

5 Hazeldene Design Framework

Hazeldene is highly constrained by steep forested terrain with most private landholdings already developed. The framework provides for Hazeldene to remain a rural settlement with no additional growth identified.

Figure 5 and the associated recommendations provide a design framework which identifies that residential development within Hazeldene should be limited to the existing areas.

5.1 Create clear settlement boundaries

The physical containment of Hazeldene is required to ensure that the township's unique character is preserved and enhanced. Inappropriate residential development has occurred on flood prone land in Hazeldene with many lots unable to treat waste water on site. A settlement boundary reflecting existing urban zone boundaries will define the size, shape and preserve the character of Hazeldene and help reduce potentially unsafe housing development.

The settlement boundary is shown in Figure 5.

5.2 Improve transitions between urban and rural land uses

In conjunction with a settlement boundary, physical containment can be supported through the provision of buffers. They provide a transition between urban and rural land uses in Hazeldene. Within the region there are landscape buffers which are comprised of road side vegetation, farming and agricultural land and ecological buffers which have a primary role in providing habitat for native flora and fauna. Existing buffers need to be protected and enhanced by:

- implementing a settlement boundary,
- enhancement of roadside vegetation through additional planting with due regard to fire risk and re-vegetation programmes, and
- protection of the King Parrot environs through re-vegetation programmes and water quality improvements.

5.3 Provide a unifying wayfinding strategy

The ability of visitors and residents to move freely, confidently and safely through the study area can be improved. To connect residents and visitors within the region, townships should be re-cast as gateways to the natural assets of the area. This can be achieved through improved signage and branding of the region.

Hazeldene is approached from two directions, from the north and south via the Yea-Whittlesea Road. The entries are currently not identified by signage. Hazeldene is incorrectly identified as Flowerdale which creates confusion for visitors to the region. These entries can be improved to provide a clear sense of arrival by providing a branded locality sign and by introducing different street trees with due regard to fire risk. Indicative locations for entry signage are identified in Figure 5.

Attractions within the region need to be accessible to visitors and residents. Information and identification signage should be located at appropriate locations to inform and direct visitors. Figure 5. identifies potential locations for this signage.

5.4 Better-connected streets, paths and trails

Better connections for pedestrian and cyclists are needed within

the region. Local roads within the area are currently shared between private vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. This is common practice for regional townships and appropriate for the character of the locality. The size and character of Hazeldene has resulted in no need for additional pedestrian and cycle infrastructure within the residential streets. A shared path is has been introduced connecting Hazeldene with Flowerdale.

5.5 Ensure new residential buildings complement the character of the region

The unifying physical attribute of the area is the rural and bushland setting. New residential homes must enhance and protect this value. Recent residential buildings are not in keeping with the character and are undermining the value of the rural and bushland setting.

Built form (its colour, look and style) contributes to character and identity of a location and place. The architectural style and expression throughout the region is can be inconsistent and overall has no unifying elements. Many of the new buildings and structures compete with the natural surroundings due to the size and scale, inappropriate siting and poor choice of finishes and colours. To maintain and safeguard the character of Hazeldene, development should:

- apply the highest available bushfire construction standards,
- use site sensitive and responsive design styles and palates,
- adopt subdued and restrained architectural styles,
- adopt muted hues, tones and textures which blend into the bushland setting, and
- Incorporate vegetation (of suitable fire retardant species) with significant canopy cover into private gardens.

5.6 Streetscape improvements in Hazeldene

The character of Hazeldene is one of its attributes. The streetscape and structure of the 'main street' is a contributing element to this character and should be preserved. Hazeldene's General Store is a focal point of the locality and is an opportunity for visitors to the region to stop. Improvements can be made to ensure the character is not eroded and opportunities are not missed and could include:

- upgrade amenities located at the entrance to Hazeldene (toilet and bus stop), these are detracting from the picturesque setting,
- provide street furniture (bins and seating) should be of a consistent style and high quality, and
- improve sightlines to the general store from the main road from both directions.

5.7 Future commercial and retail development

The role of the General Store should be strengthened to provide a focal point the community. No additional commercial or retail growth is proposed for Hazeldene.

