

Launceston Residential Strategy 2009–2029

A strategy to create choice, diversity and desirability and to maximise sustainability in Launceston's housing market

Launceston City Council
February 2010



blank page



Foreword

On behalf of Launceston City Council I am pleased to present the Launceston Residential Strategy 2009-2029. It has been created through community discussion of future land use and development in Launceston. It is derived from the community's Launceston Vision 2020 and Towards a New Land Use Strategy and Planning Scheme – An Issues Paper for Community Discussion. This strategy will help us achieve the goals of Launceston Vision 2020, and will inform the forthcoming land use strategy and planning scheme.

The Residential Strategy will enable an attractive range of development opportunities that will meet the needs of our community and will respect our environmental responsibilities. The strategy will lead to consistent planning outcomes which will serve to enhance the quality of Launceston's housing stock and the fabric of our city. It will also improve on our growing reputation as a desirable place to live.

I want to thank the people of Launceston, whose responses through the consultation process have enabled our professional planning staff to produce a strategy that reflects the strong views and passions which are the trademark of our community. Over the next 20 years, Council will be working with the community, developers and other stakeholders to crystallise the aims of the policies contained within our Residential Strategy.

Mayor Albert Van Zetten

Launceston City Council

Text: Richard Jamieson

Photos: Stalley Atherton

Editing: Veronica McShane Editing Services

blank page

Contents

Introduction	1
Why does Launceston need a settlement strategy?	1
What tools are available to Council?	2
Part 1: Key Influences	3
The impact of population changes on future urban form	3
Maximising environmental sustainability	7
Other social and economic factors influencing housing development	11
The benefits of higher density development	13
Recognising the benefits of good design	17
Regional planning for housing	21
The particular case of housing in rural areas	23
Part 2: The Current Situation	25
Serviced residential development	25
Rural residential development	27
Rural housing	28
Future demand: How many new houses will we need?	28
Balancing supply and demand	30
Part 3: A Residential Strategy for Launceston	33
Summary of key issues	33
Spatial objectives	34
Fully serviced residential areas	37
Tier 1: Urban redevelopment for new houses in accessible locations	37
Tier 2: Increased density in existing residential areas	41
Tiers 3 and 4: Vacant land	45
Tier 5: Rural residential development	51
Tier 6: Rural housing	61
Part 4: Implementation	65
Creating opportunities	65
Developing partnerships	66
Coordinating activities	67
Adopting the Common Key Elements Template	67
A neighbourhood planning approach	69

blank page

Figures

Figure 1: Launceston population change (%) by age group 2001–06	4
Figure 2: Walkability analysis	14
Figure 3: Examples of different housing densities Launceston (2008)	15
Figure 4: Lots created and taken up, and houses and units built in Launceston 1990–2006	25
Figure 5: Areas potentially suited to transition to higher density residential uses	39
Figure 6: Areas of Launceston with identified constraints to higher density residential development	42
Figure 7: Modified walkscore analysis showing candidate areas for higher density residential development	43
Figure 8: Candidate areas for residential subdivision	47
Figure 9: Map showing preferred expansion of the Los Angelos Rd/ Swan Bay area	55
Figure 10: Map showing preferred expansion of the Dilston East area	56
Figure 11: Map showing preferred expansion of the White Hills area	58

Tables

Table 1: Population Growth (medium projection) for Launceston 2009–24	4
Table 2: Launceston population growth: 65+ age group (medium projections) 2009–24	5
Table 3: Launceston population growth: under 25 age group (medium projections) 2009–24	5
Table 4: Residential lot creation and market take-up in Launceston 1990–2006	25
Table 5: Vacant lots greater than 1 ha in Launceston residential zones at 1 January 2007	26
Table 6: Lots created and taken up in Rural Residential precincts 1990–2006	27
Table 7: Land considered suitable for residential development (ha)	48
Table 8: Attributes of land considered suitable and unsuitable for rural residential development	54

blank page

Introduction

This strategy provides the way forward for housing in the Launceston municipality for the next 20 years and beyond. It has been developed as an integral part of the review of the Launceston Planning Scheme 1996, and has been informed by the public consultation process undertaken as a central component of that review.

It is anticipated that the residential strategy will be used to guide decision making from the time it is adopted by Council. Where necessary it will provide strategic guidance to amendments to the existing planning scheme.

The residential strategy is informed by Council's strategic policies including Launceston Vision 2020.¹ It is also informed by existing patterns of settlement in the wider region, and projections of future housing demand. It reflects community values including a desire for both economic and environmental sustainability. It is underpinned by government legislation regulating housing development throughout the state, for example the establishment of zonings common to all local government areas, and the limiting of residential development on agricultural land.

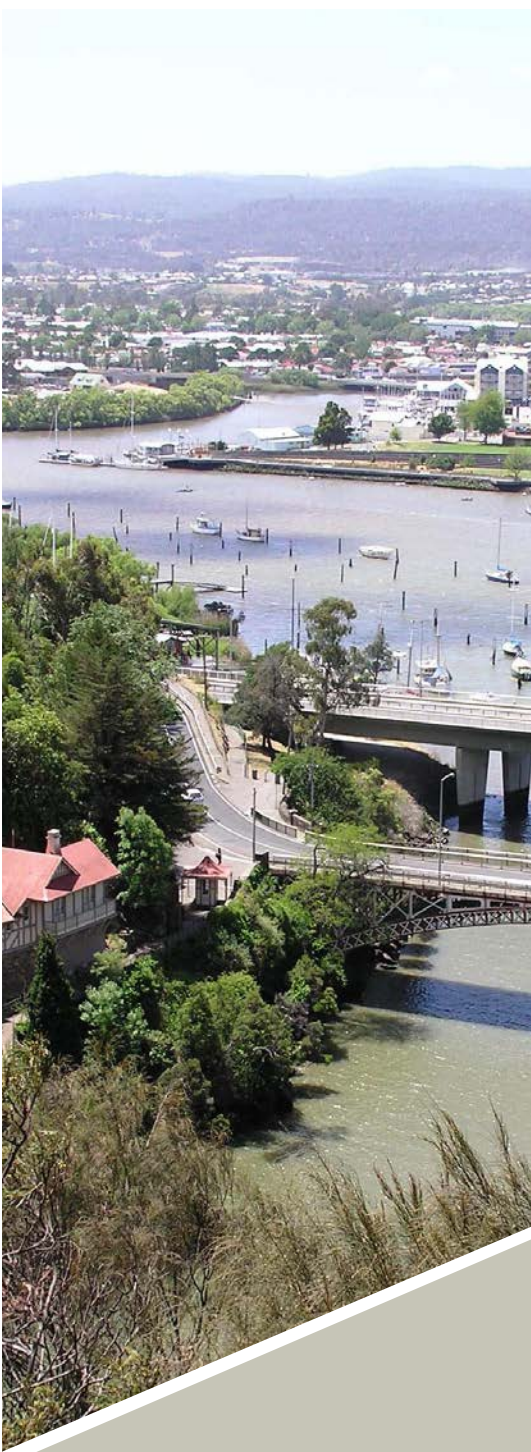
Why does Launceston need a residential strategy?

Residential development is a fundamental aspect of land use planning. All planning schemes should provide sufficient opportunity for anticipated future residential development. Planning schemes should aim to provide choice and diversity in both location and housing type to meet the expectations and aspirations of residents.

There are a number of reasons why it is necessary for Launceston City Council to develop a residential strategy to guide its planning scheme.

- 1. To comply with state legislation:** Council has an obligation under the *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* to advance sustainable development through its planning scheme. It must also comply with state policies such as the Protection of Agricultural Land Policy. Avoiding and mitigating environmental impacts and minimising any negative impact of housing development on the use of natural resources are key elements in achieving sustainable development.
- 2. To achieve strategic goals for the city:** The location and design of housing in Launceston influences almost all the objectives of Launceston Vision 2020, particularly those objectives for achieving environmental sustainability, conserving the natural environment, managing the character of the built environment and improving the strength of local communities. Creating opportunities for new housing development also assists the Launceston economy and creates employment in the city. This residential strategy is developed to be consistent with the goals of Vision 2020.

¹ The Vision 2020 project is a whole of community approach to setting the strategic direction and aspirational goals for the Launceston community up to the year 2020. Available at www.launceston.tas.gov.au or from Council upon request.





3. **To maintain a viable housing development industry:** Oversupply of housing opportunities can impair economic returns for developers by fragmenting demand. Undersupply can put the cost of housing out of reach of the average buyer, thereby inhibiting population growth within the municipality. A settlement strategy that seeks to actively manage supply is fundamental to the sustainability of the housing development industry.
4. **To achieve community benefits:** Residential development has an impact on the provision of community, emergency and commercial services. Impacts can include the viability and accessibility of services. Council can assist by ensuring coordinated development and ensuring opportunities for integration and strategic location of services to reduce public dependency on car transport to access them. Design of residential development also impacts on levels of community pride in any given area.

What tools are available to Council?

Council has a number of tools for implementing a settlement strategy. Council can:

1. determine how many houses will be provided for across the city
2. determine the spatial distribution of those houses
3. set standards and guidelines for the design, layout, appearance and energy efficiency of individual buildings, subdivisions and new residential developments
4. create specific policies and standards for individual areas of the city through local area planning
5. create opportunities for new types of development and encourage development in particular locations
6. seek to develop partnerships with the development industry and other service providers to achieve strategic goals
7. inform and promote desired strategic outcomes by disseminating information and demonstrating associated benefits.

This strategy is therefore intended to extend beyond a purely regulatory approach to residential planning. Council needs to be proactive and show leadership if it is to be successful in achieving the objectives of the strategy.

The impact of population changes on Launceston's urban form

A number of trends suggest that the pattern of urban development in Launceston may be different in the future. It is anticipated that there will be changes in the types and location of houses demanded by the community. It is also anticipated that changes will be necessary to accommodate growing demand for economic and environmental sustainability. Council will need to respond to and facilitate these changes in order to achieve the goals of Vision 2020.

Launceston's population: demographic and social changes

Over recent years the population of Launceston has grown marginally and has aged, while the average household has become smaller. These trends are likely to continue and to influence the type and location of houses that will be in demand.

While many people seek to build 'traditional' houses in new subdivisions, a significant proportion of people are seeking alternatives. A desire for access to services, reduced travel distance, proximity to the CBD, lower maintenance, and lifestyle benefits are all associated with this trend.

There is evidence of growing markets for smaller houses, renovations of inner city houses, and new flats and apartments in inner areas, along with a significant growth in retirement villages and residential aged care facilities. These forms typically house higher population densities and influence the mixed-use character of the more central locations.

Council must respond positively by creating opportunities for the housing industry to facilitate these changes. Council should examine alternatives to the spread of the city outwards from the fringe by seeking a balance of appropriate redevelopment, integration of residential development into inner city locations, and encouraging increases in existing residential density in appropriate locations. For new 'traditional' development, Council should seek to increase the diversity of housing, encouraging smaller houses and alternative forms of housing and where possible to integrate accessible community services.

Population trends

In 2006 Launceston's estimated resident population was 64,620 – slightly below the peak of 65,370 recorded in 1991. From 2002, growth was steady at around one percent per year, a rate slightly greater than for the whole of Tasmania over the same period.²

The table at Attachment 1 shows changes in population by suburb between 2001 and 2004. Growth was shared by all parts of the CBD and suburbs (defined as Launceston Parts A & B) but was uneven in distribution. The greatest growth was experienced by Launceston central areas (19.8 per cent), followed by Youngtown (16 per cent) and Newstead (7.9 per cent).

Six suburbs (30 percent of the total) grew by less than 1.0 percent, while a further seven (35 percent) grew by 1–2 percent. Three rural (Part C) areas declined fractionally, while three grew substantially (between 4.9 and 6.2 percent). Overall, rural areas grew significantly less than the suburban areas (Part B) (0.4 percent compared with 3.6 percent). Growth rates are generally attributable to areas of new housing growth.

Attachment 1 also shows the changes in population by age group in the period 2001–04.

Population projections

The Launceston population projections included three series (or sets) of population data based on different assumptions about possible demographic changes. The assumptions generated population sizes in 2024 of 72,903 (the high variant), 68,878 (the medium variant) and 64,986 (the low variant). The projected proportions of people aged 65+ are greater under the low and medium variants (21.7 and 20.6 percent

² The demographic data in this strategy is sourced from Natalie Jackson (2006), *Demographic Analysis and Projections for Launceston Local Government Area* and Launceston City Council: *Update on 2006 Demographic Analysis and Projections (2007)*, Demographic Analytical Services Unit, University of Tasmania. These reports reflect the most recent census data available at the time and are available at www.launceston.tas.gov.au or from Council upon request.

respectively) than under the high variant (19.4 percent), primarily due to the high variant assuming a greater proportion of people of reproductive age. For the purposes of planning for residential development the medium variant projections have been chosen.

Table 1. Population growth (medium projection) for Launceston 2009–24

Year	Population	Annual growth rate (percent)
2009	65212	0.4
2014	66516	0.38
2019	67797	0.32
2024	68878	0.24
Overall increase	3663 (7.5 percent)	N/A

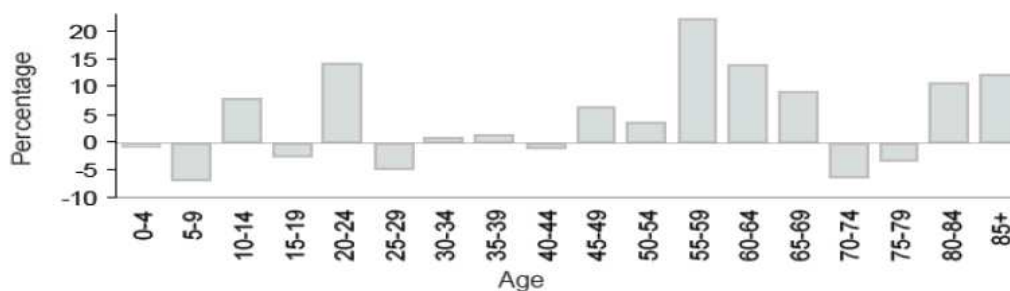
This strategy is based on the premise that Council will not seek to influence the demographics of the city through housing policy. The approach suggested is one of anticipating and/or responding to identified trends and the best possible forecasts.

Age profiles and household size

In line with national and international trends, Launceston’s population is ageing. This means that currently the generations are not fully replacing themselves, leaving a population with an increasing proportion of older people. Between 1991 and 2001 the population aged 0–44 years declined by around 5577 persons (12.7 percent) while the group aged 45+ increased by an estimated 2196 persons (11 percent), mainly in the 45–59 age group. Launceston therefore has shrinking numbers of younger people including those in the childbearing age groups, and an expansion in the post-retirement and elderly age groups. There is a projected overall decline in the proportion of people of working age. Since 2001 higher inward migration of younger university-age people has mitigated the ageing trend but this has not been sufficient to change the long-term ageing of the population.

Figure 1 shows population change by age between 2001 and 2006. The data indicate clear losses in the 0–4 and 5–9 age groups, and mixed gains and losses across all other age groups, among which are particularly notable gains at ages 20–24, 45–69 and 80+.

Figure 1: Launceston population change by age group (%) 2001–06



Population distribution by age group

In 2006 the Launceston suburbs with the youngest populations were Rocherlea and Ravenswood, with the highest numbers of pre-school and primary school children. High school teenagers were in the highest proportions in Rocherlea and East Launceston. Young adults aged 18–24 were in the highest proportions in Newnham and Mowbray, attributable to the presence of the university.

People aged 55–74 were in the highest proportions in Mayfield and Norwood; and people 75+ highest in Kings Meadows and Norwood.

Older people

In 2006 Launceston had 11,385 people aged 55–74, people reaching or in retirement. This group had risen by 547, or 0.6 percent, since 1996. In Tasmania as a whole this group had increased by 1.5 percent. People aged 75+ numbered 4384, a rise of 327 or 0.4 percent since 1996; again less than the state as a whole where this group increased by 1.0 percent in the period.

Council's projections also show structural changes. The 'medium-level' projection suggests it is likely that people aged 65+ could increase from 14.5 percent of the population in 2004 to 20.6 percent in 2024.

Table 2: Launceston population growth: 65+ age group (medium projections) 2009–24

Year	2009	2014	2019	2024
% aged 65+ years	14.8	16.4	18.5	20.6

Older people in particular, need safe and accessible housing, and generally prefer to live in familiar surroundings and close to family. As Launceston's population ages, provision needs to ensure such needs are met. The current planning scheme does not provide sufficient flexibility to cater for this demand, particularly regarding modifications to family homes, for example for the building of 'granny flats'.

Ancillary dwellings such as granny flats, whether permanent or temporary, located near the family home could meet the accommodation needs of many older people. This is particularly important in rural areas where there are no institutional aged care facilities. The future planning scheme should make provision for these projected needs by increasing the flexibility to provide for alternative accommodation, particularly within existing residential areas, and taking into account the particular needs of people in rural areas.

The increasing demand for retirement villages, aged care facilities and other support services will necessitate greater flexibility in planning provisions. There will be demand for such facilities to be integrated into existing areas and considered in planning new development.

Older people require facilities such as shops and community services to be located on public transport routes and to be accessible, particularly for those with limited mobility. Similarly, public transport must be adequate for older people conducting their day-to-day business –shopping, visiting, accessing public services, attending appointments and public events, and participating in social, cultural and other activities.

The planning scheme can assist by requiring the careful planning of public transport routes; and requiring new development to provide transport linkages between key destinations, a high standard of footpaths, drop-off/pick-up bays, and taxi spaces at key destinations.

Young people

Future land use and development needs also to consider the projected populations and distribution of young people, and the particular needs of the various younger age groups. The under 25 age group fell by 12 percent in the northern region between 1991 and 2001, reflecting a broader state trend towards declining numbers of young people. Table 3 shows the current projections (medium variant) for the younger age groups in Launceston, again reflecting state projections.

Table 3: Launceston population growth: under 25 age group (medium projections) 2009–24

	2009	2014	2019	2024
10–14	6.5	6.1	6.1	5.9
15–19	6.4	6.3	6.0	6.0
20–24	7.2	6.2	6.2	5.9

In an environment of overall declining numbers of young people it is particularly important that their needs are addressed by Council; to not do so would risk outward migration of young people from the area.

The needs of young people that can be addressed in planning policies include:

- providing, in existing areas and new developments, suitable and accessible recreation and leisure facilities and spaces such as skate parks, fitness trails, 'kick-about' areas and playgrounds
- ensuring provision for public transport, walking and cycling, including connectivity in new developments to ensure accessibility
- in recognition of the longer time young people are remaining at home (to complete post-school education and/or to avoid high rents), permitting the building of granny flats or co-location of ancillary dwellings
- encouraging alternative models of low-cost and convenient rental accommodation to provide young people with flexibility and choice (for example leasing flats above shops within the CBD)
- ensuring that public facilities and spaces are welcoming of young people and designed to encourage appropriate uses.

Opportunities should be explored to ensure land use planning is integrated into wider social planning initiatives.

Household size

Household size is a measure of the average number of people living in each dwelling. Household size for the overall Launceston Council area was 2.4 in 2006, up from 2.3 in 2001, but down from 2.6 in 1991. Reducing household size is a common trend across much of Australia; by 2021 it is predicted that nationally household size will have reduced further to between 2.0 and 2.2.

In Launceston household size differs across suburbs, from 2.8 in Rocherlea (a correlate of the younger age profile of the area) to 2.0 in Central Launceston. Overall, the suburban areas have an average household size of 2.3, and the rural areas 2.9. Trends in household size are key indicators of the type of housing likely to be needed in the future, and are therefore critical in forward planning. Trends towards smaller households occupying smaller dwellings, together with an ageing population, are likely to have significant implications for housing demand in Launceston.

Such changes need to be considered in determining the appropriateness of numbers, locations and types of new housing developments. Maintaining the prevailing housing styles and density combined with falling household size would reduce the efficiency and sustainability of our residential areas. It may also create excessive infrastructure demands that would require an increasing proportion of Council's budget to service.

These changes must impact on how Council plans for new housing and for regulations on residential density and unit development. Council will need to explore alternative models of development in accessible locations. In new subdivisions a greater range of lot sizes, particularly smaller individual lots or lots capable of accommodating unit developments, should be encouraged.

In existing areas, particularly those close to services and community facilities, flexibility should be provided to increase residential density subject to meeting appropriate design and amenity considerations.

