ELMORE STRUCTURE PLAN

Background Report



CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The City of Greater Bendigo is on Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country. We acknowledge and extend our appreciation to the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung People, the Traditional Owners of the land.

We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Peoples.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Elmore is located on Dja Dja Wurrung Country

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Overview

The Elmore Structure Plan (the Plan) is a strategic document developed by the City of Greater Bendigo to guide future growth and development of Elmore over the next 15-20 years. It sets out a long-term vision, outlining key actions and advocacy activities to address changing community needs while preserving Elmore's valued character.

Developed through extensive community consultation including surveys, workshops, and stakeholder engagement, the Plan integrates technical insights and aligns with State Government planning requirements. It recognises Elmore's appeal as a charming riverside town within Greater Bendigo, with strong physical infrastructure and a vibrant commercial hub. It also acknowledges how these aspects have supported the town's natural growth over the years. There is currently an opportunity to enhance these existing assets and to also identify improvements for the benefit of the town and wider community.

Looking ahead to 2041, if recent census data trends and low subdivisions continue to occur, Elmore could potentially welcome up to 500 new residents and 250 additional dwellings. While growth will be modest compared to other areas of Greater Bendigo, careful planning is essential so development aligns with community expectations. The Plan provides recommendations for managing growth through planning scheme changes and design guidelines that protect the town's heritage and rural character.

Key priorities identified in the Plan include:

- Supporting appropriate residential and commercial growth.
- Enhancing local infrastructure, particularly walking and cycling networks.
- Improving road safety and connectivity across the town
- Increasing linkages between the town centre and the Campaspe River.
- Balancing minimal change with strategic infrastructure investments for maximum community benefit.

The Structure Plan acknowledges that while the City will be responsible for many actions the implementation will depend on the alignment of landowner intentions, market conditions, and funding availability. While some infrastructure improvements may require external investment, community support will be important in achieving the shared vision for Elmore's future.

With the community's support the Elmore Structure Plan serves as a roadmap to maintain and enhance Elmore as a thriving, well-connected, and sustainable town for generations to come.

1 Introduction



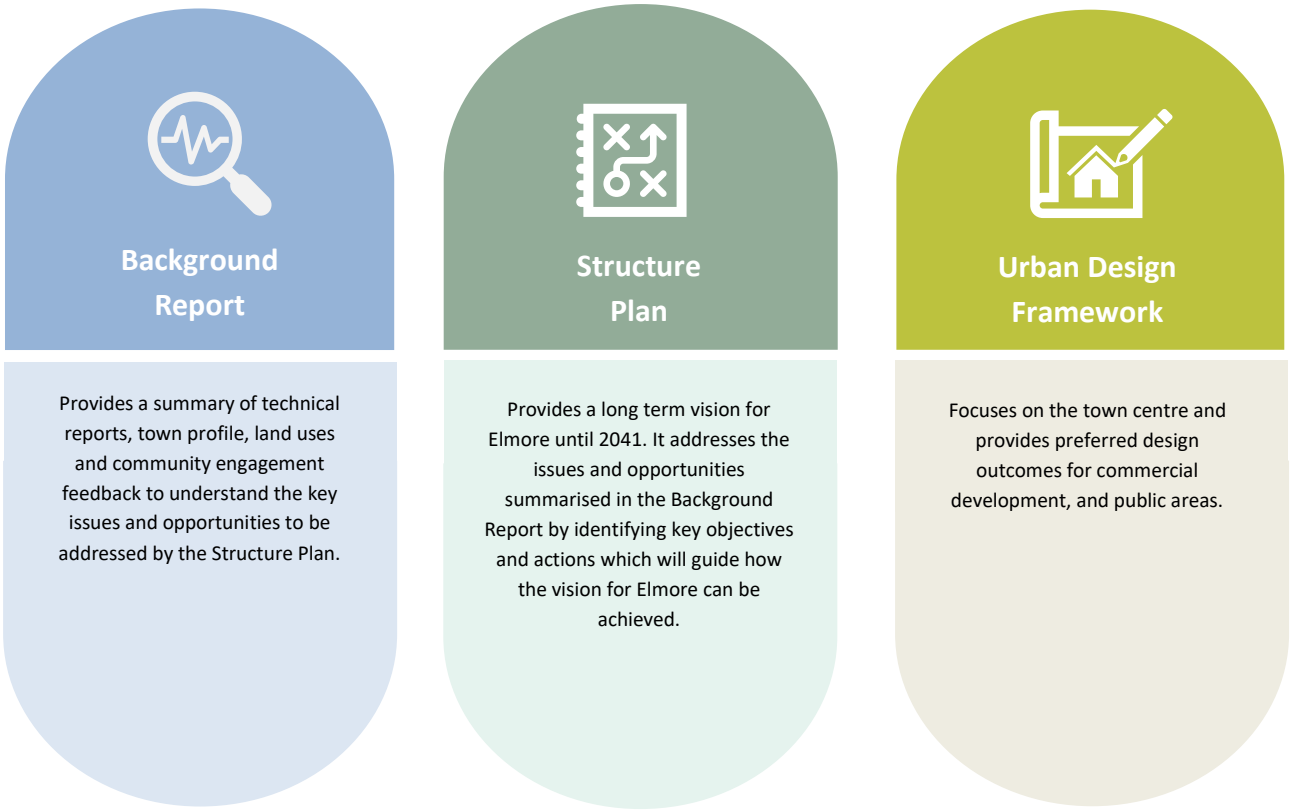
1.1 Purpose

The Elmore Structure Plan provides a long-term plan for Elmore until 2041. This Plan connects the dots between community needs, societal trends, growth projections and stakeholder priorities with the goal of providing positive outcomes Elmore.

The project aims to:

- Understand the needs of the community.
- Recommend changes to land use, built form and public spaces.
- Provide a strategic basis for budget and funding applications.
- Guide future Council decisions about development on private and public land.

*This Background Report is the first in a series of three project documents. A description of each document is provided in the graphic.



1.2 Participants

This project has been developed with a range of people and organisations. The project includes valued input from the Elmore community and the Elmore Community Reference Group.

Collaboration between internal departments, external government authorities and expert consultants, has informed technical infrastructure and servicing recommendations.

Traditional owner engagement has also been important to the success of this project. Continued engagement in the next stages will enable Dja Dja Wurrung values to be appropriately and respectfully embedded within the future plan for Elmore.

1.3 Project Process

STAGE 1 RESEARCH - **Complete**

> Background research and studies
> Initial community survey engagement
> Issues and Opportunities Paper
> Community information sessions held

STAGE 2: DRAFT DOCUMENTS - **Complete**

> Community Vision Workshop
> Development of community vision maps
> Consultants complete technical reports
> Prepare draft documents

STAGE 3: COMMUNITY CONSULTATION - **Current**

> Draft documents released for public comment
> Community information sessions held
> Submissions received and considered
> Changes to documents in response to feedback

STAGE 4: ADOPTION - Upcoming

> Councillors to consider adoption of final documents

STAGE 5: IMPLEMENTATION - Upcoming

> Recommendations can begin to be implemented
> Funding and budget bids can be sought
> Planning Scheme Amendment can commence

2 Context



2.1 Dja Dja Wurrung Country

Dja Dja Wurrung People have lived on Djandak (Dja Dja Wurrung Country), including the area now known as Elmore and cared for Country over many thousands of years.

Dja Dja Wurrung culture has an enduring connection to the land, sky and water. These relationships hold deep physical, social, environmental, cultural and spiritual significance to Dja Dja Wurrung people.

Water bodies like the Campaspe Yaluk (River), are the veins of the land. They provide food, medicine, and places for camping, hunting, and ceremonies.

Today, Dja Dja Wurrung's connection to Country remains much greater than what is visible to the eye. Waterways and river frontages can contain significant cultural heritage places such as burial grounds, birthing sites and middens. They can also be sites of intangible cultural heritage, connected to ceremony and age-old creation stories.

The Campaspe Yaluk also represents the contemporary border between Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country.

Dhelkunya Dja' Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan 2014 – 2034 outlines priority goals and nine key themes to achieve the aspirations of the Dja Dja Wurrung people.



Map of Djandak Source: Dhelkunya Dja' Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan 2014 – 2034

2.2 Regional Context

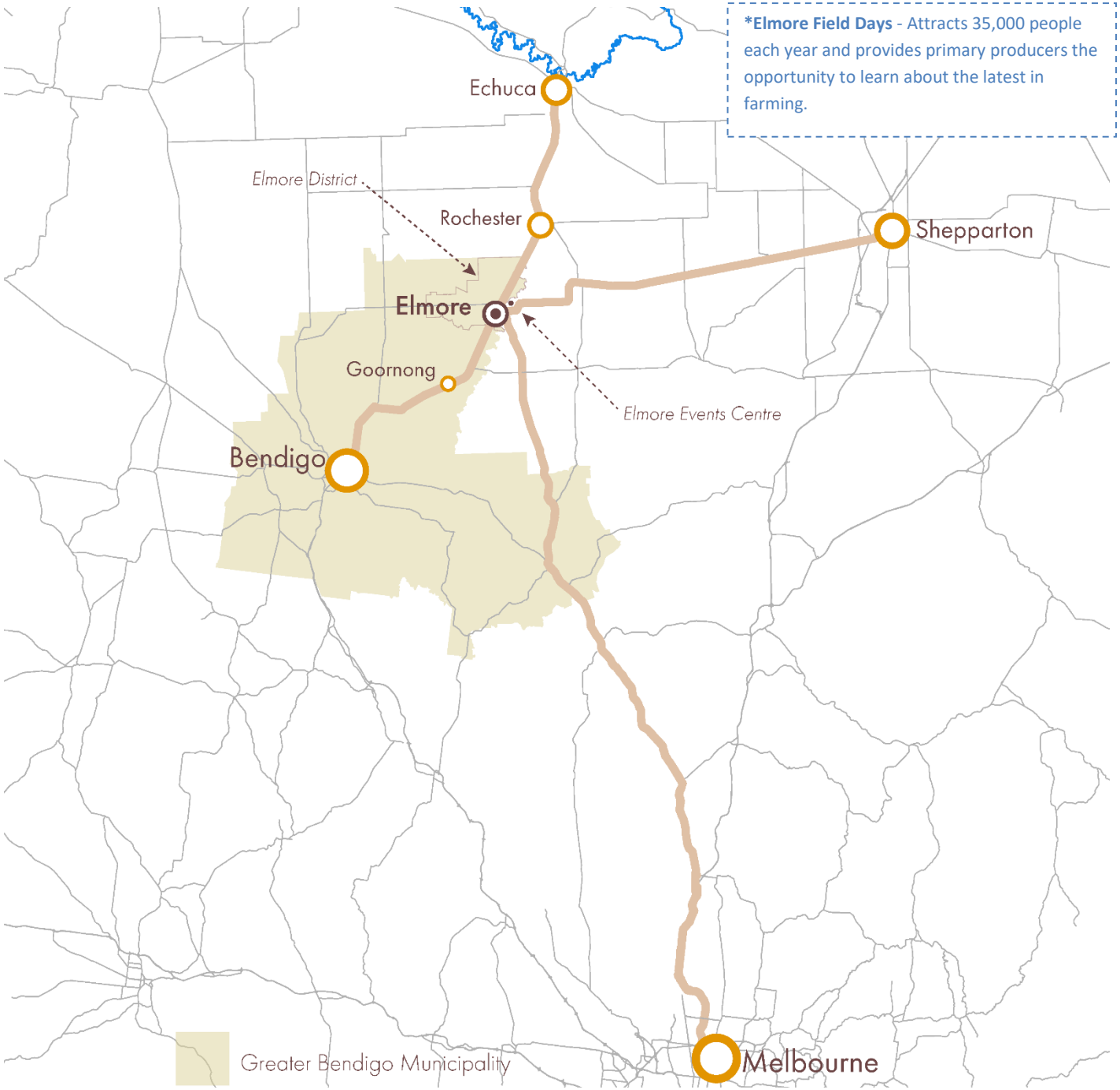
Elmore is a small rural town with a population of 847 people (Elmore District). Located within the hinterland of Greater Bendigo, the town is 55 kilometres north-east of Bendigo's city centre, and 180 kilometres from Melbourne. Other nearby towns include:

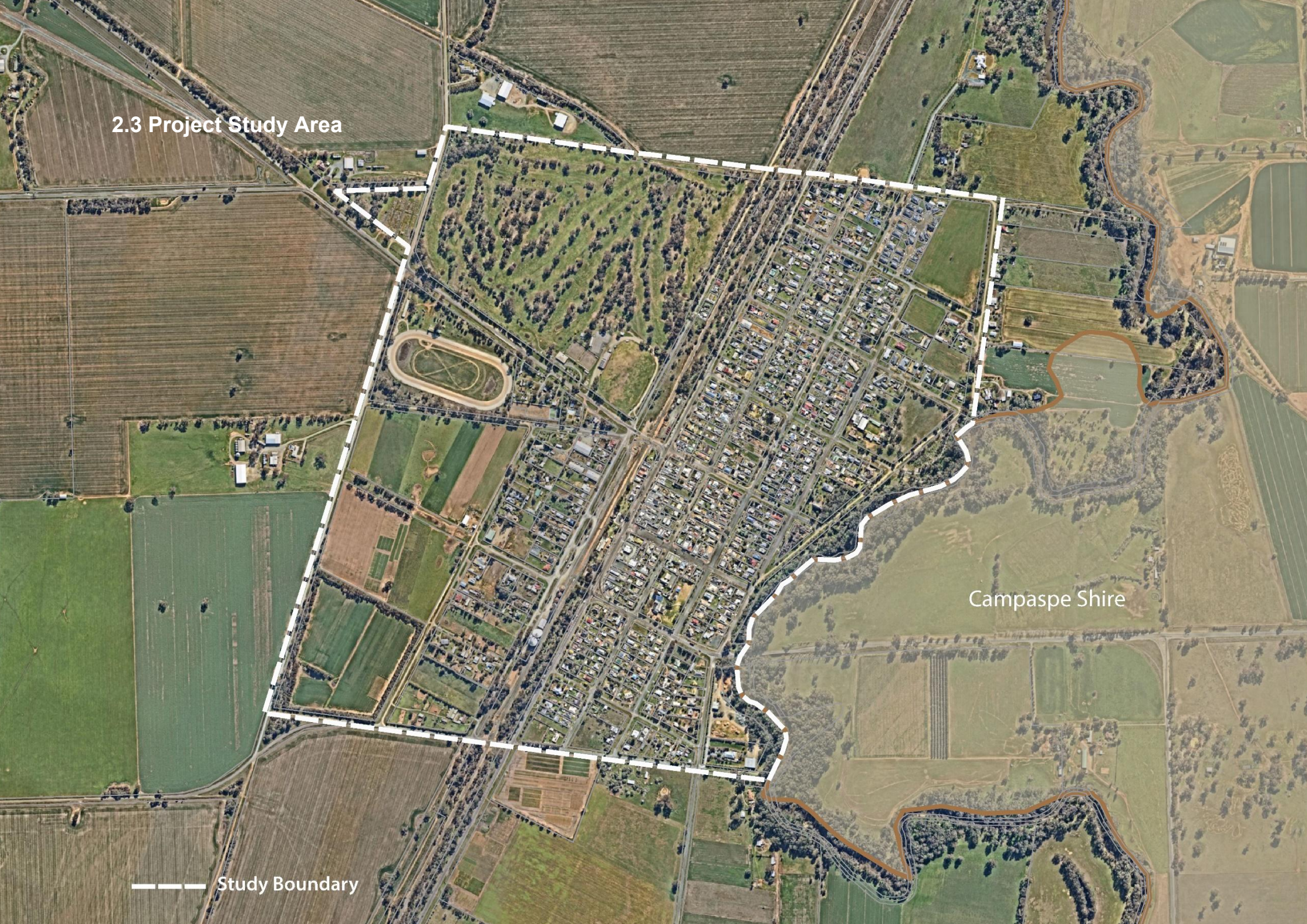
- Rochester 3,154 people
- Goornong 718 people

Elmore is connected by three major roadways Midland Highway, Northern Highway and Elmore – Raywood Road. The town is also serviced by a passenger train line and bus service between Melbourne, Bendigo and Echuca. This regionally significant transport infrastructure makes Elmore highly connected to the surrounding area. It also helps support its tourism economy and local agricultural industry.

