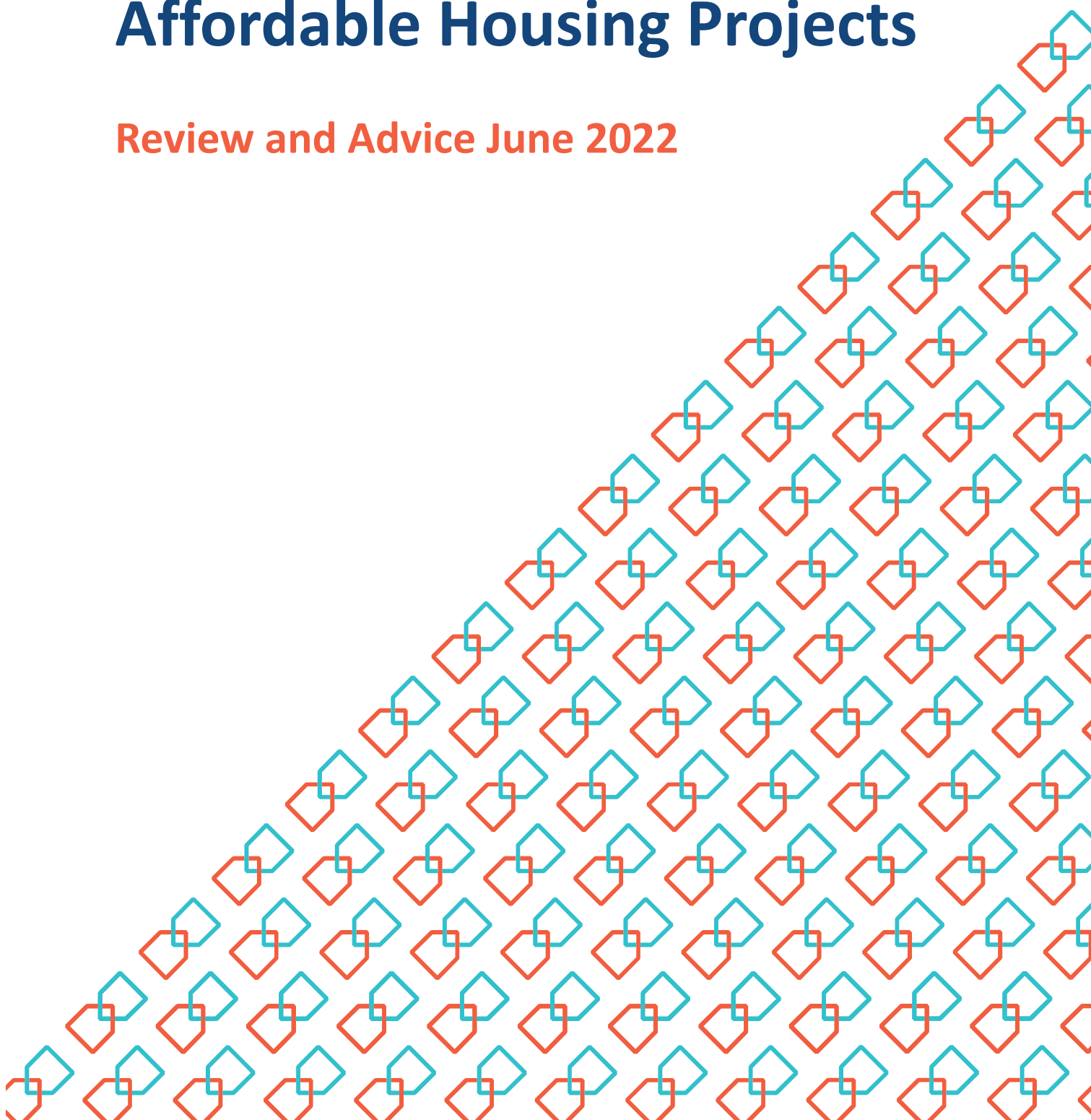


Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Projects

Review and Advice June 2022



Context

Purpose

Affordable Development Outcomes was engaged by Greater Shepparton Council ('Council') to review and comment on Council's Affordable Housing Strategy ('the Strategy') objectives and framework for Affordable Housing delivery; provide an update on Affordable Housing demand in Shepparton; and provide an informed response to key community concerns.

The advice draws on Affordable Development Outcome's work developing the Strategy which was adopted by Council in April 2020.

