



colac otway shire

FORREST STRUCTURE PLAN

Report

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1 Introduction

Forrest is an important settlement for the Colac-Otway region. It has a unique position in the Otways, being within an accessible distance to multiple regional centres, surrounded by the Otway National Park, placed on a main route to a number of key coastal settlements, and host to a limited range of retail, commercial, educational and civic facilities.

Forrest is located 32.6km's from the Colac Otway Shire's largest settlement (Colac) and is placed at the foothills of the Otways, approximately 161km from Melbourne and 76km from Geelong.

Due to Forrest's locality and township qualities it is both experiencing and able to accommodate narrow increases in activity. Tourism growth and developments are, in particular, increasing opportunities and choices for new enterprises and lifestyle activities.

Council has recently developed higher order strategic plans for key rural and coastal settlements and, similarly, views Forrest as a key settlement where greater direction regarding land use and development is required.

1.1 Function of the Structure Plan

The purpose of a structure plan is to provide a framework for settlement and integrated development of a town's activity centre within its natural setting. The Forrest Structure Plan provides guidance to the community, government, business and the development industry about appropriate directions and opportunities for change. It guides public and private sector actions for major and incremental changes in land use and built form, movement networks and public spaces. Actions are designed to achieve economic, social and environmental objectives as per the shared vision for the town.

More specifically, this Structure Plan comprises a review of the existing planning controls covering the Forrest township and in some cases, adjoining land outside the town's settlement boundary.

The Forrest Structure Plan embodies the overall vision and commitment of Colac Otway Shire's 2009-2013 Council Plan which is to, "*...work together with our community to create a sustainable, vibrant future*", and assists council in fulfilling key Land Use & Development objectives.

Council and CPG Australia have prepared the Forrest Structure Plan with input and assistance from community and business groups, individuals and government agencies.

1.2 Objectives

The plan defines specific objectives for the growth within Forrest, and identifies opportunities and strategies to complete those objectives. The creation of a settlement boundary reflects the need to accommodate the projected growth and development over a 15 to 20 year period.

1.3 Implementation

The Forrest Structure Plan outlines recommended objectives and strategies pertaining to key issues. These recommendations include amendments to the local planning policy framework and zoning controls within the township, and Council priorities for asset and infrastructure development.

An 'Implementation' table is provided to clearly articulate the actions required to achieve each strategy. The recommendations are consolidated in the final section of the document.

Upon completion, this Structure Plan will be implemented as a tool to:

- Guide the assessment of planning permits for land use and development;
- Provide direction to land owners about the future potential of their land within the Forrest township;
- Provide direction for current and emerging enterprises and industries regarding opportunities for investment, development and growth; and
- Inform Council officers of the need for future works and programs.

1.4 Key issues and themes

Environment

There are a number of environmental constraints surrounding the development of the Forrest township which have shaped the Structure Plan's recommendations. These include the presence of dense forest and the inherent threat of bushfire, erosion, watercourses and the risk of flooding and inundation from the Barwon River.

Bushfire Threat

The Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission (VBRC) Final Report has been especially influential on the outcomes of the Structure Plan due to a host of recommendations impacting the viability of settlements within rural areas at risk of bushfire attack.

The State Government is developing new provisions relating to bushfire threat. While the Forrest Structure Plan will precede the formulation of the new bushfire planning provisions, the outcomes and recommendations of the Structure Plan will be considerate of the impact that the new bushfire planning controls may have on the viability of settlement growth in areas at risk to bushfire attack.

Local Policies

A Draft Colac Otway Shire Rural Living Strategy has been exhibited. Recommendations made through the Forrest Structure Plan have considered the settlement framework and vision for the Shire identified in the Rural Living Strategy.

1.5 Opportunities

The main opportunities for driving growth within Forrest have been identified as Residential Growth / Land Supply and Tourism Development. These two broad economic forces will actively influence the shape and role of Forrest over the life of the Structure Plan.

Growth / Land Supply

Forrest's settlement pattern is reflective of its natural environment and the era in which the town was established. Current land supply is constrained by natural landmarks such as the Barwon River, Otway National Park and remnant bushland to the north and south of the town.

The Structure Plan emphasises that any discussion surrounding residential growth and development within Forrest must recognise the risk associated with bushfire. The recommendations and planning controls arising from the Royal Bushfire Commission findings will also need to be thoroughly considered when addressing the potential for residential growth in Forrest.

Tourism

A new focus on lifestyle, recreation and eco-tourism opportunities has emerged since the cessation of logging on Crown Land in the Otways. The development and popularisation of outdoor recreational activities within Forrest such as mountain biking, hiking and camping are proving important to the viability of the town as a key Otways destination. The Structure Plan has considered how Forrest will accommodate additional tourism infrastructure.

2 Role and Function

The role of Forrest as an outdoor recreation and tourism destination has been well established over recent years along with an emerging trend for rural lifestyle residential development. Forrest's popularity as a key destination for recreational pursuits such as mountain biking, hiking, horse riding and camping is increasing due to its proximity to the Otway National Forrest and Victoria's coastline.

Forrest's tourism functions will continue to play a primary role in the town's growth and development into the future. Additional tourist accommodation and retail services will be required to meet the needs of a growing tourism market; focusing investment on tourism infrastructure will provide support for further expenditure and expansion of this market. The ability to attract local and regional recreational and community events will play a critical role in ensuring the economic stability and wellbeing of the town over the next 15-20 years.

In addition to its tourism-based role, Forrest will function as a small town with limited potential for residential growth due to environmental and servicing constraints. This is reinforced by the Colac Otway Shire Rural Living Strategy which designates Forrest and other settlements in the Otways as having limited capacity for growth.

A Vision statement has been prepared for the Forrest Township. The Vision seeks to encapsulate the outcomes sought through the combination of objectives and strategies contained in this Structure Plan. The Vision has been drafted as a result of community workshops and submissions and will be subject to further consultation with the community to ensure it reflects a shared Vision.

"The vision for Forrest is to be a place that revitalises and engages people and maximises opportunities for living, working and recreation by utilising the Otway's unique rural and environmental qualities and assets."