To the east of Elmore, lies the Campaspe River and the Campaspe Shire. This land is also significant to the town as it contains the Elmore Events Centre, which hosts a range of events including equestrian and the Elmore Field Days.

In addition, the town is well situated within a 35 minutes drive from the Bendigo Airport. Currently, the airport offers a direct trips to Sydney, New South Wales.




2.3 Project Study Area
Campaspe Shire
Study Boundary

3 Town Profile



3.1 Development Timeline

Prior to the urban development and street layout we see today, Dja Dja Wurrung people lived on Djandak for generations. This included an aboriginal camp in Cardwell Street which remained in place as buildings were constructed around the area.

The first Elmore street grid was surveyed in 1864, including 137 acres for the recreation reserve. That same year, Cardwell Street was gazetted as the main street, and the town built their first pub – the Railway Hotel. Shortly after, on 13 July 1866, Elmore was proclaimed as a part of the Shire of Huntly.

In 1870, the station was established. A timber bridge directing travellers across the Campaspe River to Elmore further helped the town expand. The prosperity of the surrounding farming district (particularly sheep and wheat farms) also increased population growth and the economy.

Technical Reports:

Draft Former Shire of Huntly Heritage Study provides history about the Elmore area and makes recommendations for places of potential heritage value.

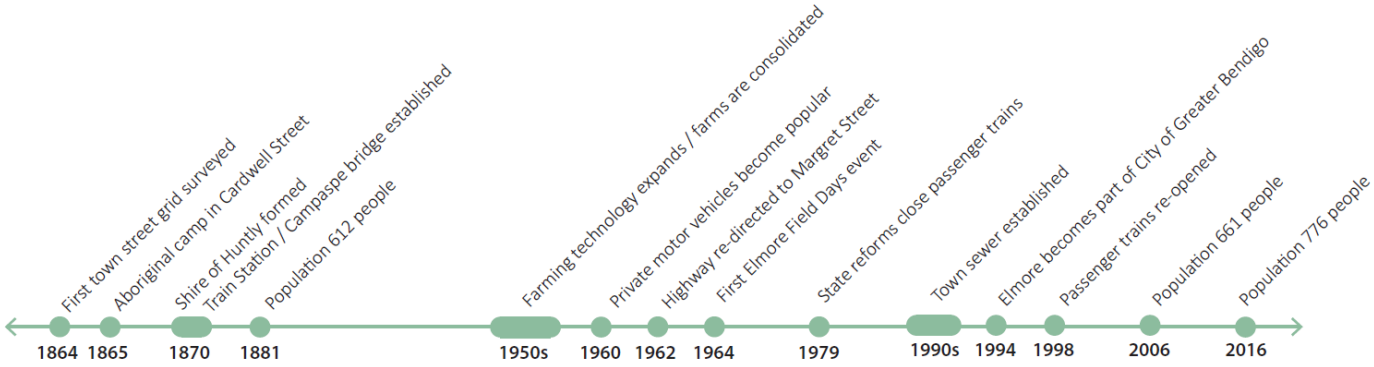




Image: Looking south down Railway Place (date unknown but believed to be c.1920). The buildings, from left to right S J Thomas Drapery at number 100, shops at number 94, then a gap at number 92, then a shop at number 90, Railway Hotel and then the two storey Shamrock Hotel. Numerous Street trees as well (Source EPA Museum)

3.2 Elmore Today

Elmore boasts a village character, flat walkable landscape and a range of businesses and services. These aspects are highly valued by the community and also attract passing visitor trade from Bendigo, Melbourne and other areas.

The changes in Elmore's history can be seen in the built form and surrounding landscape. The town retains its original street layout and a range of historic commercial and residential buildings.

The Northern Highway (Railway Place) contains Elmore's main commercial strip. It is predominately single sided and features a mix of single and two storey buildings. The opposite side of the highway showcases the popular Campaspe Run Discovery Centre and Miniature Railway tourism attraction. Public spaces such as Progress Park and the Railway Station Village Green provide a scenic backdrop as well as a place to rest.

Beyond the main strip is Cardwell Street which provides a complementary commercial setting away from the bustle of the highway. An established residential area with wide roads, well maintained houses and established gardens is also a short walk from the centre of town. There are also two primary schools (57 enrollments combined) and a kindergarten (17 enrollments).

The Campaspe River is a well recognised asset for the town and continues to be important for community recreation. The river and wider landscape also remain central to Dja Dja Wurrung's cultural identity and hese play a key role in Djaara's aspirations for community and economic prosperity.











Images (clockwise from top): Railway Place commercial strip, Railway Station Village Green, Campaspe Run attraction featuring historic Bills horse trough, Campaspe Run windmill feature.

3.3 The Community

Elmore would not be the place it is today without its people. The strong community spirit is seen within the numerous community groups, sports clubs and community-led improvements around the town. The Elmore Progress Association in particular, have led many projects over the years.

The town has also achieved a very successful community plan due to the actions which have been completed. The *Elmore Community Plan 2015 - 2020* was led and created collectively by community members. It details a future vision for Elmore and includes goals under six key themes. The Plan is currently being reviewed and revised by community members with the help of City of Greater Bendigo officers.

Data Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021.

*The figures to the right reflect the large older population at retirement age. The figures may also be impacted due to the effects of Covid 19 Pandemic when the census data was collected.

*The geographical area the data has been derived from Elmore Town SA1 and Urban Bendigo SA3.



Current Population
847 People



Median Age
52 years of age
(compared to 39 in Urban Bendigo)



Median household income
$909 weekly
(compared to $1,398 in Urban Bendigo)



Older Community
Over 50% of people are 50+ years



First Nations
2.1% identify as indigenous
(compared to 2.4% in Urban Bendigo)



Mortgage Repayments
Average $1083 per month



Families
216 Families



Labour Force
93% of people available for work are employed
(compared to 96% in Urban Bendigo)



Average weekly rent
$220



Children
Average 1.7 children per family



Needs Assistance
9% due to age or disability



Homeowners
75% are homeowners, either outright or with a mortgage

3.4 Tourism and Economy

Tourism, particularly passing visitor trade and annual events is an important part of the Elmore economy.

The annual Elmore Field Days is the most significant event attracting 35,000 visitors each year. It is focused on providing primary producers the opportunity to learn about the very latest in farming. I also gives manufacturers the opportunity to display and demonstrate those innovations.

The Elmore Charity Ball is another big event for the town. It is run by the Elmore Lions Club and is often held on the Labor Day long weekend. It attracts around 2000 attendees from rural and regional areas. The event has contributed $750,000 into the community since its beginnings.

Campaspe Run Discovery Centre, Miniature Train attraction, public toilets and the numerous food and drink premises currently make Elmore a successful a rest stop for travelers or day trip destination. As attractions and retail diversify in the town there is an opportunity to increase attractions and improve visitor experience.

***New Elmore Public Toilets** – Were completed early 2025 and include a 'Changing Place'. A Changing Place provides suitable facilities for people with high support needs who cannot use standard accessible toilets.



4 Planning Analysis



4.1 Strategic Context

The Elmore Structure Plan has been developed in accordance with the planning policy framework as set out in the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. Important documents are shown in the infographic and further detailed throughout this report:

Municipal Documents

- Council Plan Mir wimbul 2025 – 2029
- Managed Growth Strategy 2024
- Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy 2024
- Greater Bendigo Industrial Land Strategy 2024
- The Commercial Land and Activity Centre Strategy 2015
- Bendigo Freight Study 2017
- Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo 2019
- Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy 2015
- Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan 2019
- Greening Greater Bendigo 2020
- The Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021-2026
- Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2023 – 2033
- Greater Bendigo Active Living Census 2019
- Community Aquatic Facilities Strategy 2023
- Road Safety Action Plan 2023-2027
- A Stronger Greater Bendigo Economic Development Strategy 2020-2030

Under Development

- Draft Former Shire of Huntly Heritage Study
- Draft Rural Areas Strategy
- Elmore Community Plan 2015 – 2020 (being revised)

State or Regional Documents

- 'Dhelkunya' Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan 2014-2034
- Reconciliation Plan, Barpangu 2021-2025
- Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan 2014
- Loddon Campaspe Climate Projections 2019
- Loddon Campaspe Regional Economic Growth Strategy 2019

4.2 Key Strategic Documents

Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan 2014

The *Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan* provides direction for the growth of centers and towns across the region. The Growth Plan sets an aspirational population target of 200,000 people over the next 30 years (the majority of which will likely be accommodated in Bendigo).

A key land use action from the document is to –

'*Support the sustainability of small towns through investment and diversification of their economies and appropriate flexible zoning provisions'.*

Facilitating moderate growth of well serviced towns such as Elmore will help meet this objective. It will also serve to protect the forest surrounding Bendigo and provide a lifestyle option in proximity to employment and services.

Council Plan Mir wimbul 2025 – 2029

The Council Plan sets the direction for Council over the next four years. It is a key strategic document setting out plans and priorities to manage resources, and address key areas such as population growth, long-term infrastructure planning and resource allocation. This Council Plan also includes the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.

The Plan includes four themes:

1. **Responsible** - *Running an effective, fair and efficient organisation.*
2. **Healthy** - *Protecting and improving our physical, mental, and environmental health.*
3. **Thriving** - *Managing our growth, including businesses, housing, heritage and creativity.*
4. **Welcoming** - *Celebrating and including everyone in our community*

Each theme has three goals, making 12 goals in total. Each goal has two to three priority action areas, making 34 priorities in total.

The Elmore Structure Plan aims to align with the Council Plan, particularly the goals around facilitating housing which meets different needs, creating a livable and vibrant town and encouraging a strong economy.

Managed Growth Strategy 2024

The *Managed Growth Strategy* (MGS) builds from the *Regional Growth Plan 2014* and provides high level strategic direction for Greater Bendigo residential development over the next 30 years.

The Strategy aims for 70 per cent of new residential development to occur in established areas near existing services and employment. This means most of Bendigo's future growth will occur within existing suburbs and growth areas such as Marong.

While there will not be a significant change in the proportion of the population living in towns and rural areas, it is expected some growth will occur. The City will need to plan for around 14,000 additional residents and 6,000 additional dwellings in these areas up to 2056. Therefore, townships like Elmore will continue to provide an alternative and complementary lifestyle offering. In doing so, towns will play an important role in accommodating the municipality's residential growth.

Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy 2024

The *Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy* identifies three categories of housing change including minimal, incremental and substantial. These categories will guide the future growth of residential areas and provides detail about how new development can respond to existing and preferred character. Serviced towns like Elmore will likely experience minimal to incremental change suitable for their rural context.

*Potential residential growth in Elmore is discussed further in this report under **5.1 Residential.**

4.3 Township Hierarchy

Greater Bendigo has an existing settlement hierarchy including a range of urban suburbs, growth areas and townships. The Managed Growth Strategy sets out the following settlement hierarchy and growth expectations:

Regional City - Significant Growth
Urban Bendigo suburbs (including Marong)

District Towns – Moderate Growth
Elmore, Heathcote, Axedale

Rural Towns – Limited Growth
Goornong, Sebastian, Raywood, Lockwood, Mia Mia, Redesdale

***Urban Growth Boundary (shown in light green)** - is a planning tool which aims to control urban development. It does this by directing the area:*

- *inside the boundary be used for denser residential, commercial and industrial development.*
- *outside of the boundary be preserved in its natural state or used for agriculture.*

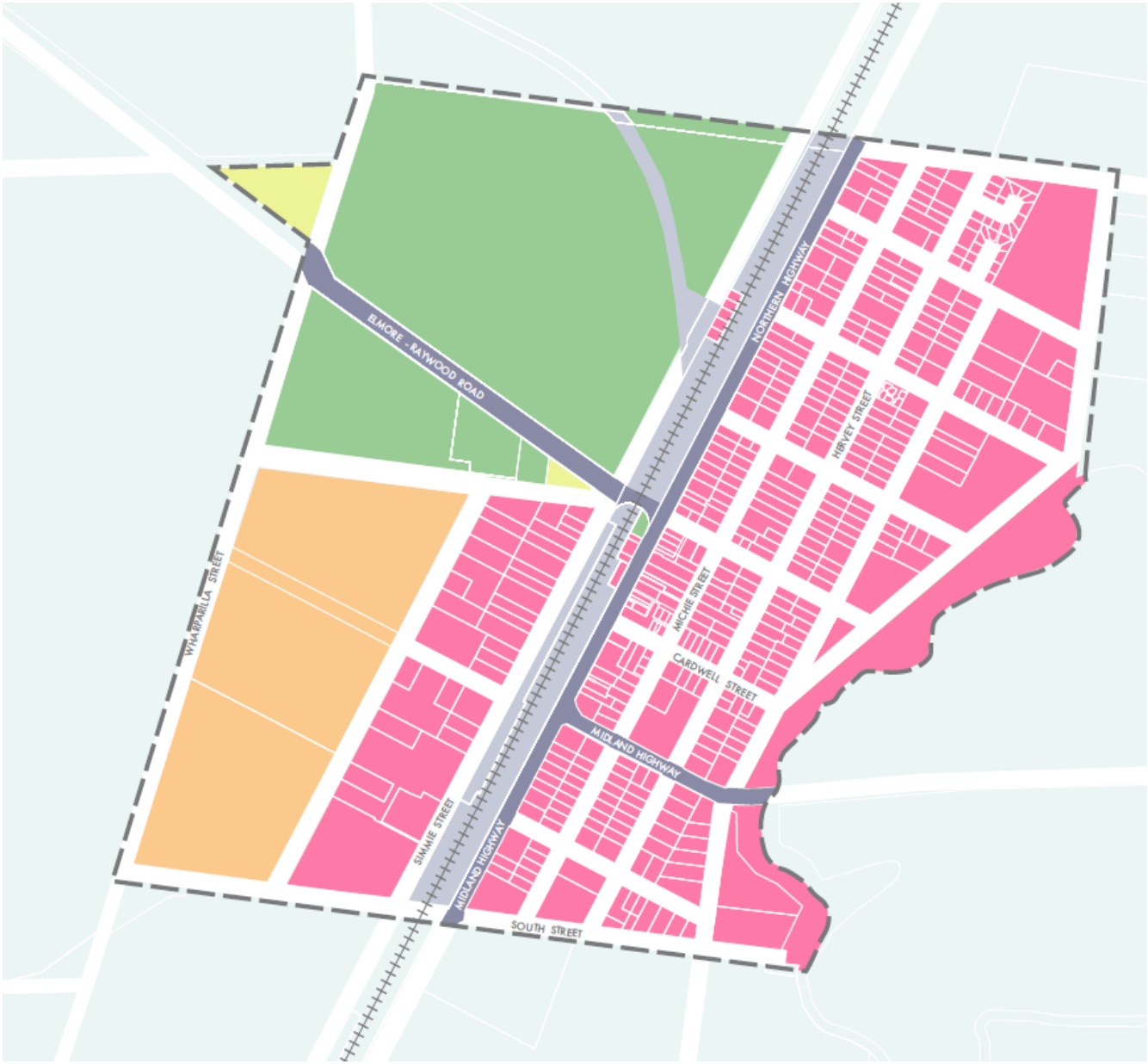


4.4 Existing Zones

Planning zones are applied to all land in the City of Greater Bendigo through the City of Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. Zones guide the use and development of land. The suite of zones available are consistent across the state of Victoria.

