



Mirboo North Structure Plan Refresh February 2020



South Gippsland
Shire Council

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This Structure Plan was completed in 2017 and updated in 2020 for the adoption of South Gippsland Planning Scheme Amendment C115 Mirboo North town centre. It needs to be reviewed before full implementation into the South Gippsland Planning Scheme occurs. This is because of recent changes to State Government bushfire requirements (introduced by Amendment VC140) that are expected to affect the recommendations set out in this report.

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Introduction

Purpose

The Mirboo North Structure Plan Refresh (referred to as the Plan) provides a framework to guide future land use and development in the township.

Study Area

The Plan applies to land identified in the township boundary (see map opposite). This includes the town of Mirboo North and the Darlimurla Rural Living Zone area.

Context

Mirboo North is strategically located between Morwell and Leongatha on the Strzelecki Highway. It is the third largest town in South Gippsland with 1,611 residents in 676 dwellings (2011 Census). The population is expected to approach 2,000 in the next 20 years with 7 dwellings needed each year to accommodate this growth.

Set on a ridge amongst green rolling hills, the town is attractive for residential growth and tourism. The town services the surrounding agricultural district and also serves as a satellite town for the Latrobe Valley and Leongatha.

The State Government has identified Mirboo North as a town where sustainable change (small-scale residential, commercial and industrial development and change) should be supported (Gippsland Regional Growth Plan 2014). The Growth Plan also states that the settlement is surrounded by key agricultural and forestry land that should be protected and where food production for domestic and export

markets should be supported. South Gippsland Shire's Housing and Settlement Strategy (2013) identifies Mirboo North as a District Town where growth is to be promoted as a secondary growth settlement.

Key Constraints

The town is affected by a number of key constraints which restrict opportunities for change and development. These are:

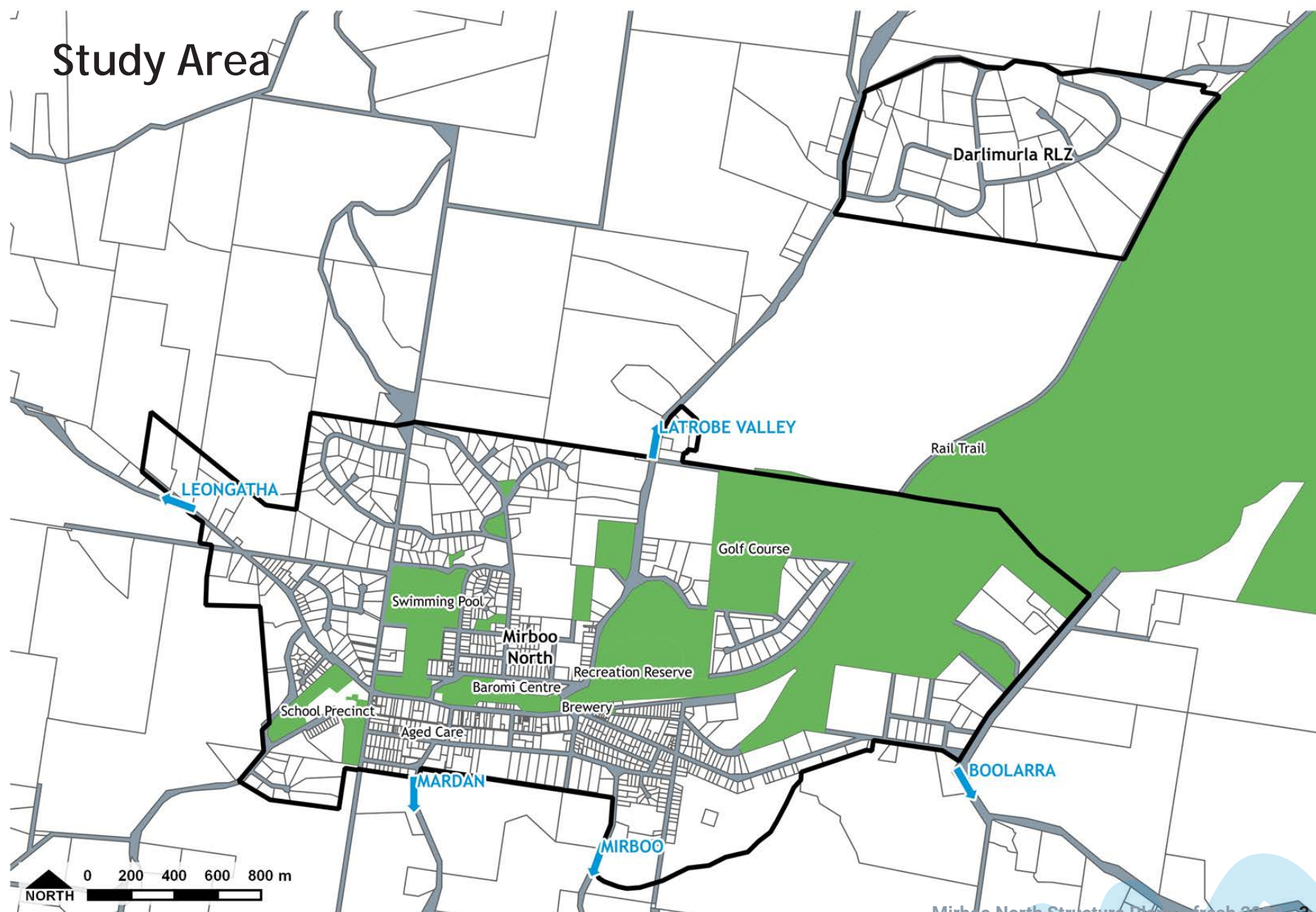
- Bushfire risk
- Declared potable water supply catchment
- Sloping land including very steep land
- Erosion risk

