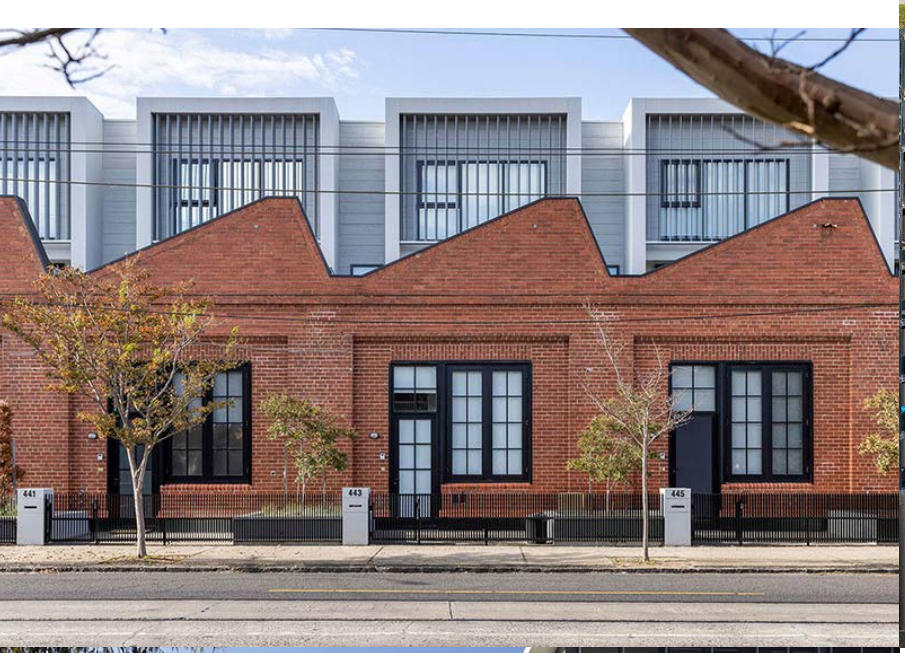
Maribyrnong Housing Strategy

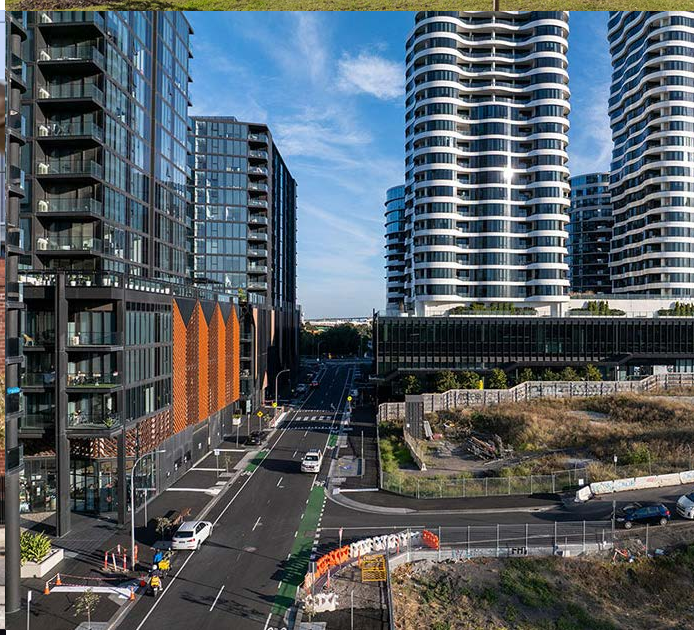
Discussion Paper

June 2025





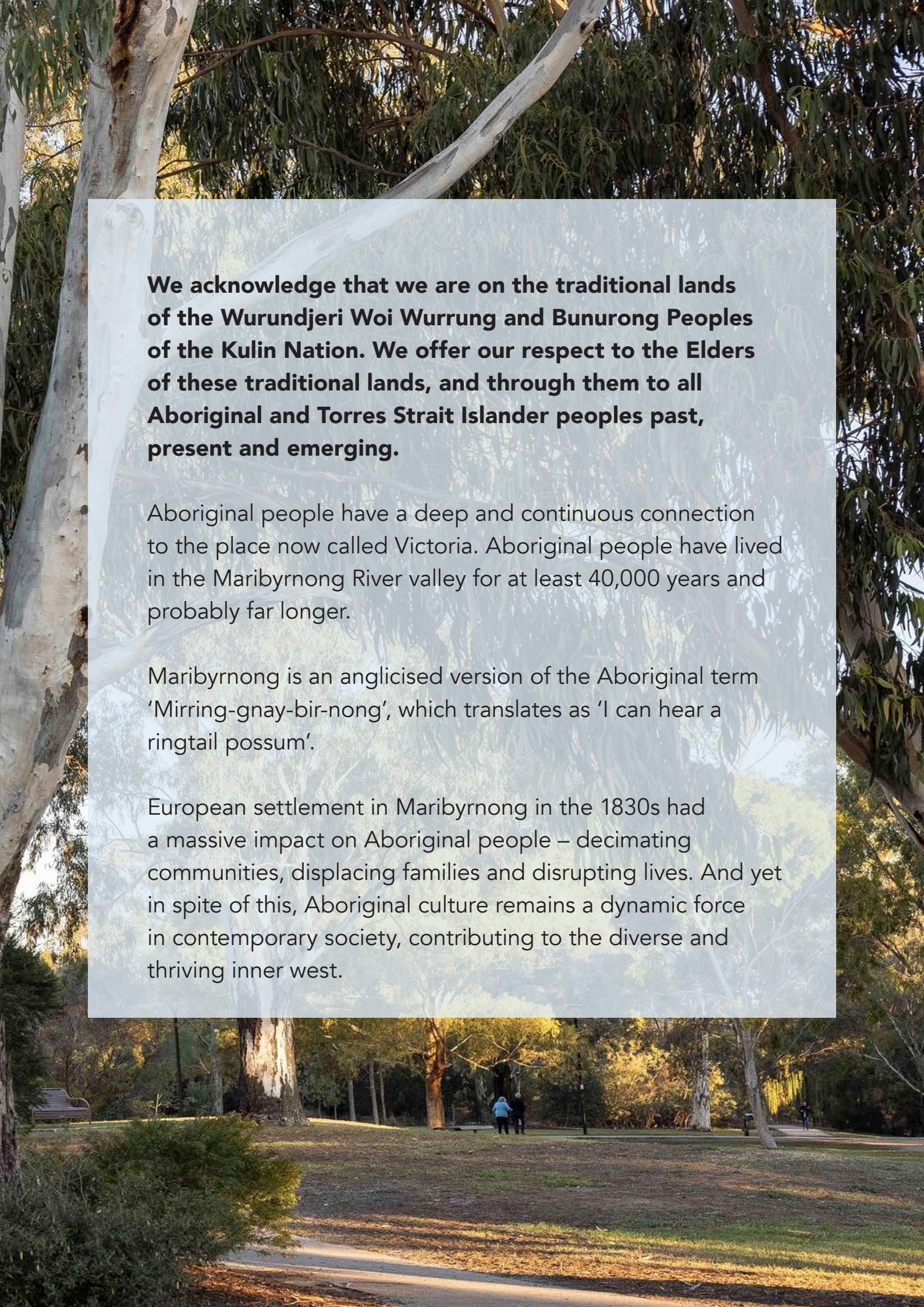






Maribyrnong
CITY COUNCIL





We acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong Peoples of the Kulin Nation. We offer our respect to the Elders of these traditional lands, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past, present and emerging.

Aboriginal people have a deep and continuous connection to the place now called Victoria. Aboriginal people have lived in the Maribyrnong River valley for at least 40,000 years and probably far longer.

Maribyrnong is an anglicised version of the Aboriginal term 'Mirring-gnay-bir-nong', which translates as 'I can hear a ringtail possum'.

European settlement in Maribyrnong in the 1830s had a massive impact on Aboriginal people – decimating communities, displacing families and disrupting lives. And yet in spite of this, Aboriginal culture remains a dynamic force in contemporary society, contributing to the diverse and thriving inner west.



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In 25 years, the City of Maribyrnong will need twice as many homes as it does now to house a rapidly growing and changing community.

This will be needed to ensure we meet the State Government's target for the City of Maribyrnong to facilitate 48,000 new homes by 2051. That's equivalent to building 35 new Caroline Spring sized estates or 86 Eureka towers.

Whilst neither of these approaches will be suitable for the City of Maribyrnong, it is important that we plan for the future to provide guidance on how we will manage this change while enhancing our neighbourhoods. This will also be vital for addressing climate challenges and in catering for the varied needs of our community.

In planning for this change, we have prepared this Discussion Paper to stimulate an informed community conversation with you, to get your ideas and feedback on how we can get this right.

1 INTRODUCTION

This Discussion Paper aims to continue the conversation with our community about how we plan for housing over the next 25 years (to 2051). It seeks to stimulate engagement on the municipality's key housing challenges and opportunities, to help us shape a new Maribyrnong Housing Strategy.

How your feedback will shape our Housing Strategy

Housing affects everyone, and it's important that the Maribyrnong Housing Strategy reflects the experiences, needs and aspirations of our local community. Community engagement helps us to understand what matters most to people living, studying and working in the City of Maribyrnong, including where you see opportunities for housing growth and change to occur.

Throughout this process, we invite you to share your views. Your feedback helps us test ideas, identify local priorities, and shape practical actions for the future. What we hear from you will inform the draft Housing Strategy, from the vision and goals through to the approaches and future actions. Once finalised, the strategy will be implemented through a range of tools, including an amendment to the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme, which will require approval from the Minister for Planning.

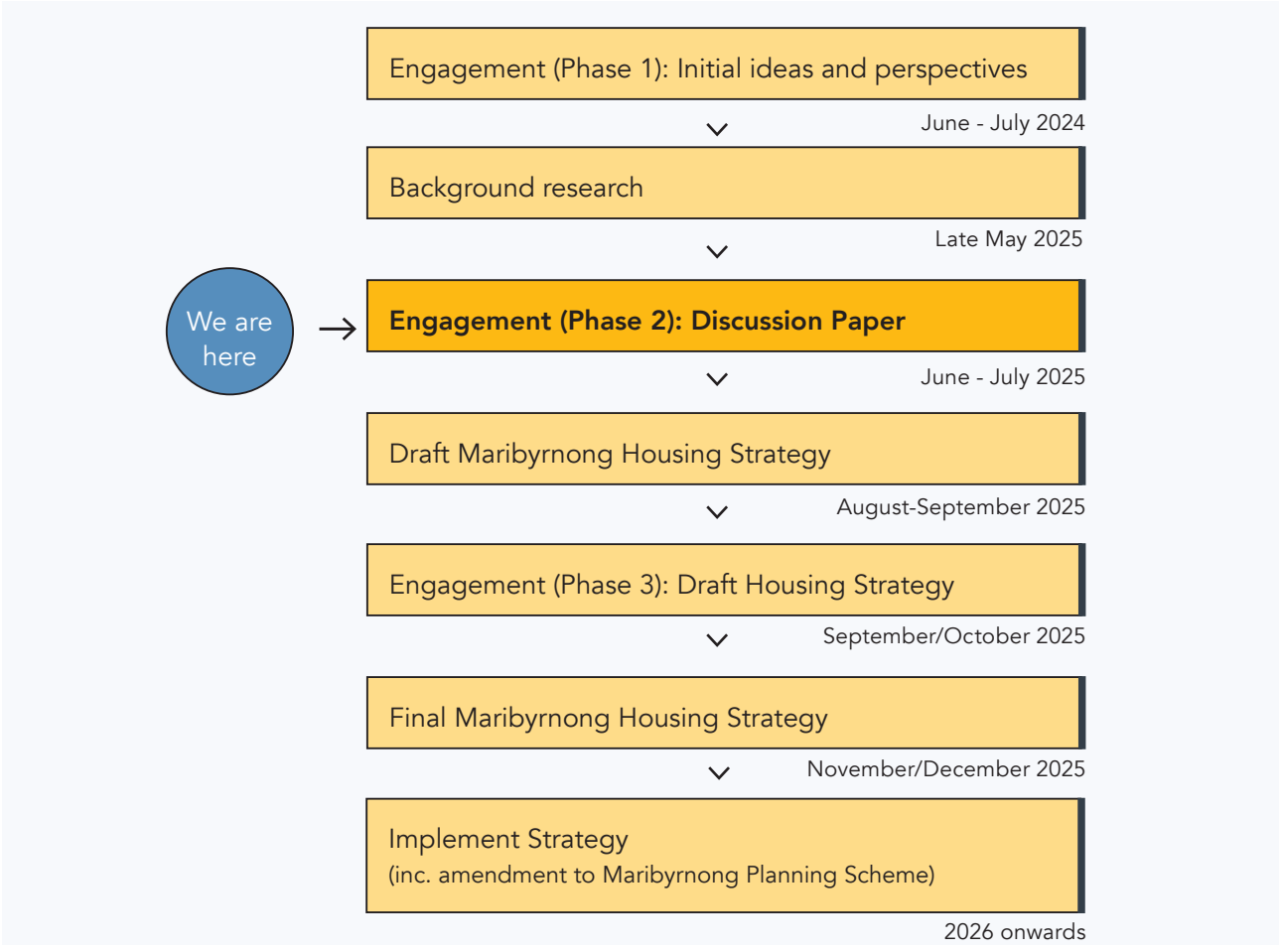


Figure 1. Key project stages

What is a housing strategy?

As our municipality evolves and changes over time, so do the housing needs of our community. To ensure that our City remains a great place to live, work, study and visit, we need to make decisions about what's important for the future.

A Housing Strategy is an important document that guides long-term decision-making by Council around housing development. As such, it will provide the basis for changes to the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme. The Planning Scheme is a legal document that outlines the rules and policies that people must follow before developing. It contains:

- Zones, like residential zones for housing and commercial and industrial zones for workplaces.
- Overlays, which cover areas which might be affected by flooding, have special design standards, protect heritage or where developer contributions might apply.
- Other planning provisions, like requirements for parking spaces or open space.

A Housing Strategy considers key factors that affect all of us, such as:

- The types of housing we need to accommodate our diverse and growing population.
- The preferred design and character of our neighbourhoods and suburbs.
- Managing housing-related climate challenges and risks.
- The most suitable locations for housing growth and change.

A Housing Strategy, can also identify actions for Council beyond what goes in the Planning Scheme, based on what might be needed to achieve holistic housing outcomes, or as a basis for advocacy to state and federal governments.



What can a housing strategy influence?

Whilst a Housing Strategy has a big job to do and will make a substantial impact in shaping growth and housing, it can't do everything. Below we've made a short list with some big examples of what a Housing Strategy can do and cannot do.

The Maribyrnong Housing Strategy will...

- Align with State Planning Policy to guide housing growth in Maribyrnong.
- Be informed by evidence and community engagement.
- Identify locations that are best suited for increased housing delivery.
- Include design guidelines to reflect future preferred neighbourhood character values in new development where possible.
- Identify actions to enhance housing affordability, design, diversity and sustainability.
- Seek an understanding of the growing and changing needs of our community.