Elmore is made up of the following zones:

ZONE	PURPOSE
Township Zone	To provide for residential and commercial development. Other uses such as educational, recreational, religious and community uses are also encouraged.
Rural Living Zone	To provide for residential use in a rural environment and some agricultural uses.
Public Use Zone	To allow uses for public utility and community services and facilities
Public Park Recreation Zone	To allow areas for public recreation and open space. Can also support some commercial use if directly associated with the designated public land use.
Transport Zone 1	To allow for State Government transport services (trainline, station and associated infrastructure).
Transport Zone 2	To allow for State Government (Department of Transport) principle road network and associated transport services and facilities.
Farming Zone	To allow for agricultural uses.



4.5 Existing Overlays

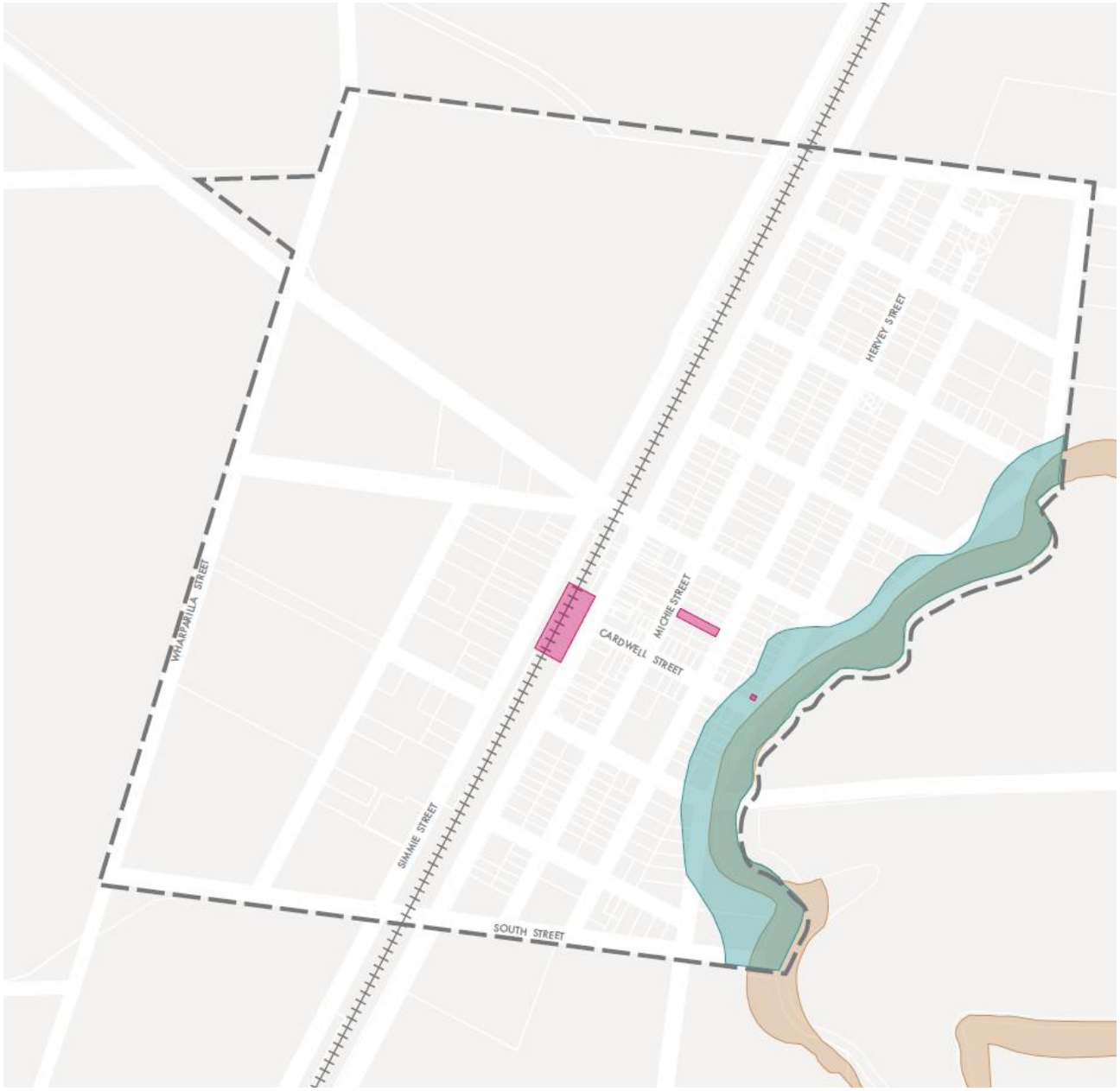
There are a number of planning overlays that apply to parts of Elmore. A planning overlay identifies a special feature of the land and whether certain requirements need to be considered with a proposed development.

Two environmental overlays apply to land along the Campaspe River including the Vegetation Protection Overlay and the Environmental Significance Overlay.

The Heritage Overlay applies to three properties in Elmore:

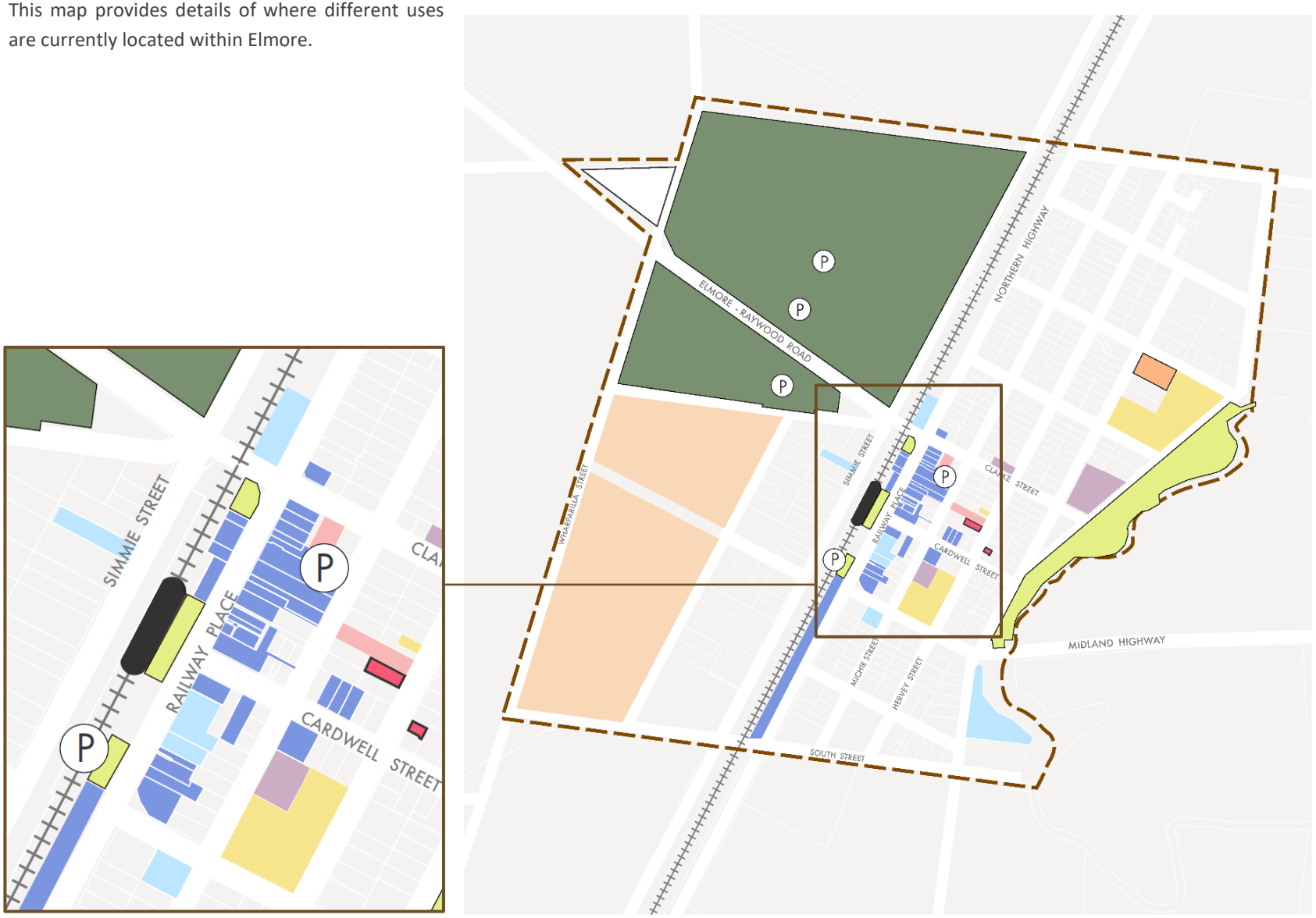
- Elmore Railway Station
- Former Water Tower
- Memorial Town Hall / Atheneum Hall

OVERLAY	PURPOSE
Heritage Overlay	To conserve and enhance heritage places of natural or cultural significance.
Vegetation Protection Overlay 2 (Significant Vegetation)	To protect remnant native vegetation and habitat, including understorey, and facilitate natural revegetation
Environmental Significance Overlay 1 (Waterway Protection)	To protect and enhance Greater Bendigo's waterways and the land adjacent to them



4.6 Existing Land Uses

This map provides details of where different uses are currently located within Elmore.



4.8 Services and Utilities

Sewerage

Coliban Water is the responsible authority for Elmore's reticulated sewerage system.

Septic Tank Effluent Disposal (STED) systems were implemented in Elmore in the 1990s as the preferred, less expensive option to a full sewer system. These continue to operate across the town today.

The use of STED systems means that septic tanks are still required on private properties as the sewer network was not designed to transport and treat solid waste. Some sewage is treated on-site and the remaining waste is sent to the Elmore Reclamation Plant based across the river in the Campaspe Shire. The system is gravity fed to the lagoon-based plant until it can be used on land. As Elmore has fairly flat typography multiple pump stations are required around the town.

Coliban Water has confirmed that the current system is suitable for Elmore into the future. However, further pump stations may be required to service properties not yet connected or if residential growth occurs.

Source: Coliban Water

Water

Coliban Water is also the responsible water authority for Elmore's reticulated potable water supply.

Raw water is provided from two groundwater bores managed by Goulburn-Murray Water under the 'Lower Campaspe Valley Water Supply Protection Area Groundwater Management Plan'. Water is then treated at Coliban Water's Elmore Water Tower site and distributed to connected properties.

Three stand pipes are located within the town. One is located on Fire Brigade Track and two are located on Elmore - Raywood Road.

Coliban Water has recently upgraded the Elmore Water Tower through rectification works. The $1.1 million investment has increased storage capacity and improved water pressure for the town. According to Coliban Water, the recent upgrades will likely have capacity to supply new residential and commercial uses.

Drainage

Elmore's stormwater drainage network is managed by the City of Greater Bendigo. The drainage network is predominantly open channel drains with some kerb and channel and underground stormwater drains. Storm water is dispersed into the Campaspe River and can cause challenges when the river floods. There is currently no formal stormwater treatment which removes pollutants before water enters the river. Potential treatment methods will be considered in a future Integrated Water Management Plan.

Gas

Elmore is not connected to a reticulated gas supply. Future connection to gas supply is unlikely due to actions under the Victorian Governments Gas Substitution Roadmap (GSR) to achieve net zero emissions.

Electricity

Powercor is the responsible authority for the distribution of electricity in Elmore which is supplied by both underground and overhead powerlines.

New development is required to provide connection to the electricity grid. New residential subdivisions commonly provide connectivity via an underground network.

Renewable Energy

A renewable energy zone is proposed between Bendigo and Shepparton as part of the draft 2025 Victorian Transmission Plan. This zone includes the Elmore town and surrounding area. Renewable energy zones are areas identified as the best places to host wind and solar projects and batteries for storage. Consultation by the State Government closed in June 2025.

Telecommunications

Elmore is supplied within the NBN Wireless Network. Most premises can connect to services over the nbn network but may require additional work to be completed first. On rare occasions, some premises cannot be connected.

5 Land Use and Development



5.1 Residential

Population

According to 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the Elmore district has a total population of 847 people. Most of the community live within the Elmore township (the project study area), including 753 residents and 405 dwellings.

Between 2016 and 2021, the Elmore township grew by 84 people and 40 dwellings. It can be assumed that the increase in population during this time was likely due to a 30 lot subdivision approved in 2017. The remaining growth has been organic, either through migration or development of vacant lots.

Should this trend continue with a 0.47% growth rate and with low subdivisions, this could see 500 more residents and 250 new dwellings in the town by 2041. This would equal to the need for around 16 new dwellings per year.

* Low subdivisions are generally lots which can be further subdivided to create an additional 1 – 15 lots.

Housing Stock

About 99% of all dwellings in Elmore are separate, stand-alone buildings. Around 72% of these houses are large in size, containing three to four bedrooms. Many are also on large lots measuring between 1,000 to 2,000 square metres.

The characteristics of this housing offers a limited choice for residents. There are few examples of smaller dwellings, townhouses and units in Elmore. As the population changes, this type of dwelling may be better suited to downsizers, single individuals or couples without children who do not need a large house and land size.

It is also noted that Cardwell Street and the Northern Highway (Railway Place) include examples of two storey commercial buildings that have been converted to dwellings. The caravan park also provides permanent housing for some residents. These buildings currently contribute to the available housing stock.

There is are currently very limited rental properties available in the town.

Trends

Victorian Floods - The 2022 flood events impacted many areas in Victoria, including Elmore. The devastation of the floods to Rochester (a township located 17 kilometres north of Elmore), displaced many community members. Should floods occur again, or the frequency of floods increase, some people may not want to return to the town but may look to alternative locations within the region.

Households – Households in Elmore are getting older and smaller. There is a current mismatch between household size and dwelling size. Lone households are the most common however, most dwellings have three to four bedrooms.

Housing Affordability – Elmore is attractive place to live due to comparably affordable rental and mortgage prices. The average weekly rent in Elmore is $220 compared to $295 in Urban Bendigo. Mortgage Repayments are significantly less per month with the average Elmore repayments $1083 compared to Urban Bendigo at $1,400 per month.



Current Households

Average 2.1 people per household. Lone person households are the most common making up 38% of households



Expected total population

1250 people by 2041



Expected total houses

660 dwellings by 2041

Land Capacity Analysis

The *Greater Bendigo Housing Capacity Analysis (Remplan 2024)* provides estimates of the current residential land availability and housing that could be provided under the current Township Zone.

The report details that Elmore has 146 developable lots which could provide up to 445 additional houses. This assumption is based on a median lot size of 600 square metres.

The report acknowledges that not every development opportunity will eventuate. Therefore, the assessment includes a degree of flexibility and makes assumptions on what is most likely to be developed.