5.8 Community Activity Node

Flowerdale Community House and the area around the Hazeldene General Store are the main community nodes for the Flowerdale and Hazeldene communities.

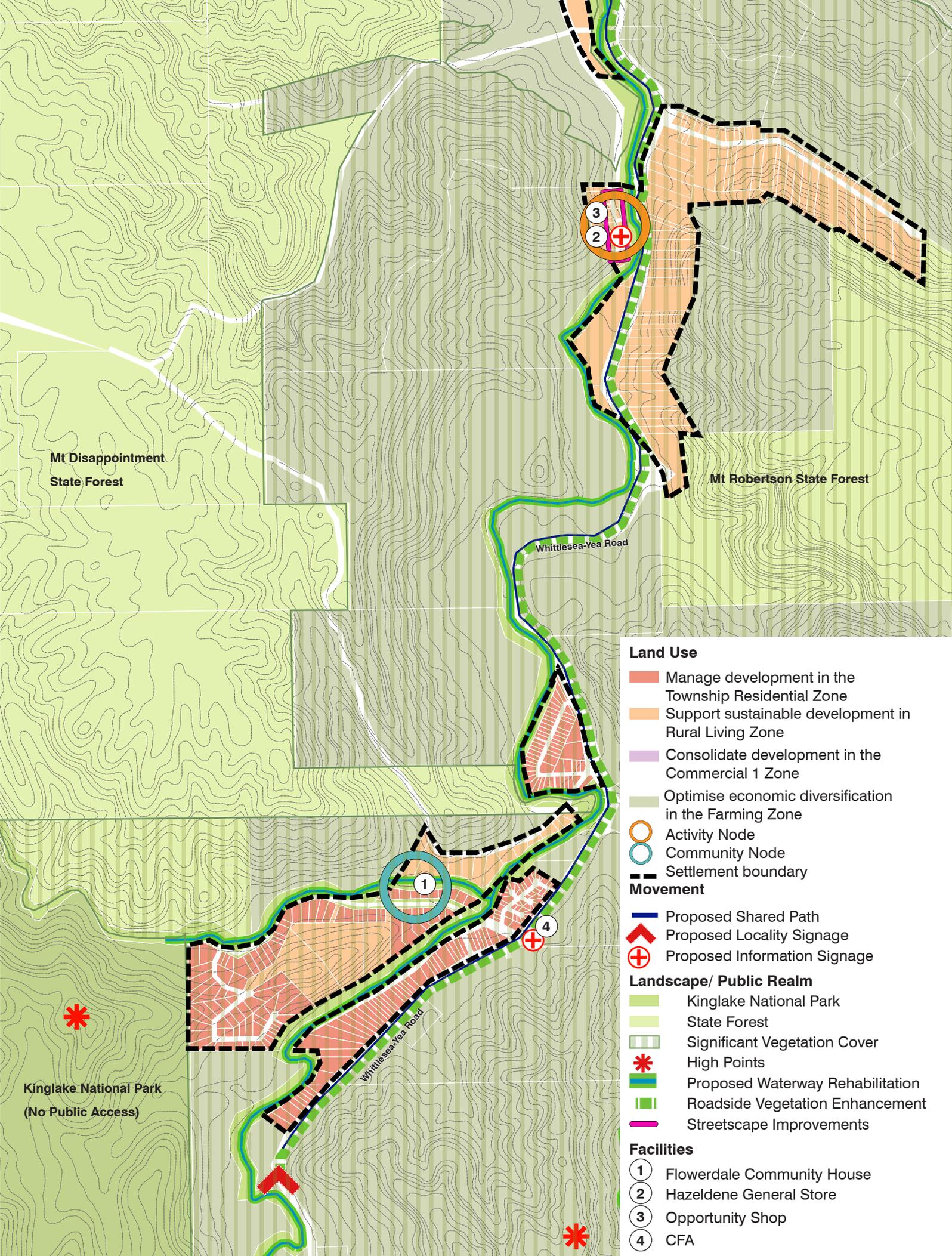


Figure 5 Hazeldene Design Framework