Affordable Housing Overview

Affordable Housing is housing that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low or moderate income households who face homelessness, housing stress and disadvantage in the private market.

Affordable Housing is required for a range of households and is part of a healthy and diverse housing spectrum.

The primary type of Affordable Housing is Social Housing, which is housing owned and managed by the State Government or not-for-profit housing organisations, including Indigenous housing agencies. Registered Housing Agencies are not-for-profit organisations and have a clear social purpose and are regulated by the government.

Delivery of Affordable Housing depends on the availability of affordable land, supportive planning processes, funding and financing, and qualified and regulated tenancy management (Figure 1). There are three primary ways in which Affordable Housing is delivered:



Figure 1: Affordable Housing Delivery requirements

Delivery Model	Key Inputs
Re-development of public or community housing owned land by the State Government or a Housing Agency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">State Government or Housing Agency owned landState Government grantHousing Agency debt financing
State Government or Housing Agency purchase of land to develop or completed dwellings from a private developer/builder.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Developer owner land sold to government or agencyDeveloper discountState Government grantHousing Agency debt financing
Development of Council owned land or land provided by a charity group (i.e. church) by a Housing Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Council or charity owned landState Government grantHousing agency debt finance

Funding Affordable Housing Delivery in Shepparton - Big Housing Build

Council's Strategy recognises the importance of government funding to realising Affordable Housing and established a Council action to advocate for Federal and State investment.

In late 2020 the Victorian Government announced the Big Housing Build (BHB) initiative comprising \$5.3 billion in funding with 25% allocated to regional Victoria. The State has committed a BHB Minimum Investment Guarantee for Greater Shepparton of \$45 million, expected to support approximately 150 Social Housing dwellings. Only part of the cost is met from the funding with Housing Agencies expected to bring land and/or debt financing to provide value for investment.

The State Government has expressed strong support for housing agency proposals that involve Council-provided land.



Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Strategy

Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Strategy: *Houses for People 2020* was developed following extensive research and consultation and established Council vision that “All members of the Greater Shepparton community have access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing”,

The Strategy emphasises:

- Housing is a fundamental human need. Addressing homelessness and housing stress requires a HousingFirst approach – supporting people into long-term and stable housing as a priority;
- Housing stress and homelessness is a significant social and economic issue in Greater Shepparton, with high demand and associated impacts including family violence, education, poverty, etc;
- Affordable Housing delivery is situated as part of a broader set of policy objectives and challenges including housing supply, diversity, CBD activation, and community health and wellbeing;
- Priority households include women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, older and younger people, people with a disability and single persons with a priority for one and two bedroom dwellings; and
- A need for range of inputs, funding and partnerships, particularly government funding to address demand.



The Strategy identified the following significant unmet demand for Social Housing in Shepparton as at June 2019:



Figure 2: Social Housing unmet demand as at 2019

The Strategy establishes four key Council objectives:

1. Increase crisis and specialised housing responses to support vulnerable households.
2. Increase Social Housing stock.
3. Increase diversity of housing choice, including ‘alternative’ housing and lifestyle typologies.
4. Increase diversity of dwelling size, beginning with one and two bedroom dwellings.

The Strategy recognises Council has a limited but important role in Affordable Housing delivery and highlights Council role will focus on leadership and advocacy; land-used planner, delivery of associated infrastructure; and facilitator of social and economic outcomes.

In endorsing the Strategy Council committed to a range of actions including:

- Collaborate to develop ‘shovel-ready’ proposals to strengthen the likelihood of government investment;
- Ensure the efficient use of underutilised assets for Affordable Housing purposes, especially Council or government-owned land and buildings;
- Advocate for Federal and State investment.



Framework for Assessing Proposed Affordable Housing developments

The Strategy established an important framework intended to guide land-use planning for Affordable Housing in Shepparton. The criterion set out in the framework aligns to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* Affordable Housing definition and list of matters that must be considered by a Council when assessing a proposal for Affordable Housing. An extract of key aspects of this framework is outlined below.