Most of the future growth in housing in Launceston is likely to come from reduced household size rather than from population growth. Based on current populations, and the medium growth projection, the anticipated reduction in household size from 2.4 down to 2.1 would generate a demand for 3870 additional houses by 2024. Population growth alone would generate demand for only 2030 additional houses.

Policy 1 - Responding to demographic projections

Key issues

The changing composition of our communities will have significant impact on future housing demand. Launceston's population is predicted to grow at a steady rate and to age significantly over the coming decades. Family structures are also changing with a trend towards smaller households. Council will allow greater flexibility to consider alternatives to single dwellings and encourage housing that caters for the particular needs of the elderly, small families, young people and singles.

Council will encourage co-location of housing and community services, either by encouraging community services to locate in residential areas or by seeking to increase residential density in areas that are already well serviced.

Planning responses

The planning scheme should:

- ensure consideration of housing types and tenures at subdivision stage to increase the diversity of lot sizes and house types
- ensure consideration of public transport linkages and cycling and walking connectivity during approval of new subdivision and development
- provide opportunities for integration of community services into residential areas by ensuring availability of suitable sites and increasing opportunities for increased housing density to maximise viability of those services
- increase opportunities for location of alternative models of housing such as multiple units, smaller houses, supported housing and affordable housing to increase choice and diversity
- allow consideration of granny flats/teenager bungalows and other ancillary accommodation in conjunction with single dwellings.

Complementary measures

Council will:

- actively monitor demographic information and respond to emerging trends
- seek to develop partnerships with the development industry to help achieve strategic objectives
- seek to develop relationships with social and community service providers to better understand likely demand and locational preferences
- Seek to develop links with social and community planning initiatives to ensure the role of land use planning is understood and to maximise potential synergies.

Maximising environmental sustainability

The Launceston community's expressed desire for environmental sustainability will change the pattern of housing development and will influence the future form of the city. There is also an increasing necessity to positively respond to the challenges associated with climate change.

Sustainable neighbourhoods can be characterised as follows. They are generally located as close as possible to urban services, are developed at a higher density, allow people to walk and cycle as often as possible or use public transport, are developed on brownfield³ sites, allow people to grow their own food, seek to conserve and re-use water, seek to reduce energy needs for heating and cooling, and conserve or enhance biodiversity through conservation or creation of habitats.⁴

3 Brownfield sites are abandoned or under-used industrial and commercial facilities available for re-use.

4 2007, Biddulph, M. - *Introduction to Residential Layout*, Butterworth-Heinemann, London.



Both the location and design of new housing can impact significantly on environmental sustainability.

Locational factors

Reduction in the need to travel: On a city-wide scale ensuring that new development is appropriately located and integrated into the existing urban fabric can significantly reduce car dependency. Choices made regarding the location of new housing directly influence transport needs.

Encouraging 'walkable' neighbourhoods, integrating community facilities into residential areas and encouraging alternatives to car transport can reduce the amount of travel. Facilitating increased residential density in urban centres also assists.

The rising cost of fuel would appear to be influencing a 'return to the city', with the associated benefits of proximity to employment and services.

Biodiversity and natural values: Housing development spreading out from the city generally has adverse environmental impacts. These include loss of vegetation and habitat through clearing for house sites, firebreaks and 'tidying up'. Through planned development these impacts may be avoided or mitigated. There continues to be pressure from landowners for incremental development on the fringes with houses developing along roads or properties on the fringes being opportunistically subdivided.

Unplanned residential growth can impact on the spread of weeds and adversely impact on water quality particularly along the Tamar Estuary and in vegetated areas.

Consideration of remnant vegetation in urban areas can increase both the amenity and the sustainability of new housing development. Retaining natural habitat and natural values, particularly natural patterns of drainage, are increasingly seen as desirable.

Consideration of how new development can respect, maintain or contribute to biodiversity should be a key consideration for new development particularly subdivision of vacant land.

Primary industries: Spread of the city into adjoining farmland typically results in a loss of productive capacity. This can be through development of the land itself or through the impact of proximity to residential development. (Noise, spray-drift, dust, dogs, motorbikes, trespassing, fencing, and illegal dumping are typical of the conflicts between farms and adjoining residential areas.) The state government Policy for the Protection of Agricultural Land⁵ has been introduced to address this issue at local level.

5

www.rpd.c.tas.gov.au/stpol/pal



Design issues

Reuse of old buildings: Converting vacant or partly-occupied old buildings for reuse requires less raw material and energy than building from scratch. Appropriate buildings for reuse are often within inner areas and their renovation can contribute to the preservation of urban character.

In this context it is important to critically consider the consequences of converting residential, or residential-suitable, buildings to commercial uses in accessible locations or along major roads. Encouraging residential uses of such buildings should generally be the preferred development response, diverting demand away from other less sustainable locations.

Water-sensitive urban design: Environments designed to reduce the amount and speed of urban runoff can improve the quality of runoff and decrease the potential for downstream flooding. Increasing capture and reuse of rainwater by encouraging storage in both drainage schemes and individual houses also assists.

Design should aim to maintain natural drainage systems where possible and minimise paving in those areas. Techniques for urban drainage to permeable areas such as swales and soak ways can lower costs and bring environmental and amenity benefits.

Opportunities for local food production:⁶ Local food production both within the city and on its fringes has been identified as increasingly important. Growing food in residential areas contributes to sustainability by reducing transport costs, increasing local biodiversity, and enhancing social outcomes.

Energy efficient building forms: Terraces, apartments and semidetached buildings are generally more efficient than the prevailing detached houses that are still being constructed in Launceston. Current planning policy generally discourages alternatives with its focus on single dwellings protected by generous setback provisions. Energy efficient materials are increasingly being demanded of new houses, encouraged by 'star' ratings. Planning should not be a barrier to achieving energy efficient forms of development.

It is currently a matter of debate as to whether the planning system should seek to regulate energy efficiency, or whether this is best dealt with under building regulations. It would be preferable for a consistent state or regional approach to be developed.

Increased consideration of environmental sustainability will assist Launceston to become more resilient to rises in energy and fuel costs and the pressures of responding to climate change.

6

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_food

Policy 2 - Environmental sustainability

Key issues

Council recognises that further extension of the city outwards into rural areas is less environmentally sustainable, as it contributes to loss of vegetation, decreased water quality, loss of agricultural capacity, and compromised scenic amenity. It also leads to increased traffic in the city.

Increasing fuel costs are reducing market demand for rural and remote residential properties.

The benefits of energy efficient and water sensitive housing are being increasingly recognised; appropriate location, design and layout can reduce transport and other costs and have positive environmental benefits.

Planning responses

Council will:

- examine alternatives to the spread of the city outwards from the fringe by seeking opportunities for urban redevelopment, residential development in inner city locations, and increasing residential density in appropriate locations
- discourage the conversion of the existing stock of residential dwellings to commercial uses particularly in inner areas or along major arterial routes except to re-enforce commercial nodes or where desirable for local service provision
- seek to increase the diversity of housing, encouraging smaller houses and alternative forms of housing and where possible to integrate accessible community services
- align future growth with areas of excess infrastructure capacity, encouraging more efficient development and encouraging infill development and more compact development where appropriate
- require consideration of energy efficiency in the layout and design of new residential development
- ensure appropriate consideration to the maintenance of existing natural values on new housing development sites, particularly subdivisions.

Complementary measures

Council will

- continue to monitor and review emerging social, economic and environmental trends and ensure that the planning scheme responds adequately and wherever possible and appropriate, facilitates development in line with community expectations
- seek to develop partnerships with providers of key community services including education, aged care, and health care and other social services to ensure their needs are integrated into future planning
- participate in the development of a common state-wide approach to energy efficient buildings through the regional planning process.

Other social and economic factors influencing housing development

The value of a thriving housing industry

Census data for 2006 indicated that 1691 people or 6% of the Launceston population worked in the construction industries, including the housing industry⁷.

In 2006/07, new housing development in Launceston exceeded \$64 million in property value. In 2007/08 the forecast value of renovations to residential properties in Tasmania was \$713 million.⁸

These figures do not factor in the multiplier effects of construction spending throughout the local economy particularly for local suppliers, the real estate industries, subdivisional and other associated industries.

Council's planning scheme can play an important role in maintaining a sustainable level of activity for the housing industry. To a substantial degree it controls the amount of land available and the sequencing of its release to the market. Unnecessary delay or significant oversupply can distort the housing market either through unnecessary price competition or lowering of profitability through oversupply. Council should aim to accommodate the likely demands in the market and make available sufficient opportunities for new houses.

Economic sustainability

Providing and maintaining the infrastructure for residential areas is a major cost to the community. Extending service infrastructure is not always cost-effective and can represent substantial long-term costs. Income from additional rates may be insufficient to cover the cost of additional upgrades or maintenance.

Different areas of the city have differing capacities to bear the cost of additional houses. Such economic considerations must be at the forefront of planning for new houses. The planning scheme can assist by:

- aligning future growth with areas of excess infrastructure capacity
- encouraging more efficient development (i.e. more connections per hectare)
- encouraging infill development, higher densities and more compact development where appropriate.

Social Inclusion

People in any society can face disadvantages, for example financial, locational, educational or health issues. Social exclusion occurs when a number of disadvantages happen all at once preventing participation in work or community life. Exclusion can occur for individual or a community or geographic area where there is a high concentration of disadvantage.

The Tasmanian Government is currently seeking to address social exclusion through a broad coordinated policy initiative.⁹ The aim is to remove barriers for individuals and communities so they have access to opportunities, choices in life and have the personal capacity, self confidence and individual resilience to make the most of them.

Locational disadvantage is particularly relevant to housing policy. Areas poorly connected to transport, located on fringes of urban areas with poorly integrated employment opportunities, community services or recreational opportunities correlate highly with high levels of disadvantage. Access to the availability of appropriate and affordable housing is also an indicator of relative advantage or disadvantage.

Housing affordability is becoming a matter of concern within the Launceston community. Including an affordable housing component in residential development has been successfully implemented in other areas and is being considered in Launceston.

7 ABS 2006 Census

8 HIA Economics Group (2008), www.economics.hia.asn.au

9 <http://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/siu>

The state and federal governments have a number of incentive programs and Council is assisting private developers and government agencies to locate suitable opportunities for affordable housing development.

Social inclusion agendas recognise that solving social exclusion requires developing innovative ways for government agencies at all levels to work together. Council's settlement strategy has a role to play in this emerging policy framework.

Dependent relative accommodation

Closely related to the affordable housing issue is the growing demand for alternative forms of housing. The co-location of ancillary dwellings within homes would particularly benefit families with disabled and/or elderly family members.

Council should be able to consider proposals for such accommodation, putting in place controls to ensure a sufficient standard of accommodation; and to prevent independent occupancy, separation by subdivision or strata plan, or sale independent of the main dwelling.

Policy 3 - Social and economic factors

Key issues

When planning for housing Council must identify and respond to emerging social and economic trends.

- The planning scheme directly impacts on the profitability of the construction industry and resultant levels of employment and investment in the Launceston municipality.
- An ageing population brings with it increased demand for access to community and social services, higher density residential development, renovations and redevelopments in inner areas, and need for retirement and residential aged care facilities.
- The location of housing and accessibility to transport, social, recreational and employment opportunities is directly related to levels of social exclusion. Council should ensure social inclusion is a key consideration in developing the settlement strategy.
- Housing affordability must be factored into future locations of housing growth.
- The long-term costs and efficiency of infrastructure will become an increasingly significant determinant of housing location and type.

Planning responses

Council will:

- aim to ensure that the profitability and capacity of the housing and construction industries is maintained by ensuring adequate supply of land and appropriate sequencing of land release
- increase the diversity of housing, encouraging smaller houses and where possible, create opportunities to integrate accessible community services
- align future growth with areas of excess infrastructure capacity, encouraging more efficient development and encouraging infill development and more compact development where appropriate.
- maintain the flexibility to be able to respond to newly identified or emerging trends during the life of the planning scheme.

Complementary measures

Council will continue to monitor and review emerging social, economic and environmental trends and ensure that the planning scheme responds adequately and wherever possible and appropriate, facilitates development in line with community expectations.

Council will seek to develop partnerships with providers of key community services including education, aged care, health care and other social services to ensure that their needs can be integrated into future decision making. Council will also seek to partner with providers of alternative forms of housing and actively participate in facilitating affordable housing programmes.

The benefits of higher density development

If Launceston grows by new subdivision on the fringe, overall housing density will continue to fall. This is undesirable from economic, environmental and social perspectives. A more compact development pattern is generally more sustainable due to:

- the financial benefits of reduced infrastructure costs
- the environmental benefits of less land being taken up per dwelling
- people being closer to jobs and services, with reduced car-dependency and associated transport costs
- a more compact arrangement of community services
- better developed communities that enjoy greater safety
- better sustained services through more concentrated demand.

Benefits are generally enhanced where houses are within a walkable distance of their destinations. This is generally considered to be a distance of up to 400m.¹⁰

Council has performed a 'walkability' analysis of Launceston. The map below (Figure 2) is generated by scoring the relative location of a house to all identifiable social and commercial locations. A methodology for this analysis is provided in Attachment 3.

The analysis shows the degree to which existing housing (or future housing locations) are able to be serviced by walking, or conversely the degree to which they are car dependnt.

This analysis can be used as a guide to the most appropriate locations for future housing or for planned increases in residential density. This analysis is developed further in the settlement strategy.

Housing densities in Launceston vary according to the age and location of the suburb or area. Generally, higher densities are found closer to the CBD and in older suburbs.

As suburban Launceston developed generally lot sizes have continued to increase and houses per hectare decrease.

The majority of recent subdivisions have minimum lot sizes of 500m² and an average of approximately 700m² resulting in approximately 12 houses to the hectare. Evidence suggests low sustainability at this density.

10 2007, Biddulph, M. - *Introduction to Residential Layout*, Butterworth-Heinemann, London

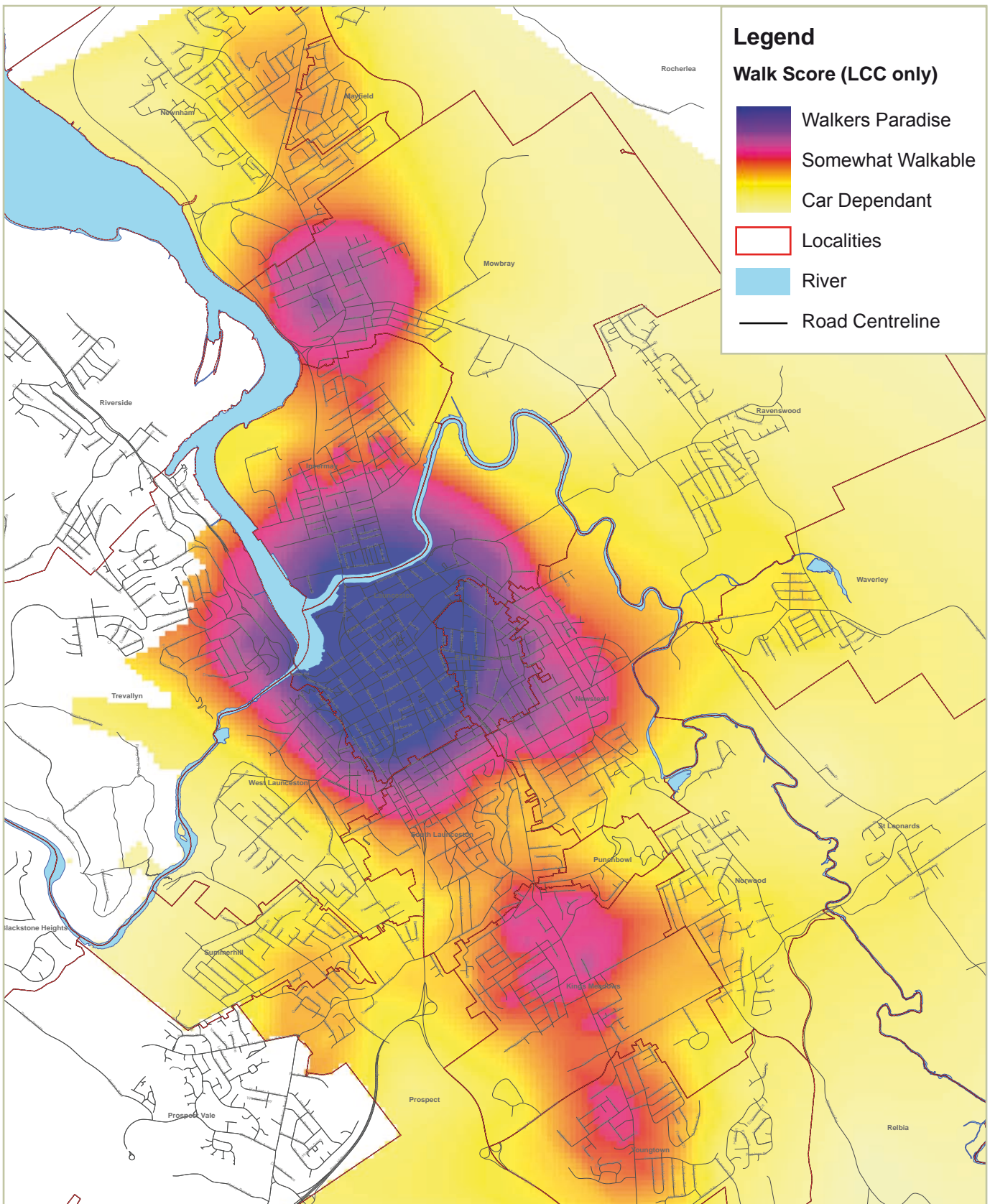


Figure 2: Walkability Analysis

Source: www.walkscore.com - used with permission

It is suggested in the UK context that sustainability benefits would be achieved at 40 dwellings per hectare.¹¹ At this level bus services become economical and local provision of services including shops and doctors have enhanced viability. This level of density has not historically been achieved in Launceston. Higher density inner area development has however been seen with the recent approval of a number of apartment buildings.

11 1999, Lord Rogers & the Urban Task Force - *Towards a strong urban renaissance*

FIGURE 3 shows examples of development patterns at different densities in three Launceston suburbs.

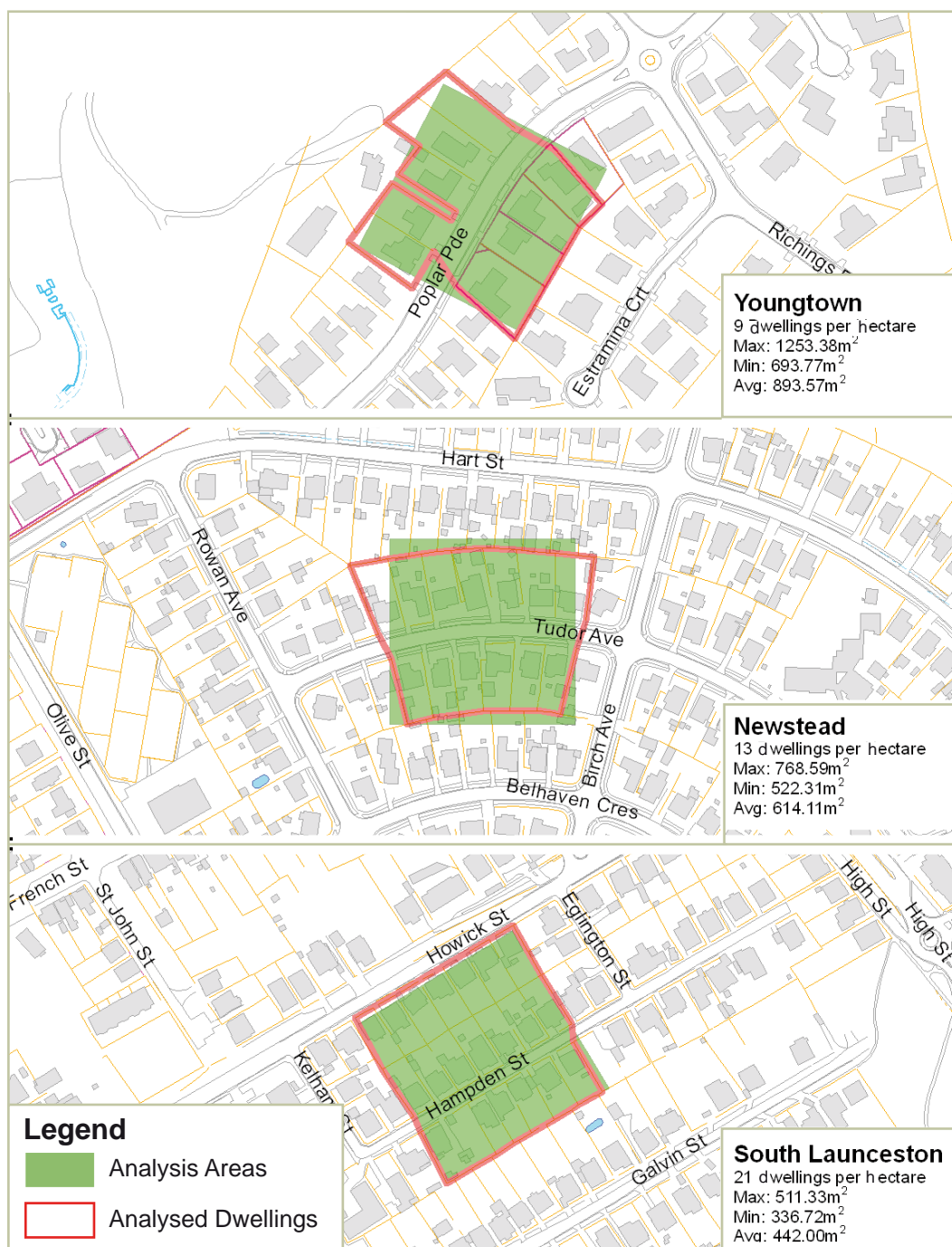


Figure 3: Examples of different housing densities Launceston (2008)

Source: Launceston City Council

Some implications of higher density residential patterns

Increasing densities in urban areas requires careful consideration of design issues.