The Maribyrnong Housing Strategy can't...

- Conflict with state policy requiring Council to facilitate 48,000 dwellings within the municipality by 2051.
- Decide who can and cannot design and develop housing.
- Stop or restrict population growth. It instead *must* plan for it.
- Directly mandate certain building types be constructed.
- Directly control housing prices or rents.
- Set future migration or population policy.
- Plan-out specific infrastructure like new road alignments, bus routes, community facilities or open spaces.

Figure 2. What a Housing Strategy can and can't do

Why we need a housing strategy

Our City is changing – and rapidly. With our population expected to grow by 40% by 2051, we'll need tens of thousands of new homes to meet this demand. The State Government has set a target for the municipality to make room for **48,000 new homes** by 2051. But it's not just about more housing – it's about planning for the right housing, in the right places that meet the needs of everyone in our community now and in the future. This is why we need a Housing Strategy, to address contemporary challenges facing the City of Maribyrnong, some of which are shown below.

We have enough land supply – but delivery of new homes is lagging

Our current housing framework suggests we may have capacity for over 60,000 new homes. But there's a gap between what could be built and what actually is being built. This is reflected in numerous sites which are vacant or underutilised despite having planning approval. It is important planning rules make it possible and practical to build the types of homes we need.

We're a diverse community with different needs

Over 40% of our residents are born overseas, a quarter of our households are families and a third are single-person households. Our community, like many across Greater Melbourne is ageing, but we are also home to a growing number of families and tertiary students. Our housing mix needs to reflect a range of different needs based on cultural aspects, life stages, and lifestyles.

Too many people are struggling to find a home they can afford

25% of households are facing housing stress and many of these households earn $650 a week or less. Over 1,000 people are homeless or marginally housed (i.e. do not have a secure long-term home). If no action is taken, we could need over 7,000 additional affordable homes by 2036 (see pages 24-29 for more information).

People are moving out west!

Historical migration flows suggests that many new residents are moving in from inner city areas and eastern suburbs – and existing residents are moving out to other parts of Melbourne's west. Our Housing Strategy will need to identify ways for our City to be a place of choice for all people living here now and into the future.

Climate and environmental risks are growing

Some parts of our City are significantly hotter than others and some are at risk of flooding. We need to plan for greener, more sustainable housing in response to the climate crisis.

Housing quality matters

Many townhouses and apartments being built today don't meet best-practice standards for space, light, and energy efficiency. Poorly designed and low quality housing negatively impacts people's health, comfort, and cost of living.

We need to manage change while protecting what's valued

As we grow, there are many new styles of housing blending in with older styles which have characterised Maribyrnong over the last century. We need to investigate what tools we can use to facilitate growth while also wanting to protect and strengthen what features we value.

There are many barriers to housing supply

Many sites across our City are underutilised, fragmented or sitting vacant. Market conditions like labour shortages, construction costs, and land banking, are slowing delivery. This limits housing choices and keeps prices high.

Who is responsible for housing & managing growth?

Planning for housing is a collaborative process that involves everyone in our community. Each level of government is responsible for planning, delivering and directing housing growth in different ways, as summarised in **Figure 3.**

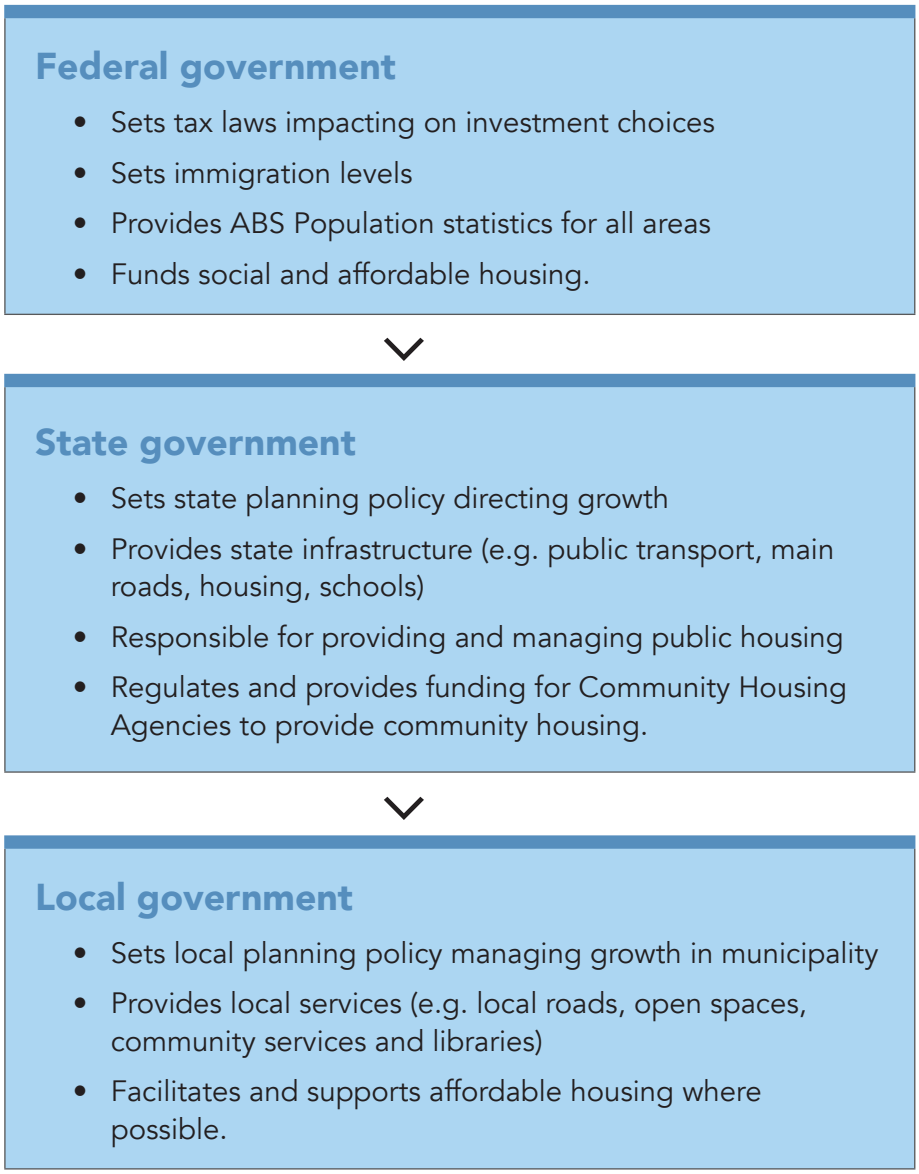
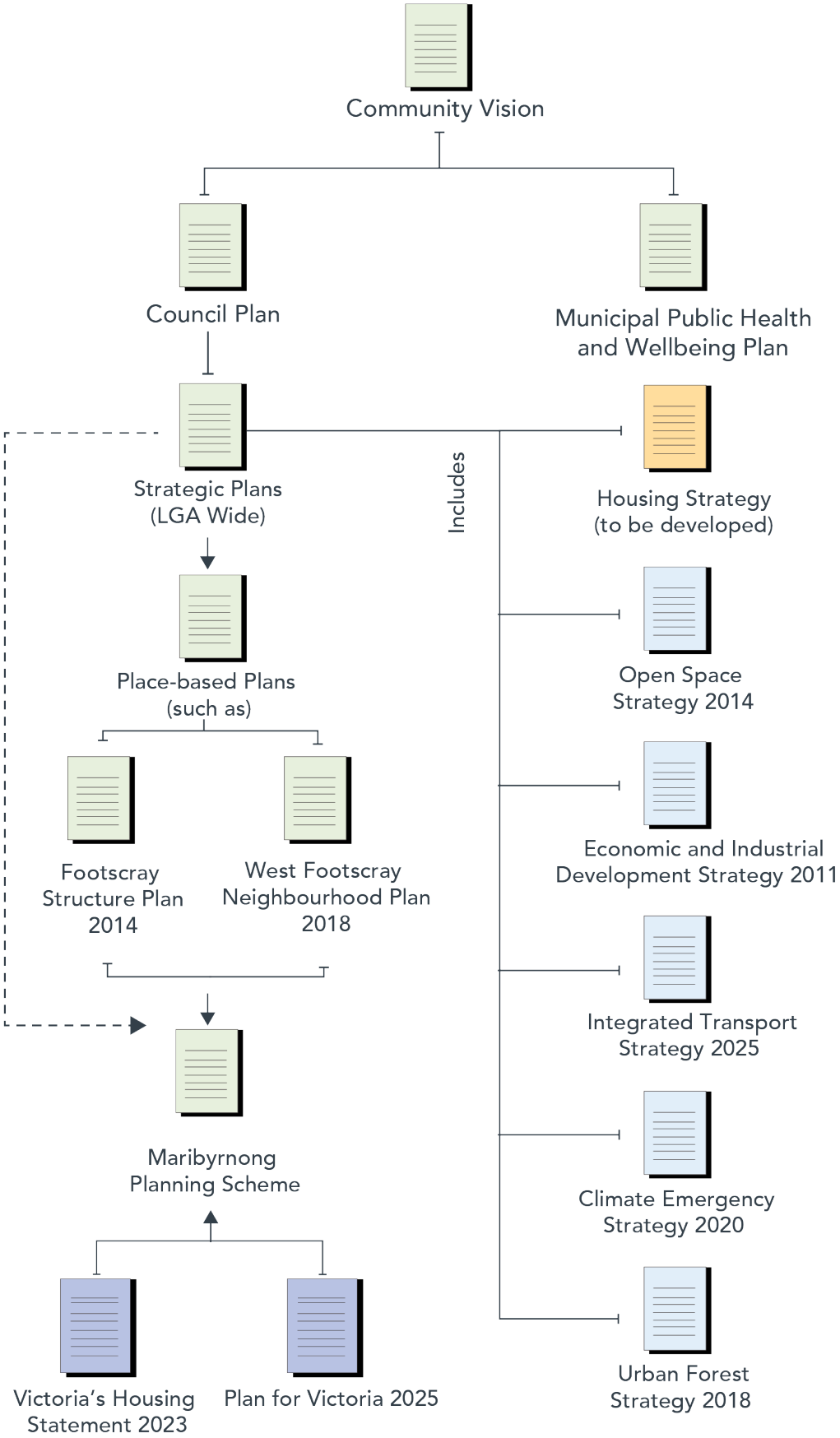


Figure 3. Key responsibilities for housing

Within Council, our planners are responsible for putting the Strategy into action, largely through changing (or amending) the Maribyrnong Planning Scheme, which is used to guide development applications in the town planning process. This could be through changing zones, implementing special ordinances such as "overlays" and other regulations like schedules to zones and other provisions.

Our strategic planning framework

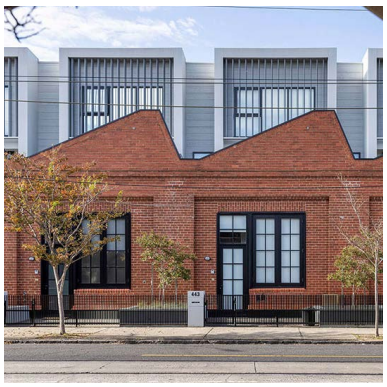


2 COMMUNITY AND HOUSING PROFILE

The City of Maribyrnong Story

Situated at the junction of the Maribyrnong River and Birrarung, the City of Maribyrnong has long been a place of gathering and movement. For the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation, it was a vital meeting place sustained through deep custodianship. Post-European settlement, the City of Maribyrnong became a key industrial and transport hub, later transforming into an "Arrival City" that welcomed waves of migrants – from post-war Europeans to more recent arrivals from Vietnam, China and India.





Building on our rich industrial heritage

The area's industrial defence base, once dominant in suburbs like Footscray, Maidstone, Braybrook and Maribyrnong, began declining from the 1960s, paving the way for residential growth. Large-scale public housing and the former Maribyrnong Migrant Hostel supported permanent settlement, especially in Braybrook and Maribyrnong. Since the early 2000s, population growth has surged, driven by high-density development in Footscray and urban renewal of former industrial defence sites, such as Edgewater in Maribyrnong. Today, Maribyrnong combines a mix of 19th and 20th Century styles of detached housing with growing apartment precincts.



A dynamic juncture and hub

Now home to a rising number of professionals, many commuting to the CBD, the City continues to attract new migrants while grappling with rising housing stress. The City also continues to have a strong base of local workers in key sectors like health, social assistance, education, manufacturing and logistics, though many workers find it increasingly difficult to afford to live locally. We are seeing a trend of younger individuals, couples and families staying for a time, before moving further out west.

As the City plans for further housing growth, it must respond to a key challenge: ensuring housing diversity that meets the needs of key workers, families, and renters alike. With land redevelopment opportunities still emerging, especially in Footscray, the City remains a critical site for inclusive and sustainable urban growth in metropolitan Melbourne.



New opportunities for redevelopment and growth

There are several major opportunities, such as the Highpoint Major Activity Centre and the Department of Defence site to the north of Cordite Avenue in Maribyrnong. Footscray has been marked as a Priority Precinct by the State Government and is expected to undergo substantial development in the future, with a significant increase in higher density dwellings expected, especially following the completion of the Melbourne Metro project, upgrades to the Sunbury line and West Gate Tunnel. This is further supported by the State Government's Activity Centre Program which identifies opportunities for development along the upgraded Sunbury line. All areas are also likely to have some further new residential opportunities through infill owing to the changing value of residential land within City of Maribyrnong.

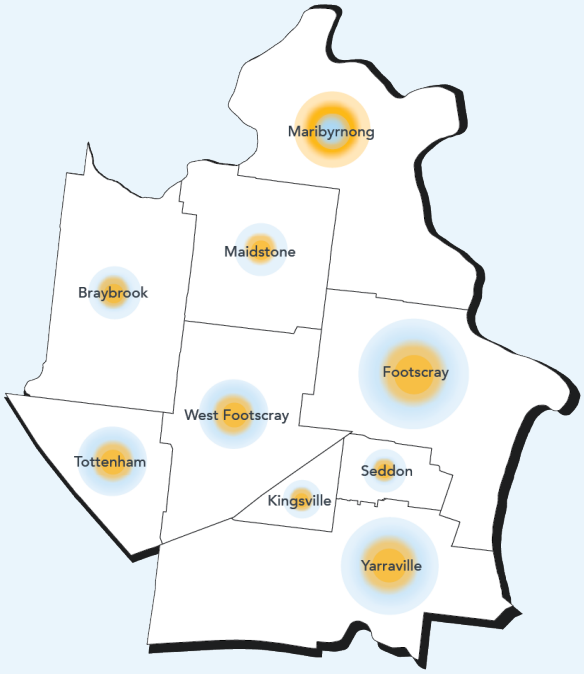
MARIBYRNONG TODAY

Population

The City of Maribyrnong was home to an estimated 94,000 people in 2024. At the time of the last Census in 2021, there were 86,398 people, up by 13,575 (19%) since 2011.

