



BAXTER TOWNSHIP STRUCTURE PLAN PROGRESS REPORT (DECEMBER 2025)

Baxter is a small inland township located in the northern region of the Mornington Peninsula. It has an area of 987 hectares, is 49.1 kilometres from Melbourne's CBD and accommodates a population of approximately 2,162 permanent residents. The township is predominantly comprised of a relatively flat, open rural landscape due to the majority of Baxter lying outside of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB).

The township is uniquely placed in a rural setting on the northern edge of the Peninsula nestled in between green wedge land, but relatively close to the outskirts of the Melbourne suburban area. It provides a variety of commercial, recreational, employment and community services to the residential population and is highly prized for its lifestyle factors by the local community.

The township is mainly residential in character with three local retail centres located along Baxter-Tooradin Road serving the local community and adjacent rural areas. The main retail centre identified as a Local Activity Centre, located near the Baxter train station includes a supermarket, associated speciality shops and other retail and commercial uses fronting the main street.

Council adopted the *Baxter Township Structure Plan 2019* at the 1 April 2019 Planning Services Committee Meeting.

VISION

Baxter will continue to be a small township nestled in the green wedge, offering the best of metropolitan and rural lifestyles. It is an affordable and attractive place providing a range of housing types, recreation opportunities, facilities and services to support the community today and into the future. 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 location.



OBJECTIVES

The future of the Baxter 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 an increased diversity of housing stock particularly in and around the town centre.

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

- 2. To create a town centre around the railway station that is a focus for the community and a great place to meet.**

Strategies

Facilitate the development of a cohesive town centre that better connects the railway station and town centre.

Support opportunities for new development around the railway station that are well designed and integrated with the train station, including on Council owned land which is subject to potential disposal.

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

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

- 3. To ensure the continuing viability of the township's retail and commercial areas.**

Strategies

Reinforce the town centre as the focus for retail and commercial activities in the township and commercial land west of the Mornington Peninsula Freeway for service retailing.

Maintain a range of retail and commercial spaces and offerings in the town centre.

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

- 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, to meet identified community needs either within the township or in adjacent areas.

Ensure that residents have adequate transport to access community infrastructure provided in surrounding townships and Major Activity Centres.



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

Strategies

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

Support development up to 3 storeys in commercial areas in the town centre and up to 2 storeys for the local shops commercial area.

6. To improve amenities and facilities within parks and open spaces for a range of ages and life stages.

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 recreation facilities in, and adjoining, the township.

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

Encourage the development of land adjacent to parks to be designed to improve passive surveillance and connectivity.

7. To ensure residents are provided with a variety of movement options that are safe, accessible, integrated and prioritise all mode types and movements within the township.

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 bicycle riders to, and within, the township with improved pathways and pedestrian facilities as shown in Figure 6 below (page 22 of the Baxter Township Structure Plan).



IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS STATUS UPDATE

ACTION		LEAD AGENCY	2024 STATUS	2024 COMMENTS	2025 STATUS	2025 COMMENTS
A1	Council will encourage some limited forms of housing and mixed use development adjacent to, and within, the town centre as shown for Precinct 1 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 Schedule 25 to the Design and Development Overlay (DDO25) to the town centre (all Commercial 1 Zone land which requires all development in Precinct 1 to comply with the design objectives included in DDO25.</p>	Complete	N/A (action noted as completed during the previous review).
A2	Council will prepare design controls to facilitate medium density housing around parks providing more diverse housing types (refer Section 9).	Council Strategic Planning	Underway	<p>Amendment C219morn seeks to implement Council's adopted Housing & Settlement Strategy and Neighbourhood Character Study. It proposes to rezone the residential land from General Residential Zone to Neighbourhood Residential Zone. The NRZ will ensure new development reflects the preferred neighbourhood character of the area.</p> <p>Officers are working through the recommendations of an independent planning panel that reviewed</p>	Complete	Amendment C219morn implements Council's adopted Housing & Settlement Strategy and Neighbourhood Character Study. It was adopted by Council in August 2024 and submitted to the Minister for Planning in September 2024 for approval. The amendment implements planning controls to ensure growth occurs in the right locations (close to jobs, services and public transport) and that new development reflects preferred neighbourhood character. The



