

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 114-122).

CONSIDERATIONS

Community Infrastructure and Services

- The swimming pool in Penshurst is in poor condition, has low visitation and high operating costs.
- Penshurst lacks community space.
- The caravan park which adjoins the Recreation Reserve is of a low standard, with limited infrastructure and no on-site supervision.

Lifestyle and character

- A high proportion of activity space in the town centre is apparently vacant; Penshurst does not have a supermarket.
- The amenity of the streetscape requires improvement, especially Bell and Martin Streets.
- The built form of the township better reflects historical uses and is poorly equipped to meet current needs.

Access, Connection and Transport

- The Botanic Gardens lack shared paths infrastructure.
- Broad an ongoing road renewal is needed – roads are not fit for purpose as they are based on decades old traffic and freight patterns.
- Public transport access is limited.

Infrastructure (servicing)

- The most densely populated settlement without reticulated sewerage. This poses significant risk to human and environmental health.

Natural Values and Open Space

- FFG are located around the township boundary within a kilometre of the town, including Bandicoots, Readers Daisy, Australasian Shoveler, and Magpie Geese, among others.
- The lack of sewerage infrastructure has resulted in high levels of blue-green algae in the spring located within the Botanic Gardens, and
- poses a high risk of contamination of local rivers, wetlands and waterways.
- Some facilities in the Botanic Gardens require upgrades.
- The groundwater aquifers underlying the town are currently undervalued.

OPPORTUNITIES

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

Community Infrastructure and Services

- Investigate repurposing of swimming pool into a splash park or neighbourhood hub.
- Investigate value or delivering a neighbourhood hub to Penshurst.
- Provide support to schools and kindergarten.

Lifestyle and character

- Better leverage Peshurst's location on the Great Southern Touring Route.
- Maximise increased tourism opportunities generated by delivery of Peshurst Volcanic Discovery Centre.
- Seek funding to undertake a streetscape revitalisation project, involving improvements to building facades and street tree plantings.
- Investigate how to better utilise vacant heritage buildings.

Access, Connection and Transport

- Advocate to Department of Transport for broad and ongoing road renewal.
- Continue to advocate to Department of Transport to improve bus service.
- Explore potential to purchase a community bus and local school bus.
- Improve shared paths and active transport connectivity.
- Create a walking and cycling loop that connects the Botanic Gardens.
- Improve the walking track to Mount Rouse and Yatmerone Wildlife Reserve.
- Deliver signage and bicycle parking facilities in Botanic Gardens.

Infrastructure (servicing)

- Finalise funding model for Peshurst adaptive wastewater scheme, to be delivered with Wannon Water.

Natural Values and Open Space

- Investigate the groundwater aquifers underlying Peshurst and surrounds and identify environmental, Indigenous and cultural significance and interconnection with the Mt Rouse volcano and nearby Wetlands including Yatmerone.

Key Aspects to be Updated in Strategic Planning Documentation

- Require land owners to provide own infrastructure to provide water access in less concentrated urban areas as part of building permit, e.g. 10000L water tank with fitting for fire truck. Triggers in planning system needed.
- Peshurst is a good candidate town for consideration of rural living, especially with its support services (schools, local retail, quality open space, WDHS health centre etc).
- Vision of community infrastructure needs.
- Investigation areas for rural living/residential development and logical zone changes around existing townships in map form.