Historic growth in Elmore has generally occurred through larger vacant lots being developed or subdivided for the first time. The data reveals that future growth could be provided by vacant lots or underutilised lots. This development could look like:

- A small lot subdivision that retains the original dwelling and adds a unit or two in the backyard
- A corner lot that creates a new lot fronting the side street
- A total site development where the original dwelling is demolished and a small unit or townhouse complex is developed.
- Small second dwelling development on an existing developed lot

Town	Recent median lot size	Developable Lots	Potential Yield (dwellings)		
			Vacant	Underutilised	Total
Elmore	600m2	146	114	331	445



***Underutilised Lot** - *large developed lot capable of further subdivision or development*

***600m2 median lot size** - has been calculated from residential development over the past five years. This figure does not represent the general lot size found in Elmore or the preferred future lot size. The figure has been used as an example size for calculation purposes.

Strategic Direction

In addition to broad population and dwelling forecasts, it is important consider how the Elmore population is expected to change when planning for future housing. The average household size in Elmore is expected to gradually decrease in the future. Most dwellings in Elmore are relatively large (three to four bedrooms) on large lots and so there is likely to be a mismatch between household size and dwelling size.

Not all smaller households equate to a demand for smaller houses. Some smaller households may still want extra room/s to accommodate visiting friends and relatives or working spaces. Promoting a mix of dwellings will enable housing types that meet a range of household sizes and needs.

As the Managed Growth Strategy's Settlement Hierarchy (page 25) identifies Elmore as a 'District Town,' where moderate growth is expected. This growth is likely to follow recent population and development trends. The suitability of many lots with existing dwellings or vacant sites within the town for further development means future growth will likely:

- Be contained within the existing township
- Happen on land already zoned for residential purposes
- Consider environmental constraints like flooding

The *Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy 2024* identifies identifies most of Elmore's township zone land as an area which can support 'Incremental Change', with a maximum height of dwellings to be two storeys. This height of development is already seen across the town however, future smaller household needs could see the development of:

- Detached single houses
- Dual occupancies
- Townhouses
- Multi-dwellings

Potential implications

The housing capacity analysis provides 'theoretical capacity' only. While theoretical capacity for growth exists, actual development is subject to various factors, including market conditions, landowner intentions, and economic viability of development.

Adjustments to planning controls may be necessary to address emerging trends and challenges in housing supply, migration and demographic changes. This could encourage growth which is both suitable and aligned with community needs.

Key Strategies:

Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan 2014
Managed Growth Strategy 2024
Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy 2024

Technical Reports:

Remplan Greater Bendigo Housing Capacity Analysis 2024

5.2 Commercial

Current Floorspace

Elmore's activity centre serves the local community as well as the larger rural catchment and passing trade. The centre measures approximately 4,730 square metres of used commercial floorspace. This is made up of:

- Retail = 1,919 square metres
- Hospitality = 1,720 square metres
- Retail services = 975 square metres
- Commercial = 250 square metres

The majority of commercial businesses are located along the Northern Highway (Railway Place) between Clarke Street and Midland Highway (Margret Street). This includes a post office, bank, small supermarket, chemist, newsagency, bakery, butcher, two service stations and a range of other retail and food options.

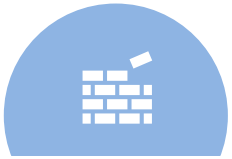
Cardwell Street (the original main street of Elmore) is re-emerging as a complementary commercial street for Elmore. Buildings that were originally constructed for shops and other commercial uses are being re-opened as niche retail spaces, including an antique/collectibles store, an art gallery and a gift shop.

Agricultural and rural supply businesses are also located in Elmore. Some of these are located on the main commercial street amongst other commercial businesses and Simmie Street. Others are located within the Farming Zone (outside of the Elmore Study Area). Some of the identified businesses include supply of sand and soil, grain, agricultural chemicals and machinery (predominantly wholesale), as well as mechanical repairs for large vehicles. These types of businesses are less reliant on foot traffic and visitor experience compared to other retail or food / drink premises so do not need to be located within the existing commercial streets.

Future Demand

As Elmore's population grows there will be an increased demand for commercial and retail floorspace in Elmore. Recent work by SGS Economics and Planning projects a demand for an additional 1,429 square metres of floorspace by 2041:

- Hospitality = 965 square metres
- Services = 303 square metres



Developable Underutilised Commercial Lots

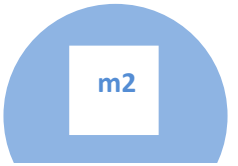
Approximately 8,430 square metres



Where do residents do most of their everyday shopping?

65% in Bendigo

24% in Elmore



Current commercial floorspace

4,730 square metres used floorspace



Expected total floorspace demand

6,159 square metres by 2041

Trends

There are a range of macro and micro trends influencing the commercial sector that are impacting land use and development in Elmore. While some of these have impacted the current activity and vibrance of Elmore, others provide opportunities for businesses to adapt to a changing commercial environment.

Elmore Trends	Wider Commercial Trends
Out of Centre commercial uses Recent planning applications for out of centre commercial uses (commercial uses not within the main commercial streets or activity centre boundaries) indicates there is a need to provide greater guidance to direct commercial uses to preferred locations.	**Impact of online retailing** Online retailing is becoming increasingly prominent in Australia and in some ways was accelerated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This may be draw expenditure away from some physical retail centres.
Use of commercial buildings For towns like Elmore, the conversion of some commercial buildings to houses and accommodation at ground level over time has reduced the available commercial floorspace, impacting the vibrancy of the commercial area. This trend has contributed to the changing function of the original main street (Cardwell Street).	**Retail as an experience** Activity Centre visitors are increasingly engaging in shopping for leisure. This desire shows that despite the push for online retailing there is still strong demand for businesses and services focused on experiences. Successful centres will be those that focus on high-quality experiences through well-designed, high-quality physical spaces, a mix of hospitality and entertainment uses, greenery, public art.
	Growing role of café culture Eating out has become a core part of the Australian culture. The outdoor dining experience helps to drive vitality within activity centres, providing a buzz and a sense of place but requires a facilitative legal framework and built environment.
	Markets and Event Spaces Markets and events have the potential to bring users to towns and activity centres, providing an opportunity for meaningful customer and social experiences.
	Increased local sourcing of products Consumers are increasingly wanting to know where their food comes from, with local sourcing and locally made products becoming more valued.

Strategic Direction

Currently, the Township Zone covers most of Elmore and allows residential development as well as a range of commercial, industrial and other uses. This has its advantages in small towns but looking to the future, there is an opportunity to better consolidate commercial uses through rezoning land in the town centre to a commercial zone. Clustering commercial activities together helps to promote a more vibrant town centre and reduces land use conflicts. Commercial zoning will also make it easier for businesses to open and operate as many uses do not require permit approval if certain requirements are met in the Planning Scheme (unlike the Township Zone). It will also encourage businesses to cluster together and work off each others successes.

The City can also improve public spaces within the town centre through urban design initiatives and provide design guidance for private development. This should consider the user experience and comfortability of moving around the commercial area.

Technical Reports:

SGS Economics and Planning: *Bendigo Commercial Land and Activity Centre Strategy Update 2023*

Key Strategies:

Commercial and Land Use Activity Centre Strategy 2015

Potential implications

The SGS economic analysis provides 'theoretical capacity' only. While theoretical capacity for commercial growth exists, actual commercial growth is subject to various factors, including market conditions, landowner intentions, and economic viability of development.

Adjustments to planning controls and re-design of public spaces may be necessary to address emerging trends and challenges. However, these changes take time over many years and may need to be achieved as budget becomes available.





5.3 Agriculture

Agriculture is not only a part of Elmore's foundations it is also significant to the town's identity, character and economics. In addition to traditional farming activities agri-tourism also plays a big part in the town which benefits from the Campaspe Run Discovery Centre and the Elmore Field Days..

Broadacre crop production is generally concentrated within the northern areas of Greater Bendigo close to Elmore. Topography in this area is generally flat or gently sloping, with the main agricultural crops being wheat for grain, barley, canola and oat crops.

There is also a significant fodder production area, mainly consisting of pasture hay with some stubble production and cereal hay crops. A hay processing plant which supplies across Australia and exports internationally is located in Goornong 17 kilometres south of Elmore.

Broadacre cropping farms require the ability to operate machinery around the clock and may generate dust, noise and light pollution. Allowing dwellings and other sensitive uses close to broadacre cropping operations can lead to conflict when expectations of rural amenity are incompatible with normal farm practices. It's therefore important that planning processes aim to achieve a balance between facilitating the growth of towns while protecting strategically important agricultural land.

The City is currently undertaking an updated Rural Areas Strategy to understand the locations of productive or marginal agricultural land in the municipality to ensure its protection through planning controls. The Strategy's *Issues and Opportunities Paper 2024* recognises this need by identifying the risks to existing and future agricultural land, such as increased land values and conflicts between farming land and rural residential uses.

In Greater Bendigo's previous *Rural Areas Strategy 2009*, an oversupply of Rural Living Zone land was identified. However, since that time, significant changes have occurred in the region and it is likely that the Rural Living land supply has been reduced.

Elmore contains three large parcels of Rural Living Zoned land within the west of the study boundaries. This land is currently used for agriculture (cropping) and cannot be further subdivided under the zone. This land is also within 800 mets of the town centre and train station making it a highly accessible location.

Key Strategies:

Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan 2014

Rural Areas Strategy: Issues and Opportunities Paper

Strategic Direction

In the case of Elmore, the growth and expansion of residential development is not to occur on land that is currently zoned for farming.

Given the proximity of the Rural Living Zoned land to the Elmore town centre a different zone and or land use could be more appropriate in the long term. Outcomes of the Rural Areas Strategy as it progresses will help inform the best plan for this land.

There is also opportunity to encourage economic diversification by supporting local rural supply industries and new agri-tourism and eco-tourism businesses.



5.4 Industrial

There is currently no industrial land in Elmore.

A review of industrial land supply within the Bendigo municipality was undertaken as a part of the *Industrial Land Development Strategy 2020*. The review found approximately 11 years supply (under 100 hectares) of industrial land within Greater Bendigo. By 2036 there will be demand for around 170 hectares. There will also be a strong need for medium and larger lots between 5,000 square metres and 5 hectares.

Strategic Direction

Whilst land on the western side of the railway currently zoned Rural Living meets size requirements it is constrained by proximity to residential use. The proximity of these large lots and potential industrial land uses would be highly constrained and therefore not suitable for industrial zoning.

Key Strategies:
Industrial Land Development Strategy 2024



Image: Elmore railway line and silos looking south

6 Heritage and Character



6.1 Aboriginal Cultural Heritage

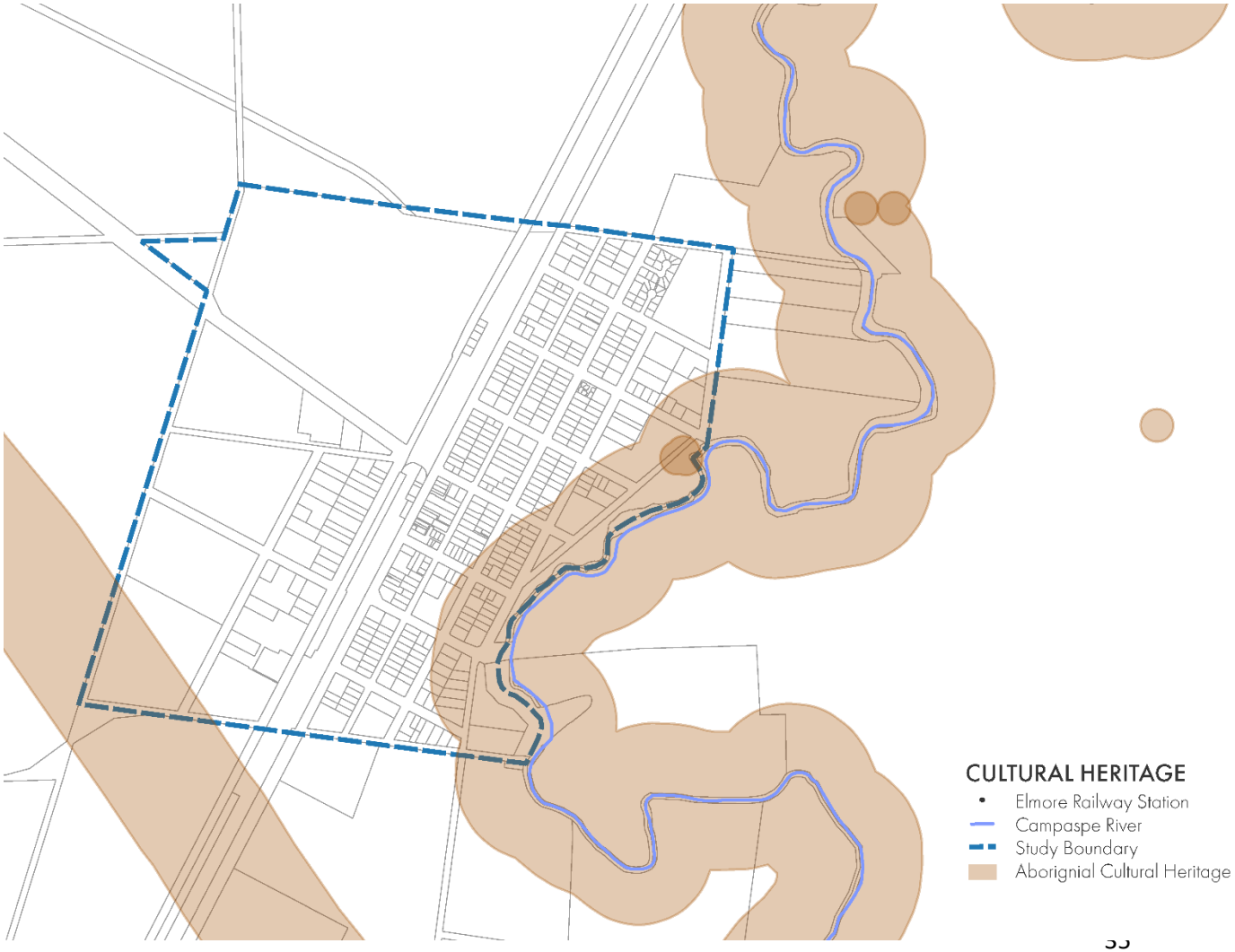
Aboriginal cultural artefacts are scattered across Dja Dja Wurrung Country, telling of the rituals and practices of Ngurar Balak (Ancestors). Elmore contains several mapped areas which acknowledge known or potential Aboriginal cultural heritage significance.

The larger areas of cultural heritage sensitivity are 200 meters either side of the Campaspe River and a north-west to south-east strip along the southern portion of the town. Scar trees are also evident in the area.

Aboriginal Cultural heritage must be managed in accordance with the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*, and under the authority of DJAARA as the Responsible Aboriginal Party (RAP). Any proposed earthworks in these identified areas could trigger the need for an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan to be developed in case any artefacts or burial sites are revealed.

Strategic Direction

An objective of the *Dja Dja Wurrung Country Plan* is to share their creation stories to teach people how gatjin (water) works in the landscape. There is an opportunity to increase awareness and celebration of Aboriginal culture and heritage within Elmore in consultation with Traditional Owners. There is also opportunity to greater support the identification, interpretation and protection of cultural heritage.



6.2 Post Contact Heritage

Elmore contains many historically significant buildings however only three have formal heritage protection. Many commercial buildings date from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. The majority of the residences were constructed between 1900-1920s.

