



Boroondara Housing Strategy

September 2023



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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Boroondara acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and original custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Introduction

Housing Strategy overview

The Boroondara Housing Strategy identifies how best to accommodate our community's housing needs over the next 15 years.

Council heard through the Boroondara Community Plan consultation that our community wants us to protect our existing heritage and valued neighbourhood character. It is also important to understand and respond to issues around housing diversity, affordability, equity and sustainability.

The Housing Strategy sets out key housing related needs and challenges in Boroondara. It identifies strategic directions and responses to support our community and to work with social housing providers, developers and the State Government to meet the different housing needs of Boroondara – now and into the future.

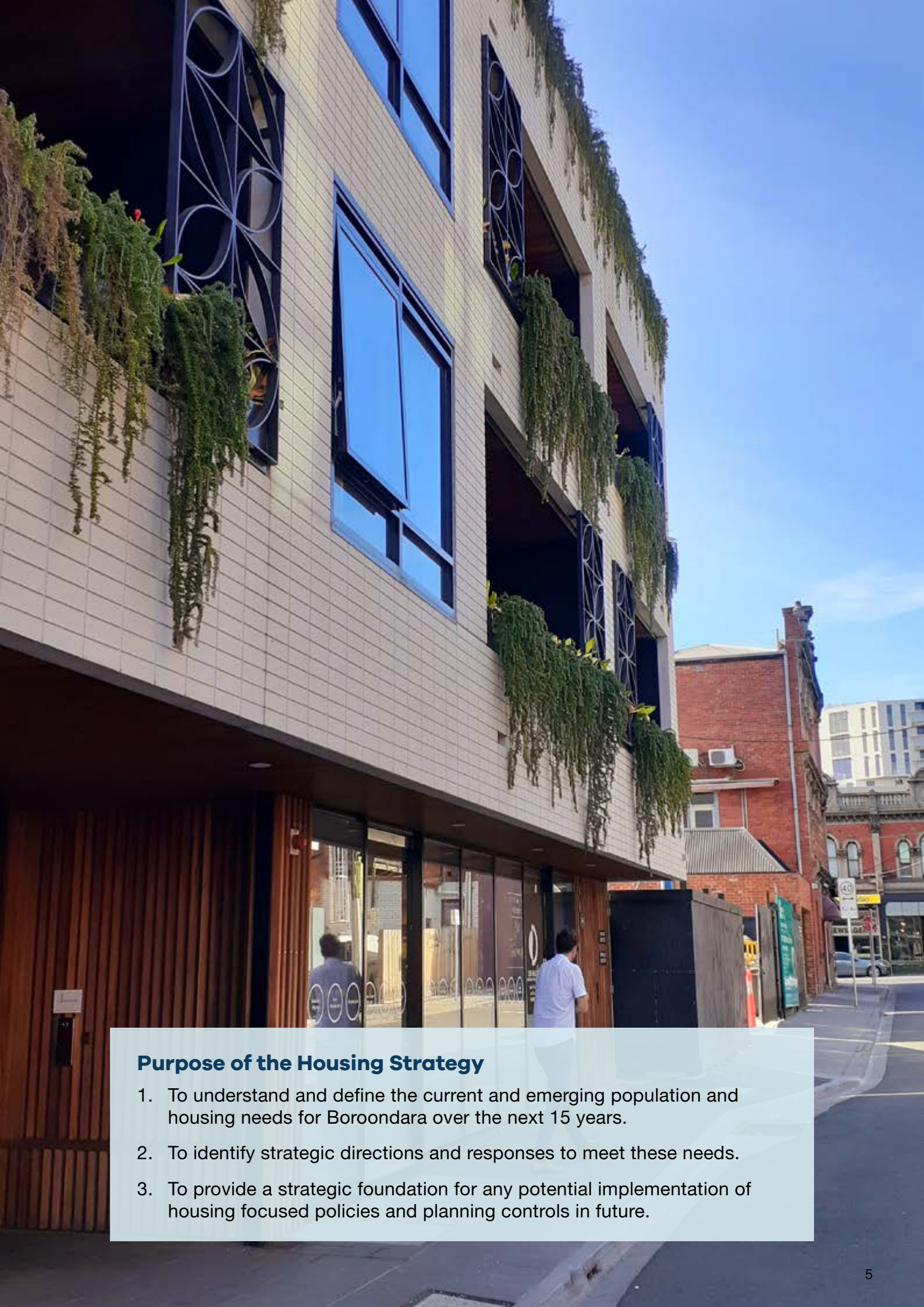
The Victorian State Government's *Planning Practice Note 90 – Planning for Housing* requires a housing strategy to:

- Ensure a range of housing opportunities are available across the municipality to meet the needs of the projected population.
- Outline the strategies and implementation mechanisms to accommodate the projected population and household needs.
- Identify where and how the housing needs of the future population will be met across the municipality.
- Identify suitable locations for housing growth including areas close to services, jobs, public transport (such as activity centres and commercial corridors).

The Housing Strategy is not a tool to control population growth or prevent different types of housing from being developed. It presents an opportunity to guide the provision of housing to appropriate locations, providing appropriate choices for current and future residents, in a sustainable manner.

The release of the Housing Strategy will not result in the immediate rezoning of land or a change in planning policy and controls. It will identify specific areas where Council, within our local government role and sphere of influence, will need to focus more detailed work in a short to medium timeframe.

The Housing Strategy is an adopted Council document that sits alongside other State and local plans and strategies, such as the *Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31*. It is one of Council's key strategic documents and needs to be considered in local policy development and decision making (refer to the appendix for Policy Context).



Purpose of the Housing Strategy

1. To understand and define the current and emerging population and housing needs for Boroondara over the next 15 years.
2. To identify strategic directions and responses to meet these needs.
3. To provide a strategic foundation for any potential implementation of housing focused policies and planning controls in future.

Why is housing important?

Housing is a complex issue with implications for social wellbeing, equality, transport, the economy and the environment. In its simplest form, it is a basic necessity and human right*¹ for all people to live a healthy life.

Housing provides a secure foundation for individuals to live the lives they want.

People want and need different things from housing throughout their lives. It is therefore important to have the right kinds of housing in the right locations allowing people to meet their employment, transport, services and social connection needs.

Housing needs to be suitable for different types of households including those with children, singles, older age, people of all abilities and different incomes. Housing is essential to support vulnerable people to live independently and with dignity.

Housing can also provide financial security. Housing at various price points needs to be available to ensure affordability for a wide range of people. Housing should not be a source of undue financial stress.





What our community values


Boroondara has undertaken extensive engagement activities with the community over the last few years. Most recently, Council updated the *Boroondara Community Plan 2021-31*, which sets out the vision for our municipality based on community values, aspirations and priorities. The Boroondara Community Plan builds on what makes Boroondara a great place to live, work, study and play.

Our community expressed how important it is for all its members, especially those in need, to be considered by Council in our planning, delivery, partnership and advocacy.

Focusing on the demands of today, while exploring the possibilities of tomorrow, is an important balancing act. The way we live, socialise, work, commute and connect will continue to evolve in coming years. We recognise too, the real threat to our environment, to our health and wellbeing, and to the quality of life of current and future generations resulting from climate change. How we approach and respond to these changes will be critically important.

Housing plays a key role in Boroondara's collective identity – it contributes to the look and feel of our streets and neighbourhoods. Council knows that protecting and respecting the character of Boroondara, while facilitating appropriate, well-designed development (that includes diversity in housing size and affordability) matters to our community. We will therefore continue to embrace diversity, foster inclusion, respect heritage, protect the environment and support people to live their best lives.



The background of the page is a photograph of a modern, two-story house with a white facade and dark roof. In the foreground, there is a rustic stone wall and a wooden fence. Lush green and yellow foliage, including climbing plants, are visible. In the background, there are trees with autumn-colored leaves under a clear blue sky.

The community vision as outlined in the *Boroondara Community Plan 2021-2031* is for a ‘sustainable and inclusive community’.

Through consultation on the *Boroondara Community Plan 2021-2031*, our community said:

We value our local heritage. We value Council’s advocacy to protect the distinct character of our neighbourhood streets and carefully regulate new development.

Diversity in housing size and affordability is also important to us.

We value these things because they contribute to Boroondara’s uniqueness and make it an attractive place to live, work and play.

Setting the scene

Boroondara forms part of the inner eastern region around the Melbourne Central Business District (CBD), bordered by the cities of Banyule, Manningham, Whitehorse, Monash, Stonnington and Yarra.

The City enjoys a high degree of accessibility to the surrounding region, particularly in an east/west direction. The municipality is well serviced by public transport and main arterial roads and freeways that pass either through the City or along its borders.

Boroondara has an extensive network of commercial centres comprising three major activity centres (Camberwell Junction, Kew Junction and Glenferrie), 31 neighbourhood centres and four commercial corridors. There are also 15 local centres throughout the municipality.

Boroondara is a custodian of a portion of the Yarra River and its environs, one of the most important riverine environments in Victoria. The Yarra River environs contain most of Boroondara's regional open space and provide a significant landscape feature within the municipality.

Our City is an attractive and highly sought after residential area with a mix of housing types. Set in a green, treed environment, it is known for extremely high levels of amenity.

Residential development is the dominant land use within the City with some of the finest residential streets in Melbourne.

The character of Boroondara is one of the key features that makes Boroondara special. It is derived from both the natural setting and the way our City has developed over time. The inter-war and post-war subdivision patterns are very distinctive. The City is a prime example of the 'Garden Suburb' form of development, highlighting the important contribution of nature strips, trees and private gardens.





Who are we?

Understanding the population and household characteristics of Boroondara provides a good insight into Boroondara's housing role and function, and how it is likely to change in the future.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimates that Boroondara was home to 169,901 residents in 2021². Most live in Boroondara's 72,812 private dwellings³. Boroondara residents also occupy other forms of accommodation including aged care facilities, residential colleges, and rooming houses.

Boroondara's community profile varies across its geography. For example, in Hawthorn, home to Swinburne University and much of Boroondara's higher density housing, around one in four residents are aged in their 20s⁴. In Balwyn North, which is close to several well-regarded schools and where most homes have at least four bedrooms⁵, almost half of households are couples with children⁶, and only one in nine residents is in their 20s⁷.

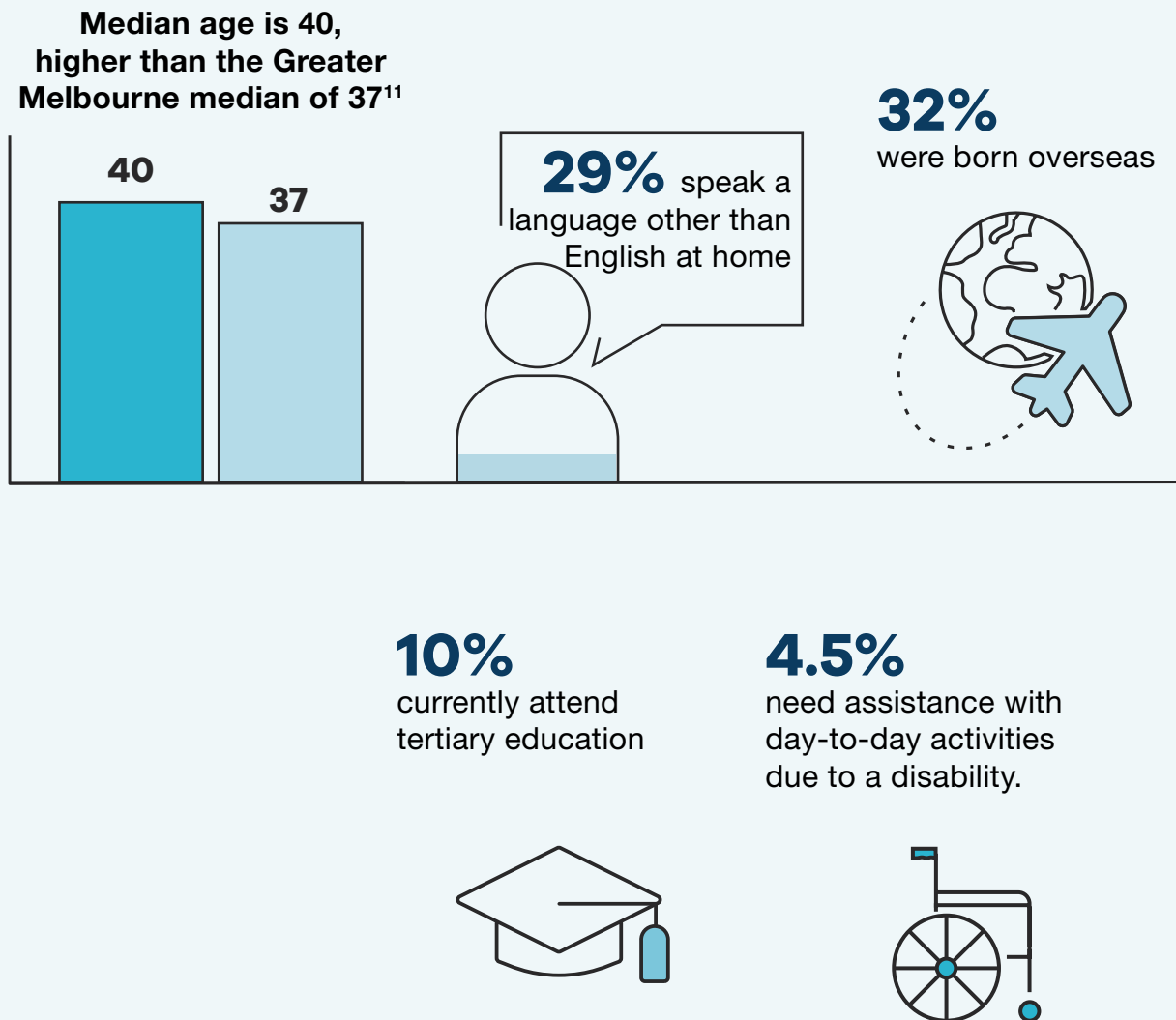
The community is made up of 52% females and 48% males⁸.

