

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

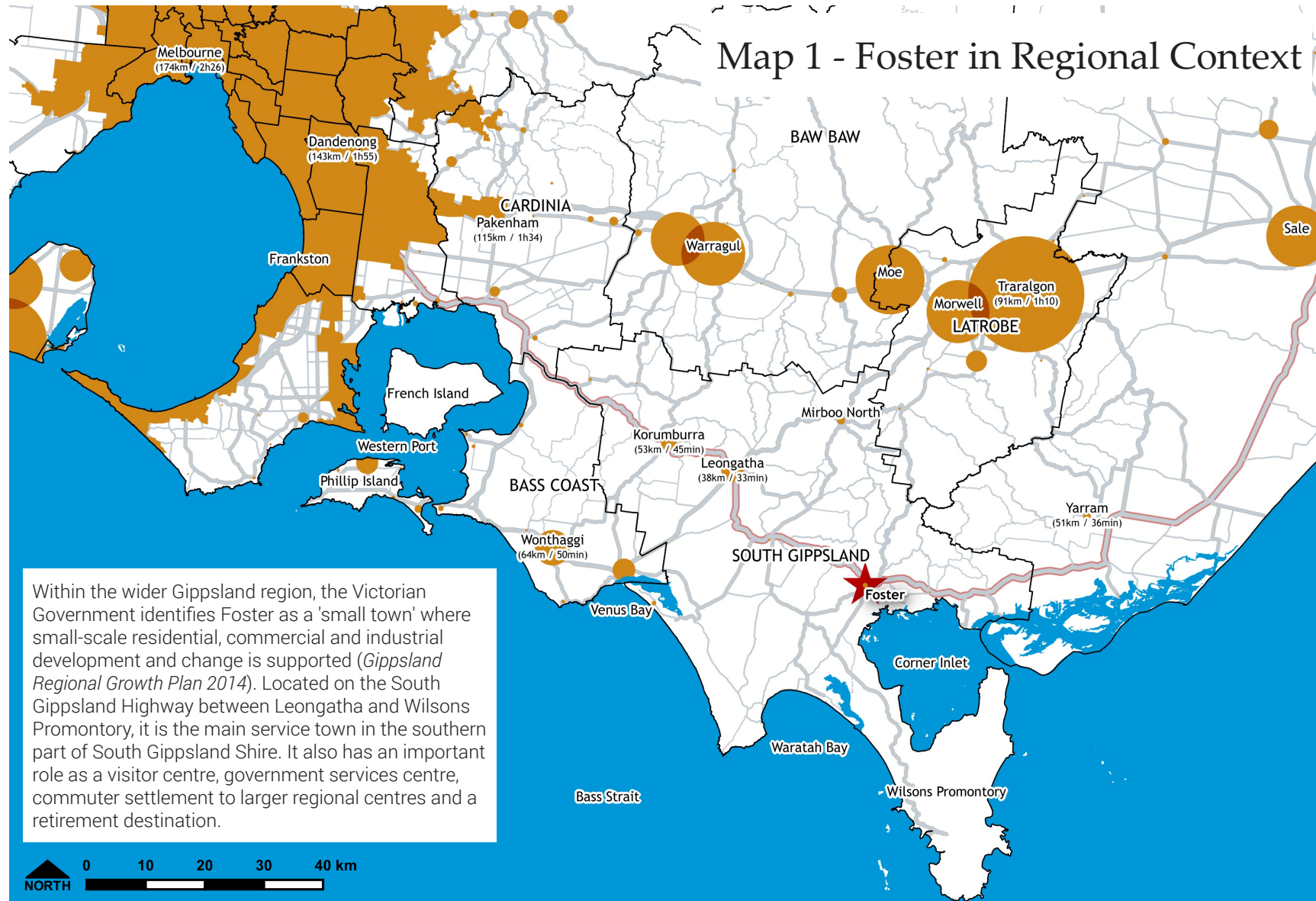
Foster Structure Plan Review Discussion Paper



*Planning for Foster's future
change and growth*



South Gippsland
Shire Council



Project Purpose

This project reviews the 2008 Foster Structure Plan, one of Council's oldest town structure plans. A key element of the project is reviewing the town's growth directions set out in the Foster Framework Plan (*Map 3*). This is required to respond to planning system changes that have occurred since this time especially in relation to bushfire and inundation risk. As the principal town in the southern area of the municipality, it is vital to ensure suitable land within the settlement boundary is developed in an orderly and appropriate manner which will not prejudice the growth of Foster.