Amenity: Raising the density of development can be achieved primarily through either new development or by increasing density in existing areas. Launceston has many areas that are recognised for their special character or heritage value. It may be inappropriate to promote a change in character in these areas. (This issue is discussed further in the settlement strategy.)

Higher density design issues: Higher density development should not be assessed against the same development standards as conventional residential development. Multi-storey development, apartments and inner area development have different characteristics from suburban developments. The reduced need for parking and for private open space should be acknowledged in assessment of higher density development.

Nuisance: Increased density can increase the likelihood of noise and amenity complaints. This is evident in areas of the city that are currently mixed use. Encouraging higher density and seeking further integration of residential uses may exacerbate this if careful consideration is not given to potential problems. Development of appropriate design codes will be necessary.

While commercial and other non-residential uses operating in inner city areas have a responsibility to contain their emissions, including noise, they often fail to do so. The introduction of residential development leads to nuisance complaints against the non-residential operations. Longer term land use planning may want to influence the location of certain types of uses to meet new or emerging land use objectives.

Policy 4 - The benefits of higher density residential development

Key issues

Council recognises that promoting a more compact urban form and higher density housing in appropriate locations may have a number of social, economic and environmental benefits for the city including reduced costs of infrastructure, increased environmental sustainability, reduced demand for transport, and a more vibrant city.

Planning responses

- Design codes for inner area and suburban higher density and multiple dwelling development must be integrated to ensure appropriate assessment of higher density development.
- Appropriate nuisance controls should be developed to ensure that higher density development does not create noise pollution and appropriately deals with privacy and amenity issues.
- Subdivision design guidelines should require an appropriate mix of lot sizes to provide for a diversity of housing types. Increased densities should be encouraged in areas close to employment, community services, entertainment and shopping districts.
- The planning scheme should identify areas where except under special circumstances increased density is not appropriate for character reasons for example heritage precincts or scenic protection areas wherever possible.
- Residential uses should integrate with commercial uses within the CBD, city fringes, and district and neighbourhood commercial areas.
- Commercial and community facilities should be integrated in the higher density residential nodes.
- Dependent relative accommodation should co-locate with family houses in residential areas.

Complementary measures

Council will:

- encourage developers to incorporate residential elements in new development proposals within the CBD and city fringe.
- develop policies, incentives and projects to encourage conversion of vacant upper floors of commercial buildings to create new residential uses in the CBD, the city fringe, and district and neighbourhood centres.
- identify opportunities to facilitate state and federal government affordable housing incentive programs.
- develop processes to address the operational problems of increasing inner-city living, such as garbage collection and parking.



Recognising the benefits of good design

Residential land use planning must go beyond deciding the number and location of houses. It must recognise the link between the environments we create through subdivision and planning approvals, and the broader social, economic and environmental outcomes for our communities.

Desirable attributes of a residential area include:

- a cafe or shops for local needs within walking distance
- a local restaurant
- a doctor's surgery, aged care and child care services
- a primary school
- a park with play equipment and sufficient space for ball games
- recreational trails (e.g. a jogging track)
- safe streets with low-speed traffic, pavements and easy crossing points
- street trees for shade, wildlife habitat and visual amenity
- choice of housing styles and price range.¹²

It is evident in Launceston generally that the older suburbs meet these criteria whereas the more recent developments do not. Trevallyn, Newstead, West Launceston, South Launceston and Kings Meadows for example have many of these attributes. Some newer suburbs have developed as solely residential with little variety in housing types and few integrated social services, are largely car-dependent, and contain limited opportunity for recreation. It would be difficult to walk to a shop in some of the newer areas of Launceston. While this may appeal to some residents it does not provide the most sustainable or socially desirable outcomes.

These patterns are due in part to the current planning scheme which does not seek to integrate services nor holistically plan for the development and growth of the city, and in part due to the desires of developers to create simple, cheap residential layouts. There is also some identified community pressure to develop land at lower densities than would be desirable to meet sustainability parameters.

Council's approval mechanisms are based on a 'design engineering standard' approach, which has little focus on social outcomes. It does not seek to encourage or achieve better outcomes and has undoubtedly contributed to the standardisation of Launceston suburbs and, to varying degrees, a lack of character and diversity in housing.

12 2007, Biddulph, M. - *Introduction to Residential Layout*, Butterworth-Heinemann, London



Council planning should have a wider focus than simply facilitating development. It should seek to achieve a balance between encouraging development and achieving the best possible outcomes for the community. Ideally these should not conflict. There is evidence to suggest that 'lifestyle and community' factors are now being demanded by the market and house builders, and will therefore contribute to the desirability and marketability of new development. Design of new housing should allow residents to live well – socially, economically and environmentally.

Outcomes for successful residential areas

Traditional urban sprawl is linked to poor community outcomes, traffic congestion, reliance on motor vehicles and expensive infrastructure. Future growth must consider connectivity, open space, sustainable infrastructure, and urban design as development outcomes. It should aim to improve transport networks with a focus on pedestrians; provide a range of mixed uses; promote the conservation of agricultural land and natural habitats; improve housing diversity and affordability; create efficient infrastructure networks and increase the density of housing to arrest urban sprawl on the periphery.

Designs should be assessed for their consideration to:

- commercial viability
- being a place people want to live in
- integration of other land uses
- safety and promotion of community interaction.

Commercial viability

Development will not occur without potential for profit. The planning scheme should ensure that the level of regulation is commercially appropriate for Launceston.

It is not the case that the most profitable schemes are those with the lowest costs or the least community infrastructure. The Commission for Architecture and Built Environment (UK) has recognised that people will pay a premium to live in housing developments with design quality, or where there is a distinctive character and/or sense of place.¹³ Creating a desirable character for new housing developments through design of both the environments and buildings is an established practice in many parts of the world.

The planning scheme should encourage local developers to recognise the benefits of good residential design and positively influence design to both increase the value of the development and to enhance community benefits.

The Launceston Planning Scheme 1996 has rigid density standards and promotes a standard subdivision layout. This can lead to inefficient land use, poor investment returns by failure to meet market demand, and compromised environmental outcomes.

13 <http://www.cabe.org.uk/>

As an example, some new subdivisions in suburban Launceston have provided only standard house blocks. In response to demand for smaller blocks and smaller houses, developers have 'shoehorned' a number of smaller houses onto these standard-sized blocks. This is a poor development pattern and one that is not desirable for residents. Consideration of future housing styles in subdivision layouts would result in better, more efficient subdivisions.

Places people want to live in

Standardisation of design can lead to bland urban landscapes. If suburbs cannot be distinguished from each other, no special sense of place can develop. Such design does not add to the character or appeal of Launceston.

Launceston should seek to promote distinctiveness in its new housing developments to create among residents a greater sense of community and an enhanced sense of identity and ownership. The concept of creating villages with individual identities within urban areas has been adopted by many cities.

A number of factors contribute to desirable residential areas. At the most fundamental level, the layout of the roads and streets, the design of public and private spaces, and the relative location of the buildings define the place. Additional layers of character can be achieved with finer-grained control on building forms, setbacks, building envelopes, changes in density, and variations in allowable heights and housing types. Characteristic landscaping and street furniture can also define areas. Architecture that is designed appropriately for the climate can also help define a local character.

In significant new residential areas or planned urban expansions, opportunities for a community focus can be identified. A shop, cafe, hall, recreational facility, or a place of significant employment could provide a focus and assist in creating a desirable environment.

There should be greater consideration given to public open space in larger-scale housing developments. The provision of high quality outdoor areas is not required by current regulations. Council should regulate with regard to:

- sufficient and diverse open space provision
- integration of and flow between spaces
- encouragement of activity and 'passive' interaction
- public amenity including shade and lighting
- street furniture including seating, bicycle parking and rubbish bins
- public art.

The importance of high quality open space accessible to the public for health, environmental and social reasons has been underestimated. Council has not adequately planned for public open space, and has therefore been left with inadequate parcels of land that are of no value for community recreation and have become a maintenance liability.

Integration of other land uses

The appropriateness of new housing development or increases in urban density must be considered in relation to other land uses. Consideration must be given to how future residents will live, access services, and integrate with the city.

Areas of mixed use are often more vibrant and interesting places to live. They can be more environmentally sustainable and promote better social and community outcomes. Many older areas, including inner city areas and country towns, are historically mixed use areas. The separation of land uses is a recent phenomenon that has been encouraged by planning scheme zoning.

While separation of certain uses is necessary for amenity reasons, there is now more opportunity for blending as cleaner industries, and residential, recreation, leisure and tourism uses move into the city, and people work from home. Many suburbs such as South Launceston, Invermay and the inner city area display such patterns of mixed use.



The incremental growth of suburban Launceston has witnessed little consideration to the integration of services, as each individual development would not have been able to sustain service facilities. A broader view may reveal a considerable under-provision in certain areas.

Council should analyse areas of the city where community, social and economic services are lacking and ensure that future development creates better provision. Opportunities for economic development including retail and community facilities should be identified at the 'outline development' stage of planning. Sites within subdivisions, particularly on arterial roads, could be reserved for such opportunities. Increasing housing density in existing areas may increase the viability of existing facilities.

It should be recognised too, that some mature areas and those with valued characteristics may not be appropriate for further integration of land uses.

Alternatives to standards-based residential design

Housing layout, subdivision and 'integrated residential developments' such as units and apartments have been dominated by a standards-based approach. There is considerable evidence to suggest this will no longer produce the best possible outcomes for the community.

A focus that is mainly on building standards often leads to poor, unresponsive outcomes, particularly in cities like Launceston where there are considerable differences between areas. Adherence to standards of design can be perceived as an easy solution, providing a guaranteed outcome for a designer. It is essential however to balance standards with site-responsive design.

Standards do not promote innovation or development of good design responses. An alternative would be to work towards desirable outcomes, judging a residential development on how it relates to its context and how it functions. Flexibility must be allowed for new and alternative solutions.

The planning scheme should clearly express the desired outcomes for new residential development, and the design and layout of applications assessed accordingly. What would follow would be a vastly simplified assessment against the appropriate standards, particularly for new houses in residential subdivision.

The state government's Common Key Elements Template advocates a performance-based approach where flexibility is encouraged.¹⁴

14 http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/landuseplanning/simplifying_planning_schemes

Policy 5 - The importance of residential design

Key issues

Council recognises that the environments we create through subdivision and planning approvals can impact on broader social, economic and environmental outcomes for our community. Council will encourage high quality design and layout of both new residential areas and individual developments.

Council will utilise local area plans and outline development plans to ensure that design of new residential areas and their integration into the existing urban fabric is considered at the earliest opportunity. Particular consideration will be given to:

- the integration of transport networks including cycling and walking
- the provision of usable convenient, safe and accessible public open spaces
- opportunities for residential developments other than single dwellings
- the environmental performance of new development including the impact on natural values, biodiversity and water
- the promotion of distinctive design in new residential developments to create character and higher standards of amenity
- better integration of commercial and community services
- integration of high quality landscaping, street furniture, and public art.

Planning responses

Council will:

- develop subdivision assessment guidelines to implement the settlement strategy
- implement a process that ensures outline development plans* are created for all significant new residential developments
- facilitate opportunities for integration of non-residential uses into residential areas, and vice versa, subject to amenity considerations.

*see following section

Complementary measures

N/A

Regional planning for housing

The *Land Use Planning and Approvals Act 1993* states that a planning scheme for a local government area must, as far as practicable, be consistent with and coordinated with the planning schemes applying to adjacent areas, and must have regard for the use and development of the region as a whole in environmental, economic and social terms.

This does not represent a requirement for holistic regional planning, and in practice has not placed significant obligations on local councils to formally coordinate, or spatially distribute, housing across their regions. Rather, councils have planned for the demand evident in their own municipalities and worked towards their own strategic outcomes within their infrastructure limitations.

In October 2008 a regional planning project for the northern region of Tasmania commenced, supported and funded by the state government. This project has two key aims: firstly to develop a regional strategy to provide a consistent and coordinated approach to development in northern Tasmania; and secondly to introduce largely consistent planning schemes across all municipalities. It is anticipated that future housing growth and standards of development will be a key consideration.

Launceston City Council has formally endorsed this process, and it is intended that the regional strategy will inform the preferred settlement pattern for Council's area.

Transfer of control of reticulated service infrastructure (water supply) to a regional body has also been legislated. This will increase the necessity for regional housing planning to ensure the best possible service provision and maximise cost-effectiveness.

It is not yet clear to what degree these regional processes will influence the distribution of housing growth – for example, by apportioning future growth between local government areas. Notwithstanding this uncertainty, a regional approach for planning future settlement growth is considered essential, for a number of reasons.

Firstly, coordination is particularly important for Launceston as the service centre for adjoining municipalities. Regional settlement patterns will influence the positioning in Launceston of infrastructure and services such as schools, health care facilities, shopping and other commercial services, and recreational facilities in Launceston. A regional approach would allow both Council and service providers some certainty as to likely future demand.

Traffic impacts also need to be assessed over council boundaries. (For example traffic from Prospect Vale exceeds the capacity of local streets in West Launceston, and expansion of Riverside is increasing demands on Gorge Road.) Regional growth may also be dependent on the capacity of Launceston to accept more sewage from adjoining municipalities.

A second major benefit of regional coordination is greater consistency between planning schemes. There are four councils and four planning schemes that impact on housing provision in Launceston. This complexity creates problems and is potentially a competitive disadvantage for the region. Variations in the application of regulations may also distort the housing market or result in sub-optimal planning outcomes, including potentially undesirable impacts on environmentally sensitive areas or places of historic interest or high visual amenity. The state government standard planning tool, the Common Key Elements Framework¹⁵ to assist in achieving this objective.

Policy 6 - Regional planning for housing
Key issues
Council recognises the social and economic value of a regionally coordinated approach to planning for housing.
Planning responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council will adopt the state government Common Key Elements Template as the basis for the new housing strategy and planning scheme provisions to ensure a smooth transition to a regional planning scheme.
Complementary measures
Council will actively participate in developing a regional land use strategy through the regional planning project.

¹⁵ http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/landuseplanning/simplifying_planning_schemes

The particular case of housing in rural areas

Protection of agricultural land

Over recent decades significant amounts of productive agricultural land in Tasmania have been permanently lost to agriculture through conversion to other uses, particularly lifestyle properties and (usually less productive) hobby farms. Had this trend continued, the value of agriculture to the Tasmanian economy might have been seriously impacted.

In response, the state government developed a policy for the Protection of Agricultural Land (PAL policy)¹⁶ to foster sustainable agriculture and ensure the continued productivity of the state's agricultural resources.

The policy is based on the premise that all agricultural land is valuable and should be maintained where possible. The policy contains a classification system whereby land is graded according to its capacity to sustainably produce agricultural goods (that is, without such activity impairing the long-term capacity of the land). The system describes 7 grades of land, with grades 1 to 3 being classified as 'prime'. (Land capability does not extend to the assessment of land for its suitability for specialist agricultural enterprises, such as viticulture; nor does it assess suitability for forestry.)

Launceston has very little prime agricultural land, with much of its productive agriculture being on land graded 4 and 5.

The PAL policy requires that the Launceston Planning Scheme will ensure that impacts on agricultural productivity are considered in approvals of new land use and development. Council must apply the following principles:

- **That productive agricultural land should not be converted to non-agricultural uses**
Conversion occurs through directly building on land and changing it to a non-agricultural use, or through subdivision of land rendering it non-viable for future agricultural use. Residential development that is not integral to an agricultural enterprise is generally considered conversion.
- **That new development should avoid land use conflicts and fettering of agriculture**
Council must ensure that new land use or development does not compromise the ability of farmers to farm without complaint or interference from neighbouring non-agricultural land uses. Conflict is most often caused by residential uses in farming districts. Issues generally include smell and noise, uncontrolled domestic animals, and fence maintenance.

The key tasks for Council in implementing the PAL policy are to identify areas of land within Launceston that are currently used for, or have the potential for, productive agriculture and to ensure that this capacity does not become eroded over time through inappropriate development or conversion. Areas that are not suitable for agriculture or that have lost their agricultural capacity may be subject to less restriction.

There are a number of areas in Launceston that are attractive for lifestyle properties and hobby farms. Areas between the Tamar Estuary and Lilydale, and areas to the south and east enjoy easy access to the city, pleasant views and outlooks, and generally small manageable lot sizes. Historically there has been a steady demand for new houses in these areas.

Protection of mineral resources

Launceston has a number of important mineral deposits within its rural areas. It also has a number of quarries, primarily extracting stone and gravel.

The contribution of mineral resources to the economy is significant. There are 18 mining leases in the municipality comprising 15 operations. These operations provide raw materials for infrastructure and industry in the city. The Launceston area consumes approximately 850,000 tonnes of crushed stone products annually. The value of the region's quarry products once out of the ground has been estimated at \$8.5m per annum (2006).¹⁷

16 www.rpd.tas.gov.au/stpol/pal

17 *Mineral Resources Tasmania, (2007) www.mrt.tas.gov.au/*

A guiding principle is to protect deposits for future development and not compromise them by encroachment of other uses. The state government's Quarry Code of Practice specifies appropriate distances for quarry operations (such as regular blasting, crushing, etc), protecting the resource from encroachment by sensitive uses. A sensitive use, such as housing, should not be approved within a buffer area unless it can be demonstrated that it would be safe to do so and that it would not compromise the future development of the mineral resource. Major operations should provide scientific analyses that would be used to determine the extent of necessary buffer zones.

Policy 7 - Protection of primary industry capacity

Key issues

Council recognises that areas with significant capacity for primary production in Launceston should be protected from conversion to non-productive uses. Construction of new houses that do not support or have the potential to conflict with primary industries should not be approved in those productive areas. New houses in rural areas should be directed to areas of low productivity or into planned rural residential areas.

Planning responses

- Council must design and implement rural zoning to accord with the objectives of the PAL policy.
- Applications for all houses in rural areas must be assessed for the degree to which they might compromise the primary industrial capacity of their lots or adjoining land.

Complementary measures

N/A

Serviced residential development

Recent development in residential zones

Understanding patterns of development in the recent past is essential to planning future housing. To inform the new settlement strategy, Council has analysed serviced residential lot creation and take-up within the municipality over the 16 years 1990 to 2006.