13,575 ↑

Population increase (2011-2021)



Year 2021	People	Dwellings
Footscray	19,957	7,902
Maribyrnong	13,408	5,275
Yarraville	16,212	6,275
West Footscray	12,589	4,891
Maidstone	10,050	3,697
Braybrook	10,160	3,667
Seddon	5,348	2,157
Kingsville	4,035	1,637



Our households

There were 35,501 households in 2021, with an **over-representation** of singles, couples without children, and group households, compared with **Greater Melbourne**.

Household types (by lifecycle stage)

Maribyrnong has a significantly higher share of:

58.7%
of households do not have children.

29.94%
are single person households.



Over-represented groups

- Single person households (28.2%)
- Group households (7%)
- Couples without children (14.5%)

Under-represented groups

- One parent family (9.1%)
- Couple with children (25.3 %)

Our housing make up

24.4%



DETACHED HOMES
(Separate)

29.3%



MEDIUM-DENSITY HOMES
(1–3 storeys)

45.2%



HIGHER-DENSITY HOMES
(4+ storeys)

Other: 1.1% (e.g. caravans, cabins, houseboats, improvised homes)

Our cultural diversity

Over 40% of residents were born overseas, with large Vietnamese, Indian, British, Irish and Chinese communities. The area has long been known as an "Arrival City" for new migrants.



Our top five industries of employment



Healthcare and social assistance
(22% of workers)



Retail trade
(14% of workers)



Education and training
(9% of workers)



Transport, postal and warehousing
(6.6% of workers)



Construction
(9% of workers)

Household costs

$376 average rental costs

$494 average weekly mortgage repayments

14.7% households earn $650 a week or less

30% households earn $3,000 a week or more

7.8% of households had an unmet need for affordable housing*.

(*2,616 in 2021 - see pp. 24-29 for more information)

$1,998

Average household income a week (as of 2021)

MARIBYRNONG IN THE FUTURE

Our future housing needs

By 2051, Maribyrnong LGA will have 155,006 people living in 71,278 total dwellings.

35,000 new dwellings
(about twice as many as we have now!)



Broken down by suburb,this looks like:

Year 2051	People	Dwellings
Footscray	41,943	21,529
Maribyrnong	30,414	13,368
Yarraville	21,688	9,684
West Footscray	16,813	7,487
Maidstone	18,104	7,792
Braybrook	14,801	6,121
Seddon	3,253	7,133
Kingsville	4,110	2,045

Forecast household groups in 2051



15,705 (24%)
Couple families with children



16,566 (24%)
Couples without children



4,984 (8%)
Group households



21,334 (32%)
Single person household



6,232 (9%)
Single parent family



2,056 (3%)
Other families

DRIVERS OF POPULATION CHANGE AND MIGRATION TRENDS

Cultural and historical foundations

Longstanding place of gathering and movement: Located at the junction of the Maribyrnong River and Birrarung, a traditional meeting place with deep significance for the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples.

Present juncture: Key hub for activity between Melbourne CBD, and western and regional employment centres, attracting people with professional and vocational occupations alike.

Post-war migrant destination: Historically a settlement area for waves of migrants, especially post-WWII Europeans, and later Vietnamese, Chinese, and Indian communities.

Industrial heritage and urban renewal

Changing industrial base: Since the 1960s, changes in once-dominant defence and manufacturing industries in areas like Footscray, Maidstone, and Maribyrnong opened land for redevelopment.

Transformation of former industrial sites: This includes major urban renewal projects at Bradmill in Yarraville and the Kinnears and Ryco sites in Footscray.

Demographic and economic trends

Growth in professionals and key workers: Attraction of young professionals commuting to the CBD, alongside key workers and students.

Increasing influx of overseas migration: Continued influx of overseas students and renters, especially in Footscray.

Westward migration: Inflows of people coming from inner city and eastern regions and outflows of residents toward western regions

Strategic redevelopment opportunities

Priority growth areas

- Footscray Priority Precinct
- Highpoint Major Activity Centre
- Defence site north of Cordite Avenue (Maribyrnong)

Transport infrastructure investments:

- Melbourne Metro
- Sunbury line upgrades
- West Gate Tunnel
- Tram Route 82 upgrades.

Infill opportunities:

Rising land values likely to enable smaller-scale residential intensification across the municipality.

3 KEY THEMES

How do we ensure future housing enhances our neighbourhoods, addresses climate challenges and caters for the needs of our rapidly growing community?

To answer this question, we have identified four key themes which we are seeking your feedback on.

THEME 1

Diverse housing for a thriving and inclusive community

How do we provide housing for everyone in our community?

THEME 2

Enhancing the character and liveability of our neighbourhoods

How do we build on what makes our neighbourhoods special now and in the future?

THEME 3

Growing sustainably with our natural environment

How do we ensure housing addresses environmental challenges and risks?

THEME 4

Convenient & accessible living

How do we get the most out of housing to meet our daily needs?



THEME 1

DIVERSE HOUSING FOR A THRIVING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

LET'S DISCUSS

How do we provide housing for everyone in our community?

A thriving community is one where everyone – regardless of age, income, background or ability – can access a safe, affordable, secure and suitable home.

Diverse and inclusive housing is more than just a social good; it supports local jobs, boosts wellbeing, reduces inequality, and creates neighbourhoods where people of all ages and life stages can stay connected and live with dignity. As our City continues to grow and change, ensuring that housing meets the needs of the whole community will be vital to our long-term health, cohesion and economic sustainability.

This theme explores what it means to provide diverse and affordable housing choices in The City of Maribyrnong. It begins by identifying who lives in our municipality today – and what kinds of housing is needed for families, older people, single households, people with disability, and key workers. It then considers the scale and urgency of housing affordability challenges, and what Council can do to support more inclusive housing outcomes.

Meeting diverse housing needs of our community

A priority for the Housing Strategy will be ensuring that future dwellings support people across all life stages, backgrounds, abilities and incomes. Achieving this means enabling a diverse housing mix, with a blend of housing types (from detached homes to higher-density apartments), sizes, tenures, and configurations.





People living solo

In 2021, there were 10,775 single-person households, comprising nearly 30% of all households in our City. This trend is forecasted to increase to over 21,000 by 2051, signalling a growing demand for smaller, accessible dwellings compared to our current predominant supply of three bedroom houses.

Single-person housing must be affordable and well-located, especially as these households are more likely to experience rental stress and rely on apartments or studios. These households disproportionately live in high-density housing and face growing affordability pressures. For example, in 2023, only 11% of dwellings for rent were affordable for lone person households on moderate incomes, 1% for those on low incomes, and none for very low incomes.



Student housing

In 2021, there were about 8,500 tertiary students living in the City of Maribyrnong, comprising 10% of people in the municipality (higher than the Victorian state average of 8.3%). Of the local students, 71% were enrolled in university, while 28% were enrolled in TAFE or vocational programs, comprising local attendance at Victoria University, but also for close access to universities in the CBD (i.e. University of Melbourne, RMIT) and elsewhere in Greater Melbourne.

Importantly, students are often highly represented in lower income groups, seeking affordable housing options, if not student housing provided by universities and select providers. With development of new campuses nearby (i.e. Fisherman's Bend) and with the proximity of existing institutions, many new residents in the City of Maribyrnong are also likely to be students, with the number of 20-29 year olds set to double from 2021-2051 to 29,288.

Advocating for universities to provide quality, affordable housing for students will be vital for the City of Maribyrnong to continue to provide opportunities for students to live close to where they study.



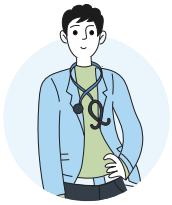
Family and intergenerational housing

Couples with children remain a major household type, with 9,325 households in 2021, comprising 25.8% of total households and this is expected to increase substantially by 6,380 (+71%) in 2051. There are also a substantial number of single parent families (3,322 households), comprising 9.1% of total households, expected to increase significantly by 2,962 (+90.6%). However, existing and prospective family households face a mismatch between preferred separate houses and the high-density stock being supplied.

As housing affordability tightens, particularly for younger and lower-income groups, there is increasing need for more family housing and intergenerational housing within medium- and high-density forms. Suitable family apartments and townhouses – offering 3+ bedrooms, noise insulation, play areas, and access to schools and services – will be essential to encouraging people to stay long-term in the City of Maribyrnong.

At the heart of this is providing housing choices which enable people to stay in the communities they grew up in. Around 4,800 people moved out to areas further west and southwest (like Brimbank, Wyndham, Hobsons Bay and Greater Geelong), most of whom are likely families.

Despite growing substantially overall, this group are projected to decrease as a key household group from 25.8% in 2021 to 23.5% in 2051. One reason for this could be that we're seeing an increase in uptake of higher density housing by single person households and couples without dependents, while families generally occupy separate houses. Understanding the needs of families will be key to ensuring that new housing types provide viable choices for them to stay longer in The City of Maribyrnong - and this is a key objective of our engagement.



Key worker housing

Key worker housing (for local workers in main industry sectors like health, hospitality, warehousing, education and manufacturing) is also crucial to increasing local economic activity and encouraging sustainable transport choices. Local sectors like health and education are facing challenges to attract and retain staff due to the lack of affordable homes near workplaces.

Figure 4 shows the range of dwellings that were affordable for the most common local occupations, between December 2023 and December 2024. Key workers in the City of Maribyrnong are increasingly unable to afford to live near their workplaces. For instance, for a child carer's household, 68% of the total market listings in the municipality between December 2023 and December 2024 were unaffordable. If the same household was in the market for a one-bedroom home (e.g. if they were a single person household or a couple), they would only have access to only 12% of the total housing listings.

This means that almost nine in every 10 dwellings were unavailable to this household when choosing a home. If the child carer had a family and the household was seeking a two-bedroom home in the market, they would only have access to 18% of the total housing listings, and only 2% if looking for a three-bedroom home. This becomes especially important also for attracting new workers. Western Health, for example, is seeking partnerships to secure accessible rental housing for over 4,500 graduates and interns annually.

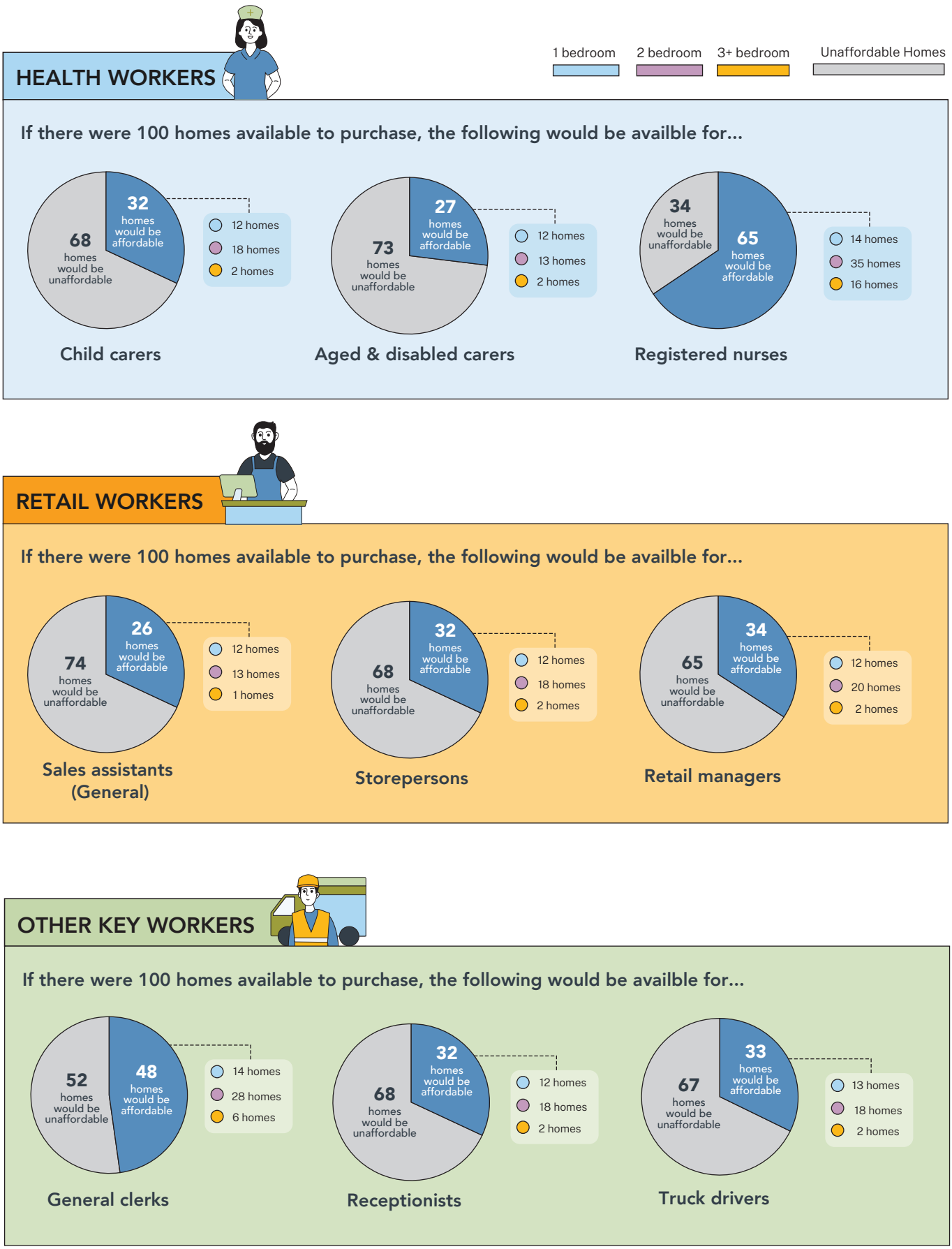


Figure 4. Key worker affordability
(.id Housing Monitor, 2021)



Housing for an ageing community

In 2021, there were 9,134 people aged 65 and over, representing 11% of all households and this is expected to increase by 12,057 (+132%) in 2051 as the population continues to age. We found from Phase 1 of engagement (2024) that older residents prioritise proximity to health services, family and accessible housing, yet many remain in dwellings which do not suit their needs, based on what is affordable in the market.



Short-term visitors

Ensuring secure, long-term housing while supporting The City of Maribyrnong's role as a welcoming, connected destination requires a considered balance. The rise of short-stay accommodation (with the arrival of the Airbnb in Melbourne in 2012) now reflects a strong demand for flexible visitation options. As an example, since starting in 2012, Airbnb now boasts over 370 current listings in the City of Maribyrnong.

However, this also places pressure on rental availability and affordability, particularly in areas close to transport, retail and cultural assets. Council recognises the need to monitor and manage the impact of short-term rentals, ensuring they do not undermine housing security for residents. Future strategies may consider regulatory, zoning or data-sharing approaches to support an appropriate mix of housing uses across the municipality.