In 2021, most of those who work within the City of Boroondara (70%)⁹ lived outside the municipality.



Our residents¹⁰

A snapshot:



Our households^{12, 13}

A snapshot:

24%

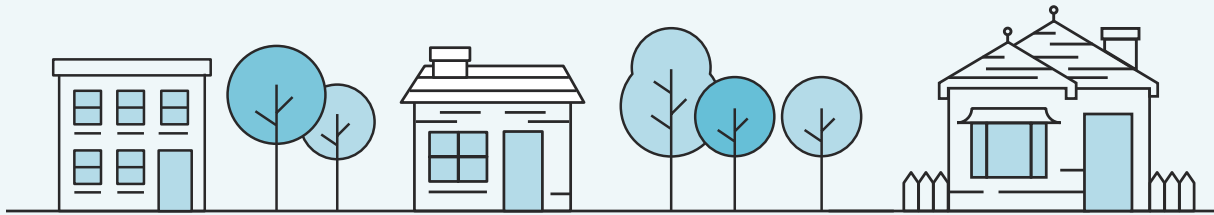
live in a flat or apartment

29%

are renting

35%

live in a dwelling that has four or more bedrooms



26%

are comprised of one person

27%

are comprised of 4 or more people

2%

are of 6 or more people

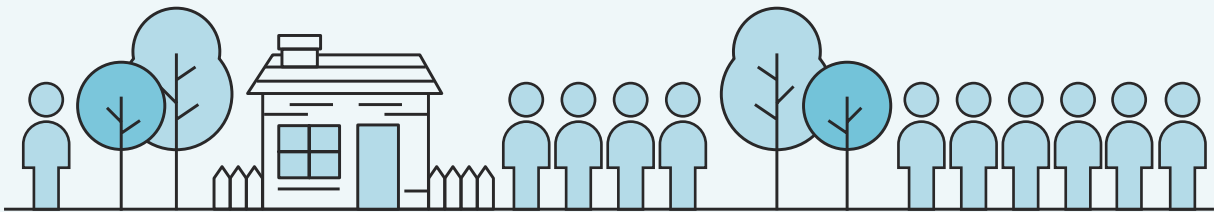
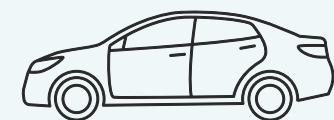


Chart 1: Boroondara households are more likely than households across Greater Melbourne to have a weekly income in excess of \$3000.

1.7%

is the average number of cars per dwelling



Weekly income <\$650

Weekly income >\$3000

12%

15%

41%

27%

Boroondara

Greater Melbourne

Boroondara

Greater Melbourne

How do we live?

With 169,901 residents in 2021, Boroondara is the 11th most populous and the 8th most densely populated of Melbourne's 31 LGAs¹⁴. In 2011, Boroondara was the 5th most populous and 6th most densely populated Melbourne LGA¹⁵.

The number of private¹⁶ dwellings in Boroondara grew 780 per annum on average between 2011 and 2021¹⁷. This is equivalent to a 12% growth over 10 years compared to 26% across Greater Melbourne. Boroondara has an annual growth rate of 1.2% in comparison to Yarra 3.6%, Melbourne 9.4%, Banyule 1%, Manningham 1.7%, Whitehorse 1.6%, Monash 1.6% and Stonnington 2.7%.

At the 2021 Census, 11% of our 72,812 private dwellings were unoccupied. This is a continuation of a gradual upward trend. In 2011, 8% were unoccupied. This is similar to Greater Melbourne, where the proportion of unoccupied dwellings increased from 9% in 2011 to 10% in 2021¹⁸. It is important to note that although some of these unoccupied dwellings are available stock, many would have been only temporarily unoccupied. For example, the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions prevented the arrival/return of residents (including international students) from overseas, residents were temporarily living in second homes elsewhere, while other dwellings may have been waiting for a new owner or tenant to move in, being renovated or awaiting demolition.

Boroondara households had an average size of 2.5 people¹⁹. This continuation of the gradual downward trend in household size has coincided with growth in couple-only and lone person households outpacing growth in family households with children (see Chart 2)²⁰.



Boroondara is the 11th most populous LGA in Melbourne. This is down from 5th in 2011.

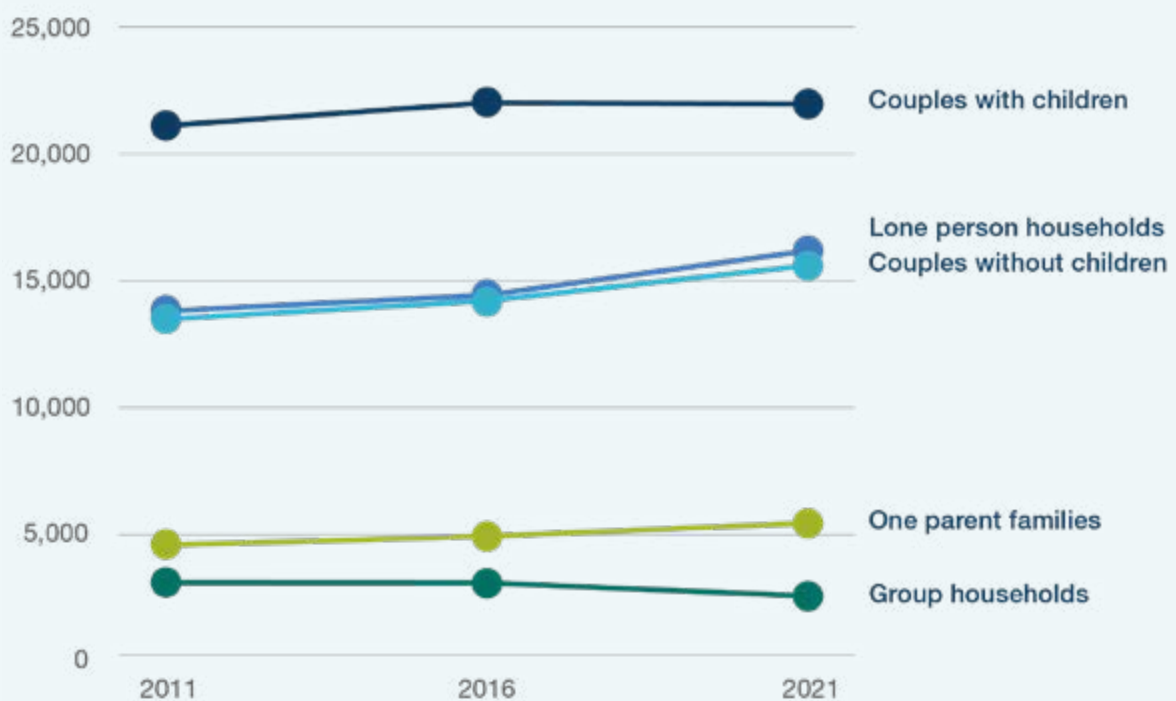


Private dwellings grew in Boroondara at an average of 780 per annum between 2011 and 2021.



The average household size is 2.5 people.

Chart 2: Growth in couple only and lone person household has outpaced growth in couples with children.



Household structure

The makeup of households shapes our understanding of how we live now and identifies patterns to plan for.

The dominant household type in Boroondara is couples with children, making up 34% of all households. However, couples with children may not account for such high proportions of Boroondara households in future. In fact, the number of couples with children in Boroondara was similar at the 2016 and 2021 Censuses, while the overall household count grew²¹.

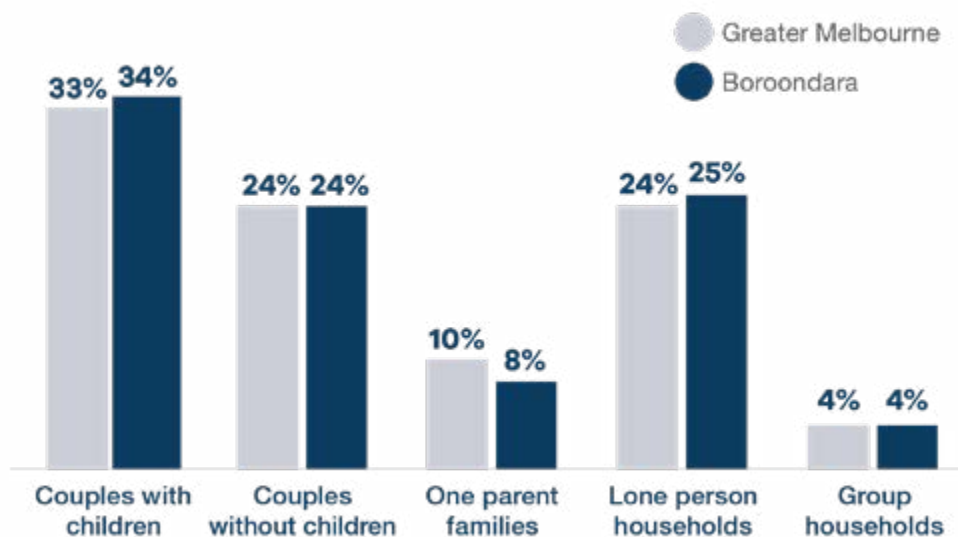
Couples without children and lone person households each increased from 23% of Boroondara households to 24% and 25% of households, respectively, between the 2016 and 2021 Censuses. These household types now account for almost half of all Boroondara households²² (see chart below).

This modest but noteworthy shift toward smaller households suggests potentially changing housing preferences.

Residents aged 65+ are 3.5 times as likely than younger residents to live in couple-only or single households²³. With our ageing trend, this shift will likely continue.

Boroondara's household composition is generally similar to that of Greater Melbourne²⁴ (see chart below).

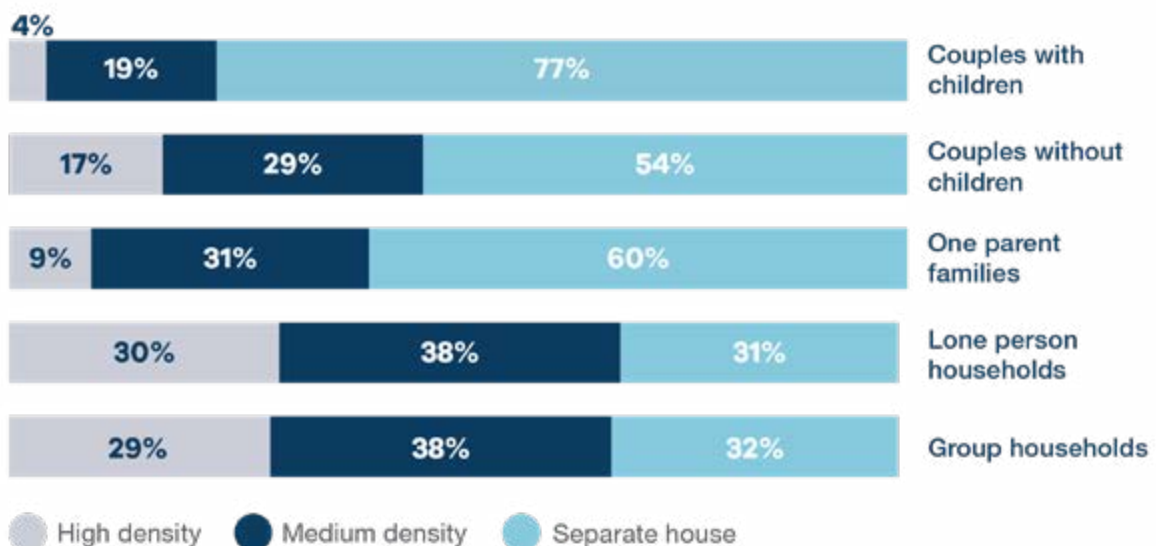
Chart 3: Boroondara has a similar household profile to Greater Melbourne.



