

NEERIM SOUTH

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

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Contents

Introduction	4
PART A: BACKGROUND	
Context	8
Community Profile	9
Existing Community Plan	10
Policy Context	11
Urban Structure & Land Use	14
Built Form	16
Access & Movement	18
Public Realm & Landscape	20
SWOT Analysis	22
PART B: RECOMMENDATIONS	
Vision & Objectives	26
Key Directions	27
Urban Design Framework	28
Public Realm & Landscape	31
Key Precinct Framework	33
Design Guidelines	35
Implementation	38



Looking south toward Main Street from school service road

In January 2016, Baw Baw Shire Council commissioned Hansen Partnership to prepare Urban Design Framework Plans for three of the Shire's designated main towns; Trafalgar, Neerim South and Longwarry.

What is an urban design framework?

An Urban Design Framework (UDF) is a document that sets out the future form and character of a particular place or locality. It is principally an urban design tool that provides a physical framework for managing change and setting new directions for the development of a place across both public and private land over time. Community values are considered alongside the needs of government departments, servicing agencies and commercial stakeholders in the overarching desire to contribute positively to the urban form of a place. A UDF also integrates non-physical initiatives and opportunities with the built form outcomes.

Framework Plans are more detailed than Structure Plans and aim to create a flexible framework for the creation of practical actions, ideas and solutions that consider constraints and provide guidance for capital budgets and future planning scheme controls. A degree of flexibility is built into Framework Plans in order to ensure that a particular place can adapt to different circumstances over time.

They are also intended to clearly articulate a 'vision' for what a place could be and, as such, act as a catalyst for positive change, particularly within the built environment.

What area will the UDF cover?

The Urban Design Framework addresses only the 'town centre' of Neerim South. This has been defined as the commercially zoned land of the township, and also includes land to the south and north along Main Neerim Road, as well as community facilities such as the primary school and skate park. The UDF also considers land beyond the defined study area boundary where it is considered logical in light of identified opportunities or influences.



Main Street view to supermarket car park

Purpose of the Neerim South Urban Design Framework

The preparation of a UDF for Neerim South offers the opportunity to develop the study area as a place that people want to live, work, invest, play and visit. The Framework Plan is the key planning and design document that will manage change within the private realm and provide direction about public works. It outlines the preferred land use, building design, public realm, transport and infrastructure directions that provide opportunities for redevelopment so that the commercial core can reach its full potential, as a vibrant, amenable and sustainable town centre. In doing this, the UDF identifies a number of key initiatives and actions to be implemented over the next 20 years.

How the Framework will be used

The Urban Design Framework Plan will be used:

- To guide public realm and built form outcomes within the Town Centre.
- To inform Council's capital works program and annual budget.
- To make policy changes in the Baw Baw Planning Scheme.
- To promote a range of partnerships and potential sources of funding for many of the initiatives identified in the Plan.
- To provide a basis for the preparation of more detailed masterplans for important sites throughout the Town Centre.

Structure of document

This document contains two main sections.

1. The first part of the document provides background analysis of the centre including context, demographic and existing physical conditions.
2. The recommendations section includes not only an overall framework and associated directions but also a series of design guidelines and directions regarding key areas of the public realm within the centre.



Looking north along Main Street



NEERIM SOUTH
URBAN DESIGN
FRAMEWORK

STUDY AREA
AERIAL ANALYSIS

- legend
- study area boundary
 - main road
 - local street



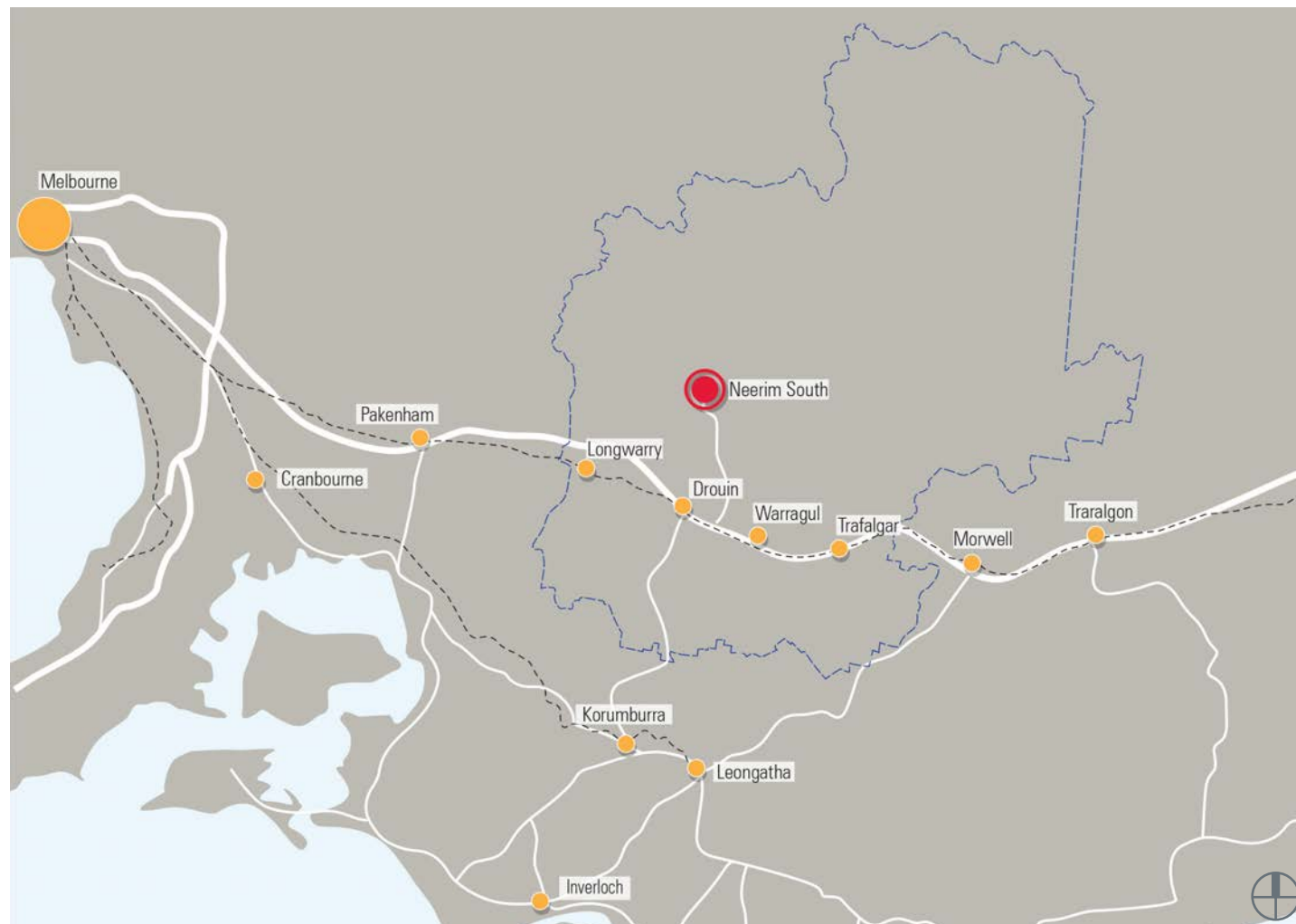


BACKGROUND

Context

Neerim South is located approximately 110km south-east of Melbourne's CBD and 20km to the north of Princes Freeway. It is located on the Main Neerim Road, which is the direct north / south tourist route to Mount Baw Baw, one of the regions key attractions. The township is positioned atop a ridgeline to the east of the Tarago Reservoir and Bunyip State Forest, encompassing views to the reservoir, surrounding bushland and agricultural land, which is key to its overall identity.

The Baw Baw Planning Scheme identifies Neerim South as one of the Shire's six main towns. The town provides commercial, retail, health, education, recreation and residential uses, in its role as a service hub for both the local and surrounding rural population, as well as catering to tourists in Baw Baw Shire's north. The township has an approximate population of 1,305 residents (2016 Census).



Regional context diagram

Population

In the 2016 Census, Neerim South recorded a population of 1,305 people with 79.9% of residents born in Australia. Furthermore, females account for 51.1% of the population and males 49.9%.

The table below outlines Neerim South's population based on 2016 Census data.

Name	Number	%	Shire %
Total population	1,305	100	-
Males	653	49.9	48.6
Females	655	50.1	51.4
Indigenous people	0	0	1
Australian born	1,029	79.9	73.7
Speaks language other than English at home	22	4.4	5.2

Australian Bureau of Statistics, census of Population and Housing 2016.

Age Structure

The 2016 Census demonstrates the most significant age bracket in Neerim South (at 42.2% of the population) are aged between 50-79 years which is high than the municipality. The township presents a slightly older population (60 years and above) than the municipality.

The table opposite outlines Neerim South's age structure in comparison with the Baw Baw Shire.

Name	Number	%	Shire %
0 – 4 years	70	5.4	6.1
5 – 9 years	74	5.7	6.9
10 – 19 years	164	12.7	12.4
20 – 29 years	98	7.6	10.6
30 – 39 years	101	7.9	10.9
40 – 49 years	159	12.3	12.5
50 – 59 years	212	16.4	13.8
60 – 69 years	189	14.6	13.3
70 – 79 years	144	11.2	8.9
80 – 84 years	46	3.6	2.4
85 years and over	37	2.9	2.3

Australian Bureau of Statistics, census of Population and Housing 2016.

Family composition

The 2016 Census identified 46.7% of families comprise couples without children, slightly higher than the Shire average. Couples with children is slightly lower than the municipal percentage at 39.5%.

Name	Number	%	Shire %
Couple without children	169	46.7	43.2
Couple with children	143	39.5	40.8
One parent family	46	12.7	14.9
- male	-	30.4	18.2
- female	-	69.6	81.8
Other family	4	1.1	1.1

Australian Bureau of Statistics, census of Population and Housing 2016.

Labour Force

At the 2016 Census, 44.5% of residents in Neerim South were employed including 55.6% of the workforce employed full-time, while 5.0% were unemployed, which is higher than the unemployment rate in the entire municipality. Furthermore, 38.95% of residents were determined to be not in the labour force, slightly higher than the municipality, suggesting a higher rate of retired persons.

Weekly Household Income

At the 2016 Census, 23.9% of households were on a gross weekly income of less than \$650 which is consistent with the municipal-wide percentage. Further, 7.6% of the population were on a gross weekly income greater than \$3000 which is slightly less than the municipal percentage.

Housing Tenure

In 2016, 39.0% of people in Neerim South owned their own home outright, 42.9% had loans and 12.8% were renting. Home ownership (with mortgage) is slightly higher in Neerim South when compared to the entire municipality.

Housing Types

In 2016, 96.3% of Neerim South's housing were detached or separate dwellings and 3.1% were medium density dwellings. Detached housing types are at 96.3%.

The table below demonstrates the distribution of housing types in Neerim South.

