1 Background

In February 2009, Hume City Council (Council) made a submission to the State Government following the release of Melbourne 2030: A Planning Update – Melbourne@5Million (Melbourne@5Million), where Investigation Areas (IAs) were identified as part of the review of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). In this submission, Hume City Council supported the State Government’s decision to review the (then) current location of the UGB and the premise that new growth opportunities should largely be located within the north and west of Melbourne.

Council’s Melbourne@5Million submission was prepared with a view that the introduction of new areas within the UGB should be underpinned by principles relating to the development of sustainable communities, catchments and the promotion of areas where infrastructure efficiencies could be achieved.

Following Melbourne@5Million, Delivering Melbourne’s Newest Sustainable Communities (DMNSC) was released 17 June 2009 and included the release of four initiatives. Of the four initiatives Council considered that the following were specifically relevant to Hume City:

- The alignment of the Urban Growth Boundary surrounding Sunbury and the Hume Growth Corridor and identification of developable and non developable land;
- The alignment of the Outer Metropolitan Ring Transit Corridor (OMR); and

Council’s submission provided commentary relating to the alignment of the proposed UGB surrounding both Sunbury and the Hume Growth Corridor. In addition the submission identified specific areas which made logical sense for inclusion into the UGB. The submission also made comments on the background technical reports where relevant, as well as the specific comments relating to the SIA for EPBC Act and the proposed alignment of the OMR.

In August 2010, Amendment VC68 was approved which provided a new alignment the UGB within Hume City. This included a significant amount of land for new urban development within Sunbury as well as land within the Hume Growth Corridor which forms part of the Melbourne North area. Along with the introduction of the new UGB and rezoning of land for urban purposes VC68 also protected areas within Hume City for their environmental and landscape features and existing uses such as quarrying activities.

Council submitted in both its Submission to Melbourne@5Million and DMNSC that additional areas should be included in the UGB beyond those in Investigation Areas, however these were not considered.
1.1 Growth Area Framework Plan Submission

As part of the preparation of Growth Area Framework Plans (GAFPs) for land included inside the UGB as part of Amendment VC68 the GAA are now inviting submissions. It is understood that submissions are being invited to inform the GAFP and may address general issues relating to the future development of the land brought into the UGB as well as issues relevant to specific land areas or precincts within the revised UGB.

Council also understands the GAFP, once completed will:

- Identify long term patterns of urban growth;
- Identify the location of broad urban development types, (activity centre, residential, employment, freight centres and mixed use employment);
- Identify boundaries of individual communities, landscape values and as appropriate discrete urban breaks and how they will be managed;
- Identify committed transport networks and options for investigation (future railway lines and stations, freight activity centres, freeways and arterial roads);
- Identify locations of open space to be retained for recreation, biodiversity protection and flood risk reduction purposes guided and directed by regional biodiversity conservation strategies;
- Identify appropriate uses for areas described as constrained, including quarry buffers; and
- Include objectives for each growth area.

Council's Submission addresses the following points in the context of the need for the GAFP to address these criteria. These include:

- future challenges for planning and the need to address these through the GAFP
- preparation of the GAFP and the need for it to include:
  - a vision and objectives for areas
  - integration with existing areas and infrastructure
  - a Spatial Strategy
  - a delivery strategy
  - a monitoring framework

- Local context
  - Hume Growth Corridor (which forms part of the Melbourne North Area
  - Sunbury
2 Future Challenges for Growth Areas

The Growth Area Framework Plan (GAFP) for the Melbourne North and Sunbury areas aims to provide a framework for growth that is envisaged to take place within the next 20 years. In this respect it is important to consider the challenges that our society and future communities will face in this timeframe to ensure that the plan responds to these challenges.

There are a number of challenges that planning can address and can contribute to a reduction of the impacts including climate change, peak oil, water shortage, food security, rising living costs, obesity and an ageing population. The GAFP provides an opportunity to tackle these issues and leave a legacy which will ensure future communities can respond to these challenges, adapt and remain sustainable longer term.

This section of Councils submission highlights these challenges and the connectedness between them; where by a planning response to one issue can result in a response to a number of the challenges.

2.1 Climate Change

There is scientific consensus that the documented rise in global average surface temperature is attributed to what is known as Climate Change (IPCC, 2007). This is attributed to the use of fossil fuels, intensive agriculture and land clearing which has caused atmospheric levels of greenhouse gases (i.e. carbon dioxide) to rise above natural levels. In Australia, average temperature increases of 1°C are likely by 2030 together with changes in rainfall patterns and the frequency and/or intensity of extreme weather events such as drought and severe storms (DCCEE, 2010).

The share of carbon dioxide emissions in 2004 shows that 25.9% can be attributed to energy supply and 13.1% can be attributed to transport. The GAFP can play a part in reducing emissions from these sources by instigating a change in the way we currently supply energy and move around (IPCC, 2007).

There are many case studies where local-based and/or renewable energy supply has been implemented. For example, Hammarby Sjostad in Stockholm, Sweden has implemented a biofuel based energy source for its community of 20,000 people (HGA, 2010). In Tudela, Spain a wind farm and solar collectors are currently being planned to serve 100% of the energy supply for a community of 30,000 people (Eco-City, 2010).

The GAFP can take a lead role in implementing measures such as these. As part of the GAFP process, the GAA should be working closely with the Federal Government to investigate opportunities to gain funding for projects that implement large-scale renewable energy resources to assist in meeting the Federal Government’s target of reducing carbon emissions to 5-25% below 2000 levels. The Solar Flagships Program is an example of the type of program that could possibly be utilised.

The GAFP also can play a part in ensuring that vehicle trips are minimised and/or a mode shift is encouraged by increasing densities, providing mixed-use activity centres, through the location of employment opportunities, and by providing efficient and easily accessible public transport, walking and cycling opportunities. Vancouver, Ottowa and Zurich are examples of cities that have provided increased public transport opportunities and have experienced increased public transport usage and a decrease in the use of the car (Stone, 2009).


2.2 Peak Oil

‘Peak oil’ is an expression that is widely used to describe the peak and then decline in petroleum sources which will have the effect of increasing the price of oil. It has been predicted that by 2014/2015 oil prices are likely to spike, jeopardising economic growth and causing economic dislocation (ITPOES, 2010). Petroleum is currently essential for agriculture and most facets of Australia’s community life and economic systems as well as for transport (Akehurst, 2002).

Australia’s problem is two-fold in that it has only 0.3% of the world’s oil reserves and that increased imports are predicted to increase and it has been forecasted that by 2015, Australia will be importing 70 per cent of its oil (Akehurst, 2002; ITPOES, 2010). Almost 80% of Australia’s petroleum use is in transport, 55% of road transport fuel is petrol, 39% diesel and 6% is LPG (Akehurst, 2002).

In short, declining oil supplies and increasing costs will affect transport options and agriculture, therefore impacting on living costs for the community due to increased transport and food costs. The mitigation measures discussed above for climate change in relation to transport can also mitigate the effects of peak oil.

The GAFP can play a role in ensuring future communities can be developed to promote increased public transport usage, encourage walking and cycling to key destinations including activities centres and services as well as providing a diversity of employment opportunities within close proximity.

2.3 Water Security

The security of Melbourne’s water supply is a topic that is attracting a great deal of attention from government, the media and the public. With a number of major augmentation projects at various stages of planning and construction (such as the Wonthaggi Desalination Plant), water storages at historically low levels and consumers facing the prospect of water bills doubling in the short term, water supply is a critical issue for Melbourne.

Potential opportunities to mitigate water shortages and increasing water costs are stormwater harvesting, water recycling including third pipe systems in developments to utilise the recycled water, and sewer mining (a decentralised form of waste-water recycling).

The GAFP can play a part in ensuring that measures such as these are rolled out in growth areas. The Kalkallo Integrated Water Project is a live example of water reuse which is already being applied in the Melbourne North area. The GAFP should include consideration of new opportunities to promote water sustainably and provide a framework for these to be realised through implementation of the plan.

2.4 Rising Living Costs

Increasingly the gap is widening between those who have access to housing and those who do not. In an equitable and inclusive society, there should be adequate levels of affordable housing available to people on low incomes. Current figures demonstrate the breadth of the problem within Victoria in that by the end of 2007, 32.3 per cent of first home buyer income was needed to pay for a new mortgage, compared to 26 per cent in early 2005 (ACF, 2008).

