

21.05 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

22/03/2012
C93

Key Issues

21.05-1 NATURAL ASSETS

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The Brimbank municipality lies within the Victorian Volcanic Plains Bioregion and contains a variety of natural landscape features and flora and fauna species of national, state, regional and local significance.

One of the remaining natural ecological communities found within the municipality is the critically endangered Natural Temperate Grassland of the Victorian Volcanic Plain listed under the Australian Government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The City of Brimbank supports 7 Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVCs), being Plains Grassland, Plains Grassy Wetland, Floodplain Riparian Woodland, Stony Knoll Shrubland, Stream bank Shrubland, Escarpment Shrubland and Riparian Sedgeland. All of the aforementioned EVCs are considered 'Endangered' for this Bioregion under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* and Plains Grassland (Natural Temperate Grasslands VVP) are listed as critically endangered under the EPBC Act.

This ecological community also supports a number of nationally protected flora and fauna species including but not limited to *Pimelea spinescens* (*Plains Rice-flower*), *Diuris fragrantissima* (*Sunshine Diuris*), *Delma impar* (*Striped Legless Lizard*) and *Synemon plana* (*Golden Sun Moth*).

The municipality is located within the Maribyrnong and Werribee River catchments and has a series of rivers and creeks that traverse the municipality and function as habitat corridors and linear recreation parklands.

The rivers and creeks within the municipality form important environmental and wildlife corridors and also provide significant open space and recreational areas. These deep creek and river valleys and their associated public open space, tree cover and visually interesting topography are the main features of an otherwise flat landscape.

It is important that Council protects and improves the quality of waterways, creek valleys, grasslands and conserves natural landscape characteristics utilising a best practice approach to ensure the integrity of conservation assets are maintained.

A balance must be found between the protection of these environmental assets and the provision of an equitable distribution of quality recreational areas throughout the municipality.

Objective 1

To identify, protect and enhance the municipality's natural assets.

Strategies

- 1.1 To discourage development that undermines the environmental significance of Brimbank's remnant native grasslands, the sensitive areas north of the Calder Freeway, the Maribyrnong River, the Kororoit, Taylors, Jones, Jacksons, Steele and Stoney Creeks and the Green Gully Valley, and other areas of comparable importance.
- 1.2 Implement *Victoria's Native Vegetation Management: A Framework for Action*, including the "three step approach".

- 1.3 Protect areas of native vegetation and habitat value from fragmentation, weed invasion, pest animals and hydrological changes.
- 1.4 Ensure the construction of buildings and works do not impact on the health and viability of areas of native vegetation or habitat value.

Objective 2

To retain, protect and improve the natural and landscape environs along the Maribyrnong River, Kororoit Creek, Taylors Creek, Jones Creek, Steele Creek and Stony Creek escarpments and adjoining open space areas.

Strategies

- 2.1 Develop a network of connected habitat corridors using river and creek corridors and open space areas.
- 2.2 Encourage the natural re-instatement of constructed waterways such as Stony Creek and Jones Creek as part of new development adjoining a waterway.
- 2.3 Retain the natural ridgelines and views along the Maribyrnong River and Kororoit Creek by ensuring the river and creek corridors are not dominated by buildings and works.
- 2.4 Require the use of suitable native vegetation on public and private land adjacent to waterways.
- 2.5 New development adjoining a waterway should be adequately set back from the top of escarpments and ridgelines to prevent soil erosion and to provide for habitat, open space and recreation corridors.
- 2.6 Ensure new development along rivers and creeks considers culturally sensitive landscapes and cultural heritage.
- 2.7 Reduce the effects of stormwater discharge to waterways in relation to pollution and flooding.
- 2.8 New development should provide passive surveillance of adjoining parks, river and creek corridors.

Objective 3

To protect and enhance the environmental health of Brimbank's waterways.

Strategies

- 3.1 Ensure all buildings and works, including hard surface areas are constructed to minimise soil erosion and the entry of sediment laden runoff into waterways.
- 3.2 Ensure all buildings and works minimise changes to the natural water flows of the city's rivers and creeks.

Policy Guidance (criteria for the exercise of discretion)

It is policy that, as appropriate:

- New developments should not prejudice the establishment of habitat corridors along river and creek corridors.