Of note, in relation to community concerns raised in relation to the two proposals, the framework identifies:

- A priority for Affordable Housing delivery to occur in Shepparton and Mooroopna, on government owned land (Federal, State and Local Government);
- A priority for Affordable Housing to be delivered as one and two bedroom dwellings;
- A preference that community (social) housing is integrated, with an objective that Community Housing is not concentrated in any one single location *“unless supported by a Registered Housing Agency”* reflecting Agencies have to manage the resulting tenancies; and
- Acknowledgement that *“clustering of Affordable Housing dwellings may be appropriate in some circumstances due to proximity to transport and/or availability of land or sites or government redevelopment or investment strategy.”*

Criteria	Strategy Response and Framework for Action (Condensed Version May 2022)
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepparton and Mooroopna are priority locations for Affordable Housing due to their convenient access to services and amenities. • Other locations in the municipality, including smaller towns and growth areas, may also be suitable for Affordable Housing provision, particularly if there is government owned land available for development. Where possible Affordable Housing should be located close to transport and services. • Government owned land is a priority for Affordable Housing reflecting the opportunity for government leadership and action. • Locations within the municipality that are identified as being suitable for growth and for more diverse and particularly smaller dwellings, reflecting the need for more one and two-bedroom dwellings.
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One and two-bedroom dwellings are the priority built-form. The need for increased 5+bedroom dwellings may be considered on a case-by- case basis. • Affordable Housing should be built to reflect market standards and measures, with consideration to long-term affordability features balanced against upfront costs.
Tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both affordable rental and ownership tenures are required, with emphasis on Social Housing and Affordable Rental Housing for lower income households.
Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process of ensuring any dwellings delivered as Affordable Housing are allocated to households that meet <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> Affordable Housing income bands or Social Housing income eligibility is required. • Priority households for Affordable Housing include single people, ATSI households, women, older people, people with a disability and/or younger people.
Longevity of outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Housing should be intended for long-term use or the value re-invested should the dwelling be sold. • Affordable Housing should be of sufficient quality to provide positive contribution to the public realm throughout its expected lifespan of 30+ years.
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Housing should not look externally different from market housing and should be equal in design quality and standards. • Integration of Community Housing built form across a site is prioritised, with an objective that Community Housing is not concentrated in any one single location unless supported by a Registered Housing Agency. • Clustering of Affordable Housing dwellings may be appropriate in some circumstances due to proximity to transport and/or availability of land or sites or government redevelopment or investment strategy.



Context and Changes since Strategy approval

Since the Strategy was developed Victorians have faced significant economic and social challenges that have strong linkages to the importance of housing affordability and housing security. There has also been significant public engagement and public attention on housing related issues.

Of note, since the Strategy was endorsed there has been:

- Covid-19 pandemic, reinforcing the importance of a safe and secure home for health and wellbeing with associated investment in providing short-term housing for people that were homeless;
- Declining housing affordability, increased housing stress, increased price of rentals and broader cost of living pressures;
- Royal Commissions into Family Violence and Mental Health emphasising the availability of affordable housing as a critical issue and priority if these issues are to be addressed;
- State Government investment in addressing homelessness and increasing Social Housing through the Homelessness to Home and the Big Housing Build initiatives;
- Federal election emphasis on housing affordability with the recently elected Labor Government committed to developing a National Housing Plan, funding 30,000 Social Housing and 10,000 Affordable Housing dwellings nationally and supporting 10,000 households to purchase a home per annum via a shared equity home ownership program;
- Increased engagement of Local Governments across Victoria in facilitating Affordable Housing through development of strategies, undertaking of planning negotiations and through direct support by providing land to registered housing agencies.

Updated analysis of key data since the Strategy was developed indicates that housing affordability has declined in Greater Shepparton since the Strategy was developed, with evidence showing:

- 40 per cent increase in the median housing price between 2010 to 2022 (Figure 2);
- 7 per cent decline in affordability of two-bedroom new private rental dwellings (2010 and 2022) (Figure 3);
- A 17 per cent increase in presentations to local homeless service over a 12 month period to 1,488 households in 2020-21. 66% clients were new to the service;¹ and
- An 80 per cent increase in households on the Social Housing waiting list (Victorian Housing Register) between December 2018 and June 2022 for the Goulburn (Shepparton) region (from 1,041 households to 1,674 households). 904 households are priorities for housing assistance;²