Housing for all abilities

Housing for people of all ages and abilities must be embedded in future planning. In 2021, 4,694 people in the City of Maribyrnong (5.2% of the population) reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability, a figure that has grown over time and is expected to continue rising as the population ages. Accessible and adaptable housing plays a vital role in enabling everyone in our community to live independently and with dignity.

Providing affordable housing choices

What is housing affordability and affordable housing?

Housing affordability refers broadly to whether housing costs are manageable relative to a household's income. A common benchmark is that housing is unaffordable (or puts the household under housing stress) if a household spends more than 30% of its gross income on housing, particularly when they are in the bottom 40% of income earners.

Affordable housing is defined by the State Government (*Planning and Environment Act 1987*) as "housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low-, low-, and moderate-income households." It includes housing delivered below market rates through government, community sector, or planning incentives and may involve private rental models.

Affordable housing exists on a spectrum ranging from crisis and transitional housing, through to social housing, affordable rental, shared equity models, and entry-level market housing. Each part of the spectrum plays a role in supporting people at different stages of life or income:

- **Crisis and supported accommodation** helps those at immediate risk of homelessness. It is typically provided by federal government, state government and community housing agencies (CHAs).
- **Social housing is long-term housing for those on lower incomes who cannot afford market rates.** It is typically provided by federal and state governments and CHAs.
- **Affordable rental** is for low- and moderate-income earners and can be made available to students and key local workers like hospitality workers or aged care staff. It is typically provided by federal government, state government and CHAs. Some councils provide small proportions of this housing to aid broader efforts.
- **Affordable home ownership** might include shared equity or below-market purchase schemes and is typically provided by the federal government and at-times by the state.

As people move through life – changing jobs, forming households, experiencing illness, or ageing – housing needs and capacity to pay can change. Ensuring a supply of affordable housing across this spectrum helps build a resilient, inclusive community where people can remain housed irrespective of life events or economic changes. It supports social connection, economic participation, and reduces the long-term costs associated with housing insecurity or displacement.

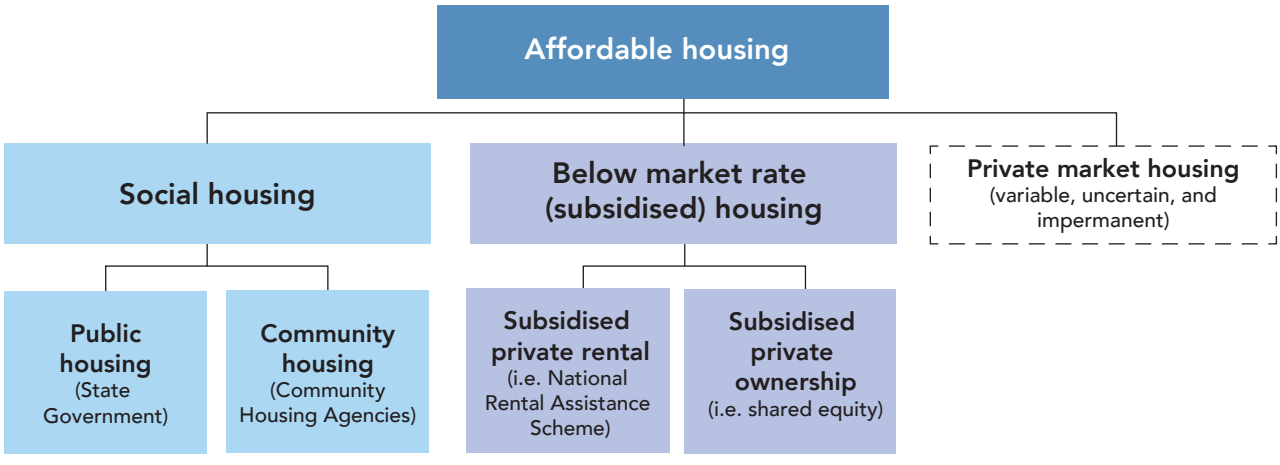


Figure 5. Types of affordable housing, adapted from City of Melbourne

Housing affordability and stress in the City of Maribyrnong

The City of Maribyrnong faces a growing shortfall in affordable housing. In 2021, there were 2,616 households in need of affordable housing, including 821 experiencing homelessness and 368 in marginal housing, representing 7.8% of all households. If current proportions remain steady, this unmet need is expected to rise to 4,068 households by 2036. To meet this growing demand, the City of Maribyrnong would need approximately 340 new affordable homes per year, most of which will need to be social housing, provided by the state government (public housing) and community housing agencies (community housing).

10.8% of all households in the municipality were in housing stress in 2021, including 22.5% of renters and 8.8% of mortgage holders, with stress rates higher in suburbs like Braybrook, Footscray, and West Footscray. Many residents, especially single parents, low-income renters, students, and key workers like hospitality and retail staff, are paying well above 30% of their income on housing, placing them in stress or at risk of poverty.

Affordability is currently severely low: only 7% of rental listings in 2023 were affordable to very low-income households, and none of the 3+ bedroom homes were affordable to these families. Among single-person households on very low incomes, 0% of listings were affordable; for those on low incomes, just 1% met affordability thresholds.

These pressures are not just local, they reflect national and state-wide trends of housing demand outpacing supply, underpinned by stagnant wages, tax settings (e.g. negative gearing, capital gains discounts), and rising housing as an investment commodity rather than a basic right.



MAP 1

Households experiencing rental stress

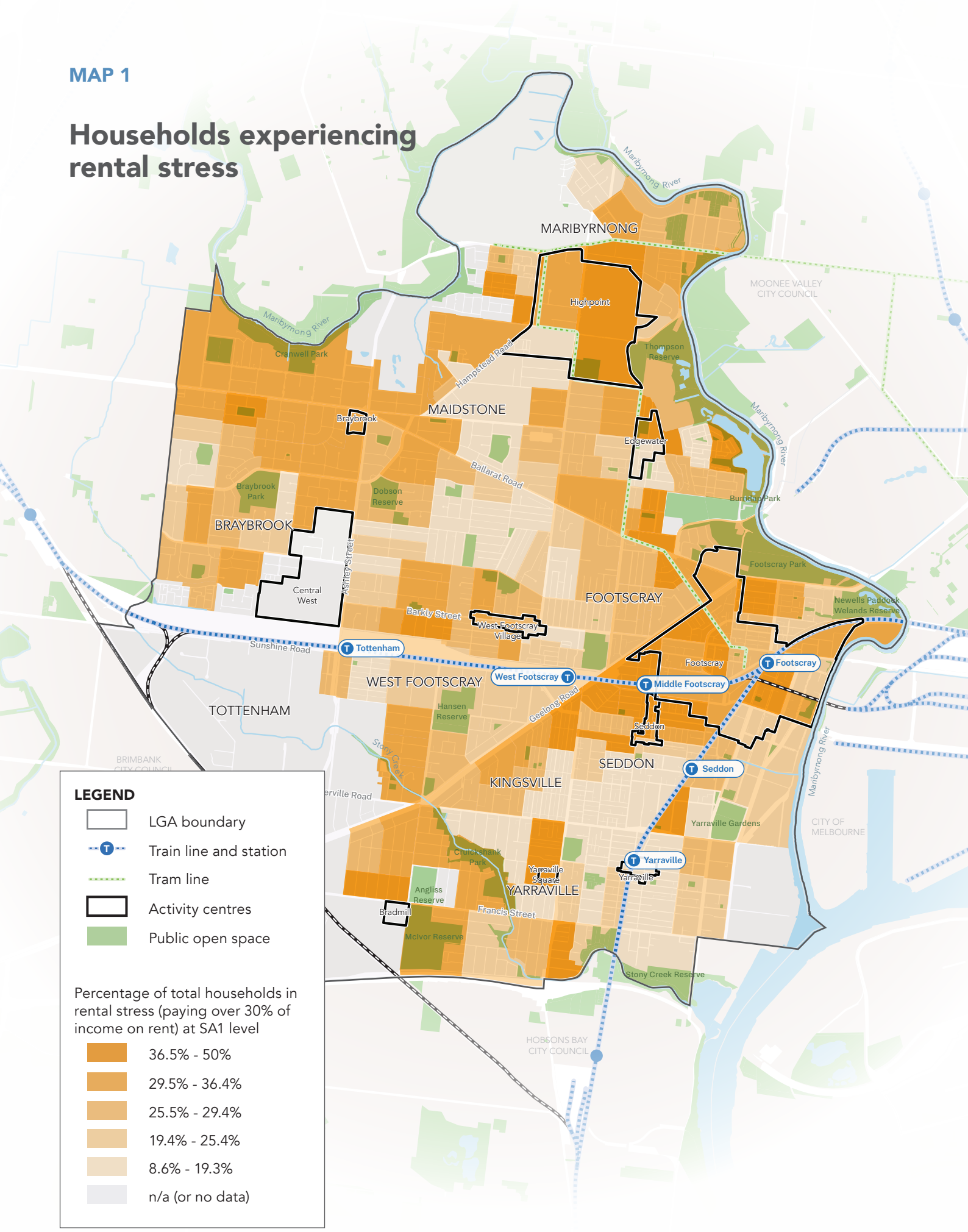


Figure 6. Households experiencing rental stress (.id Housing Monitor - SA1, 2021)

Who addresses housing affordability?

Responsibility for housing affordability is shared across all levels of government, as well as by the private and not-for-profit sectors.

- **The Commonwealth Government** leads taxation, funds homelessness services, offers low-cost financing for social housing projects, and provides financial assistance to individuals.
- **The Victorian Government** oversees the planning system, builds and operates public housing, and funds and regulates community housing.
- **Local governments** while not usually housing providers, play a role in shaping land use, advocating for community needs, and facilitating local affordable housing outcomes.
- **Community Housing Agencies (CHA)** are registered providers of community housing, meeting transitional and affordable housing needs.
- **Private developers** are for-profit entities which may allocate a part of their development towards affordable housing based on local government incentives and agreements.

The Commonwealth and Victorian Governments hold the most significant authority in shaping housing legislation, policy and outcomes. These levers are available to the Federal and State Governments without the involvement of Local governments. There are various approaches available to Local Government to address community-specific issues and directly influence affordable housing outcomes at the local level. Three tiers can be used to illustrate the level of Council intervention required to lead different approaches and what outcome can be achieved.

- **Tier 1** sets out the role that Council can play within the current housing market structure to ensure statutory requirements are met.
- **Tier 2** expands Council's role to include intervening to seek to increase the supply of affordable and social housing. This can include advocacy, partnerships and changes to planning frameworks and policies to facilitate more supply.
- **Tier 3** is the highest level of Council intervention and builds off tiers 1 and 2 to also include Council directly investing in building and providing social and affordable housing.

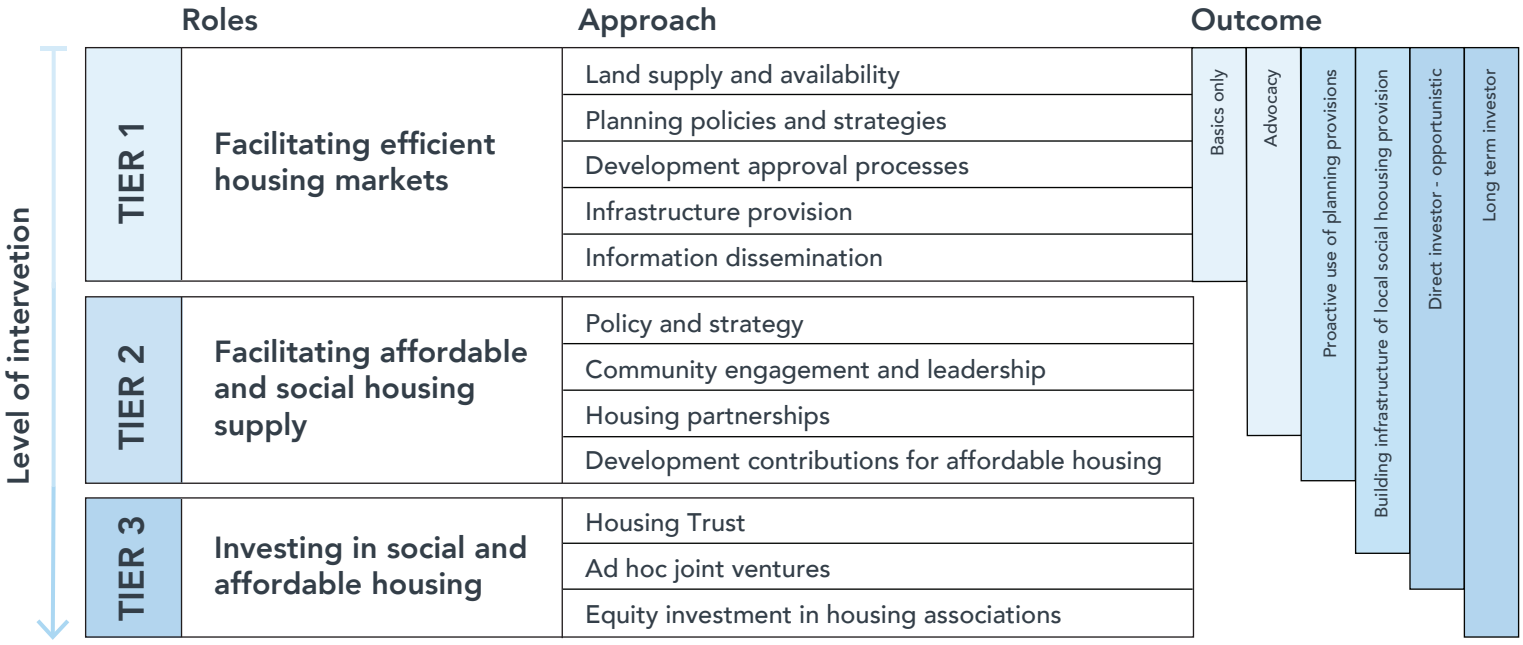


Figure 7. Local Government affordable housing intervention model (three-tiers) adapted from *SGS Economics & Planning 2018*

Addressing our housing affordability needs

There are a range of housing models – some already in use and others emerging – that can help improve both Affordable Housing (housing specifically designed for very low, low and moderate income households) and broader housing affordability across our community. These may include:

- **Build-to-Rent** - where whole buildings (generally apartments) are designed and built to be rented out, not sold. One organisation—such as a private developer, investment company or community housing provider —owns and manages the entire building and sets the rent.
- **Build-to-Rent-to-Own** - a variation of the Build-to-Rent model where residents rent a property with the option to purchase it at a later date. The arrangement typically allows residents to lock in both the rent and purchase price for up to five years, with the flexibility to buy the home at any time during that period at an agreed value.
- **Build-to-Sell** - traditional build-to-sell projects which form the largest housing development model in Australia where the developer builds and then sells units upon or shortly after completion.
- **Communal design**– where a development is designed with smaller private spaces and larger communal areas – such as shared kitchens, laundry and gardens. These models can lower construction costs and reduce ongoing expenses for residents, while also promoting a sense of community.
- **Cohousing** – a type of intentional community development where people live in private homes but share common spaces like gardens, kitchens, or meeting rooms. Residents co-govern the community and collectively manage shared land, buildings, and facilities. Cohousing developments are purpose-built and can include a mix of home ownership, private rental, and social housing.
- **Community land trusts** – A model where the land is owned by a not-for-profit community organisation to ensure it remains affordable over the long term. Homes can be bought or rented on the land, but the land itself stays in community ownership. This model is common overseas but does not have broad take up locally.
- **Ground lease model** - public land is leased to a consortium to build, operate and maintain Affordable Housing on the site for a set number of years. At the end of the lease, the land and buildings are returned to public ownership.
- **Housing Cooperative**s – where a community of people voluntarily work together to meet their common need for affordable housing. Housing cooperatives are typically owned by shareholders or not for profit organisations. Members live in separate dwellings but actively participate in the management and running of the housing cooperative as a whole. A subset of this model could include ecovillages, where the cooperative has a focus on sustainability, permaculture, renewable energy, and shared resources.
- **Inclusionary zoning** – a planning tool that mandates new residential developments include a percentage of Affordable Housing. While Victorian councils cannot currently mandate inclusionary zoning, they can advocate to the State Government for change.
- **Intergenerational living** - housing designed to support people of different ages living together—such as older adults, families, and younger people—either in the same home or in separate dwellings on a shared site. These developments often include shared spaces that encourage interaction and mutual support across generations. Intergenerational living can reduce housing costs, combat social isolation, and support informal care arrangements.

