



TALBOT FUTURES STRUCTURE PLAN DISCUSSION PAPER

Prepared by **Hansen Partnership**
for **Shire of Central Goldfields**

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Introduction

Central Goldfields Shire Council has engaged Hansen Partnership and their project partners (SGS Planning & Economics and Hello City) to undertake a structure planning process for Talbot. Numerous council strategies and reports have highlighted the provision of sewerage infrastructure to Talbot as a key priority.

However, Talbot is a unique and historic township that has not seen any significant development over the previous decades, and so any proposal that might fundamentally alter the character of the township must be carefully considered.

This Discussion Paper builds on three outputs which have been prepared to date:

- Housing and Commercial Technical Assessment, SGS Economics and Planning, December 2022
- Talbot Futures Technical Assessments, Hansen Partnership, December 2022
- Function & Identity Study: Talbot Township (preliminary draft, Hello City, December 2022

The key aspects of those documents are summarised in this Paper, and their implications for growth of the settlement, particularly how this growth might related to and inform sewerage planning has been the focus.

Th Discussion Paper contains three main sections:

- A discussion on the potential growth scenarios for the township. Understand these is critical to knowing how much land council needs to be considering for growth as part of any Structure Plan, given future growth trends may diverge from historical trends should the town be seweraged. Content in this section has been drawn from detailed assessment undertaken by SGS is their XX report.
- A summary of the issues which influence and / or need to be considered in relation to growth of the township specifically. These have been drawn from the SGS report, a series of Technical Assessments undertaken by Hansen Partnership and also from feedback drawn from engagement undertaken by Hello City with the existing Talbot community.
- An investigation of the issues and considerations which affect the growth potential for different areas within and around the settlement.

The intention is that these issues and their spatial implications will provide the basis for the next stage of this project, where technical experts, including for agencies such as Central Highlands Water, and internal council staff will come together to confirm a range of realistic options for the growth of Talbot which will be subject to the next stage of community engagement.

Importantly, following that session the content of this document will be refined to articulate key questions for the community, and expanded to include consideration of other matters relevant to the preparation of the Structure Plan (for example, priority pedestrian connects etc that are not directly linked to decisions around growth areas.

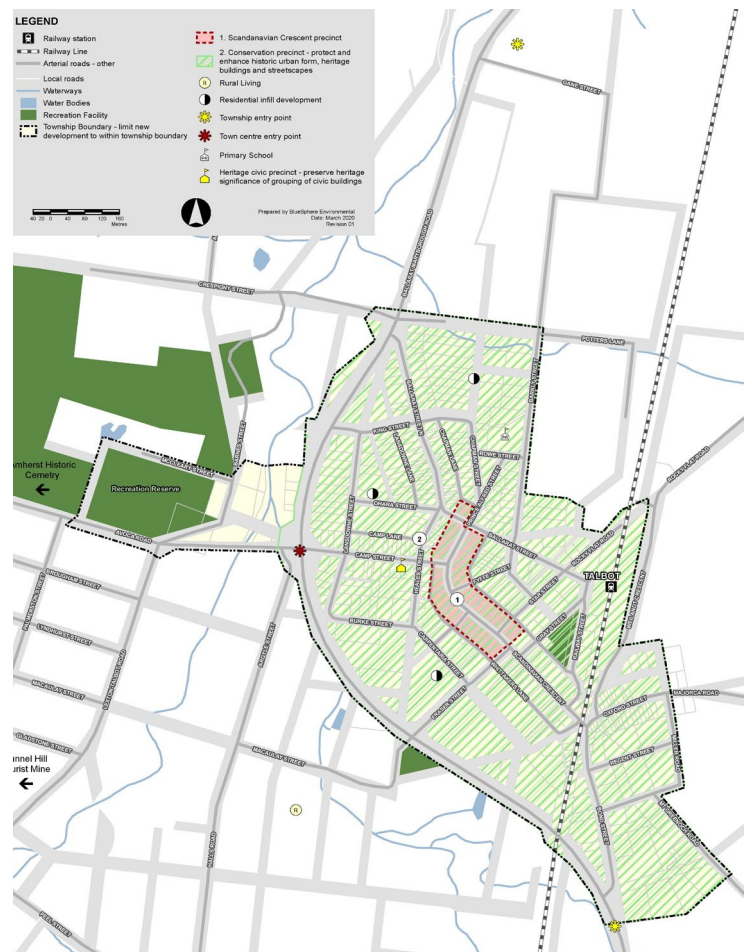


Figure 1: Existing Talbot Structure Plan does not identify any specific areas for growth

