

ATTACHMENT TO AGENDA ITEM

Ordinary Meeting

16 August 2016

Agenda Item 8.10 Economic Development Tourism and Events Strategy

**Attachment 1 Greater Shepparton Economic Development Tourism
and Event Strategy 844**



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ACRONYMS

AQIS	– Australia Quarantine and Inspection Service
CBD	– Shepparton's Central Business District
C4GS	– Committee for Greater Shepparton
NGO	– Non-governmental Organisation
VIF	– Victoria In Future population projections
HPV	– High Productivity Vehicles
GSCC	– Greater Shepparton City Council
GMW	– Goulburn Murray Water
GV	– Goulburn Valley
SBC	– Shepparton Business Centre

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

The Economic Development, Tourism and Events Strategy ("the Strategy") is aimed at identifying opportunities that will lead to building and diversifying the local economy, assist in building on Council's events portfolio and boosting tourism and overnight stays within the region. The Strategy is intended to provide an achievable, evidence based plan for the future while responding to the challenges and opportunities presented by the local, regional, and international conditions.

The development of the Strategy is timely as it coincides with a period of significant adjustment in Greater Shepparton and wider Goulburn Valley region, and will provide strategic direction to the newly formed Economic Development Department.

The Strategy has been developed through a comprehensive review of current economic conditions and an extensive consultation process. An overview of the process undertaken to develop the Strategy is shown in Figure 1. A full summary of all findings from the review are incorporated within the accompanying Background Report.

This Strategy document is presented in two main parts:

Part A: Background: Key findings from the research and consultation process to set the economic context for the Strategy;

Part B: Future Directions: The framework to guide implementation of the Strategy including a future vision, objectives, strategies and actions.

FIGURE 1 SUMMARY OF APPROACH



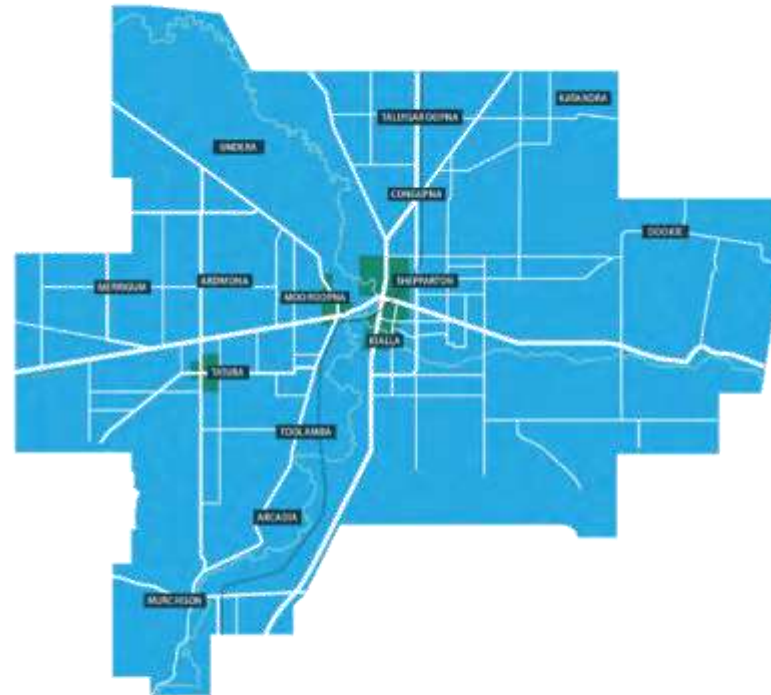
1.2. GREATER SHEPPARTON OVERVIEW

Greater Shepparton is a vibrant, diverse community located approximately two hours north of Melbourne in the Goulburn Valley. The municipality comprises the following urban areas and main townships:

- Shepparton
- Mooroopna
- Tatura
- Murchison
- Merrigum
- Tallygaroopna
- Dookie
- Undera
- Toolamba

In addition to these localities, a number of small rural settlements in the municipality include Coomboona, Katandra, Congupna, Orrvale, Kialla and Nalinga.

FIGURE 2 GREATER SHEPPARTON LGA



1.2.1. STRATEGIC LOCATION

The City of Greater Shepparton is strategically located in the Goulburn Valley in north central Victoria, approximately 180km north of metropolitan Melbourne and 72 km south-east of Echuca on the Murray River. Located at the intersection of the Midland and Goulburn Valley Highways, Greater Shepparton provides easy access to Adelaide, Sydney, Brisbane and Melbourne. It is also within easy access of the recently relocated Melbourne Market located in Epping, and the Port of Melbourne.

Greater Shepparton's central location is a major advantage and has seen the regional urban centre emerge as the retail, industry and services hub for central Victoria and southern NSW.

FIGURE 3 GREATER SHEPPARTON LOCATION



1.3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development Department is within the Sustainable Development Directorate. It consists of three major units, as shown below, with their major areas of focus.

Business and Industry Development Unit: The major areas of focus include:

- To identify opportunities to retain, diversify and grow existing businesses and jobs, and to encourage new investment;
- Lobby other tiers of government for assistance to provide infrastructure and services commensurate with a growing regional municipality.

Events Unit: The major areas of focus include:

- Maximise visitation to the region, and increase length of stay through the development of a sustainable events calendar;
- Position Greater Shepparton as a leading regional sports events destination.
- Reduce economic leakage by presenting a range of diverse events to engage local audiences.

Tourism Unit: The major areas of focus include:

- Promote Greater Shepparton as vibrant destination specifically targeting family, leisure, sports, cultural and business markets;
- Raise the profile of the tourism industry in the region as a significant contributor to the local economy;
- Maximise visitation to the region, and increase length of stay through the provision of quality visitor services and supporting the development of sustainable attractions, events and experiences.

In addition, the Economic Development Department also manages and operates the Shepparton Business Centre, Shepparton Visitor Information Centre, Shepparton Showgrounds, Tatura Park Equestrian and Exhibition Centre. A review of the units resourcing and responsibilities is provided in the Background Paper.

Although a key purpose of this Strategy will be to guide the role and operation of the Economic Development Department, there are other units within Council which can influence the growth of the economy, tourism, and events program. This Strategy is intended to build on the work of other strategies and plans, provide guidance to other units within Council, and embed an all of Council approach to economic development.

ROLE OF COUNCIL IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Most Councils recognise that although they cannot directly deliver business outcomes, they can facilitate and promote economic development within the context of its wider community and environmental objectives. As such, Council's role is to influence appropriate investment and business development in line with Council goals and facilitate business through creating an environment conducive to economic activity and investment. The main policy levers Council can use include the following:

Civic Leadership and Vision: Developing, communicating and implementing a vision for the future of the city.

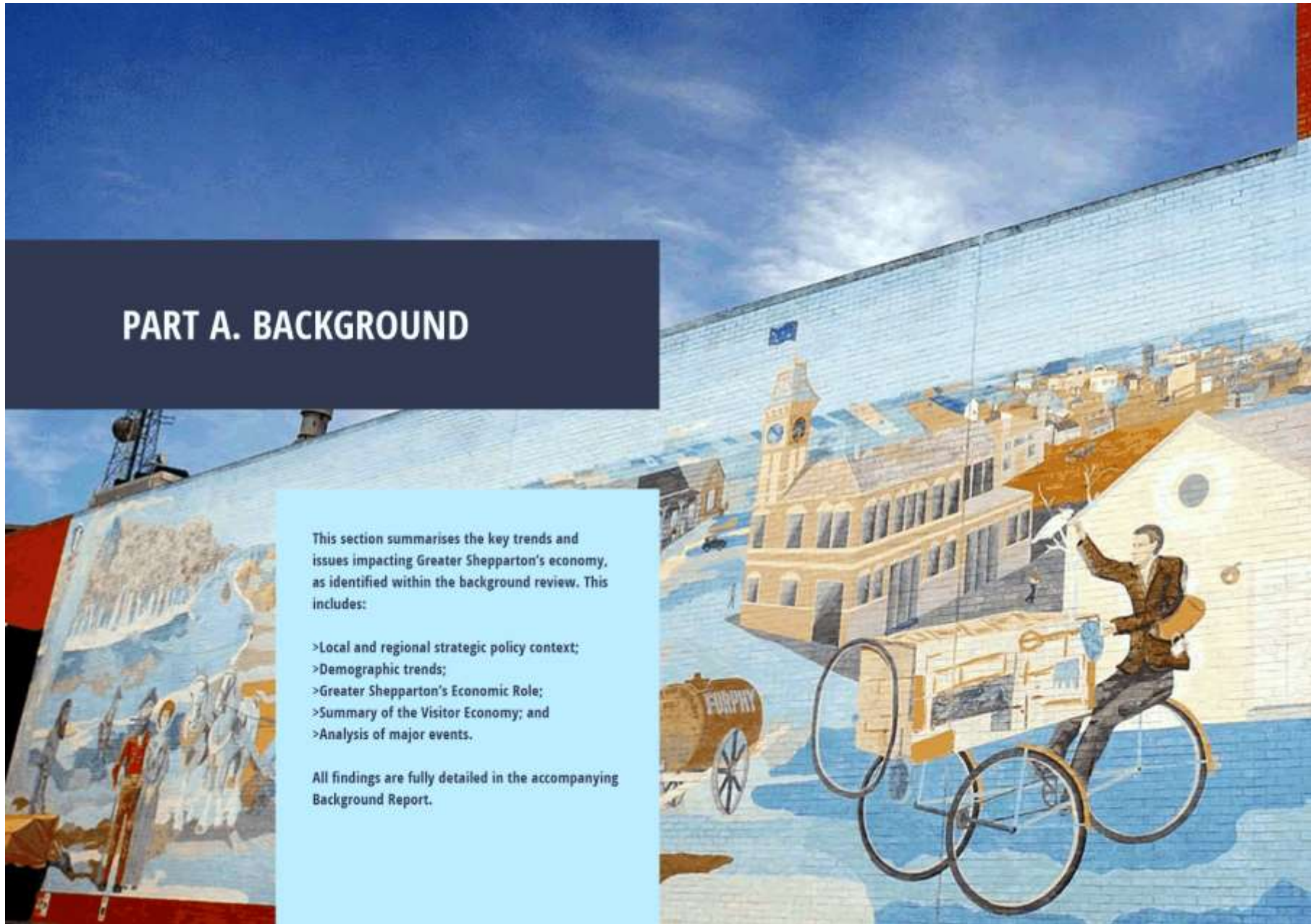
Marketing and Promotion: Taking a proactive approach to marketing the city as a desirable place to invest, work and visit.

Major Events: Delivering and promoting a calendar of major events to maximise visitation and spending within local businesses.

Infrastructure: Delivering a range of enabling infrastructure and improving the amenity of the city.

Planning: Facilitating an efficient planning system that encourages investment and employment.

Business Support: Supporting businesses, especially SMEs, by providing a positive business environment, reducing red tape, and developing a whole-of-Council approach to business growth.



PART A. BACKGROUND

This section summarises the key trends and issues impacting Greater Shepparton's economy, as identified within the background review. This includes:

- >Local and regional strategic policy context;
- >Demographic trends;
- >Greater Shepparton's Economic Role;
- >Summary of the Visitor Economy; and
- >Analysis of major events.

All findings are fully detailed in the accompanying Background Report.

2. ECONOMIC CONTEXT

2.1. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The Economic Development, Tourism and Events Strategy will be an important part of Council's decision making framework and will have regard to other key policy documents. A full summary and review of Council strategies is provided in the accompanying Background Report, and the relevant local, regional and strategies are summarised below.

COUNCIL PLAN 2013-2017

The Greater Shepparton Council Plan 2013-2017 is the key document that drives the strategic direction of Council for the next four years and beyond. The Council Plan sets out 5 strategic goals:

1. **Active and Engaged Community:** We will improve liveability through social and recreational opportunities, a range of inclusive community services and activities, and valuing our diversity.
2. **Enhancing the Environment:** We will continue to value our heritage, open spaces and natural environments, maintaining and enhancing them, and enabling greater access for people to connect with our environment.
3. **Economic Prosperity:** We will promote economic growth through working with existing businesses and industries, encouraging new business development and diversification, attracting and supporting education within our city, and strengthening the agricultural industry.
4. **Quality Infrastructure:** We will provide and maintain urban and rural infrastructure to support the development and liveability of our communities.
5. **High Performance Organisation:** We will deliver council services to the community efficiently, and provide leadership and governance that is future thinking, transparent and accountable.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Government is establishing nine Regional Partnerships across regional Victoria, with representatives from community, business and the three tiers of government.

The primary objective of the Regional Partnerships is to give regions a stronger voice within State Government and to give them a direct pathway into State Government decision-making processes. Regional Partnerships will bring a whole of government lens to the complex issues facing regional communities and will give regional communities a voice straight into the heart of government by:

- Connecting regional priorities and regional investment opportunities directly with the Victorian Government's decision-making processes
- Ensuring all ministerial portfolios across government – from education to transport, health, justice and planning – are addressing rural and regional problems, with a strong focus on creating jobs and tackling disadvantage
- Creating opportunities for local communities and individuals to have a greater say about the issues of importance to them.

The approach in establishing partnerships will align with the work of existing regional leadership, strategic planning and advocacy groups, looking at the strategic priorities regional communities have identified themselves. A lot of work has gone into Regional Strategic Plans over a number of years and these place-based regional plans that are locally owned and evidence-based will continue to be the principal mechanism to identify local priorities and set longer-term strategic directions.

Through the partnerships, regions will have significantly greater opportunity to use their plans to inform government decision-making, particularly at the State level. This will principally occur through the Regional Partnerships developing their annual work programs based on regional strategic plans and priorities. These will be presented to a new Rural and Regional Ministerial Committee within the Victorian

Government to ensure that their priorities and proposed implementation activities are considered as part of government policy and budget deliberations.

Key regional strategies include the Hume Regional Workforce and Development Plan 2015-2018 and Hume Food Opportunity and Action Plan. A full review of regional policies and strategies is provided in the Background Paper.

2.1.1. MAJOR PROJECT PRIORITIES

There are a number of major infrastructure projects which have been identified as crucial to the future development of Greater Shepparton. Many of these projects are highlighted in the Make Shepparton Great Campaign, and are summarised below.

- Redevelopment of the Goulburn Valley Health Shepparton Campus based on a masterplan including an expansion and reconfiguration of the hospital's clinical care areas, inpatient accommodation and essential infrastructure services (\$150-\$200 million investment).
- Revitalisation of the Shepparton CBD including:
 - The Vaughan Street and Maude Street redevelopment, with a new bus interchange and improvement to streetscape, parking and general amenity (\$35 million investment including \$20 million private investment);
 - Shepparton Railway Station Precinct Development, including constructing a pedestrian bridge to provide direct access between the station and Vaughan Street in the CBD (\$2.5 million investment);
 - Shepparton Court Precinct Development including a new 5 storey court complex.
- Increasing the frequency of passenger rail services between Shepparton and Melbourne and passenger friendly timetabling. This will have significant positive outcomes for population growth, tourist visitation, investment in Greater Shepparton, education opportunities, and overall social wellbeing for Greater Shepparton residents.

- The development of the Goulburn Valley Freight and Logistics Centre (GV Link), an intermodal transport terminal to provide a key link in the supply chain for regional industries and exporters to the Port of Melbourne by both road and rail. Council and State Government partners are currently seeking private investors to locate within the new centre.
- Construction of a four lane Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton Bypass to provide an additional east-west crossing of the Goulburn River (\$1.3 billion investment).
- The redevelopment of the Shepparton Art Museum and Shepparton Visitor Information Centre within a purpose-built gallery in the Victoria Lake Precinct (\$34.5 million investment).
- Upgrade and redevelopment of the Shepparton Sports Stadium to include two new courts, 2,000 seat grandstand, sports house, squash courts, multi-purpose space, and other amenities to increase the capabilities for major events and entertainment (\$20 million investment).