A snapshot of the residential market in the Launceston Council area in that period shows the following:

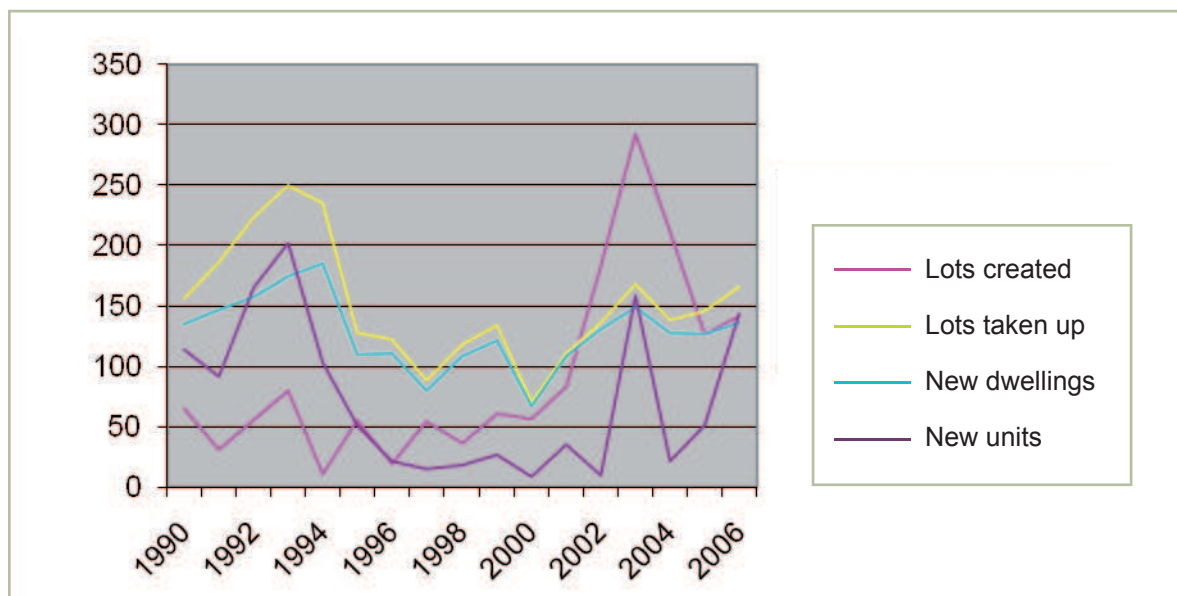
Table 4. Residential lot creation and market take-up in Launceston 1990–2006

Average lots created per year	92
Average lots taken up by residential development per year	150
Average single dwellings built per year	128
Average units built per year	73
Average residential property sales per year	1358

Source: Launceston City Council

As the table shows, an average of some 200 new residential properties (just under two thirds being single dwellings; the remainder being units) have been constructed in Launceston each year, and land is being taken up at a significantly greater rate than new lots are coming onto the market.

The early 1990s appeared to be a boom period for residential construction. The level of construction reached its lowest point in 2000 with a sharp upward curve in 2003 and a limited plateau towards 2006, but still falling short of the high levels of 1992–94.



Source: Launceston City Council

Figure 4: Lots created and taken up, and houses and units built in Launceston 1990–2006

When the lots taken up over the period are considered, the following is significant:

1. Unit development over the period accounts for 36 percent of development in serviced areas. In four years (1992, 1993, 2003 and 2006) construction of units exceeded that of single dwellings.
2. Urban development accounted for 85 percent of all residential development at a rate of approximately 170 houses per year. Rural residential development averaged 4.6 percent of residential development at 10 houses per year. Rural areas accounted for 10 percent of the residential development or approximately 20 houses per year.
3. Approximate housing densities in Launceston are around 12 dwellings per hectare (gross density¹⁸ of 1:830) for conventional residential subdivision and development, and 24 dwellings per hectare (gross density 1:416) for multiple dwellings, aged care facilities or higher density developments.

The data was collected by geographical precinct, correlating as closely as possible to the suburb boundaries used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. A summary of this data and maps showing these precincts and the patterns of development are provided as Attachment 2.

Key identified trends are:

1. Key areas of growth have been towards the edges of the city in the precincts of Alanvale, East Youngtown and West Launceston. Growth in these areas accounts for 40% of total new dwellings.
2. The precincts with the highest numbers of unit development are Kings Meadows and East Launceston. Significantly these are precincts with higher levels of access (walkability) to urban services and have older age profiles.
3. There is a particularly high correlation between patterns of lot creation through subdivision and distribution of housing growth. The significant majority of new housing development occurs on newly created lots. Other forms of development such as conversion or redevelopment have been less apparent.

Current development potential in existing residential zones

When determining the extent of future residential zoning an important consideration is the amount of land that is currently available.

The table below shows vacant lots greater than 1 ha at 1 January 2007 in the residential zones contained in the Launceston Planning Scheme 1996.¹⁹

Table 5: Vacant lots greater than 1 ha in Launceston residential zones at 1 January 2007

Zoning	Vacant lots (#)	Vacant land (ha)
Urban Residential	1	3.2
Closed Residential	13	36.32
Low Density Residential	7	31.14
Reserved Residential	7	21.06
Rural Residential	54	193.83
TOTAL	94	285.55

Source: Launceston City Council, Planning Scheme 1996

¹⁸ Number of dwellings per hectare regardless of land taken up for roads or other public services.

¹⁹ Only lots larger than 1 ha were used for the housing requirement calculations as they are large enough to be considered development-suitable. (Sites smaller than this are often gardens or are unavailable for future development; inclusion of such sites would unreasonably distort the figures.) Many of these sites may however be suitable for multiple dwellings, aged care or other higher density development.

It is important to note the Future Urban zone does not necessarily represent suitable residential land as it contains significant infrastructure constraints. Accordingly these vacant parcels are not taken into consideration as part of the vacant residential land calculations. There are currently 140.97 ha, in 12 discrete parcels, zoned Future Urban.

Based on the above assessment there is 91.72 ha of land currently available in fully serviced residential zones and 193.83 ha in the partly serviced Rural Residential zone.

Rural residential development

Rural Residential development provides for people who want to live in a country setting without a significant land holding and without conflict with productive agriculture.

The Launceston Planning Scheme 1996 accommodates this by providing a Rural Residential zone as part of its wider settlement strategy, allowing for the management of the impact of houses in rural areas.

Council has chosen to impose relatively high development standards on such areas, generally requiring sealed road frontage and reticulated water. It has also allowed Council to avoid development of unsuitable or environmentally sensitive areas. This approach has led to the creation of desirable areas where many of the environmental issues have been avoided or mitigated.

Importantly Council has also taken the approach that Rural Residential development should be planned, that is, conducted in accordance with a development plan specific to that area and integrated into the planning scheme. A planned approach allows Council to better manage the supply of land and achieve site-specific outcomes.

Recent Rural Residential development

The Rural Residential developments within the municipality are situated in the south at Relbia; and along the East Tamar in the Dilston, Windermere and Swan Bay areas. Development during the period 1990–2006 is shown in the table below. Over the 16 years, the average take-up rate was 7 lots/dwellings per year.

Table 6. Lots created and taken up in Rural Residential precincts 1990–2006

Precinct	Lots created	Lots taken up/ dwellings erected	Vacant lots (2006)
Relbia	37	73	14
Windermere/Dilston	41	47	61
TOTAL	78	120	75

Source: Launceston City Council

The Launceston Planning Scheme 1996 made a deliberate effort to curb rural land fragmentation, for example through new subdivision and residential development unrelated to rural enterprises. It did this firstly to limit the level of public infrastructure that would have to be provided and maintained, and secondly to maintain capacity of agricultural, forestry and mining activities. This strategy is in line with the principle of sustainable rural land development and mirrors the state PAL policy as outlined above.

Current development potential in the Rural Residential zones

There is some potential for further Rural Residential development, with 54 remaining vacant lots with existing zoning. This potential may be increased as many lots are suitable for re-subdivision into smaller parcels.

On the other hand, some lots are owned by people intending to build over the longer term; others are not capable of accommodating a house and are effectively consolidated with adjoining land.

Anecdotal evidence from landowners and the real estate industry indicates significant unsatisfied market demand in both Relbia and the Windermere/Dilston areas.

Rural housing

Approval of new houses in rural areas is a perennial problem for Council. There is a general community presumption that people have a 'right' to build a house on a separate title in a rural area. In reality, this has not been the case for some time, but some conflict nonetheless continues to occur.

Under the provisions of the Launceston Planning Scheme 1996 a house can only be built on a vacant rural title if: a) the title was created prior to 1997 (the commencement year of the current planning scheme); and b) basic minimum standards can be met.

Minimum standards include:

- access (frontage) to a road maintained by Council or a highway authority
- evidence of satisfactory effluent disposal by an approved system
- evidence the land to be developed is not high quality agricultural land
- the siting of the house site away from a quarry buffer area.

These provisions have generally succeeded in limiting opportunities for rural housing development and ending pressures for rural subdivision. Despite some continuing debate and individual conflicts, the provisions have been generally well accepted, have not further disadvantaged landowners, and have achieved Council objectives in a transparent way.

Recent rural house development

There were 252 houses constructed in the rural areas of Launceston in the period 1990–2006 (that is, both prior to and after the introduction of the current planning scheme). Information on the use of these houses and their relationship with agriculture have not been collected.

Development potential in rural areas

The prohibition on the construction of new houses on titles established after the commencement of the planning scheme established a limit on future development of Rural zone housing.

In 1997 when the scheme was adopted, 1400 Rural titles complied with the age and road access criteria and were available for development. Of these, some 1291 are still undeveloped, suggesting considerable opportunity could remain for the construction of houses on rural titles. However, Council has no data on the availability of these lots for building nor on the level of demand for them.

Future demand: How many new houses will we need?

Housing demand can be predicted against anticipated population growth and the historical building rates within the area, taking into account that household size changes over time.

1. Population growth and projected demand

The medium range projection of population growth in Launceston up to 2024 is for an additional 4258 persons.

If household size in 2024 were to remain at the 2006 average of 2.3 persons, then the population increase of 4258 would create demand for an additional 1851 houses. However, if average household size drops, as projected, to 2.1 by 2024, the population (by then 68,878) would require 32,779 houses, an increase of 4703 houses on today's 28,096.

The trend towards smaller household size more than doubles the housing demand in Launceston that would be caused by (modest) population growth alone.

2. Historical building rates

As shown earlier, Council found that between 1990 and 2006 an average of some 200 additional residential dwellings were built each year. If the average is maintained, then by 2024, an additional 3417 houses will be needed.

Using these figures as a guide, and factoring in a margin of 10 percent in either direction, it could be expected that between 3075 and 5173 houses could be required. That would equate to between 171 and 287 new households per year.

As was shown earlier, 85 percent of houses constructed between 1990 and 2006 were in fully-serviced locations in the residential zones in the city, the remaining 15 percent having been built in non-urban locations including Rural and Rural Residential zones.

If maintaining this pattern of demand is considered appropriate, the figures can be used as a guide for planning.

An estimation of demand by zone

Planning schemes limit the supply and influence the location of housing opportunities to best achieve their strategic goals. Council must consider holistically the amount of future housing provided and its location (zoning) as the opportunities created for each category of housing will necessarily influence demand for the remaining types. For example, if Rural housing is restricted then demand for Rural Residential houses is likely to grow due to diverted demand. Determining the appropriate number of houses is a key component of a successful settlement strategy.

This strategy categorises demand for new houses into three types depending on their location and level of infrastructure services. These are:

1. fully-serviced houses in a Residential zone (i.e. with reticulated water, sewerage and stormwater)
2. partially-serviced houses in a Rural Residential zone (reticulated water only)
3. unserviced houses in a Rural zone (no reticulated services).

Projected demand for fully-serviced houses in residential zones

If 85 percent of housing is demanded in serviced residential areas, then, based on the above projections, between 2614 and 4397 houses will be needed by 2024. Based on a historical split of 60 percent being single houses at approximately 12/ha and 40 percent being units at approximately 24/ha, an estimation of land required would be between 175 ha and 293 ha from now until to 2024.

As at 1 January 2007 there was 91.72 ha of vacant land in residential zones. This simple analysis suggests a foreseeable shortfall over the strategy period.



Projected demand for rural and rural residential housing

If 15 percent of future residential demand is for unserviced houses in Rural and Rural Residential areas it would be expected that between 461 and 776 new houses will be required in the period up to 2024. Approximately one third would be developed in Rural Residential zones and two thirds in Rural zones. If the current patterns of demand are maintained that would mean demand for between 153 and 258 dwellings in Rural Residential Zones and for between 308 and 518 new Rural dwellings.

There are 57 lots covering 193 ha of land zoned Rural Residential currently available; and it can be estimated that between 96 and 201 additional lots may be demanded.

The amount of land required to satisfy predicted demand depends on strategic choices made regarding minimum lot sizes and the rate at which land is released to the market for building. For Rural Residential development at an average lot size of 1 ha, between 96 and 201 ha would be required; at an average lot size of 4 ha, between 384 and 804 ha would be required.

This suggests that, depending on the chosen lot sizes, there is a considerable shortfall in supply, suggesting demand for zoning additional Rural Residential land in the period up to 2024.

The influence of strategy

Apportioning housing demand to particular zones in this way is problematic. The above analysis relies on static forecasts of variables. These are not sophisticated estimates; nor do they factor in the impact of future planning policy.

As will be seen in the strategy (following section), the introduction of new goals and strategies could significantly challenge the historic patterns.

Should Council succeed in achieving its goals of increased residential density, and diverting demand away from Rural and Rural Residential to serviced residential areas it is likely that the forecasts outlined above overestimate the amount of land that will be required.

Limitations of forecasting demand

Forecasting housing trends also has some major methodological limitations.

Forecasts do not factor in:

- sudden economic changes (either growth or decline), interest rates, fuel prices or particular local influences, such as the proposed Bell Bay pulp mill
- changes in Council's economic and social policies that may influence demand in some areas
- the surrounding context including the actions of other councils in limiting or providing for housing growth
- unforeseen trends in household size, or migration into or out of the area
- loss of housing to other uses including commercial uses or unforeseen demand for brownfield re-development .

Generalisations about population density do not take into account the reality of many sites nor particular constraints on achieving higher densities. More land may in fact be needed for the desired additional houses.

Balancing supply and demand

The previous sections of this strategy outline the amount of vacant land that is currently available in Launceston and estimate how much land might be needed into the future, including the amount of additional land Council would need to re-zone as residential.

Such an estimate would be valid only if current conditions remained unchanged over the forecast period. As suggested this strategy aims to actively influence the demand for different types of housing, and through planning controls, to regulate the supply of land to help achieve a range of objectives. This suggests a strategy that would provide choice, achieve viability for development and ensure economical provision and use of infrastructure, rather than the implementation of a rigid strategy based on static forecasts.

This approach does not suggest unplanned development, but a more proactive role for Council. Council will need to monitor housing availability more closely and be responsive to evident demand. A limited amount of overestimating is considered to be better than underestimating housing demand. While oversupply of land can lead to inefficient use of infrastructure, undersupply can put the cost of housing beyond the reach of average buyers and inhibit population growth within the municipality.

Policy 8 - Assessment of housing supply and demand

Key issues

Council will aim to create opportunities for housing development sufficient to satisfy the needs of the population and to help achieve Council's strategic objectives. There is no identified need to limit housing growth in Launceston, but rather to direct growth into the most appropriate types and locations.

Due to the limitations of statistical forecasting, an approach to supply that is based on responding to known levels of demand and influencing available choice in the market should be preferred. At all times Council will aim to provide sufficient opportunity for viable development and to ensure the economically sustainable provision and use of infrastructure. This does not suggest unplanned development, but more proactive and responsive roles for Council.

Planning responses

- The planning scheme should provide sufficient opportunities to satisfy reasonable housing demand without oversupplying the market or impacting on the viability of development. Ensuring the availability at all times of vacant residentially zoned land to meet 5–10 years' forecast demand, estimated at some 1000 dwellings, would seem appropriate.

Complementary measures

To achieve this, Council will need to monitor housing availability more closely and be responsive to evident demand.

Council will

- seek to work pro-actively with developers to increase overall housing density and seek to maximise the sustainability of new housing development to assist in reducing the overall demand for vacant land
- identify land that is zoned residential but has had constraints to development and seek to work in partnership with interested parties to bring it to the market.

blank page

A Residential Strategy for Launceston

Summary of key issues

The sections above outline key issues relating to future housing development in Launceston, and an analysis of factors that will influence demand over the lifetime of the strategy. These are:

1. **The influence of population trends on urban form:** The changing composition of our communities will have significant impact on future housing demand. Launceston's population is predicted to grow at a steady rate and to age significantly over the coming decades. Family structures are also moving towards smaller households. Council will allow greater flexibility to allow for alternatives to traditional three bedroom suburban houses and encourage housing that caters for the needs of the elderly, small families and young people and singles.
2. **Maximising environmental sustainability:** Continued extension of the city outwards into rural areas is recognised as being less environmentally sustainable through loss of vegetation, decreased water quality, and loss of agricultural capacity and scenic amenity. Increases in fuel costs have seen a reduced demand for remote properties. The most important factor determining the sustainability of new housing is its location. The benefits of energy efficient and water sensitive housing are increasingly recognised.
3. **Social issues influencing housing:** Council must identify and respond to emerging social, community and economic trends. Key identified directions include:
 - An ageing population is creating an increase in demand for higher density development, renovations and redevelopments in inner areas, new apartments and mixed use development, along with a significant growth in retirement and residential aged care facilities.
 - Housing affordability must be considered in types and locations of future housing. The true cost to the community must be established.
 - The long-term costs and efficiency of infrastructure must be given greater consideration in determining housing types and locations.
 - Council will consider the social impacts of the location and design of future housing and seek to develop partnerships to reduce levels of social exclusion.

Council must maintain the flexibility to be able to respond to newly identified and emerging social trends.

4. **The benefits of promoting higher density housing:** Promoting a more compact urban form and higher density housing in appropriate locations may have a number of social economic and environmental benefits for the city including reduced costs of infrastructure, increased environmental sustainability, reduced demand for transport, and the creation of more vibrant city areas. It also sustains and increases viability of existing business and facilities.
5. **Recognising the benefits of good design:** Council recognises that the environments we create through subdivision and planning approvals can impact on broader social, economic and environmental outcomes for our community. Council will encourage high quality design and layout for all new housing.
6. **Regional planning for housing:** Council recognises the social and economic value of a regionally coordinated approach to planning for housing.
7. **PAL policy:** Council recognises that areas with significant productive capacity in Launceston should be protected from conversion to non-productive uses. Construction of new houses that do not support or have the potential to conflict with primary industries should not be approved. New houses in rural areas should be directed to areas of low productivity or into planned Rural Residential areas.



Spatial objectives

Where are the best locations for new houses?

These key issues generate a number of conclusions about the desirable characteristics of future housing location:

- **Walkability:** housing should be located close to activity centres – shops, community services and recreational facilities.
- **Infrastructure:** new housing should be able to utilise existing services including sewerage, water and the road network.
- **Fuel efficiency:** locations should be well served by public transport services and/or cycling and walking networks, with reduced car dependency.
- **Sustainable design:** residential forms should maximise sustainability and energy efficiency.

In determining the most appropriate locations Council must acknowledge that there are areas where significant new development is not desirable, and that achieving the goals of the settlement strategy must be complementary to Council's broader policy framework. Potential conflicts include:

- areas with heritage values, including precincts identified in the Launceston Heritage Study
- areas of high scenic quality including areas of 'scenic protection' and 'regional significance'
- scenic approaches to the city
- areas of significant conservation value
- flood-prone areas
- areas utilised for, or capable of impacting on, primary production.

A hierarchy of preferred locations

Considering the issues outlined above, Council can establish and prioritise the types and locations of housing that it will encourage in Launceston over the coming decades.

Council should direct its activity towards creating and facilitating new housing opportunities in the locations of highest priority.

Council's hierarchy of priorities describes six 'tiers' of new housing from the most to the least socially, environmentally and economically desirable. These tiers are outlined below.

Serviced residential

- Tier 1. Residential development on 'brownfield' sites for example surplus public land, sites where industry has relocated, mixed use developments in accessible locations on the CBD fringes or adjacent to district centres or neighbourhood centres
- Tier 2. Increased density in existing residential areas where opportunities exist or where capacity for change has been identified, primarily through unit developments or redevelopment
- Tier 3. Development on vacant land in urban infill locations including undeveloped portions of existing residential areas and vacant land currently within a residential zone
- Tier 4. Development on the most appropriate vacant land on the edge of the urban areas

Partly Serviced

- Tier 5. Rural residential development in the most appropriate areas

Unserviced

- Tier 6. Individual rural houses unconnected to a primary industrial uses.

Each of the categories of housing is examined in the following section.

Exceptions to this basic framework include Lilydale which requires separate consideration; and houses that are specifically required to support primary industries.