Talbot’s growth potential

State policy requires that local governments plan to accommodate projected population growth over at least a 15-year period and provide clear direction on locations where growth should occur. A 2019 *Residential Land Supply and Demand Assessment* found that in aggregate, there is 18-25 years of zoned urban residential land supply in Central Goldfields Shire, however there is a mismatch between supply and demand geographically – Maryborough is where demand is concentrated (based on historical trends) but most of the capacity is in other townships.

Historical trends

According to ABS Census data, the Central Goldfields Shire population increased by 490 people between 2016 and 2021 with an average annual growth of 0.8%.

All townships experienced an increase in population in 2021. Talbot’s growth was relatively modest in the context of the Shire over the last 5 years, at an average annual rate of 0.5% (Table 1).

	2011*	2016	2021	Change 2016-21	Avg. Annual change 2016-21
Maryborough	7630	7921	8160	239	0.6%
Carisbrook	1143	1115	1192	77	1.4%
Dunolly	908	893	899	6	0.1%
Talbot	715	442	452	10	0.5%
Central Goldfields	12496	12993	13483	490	0.8%

Source: ABS 2011, 2016 and 2021 Census SSC/SAL, SGS Economics & Planning.

*Note: 2011 Census year is not comparable to subsequent years due to differences in geographical areas.

Table 1: Total population by LGA and SSC/SAL

In Talbot, historical growth has been negligible, due largely to the lack of sewerage. The town is currently seeing little residential building activity. Population growth is stalled and reflects a trend of ageing that surpasses that of Central Goldfields. There is very little in the way of access to local goods and services. The few retail shops have limited operating hours, and most residents would need to travel to Maryborough to fulfil their day-to-day needs. With the proposed introduction of a sewerage system to Talbot, the potential for more significant growth and development is unlocked.

Work done in 2020 by Urban Enterprise which looked at the growth potential of the whole of Central Goldfields also identified the following gin relation to Talbot:

- Population growth and housing demand is modest in Talbot compared to other towns in the Shire.
- According to the Residential Strategy (2020) and underlying Assessment (2019), Talbot only has approximately 15 useable residential lots but without a reticulated sewerage system, there is no need to identify and rezone additional land for housing. A limited availability of local facilities and services also constrain housing demand in the town.

- However, there is a need to identify additional land to accommodate residential growth in the medium- to long-term in the Shire. Given the bushfire constraints in some areas of Maryborough and the diminishing supply of available broadhectare lots for development, this need is becoming increasingly acute.
- In addition, the Central Goldfields Shire Council Planning Scheme Review (2020) has identified the need to review some of the existing planning controls in Talbot, including the Township Zone, the Salinity Management Overlay (SMO), and the Erosion Management Overlay (EMO).

Growth Scenarios

Background analysis by SGS identified four housing growth scenarios for Central Goldfields Shire townships and the non-township areas, to ensure that Talbot’s future is considered in its appropriate context.

The first three assume the growth rates identified in the 2020 Population, Housing & Residential Strategy (based on the 2019 Supply and Demand Assessment). VIF19 and Recent growth scenarios are based on historical trends and state government forecasts and anticipate relatively modest growth for the Shire in future. The Big Melbourne envisions somewhat greater growth for the Shire due to the ‘spillover’ effect from growth in larger nearby centres.

The fourth (Post-COVID) is a new scenario which builds on these assumptions and factors in additional growth due to entrenched post-COVID pull factors and strategic interventions that unlock additional land for development, ultimately resulting in a growth rate less than but more closely resembling that seen in the nearby Mount Alexander LGA.

The scenarios also anticipate the share of growth across the different townships of the Shire (where growth will occur). The first two scenarios assume a spread of development broadly reflecting recent historical trends (growth concentrated in Maryborough), while the two scenarios with higher growth assume higher shares of Shire-wide development in Talbot and Carisbrook.

A summary of the scenario results for Talbot are shown below.

