



GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL  
TOOLAMBA GROWTH  
PLAN

JULY 2020



ETHOS  
URBAN





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We, Greater Shepparton City Council, acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land which now comprises Greater Shepparton. We pay respect to their tribal Elders, we celebrate their continuing culture and we acknowledge the memory of their ancestors.

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# ABOUT THE GROWTH PLAN

Since its establishment in the 1880s, Toolamba has largely grown through incremental low-density residential development. However, the Toolamba Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) proposed by a local landowner in 2016 includes more compact residential allotments, which, along with the planned construction of the Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton Bypass (the Shepparton Bypass), has increased the need for Toolamba and Old Toolamba townships to have a clear vision and growth framework.

The Toolamba Growth Plan therefore establishes a framework to guide the sustainable development of Toolamba and Old Toolamba over the next 30 years, although growth will mostly take place in Toolamba.

It considers a range of issues, including demographic change, residential growth, transport, facilities, environmental impacts, and maintaining a connected, active community.

The Toolamba Growth Plan identifies the existing context, establishes a future direction and sets out principles manage growth, as well as addressing specific challenges and projects that may impact the townships, to facilitate and support appropriate development and ensure that the benefits of future growth are maximised and shared.

## Preparing the Plan

The development of the Toolamba Growth Plan has involved several stages, including pre-draft and draft rounds of consultation with the community, stakeholders and agencies.

Greater Shepparton City Council would like to acknowledge the contributions and support of:

- The Toolamba and District community
- The Toolamba and District Community Plan Steering Group
- The Toolamba Recreation Reserve Management Committee
- The Toolamba Primary School Council
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Department of Transport
- VicTrack
- Victorian School Building Authority
- Environmental Protection Authority
- Goulburn Murray Water

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While Greater Shepparton's growth rate has largely remained steady over recent decades, a number of issues may affect the rate of population increase over the next 30 years. These include major infrastructure development projects, such as the Shepparton Art Museum, the GV Health Redevelopment, upgrades to the La Trobe University campus, the Shepparton Stadium Redevelopment, and the construction of the Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton Bypass. Increasing pressure on peri-urban and regional areas to accommodate population growth to ease Melbourne's traffic congestion and rising housing market may also impact the municipality's growth indirectly, as well as broader issues such as environmental sustainability.

Greater Shepparton City Council is aiming to manage future growth to ensure that housing and community infrastructure is provided in a timely and sustainable way.

Although Shepparton, Mooroopna and Kialla are expected to contain a substantial proportion of the anticipated growth, as outlined in the *Shepparton and Mooroopna 2050 Regional City Growth Plan 2020*, Greater Shepparton's townships will play an important role in providing a diverse array of lifestyle options to suit changing needs.

Toolamba, in the southern area of the locality, was identified as an area of future residential growth in the *Greater Shepparton Housing Strategy 2011*. There are a number of landowners who have expressed interest in subdividing their properties to provide housing. Further, Toolamba will be the only township with its own interchange once the southern section of the Shepparton Bypass is constructed. As a consequence, Toolamba could experience a much faster rate of increase than previously.

The Toolamba Growth Plan identifies residential development opportunities and the potential service and infrastructure requirements to support growth without compromising the townships' existing character and the natural amenity of its location adjacent to the Goulburn River. It assesses the existing context using the 20-minute neighbourhood framework and provides direction for future actions across key elements of liveability, housing, access and transport, open space, employment, services, and education.

The Toolamba Growth Plan provides a basis for assessment of prospective applications for rezoning, setting out a future direction and key principles to ensure growth is well planned to benefit the townships as a whole. In addition, it is supported by the *Toolamba Housing and Streetscape Typologies 2020*, which provides guidance to ensure that future development respects and maintains the present rural atmosphere of the town.