The major infrastructure needs for the region are reasonably well defined and advocated for within existing studies and plans. A number of these projects have been identified for a number of years (e.g. Shepparton Bypass) and still await State and Federal funding. Others such as the SAM redevelopment have secured funding commitments from Council and State Government and are awaiting Federal funding. Support and promotion of these projects will need to be continued over the next five years, as well as the co-ordinated delivery once funding has been secured.

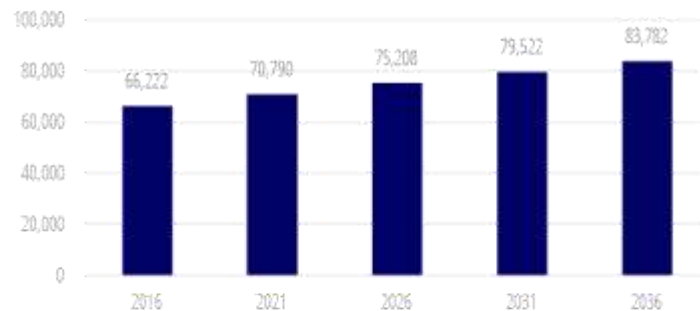
2.2. DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

The background research identified the following trends in relation to Greater Shepparton's residential population.

MODERATE POPULATION GROWTH

In 2016, the estimated population of Greater Shepparton was 66,222. According to population projections, Greater Shepparton is expected to grow to 83,782 persons by 2036, an average annual growth of 1.2%. Continued growth in Greater Shepparton's resident population will require investment in supporting infrastructure and services, and support economic and employment growth in the construction, service related industries (health and education) and retail.

FIGURE 4 GREATER SHEPPARTON PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH 2016-2036



Source: Forecast ID Greater Shepparton

AGEING POPULATION

The population is projected to age significantly with the number of residents aged 70+ to double within 25 years. This is expected to grow job opportunities in health and aged care, however, will present significant challenges to local businesses in filling skills gaps.

RETENTION OF YOUNG POPULATION

There are a high proportion of young adults (18-24 year olds) leaving the region to pursue broader education and work opportunities elsewhere, particularly in Melbourne and Bendigo. With the ageing of the local population, the lack of younger workers to replenish the workforce is a key economic challenge.

DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Greater Shepparton is a cosmopolitan community which was built on post-war migration and continues to be a major destination for new arrivals to Australia. Supporting employment pathways and language and numeracy skills development should be supported to maximise the economic participation of new arrivals to Greater Shepparton.

SOCIAL DISADVANTAGE AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Social disadvantage, and in particular, youth unemployment and disengagement are significant social and economic challenges. Building the local skills base to leverage from emerging economic opportunities (e.g. agribusiness) will be critical to future economic growth and improving social outcomes. Addressing these issues will require an all of community approach currently being driven by the Lighthouse Foundation.

2.3. ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

The Greater Shepparton economy supported 24,796 jobs and had a total Gross Regional Product (GRP) of \$3.4 billion in 2015. The largest industry sectors include agriculture, manufacturing, health, and retail.



Source: Remplan Economic Profile, 2015

TABLE 1 GREATER SHEPPARTON EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC OUTPUT - 2015

Industry	Jobs	Output (\$ million)
Health Care & Social Assistance	4,022	\$413
Retail Trade	3,280	\$355
Manufacturing	3,150	\$2,180
Education & Training	2,161	\$248
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	1,866	\$426
Construction	1,629	\$691
Accommodation & Food Services	1,160	\$140
Public Administration & Safety	1,150	\$224
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	1,024	\$251
Other Services	1,010	\$129
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	976	\$241
Wholesale Trade	916	\$310
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	704	\$420
Administrative & Support Services	546	\$121
Financial & Insurance Services	490	\$267
Information Media & Telecommunications	305	\$144
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	224	\$614
Arts & Recreation Services	154	\$26
Mining	29	\$16
Total	24,796	\$7,215

Source: Remplan Economic Profile, 2015

2.4. GREATER SHEPPARTON'S ECONOMIC ROLE

Greater Shepparton's economy is underpinned by two major pillars as described below.

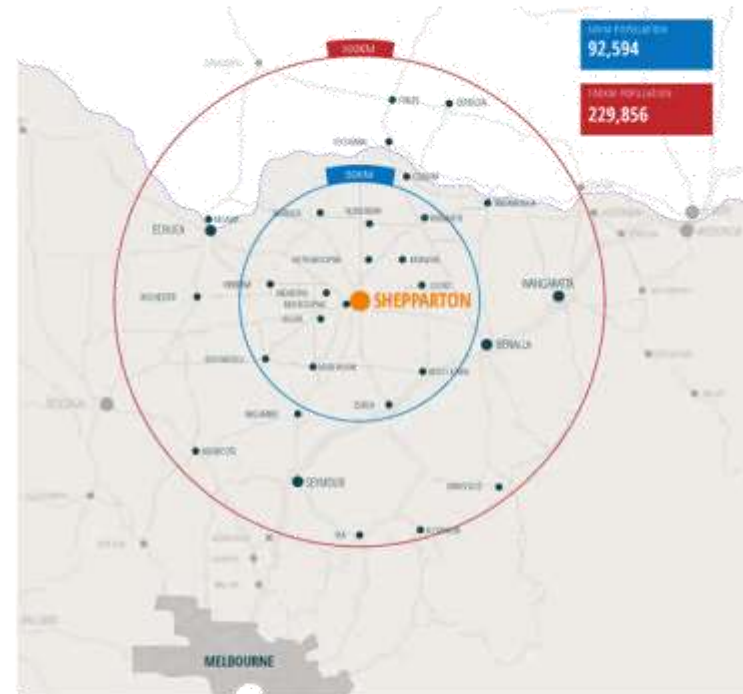
PILLAR 1: MAJOR REGIONAL SERVICE CENTRE

Greater Shepparton services a large regional catchment extending through north-central Victoria to southern NSW, covering a total population of approximately 230,000, as shown in Figure 5.¹ This supports the concentration of retail businesses, professional services, government services, health and education institutions, and the municipality's visitor economy. The population growth of Greater Shepparton and the broader catchment will provide opportunity for growth within the industries over the coming years.

Other regional cities such as Wangaratta and Albury/Wodonga have developed in recent years including their business base, retail offering, and lifestyle amenity. It is important that Greater Shepparton continues to grow and develop over the next decade, in particular the renewal of the Shepparton CBD, to remain the pre-eminent service centre in northern Victoria.

The approach to the visitor economy needs to consider this regional role and the opportunity to market Greater Shepparton's services, retail and tourism product to its regional catchment. Better coordination and clear messaging to key markets is explored further in the Visitor Economy Section of the Strategy.

FIGURE 5 GREATER SHEPPARTON'S REGIONAL CATCHMENT



Source: Urban Enterprise 2016, adapted from the Male Shepparton Greater Prospectus

¹Male Shepparton Greater Prospectus

PILLAR 2: FOOD HUB

Greater Shepparton lies in the heart of the Goulburn Valley Irrigation district, also known as Australia's 'food bowl'. The strengths of the Greater Shepparton region include dairy, horticulture, livestock and broad acre cropping.

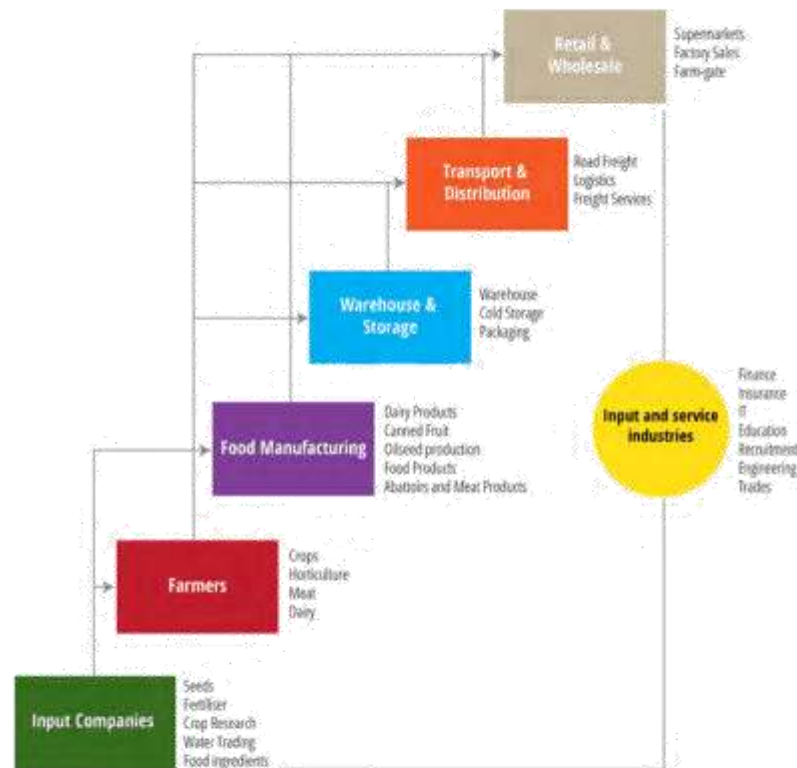
Figure 6 provides a high level representation of the food industry supply chain in Greater Shepparton. There is a concentration of all business types at each level of the supply chain located in Greater Shepparton and there are a number of large companies which are fully vertically integrated.

Due to the scale of production, existing supply chain infrastructure and proximity to port, the region is well placed to leverage from growing export demand and is developing into an international hub for food production and processing. There have been some significant investments in recent years, particularly in dairy product manufacturing (e.g. baby formula, milk powder). The push for increased value-adding activities will have a number of economic benefits, principally:

- Drive direct investment into the region;
- Develop more refined products which are export ready;
- Have significant flow-on benefits through the food supply chain; and
- Attract a greater number of skilled workers to the region.

It is important to note that there are a number of large businesses located in the Goulburn Valley, but outside the boundaries of the City of Greater Shepparton (e.g. Cobram). Many of these businesses are also going through a phase of investment and expansion. As a region, many of the supply chain and economic flows go beyond municipal boundaries, and therefore the expansion of these businesses will have flow on benefits to Greater Shepparton. In addition, the increase in workers and residents in these areas will also grow Shepparton's regional catchment. This demonstrates the importance of developing regional links between municipalities and industry partners to address infrastructure and agricultural constraints across the Goulburn Valley Irrigation District.

FIGURE 6 GREATER SHEPPARTON FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN



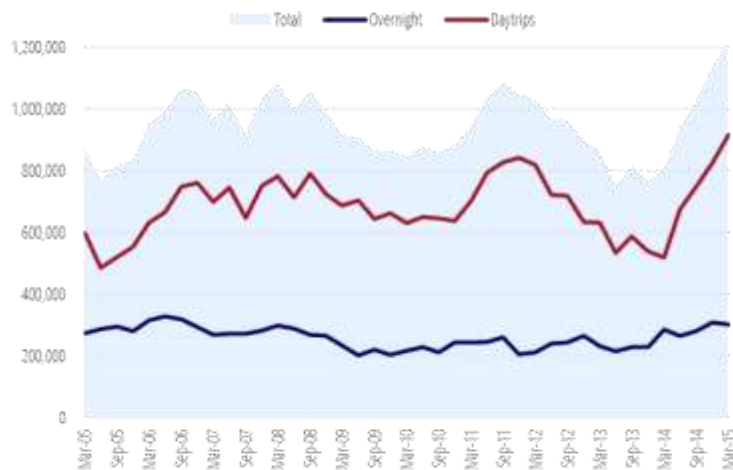
Source: Urban Enterprise 2015

2.5. VISITOR ECONOMY

The visitor economy is an important aspect to Greater Shepparton’s economic development as it is focused on attracting expenditure within Greater Shepparton from outside of the region, and is underpinned by Greater Shepparton’s regional economic role.

In 2015, Greater Shepparton received over 1.2 million visitors, including 915,000 daytrip and 300,000 overnight domestic visitors, and 10,000 International visitors. The visitor economy contributed \$190 million in economic output and supports 1,171 jobs across Greater Shepparton.²

FIGURE 7 GREATER SHEPPARTON DOMESTIC VISITOR TRENDS 2005-2015



Source: WGS & NYS, Tourism Research Australia

² Greater Shepparton Economy ID Profile

The profile of Greater Shepparton’s visitors is diverse as it attracts visitation for retail, health services, education, business, visiting friends and relatives and holiday/leisure. The key markets for Greater Shepparton include:

- Health, education and retail markets (Greater Shepparton’s regional catchment);
- Holiday leisure markets:
 - Families;
 - Older Travellers / Couples;
 - Experience Seeking / Self-drive International Visitors;
- Visiting friends and relatives;
- Major events, particularly sporting competitions; and
- Business markets (Australian capital cities and regional centres).

The tourism industry in Shepparton is not a traditional holiday leisure destination and this should be reflected in the approach to industry development, marketing and tourism structures.

2.6. MAJOR EVENTS DESTINATION

Greater Shepparton prides itself on being one of Regional Victoria's key major event destinations. The region's strengths for hosting major events are based on its central location, quality facilities, and industry support provided through Council's Events Unit.

Analysis of events data provided by Council for the year 2014/15 shows there was:

- 172 events supported in Greater Shepparton supported by Council;
- 262,850 attendees across all events;
- 95,705 visitors from outside Greater Shepparton;
- Events generated a total economic impact of \$36 million and supported 235 local jobs;

TABLE 2 TOTAL ATTENDANCE AND NON-LOCAL VISITATION BY EVENT TYPE

Event Type	Attendance	Visitors*	Visitors proportion of Attendance (%)
Community	81,980	23,620	29%
Sporting	68,750	32,480	47%
Business & Conference	27,110	9,625	36%
Sporting Equestrian	26,870	10,980	41%
Arts & Culture	26,300	7,450	28%
Expo	21,200	8,050	38%
Function	4,940	-	0%
Major Sporting Event	4,200	3,500	83%
Other	1,500	-	0%
Total	262,850	95,705	36%

*From outside Greater Shepparton

Source: City of Greater Shepparton 2015, compiled by Urban Enterprise

Sporting events are a particular strength of Greater Shepparton, and accounted for the largest visitation for 2014/15 (Table 2). Due to the quality of sporting infrastructure (including expected facility upgrades e.g. Sporting Precinct) and strong network of local sporting clubs and groups, Greater Shepparton has the potential to position itself as the prime destination for sporting events in regional Victoria.

In addition to sporting events, there are a number of other opportunities to develop the events calendar:

- Attraction of 'hallmark' and international standard events (other than International Dairy Week) which can assist in the positioning of Greater Shepparton and which leverage the city's sporting strengths (e.g. Davis Cup, BMX World Cup).
- Arts and cultural events which celebrate the diversity and cultural heritage of the region such as:
 - Multi-cultural events;
 - Indigenous events;
 - Music events; and
 - Motor sports events.
- Business events and conferencing to leverage from Greater Shepparton's large business base. The lack of quality, purpose-built venues for business conferencing is the largest impediment to capturing this market. The SAM development proposal includes facilities for businesses events and conferencing, and opportunities for an enhanced Eastbank (as a result of the relocation of SAM) may provide opportunities to host larger business and conference events.

The rising recognition of the economic benefits of events has meant that events attraction has become increasingly competitive between regional Councils and tourism boards. In some circumstances this has led to 'bidding wars' between Councils to secure particular events. Due to the importance of the event calendar in generating visitation to Greater Shepparton, it is critical that Council are actively pursuing new opportunities for events through building strong and long-term relationships with event operators (e.g. national sporting bodies), and investing in upgrades to facilities.



PART B. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This section outlines the directions and actions to guide economic development within Greater Shepparton over the next five years.

3. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This section presents the framework for the Greater Shepparton Economic Development, Tourism and Events Strategy 2016-2020. The Strategy comprises the following elements:

- **Vision** – the aspirations for the region's economy and role of Greater Shepparton City Council;
- **Major Themes** – the 7 areas of key focus of the Strategy;
- **Targets and Monitoring** – the targets which will measure the success of the Strategy;
- **Strategies** – how will the strategy be delivered; and
- **Actions** – The specific tasks required to achieve success, identifying the role of the Economic Development Unit and other stakeholders.