Scenario	Shire-wide AAGR (dwellings)	Share of growth for Talbot	Additional dwellings required 2020-2051	Total dwellings 2051	Additional dwellings per year 2021-2051
1 VF19	0.6%	4%	55	343	2
2 Recent growth	0.9%		86	374	3
3 Big Melbourne	1.1%	16%	435	723	15
4 Post-COVID	1.5%		631	919	21

Table 2: Potential Talbot growth scenarios

A range of 15-21 dwellings per year is suggested by the ‘upside’ scenarios.

This growth should be supported by additional retail floorspace in the town, allowing residents to meet more needs locally. A small supermarket of 500-600sqm, potentially supported by 2-3 smaller shops (approximately 100-300sqm total), could be anticipated once the town has accommodated a further 250-300 dwellings in approximately 15-20 years’ time.

It is important to note that optimistic growth rates, such as that suggested by the ‘Post-Covid’ scenario, are unlikely to be achieved given existing lot and ownership fragmentation in the township, without orderly infill development and potentially, the addition of modest, adjacent town extensions in conventional or low-density residential precincts. This is also likely to underpin a more certain development trajectory to support a sewerage extension business case.

The next steps to arise from this technical assessment are:

- Consultation with the community and stakeholders to confirm the feasibility of the scenarios
- More detailed assessment of capacity for growth in Talbot to ensure the rate and share of growth can reasonably be accommodated
- Potential refinements to the scenarios to finalise demand forecasts for Central Goldfields Shire

Growth related issues

Sewerage

The underlying rationale for the preparation of the Talbot Futures Structure Plan is the need for any future sewerage of the town to be aligned with broader outcomes for the township. Sewerage of the town has long been identified as both a Council and a community priority, but the implications and considerations associated with this process have not yet been fully investigated. How and where any new sewer is provided will be the key determinant of whether Talbot grows or not, and in which areas. In addition to considerations around sewerage of standard residential lots, the sewerage of potential low density lots should also be considered. Previous work looking at the housing off across the Central Goldfields municipality identified that there were limited options for people seeking larger lot housing, outside of land zoned for rural living. Under current control 'Low Density' land has a minimum lot size of 4000sqm. When sewer connections are provided, this reduces to 2000sqm. Given latent demand for this type of development, the influence that rezoning some land close to Talbot for low density, and whether this land should be seweraged should also be considered.

Heritage

The heritage building stock of Talbot is perhaps its defining feature. It contributes to the sense of township identity and also to the economic potential of the settlement. It also means that growth of the township will need to be carefully managed to ensure that these values are not compromised (see below). There are some differing proposals for what constitutes the historic core of the township which should be resolved to align with direction on growth. Areas which influence perceptions of this historic core, and also which contain other important heritage buildings also need to inform the form of development and growth proposed. In addition, there are also a number of individually significant buildings that need to be subject to greater levels of recognition in advance of any changes to planning controls. That being said, there are also large parts of the township where permits are being triggered on heritage grounds without any heritage fabric being present and where the influence of heritage values may be able to be managed via different mechanisms.

Non-residential uses

Currently, Talbot is serviced by very basic retailing in a small shop combined with a post office function. Its small population and relative proximity to the retailing available in Maryborough mean it is not able to sustain a small supermarket like that seen in Newstead. Harcourt, though larger than Newstead in terms of population, is closer to Castlemaine and currently does not have a small supermarket. Its grocery offer is spread across 2-3 shops. Residents in Harcourt would travel to Castlemaine for their weekly grocery needs. While the same is true for many residents of Newstead, this small town is far enough from Castlemaine and large enough to sustain a small IGA supermarket with a reasonable line of groceries, meat and fruit and vegetables, and that appears to trade relatively strongly.

Taking Newstead then as a broad guide for Talbot, but also considering the latter's closer proximity to a full line supermarket (in Maryborough) it could be suggested that a further 250-300 dwellings (i.e. 350-500 people) in Talbot (to reach approximately say 600 dwellings and 800 people) may be able to support a small supermarket as seen in Newstead.

Significant additional or ancillary shops would not be expected, though Newstead sustains a butcher and a take-away food / milk bar (in addition to the pub, café and post office). More likely is greater activation and extended opening hours for the existing retail premises in Talbot.

