

# PLAN HARCOURT

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS SHEET 1 - GENERAL FAQ'S

### What is Planning Scheme Amendment C94malx?

A 'Planning Scheme Amendment' is a type of strategic planning project that 'amends' the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme (i.e. making updates or changes to it), usually by updating planning policy, or rezoning areas of land, or updating overlay controls such as heritage overlays or character overlays.

'C94malx' is just the name and number assigned to this particular Amendment by the State Planning Department.

Amendment C94malx seeks to amend the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme to implement recommendations made in 'Plan Harcourt', specifically the Harcourt Framework Plan.

Plan Harcourt, 2020



Plan Harcourt is a Council document that explores spatial land use planning, town centre design and activation, and local economic development initiatives.

Plan Harcourt was adopted by Council at the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 21 July 2020. Once it was adopted, the Strategic Planning team could then commence the process that seeks to amend the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme (a Planning Scheme Amendment) in order to introduce the new policies, zones and overlay controls for Harcourt, to ensure the recommendations made within Plan Harcourt, find their way into the Planning Scheme. Should the planning scheme amendment be approved, future development in Harcourt has to respond to the planning controls that have been created by Planning Scheme Amendment C94malx, which came about from community aspirations shared during the preparation of Plan Harcourt.

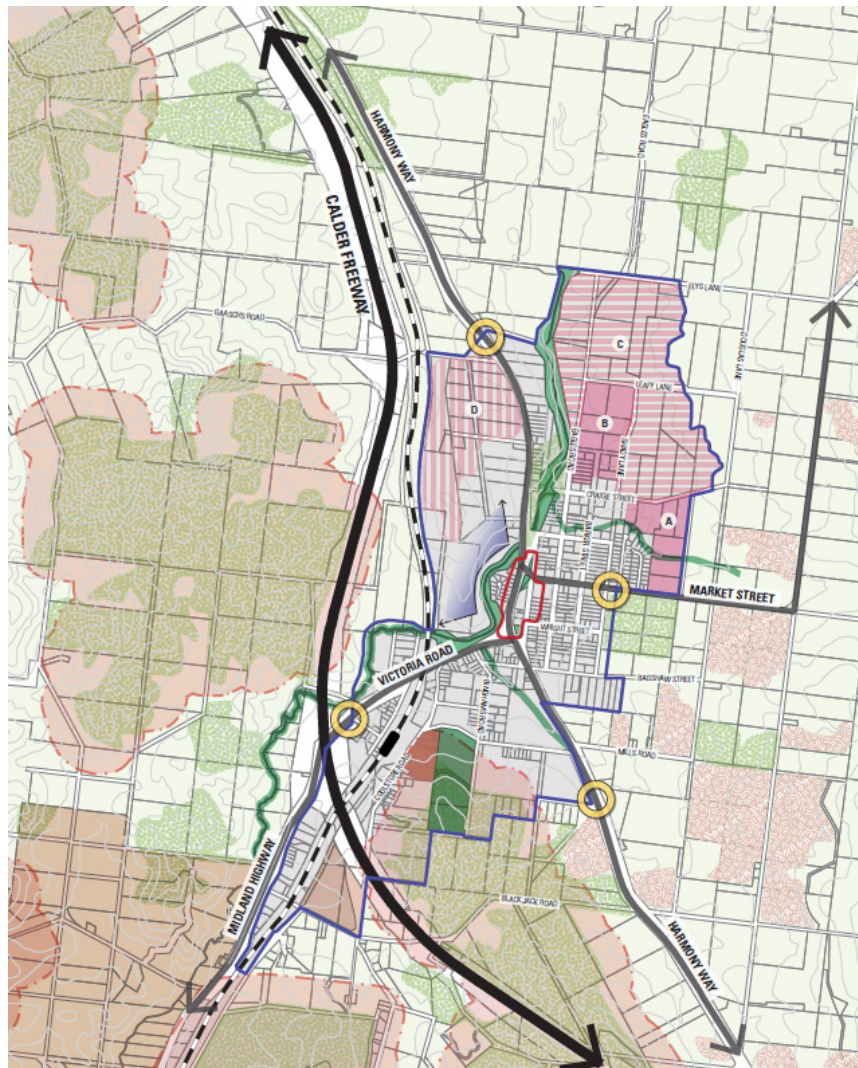
Within Plan Harcourt is the 'Harcourt Framework plan', which is the focus of Amendment C94malx.

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### What is the Harcourt Framework Plan?

