

WYNDHAM LOGICAL INCLUSIONS SUBMISSIONS

PROPOSAL B –WERRIBEE WEST - MAMBOURIN

1. Introduction

Council's proposal that the new UGB follow the Outer Metropolitan Regional Transport Corridor (OMRTC) in the City's West has largely been adopted, but one area in the south-west has been omitted.

In Werribee West-Mambourin, the UGB returns east along the Geelong Railway, omitting the land between the Railway, OMRTC, Princes Freeway and current UGB:

Figure 1: Area Omitted from the UGB in Werribee West – Mambourin



This locality's east end is contiguous with planned housing and very close to a potential passenger railway station. West of Lollypop Creek, the area is not suitable for housing, due to factors including:

- proximity to a major quarry and landfill in Wests Road,
- the landfill's potential 50-60 year lifetime; and
- fragmentation by the landfill site and waterways.

Conversely, the land is well-suited to logistics and industries, especially those seeking attractive visual exposure to the freeway, or an attractive location generally, where many lots could overlook wide floodways and some would face housing across an arterial road.

Wyndham's south-west and west are relatively remote from employment, especially in industry, logistics and related services. The locality's freeway and rail freight corridors, to be reinforced by the OMRTC, support its capacity to attract and support a range of businesses, jobs and services, especially in logistics or services to nearby urban areas.

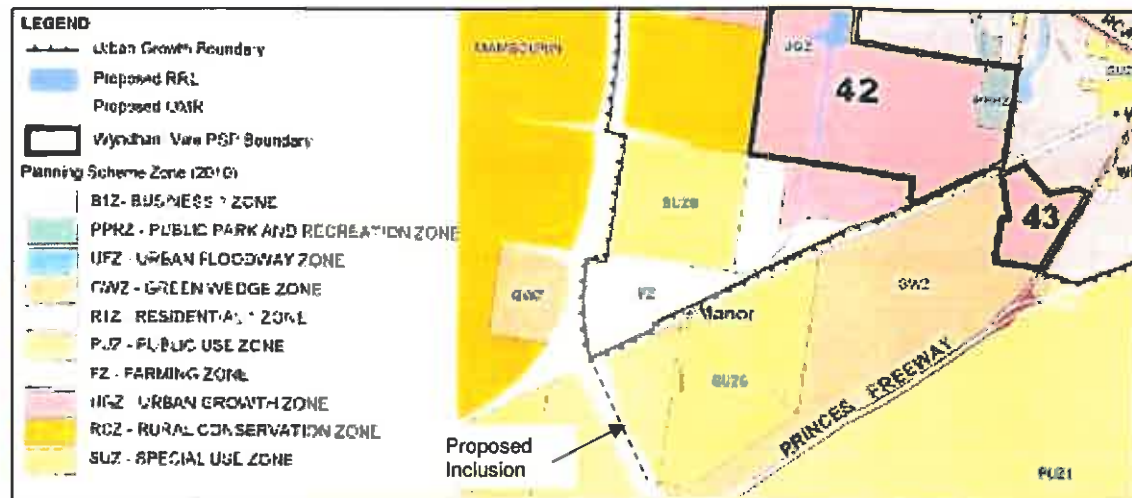
Development may need to be called on to partly or wholly fund its own freeway access and possibly a rail overpass, plus internal arterial route(s). However, this seems within the ambit of affordable development contributions, by industries that can exploit such locations. Planning policy would need to reinforce the site's appeal as an attractive gateway and business/working environment.

It is submitted that this Werribee West-Mambourin area should be within the relocated UGB.

2. Existing Zoning and Planning Policy

Figure 2 shows the zoning pattern in this proposed logical inclusions area of about 1,033ha:

Figure 2: Zoning in Werribee West:



The Green Wedge A zone occupies the whole frontage to the Princes Freeway and the eastern half of the logical inclusions area, or about 548ha (53%) overall. It extends north-eastward to the UGB, adjacent to PSP 43.