A snapshot²⁵ (see chart below):

- Most family households (including couples without children) live in separate/stand-alone houses.
- Lone person and group households have similar occupancy patterns. About one in three live in separate/stand-alone houses and a little less than this live in high density²⁶ settings. The greatest proportion live in medium density²⁷ dwellings.
- A small number (218) of Boroondara households live in houses or flats attached to shops or offices (not shown in the chart). Most of these households are either lone person or group households.

Chart 4: Most households with children live in separate or stand-alone houses.



Types of housing

The dominant dwelling type in Boroondara is separate/standalone house (53% in 2021). The remainder of housing is made up of medium (29%) and high density (18%) housing²⁸ (see chart below).

Net growth in Boroondara since 2011 has been mainly in high-density dwellings²⁹, which tend to have two or fewer bedrooms. Medium density dwellings tend to have two or three bedrooms, and most separate/stand-alone houses have at least four bedrooms³⁰ (see charts below).

Chart 5: Just over half of the dwellings in Boroondara are separate/stand-alone houses.

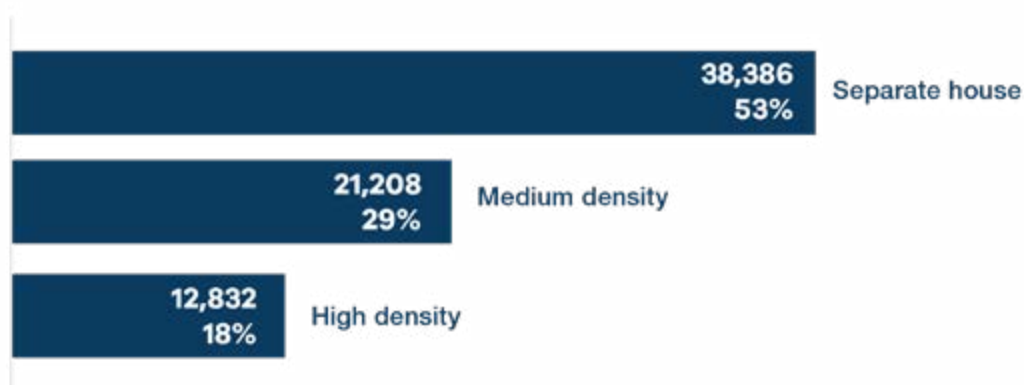
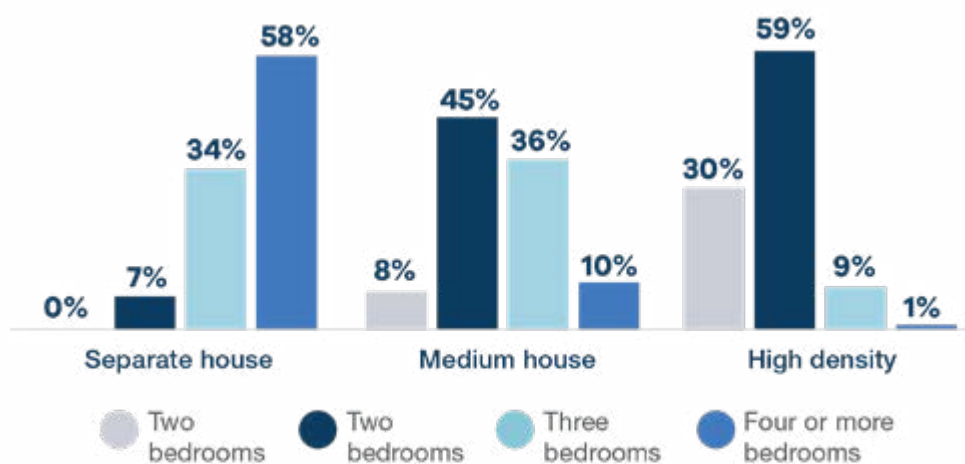


Chart 6: Most separate/stand-alone houses in Boroondara have at least four bedrooms and most high-density dwellings have two bedrooms. Based on private dwellings counted in the 2021 Census, excluding visitor only and non-classifiable.



The COVID 19 pandemic has resulted in significant and wide-ranging impacts on the economy which are likely to disrupt normal patterns of building approvals³¹. For example, the number of new Boroondara dwellings approved in building permits in 2020-21 and 2021-22 were the 2nd and 3rd lowest counts of the past 10 years³². The number of net new Boroondara dwellings approved in planning permits in 2020-21 and 2021-22 were the lowest in at least the past seven years³³. This suggests that actual dwelling growth may slow in the next few years.

Chart 7: The proportion of Boroondara households living in dwellings of four or more bedrooms increased between 2011 and 2021.

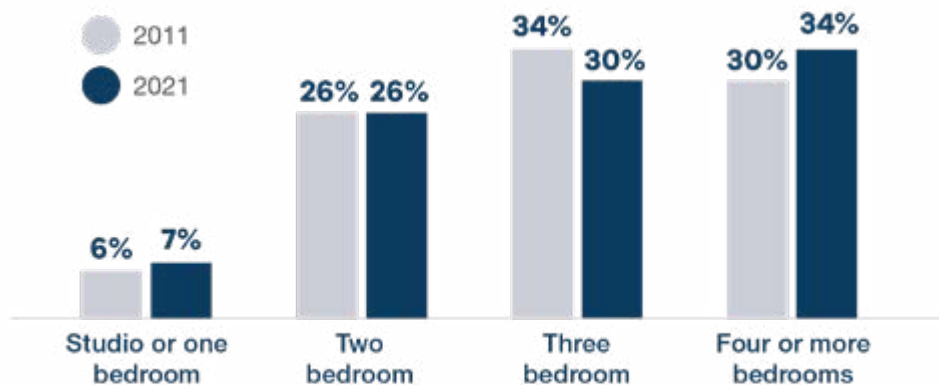
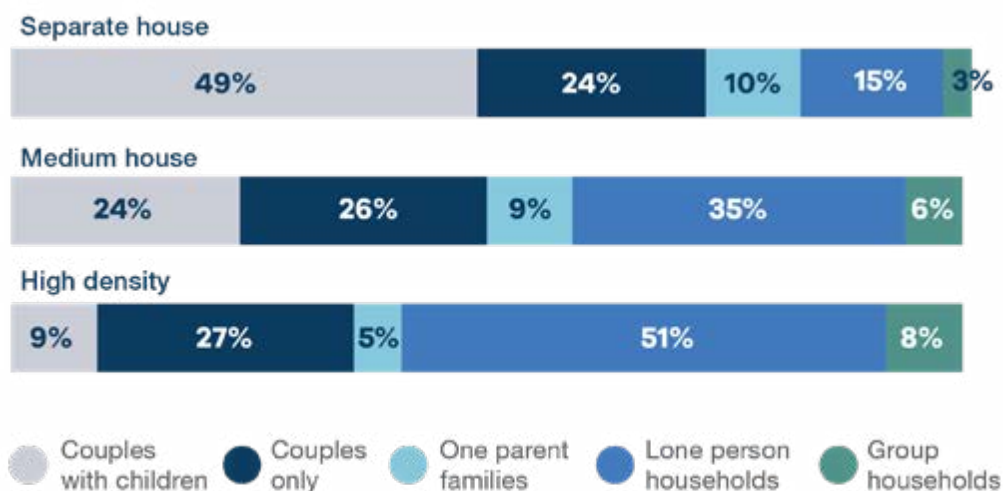


Chart 8: In 2021 most occupied separate houses were occupied by households with children. Most occupied high-density dwellings are occupied by one person.



Patterns of housing development

It is important to understand where and what types of housing development have been occurring within the municipality over a period of time. This helps to interpret what is being sought and delivered by housing policy and the market.

Small scale development

Between 2005 to mid-2022, housing development has been predominantly small-scale and spread fairly evenly across the City.

Small scale development has increased housing diversity in our residential neighbourhoods and provided more housing choice for residents.

Of these developments, approximately 77% delivered 2-3 dwellings (e.g. dual occupancy and townhouse developments). The remaining projects delivered between 4-9 dwellings (e.g. townhouses and low-rise apartments).

Large scale development

Larger scale development has mostly occurred in major Activity Centres, within or close to neighbourhood activity centres, and along main roads that are close to train and tram stops.

These larger developments have played an important role in providing more housing diversity and choice for residents near amenity and services with access to jobs and public transport. Those developments with commercial uses at ground level have contributed to activating streets.

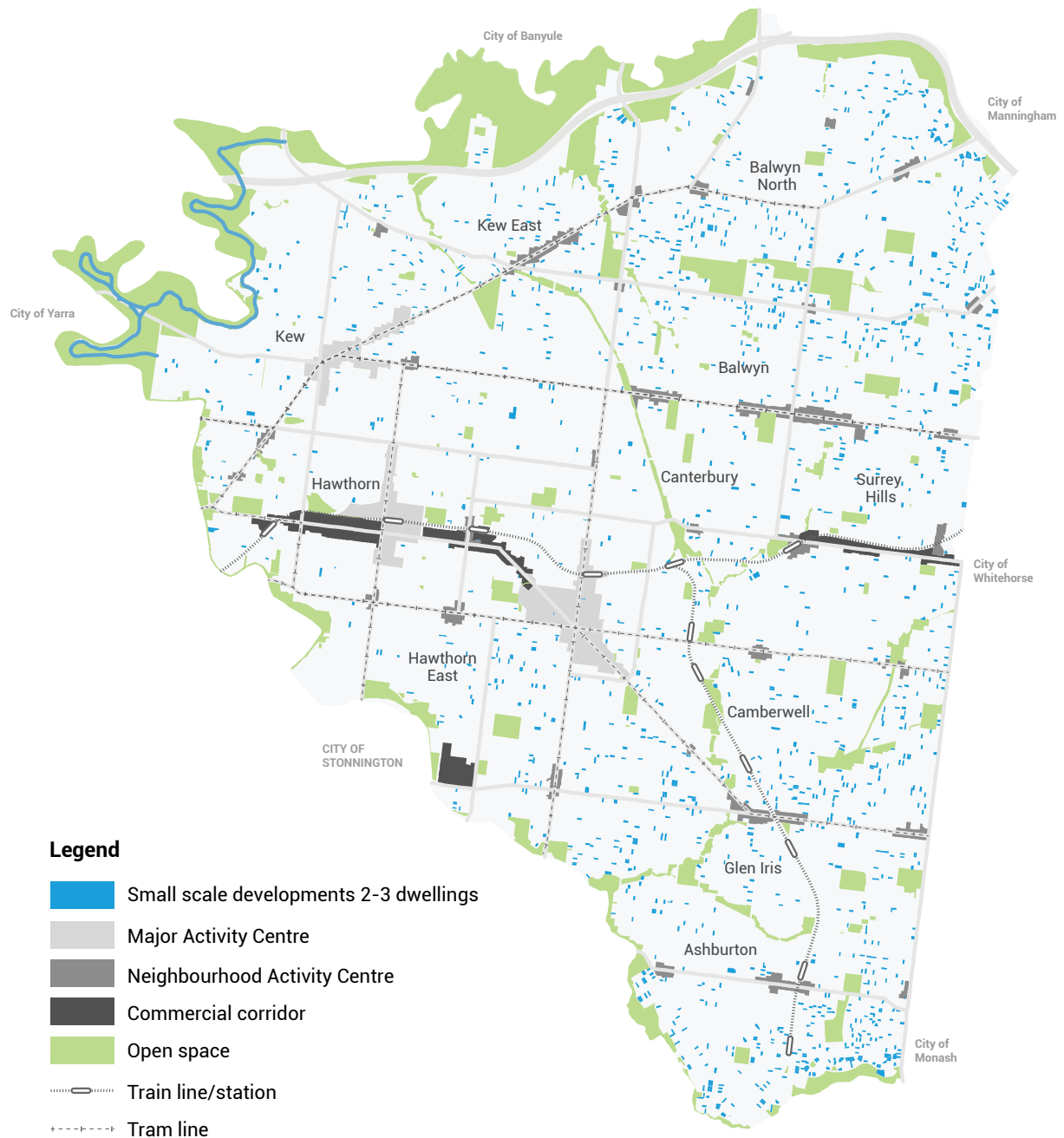
This pattern of development is consistent with the policy position at both state and local level.

It is noted that some developments have occurred more along public transport corridors and main roads where larger sites tend to be easier to develop and provide a greater level of design flexibility.

Typically, residential developments in these areas are in the form of mid-rise apartment buildings.

Image 1: Map showing the distribution of small scale developments with 2-3 dwellings spread fairly evenly across the City.

Source: City of Boroondara, 2022



Note: indicative map only

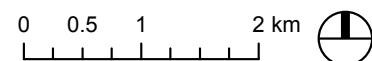


Image 2: Map showing the distribution of small scale developments with 4-9 dwellings spread fairly evenly across the City with less frequency.