- **Modular and prefabricated housing** - homes built off-site in sections and assembled on-site. This development model can lower construction time and costs and support faster delivery of affordable housing.
- **Small footprint living** - compact, simpler homes that are cheaper to build and maintain. They often have fewer features—like reduced car parking—and include tiny homes or micro-apartments.
- **Voluntary Affordable Housing agreements** – where local governments negotiate with developers to include Affordable Housing in their projects, typically as part of a proposal to rezone land or during the planning approval process. In return, developers may be offered incentives such as increased building height or reduced car parking requirements. Community Housing Providers usually play a key role by managing the Affordable Housing delivered through these voluntary agreements.

Key examples



Communal design: Nightingale Anstey. Image Source: Nightingale

Nightingale Anstey is located in Brunswick and contains 54 apartments across eight levels. The apartments range from studio-style to three bedrooms, and are split into two communities: a Laneway community with 31 apartments, and a Station community comprising 23 apartments. Both communities within Nightingale Anstey have separate secure entries. Each community features a dedicated rooftop space with gardens, shared laundry facilities, communal bike storage and waste rooms. Trees and greenery help to soften the visual impact of the site.



Housing Cooperative: United Housing Co-operative, Summerhill Village. Image Source: Open House Melbourne

Summerhill Village is a social housing, medium density apartment development in West Footscray. Jointly owned by United Housing Co-operative and the Lions Club of Footscray, the Village contains 49 apartments ranging from one to two bedrooms. The apartments are built over two to three levels, around a courtyard. Summerhill Village is primarily intended for women over 55 years of age, promoting independent living within an engaged community. Tenants contribute to community wellbeing to the best of their ability, and are able to access shared spaces including a Multi-Purpose Community Facility and community gardens.



Small footprint living: Harris Transportable Housing Project. Image Source: Schored Projects

The Harris Transportable Housing Project is a collaboration between Launch Housing, the Victorian Government, Schored Projects, and the Harris Family to deliver 57 tiny homes in the City of Maribyrnong for people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness. The tiny homes are pre-fabricated in a factory and can be installed on site within a day. The homes are designed for single-person or couple households and are portable, so they can be moved to alternative sites if necessary.

Ryco Precinct, Footscray

The Ryco Precinct at 11–19 Whitehall Street, Footscray, is being developed into a vibrant mixed-use development. Originally home to Ryco Hydraulics, the site was rezoned in 2014 to facilitate residential and commercial uses. The development includes office spaces, commercial uses and residential dwellings.

A notable component of the Ryco Precinct redevelopment is its contribution to housing diversity and affordability within the inner-west. It has a provision of 40% affordable housing to be delivered via 'build-to-rent-to-own' model delivered by Assemble.

Notably, this supports affordability for moderate income earning households, like our key workers.

Additionally, the rezoning under Planning Scheme Amendment C122 supports higher-density residential uses which enables a broader mix of housing types and price points close to transport, services, and employment hubs. The inclusion of commercial and retail space alongside residential components is also intended to support a self-contained, walkable community, potentially reducing living costs through local access to jobs and amenities.



Existing condition



Architect's render (source: Jackson Clements Burrows Architects)



THEME 2

ENHANCING THE CHARACTER AND LIVEABILITY OF OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

LET'S DISCUSS

How do we build on what makes our neighbourhoods special now and in the future?

The City of Maribyrnong is home to a unique mix of neighbourhoods, each with its own character, stories and community identity. From the leafy streets of Yarraville to the heritage fabric of Seddon to the bustling centre of Footscray and the emerging hubs of Braybrook and Maribyrnong-Highpoint, these places are shaped not just by their buildings but by the people who live in them.

As our City continues to grow and change, it's important that we protect what we value while also welcoming new homes, new residents, and new forms of high-quality design.

This theme explores how we can balance growth with liveability and neighbourhood character. It looks at the shift from detached housing to more compact development, and how Council is planning for this change through a precinct-based character framework. This outlines what preferred character looks like, based on enhancing what qualities are valued already as well as qualities we want to see in our City as it grows and changes into the future.

It unpacks the tools and overlays available to guide design, while highlighting the challenges of infill, heritage, and zoning reform. Finally, it invites the community to consider what kind of places we want to live in, what the preferred future character of our neighbourhoods should be, and how planning can help us get there.

Evolving character in the City of Maribyrnong

Over time, The City of Maribyrnong has experienced a significant shift from a predominantly detached housing stock to higher-density forms, particularly in areas like Footscray, Braybrook and Maidstone. This change is driven by demand for more diverse housing and the pressures of infill development. At the same time, new homes must meet improved expectations for design quality, accessibility, and neighbourhood integration. The 2023 Maribyrnong Medium Density Design Guide supports this aim, setting out principles for better built form and landscaping outcomes, though its uptake and effectiveness remain a work in progress.

To manage this transition, Council has adopted a precinct-based character framework, which groups residential areas into four key character types.



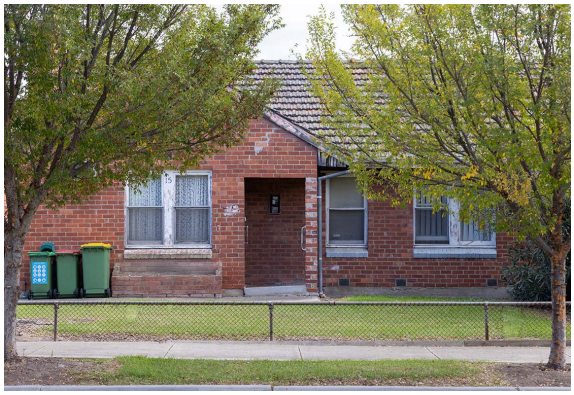
Garden Suburban

Found in Yarraville, Maidstone, Footscray and West Footscray, these areas are defined by green, open streetscapes, generous setbacks and mixed-era housing.



Inner Urban

Present in older areas like Footscray, Yarraville, Seddon and Kingsville, these neighbourhoods have small lots, narrow streets, and a strong sense of urbanity and heritage.



Garden Court

Seen in parts of Braybrook and Maidstone, these areas are characterised by 1980s–90s development with curvilinear street networks and lower permeability.



Post-millenial infill

Located in newer estates or infill zones across the municipality, such as Edgewater in Maribyrnong and the Orion Estate in Braybrook, these areas feature more intensive, varied forms, often with minimal setbacks and modern finishes.

MAP 2:

Existing neighbourhood character areas (2025)

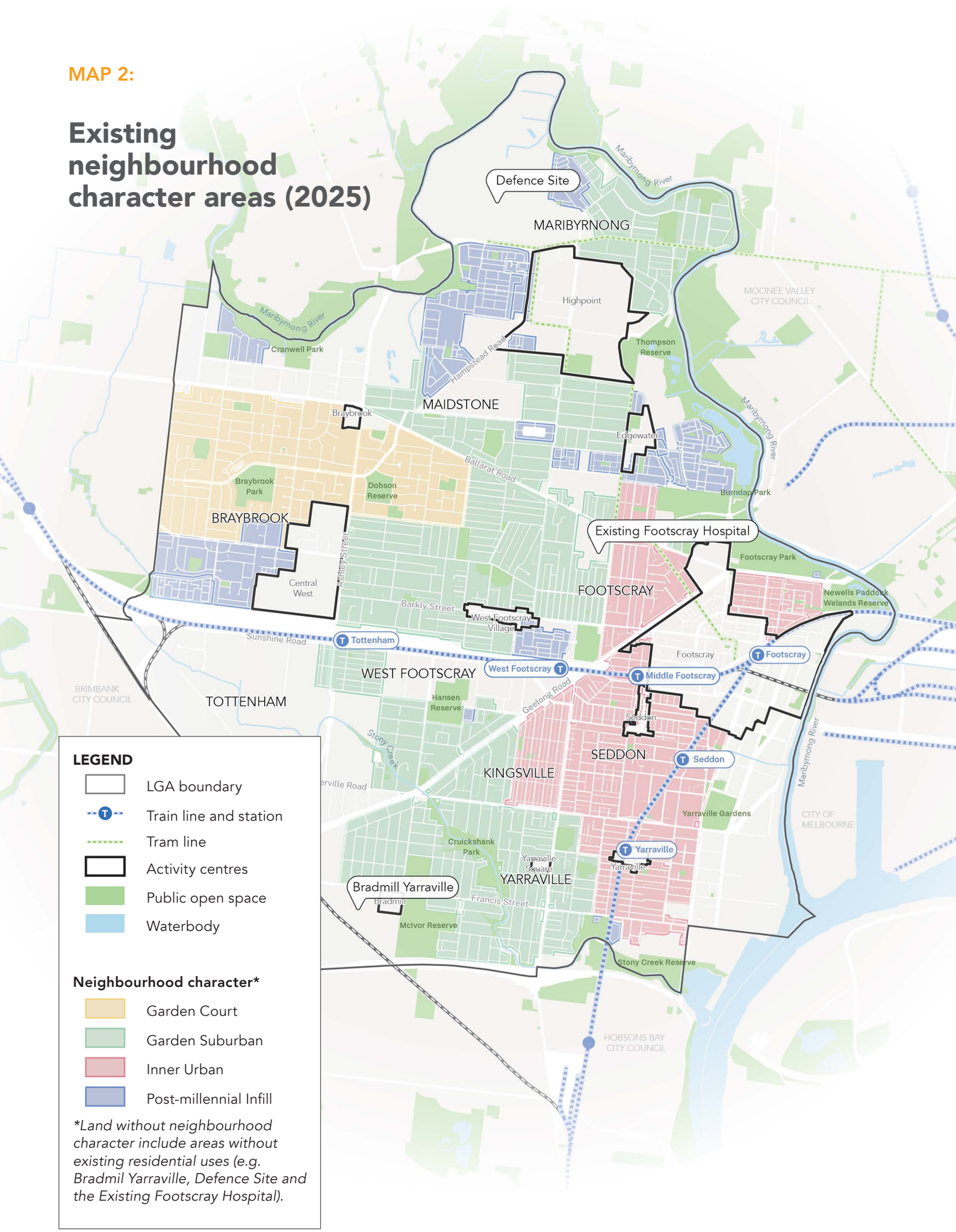


Figure 8. Existing neighbourhood character areas (2025)

Garden Court

Garden Court areas throughout Braybrook and western parts of Maidstone are characterised by a mix of architectural styles, dating back predominantly to the Postwar Era, and including 1990s to contemporary infill development. Traditionally, housing is quite modest, with most older stock consisting of weatherboard, single storey forms. However, the increasing infill development, which tends to incorporate more brick and render styles, is usually two storeys, has reduced side setbacks and at times includes multi-unit or semi-attached types.

Garden Court areas are distinguished by their open and informal atmosphere, due to the predominance of cul-de-sacs, wide grassy natures strips and generous front setbacks. These characteristics are strengthened by the horizontal emphasis of the built form and low level gardens. Street trees are small to medium in size, and irregularly planted.





Existing character attributes

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE, FORM AND LAYOUT

- Architectural style is predominantly Postwar to 1960s, with some 1990s-onwards infill development and pockets of public housing. Some Interwar dwellings can also be found throughout the precinct.
- Roof forms are generally low-pitched, with some flat roofs in contemporary styles.
- Older building are predominantly weatherboard, with either tile or iron roofs. While development since the 1990s tends to be brick and more recently render.
- Garages or carports are mixed, often built into the dwelling, or to the side.

HEIGHTS

- Built form is predominantly one to two storeys.

SETBACKS AND SITING

- Dwellings are oriented parallel to the street.
- Front setbacks are generally 6 to 7 metres.
- Side setbacks are usually between 1 to 3 metres. Increasingly, recent development is built to one side boundary.

FRONT FENCING

- Low-medium front fences (<1.5m) is common and generally transparent. Occasionally a high, solid fence can be seen.

GARDEN AND LANDSCAPING

- Predominantly informal and low-level, exotic gardens.

PUBLIC REALM

- Streets are often in a curvilinear layout, with some grid patterns. They consist of conventional lot sizes, wide verges, narrow footpaths and concrete kerb and channels.
- Street trees are irregular and usually small-medium sized trees.

Garden Suburban

The Garden Suburban precincts are characterised by a diverse mix of architectural styles ranging from Victorian and Interwar periods through to contemporary developments. This character is found in Maribyrnong, West Footscray, Maidstone, and western parts of Yarraville and Kingsville.

While infill redevelopment and multi-unit housing are increasingly present, the overall character remains defined by predominantly single and two storey dwellings. Lot sizes are generally generous. The precincts display a consistent pattern of low scale built form, compact yet spacious streetscapes, and a strong integration with the natural landscape, enhanced by wide nature strips, moderate side setbacks, and low or transparent front fencing.

A key feature across the Garden Suburban areas is the spacious and green streetscape character. This is achieved through a combination of mature exotic and native gardens, established canopy trees, and consistent street tree plantings in some locations. Topographical variations in certain precincts allow for long ranging views towards parklands, river corridors, and leafy surroundings.





Existing character attributes

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE, FORM AND LAYOUT

- Mix of architectural styles, including Victorian, Federation, Edwardian, Interwar, Postwar, 1960s, 1990s and increasing contemporary infill development.
- Generally detached dwellings, with some attached structures and increasingly common multi-unit developments.
- Front façades are articulated with the use of verandahs, balconies, ornamendted parapets, windows and doorways.
- Roof forms are generally mixed in older developments and flat in some contemporary developments.
- Building materials are predominantly brick and some weatherboard style dwellings. Newer developments are often rendered.
- The location of garages or carports is mixed depending on the era of dwelling.