A more detailed analysis of potential retail expenditure for a future population, and how this might be distributed and sustain retail floorspace in Talbot, could be undertaken. For the purposes of this study however it is sufficient to suggest that a site or location for a small supermarket of 500-600sqm, potentially supported by 2-3 smaller shops (approximately 100-300sqm total), could be anticipated once the town has accommodated a further 250-300 dwellings in approximately 15-20 years' time (assuming approximately 15-20 dwellings per year). The Structure Plan will need to have consideration for where this use might be best located and what influence the existing zoning of land may have on Council ability to manage any new commercial (or other non-residential) development.

Tourism and township presentation

Tourism is a key economic generator for Talbot and relies heavily of the appearance of the town and its historic fabric. As such, it is very important that any new development is sensitive to how it will add to or detract from the valued characteristics of the settlement. There are particular areas that are perhaps more sensitive than others given they contain key viewlines or contribute to the setting of the historic core. These areas include the largely vacant parcels which sit between the historic core and the Ballarat-Maryborough Road (which are included with the existing township boundary) as well as key corridors leading to the historic core (such as Bond Street or Ballarat Street North).

Lot sizes

Talbot has a very complex system of lots configurations, As with many goldrush era townships, its subdivision pattern was laid out in anticipation of much more growth than eventuated. As such the township has numerous very small lots, but many of these have been consolidated into single properties which are generally much larger. These larger 'properties' have been used as the basis for an analysis of existing township capacity to accommodate growth. Lot sizes for future development also need to be considered in relation to the particular characteristics of the township, and will have implications for the quantum of growth with can be accommodated within the existing settlement area. The Urban Design Guidelines prepared for the towns recommended a minimum lot size of 400sqm be applied. However, even this sized lot may compromise the ability of lots to respond to the 'garden' character of the township which are so valued by the existing community.

Environmental Risks

Background technical work relating to environmental risk undertaken by Hansen Partnership and Kevin Hazelwood (in relation to bushfire) have all suggested that growth of the township should be focused to the eastern side of the Ballarat-Maryborough Road.

Bushfire risk is much higher on the western side of this barrier, and intervening land between the main settlement area and existing rural living land is also affected by flooding associated with Back Creek. A drainage line runs across the alignment of Potters Lane to the north which would need to be considered in decisions on growth to the north of the existing urban area.

Biodiversity & Cultural heritage

Constraints associated with biodiversity and cultural heritage are also generally concentrated to the western side of the Ballarat-Maryborough Road, again highlighting that growth is likely to be focussed to opportunities of this east of this road. Biodiversity constraints within the township and its northern and eastern periphery appear to be limited to some existing clumps of canopy vegetation.