- New development adjoining native vegetation or habitat corridors along the waterways should be adequately fenced and setback to prevent weed invasion and disturbance to the site's land form and vegetation.
- Preference should be given to the establishment of conservation reserves or native vegetation offsets located on land contiguous with other areas of native vegetation.
- Preference should be given to proposals to locate native vegetation offsets within the area of the planning scheme where reasonable opportunities are available so that gains can accrue to the flora/fauna communities affected by the loss and to the local catchment areas.
- All offsets should be provided in accordance with Victoria's Native Vegetation Management: A Framework for Action.
- Remnant native vegetation along Brimbank's creeks and rivers should be retained and revegetated to facilitate the creation of habitat corridors.
- Any changes to natural water flows should not compromise the viability of nearby patches of native vegetation.
- New buildings and works should be adequately setback from the ridgelines along the Maribyrnong River and Kororoit Creek to protect the landscape and escarpment vegetation, maintain views and the valley's natural land form.
- New subdivisions and developments should be designed to address adjoining parks, river and creek corridors.
- Development which requires the removal of significant existing street trees should be discouraged.

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The Brimbank Green Wedge contains a number of environmental assets and areas used for recreational, horticultural and low density residential uses. Despite the whole of the area being located outside the Urban Growth Boundary, Council has faced significant pressure to increase residential development within the area.

Residential land use is inconsistent with current state government planning policies which discourage residential development outside the Urban Growth Boundary and in areas affected by significant aircraft noise.

Objective 1

To protect and enhance the landscape, cultural heritage, recreational, environmental and agricultural values of the Brimbank Green Wedge.

Strategies

- 1.1 Discourage further residential subdivision in the Brimbank Green Wedge in accordance with state government planning policies.
- 1.2 Ensure development in the area, especially on the escarpments and ridgelines, minimises any visual impacts on the landscape qualities of the area.
- 1.3 Provide for the development of an open space recreation and habitat corridor along the Maribyrnong River and Kororoit Creek.
- 1.4 Ensure that education centres and non conforming uses develop master plans that protect the values of the green wedge area.

Objective 2

To protect future land use and development from potential contaminants associated with land previously used for farming and agricultural practices.

Strategies

- 2.1 Ensure contaminants are suitably identified on sites that are known or suspected to have been used for a contaminating use.
- 2.2 Ensure sites identified as being potentially contaminated are appropriately remediated to minimise risk to the community and the environment.

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Implementation**Zones and Overlays**

- Apply the Green Wedge Zone to existing agricultural and rural residential land outside the Urban Growth Boundary.
- Apply the Public Conservation and Resource Zone to areas of environmental and habitat significance in public ownership.
- Apply the Rural Conservation Zone to sensitive escarpments and riparian areas along Maribyrnong River and Kororoit Creek.
- Apply the Special Use Zone to existing education centres and other non-conforming uses within the Green Wedge.
- Apply the Public Park and Recreation Zone to public open space and recreation areas in public ownership.
- Apply the Environmental Audit Overlay to areas of potentially contaminated land within the Green Wedge.
- Apply the Environmental Significance Overlay to the areas adjacent to the Kororoit Creek

Further Strategic Work

- Consider the application of Environmental Significance Overlays to areas of remnant native vegetation, existing and proposed habitat corridors and waterways.
- Consider the application of Public Acquisition Overlays to areas of environmental value proposed for incorporation into the public land management system.
- Develop planning policies and provisions aimed at protecting the landscape qualities of the Brimbank Green Wedge from inappropriate development, especially on escarpment and ridgeline areas.
- Consider the rezoning of the Keilor Market Gardens to Green Wedge to legitimise and support existing horticultural activities.
- Investigate the potential expansion of the Rural Living Precinct, east of the Keilor Golf Course at the top of the escarpment.
- Prepare development guidelines for the assessment of development within areas identified as potentially contaminated.
- Prepare and implement a biodiversity strategy for the municipality.

Reference documents

Brimbank City Council Natural Heritage Strategy, Ecology Australia Pty Ltd, 1997 (Reviewed Abzeco Pty Ltd, 2006).

Brimbank Native Vegetation Review: Site Assessments, Abzeco Pty Ltd, 2007.

Port Phillip and Western Port Native Vegetation Plan, Port Phillip and Western Port Catchment Management Authority, 2006.

Kororoit Creek Regional Strategy 2005-2030, September 2006.

Maribyrnong River Valley Design Guidelines, April 2010.

Port Phillip and Westernport Regional River Health Strategy, Melbourne Water, 2007.

Brimbank Green Wedge Management Plan, August 2010.