In addition to setting growth directions for the town, a structure plan can:

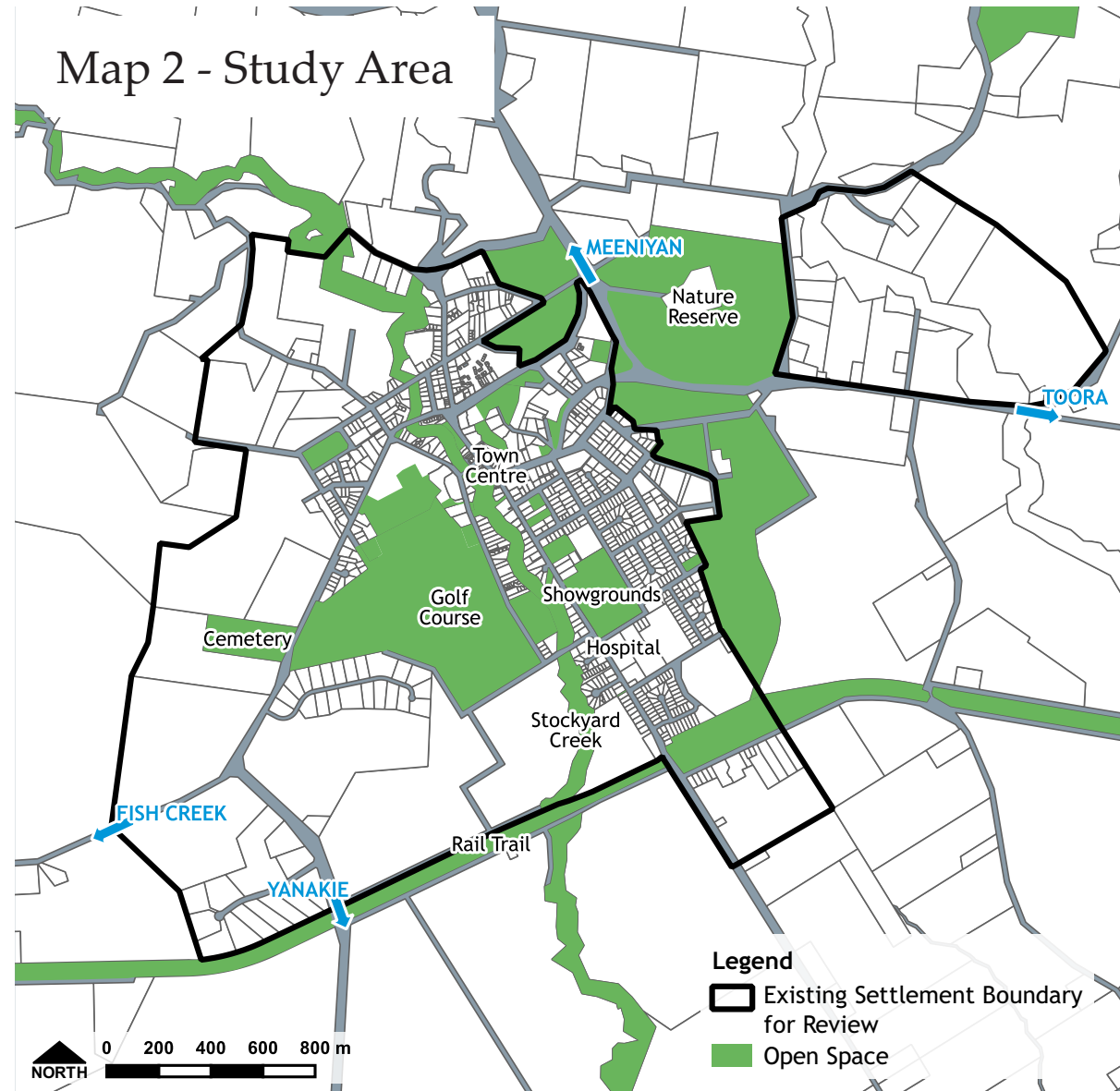
- Recommend changes to the planning scheme
- Identify key infrastructure projects
- Propose capital works projects
- Identify advocacy positions for Council for issues outside Council's control
- Recommend further detailed work

The project study area included land in the existing settlement boundary for Foster and its surrounds (see *Map 2*).

Discussion Paper

This Discussion Paper seeks to:

- Inform the public of the existing Foster Structure Plan;
- Highlight key issues and opportunities for Foster; and
- Invite comments for improvements.



Project Timeline



This **Discussion Paper**, comments received and any further investigations undertaken will inform the **Draft Structure Plan** that will be prepared for comment before a **Final Structure Plan** is prepared and presented at a Council meeting for adoption.

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Discussion Questions

This project is an opportunity to review the plans and vision for Foster and its growth.

The following questions have been prepared to help the public provide input that will shape the Draft Structure Plan.

1. What do you think of this vision from the 2011 Foster Community Plan?

The Vision of the Foster Community is to evolve a township which:

- *Provides a safe, healthy and stimulating environment which allows community members to grow up, be educated, work, play, create and retire in Foster*
- *Is a desirable residential environment for people of all age groups and from all walks of life*
- *Has managed growth but retains a small town feel with the beauty and amenities of its rural setting*
- *Encourages its citizens to reach their potential and provides support for these endeavours*
- *Is an attractive, interesting, vibrant and enjoyable destination for visitors.*

Foster Community Plan 2011



2. Do you think this list captures Foster's key strengths relevant for the structure plan?

Key strengths which should be considered in decision making in Foster:

- Government services hub
- Tourism opportunities
- Vibrant town (retail) centre
- Stockyard creek & forested areas



3. Do you think this list reflects Foster's key growth issues?

Key issues relating to Foster's future growth:

- Environmental risks including bushfire and inundation
- Providing land for housing with development difficulties e.g. establishing road connections to southern growth area, possible contamination, natural barriers (forest)
- Servicing lower density lots distant from the town centre
- Future of Council depot site and surrounding area including the future location of the skate park
- Possible pressure from economic growth in new industries like off shore windfarm development
- Ageing population and increasing demand for aged care services

Refer to **Map 3** and its annotations on page 7 for specific place-based issues.