3.2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Implementation of the Strategy will be guided by the following principles that align with the main policy levers available to Council to influence local economic development, and the key issues facing the region. The principles are intended to be adopted across the organisation to embed a whole-of-Council approach to economic development.

IMAGE & MARKETING	Improving the brand and perceptions of Greater Shepparton as great place to work, visit and invest
PARTNERSHIPS & ORGANISATION	Developing effective partnerships throughout the region to ensure the efficient delivery of projects and services
INFRASTRUCTURE	Unlocking and delivering the key infrastructure priorities for the region
BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT & ADVOCACY	Actively engaging with the local business community and advance their needs as key members and contributors to the local community
PLANNING & COUNCIL SYSTEMS	Support a positive business environment through facilitating an efficient planning system, seeking to reduce red tape, and improving Council systems and processes, and embedding a consideration of economic implications within decision making

3.3. VISION AND FRAMEWORK

The vision for economic development, tourism and events in Greater Shepparton over the next 5 years and major areas of focus are summarised opposite.

VISION

“Greater Shepparton is a premium regional destination to live, work, visit and invest. Our industries are world leaders in innovation, efficiency and sustainable practices. Greater Shepparton City Council is acknowledged for its proactive support of industry, sustainable economic growth, and calendar of major events.”

MAJOR THEMES

1. Best Practice Economic Development

Develop processes and systems to embed a best practice organisational approach to investment attraction and economic development

2. Food Hub

Drive investment and employment growth in the food industry sector to capitalise on export opportunities

3. Training and Attracting a Capable Workforce

Retain and attract a capable workforce through improvement to the liveability of Greater Shepparton and enhanced training and education pathways for existing workers and residents

4. Re-invigoration of the CBD

Support the role of Shepparton CBD as the premier service centre in central Victoria and the development of a diversity of uses and activities

5. Future Industries

Diversify the economic base and capture investment in emerging industries which are well suited to Greater Shepparton

6. Visitor Economy

Grow the visitor economy through improved product, experiences, targeted marketing and visitor servicing

7. Major Events Hub

Continue to develop Greater Shepparton into a major events hub in central Victoria capitalising on quality sports infrastructure

4. BEST PRACTICE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4.1. DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

Develop processes and systems to embed a best practice organizational approach to investment attraction and economic development

This Section outlines the core practices of Council to support economic development and address the strategic areas of focus outlined in this Strategy.

Focusing on delivering best practice in local economic development will assist the City of Greater Shepparton in growing existing businesses, attracting new business and investment and development of local jobs.

Economic Development Australia, a leading industry body highlights the following as overarching delivery objectives for local economic development:

- Objective 1: Supporting the existing business base
- Objective 2: Attracting new businesses and jobs
- Objective 3: Improving liveability

Continuing to engage with existing businesses, providing focused business support and improving Council processes will assist greatly in achieving the objectives of the Strategy.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- Creating supportive relationships with the local business community
- Providing useful information for businesses
- Supporting small business growth
- Attracting new investment and industry
- Improvement to economic development governance
- Embedding economic development as a priority within Council decision-making

TARGETS AND MONITORING

- Decrease the turnaround time for business planning applications
- Council develops an up-to-date business database
- Procedures and measures to ensure that Economic Development Officers are engaging meaningfully with local businesses

4.2. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Strategies and actions are structured by the following key areas:

- Networking, Business Engagement and Information Provision;
- Planning and Compliance Support;
- Priority Investment Projects; and
- Industry Research.

NETWORKING, BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION PROVISION

Business engagement is the cornerstone of local economic development efforts. Council officers should be pro-active in maintaining links between businesses and Council in order to ensure that businesses are supported and informed. Moving forward, Council should embed procedures and processes that ensure Economic Development Staff are engaging with businesses in a meaningful way. This will need to align with performance measures for local economic development which are currently being updated.

STRATEGY 1 **Ensure economic development staff are visible and active in the local business community, and develop procedures to ensure that Council are engaging with business in a meaningful way**

ACTION 1.1 *Develop a dynamic and up-to-date business database system and ensure information is correct, up-to-date, and cross references the most recent business register data. At a minimum, it should include the following fields:*

- Business name;
- Owner and main contact person;
- Address;
- Email;
- Phone;
- Industry classification; and

- Business size (estimated number of jobs).

ACTION 1.2 *Once an up-to-date database has been established, investigate the development and establishment of an interactive Client Management System which can be used to record and track business engagement and report on economic development performance measures. Engage with EDA Victorian State Practitioners Network as to how this may be implemented and used.*

ACTION 1.3 *Nominate economic development staff to be the first point of contact for businesses within the key sectors of the economy, including:*

- Food Sector and industrial activities;
- Retail and hospitality;
- CBD businesses;
- Health, education, and social services;
- Tourism;
- Small business (The Shepparton Business Centre can continue to fulfil this role).

Staff should have detailed knowledge of their nominated sector including:

- General understanding of the economic drivers;
- Understanding of local conditions and pressures facing local business;
- Strong working relationships with businesses and industry groups within the sector;
- Cultivate links with industry bodies and relevant regional and state authorities;
- An up-to-date understanding of current grants and funding opportunities.

ACTION 1.4 *Undertake regular meetings and site visits with businesses to ensure that Council have a better understanding of business operations, concerns and current and potential projects. Once a CMS has been established (Action 1.2) record details of business engagement and develop KPIs on business engagement, aligning with EDA performance measures.*

ACTION 1.5 *Provide effective email communication with businesses where necessary. Develop a quarterly email newsletter to go to businesses on the business database (once completed), promoting Council projects, networking opportunities and grants programs.*

STRATEGY 2 Support grants and funding opportunities for local business

ACTION 2.1 *Stay up-to-date on current grant and funding programs which may be available for local businesses including local, state and federal government grants, and industry-based funding.*

ACTION 2.2 *Establish a regional grants online portal using the Greater Bendigo model, which is currently being developed.*

ACTION 2.3 *Publish and distribute grants information through online media and newsletters.*

ACTION 2.4 *Actively apply for government grants that support educational programs/sessions for the business community.*

ACTION 2.5 *Provide support, where possible, for local businesses when applying for state and federal grants.*

STRATEGY 3 Establish a program of networking and educational events

ACTION 3.1 *Use information from the business survey to develop a program of networking events targeted at industry. This may include:*

- *Seminars on topics of interest e.g. NBN, social media, digital marketing;*
- *Localised networking opportunities across key townships;*
- *Workshops with specific industry on topic.*

PLANNING AND COMPLIANCE SUPPORT

For the majority of businesses, the most engagement they will have with Council will be through the planning system. Although businesses can generally have difficulties in understanding the complex nature of the Local Planning Scheme, the Greater Shepparton City Council Planning Department was generally perceived as being facilitative relative to other Councils. Council must ensure that it continues to have a proactive and facilitative approach to planning systems particularly when assessing projects which will deliver investment and jobs to the region and are within strategic areas of the economy (e.g. Shepparton CBD).

The City of Frankston's 'Priority Planning' program provides an excellent model for the efficient assessment of business related permits and effective co-ordination between Council's Planning and Economic Development teams to facilitate major developments that generate significant economic benefit. The process seeks to 'cut red tape' by ensuring more efficient planning decisions are made on applications that drive employment and/or activate the city centre, whilst encouraging high quality developments.

STRATEGY 4 Ensure that Council provides a facilitative approach to the planning system which embeds a consideration of economic development outcomes

ACTION 4.1 *Implement a 'streamline' planning process to facilitate significant commercial precinct development in the Shepparton CBD, industrial precincts, and other parts of the municipality which demonstrate an economic benefit. The streamline process would apply to significant developments which have a development cost of over \$4 million and/or more than two levels within the Shepparton CBD. Apply the following steps:*

- *Develop a project team within Council consisting of an experienced statutory planner, economic development and tourism officers, and other relevant units if required (e.g. Engineering);*
- *Encourage pre-application meetings between Council to provide early guidance.*

- Ensure that all relevant information needs and documentation are outlined to the applicant at the outset.
- Provide weekly updates to the applicant;
- Determine the outcome of the application within the statutory timeframe.

ACTION 4.2 For large proposals which bring a significant economic and employment impact for Greater Shepparton (over \$20 million in investment and/or generation of over 50 on-going jobs (FTE)), senior Council staff and the CEO should be involved. This strategy is used by the City of Hume to attract larger investment.

ACTION 4.3 Identify a suitably experienced statutory planner who understands rural land use planning and agricultural issues, and can take carriage of agricultural related applications.

PRIORITY INVESTMENT PROJECTS

Greater Shepparton City Council has completed important work in recent years to prioritise critical investment projects, as outlined in the Make Shepparton Greater Campaign. In the past, securing funding for major projects has been hampered by a lack of common understanding on priorities and the political context (not within a marginal seat). It is critical that Council has agreement on investment projects that are important to attract industry and improve liveability of residents.

Section 11 provides a consolidated list of current and future infrastructure priorities.

STRATEGY 5 Ensure that Council has an updated list of priority projects which it can take to funding agencies

ACTION 5.1 Continue to promote the priority investment projects identified within the Priority Transformational Projects Prospectus. Investigate opportunities for private investment to leverage from major infrastructure development. A full list of major infrastructure projects is provided in Section 11 with actions related to each of the priority infrastructure projects.

ACTION 5.2 Once funding has been committed for priority projects, undertake the required strategic work to identify new priorities.

ACTION 5.3 Prioritise future infrastructure projects based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with strategy & policy (regional/state/federal);
- Alignment with community vision & aims;
- Meets a demonstrated need/future needs;
- Potential for flow on private sector investment;
- Potential for Government grant funding;
- Project status (shovel ready?);
- Economic, social and environmental benefit;
- Impact on fiscal base;
- On-going operational costs and viability.

A range of infrastructure projects for long-term consideration have been identified in this report, along with next steps. This has been consolidated in Section 11.

INDUSTRY RESEARCH

It is critical that ongoing research is undertaken to track industry performance. This will assist in measuring the success of the Strategy and inform strategic planning processes.

In addition to this, Council should undertake performance reporting of the economic development unit, which has been outlined in a paper prepared by EDA Victoria State Practitioners Study 'Annual Performance Measures of Local Economic Development'.

STRATEGY 6 Undertake ongoing research of industry performance

ACTION 6.1 Undertake an annual survey of industry, building on the survey completed for the economic development strategy to measure industry performance and growth. Key measures to

understand local trends include employment, revenue growth, capital investment. The survey should also seek feedback on Council's role such as participation in Council-run workshops, satisfaction with workshops, and topics of interest.

ACTION 6.2 *Continue to subscribe to economic data which is made available across Council and the business community (e.g. Remplan Economy).*

STRATEGY 7 **Implement annual performance reporting of local economic development in line with EDA performance measures paper**

ACTION 7.1 *Establish a reporting procedure to collect relevant measures as specified in the Economic Development Performance Measures Paper (EDA Victoria State Practitioner Network)*

BUSINESS GRANTS AND INCENTIVES

Business incentive and grant schemes provide a boost to businesses which demonstrate potential to create employment and build a diverse, innovative local economy. These schemes can be used as a strategic tool by Council to either attract new businesses to town or encourage reinvestment within existing businesses.

Currently there are only a handful of Councils in Victoria which have a formal business grant or incentive scheme. A review of business grants schemes is provided in the Background Report, Appendix E. Greater Shepparton can learn from successful programs implemented elsewhere, and offer incentives for businesses which align with the strategic objectives of Council, activate and occupy a vacant commercial space, and demonstrate long-term viability and economic benefit to the local area.

STRATEGY 8 **Provide incentives for the attraction of business and investment that diversify and add value to the local economy**

ACTION 8.1 *Establish a small business grant scheme aimed at supporting and attracting businesses to Greater Shepparton. Develop appropriate guidelines including:*

- *Strategic objectives and aims of the program;*
- *Confirm grant categories and eligibility criteria;*
- *Application requirements and forms;*
- *Transparent assessment process;*
- *Resourcing required to administer the scheme;*
- *On-going engagement with grant recipients and tracking of benefits of the scheme.*

An example of small business objectives and eligibility criteria is provided overleaf.

The grant scheme would provide a maximum of \$10,000 for approved businesses from an annual funding pool of \$30,000. Based on demand and take-up, this may be increased over time.

ACTION 8.2 *Economic Development, Tourism, and Events staff continue to investigate and implement innovative measures to attract investment to the region*

ACTION 8.3 *Investigate opportunities for Council to influence and grow international markets. Develop a strategic plan that outlines Council's responsibilities and actions for international engagement. This will include (but not limited to):*

- *Sister city arrangements;*
- *Receiving inbound trade missions;*
- *Organising outbound trade missions; and*
- *Highlighting the competitive strengths of the region for overseas markets.*

DRAFT SMALL BUSINESS GRANT GUIDELINES**Grant Program Objectives**

- Support the effective implementation of Greater Shepparton's Economic Development, Tourism and Events Strategy 2016-2020, as well as other Council policies and strategies.
 - Incentivise the attraction of businesses that add value to Greater Shepparton's offering as a visitor destination and generate benefits for its residents, workers, visitors and the business community in the long-term.
 - To support innovative businesses that demonstrate solid market potential and a sound business model, including long-term financial viability and economic benefit to the local area.
 - Improve commercial/industrial occupancy rates and activate key areas of the municipality such as the Shepparton CBD. Attract business activity, visitors and shoppers to key commercial precincts in the municipality by encouraging unique and creative businesses.
- OR
- Are located in a rural area and demonstrate the delivery of a quality farm-gate attraction e.g. Quality restaurant, Microbrewery or distillery, farm gate café or produce store.

Eligibility Criteria

- Have a registered Australian Business Number (ABN);
- Be located within a commercial premise in Greater Shepparton or committed to locate within Greater Shepparton (the business must sign a commercial tenancy or purchase a property before any grant funding is provided);
- Employ 20 people or less;
- In the case of a franchise, the applicant should not operate more than five establishments within Victoria; and
- Demonstrate business readiness and a sound business model. The financial viability of the business should not be dependent on the provision grant funding.

Assessment Process

It is important that the assessment process is transparent. Applications which meet the eligibility criteria should be assessed by an independent panel. This may consist of Council's Economic Development Manager, as well as experienced members from other business groups such as Tourism Greater Shepparton, Chamber of Commerce, and Committee for Greater Shepparton.

5. FOOD HUB

5.1. DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

Drive investment and employment growth in the food industry sector to capitalise on export opportunities

Greater Shepparton is situated in the heart of the Goulburn Valley, often referred to as the "Food Bowl of Australia" as around 25% of the total value of Victoria's agricultural production is generated in this area. The food production sector, and associated supply chain sectors (transport, logistics, warehousing) underpins economic performance and employment across Greater Shepparton and broader region.

Due to the scale of production and existing supply chain infrastructure and services, the region is well placed to leverage from emerging export demand and is developing into an international hub for food production and processing. There have been some significant investments in recent years, particularly in the dairy industry which has experienced rising demand from Asia for milk and related products (e.g. baby formula).

Despite recent growth, there are on-going challenges facing the industry, principally:

- The cost and availability of irrigation water;
- An ageing on farm workforce;
- The requirement for skilled workers for an increasingly mechanised food processing sector;
- Encroachment into valuable farming land (right-to-farm); and
- Biosecurity threats (fruit fly);

It is critical that Council is well informed around these issues. Currently there are no dedicated resources within the Economic Development Department who have a strong understanding of agriculture and who can advocate and run programs for the sector. A food industry resource should be the first point of contact to assist agri-business with planning needs and providing linkages to relevant programs and grant funding to assist the sector. There may be opportunity for a dedicated resource which sits at the regional level to assist Councils in the Goulburn Valley region.