Strategic Direction

The draft Former Shire of Huntly Heritage Study is the first comprehensive heritage study of the area. The draft study identifies 31 individually significant sites and three significant heritage precincts which are recommended for protection.

The precincts include:

- Cardwell Street Commercial
- Railway Place Commercial
- Hervey Street and Jeffrey Street Residential

Future development will need to consider the existing heritage buildings and future sites recommended for heritage overlay protection.

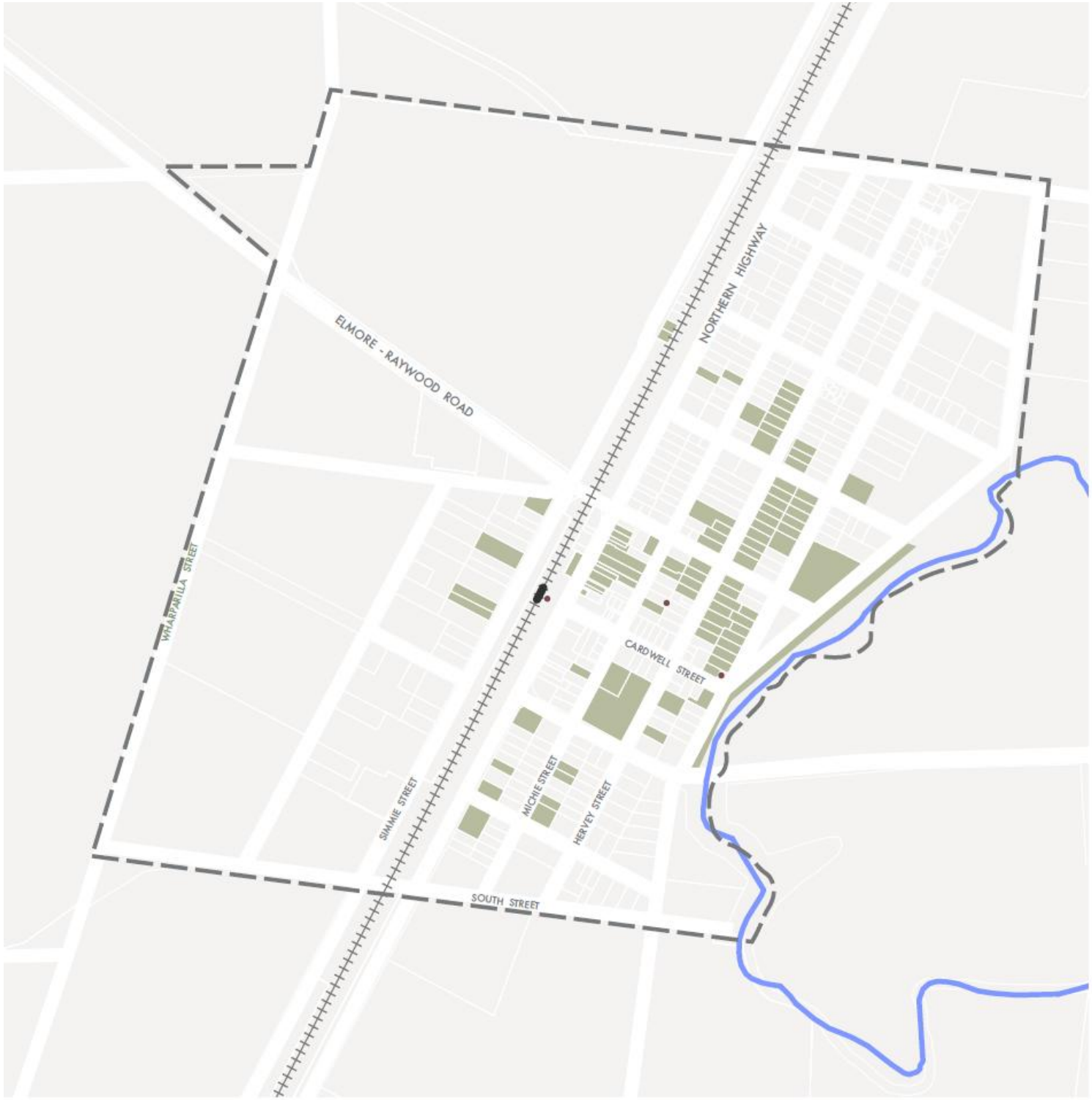
Technical Reports:
Draft Former Shire of Huntly Heritage Study Stages 1 and 2







Images – The above buildings have State Heritage significance including Former Water Tower HO416, Memorial Hall / Atheneum Hall HO417 and the Elmore Railway Station buildings HO418



ELMORE HERITAGE

- Elmore Railway Station
- Proposed Heritage Overlay
- Existing Heritage Overlay

6.3 Residential Character

Neighbourhood character is the relationship between both public and private areas. It is the combination of front and side setbacks, garden features and building design form, scale and materials which together create a sense of place.

The residential area of Elmore has historically developed in a strong grid pattern. Most houses demonstrate predominantly intact examples of the early development of the town while others are newer construction. Some semi – rural character (including houses on larger acreage) is located on the edges of the town. The combination of the following elements enhance the village feel and rurality of the area:

- Lots are longer in depth than they are wide
- Mostly sealed roads
- Open drains and some curb and channel
- Large grassy verges
- Often no footpaths or footpath on one side
- Some formality through street trees
- Spacing between buildings
- Generous front setbacks
- Visual presence of private gardens
- Houses are mainly single storey
- Fencing is low (no more than 1.2m high)
- Generally timber picket or wire fencing
- Garages mostly separate to houses

Strategic Direction

Neighbourhood character is constantly changing to allow newer development among established areas. It will be important to protect and enhance the valued 'village' character aspects as change occurs.

The *Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy 2024* identifies four main character types in Elmore. Development should be enabled to fit within the existing identified character and continue to allow view lines to the agricultural and river reserve land and historically significant buildings.

Including consistent setbacks, garden settings and fencing in new development will help maintain and enhance the four identified neighbourhood character types.

Neighbourhood Character Types

Township – represent the early stages of development and strong grid subdivision pattern. Spacing between buildings, low permeable fencing and the strong visual presence of trees and vegetation give strong character to these areas.

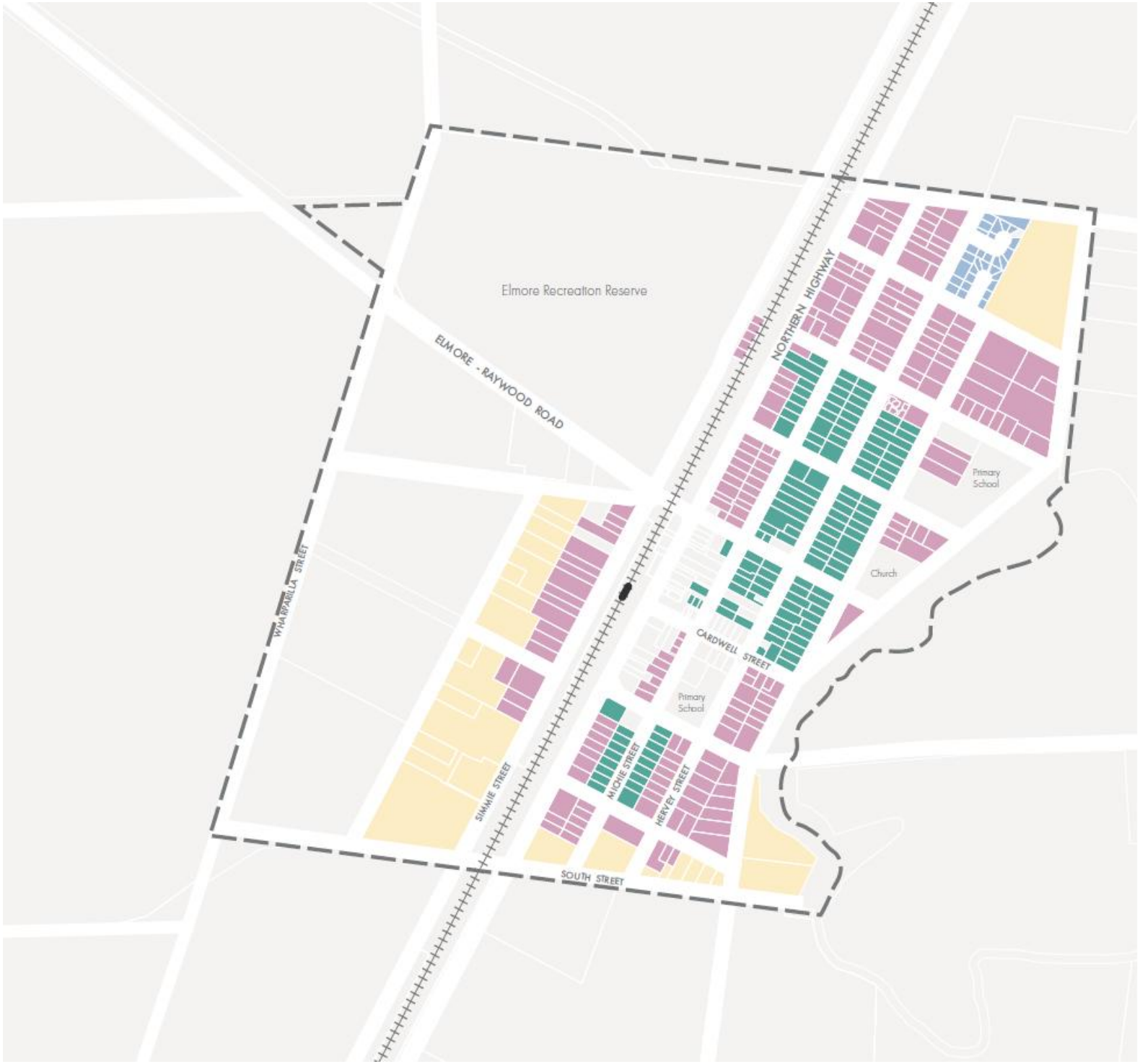
Township Suburban – represents development between 1950s to now. Spacing between buildings and the strong visual presence of trees and vegetation give strong character to these areas. The use of kerbs and channels and the lack of footpaths and often wide grassy verges creates a more informal township feel.

Semi – Rural – is mostly located on the edges of the town and provide a transition to the farmland adjoining the town boundary. Dwellings often have large footprints, verandahs and sit on sizeable acreage.

Suburban - Post 2000 – reflect new suburban style subdivisions with cul-de-sac and curved patterns. A variety of materials are often combined in dwellings. Garages are integrated into the dwelling roof form and are often very prominent.



Image: Example of Township character type



NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

- Elmore Railway Station
- Township
- Township Suburban
- Semi - Rural
- Suburban - Post 2000
- Non - Residential Uses

*Character map from the Housing and Neighbourhood Character Strategy 2024. It identifies four neighbourhood character types in Elmore. The character areas identified, represent the character style, not the era in which the buildings where constructed. Vacant land has been included with the predominant street character type.

6.4 Commercial Character



Railway Place (Clarke Street to Cardwell Street)

- intact streetscape
- historic buildings
- zero front wall setback
- continuous verandahs
- large window frontages
- fine-grained lot pattern (traditional narrow frontage and long depth)
- low scale with a mix of single and two storey
- street trees
- line marked angle car parking



Railway Place (Cardwell Street to Margret Street)

- fragmented streetscape
- spread out buildings
- limited verandahs
- a mix of front wall setbacks
- low scale single storey
- larger land holdings
- businesses across multiple sites
- no street trees
- unlined and lined parallel car parking



Cardwell Street

- fairly intact streetscape
- historic buildings
- zero front wall setback
- fragmented verandahs
- a mix of large window frontages and smaller vertical windows
- fine-grained lot pattern (traditional narrow frontage and long depth)
- low scale with a mix of single and two storey
- some street trees
- line marked angle car parking
- wide road and substantial road reserve

Strategic Direction

Railway Place, the main commercial street of Elmore has two distinctive sections. The section between Clarke and Cardwell Street is intact and retains many elements required for a successful retail environment. The section between Cardwell Street and Margret Street could be improved to increase weather protection (verandahs), street tree plantings and additional fine grain buildings in the future.

Cardwell Street has seen organic change over the years from original commercial buildings then converted to residential or accommodation, changing the use and feel of the streetscape. More recently there's been a return of some buildings to commercial uses, including a gallery, coffee van and the reopening of the Parsons Store offering antiques for sale. This change highlights the importance of identifying which buildings and elements of character should be enhanced and protected.

The *Elmore Community Plan* and community survey identified a desire to expand arts and entertainment opportunities. There is currently no specific location where markets or small events can occur in the town. An opportunity exists to formally reactivate Cardwell Street as an extension to the commercial core. This would expand the town's commercial offering while being separate from the bustle of the highway. This street could also be closed to traffic at certain periods to enable its use for markets and events, with the charming heritage buildings as a backdrop.

The development of an Urban Design Framework will provide recommendations to improve the design of new commercial development as well as public areas within the town centre. Public space improvements to encourage outdoor dining and public gathering places are potential options to explore, in addition to general streetscape improvements.

The expensive nature of public space works also means they may require additional funding or government grants and would likely need to occur over several years.







7 Movement and Access



7.1 Movement Network

Elmore is serviced by several major transport links including:

- Northern Highway
- Midland Highway
- Elmore-Raywood Road
- V/Line regional train service
- V/Line regional bus service

Such transport infrastructure makes Elmore highly accessible by car, bus and train. The road network also enables transport and logistics industries to support local agriculture and other industries.

The Northern and Midland Highways are owned and managed by the Department of Transport and Planning. They are part of Victoria's Principal Freight Network and are preferred roads for freight movements.

The Northern Highway (Railway Place) is one of the most significant streets in the town. It is not only the location for the town centre commercial strip, but also the main public setting that most passing travellers' experience and identify with Elmore. Many roads serve a movement purpose but also provide different functions either as a destination or a place to gather.

The remaining streets of Elmore are local roads mostly servicing the local community. These roadways are wide with large road asphalt areas which are designed for the movement and parking of cars.

The City's Integrated Transport and Landuse Strategy notes that the importance for roads to be suitable for active transport users as well as cars. This promotes health and wellbeing and provides people with a choice on how they move around their town.

The wide streets also contain a large amount of public space. There is an opportunity to be creative and to use existing assets and infrastructure in achieving minimal cost but maximum benefit improvements. Lower cost improvements which claim back space for pedestrians and cyclists while maintaining the road function for cars could be implemented. These improvements could be in the form of line marking or bollards within existing asphalt roads which provide separated walking and cycling areas. Mid-road landscaped refuges or curb build outs could also make crossing wide roads easier.





Community Drop in Session

Improved road safety (speed, crossings and entrances) was rated highly



ELMORE EXISTING ROADS

- Sealed local road
- Unsealed local road
- Highway
- Main Road
- Elmore Railway Station
- Public land

7.2 Walking

Elmore is a compact town with most everyday needs and services located within 800 metres walking distance for many residents. The flat landscape makes much of the town very walkable. The commercial area in particular includes sealed footpaths on both sides, weather protection on most buildings, a signalised pedestrian crossing and many bench seats for resting or waiting.

Despite having a strong foundation for connectivity, the public spaces and commercial areas are not connected as they could be. Like many small towns, the main street and commercial core has formed around a busy highway. The presence of the roadway and trainline infrastructure therefore presents a physical barrier to walking and cycling to parts of the town.