A widely used measure is that when a household in the bottom 40 per cent of the income distribution spends more than 30 per cent of its gross income on housing costs it is considered to be housing stress (ACF, 2008). Failure to ensure access to affordable housing is also linked with a range of other problems such as poor health status and social exclusion. However, housing affordability must take into account a wider range of costs than just rent or mortgage price. At a time when Australians are dealing with the twin issues of climate change and increasing petrol prices, consideration of housing affordability must include transport and energy costs.
The Senate Inquiry into Housing Affordability noted that;

“*The way to improve housing affordability is not to build cheap houses on the outskirts of cities away from employment, services and public transport links. This simply shifts costs from housing to the cost – in dollars and time – of transport. Rather, the aim must be to build affordable housing in areas where infrastructure can provide for and attract new residents. In considering longer term changes in the housing stock, thought must also be given to it being environmentally sustainable for it to be truly ‘affordable’ in a broader sense*” (ACF, 2008).

This highlights the importance of the need for GAFP to ensure development is met with the timely delivery of infrastructure. In addition there is a need for GAFP to take a neighbourhood approach to new communities where local jobs and services can be easily accessed.

The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) that hit the world in 2007 (and which is thought to be continuing) is a prime example of another potential future challenge for our growth areas that could increase the cost of living. The GFC affected the lives of many and included rises in living costs and unemployment and it is likely that similar events will occur again within the 20 year timeframe of the GAFP.

As such, it is important that the GAFP considers and provides public transport options and renewable energy sources to mitigate shifting cost from housing (and providing affordable housing in the narrow sense) to other areas such as energy and transport to address rising living costs.

2.5 *Obesity*

Obesity is a condition of excess body fat. In general, body fat accumulates when the energy intake from food and drink is greater than the energy expended through physical activity over an extended period of time. One of the main factors implicated in rising levels of obesity is decreased walking, cycling and transport-related physical activity (AIHW, 2004). It has been found that an additional 30 minutes driving per day is associated with a 3 percent increase in the likelihood of obesity (House of Representatives – Standing Committee on Health and Ageing, 2009).

Australia is one of the most overweight developed nations, with overweight and obesity affecting about one in two Australian adults and up to one in four children and the trend is for this to increase (House of Representatives – Standing Committee on Health and Ageing, 2009). Obesity has many health implications such as diabetes, heart disease, respiratory problems, osteoarthritis and reproductive problems (AIHW, 2004).

In addition to the costs of overweight and obesity incurred by individuals, families and communities, there are significant financial costs for the health system. In 2008, it was estimated that the total cost of obesity was $58.2 billion which included the attributable cost of diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, various types of cancer and osteoarthritis (House of Representatives – Standing Committee on Health and Ageing, 2009).

Again, this future challenge has similarities with the ones previously mentioned, in that the measures to mitigate these challenges are similar. It is necessary to ensure that efficient and easily accessible public transport is available and that pedestrian and cycle networks are provided in a safe and efficient route to key destinations. Importantly, it is key that at the urban framework stage, logical planning areas are established to ensure that each ‘community’ will be able to access key uses within walking distance. In addition regional passive and active open space areas must be identified and linked through networks and trails.

2.6 *Food security*

Food security has been defined as the availability of nutritious and safe food that is accessible to all, for a reasonable price, on a regular basis (Budge & Slade, 2009). Traditionally, food insecurity has been an issue in the developing and transitional nations...
of the world, however food supply insecurity also occurs in developed nations, among the socially and economically disadvantaged and those who have difficulty accessing nutritious food through their local supply channels (Budge & Slade, 2009).

In Victoria in response to the question asked in 2007 ‘In the last 12 months, were there any times that you ran out of food and you couldn’t afford to buy more?’, 6.1% of the population reported that they had (Budge & Slade, 2009). Food insecurity is also connected to the increase of obesity in Australia, as well as disease and will be compounded by climate change, peak oil and any global financial shocks.

To combat food security, local food supplies need to be available within walking distance or accessible via public transport (Budge & Slade, 2009). However, low socio-economic areas tend to have less healthy food outlets and an excess of fast food, petrol stations and expensive convenience stores within easy accessibility. Unfortunately, most large retail and supermarket centres are predominately car dependant.

While there is evidence that to address the food security issue work needs to be done at a higher level through changes to the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the State policies in the Planning Scheme, the GAFP also has a part to play. Ensuring food security at the GAFP level can be achieved by making sure the plan supports easy access to food. This can be achieved through the provision of neighbourhood activity centres (i.e. supermarket outlets) which are accessible via transport links.

### 2.7 Ageing Population

As with most other areas in Melbourne, Victoria and Australia, the Hume population is predicted to age with the older age group (aged 65 years or more) accounting for an increasing proportion of our community. This has implications for the provision of health services, housing types and transport.

An older population is likely to have mobility restrictions and the pattern of demand for public transport services is likely to shift towards local transit (relative to commuter transport). As such, the provision of efficient and easily accessed public transport along side the logical location of activity centres is also important in addressing the needs of an ageing population.

An ageing population will also be associated with the continued decline in average household size. This will create a need for greater diversity in housing types and options. Development will also need to reflect the economic and social infrastructure requirements of future communities, including access to employment, and to social services.

The GAFP must build upon best practice from elsewhere and raise the standard of growth area planning to maximise its potential to mitigate the impacts of the future challenges for growth areas.
3 What the Growth Area Framework Plan Should Do & How It Should Be Prepared

This section of the submission outlines Council’s evaluation of the current GAFPs based on their experience of implementing the GAFP for the Hume Corridor. It outlines how the new GAFP could more appropriately fulfil its role in providing the strategic planning framework for the growth regions and Council’s recommendation for: the aims and the components for the new GAFPs; and how the new GAFPs should be prepared.

3.1 The Current Growth Area Framework Plans

The GAFPs being prepared are effectively revisions or extensions to the current GAFPs. As part of their preparation it is important to consider the performance of the current GAFPs and evaluate the extent to which their aims and objectives have been achieved.

The current Growth Area Framework Plan aims to:

- Set the long-term strategic planning directions to guide the creation of more sustainable communities in Melbourne’s five growth areas; and
- Give the Victorian Government, councils, developers and growth area communities greater certainty and confidence about future development in Melbourne’s growth areas.

To achieve these aims, the GAFP sought to achieve the following:

- Identify the long term direction of urban growth;
- Identify the location of broad development types, for example activity centre, residential, employment and mixed use employment;
- Identify committed transport networks as well as network options for investigation;
- Identify committed regional open space networks, as well as investigation sites;
- Show significant waterways as opportunities for creating green corridors; and
- Include strategic directions for individual growth areas.

3.1.1 Council Evaluation

Council supports the creation of sustainable communities. It also recognises the value in key stakeholders having confidence in the directions of future development, particularly infrastructure providers and developers given the scale of investment needed in growth regions. Unfortunately, Council considers that the current GAFPs have not achieved either of these aims.

With regards to the delivery of more sustainable communities, Council sees little difference in the sustainability of new growth communities of today compared to 10 years ago. Specifically, it sees no significant difference in the level of employment provision, service provision, transport infrastructure and density of new housing. Given the lack of guidance in the current GAFP on these matters, Council also suggests that there is little to suggest that any improvements that have occurred are the direct result of the GAFP.

Council also sees little confidence amongst key stakeholders that infrastructure and investment decisions have resulted as part of the current GAFPs. It observes that a significant number of strategic decisions are being resolved in lengthy PSP preparations or are being further deferred. In Hume, there has been minimal commitment from State Agencies for the funding and development of Aitken Boulevard as a result of the current GAFP despite it being identified as a major part of the road network on the spatial plan.

Similarly, Council sees little increased confidence of investors in the Broadmeadows CAD despite being identified in the GAFP as the major centre in the Hume Corridor. Finally, in its capacity as ‘the council’, it does not consider that the current GAFP has increased certainty in how and when it should invest in the new communities being planned. It will be important that far greater certainty is provided in the new GAFPs, particularly for large regional infrastructure and development like Aitken Boulevard, the OMR and the Broadmeadows CAD.
Council believes the failure to meet these aims represents a missed opportunity for the strategic planning of growth regions. This must be rectified in the new GAFPs given the scale of the new communities proposed in the new growth areas and their vulnerability to issues of peak oil, climate change and rising living costs. Council consider that the missed opportunity is the result of the limited depth and guidance in the current GAFPs and an overall lack of sophistication in approach to deliver change, intervention and investment in growth regions.

