

Greater Geelong Planning Scheme

Amendment C457ggee

Explanatory Report

Overview

The amendment proposes to implement the *Highton Village Urban Design Framework January 2024 (Highton UDF)* into the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme.

The amendment does this by rezoning land at 19 Belle Vue Avenue, 1A Taylor Court, the road reserves of Belle Vue Avenue, part of Taylor Court and the laneway east of Belle Vue Avenue, Highton from General Residential Zone 4 (GRZ4) to Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z), introducing a new planning policy, applying a Design and Development Overlay (DDO) to the commercially zoned extent of the Centre, and introducing the Highton UDF as a Background Document.

Where you may inspect this amendment

The amendment can be inspected free of charge at:

- City of Greater Geelong's website at www.geelongcity.vic.gov.au
- By appointment only during office hours at City of Greater Geelong, Wurriki Nyal, 137-149 Mercer Street, Geelong – Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm.
- Department of Transport and Planning website at <http://www.planning.vic.gov.au/public-inspection> or by contacting the office on 1800 789 386 to arrange a time to view the amendment documentation.

Submissions

Any person may make a submission to the planning authority about the amendment. Submissions about the amendment must be received by Monday 9 December 2024.

A submission must be sent to:

The Coordinator
Strategic Implementation Unit
City of Greater Geelong
P O Box 104,
Geelong VIC 3220; or

- by email to amendments@geelongcity.vic.gov.au or

- lodged online at www.geelongaustralia.com.au/amendments

Panel hearing dates

In accordance with clause 4(2) of Ministerial Direction No.15 the following panel hearing dates have been set for this amendment:

- directions hearing: In the week commencing 31 March, 2025.
- panel hearing: In the week commencing 5 May, 2025.

Details of the amendment

Who is the planning authority?

The amendment has been prepared by the Greater Geelong City Council, which is the planning authority for this amendment.

The amendment has been made at the request of Greater Geelong City Council.

Land affected by the amendment

The amendment applies to land within the Highton Village Shopping Centre as shown in Figure 1.