Source: City of Boroondara, 2022

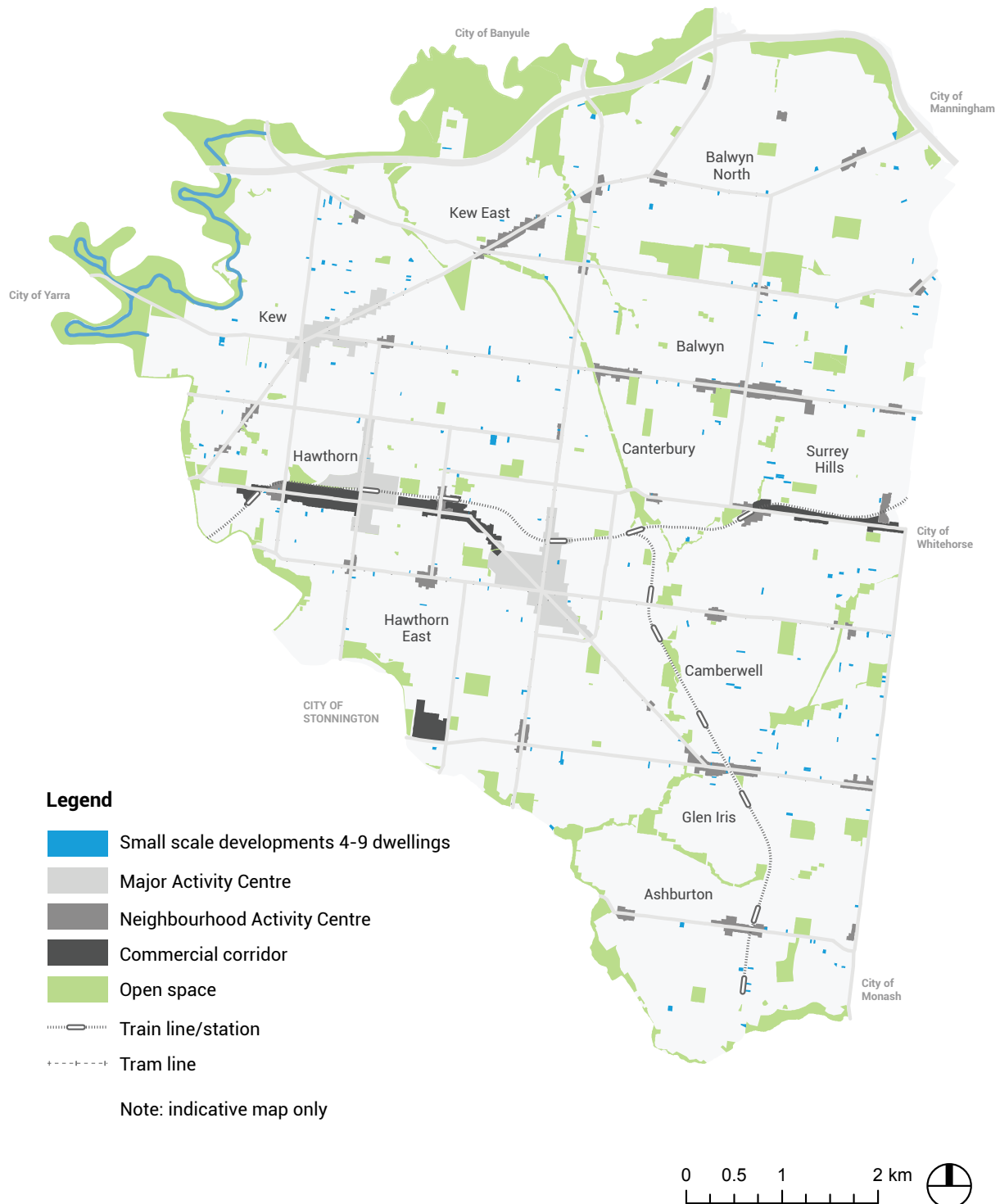
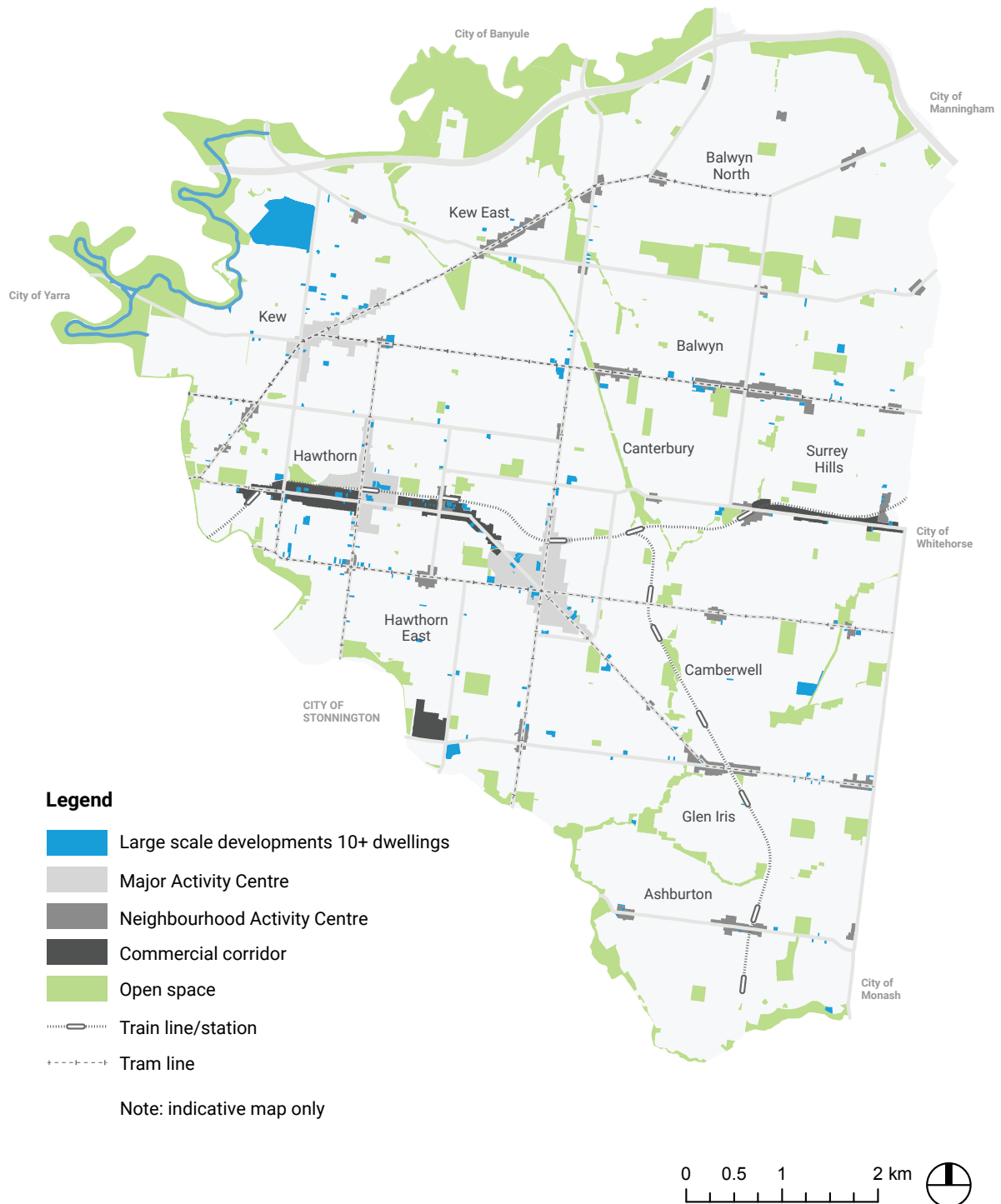


Image 3: Map showing the distribution of larger scale developments with 10+ dwellings mostly occurring in and around major and neighbourhood activity centres and commercial corridors, and public transport lines.

Source: City of Boroondara, 2022



Cost of housing

Of the occupied dwellings in Boroondara in 2021, the majority were either owned outright (38% versus 29% across Greater Melbourne) or had a mortgage (29%), followed by private rentals (27%)³⁴.

In the December quarter of 2021, the median house price in Boroondara ranged from \$2.21M in Hawthorn East to \$3.39M in Canterbury and units were between \$610K in Hawthorn and \$1.3M in Ashburton^{35,36} (see Table 1²⁷). Across Metropolitan Melbourne the median house price was \$950K³⁸.

At the 2021 Census, the median mortgage repayment per month in Boroondara was \$3,000, high relative to \$2,000 across Greater Melbourne, but more consistent with Inner South-East Metropolitan Partnership councils (at between \$2,400 for Glen Eira and \$3,000 for Bayside)³⁹.

Median weekly rents⁴⁰ in Boroondara during the December Quarter of 2021 were higher than the Metropolitan Melbourne median (\$430 weekly compared to \$400) and increases as dwellings increase in size. The median weekly rent for a four-bedroom house in Boroondara costs more than double that of metropolitan Melbourne overall (\$923 compared to \$450)⁴¹.

At the time of writing, increases in rental and mortgage costs have added to housing affordability issues.

At the 2021 Census, Boroondara was ranked 27 out of 31 Greater Melbourne LGAs for the proportion of households in social housing (with rank 1 having the highest proportion of households in social housing). In June 2021 there were 796 social housing dwellings in Boroondara⁴² which represents approximately 1.1% of all Boroondara dwellings. This includes housing managed by not-for-profit housing associations such as Servants Community Housing.

The median house price in Boroondara ranged from \$2.21M in Hawthorn East to \$3.39M in Canterbury.	\$3000 is the median mortgage repayment amount per month in Boroondara.	Only 1.1% of all Boroondara dwellings are social housing.
	27% of dwellings are privately rented.	38% of dwellings are owned outright.

Table 1: Showing the median house and unity prices in Boroondara.

Suburb	Houses (December Quarter 2021 Median)	Units (December Quarter 2021 Median)
Ashburton	\$2,250,000	\$1,325,000
Balwyn	\$2,750,000	\$860,000
Balwyn North	\$2,407,000	\$1,111,500
Camberwell	\$2,650,000	\$884,000
Canterbury	\$3,390,000	\$900,000
Deepdene	\$2,731,500	Not enough sales
Glen Iris	\$2,537,500	\$708,500
Hawthorn	\$2,971,000	\$610,000
Hawthorn East	\$2,210,000	\$665,000
Kew	\$2,580,000	\$940,000
Kew East	Not enough sales	\$1,237,400
Surrey Hills	\$2,525,000	\$901,000

Source: Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (December 2021) 'Property sales statistics' (data set), HOUSE 4th Quarter 2021, accessed 13 July 2022;

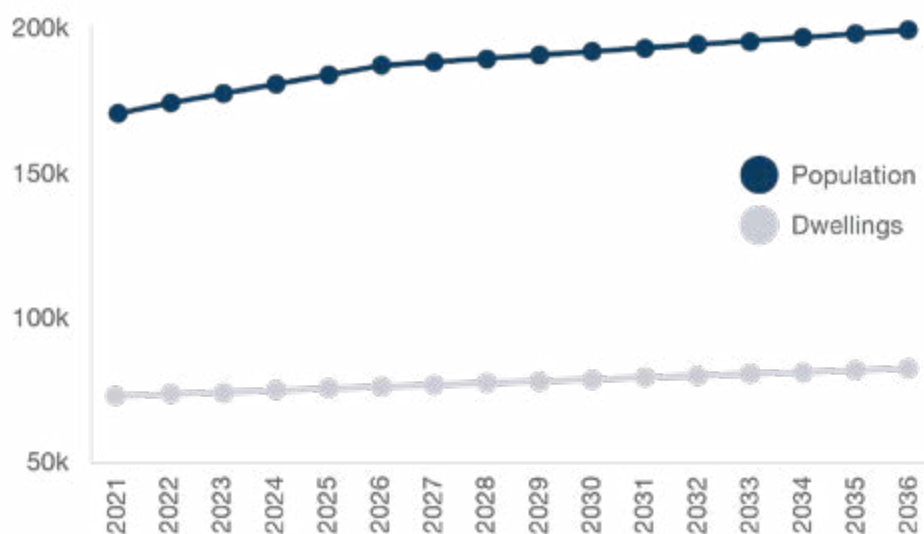
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (December 2021) 'Property sales statistics' (data set), UNITS 4th Quarter 2021, accessed 13 July 2022; Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (December 2021) 'Property sales statistics' (data set), Yearly Summary DecQTB 2021, accessed 13 July 2022.

Population and household projections

Boroondara has experienced steady population growth for most of the past decade. The ABS estimates that Boroondara saw annual increases of between 1300 and 2500 residents every year between 2011 and 2017⁴³. This is an annual growth rate of 1.2%.

Over the next 15 years, Boroondara is forecast to grow by around 28,700 additional residents and 9,400 additional dwellings⁴⁴ to reach a total of approximately 200,000 residents and 80,000 dwellings (see chart below).