Initial community inputs

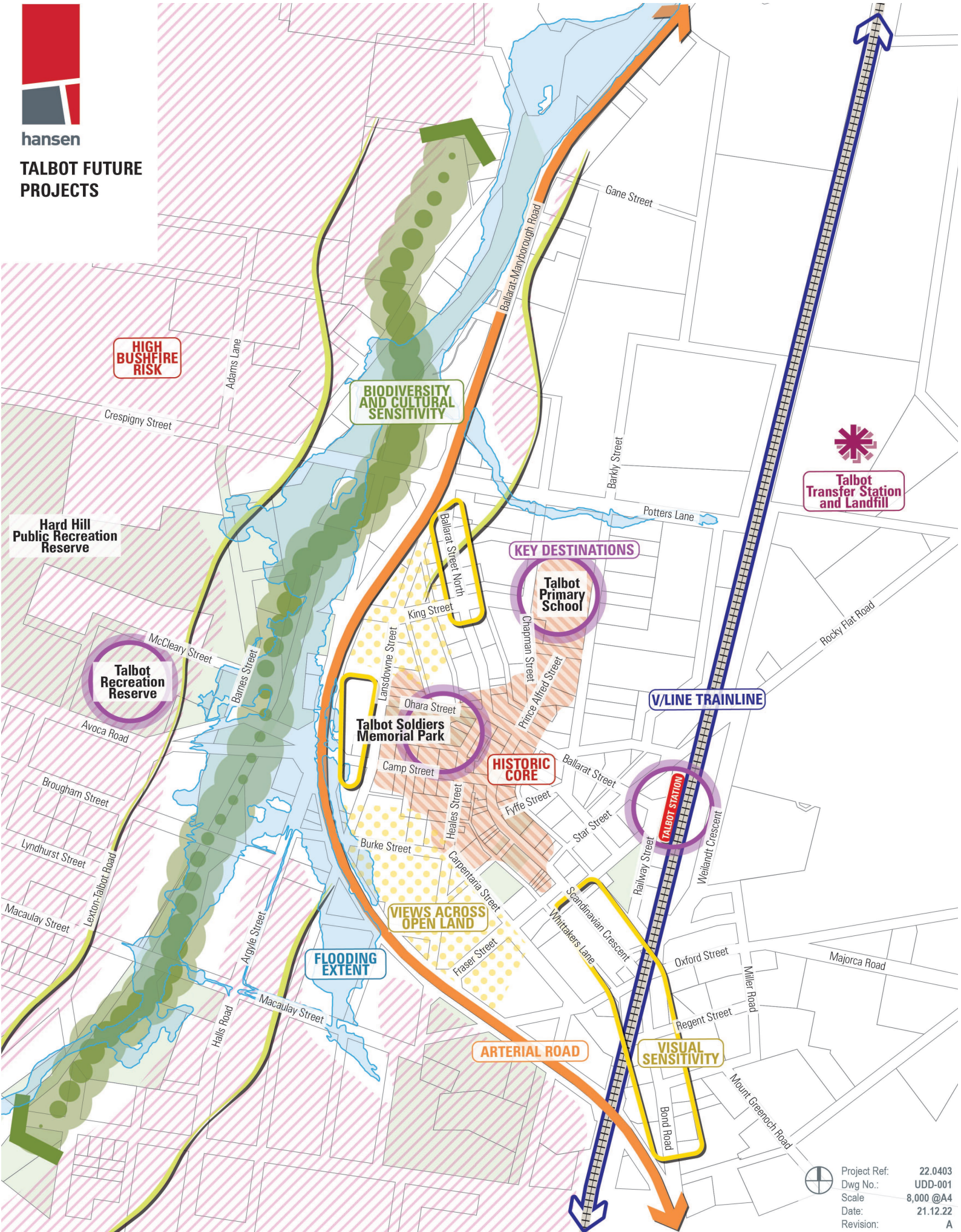
Feedback to date regarding the most appropriate locations for growth should this be pursued have been reasonably consistent. The majority of responses have been clear in their desire to avoid development to the west of the township close to Back Creek and its floodplain. A few respondents did see potential in existing rural living areas to the immediate south of the Recreation reserve but this support was limited. The majority of responses were evenly spread among areas to the immediate outside of the existing township boundary to the North, South and East, with the south east seeing the most favourable responses. These initial findings will be tested further through engagement to follow. Ensuring growth does not compromise the small town feel and the peace and quiet of the settlement is important to existing residents, who are also keen to see growth contribute to improvements in infrastructure, particularly in the public realm where drains, footpaths and trees were all noted.

Drainage & Telecommunications

In addition to sewerage and roads, Talbot also has little drainage infrastructure. Considerations more broadly of how any new growth areas will interact with an impacts on existing drainage systems will need to be carefully considered. Current drainage consists primarily of open swales which in some area, are difficult to maintain. Limited areas of pipe may not have the capacity to accommodate additional inflows. Opportunities to improve internet and other telecommunications infrastructure within the town may also need to be explored to support not only commercial growth but also residential growth given increased opportunities for those in the labour force to work from home.



TALBOT FUTURE PROJECTS



HIGH BUSHFIRE RISK

BIODIVERSITY AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

KEY DESTINATIONS

Talbot Primary School

Talbot Soldiers Memorial Park

HISTORIC CORE

VIEWS ACROSS OPEN LAND

FLOODING EXTENT

ARTERIAL ROAD

VISUAL SENSITIVITY

V/LINE TRAINLINE

TALBOT STATION

Talbot Transfer Station and Landfill

Hard Hill Public Recreation Reserve

Talbot Recreation Reserve

Project Ref: 22.0403
 Dwg No.: UDD-001
 Scale: 8,000 @A4
 Date: 21.12.22
 Revision: A

- Legend**
- Parks/ open space
 - V/Line Trainline

Aging population

Looking at the median age for towns, the median age in Talbot rose by 5 years between 2001 and 2016 Table 5. This is in line with the general ageing of the population – that is, a larger share of older people in general – but is particularly pronounced in Talbot where the lack of new development means there is no influx of younger households. Failure to provide opportunities for growth will have significant impacts on the township. However, new or younger demographics sectors may also have different needs or priorities than those which have been catered for to date.