At present, representation of the industry is highly fragmented with a number of groups and committees at the local and regional level. The Committee for Greater Shepparton has a number of large agricultural related firms within their membership and Council should leverage the work done by the Committee and their engagement with industry.

The Northern Victoria Food Strategy Action Plan has recently completed and includes a number of worthwhile directions. The Plan is intended to be driven through collaboration between Hume RDA, three tiers of government, and industry, with the lead agents yet to be nominated. Defining Council's role in the delivery of the plan will need to be determined going forward.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- Determine the role of Greater Shepparton City Council within the governance framework for the Goulburn Valley region
- Maximise the export potential of the region to leverage from rising food demand in Asia
- Attract and develop capable workers to address the impact of an ageing workforce
- Protect the 'right to farm' as farming practices become increasingly intensive
- Investment in enhanced supply chain infrastructure, in particular the duplication of the Goulburn Valley Highway and Shepparton bypass

- Promote improved bio-security measures to protect against fruit fly

TARGETS AND MONITORING

- Growth in the volume and output of food exports
- Employment growth in the sector
- Increase in agricultural production
- Increase in value-adding activities
- Delivery of critical supply-chain infrastructure leading to increased productivity

RELEVANT STRATEGIES

- Greater Shepparton Freight and Land Use Study 2013
- Northern Victoria Food Strategy
- Goulburn Valley Fruit Growing Industry Roadmap 2013

5.2. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Strategies and actions to develop the food sector are outlined below.

STRATEGY 9 Embed a regional approach to growth in the food sector and contribute to delivering effective and efficient regional governance

ACTION 9.1 *Engage with Hume partnerships and member Council's to determine an implementation framework for the Northern Victoria Food Strategy and Hume Workforce Development Plan which clearly defines the role and responsibility across stakeholders.*

ACTION 9.2 *Work with regional partners to develop an agricultural brand for the region which highlights the boutique strengths (i.e. continue work completed on the 'Provenance Story').*

STRATEGY 10 Strengthen engagement with the food sector and provide useful information on export markets, grants, and research and opportunities

ACTION 10.1 *Develop a business database on agri-business firms (this may be done as part of Action 1.1).*

ACTION 10.2 *Identify or recruit a suitably qualified economic development officer who is the first point of contact and responsible for engaging with the food sector. This includes developing strategic relationships with:*

- *Local growers and businesses across the food supply chain;*
- *Relevant State and Federal government personnel (e.g. Agriculture Victoria, GMM);*
- *Industry groups (e.g. VFF, Horticulture Centre for Excellence); and*
- *Education and training institutions;*

The nominated staff member should have a strong understanding of local agricultural conditions.

ACTION 10.3 *Implement an annual food sector roundtable event which brings together local food sector businesses to discuss major obstacles to improving the sector's competitiveness e.g. economics, innovation, market access and the regulatory environment. Invite industry experts to present at the roundtable.*

ACTION 10.4 *Develop strategic relationships with senior management of large food businesses and encourage them to get involved in local industry and community events to share their expertise.*

ACTION 10.5 *Seek out existing programs that educate agribusiness owners and managers in leadership and employer skills and sponsor delivery of these in the region.*

ACTION 10.6 *Prepare case studies of SME businesses in the region which have successfully leveraged overseas markets. Promote these examples through online channels, business networking events, and newsletters.*

STRATEGY 11 **Encourage and facilitate investment in critical supply chain and enabling infrastructure**

ACTION 11.1 *Continue to implement the findings of the Freight and Land-use Study 2013.*

ACTION 11.2 *Facilitate on-going dialogue with agri-businesses, transport firms, VicRoads and Council to identify and roll out infrastructure upgrades to support Higher Productivity Vehicles (HPV).*

ACTION 11.3 *Support the potential development of an Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) bonded container facility in Greater Shepparton to support the Goulburn Valley, Rivenna and Murray regions. Council should work with local transport businesses, industry bodies, and Committee for Greater Shepparton to secure State Government support for the project, and lobby Federal Government.*

ACTION 11.4 *Work with regional funding partners to secure funding for the construction of the GV Shepparton Bypass.*

ACTION 11.5 *GV Link remains a significant long-term opportunity to develop state of the art logistics centre. However, attracting private investment will remain a challenge until the GV Bypass is constructed. Once planning is complete and funding secured for the GV Bypass, undertake a renewed market sounding process to promote GV Link to prospective businesses.*

ACTION 11.6 *Advocate for the development of a Melbourne-Brisbane inland freight rail route which leverages the production potential of the Victorian and NSW irrigation regions, and includes Greater Shepparton. Continue to support and work with the Food Bowl Inland Rail Alliance to lobby the State and Federal Governments and the Rail Implementation Group, to properly consider the Shepparton-Narrandera alignment.*

If Greater Shepparton is not included in the final alignment of the Melbourne-Brisbane route, lobby state government and VicTrack to upgrade the Mangalore-Tocumwal Line to standardised gauge to enable access to the new line broader national networks.

STRATEGY 12 **Diversify the agricultural base and encourage the expansion of value-adding, gourmet food sectors, and research activities**

In addition to the food tourism expansion initiatives in the Visitor Economy section:

ACTION 12.1 *Encourage the expansion of vegetable growing in the region by the following:*

- *Engage with rural estate agents to identify available sites which may be available for vegetable growing which are an appropriate size, have water rights, and which can be used to promote to prospective growers;*
- *Distribute the recently developed Vegetable Grower's Prospectus to growers currently located in peri-urban Melbourne, and other vegetable growing districts including Bacchus Marsh, Pakenham, Werribee South, and Northern Geelong;*
- *Engage with growers directly, including industry groups (e.g. Vegetable Growers Association, Western Victorian Vegetable Association) to promote the opportunities in Greater Shepparton and available sites.*

STRATEGY 13 Assist the development of a capable and healthy workforce to support the agri-business sector

ACTION 13.1 Support the Goulburn Valley Transition Committee and Home Regional Workforce Development Plan to ensure a regional approach to workforce development. Implement localised initiatives which align with the regional policy as outlined within this strategy.

ACTION 13.2 Support the work of the Horticulture Centre of Excellence and assist in establishing a Horticulture Cluster which develops research, education and employment pathway links between education institutions and local industry. Engage with the Horticulture Centre of Excellence and assist in lobbying efforts to gain funding for the program.

ACTION 13.3 Build on the existing Dookie Food and Fibre Event and raise its profile within Greater Shepparton and surrounds.

ACTION 13.4 Engage with the Better Together Schools Alliance and other education industry stakeholders in regards to developing agricultural learning and training programs based on successful models elsewhere. This includes:

- Mansfield High School and Tyrell College Sea Lake vocational education programs; and
- Timboons P12 early education program.

Invite key people from these programs to meet with the Better Schools Alliance. Seek funding through regional industry groups, and State and Federal Government grants to develop programs.

ACTION 13.5 Facilitate greater links between Melbourne University Dookie Agricultural College and local agricultural businesses to provide greater exposure of students to the local industry and build pathways to capture a greater proportion of graduates to stay in the region. This would consider:

- Developing a dialogue with Dookie College teachers and administrators;

- Investigate opportunities for local businesses to host students, be involved in internships and work placement programs, or research programs;

- Identify willing local businesses which may be interested in participating in programs with the Agricultural College.

ACTION 13.6 Work with LaTrobe University to assist in developing agri-business related courses.

ACTION 13.7 Support the on-going maintenance and operations of community halls which are integral to community wellbeing in rural farming communities.

ACTION 13.8 Advocate Federal Government for efficient visa systems for skilled migrants and working holiday tourist visas

STRATEGY 14 Assist food sector businesses and industry groups to address on-going constraints to investment

In addition to the agricultural workforce initiatives in Strategy 13:

ACTION 14.1 Ensure that planning provisions protect and recognise the importance of agricultural production and the right-to-farm. The current local planning provisions and Rural Land Use Strategy emphasise the economic importance of agricultural production. However, Council should:

- Monitor planning outcomes to ensure that changing trends in agriculture (e.g. production intensification) are reflected within local planning policy, and planning is not an impediment to production growth;

- Identify/recruit a suitably experienced statutory planner who understands rural land use planning and agricultural issues, and can take carriage of agricultural related applications. This person should act as a first point of contact for farmers requiring a planning permit.

ACTION 14.2 *Engage with local grower's associations and Horticulture Centre of Excellence to investigate establishing a fruit-fly management program utilising successful models used elsewhere (e.g. Moira-Berrigan No Flies on Us). This would assist residents and property owners to understand, identify and manage the risk of the fruit fly in their home. Council should ensure that current best-practice fruit fly management is implemented on public land.*

ACTION 14.3 *Continue a dialogue with Goulburn Murray Water (GMW), State and Federal governments, and farmer's representatives on water availability and price issues. While it is acknowledged that there is limited scope for Council to influence water issues, it is still the primary constraint for farmers and it is important that Council are well informed around these issues. Particularly during times of water scarcity and high prices, Council may assist farmers through other avenues (e.g. providing support services, fast-tracking planning permits which relate to critical on-farm infrastructure e.g. bridges, dairy feedpods).*

ACTION 14.4 *Investigate the opportunity for fruit irradiation facility in order to manage fruit fly contamination and secure export markets. This may be explored as part of an export precinct that also includes the bonded warehouse facility (see action 11.2).*

STRATEGY 15 **Increasing export opportunities**

ACTION 15.1 *Develop marketing collateral in key international languages, with the priority being Chinese.*

ACTION 15.2 *Work with Business Victoria, the Department of Agriculture, RDV and other industry bodies to provide information on grant opportunities and the steps required to become 'export ready', particularly relevant to SMEs.*

ACTION 15.3 *Work with regional partners to develop training programs, mentoring supporting, and information sessions for SME agricultural businesses in regard to export opportunities, technology, and innovation. Monitor and capitalise funding opportunities that allow for co-ordination of workshops and seminars.*

ACTION 15.4 *Work with the Victorian Government to identify key areas and products for export development.*

6. TRAINING & ATTRACTING A CAPABLE WORKFORCE

6.1. DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

Retain and attract a capable workforce through improvement to the livability of Greater Shepparton and enhanced training and education pathways for existing workers and residents

Greater Shepparton faces significant workforce issues including a rapidly ageing workforce with a lack of younger workers to replace retirees, the loss of young residents and workers to Melbourne and other large regional centres, and the significant challenges in attracting highly skilled workers to the region.

There is a critical need to upskill workers to replace an ageing workforce, keep pace with technology advancements, support higher value-added products, and leverage emerging agribusiness opportunities. This will require a sustained effort across industry, government authorities at all levels, and education providers. The Hume Regional Workforce Development Plan provides a regional approach to guide efforts. Implementation will be driven at the sub-regional (Goulburn) and local level.

Youth unemployment and disadvantage has emerged as not just a significant social challenge, but a long-term economic imperative. Consultation with businesses demonstrated that it is often difficult to find suitably trained and 'job ready' young people. Emerging economic opportunities, particularly in agribusiness, will require skilled workers who are able to successfully transition from study to work. While there is a lot of work currently being undertaken in Greater Shepparton by various government and NGOs, there is a lack of overarching strategic direction across the sector. Addressing these issues will require an all of community approach currently being driven by the Lighthouse Foundation.

'Livability' is a key driver for regional investment and business locational decision making. Consultation with businesses and major organisations indicated that poor perceptions of the livability in the region undermined their ability to attract workers and retain skilled residents. Specific areas to improve the livability appeal of Greater Shepparton include:

- Poor perceptions of crime and safety;
- Limited rail services connecting Shepparton to Melbourne;
- Arts, cultural, and hospitality options;
- Broader tertiary education opportunities;
- Attractive rural living opportunities; and
- Vitality of the area for young residents (e.g. activities other than of sport).

Other large regional centres such as Bendigo and Ballarat have leveraged funding for significant improvements to their livability which has subsequently provided major economic benefits in population growth and a boost in professional workers to the region.

There are significant linkages between improving and promoting livability, and developing tourism product and experiences. Council may consider utilising resources within the Tourism Unit to deliver better livability outcomes.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- Critical skill gaps across a number of sectors including farming, transport and logistics, trades, and professional services;
- High youth unemployment and social disadvantage (as highlighted by the work completed by the Lighthouse Foundation);
- Low retention of young residents;
- Need for investment to improve the liveability of the region;
- Poor perceptions of Greater Shepparton undermining the ability of business to attract the right staff; and
- Strengthening collaboration between industries and education providers.

RELEVANT STRATEGIES

- Hume Region Workforce Development Plan 2015-2018
- The State of Shepparton's Children Report 2014, The Lighthouse Foundation
- Make Shepparton Greater Campaign Prospectus

TARGETS AND MONITORING

- Population growth above current State Government projections (Victoria in Future);
- Decreased unemployment rate
- Decrease youth unemployment rate;
- Increase in the number of people who study and work locally;
- Development of critical liveability infrastructure (e.g. expanded rail services);
- Retention of young population.

6.2. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Strategies and actions are structured by the following key areas:

- Liveability and population attraction;
- Workforce Training and Upskilling; and
- Youth welfare and employment pathways.

LIVEABILITY AND POPULATION ATTRACTION**STRATEGY 16 Encourage investment in infrastructure which is critical to improving the liveability of the region**

In addition to the tourism product development initiatives in the Visitor Economy and projects in the CBD Revitalisation Sections:

ACTION 16.1 *Continue to promote priority projects to improve liveability with a particular emphasis on improving rail services between Shepparton and Melbourne which are inadequate for a major regional centre, including the high speed rail project.*

ACTION 16.2 *Implement the findings of the Sports Precinct Masterplan and Shepparton Stadium Redevelopment business case.*

ACTION 16.3 *Support the redevelopment of Goulburn Valley Health and the staged implementation Goulburn Valley Health Capital Master Plan and Feasibility Study. Identify flow on private investment opportunities which can leverage the significant public investment such as aged care facilities, allied health businesses.*

ACTION 16.4 *Undertake a process for neighbourhood community planning to develop greater local character in Shepparton, promote a greater sense of place, and improve liveability (similar to the community plans for Greater Shepparton's small towns). This includes:*

- Identification of Shepparton neighbourhoods;
- Establishment of community reference groups at the neighbourhood level;
- Consultation with community regarding local services, amenity, landscaping streetscape;
- Development of a Neighbourhood Community Action Plan.

STRATEGY 17 Promote the strengths of Greater Shepparton as a location for skilled workers

ACTION 17.1 Continue to use the Great Things Happen Here Campaign to promote the strengths of Greater Shepparton. Ensure that materials reflect the key factors which influence families to relocate to a rural location. Based on a survey of Melbourne residents undertaken by Urban Enterprise, this includes:

- A large regional centre with access to community infrastructure and services;
- Relaxed lifestyle;
- Scenic natural environment;
- High quality and choice of retail, entertainment and food and beverage;
- Quality job opportunities;
- Mediterranean climate; and
- Proximity to Melbourne.

ACTION 17.2 Where possible assist industry in the recruitment of skilled workers. Council can:

- Stay informed on State and Federal Government grants and packages for recruitment and relocation of skilled workers. Provide information to industry through online channels and business engagement sessions;
- Continue to support the work of the Shepparton Ethnic Council to support new migrant arrivals to the region;

ACTION 17.3 Advocate State Government to commit to funding and implementation of additional regional relocation initiatives to replace the former Regional Living Expo.

WORKFORCE TRAINING AND UPSKILLING

STRATEGY 18 Work with regional partners to implement the key directions of the Hume Workforce Development Plan

In addition to the workforce initiatives for the agricultural sector outlined in Strategy 13:

ACTION 18.1 Work with the Goulburn Partnership to recognise workforce development as a priority issue and undertake initiatives which align with the Hume Workforce Development Plan

ACTION 18.2 Secure funding support to develop industry workforce development plans for critical sectors to identify, develop and implement targeted programs in conjunction with regional education and training providers. The priority sectors include:

- Health, Aged Care and Community Services; and
- Transport, Warehousing and Logistics.