Facilitating choice and focus on creation of opportunity

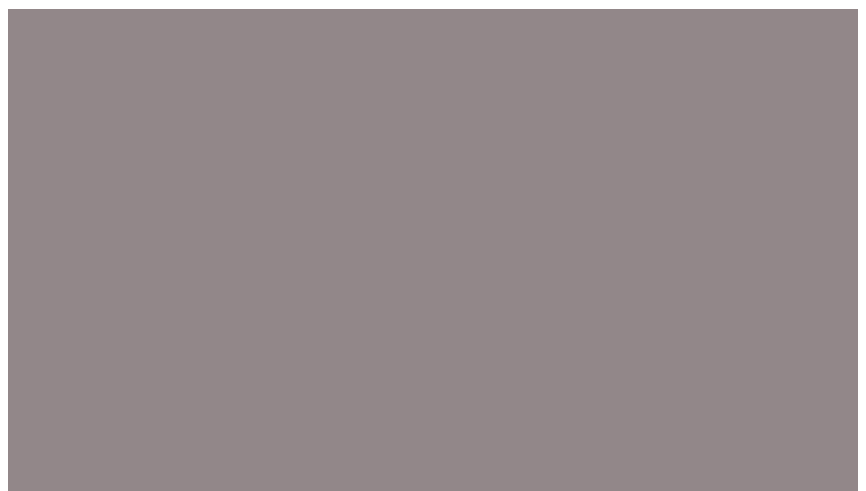
The hierarchy of preferred locations is designed as an aspirational guide. It is not suggested that all new houses can be developed on brownfield sites or in walkable locations, but merely indicates Council preference.

It is recognised that Council must continue to provide choice to residents in each tier of the hierarchy to maintain a competitive development industry and to provide for the diversity of housing types and locations desired by the community.

The prevailing aspiration to build new houses in new subdivisions, and a development industry set up to facilitate it, creates considerable inertia against a fundamental shift to more sustainable housing policies and practices.

The strategy seeks to manage the availability of a range of choices while creating particular development opportunities consistent within Council's hierarchy of preferred locations.

The focus of the strategy is therefore on creating and encouraging the uptake of opportunities in accordance with the aims of the hierarchy rather than seeking to unnecessarily restrict growth in other areas particularly the traditional pattern of growth through subdivision of vacant land.



Policy 9 - Settlement hierarchy

Key issues

Council will adopt a six tier hierarchy of objectives to guide the location of future housing development. This hierarchy describes housing locations from the most to the least socially, economically and environmentally desirable and should be used by Council to inform strategic choices.

Fully Serviced Residential Areas

1. Locate new residential development on 'brownfield' sites that are in accessible locations on the CBD fringes or adjacent to district centres or neighbourhood centres; then
2. Increases density in existing residential areas where opportunities exist or where capacity for change has been identified, primarily through unit developments or redevelopment; then
3. Is located on vacant land in urban infill locations including undeveloped portions of existing residential areas and vacant land that is currently within a residential zone; then
4. Is located on the most appropriate vacant land on the edge of the urban areas; then

Partly Serviced

5. Is located in planned rural residential development in the most appropriate areas; then

Unserviced Development

6. Individual rural houses unconnected to a primary industrial use

Planning responses

- While the focus of the strategy is on encouraging opportunities in accordance with the aims of the hierarchy, the planning scheme will continue to allow for traditional patterns of growth through subdivision of vacant land.
- Exceptions to this basic framework include Lilydale which requires separate consideration; and houses that support primary industries.
- To clarify the intent of the Rural Residential zone, the minimum lot size will be 1ha.

Complementary measures

Council will seek to establish partnerships with the development community to investigate and promote housing models and locations that advance the goals of the settlement strategy.

Council will seek to develop opportunities for innovative housing development consistent with the strategy.



Fully serviced residential areas

In order for Council to achieve its strategic goals and maximise sustainability, fully serviced residential development must be the primary focus. Historical data suggests that 85 percent of all houses are located in serviced areas. This strategy suggests that Launceston should seek to increase this proportion.

The following is an examination of the types of housing development that comprise the six tiers of the housing hierarchy, from highest to lowest priority.

Tier 1: Urban redevelopment for new houses in accessible locations

The benefits of higher concentrations of residential development around commercial centres is well understood and include: making centres more vibrant through increased demand for local services; broadening the economic base to include leisure and entertainment; stimulating a night economy; and increasing natural surveillance and thereby lowering crime.

Proximity is suggested to be within a 400m radius of an identified centre. At this distance facilities would largely be walkable.

By its nature housing close to commercial centres reduces travel, and commercial centres are also generally more convenient to public transport. Increasing housing density around commercial centres is therefore likely to promote use of public transport.

In Launceston the key commercial areas include the CBD, CBD fringe and the major district centres of Mowbray and Kings Meadows, plus the 'lower order' centres such as Prospect, Newstead and Trevallyn.

The aim should be to create significant nodes of residential development within and adjacent to these identified areas.

This can be achieved by:

1. encouraging provision of residential components in commercial redevelopment or as part of new mixed use developments
2. replacing commercial/ industrial development with residential uses in areas close to activity centres
3. encouraging residential uses of vacant upper floors (e.g. of buildings in commercial use)
4. replacing existing residential development patterns with new forms of more desirable, better designed, higher density housing through demolition and redevelopment or insertion into areas adjacent to activity centres in appropriate locations
5. promoting residential design away from single dwellings or 'conventional' single storey detached multiple dwellings, towards higher density options such as terraces, flats, apartments and other multi-storey forms.

This strategy must consider the existing patterns of development and the appropriateness of new forms of development. Areas with significant heritage values would require particularly careful consideration.

Policy 10 - Promoting increased density around activity centres

Key issues

Council will seek to create opportunities for new residential development within and adjacent to identified centres of activity including commercial activity. Council will seek to identify sites for redevelopment into higher density residential uses.

Planning responses

- Council will identify opportunities consistent with the higher density objective and seek to zone them to allow residential uses.
- Development control provisions should support the redevelopment of brownfield sites and encourage higher density forms of residential development within them.
- The objective of higher density development must not conflict with maintaining the special character of identified areas.

Complementary measures

Council will

- develop partnerships and work with landowners and the development industry to communicate policy objectives and facilitate beneficial land use changes.
- assume a role in planning and infrastructure planning for significant new residential developments.

Areas of transition

It is acknowledged that there are likely to be difficulties in creating new opportunities for residential development within areas currently under other uses.

A complementary alternative would be to work on a larger scale, seeking to change the prevailing character of identified areas of the city and creating specific opportunity for new residential development. Such an approach could provide a considerable quantity of new development in the most sustainable locations over time.

Combinations of characteristics that would make an area suitable for consideration include:

- high accessibility to an activity centre, particularly a retail area
- low value building stock (e.g. sheds, warehouses)
- low development intensity
- less capital intensive uses such as warehouses, distribution or service industries.

There are a number of areas that could be considered for transition to higher density residential uses. The candidate areas shown on the map below (Figure 5) are for illustrative purposes only and would remain subject to detailed suitability analysis.

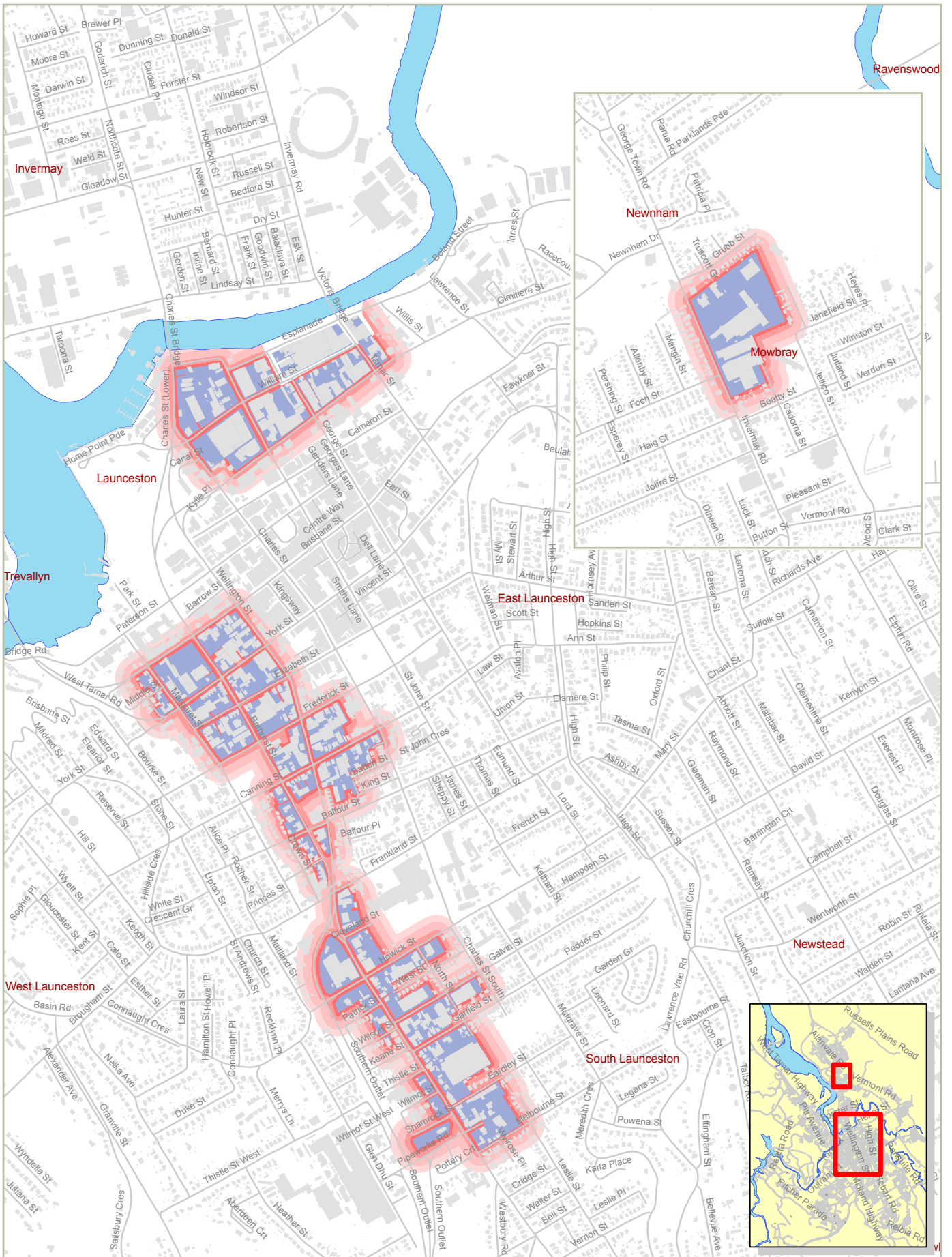


Figure 5: Areas potentially suited to transition to higher density residential uses

Source: Launceston City Council

A strategy of relocating inappropriately located industrial uses is consistent with the strategic direction of Council's emerging industrial strategy.

In addition to achieving residential objectives, such a strategy has the potential to benefit the city in a number of ways including:

- visual improvement
- increasing demand for leisure and recreation in the city areas by increasing the resident population
- making the city a more vibrant place.

A policy of seeking to significantly change the character of an area through such measures as relocating industry could realistically only be done in partnership with landowners. Council should nonetheless take a leadership role in promoting a vision of future development.

This is a long-term strategy with potential to bring beneficial change to the city and significantly contribute to future sustainable housing.

Council will commit to preliminary studies of a number of candidate areas for transition to significant residential use, including preliminary site investigations and gauging the interest of property owners.

Policy 11 - Transition areas

Key issues

Council will seek to investigate areas of the city that have inappropriate land uses or that are otherwise failing to contribute positively to the amenity or functionality of the city. Council will examine their potential for long-term transition to residential, or partly residential, uses.

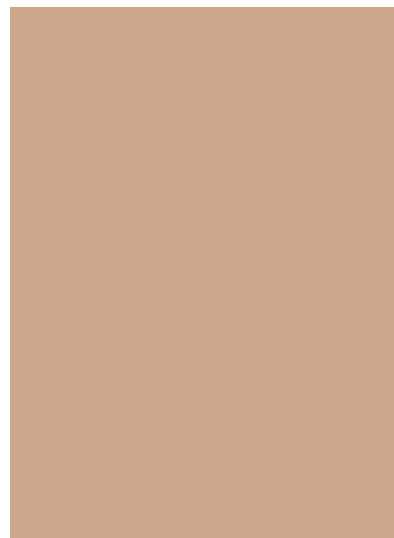
Planning responses

Council will seek to zone appropriate sites for residential uses.

Complementary measures

Council will

- promote the benefits of any such significant land use changes to landowners and other interested parties
- develop mechanisms for coordinated development for sites with multiple owners.



Tier 2: Increased density in existing residential areas

Over the past decades many residential units have been constructed in Launceston, at an average of 73 per year since 1990. These are largely located in residential zones.

In addition to the general sustainability benefits outlined earlier, higher density housing has the following benefits:

1. Units and other higher density forms are generally smaller than houses and as such appeal to smaller households, including singles and the elderly. Demographic analysis points to increasing demand for these forms of housing.
2. Higher density forms are generally more affordable than houses, thereby assisting to provide opportunities at the lower end of the market.
3. Increasing residential density in serviced areas requires considerably less additional infrastructure than establishing new houses on the periphery, and therefore brings initial and long-term cost advantages to the community.

Some unit developments in Launceston over recent decades have produced poor outcomes with regard to streetscape, impact on surrounding development, and general amenity. Often such problems can be attributed to poor design and site layout (and a poor regulatory framework for design).

Council should continue to provide opportunity for units to co-locate with existing houses and for multiple units to be constructed on vacant subdivision blocks. To be successful, higher density living requires a careful focus on design to ensure that levels of amenity and functionality are maintained.

In the Launceston context a targeted policy of increasing densities is only appropriate for certain locations, such as inner areas and around activity centres where property prices are higher (and higher intensity development is often required to achieve a profit), and where the advantages of achieving development with high levels of walkability outweigh potential disadvantages associated with changes in existing patterns of development or residential character. While in some areas change may be promoted, there are other areas of particular character where it would not be appropriate to encourage significant changes.

As noted in the earlier discussion of Tier 1 housing, limitations are created by the presence of heritage values, or identified scenic or landscape character. Generally such areas have low capacity to change.

Council's walkability analysis has been modified to remove such areas of recognised significance. The resulting map (Figure 7) shows areas that are both accessible, have high levels of walkability and are not identified as having significant identified urban character. In areas identified as having a higher priority there should be no presumption against new development proposals that seek to increase levels of residential density. This analysis is expanded in Attachment 3.



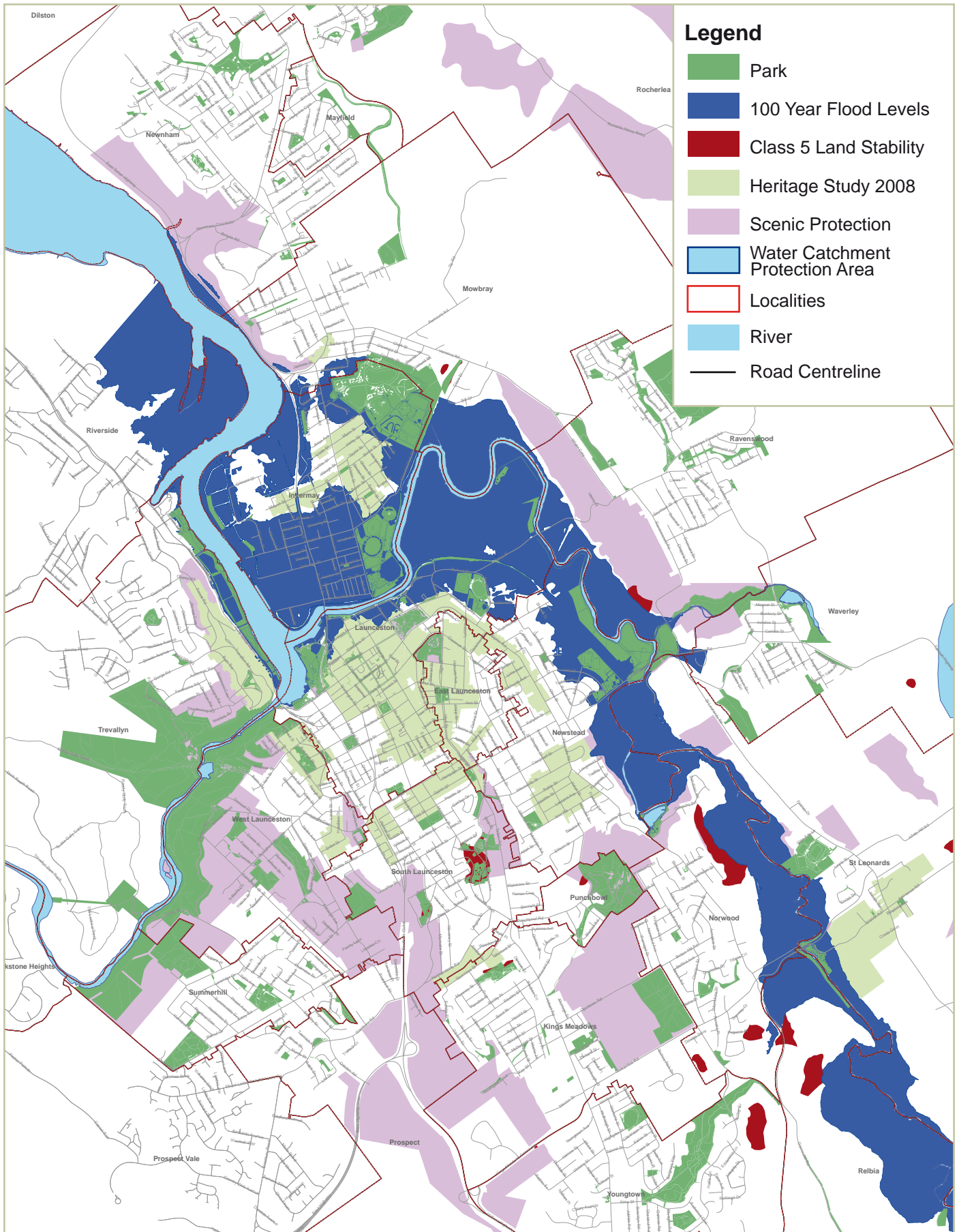


Figure 6: Areas of Launceston with identified constraints to higher density residential development

Source: Launceston City Council

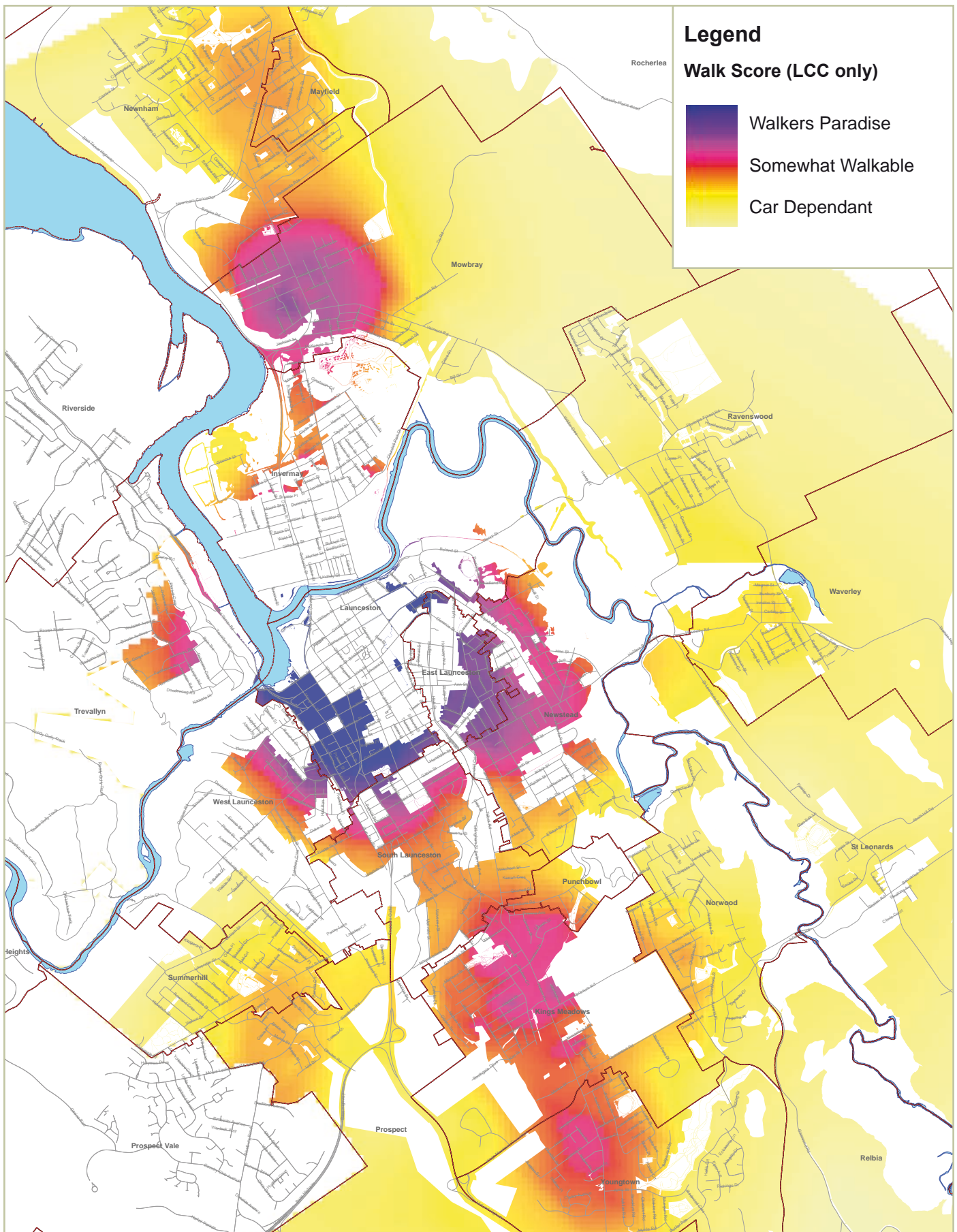


Figure 7: Modified walkscore analysis showing candidate areas for higher density residential development

Source: Launceston City Council

www.walkscore.com - used with permission

Policy 12 - Increased density in existing residential areas

Key issues

Council recognises the benefits of encouraging increases in housing density within existing residential areas. Subject to appropriate design and taking into account special characteristics of particular areas, Council will allow the development of higher density multiple dwellings within existing residential areas.