JUNCTION

JUNCTION HOTEL BAR

JUNCTION HOTEL LOUNGE





# INTRODUCTION

## About the Townships

Toolamba is located in the south-west area of Greater Shepparton, approximately 13 km south-west of Shepparton and 160 km north of Melbourne. It is surrounded by a rich agricultural landscape that is bordered by the Goulburn River and the Shepparton Regional Park. Old Toolamba lies approximately 3 km to the south-west of Toolamba.

Shepparton is the closest regional city, supporting the population of Toolamba with employment and educational opportunities, retail goods, and community services. However, the Toolamba townships also rely on nearby Mooroopna and Tatura for their secondary retail offerings and community infrastructure.

The municipality's settlement patterns see Shepparton serve as a more urbanised regional hub, while the surrounding townships provide an array of lifestyle alternatives, contributing to Greater Shepparton's overall diversity and character.

## The Townships

The townships' overall population (including surrounding farmland) was recorded as 769 persons in 2016. This was made up of 216 families and 295 private dwellings, equating to 2.8 persons per household.

Within the town of Toolamba itself, there was a total population of 332 people in 2016 and 123 separate dwellings<sup>1</sup>.

Toolamba township offers a range of facilities for its residents, including a general store, hotel, primary and preschool, community gardens, a playground, and a recreation reserve including an oval, community centre, and tennis courts. It also hosts CFA, CWA, Lions Club and fishing clubs.

Old Toolamba is largely residential, with no commercial centre or community facilities.

The townships can be accessed from the Goulburn Valley Highway via Bridge Road to the east, or the Midland Highway via Toolamba Road to the west.

The Toolamba community is tightly knit and has shown a keen and active interest in the future development of their townships. Previous engagement has found that the community is open to growth, but wish to ensure that the small-town character, rural feel and identity of Toolamba is retained and protected.

The Toolamba Growth Plan seeks to frame the community's spirit and direction for their townships, providing important structural elements and guidelines to ensure appropriate and successful growth over the next 30 years.

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<sup>1</sup> The Australian Bureau of Statistics includes both townships as a single State Suburb for the collection of Census data. Data for Old Toolamba is not published separately.

## Heritage

The Toolamba District encompasses a number of important heritage sites that contribute to the local character and which need to be carefully considered in future development.

The Toolamba district lies on the traditional land of the Yorta Yorta Peoples and includes areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Sensitivity.

The Toolamba pastoral station was established in 1845 by David and Alexander Innes. In early 1874, seventy-two allotments were surveyed, establishing a township at the site of present-day Old Toolamba, with a Post Office opening in 1873. Toolamba railway station opened on 13 January 1880 at the junction of Shepparton and Tatura lines (later extended to Echuca), drawing the focus of the town to the west of the original settlement. The Junction Hotel and Wren's Store are remnants of this early period, retaining integral roles in the community.

The station was a significant transport hub up to the 1950s, but the conversion of the Victorian Railways from steam to diesel-electric power during the 1950s and 1960s, reduced Toolamba's importance as a refuelling point. In 1981 the Echuca line was closed, followed by the closure of the Toolamba Station on 20 December 1987 and the removal of all buildings and infrastructure.

The landmark Toolamba Bridge was originally constructed across the Goulburn River in October 1900 and refurbished in the 1960s. Council and Regional Roads Victoria have undertaken structural upgrades in 2019, with duplication of the bridge expected in approximately 10 years, at the end of its functional life. The existing historic bridge remains valued for its cultural heritage significance.