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				<p>Amendment C219morn and all community submissions in early 2023.</p> <p>Amendment C219morn will be finalised and presented to Council for adoption in mid-2024.</p>		<p>Minister is still yet to decide whether to approve Amendment C219morn.</p> <p>The State Government also introduced the Townhouse & Low-Rise Code in March 2025 which applies to medium density development. The code provides a 'deemed-to-comply' assessment pathway to support faster decisions and provide certainty for townhouses and small-scale apartment development.</p>
A3	Council will encourage the delivery of more diverse housing stock within the township, providing for the needs of an ageing population.	Council Planning Services	Underway	This action is ongoing and will continue to be implemented as planning permit applications are submitted for individual sites.	Ongoing	This action is ongoing and will continue to be implemented as planning permit applications are submitted for individual sites.
A4	Council will investigate options to work with housing associations to deliver more diverse housing stock on its land holdings (some of which are subject to potential disposal) within the township.	Council Major Project Coordination / Property / Community Services??	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</p>	Ongoing	Council prepared a draft Affordable Housing Development Contributions Strategy to give clear direction about how the Shire will support and enable the delivery of more affordable housing on the Peninsula through the collection of contributions for certain types of development via the Planning Scheme. However, Council



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				<p>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> <p>Community and stakeholder consultation on the draft Strategy commences on 29 April until 7 June 2024.</p>		<p>abandoned the project in December 2024.</p> <p>Where possible, officers continue to negotiate with planning permit applicants and proponents of privately led planning scheme amendments to deliver affordable and diverse housing outcomes, including negotiating with developers to provide contributions to housing associations to deliver social and affordable housing on the Peninsula as per Council's adopted Triple A Housing Plan 2020-2030 and Social and Affordable Housing Policy.</p>
A5	<p>Council will develop a streetscape masterplan for the town centre precinct identifying projects to be undertaken over the coming years to enhance amenity and improve the quality of the public realm.</p>	<p>Council Strategic Planning</p>	<p>Yet to be commenced</p>	<p>Subject to budget and staff resourcing.</p>	<p>Yet to be commenced</p>	<p>Subject to budget and staff resourcing.</p>



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A6	The Plan will provide for new, well designed and integrated mixed-use residential, community and small scale commercial development in the town centre as shown in Precinct 1.	Council Strategic Planning	Complete	Amendment C269morn was approved by the Minister for Planning in June 2022. The amendment applied Schedule 25 to the Design and Development Overlay (DDO25) to the town centre (all Commercial 1 Zone land which requires all development in Precinct 1 to comply with the design objectives and buildings and works requirements included in DDO25.	Complete	N/A (action noted as completed during the previous review).
A7	Council owned land north of the railway station which is subject to potential disposal will be rezoned in part as shown in Precinct 1.	Council Property	Complete	Amendment C269morn was approved by the Minister for Planning in June 2022. The amendment rezoned land at 18 Thomas Street, Baxter from General Residential Zone to Commercial 1 Zone and has been retained by Council. The remaining General Residential Zone land has been disposed of by Council.	Complete	N/A (action noted as completed during the previous review).
A8	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.	Yet to be commenced	Subject to budget and staff resourcing.



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A9	Council will work with local businesses to promote their economic activities through clustering, promotion and a business support program.	Council Economic Development	Underway	<p>No work has been undertaken with Baxter businesses.</p> <p>An extended workshop program has been developed for businesses across the Shire which addresses these needs. This program was launched in July.</p> <p>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.</p>	Underway	<p>A survey of businesses across the Mornington Peninsula, including Baxter, will be undertaken -in September 2025. Part of the survey involves questions on business support needs and the Shires business training resources will be tailored to address these needs.</p> <p>The region's Destination Management Plan has been released, with some high-level objectives to increase visitation to the Western Port region. In partnership with Mornington Peninsula Regional Tourism, opportunities will be communicated to businesses and specific actions developed for Council to deliver as part of this plan.</p>
A10	Council will investigate the need for additional community facilities, including youth facilities, to meet community needs within the township or in adjacent areas.	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.	Underway	Council has developed a 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, Council is currently developing Infrastructure Action Plans for the Western Port region, followed by the Northern region and Southern region.