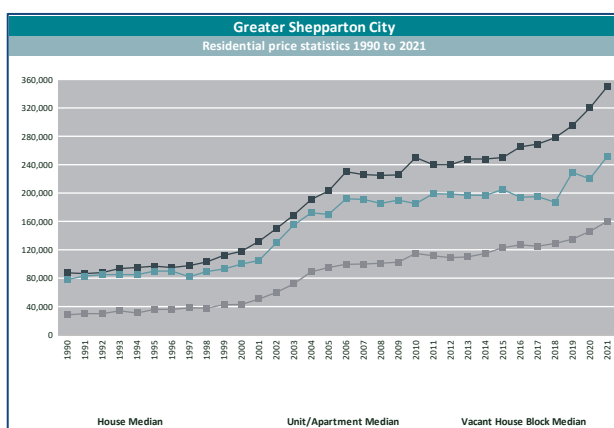


Figure 4: House, unit and residential land price change, Source: Source: Victorian Valuer General 2021

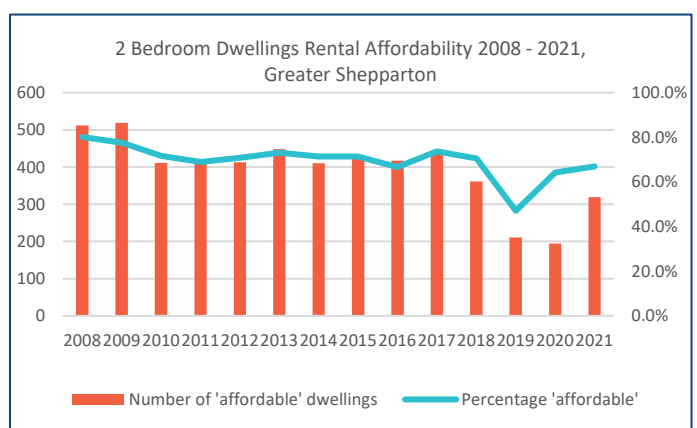


Figure 3: Change in availability of 2 Bedroom private rentals, Shepparton 2008 – 2021, Source: DHHS Rental Report, diagram by Affordable Development Outcomes

¹ BeyondHousing presentation to Greater Shepparton City Council (presenter 739)

² DFFH (2022) Victorian Housing Register, June 2022. Comparison with June 2018 data published in the Council Strategy, <https://www.housing.vic.gov.au/victorian-housing-register>



In addition to the significant increase in demand, analysis undertaken in May 2022 indicates there has been a decline in Social Housing in Greater Shepparton as a percentage of all housing from 5.74 per cent in 2016 to an estimated 5.4 per cent in 2019, with the decline expected to continue to drop to approximately 4.59% in 2024 even assuming the two proposals proceed:



Delivering Affordable Housing and Big Housing Build

Delivery of the Affordable Housing depends on:

- Access to affordable and appropriate land;
- Detailed design and planning approval;
- Government funding and low-cost financing.

The Big Housing Build aims to address part of the funding component. To receive funding a Housing Agency has to submit a detailed proposal and feasibility to the State Government under a defined funding round with applications competitively assessed.

The funding typically only covers up to 75 per cent of the total cost of the development. The Housing Agency needs to demonstrate value for the investment, experience in delivering and managing Social Housing and a financially sustainable model, for example, that includes allowance for maintenance over time.

Once funding is allocated a Housing Agency must deliver within agreed timeframes and no later than December 2025. Developments must meet a range of design, environmental and planning standards.

Project Proposals

The Strategy committed Council to explore the application of underutilised and available Council land for Affordable Housing in recognition that the provision of affordable land is critical to delivery and that this was one area Council could make a considerable input- creating opportunities for government investment as well as achieving housing supply and diversity objectives.

Two projects have been proposed that require the application of Council land:

Address	Current Use	Proponent	Proposed # Affordable Housing
Maude/Nixon and Edward Streets Car Park	Car park zoned Activity Centre	Beyond Housing and Wintringham Housing	31 (subject to planning and design)
Part of 45 Parkside Drive	Vacant land zoned General Residential	Women's Housing Ltd	45 (subject to planning and design)



Key Community Concerns

Public consultation on the question of whether Council should sell or gift the land resulted in a range of responses. Whilst there was general support for Social Housing expressed by many submitters, there was considerable number of concerns raised in relation to the location, use (tenancy groups), design and perceived concentration.