The Harcourt Framework Plan (below image) sets the overarching strategic plan for Harcourt as it relates to zoning and future town expansion areas. It notes the location of the new township boundary, bushfire overlays, and the location of the town centre. It is a graphical representation of the long term strategic plan for Harcourt's growth over time.



#### Legend

- Township Boundary
- Town Centre
- Freeway
- Main Roads
- Train Station
- Rail Corridor

- Township Entrance
- Retain hillslope and landscape background to Town Centre
- Rural Living Zone (RLZ)
- Industrial Land
- Public Open Space
- Bushfire Management Overlay

- Future Town Expansion Areas A and B
- Future Town Expansion Area C
- Future Town Expansion Area D
- Existing Canopy Vegetation
- Existing Horticultural Land

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### What is the Harcourt Framework Plan?

The Harcourt Framework Plan was prepared using a place-based approach. This means that there has been a focus on understanding Harcourt's distinctive place values and features, and leveraging off those to determine an appropriate growth trajectory. This approach has involved listening to community members who live, work and play in Harcourt to understand their needs and aspirations; deep observational research by the Strategic Planning unit to study and understand the built form, heritage, movement patterns and important nodes and landmarks in the township, and analysis of the development context with respect to existing planning policy and pressures on the planning system.

The research and engagement has been comprehensive, and the resulting planning scheme amendment C94malx will ensure that growth and change builds on the town's existing character and fabric, and will positively contribute to a strengthened sense of, and connection to, place. An ecological framework tailored to spatial planning projects in the Mount Alexander Shire underpins the place-based method and recognises five interrelated factors that sit at the heart of a place.



Through the recognition of these interrelated factors, the proposed planning controls in Planning Scheme Amendment C94malx have been based around five key themes that were identified through community engagement in Harcourt.

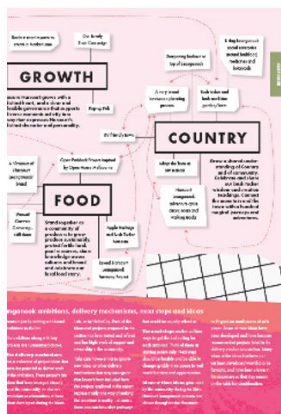


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### How does the amendment relate to Shine Harcourt?

The ambitions of Shine Harcourt Leanganook that relate to strategic land use planning and urban design have been considered in the preparation of the Planning Scheme Amendment, however not all recommendations have been included for a number of reasons. For example, the Victorian State Government has specific policies that allow only certain types of content to be incorporated into a planning scheme.



While the two projects have been undertaken utilising different methodologies, the overall directions are harmonised in one single document titled Plan Harcourt. The Plan finds that:

- Sustainable growth in Harcourt is achievable and desirable;
- That local place values and attributes can form the basis for new growth;
- Town centre activation can improve the sense of place and drive visitation and investment;
- Natural assets can be leveraged to attract capital investment;
- Tourism and visitation remain vital to future prosperity and sense of identity; and
- Local capacity can drive partnerships and projects at the community level.

A Relational Map at Appendix 2 of Plan Harcourt demonstrates the conceptual and strategic linkages between the Harcourt Framework Plan and Shine Harcourt Leanganook. The purpose of the Relational Map is to recognise the broad range of specific policy directions, spatial planning and economic development program concepts, and community-level initiatives identified through research and engagement, and how they are conceptually linked in a unified Plan Harcourt.

The Relational Map includes a selection of key projects identified through the development of the Harcourt Framework Plan and Shine Harcourt Leanganook, organised around Council's role as either:

- **Lead:** Projects under the direct auspice of Council as regulatory and/or funding body, which have an established implementation pathway, i.e. amendments to the Planning Scheme and capital works projects.
- **Partner:** Projects which require additional investigation, planning and possible co-funding between Council, State and Federal governments, and delivery with community partners, i.e. public art initiatives focused on the town centre and entrance points.
- **Advocate:** Projects that may be instigated by the community at any point in time, with or without Council involvement, which will contribute to the overall vitality and strength of the community.



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### Why is Planning Scheme Amendment C94malx needed?

