
SOMERVILLE TOWNSHIP STRUCTURE PLAN PROGRESS REPORT (JULY 2024)

Somerville township is located near the northern boundary of the Shire along the eastern coastline. With an estimated resident population of around 11,900 in 2018, it is the largest township along Western Port Bay in terms of population that is forecast to grow to 12,834 by 2036.

While a substantial portion of the township is in the green wedge or set aside for port-related special purpose use, the urban area boasts a lively commercial-industrial core that is surrounded by residential land which decreases in density towards the edges.

The activity centre is regarded a Large Township Activity Centre with a relatively large commercial floorspace that is predominantly retail. Although the centre features both street-based and mall-based shopping, it exhibits a relatively poor integration between various components due to the physical division of the railway line.

The Somerville Township Structure Plan 2019 was adopted by Council at its Planning Services Committee meeting on 15 July 2019.

VISION

Somerville will be a well-established rural town building on its long and celebrated history as an attractive and affordable place, providing a range of housing types and excellent facilities and services to support the community today and into the future. The town's rural appeal is maintained through large open spaces, trees, views to the surrounding countryside and good recreational facilities. An enhanced town centre and improved public spaces and connectivity has created a more cohesive community, while transport infrastructure ensures that residents can continue to enjoy the benefits of the township's rural location.

OBJECTIVES

The future of the Somerville Township will be guided by the following seven objectives:

1. To provide a range of housing choices to meet current and future community needs.

Strategies

Facilitate a greater diversity of housing stock particularly in and around the town centre and parks.

Encourage housing that meets the needs of an ageing population and increase the diversity of household types.

2. To create a more unified town centre through enhancements to the public and private realms.

Strategies

Facilitate a more cohesive town centre, better connecting its eastern and western sides, and provide a seamless transition between the railway station and the town centre.

Support development within the town centre that contributes to a greater range of retail and commercial spaces and offerings in the town centre.

Encourage integrated mixed use development and community services and infrastructure in the area shown in Precinct 1 as 'opportunity areas for commercial, community, housing and open space'.

Improve the public realm within the town centre to facilitate safe and convenient pedestrian access, amenity, public gathering and business performance.

Encourage temporary uses which activate the railway reserve land and improve pedestrian connectivity between Frankston-Flinders Road and Edward Street.

3. To ensure the continuing viability of the township's retail, commercial and industrial areas.

Strategies

Reinforce the town centre as the focus for retail and commercial activities and in the north-eastern section of the township as the focus of industrial activity.

Maintain a range of retail and commercial spaces and offerings in the town centre, and a range of employment opportunities in the industrial area.

Support the economic activities of local businesses through improved promotions, programs and signage.

Facilitate uses such as primary produce sales or other uses that support industry in the township and the green wedge on commercially zoned land.

4. To ensure that community infrastructure meets the needs of residents of the township.

Strategies

Support the provision of additional community facilities, including youth facilities and a fit for purpose library, to meet identified community needs preferably within the township.

Provide for new public gathering areas and potentially a community garden, particularly within the railway reserve in the town centre, along with a range of temporary pop-up food and drink facilities and landscaping, paving and public furniture.

Ensure that residents have adequate transport links to access community infrastructure provided in Somerville and surrounding townships.

5. To ensure new built form is of a scale and form appropriate to the township's character.

Strategies

Support development in residential areas that is consistent with Council's adopted Housing and Settlement Strategy 2017 (of up to a maximum of 2 storeys).

Support development in residential areas that is consistent with Council's Neighbourhood Character Study & Guidelines (once adopted) in facilitating development that is in character with the township.

Support development up to 3 storeys in commercial areas and up to 2 storeys in industrial areas.

Support development that respects the existing heritage fabric of the township.

6. To provide a range of attractive and functional open spaces in the township that support the community's recreation needs.

Strategies

Facilitate a series of high quality open spaces integrated with the surrounding neighbourhood.

Promote the semi-rural character of the township by maintaining, improving and complementing open spaces, trees and local views.