There are several examples in Elmore of walking infrastructure not meeting the accessibility needs of the community. There are missing links between existing footpaths and footpaths which end mid block before the roadside kerb. There are other examples such as Margaret Street where the form of the road makes it extremely challenging to enter and exit the designated school crossing, particularly for wheelchair or pram users.

The community has also identified some current challenges to walking, including high traffic speed, dangerous crossing points and an inconsistent walking infrastructure. The absence of footpaths in some parts of the town and the extent of bindi eye on nature strips (weed with spikes sharp enough to puncture shoes and tyres) also means people tend to walk on the roads. Limited weather protection or trees for shade also means unpleasant walking environments at certain times of the year.

While in some circumstances this situation is acceptable due to the wide road widths and verges, there are some streets near key destinations which could benefit from having additional footpaths or amenity for pedestrian safety.

Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo highlights that including small infrastructure including seats, wayfinding and drinking fountains at intervals along trails and walking circuits can improve walking environments particularly for older people or those with disabilities. Greening Greater Bendigo also promotes increased canopy cover from trees to improve cooling spaces and comfortability for walking.

Community Survey

Better walking and cycling paths was the most highly rated improvement



Image: Clarke Street footpath which ends mid block.



EXISTING WALKING ASSETS

- Existing sealed footpath
- Existing unsealed shared path
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Elmore Railway Station
- Public land
- Signalised pedestrian crossing
- School crossing
- Pedestrian railway crossing
- Bus stop
- School bus stop
- Bench seating
- Picnic table with seating
- Drinking fountain

7.3 Cycling

Cycling in Elmore serves both as a means of transportation to work or school and as a recreational activity.

The community has highlighted several challenges to cycling, including speed of traffic on highways and local roads, dangerous crossing points (particularly on weekends) and limited cycling infrastructure. Given these physical limitations, there are very few places to safely ride a bike. Elmore's only dedicated off-street cycling space is the Campaspe River Reserve shared path. The existing line marked bike lane along Northern Highway would be considered unsafe for the majority of riders due to angled car parking and heavy vehicle traffic.

Children are likely the largest group of cyclists in Elmore and often face difficulties accessing facilities at the Recreation Reserve. Most homes are on the eastern side of town where the highway presents a barrier for cyclists. Additionally, the absence of footpaths in some areas and the prevalence of bindi eye (weed with spikes sharp enough to puncture shoes and tyres) force children to ride on roads, further limiting safe cycling options.



Join the Ride Student Survey 2022

Over three quarters of students in Elmore want to ride or walk to school



Evidence shows protected cycle lanes are the best treatment to encourage wider ridership.

* There are behaviour change programs which teach road safety skills for children. For example - Join The Ride program encourages children to ride to school and helps identify safe routes to school. The program was previously undertaken with primary schools in Elmore by the Department of Transport in partnership with the City of Greater Bendigo and Bike Bendigo. There were 72 student enrolments between both schools in 2022 when the program was last held.



EXISTING CYCLING ASSETS

- Exisitng line marked bike lane
- Exisitng unsealed shared path
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Elmore Railway Station
- Public land
- Signalised pedestrian crossing
- School crossing
- Pedestrian railway crossing
- Bicycle hoops
- Drinking Fountain



WALKING AND CYCLING NETWORK GAPS

- Exisitng sealed footpath
- Exisitng unsealed shared path
- Walking asset gap
- Cycle asset gap
- Crossings for improvement
- Potential shared area
- Sealed road
- Unsealed road
- Highway
- Elmore Railway Station
- Public land
- School

7.4 Recreation

In addition to walking and cycling for daily travel, several opportunities for recreational improvements have been suggested by the local community. These include:

- A potential cross-border connection to the Elmore Events Centre
- An off-road rail trail to Hunter along the Elmore–Cohuna Rail Line
- A neighbourhood walking or cycling loop within the town

While these ideas reflect genuine community interest, most present significant cost or feasibility constraints.

Access to the Elmore Events Centre, located in the Campaspe Shire and host of the Elmore Field Days, currently lacks pedestrian routes. A new bridge across the Campaspe River (either north or south of town) could allow pedestrian access, but such infrastructure would be prohibitively expensive. Collaboration with DJARRA and the Campaspe Shire would be necessary to investigate viability, particularly regarding utilising crown land and environmental and cultural considerations across the river.

Additionally, the absence of walking and cycling infrastructure on the Campaspe Shire side poses further limitations. The low expected usage will likely not justify the substantial investment required.

The *Greater Bendigo Open Space Plan* identified potential for a Goldfields to Murray Trail linking Bendigo to Echuca along the existing trainline and back roads. However, a feasibility study concluded that the project is not viable at this time. Given Elmore to Hunter is a more low profile location it is also unlikely to be feasible at this time. And so alternative approaches may need to be considered and led by the community similar to the Lockington to Cotta Trail located in the Campaspe Shire.

Of all the ideas considered, the most achievable and beneficial recreational option for the local community is the incorporation of a walking and cycling loop within the town and municipal boundaries. This approach is aligned with guidance from Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo, which promotes accessible and localised recreation routes for smaller towns. This loop could connect to the Campaspe River Reserve shared path and use existing land at the Elmore Recreation Reserve. It offers the greatest potential for community benefit, community support, and use of current land and infrastructure.

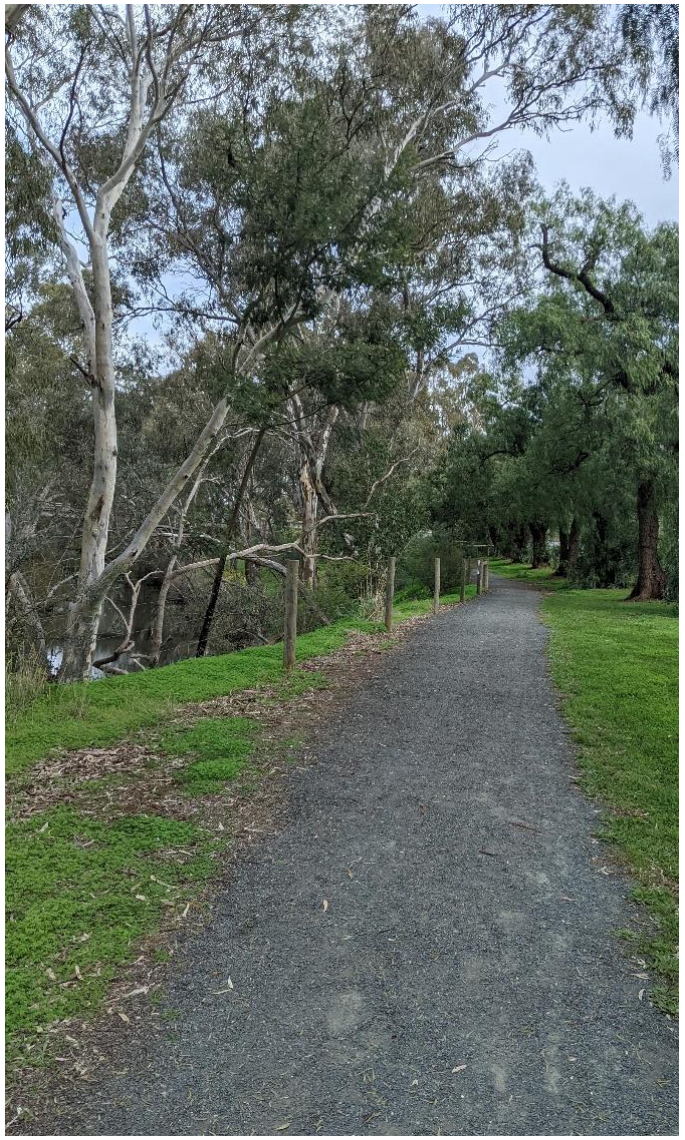


Image: Existing shared path along the Campaspe River Reserve

7.5 Vehicles

Most people in Elmore have access to a car and rely on car travel for everyday transport and commuting to work. Many travelers also rely on private vehicles to travel to and through the town.

The town has two petrol stations which makes refueling vehicles convenient. The growth of electric technology will see more people purchasing electric and hybrid vehicles in the near future. With this change charging stations are expected to expand.

Currently there is a gap in charging infrastructure when traveling around Victoria, presenting an opportunity to attract different travelers.. For travelers the location of charging stations needs to be strategically placed so people can either shop or have somewhere to spend time when their car is charging.

Elmore also has ample wide roads for parking. Marked car parks are located along Railway Place, Clarke Street and Cardwell Street. There is also an abundance of space on side streets for on street parking, only just a short walk to the commercial area.

*Data sourced from ABS 2021. It is important to note that at the time of the Census data collection the pandemic may have overrepresented the people who work from home.

Motor Vehicle Ownership



96% of households have access to a car



58% of households have two or three cars

Commute to Work



63% travel to work by car



7.9% travel to work by walking



Zero people use public transport



24% did not go to work or worked from home

7.6 Freight

Road freight is important and essential for the distribution of goods. Roads dedicated to allow freight should be protected for this purpose however, often serve multiple roles.

According to the *Bendigo Freight Study 2017* general freight, non-refrigerated food/beverages and building construction/products are said to most commonly use Midland and Northern Highways as freight routes. These Department of Transport managed highways and Elmore - Raywood Road are designated B-Double routes. These routes are particularly important for heavy vehicles which allow export of the products produced at the hay processing facilities nearby.

Elmore has an advantage of being strategicially placed on a major travelling corridor and a meeting point for routes and commuters. Elmore is situated midway between Bendigo (South), and Echuca (North). IT is also within the Echuca, Shepparton triangle which could make the location appealing to businesses who service all those areas.

While Elmore is centered around a strategic freight route there are some challenges which come withheavy vehicles which constantly travel through the centre of town. Trucks are often seen parked parallel on the Northern Highway within the cycle lane between the vehicle parking spaces and the driving lanes. This causes sight line impacts to the north and the south of the commercial strip for parked and driving vehicles. Designated long vehicle parking is available to the southern entrance to the town however, it is not specifically identified along the entire stretch of highway.

Technical Study
Bendigo Freight Study 2017

Census Data 2021
4.5% Road Freight Transport is the second top employment industry



Image: Midland Highway and Northern Highway intersection with heavy vehicles and long vehicle parking

7.7 Public Transport

Train

Elmore's train station currently supports 19 passenger train services per week to Bendigo, Melbourne and Echuca (38 outward services in total).

Part of the Regional Rail revival works has involved the Bendigo and Echuca Line Upgrade through Elmore. The works aimed to improve safety, tracking train movements and increase maximum speed. While the upgrades are welcomed, challenges remain with the current train times which limit the use of the service for commuting to work or school. This is reflected in the Elmore ABS data 2016 and 2021 which shows that none of the community take public transport to work. It was also highlighted in the engagement survey, where many expressed the need for services which fit in with school and work start and finish timeframes.

For example, the earliest train departing at 7.54am, on a weekday does not arrive in Melbourne until 10.44am. Similarly, the latest returning train from Melbourne is at 3.06pm. The 7.54am train from Elmore arrives in Bendigo at 8.36am. However, returning home is challenging as the last train leaves Bendigo Station at 5.05pm.

Bus

Elmore is also serviced by a regional V/line Bus which travels to the following places:

- Elmore – Bendigo (40 minutes travel time)
- Elmore – Echuca (32 minutes travel time)
- Elmore – Melbourne (2 – 3 hours travel time)



Community Survey

59% of respondents want better public transport

ABS data alone does not provide an accurate reflection on the use of the bus network. It is also worth noting that the environment, infrastructure and waiting areas significantly impact transport choice.

Given the travel times make commuting for work/school challenging there is still likely a different demographic who would use this service who are not bound by normal work hours.

Public Transport is managed and delivered by State Government and so the City will likely have to take an advocacy role for change.

Destinations

	Elmore - Bendigo (42min)	Bendigo – Elmore (35 min)	Elmore – Echuca (46 min)	Echuca – Elmore (38 min)	Elmore – Melb (170 min)	Melb – Elmore (160 min)
Mon-Fri	7.54 11.42 15.42	9.03 1.10 17.05	9.38 1.45 17.40	7.16 11.04 15.20	7.54 11.42 15.42	7.02 11.06 15.06
Saturday	7.53 16.32	11.07 20.04	11.41 16.30	8.54 15.54	7.53 16.32	9.06 18.06
Sunday	9.32 16.30	11.07 20.04	11.41 20.38	8.54 15.54	9.32 16.30	9.06 18.06

Strategic Direction

Improving road safety is more than just physical improvements. It involves a combination of infrastructure, government involvement and also behaviour change around using roads, active transport and education.

From a physical perspective, Elmore's size, street grid structure and existing footpaths provide an ideal position to build from. Therefore, any changes will ideally improve on the existing footpath network, desire lines and routes to key destinations. Improvements will likely prioritise key connections, including safe road crossings, raised safety platforms or broken links rather than footpaths on every street.

The reason for this is that Elmore has many wide roads which could support multiple purposes and travel modes. Care should also be taken to maintain the rural feel of streets and also prioritise where infrastructure is best located for maximum benefit. Small infrastructure including seats, wayfinding and drinking fountains at intervals along trails and walking circuits will also improve walking environments.

It is likely that many streets will remain as they are to maintain rural feel of the town. This will likely be where traffic is more limited to local residents.

Some streets will also continue using existing wide road infrastructure but incorporate better space for shared walking, cycling and vehicle movements. Some streets may also be prioritised as key walking and cycling routes. This will encourage a north – south and east – west link for walking and cycling.

The hard road infrastructure will potentially be one of the most challenging and cost demanding, yet the most important when encouraging accessibility around the town. The attitude change to walking and cycling and safety on roads will take more time and will depend on available education and behaviour change programs.

For the main arterial roads, the movement of freight vehicles will likely remain a priority. Road freight is important and essential for the distribution of goods, and therefore safety on roads dedicated to allowing freight should be improved to ensure these roads meet their main function but also cater for people to cross and access safely.

Key strategies which will inform where and how improvements should be prioritised include:

Walk, Cycle Greater Bendigo 2019
Guides future decision making and investment in walking and cycling infrastructure and aims to make it easier for people to walk and cycle.

Integrated Transport and Land Use Strategy 2015
Emphasises improving walking, cycling and public transport options. Clear directions for strengthening connections between people and places, improving health and wellbeing, changing individual travel behaviors, using low carbon modes of transport are also detailed within the recommendations. Improved connections into Bendigo are a key consideration for towns, where it is expected that bus and train services will expand over time.

Greening Greater Bendigo 2020
There are numerous well documented benefits to street trees including helping to cool the urban environment, health benefits and improvements to public domain amenity. For Elmore, the main recommendation involves the preparation of a precinct plan to guide local tree planting for priority streets and establish a network of shaded streetscapes for walking and cycling.

8 Community Spaces



8.1 Public Open Space

The ability to access open space and recreation facilities is important for the health and wellbeing of the community. These areas are commonly recognised as places that community members can gather for a range of purposes, including creative, health, learning, recreation and social purposes.

The protection, enhancement and multi-use of these places will continue to be an important part of Elmore's identity and appeal in the future. Having space dedicated to formalised or arranged sports is required however, incorporating areas that are not set aside for organised sports such as grassed spaces or picnic areas is equally important.

Currently there is a range of open spaces established in Elmore. There are five main spaces including a river reserve, large recreation reserve (north and south parcels) and smaller parkland known as Progress Park and Apex Park. Elmore also has a highly attractive and landscaped train station forecourt which is referred to in this document as the 'Railway Village Green'. It is noted that Elmore does not have a defined central point in town or marked town centre.