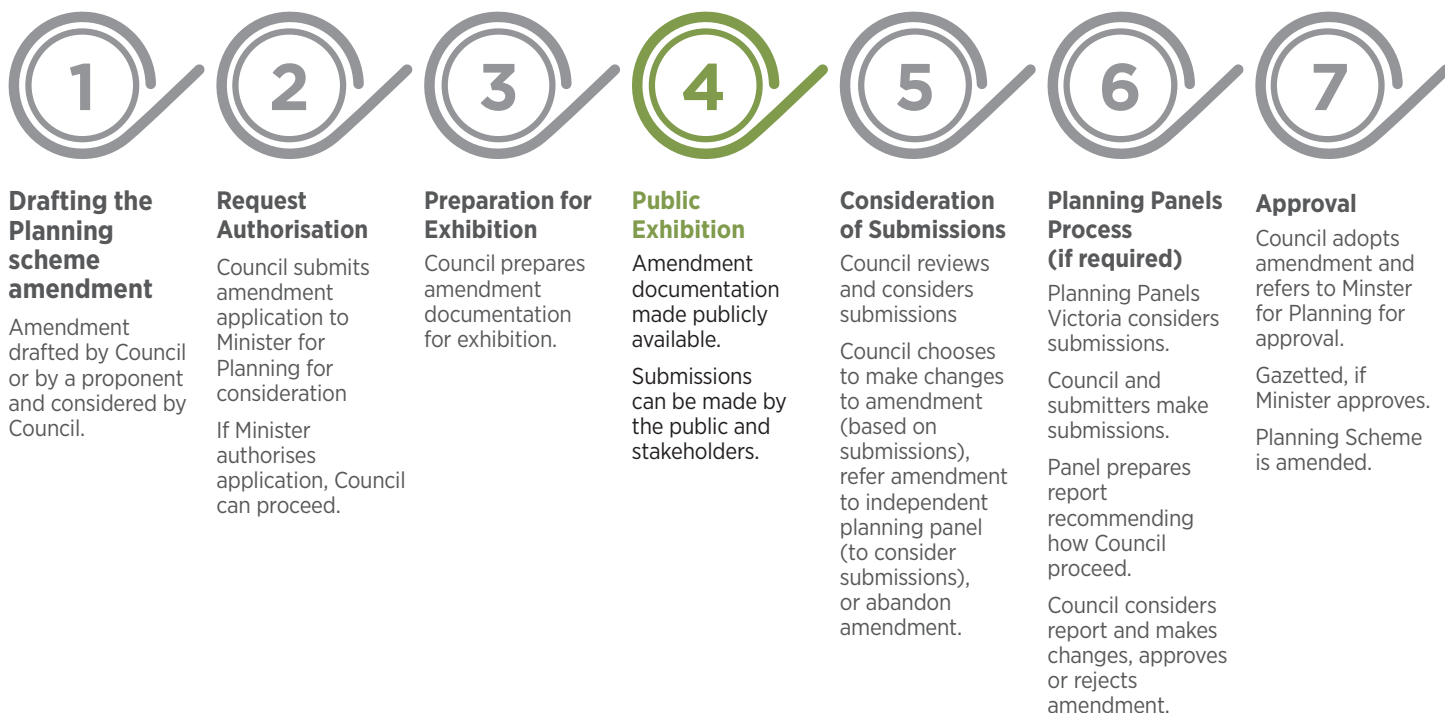
Harcourt has been identified as a small town that can accommodate planned growth in the region. This is recognised in the Loddon Mallee South Regional Growth Plan 2014 and in the Mount Alexander Planning Scheme.

The work completed by Council and the community to develop Plan Harcourt has in turn provided the basis for the planning controls proposed in Amendment C94malx. The planning controls proposed in Amendment C94malx acknowledge that any future growth and change in Harcourt needs to be carefully planned to promote and preserve local place values, and recognise the highly productive agricultural operations around the town. Furthermore, plans for growth in Harcourt should ensure that provisions are made for appropriate infrastructure, and that the existing natural and cultural features of the area are maintained for the benefit of future residents.



### What stage of the planning scheme amendment process are we at?

As part of the Planning Scheme Amendment process, a formal public exhibition period will occur from 11 January 2022 to 6 March 2022. The timeline below illustrates that we are now entering into this step in the process, Step 4 - Public Exhibition.



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The public exhibition period provides the community, key stakeholders and government agencies the opportunity to view the planning scheme amendment documentation and the proposed planning controls. During this time, the community, key stakeholders and government agencies may make a submission for or against the amendment if they so wish. Further information on how to make a submission is provided below.

### Information Sessions

#### Drop in Sessions

During the public exhibition period (from 11 January to 6 March 2022), Council will be visiting the Harcourt community and undertaking 'drop in' sessions (subject to COVID-19 restrictions) at the following times and locations.

- Friday 28 January 2022  
4pm to 7pm at the ANA Hall, Harcourt
- Tuesday 15 February 2022  
4pm to 7pm at the ANA Hall, Harcourt
- Tuesday 1 March 2022  
4pm to 7pm at the ANA Hall, Harcourt

To register for drop in sessions, please contact the Strategic Planning team via email at [strategicplanning@mountalexander.vic.gov.au](mailto:strategicplanning@mountalexander.vic.gov.au) or call **5471 1700**.