Name	Number	%	Shire %
Separate houses	444	96.3	90.6
Semi-detached, townhouse	9	2.0	3.7
Unit, flat or apartment	5	1.1	4.4
Other	0	0	0.9

Australian Bureau of Statistics, census of Population and Housing 2016.

Existing Community Plan

The *Neerim South Community Plan* (2007-2012) was developed from a community consultation process led by Baw Baw Shire Council as part of the Baw Baw Shire Community Engagement Process.

The Community Plan may be used as a reference to understand the aspirations for Neerim South, which reflects the views of the Community.

The Vision

“Neerim District is a caring and friendly community that strives to respect and value all our community members, manage our population growth and preserve our panoramic landscape. We are striving to create a healthy economy to improve our future and create a vibrant district whilst sustaining and preserving our natural resources and environment.”

Priority Areas

‘Priority Areas’ identified in the Community Plan relevant to the town centre are as follows:

- *Plant more native bushes and low trees around walking tracks and other public areas. (Ongoing)*
- *Provision of an integrated community hub to generate employment opportunities, provide a totally integrated health service from infants to aged care, provision of additional community transport as well being an attraction for families to move into area.*
- *Continued upgrade of local schools and kinder to keep pace with district growth and more childcare services.*
- *Provision of a community library and Community House offering a range of services.*

- *Establish a business group that can encourage improved shopping opportunities and revitalise business district that can also look at working on a standard street façade plan.*
- *Establish a Neerim District Market.*
- *Review all parking within business district.*
- *Regulate advertising signage.*
- *Working with the business group, develop more tourism within area, but maintain village atmosphere.*
- *Improve the tourism signage.*
- *Maximise tourism potential to improve employment.*
- *Extension of skate park area to include recreation for all ages such as petanque or boules. (Not being pursued)*
- *Develop a master plan for Recreation Reserve in Neerim South/ Neerim District. (Completed but due for review following preparation of a shire wide Recreation Strategy)*
- *Ensure all planning maintains the natural beauty and environmental assets, slow the rate of growth and housing developments.*

Summary

The Community Plan outlines a number of key initiatives which can be incorporated into the development of Neerim South’s Urban Design Framework.

Specific to the study area, urban design interventions may involve specifying the location and arrangement of:

- A community hub;
- Improvements to the main commercial precinct to incorporate tourism signage and public facilities; and
- Improved open space and recreation facilities at the existing park.

A range of State and Local planning policies, plans and reports are relevant to the planning, development and management of Baw Baw's townships. The following is a brief summary:

State Planning Policy Framework

State Planning Policies are the overarching policies that relate to the use of land and its development throughout Victoria. At a principle level the State Planning Policies aim to implement the key strategic aims found within the current policy document, *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*. Along with strategic direction for metropolitan Melbourne, this policy also seeks to improve the planning of key regional areas through the creation of regional strategies. The regional strategy relevant to Baw Baw Shire is the *Gippsland Regional Growth Plan*.

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) covers issues of State importance that address settlement planning, residential development, environmental and landscape values, natural resource management, built environment and heritage, housing, economic development, transport and infrastructure.

Clause 15 of the SPPF sets out principles that guide positive built environment and heritage outcomes. These principles provide the foundation for the recommendations of this project and seek to "create urban environments that are safe, functional and high quality with a sense of place and cultural identity." The responsiveness of development and planning to a particular location and site context of an area is of key importance. The clause encourages the protection and enhancement of key landmarks and vistas, and places of heritage significance. Architectural and landscape architectural quality is also emphasised as an important factor in new development in existing urban areas. Additional objectives include design of places and spaces to ensure and support community safety and the protection of 'neighbourhood character'.

Regional Strategies

The *Gippsland Regional Growth Plan* provides an overview of the region and establishes overarching objectives in relation to the area's future growth. This regional growth plan should be viewed as a guiding document to facilitate the expected increase in population, driving economic growth and providing for healthy communities.

Local Planning Policy Framework

The Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) is made up of two key sections: the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) and local planning policies.

The Municipal Strategic Statement sets out vision documents for Council. It recognises that the municipality is expected to experience considerable increases in population in the coming years and sets out key strategies for the sustainable growth. The visioning statements are focused on providing for population growth while also maintaining the rural nature of the municipality. The *Baw Baw Settlement Management Plan (2013)* and Clause 21.04 sets out the strategic direction for the 'main towns' of the municipality. These towns include Warragul, Drouin, Trafalgar, Yarragon, Longwarry, and Neerim South. The policy sets the context for each town and where relevant, key objectives related to the future residential, industrial and commercial direction of each town.

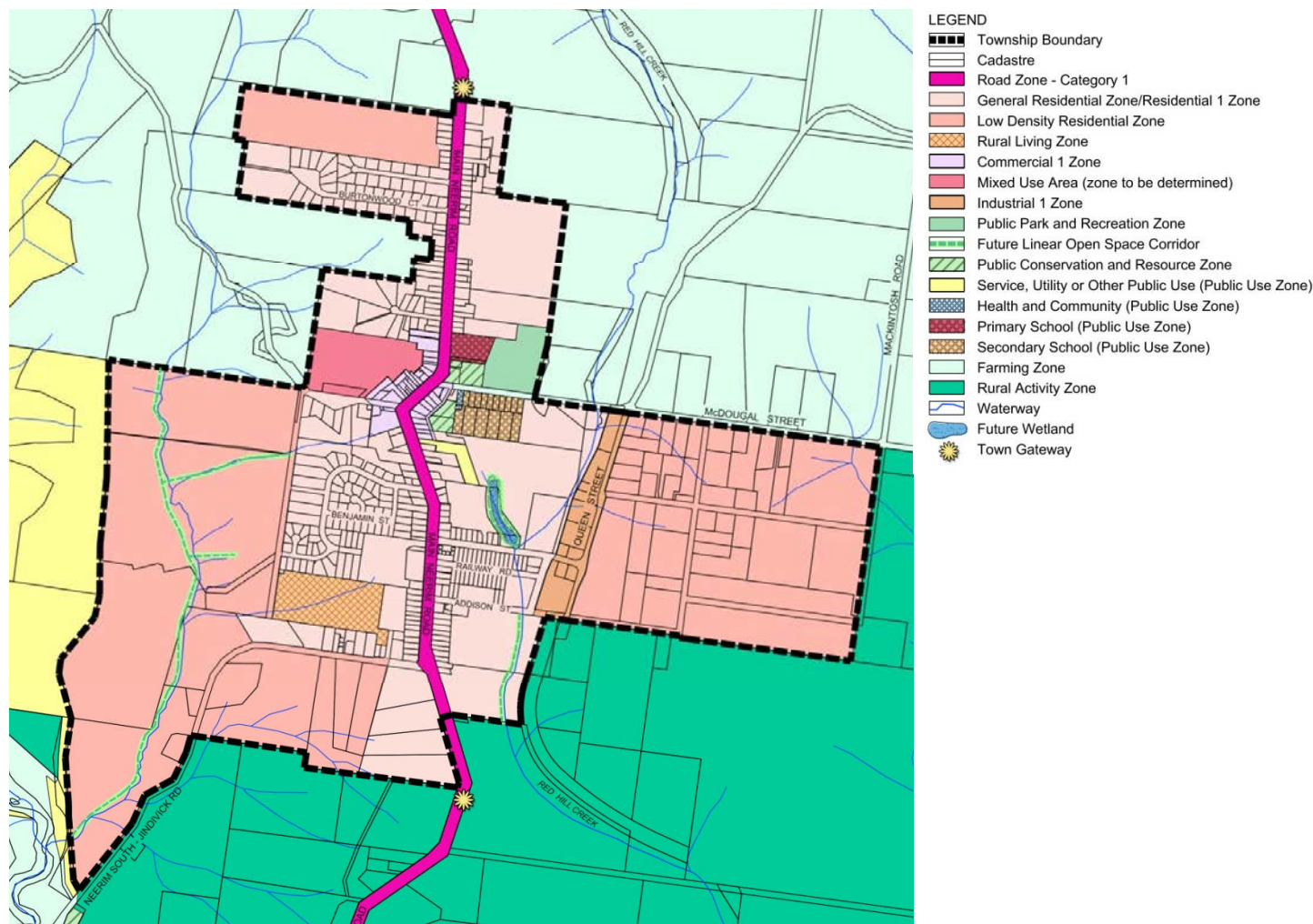
The directions for Neerim South are outlined in the following section.

Main Towns

Clause 21.04 identifies Baw Baw's six largest urban areas, which must ensure the efficient provision of infrastructure and services, the management of residential, industrial and commercial development, the continuing development of the transport network and the provision of community facilities and services. The directions for the town have been derived from the recent *Settlement Management Plan* (2013)

Limited direction is provided in relation to the Neerim South study area:

- Rezone Low Density Residential Zone land to the west of the town centre at the intersection of Main Neerim Road and Neerim East Road to Mixed Use Zone (or similar zone). This would allow for retail development at the street frontage and the potential for development of mixed density housing at the rear. It is noted that the associated plan identifies a "mixed use area, zone to be decided".
- Improve gateway treatments to the north, south and east.



Extract from Clause 21.04 - Neerim South Structure Plan

Zones

The study area of Neerim South is largely located within the **Commercial 1 Zone**. The zone provides for a wide range of commercial activities and also provides for residential development. The purpose of the zone is:

- *To create vibrant mixed use commercial centres for retail, office, business, entertainment and community uses.*

Approximately six lots identified within the study area are located within the **General Residential Zone (GRZ)**. The key purpose of the General Residential Zone is:

- *To provide a diversity of housing types and moderate housing growth in locations offering good access to services and transport.*

The **Public Use Zone 2** applies to the Neerim South Primary School. The key purpose of the Zone includes:

- *To recognise public land use for public utility and community services and facilities.*

The park located to the north of the study area is subject to the **Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)**. The PCRZ is generally applied to the natural environment to assist with the preservation of the area.

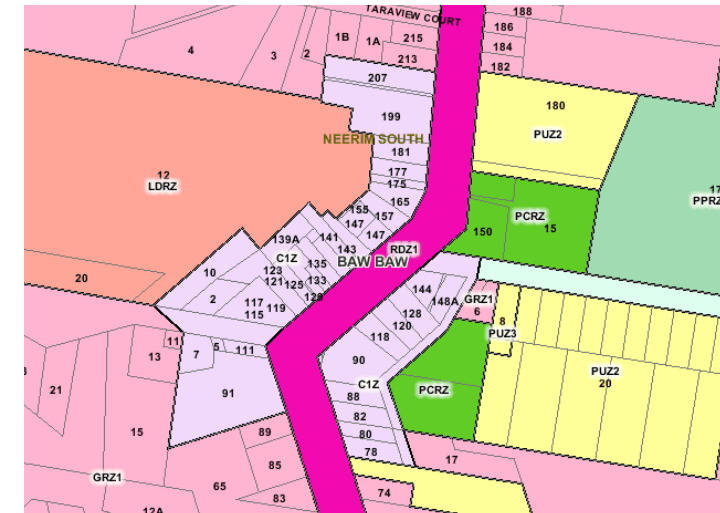
Main Neerim Road is located within the **Road Zone Category 1**. RDZ1 categorises a road as significant and VicRoads are the Responsible Authority.

