



City of Whittlesea

Appendix 4: State and regional PPF/rural zones



During the audit period, a review of Victoria's Planning Policy Framework (PPF) was changing the content of planning schemes. Planning schemes are always dynamic. However, the PPF translation is particularly significant because it re-organises the structure of the entire local policy portion of a planning scheme in one amendment.

KEY:	
✘	No support
▸	Some support (could be augmented).
●	Strong support
N/A	Not applicable

		Whittlesea Planning Scheme: PPF							Whittlesea Planning Scheme: Zone Schedules				Council Plans, Policies, Strategies				Notes:	
		Clause 11.01 - 1R Green Wedges - MM	Clause 11.03 - 3S Peri-Urban Areas	Clause 11.03-5S Distinctive Areas and Landscapes	Clause 14.01-1S Protection of Agricultural Land	Clause 14.01-2S Sustainable Agricultural Land Use	Clause 17.01-1S Diversified Economy	Clause 14.01 -2L Sustainable Agricultural Land Use	Clause 35.04 Green Wedge Zone Schedule	Clause 35.04 Green Wedge A Zone Schedule	Clause 35.07 Rural Conservation Zone Schedules	Farming Zone Schedule	Council Plan 2017-2021 Update 2020	Health and Wellbeing Partnership Plan 2017-2021	Whittlesea GWMP 2011	Land Capability Assessment Project (web-based)		
Peri-urban Planning Scheme Audit Benchmarking Principles																		
Food Production	Does the planning scheme support 'accepted agricultural practices' and 'accepted farm structures' by exempting them from the requirement to obtain a planning permit (note: other regulation may apply).	N/A	✘	✘	✘	▸	N/A	✘	✘	✘	▸	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	Default provisions for outbuildings in schedules. RCZ2 provides for a 50sqm extension to an existing outbuilding without a permit. It is unclear why this schedule area are has been singled out for this provision.
	Does the planning system facilitate expansion of the array of food produced - to satisfy demand for local food and expand access to local food for the community.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	▸	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	▸	●	●		
	Does the planning system facilitate resilience against climate change, peak oil, and other threats?	N/A	N/A	✘	N/A	▸	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	●	●		
	Does the planning scheme support new sources of revenue on-farm, such as non-exempt agricultural uses, by taking a generally flexible and scale-sensitive approach? These might include farm-based businesses, agritourism, and direct sales.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	▸	▸	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	▸	●	✘		
Food Processing and Manufacture	Does the planning system respond to the scale of an operation and developmental needs for food processing - such as other regulatory requirements, and the infrastructure needed for packaging and distribution.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✘	N/A	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	▸	▸		
	Does the planning system provide for the on-farm sale of prepared food, if components of that food are produced or processed on the farm?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	▸	N/A	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	▸	▸	▸		

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Aggregation, Distribution and Storage (Wholesale Distribution)	Does the planning system facilitate producers self-distributing their products, especially when they have small and medium sized farms?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	☺	●	●	
	Does the planning system facilitate producers' access to all types of local and regional supermarkets, restaurants and institutions- where most food is purchased- which is a necessary precursor to significantly expanding the consumption of locally grown products. This might relate to the availability of a variation of scales and types of on-farm and commercial storage, aggregation and distribution services.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	☺	☺	☺	
	Does the planning system facilitate "secondary integrated agricultural activities" on farms – such as the sale of non-farm products (where these are ancillary to the marketing of an on-farm product), and the hosting of educational and cultural events related to farming.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	☺	☺	Educational uses and place of assembly (in some zones) are prohibited so would have to provide a legal planning argument for support.
	Does the planning system facilitate personal relationships among producers and consumers whose collective desire is to eat food that is healthy, fresh, tastes good, and to support those who produce it. This might encompass farmers markets, food hubs, shared marketing, shared distribution, regional brand development.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✘	N/A	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	☺	●	☺	Planning would require specific policy references – markets, food hubs, shared assets for distribution on farms. Goes against most policy direction to discourage commercial uses not directly related to the farm business.
Nutrient Management	Does the planning system facilitate the prevention of nutrient losses in the environment, moving away from waste management to nutrient management?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✘	N/A	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	
	Does the planning system facilitate the production and use of compost as a valuable component of sustainable farming operations?	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	✘	N/A	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	✘	Refer note below.
	Does the planning system facilitate sustainable agriculture practices – for example, environmental stewardship that supports soil health and biodiversity conservation/ enhancement, prevents manure and fertilizer runoff, reduces soil erosion and prevents livestock access to waterways. This may be achieved with buffers and setbacks that relate to the scale of the use/development.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	☺	N/A	☺	●	●	●	●	✘	✘	●	☺	

