritage will give Casey residents historical insights into a municipality otherwise dominated by new buildings and places.
- Heritage places, including buildings, areas, structures, archaeological sites, trees and landscapes with scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value, for past, present or future generations, existing throughout Casey. Many have been identified through heritage studies, which include the City of Berwick Heritage Conservation Study 1993 and Casey Heritage Study 2004. Casey’s diverse heritage places may be of existing or potential national, State or local significance, including “Edrington”, the former home of Lord and Lady Casey. Identified sites need to be protected from inappropriate development.
Objectives

- To protect Casey’s agricultural, landscape, cultural or environmental attributes from inappropriate urban development for the future enjoyment of Casey’s communities.
- To protect the high quality soils of the south from inappropriate subdivision for intensive farming purposes.
- To protect Casey’s valuable sand and stone extractive resources.
- To protect quarry holes as future land fill sites or refuse tips from adjacent development that would limit their capacity as community assets.
- To protect the high scenic value of the landscapes in Casey’s northern Foothills region.
- To protect ecologically fragile and sensitive coastal environs from urban expansion.
- To protect Casey’s many rural settlements from unsupportable expansionary pressures.
- To maintain a healthy system of waterways that protects the diverse ecological values of the waterways and the ultimate receiving waters of Western Port and Port Phillip Bays while also minimising flooding and providing the community with the opportunity to enjoy the recreational economic benefits of well maintained safe waterways.
- To identify and protect Casey’s heritage places from inappropriate development.

Strategies

- Encourage uses and developments which:
  - enhance the unique character of existing rural settlements;
  - are responsive to site constraints including topography, outlook and vegetation;
  - are harmoniously integrated with the rural or coastal landscape;
  - provide employment opportunities for rural communities;
  - do not generate excessive traffic or demand for services which are not available in the area;
  - revegetate cleared areas with indigenous vegetation;
  - do not adversely impact on identified heritage places, including sites and features of Aboriginal cultural heritage value.
- Examine opportunities for development in locations that do not possess:
  - identified high quality, versatile agricultural soils;
  - identified environmental significance (such as along watercourses, wetlands, the coastal areas of Western Port and areas of remnant vegetation);
  - outstanding landscape values (such as around the northern foothills and the shores of Western Port).
- Examine opportunities for development in rural areas provided that it does not fragment rural land holdings and make farming activities less economically viable.
- Examine opportunities for development that minimises the removal of remnant native vegetation or the destruction of habitats that support native plants and animals.
Encourage the use or development of land in a manner that enhances the environmental values of Western Port, (for example, by not creating polluted runoff and/or by selecting sites for urban uses within existing coastal townships).

Encourage commercial development to locate in or adjacent to existing settlements.

Conserve heritage places (Aboriginal and European) identified as being significant at a national, State, regional and local level. Support the development of such buildings and places if it can be shown that their heritage values can be retained.

Facilitate a greater understanding and consideration of stormwater attributes in both the urban and rural areas of the municipality.

Ensure that Casey’s rural land is not eroded or prejudiced by inappropriate development, particularly developments that do not need to be located in a rural area.

Implementation

These strategies will be implemented by:

Use of policy

- Use of Extractive Industry Policy to have regard to the proximity of proposed development to extractive industries to protect the continued operation of the industries and any future use of the sites for waste disposal (Extractive Industry Policy, Clause 22.13).

- Using Casey Foothills Policy guidelines to assess development proposals in relation to visual exposure, landscape and/or vegetation management, infrastructure and heritage (Casey Foothills Policy, Clause 22.03).

- Using Western Port Coastal Policy to recognise the need for sympathetic development to conserve the environmental and scenic qualities of the Western Port coastal areas (Western Port Coastal Policy, Clause 22.04).

- Using the Stormwater Policy to recognise the need to protect stormwater and its associated environmental, amenity, economic, hydraulic and cultural values (Stormwater Policy, Clause 22.17).

- Using the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Policy to set out guidelines for when development applications or requests to amend the planning scheme should have regard to the identification, protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Policy, Clause 22.21).

- Using the relevant conservation/management guidelines in the Casey Heritage Study 2004 in the assessment of planning applications relating to identified heritage places.

- Using the Non-Agricultural Uses In Green Wedge Areas Policy to protect Casey’s ‘green wedge’ land from ad hoc and inappropriate development (Non-Agricultural Uses In Green Wedge Areas Policy, Clause 22.18).

Application of zones and overlays

- Applying the Green Wedge A Zone to protect and conserve the sensitive coastal areas under private ownership.

- Applying the Urban Floodway Zone to protect identified waterways and drainage courses from inappropriate development which may be detrimental to water quality and impede overland flow paths.
Applying the Public Conservation and Resource Zone to protect and conserve the natural environment of the coastal areas under public ownership.

Applying the Environmental Significance Overlay to areas of identified environmental significance including the coastal environs.

Applying the Significant Landscape Overlay to areas of identified landscape character and value including the Casey Foothills and Western Port coast.

Applying the Heritage Overlay to heritage places of national, State and local significance, as identified in Council’s heritage studies and strategic work.

**Further strategic work**

- Developing a policy for Protection of Potential Landfill Sites and complementary policy for Extractive Industry and Sensitive Uses.
- Developing a strategy for Recreation and Open Space within the municipality.
- Developing a policy for conservation.
- Developing a policy with input from Parks Victoria for the protection of the Cardinia Creek Parklands.
- Ensuring that areas of remnant vegetation as identified in the Port Phillip and Westernport Strategic Vegetation Plan – City of Casey Pilot Project (1997) are protected with stronger controls and guidelines by preparing a vegetation strategy for the municipality to identify significant vegetation.
- Preparing a local heritage policy to guide day-to-day decision-making in respect to the protection and conservation of Casey’s heritage places.
- Preparing guidelines for the Housing Commission of Victoria Doveton Estate precinct.
- Undertaking a further study to identify additional heritage places, including significant trees, gardens and landscapes, and Aboriginal cultural heritage.
- Conducting a regular review of identified heritage places to maintain the integrity of the Heritage Overlay controls.
- Developing an environmental strategy.

**Other actions**

- Investigating incentives for owners of land to:
  - retain and restore places of heritage significance;
  - revegetate land or maintain tracts of remnant native vegetation;
  - eradicate or remove identified environmental weeds.
- Facilitating the revegetation of publicly owner land through Casey’s Growing a Green Web program.

**Reference Documents**

- *Casey Heritage Study 2004*
- *City of Berwick Heritage Conservation Study 1993*
- *Heritage of City of Casey, Historic Sites in Former Cranbourne Shire (1996)*
- City of Casey (Cranbourne Knox) Heritage Study 1998
- Casey Significant Tree Strategy, City of Casey, 2014.