



Frequently Asked Questions

North West and South Wangaratta Residential Growth Area Structure Plans

July 2015

1. What is a structure plan?

A structure plan is a tool used to set out a vision for the future development of a place. In this case, structure plans are being used to direct and manage the development of new residential growth areas in north-west and south Wangaratta.

A typical structure plan contains a *plan*, showing the location of specific future land uses such as housing, shops, schools, parks and community facilities. It also shows infrastructure such as roads, bus routes, pedestrian and cycle paths, and drainage. Land uses and infrastructure will respond to areas of environmental sensitivity such as native vegetation, flooding, bushfire risk and cultural heritage.

The plan is supported by a *report* that explains how the plan was developed. The report details land use opportunities and constraints and explains why different land uses and infrastructure are located in certain areas. The report also identifies the needs of a new residential community and explains how these are met by new and existing facilities.

Council consulted with key stakeholders in April 2014 to help identify land use and planning opportunities and constraints within the structure plan areas. Background specialist studies were completed for the areas assessing biodiversity, bushfire risk, cultural heritage, drainage and traffic impacts.

2. Why complete a structure plan?

Structure planning can help local government to:

- Provide greater certainty to the local community and investors about its expectations for the future form of development in its residential growth areas
- Manage change to ensure growth areas are attractive, vibrant areas to live, work and shop
- Ensure the social, environmental and economic vitality of an area
- Make best use of Council resources and focus investment to best serve the community.

The structure planning process enables the community and other stakeholders to actively participate in shaping the future form and function of growth areas, ultimately helping to secure their confidence in an area's development.

3. The structure plan shows

- a park; or
- shops; or
- a community facility; or
- a storm water retention basin on my land.

What does this mean?

This means that if your land is identified for a specific type of infrastructure you will not be able to develop in the way that you may have been anticipating.



Each draft Structure Plan shows a preferred layout of land uses and infrastructure for the growth areas. The layout includes the location of roads, paths, parks, a neighborhood center, drainage infrastructure (retention basins and wetlands) and different types of land uses, i.e. residential, low density residential, compact residential and commercial. The majority of these land uses and infrastructure are identified on privately-owned land.

The location of infrastructure has been informed by specialist technical reports. This means the best locations for infrastructure have been identified on the draft Structure Plans in accordance with these reports. If the same outcome can be achieved by locating key infrastructure in a slightly different place, then the draft Structure Plans may be changed as a result of the consultation process.

4. It seems unfair that my land is needed for infrastructure, but my neighbour can subdivide and develop for new housing. What compensation do I get?

Affected land owners will be paid appropriately for the land required for specific infrastructure items, based on the development potential of their land. More detailed analysis of development potential, infrastructure projects and compensation will be prepared as part of the infrastructure contributions phase of this project (refer to Q.5).

5. What are infrastructure contributions?

Infrastructure contributions are levies applied to new residential areas to enable the upgrade and development of community facilities, recreation facilities, transport infrastructure, drainage infrastructure and public realm assets.

A finalized Structure Plan will identify the various higher order infrastructure projects that are required to meet the future needs of the community. An Infrastructure Contributions Plan will then calculate the total cost of the various higher order infrastructure items. This total cost is then divided by the total amount of net developable hectares in the growth area to determine a charge rate. This charge rate may be based on an area (eg. per net developable hectare) or an outcome (eg. per dwelling or lot).

6. Will I have to pay an infrastructure contribution?

If you choose to develop your land, then you will be required to pay infrastructure contributions. No contributions are payable if you choose not to develop your land.

An infrastructure contribution is payable on 'net developable land' at the time of development. Net developable land is defined as land within a property that is available for development. This excludes encumbered land, arterial roads, railway corridors, schools and community facilities and public open space. It includes lots, local streets and connector streets. Net developable land may be expressed in terms of hectare units (i.e. NDHa).

The Infrastructure Contributions Plan will include a plan and table showing the location and amount of net developable land for each property, therefore each property owner can calculate the total infrastructure contribution charge for their property. Each property will be required to pay infrastructure contributions for the land they wish to develop, at the time they develop.



7. When do I need to pay infrastructure contributions?

Infrastructure contributions must be paid to Council prior to Council issuing a Statement of Compliance for a Plan of Subdivision (ie. when a planning permit for subdivision is approved by Council and certain conditions of the planning permit have been met).

8. Will the approval of the Structure Plans affect my rates?

Not in the short term. A change in rates is linked to a change in the valuation of your property. This happens over time and is a result of recorded changes in property values as properties are bought and sold in an area.

If you have any further questions about your rates, you can contact Council's Property and Revenue Department.

9. When can I subdivide my land?

The chart below illustrates the basic steps before a permit can be granted to subdivide land for residential purposes:



You can continue to develop your land in accordance with its current zone controls. If you wish to subdivide your land for residential development, you must wait until the land is rezoned from Farming Zone to an appropriate residential or commercial zone.

How long will it take to complete the North West and South Wangaratta Structure Plans?

An exact completion date is hard to predict, due to the complexity of the project. The project has three main components being preparation of *structure plans*, preparation of *infrastructure contributions* and *implementation* of both through amendments to the Wangaratta Planning Scheme.

Structure Plans:

Background analysis comprising preparation of specialist technical studies and the opportunities and constraints analysis with key stakeholders is complete. Draft Structure Plans have been prepared for public consultation using this background information.

A formal public consultation period is underway. At the conclusion of the public consultation period, all submissions received by Council will be considered. For reporting purposes, the content of submissions will be summarized. Adjustments may be made to the draft structure plans in response to submissions.

Once the necessary adjustments are made, the final Structure Plans will require approval by Council.



Infrastructure Contributions:

Council is working with specialist consultants to identify infrastructure required to transition the growth areas from their current farming uses to being 'development ready' for housing. This process includes identifying necessary infrastructure projects, costing the projects and distributing the costs in an equitable way to those landowners and developers who choose to develop. It is expected that this project will be completed following public exhibition of the draft structure plans.

Implementation:

Implementation of approved Structure Plans will be achieved primarily through changes to the Wangaratta Planning Scheme. These changes may include rezoning land for residential, commercial and public purposes, applying a Development Plan Overlay and introducing requirements for the payment of infrastructure contributions.

These actions require a planning scheme amendment. A planning scheme amendment typically takes 12 months, however this process may be longer or shorter, depending on whether a Panel is required to assess submissions, and the volume of submissions a Panel is considering.

A basic amendment process is shown below:



What happens next?

Following the community consultation period, submissions will be assessed and a report to Council will be prepared making recommendations on the final form and content of the Structure Plans. During this time Council will be working on an infrastructure contributions plan for each Residential Growth Area. If you have provided formal feedback (in the form of a submission with your name, address and email) you will be notified of the next steps to be considered by Council.

Further information can be obtained:

- On Councils Website
www.wangaratta.vic.gov.au/services/planning/growthareaplanning.asp
- By contacting the Strategic Planning Team:
Phone: 5722 0888 or by making an appointment during normal business hours.