Notes:

- Whittlesea Council has introduced a food waste collection service for residents which will be processed into a composted fertilizer product and made commercially available. Whilst this is positive, it does not appear to be part of a broader strategic focus (Waste Recovery Strategy and Environmental Sustainability Strategy do not have it as an action although there is the broader objective of reducing waste to landfill). The initiative also does not necessarily support farmers composting their own waste for use on the farm, which can involve permits for buildings and works and processing.
- Special Use Zone Schedule 7 is specific to mushroom production – it is facilitative of mushroom production on the lot subject to this zone but also precludes other agriculture and agricultural processing. As such, it has not been included in the audit.

Declaration for transparency:

The author works for the City of Whittlesea in the Strategic Futures Department. Fellow director of Plan-it Rural P/L, Annemaree Docking, is a former employee of City of Whittlesea and has contributed to the Regenerative Agriculture project detailed below as part of her PhD candidature with Deakin University.

Summary recommendations:

Note for all Council Matrices

The Farm to Plate Victorian Peri-Urban Planning Scheme Audit defined the problem via a literature review, VCAT review, and a review of state and local government policy reforms, using this information to make recommendations for local planning scheme content within each Council matrix. Relevant content from publicly available, local Council strategies and plans has also influenced the recommendations. Possible changes to the wording in local policy to support local sustainable food systems have been proposed below (refer strike-through and blue text). However, planning schemes are dynamic and there can be no guarantee that the policy content that was reviewed here remains the same at time of reading.

Locally relevant documents:

Investigate the incorporation into the scheme of elements from the *Whittlesea GWMP 2011*. That said, this document is shortly due for review and there are opportunities to strengthen the support for the local food system and food security through the preparation of the new plan.

The [Land Capability Assessment Project](#) (web-based) was created out of a GWMP action and is a mapping system that investigates agricultural potential in response to climate change. The project (now complete) had the following objectives –

- To investigate agricultural potential in the rural north by understanding land capability now and in the future as climate changes
- To support innovative agricultural activity that fosters landscape diversity by offering tools to existing landholders and encouraging new agricultural entrepreneurs to the region.
- To unlock the economic potential based on local agriculture.

Since the audit was conducted, the City of Whittlesea has released its *Agribusiness Prospectus* which lists the Land Capability Assessment Project and additional major initiatives as follows:

Whittlesea Food and Farm Collective:

The Whittlesea Community Food and Farm Collective is a collaboration between the City of Whittlesea, Melbourne Polytechnic, Whittlesea Community Connections and Yarra Valley Water. The project will provide local agribusiness with insight into:

- Innovative farming options;
- The use of recycled water to enhance production;
- The benefits of diversification;
- Sustainable farming practices which achieve high productivity and promote biodiversity.

Regenerative Agriculture and its potential for enhancing climate resilience:

The City of Whittlesea partnered with Deakin University to consider the concept of regenerative agriculture and its potential to support transformative change of peri-urban agriculture for greater climate resilience. As part of this project, five best practice regenerative agriculture practitioners were interviewed, and a case study for each was developed. The findings from this project will be used to encourage sustainable farming practices and land restoration, which will result in long-term positive outcomes for agriculture and the environment.

There is clearly an intention by Council to support the diversification of agricultural practices and outputs. Currently, there is little existing agriculture-related local planning policy to work with so there are no recommendations for policy changes.