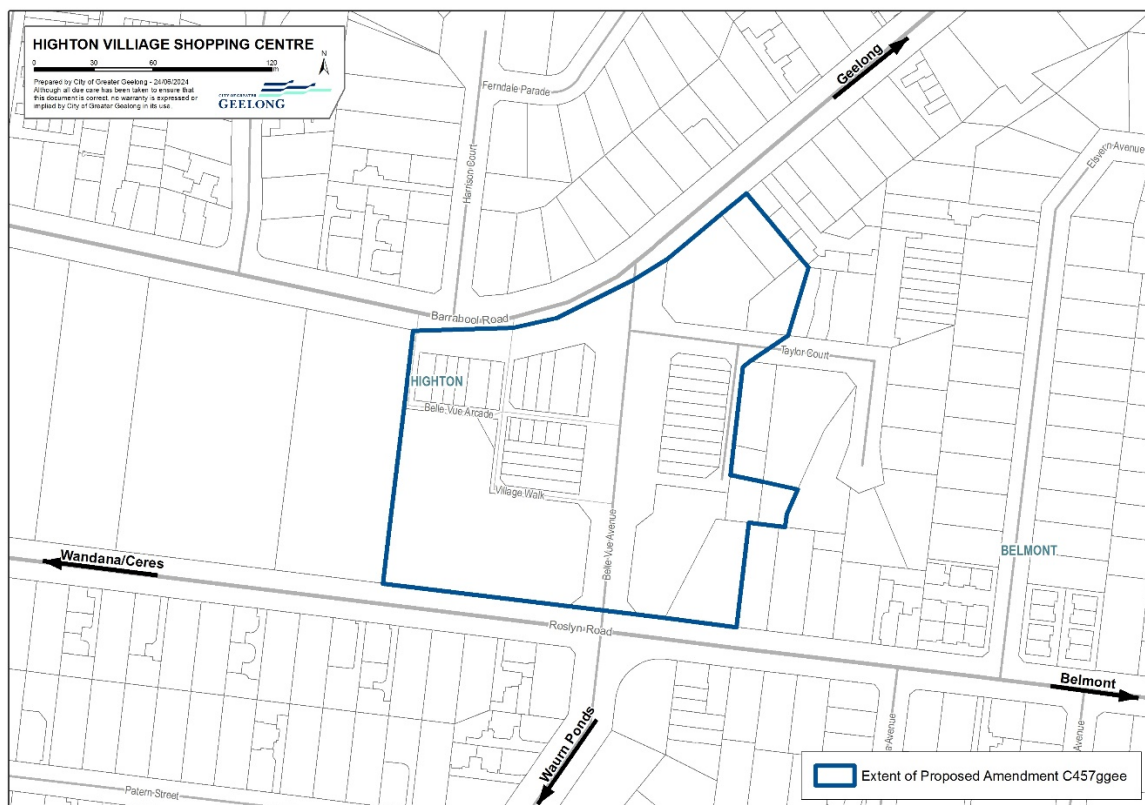


Figure 1 – Land affected by the proposed amendment

A mapping reference table providing further information about the land affected by this amendment is attached at Attachment 1 to this Explanatory Report.

What the amendment does

The amendment seeks to implement the Highton Village UDF into the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme by introducing new planning policy, rezoning land in the Highton Village Shopping Centre to Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z), applying the Design and Development Overlay Schedule 52 (DDO52) and introducing the Highton Village

UDF as a Background Document.

Specifically, the amendment makes the following changes:

Zoning Maps

- Amends Planning Scheme Map No. 52 to rezone two Council-owned car parks at 19 Belle Vue Avenue and 1A Taylor Court, Highton and the road reserves from General Residential Zone 4 (GRZ4) to Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z).

Overlay Maps

- Amends Planning Scheme Map No. 52DDO to apply the Design and Development Overlay Schedule 52 (DDO52) to all land within the Highton Village Shopping Centre.

Planning Scheme Ordinance

- Inserts Clause 16.01-2L (Social and affordable housing) into the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme to facilitate the delivery of affordable housing in line with State and Regional Policy.
- Inserts Schedule 52 to Clause 43.02 Design and Development Overlay.
- Amends the Schedule to Clause 72.08 (Background Documents) to insert the Highton Village Urban Design Framework (January 2024) as a Background Document.

Strategic assessment of the amendment

Why is the amendment required?

Highton Village is one of twenty-four neighbourhood activity centres across Greater Geelong, with the broader suburb of Highton-Wandana Heights-Ceres home to an estimated 21,244 residents (ABS census 2016).

Highton Village is located 5km from Central Geelong on Barrabool Road, which is the primary movement corridor between Central Geelong, the Barwon River, and the Geelong Ring Road. Roslyn Road to the south provides access to Belmont's High Street 1.5km to the east.

Highton Village is a thriving centre that plays a local day-to-day retail and hospitality role within Highton. As the much larger centres of Waurn Ponds and Belmont cover the wider catchment, Highton will continue to serve a local, neighbourhood centre role. The Centre currently comprises 7,000sqm retail floor space with a mix of unique and independent stores offering the opportunity to continue to capitalise on the trend in retailing and consumer behaviour to seek 'experiences' rather than just a marketplace for goods and services. The Geelong Retail Strategy identifies the need for an additional 1,000sqm of floorspace in the Highton Village by 2031 to meet the shopping needs of the community. The Highton UDF identifies where this additional floorspace could be provided.

The Highton Village UDF sets out the preferred development outcomes and requirements for building heights, setbacks, and other design considerations for development within the activity centre. These requirements are supported by analysis and guided by sound urban design principles appropriate to the context of the centre.

The Highton Village UDF has identified two parcels of Council owned land contained within the shopping centre and which are used and will largely be retained for car parking use within the centre. Alike other retail centres across the municipality such as Pakington Street in Geelong West and Newtown, it is appropriate to include these sites within the same C1Z as the balance of the centre. The use and future of these properties better aligns with the purpose of the C1Z than the current GRZ4. The northern portion of the 19 Belle Vue Avenue site car park is identified in the Highton Village UDF as a key development site, although there is no current redevelopment plan for the land. The amendment also rezones the road reservations of Belle Vue Avenue, part of Taylor Court, and the laneway to the east of Belle Vue Avenue to C1Z.

How does the amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

The amendment gives effect to and is consistent with the following objectives of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*:

(a) To provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and the development of land.

This amendment will achieve this by implementing a well-planned framework and requirements for development in the commercial centre of Highton that addresses the needs of the existing and future community of Highton.

(b) To secure a pleasant, efficient, and safe working, living and recreation environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria.