3 The Structure Plan

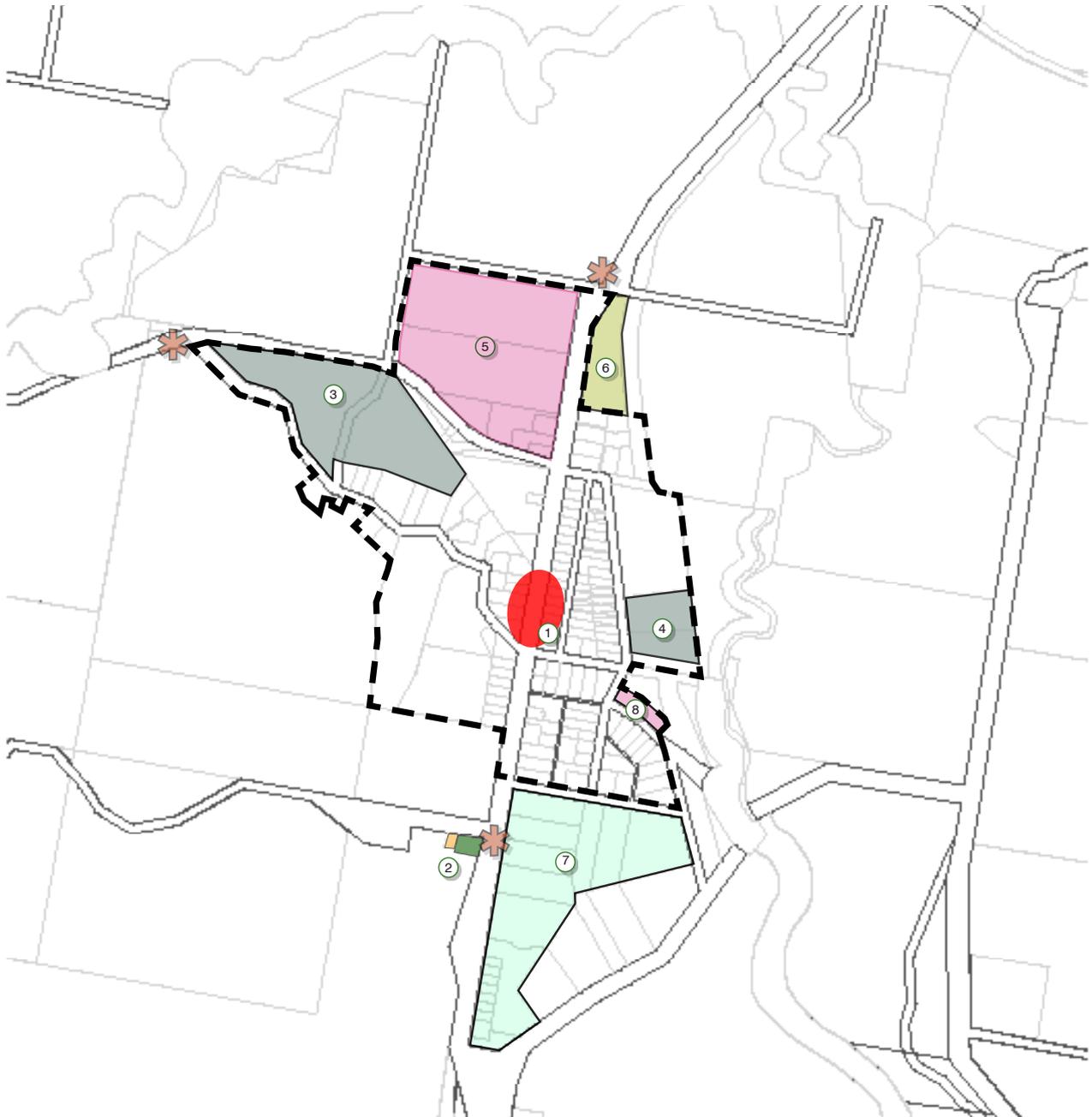
The Structure Plan is illustrated in Figure 1.

The key physical elements of the structure plan are described below:

1. The structure plan **establishes a defined settlement boundary** to provide strategic direction for the town's growth.
2. **Opportunities for limited expansion** beyond the current township have been identified and are reflected in the Structure Plan.
3. The structure plan seeks to support further **opportunities for Forrest's eco-tourism based economy** anchored by opportunities associated with Forrest's proximity to the Otway National Park and Lake Elizabeth.
4. The structure plan seeks to **revitalise the Grant Street business core** and expand the provision of commercial uses, particularly those related to the tourist sector. Opportunities to further develop retail services for the local population are also outlined.
5. The structure plan seeks to **celebrate the heritage assets** of Forrest, in particular the management of the European heritage sites relating to the town's timber history.
6. The structure plan establishes a framework for **improvements in community and service infrastructure.**

Re-zoning Recommendations	
	Rezone land to the north and north east (2324 and 2330 Birregurra-Forrest Road and 3025, 2346 and the balance of 2348 Forrest-Colac Road) from the FZ to TZ to accommodate future residential development.
	Rezone 1, 3 and 5 Hennigan Crescent and 35, 45, 55 and 59 Turner Drive from FZ to TZ to reflect the current land use on site.
	Rezone land to the south of Frizon Street bounded by the Forrest-Apollo Bay Road and Gills Lane from FZ to RLZ to reflect the existing land use. Will require a Schedule specifying minimum lot sizes.
	Rezone Primary School from TZ to Public Use Zone (PUZ) to reflect the existing land use.
	Rezone Caravan Park sites from TZ to Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) to reflect the existing land use.
	Back-zone land at 1and 5 Rivendell Lane from TZ to Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) and Public Use Zone (PUZ) to reflect actual use.
	Rezone land east of Birregurra-Forrest Toad and north of Henry Street to RAZ (2317 Birregurra-Forrest Road) to encourage gateway development.

Figure 1 Forrest Structure Plan



Legend

- Settlement Boundary
- Direct infill development
- Residential development opportunities
- Rezone to Rural Living Zone
- Rezone to Rural Activity Zone
- Backzone to Public Conservation and Resource Zone
- Rezone to Public Use Zone
- Consolidate Grant Street Town Centre and provide opportunities for commercial expansion.
- Opportunity for gateway entries

- ① Expand general store floorspace
- ② Increase tourist infrastructure at mountain bike drop off point
- ③ Turner Drive development opportunities,
- ④ Old Timber Mill redevelopment opportunities for accommodation / commercial uses, no decision made on use
- ⑤ 2324 Birregurra-Forrest Road Rezoning
Previous permit has lapsed
- ⑥ 2317 Birregurra-Forrest Road Rezoning - Schedule to identify use precluding residential use
- ⑦ South of Frizon Street Rezoning
Determine schedule to apply minimum lot size
- ⑧ Hennigan Crescent Rezoning



4 Settlement

4.1 Managing Residential Growth

Forrest has been designated by the Draft Rural Living Strategy as a town with limited capacity for growth. This must be understood in the context of the desire to support the town's tourism focus.

Forrest is a small town generally contained within the existing TZ land. An assessment of land within the existing TZ identifies approximately 9Ha of land that could potentially be developed for residential purposes (Refer Figure 1). This includes land in Turner Drive and the former Timber Mill site in Station Street.