The triangular area in the north-east, bounded on two sides by the UGB (and the third by the proposed Ison-Westbrook Road route) is about 43ha. Most of this area is a shallow floodplain that is expected to become developable by either external or internal flood management, as discussed below.

The Special Use 6 zone occupies about 367ha, or 35.5% of the total area. Wyndham City's 240ha site, hosting a continuing basalt quarry and crushing plant and Council's refuse disposal facility (RDF), occupies the whole area north of the east-west section of Wests Road, to the Geelong Railway.

South of Wests Road, quarry interests (the Barro Group P/L and Mossfiel Civic Centre P/L) jointly own a 182ha property, including the remaining area of about 127ha in the Special Use 6 zone. This area is not yet quarried.

The Public Use zone in the south-west, on the remaining 119ha (11.5%) of the proposed logical inclusion, extends to (and across) the proposed OMRTR. Melbourne Water's Western Treatment Plant site had two areas north of the Freeway, neither forming an active part of the treatment plant. This one is undeveloped, though it is believed to have had a long history of grazing and cropping.

The whole Melbourne Water property, from this site to Port Phillip Bay, is subject to the Ramsar treaty on protection of migratory bird species, so there is an approval process to be followed before any urban development can occur. (Despite the above comments on land use, biodiversity studies would be required in any event, especially given that another small tributary to Lollypop creek crosses the site.)

The Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO1) applies to the whole Lollypop Creek floodplain, but not to the tributary on the Melbourne Water land. This reinforces the need for biodiversity studies, despite the history of cropping on much of this generally flat floodplain, and Council officers' belief that very little native vegetation remains, even along most of the waterways.

3. The Proposal

3.1 East of the proposed Ison-Westbrook Road route

Although most of this 43ha pocket is flood-prone, this is a very shallow section of floodplain that may be substantially freed for development by:

- proposed drainage works upstream of the Geelong Railway, or
- cut-and-fill within the area, to retain flood storage capacity.

The key candidates to use the land are housing and active open space:

- a. Housing is favoured as fully as practical, because:
 - the land is contiguous with proposed housing in PSP43;
 - it is over 1.5km from the nearest source of adverse amenity impact, from Council's RDF or from a kilometre into the Western Treatment Plant; and
 - it is adjacent to the most accessible site for a potential Werribee West rail station, although no commitment has been made to its delivery.
- b. Active open space has not been provided in PSP43 on the assumption that this extension area will be sufficiently protected from future flooding to facilitate sporting development. At least 8-9ha would be required, and this could be increased to as much as 20ha

3.2 The Current Green Wedge Zone, West of Ison/Westbrook Road

- a. Land capability.

Around 60% of this area is at least marginally flood prone, and it would be imperative to retain the flood storage capacity it offers. However, it is expected that it will be possible to significantly reduce the area of the floodplain by cut-and-fill, as supported in PSP42 South. This should be enabled by:

- the relatively flat and shallow form of most of the floodplain,
- the minimal biodiversity values at present (and capacity to create them if consistent with flood management), and
- the alluvial nature of the surface material, in contrast with the rocky higher plains in most of Wyndham's west.

There is, of course, a series of limits to the scope of cut-and-fill to generate developable land in flood plains. In this case, it is best to be conservative, assuming only a one-third reduction in flood prone area, to around 40% of the total. This would leave 60% (300ha) of the west section of the Green Wedge zone for development.

b. Land use: Housing Not Supported

Council does not support residential use of this section of the proposed logical inclusion, for several reasons:

- Much of it is sufficiently close to the Wyndham RDF (landfill) to warrant caution about potential exposure to odours.
- Residential communities need to be compact and permeable, due to the need for ready access to a wider range of services, like schools, shops and local parks.
- The proposed Ison/Westbrook Road route would create a further barrier to connectivity within residential communities, whilst creating a suitable residential-employment interface.
- The need for additional business and employment opportunities is considered to exceed the need for more housing in this part of Wyndham West.

c. Land use: Industry, Logistics and Business Services

This locality offers strong appeal for industrial and logistics businesses and associated services, and this focus is supported by Council for several reasons:

- It is expected that a significant "light" industrial precinct will be created north of the Geelong Railway, to support business and employment, and offer a buffer to the nearby quarries and RDF. However, that precinct will offer limited appeal to businesses requiring high exposure, and will be less suitable for businesses generating heavy traffic. The subject locality can therefore offer a complimentary role.
- In particular, Wests Road already provides a frontage/service road to the Princes Freeway, offering high exposure for business that need it.
- In the "gateway" area where the Princes Highway leaves the Freeway, and Ison-Westbrook Road connects, there is a particularly exposed and accessible island area that can be planned as a high amenity industrial/business site. It would be bounded to the west and north-west by the main Lollypop Creek floodway, but this could also be turned to advantage by running a perimeter road and pathway around the interface, and facing businesses onto the floodplain.
- In the north, towards the rail corridor, that generally flood-free area can offer opportunities for logistics businesses and industries needing larger sites.
- In the broader strategic sense, this exposed locality sits:
 - at the intersection of Princes Freeway and two key routes into Wyndham,
 - between Melbourne and Avalon Airport,
 - midway between Melbourne and Geelong, and their ports, and
 - will access all major industrial and logistics districts in Melbourne's outer West and North.

The PSP for this area can optimise capacity to attract business and employment by:

- Ensuring effective integration with the associated floodways, and
- Targeting layout, design and land use strategies to foster a degree of specialisation between the sub-precincts, as outlined under (b), above.

d. The assumptions in 3.2 (a), above allow for around 200ha of floodplains to be retained in the current Green Wedge A zone. Only limited thought has been given to that area's potential roles. However, candidates would clearly include:

- Lakes, wetlands and other forms of riparian corridors along the waterways;
- Passive open space, and extensive recreation facilities such as golf course(s) and equestrian facilities.

3.3 The Special Use 6 Zone

a. Industrial Characteristics

This zone already has key features of a low density industrial precinct, including its processes and generation of heavy truck movements that need to be diverted away from residential areas as well as practical.

Although all current uses are relatively temporary:

- the current basalt quarry is believed to have a few years' quarry life to go;
- the rock crushing plant is expected to be retained when the quarry operation moves to a site north of the Geelong Railway;
- the RDF is expected to have an operating life of 50-60 more years; and
- the unextracted site south of Wests Road is not expected to see extraction for some years, and though its extraction area and depth of rock may suggest a significantly smaller operation than on the current site, it may be several decades before this site is quarried and filled.

b. Long term land use

Landfill is itself an interim land use. This is normally followed by electricity generation from extracted methane; rolled out as the landfill progresses from one cell to the next, and likely to be continued for at least 20-30 years afterwards.

Long term land uses for the RDF are unlikely to be determined for several years, and will undoubtedly reflect surrounding development at the time. Meanwhile, modern landfills include a widening range of recycling activities, from recovery of metal, battery and electronic components, to green waste composting. These are likely to continue throughout the life of the landfill.

3.4 The Public Use Zone

Subject to detailed studies, especially on biodiversity and flood levels, and the objectives of Melbourne Water, this smaller sector appears to be largely developable.

It is over 5km from Wests Road's connection to the Princes Highway and Freeway. However, its north end is adjacent to the level crossing that provides direct access to:

- The associated employment precinct proposed north of the railway;
- Bulban Road, north-east to Ison/Westbrook Road; and
- When the OMRTC is built, to that corridor and its links to Geelong and beyond, and to Beveridge and beyond.

The OMRTC will lift the precinct's profile, stressing the importance of a frontage/service road along the OMRTC to ensure that is addressed by the future businesses along it, potentially before the OMRTC is built.

4. Evaluation Against Standards For Logical Inclusions.

The proposal:

- Is in a growth area municipality,
- Is located on the existing Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), and
- Proposes a small residential and open space extension, plus a larger industrial/logistics employment area, separated by an arterial road.

5. Evaluation on Design Criteria

5.1 Consistency with the State Planning Policy Framework and any Ministerial Directions.

The proposal is believed to be consistent with the SPPF and those Ministerial Directions that have relevance to the locality and proposed land uses.