Council submits that if the GAA are to truly and appropriately fulfil their role outlined in Section 46AR of the Planning and Environment Act and maximise the opportunities that planning at this scale provides, the GAFPs must provide:

- a genuine response to the challenges that society and the growth regions faces now and will face in the future rather than planning for “more of the same”;
- greater strategic direction than a high level spatial plan showing the broad future use and protection of land within the Growth Regions;
- greater guidance and certainty on land uses and infrastructure that are of a sub regional or regional scale to avoid such matters being deferred or resolved at the detailed planning stage; and
- greater emphasis and clarity on the required actions of key agencies to enable coordinated and timely intervention and investment, particularly for infrastructure provision.

The current GAFPs have not achieved their potential to guide the delivery of more sustainable communities or provide greater certainty and confidence about future development in Melbourne’s growth areas. They lack the strategic direction and clarity on action necessary to deliver change, intervention and investment in growth area planning. The new GAFPs must address these failings.

3.2 New Growth Area Framework Plans

3.2.1 Aims of the New Growth Area Framework Plans

Council notes that Clause 11.02-3 of the State Planning Policy Framework outlines the list of outputs for the new GAFPs. Council does not object in principle to this list but is concerned that it represents only a minor alteration to the list that guided the preparation of the current GAFPs and therefore is unlikely to address the failings identified by Council outlined above.

To address this and to help ensure that the new GAFPs fulfil their potential role in the strategic planning of growth regions, Council submits that the new GAFPs should aim to:

- provide a vision for the future development of the growth regions which delivers sustainable communities and responds to the current and future challenges for society and specific to the growth region;
- provide long term direction on the need and the scale and location of future land uses and infrastructure in the growth regions, particularly regional and sub regional development;
- provide advice on the role and relationship of different activities within and adjoining the growth regions, notably activity centres, employment areas and open space areas;
- provide detailed direction on the infrastructure requirements in the growth regions;
particularly regional infrastructure, and the sequencing of development; and

- coordinate the timing, funding and activities of different agencies to enable the realisation of the vision and the land use and infrastructure outcomes sought in the Plan.

Council also submits that the outputs listed in Clause 11.02-3 should be implemented such that they also achieve the following additions in bold:

- Identify the long term pattern of urban growth and vision for the area;
- Identify the location, type and scale of broad urban development types, for example activity centre, residential, employment, freight centres and mixed use employment;
- Identify the boundaries and catchments of individual communities, landscape values and as appropriate the need for discrete urban breaks and how land uses in these breaks will be managed;
- Identify required transport networks and options for investigation such as future railway lines and stations, freight activity centres, freeways and arterial roads as well as standards of service for public transport;
- Identify the location, function and management of open space to be retained for recreation and/or landscape protection and/or biodiversity protection and/or flood risk reduction purposes guided and directed by regional biodiversity conservation strategies;
- Show significant waterways as opportunities for creating linear trails, along with open space areas and areas required to be retained for biodiversity protection and/or flood risk reduction purposes;
- Identify appropriate uses with timing and phasing for areas described as constrained, including quarry buffers; and
- Include objectives, targets and measures for each growth area.

The GAFPs must adopt a broader set of aims then the current GAFPs and provide greater strategic direction and certainty in implementing the objectives for the GAFPs in Clause 11.02-3.

3.2.2 Spatial Scope

The new GAFPs must extend their strategic guidance beyond the areas recently brought inside the UGB to ensure that the influences and relationships between the new and existing areas are appropriately planned for. This is particularly relevant in the Melbourne North Region where the planning of the existing areas in the Melbourne North Region in response to Melbourne 2030 and the current GAFPs is at an early stage.

Specifically the GAFP must articulate and provide guidance on the influence of the existing areas on the new development areas and mitigate any adverse impacts of new development on the planning for existing areas. The prime example in Hume is the potential adverse impact that the development of competing activity centres might have on the Broadmeadows CAD and the Craigieburn Town Centre.

To address this, the GAA should identify the spatial scope of the GAFP on the travel to work areas, housing market areas and catchments for activity centres not simply zoning, landownership or authority boundaries. It should also determine whether strategic decisions about the future of an area, destination or land use within or adjoining the growth region can be planned for appropriately at the precinct level without guidance within the GAFP. This will ensure that the GAFP is based on, and can thereby appropriately influence, the pattern of movements of people and activity, desired outcomes for land as well as investment decisions.

It is important that each of Melbourne’s growth regions are considered separately an effective approach in one growth region may not necessarily suit the circumstances and spatial
context of another. For the Melbourne North Growth Region, Council submits that the new GAFP should determine the spatial scope by considering the strategic influence of existing key destinations and land uses within the whole of the Northern Corridor and the impact on growth on these. For the Sunbury Region, the GAFP must recognise that the scale of growth planned has significant implications on how Sunbury will function, and must also consider its role in providing access to services and employment to the wider region.

The GAFP must provide strategic guidance beyond the areas recently brought inside the UGB to include key locations and infrastructure within the existing areas. It must consider the influences of these existing areas and the potential impact on them from development on new areas.

3.2.3 The Components of the New GAFPs

To achieve their strategic role and overcome the failings of the current GAFPs, Council recommends that the GAFPs comprise the following components:

- a spatial vision of what the Melbourne North and Sunbury growth regions will look like in 30 years which reflects sustainable development objectives;
- a set of strategic objectives for the area which focus on what outcomes are needed to address the key issues and threats that the region faces in achieving that vision;
- a Spatial Strategy outlining what type and scale of development is intended to happen where and when to achieve the vision and objectives;
- a delivery strategy for achieving the vision, objectives and Spatial Strategy setting out what is to be done by whom and by when, including an Infrastructure Plan; and
- a series of measures and targets to monitor the realisation of the vision for the region and inform the review of the spatial and delivery strategies

These are discussed in turn in at sections 3.2.4 – 3.2.7.

3.2.4 A Vision & Objectives

A vision for each Growth Region is needed to help enable key stakeholders and the community envisage the place(s) that are intended to be created and help them to identify their role in delivering these places. The lack of a vision in the current GAFPs has resulted in a loss of opportunity to communicate to State Government, Local Government, private organisations, voluntary groups and the community what the place they are involved in creating should be like. Council submits that the new GAFPs must include a vision which articulates the place that the growth regions should be in 30 years time.

The GAFP should include a vision which articulates the place that the Melbourne North and Sunbury Regions should be like in the future.

Although the current GAFPs have some broad objectives under different themes, they have been shown to be insufficient to generate or direct intervention. Council submits that new GAFPs must include objectives which are targeted at achieving a vision and resolving the specific issues that a growth region faces. They should help to articulate to others what is needed to achieve the vision and provide the basis for more targeted actions in the Spatial Strategy and the Delivery Strategy.

In developing the vision and objectives, the GAA should identify consider and address the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the growth regions. In addition, it should consider what type of place(s) should be created to mitigate the potential impacts of some of the challenges outlined in Section 2, notably peak oil, climate change and rising living costs.
3.2.5 A Spatial Strategy

The new GAFP must go beyond a spatial plan which simply identifies constraints to development and confirms the boundaries of broad land uses. It must guide future development and take advantage of the opportunity that planning at the regional scale has to resolve and coordinate future land use matters, Council propose that this be achieved through the inclusion in the GAFP of a Spatial Strategy which:

- articulates how the growth region is planned to function, focusing in particular on the dependencies and influences of different locations and how people will move between locations of activity both within and beyond the new development areas;
- provides clear direction on the location and role of transport infrastructure, identifying strategic freight routes, the major road network and the principal public transport network. For public transport it should identify the mode or at least the frequency of service if the mode is to be determined later;
- provides clear direction on the broad location and scale of different land uses and regionally or sub regionally significant development and infrastructure (including Principal and Major activity centres, large scale community infrastructure, leisure developments, large employment nodes, major bulky goods sites), particularly where their influence extends beyond administrative planning boundaries; and
- includes any aspirations for new development which should be considered at the precinct planning stage which helps to achieve the vision and objectives for the area.