The Context Paper revealed 50 potential lots¹ in the current land supply which represents approximately 22 years based on historical patterns of 2.3 dwelling permits per year. The intent of the strategy is however, to facilitate a low growth scenario which would provide land for 3.5 dwellings per year to support the natural growth of Forrest as a viable town and service the tourism industry. At this level of development, the 'current' potential lots represent 14 years supply.

In addition to the existing supply, it is recommended to rezone land to the north of town for future residential demand. The parcels west of Grant Street are known as 2324, 2330, 2324, 2344, 2346 and 2348 Birregurra-Forrest Road. Sites 2320 and 2324 are bound to the north and west by an unmade road reserve occupied by several large trees which may require modification if used as the primary access for future development. Land at 2317 Birregurra-Forrest Road on the eastern side of Grant Street is partially constrained but as a 'gateway' site is considered suitable for tourist accommodation. Land at 3025 Colac-Forrest Road is also proposed to be zoned from FZ to TZ.

The additional land recommended for rezoning will provide for residential development, representing a sustainable land supply and urban structure for Forrest. The recommendations reflect potential development in light of vegetation and anticipated land contamination constraints which may limit yield within TZ land. Other recommendations include addressing existing zoning anomalies including rezoning land along Hennigan Crescent from FZ to TZ and the land to the south of Frizon Street bounded by the Forrest-

Apollo Bay Road and Titchs Track from FZ to RLZ with a new Schedule specifying minimum lot sizes.

Due to the constraints on development in Forrest and the proximity of the bush interface to most parts of the town, limited options are available for rezoning of land to accommodate future housing and commercial development. Land to the north of the existing Township Zone on the western side of Grant Street is considered one possible option because it is located furthest away from high fire risk bushland but is relatively close to the main centre of town and is not flood prone. Despite one of these sites containing a large track of vegetation, a preliminary assessment during the structure plan process confirmed that the vegetation included only small areas of high EVC with the balance predominately low to medium value. The site is also considered a potential fire risk and obviously cannot be farmed and therefore on balance is considered appropriate to be included in the Township Zone. The Rural Living and Low Density Residential Zones are also potential options for this area particularly in the short term, but would not result in a yield that would service the needs of Forrest over the long term.

There are several dwellings on separate lots currently in the Farming Zone which are located just outside the Township Zone. It is recommended that these be included in the Township Zone and form part of the township proper.

This area contains a cluster of small lots on the southern approach to Forrest and several larger lots closer to Frizon Street. Of the eighteen lots proposed for rezoning to Rural Living Zone, three of these are vacant lots. The current FZ does not reflect the occupation of dwellings and the obvious connection to the township. The Rural Living Zone will allow single dwellings to be developed on the remaining vacant lots as an 'as of use right' while a schedule is proposed to restrict further subdivision of these lots recognising the high bushfire risk and proximity to forested crown land. The Rural Living Zone is also recommended for this area to allow for broader uses to be considered through planning applications such as tourist accommodation which the current Farming Zone does not.

1 Potential Lots at 85% uptake of total supply (59 lots)

4.1.2 Strategies

The Structure Plan also provides an opportunity to correct previous zonings and apply current controls to reflect the true use of the land and minimise the requirement for planning permits. The structure plan proposes the Caravan Park, school, DSE and CFA sites to be rezoned PUZ.

Overall, the proposed land within the town boundary as shown in Figure 1 will equate to approximately 20 years of supply to allow development at around 3.5 lots per annum (refer Appendix 1).

4.1.1 Objectives

- Limit land available for urban development to land contained within a defined settlement boundary.
- Protect the established extent of development within Forrest, defined by its rural setting at the entrance to the Otway National Park and forests.
- Encourage infill development within an established settlement boundary.

1. Establish a settlement boundary in accordance with Figure 1. The town boundary will only apply to TZ land.
2. Rezone land to the north and north east (2324 and 2330 Birregurra-Forrest Road and 3025, 2346 and the balance of 2348 Forrest-Colac Road) from the FZ to TZ to accommodate future residential development.
3. Rezone 1, 3 and 5 Hennigan Crescent and 35, 45, 55 and 59 Turner Drive from FZ to TZ to reflect the current land use on site.
4. Rezone land to the south of Frizon Street bounded by the Forrest-Apollo Bay Road and Gills Lane from FZ to RLZ with a new Schedule specifying minimum lot sizes to reflect the actual land use on site.
5. Rezone Primary School from TZ to Public Use Zone (PUZ).
6. Rezone Caravan Park sites from TZ to Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).
7. Back-zone land at 1 and 5 Rivendell Lane from TZ to Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ) and Public Use Zone (PUZ) to reflect actual use.

IMPLEMENTATION					
Strategy	Recommended Planning Scheme Change (LPPF, Zone or Overlay)	Implementation Actions	Further Strategic Work	Responsibility	Priority
1	Amend Clause 21.03-2 to include appropriate policy statements and map identifying settlement boundary.	None	No	Council	
2	Rezone land at 2324 and 2330 Birregurra-Forrest Road and 3025, 2346 and the balance of 2348 Forrest-Colac Road from FZ to TZ.	None	No	Council	A
3	Rezone 1, 3 and 5 Hennigan Crescent and 35, 45, 55 and 59 Turner Drive from FZ to TZ.	None	No	Council	A
4	Rezone land to the south of Frizon Street bounded by the Forrest-Apollo Bay Road and Gills Lane from FZ to RLZ with a new Schedule specifying minimum lot sizes.	None	No	Council	A
5	Rezone Forrest Primary School from TZ to PUZ.	None	No	Council	A
6	Rezone Caravan Park sites from TZ to PPRZ.	None	No	Council	A
7	Back-zone land at 1 and 5 Rivendell Lane from TZ to PCRZ and PUZ.	None	No	Council	A

5 Economic Development

5.1 Town Centre

Forrest's town centre was historically Station Street, with township development influenced by the regional railway system (closing in 1957) and the location of the town's sawmilling operations. Today, the town's orientation is around Grant Street.

Grant Street contains a primary school, public hall and a few small shops. The school doubles as a child and maternal health outreach facility, providing key services to the local community. Grant Street is also characterised by some small-scale, short-stay accommodation, including Forrest Country Guest House, Ti Tree Cottages and 'the Church'.

Forrest's town structure has been determined by a hierarchic structure of forestry, farming, industrial and service activities, and the growth of the town and its public institutions has been based entirely on the shape of the local economy. Only within the last few decades has the town's form been influenced by uses and development spurred by tourism, rural lifestyle and recreational pursuits.

