

Beveridge North West Resilience Plan



Acknowledgement of Country



The Beveridge North West Resilience Plan Partnership Group wishes to acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waterways in the of Beveridge North West precinct and pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. We recognise and value the continuing rich cultures and the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities to the Victorian community. We pay our respects to their rich cultures and their strength, resilience and pride as the oldest continuous culture in the world.

Statement of Intent

This Resilience Plan for Beveridge North West has been developed in partnership by Mitchell Shire Council, the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA), the the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP), formerly the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Yarra Valley Water and RMIT University. They have been advised by the City of Melbourne City Resilience and Sustainable Futures Team¹.

This collaboration will work together over the next 5 years to identify innovative opportunities and partnerships to build resilient, self-sustaining thriving communities in the Northern Growth Corridor.

The Beveridge North West Resilience Plan will support the development of a community and suburb that can respond to future disruption as well as existing chronic stresses in the surrounding area. This Resilience Plan connected to a Precinct Structure Plan, is the first of its kind and will support the planning phase for a thriving, liveable and strong community where residents experience social connectedness with positive health and wellbeing.

The understanding of urban resilience in this plan is based on the definition provided by Resilient Melbourne²:

Urban resilience is the capacity of individuals, institutions, businesses and systems within a city to adapt survive and thrive no matter what kind of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience.

Vision for a resilient Beveridge North West

The Beveridge North West Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) is planned to accommodate approximately 45,000-50,000 residents and anticipates around 3,000 jobs from the planned amenities in town centres, schools, community facilities and businesses³.

The vision for Beveridge North West is that it will be a thriving, liveable and strong community where residents experience social connectedness with positive health and wellbeing. It will be a universally accessible and walkable neighbourhood where people can access their 'daily living' needs within a 20-minute return walk from home while at the same time being connected to surrounding communities and the broader region.

The community is economically, socially, indigenous and culturally diverse. This includes a diversity of age groups, household structures and housing options. Residents know their neighbours and support one another, and everyone feels safe in the community. There is a high level of community events and activities.

Beveridge North West will have important key community and social infrastructure and locally accessible services early in the lifetime of the precinct, including public transport services. A resilient Beveridge North West will be built on community engagement and stakeholder and community partnerships. It will be less resource intensive than comparable precincts, support high levels of biodiversity and be resilient to environmental risks, such as the urban heat island effect, extreme weather events and bushfire risk.

Background

The Beveridge North West precinct is located in Mitchell Shire within Melbourne's northern growth corridor and is planned to be developed over the next 20-30 years. Mitchell Shire Council (Council) is Victoria's fastest growing municipality and currently home to 48,969 people across 11 townships⁴. By 2041 Mitchell's population is estimated to increase to 170,830, approximately 349% of its current size. The precinct area, as well as surrounding areas, is currently rural, except for some discrete isolated residential developments.

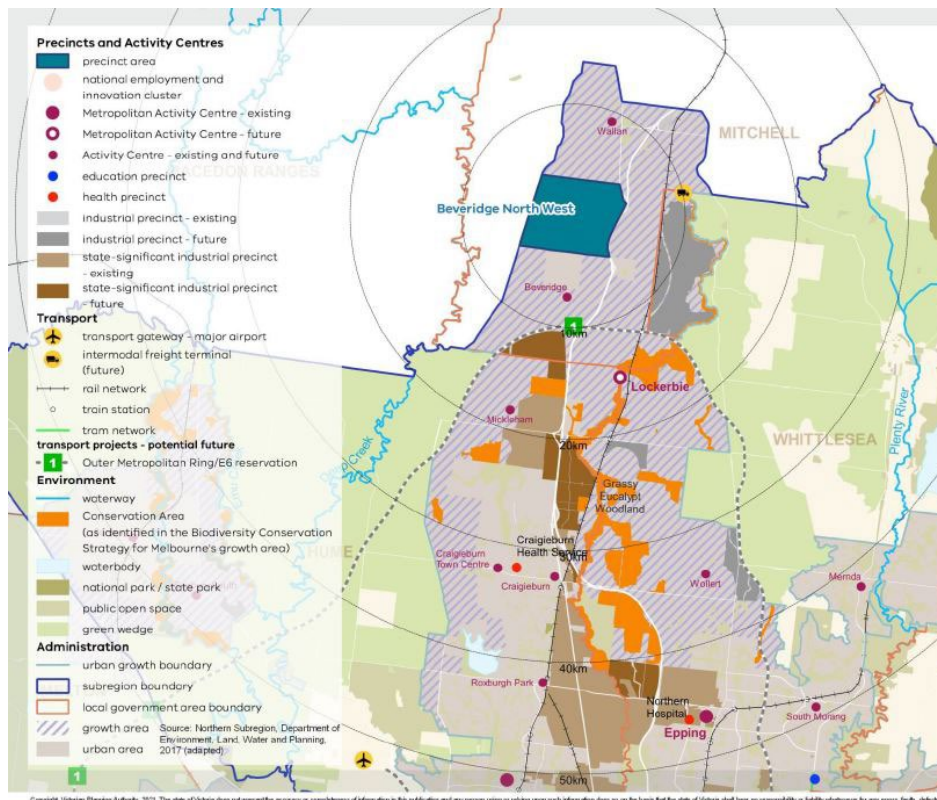
The Beveridge North West Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) identifies the area which lies between the old town of Beveridge and Wallan, about 40km from Melbourne's CBD and covers 1,279 hectares (Figure 1). The precinct contains generous plains, gently sloping valleys and undulating hills inclusive of distinctive hilltops and remnant volcanic cones, while Kalkallo Creek flows through the western portion of the PSP⁵. The former (and potential future) Beveridge railway station is slightly more than 5km away, while the nearest existing railway station is in Wallan, more than 8km away.