Overlays

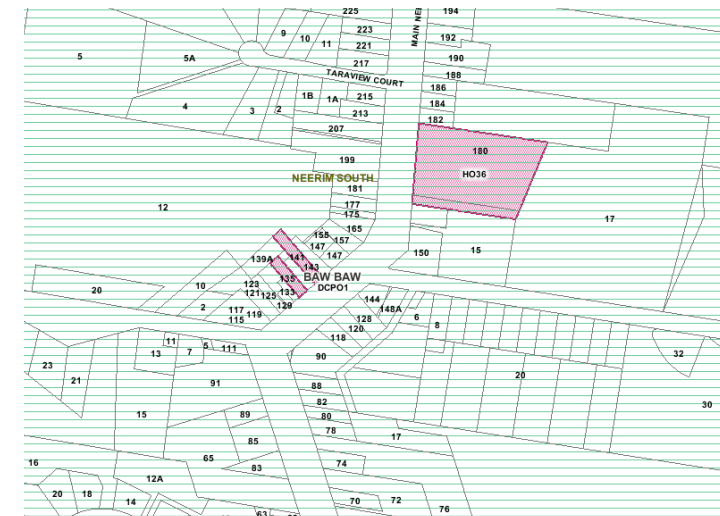
The following Overlays are relevant to the study area:

The **Development Contribution Plan Overlay**, Schedule 1 (DCPO1) affects the entire Neerim South town centre. The purpose of this overlay is to identify areas which require the preparation of a development contributions plan for the purpose of identifying levying contributions for the provision of works, services and facilities before development can commence.

The **Heritage Overlay (HO)** identifies sites of local, regional and State heritage significance (Victorian Heritage Register) and is used to protect places that have heritage value. The purpose of the HO is to conserve and enhance heritage places and ensure that development does not adversely affect the significance of heritage places. Within the Neerim South town centre there are three site specific heritage overlays including, Neerim South Primary School at 180 Main Neerim Road (HO36), the Commercial Bank (former) along Main Neerim Road (HO306); and the Butchers Shop at 141 Main Neerim Road (HO307).



Zoning Plan



Overlay Plan

The following observations are made regarding the use and character of the Study Area:

- The main **gateway** to the study area from the north is located at the start of the service road to Neerim South Primary School. To the south, the medical centre marks the start of the town centre. The Neerim East and Main Neerim Road round-about comprises a secondary gateway to the commercial core from both the north and east. These gateways sit at the junction of the commercial core and provide a distinct shift of land use through the township.
- The **retail and commercial uses** associated with Neerim South town centre are primarily located to the west of Main Neerim Road between Wagners Road to the south and Neerim East Road to the north. Uses within this commercial core precinct include a supermarket, milk bar, bank, post office, hardware store, café, personal services, butcher and veterinary clinic. To the south of Wagners Road are several other uses including a hotel and medical facility, which are somewhat separate from the commercial core to the north.
- The Study Area also comprises significant **public open space** - Neerim South Park; comprising a variety of recreational and community based facilities including a skate park, two playgrounds, public toilet, picnic shelter and visitor carpark, set amongst mature canopy vegetation. This park is considered a vital asset to the operation of the town centre as a tourist stopping point to Mount Baw Baw. Neerim South Park abuts the Neerim South Primary School to the north. This area forms part of a community precinct, which extends across Main Neerim Road encompassing the CFA and community hall.

- Key **retail anchors** within the study area include the supermarket within the commercial core and the Neerim South Hotel to the south of the commercial core.
- While the south-east of the study area along Main Neerim Road is zoned for commercial purposes, it comprises predominantly **residential uses** south of the church, with a mix of commercial and residential to the north of this building. As such, the church constitutes a 'marker' in the transition of land use.
- To the rear of the commercial core at the west are several **residential properties** which abut vacant Low Density Residential Zone land. These properties provide future opportunities for some modest increases in density close to the town centre.
- The **land** to the immediate west of the main street strip provides expansive views from the rear of the commercial core. The land is relatively flat and, while zoned for low density residential use, remains vacant.



Supermarket and art gallery from Main Neerim Road



Mixed uses to the north



Commercial and hospitality uses within commercial core

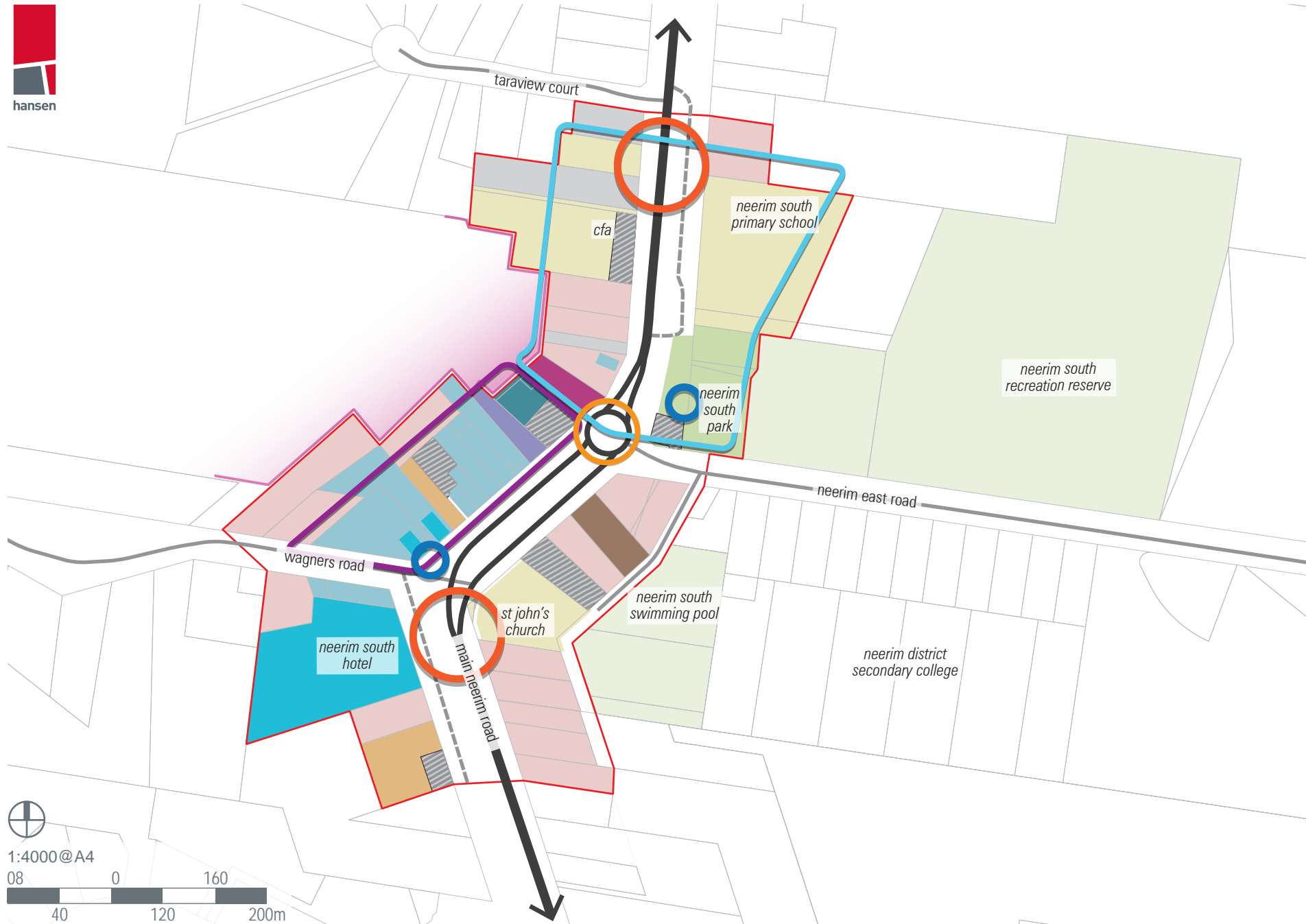


NEERIM SOUTH URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

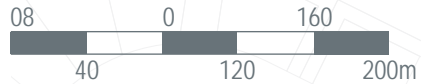
URBAN STRUCTURE & LAND USE ANALYSIS

legend

- study area boundary
- towncentre gateway
- commercial gateway
- tourism node
- commercial core
- community precinct
- commercial
- retail / personal services
- hospitality
- supermarket
- gallery
- industrial
- medical / health
- community / education
- underutilized land
- residential
- vacant low density residential zoned land
- public open space
- car park
- main road
- local street
- service road



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Built Form

The following observations are made regarding the built form characteristics and overall image of the study area:

- **Building heights** within the study area typically comprise single storey forms of the post-war era. The notable exception is St John's Church which presents a two storey equivalent brick form, typical of this type of community facility. This low scale built form character enhances the rural setting of the township and emphasises the township's landscape qualities including boulevard planting along Main Neerim Road.
- The commercial core of Neerim South is defined by its dominant **street wall** presence along the west of Main Neerim Road. Retail and commercial uses typically present canopy over path enabling a sense of enclosure typical to other main streets within Baw Baw. The commercial street wall also encompasses breaks in the linear mass in the form of service laneways providing access to car parking at the rear of lots. These breaks create small clusters of buildings and diversify the streetscape experience within this portion of the town centre. The Foodworks site is considered to be an anomaly to the typically consistent street wall condition to the south. The site comprises customer parking within the front setback.
- There are several **prominent buildings** within the study area which are of various eras and architectural styles, establishing an emerging and diverse built form character. The Foodworks supermarket, the medical centre and the CFA building are all of recent construction and high site coverage. These forms are single storey and set back from their respective street frontages, typically comprising car parking or impermeable surfaces. Despite this, their bulk and hard surfacing ensures they are dominant within the streetscape.
- Other prominent buildings in the surrounds include **St John's Church** at the highly exposed Wagners Road and Main Neerim Road intersection. This large brick form is highly visible along the main road approach, forming part of the gateway to the commercial core. The **art gallery** at the Neerim East and Main Neerim Road roundabout is also considered a prominent building due to its highly exposed location at a key junction within the study area. This robust post-war brick building is sited to the street frontage and sits prominently forward of the abutting supermarket.
- Other built form types within the study area include a number of **single storey post-war dwellings**, specifically those extending along the east side of Main Neerim Road opposite the commercial core. These dwellings contribute to the rural urban character of the township and comprise established landscape setbacks with canopy vegetation, lawn areas and low fencing.
- As illustrated on the Built Form & Town Image diagram, there are several **historically significant buildings** within the study area subject to the Heritage Overlay. These include: HO306: Neerim South Primary School to the north east, HO307: The former Commercial Bank within the commercial core and HO308: The Butchers Shop also within the town core at 141 Main Neerim Road. These sites contribute to the township's identity and built form character.
- To Wagners Road, the **presentation of buildings** to either side of the road is relatively inactive comprising highly permeable side fences and blank walls of buildings, as illustrated in the corresponding diagram. This streetscape presentation results in an unclear commercial frontage when traveling from west to east along this road.
- Outside of the commercial core, properties demonstrate **highly permeable landscape setbacks** which contribute to the rural character of the township. This streetscape condition is a successful transition to the lower density residential and agricultural uses to the north and south of the township.