In the absence of significant demand for higher-order services and development, Forrest's original town core has remained relatively intact. Thus, mixed uses (civic, residential and commercial) throughout the town core have been preserved. The legacy of this organic pattern of development is unformed precincts within an ill-defined town centre.

While residents can easily navigate their way between key land uses, there is merit in consolidating commercial uses within a defined part of Grant Street to provide a focal point for the important tourist market. This will become increasingly important as the role of Forrest as an outdoor recreation destination grows.

Furthermore, the recently developed microbrewery may 'pave the way' for the establishment of other new enterprises in Forrest: potentially small businesses with a focus on rural produce. This type of commercial offer would certainly reflect the desires of the tourist market.

While it is not expected that the town centre will grow to service a larger catchment through significant additional businesses and enterprises, it is anticipated existing businesses will diversify to cater for a greater range of needs for the tourist market. With this change, opportunities to expand local convenience retailing to improve the service offer for the local community may arise. This would be a positive outcome for Forrest.

The land at 2317 Birregurra-Forrest Road (east of Grant Street) provides an entrance to the town and as such, should be developed to deliver a gateway entrance. This land provides an opportunity for positioning Forrest as an eco-tourism/extreme-sports destination.

5.1.1 Objectives

- Increase retail oriented opportunities including accommodation in Grant Street.
- Continue to support the consolidation of business activities and mixed uses in town centre.
- Encourage diverse local business opportunities.

5.1.2 Strategies

8. Concentrate commercial, business and enterprise uses along Grant Street between the Community Hall and Turner Drive/Blundy Street as follows:
 - Small scale businesses providing convenience retail, dining / cafes, as well as rural produce based micro enterprises.
 - Bed and breakfast and other like accommodation facilities are encouraged.
9. Encourage the re-development of the existing general store to provide additional floor space, an active street front and expanded provision of retail / commercial services.
10. Encourage and consolidate street based retailing in the form of cafes and outdoor seating on the eastern side of Grant Street. New footpaths should be constructed along east side to approximately 3-5 metres as appropriate to accommodate pedestrian movement, seating and bicycle parking.
11. Support ongoing opportunities for school facilities (computers/library) to be used by the local community.
12. Ensure any new developments are designed to incorporate the streetscape, including footpaths, to activate and enliven streets.
13. Rezone land east of Birregurra-Forrest Toad and north of Henry Street to RAZ (2317 Birregurra-Forrest Road) to encourage gateway development (refer Figure 1).

IMPLEMENTATION					
Strategy	Recommended Planning Scheme Change (LPPF, Zone or Overlay)	Implementation Actions	Further Strategic Work	Responsibility	Priority
8, 9, 10, 11 & 12	Update Clause 21.05 – Economic Development to include a strategy in relation to enhancing the economic viability of Forrest.	<p>Include strategies in appropriate Council documents to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Encourage small scale businesses and accommodation facilities to locate along Grant Street between the Community Hall and Turner Drive. – Encourage the redevelopment of the general store. – Encourage street based retailing in the form of cafes and outdoor seating on the eastern side of Grant Street. – Encourage the expansion of footpaths along the east of Grant Street to accommodate pedestrian movement, seating and bicycle parking. 	Yes ¹	Council	A
13	Rezone land east of Birregurra-Forrest Road and north of Henry Street to RAZ	None	No	Council	A

Recommended Further Work

1. Council to review current footpaths within Forrest with the aim of accommodating multi function uses along Grant Street.

Figure 2 Indicative Interactive Streetscape



5.2 Tourism

The unique environmental qualities of Forrest and its proximity to the Great Otway National Park make it a highly sought after destination for outdoor recreation and leisure pursuits. Tourist infrastructure is well established in terms of signage, camping areas, trails, shelters and picnic areas including a mountain bike drop off location at the edge of town.

At present, there is no provision for the hire of recreation equipment including bike, kayak or camping hire. Given the popularity of this destination for these activities, there is merit in providing such facilities within Forrest.

Furthermore, there are currently no public change room areas, showers or lockers provided in Forrest to cater for the needs of tourists returning from recreation activities. This is particularly relevant for mountain bikers, who currently have nowhere to dry off / change clothes after hitting the trails and have nowhere to store their bikes. This means bikes are left in the street on the footpath in front of the café, and that people that are not staying overnight in town might be reluctant to spend time in town after they have finished cycling.

To capture the tourist dollar as effectively as possible, opportunities for people to spend longer in town should be facilitated. It is considered infrastructure for bike and equipment storage should be located at the current mountain bike drop off location, to be used in conjunction with the picnic facilities and toilets. There is also an opportunity to improve the gateways to Forrest by establishing landscape / built form treatments to acknowledge entry into the town.

There is a need to expand the accommodation offer to meet the growing and diverse needs to the tourist population. B&B's, group accommodation and boutique serviced apartments should be on offer in town. Group accommodation would attract large groups including school camps, sports groups etc. This type of accommodation, similar to that in the ski fields, could be co-located with a tourist hire business to cater for recreation needs in one location. A potential site for group accommodation of this nature is the old timber mill site; it is acknowledged this site is included in the future residential land supply equation however it is expected group accommodation development would only have a modest effect on residential supply.

5.2.1 Objectives

- Increase the offer of tourist based activities and accommodation.
- Encourage major sporting events in Forrest.

5.2.2 Strategies

14. Encourage the development of tourist infrastructure including bed and breakfast, group accommodation, farmers markets, rural produce, café, restaurants, eateries and the like.
15. Investigate opportunities for group accommodation to locate on the old Timber Mill site, adapting any existing buildings as appropriate. This strategy should be facilitated through Councils economic development unit with the private sector.
16. Encourage establishment of town based equipment hire and tour groups to support tourist recreational needs.
17. Explore opportunities to develop public showers and lockers in association with existing public toilet and picnic area at the mountain bike drop off locations to the north of town.
18. Explore opportunities to develop gateway treatments to the north and south of Forrest at the entrances along Grant Street, as shown in Figure 4.
19. In conjunction with Regional Development Victoria and Tourism Victoria, Council should facilitate opportunities to locate recreational events in Forrest. A marketing campaign should be established to achieve this outcome.
20. Encourage niche business to locate in town in the form of the cellar door, rural produce stores and the like.