Continue to build upon the existing and extensive range of recreation facilities in the township.

Enhance the town centre and residential areas through additional tree planting and improvements to existing open spaces.

7. To ensure residents are provided with a variety of movement options that are safe, accessible, integrated and do not depend on vehicle ownership within the township for equitable access to services.

Strategies

Improve the township's existing road, off-road and public transport infrastructure to ensure residents have real choice about how they access local facilities and the surrounding region.

Improve amenity, priority and safety for pedestrians and cyclists to and within the township with a focus on connecting the community to key destinations.

Support the intensification of land use within the town centre and key corridors to reduce the scatter of trip generating uses beyond the town centre.

Improve connectivity between key locations within the town centre including the eastern and western retail areas, the industrial/retail area to the north of Eramosa Road East and the three retail/community service areas to the west of the railway line.

Simplify the design and operation of complex intersections to enhance cyclist safety and pedestrian priority.

Monitor the number of truck movements to and through the township and review traffic speeds to provide for improved pedestrian and cyclist safety.

New or enhanced links and potential intersection improvements are shown with green dashed lines and arrows on the township's movement framework in Figure 9 (page 25 of the Somerville Township Structure Plan).

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS STATUS UPDATE

ACTION		LEAD AGENCY	STATUS	2024 REVIEW COMMENTS
A1	Council will encourage mixed-use development as shown in Figure 12 (page 29 of the Somerville Township Structure Plan) for Precinct 1, providing new forms of housing to support the town centre through improved street activation, surveillance and integration.	Council Strategic Planning	Complete	<p>Amendment C269morn was approved by the Minister for Planning in June 2022.</p> <p>The amendment applied DDO30 to Commercial 1 Zone land in the town centre to encourage mixed use development.</p>
A2	Council will encourage developers to work with housing associations or other agencies to deliver more diverse housing stock within the township, providing for the needs of an ageing population.	Council Strategic Planning	Underway	<p>Council has prepared a draft Affordable Housing Development Contributions Strategy to help increase the supply of affordable housing on the Peninsula through the planning system.</p> <p>The draft Strategy is focused on social housing – being housing supplied by the State Government or Registered Housing Associations for eligible families and individuals at a subsidised, affordable rent.</p> <p>The draft Strategy proposes to introduce a mandatory requirement in the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme for most new development on the Peninsula to contribute towards the cost of delivering social housing within the Shire, subject to a range of exemptions.</p>

ACTION		LEAD AGENCY	STATUS	2024 REVIEW COMMENTS
				Community and stakeholder consultation on the draft Strategy commences on 29 April until 7 June 2024.
A3	The Plan will provide for new, well designed, accessible and integrated mixed-use residential, community and commercial development as shown in Figure 12 (page 29 of the Somerville Township Structure Plan) for Precinct 1.	Council Strategic Planning	Complete	Amendment C269morn was approved by the Minister for Planning in June 2022. The amendment applied DDO30 to Commercial 1 Zone land in the town centre to encourage mixed use development.
A4	The Plan will connect and better integrate the separate retail, community, commercial and railway station areas to provide a more distinct and cohesive town centre as shown in Precinct 1 and Figures 5 and 6 (page 17 of the Somerville Township Structure Plan).	Council Strategic Planning	Complete	Amendment C269morn was approved by the Minister for Planning in June 2022. The amendment applied DDO30 to Commercial 1 Zone land in the town centre to encourage mixed use development. Funding was received for the Eramosa and Frankston-Flinders Road pedestrian crossing which has now been delivered.
A5	Council will develop a streetscape masterplan for the town centre precinct identifying projects to be undertaken over the coming years to enhance amenity, accessibility and improve the quality of the public realm.	Council Strategic Planning	Yet to be commenced	Subject to budget and staff resourcing.