Retail form to main street comprising glazing and signage



Contemporary CFA building with associated parking



Vacant traditional building in study area



NEERIM SOUTH URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

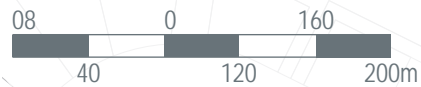
BUILT FORM & TOWN IMAGE ANALYSIS

legend

- study area boundary
- retail anchor
- prominent building
- 1 storey
- two storey equivalent height
- other structure
- dwelling along main street
- extent of main street form
- canopy
- street wall
- blank facade
- landscape setback
- high fencing to street
- breaks in street wall
- heritage overlay
- public open space
- car park
- main road



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The following observations are made regarding the access and movement attributes of the Study Area:

- Neerim South comprises a north-south aligned **main road** extending from the Princes Highway at Drouin to the south to Mount Baw Baw Tourist Road to the north. This road is the main route to Mount Baw Baw and surrounding National Parks from Melbourne and other major towns. Neerim South is often utilised as a primary resting point for tourists resulting in a built form configuration along this main road catering to a tourist population. It also forms a tourist 'loop' through to Healesville via Powelltown.
- As well as being a tourist route, Main Neerim Road is also a **major heavy vehicle route**, used by milk tankers, logging trucks, cattle trucks, fuel tankers and quarry trucks connecting from the broader rural areas down to the Princes Highway.
- Within the commercial core, Main Neerim Road comprises angled **parking** abutting a central median accessed by south bound traffic. To the eastern kerb in front of the main retail and commercial uses, angled car parking is also provided catering to north bound traffic. This car parking configuration allows efficient connections with the townships key retail and commercial uses. However, issues exist with the safety of pedestrian movement from the eastern side.
- Another key feature of this main road is the presence of **mature canopy planting along the central median** within the town core and to the north adjacent to the primary school. This landscape feature demarcates key uses within the township.
- Main Neerim Road also encompasses **service roads** to the north and south of the study area. To the north, the service road provides a safe pick-up and drop-off point to the primary school, whereas the southern service road provides separate vehicle access to commercial and medical facilities with ample customer car parking buffered from through traffic along the main road.
- As illustrated within the Access & Linkages diagram, the study area comprises multiple **off-street and at-grade car parks** for various uses within the commercial core and community precincts. The supermarket, medical centre, Neerim South Park and St John's church all include car parking within their front setbacks. Several retail and commercial uses within the commercial core provide parking to the rear of properties, accessed via laneways from Main Neerim Road.
- The location of **crossovers** form an integral part of the pedestrian and vehicle network within the study area. As illustrated within the corresponding diagram, the commercial core comprises five crossovers along its length, interrupting the footpath and built form pattern.
- The Warragul Station to Noojee **regional bus route** operates along Main Neerim Road. There are several bus stops within the study area including at the primary school and within the commercial core.
- Main Neerim Road presents a typically consistent **footpath network** through the study area. There are several pedestrian crossing points along this road including at the primary school to the north, at the roundabout within the centre of the study area and at the central median, where there is a designated crossing point to access the commercial core.



Boulevard planting along Main Neerim Road



Car parking example in commercial core



Car parking along Main Neerim Road

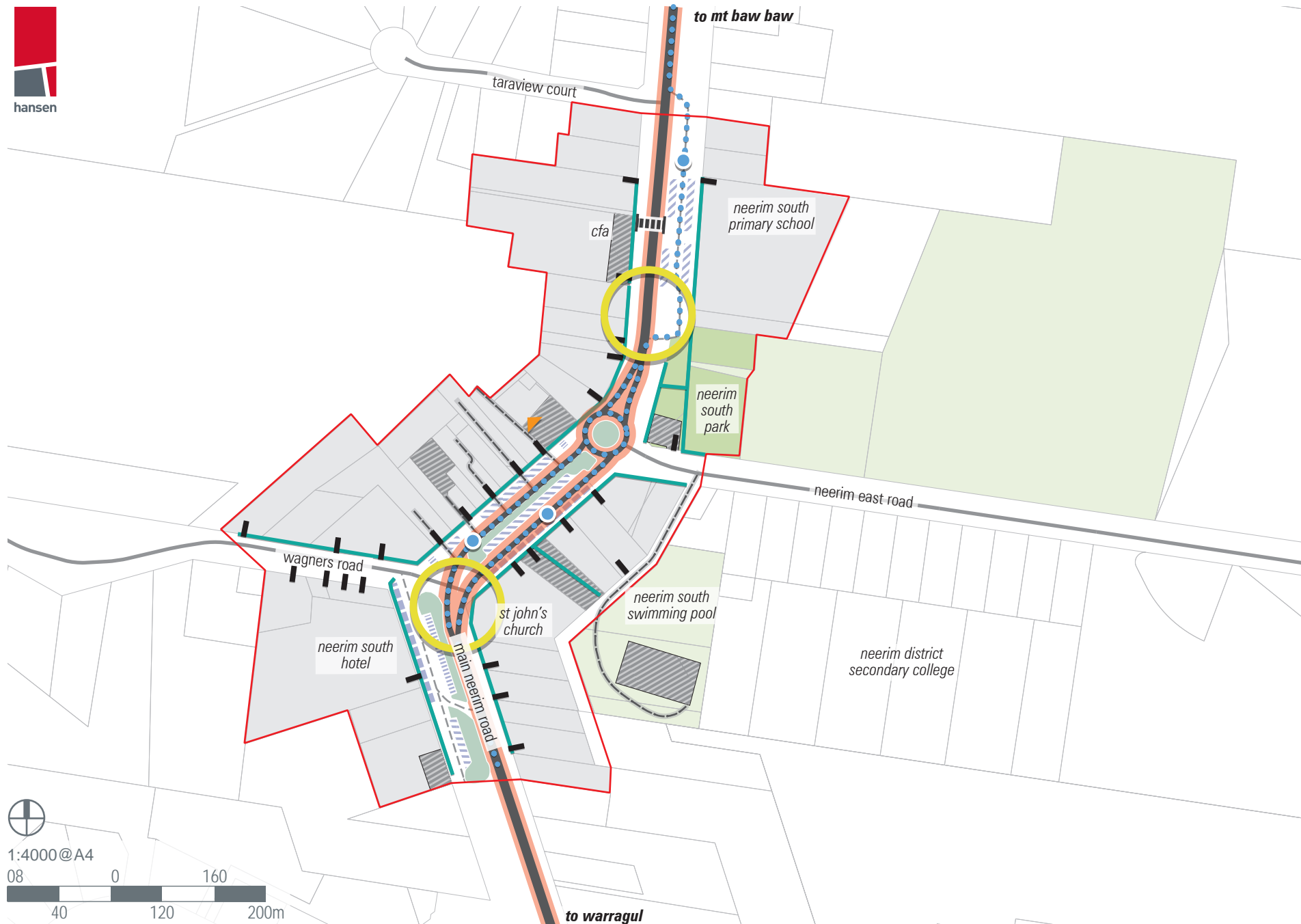


NEERIM SOUTH URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

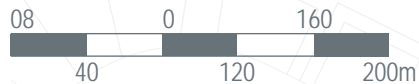
ACCESS & LINKAGES ANALYSIS

legend

- study area boundary
- township gateway
- tourism route to mount baw baw
- pedestrian crossing
- pedestrian entry into retail anchor
- crossover
- footpath
- parallel on-street parking
- 90° on-street parking
- 45° on-street parking
- main road
- service road
- local street
- laneway
- bus stop (regional)
- bus route
- car park
- median
- urban block
- public open space



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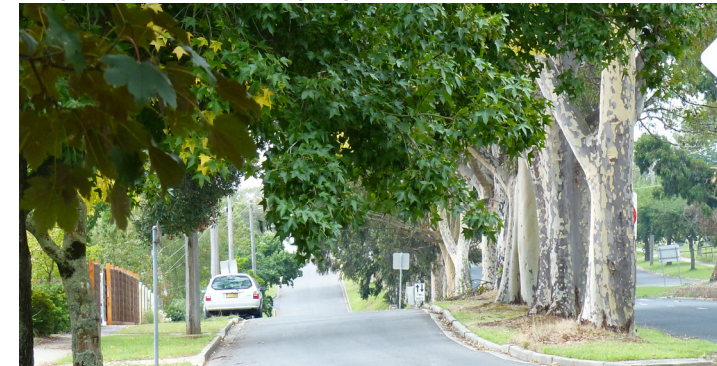


The following observations are made regarding the public realm and landscape characteristics of the study area:

- **Neerim South Park** is located to the north east of the study area abutting the Neerim South Primary School. This public facility comprises several recreational and community based uses including two playgrounds, skate park, public toilet, picnic shelter and off street car park. The site comprises mature canopy vegetation and garden beds and is considered to be a significant asset to the township's identity and tourism setting.
- A significant feature of the township is the **sloping topography** along Main Neerim Road. There is a considerable slope from the north east to south west, when viewed from the commercial core. This results in an elevated main street, enhancing visibility to tourists and potential customers. To the edges of the study area to the north and south, the topography falls to each side contributing to the sense of arrival and departure when traveling through the township.
- In addition to the slope outlined above, Main Neerim Road is located along a **ridgeline** which marks the boundary of two catchments, meaning that land slopes down on both sides of the centre. This makes significant views available from the town centre between buildings. Particularly notable are the views to the west.
- Another key feature of the study area are the **deciduous mature canopy trees** forming a scenic boulevard through the commercial core and again at the primary school along Main Neerim Road. Throughout the remainder of the township, there is a considerable mix of mature canopy vegetation within both private and public realms contributing to the rural urban character of the township and enhancing the sense of arrival along Main Neerim Road. This is particularly evident to the north of the commercial core surrounding the primary school and Neerim South Park.
- The **footpath conditions** are enhanced in the commercial core, along the main street. While the majority of the study area comprises pedestrian paths to both sides of roads, the path along the commercial core is wider, contributing to the legibility of the centre and prioritising pedestrian movement along its length. A median outstand is located at the south of the commercial core comprising of public seating and tables and tourist information signage.
- Commendably, the study area comprises generous **garden beds and landscaped areas**. This is particularly evident at the central roundabout where there are large portions of ground level planting at the street edge and within the round-about itself. This treatment contributes to the landscape character of the township and acts as a gateway feature leading to the commercial core from the north.
- As illustrated within the corresponding diagram, the commercial core comprises a variety of **street furniture and public infrastructure**. This includes bench seating, rubbish bins and several artistic sculptures scattered adjacent to the roundabout. A cenotaph is also located in the centre of the town centre roundabout. These features contribute to the character of the township and enhance the tourist qualities of the township.