4. What opportunities does the structure plan review present?

The following questions have been prepared using the themes of the South Gippsland Community Vision (2022) and Asset Plan (2022).

How can Council maximise its resources in Foster for the benefit of the region especially in the context of ageing infrastructure and rate capping? E.g. consolidating activities in a community hub

How could Foster be more attractive to visitors? E.g. better promotion of mountain bike trails

What changes would make the town more walkable? E.g. wayfinding sign to the rail trail

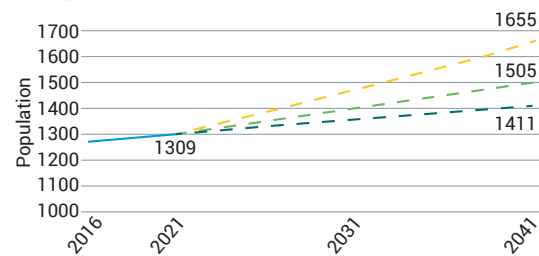
How could access be safer? (note Fish Creek Foster Road crossing to access the secondary school is being considered)

Do you think the current levels of heritage protection are adequate? (note at present seven places are protected, with others identified in the 2004 study not currently protected)

Growth in Foster

The key driver of change for housing and much of the commercial sector is the rate of population growth in the town and its local catchment. The Foster economic assessment (2022) prepared three growth scenarios to assist with planning as shown in the following diagram. It generally found that there is sufficient urban land for future development. Additional land may need to be rezoned in the future, however only in the case of a higher growth scenario.

Figure 1. Foster Structure Plan Area Population Growth Scenarios 2021-2040



Source: Tim Nott

To ensure market choice and prevent unnecessary scarcity driving prices higher, the assessment recommended that at least two growth fronts of residential land.

Growth in the town is affected by bushfire and inundation risk, waterways, steep topography and the location of public land (notably parkland). The bushfire assessment (draft 2020) prepared for Foster found that the existing growth area to the north (1) is severely constrained by bushfire risk. The western growth areas are also constrained by bushfire risk and the southern growth areas by inundation risk.

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5. What do you think about these proposals?

- 1 Remove from settlement boundary due to bushfire risk and other constraints. Area has been assessed as having such a high level of bushfire risk that no further lots should be created.
- 2 Reconsider inclusion in settlement boundary due to bushfire risk, waterways, steep land and vegetation. Could be long-term growth area subject to more detailed investigation.
- 3 Retain as growth option with requirements to address bushfire risk (e.g. perimeter road requirement).
- 4 Reconsider inclusion in settlement boundary due to bushfire risk, waterways, steep land and vegetation. Could be long-term growth area but recommend to retain in the Farming Zone in the foreseeable future.
- 5 Propose as future low density residential zone (LDRZ) with an overlay to guide orderly subdivision for more efficient use of land for housing.
- 6 Propose future urban development after #8 (closer to centre) is developed. This site will need to consider potential contamination as well as land inundation risk.
- 7 Propose future urban development after #6 and #8 (closer to centre) are developed with the same considerations as #6.
- 8 Retain as growth option with requirements to address inundation risk and waterway protection.
- 9 Retain as industrial expansion area with consideration of the sewer buffer. Note that industrial activity has been approved on site to east but continued expansion in this direction is not preferred because of the nearby waterway.
- 10 Propose policy to support the tourism purposes of the rail trail particularly in the station area with activities like cafes, bike hire and other related retail space which are limited in scale (total area <500sqm) so as not to detract from the town centre as the principal retail focus in the district.
- 11 Remove the town centre expansion area. While this is still a possible expansion location, the economic assessment identified other directions that growth could occur (south along Station Rd and north-east along Fish Creek-Foster Rd) which may be more appropriate if and when more Commercial 1 Zone land is needed. The relocation of Council's depot operations from this site create an opportunity for the future of this area to be reviewed.
- 12 Consider rezoning this area from Mixed Use Zone given its history and current industrial uses and large format retail activities which pose conflicts with current and potential residential use (that does not currently require planning permission). The economic assessment proposed the Commercial 2 Zone to reflect its current economic role.
- 13 Consider increasing the minimum lot size requirement or applying design controls to discourage further subdivision and provide orderly subdivision where this occurs in Jay Rd, Oberon Vista and Ameys Track Rural Living Zone area.

Map 3 - Framework Plan for Review