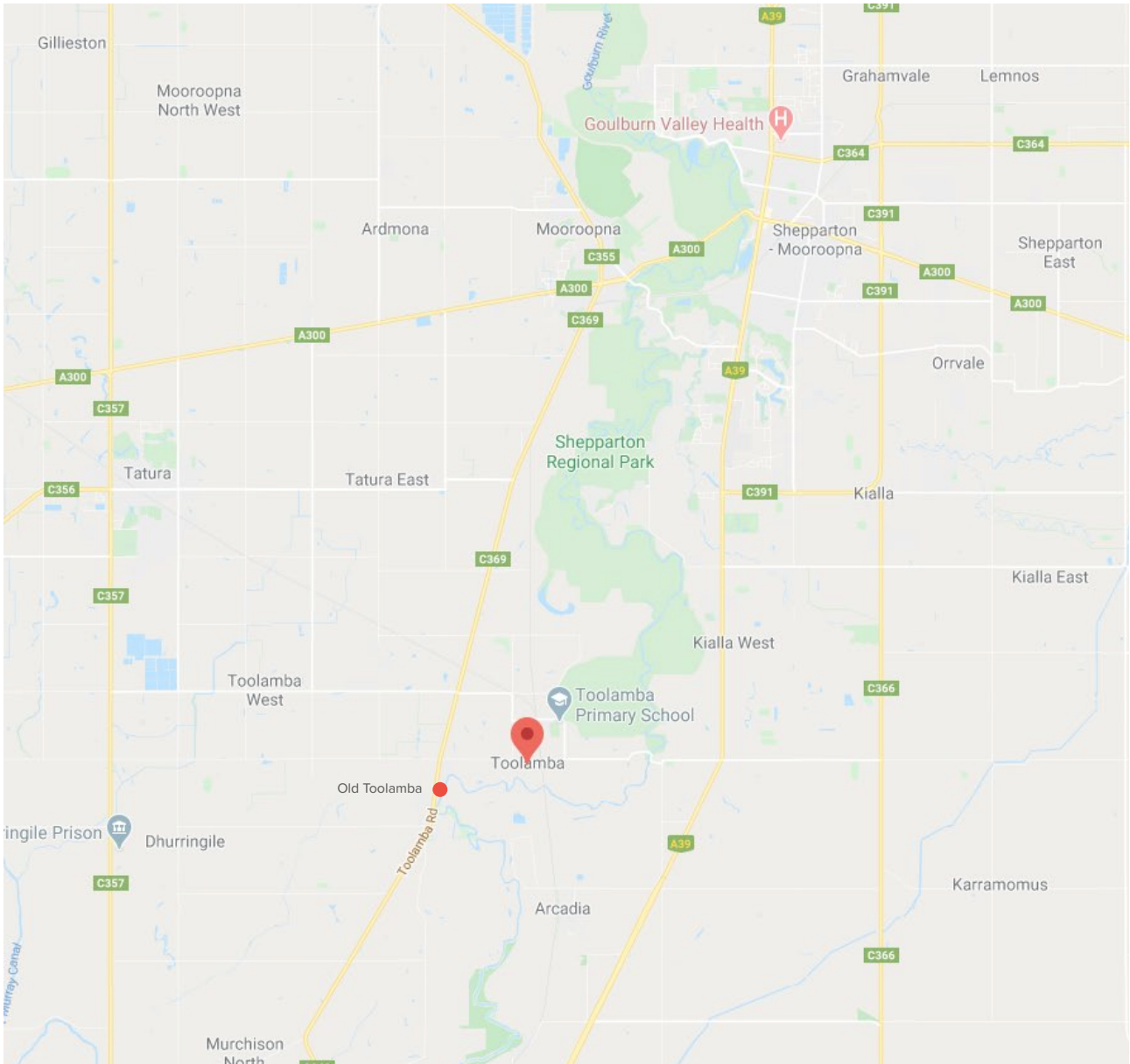


Figure 1-Map showing location of Toolamba and Old Toolamba in relation to Shepparton, Mooroopna and Tatura.



## Consultation

### Pre-draft Consultation

A variety of factors will influence the development of the Toolamba Townships. The Pre-draft Consultation aimed to ensure that these factors were fully understood prior to beginning work on the Growth Plan.

A range of activities were undertaken to ensure that the community and stakeholders had an opportunity to provide input into the Growth Plan as outlined below.