The responses are not uncommon when Social Housing is proposed and are suggested in part to reflect:

- Lack of general community engagement in a discussion about Affordable Housing delivery due to historic government underinvestment. Social Housing proposals have not been normalised in the community as part of every-day planning decisions;
- More active community engagement at the point proposals are made, rather than at strategic planning and policy development stages, for example when a Housing or Affordable Housing strategy is developed that sets objectives for an increase in Affordable Housing;
- Conflation of issues and concerns relating to design, planning etc rather than a focus on the question put to the community on whether Council should dispose of a land asset (or provide air rights);
- Limited community understanding about the process of funding and delivering Affordable Housing;
- Generally poor quality existing public housing reinforcing perceptions and stigma of this type of housing. This response does not reflect the new standards placed on community housing agencies;

It is important to note that vulnerable persons who might benefit the most from Social Housing do not generally self-nominate to participate in public consultations, with research demonstrating homeowners and older residents are over-represented in engagement on Social Housing proposals and are significantly more likely to oppose a Social Housing proposal relative to renters and younger people.³

Parkside Drive proposal

The proposal is for Women's Housing Ltd (WHL) to purchase a 'super-lot' of land from Council to enable the development by a standard residential builder of 45 free-standing dwellings.

The development is subject to design, funding and planning approval.

Part of the estate is developed with the remaining land zoned suitable for residential housing and owned by Council. This land has some service connections / infrastructure in place, with key infrastructure in the southern part of the site

The review identified:

- The site was identified by WHL after extensive assessment of land availability and suitability in Shepparton which concluded there are very limited opportunities and no sites of this scale that met their requirements. Many sites were subject to easements, flood risk, or were not appropriately zoned;
- WHL require a minimum number of tenancies (40 – 50) in order to establish a presence in



Figure 5: Parkside Estate with vacant land in red and proposed land sale in purple (subject to sale, design, funding and planning)

³ See for example community engagement report by City of Darebin (<https://yoursay.darebin.vic.gov.au/affordablehousingpreston>)

- Shepparton and put a local tenancy management team in place;
- WHL proposes to engage a market house-land builder to build the dwellings using standard market designs, fitting with the rest of the estate development;
- WHL focus housing women including single-parent families, older and younger women, and women that have experienced or at risk of family violence;
- WHL's experience indicates that supporting women with similar social experiences to live in proximity supports households to build community connections and supports, such as child-minding arrangements;
- It is not possible to 'salt-n-pepper' the 45 lots across the estate as there is no clear plan or activation of the remaining estate development. There are also efficiencies and benefits in WHL developing a super lot;
- Significant limitation on changing the proposal, for example, if other land in the estate could be developed to spread the dwellings across the estate, due to government funding program criteria and process;
- Subject to funding, WHL propose to make a financial payment to Council for the land.

Key community concerns and Affordable Development Outcomes analysis is summarised below.

It is noted there was resident support for community housing but responses to the specific question on whether the land should be sold for this purpose was mixed with responses in relation to potential design, development outcomes and tenant cohorts.

Key Item	Analysis and Response
Location suitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site is within an existing residential area and is rezoned as suitable for housing with planning controls in place to guide development. • Land is available and has key infrastructure in place to enable site development to commence quickly. • Site is immediately adjacent to open space and recreational facilities, 600 m to community centre, under 800 m from childcare, 2 km to primary school and local shops, 5 km from CBD. • Bus stop immediately adjacent to the site.
Perceptions of Concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development will deliver a proposed 45 new dwellings located in the southern part of a 159 lot estate development (subject to planning approval). • As a percentage of all dwellings in the estate, the housing will represent 28% of dwellings. As a percentage of all dwellings in Greater Shepparton it is estimated the housing will comprise 0.16% of all housing at point of construction completion (estimated 2024/25). • There is no identified 'ideal' mix of public/private housing by State or in the Council strategy. • The Strategy prioritises integration, sets an aspirational objective that Affordable Housing is not concentrated in any one single location, and notes that clustering of Affordable Housing dwellings may be appropriate in some circumstances due to proximity to transport and/or availability of land or sites or government redevelopment or investment strategy, or if "supported by a Registered Housing Agency" reflecting the Agencies may have practical reasons for clustering and have experience to determine the optimal mix and scale for any single location.
Tenant Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed resident groups are all recognised as Council priorities under the Strategy.



Maude / Nixon Street Proposal

The proposal comprises three parts:

- Replacement of the Council carpark with improved amenity (undercover) and resident parking;
- Development of one floor of 15 units to be owned and managed by Wintringham Community Housing, targeting older people; and
- Development of one floor of 16 units to be owned and managed by BeyondHousing and targeting a range of households from singles to families.