Chart 9: Over the next 15 years, Boroondara is forecast to grow to more than 80,000 dwellings and around 200,000 residents in total.



The projected increase in population and dwellings is based on an average household size of 2.4 persons per household (slightly lower than the metropolitan average) with a total of 11,981 additional households. The projected dwelling increase of 9,400 accounts for some of the population growth being accommodated by existing vacant dwellings rather than provision of new dwellings. Boroondara's occupancy rate was lower than usual at the 2021 Census due to restrictions associated with the COVID 19 pandemic. However, this vacancy rate is expected to reduce to normal pre-pandemic levels.

The COVID 19 pandemic slowed population growth across all geographic areas, largely due to less overseas migration. Capital cities are projected to bear the heaviest impacts, with total population across capital cities estimated to be around 5% lower by June 2031 than would have been the case in the absence of COVID 19 pandemic⁴⁵.

This presented the “first overall population decline for the capitals ever recorded by the ABS”, coupled with increased movements to the regions⁴⁶.

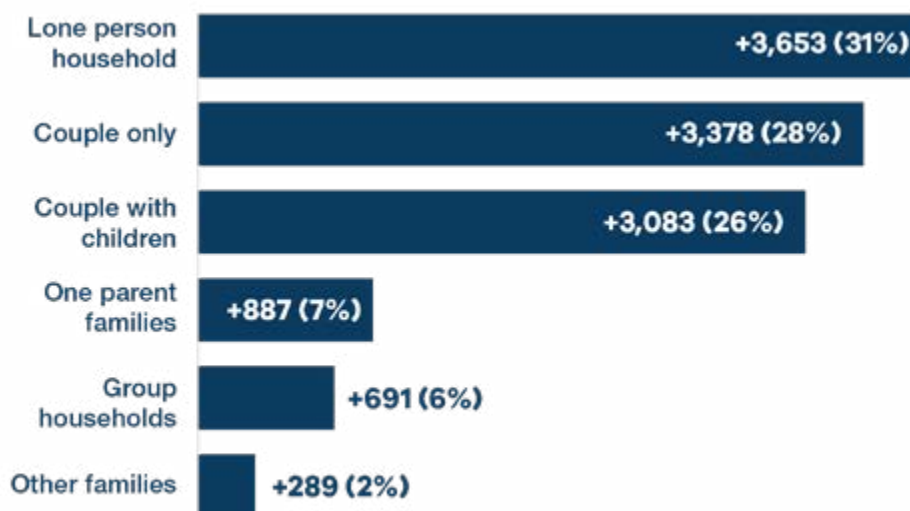
In Boroondara, the pandemic resulted in a population reduction of 5.4% or 9,646 from 2019 to 2021⁴⁷.

This reduction is largely due to the lack of overseas migration which was the key driver for population growth in Boroondara pre-pandemic. Net domestic migration (usually negative) and births/deaths play only minor roles⁴⁸.

Despite the uncertainty the COVID 19 pandemic has introduced, the Federal and State Governments have assumed that migration will return over two-to-three years⁴⁹.

The chart below shows the nature of these forecast changes in terms of forecast additional households⁵⁰.

Chart 10: Forecasts indicate that growth in households of one or two adults (only) between 2021 and 2036 will be greater than growth in households with children and group households.



Boroondara's population in 2021 was 169,901.

Over the next 15 years, Boroondara is forecast to grow by around 28,700 residents and 9,400 dwellings.

Understanding our housing needs and challenges

Melbourne is growing and changing

The State Government's *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* sets the framework for integrating long-term land use, infrastructure and transport planning. It directs how to manage the supply of new housing across the city to meet population growth.

Local housing strategies and policies must be consistent with the state-wide policy directions set by the State Government through *Plan Melbourne*.

Boroondara will need to accommodate an appropriate level of housing growth to meet future demand.

Council must plan for this population growth while balancing other policy objectives set out in the Boroondara Community Plan (such as protection of neighbourhood character and amenity) as well as other plans such as the Climate Action Plan. A strategic and proactive approach will allow Council to better balance these (sometimes) competing objectives and achieve more consistent outcomes.

While Council cannot directly control population growth, it has an important role as the planning authority to plan for its current and future communities' housing needs. If planned well, growth can deliver a range of benefits, such as greater choice of dwellings to accommodate the different stages of life of our residents, economic development and more inclusive and vibrant neighbourhoods. It is also important to consider and respond to how an increase in population can place pressure on infrastructure, such as parks, drainage, schools and childcare, and aged services. Council understands that this requires a balance between the benefits and costs of providing increased amenity and services to people. It is also acknowledged that the City needs a population that is spread across different age and life stages to help keep various services viable and functional.

The Housing Strategy utilises the most up-to-date data to plan for our current and future needs within this context. This data has helped inform the following key housing needs and challenges in Boroondara, which are discussed further in this section.

- Protecting our heritage and character
- Sustainability
- Design excellence
- Housing diversity and choice
- Housing capacity
- Infrastructure capacity
- An ageing population
- Housing affordability
- Social and affordable housing
- Homelessness



Housing sits at the centre of a complex system of society shaping inter-relationships – but in its simplest form, it is a basic necessity for all people to live a healthy life.

Protecting our heritage and character

Home to some of Melbourne's finest suburbs, Boroondara boasts many exceptional heritage streetscapes and residential, commercial, and grand civic buildings. The tree lined streets, gardens and green open spaces are a vital component to the character of our City.

Boroondara protects its heritage by applying the Heritage Overlay to properties of identified heritage significance. The Heritage Overlay is a tool that requires a planning permit to subdivide land, demolish, build or alter a property that has a level of heritage significance.

Over 15,000 properties in Boroondara are covered by a Heritage Overlay. This places Boroondara in the top 3 councils in Victoria in heritage protection.

Residential areas in Boroondara are also divided into 80 Neighbourhood Character Precincts according to their style and common characteristics. This helps new development respond to and respect the character and history of local areas. Each precinct has a Precinct Statement (a background document in the Boroondara Planning Scheme) that sets out the preferred future character. Neighbourhood character is a critical element of Council's consideration of development proposals.

To safeguard the character of Boroondara, the overwhelming majority of our residential areas are within the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (87%). These areas will likely see only limited change in response.

To balance this, the majority of future higher density housing development will continue to be directed to areas that are near public transport, jobs, services and infrastructure such as major activity centres, commercial corridors and along some main roads.

Future change in these areas will be carefully guided by planning policies and by applying suitable zones and overlays. In major activity centres this might include Structure Plans and Design and Development Overlays.

Further work is required to ensure that the Neighbourhood Character Precinct Statements remain effective and up-to-date.



Sustainability

Council knows how important it is to our community to address the increasing threat to our environment and health and wellbeing of current and future generations as a result of our changing climate. Council has developed Boroondara's Climate Action Plan and declared a climate emergency as a response.

Greenhouse gas emissions generated from the construction and operation of buildings is one of the largest contributors to the emergency. Council is leading by example having reduced greenhouse gas emissions from Council-run buildings and services by 80% since 2007-08.

As Boroondara consists of large areas of residential neighbourhoods, housing plays a very important role in creating a more sustainable environment. Improving the energy and water efficiency of new buildings and retrofitting existing ones contributes to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and stormwater pollution. Incorporating sustainable design features and materials into housing will ensure there is greater ability for resilience and adaptation to the changing climate.

With any new housing development, retrofit or addition, there is an expectation that it will contribute to Boroondara's biodiversity and canopy cover. Large trees and landscapes on public and private land help mitigate changing climate and heat island impacts.

Locating new housing close to public transport and cycling infrastructure encourages a more sustainable approach to the movement of people.

To ensure greater accountability for Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) in the development of buildings, Council joined 24 other Councils to seek changes to Victorian Planning Schemes to introduce stronger ESD policy directions.

The State Government has voiced support for a state-wide policy, however, at the time of writing, there is still no dedicated planning policy in the Boroondara Planning Scheme that requires an ESD assessment to be provided as part of a planning application.

Climate change is not only a local issue. It requires a coordinated, consistent and strong policy response across all levels of government. Therefore, it remains Council's position that a state-wide ESD policy is needed. Further work is required in partnership with Council Alliance for Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) to advocate for this.



Design excellence

The design quality of our housing is central to how we live. Good design is a key element in creating housing that is secure, desirable, healthy and safe, enabling people of all ages and abilities to flourish⁵¹.

Council also knows the important role that housing plays in the look and feel of our City. Design excellence is about striving to make a positive contribution to Boroondara and enables people to feel a sense of connection and pride for their neighbourhood.

In 2017 the State Government introduced the Better Apartment Design Standards to all Victorian Planning Schemes to improve the liveability and internal amenity of apartments. In 2021, an update to the Standards focused on the external amenity impacts of apartment buildings. With a significant number of new housing in Boroondara in the form of high and medium density apartments, these Standards are vital in ensuring that apartments make a positive contribution to our neighbourhoods and are safe and healthy places to call home.

A considerable amount of housing in Boroondara is medium density (29%). This includes townhouses or side-by-side housing, and can be found throughout the municipality. Further educational opportunities exist to highlight the benefits of high-quality design.

Universal design supports flexibility, adaptability and the longevity of housing. Developments that incorporate design strategies at the outset – such as level floors, wider doorways and corridors, and accessible kitchen and bathrooms – future proofs our housing. It allows residents of all ages, abilities and in all life stages to use and adapt their housing according to their changing needs⁵². This is an important consideration for Boroondara's ageing population and changing households.

Design excellence is also about high quality construction and efficient use of resources. Housing consumes a lot of energy and water and contributes significantly to our City's climate impacts. This is why it's important for housing to function as efficiently as possible to minimise resource consumption and reduce maintenance and operating costs.

In Boroondara, we highly value our green spaces and large trees. Protecting and adding more large trees should be at the forefront of the design process. Integrating significant tree coverage and vegetation into the design of buildings will aid in off-setting emissions, reducing urban heat, improve air quality and improve visual amenity. Investing in quality landscaping adds value to properties as people place such high importance on it⁵³.

Further educational work is required to reinforce our City's expectations for design excellence so that the highest quality places we want now and those we need for the future are delivered.



Housing diversity and choice

A key *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* objective is to facilitate the provision of a greater diversity and choice of housing to help meet the specific needs of the population.

The community vision in the Boroondara Community Plan is for a sustainable and inclusive City. A diverse range of housing is essential to fulfilling this commitment and enables our people to make choices that cater to different stages of their lives. It allows people to stay in their local community if they so wish – from children to young adults, to families and into old age. This is important to maintain social connections, mental health and wellbeing, and community vitality.

Data shows our household types are changing. An increase in smaller lone person and couple only households combined with an ageing population means smaller and different types of housing will be required.

Council will continue to support the delivery of a diverse range of housing stock through existing housing policies in the Boroondara Planning Scheme.

Further work will be required to investigate whether alternative housing models can help deliver housing diversity and affordable housing options in Boroondara. It should be noted that there are limited legislative tools at present to actively support this type of housing. These models include but are not limited to:

- Rent-to-own – for people who can afford private rented housing and who would like to own their own home, but do not earn enough to save for a deposit.
- Build-to-rent – supported by institutional investors, such as superannuation schemes, wanting to invest in high quality developments that offer a return over the long term.
- Co-housing – semi-communal housing consisting of a group of private homes and shared community space.

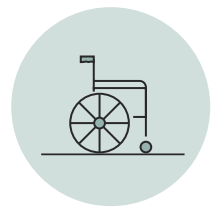
Image 4: Showing a diverse range of people that require housing in Boroondara. The community vision in the Boroondara Community Plan is for a sustainable and inclusive City. A diverse range of housing is essential to fulfilling this commitment and enables our people to make choices to cater to different stages of their lives.



Students and young people



Single parent families



People living with low level of mobility or disability



Older people



Single person households



People with families on low household incomes



First home buyers



Empty nesters



Migrants

Housing capacity

Boroondara will need to ensure there is sufficient capacity to accommodate around 9,400 new dwellings over the next 15 years⁵⁴.

Land use zones provide directions on how land can be used, particularly what uses are permissible. Each zone has a purpose, and its application provides planning certainty of what can occur. This directly influences the availability of land for housing in Boroondara.

There is a significant amount of land (4,734.47 ha) allowing for residential use in Boroondara.

The majority of Boroondara's residential land is in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) [87%], which incorporates largely low-scale residential neighbourhoods with special and intact neighbourhood character and areas of heritage significance. These areas are considered the least suitable for accommodating additional housing and change, however there are opportunities for new low scale infill development depending on site context.

Boroondara has land in other zones that allow for residential development (General Residential Zone, Residential Growth Zone, Commercial 1 Zone and Mixed Use Zone) [see Table 3]. These zones define land use in and around the City's activity centres, commercial areas and along some public transport corridors and main roads. These zones generally allow for medium to high density development and encourage a mix of land uses.