The Spatial Strategy must focus its guidance for development without going into the level of detail more appropriate to precinct scale planning. However, it must avoid platitudes and statements of intent which do not stimulate action or help to guide and determine the future development outcomes sought, particularly for regional or sub regional development and infrastructure. To achieve this, the Spatial Strategy should utilise a combination of direction, requirements and targets to guide development whilst enabling refinement and change at the precinct planning stage where this can be justified.

3.2.6 The Delivery Strategy

The primary failing of the current GAFP is the lack of clear advice on the timing which means and responsibilities for the delivery of change. This has stifled the investment and planning of the growth regions and caused delays in the more detailed precinct planning. This is particularly the case with the planning for infrastructure with State Agencies and other stakeholders slow to identify infrastructure requirements and slow to commit funding.

To overcome this failing, Council submits that the new GAFPs must include a Delivery Strategy which coordinates the actions, investments and interventions of key agencies within State Government, Local Government, private and voluntary agencies. The Delivery Strategy should outline what actions are needed to deliver the Vision, Objectives and Spatial Strategy and set out as far as practicable when, where and by whom these actions will take place.

Specifically, the Delivery Strategy should:

- outline for each key element/development within the Spatial Strategy which organisation(s) is responsible for its delivery and the current status of that responsible organisations work;
• include an Infrastructure Plan containing the major infrastructure requirements with their, funding status and timeframe for delivery;
• provide mechanisms and targets for action and change within a specified timeframe to demonstrate and provide confidence to others how and when it is intended that the elements of the Spatial Strategy will be implemented;
• outline the anticipated sequencing or staging of development; and
• link the staging of development to key timeframes and triggers for action. For infrastructure delivery this should be in the form of an Infrastructure Timeline.

The preparation of a Infrastructure Timeline(s) showing the intended phasing of development and associated infrastructure is an excellent means of communicating and tracking the delivery of the plan. Council submits that this form the central component of the Delivery Strategy.

3.2.7 Monitoring Framework

The current GAFPs have no monitoring framework to understand how the GAFP is performing or if key actions necessary to its successfully implementation have been achieved or should be revised.

To address this, the new GAFPs should include a list of measures to monitor the progress of actions within the Delivery Strategy and track the extent to which the Vision and Objectives for the GAFP are being achieved. It should track whether infrastructure projects will be funded and delivered in an appropriate timeframe to enable development and serve the new communities. It should also outline what changes to the Spatial Strategy and Delivery Strategy or alternative actions need to be implemented should the initial actions no longer be achievable or deliverable.

The GAFP should include a Monitoring Framework which outlines how the GAA will track the performance of the Plan.

3.3 How the New GAFP Should be Prepared

Council believes that how the GAFP is prepared is critical to its realisation and implementation as it has the potential to engender support and belief in the plan amongst agencies, stakeholders and the community. This section outlines how Council considers that GAFPs should be prepared.

3.3.1 Developing and Testing of Options

The ability of the GAA to prepare a plan that is the most appropriate having gone through an objective process of assessing alternatives will pay dividends in the preparation of precinct structure plans. It will also assist in responding to changes in circumstance that may occur and ensure that investment decisions made by agencies are more justifiable and certain. This is particularly important for the (early) provision of infrastructure as a more justified plan will provide a more robust basis for securing investment and funding. To achieve support and buy-in for the GAFP, the rationale for taking forward and rejecting options as the plan emerges should also be well documented and communicated.

The GAFP should include a Delivery Strategy which outlines what actions, are needed, where they are needed and when they needed to achieve the Vision, Objectives and Spatial Strategy.

The GAFP needs to be developed based on a transparent process of identifying and testing options.
component which includes the most opportunities for alternatives.

In developing Spatial Strategy, the GAA should focus on identifying and testing options for:

- where development and change should occur;
- where it is necessary to prevent development and change;
- what form and scale the development and change should take; and
- what infrastructure is needed to enable the new development and change.

And have a sound understanding of the following:

- The required development needs of the area generated both by the new communities and existing communities;
- The constraints and opportunities for new development and change to meet these demands within the land recently brought within the UGB, existing zoned land and existing development areas;
- The policies for the development and use of land within other policies and programmes at the State and regional level which influence the nature of places and how they function;
- The capacity and funding potential of key agencies to deliver the required change in these different areas, particularly new infrastructure; and
- The contribution that needs to be made to delivering sustainable communities and mitigating the impacts of peak oil, climate change, housing affordability and other challenges that society faces and will continue to face.

The needs and demands of the area generated both by the new communities and existing communities need to be quantified and understood at an early stage. This process must consider both the development needs generated by the new population in terms of employment, service requirements, open space and housing as well as the needs of the existing areas for such development. In particular, this should focus on understanding development requirements which have a regional influence (retail, employment, open space and large scale community facilities).

The opportunities and constraints for achieving these demands should then be assessed. As outlined above, the GAFP must consider the whole of the growth region, direct development outcomes and articulate how the region is to function in the future. Therefore it is critical that this process considers the constraints and opportunities for change in the existing areas, undeveloped zoned areas and the areas recently brought inside the UGB.

The starting point and greatest focus should be on the options for future of existing regional development, notably activity centres, transport infrastructure, other large scale infrastructure and employment centres as these will play a crucial role in the life of the community in meeting the immediate, medium and long term demands and their upgrade may have significant cost and timing benefits. Understanding their role and function will also provide a guide for the need and appropriate catchment, scale and location of new, activity centres, employment centres and infrastructure.

There are a significant number of choices which need to be appropriately considered with regards to the scale and role of the existing activity centres and employment centres in the Melbourne North Growth Region and the Sunbury Growth Region and these are discussed in Section 4 below.

When identifying the development options of new areas recently brought into the UGB, it is important that this assessment does not unduly discount suitable areas or options as this will result in challenge or strategic deliberation at the precinct planning stage. Specifically, it is important that this task is not restricted to a basic mapping exercise which identifies potential constraints such as landscape, heritage, native vegetation, important habitats and flood risk areas without also considering the community benefits of developing these areas in terms of the provision of new infrastructure, overcoming
access issues, and achieving critical mass for activity centres. Likewise, it is important that the GAFP does not simply opt for one land use without considering others. The GAA should also not prevent the identification of development options simply because of an existing zoning or direction in an existing plan when another option may provide greater community benefit. A good example of this is the opportunity that the GAFP provides in reviewing unimplemented directions in the current GAFPs on land in Greenvale and adjacent to the Hume Freeway.

In testing the options, the GAA should appraise the extent to which the options contribute to the vision and objectives of the GAFP and the extent to which the options mitigate the impacts of peak oil, climate change, housing affordability and other challenges that society faces (if these are not part of the vision). The assessment should also consider the capacity and funding potential of key agencies to deliver the development option, particularly what investment is needed in social, environmental, economic and transport infrastructure to enable this.

The GAA must be satisfied that the agencies/partners necessary for its delivery will support the option and that the necessary resources to deliver it have a realistic prospect of being provided in the life of the GAFP. It should also be satisfied that there is not an unacceptable risk that the option will not be fully implemented, however, this should not prevent options being explored at an early stage where the funding and plans of agencies are yet to be finalised or are subject to change.

To ensure the support of key agencies and stakeholders this assessment process should be undertaken in partnership with these agencies and published as part of the consultation on the GAFP. This could take the form of a matrix or framework which shows how each option performs against the objectives for the plan and sustainability criteria.

In preparing the Spatial Strategy, the GAA must do more than produce a spatial plan. It must develop and test different development options for what type of development is needed where and when to meet the demands and needs of the existing and future communities. The GAA must also consider the capacity of the different agencies and stakeholders to deliver these options.

3.3.3 Preparing the Delivery Strategy

As outlined above, the Delivery Strategy (or equivalent) is critical to addressing the failings of the current GAFP and meeting the aims of the GAFP. In preparing the Delivery Strategy, the GAA should identify in partnership with other agencies the actions that are needed by these agencies to achieve the Spatial Strategy (or equivalent). Specifically, it should consider:

- What actions are needed by whom and when to deliver the Vision, Objectives and Spatial Strategy (i.e. what is needed once the GAFP is adopted?)
- What funding is needed from whom and when to enable the development and change intended in the plan to occur?
- What actions, if any, are needed to ensure that PSPs could be prepared?
- What contingency plans are needed to ensure that the GAFP is achieved?
- What measures are in place that would trigger the contingency plan to be used and how would this be implemented without wholesale revision to the GAFP?