STRATEGY 19 Encourage the expansion of tertiary education facilities and course availability in Greater Shepparton

ACTION 19.1 Liaise with LaTrobe University, GO TAFE and Melbourne University around the development of courses and research programs which match the needs of the Goulburn Valley Region. This includes:

- Agri-business;
- Health and aged care;
- Hydro-engineering and irrigation technology; and
- Indigenous studies.

YOUTH WELFARE AND EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

STRATEGY 20 Work with NGOs and regional authorities to support initiatives to address youth unemployment and disadvantage in Greater Shepparton

ACTION 20.1 Promote the Victorian Government's Back to Work Scheme to local businesses to encourage them to hire disadvantaged job seekers

ACTION 20.2 Work in partnership with public sector bodies in the Goulburn Valley region to develop and adopt an Aboriginal Employment Accord

ACTION 20.3 Work with community representatives and NGOs to assist in developing a Youth hub in the Shepparton CBD. The development of the Youth Hub should respond to the needs of Greater Shepparton's youth, and have regard to the new GO TAFE Skills and Jobs Centre to ensure that there is not an overlap in services. The Lighthouse Project is currently undertaking a consultation process with the community to determine the role and function of the Hub. Council can support the concept by:

- Support NGOs undertaking community consultation activities to determine the role and services provided at the Youth Hub;
- Identify appropriate sites, including opportunities for co-location within Council and government owned buildings;
- Seek funding to undertake a business case to support the concept;
- Seek state and federal funding, as well as philanthropic donations to help establish the Youth Hub.

ACTION 20.4 Continue to support groups that aim to improve educational outcomes and assist young people such as the Better Together Alliance, Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project, and Rumbalara. Encourage, support, and celebrate the philanthropic initiatives of the local business community. Council may:

- Encourage local business and industry representatives to get involved in assisting youth oriented organisations either through funding assistance, employment pathways, and mentoring;
- Provide recognition of businesses which contribute to youth issues in the community through highlighting their activities in Council's online channels; and
- Develop an annual award for businesses to recognize philanthropic endeavours (this may be done as part of the Shepparton Chamber of Commerce Awards).

7. RE-INVIGORATION OF SHEPPARTON CBD

7.1. DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

Support the role of Shepparton CBD as the premier service centre in central Victoria and the development of a diversity of uses and activities

The Shepparton CBD plays a vital role in the regional economy as the largest concentration of employment, and as a regional service centre for shopping, business, tourism, entertainment, community, civic and other facilities and services.

Economic conditions in the CBD have deteriorated over time, and redevelopment and investment fundamentals are weak. According to some property owners, rent for CBD commercial properties has fallen significantly in recent years, vacancy rates are higher, and there is minimal 'appetite' for new commercial development in the CBD. There are a number of factors which have combined to undermine the economic health of the CBD, including:

- Increased competition from expanding shopping centres (Marketplace and Riverside);
- Leakage of office development outside the CBD centre (mainly to Shepparton North);
- Parking and access issues; and
- Negative perceptions of safety and amenity.

There is a clear and urgent need for action to revitalise the CBD economy, in particular;

- Encourage more trips to the CBD for retail and entertainment;
- Facilitate greater mix of daytime uses near the centre of the CBD particularly employment/office uses; and

- Encourage reinvestment/redevelopment of key sites in the CBD.

There are a number of major developments proposed for the CBD; Vaughan and Maude Street Revitalisation, Shepparton Courts Precinct Redevelopment; and Shepparton Railway Station Precinct Redevelopment. All three projects will provide significant investment and improvement to the urban realm, and create opportunities for new business.

The recent Commercial Activity Centres Strategy provides an Action Plan for the Shepparton CBD which should be implemented progressively. A number of the actions are directly relevant to the Economic Development Department and may be considered within the scope of the proposed CBD Place Manager role.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- Need for a greater diversity of uses in the CBD
- Attract office development in the centre of the CBD
- Address declining performance of the Maude Street Mall
- Facilitate major redevelopment opportunities within the CBD
- Address poor perceptions of safety and amenity of the CBD

RELEVANT STRATEGIES

- Commercial Activity Centres Strategy 2016
- Shepparton CBD Strategy 2008
- Shepparton Tertiary Education Precinct Plan 2005

TARGETS AND MONITORING

- Increase employment in the CBD
- Decrease in vacancy rates
- Development of new office floorspace
- Improved customer and visitor perceptions

7.2. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Strategies and actions to progress development of the CBD are outlined within the following major areas:

- Infrastructure and site development; and
- Diversity of uses and visitor experience.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND REDEVELOPMENT**STRATEGY 21 Revitalize the Maude Street Mall to reinvigorate space and attract customers back to the mall****ACTION 21.1** *Revitalize the Maude Street Mall, with particular attention to:*

- Signage;
- Access and directional signage to the multi-deck car park on Stewart Street;
- Bicycle access and bicycle parking infrastructure;
- Allowance for outdoor dining for specific areas;
- Flexible stage and events space at the southern end of the mall;
- A 'destination playground' (a quality outdoor playground which draws families to the region e.g. Rye Foreshore, Melbourne Children's Hospital);
- Telstra Tower and improved lighting and amenity around the public toilets;

- Design of an events program for the mall which should include children and family events, markets, music, and other cultural events;
- Services for events e.g. power.

The mall revitalization should also consider other place-making initiatives which reinforce Mall as Greater Shepparton's prominent town square and meeting place, and respond to the key place-making principles:

- Sociability; A friendly and welcoming space;
- Uses and Activities; Provides opportunities for multiple activities and is used throughout the day;
- Comfort and Wellbeing; Presents itself as being safe and clean;

ACTION 21.2

Over the short-term, continue to implement activation initiatives which draw visitors and customers into the Maude Street Mall. This includes:

- Promote outdoor dining in the Maude Street Mall by considering waiving fees for outdoor dining permits;
- Encourage food vans to locate in the Mall during peak periods;
- Activate the Telstra Tower by investigating and implementing projects that enhance the experience on the viewing deck to increase visitation to the tower (e.g. signage, street art);
- Continue to implement a program of events and activities within the Mall including the Summer and Winter Market, CBD Fun events. Identify opportunities for new activities and events particularly music and cultural events. This may occur at times during low visitor periods or leveraging from the major events calendar;
- Encourage activation initiatives such as busking and children's activities;
- Roll out free Wi-Fi access for patrons in the mall (Action 27.2 within this Strategy);

ACTION 21.3 *Attract retail, hospitality and professional businesses to fill vacancies in the Mall. Working with landowners, appoint a suitability qualified commercial property agent to develop a Leasing Strategy for the Mall. The Strategy should consider:*

- Customer target markets;
- Gaps in the current retail supply;
- The optimal tenant/retail mix; and
- Specific retailers which should be targeted.

Council may assist in the attraction of identified retailers by utilising the grants and incentive schemes.

This would be done following the endorsement of a design concept for Maudie Street Mall.

STRATEGY 22 **Facilitate major redevelopment opportunities in the CBD and undertake initiatives to maximise the flow-on benefits for surrounding businesses**

ACTION 22.1 *Ensure that the Shepparton CBD is considered the prime location when determining the best and potential locations for major developments in the future e.g. accommodation, multi-storey office, conference facilities.*

ACTION 22.2 *Work with regional funding partners to secure funding for Shepparton CBD Revitalisation Project Stage 2 (Maudie Street Bus Interchange) for the construction of the bus interchange, retail precinct, piazza and community facilities.*

ACTION 22.3 *Leverage Shepparton Low Courts redevelopment by promoting retail and office development in the precinct. Liaise with landowners and local developers in regards to the opportunities.*

ACTION 22.4 *Seek funding for and develop a masterplan for the Shepparton Railway Station Redevelopment (CBD Revitalisation Project Stage 3) which:*

- Improves the public space and amenity surrounding the railway station;
- Develops improved connections between the railway station and CBD centre; and
- Identifies redevelopment opportunities for underutilised VicTrack land adjacent to the railway station.

ACTION 22.5 *Progress planning for the development of a Youth Hub and redeveloped Shepparton Business Centre within a CBD location (as outlined in Actions 19.1 and 30.1 in this Strategy).*

ACTION 22.6 *Implement an enabling approach to renewal and major re-development within the Shepparton CBD, and work closely with developers and potential investors to overcome planning barriers. Council should:*

- Support the innovative use of vacant buildings or sites.
- Statutory Planning functions should have due regard to the policy priority for renewal of the CBD, and input from Economic Development and Tourism officers as appropriate.
- Support the consolidation of sites where this is required to facilitate redevelopment, subject to other planning considerations being met (as outlined in the Commercial Activities Strategy 2016, Action 5.2).

STRATEGY 23 **Improve access and parking availability in the Shepparton CBD**

ACTION 23.1 *Ensure that future transport planning for the Shepparton CBD takes into account cycling access and facilities. Recognise the ability of high-quality cycling infrastructure to create additional visitation associated with recreational visits, as has been identified in main street style centres elsewhere in Australia. Implement those aspects of the Cycling Strategy 2013-2017 that are relevant to the Shepparton CBD (as outlined in the Commercial Activities Strategy 2016, Action 3.1).*

ACTION 23.2 Review the location and availability of short term convenience parking in the CBD (up to 75 minutes) to ensure that CBD remains attractive to convenience shoppers (as outlined in the Commercial Activities Strategy 2016, Action 3.2).

ACTION 23.3 Liaise with the owner of the Stewart Street car park to upgrade the multi-deck car park, in accordance with the concept plan in the Shepparton CBD Strategy, by including:

- Improvement to the Stewart Street frontage. This may include creating active street frontage retail or uses at the ground level with retail activities on the ground floor;
- Active frontages and uses along the edge of the laneway to the Target arcade;
- Identification signage on Stewart Street;
- Installation of appropriate lighting and CCTV within the car park.

ACTION 23.4 Undertake a site selection study to identify strategic locations to develop multi-story parking including opportunities for commercial floorspace at ground or upper levels. This would include Council-owned surface car parking including (Weisford Street, Rowe Street, and Edward Street) and areas around the education precinct.

The project could provide an example and act as a catalyst for multi-deck car parking and mixed-use development in the CBD. The Edward Street car park development in Bendigo provides a good example of a Council-led development to absorb car parking demand for additional commercial development in the CBD.

DIVERSITY OF USES AND VISITOR EXPERIENCE

STRATEGY 24 Continue to develop the Shepparton CBD's education precinct to provide an enhanced environment for students and maximise the economic benefit for surrounding businesses

ACTION 24.1 Investigate the feasibility of relocating the Shepparton Business Centre to co-locate within the tertiary education precinct, and build pathways for students to small business.

ACTION 24.2 Create a working group between tertiary education providers and Council that ensures synergies in operations are maximised and Shepparton progresses as a 'student-friendly city' (as outlined in the Commercial Activities Strategy 2016, Action 2.1).

ACTION 24.3 Develop a long-term process of co-ordination of planning and development that integrates the future growth and expansion of LaTrobe University and GO TAFE into the Shepparton CBD. This will be informed by the dialogue developed in the action above (as outlined in the Commercial Activities Strategy 2016, Action 2.2).

ACTION 24.4 Promote the development of student residential housing in the CBD as a long-term opportunity, aligning with growth and development of tertiary education institutions.

ACTION 24.5 Engage with CBD traders to promote the student population as an emerging and large potential customer base. Encourage initiatives such as discounts for customers with student ID etc.

STRATEGY 25 Improve the hospitality and entertainment offerings in the CBD and promote it as a safe and social location

ACTION 25.1 Implement a CBD street art program to provide a welcoming and interesting environment for locals and visitors. This should target poorly presented areas and large blank walls (e.g. Stewart Street, Rowe Street) and utilise local youth, art and indigenous groups to be involved. The Shepp-Y-SAart program may be used as a good example to continue and expand. Review the program implemented in Benalla as a case study.

ACTION 25.2 Implement a CBD banner program to include a mixture of flagpole signage and others to advertise events. Identify key locations to install flagpole infrastructure.

ACTION 25.3 Encourage the application of the 'Renew Newcastle' or other similar schemes seeking to create active frontages and activity in otherwise vacant tenancies or land. This can include the use of pop-up shops, temporary displays and other short-term uses for otherwise unutilised space. A flexible merit-based approach is required from Council to ensure such

projects are feasible and can be approved (or refused) in a prompt manner (as outlined in the Commercial Activities Strategy 2016, Action 5.3).

ACTION 25.4 Encourage the development of Fryers Street as a gourmet food and restaurant strip. This strip has emerged in recent years following streetscape improvements and is unique in Shepparton. There is opportunity to strengthen the number of cafes along the strip as well boutique, independent retailers. Council should utilise the Small Business Grants Program to attract these types of traders to the precinct.

ACTION 25.5 Support the development of a Fryers Street Food and Wine Festival which celebrates regional produce and local food and beverage businesses.

ACTION 25.6 Update wayfinding signage in the CBD to highlight the Fryers Street Food Precinct from key areas in the CBD e.g. Maude Street Mall, Wynham Street.

ACTION 25.7 Encourage the development of High Street, as well as Maude Street (between the Mall and Rowe Street) as a multi-cultural food precinct. This strip has established in recent years with a number of restaurants and food stores from a variety of backgrounds.

There is significant opportunity to improve the amenity along High Street, particularly once the Shepparton bypass has been constructed and traffic and freight movements have eased. There are already plans to undertake streetscape works along Maude Street, between High Street and Vaughan Street, as outlined in the CBD Revitalising Project Stage 3 including:

- Landscaping, a revised car-parking layout and pedestrian access.
- Replacement of the roundabout at the intersection of Maude and Vaughan Streets with traffic lights.
- Removal of the existing bus parking area to the north-east of the intersection of Maude Street and Vaughan Streets.

Over the long-term, a streetscape masterplan should be developed for High Street which aims to improve the amenity, pedestrian environment, access, and landscaping.

ACTION 25.8 Encourage the establishment of the High Street Food Strip over the short-term by the following:

- Engage with existing traders and other interested parties (e.g. Shepparton Ethnic Council) and co-ordinate the development of a working group to identify opportunities for joint marketing, branding, and amenity improvements;
- Once established, work with the group to develop a marketing strategy and campaign to promote High Street;
- Activate blank walls such as the Target store frontage. This may be in the form of a mural or art which celebrates the multi-cultural heritage of the region;
- Encourage hospitality and retail businesses to leverage the redevelopment of the Shepparton Low Courts; and
- Utilise the Small Business Grants Program to attract other food traders to the precinct.

ACTION 25.9 Encourage temporary food trucks to setup in strategic areas of the CBD (around Victoria Park Lake, Maude Street Mall) during peak visitor periods such as Christmas shopping period and major events.

ACTION 25.10 Ensure that advertising and marketing for the Shepparton CBD includes the generalised theme for the centre as a clean, safe and friendly destination. Wherever possible, encourage stakeholders to pursue the clean, safe and friendly theme (as outlined in the Commercial Activities Strategy 2016, Action 6.1).

ACTION 25.11 Encourage a night-time economy in the Shepparton CBD that includes casual dining, entertainment and family activities for a broader demographic than currently uses the centre after normal business hours. Co-ordinate relevant stakeholders to develop a Night Time Strategy for the CBD (as outlined in the Commercial Activities Strategy 2016, Action 6.2).

The Strategy should consider initiatives to draw visitors to the CBD during night-time as well as managing amenity and safety issues. Areas which should be considered as part of a Night-Time Economy Strategy include:

- Identify the key night-time precincts (e.g. Village Cinema, Mall, Fryers Street);
- Identify areas requiring improved lighting as well as opportunities for interesting feature lighting to enhance the night time atmosphere;
- Consultation with night-time traders, police and emergency services;
- Implement night time entertainment to coincide with major events;
- Identify barriers for businesses establishing night-time venues (e.g. music); and
- Opportunities for night-time events.