Planning responses

- The appropriateness of higher density development in areas of special character requires additional consideration.
- The planning scheme should contain enhanced design guidelines for unit developments.

Complementary measures

N/A





Tiers 3 and 4: Vacant land

The proposed hierarchy prioritises new residential development in existing urban areas towards achieving increased residential density. The settlement strategy nonetheless recognises that Launceston's future housing requirements may not all be met in this way.

Subdivision of vacant land has long been the predominant form of new residential development in Launceston and is likely to remain so. A fundamental cultural shift to preferring alternative forms of housing is likely to only occur in the very long term, if at all.

While it is the intention of the new settlement strategy to influence this cultural shift, Council accepts that subdivision and development of vacant land is likely to remain the predominant form of new housing provision in the immediate future. A housing strategy for Launceston must therefore provide for it.

Because residential zoning increases the value of land and creates landowner expectations, continuity of zoning is important for long-term investment decisions. Unless there is a demonstrable and overriding reason why a residential zone should not be maintained, the future planning scheme should seek to maintain it.

Tiers 3 and 4 of the proposed hierarchy pertain to vacant land. Tier 3 is concerned with infill of vacant land within the existing developed areas and tier 4 is concerned with urban expansion in vacant areas on the edge of the city.

A methodology for considering suitability of currently vacant land

When determining the appropriateness of land for residential subdivision, Council needs to employ a transparent, repeatable and defensible methodology to assess one piece of land against another.

To achieve this Council undertook a study to identify vacant areas with residential development potential within or on the fringes of the city, and to prioritise areas for development.

The scope of the study was to:

- identify sites that are underdeveloped and within or adjacent to the currently developed areas of Launceston
- develop criteria considered important to any well functioning, fully developed area and a scoring system based on weighting factors to objectively prefer one site over another
- determine the subject sites most appropriate for future development.

The results of this study forms Attachment 4.

Significant parcels of vacant land in a current residential zone were included in the study to reassess their suitability. The 140 ha of vacant land currently zoned Future Urban were also included. Vacant residential land approved for subdivision or under development was excluded from the study.

This was not intended to be an exhaustive assessment. The 32 sites selected for assessment were considered by Council to be the most obvious candidate areas for future housing development. It is acknowledged that additional sites may exist and could be assessed should the need arise.

The assessment criteria were:

1. proximity to reticulated water supply
2. capacity of the water supply (quantity/pressure) at the subject site to meet desirable standards
3. ability of sewer mains from the subject site to flow via gravity to Council's system
4. capacity of Council's waste water treatment plant to accept effluent should the subject site be fully developed
5. capacity of stormwater drainage to discharge into public watercourses or Council's existing system should the subject site be fully developed
6. the subject site's risk to flooding by inland water
7. the subject site's landslip zoning (with reference to Mineral Resources Tasmania information)
8. scenic issues such as whether the site is within an important view field or on an undeveloped access route into the city
9. conservation values of the subject land in accordance with TASVEG ²⁰
10. distance from CBD
11. proximity to arterial road network (ease of transport)
12. slope of the land
13. current zoning and/or special overlay
14. level of interest from owner/developer
15. level of assistance required from Council to make things happen – e.g. multiple small titles or large parcels in single ownership
16. proximity to neighbourhood services
17. whether the land constitutes infill development or expansion of the city
18. the extent of any conflicts with adjacent land use such as industrial development.

The final outcome was a priority ranking of subject sites considered suitable for development.

The report suggests that of the sites assessed, a total of 448.5 ha may be suitable for future residential development. The sites assessed and those considered suitable are shown on the map (Figure 8).

²⁰ TASVEG is a Tasmania-wide vegetation map, produced by the state government Tasmanian Vegetation Mapping Program (TVMP). The TVMP use 154 distinct vegetation communities to produce TASVEG maps at a scale of 1:25,000.

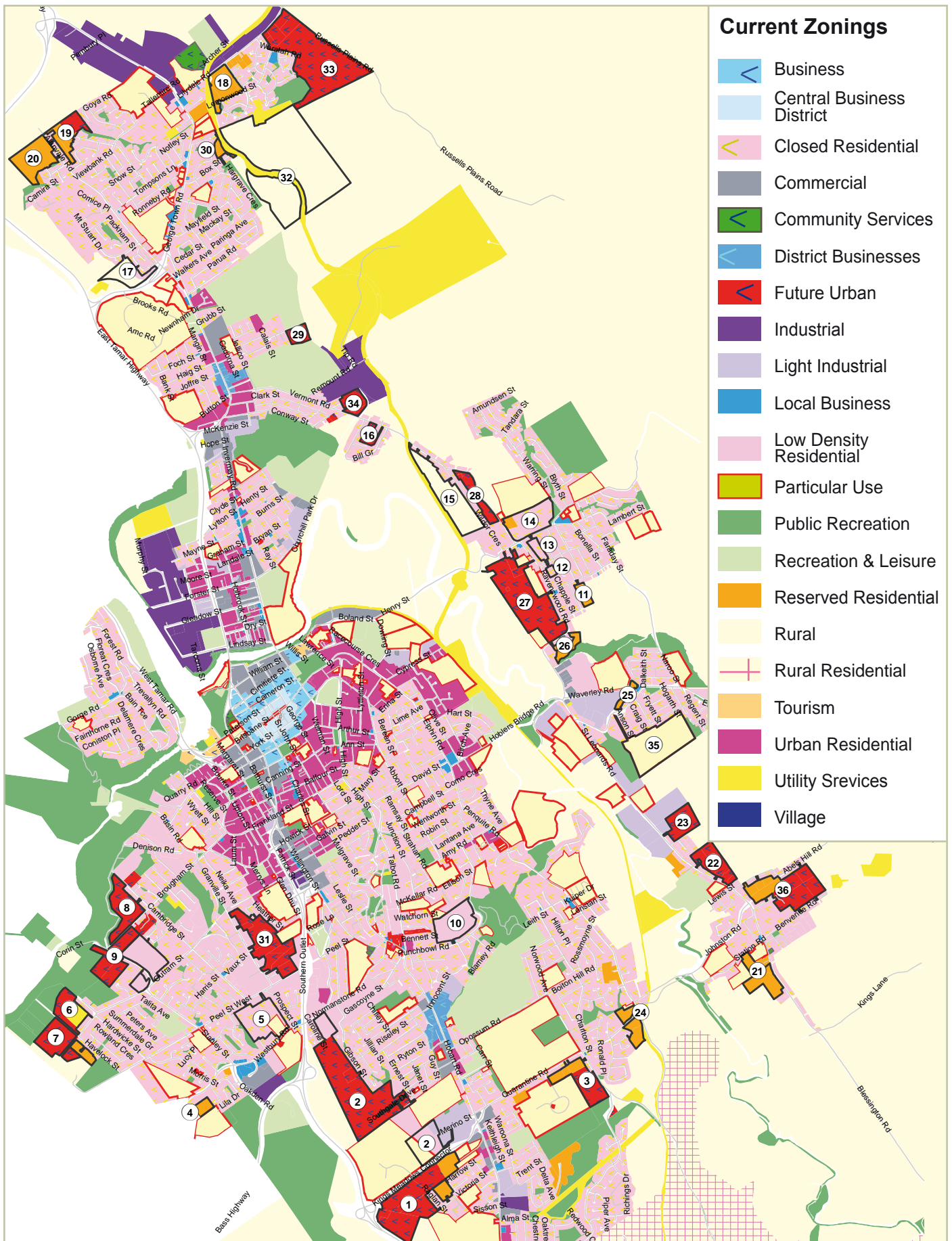


Figure 8: Candidate areas for residential subdivision

Source: Launceston City Council

The current zoning of land considered suitable by the study is shown in Table 7. Most land considered suitable for residential development in Launceston would need to be re-zoned for development to proceed.

Table 7. Land considered suitable for residential development

1. Land in current residential zones (ha)		
Closed Residential	21.1	
Reserved Residential	49.6	
Low Density Residential	12.4	
Subtotal		83.1
2. Land in non-residential or composite zones (ha)		
Future Urban	207.7	
Rural	88.2	
Particular Use 8.6 (timber mills)	24.7	
Future Urban/Utility Services	9.6	
Future Urban/Reserved Residential	35.2	
Subtotal		365.4
Total (ha)		448.5

Source: Launceston City Council

The demographic projections outlined earlier suggest that Council may need between additional 2614 and 4397 houses in the period up to 2024 equating to a theoretical land requirement of between 175 and 293 ha depending on chosen densities.

Attachment 5 shows the development status of eight parcels of residential land in Launceston at August 2008. Launceston has 63 ha approved and either awaiting or available for development, and a further 177 ha in advanced stages of consideration. This suggests that there is currently no shortage of vacant residential land in Launceston and that there is sufficient land to supply the market for some time.

There is also evidence of considerably more suitable residential land that is not currently zoned as such that would be able to accommodate new development in the foreseeable future.

It should be noted that while Council forecasts of land consider the historical pattern of construction on vacant land they do not factor in future increases in density or the redevelopment of brownfield urban sites. Given this strategy seeks to encourage a more compact urban form it is likely that the figures for land requirement are overestimates.

Need for flexibility and responsiveness

While Council can seek to influence the distribution of new houses it must recognise that it cannot control factors such as market trends or the willingness of landowners to enter the development market.

Reasons for identified land not developing could include:

- unwilling owners
- market trends
- relative desirability of locations

- changing economic or social circumstances
- patterns of economic investment
- changes in demographic forecasts e.g. migration rates.

Housing development in a given area may also be curtailed by other planning factors such as the necessity to retain a preferred neighbourhood character, native vegetation or other natural values; scenic protections may lower achievable density; or fortuitous events may create a more desirable outcome or a better strategic fit than the original plan, for example as the result of the sale of a school oval or the relocation of an industry.

Council must allow itself the flexibility within the planning scheme to be able to respond, and should not make immediate provision to meet all the potential demand.

It is suggested that the best strategy would be to zone, from identified sites, around 50 percent of the likely land requirement at the commencement of the scheme, allowing the balance to be taken up following evidence of demand. Locations would be from the remaining identified sites or other sites arising from changed circumstances (e.g. windfall sites, or sites that have not currently been considered) providing these sites are favourably assessed. This approach would support the intention of the strategy to prioritise development locations further up the priority hierarchy.

Policy 13 - Allocation of vacant residential land

Key issues

Council recognises that a significant portion of demand is for new dwellings on subdivided, serviced, vacant, residential land. As part of its broader settlement strategy Council will provide opportunities for residential subdivision in the best possible locations taking into account infrastructure capacity, and social and environmental factors.

In addition to zoning of vacant land, and in line with Council's strategic objectives for increased density, opportunities should be provided for urban residential development and redevelopment.

Planning responses

Council will:

- zone land in accordance with best available forecasts of future housing demand
- use objective, repeatable assessment against sound planning criteria to identify land suitable for residential zoning
- direct residential development toward the most suitable sites
- restrict the amount of land allocated, and retain the flexibility to be able to respond to windfall sites or to consider sites not previously considered in the planning scheme
- ensure the market has a role in determining the sequence of development of sites determined suitable to ensure the most efficient supply of land for development
- zone a conservative amount of land in line with priorities at the commencement of the scheme to ensure that it has the capacity to respond to changing patterns of demand.

Council will maintain the residential zoning of land specified in the Launceston Planning Scheme 1996 wherever there is feasible prospect of residential development.

Complementary measures

Council will:

- work with landowners to resolve barriers (such as infrastructure and fractured ownership) and facilitate bringing land to the market, the focus being on higher tiers of the hierarchy including brownfield and redevelopment opportunities
- monitor the market
- develop partnerships with community and community service providers to identify need and match demand with new opportunities
- promote a mix of lot sizes and seeking higher densities or alternative forms of housing where appropriate.

Future higher density and subdivisions

Subdivision should not be simply a surveyor-driven cutting up of land, but attention should be focused on the degree that the chosen layout achieves Council's strategic goals.

Key goals include

- achieving higher residential densities
- providing a greater range of housing options
- achieving greater environmental sustainability
- creating areas with vibrancy, liveability and walkability.

Subdivision in Launceston over past years has resulted in little diversity in housing types. The current planning scheme contains a number of worthwhile strategies and strategic intents; however these have not been translated into desirable outcomes, largely due to observation of a 'minimum standards' approach.

It is essential that achieving Council's higher density objectives are considered at the subdivision stage. Retro fitting higher densities or alternative forms of housing into rigid block patterns is more difficult, is often not possible, or results in poor development patterns.

New subdivisions should provide opportunity for increased housing density where appropriate and a range of housing types to meet the needs of a diverse community.

This strategy suggests that Council will set targets for minimum density for new subdivision of vacant residential land. A required gross density minimum of 15 dwellings per hectare within serviced residential areas would assist, requiring an enhanced consideration of dwelling types and lot sizes.

Conventional subdivision would not achieve this target; therefore to achieve this higher density, a subdivision would need to also contain some smaller blocks, and/or include multiple units on some blocks. To complement this policy a reduction in the minimum lot size to 250m² is suggested.²¹

Approval of higher density subdivision proposals will require Council to place a greater focus on location and design of buildings and the amenity created for residents. For proposals exceeding 25 dwellings per hectare (equivalent to a average lots size of 400m²) Council should consider requiring an intergrated development where either buildings or building footprints/envelopes and subdivision are considered together.

The elements of this strategy promoting higher density should be considered along with those promoting higher standards of design (see Part 1).

21 The *Launceston Planning Scheme* 1996 specifies minimum lot sizes of 350m² in the Urban Residential Zone and 500m² in the Closed Residential Zone.

Policy 14 - Encouraging an appropriate mix of housing densities

Key issues

Achieving a more sustainable development pattern in Launceston will encourage new subdivision to incorporate a mix of lot sizes so the overall densities of new residential areas increases.

Planning responses

Council will:

- specify that outline development plans for new housing address options for achieving higher densities
- improve subdivision assessment criteria to include consideration of lot types and densities, including consideration of appropriate locations for multiple dwellings and other alternative forms
- introduce a target density of 15 houses per hectare and reduce minimum lot size in the residential zones to 250m²
- require consideration of future building forms and layouts for subdivision of lots less than 400m²
- Require greater consideration of opportunities for community facilities in new developments.

Complementary measures

- Maintain a register of the needs of local community service providers such as schools, and aged care and health care facilities, and consider these in the subdivision assessment process.

Tier 5: Rural residential development

Rural residential is the tier with the historically lowest overall provision of new houses in Launceston. Between 1990 and 2006 only 120 dwellings or approximately 6% of total house building occurred in Rural Residential zones.

The Launceston municipality contains two broad Rural Residential areas: Relbia and Windermere/Dilston.

While it is not advocated that new demand be encouraged in Rural Residential areas, it is important to recognise that this zoning provides people with the possibility of living in a rural setting without conflicting with primary industries and without the obligation to purchase and maintain a significant landholding.

Rural Residential development diverts demand away from rural areas and reduces the number of people seeking to build houses in rural areas. This is a significant component of a holistic housing strategy.

To be beneficial significant care must be taken in the planning stage to avoid creating environmental problems and particularly creating new infrastructure that needs ongoing maintenance.

As stated above, there are currently 54 vacant parcels of land and it is estimated that between 96 and 201 additional lots may be sought. This suggests that, depending on the lot sizes taken up, there is a considerable shortfall in supply and some justification for zoning additional Rural Residential land in the period up to 2024. At this level Rural Residential development is considered to have relatively small impact on the overall residential pattern.

In common with Serviced Residential this strategy suggests that areas currently zoned in Launceston Planning Scheme 1996 for rural residential development should be maintained and transferred into the new scheme, unless there is no likelihood of development proceeding.

Consideration of lot size

Lot sizes are critical in determining how much land may be required over the life of the planning scheme; and are also linked to the economic and environmental sustainability of the future development.

The Launceston Planning Scheme 1996 has a minimum lot size of 4 ha in the Rural Residential zone. Local variations exist for the following areas,

- Doctors Rise, Windermere and Little Saltwater Creek, Swan Bay (0.8 – 3.0 ha lot sizes with an average of 1.5 ha)
- 1118 Windermere Road, Windermere (30 ha minimum lots, with an average size of 60 ha)
- Dilston South, Dilston (lot sizes, in accordance with an approved plan, 1.2 – 10 ha)
- Glenwood Road, Relbia (4 ha with discretion to reduce to 2.0 ha).

This strategy suggests that lot sizes should be determined on the basis of the following factors:

1. **Market demand/ economic viability:** Buyers generally base choices on location, cost, security, quality of life, and aesthetic values in addition to the features of individual homes and lot size. The location and setting is often more important than lot size. Living in a comfortable, safe, convenient and friendly community is also a strong consideration.

Buyers have many individual reasons for choosing a rural residential lifestyle: some do not want maintenance obligations and prefer a small lot, and others desire space for small scale agriculture or other activities such as keeping horses.

Rural areas are less efficient and more expensive to service than conventional residential development. Low density occupancy means public transport is typically unviable and use of infrastructure is inefficient. The wider transport effects and the costs to the community should be considered when assessing the sustainability of such use.

2. **Environmental capacity:** Rural residential settlements can impact on most environmental values. Ecological factors sometimes prevent dense development, such as the need for water quality protection when sewerage infrastructure is lacking, or where significant conservation values are present. Where no important issues exist lot sizes may be smaller. Smaller lots provide more efficient development as they convert less land from agriculture per dwelling.

While it is often better to avoid environmentally sensitive areas than to allocate lots to residential development, some evidence suggests that large residential lots, particularly when combined with conservation covenants or similar, can be effective in preserving conservation values.

3. **Effluent disposal:** A number of factors need to be taken into account with regard to on-site sewage disposal, including the proximity of watercourses, dams, bores, etc; the slope of the allotment; the size of the allotment; the proposed dwelling and outbuildings; and the soil types, depth to groundwater and rock, and the capacity for soakage. Correct and accurate site assessment is critical. The main aims of site and soil assessment are to identify any constraints that may potentially limit the capacity of the site to adequately deal with effluent.

A New South Wales study concluded that in-ground disposal systems pollute groundwater at certain densities.²² Evidence for Launceston suggests that one system per hectare (100 per square kilometres) may be acceptable. Acceptable densities vary considerably from site to site.

Package treatment plants support higher density developments than do traditional septic systems, and are becoming more popular particularly in sites where septic tanks are problematic.