5.2 Analysis of Constraints and Opportunities

a. Agricultural Activities

There are no agricultural activities in the proposed logical inclusion area, but much of the site is used to raise beef cattle and horses are kept on one or two lots in the area.

Neither of these uses is of sufficient strategic or economic value to be retained if a viable, strategically needed land use is otherwise called for. (See (d) re quarries.)

b. Biodiversity

(i) Floodways and wetlands

Map 2 shows the location of the broad Lollypop and Cherry Creek floodways; essentially shallow floodplains that have long been cultivated, farmed and grazed. Their biodiversity value is therefore believed to be limited, despite a small ephemeral wetland on the west branch of Cherry Creek, to the west.

Towards the South West, some 119ha of Melbourne Water land is also substantially developed as grazing land for beef cattle. The Ramsar classified areas that occupy most of the Western Treatment Plant, to the south, extend to other Melbourne Water lands north of the Princes Freeway, including this site. There is little evidence that the land offers substantial habitat for the targeted migratory bird species that fly here, especially in the absence of more wetlands noted above. However, this will need to be confirmed by targeted fauna studies.

(ii) Grasslands

The higher land in this locality is generally associated with basaltic lava flows that have not been covered by alluvium. These areas are less likely to have been cultivated, so the native grasslands and associated fauna are more likely to have survived, as they have in most of the planned 11,000ha grassland reserve to the north-west, unless they've been quarried, as noted below. Detailed flora and fauna studies will be required, as they have in other growth areas in Wyndham.

c. Drainage Corridors

The Lollypop and Cherry Creek drainage corridors, noted above, drain a significant catchment north of the Geelong Railway. However, in addition to substantial existing and proposed flood management works north of the Railway, the lower floodways in the subject locality will also remain essential to flood management in this region.

Melbourne Water is open to discussions about potential to reshape the flood plains to achieve developable parcels of land, whilst retaining or enhancing flood management values; and a potentially restoring riparian environments along the waterways; and creating recreation facilities that are relatively flood tolerant, as noted in 3.2 (d), above.

The whole logical inclusions precinct is clear of the contours at which rising sea levels would be a threat, on current information.

d. Extractive Industry and Landfill

The highest land in this locality is mostly north of the east – west section of Wests Road, as noted earlier. This basaltic outcrop on about 240ha has hosted a major basalt quarry and crushing plant for at least 30 years, and is still continuing towards the south-west of the site.

Southward from Wests Road, there is evidently a sufficient resource to quarry. However, all but the northern margin of that property is otherwise sufficiently level to cultivate, or create building sites on.

Wyndham City's regional refuse disposal facility (RDF) is working westwards from the eastern margin, and is expected to operate there for another 50-60 years.

e. Heritage

There are no known heritage issues in the proposed inclusion area, but studies will still be needed.

f. Landscape Features

The basalt outcrop and its on-site industries are the strongest internal landscape features, which the landfill is expected to reinforce over time.

However, the floodplains and creeks offer the potential for significant landscape restoration, using trees and water, and will help separate industrial land uses and housing to the east.

Externally, the whole area currently offers vistas to the You Yangs (west), the Western Treatment Plant's red gum framed plains (south), future residential areas, some in a "waterway" environment (north-east), and future industrial areas directly north, across the railway.

It will be a challenge to optimise these outlooks in a mostly industrial environment but a potential asset to the form of development that Council aims to attract.

g. Land use

The most prominent existing land uses are the quarry and landfill, but grazing, mostly of beef cattle, is the most extensive.

East of the proposed Ison (Westbrook) Road corridor, it is proposed that the key land uses are residential and active (sporting) open space, as outlined above subject to resolution of flood management issues. That section of the floodplain is only subject to shallow flooding, but it is relatively frequent, pending flood management strategies being developed at present.