ACTION 25.12 Undertake an annual review of safety measures and programs for the Shepparton CBD, including consideration of new measures that might be implemented (in consultation with police, traders and other stakeholders) as well as review of existing programs and actions (as outlined in the Commercial Activities Strategy 2016, Action 6.3).

ACTION 25.13 Investigate the opportunity to hold rooftop cinema events within the CBD. Rooftop cinema events could take place at a venue such as the CBD multi-deck car park which would also

enhance awareness of the carpark and work towards enhancing the night atmosphere. Examples include Curtin Rooftop Cinema and Lido Cinema. Engage with Village Cinemas on opportunities to partner for such as event.

STRATEGY 26 Promote the Shepparton CBD as northern Victoria's premium office location and improve amenity for office workers

ACTION 26.1 Encourage development of the Welsford Street Precinct (between Vaughan and Fryers Street) as a prime office location, as identified through the CBD Strategy.

ACTION 26.2 Undertake a development concept for the part Council-owned surface car park on the eastern side of Welsford Street. This would include multi-deck car parking and commercial offices uses on the ground or at upper levels. Seek tenants to support the development (e.g. Council or State Government office, private organisations)

ACTION 26.3 Encourage new office floorspace development to occur in the CBD. Seek planning interventions to limit the linear growth of office uses along Wynaitham Street north of the CBD.

8. FUTURE INDUSTRIES

8.1. DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

Diversify the economic base to capture investment in emerging industries which are suited to Greater Shepparton

Economic diversification has been identified as a critical objective within previous economic development strategies for Greater Shepparton and the broader Hume Region. The over reliance on the food sector can lead to disinvestment and severe social impacts during periods of downturn in the sector (as demonstrated during drought years), and limits the diversity of job opportunities in the region. There are a number of specific niche opportunities to grow emerging industries which are subject to current studies and proposals, and can be driven and led by Council. These are summarised as follows:

- The rising national 'digital economy' is offering new economic and social opportunities to deliver more effective and efficient services and capture new forms of business³. For regional centres such as Greater Shepparton, the digital economy can reduce the distance between businesses and markets and empower small companies to become global exporters of products and services.
- The equine and greyhound racing industries are significant rural sectors across central Victoria. There is a proposal which is being progressed to develop an integrated Greyhound and Equine Precinct in Kialla, at the current site of the Goulburn Valley Harness Racing Club. An economic impact assessment of the proposal shows an additional \$287 million in economic output and 744 jobs over the construction phase of the project.

³The 'digital economy' has been described by the Commonwealth Government as the 'global network of economic and social activities that are enabled platforms such as the internet, mobile, and sensor networks'.

- There are a number of opportunities to leverage green technology innovations in Greater Shepparton through the use of waste recovery and alternative energy generation. A feasibility study found that there are significant opportunities in Greater Shepparton for enhanced waste and resource recovery operations and facilities to service the wider GV Region. The waste and recovery sector covers the generation, collection, and drop-off services, sorting, transfer, reprocessing, export, reuse, and disposal of waste materials. These activities occur across all sectors of the economy including households, businesses, industry, and government.

The Shepparton Business Centre (SBC) is an important asset which is managed within the Economic Development Department. The SBC provides subsidised office space to support emerging businesses in Greater Shepparton and can play an important role in seeding new business types. There are a number of opportunities to improve the operations and facilities of the SBC based on lessons from a number of new business incubators which have established in recent years.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- Create a greater diversity of job opportunities in Greater Shepparton
- Support growth in the equine sector
- Grow the digital economy
- Grow the arts and creative sectors
- Encourage greater utilisation of the SBC

RELEVANT STRATEGIES

- Draft GRVT Equine Precinct Masterplan
- Digital Hume Strategy
- Draft Greater Shepparton Resource Recovery Precinct Feasibility and Site Selection Study 2016

8.2. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Strategies and actions for Future Industries Theme have been structured by the following key areas:

- Niche Industries;
- Shepparton Business Centre.

NICHE INDUSTRIES**STRATEGY 27 Grow the equine sector in Greater Shepparton**

ACTION 27.1 *Secure support to redevelop the Goulburn Valley Equine and Greyhound Racing Precinct and advance the opportunities identified in the Goulburn Valley Equine and Greyhound Racing Precinct Masterplan and Feasibility Study due to be finalised in 2016.*

ACTION 27.2 *Once planning and funding commitments are finalised, work with the equine industry to undertake a market sounding process with equine related businesses located outside of the municipality to locate within the new precinct. (e.g. trainers).*

STRATEGY 28 Leverage growth in the digital economy for local businesses and implement the priority actions identified in *Digital Hume* and seek funding where required

ACTION 28.1 *Promote Greater Shepparton as an 'NBN ready' location within business and residential attraction material and promotions utilising the 'Digital Hume' brand. This may target lifestyle entrepreneurs/tree-changers to relocate to the region.*

ACTION 28.2 *Roll-out Wi-Fi 'hotspots' which provide access to free wireless internet in strategic areas within the Shepparton CBD. This includes the Maude Street Mall, Fryers Street, Target Arcade.*

ACTION 28.3 *Continue to develop a program of workshops for local businesses to enhance digital skills and literacy particularly within website development and social media. Utilise the business survey (Action 6.1) to ascertain demand for other digital related workshops.*

ACTION 28.4 *Grow the arts and culture industry sectors, leveraging off the competitive advantages of Greater Shepparton including indigenous and multi-cultural populations.*

ACTION 28.5 *Support a Creative Shepparton initiative and the incorporation of those principles in the Council Plan.*

ACTION 28.6 *Secure funding to improve arts and cultural facilities including the new Shepparton Art Museum and upgrades to Eastbank.*

STRATEGY 29 Encourage the growth of green technology industries

ACTION 29.1 *Support and encourage green technology investment.*

ACTION 29.2 *Implement findings from the Resource Recovery Precinct and Site Selection Study (review of sites across entire Goulburn Valley).*

SHEPPARTON BUSINESS CENTRE

STRATEGY 30 Investigate the relocation of the Shepparton Business Centre into the CBD

ACTION 30.1 Undertake a concept plan and business case for the development and relocation of the Shepparton Business Centre to a Shepparton CBD location. The plan will investigate:

- Potential CBD locations which have greater exposure and improve surrounding amenity for tenants;
- Opportunity for contemporary hot desking facilities to service the large business visitor market;
- Opportunities to link with tertiary education providers;
- Opportunities to increase operating revenue;
- Other services which could be provided to the broader Greater Shepparton business community; and
- Funding opportunities which may be leveraged.

STRATEGY 31 Encourage better utilisation and awareness of the Shepparton Business Centre as a location for entrepreneurs and start-up businesses

ACTION 31.1 Review the current positioning of the Shepparton Business Centre to become a broader service for small businesses across Greater Shepparton; a one-stop-shop for assistance and information. Utilise the small business survey to identify other services which the SBC could be provided to the municipality's small businesses.

ACTION 31.2 Review business selection criteria for the business centre in relation to:

- Attracting a major, long-term anchor tenant to subsidise costs of the business centre;

- Allowing similar types of businesses to locate at the centre.

ACTION 31.3 Continue to develop and promote the technical and digital resources of the SBC as a point of difference. This includes promoting the SBC as 'NBH ready' and reinvesting in digital technology e.g. high quality video conferencing facilities, mobile interactive whiteboards (major re-investments should be considered against the outcomes of the Concept Plan - Action 29.1)

ACTION 31.4 Strengthen the digital presence of the SBC. This includes:

- Undertake a revamp of the website to include a contemporary layout, presentation, improved content, and optimisation for mobile devices; and
- Utilise social media to promote the business centre and its activities to the broader Greater Shepparton business community.

ACTION 31.5 Continue to support local business events, networking opportunities, and seminars such as the Shepparton Business Awards and Victorian Small Business Festival.

ACTION 31.6 Engage with tertiary education institutions (LaTrobe University, GO TAFE) in regards to promoting the SBC to graduating students who may be considering starting a business.

ACTION 31.7 Strengthen relationships with local business groups and professional organisations (e.g. Shepparton Chamber of Commerce, Committee for Greater Shepparton).

ACTION 31.8 Develop and promote case studies of 'success stories' of businesses which have graduated from the SBC and subsequently expanded their business.

ACTION 31.9 Implement data collection methods to track businesses which leave or 'graduate' from the SBC to track businesses performance and expansion. This may take the form of an annual survey to track the number of employees, business turnover, and location.

9. VISITOR ECONOMY

9.1. DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

Grow the visitor economy through improved product, experiences, targeted marketing and visitor servicing

Greater Shepparton attracts an estimated 1.2 million visitors per annum according to Tourism Research Australia. Much of this visitation (900,000) is attributed to daytrip visitors.

Analysis of visitor data for Greater Shepparton shows the key drivers for visitation include visiting friends and relatives, shopping, business travel, health care, education, events and holiday purposes. The range of drivers for visitation highlight the need for a much broader focus than traditional holiday leisure tourism with regard to targeted marketing and visitor servicing.

There are significant resources dedicated to marketing and visitor services, with numerous organisations having various roles. This leads to an overlap in services and often mixed messaging in the market place. There is opportunity to streamline the resources dedicated to tourism and direct resources more effectively in promotion to key markets, visitor information services targeted to visitor need and product development which will attract more visitors, grow overnight stays and visitor yield.

Product development should remain a key focus of Greater Shepparton in order to grow visitation to the region. Leveraging from Greater Shepparton's strengths in the family market and making more of the Goulburn River Parkland are some of the opportunities to exist.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- Convert daytrip visitors to overnight visitors
- Improve awareness and positive perceptions of Greater Shepparton and its villages in key markets
- Acknowledge the need to service the broader visitor economy and not just holiday leisure visitors
- Acknowledgement of the role and impact of the visitor economy for Greater Shepparton
- Provide quality visitor servicing and information targeted to key markets
- Support and encourage investment in compelling tourism product

RELEVANT STRATEGIES

- River Connect Strategic Plan
- GRVT Destination Management Plan

TARGETS AND MONITORING

- Overnight visitation growth
- Daytrip visitation growth
- Visitor expenditure
- Economic impact measured in jobs and output
- Greater awareness of Greater Shepparton's tourism product

9.2. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Strategies and actions for the visitor economy have been structured by the following key areas:

- Tourism Governance;
- Product Development;
- Marketing and Brand; and
- Visitor Information Services.

TOURISM GOVERNANCE

During the course of consultation for the development of this strategy, it was acknowledged by many that there was confusion and overlap in tourism services delivered by Greater Shepparton City Council, Tourism Greater Shepparton, Shepparton Show Me and Goulburn River Valley Tourism. Overall there are substantial resources being made available to the delivery of tourism services, however a strong overarching strategic approach to tourism delivery is lacking. The new brand work currently being delivered provides an excellent starting point for establishing one brand in the market place to represent Greater Shepparton across various sectors: tourism, retail, health and education and events.

Bringing together the various organisations under one umbrella is recommended for delivering marketing and other services related to the visitor economy. The most appropriate way to achieve this is to establish an organisation such as a section 86 committee, with staff being retained under Greater Shepparton City Council. The previous Mornington Peninsula Tourism which operated successfully for 15 years operated under this structure.

This organisation would establish its own strategic action plan influenced by a board and responsive to industry. The benefits of this approach is that it will allow the organisation to operate independently from Council and be responsible for its own social media, digital approach and marketing. This means that it can operate with flexibility and be much more responsive to new technology. To date adoption of quality contemporary online technology has been a major setback for marketing of Greater Shepparton.

STRATEGY 32 Implement structural reform for the approach to tourism service delivery including marketing, visitor servicing and product development

ACTION 32.1 *Investigate a new tourism governance model with the aim to reduce duplication of activities across Greater Shepparton City Council, Tourism Greater Shepparton and Shepparton Show Me. This includes assessment of the benefits and weaknesses of models implemented elsewhere such as Geelong and Bellarine Tourism, Mornington Peninsula Tourism, and Moama-Echuca Tourism.*

ACTION 32.2 *At the completion of the current MOU with Goulburn River Valley Tourism (2017/18), assess the positioning of the regional tourism structure. If at this time, GRVT is not recognised by Tourism Victoria as a regional tourism board, investigate alternative options.*

ACTION 32.3 *Continue to maintain a regular dialogue with the tourism industry. Implement business engagement procedures as outlined in Strategy 1.*

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

In order to grow the visitor economy, it is critical for Greater Shepparton to continue to develop tourism product that attracts visitors to the region and improves the overall visitor experience of visitors. Importantly the development of a suite of products suited to various markets will assist in improving the length of stay of visitor to the region and also assist in servicing the large VFR market. Development of food product, arts and cultural product and family friendly should be a focus for the region.

The small towns of Murchison, Dookie and Tatura present opportunities to attract holiday leisure visitors drawn to the amenity and lifestyle of these villages. Targeted improvement to these villages should take place as well as attracting boutique product such as accommodation, food and arts and cultural activities.

STRATEGY 33 Support and facilitate the development of contemporary tourism product which appeals to target markets and aligns with the positioning of Shepparton and Mooroopna

ACTION 33.1 *Support the development of Shepparton Art Museum and Visitor Information Centre at Victoria Park Lake by implementing the recommendations of the Shepparton Art Museum Business Case.*

ACTION 33.2 *Develop a strategic tourism framework for the Goulburn River Parkland with stakeholders. Undertake a review of the RiverConnect masterplan and business case with the aim to identify and pave the way for the development of tourism experiences and product. This includes investigating:*

- *Delivering organised commercial water based activities, including boating, kayaking, canoeing and fishing;*
- *Nature based accommodation;*
- *Linking key products and experiences;*
- *Offering better waterfront experiences, rest area, trail and tracks that encapsulate the riverfront experience; and*

- *Releasing commercial waterfront opportunities, including food and dining experiences, and waterfront accommodation.*

ACTION 33.3 *Explore long term opportunities for the establishment of a Riverfront Precinct and expansion of Eastbank. Undertake a masterplan for the Eastbank-Marguni Street area with consideration of:*

- *Commercial opportunities;*
- *River activation;*
- *Improved linkage to VPL, shared path network, Goulburn River, CBD, and Kidstown and War Memorial.*

ACTION 33.4 *Continue to develop the Australian Botanic Gardens, Shepparton, as a priority tourism project by undertaking the following steps:*

- *Council to continue to provide resources and funding commitments to establish the Australian Botanic Gardens;*
- *Assist the Australian Botanic Gardens, Shepparton to approach and seek assistance from benefactors to support the establishment of the gardens;*
- *Investigate the establishment of a visitor and education centre at the Botanic Gardens which provides a chronological history of the Goulburn Valley. This will include information on our local Aboriginal Culture & Heritage, through to the irrigation scheme and early migration. This could be developed as internal and external interpretation with café. This would build on a review of Shepparton's heritage centres previously undertaken and target primary and secondary school curriculums, including potential outdoor classrooms.*
- *Undertake infrastructure upgrades to link to the shared pathway network;*
- *Identify events and activities to attract visitors and locals.*

ACTION 33.5 *Support the continued development of Kidstown as a major visitor attraction in Greater Shepparton including:*

- The establishment of a foodhub and accommodation facilities;
- Supporting more major event opportunities;
- Development of improved infrastructure to appeal to broader children's market as a key adventure park in regional Victoria.

ACTION 33.6 Showcase local indigenous culture and heritage as a primary strength of the Greater Shepparton. Increase the presence of indigenous culture and art in Greater Shepparton including:

- Investment in Indigenous public art;
- Tours on the Goulburn River;
- Providing further linkage to the new SAM precinct.

Strengthen indigenous product through development and packaging of indigenous experiences, this includes:

- Indigenous market garden at the Australian Botanic Gardens;
- Indigenous art through Kaiela Gallery;
- Cultural experiences at Bangerang Cultural Centre;
- Indigenous tours of the Goulburn River Parklands;
- Inclusion of an indigenous sculpture trail along the Goulburn River;
- Indigenous exhibitions in SAM.