If the options in the Spatial Strategy are appropriately appraised for their deliverability and achievability, this should be a straightforward exercise as these will have been established.

The priority task for the Delivery Strategy will be the establishing and introducing measures to ensure that the infrastructure required to support development is delivered in a timely fashion. To
achieve this, the GAA should prepare an Infrastructure Plan by gathering information on the availability and timing of funding and timescales for delivery from key agencies and relating this to the potential sequencing and phasing of the proposed development in the Spatial Strategy. This plan should then form the basis discussions for the prioritization of funding and actions to be monitored over the lifetime of the Plan.

3.4 Working in Partnership

Although the GAA has a leadership role in the preparing the GAFP, the GAFP should be prepared on the basis of a partnership approach with key stakeholders, including the Growth Area Councils. Council understands that it is intended that this be addressed at the State level through the creation of the Project Team led the GAA comprising the key State Agencies.

3.4.1 The Role of Hume City Council

Council is the responsible authority for the Hume Planning Scheme and its implementation. In its role as the council, it also plays a significant role in the delivery of services in the areas outlined in the plans. For these reasons, it plays a major role in the delivery of sustainable communities. Council also has significant planning expertise and extensive knowledge of what the communities in the Melbourne North and Sunbury Growth Regions need and an understanding of how they function. It also knows and understands the strengths, opportunities and issues of both regions.

Council believes that a strong partnership approach between Hume City Council and the GAA has significant benefits in sharing this knowledge and ensuring that the GAA understand the capacity of Council to respond to and deliver the vision and objectives for the regions in terms of service provision and coordinating activity at a local level.

Council has begun strategic planning work to guide the future growth of Sunbury and feels that a joint approach to evidence gathering and options testing is critical to ensure a succinct and unified planning approach. In particular, such a joint approach would appropriately link the new and existing communities and to resolve the infrastructure constraints of the region. For the Melbourne North region, Council has developed a good working relationship with Whittlesea on cross boundary issues and opportunities for how the area should function in the future. This relationship is critical to the successful implementation of cross boundary infrastructure provision and coordinated action. It should be harnessed by the GAA through the preparation of the GAFP.

It is understood that the form of the partnership approach with Growth Area Councils is to be finalised in November 2010 following the submissions to this period of consultation. Council submits that in deciding and recommending the form of the partnership approach that the GAA recognise the need for a strong working relationship between Hume City Council and the Project Team established by the GAA, particularly for Sunbury. Specifically, Council seeks a relationship with the Project Team which enables it to:

- play a major role in the visioning and development of objectives for the two growth regions;
- input and review the evidence studies prepared by or on behalf of the Project Team;
- the options developed for the spatial strategy (or its equivalent); and
- the delivery strategy (or its equivalent).

Council recommends that this be achieved through an officer(s) from Council attending meetings of the Project Teams for both the
Melbourne North and the Sunbury growth regions. This officer(s) would also be the point of contact for providing input and managing responses to the evidence and discussion material prepared by the Project Team to inform the GAFP.

Council would also welcome members of the Project Team attending meetings of the Officer Team within Hume City Council preparing its growth plan for Sunbury and being the source of input from the respective State agencies in this process on a similar vein.

Council would welcome a formalized working protocol if the GAA considered this appropriate.

Hume City Council seeks a partnership approach with the GAA which maximises the knowledge and capacity of both organisations to deliver sustainable communities.
4 Local Context

This section of the Submission outlines the key issues that Council identifies in the Hume Growth Corridor which forms part of the Melbourne North area and Sunbury. It is not possible to identify all issues and so Council has focused on those which it feels the GAFP has the greatest potential to influence.

4.1 Hume Growth Corridor

The Hume Growth Corridor is bounded by Mickleham Road to the west, Merri Creek to the west and Somerton Road to the South extending almost to the edge of the municipality just north of Donnybrook Road. Over the past 20 years consistent growth has occurred within the areas of Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn. Residential growth within the Hume Growth Corridor has also been supported by the development of employment areas surrounding Melbourne Airport and along the Hume Freeway. Most recently just over 800 hectares of employment land, which forms part of the Mickleham North Employment Precinct, was rezoned for employment purposes.

The change to the UGB following Melbourne@5 Million and Delivering Melbourne’s Newest Sustainable Communities has provided land west of the existing growth area to Mickleham Road, north surrounding the part of the Mickleham North Employment Precinct extending towards the alignment of the Outer Metropolitan Ring Road (OMR) and east and north of the existing township of Kalkallo.

Whilst there are specific local issues which should be considered in the development of these areas there are also key issues which must be addressed and are integral to the success of the GAFP for the entire Melbourne North region. These key issues for the Hume Growth Corridor and Melbourne North region in turn are summarised in sections 4.1.1 – 4.1.6.

4.1.1 Key Issues – Regional

In developing a GAFP for the Melbourne North area it is critical to consider the broader regional context beyond areas which have been included within the Urban Growth Boundary and their immediate surroundings. This includes the relationship and connections with significant employment, activity centres as well as other key infrastructure. In this context it will be important in development the GAFP for Melbourne North to consider:

- The role and function of the Broadmeadows Central Activities District
- The activity centre hierarchy, both existing and future including the role, function of individual centres and impact on others
- Melbourne Airport and related connections and employment opportunities generated by the Airport
- Proposed role and function of Melbourne North Intermodal Freight Terminal and impacts of its development
- The Outer Metropolitan Ring Road
- Regional infrastructure including, education, community services and open space

The GAA need to understand and consider the role and function of key locations, activity centres and new infrastructure in the Melbourne North area.

4.1.2 Employment

Currently within Hume City there are significant areas identified for major employment opportunities, including Melbourne Airport and surrounds; Mickleham North Employment Node and existing industrial and business park areas from Campbellfield extending along the Hume Freeway. Currently the Melbourne Airport employment precinct generates approximately 13,000 jobs (20% of total jobs in Hume) with over
50% of these jobs within the transport and storage sector.

It is expected that Melbourne Airport and surrounds will support over 55,000 jobs in the future. The Hume Highway Precinct currently supports approximately 18,000 jobs (29%) largely within the Manufacturing sector. The Mickleham North Employment Node is anticipated to support over 30,000 jobs. In addition the Broadmeadows Central Activities District has been designated as an area of significant employment growth in the future. It is expected that Hume will continue to play a key role in contributing to the national economy and Australia’s global position.

This information highlights the importance of ensuring GAFP responds to the need for connections between and key employment centres including Melbourne Airport, the Mickleham North Employment Precinct, Broadmeadows CAD, Hume Highway precinct and any other new locations part of the GAFP. There is also a need to diversify the employment opportunities within the region to strengthen the local economy and promote increases local job opportunities.

It is imperative that the GAFP is guided by a sound understanding of the existing and future anticipated economic conditions within the region. Specifically, whilst there are areas which could be suitable for employment, the GAFP must determine the scale and type of employment land needed through an economic assessment as well as an assessment of the constraints. A significant influence on the likely future employment requirements will be the role and function of the proposed northern intermodal freight terminal and the extent to which this with the Mickleham North Employment Precinct meets the demands of employment and the diversity of employment required to support existing and new communities.

4.1.3 Transport

Council has worked with state agencies and local partners to prepare a draft Hume Integrated Land and Transport Strategy (HILATS). This outlines Council’s concerns, aspirations and solutions for more appropriately linking land use development and transport provision in Hume. It therefore provides an excellent starting point for considering transport provision in Melbourne North.

Public Transport

The GAFP existing public transport network within the Hume Growth Corridor is currently focused on the rail provision which to a large extent is located east of the majority of development, in particular residential. The introduction of the two orbital bus routes will largely improve movements east-west most significantly within the southern areas of the Hume Growth Corridor surrounding Broadmeadows.

The GAFP must consider the relationship between significant transport infrastructure and new development, there are already significant existing gaps between growth and public transport links. The GAFP will need to address infrastructure provision, funding and the future needs to service the growth areas to ensure real integration of land use and transport is achieved. It is expected that the infrastructure required will need significant investment in public transport to sustainability service new growth.