The amendment introduces new development provisions for the centre to create a place where the community can live, work, and play safely. The new provisions will guide future growth and development of the centre to enhance the current feel and experience.

(c) To balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

The DDO52 seeks to ensure that new development is compatible with the village atmosphere of the centre whilst providing for the future growth that is required to provide more floorspace.

How does the amendment address any environmental, social and economic effects?

Environmental Effects

The amendment is expected to have a positive impact on the environment by

ensuring that new development is responsive to the local context and providing built form controls that will guide new and infill development.

The UDF features “*retain and enhance the tree canopy and greenery of the Village*”, “*encourage Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) in the architecture and design of buildings and public spaces*”, and “*improve pedestrian and cyclist safety and amenity when designing new streets and buildings*” as some of its core urban design guiding principles. These have important environmental benefits for the Highton community.

A component of this amendment involves the rezoning from GRZ4 to C1Z of Council-owned land which is currently used as Council provided car parks for the shopping centre (1ATaylor Court and 19 Belle Vue Avenue). A ‘sensitive use’, ‘children’s playground’ and ‘secondary school’ are all allowed for in the current GRZ4 as well as in the proposed C1Z.

Council followed the 4-step process outlined in the *Summary Guide for Planning for potentially contaminated land* to consider if the land may be potentially contaminated, triggering the requirements of Ministerial Directions 1 and 9.

Both sites proposed for rezoning have been used as sealed car parks for the shopping centre for over 30 years. Car parking is not a land use identified in the Planning Practice Note 30 (PPN30) as a high or medium potentially contaminating land use. Surrounding uses to these two sites include retail, hospitality and residential all of which are unlikely to have a detrimental or contaminating effect on the land. An Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) does not apply to the proposed rezoning sites or to any of the surrounding commercial or residential areas. There is no recorded environmental audit for either site. A former service station operated at 65-71 Barrabool Road, Highton, adjoining 1ATaylor Court, until 2002 when a planning permit was issued for an office and retail complex. Environmental Health Australia (EHS) Pty Ltd undertook an environmental site assessment following removal of underground storage tanks at this site concluding that the site was suitable for commercial use, with limited soil contamination detected, contaminated soil removed and conclusions that the groundwater status of the site was unlikely to transport isolated spill off-site.

Based on the analysis of the history, available information and local circumstances, the land proposed for rezoning is not affected by the potentially contaminated land (PCL) provisions. These rezoning from GRZ4 to C1Z does not change the sensitive uses, children’s playgrounds or secondary schools that are allowed either as of right or by a planning permit. The 1A Taylor Court site is encumbered by a Section 173 Agreement on title requiring the land to continue to be used for car parking associated with nearby retail premises. An additional measure of oversight is that the City is the owner of these properties and has control over any future proposals for 19 Belle Vue Avenue through its landowner status and responsibilities and obligations when selling land.

Social

The amendment provides direction to the local community about the future development parameters and growth of the centre. Implementing the Highton UDF

will ensure that excellent design and built form outcomes are to be achieved in any new development of the centre.

Improvements to the public realm of the Highton Village Shopping Centre through encouraging active frontages and improving pedestrian and cycling amenities will also lead to positive social effects and outcomes for customers, staff, and the wider community.

The City undertook five phases of community consultation on the Highton Village Shopping Centre between 2016 and 2021. This ranged from in-person workshops to on-line survey/submissions and input from external stakeholders. The UDF has responded to this consultation and is implementing the community aspirations for this neighbourhood activity centre.

The amendment will generate positive social benefits by increasing affordable and social housing diversity in Highton Village.

Economic

The amendment will guide the future development of the centre as it grows to accommodate additional floorspace. This will benefit the needs of the local community and provide continued access to the daily retail and services sought by residents. Additional growth of the centre will also increase local job availability.

Does the amendment address relevant bushfire risk?

Highton Village and the surrounding built residential area is not located in an area of identified bushfire risk. The location is also remote from the Barwon River corridor.

Does the amendment comply with the requirements of any other Minister's Direction applicable to the amendment?

Ministerial Direction – The Form and Content of Planning Schemes

All schedules and consequential changes to local planning provisions in the amendment have been prepared in accordance with applicable style guides, formatting and layout as specified in the Ministerial Direction - The Form and Content of Planning Schemes.