Develop genuine collaboration with the Aboriginal community to ensure community ownership and cultural authenticity (as agreed in the Algabonyah Communique 2015).

ACTION 33.7 Continue to support the improvement of Victoria Lake Tourist Park and implementation of the Victoria Park Lake Masterplan.

STRATEGY 34 Undertake destination improvement projects for Tatura

ACTION 34.1 Improve the linkages between Tatura Park and the town centre through wayfinding signage, consistent footpath treatments, visitor information during events (touch screens and volunteers), and electronic events board in the town centre promoting the current and upcoming events.

ACTION 34.2 Investigate the opportunity to expand the role and presence of Tatura War Camps museum. Undertake a feasibility study into the establishment of Tatura War Camps as a premium attraction in the region which could service national and international markets including investigation into:

- Purchase of one of the war camp sites to establish an interpretive attraction;
- Investment into a new facility;
- Identification of market demand for the facility;
- Options for improving the offer.

Establish a community and Council working group to oversee a feasibility study into the development of the Tatura War Camps as a key destination.

ACTION 34.3 Continue to promote the attraction of a quality large motel facility to Tatura in conjunction with other private sector tourism opportunities.

STRATEGY 35 Undertake destination development projects for Murchison and surrounds, including:

- Establishment of Days Mill as a key food and agri-tourism destination.
- Support investment into the historic buildings (e.g. Gregory's Bridge Hotel)
- Attraction of self-contained accommodation
- Expanding the food and beverage offer in Murchison

- Trail development including a Goulburn River trail between Murchison, Toalamba and Kialla and completion of the Rushworth rail trail.

ACTION 35.1 Investigate opportunities for the establishment of Days Mill as a tourism destination in conjunction with Parks Victoria including the potential to establish Greater Shepparton City Council as the Committee of Management.

ACTION 35.2 Work with Campaspe Shire to progress the completion of Murchison-Rushworth Rail Trail.

ACTION 35.3 Undertake a feasibility and concept plan for a Goulburn River Trail which would connect Murchison to Toalamba and Kialla. At the completion the full trail would connect from Kialla to Rushworth, with opportunity to link to Heathcote.

ACTION 35.4 Promote and encourage tourism investment opportunities in Murchison through targeted investment attraction strategies.

STRATEGY 36 Undertake destination development initiatives for Dookie, including:

- Continued improvements to the Mount Major Mountain Bike course and trail head facilities;
- Investment in the Dookie Rail Trail;
- Establishment of Dookie as an arts and cultural destination with continued development of arts and cultural events;
- Accommodation investment.

ACTION 36.1 Work with the Goulburn Valley Mountain Bike Club and Melbourne University in the establishment of a long term masterplan for Mount Major (including resurfacing and accessibility via Mt Major and TV access road) and assist in funding applications.

ACTION 36.2 Seek grant funding for establishment of the Dookie Rail Trail extensions.

ACTION 36.3 Promote investment opportunities in food wine, arts and cultural development in Dookie through targeted investment attractions. Investigate opportunities for cultural events at the Dookie Quarry.

STRATEGY 37 Promote and facilitate private sector investment opportunities

ACTION 37.1 Establish an online prospectus for investment in Greater Shepparton's visitor economy. Key projects include:

- 4-4.5 Star internationally branded high quality hotel or motel including a large format hotel in Shepparton;
- Quality motel in Tatura to service the business, conference and events market;
- Nature based accommodation/resort leveraging the river and parklands;
- Agricultural and farm stay accommodation;
- Bed and breakfast/guesthouse in small townships;
- A low cost accommodation facility for backpackers;
- Houses or three bedroom accommodation options for long stage business and events visitors;
- Holiday leisure tourist park.

ACTION 37.2 Utilise the small business grants program for attracting new small business start-ups or expansions which demonstrate the delivery of contemporary and quality food, dining, entertainment and farm gate attractions in towns and in the rural area. This may include:

- Quality bars and restaurants
- Microbrewery
- Distillery
- Farm gate cafes and produce store

ACTION 37.3 *Promote Greater Shepparton's grants program and opportunities in the Melbourne market targeted to the food and craft sector. Examples include Gourmet Traveller, Brewers Association.*

STRATEGY 38 **Promote the development of food tourism leveraging from Greater Shepparton's agricultural strengths**

ACTION 38.1 *Encourage the use of local produce in restaurants and cafes by:*

- *Preparing an information kit for local producers in conjunction with existing local produce stores promoting opportunities to sell locally*
- *Develop a local produce branding program through the region to gain operator support (the food jassickers brand may be leveraged for the region)*

ACTION 38.2 *Integrate the existing farm-gate tour route within a new destination website (the Bellarine Taste Trail website may be used as a good example). Develop new digital content to promote the route.*

ACTION 38.3 *Work with SPC to progress the development of a food hub in Kidstown. This may include a mixture of interpretative and educational experiences which highlight the local food journey.*

MARKETING AND BRAND

STRATEGY 39 **Establish clear and consistent branding and marketing materials which appeal to target markets, link with the competitive strengths of the region, and is motivational**

ACTION 39.1 *Establish a destination website for Greater Shepparton which is motivational and acts as a visitor information portal based on work which is currently underway. This should include consideration of:*

- *Motivational images;*
- *Providing information for holiday leisure visitors;*

- *Providing information for retail visitors;*
- *Providing information for health and education visitors;*
- *Accommodation inventory with links to booking agencies;*
- *Content management system linking to ATDW;*
- *Major events.*

ACTION 39.2 *Finalise the new brand being developed for Shepparton region and utilise it broadly across organisations and Council to ensure consistent messaging.*

ACTION 39.3 *Develop tour packaging, leveraging off the product strengths of Greater Shepparton and its location in central Victoria. Examples include:*

- *Greater Shepparton Family Pass: Kidstown, Kyabram Founa Park, family accommodation, pub meal, motor museum;*
- *Car club package including lunch, designated route from Melbourne through the region;*
- *Once SAM has been redeveloped, a Northern Victoria Arts and Cultural Package: Bendigo Art Gallery, Shepparton Art Museum, Kaiela Gallery, Lunch at Tallis Winery.*

ACTION 39.4 *Continue to implement relevant and innovative marketing and promotional campaigns to promote Greater Shepparton to target markets.*

STRATEGY 40 **Undertake a social media strategy leveraging from the new website development and branding**

ACTION 40.1 *Appoint a consultant to undertake a social media strategy.*

ACTION 40.2 *Ensure there are specific resources for the implementation of a social media marketing strategy.*

STRATEGY 41 Continue to utilise Mooving Art as a way to engage with visitors and promote Greater Shepparton.

ACTION 41.1 Investigate new ways to extend the Mooving Art program to make it more interactive with visitors. Examples include:

- « Gallery / exhibition of previous moving art examples;
- » Establishment of Mooving Art hunt, perhaps using mini disguised Mooving art statues around Victoria Lake as an attraction for children;
- » Doing a swap or special exhibition with Berlin's Art Bears.

ACTION 41.2 Utilise the Mooving Art as a key promotion feature for Shepparton in key markets, such as a 'takeover' in Bourke Street Mall, or at the Hume Freeway and Goulburn Valley Freeway rest stop.

STRATEGY 42 Continue to promote Greater Shepparton to the RV and touring market

ACTION 42.1 Promote caravan parks in Greater Shepparton as key stopover locations for the travelling RV market;

ACTION 42.2 Continue to work with the Newell Highway Route 39 group to promote Greater Shepparton as a stopover destination.

ACTION 42.3 Promote and develop Greater Shepparton's small towns as RV friendly towns leveraging from east west travel (Adelaide to Sydney).

STRATEGY 43 Leverage Victoria's strong international visitation to attract greater international tourists to Greater Shepparton

ACTION 43.1 Develop tourism product and experiences which appeal to international markets (e.g. Indigenous tourism opportunities outlined in Action 32.6).

ACTION 43.2 Develop improved relationships with Tourism Victoria to increase involvement in regional tourism marketing campaigns and branding collateral (linking to Action 31.2).

ACTION 43.3 Maintain Greater Shepparton's presence on major touring routes.

ACTION 43.4 Attract an international level sporting events to Greater Shepparton (linking with Action 51.2).

VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

STRATEGY 44 Improve the provision of visitor information to match with the changing needs of visitors, and extend the reach and dispersal of relevant information around Greater Shepparton

ACTION 44.1 Continue to produce key visitor collateral such as the visitor guide, visitor maps, and other relevant ones to ensure that visitor demands are serviced.

ACTION 44.2 Relocate the Visitor Information Centre into Shepparton Arts Museum once completed.

ACTION 44.3 Ensure that digital collateral produced by Greater Shepparton is smart phone friendly.

ACTION 44.4 Promote Shepparton's visitor attractions to the local community through social media;

ACTION 44.5 Develop effective relationships with local media outlets to regularly highlight local events and tourism attractions (e.g. a regular space in the local newspaper which highlights events and current 'things to do').

ACTION 44.6 Undertake training programs to educate frontline hospitality of Greater Shepparton's product mix. This may include visiting businesses and organisations and briefing staff on key visitor attractions.

ACTION 44.7 Investigate the installation of touchscreens which display Council's new visitor services website at key destinations: In the Mall, The Marketplace, Tatura Park, Goulburn Valley

Health, and other key attractions such as Kidstown (Launceston Queen Victoria Museum provides a case study of cost effective and flexible touch screen devices).

- ACTION 44.8** *Explore the provision of Wi-Fi at key destinations where touchscreens are not appropriate.*
- ACTION 44.9** *Develop a consistent postcard brochure rack for tourism and accommodation businesses. (Mornington Peninsula provides an excellent long term case study of this practice).*
- ACTION 44.10** *Establish a vehicle which can be moved between destinations which responds to Council's events calendar. (St Kilda Tourism provides a successful case study of a VIC Kombi).*
- ACTION 44.11** *Establish a permanent VIC presence at Tatura Park and other key locations which can be staffed by Tatura volunteers during events.*

10. MAJOR EVENTS HUB

10.1. DESCRIPTION AND RATIONALE

Continue to develop Greater Shepparton into a major events hub in central Victoria capitalising on quality sports infrastructure

Events supported by Council generate substantial economic benefit for Greater Shepparton and demonstrate exceptional regional benefits for the costs and resources dedicated to events. It is estimated that events in Shepparton generate \$36 million in output across the region and are essential for supporting accommodation and tourism providers.

There is opportunity to implement further sophistication in the ranking and assessment of events in Greater Shepparton as well as new coordinated data collection and economic benefit modelling to ensure consistency of approach.

There are a number of gaps in the events sector which should be the focus of development. This includes events during off peak periods and the development of additional arts, cultural and food events.

Feedback through the consultation process showed that Council events staff were considered to be generally supportive and facilitative. It will be important that strong links are maintained with event operators to retain existing events, and strategically capture new events to Greater Shepparton. This is especially important within the context of an increasingly competitive regional events space.

STRATEGIC ISSUES

- Need for greater acknowledgement of the role of the events sector in Greater Shepparton's economy;
- Need to continue to support events funding and resources allocated to supporting events
- Opportunity to improve the grant and sponsorship process through the adoption of criteria targeted to maximising yield from funding
- Need to undertake consistent research and economic analysis of events
- Opportunity to fill in gaps in seasonality within the events calendar
- Opportunity to diversify the events base to include more arts, cultural and music events

RELEVANT STRATEGIES

- GRVT Destination Management Plan
- Greater Shepparton Sports Capacity and Capabilities Assessment
- Tatura Park Masterplan
- Shepparton Showgrounds Masterplan
- Sports Precinct Masterplan
- Cycling Precinct Masterplan

TARGETS AND MONITORING

- Increase in off-peak visitation
- Increase in economic impact of events

- Increase in event visitation (from outside the municipality)

10.2. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Strategies and actions for the events sector have been structured within the following key areas:

- Positioning;
- Event Facilities; and
- Event Development and Support.

POSITIONING

STRATEGY 45 Promote and position Greater Shepparton as Regional Victoria's and Australia's sports events capital

ACTION 45.1 *Continue to utilise the resources and leverage the relationship of Sports Marketing Australia to lobby on behalf of Council to secure sporting events.*

ACTION 45.2 *Ensure the inclusion of sports events in Greater Shepparton promotion and marketing material.*

ACTION 45.3 *Continue to profile the major events calendar as a key economic and visitation stimulator highlighting the broad events program to a state and national level in line with broader visitation branding and positioning.*

ACTION 45.4 *Provide focus on the region's major visitation event attraction on participatory sports such as masters championships, national and state championships and mass participation that go over multiple days and are between 500-4,000 visitors to meet the bedding capacity of the broader region.*

ACTION 45.5 *Undertake an audit of local sports facilities audit and local clubs capability assessment*

ACTION 45.6 *Utilising information from the sports audit and capability assessment develop a Sports Events Attraction Plan*

EVENT FACILITIES

STRATEGY 46 Address the long term operational issues facing Tatura Park

ACTION 46.1 *Implement the recommendations of the Tatura Park review and continue to implement the Tatura Park masterplan.*

ACTION 46.2 *Continue to implement an annual business plan for Tatura Park.*

ACTION 46.3 *Develop improved website presence for Tatura Park on Greater Shepparton City Council's website, branding, and social media plan.*

ACTION 46.4 *Position and develop strategies to be proactive in events attraction for medium and large size events including equestrian and livestock exhibitions but also diversifying into broader lifestyle events and exhibitions.*

STRATEGY 47 Maximise the investment in the Shepparton Show Grounds

ACTION 47.1 *Develop a targeted events program to maximise the use of the Shepparton Show Grounds including: exhibitions, car shows, music shows, lifestyle and arts events.*

ACTION 47.2 *Continue to implement an annual business plan for the Shepparton Show Grounds.*

ACTION 47.3 *Develop improved website presence for Shepparton Show Grounds on Greater Shepparton City Council's website, branding, and social media plan.*

ACTION 47.4 *Continue to implement the Shepparton Showgrounds master and infrastructure implementation plan.*

STRATEGY 48 Investigate the establishment of a purpose built conference facility next to Eastbank

ACTION 48.1 Undertake a feasibility and concept plan to establish a purpose built conference centre at Eastbank. This includes:

- Identification of facilities required;
- Location for a 200 seat theatre (could be located within SAM, when it is relocated);
- Opportunity for riverfront views;
- Food, beverage and retail component;
- Broader masterplan for Eastbank precinct.
- Accommodation component.

Linking with Action 32.3 in the Visitor Economy Section.

STRATEGY 49 Commence implementation of the Victoria Lake Events Centre

ACTION 49.1 Implement the recommendations and outcomes of the Victoria Lake Masterplan.

STRATEGY 50 Continue to implement a program of investment in Greater Shepparton's sporting infrastructure

ACTION 50.1 Develop an infrastructure funding plan for Greater Shepparton's sporting events spaces, including:

- The continued investment and redevelopment of the Shepparton Sports Precinct.
- The Shepparton Sports Stadium which is dated and in need of expansion. The development of the stadium into a larger high quality multi sports precinct will drive visitation in indoor sports events and capabilities to host state, national, and international events;
- Aquamoves;
- BMX facilities to ensure that Greater Shepparton continues to host major national and international BMX events;
- Deakin Reserve as a major sporting events facility;

- Mooroopna Sports Precinct;
- Whole of sport planning for equestrian, tennis, and cricket developments;
- Mooroopna Motocross Track and motorway precinct (including consideration of impacts of potential GY bypass);
- Mount Major, Dookie; and
- Kialla Park Precinct Reserve.

EVENT DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

STRATEGY 51 Ensure Council continue to support the current major annual events calendar

ACTION 51.1 Maintain funding for current major events.

ACTION 51.2 Ensure a dialogue with major events is maintained before, during and after major events.

ACTION 51.3 Maintain existing service levels and quality infrastructure to support major events.