Art gallery and surrounding vegetation



Boulevard planting along Main Neerim Road



Playground at Neerim South Park



NEERIM SOUTH URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

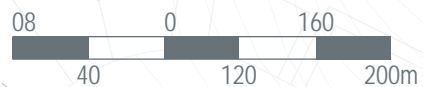
PUBLIC REALM & LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

legend

- study area boundary
- views to hills
- key views to retail core
- boulevard planting
- canopy vegetation
- central median (grassed)
- median / outstand (paved)
- public garden bed
- memorial / statue
- sculpture
- public toilet
- skate park
- playground
- picnic shelter
- plaza and notice board
- seating
- footpath
- retail core footpath
- no footpath
- car park
- slope
- contour
- public open space
- urban block



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Based on the preceding context review, a summary of Neerim South's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) has been prepared. SWOT analysis helps to develop a realistic assessment of how strengths and opportunities can counter weaknesses and threats to the township's future. It also provides a basis to develop a series of meaningful ambitions and directions that will inform the creation of an Urban Design Framework Plan.

The strengths and weaknesses described below are illustrated in the Opportunities and Threats diagram overleaf.

Strengths

The following strengths are considered Neerim South's advantages and most valuable assets, which help to create a good foundation for future growth and development. Strengths should generally be maintained and enhanced.

- Established commercial core comprising a variety of retail and commercial uses;
- Recent development within the study area including community and health-based uses;
- Strong tourism focus throughout township encompassing designated parking, amenities and art interventions;
- Established landscape features at Main Neerim Road roundabout enhancing gateway to commercial core;
- Significant public open space to north-east of the study area, part of a wider community precinct, encompassing a skate park, multiple playgrounds, picnic area and recreation facilities;
- Mature boulevard planting along Main Road within the commercial core and community precinct, including central median parking at the commercial core;
- Large medians contributing to the landscape quality of the study area;
- Several heritage buildings contributing to the township's character and identity;
- Consistent pedestrian paths through the study area;
- Successful built form and landscape transitions leading towards residential areas and rural land; and
- Reasonable public transport access to the commercial core and schools via regional bus routes.

Weaknesses

The following identified weaknesses are challenges that need to be addressed through this process to ensure they do not compromise the long-term viability of Neerim South. Weaknesses can also be viewed as early stage opportunities.

- Laneways through the commercial core interrupt the pedestrian path and legibility of the main street;
- Poor directional signage to tourism related facilities from each end of the study area;
- Poor signage and awareness of commercial and retail uses south of Wagners Road;
- Blank and inactive presentation to Wagners Road and crossovers associated with the rural store present poorly on approach to the town centre;
- Recent development siting customer car parking to street frontages utilising impermeable materials and detracting from the township character; and
- Distinct built form character between commercial precinct to the south and the main street. Larger forms with inactive frontages are inconsistent with small town feel.

Opportunities

Opportunities are considered the advantageous long-term issues affecting the town centre, which should be capitalised on during the Framework Planning phase.

- Enhance tourism expenditure through the strengthening of the study area as a stopping point en-route to Mount Baw Baw. Encourage additional local tourism related uses within commercial core;
- Upgrade and enhance the public toilets and picnic shelter at Neerim South Park to cater to the transient tourist population;
- Expand and upgrade the median outstand / plaza area to the south of the commercial core with new tourism signage, seating, shelter and landscaping;
- Further celebrate and establish connections with art galleries and local artists in the public realm;
- Enhance public realm features and garden beds through the entire commercial core and consider interventions along laneways;
- Utilise natural slope of the land to enhance the presence of the commercial core from the retail gateways to the north and south;
- Establish formalised pedestrian crossings across Main Neerim Road for use during peak traffic periods;
- Encourage intensification of study area for commercial, community, education and medium density residential uses to ensure remainder of township retains its rural character; and
- Improve interface to supermarket carpark and southern commercial precinct at key corners and gateways.

Threats

The following threats are long-term weaknesses or challenges that have the potential to undermine the future aspirations established for Neerim South. It is important to consider ways to avoid or minimise the impact of potential threats.

- The growth in tourism may compromise the rural small town character and see the introduction of larger anchor retail tenancies, inconsistent with existing building stock;
- Expansion of commercial core to the east of Main Neerim Road may dilute the existing main street;
- Potential off-site amenity impacts to residential land within study area due to new commercial or community based development in atypically large forms;
- New development on commercial land not having regard to existing low scale context; and
- New commercial and residential growth may be inconsistent with rural urban character and comprise impermeable setbacks and large built forms. It may also compromise landscape features and characteristics integral to Neerim South's identity.

NEERIM SOUTH URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

legend

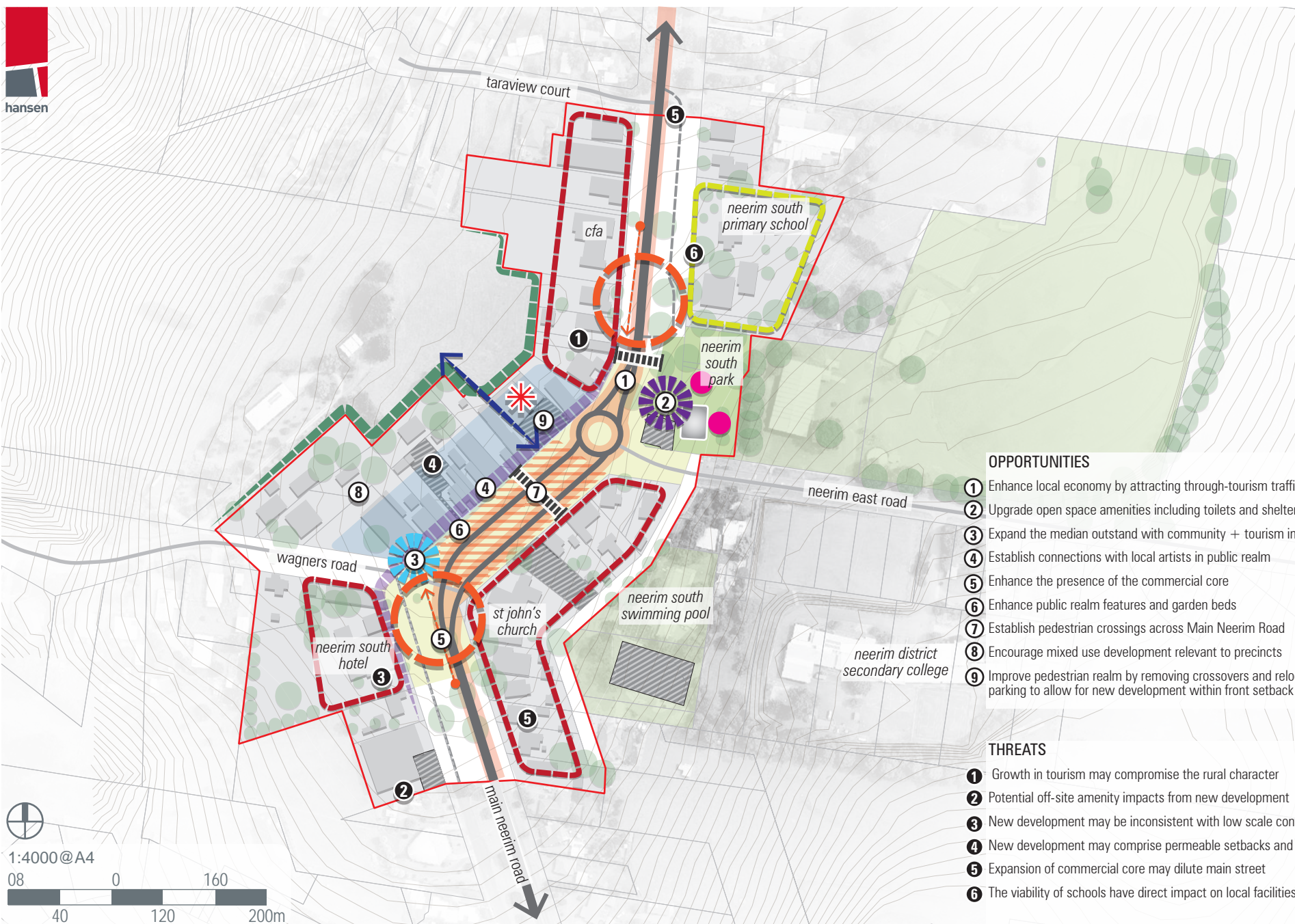
- study area boundary
- commercial core
- gateway
- retail anchor
- public toilet node
- public plaza
- boulevard planting
- playground/ skate park
- slope
- heritage overlay
- car park
- public open space
- main road
- local street
- service road
- contour

OPPORTUNITIES

- ① Enhance local economy by attracting through-tourism traffic
- ② Upgrade open space amenities including toilets and shelter
- ③ Expand the median outstand with community + tourism information
- ④ Establish connections with local artists in public realm
- ⑤ Enhance the presence of the commercial core
- ⑥ Enhance public realm features and garden beds
- ⑦ Establish pedestrian crossings across Main Neerim Road
- ⑧ Encourage mixed use development relevant to precincts
- ⑨ Improve pedestrian realm by removing crossovers and relocating car parking to allow for new development within front setback

THREATS

- ① Growth in tourism may compromise the rural character
- ② Potential off-site amenity impacts from new development
- ③ New development may be inconsistent with low scale context
- ④ New development may comprise permeable setbacks and landscape
- ⑤ Expansion of commercial core may dilute main street
- ⑥ The viability of schools have direct impact on local facilities





RECOMMENDATIONS

Vision & Objectives

A vision for Neerim South, as relates to the future of the town centre, was developed with reference to background analysis and findings and consultation with the local community.

Neerim South will be:

- *A vibrant town centre and the location for local business, retail and community activities providing a diverse range of goods, services and facilities for both residents and visitors;*
- *A township with a strong and distinctive sense of community pride that reflects the creative, historic and environmental features of the town;*
- *An attractive and vibrant tourism destination; and*
- *A community where residents have access to a quality pedestrian and cycle network linking to key services and facilities.*

The Urban Design Framework seeks to deliver the vision through a series of overarching objectives and key directions.

Objectives

The primary objectives for Neerim South are:

- To establish clearly defined gateways which seek to improve the recognition and identification of Neerim South along Main Neerim Road.
- To promote Neerim South within its wider regional Baw Baw tourism context.
- To maintain and enhance the appearance of the public realm within the town centre, including along Main Neerim Road.
- To ensure a safe and convenient pedestrian and cycling environment through the town centre.
- To improve access and connections to existing and new public open space within the surrounding street network.
- To maintain key views and outlook to agricultural and environmental surrounds.
- To provide opportunities for modest future commercial development.
- To provide opportunities for new low-scale medium density residential forms within walking distance to the town core and public transport.
- To provide versatile and functional public spaces within the town core for visitors and local residents to support informal social interaction and community events.
- To provide opportunities for consolidated and connected community-focused development within close proximity to the town centre.