Detailed capacity modelling and analysis has been undertaken by SGS Economics and Planning to understand whether our housing needs are likely to be met under the current policy settings (while also considering the likely rates of uptake by the market) over the next 15 years.

'Capacity' in this context means, theoretically whether enough dwellings and the right mix of dwelling types can be developed under the current zoning and planning controls to meet our projected housing needs.

With capacity for a net increase in dwellings of approximately 65,050 in Boroondara, there is more than adequate capacity under the current policy settings to provide for the 9,400 dwellings likely to be needed.

It can be concluded that Boroondara's current zones can accommodate the anticipated housing need. Focus can then be on ensuring policies and controls guide future housing delivery in appropriate locations, with housing choice, and in a sustainable manner.

Table 2: Breakdown of land in Boroondara that allows for residential uses by zone (excluding land that is not suitable for residential e.g. open space, schools, train lines etc.)

Zone	Area (hectares)	Area (%)	Anticipated outcome
Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)	4122.05 ha	87.06%	Supports minimal change. Considers identified neighbourhood character.
General Residential Zone (GRZ)	392.62 ha	8.29%	Supports moderate change.
Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)	37.64 ha	0.8%	Encourages increased housing density and diversity.
Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z)	167.04 ha	3.35%	Encourages increased housing density and diversity above commercial uses.
Mixed Use Zone (MUZ)	1.94 ha	0.04%	Encourages high density residential within commercial context.
Comprehensive Development Zone (CDZ)	2.53 ha	0.05%	May allow for residential uses but plays only a marginal role in provision of housing in the municipality.
Priority Development Zone (PDZ)	10.65 ha	0.22%	May allow for residential uses but plays only a marginal role in provision of housing in the municipality.

Infrastructure capacity

The delivery of housing in Boroondara must also be considered in conjunction with the capacity and functionality of community and physical infrastructure.

Planning for community infrastructure – the buildings and spaces that provide services, activities and amenity such as libraries, community health centres and pre-schools – and physical infrastructure such as drainage, is integral to ensure high-quality outcomes that meet the needs of existing and future communities.

The *Boroondara Community Plan 2021–31* sets out key strategies to ensure the delivery of community services and facilities that are adaptable to meet the changing needs and expectations of our community.

The *Boroondara Asset Plan 2022-23 to 2032-33* identifies key issues and responses for physical infrastructure provision and maintenance.

Council will need to continue to plan for and manage local infrastructure and request the State Government to provide new and upgraded key infrastructure in the municipality, such as schools, public transport facilities, arterial roads and Melbourne Water managed drainage and sewage systems.

An ageing population

Boroondara's population continues its ageing trend with an increase in people over the age of 65 (15% of the population in 2011, and 18% in 2021)⁵⁵.

Many older people live in homes that may no longer be suitable as their life circumstances have changed, such as death of a partner, health issues, desire for a lifestyle change or financial factors. Often older people can be asset rich (owning a home) but income poor (living on savings, superannuation and age pension).

At the 2021 Census, 81% of Boroondara residents aged 65 and over were living in a dwelling classified by the ABS as having at least one 'spare' bedroom⁵⁶.

The Federal Government actively encourages older people to downsize. People aged 60 and over can make a large contribution to their superannuation fund from the proceeds of selling their family home. The purpose of this measure is to encourage people to downsize into housing that is more suitable to their needs. This in turn frees up larger homes to accommodate families.

This policy response is based on the assumption that where the number of bedrooms exceeds the number of permanent residents, dwellings are not being fully utilised.

However, downsizing is about more than just reducing the underutilisation of houses. Research shows that residents looking to downsize want more manageable internal and external space while maintaining sufficient size⁵⁷.

The primary reasons for older people to downsize were: lifestyle (27%) and financial (27%) reasons, the garden or property requiring too much maintenance (18%) or being 'forced' to move (15%)⁵⁸. Often due to a lack of choice in appropriate housing, people must move away from their local community, increasing social isolation and distance from established networks.

There is also an increasing older age cohort. These ‘young olds’ do not need immediate medical care or access to retirement services. Instead, they reframe the idea of elderly people as conservative, immobile or needing concentrated care, and embrace living active lives for 20-plus years after retirement⁵⁹.

Due to housing affordability issues, more households will be forced to rent into retirement. Accordingly, there will be an increasing need for secure, stable, affordable and appropriate housing options in the social and private rental sectors to accommodate this cohort in years to come.

As Boroondara’s population continues its ageing trend, there will be many housing challenges that require a policy response. Some of those will be outside Council’s role. Where Council can play a role, it needs to ensure that our residents have the opportunity to age in place. Provision of a diverse range of housing at various price points is critical in achieving this outcome and ensure our residents remain connected to the local community they have lived in for many years.



Housing affordability

Boroondara is a very desirable place to live. The strong demand to reside here has resulted in continued house price growth and high land values.

As purchasing housing in Boroondara is significantly higher compared to the Melbourne Metro. While renting is more viable than purchasing a home, it is cost prohibitive for many households, particularly those consisting of young people and students.

Some households are paying housing costs which exceed the affordability benchmark of 30% of household income, with serious impacts on residents and the City's health, diversity, and vibrancy.

Housing prices in Boroondara have far outpaced local incomes leaving many households behind. Between 2006 and 2021, the median price of a house in Boroondara has increased by 215%. Median household incomes have only increased by 57% over the same period⁶⁰.

To maintain Boroondara's social and economic resilience, greater housing affordability is important. Council acknowledges this need and will continue to support the delivery of housing diversity within the municipality through planning policy. However, responding to housing affordability extends beyond Boroondara and urgent policy intervention is required at the State and Federal Government levels to influence the market.

At the 2016 Census, Boroondara was ranked 4th of Melbourne LGAs for having a low proportion of key workers relative to the labour force. This is indicative of low housing affordability.

Between 2006 and 2021, the median price of a house in Boroondara has increased by 215%. Median household incomes have only increased by 57% over the same period.



Social and affordable housing

Another key objective of *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050* is to increase the supply of social and affordable housing.

The Planning and Environment Act 1987 defines affordable housing as ‘housing, including social housing that is appropriate for the needs of very low, low and moderate income households’ (refer to table below for the annual income range).

Table 3: Annual household income ranges – eligibility for affordable housing (excluding social housing)

Household type	Very low income range (annual)	Low income range (annual)	Moderate income range (annual)
Single adult	Up to \$26,680	\$26,681 to \$42,680	\$42,681 to \$64,020
Couple, no dependant	Up to \$40,010	\$40,010 to \$64,030	\$64,031 to \$96,030
Family (with one or two parents) and dependent children	Up to \$56,010	\$56,011 to \$89,630	\$89,631 to \$134,450

As discussed earlier in the Strategy, housing in Boroondara is significantly higher compared to the Metropolitan Melbourne. Median weekly rents in Boroondara for all dwelling types are higher and increase as dwellings increase in size.

Housing options delivered as ‘affordable housing’ in Boroondara (typically at a 20 per cent discount to market rent) are therefore not affordable to very low to moderate income earners in our City.

The Department of Families, Fairness and Housing defines low-income households as those receiving Centrelink incomes. In Boroondara, only 37 (1.5%) dwellings made available for rent in the private rental market in the March quarter of 2022 were affordable for households receiving a Centrelink payment⁶¹.

There are four types of households in critical need of housing: key workers, single older women, people escaping domestic and family violence and people with disability

Key workers

Around 10%⁶² of employed persons living in Boroondara are employed in key worker⁶³ occupations.

Key workers are people who work in essential industries such as teachers, healthcare and emergency workers and are considered important to the proper functioning of the City. Many receive low to moderate incomes – indicated in Table 2 – and so rely on low and moderate income housing. The growing housing affordability crisis means they are increasingly unable to afford housing close to their work. Equally they are generally ineligible for public housing⁶⁴.

Proximity to work is particularly important in healthcare, emergency services and some community and welfare support roles to allow workers to cover shifts, quickly respond to increases in service demand and attend emergency situations⁶⁵.

Key workers make a significant contribution to our local economy and community. Without intervention to increase housing supply for key workers, Boroondara will face challenges attracting and retaining key workers. This is particularly pertinent given Boroondara's ageing population and future need for more healthcare workers.



Single older women

The Parliament of Victoria's *Inquiry into homelessness in Victoria (March 2021)*, found single older women are a fast-growing cohort experiencing homelessness. There is generally an underreporting of this and therefore numbers are likely to be higher.

Research undertaken by Council and Monash University (2010-2012) identified a range of factors contributing to this in Boroondara such as low or no income, lack of superannuation, and the high cost of private rental and homeownership. These women are also disadvantaged by a retirement system predicated on home ownership⁶⁶. Single older women, especially low income women or women dependant on pensions, are often forced to move out of their local community due to unaffordable housing, isolating them from their family, social, health and geographical networks.

People escaping domestic and family violence

The Royal Commission into Family Violence (2016) heard consistent evidence about the central role access to secure housing plays for people trying to escape domestic and family violence⁶⁷. The evidence showed that housing pathways are 'blocked up' and not flowing as intended. Significantly, a lack of viable long-term housing options prevents people from escaping the system and establishing new lives. In 2019–20, 35% (40,021 clients) of all clients seeking specialist homelessness services in Victoria cited 'family and domestic violence' as their main reason for seeking assistance⁶⁸. Police recorded 966 family violence incidents in Boroondara during the year ending March 2022. Family violence often goes unreported⁶⁹, so the actual number of family violence events may be higher.

People with disability

Some people with disability receive the Disability Support Pension as their main source of income, which may put some housing options out of reach⁷⁰. In Boroondara, almost 2,000 residents received a Disability Support Pension in June 2021⁷¹. Data suggests that some people with disability struggle to find affordable housing and are vulnerable to housing or rental stress. The availability of affordable, sustainable and appropriate housing helps people with disability to participate in the social, economic and community aspects of everyday life⁷².

It should be noted there are other types of households also in critical need of housing such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples. As noted in the *Boroondara Reconciliation Strategy 2022-2026*, Council recognises there is a significant gap between the health status of Victoria's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and the non-Aboriginal population. Although there have been some improvements, many areas such as housing, require urgent action to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians.

Within the current planning legislative framework, local government can provide for more housing for very low, low and moderate income households by:

- entering into a voluntary agreement with a planning permit applicant, under section 173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, for the provision of affordable housing as part of a proposed development;
- advocating for policy and legislative changes to the State Government; and,
- facilitating partnerships between developers and affordable housing associations/providers.

Further work is required to understand if these planning tools are adequate policy responses to address the need for affordable housing in Boroondara for the vulnerable groups discussed. It is acknowledged that increasing the provision of affordable (and social) housing is the responsibility of State and Federal Governments and Council has and will continue to advocate to both levels of government on this matter.

What is the difference between affordable, social, public and community housing?

There is often confusion around what each of these mean – here are some definitions for clarity.

Affordable housing is a broad term describing housing suitable for the needs of a range of very low, low and moderate income households (whether bought or rented) so these households can meet their other essential living costs.

Social housing is an umbrella term that includes both public housing and community housing. It generally indicates housing that involves some degree of subsidy.

Public housing is housing owned and managed by Homes Victoria. The State Government provides public housing to eligible Victorians including people who are unemployed, on low incomes, live with disability or a mental illness, who are at risk of homelessness.

Community housing is housing owned or managed by community housing providers. The community housing sector and government work in partnership to deliver more housing to more Victorians who need support. Community housing providers are highly regulated, not-for-profit organisations that specialise in housing the diverse range of tenants that require both public and affordable homes. Because of their not-for-profit structure they can deliver services cost effectively and to a high standard.

The State Government's **Big Build** project will provide around 213 social and 170 affordable housing dwellings at its Markham and Bills Street redevelopment sites.

At the time of writing, there remains approximately 2,500 people waiting for social housing on the Victorian Housing Register and transfer list for the Box Hill Regional Office (covering Boroondara, Whitehorse and Manningham).

Homelessness

Homelessness comes in many forms from couch surfing to sleeping rough (e.g. on streets, in cars or improvised shelters).

People can become homeless through no fault of their own, due to a variety of complex and often interrelated risk factors. The COVID 19 pandemic has only exacerbated the situation. Risk factors include loss of employment, family violence, lack of affordable housing, alcohol and other drug dependency, being recently released from prison, mental illness, financial difficulty and family breakdown.

The various risks are compounded by rising rents in the private market and an inadequate supply of social housing stock. The nature of risk factors also means it is often difficult for a person to break the cycle of homelessness once they become homeless.

Council plays several roles in relation to social housing and homelessness including:

- advocacy on the provision of social housing
- advocacy for funding for homelessness services to provide assertive outreach
- providing staff with a framework for responding to reports of homelessness as outlined in Council's Homelessness Protocol
- providing grants to organisations supporting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Increasing the provision of social housing is important to addressing homelessness. Council does not offer financial subsidies or assets for the development of social housing. That is the responsibility of State and Federal Governments. Council has and will continue to advocate to both levels of government to increase and improve social housing stock in Boroondara (on State Government or private land owned and/or managed by not-for-profit housing associations).

