



SUMMARY

Neighbourhood Character Strategy

We are currently preparing a new Neighbourhood Character Strategy for Nillumbik and we would like your feedback on the first draft of the Strategy.

What is the Neighbourhood Character Strategy project?

Nillumbik Shire Council is developing a new Neighbourhood Character Strategy for its residential areas, including designated rural townships, in the municipality.

Neighbourhood character can essentially be defined as how an area looks and feels and the qualities that make that area distinct from others.

The purpose of the Strategy is to guide the design and placement of new development in Nillumbik's residential areas, ensuring that it respects and responds to the valued features or character of an area. It will replace the existing Neighbourhood Character Study: Residential Design Guidelines' prepared in 2001 (amended in 2003).

The Strategy is being developed in response to an associated priority action within the current Nillumbik Council Plan 2021-2025 as well as to reflect changes to State Government policy and planning reforms that have been occurring over recent years.

Neighbourhood character is created by a combination of landscape, vegetation, the built environment, history and culture, and how they interact. It includes elements like:

- Built form and architectural style (how buildings/homes look, heights of buildings)
- Setbacks (how far buildings/homes are set back from the street)
- Vegetation (like gardens, trees, plants, bush)
- Street layout (street configuration, subdivision pattern)
- Topography (mountains, hills, creeks, gullies, etc.)
- Views
- Streetscape (how the street/road looks).

To develop the Strategy, each residential area is carefully assessed to determine the key character attributes which are used to form neighbourhood character statements and guidelines. Community input into understating the character of each area is an essential part of the process.

Why are we doing this?

Council recognises that the existing Neighbourhood Character Study and Precinct Guidelines from 2001 (amended in 2003) are now dated, and many State policies and implementation measures have since changed over this time. This Strategy will carefully consider character area boundaries and how the preferred character of each area should best be protected, including through the Nillumbik Planning Scheme.

The identified character types and precincts will be used to develop preferred future character statements, objectives and design guidelines.

What does the Strategy achieve?

The Neighbourhood Character Strategy seeks to capture and identify Nillumbik's unique values and develop a corresponding framework for residential development that will ensure better design and amenity outcomes for all residential localities across the Shire.

The new Strategy will strengthen Council's ability to protect the character of the Shire's residential areas, including within its rural townships, and provide greater clarity to landowners, developers, architects, designers, Council, State Government and the community about what constitutes neighbourhood character, what are the valued attributes for each character area and what are appropriate design responses.

Upon completion of the Strategy, a planning scheme amendment will be required to implement the Character Precinct Profiles (including preferred character statements, neighbourhood character objectives and design guidelines) and give them statutory weight through the Nillumbik Planning Scheme. This will ensure that these instruments will be appropriately considered in assessing planning permit applications for new development within these character precinct areas. Any such planning scheme amendment will be placed on exhibition in accordance with the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

How will the Strategy be used?

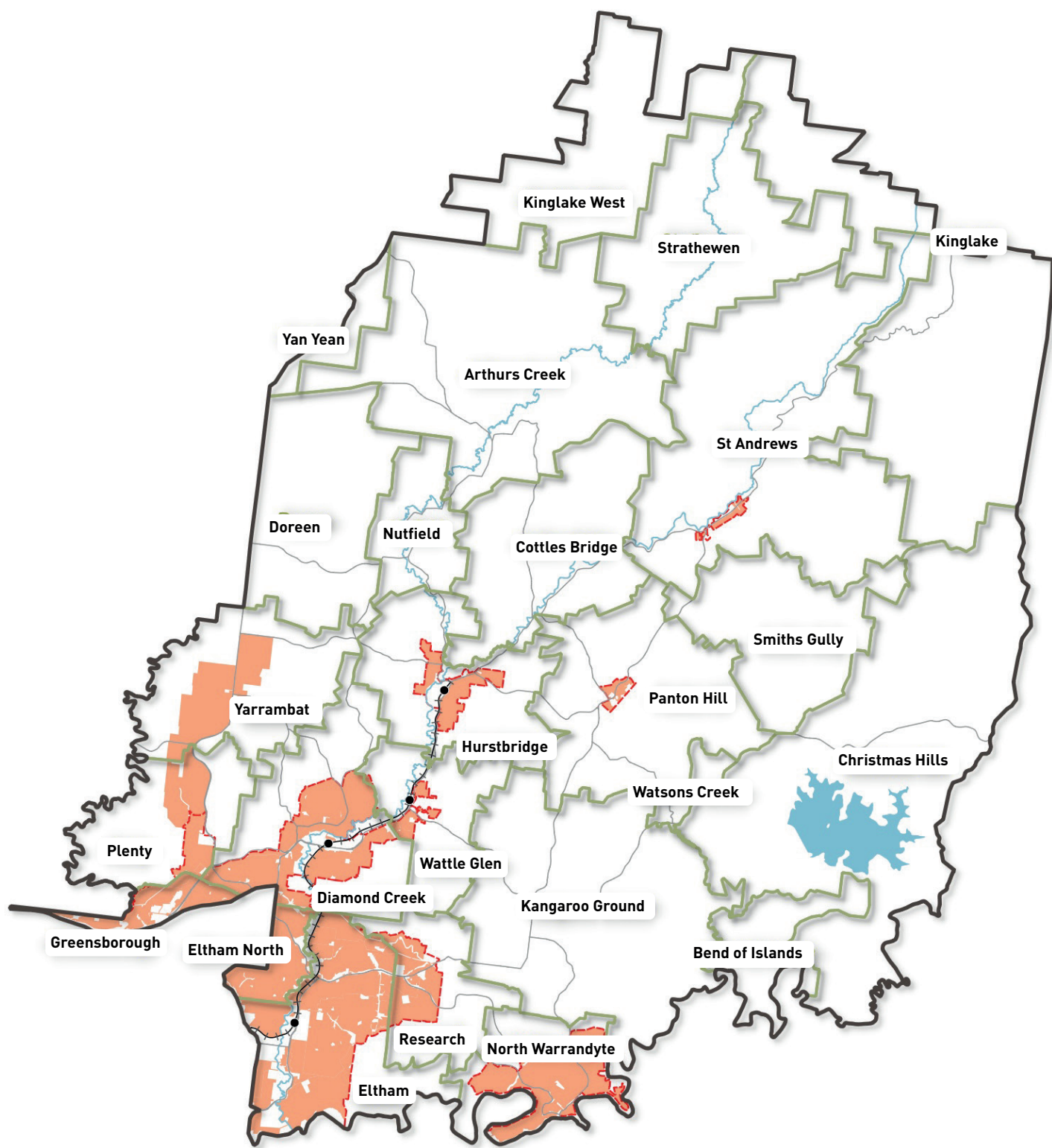
The completed Neighbourhood Character Strategy will be a strategic policy document that aims to provide a robust framework to guide development within Nillumbik's residential zones. It will be one of a series of documents, including a future Housing Strategy, that are required before preparing an overarching Residential Development Framework (RDF) for the Shire. An RDF will provide a means to balance the outputs of a Housing Strategy and Neighbourhood Character Strategy and is an obligation under State Planning Policy to holistically plan for the housing change of a municipality over an approximate 15-year period.