4. **Impact on primary industry:** Residential development in rural areas can place pressures on the continued viability of agricultural activities. It may result in loss of farmland and impose a demand for costly infrastructure. The larger the lot size, the more land potentially lost to production. This is generally not desirable and may bring development into conflict with the PAL policy. Alternatively larger lots may also present opportunities for future residents to conduct small business enterprises based on agricultural enterprises, small scale manufacturing or tourism.

The approach suggested is that lot sizes should not be rigidly prescribed in all circumstances; rather an approach based on site-specific assessment should be preferred. This is consistent with Council's current requirement for an outline development plan²³ for each low density residential proposal. It is at that point that lot size should be determined. The development proposal must demonstrate that each proposed lot has considered effluent disposal and meets environmental considerations. It is envisaged that a mix of lot sizes might be more appropriate than a rigidly applied minimum.

Consideration of subdivision standards

Council has a number of standards that take into account site-specific variations for subdivisions within Rural Residential zones. (Generic standards cover all other areas.)

Current standards require a minimum frontage to a Council-maintained road (preferably a sealed road). They also require demonstrated capacity to dispose of effluent, consideration of fire safety and connection to reticulated water where available.

These standards have largely created desirable areas for development that have maintained high levels of amenity and avoided significant environmental problems.

It is not considered that Council should open the door to unrestricted Rural Residential development but should maintain standards to maximise environmental sustainability and aesthetic qualities.

Policy 15 - Rural Residential lot size and development standards
Key issues
Council will ensure that future Rural Residential development respects the environmental capacity of its location and creates attractive, safe and functional areas for future residents.
Planning policies
<p>Council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain all existing areas zoned Rural Residential and translate as far as possible the existing site-specific criteria into new planning scheme. determine appropriate lot sizes based on site-specific assessment of household drainage and of environmental impacts particularly on conservation values specify minimum standards only where necessary to ensure acceptable standards of development, particularly road frontage, reticulated water and fire safety.
Complementary measures
N/A

A methodology to identify locations for future Rural Residential development

To determine the most suitable locations for future Rural Residential development a GIS-based²⁴ model was developed to:

- identify a series of factors that determine sustainable choices for future Rural Residential development
- group the factors as either positive or negative attributes

²³ Outline development plans are discussed in the final section of this document

²⁴ a **geographical information system**, is used for capturing, storing, analysing, managing and presenting data which is spatially referenced (linked to location).

- remove unsuitable land from consideration
- rank suitable land according to the number of positive attributes
- map the results.

The positive and negative attributes used in the model are provided in the table below.

Table 8. Attributes of land considered suitable and unsuitable for rural residential development

Negative attributes for Rural Residential development	Positive attributes for Rural Residential development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high conservation value forest • land zoned for other uses i.e. industrial or closed residential • potential landslip • within a water catchment protection area • within identified buffer areas • prime land under the PAL policy • can be sewerred (land with sewerage should be developed at a higher density than rural residential) • flood risk • non-freehold land • slope greater than 17 degrees • no road frontage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • within 500m of reticulated water • sealed road frontage • gravel road frontage • on current garbage collection route • not in Scenic Protection Special Area • not containing TASVEG native forest • continuous with existing Rural Residential zones.

Source: Launceston City Council

Council's analysis of land for future rural residential development is provided as Attachment 6.

Chosen strategy

Council's analysis of all the rural areas of the municipality showed there was significantly more land suitable for low density residential development than is likely to be required. However, closer analysis of the provision of water and road capacity significantly reduced the areas of land assessed as suitable.

As a result, Council recommends the following:

- expansion of the existing Los Angelos Rd/Swan Bay area
- expansion of the Dilston area between the East Tamar Highway and the proposed Dilston bypass
- future consideration of intensification or expansion of the Relbia and Lilydale areas
- zoning of the existing development around White Hills as Rural Residential (within the proclaimed water district) allowing for modest expansion of up to 15 lots.

The strategy clearly shows the preferred spatial distribution of Rural Residential development. It identifies two key areas for expansion and suggests a number of other areas suitable but deficient in infrastructure. The analysis also suggests some potential in existing Rural Residential zoned areas.

The strategy has adopted an indicative average lot size of 3 ha and applies this as an achievable gross density in its land calculations. This is a more conservative approach to rezoning than the 4 ha minimum lot size adopted as the standard for Rural Residential in the Launceston Planning Scheme 1996.

This aims to balance the environmental and economic sustainability of Rural Residential development. The figure of 3 ha is used as a guide for estimations only and would need to be shown to be achievable for each proposal through the outline development planning process.

Expansion of the Los Angeles Rd/ Swan Bay area

This area represents perhaps the most suitable area for future growth. It is in an area characterised by Rural Residential development, is aesthetically desirable, and has generally low agricultural usage.

The model suggests 738 ha that may be suitable within this broader area. This would provide a theoretical maximum capacity of almost 250 additional lots. It currently has approximately 129 houses.

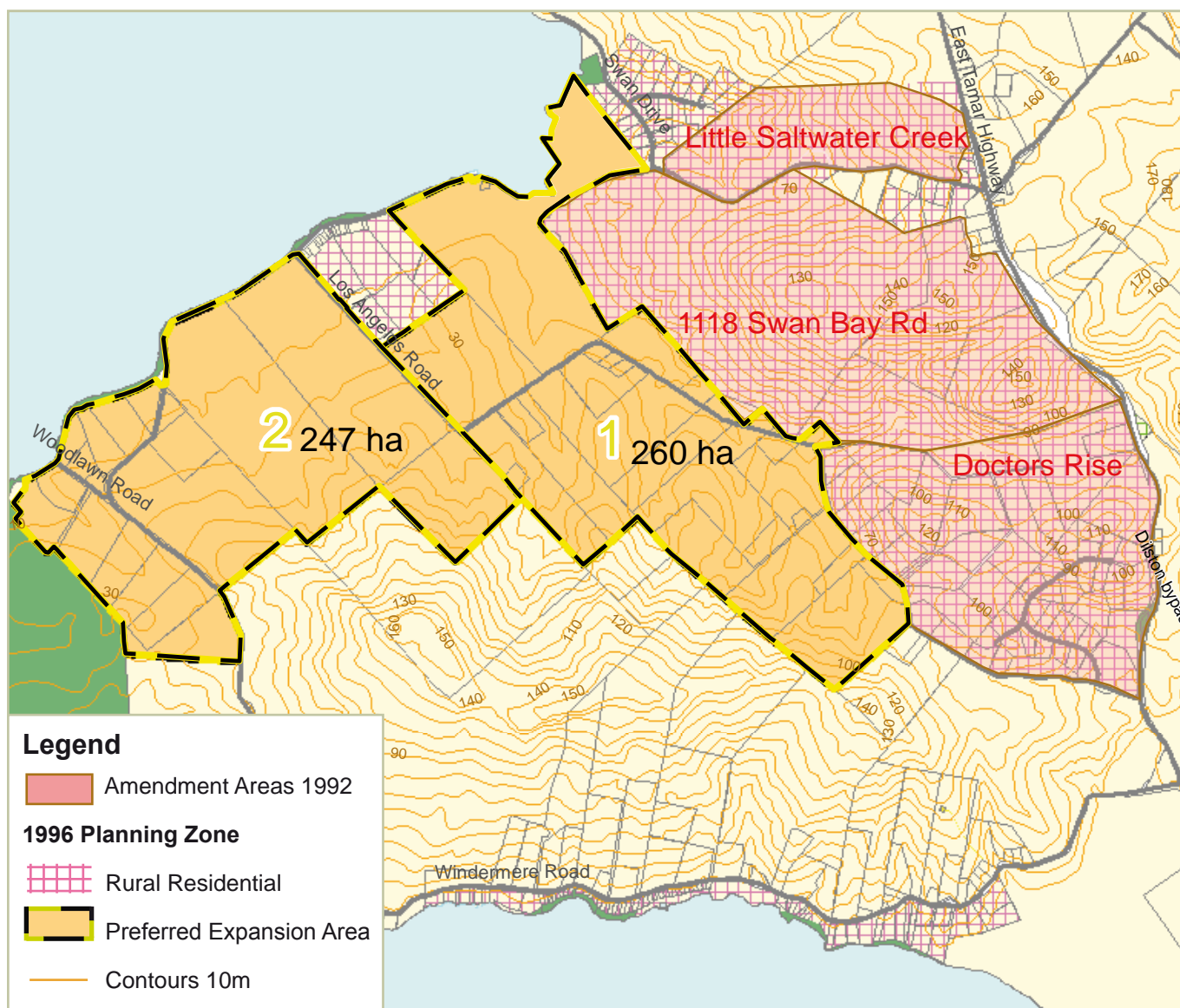


Figure 9. Map showing preferred expansion of the Los Angeles Rd/ Swan Bay area

Source: Launceston City Council

The wider area contains a significant portion of land that is zoned Rural Residential by the Launceston Planning Scheme 1996. The existing Rural Residential zone covers 517 ha. Much of this existing zone is located immediately adjacent to the areas highlighted by the model. The existing zoned area does not appear as the top priority within the model due to its location in a Scenic Protection Special Area.

In order to unlock the potential for development in the area Council will need to facilitate infrastructure upgrades including an upgrade to the water main and widening of the road. An upgrade of the water main from the East Tamar Highway to Woodlawn Road is estimated at up to \$1.85m. Staging of the development from the highway eastwards would assist in minimising upfront costs.

Upgrading of the road pavements to 6 m along Los Angeles Road (East Tamar Highway to Windermere) and 5.5 m along Windermere Road (from the junction of Los Angeles Road northwards) would also be required. Some minor grade, bridge and culvert issues will also need to be resolved. This is expected to cost \$68,500.

The proposed strategic direction is as follows:

1. Council will commit to facilitating both water and road infrastructure upgrades in this area and determining the appropriate per block charges for infrastructure.
2. An additional 260 ha area should be zoned as shown as Area 1 on the Windermere/Dilston – Los Angeles Road, Swan Bay proposals map (fig. 9 above). This would give potential for up to 87 additional houses over the planning scheme period.
3. A further 247 ha should be considered for Rural Residential development (Area 2 on the map) but only following substantial development of both the existing vacant capacity and the proposed expansion area. Current rates of demand suggest this would not be within the current planning scheme period.
4. Subdivision must not be approved without Council submission of an outline development plan.
5. Development of existing and proposed areas should be sequenced westwards from the East Tamar Highway to minimise infrastructure upgrades.

Dilston area east of the old highway

The proposed Dilston bypass will create an area of land between the old and new highways that has many suitable characteristics for Rural Residential development.

The subject land is marginal farmland that will be further constrained by the new road. It has few identified environmental constraints and is in three large holdings. There are currently three houses in the area.

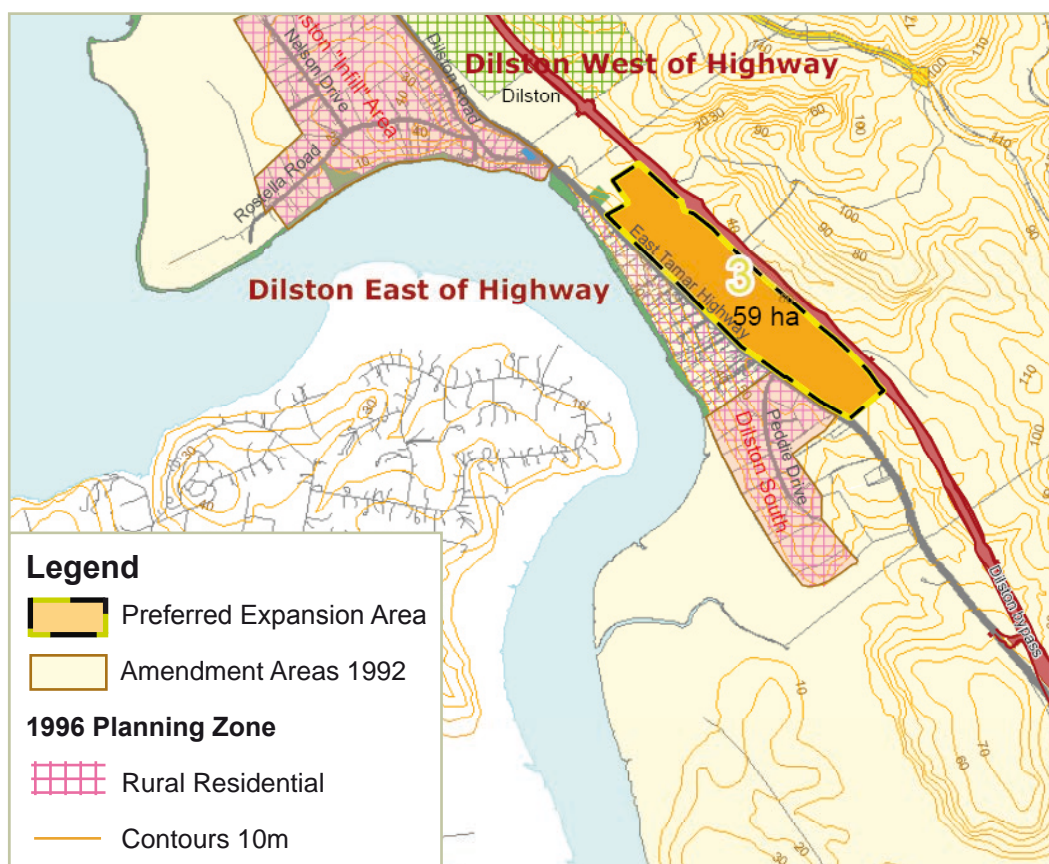


Figure 10. Map showing preferred expansion of the Dilston East area

Source: Launceston City Council



Construction of the bypass removes access limitations on the old road and allows potential for further development. Expanding Dilston over the road would assist in balancing the settlement.

The model identifies approximately 220 ha of suitable land. This potential can be reduced to approximately 60 ha for the following reasons:

- Land east of the Dilston bypass must be excluded due to access problems.
- A minimum of 100 m must be left free from development as an acoustic and visual buffer to the new highway.
- Land to the north of Dilston is low lying and wet.
- There are significant easements through this land including the Esk Water trunk main and the proposed pulp mill pipeline.

It is considered that realistic potential would be approximately 20 blocks. Infrastructure can be provided to the site with little or no off-site upgrades. The proposed strategic direction for this area is:

- An area of 60 ha should be rezoned on the eastern side of the old East Tamar Highway up to the road corridor for the new East Tamar Highway as shown as Area 3 on the Dilston East proposals map (figure 10).
- Rezoning should only proceed following final confirmation that the bypass will be built and the road corridors established.
- A 'no build' buffer area of a minimum of 100 m must be maintained in any subdivision adjacent to the new East Tamar Highway.

Other areas for consideration

Expansion or intensification of the existing Relbia Rural Residential zone: Relbia is clearly a desirable area for Rural Residential development in the municipality. Current infrastructure limitations prevent it being designated as a preferred area at this time. Should Council prioritise upgrades it is recommended that consideration be given to both consolidation through re-subdivision and incremental expansion of the area.

Lilydale: There are a number of factors that make Lilydale a desirable node for Rural Residential development. The inability to supply water severely limits the potential in the short term. It is recommended that Council pursue options for increasing water supply.

It is considered that low overall levels of demand for housing in Lilydale suggest that a less capital intensive form of development may be the most appropriate. Although not part of this analysis, an alternative zoning of Rural Living could be investigated for the areas immediately adjoining Lilydale. This zone would not require the service infrastructure necessary for Rural Residential.

White Hills: The White Hills area has many of the characteristics of a planned Rural Residential area although it is not currently zoned as such. A number of larger blocks are currently provided with a reticulated water connection.

Approximately 15 lots could be catered for within the existing supply network. Beyond this number significant upgrades would be necessary. An upgrade to a 200 mm diameter pipe providing capacity for an additional 130 lots would cost approximately \$875,000.

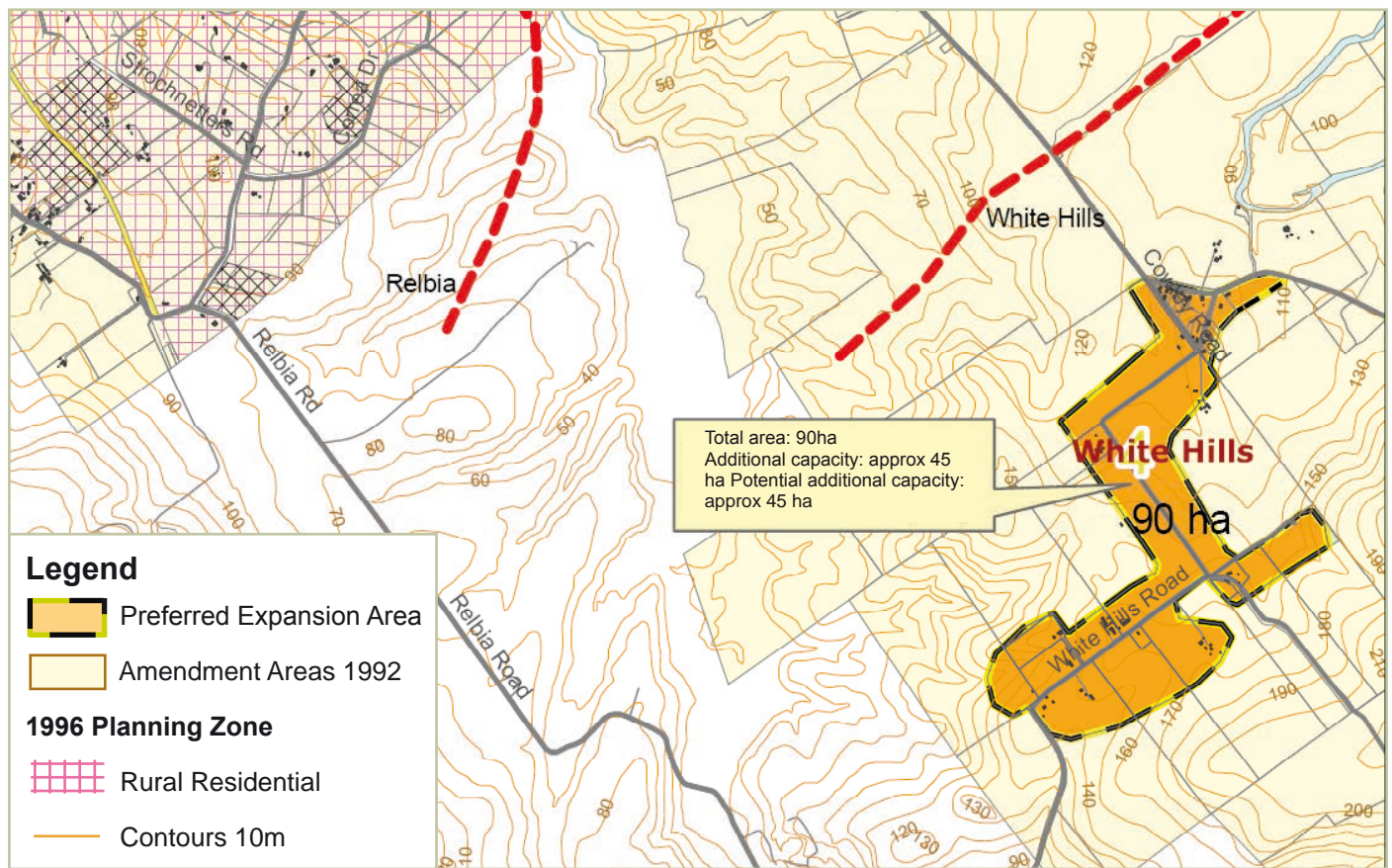


Figure 11. Map showing preferred expansion of the White Hills area

Source: Launceston City Council

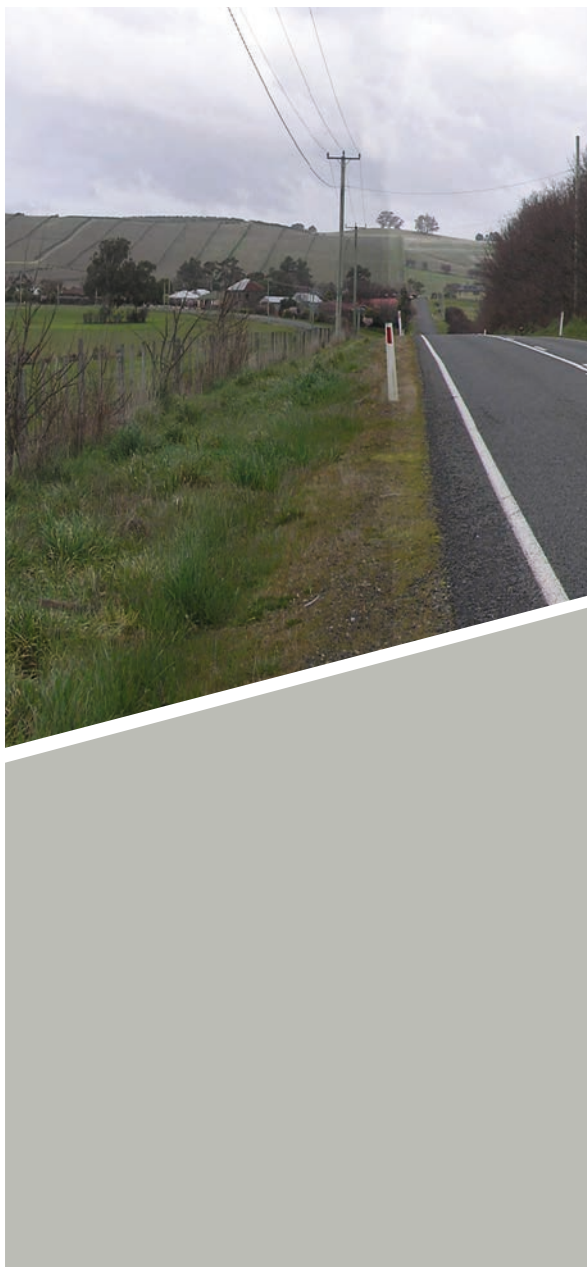
The existing area should be considered for Rural Residential zoning to reflect its current smaller lot pattern (around the junction of White Hills Road and Blessington Road). Modest expansion around White Hills subject to infrastructure constraints would be appropriate. Significant expansion of the zone is not favoured at this time.