In terms of public transport, the key is getting the most appropriate frequency to serve the area and to ensure there is suitable access to major employment nodes. In the short and medium term, links to employment will be at Melbourne Airport, Broadmeadows CAD and Epping.
It is expected that the GAFP will address:
- appropriate alignments for public transport informed by movement and journey to work patterns
- links east west which ensure good access to railway lines and through out region
- confirm the location of new railway stations
- Identify and confirm appropriate standards of frequency for public transport
- identify timing, funding and delivery arrangements for new transport infrastructure

In addition there is a need to specifically understand the opportunities presented by Aitken Boulevard (E14) as a principal north south public transport route which also has the potential to link Melbourne Airport to Broadmeadows as well as other key employment areas. For a number of years Council has identified Aitken Boulevard as a key public transport route and is currently exploring Bus Rapid Transit opportunities along it. The existing reservation provides an opportunity to deliver a bus rapid transit outcome however this will require a funding commitment to deliver both the public transport and road construction components.

The GAFP will need to ensure that new freight routes are established as part of the development of new employment areas and that these connect to the existing Principal Freight Network and avoid conflicts with residential areas.

Activity Centres
- The GAFP must outline the timing and funding of the major road infrastructure in the Melbourne North area, particularly the Outer Metropolitan Ring Road.
- The GAFP should direct the development of an integrated public transport network which connects key destinations in the Melbourne North area, notably the Broadmeadows CAD, the airport and Epping. The timing, funding and delivery of this network should be outlined, including the Bus Rapid Transit route on Aitken Boulevard.

Road Infrastructure
- The GAFP will be required to consider the capacity of the existing arterial road network and expected future role and function. This will be particularly important with new connections to the Outer Metropolitan Ring Road long term and the likely changes in travel patterns as a result.
- In addition the creation of new employment areas will also influence the existing freight networks and will likely create new networks. The GAFP

Specifically the GAFP will need to determine the catchments of these new centres and existing centres and assess the suitability of providing different uses within new centres as opposed to existing ones. This is particularly relevant to regional scale infrastructure, retail and leisure. In particular, the GAFP must provide direction for each centre to ensure the relationship between
the CAD, Craigieburn, Epping and other centres as appropriate.

In addition to this the GAFP must specifically review the need, function and role of the proposed Major Activity Centre located on the corner of Somerton and Mickleham Roads, Greenvale included within the existing Growth Area Framework Plan. The proposed Activity Centre, identified as A4, Greenvale Town Centre (see Figure 1 for location), identified in the schedule of Precinct Structure Plans is currently proposed as a Major Activity Centre with a ‘new economy’ employment focus as well as residential and recreation role and function. The premise for the development of an employment based activity centre within this location came about as a result of the Committee for Smart Growth process and is an outcome of the recommendations in the Committee’s report.

The proposed A4 Greenvale employment based Activity Centre was identified as a long term prospect by the Committee for Smart Growth. Whilst the Committee for Smart Growth identified this employment based activity centre opportunity it also identified that there was limited opportunity for a retail offer in this location as a result of its close proximity to the existing Greenvale Village Neighbourhood centre. Since the existing Growth Area Framework Plan was introduced into the Planning Scheme there has been no specific review of the role and function or even need for the proposed A4 Greenvale Town Centre. In light of the recent UGB change it would appear the viability, role and function of the A4 activity centres must be reviewed as part of the formulation of a new GAFP.

**The GAFP must direct the future development of activity centres to ensure an appropriate relationship between existing and new activity centres in the Melbourne North area. It should ensure that any new centres do not compromise the viability and investment in the Broadmeadows CAD.**

**LOCAL CONTEXT**

**HUME GROWTH CORRIDOR**

4.1.4 Open Space

The GFAP will need to address a range of open space (encumbered, unencumbered passive and active) requirements to provide a clear framework of how the network of open space can be integrated successfully within the region and connected to neighbourhoods. Anecdotally there is currently a significant deficiency in the provision of regional open space, both passive and active, within the Melbourne North Corridor.

With respect to the Hume Growth Corridor there is a specific need for the GAFP to consider, identify and address the following open space requirements and issues:

- new active and passive regional open space areas that service the entire corridor that may be purchased and managed by the State;
- creation of networks of open space and connections between them;
- open spaces which are linked by suitable public networks;
- distinction between conservation areas, intended offset areas and areas identified as open space;
- greater certainty surrounding extent of conservation areas and compatible open space functions within or surrounding protected areas;
- opportunities longer term around and within quarrying activities for open space functions;
- function of Merri Creek Regional Park as an open space linkage, noting difficulties in accessing the link from existing residential areas west of the Hume freeway/highway;
- provision for State wide active sports facilities and stadiums;
- open space provision linked to tourism potential and opportunity (Hume Freeway and OMR);
- ensure regional walking and cycling opportunities are planned as a priority; and
- provision of funding to Council for Open Space and Sport and Recreation planning in new UGB areas.
4.1.5 Specific Area Considerations

Within the Hume Growth Corridor there are a number of specific areas which are influenced by existing land uses or areas already planned and the potential impact of the surrounding land uses is integral to their potential development, future use and integration with the surrounding areas which form part of the Melbourne North region. There areas are discussed below and a plan showing these locations is provided at Figure 1. These areas will need to be considered and options/scenarios worked through as part of the preparation of the Melbourne North GAFP. In some instances decisions made within other areas will in turn have implications for these areas and possible development outcomes.

Hume Highway East
The existing Growth Area Framework Plan employment designated land east of the Hume Freeway, identified in the Precinct Structure Planning schedule as the Mickleham Employment Area North and South, is no longer on the edge of the Urban Growth Boundary.

There are a number of possible scenarios which result from the land surrounding this site now having a development potential. At this stage it is unclear what the development potential is for all the surrounding land and how the area may relate, connect and be integrated. The GAFP should consider whether this land should remain for employment purposes or an alternative land use.

This will require a greater understanding of the quarry area, anticipated lifespan of quarrying activities, likely constraints, possible integration with surrounding land as well possible infrastructure opportunities including the location of a train station between the existing train stations of Craigieburn and Donnybrook. In particular it will be important to consider the phasing of anticipated land use changes within the areas and their impact on integration of sites.

Craigieburn West
The Craigieburn West area located between the planned R2 Craigieburn Precinct Structure Plan Precinct and Mickleham Road. The area is also located north of the Mickleham Neighbourhood of the R1 Precinct Structure Plan Precinct. As part of the recent UGB change the area is was included in the Urban Growth Zone and the Farming Zone. It is understood that the area was partly zoned Farming as a result of possible conservation issues within the area. It is unknown what the significance of these possible conservation areas are and what the implications they may have on the development potential of this area. This issue requires greater certainty. With this said it would appear obvious that this area is a natural extension of the existing Craigieburn area to the west and should have a residential role.

Kalkallo and surrounds
The future of the Kalkallo township needs to be explored as part of the GAFP. There are a number of known constraints within the area including heritage and conservation which must addressed. It is understood that land immediately east of the Kalkallo Township, rezoned to farming as part of the UGB change, has been set aside for potential a Yarra Valley Waste Water Treatment Plant. The GAFP will need to establish the requirements of this infrastructure and implications on surrounding land uses (including buffers).

In addition this land is bounded by the Hume Freeway to the west, the OMR to the north the Sydney – Melbourne railway line and Donnybrook Road to the South. If this area is determined to be a residential precinct it will be critical to provide adequate connections to the surrounding area to ensure it is not an isolated community. It will also be important to consider the potential population of the future community. Land east of the railway line will also be an important consideration in the development of this area and the ability to integrate the two areas.
The future role and function of the Donnybrook Train Station will also be an important consideration and the current location of the Station could potentially be located further north to improve its ability to service the catchment more widely and improve its accessibility.

The role and function of Donnybrook Road east of the Hume Freeway will also need to be established. Currently, Donnybrook Road is proposed to be 3 lanes in each direction and will serve as a freight route to support the Mickleham North Employment Precinct. It is also expected to provide a connection east - west to the OMR and E6 alignment. The GAFP will need to address the role and function of Donnybrook Road west of the Hume Freeway.