IMPLEMENTATION

Strategy	Recommended Planning Scheme Change (LPPF, Zone or Overlay)	Implementation Actions	Further Strategic Work	Responsibility	Priority
14-20	None	<p>Include strategies in appropriate Council documents to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage the development of tourist infrastructure in Forrest, including bed and breakfast, group accommodation, farmers markets, rural produce, cafes and restaurants and eateries. - Investigate opportunities for group accommodation to locate on the old Timber Mill site. - Encourage the establishment of town based equipment hire and tour groups. - Investigate opportunities to develop public showers and lockers. - Explore opportunities to develop gateway treatments along Grant Street. - Work with RDV and Tourism Victoria to investigate the location of recreational events in Forrest. - Encourage niche specialty business to locate in town in the form of cellar door and rural produce stores. 	No	Council, RDV, Local businesses, organisations and sporting clubs	A

6 Environment

6.1 Heritage

Forrest's heritage includes Aboriginal cultural heritage and European heritage.

Aboriginal cultural heritage is significant within Forrest. Throughout the areas of the Great Otway National Park, there are four traditional Indigenous Owners: the Wathaurung, Gulidjan, Gadubanud, and Kirrae Whurrong people. Their spiritual and physical connections to places surrounding Forrest go back tens of thousands of years, as evidenced through artefact scatterings found east of the township.

European settlement in the Otways was established in the 1890's, initiated through the need to transport timber to Colac and other regional towns. Little evidence of Forrest's original buildings exists; much of Forrest's infrastructure and timber mills were located in surrounding bushland. Regardless of the lack of original buildings, Forrest's European history is relatively well-documented. The Forrest History Walk is available for tourists and is a one hour township walk incorporating 27 sites of local European heritage, marked by interpretation panels. Anecdotal evidence suggests these heritage markers are not linked in an easily legible way, limiting the ability to tell the historical story of Forrest to visitors. There is an opportunity to improve the connection of the historical aspects of Forrest with other existing activities.

The Birregurra – Forrest "Tiger" Rail Trail was opened in June 2011, and provides 30kms of continuous trail linking Barwon Street, Forrest (opposite the Terminus Hotel) and Birregurra, along the old main Melbourne – Warrnambool rail line.

The opportunity to retain and celebrate heritage will be important in maintaining sense of place and identity in Forrest.

6.1.1 Objectives

- Protect European heritage elements.
- Articulate heritage in the public realm.
- Protect places and areas of cultural heritage significance and encourage development and adaptation where appropriate that does not detract from their significance.

6.1.2 Strategies

21. Identify, conserve and protect places of cultural heritage value from inappropriate development.
22. Integrate the existing European history of a timber town into sites of interest and re-development opportunities. Encourage further investigation of the Timber Mill site along Station Street for future re-development opportunities which may include adaptation of redundant mill infrastructure. Any development on this site should include interpretative signage / displays telling the story of the past use of the site.
23. In conjunction with the local community, investigate the potential for heritage artefacts to be consolidated in a heritage centre or interactive display. Opportunities exist to share the town's story through an interactive display of existing artefacts embracing the European history of Forrest along Grant Street.

IMPLEMENTATION					
Strategy	Recommended Planning Scheme Change (LPPF, Zone or Overlay)	Implementation Actions	Further Strategic Work	Responsibility	Priority
21	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue to implement the provisions of Clause 15.03 – Heritage and Clause 22.01 Heritage Places and Areas. – Investigate whether further work is required to identify and protect places of heritage significance. 	Yes ¹	Council	B
22, 23	None	<p>Include strategies in appropriate Council documents to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Investigate opportunities to redevelop the Timber Mill site and integrate the site's heritage values. – Investigate the potential to develop a heritage centre or interactive display of heritage artefacts. 	No	Council / Developers	A

Recommended Further Work

1. Council to investigate whether further protection of heritage assets is required.

6.2 Open Space / Recreation

The Structure Plan recognises the range of recreation opportunities in and around town specifically relating to Forrest's connections with the Otway National Park, including mountain bike trails and camping. Colac Otway Shire is currently preparing an Open Space Strategy to examine existing and future opportunities for the provision of open space within the municipality.

Forrest is serviced with six designated bike trails in and around the town, there are numerous other trails throughout the Otways which can also be utilised. A designated bike shelter with basic amenities is located on the south west corner of Riverdale Lane and the Forrest Apollo Bay Road.

As discussed in Section 7, opportunities to expand tourist infrastructure at this site is encouraged, including the provision of bike lockers and public showers / change rooms. This type of infrastructure is particularly important to users during winter. There is no provision of bicycle parking or pedestrian seating in town. This type of infrastructure is encouraged as a way to generate more localised walking and cycling trips, and to cater for the needs of visitors to the town.

Football, netball and tennis are an important part of the recreation mix in Forrest. The football ground is located outside of town, but is connected via the rail trail and Forrest-Birregurra Road. Catering to the locals needs in terms of organised sports, these clubs contribute to a strong sense of identity for the town. Providing for the ongoing needs of the club is important.

6.2.1 Objectives

- Encourage the provision of and linkages of open space.
- Encourage appropriate provisional recreational activities.
- Improve recreational facilities.

6.2.2 Strategies

24. Encourage public seating in Grant Street that is designed in an attractive and functional manner.
25. Improve and construct footpaths along both sides of Grant Street to cater for both bicycle and pedestrian movements.
26. Introduce attractive and functional bicycle facilities in the form of:
 - Bicycle racks, located near commercial businesses;
 - Lockers and appropriate lockable storage at Mountain Bike drop off point (south west corner of Riverdale Lane and the Forrest Apollo Bay Road).
27. At the current Mountain Bike drop off point expanded facilities as shown in Figure 3 will be encouraged.
28. In an appropriate location, a bicycle store consisting of sales, hire, and maintenance or the like should be encouraged. This business should not be limited to bicycles only but may also include other forms of recreational equipment as required within the Forrest location.

IMPLEMENTATION					
Strategy	Recommended Planning Scheme Change (LPPF, Zone or Overlay)	Implementation Actions	Further Strategic Work	Responsibility	Priority
24-28	None	<p>Include strategies in appropriate Council documents to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage the provision of attractive and functional public seating in Grant Street. - Encourage the improvement and construction of existing and new footpaths along Grant Street. - Encourage the provision of bicycle facilities, including bicycle racks near commercial businesses and lockable storage space at the mountain bike drop-off point. - Encourage an expansion of facilities at the mountain bike drop-off point. - Encourage the development of a bicycle sales, hire and repairs store 	Yes ¹	Council	A

Recommended Further Work

1. Council to review current footpaths within Forrest with the aim of accommodating multi function uses along Grant Street.

Figure 3 Example Public Showers / Change Room Facilities



Figure 4 Indicative gateway treatment for mountain bike drop off area.