Any development is subject to design, funding and planning approval.

Engagement with the housing agencies highlighted:

- The site was identified after extensive assessment of land availability and suitability in Shepparton which concluded there are very limited opportunities and no sites of this scale that met the agency requirements and priority housing need. Many sites were subject to easements, flood risk, or were not appropriately zoned;
- The provision of the land will meet the Council objectives to support delivery of Social Housing and activate the CBD including with residential housing;
- The development will replace the car park which will remain under council ownership. Subject to design, minimal loss in carparking is expected.
- The Shepparton CBD Car Parking Strategy identified that across the CBD, car park utilisation is consistent across on-and off-street parking (58% and 52%) with overall utilisation of on-street parking is higher than off-street. The proposal is located in Area D (Figure 6) which has on average across the area a 66% utilisation rate.
- The site design is subject to plans that will be developed by Wintringham and BeyondHousing and that will need to be assessed by Council and approved by the State Government. Any development over 3-storeys is also subject to review by the Government Architect.

Figure: Utilisation @ 12 PM, Tuesday

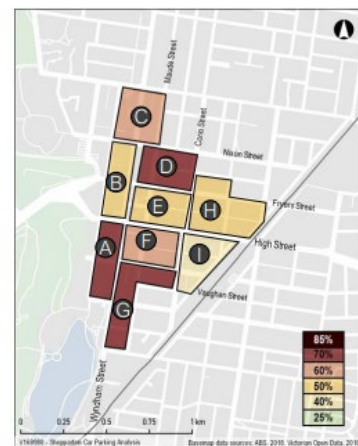


Figure 6: Car parking utilisation rate (12 pm)

Key community concerns and Affordable Development Analysis is summarised below. It is noted a number of residents also expressed support for community housing but as with the Parkside Drive proposal, the key question of whether the land should be sold was often overshadowed by concerns about the proposed use as Social Housing.

Key Item	Analysis and Response
Location suitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site is within the CBD, zoned for more intense development reflective of its status as the Activity Centre. • The site has very close walkable access to services, retail, green space, community facilities, medical facilities and education and training.
Perceptions of Concentration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development will deliver a proposed 31 new dwellings (subject to design, planning and funding). • As a percentage of all dwellings in Greater Shepparton, it is estimated the housing will comprise 0.11% of all housing at point of construction completion, plus replacement of the Council carpark. • There is no identified 'ideal' mix of public/private housing by State or in the Council strategy. • The Strategy prioritises integration, sets an aspirational objective that Affordable Housing is not concentrated in any one single location, and notes that clustering of Affordable Housing dwellings may be appropriate in some circumstances due to



Key Item	Analysis and Response
	proximity to transport and/or availability of land or sites or government redevelopment or investment strategy, or if “supported by a Registered Housing Agency” reflecting the Agencies may have practical reasons for clustering and have experience to determine the optimal mix and scale for any single location.
Tenant Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed resident groups are all recognised as Council priorities under the Strategy.
Design, including overlooking, safety, access, carparking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community concerns related to conceptual plans developed by Council not the Housing Agencies. The Housing Agency proposed design will be subject to ResCode requirements, planning controls and assessment of adjacent sites to ensure no in appropriate overshadowing or overlooking. Concerns such as overlooking can be addressed in design and planning controls.

Alternative Sites

Several objectors suggested the sites were not appropriate for Social Housing and that other land would be better located for this purpose.

An assessment of land supply and development opportunities including discussions with Homes Victoria, housing agencies, and an assessment of the recent Spatial Economics land supply report commissioned by Council indicates:

- Majority (80%) of development in Greater Shepparton occurs in greenfield estates with 77% of dwellings constructed in the last three years being for large blocks of 500 – 1000 sqm. These sites suit large 3 – 4 bedroom dwellings and require residents to have one or more cars to access services and jobs. This form of housing is not a priority for Social Housing, and whilst housing agencies might purchase a few dwellings in these estates subject to funding, they are unlikely to receive government support for significant numbers of dwellings in these locations;
- Only 32% of land capacity in Greater Shepparton is suitably zoned for residential housing and not all land is for sale. Many sites assessed as part of sourcing of land exercises identified that large lots suitable for medium density development had zoning, easement and/or flood risk issues.
- The Spatial Economics Report does not address undersupply of housing appropriate for lower income households. The Affordable Housing strategy identified a significant gap in the supply and availability of this form of housing relative to demand;
- Land must be available and able to be purchased at an affordable price in order to be feasible for a Housing Agency to develop; and
- There was only 34 one- and two-bedroom homes for sale on realestate.com in May 2022 with properties generally older, of low quality and accessibility, and poor environmental standard. State funding is also only available for new properties and these must meet accessibility, design and environmental performance standards.