Homelessness is a growing national problem and the increase in homelessness is being seen in Boroondara. The number of people in Boroondara who were homeless on Census night increased from 383 in 2011 to 426 in 2016.

Source: ABS (2018)

Housing strategic directions

The community vision as outlined in the *Boroondara Community Plan 2021-2031* is for a 'sustainable and inclusive community'.

With this in mind, three strategic directions articulate Boroondara's approach to planning for future housing provision in response to the unique context of Boroondara.

These strategic directions have been informed by data analysis and research, *State Government Planning Practice Note 90: Planning for Housing and community aspirations*.

Each strategic direction includes desired outcomes, responses and actions that outline how Council will aim to achieve the identified strategic directions. This is supported by a Housing Framework Plan (Image 5).

The strategic directions are:

1. **Housing diversity in appropriate locations**
2. **Housing that is sustainable and achieves design excellence**
3. **Housing that meets the needs of all residents now and in the future.**



Strategic direction 1: Housing diversity in appropriate locations

Providing a diverse range of housing (in terms of typologies, size and cost) allows a variety of people to live in Boroondara and contributes to a vital community.

Council knows that protecting and respecting the character of Boroondara, while facilitating appropriate, well-designed development (that includes diversity in housing size and affordability) matters to our community.

Housing capacity analysis shows there is adequate capacity to accommodate projected future housing in Boroondara. However, it needs to be guided to appropriate locations. This means most of our future housing development will continue to be directed towards areas that are well located in relation to existing infrastructure, jobs, services and public transport such as major activity centres, commercial corridors and along some main roads (as shown on the Framework Plan as high and moderate change areas). These areas have also been identified as being able to absorb some change in character.

In response to our City's unique heritage and character including the importance of green spaces and trees, many areas of Boroondara will likely see only minimal change.

Structure Plans will play a key role in determining the most appropriate way in accommodating opportunities for future housing and employment growth in our Activity Centres.

Desired outcomes:

- The majority of new housing, particularly higher density housing, is located in activity centres, commercial and public transport corridors and along some main roads.
- A diverse range of housing types are delivered.
- New housing is respectful of the City's unique character.
- New housing located within activity centres and commercial areas does not displace commercial uses.
- New developments align with preferred character outcomes and design guidelines in the Neighbourhood Character Precinct Statements.
- Appropriate infrastructure assets are planned for and are in place to accommodate future housing development, including new housing developments contributing to required upgrades of infrastructure to meet additional demands.



To achieve this, Council will:

1. Investigate the most appropriate housing outcomes in General Residential Zone 5 (GRZ5).
2. Review the Neighbourhood Character Policy (including Precinct Statements) to ensure policy directions are delivering housing that respects and enhances the preferred character.
3. Complete the Camberwell Junction Structure and Place Plan and include it as part of the Boroondara Planning Scheme.
4. Review our Neighbourhood and Local Shopping Centres network to understand their economic role and what role they may play in future housing provision.
5. Monitor population and dwelling forecasts, particularly having regard to the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on population and housing needs and prepare an interim report within 2 years.
6. Investigate enhancing internal processes for development data collection.
7. Ensure Council-controlled assets and infrastructure are in place to meet future population and housing needs such as local roads and drainage, libraries and open space.
8. Request the State Government to provide new and upgraded key infrastructure in the municipality such as schools, public transport, roads, bike paths, regional open space such as Yarra River corridor and Gardiners Creek and Melbourne Water managed drainage and sewage systems, particularly in and around future high change housing areas.
9. Prepare a Planning Scheme Amendment to:
 - include the Boroondara Housing Strategy as a background document in the Planning Scheme
 - update local policy in accordance with the Housing Framework Plan, the strategic directions and desired outcomes of the Housing Strategy.

Housing Framework Plan

The Housing Framework Plan provides the overarching strategic direction on residential development throughout Boroondara. It is based on three change areas – low, moderate and high – which are discussed in more detail on the following pages.

Irrespective of a site's location in any of the three change areas, a contextual assessment of any housing development will be required. This assessment will need to consider any site-specific constraints or attributes.

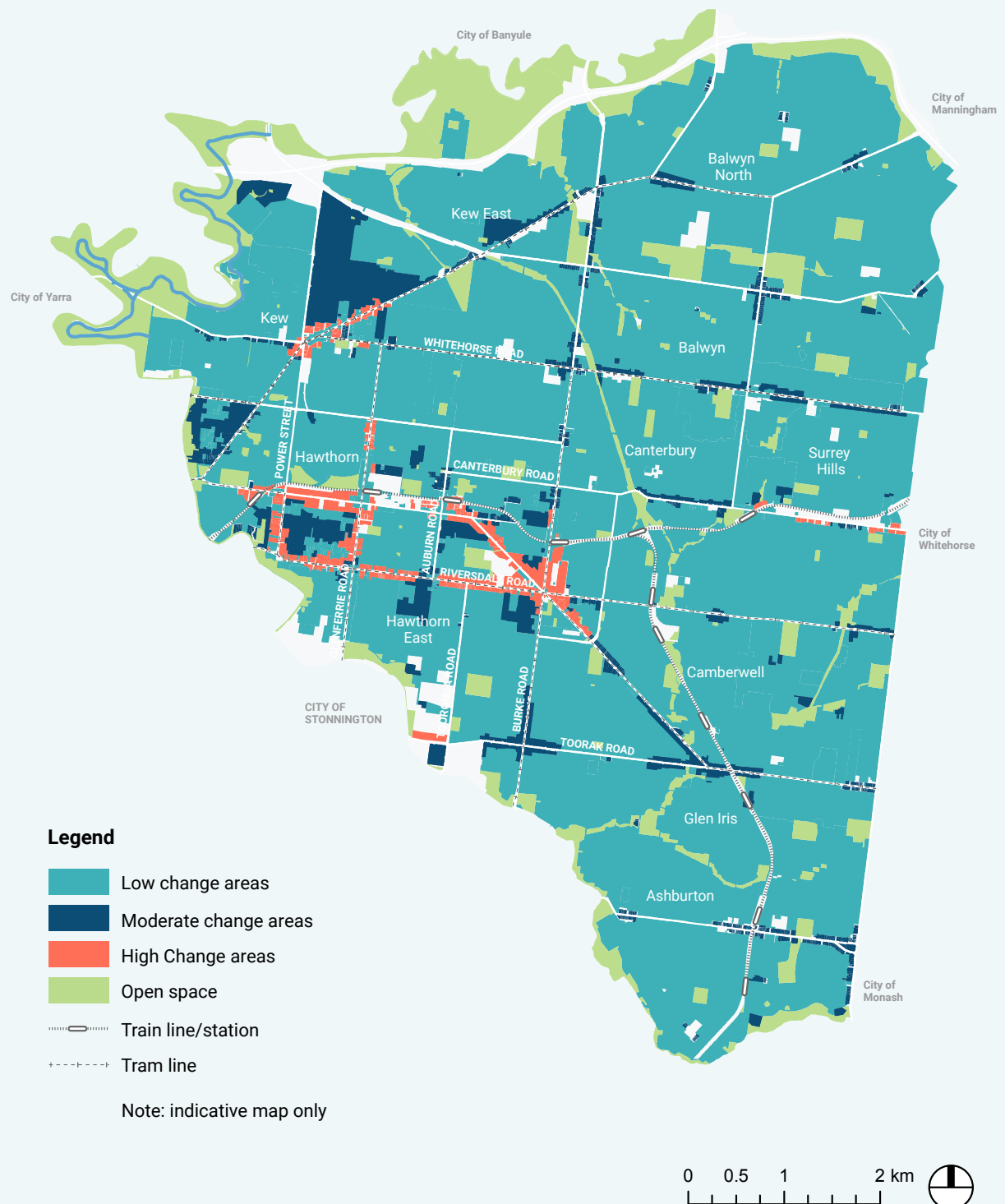
The change areas are indicative only and do not provide the strategic basis for planning zones.

The zones (including relevant schedules) determine the level of change in an area and are further refined by planning overlays to reflect the local conditions. Commercial zones will play an important role in the provision of future housing.

Detailed capacity modelling and analysis undertaken by SGS Economics and Planning indicates there is more than adequate capacity under the current policy settings to provide for the 9,400 dwellings likely to be needed over the next 15 years. Therefore, Boroondara's current zones can accommodate the anticipated housing need.



Image 4: Housing Framework Plan. Shows distribution of low, moderate and high changes areas across Boroondara. Note: Indicative map only. Development outcomes will depend on any site specific controls, constraints and attributes and contextual assessment.



Low change areas

Low change areas are generally within established residential locations that have limited capacity to accommodate significant future housing change over time. These areas often have a strong and consistent character, have significant established and important tree coverage and many areas are protected through Heritage Overlays. New housing in these low change areas will need to respect the type, scale, and prevailing character of the area. It is expected that infill development of one or two dwellings on typically small individual lots (including alterations and additions to existing dwellings) that is respectful of existing character will continue. Areas of low change apply to around 72% of the municipality⁷³. It is acknowledged that often infill development of one dwelling on a lot does not require planning approval and this can have issues around respecting prevailing character.

Moderate change areas

Moderate change areas have the capacity to accommodate a more modest level of housing and are generally within or close to activity, neighbourhood and commercial centres, education and public transportation. These areas often already have a mixed character that allows them to absorb additional housing development. It is expected that enhancement will gradually evolve over time as development of one, two or more dwellings on individual lots (including smaller scale apartment developments and additions to existing dwellings). Areas of moderate change apply to around 7% of the municipality⁷⁴.

High change areas

High change areas support additional housing provision and diversity at increased densities. These areas have strong mixed use and commercial character that can absorb housing change as well as access to existing services, public transport, amenity and infrastructure. Locations include Glenferrie/Hawthorn, Kew and Camberwell major activity centres, commercial corridors such as Camberwell Road and along sections of major transport corridors such as Riversdale Road, Glenferrie Road, and Power Street. It is expected that housing diversity will occur through mixed use, infill and apartment development. Areas of high change apply to around 2% of the municipality⁷⁵.

Strategic direction 2: Housing that is sustainable and achieves design excellence

Council understands that environmental sustainability is an important issue for our community and changes need to be made by all. Improving our housing stock to be more energy efficient through Environmentally Sustainable Design, adaptive reuse of existing buildings and energy retrofits to existing housing is a vital component in response to the increasing threat of the changing climate.

Providing and retaining significant tree coverage and vegetation is a key priority in creating a cool, green City and must be considered in conjunction with housing delivery.

Investment in good design generates social and economic value in the form of improved health and wellbeing, greater sense of community and safety, enhanced property values, improved environmental performance and reduced energy costs⁷⁶.

There is an opportunity for Council to investigate new policy to improve medium density design outcomes in our residential areas and strengthen existing design policies in the Boroondara Planning Scheme. This includes reinforcing our City's expectations for design excellence so that the highest quality places are delivered consistently.

Key to delivering design excellence is incorporating universal design principles early in the design process. This means housing is designed and built to be safe, easy to live in and adaptable to the changing needs of occupants across their lifetime, particularly people with disability or temporary injuries, the elderly and families with young children⁷⁷.

Desired outcomes:

- Housing that incorporates or retrofits ESD measures to assist in reducing the environmental footprint of development.
- Design and construction of dwellings and residential buildings retains and enhances canopy tree coverage, vegetation and landscaping.
- Innovative, high-quality urban architectural and landscape design that enhances the appearance and strengthens identity of the City.
- Housing that incorporates universal design principles to allow for flexibility and adaptability to meet the diverse range of needs of people today and in the future.



To achieve this, Council will:

1. Continue to progress a joint-Council planning scheme amendment to introduce new Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) provision into respective planning schemes.
2. Continue to advocate to the State Government for the introduction of a state-wide ESD policy into the Victoria Planning Provisions.
3. Continue to play an active role in the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE).
4. Investigate implementing an educational program to encourage and enable energy retrofits to improve energy efficiency of Boroondara's older homes and buildings.
5. Review and update existing local planning scheme policies to enable ESD upgrades while respecting the heritage or character-defining elements.
6. Continue to apply Council's existing tree protection controls and investigate opportunities to strengthen local policy through a Tree Canopy Strategy and new or existing controls within the Boroondara Planning Scheme.
7. Continue to advocate to the State Government for metropolitan wide tree controls and changes to building regulations to improve tree protection and canopy cover on private property.
8. Investigate strengthening local policy to improve medium density design outcomes.
9. Prepare a series of best practice urban design guidelines for new development within Boroondara.
10. Promote high standards of design and environmental sustainability in Boroondara through bi-annual Urban Design Awards.
11. Investigate strengthening local planning policy provisions to ensure new housing is adaptable and accessible.
12. Monitor the impact of the State Government's Better Apartments Design Standards in Boroondara context and seek to introduce local policy improvements where necessary.