	2011*	2016	2021	Change 2016-21
Maryborough	48	50	51	+1 year
Carisbrook	44	44	45	+1 year
Dunolly	55	57	58	+1 year
Talbot	48	55	59	+4 years
Central Goldfields	48	50	52	+2 years

Source: ABS 2011, 2016 and 2021 Census SSC/SAL, SGS Economics & Planning.

*Note: 2011 Census year is not comparable to subsequent years due to differences in geographical areas.

Table 3: Median age by area

Facilitating growth in the township will be important to unlock the potential for new families to move to the township, thereby supporting the local primary school, sporting reserve etc. However, seeking to attract new families will mean the plan for the township needs to look not only at the needs of existing residents, but also to the potential future demographic when considering priority actions.

Landfill / refuse centre

As towns grow, the sustainable management of waste becomes increasingly important. In addition, often these types of facilities are associated with planning controls which seek to reduce the amount of residential development in proximity in order to minimise land use conflicts and amenity issues for those residents. Talbot's refuse centre is currently located on public land to the north east of the township. Should growth to the north or east of the township be proposed or explored, there may be a need to also consider the long terms future of waste management in this location if it is not to constrain growth of the township.

Spatial options testing

Figure 3 on the following page identifies a variety of considerations relating to different parts of the township.

For each area the key characteristics and initial issues or opportunities which should be considered in planning for future growth have been identified. These are not comprehensive as other constraints such as infrastructure (roads, drainage etc) and planning permit requirements (i.e. erosion management overlay) affect most areas.

These areas have been identified to inform discussions about options for the future growth of Talbot and may change over time as further technical analysis and community engagement are undertaken. Potential yields are theoretical and drawn from the relevant Technical Assessment.

AREA A:

Properties: n/a | Lots: n/a | Maximum yield: n/a

- Bushfire risk
- Flood risk along the Back Creek
- Cultural heritage values associated with Back Creek
- Biodiversity and native vegetation constraints along Back Creek and associated with the Hard Hill Reserve
- Poor connectivity to the main settlement area

Do not intensify development or resubdivide existing land

AREA B:

Properties: 12 | Lots: 20 | Maximum yield: 154

- Not currently within the township boundary, zoned for rural living
- Drainage line along Potters Lane
- Contains portions of public land which appears unlikely to be used
- Larger lots 4000-20000sqm
- Some existing development towards Barkly Street and on larger lots within area
- Reads as part of current township
- Limited constraints, scattered vegetation
- Very close to train station and school

Consider potential to rezone to support resubdivision of larger lots to support town growth

AREA C:

Properties: 5 | Lots: 14 | Maximum yield: n/a

- Not currently within the township boundary, zoned for farming
- Part publicly owned land
- South of the resource recovery centre which may have adverse impacts
- Close to the train station and primary school (direct)
- No access across train line
- No existing services or infrastructure

*Potential opportunity for longer term growth, dependant on resource recovery centre and connections across rail line
Potential for Low Density Residential rezoning.*

AREA D:

Properties: 10 | Lots: 36 | Maximum yield: 331

- Not currently within the township boundary, zoned for rural living
- Part publicly owned land
- Close to town centre
- Majorca Road is single lane