The conclusion of this analysis is that there is very limited opportunities for development of new Affordable Housing in well-located areas of Greater Shepparton.

Concerns about Concentration

Several objectors raised concerns about what they perceived would be concentration of Social Housing on both sites.

Neither the State Government nor the Council Strategy establish a maximum number of Social Housings for any single area.

As noted, the Strategy sets objectives for integration and to see Social Housing delivered across Shepparton whilst also recognising that clustering may be appropriate due to the availability of land and housing agency requirements. Accordingly, each Housing Agency proposing development has considered the total number of dwellings proposed for



the respective sites and based on their experience has advised that they do not consider their proposals to be overly concentrated.

There is limited research and evidence as to what is an appropriate mix of market/affordable housing. Most studies focus on reduction of large scale public housing estates. In Victoria the State Government is reducing concentrations of Social Housing on very large high-rise estates from 100% of the specific site to between 10% and 50% of the site. These sites are situated within wider medium to low density neighbourhoods that overall have Social Housing comprising between approximately 5 – 10% of all housing in the local government area.

One study has found that *“...although areas with a concentration of disadvantaged people are often assumed to create adverse effects for residents, empirical research suggests that residents in disadvantaged places access support from family and friendship networks that are not restricted to place (Robinson 2011) and may in fact have certain advantages in terms of mutual support and practical assistance in ‘hard times’.”*⁴ WHL has indicated that this reflects their experience in other developments.

Another study found that *“in new public housing development there are many examples of innovative practice where good design, mixed tenure and layout options have been used to create more sustainable and socially diverse communities within which public rental housing is not identifiable.”* This study also identified that ways to address potential concentrations of poverty can include support for tenants; ways of working that involve a public, regular and/or constant presence by someone seen to be in charge; and other strategies that are less tenure-focused such as broader neighbourhood planning, support, capacity building for lower income residents.⁵

Consideration of what is ‘concentration’ depends on the scale the project is assessed against. The analysis highlights that as a percentage of all dwellings in Shepparton each proposal will represent a very minimal percentage – 0.11% to 0.16% of all housing in 2024/25, or 0.27% in total. It is also noted that each of the Affordable Housing proposals:

- Are situated in an area that is zoned as suitable for residential housing and in the case of the Maude / Nixon Street site, suitable for higher density development;
- Connect to existing housing in the area;
- Must be designed to meeting planning and zoning controls;
- Will be managed by Registered Housing Agencies that have experience and expertise in managing Social Housing tenancies.

A University of Sydney study *‘Finding the Right Mix in Public Housing Redevelopment: Review of Literature and Research Findings’* found that in an assessment of UK, USA and Australian research there was *“no ‘correct’ mix and that attention needs to be paid to concentration, composition and scale. This means that proposed tenure mix should take into consideration the likely composition of both public and private components of the community, both inside and beyond the boundary of the redevelopment site.”*

The study also noted recent US research that suggested that a mix of ages, incomes and family types amongst social housing tenants, and the delivery of other community programs, is more important than tenure mix in securing positive outcomes for lower income households.

Other factors to consider when assessing a proposal includes benefits associated with Social Housing which include:

- Reduced housing stress and housing costs, freeing up income for people to spend in the community and on critical services such as education and healthcare;
- Greater tenure security reducing general stress, improving household wellbeing and supporting people to make positive life choices such as to pursue education or work;
- Reduced health and correctional service costs;
- Improved educational benefits for children that are in safe and secure housing.

⁴ Pawson, H., Hulse, K. and Cheshire, L. (2015) Addressing concentrations of disadvantage in urban Australia, AHURI Final Report No.247. Melbourne, <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/publications/projects/myrp704>

⁵ Atkinson, R. (2008) Housing policies, social mix and community outcomes, AHURI Final Report No. 122, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/122>



Related to concerns about potential concentration of Social Housing where views on who would be housed.

It is emphasised that ‘who’ would be housed is not required to be considered in the disposal of Council land nor a criteria under the planning system, other than to note the proposal will deliver Social Housing, being legally defined as housing owned, managed or controlled by a registered housing agency or State housing authority.