The proposed PSP includes a vision of walkable catchments for local activity centres and high amenity road and path networks for pedestrians and cyclists. This network includes large areas proposed for open space. External to the site however, the connectivity to Wallan, Melbourne's north and the metropolitan region more generally is car-focussed and based on accessibility to the Hume Freeway.

In the north of the precinct, on the western side of Spring Hill Cone a quarry has been proposed, a proposition that is currently debated between different levels of government and the community.

Yarra Valley Water holds 740 hectares of land in the PSP area (740 ha). The land is currently irrigated with recycled water to support local agriculture but is not needed for this purpose after 2023. Yarra Valley Water is currently exploring opportunities for engaging with the development sector to create a sustainable community development.

Figure 1: Location of Beveridge North West within Melbourne's Northern Growth Corridor



Source: PSP Beveridge North West, VPA (2021); Note: km-labels refer to the diameter of the circle, not the radius

Current resilience risks and vulnerabilities

A resilience plan or strategy offers the opportunity for cities and, on a smaller spatial level, for communities to bring together the relevant stakeholders, thinking about what is needed to move from a reactive to a proactive approach towards stresses and shocks and to prepare for possible futures. Possible acute shocks for Beveridge North West include for example bushfires, floods, heatwaves, disease pandemics, infrastructure-related emergencies, and extremist acts, including cyber-crime. Relevant chronic stresses include climate change, rapid population growth, increasing social inequality, increasing rates of alcoholism and family violence and increasing pressures on natural assets.⁶

Resilience planning for new communities in growth areas is challenging because most of the infrastructure and services as well as community networks are not in place at the beginning of the development planning process. Thus, resilience planning is understood as an ongoing process that draws on community participation and alternative ways of collaboration as crucial elements of urban resilience strategies. It is expected that this plan will be updated with the participation of the community of Beveridge North West once the new community residents have moved in.

The Resilience Plan is based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) developed by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Figure 2).

Figure 2: UN Sustainable Development Goals



Source: United Nations 2021

A review of relevant strategies, plans, research documents, consultants reports and stakeholder consultations was completed to identify resilience risks and vulnerabilities in Beveridge North West. The medium- and long-term impacts of COVID-19 for residents across Mitchell are still being felt and understood. The objective of this resilience plan is to enable the community to be resilient to ongoing impacts of COVID-19, existing chronic stresses, as well as future disruptions experienced in the community.

For each area (social, economic and environmental,) 3-5 key risks have been identified. Overall, the focus is on short- to medium-term risks, while systemic risks which apply to the overall metropolitan region or Victoria, and which are not easily addressed in a local Resilience Plan, have largely been left out.

While risks and vulnerabilities are presented in the categories of society, economy and environment, they are interconnected. The identification of these risks and vulnerabilities offers opportunities to prepare, respond to, or even avoid them.

Social risks and vulnerabilities

- Potential lack of housing diversity and affordability
- Potential lack of social cohesion and community infrastructure
- Potential for social inequality
- Lack of focus on diversity

Economic risks and vulnerabilities

- Potential lack of sustainable employment
- Potential inadequacy of transport options
- Timing of delivery of infrastructure and services
- Access to diverse retail and services and future economic viability

Environmental risks and vulnerabilities

- Environmental, economic, and social impact from the proposed quarry if it goes ahead
- Risk of loss of biodiversity and pressure on ecosystems from development
- Risk of soil erosion and flooding
- Heat Island effect and impact of extreme weather events or other climate change-related events
- Bushfire risk

Objectives

The objectives of the Resilience Plan will guide the actions for the development of Beveridge North West and aim to achieve the vision of a resilient precinct.