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A6	Council will undertake an audit of street lighting in the town centre to identify opportunities to enhance pedestrian movements.	Council Traffic and Transport	Yet to be commenced	Subject to budget and staff resourcing.
A7	Any future redevelopment of Somerville Plaza and Somerville Central is to include vehicle and pedestrian access between the sites over the drainage reserve (subject to negotiation with Melbourne Water).	Council Strategic Planning	Ongoing	Amendment C269morn was approved by the Minister for Planning in June 2022. The amendment applied DDO30 to Commercial 1 Zone land in the town centre to encourage mixed use development.
A8	Council will work with local businesses to support their economic activities through clustering, promotion and a business support program.	Council Economic Development	Underway	A survey of all businesses in the Somerville commercial area was undertaken in early 2021. Part of the survey involved questions on business support needs and an extended workshop program was developed which addresses these needs. This program was launched in July. Additionally, a business grants program which will provide grants to consortia of businesses in small townships for revitalisation and promotion activities was launched in October. Surveys will be undertaken again later this year. Council adopted a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy in May 2024. The Strategy provides a framework for the Shire to support local businesses and their economic activities.
A9	Council will collaborate with traders to identify the need and location of	Council Economic Development	Yet to be commenced	Subject to budget and staff resourcing.



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	suitable way finding signage within the township.			
A10	Council will investigate the need for additional community facilities, including public gathering areas, temporary facilities and a community garden in the railway reserve or surrounds, youth facilities and a fit for purpose library within the township and advocate to the State Transit Authority for use of land for this outcome.	Council Community Infrastructure & Open Space Planning	Underway	Council is currently developing a new Community Facilities Infrastructure Strategy to guide decision making for the future planning, delivery and management of Council's community facilities. Using the principles in this Strategy, Infrastructure Investment Action Plans will be developed for each township.
A11	Council will advocate to Public Transport Victoria (PTV), the Victorian Government and private bus providers for additional public transport options to the township and to surrounding townships to better access community and support services.	Council Traffic and Transport	Ongoing	This action is ongoing. Council continues to advocate for better public transport on the Peninsula. Council has been successful in securing further State funding to improve the Hastings to Mornington route.
A12	Council will adopt the <i>Neighbourhood Character Study & Guidelines</i> (currently under preparation) to prepare further guidance on the built form character requirements for the residential areas of the township.	Council Strategic Planning	Underway	The Neighbourhood Character Study & Guidelines was adopted by Council in October 2019. The recommended controls to protect and enhance neighbourhood character are now proposed to be incorporated into the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme via Amendment C219morn.



ACTION		LEAD AGENCY	STATUS	2024 REVIEW COMMENTS
				Officers are working through the recommendations of an independent planning panel that reviewed Amendment C219morn and all community submissions in early 2023. Amendment C219morn will be finalised and presented to Council for adoption in mid-2024.
A13	Council will prepare precinct design guidelines, requirements and planning controls to set parameters for appropriate scale, height and intensity of development (see Section 9).	Council Strategic Planning	Complete	Amendment C269morn was approved by the Minister for Planning in June 2022. The amendment applied DDO30 to Commercial 1 Zone land in the town centre to encourage mixed use development of an appropriate height and design.
A14	Council will undertake a strategic review of the distribution and role of all local parks within Somerville, with a view to improving their accessibility, attractiveness, amenity, security, utility, maintenance and habitat.	Council Community Infrastructure & Open Space Planning	Underway	Council is developing an Open Space Strategy to set a clear direction for achieving an open space network that meets the wide-ranging needs of a growing and diverse community.
A15	Council will plant additional trees and other locally appropriate vegetation within parks and open spaces to improve amenity and micro-climate.	Council Natural Systems	Yet to be commenced	Subject to budget and staff resourcing.