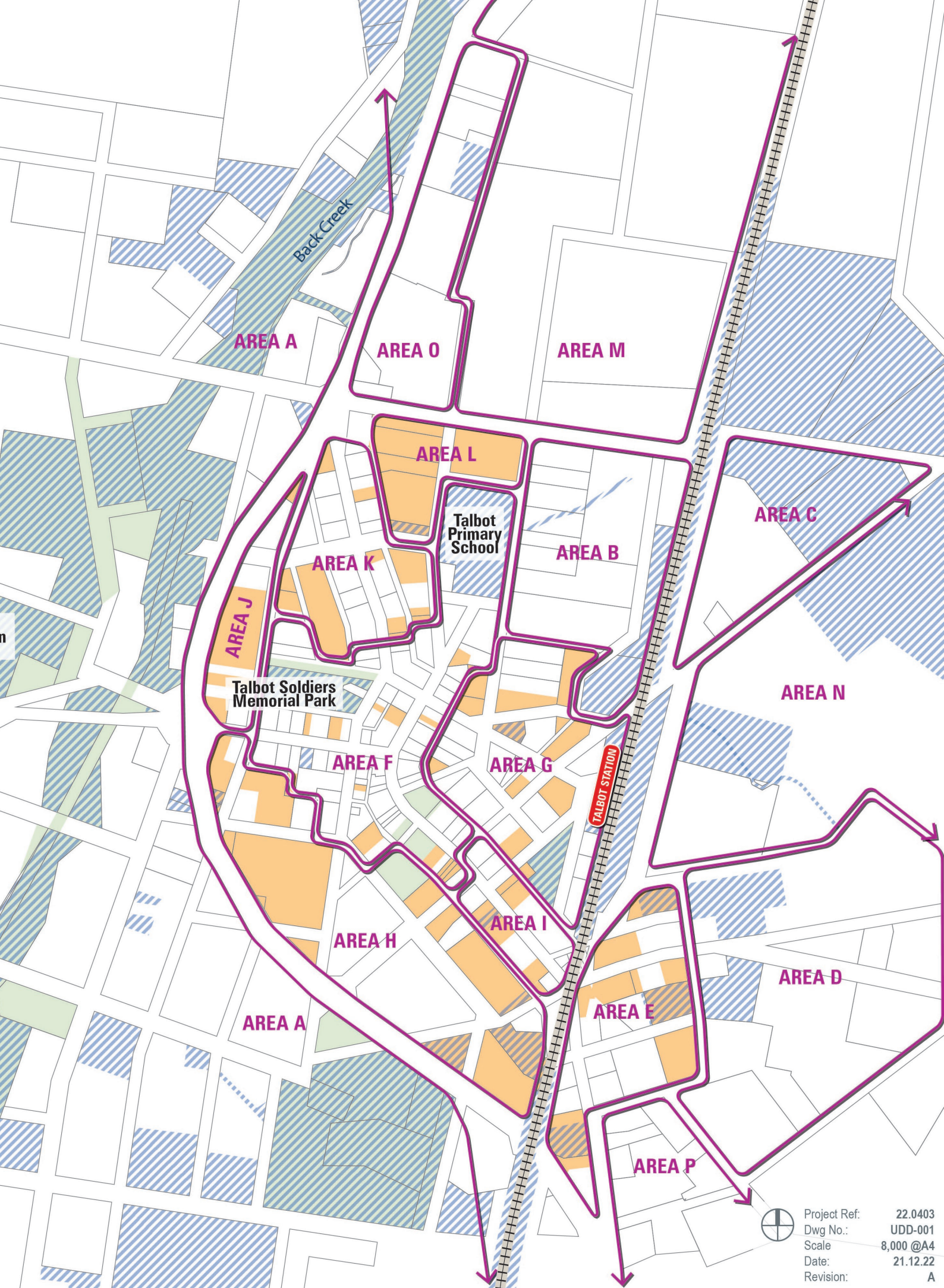
Potential opportunity for resubdivision to low density residential land. Potentially for sewerage meaning land could subdivided down to 2000sqm or standard residential.

AREA E:

Properties: 15 | Lots: 50 | Maximum yield: 51

- Part of the existing settlement area
- Connection across the train line at Scandinavian Crescent
- More difficult to sewer
- Some properties may have heritage value
- Southern gateway to township has visual sensitivity
- Rear of lots visible from main road.

Potential for further subdivision and redevelopment of existing lots once seweraged. Potential for Low Density Residential rezoning. Lots along township entry have constraints in terms of visibility / tourism and there may be heritage values which constrain development.



