

SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE

Small Towns Strategy

WHAT IS THE SMALL TOWNS STRATEGY?

Over the last two decades Council has conducted extensive strategic planning work to guide the future growth and character of the region responding to the variety in size, infrastructure provision, history and community needs of each of the local towns surrounding Hamilton.

Accordingly, the specific strategic direction for each town, outlining a vision, existing assets, challenges, and a future plan for service and infrastructure delivery needs to be reviewed and updated.

The limitations in funding and resources available to Council means that creative approaches to service and infrastructure delivery are required.

Strategic thinking is necessary to determine how to best balance investment across the towns with projected growth and those experiencing population decline, while ensuring communities have fair access to the facilities and services necessary for liveability.

To do this, it is important to understand how each community uses the facilities in their town, what they need and value, and how/where they access services not available locally.

The vision for each town outlined in this Small Towns Strategy will enable each of our towns to complement and support one another to provide the services, infrastructure and opportunities necessary to ensure the wellbeing of the Shire's residents for years to come.

NEXT STEPS?

The project team is now pleased to exhibit this draft Small Towns Strategy to the community for a final engagement period.

Feedback on the document and on township priorities can be sent through to planning@sthgrampains.vic.gov.au.

All feedback received will be considered by Council prior to adoption of the Strategy early next year.



Key items in Strategy (more detail pages 46-54).

CONSIDERATIONS

Community Infrastructure and Services

- The Town Hall is poorly maintained.
- The recreation reserve and toilets at sporting facilities are also poorly maintained.

Lifestyle and character

- Native vegetation in township (such as the Woolly Tea Tree) are depleted.
- Safety is a concern around Stalkers Bend and Heritage Park
- Better maintenance of heritage buildings in Branxholme is needed, including the water tower.
- Limited demand for new housing due to servicing constraints
- Vacant store fronts have a negative effect on the town.
- Branxholme isn't integrated with nearby attractions Tumuli, Byaduk Caves, Budj Bim and Lake Condah

Access, Connection and Transport

- Roads are poorly maintained.
- Lack of streetscape amenity and planting creates a poor pedestrian environment for locals and visitors.
- Main streets are unpaved, comprised of a mix of coat bitumen seal and gravel.
- Poor connectivity between toilet/park opposite the shop with the oval and swimming holes

Infrastructure (servicing)

- The town experiences significant flood liability and drainage problems, especially west of Creek Street where the town core is located.
- Poor internet connectivity limits town growth
- There are currently no sewerage services in Branxholme.

Natural Values and Open Space

- Both Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act and native vegetation are interspersed through the town, particularly on the western half and eastern boundary of the town.

OPPORTUNITIES

The following list of opportunities was developed to reflect previous strategic work and community engagement results.

Community Infrastructure and Services

- Investigate whether there is sufficient demand for Branxholme Kindergarten to be a permanent kindergarten.
- Assess condition and use of community facilities, and upgrade or re-purpose to better meet community needs.
- Deliver improvements to the recreation reserve and toilets at sporting facilities.

Lifestyle and character

- Address safety concerns around Stalkers Bend and Heritage Park by providing improved lighting.
- Repurposing former bakery for alternative use such as a market.

- Develop a plan for the protection and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings.
- Implement Volcanic Trails Masterplan.
- Provide signage and information about nearby attractions such as Tumuli, Byaduk Caves, Budj Bim and Lake Condah.
- Develop a staged streetscape and planting plan, including planting for drainage.

Access, Connection and Transport

- Advocate to DoT for broad and ongoing road renewal.
- Prioritise paving of key streets (UDF has identified that these are: Best and Wyndham, Andrew identifies Cox, Brown and Lynch streets).

Infrastructure (servicing)

- Advocate for improvements to internet infrastructure.
- Advocate for the delivery of a low-pressure sewer system as recommended by Australian Water Environments (AWE).
- Better manage bushfire risk by delivering community water tanks or overhead fill supply in areas with non-reticulated water supply.

Natural Values and Open Space

- Develop a flood management plan, incorporating water sensitive urban design and biological options for increasing drainage.
- Deliver improvements to local swimming reservoir.
- Develop a plan for the conservation and restoration of native vegetation (e.g. Woolly Tea Tree restoration).

Key Aspects to be Updated in Strategic Planning Documentation

- Planning scheme review required for land on the peripheries of the town that are currently under an agricultural zone.
- Highly fragmented Farming Zone.