Ministerial Direction No.1 – Potentially Contaminated Land

An analysis of the history, available information and local circumstances of the land proposed for rezoning in this amendment, has deemed that it is not affected by the PCL provisions.

Ministerial Direction No. 11 – Strategic Assessment of Amendments

This explanatory report has been prepared in accordance with the strategic assessment requirements. This amendment complies with Ministerial Direction No. 11 Strategic Assessment of amendments under section 12 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. The amendment is consistent with this direction which

ensures a comprehensive strategic evaluation of a planning scheme amendment and the outcomes it produces.

Ministerial Direction No. 15 – Planning Scheme Amendment Process

This planning scheme amendment has been prepared in accordance with this direction.

How does the amendment support or implement the Planning Policy Framework and any adopted State policy?

The amendment is consistent with the following clauses of the Planning Policy Framework and will assist in achieving their intent:

11.03-1S Activity Centres – this clause seeks to encourage the concentration of major retail, commercial, residential, administrative, entertainment and cultural developments into activity centres that are accessible to the community.

The amendment applies to the land in the commercial areas of the Highton Village Shopping Centre. It proposes to rezone current commercial car parks to the C1Z and the adjoining road reserves in Belle Vue Avenue and part of Taylor Court and the abutting laneway to the east.

11.03-1L Activity Centres – this Clause supports the role and function and the continued diversification over time of centres in the Geelong Retail Centre hierarchy. It seeks to achieve this through several strategies including encouraging a mix of uses, supporting accommodation uses above ground floor level, encouraging redevelopment of car parking areas for commercial and residential uses, supporting increased intensity and vertical growth of centres, and encouraging development that supports a diversity of retail forms.

This amendment introduces a new DDO52 to provide guidance on built form that can accommodate above-ground floor level accommodation, allows development to support active uses along ground floor frontages and contains development opportunities to support maintaining the neighbourhood centre level role within the retail hierarchy.

The Highton Village UDF has identified a key redevelopment site at the northern end of the 19 Belle Vue Avenue car park. This offers a long-term opportunity to provide a 'book end' development to the existing shops. Any new development of this site should address both Belle Vue Avenue and the car park and would accommodate a mix of uses. There is no current planned development for this site.

Clause 13.04-1S Contaminated and potentially contaminated land – seeks to ensure that contaminated and potentially contaminated land (PCL) is used and developed safely.

An analysis of the history, available information and local circumstances of the land proposed for rezoning in this amendment, the land would not be affected by the PCL provisions.

15.01-1S Urban design – this Clause seeks to create urban environments that are safe, healthy, functional, and enjoyable and that contribute to a sense of place and

cultural identity. It does so by requiring development to respond to its context in terms of character, cultural identity, surrounding landscape and climate.

This amendment reinforces this aim of the Clause by including built form provisions that respect the low-rise nature of the Centre, prioritising a pedestrian friendly environment, the inclusion of landscaping and sensitivities towards the surrounding built residential areas.

15.01-1L-01 Development in activity centres - includes strategies to ensure development respects adjacent sensitive land uses, provides visually interesting and active street frontages, encourages parking to the side or rear of a centre, provides landscaping in front setbacks and ensures safe and convenient pedestrian connections.

The Highton Village UDF and the application of the DDO52 support these strategies through targeted built form controls and will complement the existing requirements of the C1Z.

15.01-2S Building design - seeks to achieve design and siting outcomes that make a positive impact on the local context, enhance the public realm, and support sustainable development.

This amendment seeks to achieve the same outcomes for Highton Village through the UDF implementation and a DDO52. Many strategies of this clause are achieved by the DDO52 including for example minimising the detrimental impact of development on neighbouring properties, the public realm, and the natural environment.

15.01-5S Neighbourhood character – this Clause recognises, supports, and protects neighbourhood character, cultural identity, and a sense of place.

The DDO52 and its built form provisions have been developed from a detailed built form analysis and community engagement. This analysis is represented in the Highton UDF and aims to manage future development in a way that recognises and responds to the character of the Village centre.

16.01-1S Housing supply – seeks to facilitate well-located, integrated and diverse housing that meets community needs.

The UDF and DDO52 outlines opportunities for new mixed-use development up to four storeys within the Centre including the development of residential premises above ground level active uses. This is expected to complement the lower density of the surrounding Highton residential area.