Structure of this Plan

The Plan sets out objectives, strategies and actions that apply to the town. A few of these objectives and actions are overarching while the rest are set out according to four themes (Land Use, Built Form & Landscape, Access and Open Spaces).

The Plan distinguishes between objectives, strategies and actions that are already found in the South Gippsland Planning Scheme or other strategic work and those which are proposed for inclusion in the Planning Scheme (in *italics*).

The clauses referred to are found in the South Gippsland Planning Scheme and refer to both State and local policy. Two reports are also referenced: Mirboo North Community Infrastructure Plan 2014 (referred to as "CIP" and the Blueprint for Social Community Infrastructure 2014 (referred to as "BSCI").



The Plan

OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES

Promote Mirboo North as a sustainable community and the principal town in the north of the Shire (Cl. 21.15)

Ensure that any proposed use and development of land in Mirboo North is generally in accordance with the *Mirboo North Structure Plan Refresh* (Cl. 21.15 adjusted)

Role & Function

Principal township in the north of the Shire, servicing the surrounding agricultural activities and rural population. Tourism is an increasingly important economic contributor (Cl. 21.15)

OVERARCHING ACTIONS

Implement the Mirboo North Structure Plan Refresh via an amendment to the South Gippsland Planning Scheme which:

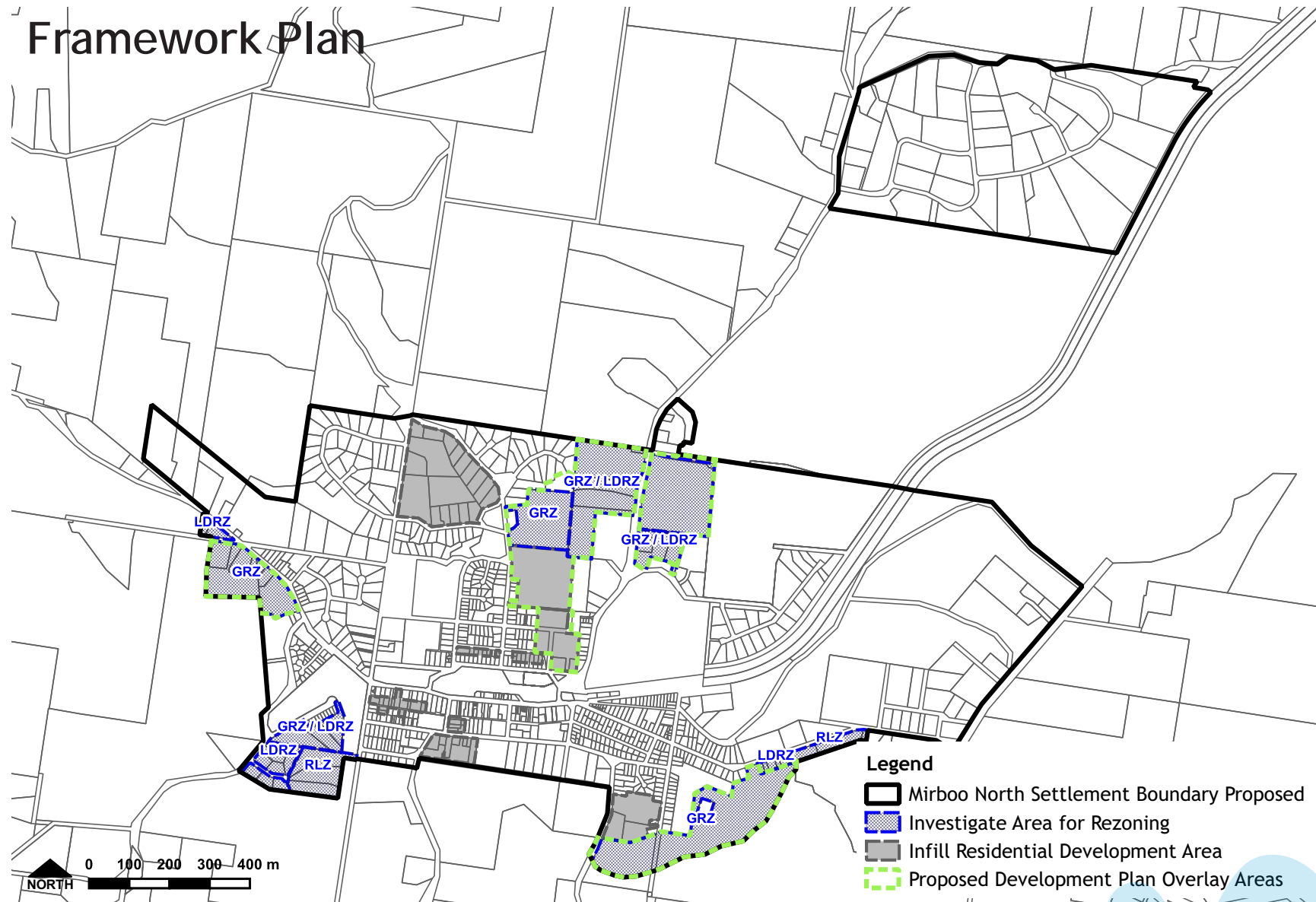
- Updates the Framework Plan in the local policy as shown on page 5
- Updates the local policy about Mirboo North with the proposed objectives and strategies
- Applies the General Residential Zone (GRZ) - Schedule 2 and 3 to existing GRZ areas with variations to the planning controls so that they better reflect local conditions and improve amenity
- Applies a Design and Development Overlay to the town centre area to improve amenity