6.3 Natural Environment

The need to retain and protect Forrest's surrounding natural environment into the future is a significant feature of the Structure Plan. Within Forrest and the surrounding region, there are numerous environmental factors which need to be considered including native vegetation, land stability, flooding and wildfire.

Native Vegetation is protected under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. In Victoria, there are approximately 300 Ecological Vegetation Classes or EVC's. There are numerous Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) present in large patches within and surrounding Forest they are: 16 Lowland Forest, 18 Riparian Forest, 30 Wet Forest, 45 Shrubby Foothill Forest, 48 Heathy Woodland, 83 Swampy Riparian woodland and 201 Shrubby Wet Forest. The Structure Plan aims to recognise these EVC and their relevant conservation status.

Forest is reported to be susceptible to landslip, flooding and fire hazards. Forrest is within an Environmental Management Overlay to manage the risks associated with erosion specifically land -slides.

In terms of flooding, the town generally drains to the east and west of Grant Street with the eastern side leading towards the West Branch of the Barwon River. The river is covered by the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay. It is noted that some parts of the town have been identified as flood prone.

Forrest is of particular risk to bushfires especially wildfire due to its proximity to the densely forested vegetation.

The report released by the 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission outlined three key recommendations around the validity of allowing settlements to be located in areas of high fire risk:

- Recommendation 39, the State amending the Victorian Planning Provisions relating to bushfire.
- Recommendation 40, the CFA amending its guidelines for assessing development in areas of fire risk.
- Recommendation 46, the State develop and implement a retreat and resettlement strategy for existing developments in areas of unacceptably high bushfire risk.

6.3.1 Objectives

- Protect significant environmental attributes.
- Recognise both the biodiversity and landscape values of flora.
- Recognise the presence of Ecological Vegetation Class's and their relevant conservation status.
- Manage fire risk within Forrest.

6.3.2 Strategies

- 29. Maintain biodiversity through the protection of significant habitats including remnant vegetation.
- 30. Ensure land use and development does not detrimentally impact upon identified significant flora and fauna habitats, including areas of roadside vegetation.
- 31. Ensure land identified as being covered by Ecological Vegetation Class (EVC) 83 Swampy Riparian Woodland and EVC 18 Riparian Forest are protected through conservation. Consideration of Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) should be explored where appropriate.
- 32. Ensure development which is likely to increase the number of people in areas of risk to fire meets specific construction requirements as outlined by CFA and within the WMO or new planning controls.

IMPLEMENTATION					
Strategy	Recommended Planning Scheme Change (LPPF, Zone or Overlay)	Implementation Actions	Further Strategic Work	Responsibility	Priority
29-32	None	Continue to implement the provisions of the Colac Otway Planning Scheme including SPPF Clause 12 – Environment, LPPF Clause 21.04 – Environment, and the VPO and WMO as appropriate.	No	Council	C

7 Access and Movement

7.1 Access and Movement

Like many small regional towns within Victoria, Forrest is heavily reliant on motor vehicles for transport with limited public transport of three bus services a day, generally travelling to and from Colac and Apollo Bay.

Grant Street is the main street within Forrest and is used by local traffic, regional traffic and heavy vehicles accessing the Otways. Despite the range of user groups, traffic is distributed throughout the day in a manner that minimises impacts on movement and access. Car parking is limited along Grant Street.

Any new developments should be satisfactorily connected to the existing road network to ensure safe access is available to and from each site.

7.1.1 Objectives

- Provide appropriate public transport options for the community.
- Provide an appropriate road hierarchy.
- Encourage opportunities for walking and cycling.

7.1.2 Strategies

33. Provide adequate car parking facilities to be established in proximity to tourist attractions and recreation destinations, allowing for caravans and trailer vehicles.
34. Ensure new developments are connected to the existing street network or provide appropriate connections in accordance with Council Road Design specifications.
35. Upgrade the footpath on the western side of Grant Street from the Mountain Bike drop off point to town centre to be Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant.
36. Provide in an appropriate location for a bus shelter and seating in Grant Street.

IMPLEMENTATION					
Strategy	Recommended Planning Scheme Change (LPPF, Zone or Overlay)	Implementation Actions	Further Strategic Work	Responsibility	Priority
33, 35, 36	None	Include strategies in appropriate Council documents to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage the provision of adequate car parking facilities in proximity to tourist and recreation destinations. - Upgrade the footpath on the western side of Grant Street to be DDA compliant. - Provide a bus shelter and seating in Grant Street. 	No	Council	A
34	None	Ensure that the processing of development applications take into consideration Council Road Design specifications and the need to connect new development to the existing street network.	No	Council	C

8 Physical Services

8.1 Services Infrastructure

Forrest is limited in the way of utility infrastructure. There is no reticulated sewer or gas, and given the current population and expected growth over the next 10 – 20 years, it is likely that the implementation of reticulated sewer will remain unfeasible.

As identified within the Issues Paper: Wastewater Management Forrest (2005), groundwater is sufficiently deep at all locations to be of little or no concern during construction of any traditional or alternative sewerage works.

Forrest is located on a ridge, resulting in the township draining to the east and west of Grant Street, towards the West Branch of the Barwon River, drainage throughout Forrest generally consists of wide open swale drains adjacent formed and unformed roads. It is considered this form of drainage, specifically along Grant Street, is impractical and requires review.

8.1.1 Objectives

- Improve drainage.

8.1.2 Strategies

35. Council to undertake a review of drainage throughout Forrest and undertake relevant upgrades.
36. Ensure new developments use sustainable wastewater technology.

IMPLEMENTATION					
Strategy	Recommended Planning Scheme Change (LPPF, Zone or Overlay)	Implementation Actions	Further Strategic Work	Responsibility	Priority
35	None	Include strategies in appropriate Council documents to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Undertake a review of drainage throughout Forrest and complete identified upgrades. 	Yes ¹	Council	B
36	None	Continue to implement the provisions of Clause 21.03 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Settlement in relation to ensuring that development incorporates ESD principles. 	No	Council	C

Recommended Further Work

1. Council to undertake drainage review.

9 Community Infrastructure

9.1 Social and Community Facilities

Forrest's community hub (focussed around Primary School and Community house) is an important location for social interaction and the provision of community and health services and facilities.

A number of facilities are available in Forrest for the use of its residents. Key community infrastructure includes:

- Primary school (current enrolment of 35, employing 2 FT teachers) offering synergies with the visiting Maternal Child Health (MCH). Of concern to the community is the falling number of young children residing in the town. As repeatedly expressed during consultation, more young children are needed in order to keep the school open;
- Visiting MCH (based at the primary school);
- Pre-school;
- Community house, including community information area, upgraded amenities, commercial kitchen, stage and large hall and synergies with the mobile library; and
- Medical centre, hosting a visiting GP approximately 2 days per week.