HEIGHTS

- Built form is predominantly single and two storeys with some three storey buildings. Some split level dwellings are built into the slope of the land where the topography allows.

SETBACKS AND SITING

- Dwellings are often oriented parallel to the street, and some angled.
- Front setbacks vary from 1-15 metres. Larger front setbacks are found closer to the river or in Kingsville.
- Side setbacks are usually between 1 to 3 metres. Occasionally they are not present.

FRONT FENCING

- Fences are usually low (<1.0m), with a mix of transparent or solid materials. Some of low fences are in the form of retaining walls. Occasional high fences (1.5m) are present.

GARDEN AND LANDSCAPING

- Gardens are established, with a mix of exotic and native species. Some low-level gardens are present. Tall / mature canopy trees can occasionally be found where setbacks permit.

PUBLIC REALM

- Streets are a mix of fine-grain, formal grid layout, curvilinear and medium to large streets.
- Wide nature strips (between 1–5 metres) are present. However, some streets do no have nature strips at all.
- A mix of medium-large street trees are planted on some streets. Some irregular planting can be found as well.
- There are views to surrounding and distant nature such as Maribyrnong River, Stony Creek, and the Dandenong Ranges. Views to the city can also be found.

Inner Urban

The Inner Urban precincts are characterised by a mix of dwelling types, eras, and built forms. This character is found in Yarraville, Seddon, Kingsville and Footscray.

Housing styles include Victorian, Federation, Edwardian, Interwar, Postwar and 1960s onwards developments, including townhouses, walk-up flats and multi-unit buildings. Building heights generally range from one to three storeys, with brick construction being common. Front setbacks vary while there are minimal side setbacks. Lot sizes are generally compact, although the streets maintain a spacious feel due to wide pavements, wide nature strips, low front fencing, and consistent street tree planting.

Heritage and Neighbourhood Character Overlays apply to significant portions of the area. Despite the diversity in housing eras and building types, a sense of consistency is achieved through low-scale built form, uniform setbacks, and complementary streetscape elements. Bluestone kerbs, laneways, and mature vegetation are notable features.





Existing character attributes

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE, FORM AND LAYOUT

- Styles are mostly from the Victorian, Edwardian, Federation, Interwar, Postwar, 1960s, 1970s and 1990s. Some contemporary infill developments can be found. There are large heritage protected precincts.
- Generally detached dwellings, townhouses, walk up flats, and multi-unit apartment developments.
- Front facades are sometimes not well articulated. However, most have ornamented parapets, verandahs, balconies, windows and doorways that address the street.
- Roof forms are generally mixed in older developments and flat in contemporary developments.
- Building materials are predominantly brick or weatherboard, with either tile or iron roofs.
- Garages or carports are generally located to the side or rear of a dwelling/development, not visible from the street. Occasional garages/carports on the front boundary disrupt this pattern.

HEIGHTS

- Dwellings are predominantly single storey, with some two to three storey development scattered throughout.

SETBACKS AND SITING

- Dwellings are oriented parallel to the street. Often buildings are located on one side, with driveway access along the other side.
- Front setbacks are generally 3 to 4 metres, 6 to 7 metres or closer to 15 metres (in parts of the Gordon/Kinnear St area). Buildings in Yarraville and Seddon have generally 1 to 2 metres or 3 to 4 metres front setbacks.
- Side setbacks are often not present, or between 1 to 3 metres.

FRONT FENCING

- The presence of front fences is mixed. They are either not present, low (<1.0m) and generally transparent or high, solid timber fences.

GARDEN AND LANDSCAPING

- Mix of exotic/native, low-level gardens. Occasional tall/mature trees, where setbacks permit.

PUBLIC REALM

- Streets are narrow and have a Victorian era base with a fine-grain, formal grid layout. They consist of laneways, modest lot sizes, narrow footpaths and bluestone or concrete kerbs and channels.
- Large established street trees are planted where space is provided on the road or sidewalk.
- Views to the city, Maribyrnong River, parklands, and beyond are often prominent.

Post-millennial infill

Post-millenial precincts consist of infill developments, masterplanned estates, and discrete apartment pockets, developed from the early 2000s onwards. They are found in parts of Maribyrnong, Braybrook, Maidstone, West Footscray and Yarraville.

Built form ranges from two-storey detached and attached dwellings to four or more storey townhouses, multi-unit developments, and apartment buildings. Construction styles are predominantly contemporary, featuring rendered finishes, flat or skillion roofs, and minimal to no front or side setbacks. Garages typically form part of the dwelling façade or are rear-accessed via laneways.

Despite the prominence of built form, the public realm generally maintains a high standard of amenity, including landscaped parks, open spaces, and some median strips that accommodate canopy trees. Proximity to the Maribyrnong River is a key characteristic in some areas, where dwellings are oriented to capture river views. In established locations, mature street trees and narrow green strips can soften the appearance of higher-scale developments at street level.





Existing character attributes

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE, FORM AND LAYOUT

- Architectural styles usually are from the early 2000s, with some from the 1990s and post 2010.
- A mix of detached, attached, semi-attached townhouses, and apartments.
- Older buildings have façades that are usually articulated well with balconies, windows and doorways, addressing the street. More contemporary buildings have minimal articulation.
- Roof forms are mixed, low-pitched, skillion, or flat.
- Older buildings have materials are predominantly brick and/or render. More contemporary buildings are predominantly concrete or render.
- Double garages are generally located within the built form and often dominate the front facade. Occasionally townhouses have garages facing a rear laneway. Apartments have integrated carparks and some at-grade parking.

HEIGHTS

- Older buildings built form is predominantly two storeys, and quite large. Townhouses are predominantly 2-4 storeys. Apartments are predominantly 4-10+ storeys.

SETBACKS AND SITING

- Dwellings are oriented parallel to the street. Often buildings are built to one side and have a very high site coverage with minimal to no private open spacae. However, depending on topography or views, they may be oriented at an angle towards a view.
- Front setbacks are generally to 3 metres, 3 to 4 metres, or 6 to 7 metres for older buildings. More contemporary buildings have front setbacks of 0 to 3 metres.
- Side setbacks are often not present, or approximately 1 metre.

FRONT FENCING

- Where space permits, on older buildings front fences are mixed, with either high, solid rendered walls to conceal private space, or lower permeable metal fences. More contemporary buildings either do not have front fences, or vary up to 1.8 metres.

GARDEN AND LANDSCAPING

- Mix of exotic/native, low-level or establishing gardens. Minimal tall/mature trees, where setbacks permit. More contemporary buildings have minimal gardens with low-level exotic plantings where space permits.

PUBLIC REALM

- Where space permits, street trees are small and establishing.
- Nature strips are either not provided, or 1 to 2 metres wide. Foot paths are either absent, or on both sides of the street.
- Some areas have views to the Maribyrnong River.
- Some areas have underground powerlines.

Enhancing our character into the future

As the City of Maribyrnong continues to grow, balancing the need for new housing with the desire to retain what makes each neighbourhood special presents an ongoing challenge. One of the most common tensions is around infill development, where newer homes – especially townhouses or apartments – may not always reflect the style or scale of surrounding buildings. This can be particularly sensitive in areas with heritage and special character values, although it's worth noting that Heritage Overlays and Neighbourhood Character Overlays apply to only a small proportion of residential land in The City of Maribyrnong, unlike in other inner-city areas.

Recent policy reforms by the State Government have encouraged a shift away from simply preserving what exists toward planning for a preferred future character. In response, we as Council are taking a more proactive approach – one that recognises what people love about their neighbourhoods, like green streets, heritage homes, and a strong sense of place, while also making space for new, well-designed housing. By exploring how we guide change in this way, we aim to protect what's important, improve design quality, and help make sure that future housing supports sustainability, affordability, and the needs of our growing community.

Recent State Government amendments, such as VC267, are designed to increase housing supply – particularly in areas zoned for residential growth like the General Residential Zone (GRZ). These changes provide clearer and more streamlined rules for low-rise development, which can potentially limit Council's ability to shape the fine-grain details of neighbourhood character. However, we continue to take a proactive role – investigating how we plan for growth while strengthening our valued character and can do through what are called overlays like:

- Heritage Overlays (HOs): which protect and enhance buildings listed in the Victorian Heritage Register, generally limiting renovations, rebuilds, and sometimes amenity impacts from nearby new developments.
- Design and Development Overlays (DDOs): which guide the built form of new development, including building height, setbacks, materials, and street rhythm to reflect the desired character of an area.
- Development Plan Overlays (DPOs): which coordinate how larger sites are redeveloped, ensuring that new neighbourhoods have appropriate layout, public spaces, and access.
- Neighbourhood Character Overlays (NCOs): which can protect and reinforce valued design elements in established residential areas, such as front gardens, roof forms, and vegetation.
- Environmental or Vegetation Overlays: which support climate resilience by preserving trees, encouraging landscaping, and managing environmental risks like flooding or erosion.

These overlays work alongside zoning and state planning policy, giving Council more tailored tools to shape the kind of change the community wants to see – change that respects the character of our neighbourhoods while also delivering sustainable, high-quality new homes.

MAP 3

Key development controls

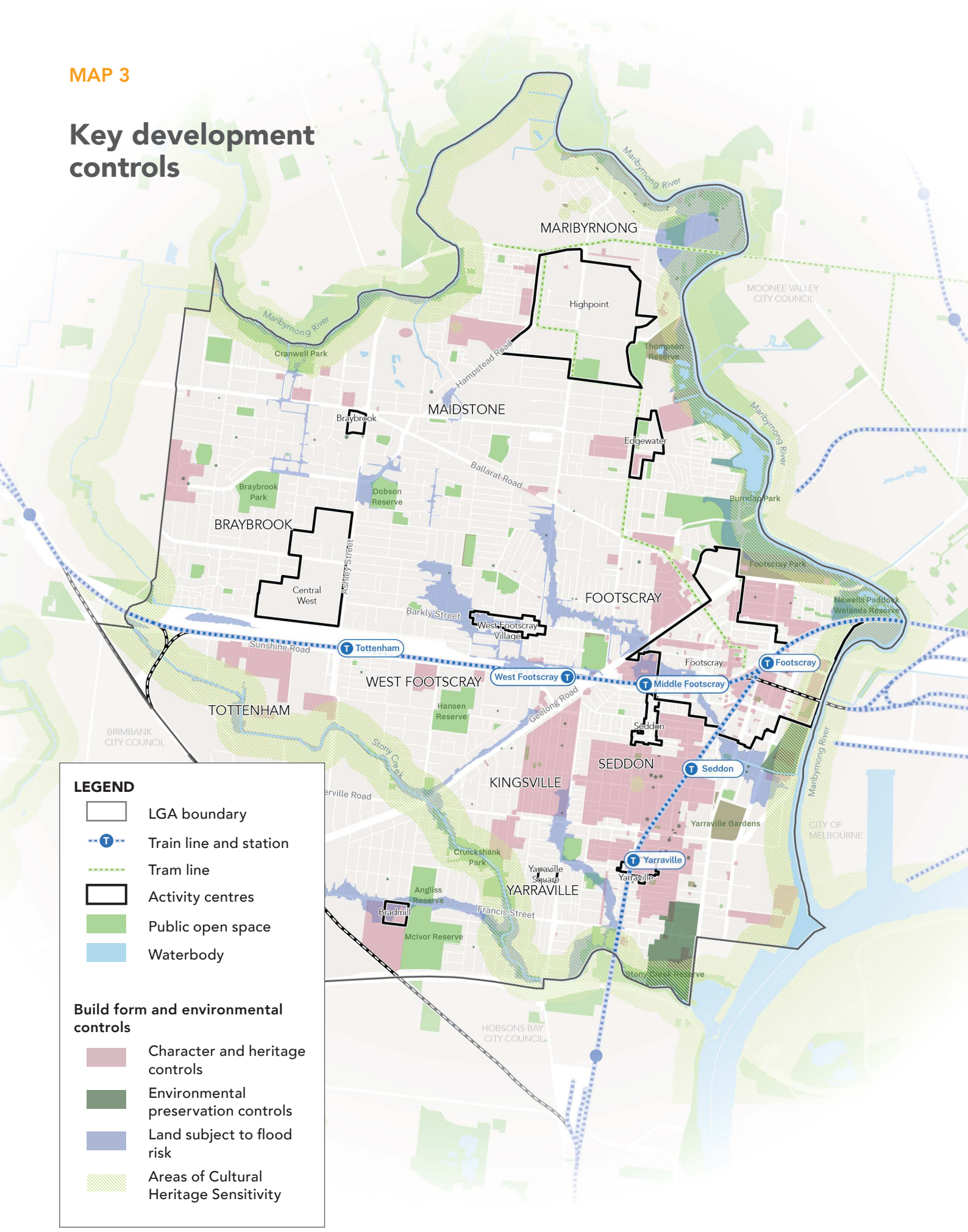


Figure 9. Key planning controls (2025)

Planning for preferred character

Given that the recent amendments (inc. VC 267) potentially limit ways Council can preserve fine grain aspects of existing character, there is a real need to become clear on what preferred character looks like.

To guide positive, well-managed change, that builds on our existing urban fabric, Council is now focusing on planning for the preferred future character of each neighbourhood. This means describing how each area should look, feel and function in the future and balancing what makes a place special today with the evolving needs of a growing and diverse community.

One way we are doing this is by updating precinct-based neighbourhood character policies, and will explore how we can implement them through planning tools such as zoning schedules, the Planning Policy Framework (in the Planning Scheme), Design and Development Overlays (DDOs) and Neighbourhood Character Overlays (NCOs). Where possible, we want to set clear expectations for new development – including scale, setbacks and building form – so that housing growth supports rather than undermines the distinct qualities of each area.

Importantly, this is not about freezing neighbourhoods in time, rather, it's about integrating character protection with opportunities for new housing for example, locating low-rise townhouses or small-scale apartment buildings in areas close to open space, schools, shops, and public transport. In these locations, thoughtful design can support both liveability and housing choice, particularly if guided by clear, community-backed character directions.

Through this process, we want to work with the community to understand what future character should look like:

- What attributes of the houses and streets in your neighbourhood do you value the most? For example, building materials, height, roof material, front fencing, space between side of house and fence, front yard, street trees and nature strip.
- What characteristics from other suburbs would you like to see in your neighbourhood?
- Where could we locate new housing of different types, ensuring we provide opportunities near parks, transport options, community services, jobs and services?

The answers to these questions will inform how preferred character is defined and protected, ensuring that growth strengthens, rather than dilutes, the unique identity and liveability of the City of Maribyrnong's neighbourhoods.



THEME 3

GROWING SUSTAINABLY WITH OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

LET'S DISCUSS

How do we ensure housing addresses environmental challenges and risks?

The way we plan and design housing today will shape how well our neighbourhoods respond to the climate challenges. As climate change intensifies, issues like extreme heat, air quality degradation, flooding, and biodiversity loss are already placing new pressures on urban environments, including in the City of Maribyrnong.