#### Online Information Sessions (Covid-19 safe)

Should Covid-19 restrictions make the abovementioned drop in sessions impossible, we will facilitate online information sessions.

To register for online information sessions, please contact the Strategic Planning team via email at [strategicplanning@mountalexander.vic.gov.au](mailto:strategicplanning@mountalexander.vic.gov.au) or call **5471 1700**.

To access the planning scheme amendment documentation visit Council's Plan Harcourt webpage [www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/PlanHarcourt](http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/PlanHarcourt).



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### How can I make a submission?

Firstly, please read the Planning Scheme Amendment C94malx documentation on Council's website. If you have any questions or would like to chat to us in person or over the phone, please check the dates for our community drop-in sessions in Harcourt, or contact us to arrange an alternative time. All submissions are treated as public documents.

Any person who is affected by the amendment may make a written submission in relation to any part of the proposed amendment. Submissions must be made in writing via email

[strategicplanning@mountalexander.vic.gov.au](mailto:strategicplanning@mountalexander.vic.gov.au) or mail Strategic Planning Mount Alexander Shire Council, PO Box 185, Castlemaine VIC 3450. You can make a submission from now up until Monday 7 March 2022.

You can make a submission that either:

- Supports the amendment.
- Opposes the amendment.
- Supports the amendment but recommends changes be made to parts of the amendment.

After the public exhibition period Council must consider all submissions received. If the matters raised within the submissions cannot be resolved, Council must appoint an independent planning panel to review and consider the outstanding issues. The Planning Panel is to provide recommendations to Council about the amendment, which may lead to changes to the amendment. Council then considers the amendment for adoption and refers it to the Minister for Planning for approval.

### What consultation with the community has occurred up until now?

A discussion paper was released for public comment in November 2018. Following this, Council undertook a range of community activities to inform and engage the Harcourt community in discussions about spatial planning, residential and commercial growth and town centre activation. This included two launch events at the Harcourt Bowls Club and Goldfields Track Cafe; drop-in sessions around Harcourt; surveys; an online interactive map that allowed users to share their ideas for Harcourt; a workshop with Grade 5/6 students at Harcourt Valley Primary School; a meeting with Nalderun, and meetings and conversations with community groups, government agencies, and referral authorities.

A 'What We Heard paper' was released in April 2019, summarising feedback from the community and stakeholders. This paper was specifically discussed with the Executive and Council at briefings in March 2019, prior to the paper being publicly released.

The final draft Plan Harcourt was released for public consultation in November 2019. Two community drop-in sessions were held in Harcourt in November and December 2019, and the project team was also available to talk about the plan at the Harcourt Twilight Market in November 2019.

The community engagement activities undertaken for the preparation of Shine Harcourt during 2019 also informed the final Plan Harcourt and this planning scheme amendment.





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### What are the next steps in the Planning Scheme Amendment process?

Once the public exhibition period finishes, the planning scheme amendment process follows one of two potential scenarios.

One scenario is that Council receives submissions from the community during the exhibition period. In this scenario, Council reviews and considers the submissions received at a Council meeting. If the submissions cannot be resolved (through changes to the planning scheme amendment), then an independent planning panel will be required to review the submissions (appointed through Planning Panels Victoria). While appointing a planning panel adds additional costs and time (approximately six months) to the amendment process, it provides submitters and Council with a robust and independent expert view of any unresolved submissions. After this process, Council can consider whether or not to finalise the amendment or abandon it.

The other scenario is that Council receives submissions from the community during the exhibition period but that these are resolved, or perhaps no submissions are received at all. In this scenario, Council can decide to progress the amendment to approval at their Council meeting, then the amendment is gazetted by the Minister for Planning and the Planning Scheme is successfully updated with the new policy, zones and overlays for Harcourt.

### Any other question not answered here?

Please see the other fact sheets specifically for existing residents, businesses and horticultural producers, visit [www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/PlanHarcourt](http://www.mountalexander.vic.gov.au/PlanHarcourt) or contact Strategic Planning by email [info@mountalexander.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@mountalexander.vic.gov.au) or phone (03) 5471 1700.





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Importantly, the Relational Map is not an implementation plan – particularly as the Map only displays a selection of potential projects. It is deliberately

non-sequential and non-hierarchical and all projects shown on the map are considered equally valid and consequential to the community.

The Relational Map includes a selection of key projects identified through the development of the Harcourt Framework Plan and Shine Harcourt Leanganook, organised around Council's role as either:

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