Summary

The strategy clearly shows the preferred spatial distribution of Rural Residential development. It identifies two key expansion areas and suggests a number of other areas suitable but currently deficient in infrastructure. The analysis also identifies some development potential in existing zoned areas.

This strategy would provide an additional 320 ha of vacant Rural Residential zoned land with an estimated development potential of 107 lots, in addition to the 54 lots currently vacant within the zone. This is considered a conservative strategy given the predicted demand for Rural Residential development being between 96 and 201 lots.

It should be remembered that of the land identified there will be a portion that is not released, and the suggested average lot size of 3 ha may not be achievable in all circumstances. If this is the case there will be fewer realisable lots. Land allocated for roads and drainage will further reduce yields. Both these factors will reduce the number of lots achievable from the land recommended for zoning.



Responsiveness and flexibility

The proposed strategy does not seek to allocate land to accommodate the entire expected demand for Rural Residential development over a 10 year period. This is so for a number of reasons.

1. The proposed strategy is to not oversupply the market or encourage unfocused demand in the early years of the scheme; the strategy would thereby possibly increase the viability of individual developments.
2. Under the proposed strategy Council would retain flexibility and be able to respond to new proposals into the future without being constrained by an overly prescriptive strategy.
3. Council would be able to continually monitor and review the success of the strategy. Demand may not reach forecasts and as such additional land may not be necessary; alternatively infrastructure may become available in an area currently deficient, and this approach would reserve capacity to respond.
4. The approach allows some role for the market. Rather than Council choosing all areas it would allow the flexibility to assess proposals by landowners there is considerably more land shown by Councils analysis as suitable for Rural Residential development that could sustainably be zoned.

The strategy recognises that houses will continue to be developed in the Rural Residential zone and any future Rural Living zone.

Policy 16 - Preferred locations for Rural Residential

Key issues

Council's strategic intentions are to:

1. provide for future Rural Residential development in the most appropriate locations as part of a holistic settlement strategy.
2. ensure that the market is supplied with the best options for environmentally and economically sustainable Rural Residential development without oversupplying the market or diverting demand away from serviced residential development.

Council will direct demand into serviced residential areas and away from rural and Rural Residential areas. Council will aim to increase the proportion of total housing development in serviced residential areas above the long-existing average of 85 percent.

Council will limit zoning land for Rural Residential and opportunity for Rural housing to ensure that housing in these areas does not increase as a proportion of total housing development (currently 15 percent) and divert demand away from serviced areas.

Planning responses

General

- Maintain the existing Rural Residential zones
- Translate as far as possible the current site-specific subdivision criteria for identified local areas within the existing Rural Residential zone.
- Introduce a minimum lot size of 1 hectare within the Rural Residential zone.

Windermere/Swan Bay

- Provide for an additional 260 ha of Rural Residential zoning continuous with existing Rural Residential zoning accessed along Los Angelos Road.
- Consider further extensions of the Rural Residential zone towards Woodlawn Rd following substantial development of the existing and expanded Rural Residential zone.

East of Dilston

- Create a new Rural Residential zone of approximately 60 ha eastwards from the Dilston developed area to the proposed Dilston bypass corridor (subject to bypass approval).

White Hills

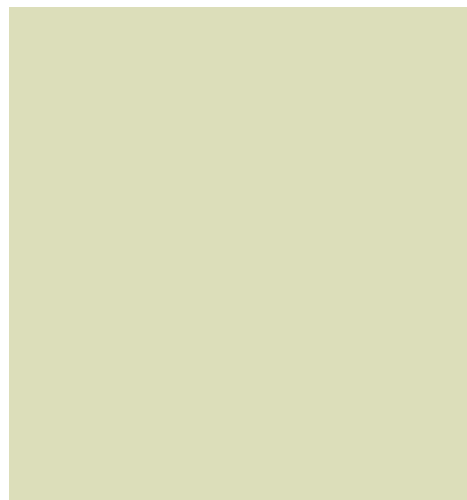
- Zone the area suitable for development within the existing water district as Rural Residential to better reflect its existing character; and allow for modest expansion up to the limits of the existing reticulation system (i.e. 15 additional lots).

Lilydale

- Investigate the area in proximity to Lilydale for suitability for Rural Living zoning.

Complementary measures

- Council will commence planning for the necessary infrastructure improvements to allow the proposed expansion in the Windermere/Swan Bay area. Council will devise an appropriate mechanism to recoup costs through contributions from future subdivisions.
- Council will consider areas near Relbia and Lilydale as priority areas for Rural Residential development, and seek to unlock their potential by addressing existing infrastructure constraints.
- Council will be proactive in working with landowners to bring undeveloped land in zoned areas onto the market.



Tier 6: Rural housing

Rural development refers to housing - usually isolated individual houses on rural properties (farms). This is the lowest preference for location of new houses in Council's proposed hierarchy.

Houses that specifically support rural or primary industry activity are not dealt with in the strategy. Tests to demonstrate the necessity of additional houses will need to be applied.

The key issue is 'rural lifestyle' houses. Rural housing that is not related to rural activities is generally an unsustainable form of development. It is car-dependent and generates more travel than urban settlement. It can lead to clearing of vegetation and poor environmental outcomes.

It is also evident that as rural housing grows, so does the expectation that Council provide an urban standard of services – sealed roads, water supplies, garbage collection and other social services. Generally the dispersed nature of rural settlements makes it uneconomical to provide these services. Cost is itself an increasingly important consideration.

As discussed in Section 1, Council must implement the state government PAL policy.

The requirements of this policy with regard to rural houses have been recently considered by the Resource Planning and Development Commission for the adjoining councils. Essentially similar provisions have resulted.

These recent decisions suggest that in the Rural Resource zone the building of a house is prohibited on lots less than 50 ha unless it can be demonstrated to be integral to an agricultural or tourism-based activity and be unlikely to fetter resource development on an adjoining lot.

It is likely that Council will be required to implement similar provisions.

It is envisaged that all land with significant potential for primary industries will be placed in the Rural Resource zone.

25 Planning Directive No.1: *Format and Structure of Planning Schemes*, http://www.rpd.c.tas.gov.au/planning/planning_directives/pd1 (See part 4 for explanation)





Rural areas that have little agricultural capacity or have already been compromised by subdivision would be placed in the Rural Living zone. The Rural Living zone would not be subject to the provisions of the PAL policy and as such would give Council more flexibility to consider housing development.

In the documentation accompanying the PAL policy a methodology is provided to guide councils in ensuring their schemes are consistent with PAL. Council will need to follow this process as part of the review of the planning scheme.

Standards of development

Any new planning scheme must ensure that future rural houses achieve basic minimum standards, including:

- frontage to a Council-maintained road
- demonstrated capacity to dispose of effluent on site
- acceptable impact on scenic amenity and natural values
- appropriate setbacks from adjoining properties.

Council's current policy of not allowing development on titles created after the commencement of the Launceston Planning Scheme 1996 is a well accepted and appropriate control that furthers the objectives of the PAL policy. It is recommended that this policy be maintained in a future planning scheme.

It is likely that it will become more difficult to build houses on rural land throughout the state as the PAL policy is progressively implemented through revised and updated planning schemes.

The Launceston Planning Scheme 1996 requires discretionary approvals for many rural developments such as house extensions, car ports and verandas. Such development would not need approval in urban situations. This process generally adds very little value and often costly and time consuming for applicants. Planning controls for rural development should be minimised where possible.

Policy 17 - Houses in rural areas

Key issues

Council will ensure that new houses approved in rural areas will not impact on areas of high agricultural potential or containing significant mineral or timber resources.

As part of a holistic settlement strategy Council will provide for houses in rural locations through identification of Rural Residential and Rural Living zones.

Planning responses

Council will continue to approve houses in rural areas only when minimum criteria are met:

- compliance with the requirements of the PAL policy and an agricultural impact assessment
- frontage to a state or Council-maintained road
- demonstrated ability to dispose of effluent
- satisfaction of the relevant safety, bushfire, aesthetic and amenity considerations
- location outside an identified buffer area for mining operations or other protected land uses.

Council will seek to minimise planning controls on alterations and extensions to existing houses, garages and outbuildings in rural areas.

The current prohibition on building houses on lots created after 1998 should be maintained.

Complementary measures

N/A



blank page

Council's approach should be one of stewardship of the city on behalf of present and future residents and visitors. It should leave a legacy of good development that would be consistent with the community's vision for the city.

To achieve this Council needs to be more than just a reactive regulator; it needs to demonstrate leadership in the community and a commitment to achieving better, more sustainable residential development. Elected aldermen and Council staff must have the understanding and skills necessary to achieve the goals of the strategy.

Experience also suggests that writing a planning scheme, zoning land and then waiting for development to happen will not achieve Council goals. This section suggests that through a focus on creating opportunities, developing partnerships and coordinating activity Council can best achieve the goals of the strategy.

Creating opportunities

It has often been the experience in Launceston that demonstrably good development can be frustrated by the planning scheme and regulatory processes. Because of its age our current planning scheme is to some degree disconnected from the current vision for the city as expressed in Vision 2020. It was written substantially as a guide for assessment of development, and can be inflexible and overly prescriptive.

More importantly it contains little in the way of vision – statements of goals and aspirations for particular areas of the city, how they should develop, and their preferred uses. It focuses on detail and puts great weight on compliance with standards. It is not driven by a bigger picture of how the city should develop.

If planning is predominantly reactive it is unlikely that goals will ever be achieved. Relying on 'serendipitous coincidence' between the vision of a landowner/developer and Council is not likely to pay dividends. Some sites may not be developed to their full potential because of landowner/developer concerns about the planning scheme and what Council may or may not approve.

By identifying key sites and setting up parameters for development Council and landowners/developers can create considerably more certainty of outcome, and potentially more successful projects.

Developing a register of key housing development sites is proposed. This would expand on Council's recent successful initiative of creating a register of commercial development sites in the city and marketing them online and through real estate and other development agencies.

Policy 18 - Creating opportunities

Key issues

Council will ensure that the goals of this settlement strategy are communicated to the community, landowners and the development industry. Council will identify housing development opportunities that are consistent with Council's strategic goals and provide the mechanisms to market these opportunities.

Planning responses

N/A

Complementary measures

Council will:

- identify development sites consistent with the six-tier residential development hierarchy
- expand the development sites register to include sites for housing development
- assist in identifying appropriate forms of development for individual sites to maximise their fit with Council's strategic goals.

Developing partnerships

Council will achieve the best possible development for the city through dialogue and cooperation with and between the key stakeholders. For development applications, this dialogue should commence at the earliest possible opportunity and be ongoing. Discussion held prior to parties adopting any fixed positions or investing in development proposals is the most desirable.

Key stakeholders Council will engage with include:

- developers and landowners
- other regulatory bodies such as the Tasmanian Heritage Council, the state government Environment Division, and the Resource Planning and Development Commission
- groups and organisations with an interest in the built environment and business and industry, for example the National Trust, the Tasmanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Housing Industry Association
- government agencies and community service providers
- other councils in the region
- University of Tasmania.

The objective is a cooperative approach to development that is consistent with Council's strategic objectives, viable and feasible for the developer, and in the interests of all key stakeholders.

Council can act as broker between key stakeholders and can play a significant role in developing partnerships. Council has considerable staff expertise and access to external resources to support these processes. As well as working towards the best possible community outcomes Council is also resourced to anticipate and mitigate areas of potential conflict.

Policy 19 - Developing partnerships

Key issues

Council will seek to develop partnerships with key stakeholders in the residential development process. Owners of key sites, regulatory bodies and relevant community groups are particularly important. Through early discussions Council can maximise the opportunities for achieving its strategic goals, reduce the possibility for conflict and improve the efficiency of the development assessment process.

Planning responses

N/A

Complementary measures

- Identification of key sites and stakeholders

Coordinating activities

A major goal of this strategy is to promote development towards Council's stated vision for Launceston. Success requires consistency with and coordination between all other strategies of Council.

Coordination of infrastructure and capital works can assist, for example by provision of cycling, walking and public transport infrastructure; transport strategies; improvements to street furniture, lighting, and public toilets; and public safety initiatives. Cultural programs can be coordinated to create opportunities for art in both public spaces and private developments.

Economic development activities can be coordinated, for example to fulfil our goal of vibrant urban centres. Making residential uses of upper floors in the CBD a permitted use in the planning scheme will succeed through the marketing of such development opportunities and Council partnership with landowners and developers.

It is evident in Launceston that planning regulation alone is not particularly good at achieving desired outcomes. Coordination of planning regulations and complementary activities generates synergies and can be a catalyst for successful development.

Policy 20 - Coordinating activities

Key issues

Council recognises that to achieve its strategic goals it will need to coordinate its activities to ensure that planning scheme goals, capital spending, and social and economic programs are aligned.

Planning responses

N/A

Complementary measures

N/A

Adopting the Common Key Elements Template

Launceston City Council is required to adopt the state government's Common Key Elements Template, a mechanism that seeks to create consistent zonings and administrative provisions across all Tasmanian council areas. All current residential zones will be replaced.

The Launceston Planning Scheme 1996 provides for the following residential zones.

- **Urban Residential:** inner city residential areas where the density is the highest. The minimum lot size is 350m².
- **Closed Residential:** the city's principal residential areas where single dwellings are interspersed with multiple dwellings. The minimum lot size is 500m².



- **Low Density Residential:** land within significant view fields or where visual intrusion and environmental factors are of primary concern. The minimum lot size is 1500m².
- **Reserved Residential:** holding zone introduced to the 1996 planning scheme in an attempt to sequence the orderly future development of residential land. It has lower priority for development than the Urban or Closed Residential zones.
- **Rural Residential:** zoning providing for residential development in a semi-rural environment where all lots can be connected to reticulated water and are serviced by Council-maintained rural roads.
- **Future Urban:** although not technically a residential zone, this zoning was introduced in 1996 as another mechanism to manage urban development. This land was designated for development beyond the first 10 years of the planning scheme.

Other zones within the planning scheme that provide for residential development include the Business, Local Business and District Business zones and the Commercial zone, these provide for inner urban housing (generally on upper floors), and the Rural zones that support primary industries and rural settlements.

The Common Key Elements Template limits the number and complexity of zones to four principal residential zones in addition to the business and commercial zones. Within each of the new, broadly defined residential zones, a wide range of circumstances will occur meaning Council now needs more flexibility to consider proposals and to achieve complex planning outcomes.

Residential zones set out in the template are:

- **Residential:** residential use or development that accommodates a range of dwelling types and densities where full infrastructure services are available, including access to educational, recreational, transport and community services.
- **Low Density Residential:** residential development on larger lots (with or without infrastructure services) where there are constraints to development at higher densities.
- **Rural Living:** residential development on large lots in non-urban settings where it can be expected that infrastructure services may be limited and residential amenity will be influenced by the rural character of the area.
- **Mixed Use:** a range of residential, commercial, industrial and other uses that complement the function of a township, settlement or a locality where a mix of uses has been established and should be maintained.

The template provides for two zones with rural characters:

- **Rural Living:** areas in which residential opportunities exist, while recognising that the rural character of the area will affect the provision of services
- **Rural Resource:** areas that provide for resource development, agriculture, aquaculture, forestry, mining and other primary industries.

Policy 21 - Adopting the Common Key Elements Template
Key issues
Council is required to adopt the Common Key Elements Template as the basis for drafting a new planning scheme.
Planning policies
All future amendments to the Launceston Planning Scheme 1996 and/or development of new planning ordinances will be consistent with the Common Key Elements Template.
Complementary measures
N/A

A neighbourhood planning approach

Conflicts often emerge in Launceston developments around design, heritage and urban character matters. By identifying and registering those matters and by setting clear and explicit parameters for the acceptability of development affecting those values, Council will be able to pre-empt and prevent disputes.

An objective of this strategy is to develop mechanisms to recognise different areas of the city and to develop objectives for appropriate future development. A clear vision and in-place controls increase certainty for developers and reduce assessment time, and ensures that opportunities are not lost through misunderstanding.

Some areas can be identified for change or development; conversely in other areas precinct-based controls can be used to ensure stability and prevent inappropriate development.

In order to achieve this finer-grained, neighbourhood-based approach to planning, two mechanisms are proposed: local area plans and outline development plans.

Local area plans

Where proposed development or other changes are of sufficient scale to alter the character of an area, a local area plan may be appropriate, allowing holistic consideration of all planning objectives for the area. A local area plan is developed by Council as a strategic document describing the preferred future development pattern for a particular area.

Lilydale represents a good example of the applicability of a local area plan. Lilydale village is largely excluded from analyses of housing in Launceston, contributing on average only 0.4 percent of houses built. However, Council could seek to influence demand for housing in the Lilydale area by allocating land for development. This would potentially strengthen the community, increasing the viability of shops, the hotel, and medical and community services. Because such a strategy would require careful analysis to determine the positive community benefits against the amount of public investment, Lilydale is considered an ideal location for a neighbourhood planning process that would lead to a local area plan.

Outline development plans

An outline development plan is essentially a blueprint for how an urban area should develop, generally through a specific subdivision or integrated development proposal to ensure site-specific problems are avoided, and opportunities to create desirable and liveable residential areas are maximised.

Requiring all new development over a certain size to demonstrate resolution of these issues through an outline development plan would significantly increase the quality of residential development in Launceston. Plans should be required for all development over 1ha. Ideally outline development plans should be prepared and integrated into the planning scheme as part of a planning scheme amendment.

The neighbourhood planning approach suggested will maximise consistency and certainty in the development process. It will seek to achieve a clear way forward on the most appropriate form of development and put in place a framework to achieve it.

Policy 22 - A neighbourhood planning approach
Key issues
<p>Council believes a key element to implementation of the settlement strategy is through neighbourhood planning.</p> <p>Where necessary Council will develop local area plans to guide future development. Council will require all significant new residential development to prepare an outline development plan, in consultation with the community.</p> <p>Council will be proactive and work with landowners and developers to develop the best possible outcomes.</p>
Planning responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Council will seek to identify areas of special character where a local area planning approach would be beneficial to either promote beneficial change or preserve existing character, or in some cases, both.• Council will require the preparation of an outline development plan for all subdivision and integrated development proposals over 1ha. Once approved Council will seek to integrate these plans into the planning scheme.
Complementary measures
N/A

blank page

LAUNCESTON CITY COUNCIL

Town Hall, St John Street, Launceston

Mail: P O Box 396, Launceston Tasmania 7250

Phone: 03 6323 3000

Email: planningschemereview@launceston.tas.gov.au

Web: www.launceston.tas.gov.au