

# 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](mailto: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 76–86).

### CONSIDERATIONS

#### Community Infrastructure and Services

- Council Chambers are currently underutilised.
- Utilisation of Coleraine Pool is modest and continued operation will require significant cost.
- Management of the Arboretum (Parks Victoria) could be improved.
- Police station redevelopment is needed.

#### Lifestyle and character

- Amenity and character of town is negatively impacted by poorly maintained shop frontages.
- A substantial proportion of activity space and heritage buildings in the town centre appears to be vacant.
- Caravan park is undermaintained, and is utilized for mixed purposes – both social housing and visitor accommodation.
- “Whyte Street” refers to a family involved in the massacre of Aboriginal people.
- Street furniture on main street is in need of improvements.

#### Access, Connection and Transport

- Main Street does not encourage walkability. Generally poor access for pedestrians, cyclists and residents using walkers/wheelchairs.
- Roads and streetscapes lack amenity.

#### Infrastructure (servicing)

- There is poor waste management in the town.
- Properties on the edge of town do not have reticulated sewerage.

#### Natural Values and Open Space

- A floodway and land subject to inundation impacts the northern and southern banks of the river that bisects the town.
- Native vegetation in the northern and southern portions of the town boundary would require a permit for removal.
- The main street lacks sufficient street trees, which contributes to urban heat and negatively impacts amenity.

### OPPORTUNITIES

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

#### Community Infrastructure and Services

- Investigation needed into utilisation of Racecourse, Golf Course and Showgrounds and how they can better function as community spaces.
- Repurpose Council Chambers for community use.
- Investigate with community what is needed from Coleraine pool facilities.
- Advocate to Parks Victoria to deliver improvements to Arboretum.
- Police station redevelopment is needed.

## **Lifestyle and character**

- Recognise Aboriginal peoples history – Rename Whyte Street.
- Maximise opportunities for tourism.
- Deliver RV friendly infrastructure to improve tourism.
- Investigate best site for Tourist Information Centre.
- Develop the area around the Eucalyptus Discovery Centre as the main stopping point for travellers.
- Invest in heritage buildings to support heritage-based tourism.
- Provide signpost to local attractions such as waterfalls to develop a tourist drive.
- Improve public realm.
- Deliver planted median street with low-growing indigenous grasses and groundcovers.
- Deliver avenue planting to roads leading into Coleraine, with additional indigenous multi-story vegetation.
- Landscape entry points to town with low-growing, indigenous species of vegetation.
- Deliver more street tree planting on main street.
- Deliver upgrades to street furniture, in particular seats and waste bins.
- Deliver picnic facilities.

## **Access, Connection and Transport**

- Advocate to DoT for broad and ongoing road renewal.
- Improve pedestrian and cyclist paths.
- Increase pedestrian priority and deliver accessible shared paths throughout town, in particular, at the Whyte Street and Young Street intersection.
- Connect existing walking tracks to the Arboretum.
- Provide a walking path to Silvester Oval.
- Develop Winter Street as a civic connecting avenue between Queens Park, the town centre and the Arboretum.

## **Infrastructure (servicing)**

- Identify key sites to deliver additional waste disposal.
- Investigate whether reticulated sewerage is required on lots on edge of town.

## **Natural Values and Open Space**

- Advocate to Parks Victoria to deliver improvements to the Arboretum, such as improving the lookout and providing a connecting walking trail with street tree planting. Investigate possibility of Committees of Management and Council taking a stronger role.
- Investigate ways to increase use of the lake at the historic Railway Station/Community Park.
- Implement landscape protection at the foothills of township.
- Enhance Bryan Creek Corridor:
  - Deliver revegetation using indigenous species.
  - Establish waterholes and wetlands.
  - Deliver recreational trails on both sides of the creek.
  - Deliver new pedestrian bridges.
- Enhance public open spaces:
  - Improve Queens Park through tree planting and seats, revegetation and a new lookout.

## Key Aspects to be Updated in Strategic Planning Documentation

- Market the town as a higher level service centre: with local shops, IGA, health centre and primary school it has the basis to support growth.
- Develop a comprehensive heritage conservation strategy.
- There is a need to review township boundaries for Coleraine as some land on edge of towns is being used as rural living rather than agriculture and zoning could be reconsidered.
- Planning Scheme Review Report recommended progressing South West Landscape Assessment and Grampians Landscape Assessment to protect significant landscapes – including the foothills of Coleraine. Findings of the studies need to be adopted by Council and consulted with the community in order to determine permit triggers.