21.04 THE FOOTHILLS

21.04-1 Context

The Foothills is located to the north of the municipality, and consists of the areas around Lysterfield, Narre Warren North and Harkaway. It is located in hilly terrain, with breathtaking views to and from the ridges and other vantage points. The region is predominantly used for grazing, horse agistment and regional open space (Lysterfield Lake Park, Churchill National Park and the Police Paddocks).

There are two rural settlements at Harkaway and Narre Warren North. There is a variety of lot sizes, ranging from small house lots in the rural settlements to rural residential lots in Lysterfield, to much larger land holdings elsewhere. Most of these lots are unsewered.

The area is facing increasing pressure from landowners wishing to subdivide and develop land at higher densities. Yet the area lacks much of the physical and social infrastructure to support such growth and is proximate to the bushfire prone areas of the Dandenongs to the north.

The area is important because the hilly terrain offers topographical and scenic relief to the low-lying built up areas. In addition, its visual qualities contribute to a positive image of the municipality as a desirable place to live. The area should be protected because intensive development will destroy scenic attributes.

21.04-2 Objectives, strategies and implementation

Objectives

- To ensure the long term protection and enhancement of the Casey Foothills for its:
  - valued rural landscape and character;
  - significant visually exposed hilltops and ridge lines; and,
  - vegetation, which provide the “green” backdrop to the City of Casey.
- To identify and protect hill tops, ridges and other areas with identified landscape significance from development that jeopardises the “green crest” that characterises the Foothills.
- To preserve the identity of rural settlements and townships and provide for rural residential development in specified areas.
- To increase public access to and use of open space by the provision of open space linkages.
- To allow development compatible with the protection and enhancement of the Foothills and protect the area from the threat of bushfire.

Strategies

- Enhance the landscape quality of the Foothills and ensure new development is not visually intrusive from the major public areas within and outside the Foothills.
- Re-vegetate areas of change in accordance with pre-settlement vegetation cover.
- Protect and enhance drainage lines, the Western Port catchment, native vegetation and sites of heritage and Aboriginal significance.
• Recognise limited development opportunities exist for proposals which retain the landscape and environment objectives of the foothills.

• Promote the Casey Foothills as an alternative recreational/lifestyle area.

• Acknowledge that the Casey Foothills is not the preferred location for additional rural residential development within the municipality.

• Protect and enhance the “gateway” to the Dandenongs and encourage low key tourism and outdoor recreation facilities compatible with the Foothills.

• Retain existing subdivision controls, particularly for unserviced land with high landscape value and remnant vegetation.

• Maintain a northern buffer against unconstrained urban expansion into the Dandenongs.

• Provide a clear and justified demarcation between the urban and non-urban areas, in particular Narre Warren North and Harkaway and contain urban development within existing township boundaries allowing residential expansion of the townships only if there is proper strategic justification.

• Designate areas specifically for rural residential development.

• Protect and enhance existing open space and provide additional linkages where possible including along the Cardinia, Eumemmerring and Dandenong Creeks.

• Provide an integrated road network for the Casey Foothills.

• Provide reticulated sewerage and water supply to townships and Lysterfield South.

**Implementation**

These strategies will be implemented by:

**Use of policy and exercise of discretion**

• Using local 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 local Township Policy to retain the identity of the Narre Warren North and Harkaway townships by identifying their growth limits (Township Policy, Clause 22.02).

• Encouraging the development of open space linkages through public open space contributions (Clause 52.01).

• Encouraging the revegetation of areas of the Foothills in accordance with pre-settlement vegetation cover.

**Application of zones and overlays**

• Applying the Rural Living Zone to the entire Casey Foothills, excluding the rural townships, to provide for residential development and living opportunities in a rural environment.

• Applying the Township Zone to the rural settlements of Narre Warren North and Harkaway to provide for a range of appropriate residential, commercial and industrial uses in Casey’s townships.

• Applying a Significant Landscape Overlay – Casey Foothills (SLO1) to identify, conserve and enhance the significant landscape of the Foothills.
Further strategic work

- Reviewing Casey Foothills Strategy to:
  - Further investigate whether specific areas within the Foothills warrant a reduction of the minimum lot size to four hectares or justify being included in an Environmental Rural Zone.
  - Ensure 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.

- Preparing a strategy for the Harkaway Township to retain the identity of the town.

- Identifying any bushfire prone areas as the basis for the introduction of a Wildfire Management Overlay.

Other actions

- Investigating potential to allow individual heritage properties to be used for purposes consistent with the strategic objectives for the Foothills that are otherwise prohibited under the relevant zone controls.

- Facilitating revegetation of publicly owned land in the Foothills through Casey’s Growing a Green Web program.