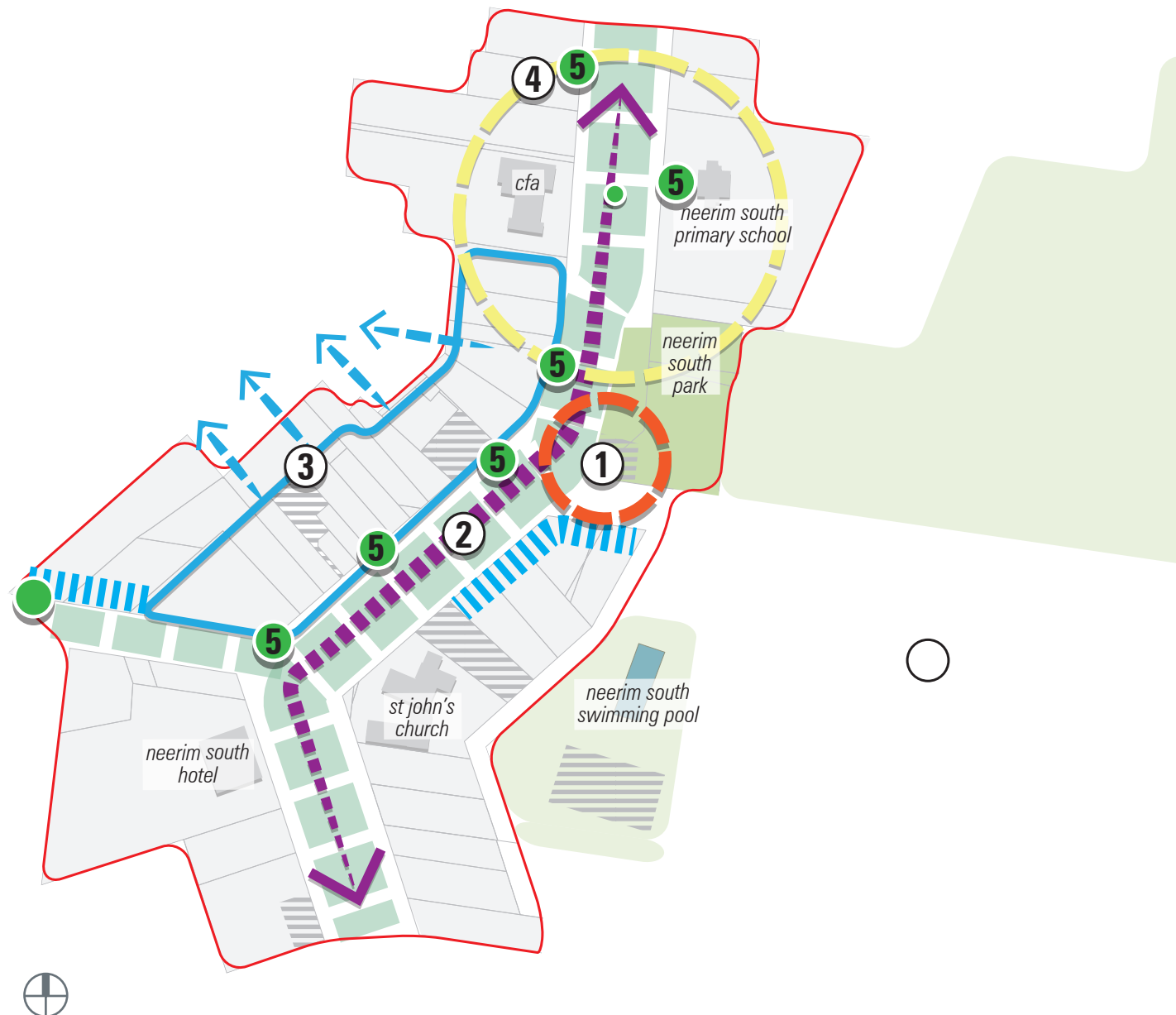
Existing sculpture within town centre

Key Directions

Based on an analysis of the issues and opportunities for the Neerim South study area, a series of Key Directions were determined, which outline important initiatives to achieve the outlined Vision and Objectives for the future of the township. The Key Directions are:

1. Upgrade and enhance the tourism node at the town centre.
2. Improve the ease and safety of movement of both vehicles and pedestrians.
3. Expand the commercial core to the west.
4. Enhance and establish new community uses and event spaces to the north.
5. Establish a series of small rest stops/ plazas through the town centre.

The following pages provide further detail of the delivery of initiatives through an Urban Design Framework, Public Realm and Landscape Plan as well as a Concept Plan for one of the identified key site planning areas.



The Urban Design Framework outlines a series of key principles and actions that will improve the function, image and capacity for growth within Neerim South. The focus of the Plan is to establish a framework for change that will lead to revitalisation, enhanced investment in and renewed community interest and ownership of the Township. The Framework plan is divided into three categories including Land Use, Built Form and Access and Movement, which seek to achieve the identified Key Directions. These are detailed below.

Land Use

- Clearly define Main Street area and focus public realm improvements here.
- Carefully plan and facilitate the expansion of the commercial core to the west.
- Encourage the redevelopment and intensification of commercial uses to the east of main Neerim road between the church and Neerim East Road.
- Consolidate and improve community uses in the northern portion of the town.
- Encourage the adaptive reuse and redevelopment in the north west of the town centre to facilitate community and tourism uses.
- Encourage the development of low scale (two storey maximum) medium density housing in the remainder of the town centre.
- Encourage the redevelopment (over time) of residential properties fronting Wagner street to medium density or other appropriate use (ie office or hospitality uses). Do not support any additional retail uses to this frontage.
- Provide opportunities for low-scale **medium density residential development** to the west of the town centre, providing outlook to pastoral land.

- Establish a **mixed-use precinct** to the rear of the supermarket site on vacant, flat land, to accommodate new commercial businesses and car parking.
- **Consolidate community uses** to the north of the town centre providing connections to the primary school, including investigation of new community hub building.
- Consider opportunities to **acquire the parcel of land** at 207 Main Neerim Road to accommodate any new community building (linked to the JD Algie Hall) and a new car parking area to the rear.
- Upgrade and **expand tourism node** to the corner of Wagners Road and Main Neerim Road, encompassing a paved plaza and pedestrian links between commercial uses to the north and south.
- Establish a series of **small plazas** and rest stops along Main Neerim Road.
- **Relocate service station** outside of the study area and encourage the development of new commercial uses at this corner.
- **Retain residential stock** to the south and north of the commercial core to form part of the township's identity and character at a critical gateway approach.

Built form

- Where possible, seek to retain and re-purpose **existing traditional forms** along Main Neerim Road for commercial and retail uses.
- Retain and build on the **fine grain frontages** of traditional built form and avoid wide frontages which are at odds with tradition strip 'feel'.
- Seek to provide **glazed/active frontages** along Main Neerim Road within town centre.
- New forms to provide a strong **built form presence at key corners** within community and commercial hubs.
- Encourage the integration of **tactile art** to blank walls within the town centre, particularly on blank walls to Wagners Road.
- Ensure that new built form is designed with **respect to the townships rural landscape character**. This includes the use of 'natural' materials such as wood and stone, forms no greater than two storeys and the incorporation of landscape setbacks and boundary planting beyond the commercial core of the town centre.
- Where possible, ensure new built form **seeks to frame views** to nearby hills and maximise outlook to pastoral land.
- Provide opportunities for **housing diversity** within the town centre including medium density townhouses and units within close proximity to the commercial core in identified locations.
- Implement a new sensitively designed **public amenities building** at Neerim South Park incorporating tourism facilities and improved surveillance from the commercial core and open space.

- Encourage new built form to be built to boundary to Wagner Road to create a stronger built form edge.
- Encourage the retention of older varied built form for adaption and reuse to preserve the character of the town.
- Do not support any additional at grade car parking to Main Neerim Road frontages within the town centre.

Access and Movement

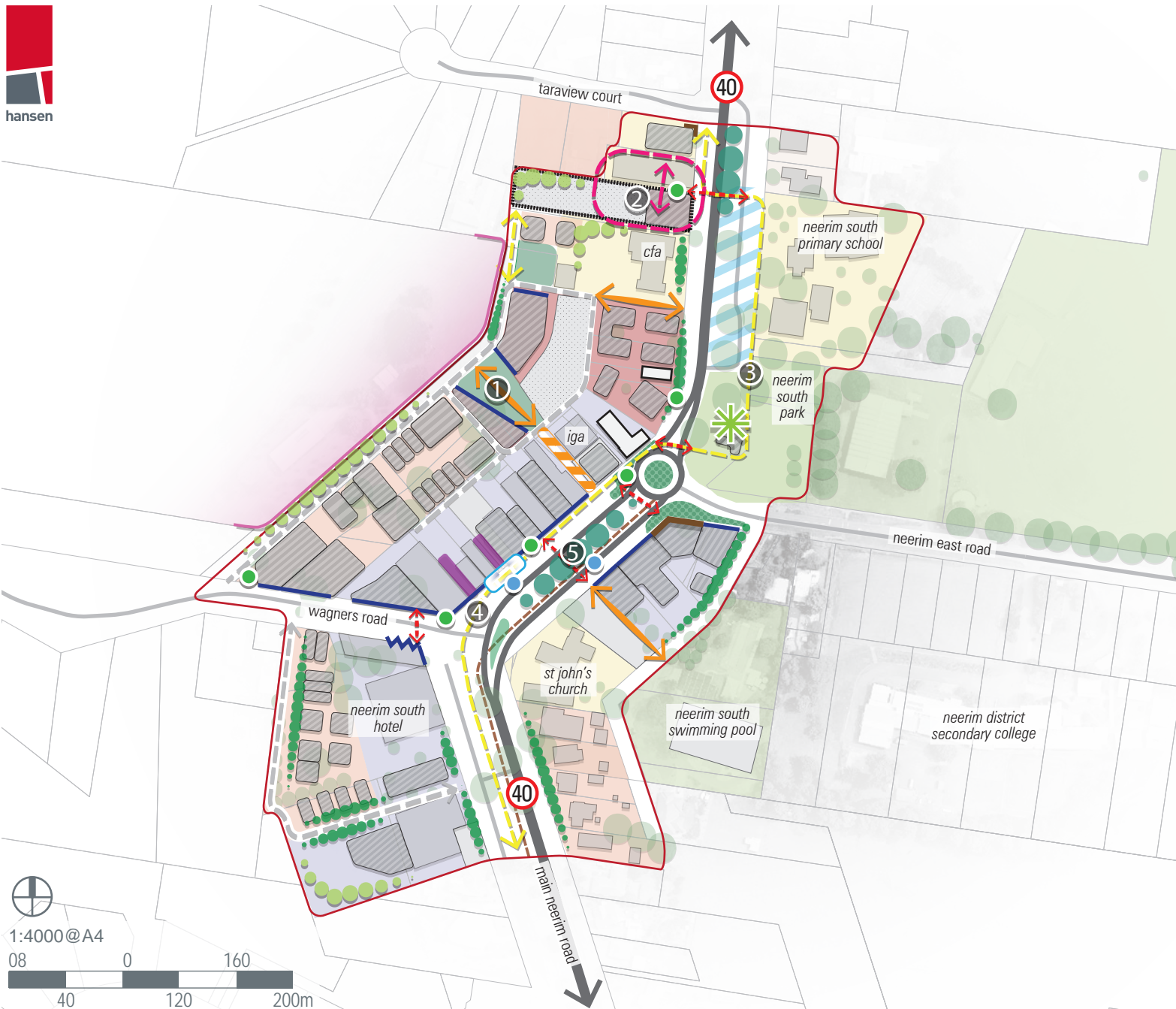
- **Reduce speed limits** along Main Neerim Road within the town centre to 40km/hr.
- Establish a **signalised pedestrian** crossing from Neerim South Primary School across Main Neerim Road.
- Seek to establish **new access ways** along the western boundary of the town centre, providing access to new mixed use and residential development.
- Utilise the existing access reserve between 203 and 207 Main Neerim Road to **provide access to rear car parking areas**, and initiate discussions with the CFA to implement a future north south connection at the rear of their site to any future development west of the commercial core.
- Where possible, **remove crossovers** along commercial strip to the west from Main Neerim Road to reduce pedestrian and vehicle conflict.
- Implement a **rear access-way** to ensure commercial businesses to Main Neerim Road are provided with vehicle access.
- Seek to **realign the north-bound bus stop** to improve commuter safety.
- Establish **key pedestrian and cycle connections** from the commercial precinct to the south through to the community precinct to the north.
- Improve **pedestrian crossings** in key locations along Main Neerim Road.
- Improve pedestrian environment and appearance of central median on Main Neerim Road by **replacing car parking with a landscape planting zone** following construction of additional town centre car parking to the west of existing shops.