As the rezoning of residential land occurs, generally apply the Development Plan Overlay to the broad development front area as shown on the Framework Plan opposite.

DARLIMURLA RLZ

Change in this area will be limited and subject to the restrictions of the Rural Living Zone.

Framework Plan



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Land Use

CONTEXT

Mirboo North is an agricultural services, lifestyle and retirement location surrounded by highly productive agricultural land. While servicing the surrounding agricultural communities, it also performs a satellite town role to the Latrobe Valley and Leongatha. Land use and town growth is subject to a number of environmental constraints. The main retail strip is located on the Strzelecki Highway (Ridgway) with most community facilities in close proximity. Three industrial precincts are located in the town: one at the western edge, one in the town centre and the other just outside the town centre.

OBJECTIVES

To encourage land uses that focus pedestrian activity in the town centre (new)

To encourage a diverse range of tourism opportunities (Cl. 21.11)

To encourage the development of bed and breakfast, cabin, homestead and motel accommodation in appropriate locations (Cl. 21.11)

STRATEGIES

Settlement

Manage growth within the settlement boundary (new) - refer to map on previous page

Promote residential infill development and township consolidation as a priority over expansion of the township's boundaries,

particularly Infill Residential Development Areas* (Cl. 21.15 adjusted) - refer to map opposite

Promote higher density residential development and retirement living within a 400m walk of the town centre (Cl. 21.15 adjusted)¹ - refer to "Residential in Walking Distance" on page 13

Where demand can be demonstrated, promote the staged release of new residential land in a contiguous and integrated manner, providing for a range of densities that decrease with distance from the town centre (Cl. 21.15)

Economy

Retain the main street for retailing and other commercial development (Cl. 21.15)

Discourage shops (except restricted retail) and food and drink premises outside Commercial 1 Zone (new)

Discourage land uses other than shops, offices, place of assembly, community facilities and tourist attractions inside the town centre (new)

Encourage new commercial and economic development opportunities that support the needs of the local community (Cl. 21.15)

Promote tourism and other economic development that complements the natural environment and landscape values of the region (Cl. 21.15)

ACTIONS

Support indoor recreation facilities available during the day connected to residential areas via

accessible paths and trails (CIP p.2)

Support accessible and varied services that support older people actively participate in community life (CIP p.2)

An upgrade or extension to the kindergarten or child care centre should integrate both centres and consider inclusion of Maternal and Child Health services, creating a children's services precinct (CIP p.29 & BSCI p.6)

Investigate the need for supported residential accommodation for younger people with disabilities or independent living units (CIP p.58)

Encourage retail outlets which cater for locals and visitors to the town to ensure year round business rather than catering for the narrower tourist market alone (CIP p.70)

Encourage businesses and services that attract new residents to town such as businesses and services that promote art, craft, cafes and bushwalks (CIP p.70)

Encourage weekend opening hours (CIP p.71)