16.01-1L-02 Increased housing diversity areas - applies to the residential land located in and around the neighbourhood activity centres across the municipality including at Highton Village Shopping Centre, with the objectives to evolve the character of the area through more intensive development, supporting development that makes a positive architectural and urban contribution to the area and promotes pedestrian safety.

The general strategy for maximising housing opportunity in the Highton IDHA is to accommodate high density housing in the activity centre with medium density housing in the residential areas. Built form strategies encourage development that includes measures to achieve visual interest, sympathetic designs, discourage

storage within the secluded open space. Building height strategies include designing development to reduce dominance of the building from the streetscape and adjoining properties and encouraging development of up to three stories on larger sites abutting the activity centre. This Clause also encourages the consolidation of lots to increase development potential and discourage the fragmentation of sites and underdevelopment. Car parking strategies seek to locate car parking structures behind the line of the front façade, reduce their visual dominance and minimise the number of vehicle crossings.

DDO52 aims to achieve these strategies while also preserving the existing look and feel of Highton Village and avoiding the overdevelopment of the commercial centre based on the community aspirations gained through the UDF consultation process. The Highton Village UDF has sought to limit height along the Belle Vue Avenue frontage within the activity centre to two storeys. This will affect the opportunity to accommodate more and higher density housing and contrast to the surrounding GRZ4 areas of the IHDA which encourages development up to three storeys in height. Overtime the central, core street of the commercial centre of the IHDA may have a lower development height than that of the edges of the commercial area and the surrounding residential component. This has come about through Council seeking to preserve the existing look and feel and avoiding overdevelopment of the centre of the commercial centre based on the community aspirations gained through the UDF consultation process.

The DDO, combined with other provisions of the planning scheme, promotes new design and development to prioritise pedestrian movements and remove conflict with vehicles.

Clause 16.01-2S - Housing Affordability seeks to deliver more affordable and social housing closer to jobs, transport and services.

Housing affordability and the supply of social housing is one of the key issues front of mind for the planning actions undertaken by the City of Greater Geelong. One of the key strategies of the City's Social Housing Plan is to enable the delivery of more social housing supply through negotiation for a meaningful developer contribution and inclusion of social housing in all new private developments where rezoning and planning approvals add value to land.

Amendment C457ggee includes a policy element to encourage social and affordable housing contribution as part of any residential development within the Highton Village Shopping Centre. The Planning Policy Framework of the Planning Scheme already includes support for social and affordable housing and this is actively being encouraged by the State Government's Housing Statement. The inclusion of a local policy element that is specific to Amendment C457ggee will further bring alignment between state policy objectives in housing, local policy in the IHDA and opportunity to provide certainty in triggering negotiations for site specific inclusion of social and affordable housing.

17.02-1S Business – this clause encourages development that meets the community's needs for retail, entertainment, office, and other commercial services.

The DDO52 built form provisions will provide certainty to the local community about the scale and form of new development in their neighbourhood centre. This will provide opportunities for new commercial, retail, and other services in an activity centre that is centrally located to the Highton community. The built form controls encourage ground floor development that provides active frontages to further

enhance the commercial and pedestrian activation of the centre.

18.02 Movement networks – seeks to facilitate efficient and safe walking and cycling networks and increase the proportion of trips made by these active transport modes through well planned, safe, connected, comfortable and accessible routes.

The UDF has addressed movement and transport both within and to the Village. The UDF seeks to ensure pedestrian and cyclist amenity, increase the attractiveness and safety of the key pedestrian routes within the centre, provide the right amount of short- and long-term parking for staff and customers, promote sustainable transport choices, promote safety within the Centre, promote the convenience of public transport and manage car parking intrusion into residential areas.

The DDO52 reinforces these objectives through prioritising the pedestrian environment and encouraging active frontages at ground floor level, locating vehicle access and car parking at the rear of buildings, incorporating reduced or shared parking amenities where possible and supporting active transport through bicycle parking and change facilities.

How does the amendment support or implement the Municipal Planning Strategy?

The amendment is consistent with the following clause of the Municipal Planning Strategy and will assist in achieving the objectives of the clauses as follows:

02.03-1 Settlement - Activity Centres and retail seeks to ensure that the community has access to everyday services within a 20-minute drive from home, and that retail centres are encouraged to grow and transition overtime into activity centres with an extended offer including uses other than retail.