Residential neighbourhoods covered by the Strategy










The map below outlines the areas that will be covered by the Neighbourhood Character Strategy, which includes all residential zoned land including land in the:

- General Residential Zone (GRZ)
- Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)
- Mixed Use Zone (MUZ)
- Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ)
- Township Zone (TZ).

These areas are more likely to experience housing change and growth into the future and therefore need guidelines to be in place to ensure any new development within residential areas is respectful of the relevant neighbourhood character.



Legend

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Study Area |  Hurstbridge Train Line |
|  Nillumbik Shire Council Boundary |  Major Roads |
|  Locality Boundaries |  Major Watercourse |
|  Urban Growth Boundary |  Sugarloaf Reservoir |
|  Train Station | |

Neighbourhood Character Strategy

Figure 1: Residential Study Area

1:140000 @ A4
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What is included in the draft Neighbourhood Character Strategy?

The draft Neighbourhood Character Strategy identifies a series of new neighbourhood character areas across the Shire's residential localities which are accompanied by Precinct Profiles that contain a statement of preferred character, character attributes, character objectives and design guidelines for future development.

In its entirety, the draft Neighbourhood Character Strategy provides the following:

- Definition of neighbourhood character.
- Outline of the methodology conducted.
- Overview of policy and statutory context.
- Overview of existing strategies and background information.
- Summary of community consultation.
- Identification and summary of the key issues and threats to neighbourhood character in the Shire.
- A proposed Precinct Profile specific to each neighbourhood character area.

What are the proposed Neighbourhood Character areas?

Through the undertaking of a desktop analysis, site surveys and the key values identified by the community through the initial public engagement undertaken in April and May 2022, the draft Neighbourhood Character Strategy has identified a total of eight neighbourhood character areas, which are:

- Bush Residential 1
- Bush Residential 2
- Garden Court 1
- Garden Court 2
- Garden Court 3
- Garden Residential
- Rural Residential 1
- Rural Residential 2.

It is proposed that the draft character areas should replace the character areas identified as part of Nillumbik Shire's previous Neighbourhood Character Study and Design Guidelines (amended in 2003).

Section 6 of the draft Strategy provides an overview of the draft character areas identified by this Strategy and also demonstrates the key differences between each character type/area. The map below (taken from the draft Strategy) shows locations of the different draft character areas across the Shire.

What are Neighbourhood Character Precinct Profiles and how do they work?

Neighbourhood Character Precinct Profiles have been prepared for each neighbourhood character area identified within the Shire. Each profile provides a summary of the character area with associated character objectives and design guidelines to provide guidance to future development, ensuring that it reflects the preferred character as best as possible.