Housing that ignores these risks not only impacts liveability but also increases long-term costs and vulnerabilities for residents, particularly the most at-risk. Growing sustainably with our environment means planning for climate resilience, promoting climate and environmentally responsive design, and embedding nature and water back into our neighbourhoods.

This theme explores the climate and sustainability challenges facing housing in the City of Maribyrnong. It begins by identifying key risks such as the Urban Heat Island effect, declining tree canopy cover, and flood-prone areas near the Maribyrnong River and how these might affect residential development. It then discusses opportunities to promote sustainable housing design and construction, including improved environmental standards, energy efficiency, and the shift toward net-zero homes. The final section focuses on the role of planning, highlighting the importance of strong built form controls, incentives for green infrastructure and water-sensitive urban design, and ensuring that homes contribute to both community wellbeing and climate adaptation.

The climate challenge for housing

Canopy cover and heat island

As the City of Maribyrnong continues to grow, addressing climate resilience and environmental sustainability is critical to ensuring long-term liveability. The Urban Heat Island Effect (the impact of unshaded, hard surface areas on amplifying heat in summer times) is a significant concern across the municipality, driven by a legacy of low tree canopy cover – particularly on private land.

While Council initiatives have begun to increase tree cover and biodiversity in streets, parks and other public areas through its Urban Forest Strategy, a consistent loss of vegetation in residential areas is contributing to hotter, less hospitable neighbourhoods. This is often due to moonscaping (extensive site clearing), minimal landscaping and large amounts of space along streets being allocated to driveways and concreting in new development. Given that private land comprises 70% of space in the municipality, it represents the largest opportunity for vegetation, significantly more so than what Council can do alone with public spaces. Addressing this will be vital for improving our resilience to climate challenges now and in the future.

New state planning rules for residential development (Townhouse and Low-Rise Codes, 2025) now mandate a requirement for tree canopy provision to comprise 10% of a site less than 1,000sqm and require space for street trees in designing vehicle access. Until recently, this had been up to Council's discretion.



MAP 4

Urban Heat Island Vulnerability

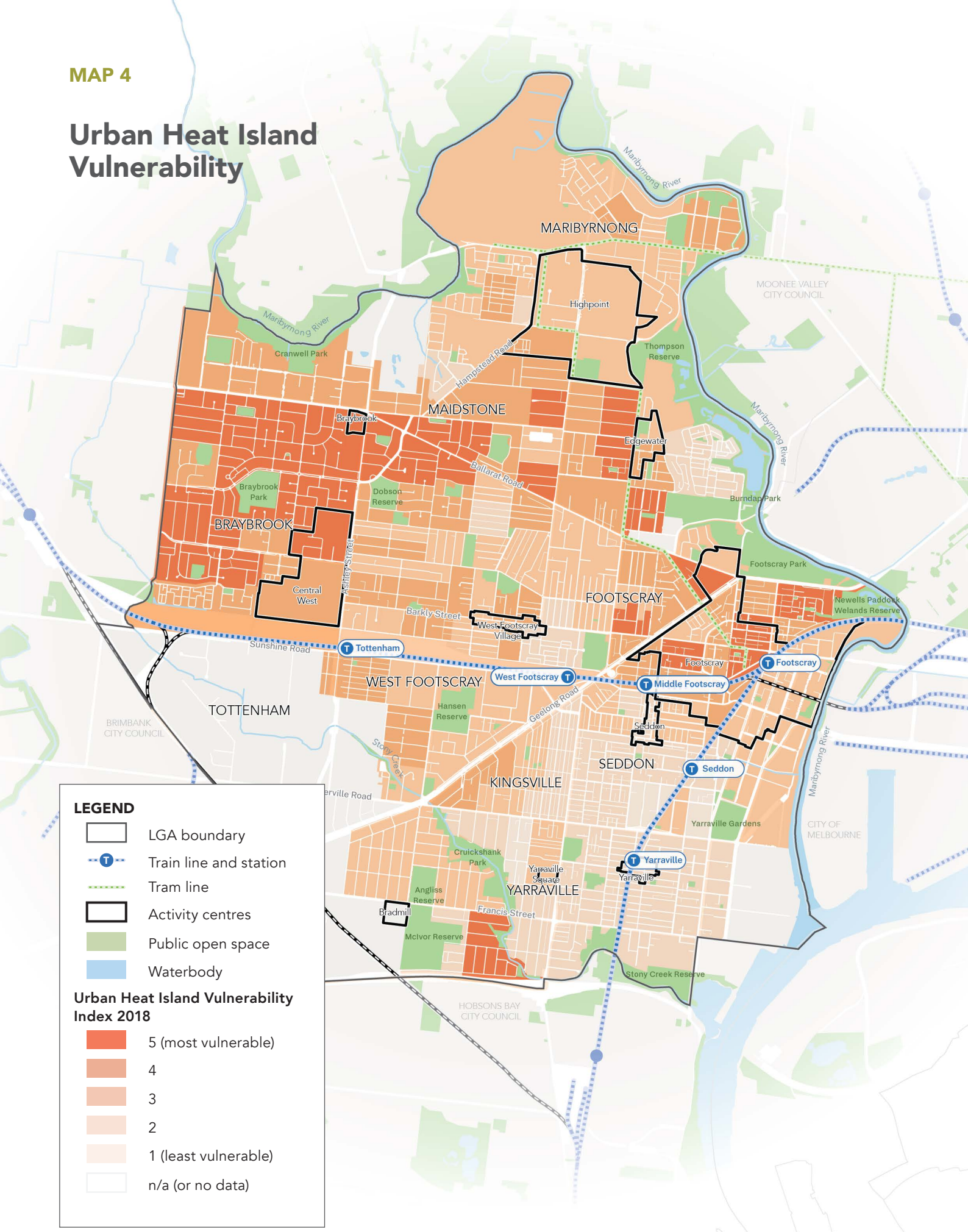


Figure 10. Urban Heat Island Vulnerability in the City of Maribyrnong (2018)

Air quality

Council is working to address the environmental and health impacts of poor air quality in the municipality, largely caused by the City's proximity to the Port of Melbourne and high volumes of trucks and vehicles on local roads. As a result, our residents face a 40% higher than average risk for air quality related diseases.

Addressing this challenge – closely aligned with our Air Quality Improvement Plan (2022) - must be a key consideration in how we plan for housing. Central to this is encouraging walkable neighbourhoods, where residents can access shops and daily needs close to home, reducing reliance on motor vehicles (as discussed under Theme 4).

We want to focus housing growth in appropriate locations where services are most accessible, such as activity centres and areas with strong public transport access. At the same time, development along major transport corridors with high traffic volumes – such as Geelong Road, Ballarat Road, Williamstown Road and Ashley Street - will need to be carefully managed.

One approach is to consider the concept of "second street density", where higher-density housing and taller buildings are located in the back streets behind transport corridors and major roads. This model aims to improve health and wellbeing for residents by avoiding noise and pollution associated with busy roadways, while still providing access to services and facilities.

We also want to explore how we can improve outcomes through design, including measures to encourage more tree planting and landscaping in new developments, along with thoughtful layout, siting and building orientation.

Flooding risks

Flood risk presents another layer of climate vulnerability, particularly in areas close to the Maribyrnong River and lower-lying parts of the City. Managing growth in these locations will require stronger integration of flood resilience, sustainable water-sensitive urban design (WSUD), and climate-responsive housing.

Ensuring that future development supports environmental performance and neighbourhood character – including tree planting, access, open space integration, and permeability – will be crucial for adapting to climate change while delivering quality residential environments. In some areas, there may be limited opportunities for housing growth and development to help reduce community exposure to flood hazards and associated health risks.



Sustainable housing design and construction

Designing housing that supports environmental resilience is critical to ensuring that The City of Maribyrnong can grow sustainably with its environment. A key opportunity lies in embedding environmentally resilient character into new development and renovations – particularly through increased vegetation, permeability, and climate-sensitive built form. Areas with compact, impervious development patterns – especially in Inner Urban precincts, exhibit greater vulnerability to the Urban Heat Island effect, as do largely unshaded areas like Garden Court precincts (Braybrook and parts of Maidstone).

To address this, our preferred character statements could include tree canopy cover and landscaping (aligning with reformed standards for tree canopy provision), setback guidance, and open space integration as essential features to promote heat resilience and sustainable water management.

Balancing housing and green space

At the local level, our Medium Density Design Guide (2023), Integrated Water Management Plan (2023) and Urban Forest Strategy (2018) reinforce this commitment by encouraging water-sensitive urban design (WSUD), permeable surfaces, and vegetation-rich design outcomes. These tools seek to ensure that new infill development is well-designed in order to reduce stormwater runoff, maximise energy-efficiency and adapt to changing climate conditions. By embedding sustainability into neighbourhood character, planning controls, and design guidance, we can support housing that meets environmental performance targets and delivers long-term liveability and resilience for residents.

Environmentally sustainable design

Council is working to improve environmentally sustainable design (ESD) in new housing across The City of Maribyrnong. This means making sure new homes are more energy efficient, climate resilient, and better for the environment.

Recent changes to state planning rules support this by introducing new standards to improve solar access, make it easier to use solar energy, manage stormwater more effectively, and improve access to recycling and waste services. Maribyrnong City Council is one of 25 councils involved in the Elevating ESD Targets project (Planning Scheme Amendment C177), which seeks stronger sustainability requirements for new development, including to achieve:

- Net-zero carbon buildings
- Better energy and water efficiency
- More green spaces and tree planting
- Aligning with the National Construction Code's 7-star energy rating

While the Minister for Planning has paused Amendment C177, Council remains committed to advocating for higher ESD standards.

The following pages show examples of housing that meets these higher sustainability benchmarks. These are the types of designs we'd like to see more of in the municipality, and we're exploring ways to work with the development industry to support this.

Planning approaches for sustainability

As the City of Maribyrnong grows, effective planning will be vital to ensuring that new development actively supports the City's climate and sustainability goals. One of the most critical actions we as Council can take is to strengthen sustainable built form controls within zones which allow for residential development. This includes promoting setbacks, permeability, access and landscaping requirements that reduce urban heat and allow for deep-rooted planting.

We will also explore ways to ensure housing is planned for in a way which supports active transport and public transport options. We will also consider how the viability of these choices might provide opportunities for people who chose to live without a car, to save money on car parking spaces. This might mean reduced minimum requirements for developments which are located within walking distance of high qulaity public transport services.

Certain character areas, particularly Garden Court residential areas (Braybrook and parts of Maidstone), are vulnerable to overheating and vegetation loss due to inadequate planning controls and enforcement. A clearer focus on preferred neighbourhood character that embeds climate resilience is needed to safeguard long-term environmental performance.

Looking ahead, our role in setting ambitious, enforceable planning controls that promote low-emission, climate-adaptive development will be key to achieving a sustainable urban future. This includes advocating for stronger ESD standards at the state level, while applying local design policies and overlays where we can, to embed sustainability into residential development.

Other practical initiatives to support sustainability

Council can also support sustainable housing in ways that sit outside the planning system. This could include practical tools such as online education, fact sheets, and design guides to help both homeowners and renters improve their homes' energy efficiency and resilience to the impacts of climate change. Council could also help promote rebates or grants that help residents in transitioning their homes to renewable energy or improving water efficiency.

Other ideas include encouraging greener homes and neighbourhoods through planting and landscaping. This could involve providing more education and information on caring for canopy trees to provide shade and reduce heat, using native plants, creating wildlife-friendly gardens, and climate-adaptive planting in pots or containers. Council could prepare landscape guidelines to support plant selection and maintenance, with tips that apply to both homeowners and renters.

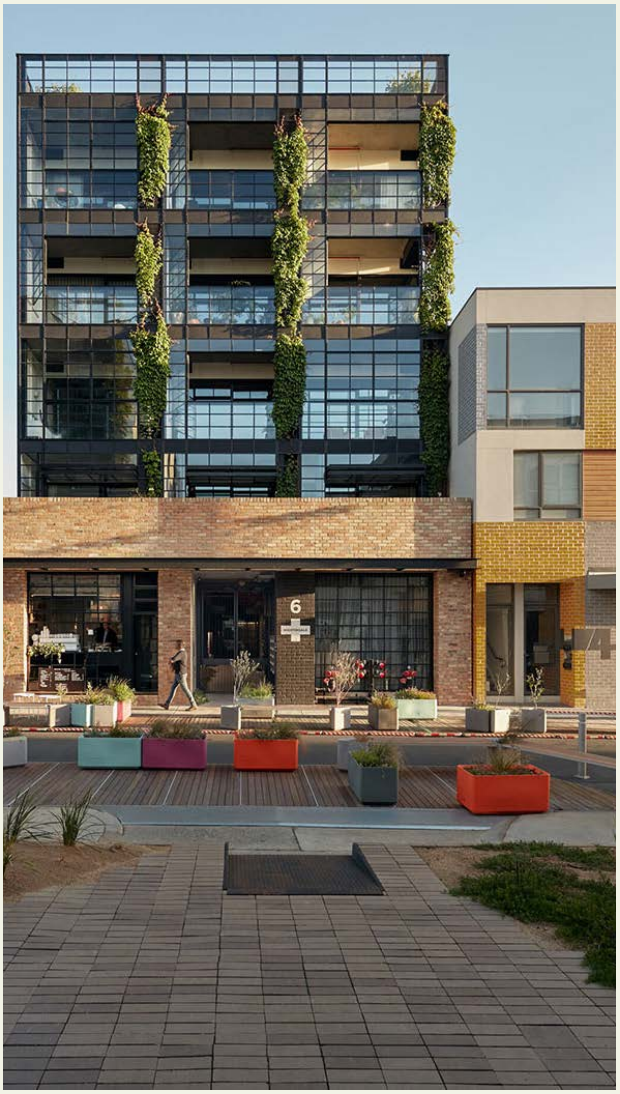


Nightingale 1

Nightingale Housing and Breathe Architecture

Nightingale Housing is a Melbourne-based social enterprise committed to creating financially, socially, and environmentally sustainable housing. Its inaugural project, Nightingale 1, serves as a prototype for this model, featuring a five-story building with 20 apartments. It also features a limited number of off-street parking spaces, to reduce costs for households who do not own multiple (or even a single) vehicle.