The strategies of this Structure Plan assume a small increase in the population over the next 10 – 20 years. We recognise there may be a desire for more medical and health services to be provided more frequently, however the service provision is based on population demographic thresholds. Given the relatively small size of the local population, it is expected services are likely to continue at their current level.

Support for the continuation of health and community services should be provided by Council.

9.1.1 Objectives

- Provide for community and health related services.
- Provide a healthy, safe and caring environment where access and equity are priorities.

9.1.2 Strategies

37. Advocate for the ongoing provision of high quality and accessible health, community and education services in Forrest as relevant to the needs of the resident population.
38. Support ongoing community use of equipment and services at the Primary School as appropriate including computers, library and sporting equipment.

IMPLEMENTATION					
Strategy	Recommended Planning Scheme Change (LPPF, Zone or Overlay)	Implementation Actions	Further Strategic Work	Responsibility	Priority
37	None	Advocate for the ongoing provision of high quality and accessible health, community and educational services in Forrest.	No	Council	C
38	None	Include strategies in appropriate Council documents to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Support ongoing community use of Primary School resources. 	No	Council	A

10 Implementation and Review

It is recommended that the implementation of the Structure Plan:

- Include the Structure Plan as a Reference Document in the Colac Otway Shire Planning Scheme;
- Revise and update the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement, to give immediate effect to specific strategies identified in this report;
- Revise and update the Council plans to include specific strategies identified in this report in Council's future resource allocation and planning; and
- Set out the further strategic work that should be undertaken to enable the implementation of other specific strategies.

Recommended timeframes for the implementation of each identified Strategy in the plan should guide funding and resources. Changes to the Planning Scheme and Council Plan/actions have been categorised according to the following legend:

- A - Minor amendment to the Planning Scheme (MSS, zone or overlay) or update to Council plans as required (1-5 years)
- B – Further strategic investigation and/or stakeholder consultation required (6-10 years)
- C – Ongoing work

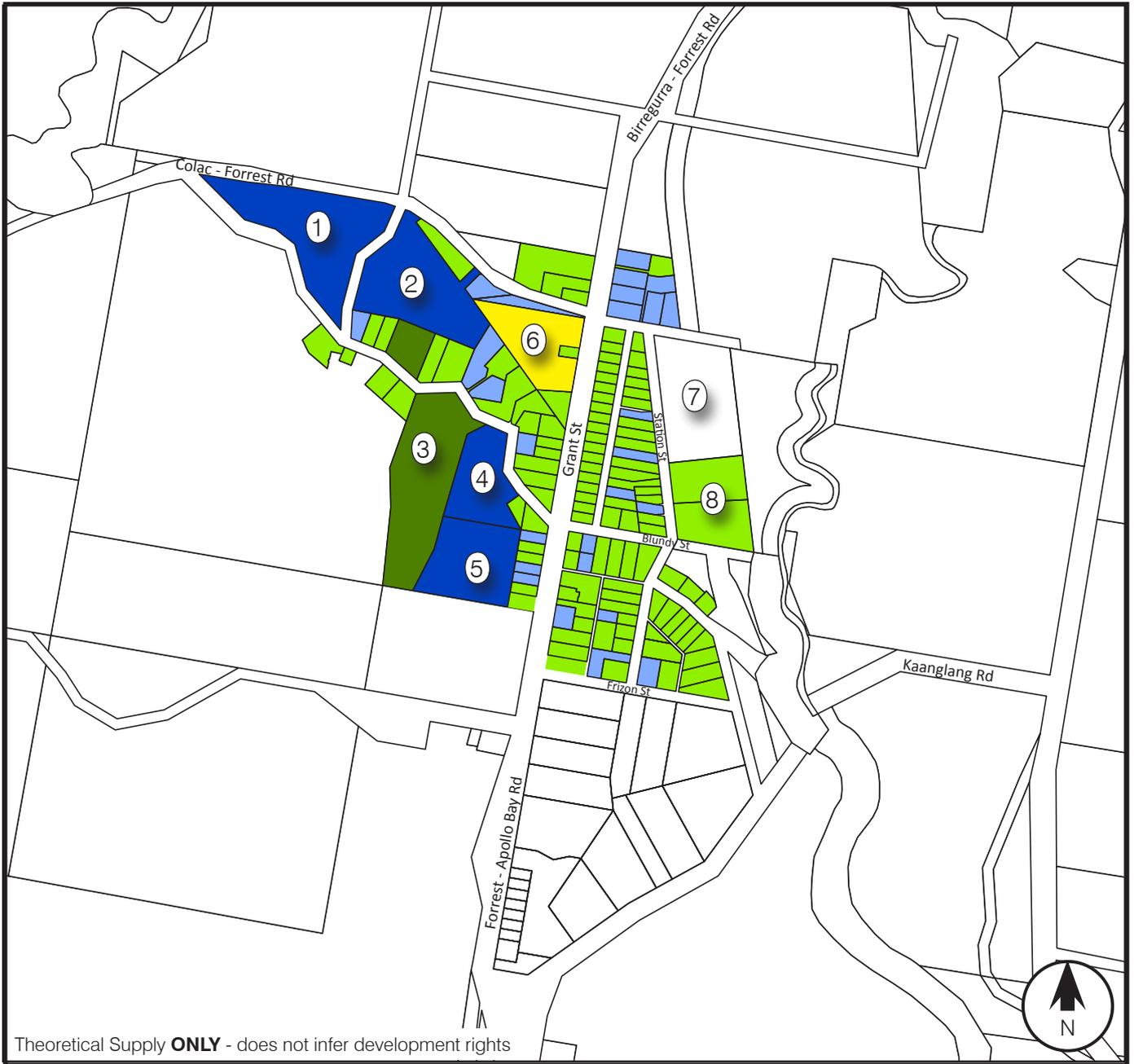
The Department of Planning and Community Development requires Structure Plans to be reviewed every five years. It is recommended an interim review occur at 3 years, to monitor and review the progress of recommendations. This needs to take into account newly released ABS data, demographic analysis, VCAT decisions, panel reports and revisions to State policy, and review assumptions contained in the Structure Plan as relevant.

colac otway shire

FORREST STRUCTURE PLAN

Appendix 1 - Current Land Supply Analysis

Forrest - Current Land Supply Analysis



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Occupied Lots | 7 | Caravan Park |
|  | Occupied Lots (Subdividable) | 8 | Old Mill Site - some ground contamination |
|  | Vacant Lots | | |
|  | Vacant Lots (Subdividable) | | |
| 1 | Expected yield in light of constraints 9 lots | | |
| 2 | Current Subdivision Application for 9 lots | | |
| 3 | Highly constrained - expected yield 7 lots | | |
| 4 | Highly constrained - expected yield 4 lots | | |
| 5 | Highly constrained - expected yield 3 lots | | |
|  6 | School | | |