Donnybrook Road West and surrounds
The Donnybrook Road and surrounds includes land north and south of Donnybrook Road bounded by the OMR alignment to the west and part of the Mickleham North Employment Precinct (Merrifield and Folkestone) to the east. South of the area is the Inter-urban Break and north is the OMR alignment and north east is the intersection of the OMR and Hume Freeway.

The alignment of the OMR and amenity impacts on the surrounding are will need to be considered carefully as part of the future urban use directions established for this area. In addition the role and function of Donnybrook road, with potentially three lanes in each direction as a connection to the OMR has the ability to provide a significant barrier to the integration of land south of Donnybrook Road. Connections to this area of land south of Donnybrook Road will also need careful consideration with the ability of a south north connection through the Interurban break unlikely, the OMR to the west and grassland/woodland east.

The alignment of Aitken Boulevard within this area is also an important consideration. Currently the alignment of Aitken Boulevard finishes within the Merrifield Employment Precinct. The role and function of Aitken Boulevard is unclear north of this area, there are a number of possible scenarios which need to be tested and worked through prior to establishing a final alignment north. These include, its connection to the OMR, whether it travels east, west or both sides of the existing Melbourne Water retarding basin and its extension through the Mitchell Shire Council’s new growth areas, the likely final destination of Aitken Boulevard must also be considered.

The GAFP should also consider the potential opportunities of Melbourne Water’s existing Retarding Basin. The implications of significant development north, as well as the OMR alignment, are likely to have implications on the requirements and functionality of the existing retarding basin. Depending on the requirements of the retarding basin there may be an opportunity for the retarding basin to serve as a focal point for the surrounding development. In particular active and passive regional open space opportunities should be investigated, including the potential development of a stadium catering for statewide activities, depending on the identified recreation needs of the Melbourne north area.

The integration of the Merrifield – Area 2 is also an important consideration. As part of the planning for the Merrifield development two areas where established, Area 1 and Area 2. During planning for large employment the vision of Area 2 was an intensive employment node with the ability to provide for compatible business and commercial uses to support the employment precinct. The land uses of the surrounding area will need to integrate with this development.

There are a number of areas in the Melbourne North area which require specific consideration, including undeveloped areas planned in the current GAFPs that should be reviewed.
Figure 1: Melbourne North, Hume Growth Corridor – Specific Area Plan
4.2 Sunbury Growth Region

The township of Sunbury has a long history of planned growth having been originally identified by the State Government in 1971 as a designated growth corridor and later as a ‘new town’.

Since this time, plans have been prepared by Council which initially sought to contain growth (Sunbury Strategy, 1993) and more recently to expand the town to a size which would support the provision of service demand created by community at a sustainable level (Sunbury Strategic Framework 2005, 2008).

At the heart of these plans are attempts to establish a function and supporting urban structure for Sunbury. This is as a result of Sunbury’s uniqueness; its separation from metropolitan Melbourne, country town feel and character, as well as its role in providing services to the surrounding region and townships.

4.2.1 Function & Urban Structure of Sunbury

The change to the UGB as part of Amendment VC68 has resulted in a significant amount new land available for development, primarily to the south and east of the existing Sunbury Township. The scale of potential development will result in a population which far exceeds that envisaged in the earlier plans. Accordingly there is a requirement to reconsider fundamental questions during the preparation of the GAFP for Sunbury, including:

- The optimal population for the town which enables it to meet more of the demands of the residents of Sunbury and surrounding towns;
- The desirable and realistic level of self containment that should be planned for different types of services and infrastructure, notably community, health open space and education services;
- The desirable and realistic level of employment that should be planned for;
- The capacity and suitability of the town centre to meet the land and development requirements generated;
- The capacity and required transport infrastructure within the town and linking to the town to other locations to adequately respond and enable this identified level of increased service and employment provision; and
- How to maintain and protect the semi rural country town feel, high landscape amenity and separateness from Melbourne that gives Sunbury its character.

These are key issues which the GAA must seek to understand and guide through the Vision and Objectives (or equivalent) component of the GAFP as they fundamentally shape the approach to the planning of the town.

For example, an objective to provide only a limited increase in the level of employment and housing provision will significantly influence the form of the transport connections needed to connect future residents to employment opportunities. Likewise, a vision for the town centre to expand and meet all the large scale infrastructure and service needs will significantly influence the urban structure of the town and the public transport network within the town.

The Spatial Strategy (or equivalent) component and the Delivery Strategy (or equivalent) component of the GAFP must also address these and provide sufficient strategic guidance on the location, nature, scale and timing of development needed to achieve the response to the issues identified. In particular, it will need to outline what the necessary large scale infrastructure requirements and interventions are that require coordinated action and collective funding.

Simple high level objectives without this guidance will be insufficient to enable the preparation of detailed precinct planning and will not provide an appropriate approach for development contributions and other funding to deliver these in a coordinated and timely manner.

In preparing the GAFP for the Sunbury area, the GAA will need to consider the function and structure of the whole of Sunbury.
4.2.2 Level of Self Containment & Regional Role of Sunbury

The remote location of Sunbury from the rest of Metropolitan Melbourne means that the residents of Sunbury have to travel some distance to access a range of employment opportunities and large scale services like hospitals, major retail and education services.

The electrification of the train line will bring some benefits in enabling this accessibility by public transport, albeit largely for employment in the CBD of Melbourne. However, travel to work data, retail expenditure data, and anecdotal evidence shows that a significant proportion of residents are leaving Sunbury to meet their demands and are doing so by car along the Sunbury-Bulla Road.

Whilst Sunbury residents leave to meet a number of their requirements, it is important to factor in the role that Sunbury plays in meeting the needs of the wider region, particularly for convenience retail, basic services and some employment.

The approach to self containment for the provision of employment and community, health, open space & leisure facilities and services must be included in the vision and objectives (or equivalent) of the GAFP. This then must be supported by appropriate guidance relating to their location, scale, timing and delivery.

The GAFP for the Sunbury area will need to determine the level of self containment for the township that is both desirable and practical to achieve.

4.2.3 Setting of Sunbury

A consistent theme which is valued highly by the Sunbury community is the country town feel of Sunbury. It is landscape amenity and rural outlook which contribute to the country feel of Sunbury and it is critical to the town’s character and appeal. Sunbury was originally planned to be retained within the valley which would protect the landscape amenity and rural outlook. However, over time development has compromised this aim in parts of Sunbury and the UGB change will further compromise this. The GAFP offers significant opportunities to limit this loss and impact by protecting landscapes, hilltops, ridgelines and views from inappropriate development.

As part of the preparation of the GAFP for Sunbury a comprehensive landscape and visual assessment will be required. Council is happy to work the GAA in partnership to development and further this work to provide guidance on how to mitigate the impact of development on the landscape, rural outlook and key views. This should build on the work that was undertaken to inform DMNSC. Specifically, the assessment will need to identify appropriate mitigation guidance as well as advice on where more work is required at the detailed planning stage to achieve this.

The setting of Sunbury is crucial to its character. A landscape and visual assessment should be undertaken to ensure that the GAFP protects and enhances this.

4.2.4 Employment

The GAFP must carefully consider at the outset what level of self containment for employment should be planned and what role Sunbury should play as a source of employment for surrounding townships within the region.

Currently, only 24% of the working population of Sunbury work in Sunbury. Of the people working in Sunbury, 65% live in Sunbury with 26% coming from municipalities and townships immediately adjoining Sunbury. This employment is primarily in businesses which provide services to the community in Sunbury and the nearby townships, notably retail, education and training. This reflects the limited range of the employment offer in Sunbury but the importance of it to regional townships.
Whilst this ‘local’ generated employment is likely to increase as the population increases in the town and in surrounding townships, previous work undertaken for Council identified that Sunbury was a ‘secondary’ or ‘non prime’ location for investment, particularly from footloose businesses. An increase in employment and self containment without significant intervention is therefore unlikely to be easily achieved if at all. It maybe that a more appropriate response, particularly in the short term until a sufficient change in the perception of Sunbury as an employment location is achieved, would be to not rely on large employment growth in Sunbury and ensure that measures to connect people to employment are pursued. This might include increasing transport provision to other employment locations or requiring that new housing be suitable for home working.