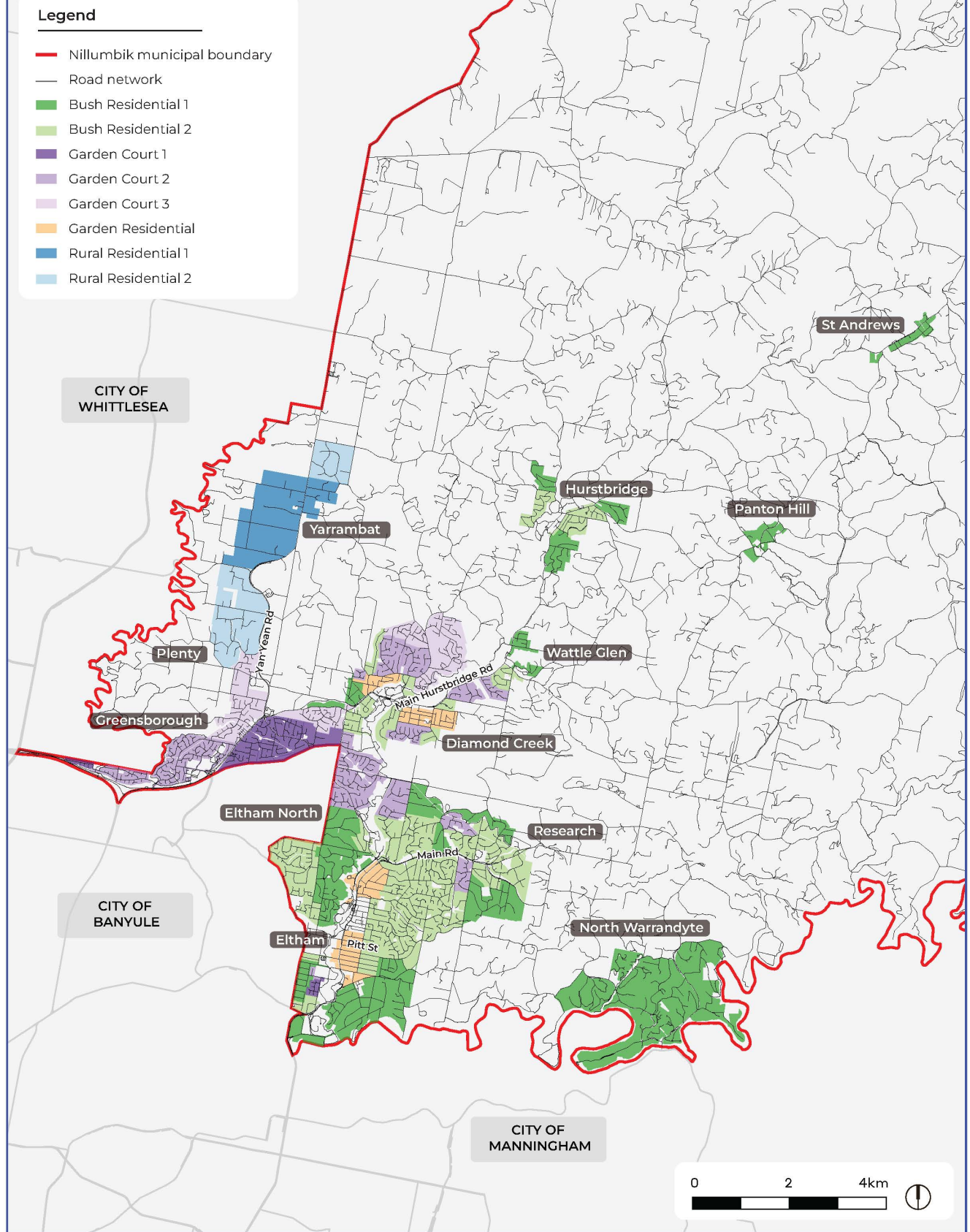
Like the character areas, these profiles are intended to replace the profiles identified as part of Nillumbik Shire's previous Neighbourhood Character Study and Design Guidelines (amended in 2003).

The precinct profiles include:

- Character Description;
- A Character Area map;
- A summary of key character attributes;
- A Preferred Character Statement;
- Preferred Character Objectives;
- Design Guidelines; and
- Photos.

The Character Precinct Profiles can be found in Section 7 of the draft Strategy.

Draft Neighbourhood Character Areas



A series of zoomed in locality maps are provided in the appendix to the draft Strategy.

Where are we in the process?



Find out more and have your say

Council's public engagement website, Participate Nillumbik, has a page dedicated to the Neighbourhood Character Strategy project. The Participate Nillumbik project page can be accessed at participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/neighbourhood-character-strategy

The Participate Nillumbik page provides:

- A full summary of the project and how it relates to planning for housing and residential development in the Shire. This information includes key project documentation such as the draft Strategy and other helpful resources such as summary fact sheets.
- Access to a video on neighbourhood character showing various examples around the Shire.
- Interactive maps that allow people to view the study area for the project and clarify which properties are included and which neighborhood character area has been identified for a particular property.
- Details of the three rounds of public engagement being conducted during the project and associated engagement activities for the current round.
- How to provide your input to the various forms of public engagement (second engagement period commences 29 August 2022 and closes 10 October 2022).
- Ability to register to stay informed about the project.
- Key milestones for the project.
- How to find more information about the project, including speaking with the relevant Council officers and more.