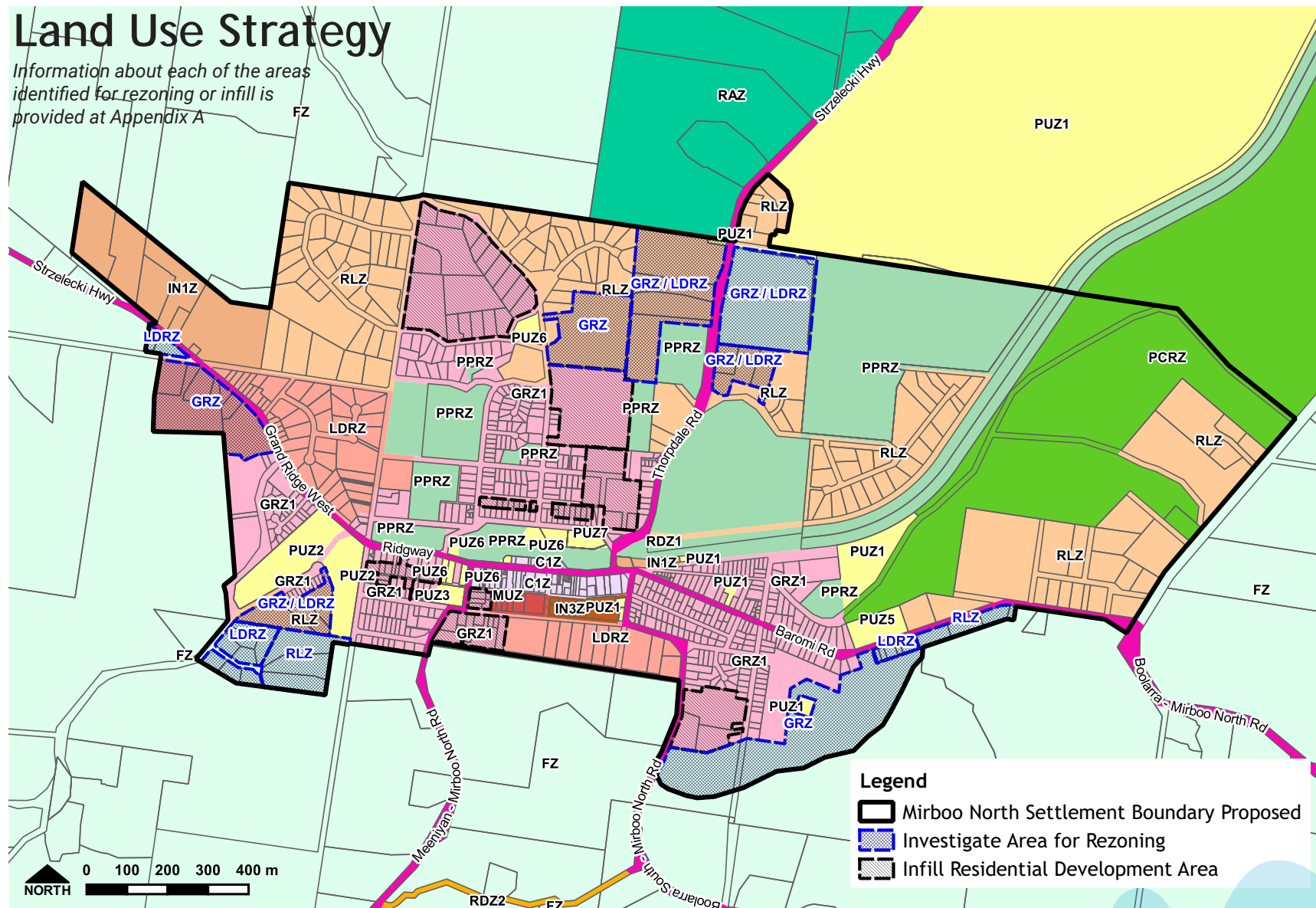
Encourage more retail and 'in town' accommodation (CIP p.71)

Support infill development south of Ridgway for older people and retirement age which is close to shops and services with a continuous footpath connection (CIP p.45)

Investigate the areas shown on the map opposite for rezoning to provide for residential and commercial growth and legitimise existing uses in the township boundary*

¹ The South Gippsland Shire (2013) Housing and Settlement Strategy recommends lot sizes of 250-400 square metres.

* Appendix A to this report provides an analysis of these areas



Access

CONTEXT

Mirboo North is strategically located on the Strzelecki Highway between Morwell and Leongatha where it crosses paths with the scenic Grand Ridge Road. A rail trail links Mirboo North to Boolarra for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The provision of footpaths within the township is limited and some roads are not sealed. Improvements to road and pedestrian infrastructure are likely to occur incrementally given the town's low growth.