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A16	Council will investigate opportunities to integrate parks within their surrounding neighbourhood to enhance public safety and comfort for users.	Council Community Infrastructure & Open Space Planning	Underway	Council is developing an Open Space Strategy to set a clear direction for achieving an open space network that meets the wide-ranging needs of a growing and diverse community.
A17	Council will increase the provision of shade trees in Somerville with the aim of achieving 40% canopy cover of all public spaces and private parking areas by 2033.	Council Natural Systems	Underway	This action will be considered as part of Council's Urban Forest Strategy which is currently under development. Community consultation is expected to commence mid 2024.
A18	Council will utilise allocated \$200K Federal funding once available for upgrades to sporting facilities at Barber Reserve, subject to confirmation on scope of works and timing.	Council Infrastructure Projects	Complete	Council has delivered upgrades to the sporting facilities at Barber Reserve.
A19	Council will advocate to the Victorian Government to deliver improvements to the bus network throughout the region to provide for greater access to more destinations with higher frequency services.	Council Traffic and Transport	Ongoing	This action is ongoing. Council continues to advocate for better public transport on the Peninsula.
A20	Council will advocate to the Victorian Government to improve access and	Council	Ongoing	This action is ongoing. Council continues to advocate for better public transport on the Peninsula.

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	public amenity between the railway station and nearby bus stops.	Traffic and Transport		
A21	Council will work with VicRoads to investigate pedestrian and cycling safety on the local and arterial road network, advocating for 40km/h speed limits in the Town Centre Precinct and priority for pedestrians and cyclists crossing all roads within the town centre.	Council Traffic and Transport	Complete	The pedestrian crossing upgrade located on Frankston-Flinders Road has been delivered. A TAC grant has been granted for the Grant Road Pedestrian upgrade and the 40km speed reduction has been approved.
A22	Council will advocate to VicRoads and the Victorian Government to prioritise improvements to pedestrian and cycling priority, safety and greater opportunities to move within the township particularly at main roads and intersections as identified in Figure 9 (page 25 of the Somerville Township Structure Plan), with urgent focus on upgrades to the roundabout located at the intersection of Eramosa Road (East and West), Frankston Flinders Road and Grant Road.	Council Traffic and Transport	Underway	The Shire's Integrated Transport Strategy is under development which will assist advocacy for cycling improvements. The construction of new footpaths is guided by Council's Pedestrian Access Strategy 2024. Delivery is subject to budget availability.
A23	Council will enhance pedestrian and cycling links between precincts of the township and permeability within	Council	Underway	The Shire's Integrated Transport Strategy is under development which will assist advocacy for cycling improvements.

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	residential, commercial and industrial areas as identified in Figure 9 (page 25 of the Somerville Township Structure Plan).	Traffic and Transport		The construction of new footpaths is guided by Council's Pedestrian Access Strategy 2024. Delivery is subject to budget availability.
A24	Council will advocate for the Baxter Railway electrification project to consider extending the duplication and electrification project to Somerville and Hastings.	Council Traffic and Transport	Underway	In November 2023, the Federal Government withdrew funding for the upgrade of the Stony Point railway line which included the electrification project to Somerville and Hastings.
A25	Council will work with significant parking providers to monitor occupancy and availability of car parking across the centre trialling the use of sensor technology or other methods.	Council Traffic and Transport	Yet to be commenced	Subject to budget and staff resourcing.
A26	Council will advocate to the State Government for shared funding to support the shared user path between Baxter and Somerville and will commence works along this missing link of the Western Port Bay Trail by accessing Federal funding committed during the 2019 election.	Council Traffic and Transport	Underway	Funding for this alignment has been allocated under a State Government program which is in addition to the Federal funding. The section is now fully funded as a result.
A27	Council will work with VicRoads to convert all of the existing school/pedestrian crossings in	Council	Complete	It is noted that key pedestrian improvements are identified and prioritised by the Shire's Principle Pedestrian Network, including in the Somerville area.

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	Somerville into permanent Wombat crossings (raised zebra type crossings) and ensure that all roads have footpaths.	Traffic and Transport		The school crossing located at the intersection of Frankston-Flinders Road and Eramosa Road West has been upgraded to a raised zebra crossing by the State Government.
A28	Council will work with VicRoads to investigate an improved Frankston-Flinders Road crossing across Frankston-Flinders Road near the Park Lane intersection.	Council Traffic and Transport	Complete	The pedestrian refuge on Frankston-Flinders Road has now been delivered.