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				The timing of these Action Plans will be subject to budget and staff resourcing.		This plan will provide a strategic, needs based approach to provision of community infrastructure. The timing of these Action Plans will be subject to budget and staff resourcing.
A11	Council will advocate to the Victorian Government for additional public transport options connecting Baxter with surrounding areas to improve access to community and support services for people in and around Baxter.	Council Traffic and Transport	Ongoing	This action is ongoing. Council continues to advocate for better public transport on the Peninsula.	Ongoing	This action is ongoing. Council continues to advocate for better public transport on the Peninsula.
A12	Council will identify an appropriate location for a community bus stop or stops in Baxter.	Council Traffic and Transport	Yet to be commenced	Subject to budget and staff resourcing.	Yet to be commenced	Subject to budget and staff resourcing.
A13	Council will adopt the <i>Neighbourhood Character Study & Guidelines</i> (currently under preparation) to provide further guidance	Council Strategic Planning	Underway	This action is underway. The Neighbourhood Character Study & Guidelines was adopted by Council in October 2019. The recommended controls to protect and enhance neighbourhood character are now	Complete	The Neighbourhood Character Study & Guidelines were adopted by Council in October 2019. The recommended controls to protect and enhance neighbourhood



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	on the built form character requirements for residential areas of the township.			<p>proposed to be incorporated into the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme via Amendment C219morn.</p> <p>Officers are working through the recommendations of an independent planning panel that reviewed Amendment C219morn and all community submissions in early 2023.</p> <p>Amendment C219morn will be finalised and presented to Council for adoption in mid-2024.</p>		<p>character are being incorporated into the Mornington Peninsula Planning Scheme via Amendment C219morn. Amendment C219morn was adopted by Council in August 2024 and submitted to the Minister for Planning in September 2024 for approval. The Minister is still yet to decide whether to approve the amendment.</p>
A14	Council will prepare precinct design guidelines, requirements and planning controls to set parameters for appropriate scale, height and intensity of development (refer Section 9).	Council Strategic Planning	Complete	<p>This action is complete.</p> <p>Amendment C269morn was approved by the Minister for Planning in June 2022. The amendment applied Schedule 25 to the Design and Development Overlay (DDO25) to the town centre (all Commercial 1 Zone land which requires all development in Precinct 1 to comply with the design objectives and buildings and works requirements included in DDO25.</p>	Complete	N/A (action noted as completed during the previous review).
A15	Council will undertake an audit of local parks to determine future	Council	Underway	Council is developing an Open Space Strategy to set a clear direction for achieving an open space network that	Underway	The draft Open Space Strategy and draft Open Space Contributions Report was placed on public



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	priorities for improvements and recreational needs.	Community Infrastructure & Open Space Planning		meets the wide-ranging needs of a growing and diverse community.		exhibition for 6 weeks between 25 August and 3 October 2025. Submissions received will be reviewed, with the Strategy to be finalised for Council adoption in December 2025.
A16	Council will plant additional trees within parks and open spaces to improve amenity and micro-climate.	Council Natural Systems	Underway	Council is currently developing a new Urban Forest Strategy which will set out the vision, strategic objectives, targets and actions required to protect, manage and enhance our urban forest into the future.	Underway	Council adopted the <u>Urban Forest Strategy – ‘Our Urban Forest: 2024-2034’</u> in September 2024 which sets out the vision, strategic objectives, targets and actions required to protect, manage and enhance our urban forest into the future. The strategy sets a target of 45% canopy cover in urban public spaces by 2034, and includes actions to deliver an annual tree planting program for each township across the Shire.
A17	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.	Underway	The draft Open Space Strategy and draft Open Space Contributions Report was publicly exhibited for 6 weeks between 25 August and 3 October 2025. Submissions received will be reviewed before the Strategy is finalised for Council adoption in December 2025.