Project Ref:	22.0403
Dwg No.:	UDD-001
Scale:	8,000 @A4
Date:	21.12.22
Revision:	A

AREA F:

Properties: 60 | Lots: 78 | Maximum yield: 44

- Core heritage area
- Numerous individual significant heritage buildings
- Integral to perceptions of the townships character and tourism potential
- Highly sensitive area
- Significant vegetation on private landholdings
- Small lots, limited vacant lots, limited opportunities for resubdivision

Limited opportunities for growth, protection of heritage character likely to be paramount

AREA H:

Properties: 21 | Lots: 39 | Maximum yield: 165

- Part of the existing settlement area
- Significant amounts of vacant or underutilised land, cleared
- Limited existing heritage stock but some would have some impact on long range views
- Highly visible location on main road and at town gateway which provides a rural setting for historic core
- Minor flood impacts to north of area close to Camp Street

Potential for further subdivision and redevelopment of existing lots once sewerred. Development would need to be sensitive to highly exposed location and minor flood risk.

AREA G:

Properties: 23 | Lots: 44 | Maximum yield: 93

- Part of the existing settlement area
- Great access to services and facilities, train station, school etc
- Some vacant land, and larger lots with resubdivision potential
- Large parcel of public land not currently utilised
- Some heritage sensitivities (particularly along lanes close to Scandinavia Crescent)
- Visually prominent area given location between train station and Scandinavia Crescent

Potential for further subdivision and redevelopment of existing lots once sewerred. Development would need to be sensitive to heritage characteristics.

AREA I:

Properties: 10 | Lots: 36 | Maximum yield: 15

- Part of the existing settlement area
- Great access to services and facilities
- Some heritage sensitivities
- Some vacant land, and larger lots with resubdivision potential
- Very sensitive corridor given location of Scandinavia Crescent and as part of town entrance

Potential for further subdivision and redevelopment of existing lots once sewerred. Development would need to be very carefully managed due to location.

AREA J:

Properties: 4 | Lots: 18 | Maximum yield: 37

- Part of the existing settlement area
- Good access to services and facilities
- Influence on views to heritage buildings and town setting
- Area of potential cultural heritage sensitivity
- Some vacant land, and larger lots with resubdivision potential

Potential for further subdivision and redevelopment of existing lots once sewerred. Development would need to be sensitive to highly exposed location.

AREA K:

Properties: 21 | Lots: 70 | Maximum yield: XX

- Part of the existing settlement area
- Great access to services and facilities, train station, school etc
- Some vacant land, and larger lots with resubdivision potential
- Heritage sensitivities (particularly along lanes close to Scandinavia Crescent)
- Visually prominent area given location as northern gateway to Scandinavia Crescent and historic core

Potential for further subdivision and redevelopment of existing lots once sewered. Development would need to be sensitive to heritage characteristics.

AREA N:

Properties: n/a | Lots: n/a | Maximum yield: n/a

- Not currently within the township boundary, zoned for farming
- Between rural living land fronting Ballarat-Maryborough Road and the rail line
- No existing services or infrastructure
- Close to train station
- No access across train line
- Some publicly owned lots

Potential opportunity for longer term growth or Low Density Residential development

AREA L:

Properties: 6 | Lots: 14 | Maximum yield: XX

- Part of the existing settlement area
- Large vacant lots
- Some flooding impacts associated with drainage line along alignment of Potters Lane
- Adjoining school and close to services etc

Potential for subdivision of existing lots once sewered.

AREA O:

Properties: 7 | Lots: 23 | Maximum yield: XX

- Not currently within the township boundary, zoned for rural living
- Lots front Ballarat-Maryborough Road so are visually sensitive
- Some minor flooding
- Some parts of the precinct identified as higher fire risk in bushfire assessment

Potential opportunity for resubdivision to low density residential land. Potentially for sewerage meaning land could subdivided down to 2000sqm

AREA M:

Properties: n/a | Lots: n/a | Maximum yield: n/a

- Not currently within the township boundary, zoned for farming
- Between rural living land fronting Ballarat-Maryborough Road and the rail line
- No existing services or infrastructure
- Established agricultural business

Potential opportunity for longer term growth

AREA P:

Properties: n/a | Lots: n/a | Maximum yield: n/a

- Not currently within the township boundary, zoned for rural living
- Some lots front Ballarat-Maryborough Road and form the southern gateway so are visually sensitive

Potential opportunity for resubdivision to low density residential land. Potentially for sewerage meaning land could subdivided down to 2000sqm