OBJECTIVES

To maintain a safe and efficient road network (Cl. 21.12)

To deliver sustainable public transport, pedestrian and car parking (Cl. 21.12)

STRATEGIES

Encourage improvements to the Strzelecki Highway (Cl. 21.12-1) - refer to map opposite

Ensure that the design and siting of advertising signs does not interfere with the safety or efficiency of a road or public way (Cl. 21.12-1)

Provide interconnected pedestrian, bicycle and bridle paths (Cl. 21.12-1)

Ensure that adequate car parking facilities are provided to support land use and development and are suitable to a rural and regional area (Cl. 21.12-1)

Avoid the development of closed courts which discourage active road and pedestrian connectivity (new) (CIP p.28)

Prioritise access improvements connecting key attractions, specifically those used by younger and older people (new) - refer to map opposite

*Provide universal access as part of new development, with paths connecting to existing footpath infrastructure (new)**

ACTIONS

Provide a shared sheltered bus / bike shelter with bike rack at public bus stop (CIP p.33, p.38)

Build paths that provide shared access for pedestrian and wheeled mobility scooters with even surfaces, gutters and road crossing points (CIP p.47)

Ensure new residential developments in Mirboo North attract sufficient developer contributions for the continuous provision of pedestrian access that includes off road mobility scooter and wheelchair access (CIP p.47)

Investigate interest in registering as an RV friendly town within established guidelines and the South Gippsland Recreational Vehicle Strategy (p.70)

Audit main street retailers for access to people with mobility issues and investigate funding options for solutions such as 'fill the gap' ramps to allow access over lips of sliding doors etc (CIP p.58)

Prioritise safe pedestrian access between new developments and the town centre (CIP p.28)*

Maintain pedestrian access for parents with prams and children on bicycles, particularly in and from new rural living areas on the outer boundaries west and south of the town (CIP p.28)*

Encourage paths linking the Community Shed to the town centre to increase access to this community facility (CIP p.47)*

Improve the safety of pedestrian access between the town centre and the Recreation Reserve - refer to Access Project 1 on the map opposite

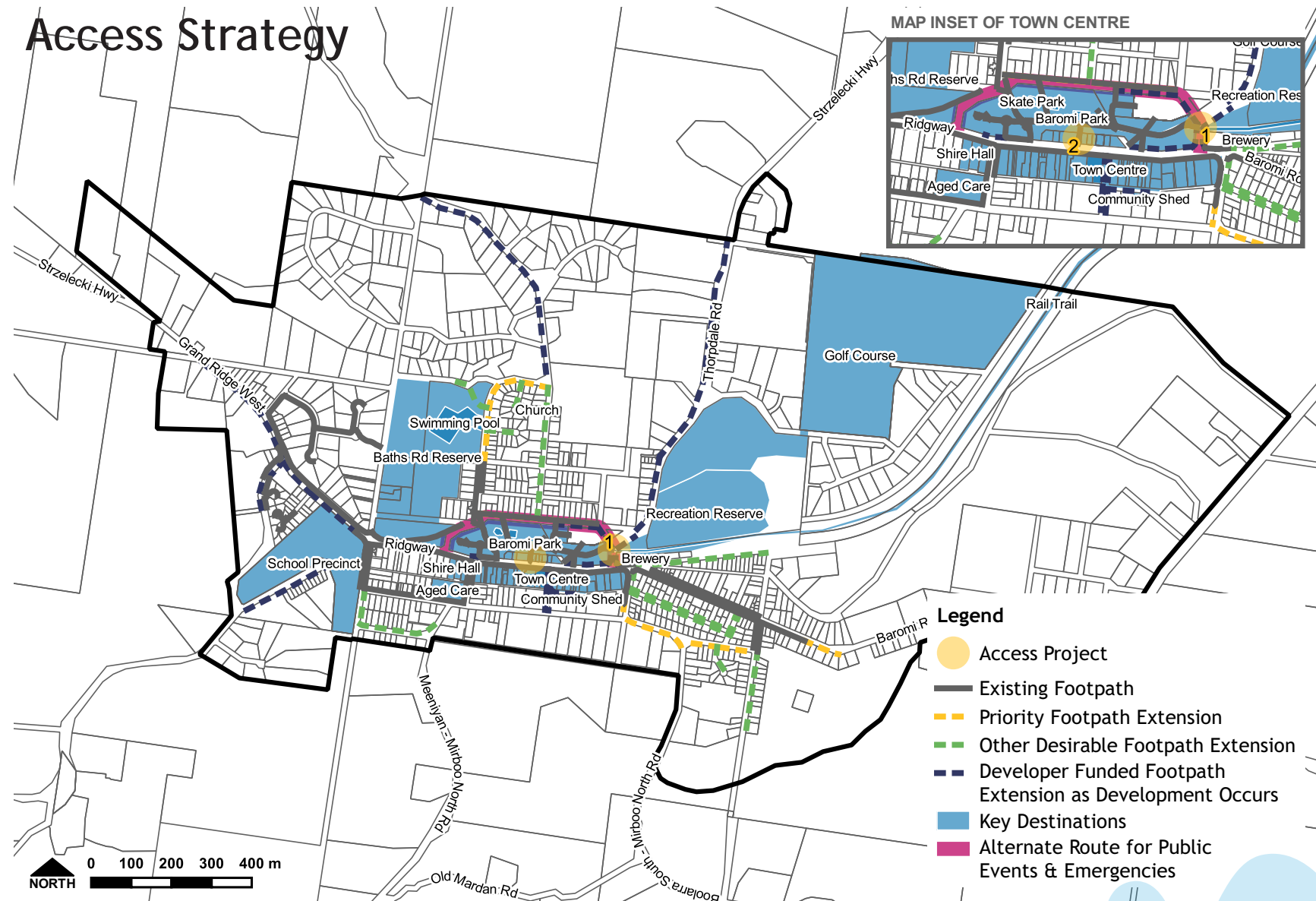
Consider the options to secure a publicly-owned connection between Ridgway and Baromi Park - refer to Access Project 2 on the map opposite