- **Upgrade pedestrian crossing** through central median incorporating a new pedestrian zone and marked crossings connecting the town centre with the swimming pool.
- Establish **new pedestrian links** from Main Neerim Road to new mixed use development area, including to the south of the CFA site as part of any future redevelopment of 181-187 Main Neerim Road.

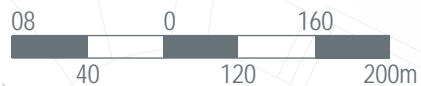
NEERIM SOUTH URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

legend

commercial		study area boundary	
mixed use / tourism		key pedestrian connections	
low scale (1-2 storey)		new pedestrian link	
medium density development		new or improved pedestrian crossing	
low density residential development		encourage establishment of future accessway	
community / education		shared accessway	
enhance existing public open space		retain boulevard planting	
areas of new public open space		revitalise picnic/tourism node	
key site planning areas		develop series of small plazas / rest stops	
town centre expansion area	1	consider acquisition to create community hub	
community hub development	2	encourage rear access to reduce crossovers	
neerim south park and event space masterplan	3	redefine bus stop	
town entry plaza	4	enhanced landscape setback	
median rehabilitation area	5	implement new boundary planting	
		strong presence to mark corner	
		establish or strengthen active frontage	
		encourage integration of tactile art to blank wall	
		relocate powerline underground	
		encourage repurposing of old buildings for tourism or community use	
		indicative infill form	
		existing built form	
		shared space (carparking + events)	
		consider potential acquisition to extend community hub/ car parking	
		new consolidated carparking area	
		existing carparking area	



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The image and identity of the public realm plays a particularly important role in attracting residents, visitors and businesses into the township. While Neerim South has a well-established landscape presence associated with its role as a key resting point to Mount Baw Baw, there remains areas where formalised pedestrian links and upgraded tourism-based uses are most required.

The following Public Realm and Landscape Framework Plan seeks to achieve improvements to the overall image of the township as a stimulant of investment. Such improvements are typically aimed at addressing the lack of marked pedestrian crossings, public gathering nodes and connections with the cultural features of the town.

The following actions describe the framework for Neerim South's public realm:

- Celebrate art and culture within township through the integration of a **public art and sculpture program** along Main Neerim Road within private and public land.
- Establish **consistent canopy planting** to either side of Main Neerim Road to complement the existing mature boulevard planting within the central median.
- Establish **new understorey landscaping** effects to complement existing canopy vegetation and investigate longer term options to reduce median car parking. This reduction of car parking should be replaced by additional car parking elsewhere in the town centre.
- Incorporate a **paved pedestrian zone** within central median including seating and signage.
- Establish **canopy planting and landscape effects** along the study area boundary to soften commercial and residential uses and complement pastoral outlooks.

- Expand and **upgrade the existing tourism node** at Wagners Road incorporating new paving, seating and signage.
- Relocate and **consolidate memorial statues** from town centre to Neerim South Park.
- **Upgrade the public amenities node at Neerim South Park incorporating** new public toilets, seating and way finding signage.
- Reduce car parking bays at Neerim South Park public car park to **allow improved footpath connections** along Neerim East Road. Promote additional parking at Primary School service road.
- Provide a **formal, marked pedestrian crossing** across Main Neerim Road connecting existing and future commercial uses.
- Establish stronger guidelines for **advertising signage** within the town centre to reduce visual dominance.
- Encourage the **consolidation of signage and other street furniture** to reduce visual clutter.



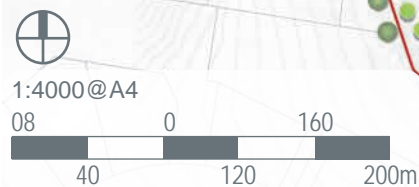
Potential new landscape planting along central median

NEERIM SOUTH URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

PUBLIC REALM & LANDSCAPE

legend

- study area boundary
- establish gateways with landscaping & signage
- establish public art/sculpture program to main road
- existing wide footpath
- extend footpath paving in commercial core
- upgrade and enhance nature strip
- maintain/enhance footpath
- upgrade pedestrian crossing
- new pedestrian link
- shared accessway
- retain boulevard planting
- establish boulevard planting along key streets
- additional boundary planting
- establish new canopy tree planting for succession
- improve picnic area/toilets/landscaping
- establish pocket park/plaza
- wayfinding / tourism signage
- seating node
- public toilet
- small plaza / rest spot
- upgrade and enhance landscape
- critical landscape opportunity
- retain existing vegetation where appropriate
- retain strategic view to hills
- relocate car park
- shared space (carparking/events)
- encourage rear access to reduce crossovers
- enhance public open space



Main Neerim Road (Town Centre)

Key Issues and Opportunities

The intersection surrounding Wagners Road and Main Neerim Road is currently unremarkable and represents a gap in the streetscape and overall legibility of the town centre. The intersection currently disconnects the main retail core to the north from hospitality, commercial and health-based uses to the south. Further, the existing tourism node including seating and information signage is considered inadequate to encourage additional tourists and visitors. Surveillance and outlook from neighbouring businesses is also lacking, which is considered a great concern at this important junction to the township. The central median to the north of this node lacks clear pedestrian links or appealing landscape effects. The existing mature canopy trees are a key feature to the public realm and identity of the township and require understorey improvements to enhance their impact.

Refer to existing conditions photos below:



existing car parking along central median



intersection conditions at Wager Road



existing street furniture at tourism node

Design Intent

The intention for the Main Neerim Road median is to revitalise what is currently an under utilised area of left over spaces and create a connected tourism and community plaza which will integrate the commercial core with new uses and provide upgraded pedestrian connections to community uses.

This area will include improved public open spaces and incorporate a paved zone comprising seating, signage and landscape opportunities.

Passive surveillance and outlook will be integral to this design response, ensuring any new development to street interfaces are appropriately managed.

Key Gestures



A series of key gestures for the detailed concept plan were developed, which outline how the design intent for the focused area will be most effectively achieved. These include:

1. Expand plaza at Wagner Road / Main Neerim Road outstand and incorporate new seating and signage.
2. In the shorter term, redesign central median including the establishment of new understorey landscape planting and a new centrally located paved pedestrian zone.
3. Encourage formal pedestrian crossing from swimming pool to retail core.
4. Improve and maintain existing garden beds within commercial core, particularly at Neerim East Road roundabout.
5. Establish active/glazed frontages to Wagner Road and incorporate new pedestrian crossing to improve connectivity.

NEERIM SOUTH URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

MAIN NEERIM ROAD

legend

study area boundary	
pedestrian priority zone	
key pedestrian connection	
future access to car parking	
new pedestrian crossing	
establish central median	
pedestrian zone	
bus bay	
bus stop	
relocate sculpture to park	
sculpture	
information signage	
seating	
ensure passive surveillance to plaza	
new landscaping	
retain existing canopy vegetation	
medium to long term succession boulevard planting	
existing footpath	
glazing to street frontage	
potential new built form	
existing built form	
encourage integration of tactile art to blank wall	
relocate powerline underground	
disabled parking bay	

KEY GESTURES

- Expand plaza at Wagner Road / Main Neerim Road outstand and incorporate new seating and signage.
- Retain angled carpark in the short term. In the medium - long term, when carparking replaced, expand median to allow for succession planting.
- Encourage formal pedestrian crossing from swimming pool to retail core.
- Improve and maintain existing garden beds within commercial core.
- Establish active/glazed frontages and pedestrian crossing to Wagner Road.



These design guidelines are not intended to be applied in all cases within the Neerim South town centre. Rather they suggest a basis for what elements might be required to achieve an improved urban design outcome within the centre. Guidelines for commercial or residential areas should be considered where these are identified on the urban design framework, rather than based on existing land use zoning. Mixed use areas may require an amalgam of these guidelines.

Commercial Guidelines

Building Height

- Built form along primary commercial streets should not exceed the parapet height of the taller abutting built form.
- New built form on vacant (island) sites should not exceed 2 storeys (9m).

Building Design

- The design of new buildings should be well proportioned with respect to surrounding built form and include high quality details such as durable window frames and articulated entries.
- Encourage contemporary design that draws inspiration from landscape and built form character.
- Retain the integrity of surrounding heritage forms and streetscapes. Mock heritage building forms should be avoided.
- New built form should incorporate high quality, durable finishes and textures which reflect the rural character of the municipality, including but not limited to brick, stone and timber products.
- The material palette of new buildings should have consideration towards muted, earthy tones, which are consistent with the rural or landscape character of the township.

- The design of new buildings should incorporate highly functional and adaptable spaces to accommodate various uses over time.
- Buildings should be designed to a minimum 6-star energy rating and reflect Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles.
- Energy efficient material selections such as durable and/or recycled materials and organic compounds to achieve a sustainable outcome are encouraged.
- For corner sites, buildings should address both street frontages and avoid the presentation of blank, inactive walls.