Council facilitated a workshop with key referral agencies to identify issues that may affect Toolamba's growth, and met with several landowners to discuss prospective plans for residential development. Agencies in attendance included:

- Department of Land, Water and Planning;
- Goulburn Valley Water;
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority;
- VicTrack; and
- Environmental Protection Authority.

Members of the community were asked to respond to the following questions via an online survey or at a drop-in session held on 9 May 2019 at the Toolamba Community Hall:

- **What do you love about Toolamba townships?**
- **What physical characteristics would you like to see retained in the future?**
- **What words describe how you imagine Toolamba townships in 2050?**
- **What changes would make Toolamba Townships even better in the long term?**

A total of 182 responses were received, providing 404 suggestions, ideas and comments. Six responses to the children's survey were also received, with 19 comments and ideas.

The comments received are explained in more detail in the *Toolamba Growth Plan Pre-draft Engagement Conversation Report 2019*.

### Draft Consultation

The Draft Growth Plan was made available for community feedback in January -February 2020.

Council consulted with the community in a second drop-in session, held on 6 February 2020 at the Toolamba Community Hall. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions, seek clarification on the Draft and provide feedback to the project team.

In addition to this feedback received, a total of 41 written submissions were received, including feedback from key agencies, including:

- Department of Land, Water and Planning;
- Department of Transport;
- Victorian School Building Authority
- Goulburn Murray Water;
- Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority;
- VicTrack; and
- Environmental Protection Authority.

The findings of this engagement period have been considered and included where appropriate, in the final version of the Growth Plan.

The comments received are explained in more detail in the *Toolamba Growth Plan Draft Engagement Conversation Report 2020*.



DAUNTS BEND

## Future Direction

During pre-draft consultation with the community, residents were asked what they love about Toolamba, and how they see its future. A number of key themes emerged from the responses, demonstrating the importance of retaining its unique character as it grows, preserving its natural features, and enabling its community to remain physically and socially connected.

The future direction for Toolamba is to embrace these themes, which have guided the preparation of the Toolamba Growth Plan, and which will provide an on-going direction for the Townships' future development.

Toolamba: a growing town offering a relaxed rural lifestyle in a quiet and spacious landscaped setting, supporting its community to be healthy, connected, and active.





TOOLAMBA COMMUNITY CENTRE



# CONTEXT

## Factors influencing growth

Toolamba's past growth has been sporadic and incremental. In the future, two significant factors may influence the current rate of growth. These are the rezoning of substantial tracts of land along with the provision of reticulated sewerage infrastructure and the construction of the Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton Bypass. Both factors may result in increased development in the coming decades beyond the trend growth that has previously been experienced.

## Demographic Change

According to the 2016 Census at an Urban Centre and Locality (UCL) level, the town of Toolamba had a population of 332, an increase of 43 persons and approximately 15% over 5 years from the 2011 Census. Compared to data at the townships level (includes surrounding farmland, using State Suburb (SSC) level data), which identifies an increase of 17 persons, it can be assumed that some residents on nearby farmland have moved or downsized into the town centre, but remained in the area.

The number of dwellings rose by 23 between 2011 and 2016 in the town boundary, from 100 to 123.

Figures 2 and 3 show the age structure of the overall township's population.

## Business as Usual Forecast

Specific population forecasts for the Toolamba area are not available, but the 'Rural South' area of Greater Shepparton, which includes Toolamba, is expected to grow by 8.0% between 2019 and 2036 (Profile ID). Toolamba's recent rate of growth translates to a 9.5% increase over the same period.

An 8-9.5% increase in Toolamba's population would bring an additional 62-73 people by 2036. Depending on whether the average persons per household continues to decline, between 22-33 more houses may be required to accommodate this increase.

In addition to the number of houses that may be required to accommodate population increase, the age distribution of the community will have implications for the services and facilities that will be required into the future.