The Highton Village Shopping Centre is characterised as a Neighbourhood Centre in the retail hierarchy for Geelong, serving a neighbourhood catchment anchored by one or more supermarkets plus speciality stores.

The amendment facilitates the strategic direction by ensuring development is consistent with the level of the Highton Centre in the retail hierarchy. New infill and refurbished development will allow for the centre to grow and a diverse range of uses for the local community.

02.03-5 Built environment and sustainability seeks to acknowledge that Geelong's sense of place and identity is valued by its community.

The strategic direction of ensuring that development enhances Geelong's sense of place and identity, supporting the design and provision of healthy, walkable neighbourhoods, encouraging environmentally sustainable design in all development and encouraging all development to provide high quality urban design and landscaping are met by the implementation of the DDO52. The objectives and requirements of the DDO52 are focussed on sustainable development, prioritising the pedestrian experience, and producing excellent design outcomes in new development.

Clause 02.03-6 – Housing outlines areas for increased housing diversity, facilitates infill development and increases affordable and social housing.

The amendment includes a new policy encouraging the provision of social and affordable housing within new residential development.

Highton Shopping Centre is designated as an Increased Housing Diversity Area (IHDA) at clause 16.01-1L-02 of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme. A planning objective of this designation is to evolve the character of the Highton Shopping Centre through more intensive development with this to lead to maximising opportunities for housing by achieving higher densities in the activity centre and encouraging a diversity of housing types to cater for a variety of lifestyles.

The Highton UDF supports the growth of the Highton Village Shopping Centre to provide additional commercial and residential development, in line with its inclusion in the Highton IDHA. The UDF supports Council's goal of providing for 50 per cent of future housing needs through urban infill, as well as delivering housing diversity and affordability. For new residential use in Highton Village, this will be achieved through medium density developments most likely in the three and four storey nominated areas adjacent to the Highton Reserve and along Barrabool Road.

Does the amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?

The amendment makes proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs) by introducing a new schedule to the Design and Development Overlay. This is the appropriate planning control for providing guidance for future built form outcomes in Highton Village and implementing the objectives of the Highton Village UDF.

Including the land at 19 Belle Vue Avenue and 1A Taylor Court, Highton and the road reserves within the C1Z is an appropriate application of the land use zones. These sites are Council owned car parks serving the parking needs of the Centre and inclusion in the C1Z rather than the current GRZ4 better reflects the land use and intention for these properties. Including the road reserves within the C1Z reflects the land use of the surrounding Centre.

The proposed inclusion of a planning policy encouraging social and affordable housing contributions is an appropriate application of the VPPs.

Inclusion of the Highton Village UDF as a background document is an appropriate action to recognise a document that provides information on why the DDO52, and rezoning have been applied.

How does the amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

The views of relevant agencies will be considered through the public exhibition process. Council consulted with VicRoads during the preparation of the background *Parking and Access Study* for the Highton Village UDF.

Does the amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?

The amendment is providing controls over the scale and form of future development within Highton Village. Providing a pedestrian friendly environment is an objective of the both the DDO52 and the Highton Village UDF.

The proposed amendment is unlikely to have a significant impact on the transport system defined by the Transport Integration Act.

Resource and administrative costs

What impact will the new planning provisions have on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority?

The amendment will have minimal impact on resource and administrative costs of Council. Any increase in permit applications triggered by the DDO52 and the associated assessment of planning permit applications can be met by Council's statutory planning department. The impact on the administrative costs of Council is appropriate for implementation of the Highton Village UDF.

ATTACHMENT 1 - Mapping reference table

Location	Land /Area Affected	Mapping Reference	Address	Proposed changes		
				Zone	Overlay	Deletion
Highton Village	19 Belle Vue Avenue and 1A Taylor Court, Highton	Greater Geelong C457ggee 001znMap52 Exhibition	19 Belle Vue Avenue and 1A Taylor Court, Highton	C1Z	-	-
Highton Village	The road reserves of Belle Vue Avenue part of Taylor Court and the laneway east of Belle Vue Avenue, Highton	Greater Geelong C457ggee 001znMap52 Exhibition		C1Z	-	-
Highton Village	Land within the commercial core of Highton Village shopping centre	Greater Geelong C457ggee 002ddoMap52 Exhibition	Belle Vue Avenue, Barrabool Road, Taylor Court, Village Walk, Belle Vue Arcade, Highton	-	DDO52	-