Strategic Direction

The *Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan 2019* lists specific projects and recommendations for Elmore. These include upgrades to the town centre, improved amenities along the Campaspe River, improved linkages between the town and the river, improvements to the town entrances and to the recreation reserve.

In addition to formal spaces there is a large amount of public space contained within Elmore's wide streets. However, there is great variability in the type and standard of streets when they are generally designed to support the movement and parking of cars. water Sensitive Urban Design improvements in selected areas could treat stormwater quality issues however also have the added benefit of improving tree cover and improving streetscape amenity.

A challenge which will be faced when planning for future growth and changing community needs is the limited City owned or managed public space in Elmore. There is therefore an opportunity to use some wide road reserves and diversify these spaces to be included as part of the open space network. These spaces would not only provide more areas for recreation but would also link existing established spaces together through pathways, landscaping and site lines.

Technical Documents
Active Living Census 2019
Relevant Strategies
Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan 2019



Active Living Census
49.9% of residents use open spaces once a week or more

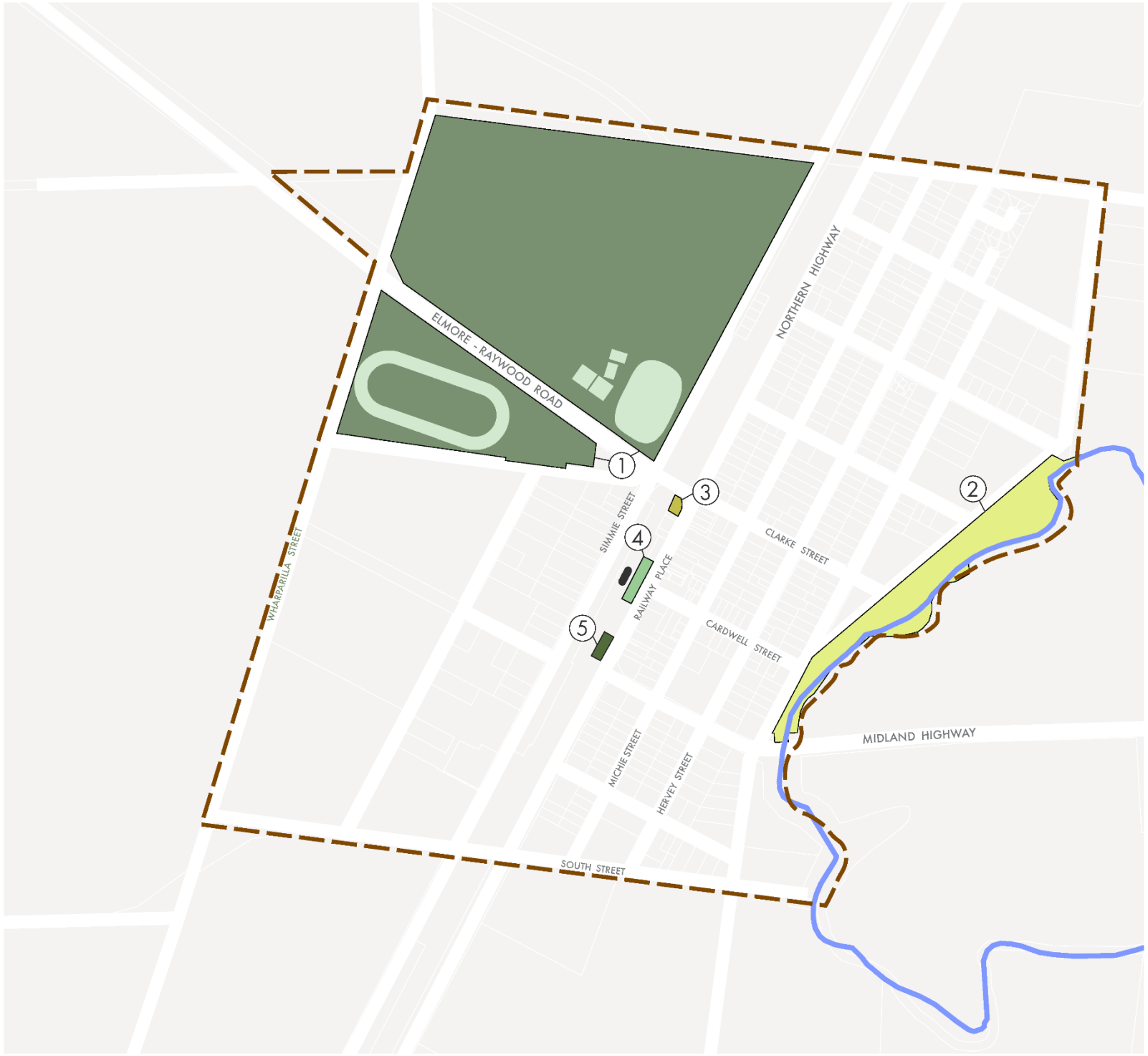


Active Living Census
9.6% Active Play is the second most popular physical activity in Elmore



Active Living Census
19.8% Walking is the most popular physical activity in Elmore

*Active Living Census area - Rural North area includes Elmore, Hunter, Goornong, Neilborough, Raywood, Sebastian and Woodvale. Findings for the Elmore - Rural North area include are based on 182 responses from residents, or approximately 8.2% of the local population.



ELMORE PUBLIC SPACE

- Elmore Railway Station
- ① Recreation Reserve
- ② Campaspe River Reserve
- ③ Progress Park
- ④ Railway Village Green
- ⑤ Apex Park

Campaspe River Reserve

The Elmore Community Plan identifies the Campaspe River as a key asset for residents and as an attraction for visitors to the town.

Part of the Campaspe River Reserve is fenced with a meandering walking/cycling path between Margret and Wright Street. The shared path has been developed over several years including a recent extension lead by the Elmore Progress Association.

The area has several amenities including:

- picnic tables
- shared walking / cycling track
- fencing
- drinking fountain
- rubbish bins
- informal nature play
- Indigenous interpretive signage

Top improvements to the river reserve suggested by the community include:

- rubbish bins / barbeques
- more seating
- toilet facilities
- Water access and/or platform pontoon
- Extension to the existing walking and cycling track

Strategic Direction

While the river is situated just under 500 metres from Railway Place there is little signage within the town to inform visitors of the proximity and direction to the river reserve and walking track.

There is also a contrast between the edge of the river reserve and the beginning of the and residential area. There is an opportunity to improve the interface through targeted landscaping, revegetation and stormwater management improvements. Given the river reserve is owned and managed by Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (with the exception of the northern portion which has a community committee of management) any changes will need the approval of the state government.

As mentioned in Section 7.1, the Campaspe River is culturally and spiritually important to Dja Dja Wurrung people. This ongoing connection is documented in wayfinding signage along the walking and cycling trail. There is an opportunity to further combine, celebrate and promote aboriginal cultural heritage within the river reserve. There is support for further cultural revitalisation led by Dja Dja Wurrung including signage utilising djali (language) and joint naming of heritage places which further integrate the importance of the river and wider Elmore area in the centre of town.







Recreation Reserve

The Elmore recreational reserve is spread over multiple sites and contains a substantial amount of infrastructure. The facilities, sporting clubs and the user groups contribute to the character and strong sense of community in the town.

Engagement with sport is high within the town however not everyone is interested in being involved or undertaking organised sports. The community have suggested the following improvements which could be accommodated at the recreation reserve:

- Improved recreational reserve facilities
- spaces for older kids
- nature play space (similar to Rochester)
- pump track (looped sequence of slopes and turns for bike riders)
- off leash dog park
- walking and cycling loop

The recreation reserve is not owned or managed by the City of Greater Bendigo. To assist with future improvements and ensure equitable access to everyone, a focused investigation should be undertake by the land owner and manager. This would help to understand the rate of use, if uses are viable, if any new uses and user groups could be accommodated and the ability to plan potential improvements holistically.

*The Recreation Reserve is crown land owned by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action and managed by a community committee of management.



RECREATION FACILITIES

1. Golfing range
2. Bowling / golf club
3. Bowling green
4. Netball courts
5. Cricket nets
6. Football and cricket oval
7. Football, netball and cricket clubrooms
8. Play space
9. Skate park
10. Swimming pool
11. Caravan park
12. Tennis Courts
13. Play space
14. Harness racing track

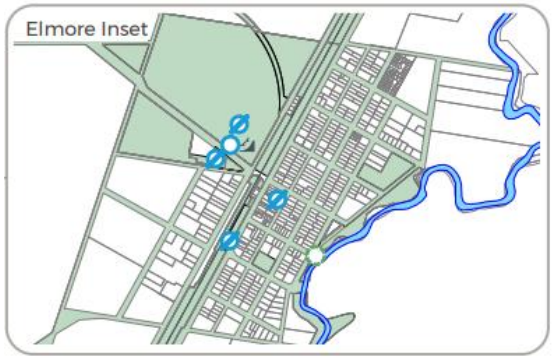
Play Spaces

Play spaces are essential elements of community infrastructure, providing opportunities for physical development at all stages of childhood.

The *Greater Bendigo Public Space Plan 2019* identified four play spaces in Elmore and a skate park. The Michie Street Play space in particular is very popular for families with young children.

The Public Space Plan recommends an assessment process be carried out to evaluate the existing play spaces. Recommendations to potentially combine existing play space resources into a larger and more central location were detailed in the actions.

Given this overarching direction there is an opportunity to review the quality, use and condition of the current play spaces with an aim to combine resources and infrastructure into a single centrally located play space. There is also the potential to explore opportunities for a dedicated local play space and more visible visitor play space.





City of Greater Bendigo owned Michie Street Play space

8.2 Community Facilities

Social infrastructure includes the facilities, spaces, services and networks that support the quality of life and wellbeing of communities.

Across Elmore there is a large range of social infrastructure. There is a mixture of ownership and management of all facilities. The Elmore Memorial Hall / Athenaeum Hall is one of only handful examples where the facility is community owned and managed. The City of Greater Bendigo owns only two facilities in the town including:

- Community Hub
- Kindergarten

In comparison to other small towns the diversity in social infrastructure and its location across the town provides for a well-serviced community. Due to the age of this infrastructure however, there may be some improvements needed to ensure their continued use into the future. Some facilities may be outdated and may need renewal in the future.

* Not all social infrastructure is owned and managed by the City of Greater Bendigo. Sometimes, other government departments own the land. In many cases a volunteer community committee of management manage the buildings and land and receives assistance from the City.

A recent example of improvement by the City is the renewal of Elmore Community Hub kitchen and access to wifi which helps support the community.

The Elmore swimming pool is also a valued asset in the community not just for the Elmore community but the wider rural – north municipal catchment. The *Community Aquatic Facilities Strategy* 2023 notes the facility is family friendly and has 25m intermediate pool toddlers' pool water slide and toilets. The City currently subsidies or provides grant funding for lifeguards, chemicals, utilities (partial water) and maintenance (generally short term low cost repairs to increase lifespan of the facility). However it is a non-council facility and managed by a volunteer Crown Land Committee of Management so can make renewal and significant improvements more challenging to be City lead.

Recommendations in the 4 year Strategy include:

- No major upgrades are planned
- Retain base service level and community management
- Review level of financial and professional support needed/provided in consultation with DEECA as the responsible agency for Crown Land Committees

Relevant Strategies:
Community Aquatic Facilities Strategy 2023

Relevant Policies: Community Assets Policy









ELMORE COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- Elmore Railway Station
- Recreation Reserve
- Playspace
- Pool
- Public Toilets
- Barbeque
- Elmore Community Hub
- Memorial Hall / Athenaeum Hall
- Education
- Church
- Primary Health
- Police Station
- Fire Station



ELMORE LAND OWNERSHIP

- City of Greater Bendigo owned
- Elmore Community
- State Government
- Crown land (State Government)
- Elmore Railway Station

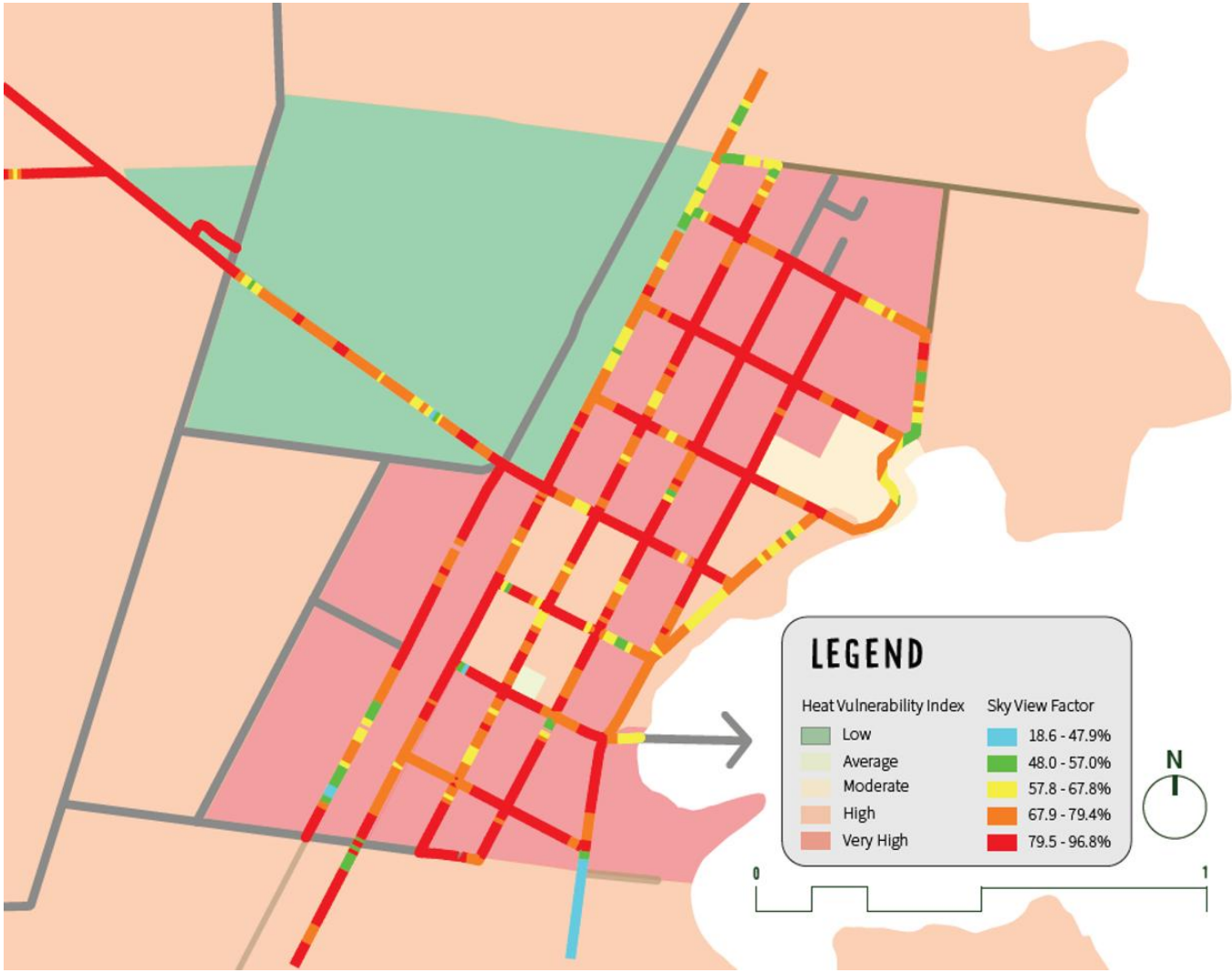
9 Climate Change and Environment

9.1 Climate Change

Climate projections show the Loddon Campaspe region is expected to experience an increase in maximum daily temperatures. This could be an increase between 0.8 degrees and 1.7 degrees Celsius by the 2030s.