Consider signage improvements to make locals and visitors more aware of existing facilities and services and assist with wayfinding

Use Couper Street as an alternate route in the case of public events or emergencies in Ridgway - refer to map opposite

**The map opposite shows Council's existing priorities for footpath extension. Footpath connections to new development are expected to be funded as part of development.*

Access Strategy



Open Spaces

OVERVIEW

Mirboo North is rich in open space assets. The town is centred around Baromi Park which provides various spaces and facilities for multiple uses. Walter J Tuck reserve provides for formal sporting activities. Baths Road Reserve and the Grand Ridge Rail Trail provide for more informal recreation. This is also provided by Parks Victoria's Mirboo North Regional Park which consists of four separate areas outside the town to the north east, north west, west and south east. The golf course, provides for golf, as well as public access. Further open space is provided by Parks Victoria's Mirboo North H13 Bushland Reserve.

OBJECTIVES

To assist creation of a diverse and integrated network of public open space commensurate with the needs of the community (Cl. 11.03-1)

To achieve a measurable net gain in the extent and quality of the Shire's biodiversity (Cl. 21.06-1)

STRATEGIES

Ensure that land is set aside and developed in residential areas for local recreational use and to create pedestrian and bicycle links to commercial and community facilities (Cl. 11.03-1)

Provide public open space reserves that improve pedestrian and cycle linkages to key destinations (Cl. 21.15 adjusted)

Ensure new subdivisions improve pedestrian and cycling linkages to key destinations (new)

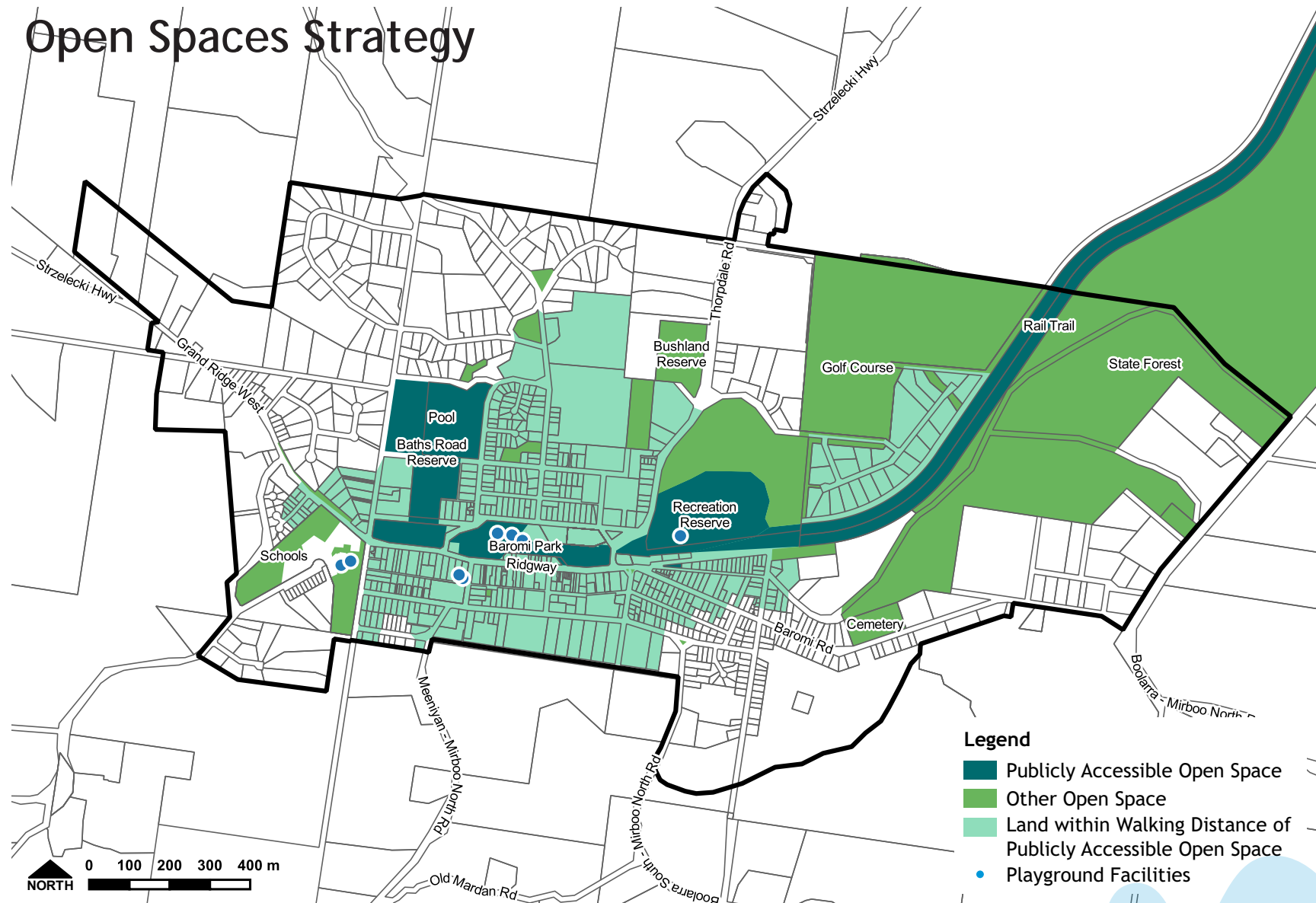
Provide publicly accessible open space within 400m of residential development (new)