Street Interface

- Buildings in the commercial core should reflect zero setbacks to achieve good retail activation at ground level.
- A minimum 70% of the street frontage should be transparent glazing.
- Upper level setbacks are required where it is necessary to match an abutting parapet.
- Ensure entrances to buildings are oriented to the street frontage and are legible from long range views across the street.
- Ensure new built form provides glazed street frontages at the ground level to allow passive surveillance to the street.
- Seek to retain the fine grain pattern of form along key commercial streets. Wide, inactive street walls are highly discouraged.
- Where hospitality uses are proposed, operable glazed frontages are encouraged to allow active uses to 'spill' onto the street.

Vehicle access

- Vehicle access points along fine grain commercial streets should be avoided. Alternatively, access should be provided to side streets or rear lanes.
- Loading and unloading of vehicles should be sited and designed to avoid pedestrian and vehicle conflict. Seek to locate on-site where possible.
- Ensure on-site car parking is located to have a minimal visual impact to the streetscape. Where possible, avoid parking between building frontages and the street.
- On-site car parking should ensure vehicle access is designed to prioritise pedestrian movement and safety. Seek to implement designated pedestrian crossings within onsite car parks to maximise pedestrian safety and legibility of wayfinding.

Signage

- Business identification signage should be integrated into the design of the building as to not be visually dominant.
- Signage should not protrude above the parapet and be sited below the building eave.
- The proportion and scale of signage should complement the prevailing signage character in the streetscape.
- The illumination of signs is discouraged. Where illuminated signs are considered appropriate, ensure light spill to nearby residential land is avoided.
- Street panel signs, sandwich board signs and projecting signs located above cantilevered awnings are discouraged.

Weather protection

- To commercial streets, new built form should be designed to provide a permanent form of weather protection, such as a veranda, awning or canopy, to the public realm, extending to the back-of-kerb line

- Cantilevered verandas are encouraged, but development should avoid supporting posts and barriers.
- Ensure new verandas, awnings or canopies complement the prevailing height, scale and materiality of existing structures.

Landscape and fencing

- Where possible, seek to retain existing canopy vegetation and incorporate into site design of new commercial form.
- Where street setbacks are proposed, new built form should incorporate landscape planting as part of the overall site design. Including but not limited to canopy trees, shrubs and ground covers.
- Fencing to the primary street frontage should be avoided.
- Native vegetation including Eucalyptus Strezlecki trees to be retained and encouraged where possible.

Residential Guidelines

Building Height

- Consolidated residential development in fringe areas to a scale of 1-3 storeys is encouraged.
- The arrangement of height should have regard to residential interfaces and provide transitions to lower forms where appropriate.

Building Design

- The design of new dwellings should be contemporary yet sympathetic to the prevailing character of residential forms within the surrounds.
- Retain the integrity of surrounding heritage forms and streetscapes. Replica heritage building forms should be avoided.

- The roof form should complement the prevailing character within the surrounding residential context (i.e. pitched, hipped or gable as predominant in the streetscape).
- Where possible, incorporate the third level into roof form.
- Utilise traditional building materials in a contemporary manner including but not limited to masonry, weatherboard and timber.
- The material palette of new buildings should have consideration towards muted, natural tones, which are consistent with the rural or landscape character of the township.

Streetscape presentation

- Street setbacks should reflect the existing prevailing setback condition in the streetscape.
- Front setbacks should incorporate generous landscape response and avoid the use of visitor car parking.
- Wide or consolidated frontages should incorporate breaks in building mass to reflect the existing grain of residential form in the streetscape.
- Dwelling entries should be oriented to the front elevation (street) and clearly legible from the public realm. This may include the use of porches.
- Windows should be incorporated into the street frontage
- Ensure service related structures are not visible from the street. This includes clotheslines, bin receptacles, services meters, air conditioners, solar panels and hot water systems.

Side and rear setbacks

- New residential development should provide generous side setbacks (up to 2m) to allow for the provision of landscape and pedestrian path along boundaries.

Vehicle access

- For two or more dwellings, seek to utilise one crossover to the site. Multiple crossovers are discouraged.
- Vehicle driveways and pedestrian paths should be clearly distinguished from the street.

Landscape

- Existing canopy trees should be retained and incorporated into the site design where appropriate. This includes within front and rear setbacks.
- Front setbacks should provide a minimum 50% permeable surfaces including but not limited to garden beds, lawn areas, gravel and permeable paving.
- Drought tolerant and hardy plant species are encouraged.
- Residential development applications must comprise a landscape plan specifying hardscape and softscape finishes (i.e. paved areas, trees, garden beds etc.)

Fencing

- To the primary street frontage, fencing should not exceed a height of 1.2m and provide a minimum 50% permeability.
- Maximum height of side and rear fences are 1.8m.
- For corner allotments, high, solid fencing may be provided along a secondary street frontage provided it does not exceed 40% of the length of the boundary.
- Materials and finishes of fencing should be complementary to the rural character of the municipality.

An urban design framework sets the vision and parameters for development in an area. However, critical to the success of any framework is the implementation which follows.

As such the following actions are recommended to implement the Neerim South UDF.

Planning scheme changes

A Design and Development Overlay based on the strategies outlined in this document and the design guidelines identified from Page 35 should be drafted and implemented through the Baw Baw Planning Scheme. As with any amendment to the planning scheme, this will go through a formal exhibition process allowing further community and landowner input to the process.

Changes should also be made to Clause 21.04 of the planning scheme to reflect the outcomes of the UDF. Specifically:

- The objective for the town centre should be refined and integrated into local policy.
- The Structure Plan map should be updated to clearly identify the defined town centre area, and the Mixed Use Zone recommendations relating to the large parcel to the immediate west of the town centre should be removed and adjusted to reflect the outcomes of the UDF.

A number of areas within or adjacent to the town centre should also be considered for rezoning or have Overlays applied. These areas are:

- Land to the west of the town centre where expansion of the town core is proposed should also be rezoned from the Low Density Residential Zone to Commercial 1 Zone. The remaining land should be retained in the Low Density Residential Zone. While a Mixed Use Zone is flagged for the entire site in Clause 21.04, this is not supported as it may lead to dilution of the town core. Further, the topography of the land means that the larger lot sizes required under the Low Density Residential Zone would be more appropriate. As part of any rezoning a Development Plan Overlay should also be applied to all land to the west of the Main Street strip. This is not only required to coordinate development of the various land parcels but also responds to the necessity of the partial rezoning of a large landholding, which is not a preferred approach. In addition, a Development Plan Overlay could provide guidance on the appropriate siting and design measures that will ensure views from the town centre to the west are not compromised by future residential development.
- Consideration should also be given to rezoning the areas of public park / recreation facilities in the town centre from Public Conservation and Resource Zone to Public Park and Recreation Zone to better reflect their current usage.
- Consideration should also be given to rezoning the single residential parcel at the corner of Neerim East Road and Swaffield Road to the Commercial 1 Zone to provide greater flexibility of use.
- Consider the use of the Public Acquisition Overlay to facilitate public vehicular access to the expanded commercial core as part of any rezoning.

- In addition, land on the eastern side of the Main Neerim Road, south of the church should be rezoned from Commercial 1 Zone to the General Residential Zone (GRZ1). The rationale for this rezoning is to prevent the further dispersal of the retail core and to encourage the consolidation of the town centre to the rear of the existing main street strip. While the Residential Growth Zone was considered, the particular characteristics of this area and the township more generally mean that this would not be appropriate and the flexibility inherent in the General Residential Zone will be sufficient to facilitate the medium density development sought by the Urban Design Framework.

Key site planning

key site 1: town centre expansion area

The flat land to the rear of the main street is identified as accommodating an expansion of the town centre. It is envisaged this area will comprise a mix of uses, including expanded retail and commercial opportunities, tourism uses including accommodation and medium density residential development. This area should also include access roads, new parks / public spaces and a large car park to accommodate additional needs and allow for the longer term redesign of the central median. Given the importance of this site, Council should lead the masterplanning of this area, in conjunction with landowners which should be implemented into the Baw Baw Planning Scheme as a DPO (see previous section on planning scheme changes)

key site 2: community precinct

Undertake investigations around the development of a community hub. As a starting point investigations should be undertaken to confirm community needs in relation to facilities to be accommodated in the northern community hub, and the optimal ways of delivering these.

The potential role of the parcel of land to the south in accommodating additional community facilities and car parking should also be investigated. Any development should also include consideration of connections between the existing JD Algie Hall and any new facilities. If possible the existing garage form should be retained and integrated into any development but it is understood that this may be difficult given the condition of the building and potential contamination. Any car parking provided should be located to the rear of the site to ensure an active frontage is provided to Main Neerim Road.

key site 3: neerim south park and event space

Undertake a masterplan process to redevelop the existing car park / service road and Neerim South Park to provide a more integrated community and tourism focal point. This should include the retention of car parking spaces but the redesign of this area as a shared space. Long bay and tourist parking should be integrated in the southern part of the area, including relocating parking from the key corner. Public toilet and picnic facilities should be improved as part of this process. Integration of the shed area to the east and potential inclusion of a men's shed in this area should also be explored. In addition, removal of the existing car parking area to the roundabout corner should be investigated with the aim of providing a footpath connection to the recreation reserve from the Main Neerim Road crossing and improving landscape presentation of this key corner.

key site 4: town entry plaza

Undertake a masterplan process for the area at the intersection of Wagners Road and Main Neerim Road identified as the Town Entry Plaza. This is intended to remove the existing three car parking spaces (which should be replaced along Wagners Road) in order to create a town entry plaza. This could then accommodate smaller scale community events.

The master planning process should also consider if the integration of a suitably designed shelter could be incorporated into the plaza to allow use in inclement weather. In addition, the more functional arrangement of seating and signage should also be investigated. As the town centre evolves and additional car parking and access to the rear of commercial properties is established to the west, consideration should also be given to the reconfiguration of the adjacent bus stop.

key site 5: central median

Improvements to the central median area are seen as important to the long term protection of Neerim South's character, and associated tourism industry. However, it is important that changes to the central median area are conducted in a staged manner;

- In the shorter term, establishment of a central pedestrian crossing point and plaza should occur. Street furniture within the central median should be consolidated into this plaza. This is an important addition with positive implications for local amenity and road safety. Surrounding the plaza, new understorey and groundcover planting should be implemented to help discourage foot traffic. Currently, pedestrian foot traffic limits growth and temporary fencing may be needed as vegetation establishes.
- In the medium-long term - as new car parking areas are provided in the expanded commercial areas to the west of Main Street - removal of the 17 car parking spaces in the central median should be investigated. This would allow the median to be expanded and the establishment of a second row of canopy trees, ensuring that new canopy vegetation can establish prior to the death of the existing trees.
- This process should be guided by a landscape masterplan and should investigate options for new central median tree species. Consultation with the community should form part of this process given the importance of this vegetation to the township's identity. Undergrounding of powerlines will also be critical at this stage. The masterplan should also review opportunities for additional parallel parking on the eastern side of Main Neerim Road.
- The removal of parking should be staged and at no time should a short fall of easily accessible spaces occur.