On a more localised level, current heat mapping shows Elmore as one of the hottest places in the Bendigo municipality. Street tree plantings in many areas are insufficient or inappropriate to mitigate exposure to weather conditions. There are also many wide asphalted roads which increase the impacts of urban heat. Therefore, future tree canopy cover targets are important for cooling and enabling shaded streetscapes for walking and cycling. Planting has already begun under the Greening Greater Bendigo's 50 year vision to increase tree cover in built up areas.

The town receives considerably less rainfall than other areas of Victoria with an average of 450mm per annum. Given the low rainfall improvements through the use of Water Sensitive Urban Design tree pits could enhance watering, promote tree canopy and enable tree growth.



*The City's Biodiversity Strategy 2024 states canopy trees can produce shade that reduces people's exposure to harmful UV rays by up to 75 per cent. This limits the incidence of heat related illness – particularly for more vulnerable younger and elderly people.

This map shows heat mapping for Elmore:

- **The Sky View Factor (SVF)** - is the measure of shade. The greater the sky factor, the less shade is available.
- **The Heat Vulnerability Index (HVI)** - shows the level of vulnerability to the community.

Key Strategies:
Loddon Campaspe Climate Projections 2019
Greening Greater Bendigo 2020
The Climate Change and Environment Strategy 2021 – 26
Biodiversity Strategy 2024

9.2 Biodiversity

Technical Documents
Biodiversity Assessment 2025 (DM Ecological)
Relevant Strategies
Greater Bendigo Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2023-2033

The Elmore area is located within the Victorian Riverina Bioregion. Much of the surrounding land has been subject to historical clearing of vegetation for grazing and cropping. Vegetation therefore is mainly located within the following areas:

- Campaspe River
- Railway reserve
- Golf Course
- Racecourse / trotting track
- Parts of the Wharparilla Road Reserve

These patches are identified as having high biodiversity value as they contain large trees with hollows or visible nests, providing habitat for native animal species.

The Biodiversity Assessment by DM Ecological recommends any future development near or within the above areas would need to consider the high biodiversity and minimise potential impacts to native vegetation. Any future subdivision design should aim to retain large trees within roundabouts on nature strips or reserves. Some large trees may also be retained within setback areas or buffer zones, providing the grass fuel / vegetation is managed. Opportunity for a biolink along the railway reserve between Elmore and Goornong is also something which could be further investigated.





Hollow bearing tree and common Ringtail Possum in hollow (source – Biodiversity Assessment 2025)


N
Legend
Elmore Study Area
Significant Tree
Significant Patch
Biodiversity Value
High
Low
Medium
Water Area
Watercourse
Buloke

9.3 Bushfire

While Elmore has no Bushfire Management Overlay most of the township and the surrounding area is identified as being Bushfire Prone. This is due to the risk of grassfire within surrounding farmland outside of the urban part of town. Given the limited bushland which could cause fire runs Elmore has a low risk of bushfire compared to other areas of Bendigo. However, as summers become longer, hotter, and drier, fire risk will become more prevalent.

The majority of fires likely to threaten Elmore would be from fast-moving grassfires, which could become dangerous if flames or embers are able to reach more heavily treed crown land areas. Vegetated areas which pose potential risk are generally limited to the golf course, the Campaspe River and the railway reserve.

The Elmore Fire Brigade along with members from neighbouring brigades, in the past have successfully undertaken planned burning operations in grassland along the railway line to the north of the Elmore township. Continued planned burns and slashing are fire protection works on public land will help reduce risk to the town. Private property owners managing their land will also reduce risk.

Technical Documents
Bushfire Risk Assessment Elmore Township 2025
(Culingaia Flora Environmental Consultancy)

When considering where future development should be located it is important to take into account the areas of highest risk and minimise any intensification to provide protection to life and property. In the case of Elmore, there is minimal vegetation to the north west and south of the site so susceptibility to bushfire risk would be relatively low. The Bushfire Risk Assessment suggests there will be no increase to risk to existing or future residents in the town in accordance with Clause 13.02-1S Bushfire Planning in the Planning Scheme.

The town has a fire station, dedicated fire brigade and is well serviced by the road network with access to the Midland and Northern Highways further reducing risk in the event of a fire. Fire risk assessments on a site by site basis when development occurs will further enable suitable BAL construction ratings, perimeter roads, setbacks from vegetation and water supply.



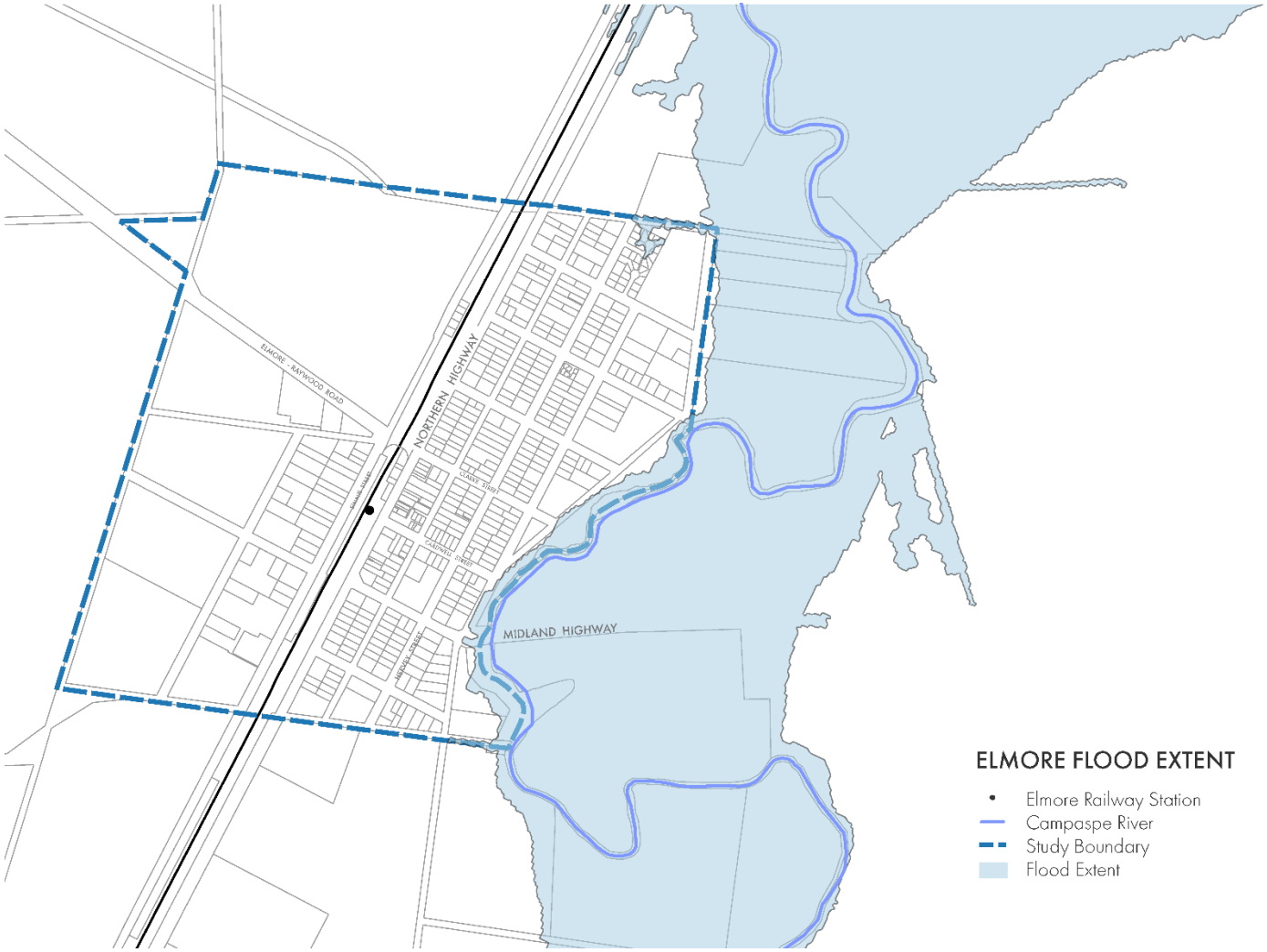
Late 2021 CFA volunteer assisting with the burn along the railway line north of Elmore Credit: Tony Scott – Forest Fire Management Victoria Source CFA Website

9.4 Flood

In October 2022 there was a major flood event which inundated land within 63 local government areas across Victoria including Elmore. Whilst greater than the 2011 flooding event, only the fringes of Elmore were affected.

Fortunately, Elmore is built on the higher side of the Campaspe River and when flooding has occurred this has it impacted farmland on the eastern side of the Campaspe River in the Campaspe Shire. While this is the case for most flood waters Elmore is relatively flat and is not completely free of impacts from riverine flooding.

The North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA) recently completed the *Campaspe River Rapid Flood Risk Assessment 2023* (RFRA) for the Campaspe River downstream of Lake Eppalock. This assessment mapped the updated extent of flooding based on a 1 in 200 (or 0.5%AEP) flood event. It also included best practice climate change projections into the data. This data is to be used for formal flood overlay mapping and planning decisions through a future planning scheme amendment. Until any formal overlays are in place the NCCMA seeks to ensure that this plan directs new development to areas that are not prone to flooding.



Estimated 2022 flood extent for Campaspe River at Elmore (source - North Central Catchment Management Authority)

9.5 Potential Contamination

There are a small number of sites in the Elmore study boundaries that may have contamination from historical uses such as old landfills, petrol stations, manufacturing and industrial sites.

In some cases, contamination can make development for sensitive uses unviable. However, in most cases the land can be remediated when the land changes use.

The State planning system can trigger an investigation of land contamination when the use or planning zone is proposed to change. In the case of historical pollution, often the original polluter no longer exists or cannot be located, and the costs must be borne by another party such as the current landowner or developer. Potential contamination will therefore be best dealt with on a site by site basis depending on the proposed use and development.



Image: Earthworks in Elmore

10 Community Engagement

10.1 Engagement Summary

Community consultation has been an important part in the preparation of the Elmore Structure Plan. Engaging with the community at various times throughout the process has allowed a better understanding of the current issues, opportunities and aspirations for the future of the town.

A summary of the community consultation methods and the themes which have emerged are provided on the following pages. The most common themes amongst all consultation were:

- Footpath and cycle path improvements
- Potential growth of retail and service options
- Public space improvements
- Road and traffic improvements
- Public transport options (increased frequency)
- Potential agricultural or industry growth
- Suitable residential growth

Community Reference Group

Prior to the commencement of the project a Community Reference Group was formed. The final group comprised of six community members who have met City Staff on several occasions over the duration of the project. Specifically, the community members have:

- Contributed both local and technical knowledge about issues relevant to the project.
- Ensured that the views and interests of the community are represented, and that relevant stakeholders are engaged.
- Reviewed ideas, visuals and key recommendations developed as a part of the project.
- Provided an active and positive contribution to the project.

Online Surveys

Two community surveys were conducted. A total of 118 responses were received from the two surveys. The surveys provided an initial capture of issues and opportunities the community identified within the town. The multiple choice surveys revealed:

Where do you do most of your shopping?

- 65% of people do most shopping in Bendigo
- 24% of people do most shopping in Elmore

What do you like most about living in Elmore? (top 3 responses)

- country town living in proximity to regional city centres
- town services and infrastructure
- natural features (River, parks and trees)

What improvements would you like to see?

- Better walking and cycle paths as the main element for improvement in the town
- Better public transport
- Campaspe River Reserve - picnic and toilet facilities including seating, picnic benches, rubbish bins and barbeques
- Extension to the existing walking and cycling track from the river reserve

Walking Tour with Sacred Heart Primary School

It is important to plan not only for adults but also for the needs of children in Elmore. A walking tour was arranged with Grade 6 students from Scared Heart Primary School to capture their ideas about public spaces in the town.

The students showed where they liked to play at the recreation reserve and the Campaspe River Reserve. They also suggested the below improvements:

- a pump track
- more play equipment for older children
- more seating along the river
- a pontoon for fishing / launching kayaks.

Drop In session - (Issues and Opportunities Paper)

In addition to the details documented in the Issues and Opportunities Paper, a range of localised issues were identified from attendees at the Drop-In Session and online. These issues included traffic speed entering the town and problematic intersections such as Margaret Street near the school, the intersection next to the bakery and also crossing the Northern Highway. Inconsistency of footpaths was also mentioned as many residents are required to utilise roadways to walk or cycle.

The potential for some smaller housing products was also mentioned, however, would only be acceptable if representative of a quality design in an appropriate location.

Community Visioning Workshop

A community visioning workshop was held in Elmore with a group of community members and a representative from Coliban Water. It involved participants undertaking a range of exercises to hear and share different community ideas around growth, what needs to be protected and what they see for the future of their town.

Post-Workshop Drop-In Session / Online Visuals

After the workshop, a range of concept maps were developed based on the ideas participants shared at the workshop.

These maps were shared on the Let's Talk online platform, hard copies were provided at the Community Hub and also at the Post-Workshop Drop-In Session.

The community comments received both online and at the Drop - In Session were positive. The comments collected indicated the ideas were heading in the right direction and that the Structure Plan could build from the vision maps.

The vision maps have been used as a stepping stone to inform the Structure Plan recommendations.

11 Summary

11.1 Background Summary

The Background Report has identified Elmore as a compact, well serviced and high amenity town capable of supporting residential infill growth within the existing town boundaries. It has a defined character and charming riverside location with a range of high value heritage buildings.

While there are many opportunities to build from the Background Report has also identified some challenges which will aim to be addressed in the Elmore Structure Plan.

Opportunities

- Strategic location between Elmore, Shepparton and Bendigo.
- Availability of regional connections via highways and railway line to Melbourne and Echuca
- Large supply of vacant land or large lots capable of further subdivision
- Possible increased connections between commercial area and river reserve
- Established street grid with small network of footpaths
- Established street grid with valued rural residential character
- Established activity centre and commercial core with historic buildings
- Compact urban footprint and walkability (most everyday needs located within 800m of where people live)
- Diversity of social infrastructure and recreational areas
- An ample range of retail, community and social services, a medical centre, bank, post office, newsagency, butcher, small supermarket and a passenger train station.

Challenges

- Identifying key public domain changes for maximum benefit
- ageing population
- quality of public domain
- quality of community facilities
- streetscape connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists
- diversity of housing stock
- potential funding for works
- Improving walking and cycling safety across main arterial roads

Glossary

Assets - Buildings, roads, other infrastructure (like drains), equipment, resources and vehicles owned by Council.

Council - Your elected Councillors, nine Councillors in total.

City of Greater Bendigo - The staff who deliver the services of the Council.

Municipality - The area within the boundaries of the Local Government Area of Greater Bendigo.

Traditional Owners - Are the original custodians of land and waters with unique roles in caring for Country and a deep spiritual connection to it. The term “Traditional Owner Group” is defined in section 3 of the Traditional Owner Settlement Act 2010 (Vic). In Greater Bendigo, the two Traditional Owner organisations are DJAARA (Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation) and Taungurung Land and Waters Council.