Forrest Township Area Current Supply	
Vacant Lots within Settlement Boundary (zoned TZ) not subdividable	26
Vacant Lots with subdivision potential*	4
Site 1: No. of Lots (expected yield in light of constraints)	9
Site 2: No. of Lots (plan of subdivision submitted)	9
Site 4: No. of Lots	4
Site 5: No. of Lots	3
Other Lots from Subdividable Land	0
Occupied Lots with subdivision potential*	1
Site 3: No. of Lots	7
Other Lots from subdividable land	1
Total Potential Lots in Current Land Supply	59
Total Potential Lots at 85% Uptake	50

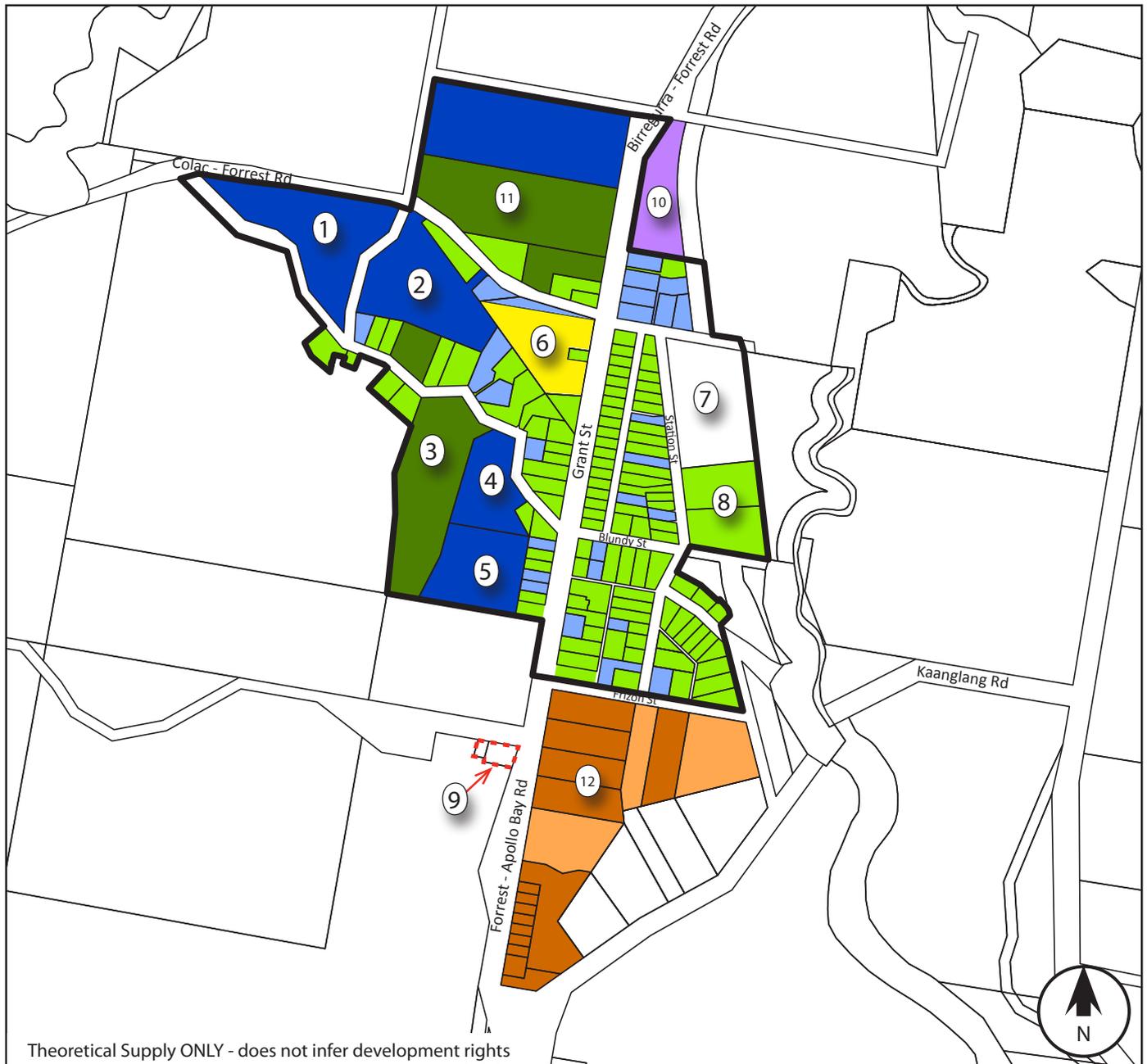
*NB: Min 3,000 m²

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FORREST STRUCTURE PLAN

Appendix 2 - Proposed Land Supply Analysis

Forrest - Proposed Land Supply Analysis



Legend

	Settlement Boundary		
	Occupied Lots		
	Occupied Lots (Subdividable)		
	Vacant Lots		
	Vacant Lots (Subdividable)		
	Occupied Rural Living Zone Lots		
	Vacant Rural Living Zone Lots		
	Rural Activity Zone (RAZ)		
1	Expected yield in light of constraints 9 lots	4	Highly constrained - expected yield 4 lots
2	Current Subdivision Application for 9 lots	5	Highly constrained - expected yield 3 lots
3	Highly constrained - expected yield 7 lots	6	School
		7	Caravan Park
		8	Old Mill Site - some ground contamination
		9	Currently Zoned TZ - Rezone to PUZ and PCRZ
		10	RAZ - not expected to yield dwellings
		11	Heavily vegetated land
		12	Existing dwellings on most RLZ lots
		13	Forrest Dairy - potential clash of uses

Forrest Township Area Proposed Supply	
Vacant Lots within Settlement Boundary (zoned TZ) not subdividable	26
Vacant Lots with subdivision potential*	25
Site 1: No. of Lots (expected yield in light of constraints)	9
Site 2: No. of Lots (plan of subdivision submitted)	9
Site 4: No. of Lots	4
Site 5: No. of Lots	3
Other Lots from Subdividable Land	17
Occupied Lots with subdivision potential*	23
Site 3: No. of Lots	7
Other Lots from subdividable land	16
Rural Living Zone Land (South of Settlement Boundary)	3
Total Potential Lots in Proposed Land Supply	77
Total Potential Lots at 85% Uptake	65
@ Projected demand of ~3.5 per annum	18.7

*NB: Min 3,000 m²