STRATEGY 52 Ensure that events funding is matched to the strategic positioning of Greater Shepparton

ACTION 52.1 Implement new criteria for major events funding sponsorship and partnerships that seeks to support events which align with the following:

- Number of visitors: Greater support for events that demonstrate they can bring 'visitors' to the Region;
- Economic impact: Greater support for events that can demonstrate higher economic impact;
- Month of the Event: Greater support for events that fill gaps in the market;
- Event Duration: Greater support for events that run over a longer timeframe;

- *Type of Event: Greater support events that diversify the events base*
- *Target Market alignment: Greater support for events that align with key target markets.*

ACTION 52.2 *Attract one or two more annual significant hallmark events that have broader national and international branding appeal. Reallocate funding to events in order for Shepparton to attract a hallmark event.*

ACTION 52.3 *Continue to support community and civic events and celebrations as part of the overall events program via grant programs, sponsorship, and council operated and run events. These include:*

- *Australia Day*
- *Carols by Candlelight*
- *Screen on the Green outdoor movie festivals*
- *Anzac Day*
- *Small town festive event grant funding*
- *Small and major event grant funding*
- *Small town Australia day grant funding*
- *St Georges Rd Food festival*
- *Converge on the Goulburn Festival*
- *New Year's Eve Festival*

ACTION 52.4 *Continue the region's major event attraction efforts on those activities and attributes where the region has a natural competitive advantage and which offered the greatest prospects of success.*

ACTION 52.5 *Investigate how the extensive major events program can be better marketed and resourced to maximise the social and economic outcomes.*

STRATEGY 53 **Diversify the events base by supporting more arts, food, cultural and music events**

ACTION 53.1 *Work with event organisers to establish a series of arts, cultural and music events. In particular:*

- *Indigenous events;*
- *Music events;*
- *Arts and cultural events;*
- *Food events;*
- *Multi-cultural events;*
- *Motor sports events.*

ACTION 53.2 *Work with small towns to develop and host major events.*

STRATEGY 54 **Explore opportunities to grow the business events sector**

ACTION 54.1 *Encourage business event facilities to become members of BEV.*

ACTION 54.2 *Improve marketing of business events including establishment of a business events Shepparton web portal which profiles establishments.*

ACTION 54.3 *Working closely with venues to acquire and attract business events.*

ACTION 54.4 *Farster collaboration within the business events sector, particularly where business events need to be shared across venues.*

ACTION 54.5 *Develop a marketing and social media plan for business events.*

ACTION 54.6 *Develop a business plan for business events.*

ACTION 54.7 *Develop a specific major business events and conference planning guide.*

STRATEGY 55 Develop relationships with National, State and Regional sporting and arts and cultural organisations

ACTION 55.1 *Continue to develop relationships with National, State and Regional sporting and arts and cultural organisations to ensure that Shepparton is front of mind for event organisers.*

ACTION 55.2 *Continue to develop and partner with local event organisers.*

ACTION 55.3 *Improve relationships with State Government to partner and support key hallmark and significant new events.*

STRATEGY 56 Develop standardised methods for events data collection and reporting

ACTION 56.1 *Build on the directions identified in the Background discussion paper with regard to the establishment of standardised methods for data collection relating to:*

- *Estimates of visitors to events;*
- *Expenditure by visitors to events*
- *Economic impact assessment methods.*

ACTION 56.2 *Develop an annual report which highlights the economic and social impacts of major events.*

STRATEGY 57 Undertake annual events industry forums to support networking and development of the events sector

ACTION 57.1 *Arrange an annual events industry forum for event organisers to attend which provides the following:*

- *Information on Council's grant programs;*
- *Information on Council's event facilities;*
- *Information on State Government grants; and*
- *Networking opportunity.*

STRATEGY 58 Provide a one stop shop for events industry resources

ACTION 58.1 *Establish an online portal on Greater Shepparton City Council's website for the events sector and event planning guide which provides the following:*

- *Council's funding support program for events and criteria;*
- *Directory of facilities and contacts by event type and capacity;*
- *Events services industry information e.g. caterers, transport etc.;*
- *Information on upcoming events campaigns and projects;*
- *Infrastructure available to support events.*

STRATEGY 59 Implement measures to manage volunteer burnout

ACTION 59.1 *Ensure the events team maintains communication and supports initiatives to be delivered by the Greater Shepparton Community Strengthening Team identified in the Greater Shepparton Volunteer Strategy and Action Plan.*

STRATEGY 60 Ensure events that are delivered in Greater Shepparton have leading systems in place for event management, sponsorship management, risk safety and complaint management.

ACTION 60.1 *Audit current systems and look to improve systems which are inadequate*

ACTION 60.2 *Develop a training session for Greater Shepparton staff and events managers and staff which provides information on best practice systems for events.*

11. MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

This section provides a consolidated list of all major infrastructure projects proposed for Greater Shepparton.

MAJOR PRIORITY PROJECTS

The following table summarises the existing priority and potential infrastructure project for Greater Shepparton. The potential infrastructure projects have been identified through the strategy process for consideration of Council.

TABLE 3 PRIORITY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Project Priority	Project	Theme	Description	Next Steps	Action
IDENTIFIED PRIORITY	Shepparton Law Courts Redevelopment	Re-Invigoration of Shepparton CBD	A new courthouse is planned to be built on the same site which will incorporate a 5 storey building with a contemporary design.	Encourage private investment opportunities to leverage the significant investment	22.3
IDENTIFIED PRIORITY	GV Highway Bypass	Food Hub	Construction of a four lane Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton Bypass (\$966 million investment) will provide an additional east-west crossing of the Goulburn River.	Advocate State and Federal Government	11.4
IDENTIFIED PRIORITY	GV Health Redevelopment	Re-Invigoration of Shepparton CBD	Redevelopment of the Goulburn Valley Health Shepparton Campus (\$150-\$200 million investment), including an expansion and reconfiguration of the hospital's clinical care areas, inpatient accommodation and essential infrastructure services.	Facilitate construction roll out. Continue to advocate for the implementation of the GV Health Masterplan. Investigate opportunities for private investment (e.g. aged care, allied health businesses)	16.3

Project Priority	Project	Theme	Description	Next Steps	Action
IDENTIFIED PRIORITY	Improve Passenger Rail Services, including high speed rail	Training and Attracting a Capable Workforce	Increasing the frequency of passenger rail services between Shepparton and Melbourne, and improving timetabling to meet the needs of a major regional centre, including implementation of high speed rail.	Advocate both State and Federal Government.	16.1
IDENTIFIED PRIORITY	Maude and Vaughan Street Redevelopment Stages 1-4	Re-Invigoration of Shepparton CBD	The Vaughan Street and Maude Street Redevelopment consists of four subprojects. The first sub-project, completed in December 2013, was the Vaughan Street – Corio Street to Maude Street Improvements. The remaining subprojects; Bus Interchange – Maude and Vaughan Street, Maude Street – Vaughan Street to High Street Improvements and the Maude Street Mall Redevelopment, are yet to be completed.	Advocate State Government for funding of Stage 2. Identify business and retail opportunities to leverage from improved streetscape environment.	22.2
	Shepparton Railway Station Redevelopment	Re-Invigoration of Shepparton CBD	Shepparton Railway Station Redevelopment Project proposes the construction of a pedestrian bridge to provide direct access to Vaughan Street in the CBD. The project would also consider development opportunities for underutilised VicTrack land adjacent to the station.	Seek funding for Masterplan	22.4
EXISTING MAJOR PROJECT	Shepparton Art Museum	Visitor Economy	The redeveloped SAM is proposed to be located on Victoria Park Lake and estimated cost \$42 million to construct.	Finalise design and lobby the Federal Government to match local and state funding	33.1
EXISTING MAJOR PROJECT	Shepparton Sports Stadium Upgrade	Visitor Economy	Upgrade and redevelopment of the Shepparton Sports Stadium to include two new courts, 2000 seat grandstand, sports house, squash courts, multi-purpose space, and other amenities to increase the capabilities for major events and entertainment (\$18 million investment).	Undertake detailed design and seek State and Federal Government funding	50.1
EXISTING MAJOR PROJECT	Maude Street Mall	Re-Invigoration of Shepparton CBD	Revitalize the Maude Street Mall.	Revitalization concepts to be developed.	21.1

Project Priority	Project	Theme	Description	Next Steps	Action
EXISTING MAJOR PROJECT	GV Link	Food Hub	The Goulburn Valley Freight and Logistics Centre is an intermodal transport terminal to provide a key link in the supply chain for regional industries and exporters to the Port of Melbourne by both road and rail.	Attract private investment partners	11.5
EXISTING MAJOR PROJECT	Goulburn Valley Equine and Greyhound Racing Precinct	Emerging Industry	An Integrated Greyhound and Equine precinct including enhanced training and recreational facilities, equine businesses, event facilities, visitor accommodation, and rural residential allotments.	Secure funding and implement the Masterplan	27.1
EXISTING MAJOR PROJECT	Resource Recovery Precinct	Emerging Industry	An Integrated Resource Recovery Precinct to service the wider region and processes a variety of waste streams	Finalise the Resource Recovery Precinct and Site Selection Study and confirm a regional approach to site selection.	29.2
EXISTING MAJOR PROJECT	Tatura Park	Visitor Economy	Address long term operational issues facing Tatura Park	Implement the recommendations of the Tatura Park Business Plan review and subsequent Masterplan	46.1
EXISTING MAJOR PROJECT	Victoria Lake Tourist Park	Visitor Economy	Support the continued growth of Victoria Lake Park including events facilities	Implementation of the Victoria Park Lake Masterplan	33.7
EXISTING MAJOR PROJECT	Shepparton Showgrounds	Visitor Economy	Maximise investment in Shepparton Show Grounds	Continue to implement the Shepparton Showgrounds master and infrastructure implementation plan.	47.4
EXISTING MAJOR PROJECT	Victoria Park Lake Events Centre	Visitor Economy	Dedicated events space for Victoria Park Lake to support water sports and outdoor events	Implement the findings of the Victoria Lake Masterplan.	49.1
EXISTING MAJOR PROJECT	Sporting Infrastructure Improvement Program	Visitor Economy	Infrastructure funding plan for key sporting infrastructure to support major events. Including Shepparton Sports Precinct, Aquamoves, BMX facilities, Deakin Reserve, and Mooroopna Sports Precinct.	Develop an infrastructure funding plan for Greater Shepparton's major sporting assets	50.1
NEW MAJOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	AQIS Bonded Container Facility	Food Hub	Development of a AQIS bonded contained facility located in Greater Shepparton to reduce freight holding time and costs	Work with local transport businesses, industry bodies, and Committee for Greater Shepparton to secure State Government support for the project, and lobby Federal Government.	11.3
NEW MAJOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Fruit Irradiation Facility	Food Hub	A regional irradiation facility to eliminate pest contamination and secure export markets	Investigate the opportunity for a Fruit Irradiation Facility and engage with AQIS	14.4

Project Priority	Project	Theme	Description	Next Steps	Action
NEW MAJOR PRIORITY PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Freight Rail	Food Hub	Development of a Melbourne-Brisbane inland freight rail route which leverages the production potential of the Victorian and NSW irrigation regions, and includes Greater Shepparton	Work with the Food Bowl Inland Rail Alliance to lobby the State and Federal Governments and the Rail Implementation Group, to properly consider the Shepparton-Narrandera alignment.	11.6
NEW MAJOR PRIORITY PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Upgrade Mangalore-Tocumwal Line	Food Hub	Gauge standardisation of the Mangalore-Tocumwal rail line for improve rail freight movements	Lobby State Government and VicTrack	11.6
NEW MAJOR PRIORITY PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Youth Hub	Re-Invigoration of Shepparton CBD	A Shepparton Youth Hub facility to provide support to the region's young population including a social space, mentoring, and life skills	Identify appropriate sites, including opportunities for co-location within Council and government owned buildings	20.3
NEW MAJOR PRIORITY PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	CBD car parking redevelopment	Re-Invigoration of Shepparton CBD	Mixed-use redevelopment of Council-owned surface car parking sites in the Shepparton CBD	Undertake a site selection study to identify strategic locations to develop multi-story parking including opportunities for commercial floorspace at ground or upper levels	23.4
NEW MAJOR PRIORITY PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton Visitor Education Centre and upgrades	Visitor Economy	A centre which presents a chronological history of the Goulburn Valley from indigenous settlement, to the irrigation scheme and migration	Develop concept plan	33.4
NEW MAJOR PRIORITY PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Shepparton Business Centre CBD development	Re-Invigoration of Shepparton CBD	Relocation and development of the Shepparton Business Centre to the CBD	Develop concept plan and business case	30.1
NEW MAJOR PRIORITY PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Eastbank Redevelopment	Visitor Economy	Expansion opportunities for the Eastbank facility to improve conference facilities for the business events market, considering opportunities for expansion into the existing SAM site	Undertake a Feasibility Study	33.3

Project Priority	Project	Theme	Description	Next Steps	Action
NEW MAJOR PRIORITY PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Tatura War Camps	Visitor Economy	Establishment of Tatura War Camps as a premium attraction in the region	Establish a community and Council working group to oversee a feasibility study into the development of the Tatura War Camps as a key destination.	34.2
FUTURE MINOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Stewart Street Car Park	Re-Invigoration of Shepparton CBD	Upgrade the multi-deck car park	Liaise with the private owner	23.3
FUTURE MINOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Shepparton CBD, High Street Streetscape Development	Re-Invigoration of Shepparton CBD	Improve the streetscape and amenity of High Street following the construction the GV Bypass to make it an attractive environment for customers, businesses, and pedestrians	Develop a streetscape masterplan	25.7
FUTURE MINOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Shepparton CBD Wi-Fi	Re-Invigoration of Shepparton CBD	Roll-out Wi-Fi 'hotspots' which provide access to free wireless internet in strategic areas within the Shepparton CBD. This includes the Maude Street Mall, Fryers Street, Target Arcade.	Engage with telecommunications companies and negotiate the rollout of CBD Wi-Fi	28.2
FUTURE MINOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Solar Energy Farm	Emerging Industries	Community solar energy farm.	Support the investment in solar energy.	29.1
FUTURE MINOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Kidstown	Visitor Economy	Investigate the establishment of a Foodhub and accommodation facilities and development of improved infrastructure	Support Kidstown operators with development plans	33.5
FUTURE MINOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Tatura Park and Town Centre Linkages	Visitor Economy	Improve the linkages between Tatura Park and the town centre through wayfinding signage, consistent footpath treatments, visitor information during events (touch screens and volunteers), and electronic events board in the town centre	Establish a community and Council working group to oversee the delivery Tatura Park and township linkages.	34.1
FUTURE MINOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Days Mill	Visitor Economy	Establishment of Days Mills as a tourism destination	Work in conjunction with Parks Victoria including the potential to establish Council as the Committee for Management	35.1

Project Priority	Project	Theme	Description	Next Steps	Action
FUTURE MINOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Murchison-Rushworth-Kialla Trail	Visitor Economy	Extension of the current Goulburn River Trail from Murchison to Kialla	Undertake a feasibility and concept plan for a Goulburn River trail linking Murchison with Toolamba and Kialla and for the extension of the rail trail from Rushworth.	35.3
FUTURE MINOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Mount Major Mountain Bike Course	Visitor Economy	Continued improvement to the Mount Major Mountain Bike course including trail head facilities and accessibility via Mt Major Road	Work with the Goulburn Valley Mountain Bike Club and Melbourne University in the establishment of a long term masterplan for Mount Major (including resurfacing and accessibility via Mt Major and TV access road) and assist in funding applications.	36.1
FUTURE MINOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Dookie Rail Trail Extension	Visitor Economy	Extension of the current Dookie Rail Trail to Cosgrove.	Seek grant funding for establishment of the Dookie Rail Trail extensions.	36.2
FUTURE MINOR PROJECT FOR CONSIDERATION	Shepparton Visitor Information Centre Relocation	Visitor Economy	Relocation of Visitor Information Centre into Shepparton Art Museum	Progress detailed designs of the Shepparton Art Museum, including the Visitor Information Centre	44.2



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