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A18	Council will provide improved walking and cycling connections to Baxter Park.	Council Traffic and Transport	Underway	The construction of new footpaths is guided by Council's Pedestrian Access Strategy 2024. Delivery is subject to budget availability.	Underway	The construction of new footpaths is guided by Council's Pedestrian Access Strategy 2024. Delivery is subject to budget availability.
A19	Council will work with Frankston City Council to improve walking and cycling connections into Baxter Park.	Council Traffic and Transport	Underway	The construction of new footpaths is guided by Council's Pedestrian Access Strategy 2024. Any additional pedestrian or traffic infrastructure would require a budget bid.	Underway	The construction of new footpaths is guided by Council's Pedestrian Access Strategy 2024. Any additional pedestrian or traffic infrastructure would require a budget bid.
A20	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.	Ongoing	This action is ongoing. Council continues to advocate for better public transport on the Peninsula.
A21	Council will advocate to the Victorian Government to deliver improvements to the railway station for train and bus passengers.	Council Traffic and Transport	Ongoing	This action is ongoing. Council continues to advocate for better public transport on the Peninsula.	Ongoing	This action is ongoing. Council continues to advocate for better public transport on the Peninsula.
A22	Council will advocate to VicRoads and the Victorian Government to	Traffic and Transport	Underway	The Shire's Peninsula Trail aims to connect missing cycling and walking links along the Peninsula. Priority	Underway	Construction began in January 2025 with completion anticipated by the end of the 25/26 financial year.



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	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 7 (page 23 of the Baxter Township Structure Plan).			<p>Trail Link 1 has been identified as the path that connects Somerville to Frankston-Baxter trail and to the Peninsula Link Trail along Stony Point Railway Line. Funding has been secured for this shared path.</p> <p>The Shire's Integrated Transport Strategy is currently under development which will assist advocacy for cycling improvements.</p> <p>The construction of new footpaths is guided by Council's Pedestrian Access Strategy 2024. Delivery is subject to budget availability.</p>		<p>The Shire's Integrated Transport Strategy is currently under development and will assist Council's advocacy for cycling improvements.</p> <p>The construction of new footpaths is guided by Council's Pedestrian Access Strategy 2024. Delivery is subject to budget availability.</p>
A23	Council will enhance pedestrian and cycling links between precincts of the township and permeability within residential and commercial areas as identified in Figure 7 (page 23 of the Baxter Township Structure Plan).	Council Traffic and Transport	Underway	<p>The Shire's Peninsula Trail aims to connect missing cycling and walking links along the Peninsula. Priority Trail Link 1 has been identified as the path that connects Somerville to Frankston-Baxter trail and to the Peninsula Link Trail along Stony Point Railway Line. Funding has been secured for this shared path.</p> <p>The Shire's Integrated Transport Strategy is currently under</p>	Underway	<p>Construction began in January 2025 with completion anticipated by the end of the 25/26 financial year.</p> <p>The Shire's Integrated Transport Strategy is currently under development and will assist Council's advocacy for cycling improvements.</p> <p>The construction of new footpaths is guided by Council's Pedestrian Access Strategy 2024. Delivery is subject to budget availability.</p>



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				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.		
A24	Council will work with VicTrack to plan and construct a regional shared path along the Stony Point Railway Line from Baxter to Merricks and Stony Point.	Council Traffic and Transport	Underway	The Shire's Peninsula Trail aims to connect missing cycling and walking links along the Peninsula. Priority Trail Link 1 has been identified as the path that connects Somerville to Frankston-Baxter trail and to the Peninsula Link Trail along Stony Point Railway Line. Funding has been secured for this shared path.	Underway	Construction began in January 2025 with completion anticipated by the end of the 25/26 financial year.