ACTIONS

Provide play spaces within 400m of all residential developments (CIP p.2)

Provide further seating and lighting at the skate bowl, extending its use as an amphitheatre to make it attractive for a broader range of people (CIP p.33, p.37)

Open Spaces Strategy



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Built Form & Landscape

CONTEXT

With its town centre located along a ridge, Mirboo North is known for its hilly topography and scenic views. While extensive clearing has occurred since European settlement, the landscape and vegetation continue to dominate over built form. Waterways and natural drainage lines often appear as vegetated corridors.

The town centre is distinct from the surrounding built form due to its fine grain nature with commercial-style frontages built to the front property boundary. Residential development is low rise and detached, generally responsive to the topography and set in established gardens.

OBJECTIVES

To protect landscapes that contribute to character, identity and sustainable environments (Cl. 12.04-2)

To ensure that heritage places are used, managed and developed in a way that conserves or reveals their heritage significance (Cl. 21.09-1)

To continuously improve all aspects of the urban environment (Cl. 21.09-2)

To minimise the visual impact of signage and infrastructure on the landscape (Cl. 21.09-3)

To recognise the importance of the natural environment and built form to the tourism industry (Cl. 21.11)

STRATEGIES

Retain a compact town centre which promotes high quality urban design (Cl. 21.15)

Protect and enhance the distinctive village atmosphere and picturesque location within the Strzelecki Ranges (Cl. 21.15)

Retain natural drainage corridors with vegetated buffer zones at least 30m wide along each side of a waterway to maintain the natural drainage function, stream habitat and wildlife corridors and landscape values, to minimise erosion of stream banks and verges and to reduce polluted surface runoff from adjacent land uses (Cl. 14.02-1)

Ensure that planning to create or expand a settlement in an area at risk from bushfire reduces the risk to future residents, property and community infrastructure to an acceptable level (Cl. 13.05-1)

Ensure landscape and indigenous vegetation are visually dominant rather than built form (new)

Encourage active frontages within the town centre (new) - refer to map opposite

Avoid siting buildings close to vegetation where vegetation can be removed without a planning permit for bushfire protection (new)

Consider the impact of built form on views from and to the surrounding landscape, particularly public viewing areas and corridors, such as main roads (new)

Encourage buildings built to the front boundary along Ridgway and adjoining streets in the town centre (new)

ACTIONS

Improve planning controls to maintain and improve the amenity of residential areas by:

- Reducing the maximum front fence height (from 2m in a Road Zone, Category 1 to 1.5m and 1.5m to 1.2m in other areas)
- Ensuring at least 50% of front setbacks is permeable
- Providing lower fire risk indigenous vegetation (refer to Indigenous Plants of South Gippsland (2004) & CFA Landscaping for Bushfire (2011))

Improve planning controls to better reflect the local conditions of residential areas outside 400m of the town centre by:

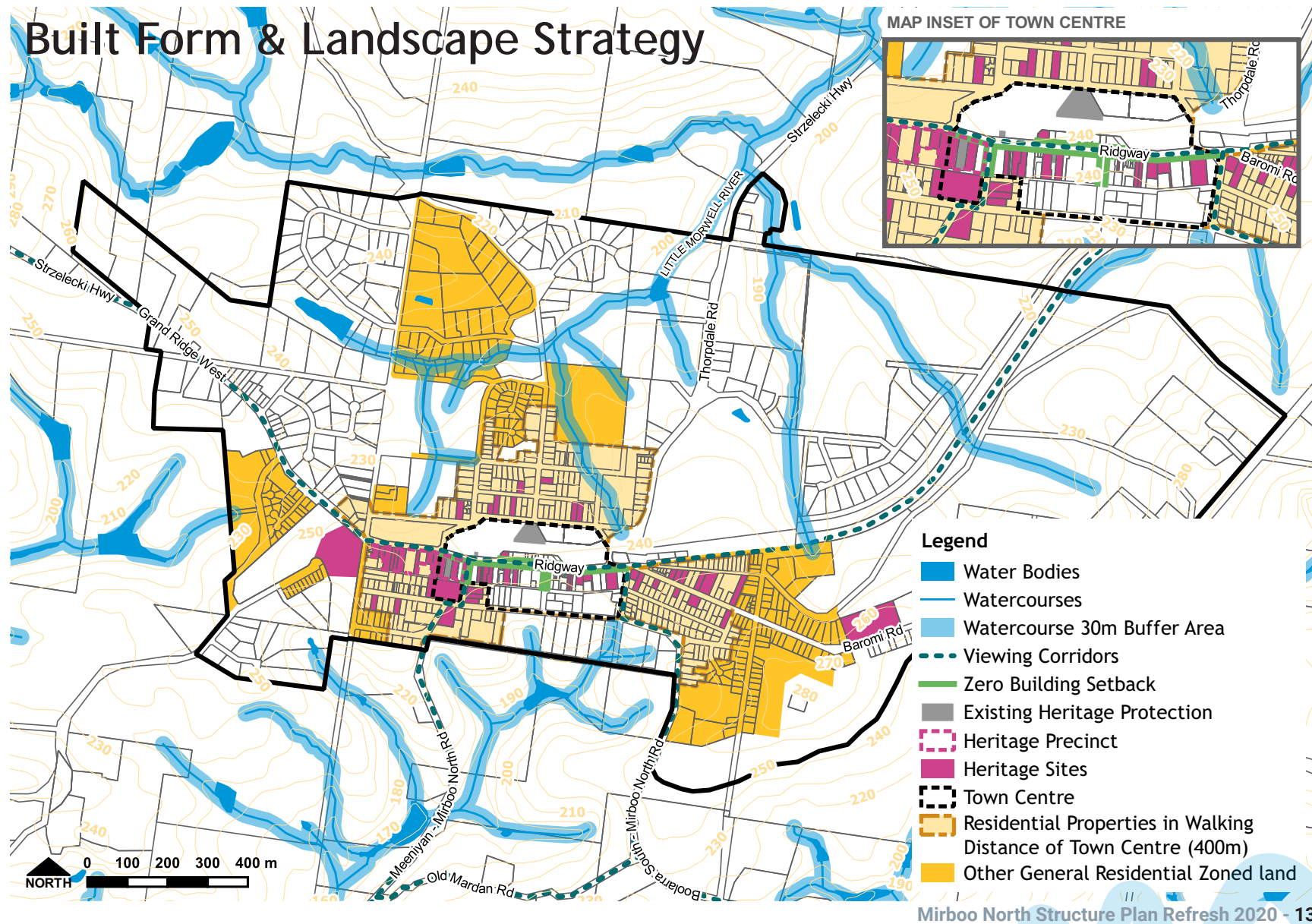
- Increasing permeability² requirements (from 20% to 40%)
- Reducing maximum site coverage (from 60% to 50%)
- Not allowing walls built to side boundaries

Introduce a Design and Development Overlay in the town centre area to implement the town centre guidelines

Encourage landowners of properties with heritage significance as identified in the South Gippsland Heritage Study (2004) (significant properties shown opposite) to support voluntary inclusion of their property in Heritage Overlay for heritage protection - refer to map opposite

Use South Gippsland's Design Guidelines for Steep Slopes (2016) before considering building or subdivision on sloping land

Investigate the need for additional indoor leisure facilities in particular to service the Mirboo North catchment (BSCI p.21)



TOWN CENTRE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Ridgway

Building frontages must contribute to the appearance and retail function of the area.

To provide an active frontage, buildings must provide:

- A display window and / or entrance measuring at least 80% of the width of the street frontage of each individual shop premises and food and drink premises, or at least 60% of the width of the street frontage of each premises used for other commercial uses.
- Clear glazing to street frontages.
- No or low visually permeable front fencing.
- Facade design that incorporates lighting to add to a sense of security at night.
- Built scale appropriate to the street and proximity to pedestrians.

Buildings should provide continuous weather protection along the street frontage.

Any security grilles should be mounted internally. Where this is not possible or practical, they should be visually permeable or transparent.

Vehicle ingress and egress, loading facilities and building services should not be located on frontages to this street.

Other Streets

Buildings must present an attractive pedestrian-focused frontage.

To provide an active frontage, buildings must provide:

- Individual entry doors to ground level dwellings to create a residential address to the street.
- Shelter and lighting to entries.
- Clear glazing to street frontages.
- No or low visually permeable front fencing*.
- Built scale appropriate to the street and proximity to pedestrians.

*Where this is not possible or practical, they should be visually permeable or transparent.

Acknowledgements

The photo of the Blessing of the Bikes on the front cover (bottom left) is courtesy of Mirboo North Times.