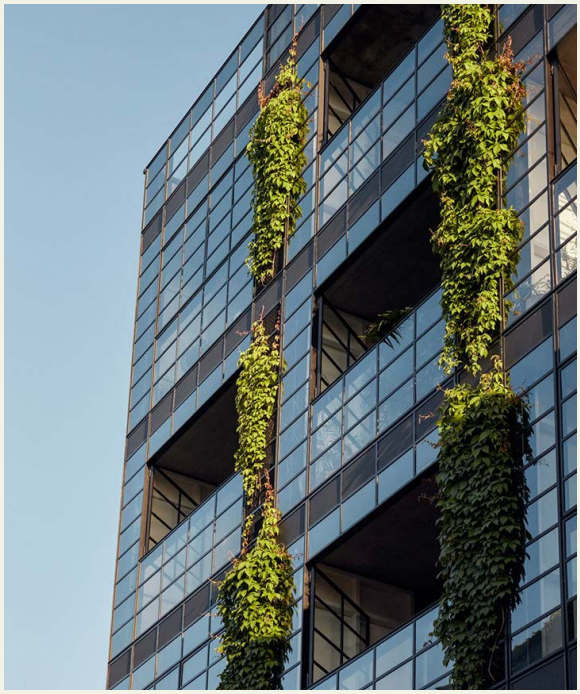
Nightingale 1 operates entirely free of fossil fuels and achieves carbon neutrality, supported by an 18 kW rooftop solar photovoltaic system. The building has an 8.2-star rating under the Nationwide House Energy Rating System (NatHERS), indicating exceptional energy efficiency. Additional eco-friendly features include rainwater harvesting for irrigation, extensive use of recycled materials such as timber flooring, and design elements that promote natural ventilation and thermal comfort. Communal spaces like rooftop gardens and shared laundry facilities not only enhance social interaction but also contribute to environmental sustainability by reducing individual resource consumption.



Building exterior (source: Nightingale Housing)



Building stairwell (source: Nightingale Housing)



Building exterior (source: Nightingale Housing)

SUSTAINABLE HOUSING CASE STUDY

Ferrars and York

HIP V. HYPE, Six Degrees Architects and Ironside

Ferrars & York is a six-storey, 22-apartment development in South Melbourne, created by HIP V. HYPE in collaboration with Six Degrees Architects and builder Ironside. The project exemplifies best practices in climate-resilient design and construction. It emphasizes quality, durability, and long-term value, utilizing low-impact, responsibly sourced materials.

The building is carbon neutral in both construction and operation, powered entirely by 100% renewable energy. It has an average NatHERS rating of 8.6 stars. A third-party verified Life Cycle Assessment was conducted to quantify the embodied carbon, leading to the purchase of high-quality Climate Active offsets. Features like double-glazed windows, an east-west orientation for optimal natural light and ventilation, and the use of recycled materials contribute to its sustainability credentials. These elements not only reduce the building's environmental impact but also enhance thermal comfort, acoustic performance, and lower energy bills for residents.



Building exterior (source: HIP V. HYPE)



Bike parking (source: HIP V. HYPE)



Building rooftop (source: HIP V. HYPE)



Theme 4

CONVENIENT AND ACCESSIBLE LIVING

LET'S DISCUSS

How do we get the most out of housing to meet our daily needs?

A well-planned city is one where daily life is easier. Convenient and accessible living means having homes close to shops, schools, services, public transport and green space – so people can spend less time commuting and more time living. When we get this right, we create places that support independence, reduce cost-of-living pressures, and help people stay active, engaged and well throughout their lives.

As we plan for housing that is inclusive, sustainable, and reflective of local character, we also need to make sure it supports the way we live–day to day. That means ensuring new homes are located in the right places: close to jobs, transport, open space, schools, shops, and healthcare.

This theme explores how we can plan for housing in the right places, close to the things we need every day. It looks at how we can balance growth with liveability, reduce reliance on cars, support active transport, and use planning tools to coordinate housing with community infrastructure. With the right planning, we can ensure that new homes contribute to healthy, connected, and thriving neighbourhoods for everyone.

Locating new homes close to access and services

Activity centres and transport

A key principle we use to determine access and convenience in housing planning is if residents can meet their daily needs by walking to their local shops, services, parks and amenities in 20-minutes or less. We call these '20-minute neighbourhoods'. These generally also include high quality, frequent public transport to provide easy access to areas beyond the local area, for work and other exciting destinations. This planning makes it easy for residents to choose a daily transport mode that best suits their needs.

In planning for sustainable housing growth, the City of Maribyrnong is strategically positioned to leverage its strong transport connectivity and diverse network of activity centres. Footscray Priority Precinct, as a Metropolitan Activity Centre, and the Highpoint-Maribyrnong Major Activity Centre, are key locations that offer opportunities for intensified residential development. Both are well-served by train stations, tram routes (including Tram Route 82), and multiple bus corridors making them highly accessible and capable of supporting medium- to high-density housing forms. There is also potential for development near the Central West – Braybrook Major Activity Centre near Tottenham station, bus services and key employment lands to the south.

The State Government have recently announced their 'Activity Centres' program, earmarking areas near Tottenham, West Footscray and Middle Footscray stations as strategic locations for more housing. This is something that, whilst important, needs to carefully planned for, to maximise its potential for our local community.

Neighbourhood Activity Centres (NACs) also play a vital role in shaping future housing growth. These centres, such as West Footscray and Seddon villages - provide walkable catchments that support a blend of residential, retail, and community uses. By directing new housing to these areas, we can ensure that new homes are co-located with services, jobs, and public transport, helping to reduce car dependency and support more equitable access to daily needs.

Council's Planning Scheme currently identifies three housing change areas. These include:

- Limited change areas: where character or constraints (such as heritage, environmental sensitivity, or access limitations) mean only limited housing growth is expected.
- Incremental change areas: where moderate, context-sensitive development like low-rise apartments, dual occupancies and townhouses is encouraged.
- Substantial change areas: where greater housing intensification is planned – such as in activity centres, near transport nodes, or on large strategic redevelopment sites.

The former Kinnears factory on Ballarat Road and Ryco factory on Whitehall Street, Footscray, are examples of key strategic redevelopment sites identified for substantial change. They are well-connected by current and future transport infrastructure, including the Metro Tunnel, and provide opportunities for a diversity of housing options that make getting around convenient and sustainable. Planning in these areas can help accommodate future population growth while ensuring that new housing is integrated with public transport, jobs, shops, and services.

MAP 5

Potential housing growth areas

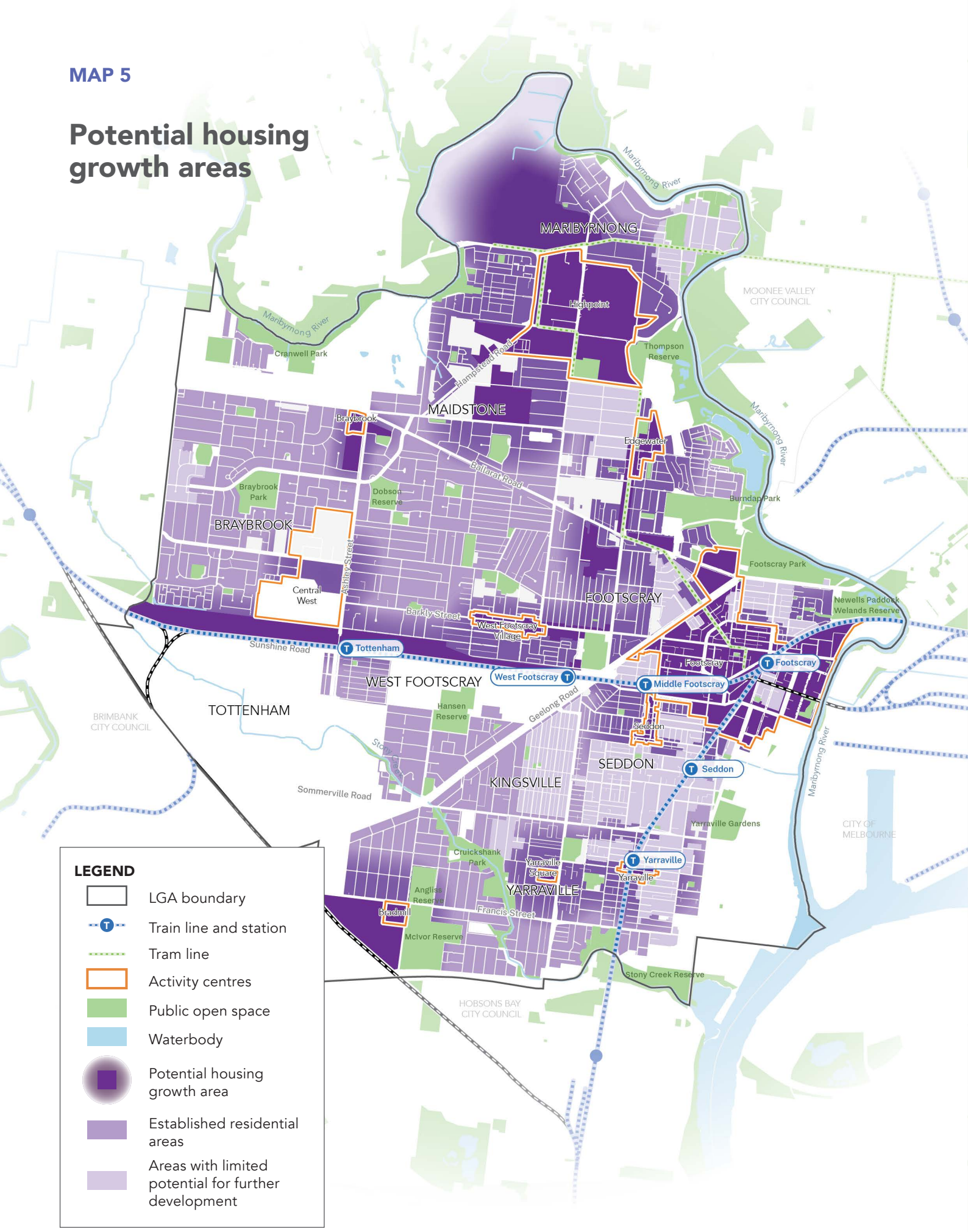


Figure 11. Potential housing growth areas in the City of Maribyrnong

Council's role in coordinating growth & infrastructure

As the City grows, there becomes an increasing need to ensure that new homes are supported by the right infrastructure at the right time. This means taking a coordinated approach to planning housing, transport, and community infrastructure, so that neighbourhoods remain liveable, connected, and inclusive as the population increases.

Council advocates to State Government agencies to align residential growth with public transport upgrades, road improvements, open space, and access to schools and health services. For example, planning around key activity centres like Footscray, Highpoint and Central West considers both transport connectivity and the need for new community infrastructure like childcare, aged services, and sporting facilities. It is especially important to align growth with State Government planning and provision, given that they have considerable powers over large development approvals, growth targets and the amount of revenues councils can receive, particularly through rates.

A key tool available to Council is the ability to secure development contributions from new housing developments. These contributions help fund a portion of the cost for essential infrastructure – such as parks, drainage, libraries, and community centres – and ensure that the benefits of growth are shared across the whole community.

The City of Maribyrnong has already introduced a 5.7% open space contribution rate, and is actively working to strengthen its approach to capturing value from development to support long-term infrastructure delivery. Council also has a Developer Contributions Plan Overlay (DCPO) that applies to the Joseph Road precinct (DCPO1) and a municipal wide DCP (DCPO2), which leverage further funding toward community infrastructures (like libraries, leisure centres, public toilets, sports facilities, neighbourhood houses, community halls and childcare facilities). However, 2051 growth projections mean they need updating to ensure we can provide adequate services as we facilitate new housing development.

Through strategic planning, advocacy, and careful coordination, Council can encourage growth in the right places and help support planning for the infrastructure needed to make communities thrive – now and into the future.



Next steps

What happens next?

The Maribyrnong Housing Strategy is being developed in stages, and we're now at a key milestone - testing key ideas and concepts with the community through this Discussion Paper. Your feedback during this phase will help us refine the direction of the draft Housing Strategy and confirm what matters most to the community.

Here's what happens next:

- **August 2025:** We'll prepare a Draft Housing Strategy, building on what we've heard from the community and the evidence we've gathered.
- **September/October 2025:** You'll have another opportunity to provide feedback on the full Draft Strategy before it's finalised.
- **November/December 2025:** The Maribyrnong Housing Strategy will be finalised – with your input shaping the future of housing across our City.
- **2026 onwards:** The Maribyrnong Housing Strategy will be implemented (including Planning Scheme Amendment). We will notify you of the exhibition period (one month) which will provide a final opportunity to provide feedback on any changes to zones and overlays resulting from the directions of the Strategy.

Appendix A Definitions of key terms

Activity centres - Designated hubs of commercial, cultural, and community activity where higher-density housing, jobs, and services are encouraged.

Affordable home ownership - might include shared equity or below-market purchase schemes and is typically provided by the federal government and at-times by the state.

Affordable housing - Defined in Victoria's Planning and Environment Act 1987 as "housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low-, low-, and moderate-income households."

Affordable rental - is for low- and moderate-income earners and can be made available to students and key local workers like hospitality workers or aged care staff. It is typically provided by federal government, state government and community housing agencies (CHAs). Some councils provide small proportions of this housing to aid broader efforts.

Crisis and supported accommodation - helps those at immediate risk of homelessness. It is typically provided by federal government, state government and CHAs.

DTP (Department of Transport and Planning) - The Victorian Government department responsible for state-level transport and planning policy, infrastructure coordination, and strategic planning.

ESD (Environmentally Sustainable Design) - An approach to design that seeks to reduce environmental impacts and improve sustainability outcomes in buildings and urban development.

Household - A person or group of people who live together in a dwelling and make common provision for food and other essentials of living.

Housing affordability - Refers broadly to whether housing costs are manageable relative to a household's income.

Housing change areas - Areas identified in planning strategies as suitable for different levels of housing growth – typically defined as minimal, incremental, or substantial change areas.

Housing stress - Occurs when a household spends more than 30% of its gross income on housing, particularly if the household is in the bottom 40% of income earners.

Infill - Development that adds new housing within existing urban areas, often by using vacant or underutilised land.

Key workers - People employed in essential services such as health, education, emergency response, and retail, who often face challenges affording housing near their place of work.

Liveability - The quality of life in a place, based on factors like access to services, safety, housing, transport, green space, and social connection.

Neighbourhood character - The look, feel, and identity of a residential area, shaped by built form, vegetation, street patterns, and cultural or historical elements.

Overlays - Planning tools that apply additional rules or considerations to certain areas or sites – for example, heritage, flood risk, or environmental significance.

Planning permit approval process - The formal process of assessing and deciding whether a proposed land use or development can proceed under the planning scheme.

Planning Scheme - A legal document that sets out policies, zones, overlays, and other provisions to guide land use and development in a municipality.

Planning scheme amendments - Changes to the planning scheme that can introduce new policies, zones, or controls – these often involve public consultation and approval by the Minister for Planning.

Social housing - Long-term housing provided well-below market rates for lower income earners who cannot otherwise afford housing comprising public housing (provided by state government) and community housing (provided by community housing agencies).

Strategic Redevelopment Sites - Large or significant sites identified in planning strategies as having strong potential to deliver new housing and other public benefits.

Transport corridors - Key road or rail routes that support high volumes of movement and are often targeted for higher-density development due to their connectivity.

VCAT (Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal) - An independent tribunal that reviews (amongst other matters) planning decisions made by councils, including permit applications and enforcement matters.

Walkability - How easily and safely people can walk to shops, services, parks, and public transport from their homes.

Zones - Categories in the planning scheme that define how land can be used and what types of development are allowed (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial).


Maribyrnong
CITY COUNCIL