Community and social infrastructure

1. A thriving, liveable, strong community, delivering the hallmarks of a 20-minute neighbourhood
2. A universal accessible community with a beautiful aesthetic feel where everyone feels safe
3. A diverse inclusive community where residents can age in place
4. Beveridge North West residents experience social connectedness with positive health and wellbeing
5. Residents know their neighbours and support one another
6. Community events and activities held continuously and well attended
7. Inclusion of traditional owners in community and neighbourhood development
8. Children, adults and older people are active in sporting clubs and activities
9. Existence of key community and social infrastructure
10. A community with good access to social support and health services, supporting families, youth, older people and everyone who needs support
11. A community with good transport options and choices

Built Form

12. A range of housing choices exists with a high design quality
13. The precinct is designed to withstand shocks, such as extreme heat and flood
14. The precinct is designed to provide additional servicing capacity in building systems and infrastructure
15. Built-form outcomes are adaptable and uses can change over time based on residents' needs
16. Homes and their environments are built to be resilient to heat stress (wide eaves, good thermal insulation, shading trees)

Economy, education and employment

17. High attendance levels at the local schools
18. Existence of local businesses, diverse local employment options and co-working spaces within town centres and employment precincts
19. Diversity of retail with a low density of packaged liquor outlets and gambling venues
20. Existence of education opportunities, including work placements, with uptake by youth as well as interested adults

Environment and biodiversity

21. New pockets of biodiversity and maintenance of important existent habitat
22. Open space, vegetation and green backyards impact positively on residents' health
23. The community is aware and well prepared for potential disasters or impacts, such as extreme weather events, bushfire, flooding or drought
24. A community with reduced waste output and increased circular economy
25. A community connected to its surrounding urban and natural areas
26. A community with reduced water use and who celebrates water in the landscape

Figure 3: Draft Precinct Structure Plan – November 2021



Source: PSP Beveridge North West, VPA (2021)

Governance of the Resilience Partnership

The Beveridge North West Resilience Partnership will take joint responsibility for responding to the Beveridge North West Resilience Plan. This includes identification and coordination of actions arising from the plan, regular monitoring and evaluation of resilience outcomes at Beveridge North West, and developing further research, policy and community-based knowledge necessary to support and enhance the achievement of these outcomes. All partners will be undertaking actions contributing to resilience.

Proposed actions include for example the development of 'Biodiversity Sensitivity Urban Design Principles' for the Hazelwynde development to be included in the master planning process. The Hazelwynde master planning process will also have a target for housing that adopts universal (accessible) design principles and a target for social housing. Further actions include advocating for timely delivery and investment of social infrastructure and services, this includes primary and secondary schools in the precinct, appropriate and accessible active and public transport services and connections, as well as timely delivery and investment of community infrastructure (recreational facilities, community hubs). Furthermore, the Partnership will advocate for system changes, legislation changes and building code changes for resilience to become a reality.

Mitchell Shire Council will coordinate the partnership group which will meet regularly to track and evaluate progress towards the shared objectives, identify gaps and suggest relevant additional actions for resilience. This includes the monitoring of more general trends and their impacts on Beveridge North West as well as the development of Beveridge North West itself and the evaluation and review of the proposed resilience actions.

¹ The City of Melbourne City Resilience and Sustainable Futures Team took on the advisory role for the Resilience Plan to provide continuity following the wind-down of the Resilient Communities program, where the idea of establishing a resilience plan for Beveridge North West was initially identified.

² City of Melbourne (2016) *Resilient Melbourne – Viable Sustainable Liveable Prosperous*. City of Melbourne, Melbourne. p.11

³ VPA – Victorian Planning Authority (2021) *Beveridge North West Precinct Structure Plan – Draft November 2021*. Victorian Planning Authority, Melbourne.

⁴ As of 2021 i.d. forecast population figures, i.d. forecast (2021) Mitchell Shire Population growth. Accessible from: <https://forecast.id.com.au/mitchell>

⁵ VPA – Victorian Planning Authority (2021) *Beveridge North West Precinct Structure Plan – Draft November 2021*. Victorian Planning Authority, Melbourne.

⁶ City of Melbourne (2016) *Resilient Melbourne – Viable Sustainable Liveable Prosperous*. City of Melbourne, Melbourne.