Strategic direction 3: Housing that meets the needs of all residents now and in the future

Having a range of housing for all residents – including young families, students, key workers, older people and those on different incomes – will add vitality to our community and supports social inclusion.

The dominant household type in Boroondara is couples with children. However, this is continuing to change and with an increase in single person and couple only households as well as an ageing population, the types of dwellings required to accommodate these smaller households need to be considered.

A person's ability to age in place is determined by the availability of appropriate accommodation. To meet future demand from an ageing population in Boroondara, Council will need to monitor the need for aged care facilities, retirement villages and other alternative housing models such as co-housing.

There is a growing 'young-old' cohort of people who live active lives for 20-plus years after retirement. Council will also need to better understand their housing needs and wants, with potentially more 'active living' apartment developments within our activity centres.

Boroondara is a desirable place to live and housing prices are high, meaning it is a challenge for many people to live here. Although Council has limited influence on the housing market, Council as the Planning Authority can respond by setting policy that results in greater diversity of housing in appropriate locations. This will help the market deliver housing at various price points.

The importance of strategic partnerships in the delivery of social and affordable housing is also recognised. Council will continue to advocate to the State Government for additional social housing in Boroondara, particularly on State-owned sites or delivered by Community Housing Associations. It is well-known that increasing the provision of social housing is an essential aspect to addressing homelessness.

Desired outcomes:

Greater diversity of housing choices and opportunities suitable for all residents including:

- housing that consists of a mix of sizes, layouts and various price points to accommodate people of different stages of life, family structures, mobility and socio-economic groups.
- housing that meets the needs of our older residents and people living with disability located close to transport, services and amenities.
- increased supply of social and affordable housing (delivered by Federal, State Government and Community Housing Associations).
- appropriate alternative housing models, such as co-housing, that can contribute to affordable and social housing opportunities and lower ongoing living costs in Boroondara.



To achieve this, Council will:

1. Continue to support the delivery of a diversity of housing stock through planning policies and tools in the Boroondara Planning Scheme.
2. Investigate strengthening local policy provisions for the delivery of a range of dwelling sizes and bedrooms in 10+ dwelling developments.
3. Investigate the ageing-in-place housing needs and options for our diverse community members, including but not limited to single older women, 'young-old' cohort, LGBTQIA+, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community members, and potential policy responses.
4. Investigate housing affordability and social and affordable housing issues within Boroondara, and potential policy responses.
5. Continue to advocate to and work with Federal and State Government, community housing providers and private sector to provide social and affordable housing for Boroondara residents.
6. Support not-for-profit community housing providers to continue to provide social housing in Boroondara.
7. Investigate whether alternative housing models, including rent-to-own, build-to-rent and co-housing, can help deliver housing diversity and affordable housing options in Boroondara, and potential policy responses.



Appendices

Policy context

National

In August 2022, the Australian Federal Government announced a new National Housing Supply and Affordability Council, which will provide advice in developing a National Housing and Homelessness Plan.

The Federal Government also announced several new housing initiatives, including:

Housing Australia Future Fund

The \$10 billion Housing Australia Future Fund will build 30,000 social and affordable housing properties in its first five years.

Of these 30,000, 20,000 will be social housing properties – 4,000 of which will be allocated for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence and older women on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness.

The additional 10,000 properties will be affordable homes allocated to frontline workers like police, nurses and cleaners.

Further, a portion of the investment returns will be made available to fund acute housing needs on an ongoing basis. In the first five years, the investment returns will fund:

- \$200 million for the repair, maintenance and improvements of housing in remote Indigenous communities.
- \$100 million for crisis and transitional housing options for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence and older women on low incomes who are at risk of homelessness.
- \$30 million to build more housing and fund specialist services for veterans who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Help to Buy Shared Equity Scheme

This scheme will allow 10,000 eligible home buyers a year to buy a new or existing home with an equity contribution from the Federal Government. It involves an equity contribution of up to a maximum of 40 per cent of the purchase price of a new home and up to a maximum of 30 per cent of the purchase price for an existing home.

State

Planning and Environment Act 1987

The Planning and Environment Act 1987 provides the legal framework for the operation of Victoria's planning system.

It specifies the objectives of planning in Victoria, including:

- to provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land
- to secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria
- to conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or otherwise of special cultural value
- to facilitate the provision of affordable housing in Victoria
- to balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

It also provides the definition and income ranges for “affordable housing”, which is housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low and moderate income households.

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050

Plan Melbourne aims to create a city where every day needs are within a 20-minute walk, cycle or local public transport trip.

Key directions in Plan Melbourne relating to housing include:

- deliver more housing closer to jobs and public transport
- manage the supply of new housing in the right locations to meet population growth and create a sustainable city
- increase the supply of social and affordable housing
- provide greater choice and diversity of housing
- facilitate decision-making processes for housing in the right locations.

To manage the supply of housing in Melbourne, it is expected that established areas (including Boroondara) will accommodate a greater share of housing growth.

Plan Melbourne aspires to 70% of new housing being provided within Melbourne's established areas between 2015-2051.

It also directs that housing choice will be provided in activity centres and other locations that offer good access to jobs, services and public transport.

Plan Melbourne identifies three major activity centres in Boroondara:

- Camberwell Junction
- Glenferrie/Hawthorn
- Kew Junction.

Boroondara also has a number of neighbourhood activity centres including:

- Ashburton
- Auburn Village
- Balwyn
- Balwyn East
- Balwyn North
- Bellevue
- Belmore Heights
- Boroondara
- Burwood Village
- Canterbury Village
- Church Street
- Cotham Village
- Deepdene
- Dickens Corner
- East Camberwell
- Glenferrie Hill
- Golf Links Village
- Greythorn
- Harp Village
- Hartwell
- Maling Road
- Middle Camberwell
- Mont Albert Terminus
- Mount Street
- Riversdale Village
- South Camberwell
- Stradbroke Village
- Surrey Hills
- Through Road
- Upper Glen Iris
- Willsmere Village.

Planning Practice Note 90: Planning for Housing

This Planning Practice note provides direction to plan for housing growth and protect neighbourhood character to ensure a balanced approach to managing residential development in planning schemes through preparation of a housing strategy and application of residential zones.

Residential Zones

Victoria's Residential Zones have undergone significant reform in the past decade, with significant changes made in 2013, and updates in 2017 (Amendment VC110).

The reformed residential zones provide more certainty and consistency about housing growth and built form outcomes by creating consistent and strengthened maximum building height controls and the introduction of a minimum garden area requirement in the General Residential Zone and the Neighbourhood Residential Zone.

In 2021, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) released a discussion paper, 'Improving the operation of ResCode', that proposes to apply a new model to residential development planning permit applications. It proposes to replace the ResCode assessment requirements with a new Performance Assessment Module (PAM), based on objectives, standards and decision guidelines. At the time of writing, DELWP (now the Department of Transport and Planning) are considering feedback received during public consultation, which will inform decisions about implementation.

Regional

Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 includes Boroondara, along with the Cities of Bayside, Glen Eira and Stonnington in the Inner South East Metro Region.

In 2020 the Inner South East Metro Region had a population of 567,390 people or approximately 11 per cent of Melbourne's total population. The region's population was projected to increase by over 216,000 people between 2020 and 2051 to a total of 784,040 people. From 2016 to 2051 an additional 119,170 dwellings would be needed to accommodate this growth [note: this does not take into account the impact of COVID 19 pandemic].

The Inner South East Region Metropolitan Partnership produced the Inner South East Regional Framework (2020) with a key action to advocate for and explore opportunities for key worker affordable housing.

In August 2021, DELWP released the draft Inner South East Metro Land Use Framework Plan to set regional-level planning policy (based on Plan Melbourne 2017-2050) to be implemented into planning schemes.

Under the housing choice theme, Boroondara is projected to account for the largest population across the region (213,840) to 2036 and would be expected to accommodate a total of 88,100 dwellings [note: again this does not take into account the impact of COVID 19 pandemic]. At the time of writing, the Inner South East Metro Land Use Framework Plan has not been finalised.

Planning Policy Framework

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) is the policy content of the planning scheme. The PPF structure provides for three tiers of integrated planning policy, grouping state, regional and local planning policy by theme.

Statewide policies

Statewide policies provide direction on planning and managing residential growth in Victoria.

Key housing directions are:

- plan to accommodate projected population growth over at least a 15-year period and provide clear direction on locations where growth should occur.
- residential land supply will be considered on a municipal basis.
- planning for urban growth should consider:
 - opportunities for the consolidation, redevelopment and intensification of existing urban areas
 - neighbourhood and landscape character
 - the limits of land capability and natural hazards and environmental quality
 - service limitations and the costs of providing infrastructure
- ensure development contributes to existing or preferred neighbourhood character.
- increase the supply of housing in existing urban areas by facilitating increased housing yield in appropriate locations, including under-utilised urban land.
- ensure that an appropriate quantity, quality and type of housing is provided.
- increase the proportion of new housing in designated locations within established urban areas.
- encourage higher density housing development on sites that are well located in relation to services, jobs and public transport.
- ensure an adequate supply of redevelopment opportunities within established urban areas to reduce the pressure for fringe development.

- identify opportunities for increased residential densities to help consolidate urban areas.
- ensure housing stock matches changing demand by widening housing choice.
- facilitate diverse housing that offers choice and meets changing household needs.

Regional policies

Regional policies provide planning guidance to councils within the Melbourne metropolitan context.

Key housing directions are:

- Manage the supply of new housing to meet population growth and create a sustainable city by developing housing and mixed-use development opportunities in locations that are:
 - in and around the Central City.
 - urban-renewal precincts and sites.
 - areas for residential growth.
 - areas for greyfield renewal, particularly through opportunities for land consolidation.
 - areas designated as National Employment and Innovation Clusters.
 - Metropolitan Activity centres and Major Activity Centres.
 - Neighbourhood Activity Centres – especially those with good public transport connections.
 - areas near existing and proposed railway stations that can support transit-oriented development.
- Identify areas that offer opportunities for more medium and high density housing near employment and transport in Metropolitan Melbourne.
- Facilitate increased housing in established areas to create a city of 20 minute neighbourhoods close to existing services, jobs and public transport.
- Provide certainty about the scale of growth by prescribing appropriate height and site coverage provisions for different areas.
- Allow for a range of minimal, incremental and high change residential areas that balance the need to protect valued areas with the need to ensure choice and growth in housing.
- Create mixed-use neighbourhoods at varying densities that offer more choice in housing.

Local policies

The Municipal Planning Strategy (MPS) in the Boroondara Planning Scheme provides a statement of the key strategic planning, land use and development objectives for Boroondara.

The vision for housing is to protect the heritage and respect the character of the City to maintain amenity and liveability whilst recognising the need for appropriate, well-designed development for future generations.

The MPS contains the following strategic directions related to housing:

- Maintain and strengthen the network of activity centres, neighbourhood centres, local centres and commercial corridors.
- Ensure major activity centres, neighbourhood centres, local centres and commercial corridors retain a commercial focus with regard to land use and built form outcomes.
- Ensure residential development complements the commercial focus of activity centres, neighbourhood centres, local centres and commercial corridors, particularly at the upper levels of development.
- Minimise the impacts of development on sensitive residential interfaces by way of visual bulk, noise, traffic and vehicle access.
- Facilitate residential development in accordance with the Housing Framework shown on the Housing Framework Plan at Clause 02.04.
- Provide a diverse range of housing types that protect preferred neighbourhood character and adjoining residential amenity.
- Provide housing that is sufficiently flexible to account for age, temporary or permanent injury or impairment, and disability.
- Protect residential areas surrounding discretionary uses from potential amenity impacts.

City of Boroondara Plans and Strategies

Boroondara Community Plan 2021-2031

Boroondara's Community Plan (BCP), incorporating the Community Vision, Council Plan 2021-25 and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-25, is a strategic document that sets out the 10-year vision for the City of Boroondara based on the aspirations of the community and the priorities they told us were important.

The BCP balances the needs of our community today, reflects the community's experience during the COVID 19 pandemic, while recognising the challenges, opportunities and changes to come over the next decade.

The BCP is structured around seven themes, as expressed by the community in 2017. Checking with the community in 2020–21, it was confirmed these themes still represent what the community want Council to focus on over the next 10 years:

1. Community, Services and Facilities
2. Parks and Green Spaces
3. The Environment
4. Neighbourhood Character and Heritage
5. Moving Around
6. Local Economy
7. Leadership and Governance

These seven themes work together with six health priorities to provide a robust foundation for achieving the community's vision, to create 'a sustainable and inclusive community.'

The Housing Strategy also considers and stands alongside Boroondara's:

- Climate Action Plan and Implementation Plan 2021-23
- Homelessness Protocol 2020
- Asset Plan 2022-23 to 2032-33
- Disability Action Plan 2018-2022
- Open Space Strategy 2013
- Bicycle Strategy 2022

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