Stigmatising of Social Housing residents can have a negative impact on households that require or live in Social Housing’s feelings of worth and acceptance in the community. The Strategy also notes there is no or limited evidence on whether Social Housing has a negative impact on crime or house prices.

It is subsequently not considered appropriate to respond to the concerns which lack evidence, noting as has occurred in another Council area that *“labelling people and groups in this way [‘undesirable’, ‘wrong kind of people’] is degrading and not respectful of their human dignity.”*⁶

Assessment

Parkside Drive

Affordable Development Outcome’s assessment of the Parkside Drive proposal is that the proposal has significant merit, aligns to the Council Affordable Housing Strategy objectives and framework for delivery, noting:

- Site is zoned and available for residential housing – Social Housing being one form of housing;
- The provision of land and attraction of government funding reflects Council’s strategy and committed actions;
- There are very limited options for WHL to develop a reasonable number of dwellings in Shepparton and therefore invest in establishing a presence in the region;
- As a percentage of all dwellings, the proposed Social Housing will have a minimal impact.
- For the 45 households that are supported there are expected to be significant social and economic benefits which will also have positive benefits for the wider community;
- The land is proposed to be purchased, providing a financial return to Council as well as the activation and progression of the estate development;
- WHL has extensive experiencing supporting the proposed cohort of residents and delivering award winning Social Housing.

The proposal raises a question as to how the rest of the site will be developed as development of the rest of the site will further reduce the potential stigma associated with the WHL development. This is recommended as an opportunity for Council to determine its plan to progress the sale and development of the remaining lots in a timely manner.

Maude Street/Nixon Street carpark

Affordable Development Outcome’s assessment of the Parkside Drive proposal is that the Site is zoned and available for residential development and is therefore suitable for Social Housing.

Furthermore it is our advice and opinion that:

- The provision of land and attraction of government funding is in line with Council’s strategy and committed actions;
- There are very limited opportunities to utilise Council land and deliver Social Housing dwellings in the CBD area in an efficient and cost effective way;
- The Agencies are delivering Social Housing in other developments across Shepparton which when combined will support a diversity of housing types and locational responses;
- The units will be targeted to a range of households in need that will suit and accept apartment-style living – households are given an option to tenant and are not forced to move into the development;

⁶ City of Darebin Townhall Avenue Social Housing proposal consultation



- The BeyondHousing and Wintringham owned apartments will be separately entranced and managed – effectively two smaller scale Social Housing developments on the site. Both agencies have significant experience in managing Social Housing for a diversity of households including older persons, people with a disability, younger people and women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.
- Both agencies have a strong presence in the Greater Shepparton area and have established links to wrap-around support services that they can connect tenants to as necessary;
- Part of the expected height is in response to the requirement to replace the public car park and an expected need to provide some resident car parking;
- The proposal is subject to the Agencies submitting a design for planning approval. This will require further community consultation, review by Council and consideration by government. Any development of Social Housing over 3-storeys must also be reviewed by the Victorian Government architect. Key community concerns are expected to be able to be addressed through the design response and planning controls.

Summary

The Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Strategy was developed after extensive research and consultation and highlighted the significant and growing demand for Social Housing in Greater Shepparton, with high rates of homelessness and housing stress.

The Strategy affirmed Council’s vision that adequate housing is a basic human right and the foundation on which the region’s liveability, health and wellbeing, productivity, and community participation is built.

The Strategy recognised, and placed at its centre, the need for a ‘HousingFirst’ response to address demand and issues of homelessness. To achieve this objective requires sufficient supply of quality and long-term Affordable Housing, particularly Social Housing.

The Council is commended on its progress in implementing the Strategy actions to assess Council land opportunities and advocate for State Government funding. The minimum investment guarantee of \$45 m is a significant financial contribution that will be further leveraged by the provision of land and the Housing Agency’s contributions. The Strategy notes that there is an estimated economic return of \$3 for every \$1 in Social Housing with non-financial benefits related to health, well-being, community resilience and participation.

As recognised by the Strategy, the delivery of Affordable Housing requires several inputs, of which access to affordable and appropriately priced and sized land is critical. The review concludes that the sites are both suitable for Social Housing and are not overly concentrated when considered in light of overall supply of Social Housing and the site contexts. Council support to release the land for Social Housing is recommended.