As a result, in preparing the GAFP, there is a need to assess the potential to provide employment in Sunbury which balances the clear advantages of providing employment locally with the market realism of achieving this. This should consider, amongst other matters:

- The likely market demand for different employment generating spaces;
- The impact of the OMR and electrification on the appeal of the town and the timing of these improvements; and
- The suitability of the land available for employment.

**The GAFP needs to take a realistic approach to the planning of future employment within the Sunbury area and ensure there is appropriate transport infrastructure to support this.**

4.2.5 Regional Large Scale Community, Health, Open Space & Leisure Provision

The 2005 Sunbury Framework Plan sought to ensure that Sunbury was self contained in terms of its community, health, open space and education services in proportion to the regional population it services. Council submits that this principle should be the basis for planning the location and scale of the required community, health, open space & leisure provision in Sunbury to reduce the need to travel.

Specifically, Council submits that the GAFP must consider the demands for large scale facilities like hospitals, TAFE and sporting facilities, as many of these facilities require specific locations and transport requirements and therefore need to be determined early in the process. These services also have long lead in times for funding and delivery and therefore cannot be appropriately planned, funded and delivered at the detailed precinct planning stage without clear guidance in the GAFP on their location, scale, funding and delivery.

To inform the GAFP, an Infrastructure Assessment is required with key providers that considers the demand for these services in light of population growth in both Sunbury and surrounding areas. Given that some of these facilities are not likely to be needed until the population is significantly larger, it is important that this assessment and the Spatial Strategy and the Delivery Strategy (or equivalent) of the GAFP:

- include a timeline with trigger points for the delivery of the facilities related to development; and
- require and inform the planning of interim solutions for maintaining appropriate service provision until this time.

Adopting this approach will help inform the funding and planning decisions of key service providers and give confidence to Council, developers and the community that the future Sunbury population will not be inappropriately provided for as a result of growth.

**The GAFP should plan for maximum self containment for community, health, open space and leisure provision and identify suitable locations for the large scale facilities.**
4.2.6 Housing
Population forecasting work by ID Consulting (on behalf of Council) has identified that the composition of households is expected to change in Sunbury. The proportion of new households without dependents is proposed to increase and households with dependents will fall. The other significant increase is in lone person households.

Although this data needs updating in light of the UGB change, this trend is likely to remain the same. Currently the range of housing stock is limited with the majority of housing targeted at families limiting the potential for young and older people to remain in Sunbury in suitable housing stock.

Housing requirements within Sunbury should be explored further as part of the preparation of the GAFP. This will ensure that the range of new housing being provided helps to meet the profile anticipated through policies which promote medium and specialist housing, particularly around activity centres. In particular, Council considers that the potential to provide high and medium density housing around potential new train stations should be explored as part of Transit Orientated Developments.

The GAFP should ensure a range of new housing opportunities are delivered in the Sunbury area, maximising opportunities for medium and specialist housing in proximity to public transport and services.

4.2.7 The Town Centre and Other Activity Centres
Activity centres are the focus for a range of land uses and activities, notably office, retail and large scale health, education and health facilities. They are also good locations for providing a range of housing opportunities. In growth areas, activity centres are a crucial means of influencing travel behaviour and providing a sense of place and community.
The GAA will need identify and appraise options and a preferred direction for the future role, function and scale of land use and activity in the current town centre and new centres.

4.2.8 Transport
Transport networks are key determinants in how an area functions and in turn are strongly influenced by land use planning. This is highly evident in Sunbury with the majority of roads within the town connecting directly into the town centre, reinforcing the primary focus of the town centre for activity. Likewise, the major road links to the rest of Melbourne, as well as the train line, provide viable options for out commuting for employment. As a consequence of these movements, many roads within the town and those leaving/entering the town are at capacity or close to capacity.

In planning the future of Sunbury, the relationship between land use and transport must therefore be very closely considered. In particular, decisions about the level of self containment, the role of Sunbury within the wider region, and the approach to activity centres will require a comprehensive approach to the planning and provision of roads and public transport if they are to be realised.

Council’s draft Hume Integrated Land and Transport Strategy (HILATS) identifies key principles and opportunities for increasing orbital links around Sunbury, increasing public transport provision and improving connections between Sunbury and Metropolitan Melbourne.

The GAFP will need to identify and test different transport solutions to guide how Sunbury is planned and help to build on the work undertaken to prepare HILATS. This should involve at a minimum consideration of:

- The capacity of the Sunbury Road – this road currently carries 26,000 vehicles per day, has significant sections which are undivided with one lane in each direction and experiences heavy congestion, particularly where the road uses the historic Deep Creek bluestone bridge to travel through the Bulla township;
- The timing of the Outer Metropolitan Ring – early delivery provides a significant opportunity to help connect Sunbury to the Hume Corridor and provide the capacity on the Sunbury Road;
- The railway crossings - currently Station Street and Macedon Street provide the only vehicle access across the railway line, which creates congestion at these two points;
- New stations and Transit Orientated Development (TOD) – there are opportunities for new train stations and TODs to the north and south of the town centre;
- Public Transport – the potential routes, coverage and frequency of services need to be determined early;
- Connections to new activity centres – linking new activity centres by a range of modes of transport will be critical and will require detailed investigation of links across Jacksons Creek and other new connections by a range of transport modes;
- Orbital links around the town - Elizabeth Drive was originally intended to act as a ring road through the Sunbury Township, however, at this stage has only extended from Mitchell Lane to Dunrossil Drive;
- The need to upgrade roads into the centre – a number of roads leading into the centre are unlikely to be able to support the significant additional flows anticipated and
- The need for walking and cycling links between the new development areas and Sunbury.

This should be reflected in the objectives and supported by appropriate detail and guidance in the Spatial Strategy (or equivalent) component of the GAFP. Accordingly this will ensure that there is an appropriate level of certainty that the transport network will operate effectively with growth and that sustainable travel is promoted.
Given the existing issues of congestion and the limited capacity in the transport network in Sunbury and on key routes into Sunbury, the GAFP must address in detail the approach to delivery, timing and phasing of the measure to revise the transport network. As outlined in Section 3 this should be undertaken as part of the Delivery Strategy (or equivalent) component of the GAFP and clearly identify for each proposed measure:

- Who is responsible for its delivery and what funding they have to deliver;
- What level of additional development can be supported before the measure needs to be delivered; and
- What contingencies or alternative measures will be introduced as necessary to resolve delays.

Appropriate transport infrastructure will be critical to achieving the role and function for Sunbury. The GAFP must clearly articulate what infrastructure is needed and to link this with the phasing of new development to ensure the transport network will operate effectively with growth.

4.2.9 Open Space

Despite Sunbury’s high landscape amenity, opportunities for public access and enjoyment of the hill tops, creeks and ridges that characterise this landscape are limited. The GAFP has a significant opportunity to address these missed opportunities and deliver high quality passive and active open spaces for new and existing communities within and beyond the growth area boundaries. Council is currently looking at these opportunities for Sunbury building on its Open Space Strategy. The GAFP will need to ensure these opportunities, and Council’s aspirations for them, are planned at the outset.

As well as identifying these opportunities on a spatial plan, Council submits that the Spatial Strategy (or equivalent) component of the GAFP must provide appropriate guidance on their functionality. This will ensure that at the detailed planning stage the range and quality of open space opportunities are not compromised or restricted. This has been in the case in parts of the Hume Corridor and elsewhere, particularly where there has been a requirement for significant conservation. The Delivery Strategy (or equivalent) component of the GAFP must also identify the funding, ownership and delivery mechanisms of these opportunities to ensure that these opportunities are fulfilled and not remain as opportunities.

With regards to active open space, the Hume Open Space Strategy (2010-15) identifies that (compared to the benchmark standards) there is sufficient open space across the area to cater for the long term needs of the current community.

However as new areas are developed, it will be necessary not only to retain the existing open space network, but also to provide new space in developing areas. The quality of open space also requires improvement to ensure that the open space system is well presented, has a high level of amenity and landscape and offers a range of recreation opportunities.

Sunbury has a high landscape amenity and a number of opportunities of passive and active open space. The GAFP should ensure that these are planned at the outset and provide a framework for their delivery.

Figure 2 (page 33) identifies some of the locations and issues and opportunities discussed in the section relating to Sunbury.
Figure 2: Sunbury Growth Area Plan