West of the Ison (Westbrook) Road corridor, only industrial, logistics and related forms of employment uses are proposed. The character of these uses is expected to vary, according to accessibility, visibility, proximity to housing and other factors.

h. Salinity

Salinity is not known to be an issue in this locality, but may warrant testing before works approvals.

i. Soil Capability

The locality's soils are not likely to pose problems for urban use, except where basalt is found at or near the surface, generally on the higher land fringing the basalt outcrop.

j. Transport

This area's status as a logical inclusion for industry and logistics is reinforced by several transport factors, as shown by the map in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Transport Connections



k. Roads

- This precinct is located midway between the ports of Melbourne and Geelong, as noted.
- It has a 5km exposure to the Princes Freeway.
- Although VicRoads may not permit a new access to the Freeway within those 5km, the Geelong Road – Ison/Westbrook Road exit, at the precinct's east end, would enable excellent easterly access.
- Northerly access would also be good, as the same easterly connection onto Ison/Westbrook Road would link to the planned new overpass of the Geelong line, allowing employee access from Wyndham's major future growth areas.
- (Although that route would also offer freight access, the major western metropolitan logistics and employment areas would be more accessible via the Princes Freeway, limiting freight traffic through residential communities.)
- In the early years, access towards Geelong would only be good in the easterly section, via the Ison/Westbrook link. However, the OMRTC forms the west end of the precinct, and when the OMRTC opens, it would be accessible via the Wests Road rail crossing or an overpass, linking with the OMRTC via the planned Bulban Road interchange. That would provide excellent westerly and northerly access.
- The Wests Road crossing will also enable a second, more direct connection into the proposed light industrial buffer that's proposed to separate the quarries and RDF from residential areas.
- It would offer logistics services to the Werribee Employment Precinct.
- Rail freight access may not be available locally, although the Melbourne-Geelong and proposed OMRTC rail freight corridors would both abut the precinct. (However, if it is available, it would require a freight siding, mostly just north of the Melbourne-Geelong line.)

l. Trunk Services

Most trunk services, including recycled water, are readily accessed in this locality.

m. Wildfire

Once developed, the precinct should be reasonably well protected from wildfire. However, the recently committed 11,000ha Wyndham grassland reserve commences diagonally across the Geelong line and OMRTC intersection. Until the OMRTC is built, there would be a greater risk that fire could escape from the grassland reserves. A strategy should be developed to minimize this risk from the north-west.

Future quarries and the RDF (though existing) may benefit from upgraded or new road infrastructure. There may be a case for those uses to contribute to upgrades, though their contributions to existing infrastructure may already be proportional, and existing approvals may mean that the chance has passed.

6. Local Infrastructure Funding

This precinct's major infrastructure demand on Council is likely to be for arterial road upgrades and extensions; probably including an overpass over the Geelong Line, or Princes Freeway access (if permitted), or (less likely) both. These costs would be shared amongst developers via a Development Contributions Plan.

7. Evaluation of Design Criteria

Council does not yet have copies of many private submissions. However, the proposed logical inclusion is believed to be relatively well known, at least in the eastern end of the Precinct, and broadly supported.

8. Conclusions

- a. Wyndham's West is remote from major precincts that offer business locations and jobs in industrial, logistic and trades services.
- b. The northerly extension of this proposed employment precinct, across the Geelong Railway, will double as a buffer that separates quarries, the RDF and other potential sources of blight from planned residential precincts. It will therefore target light industrial, less intrusive industries and logistics businesses, especially where it's adjacent to housing.
- c. This precinct, south of the Geelong line, is much more suitable than north of the Railway for logistics business and industries that require large, fairly level sites.
- d. The precinct offers prominent sites along the Princes Freeway, and a "gateway" area with potential to be particularly attractive.
- e. The locality is geographically well-located for a logistics/industrial precinct, due to its location in relation to the State's major ports, airports and industrial areas, and the transport routes to areas further afield.
- f. It will have excellent easterly and good northerly road access once the Ison/Westbrook Road link is created.
- g. It will also have excellent westerly and northerly access once the OMR's is created, though that may be years away.
- h. The residual (consolidated) floodways, estimated in Section 3.2 to be around 200ha, would offer potential as wetlands, riparian habitats, passive open spaces and possibly active sports facilities such as golf courses and equestrian facilities.