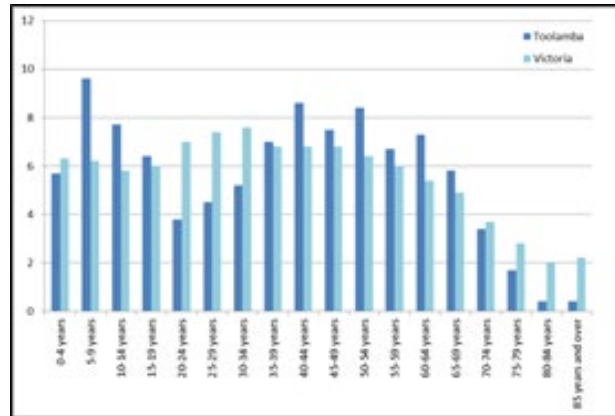


Figure 2. Toolamba's Population - Five Year Age Groups – 2016 (SSC)

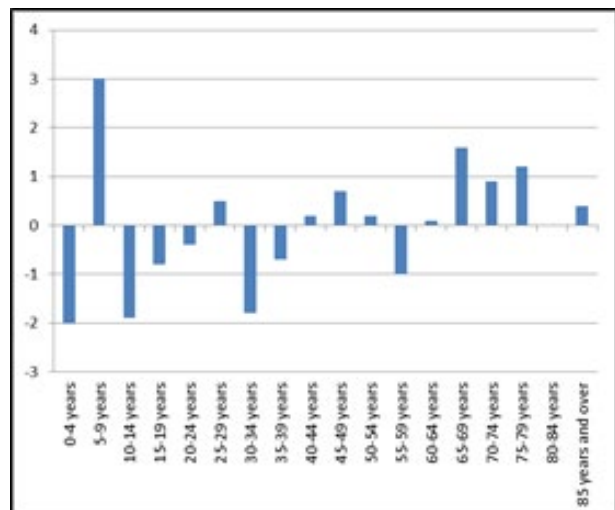


Figure 3. Population change from 2011 to 2016 (SSC)

Toolamba's median age also rose from 38 to 40 years, while the median age for Victoria remained the same (37).

The changes in 5 year age groups between 2011 and 2016 show a general trend towards an older population composition, though early-mid school age children remain well-represented (refer to Figure 3).

## Land supply

### **Residential Land Supply Monitoring Project**

Council's Residential Land Supply Monitoring Project provides an assessment of available residential land across Greater Shepparton. Conducted at approximately five-year intervals, the project highlights key housing issues, including identification of unzoned residential land stocks to ensure there is an adequate ongoing supply of residential land.

Although the previous study was completed in 2016, Council repeated the study in 2019 due to faster than expected uptake of land in some areas.

The report identifies that Toolamba has a total supply of between 88 and 111 lots, including vacant urban lots, zoned rural residential capacity lots and future (unzoned) rural residential lots.

## Proposed development

Very little new housing has been constructed in the Toolamba Townships in recent years, however, there are currently at least three local landowners who have expressed interest in subdividing their properties for residential development. The availability of new housing supply may cause the local population to grow at a faster rate in the next few years.

In 2018, land at 2 Bridge Road, Toolamba was rezoned from the Farming Zone to Low Density Residential. The development has offered 15 blocks varying in size between 4,000m<sup>2</sup> and 9,000m<sup>2</sup>. Uptake of the blocks demonstrates that there is demand for additional housing. This estate alone may accommodate a significant proportion of the growth expected under the 'business as usual' scenario.

The provision of reticulated sewerage services is a key determinant of how Toolamba will grow. Neither township is currently connected for reticulated sewerage; as a consequence, there are regulations limiting the minimum size of subdivided blocks.

However, Toolamba was identified as a priority town for reticulated sewerage services in Council's Domestic Wastewater Management Plan 2008 (DWWMP) due to potential impacts on public health and environment. Proximity to the Goulburn River and Shepparton Regional Park heighten the importance of considering environmental impacts.

Land to the south of Wren Street, on the western side of the rail line, was identified as Investigation Area 6 in the *Greater Shepparton Housing Strategy 2011* (see Section 0), prompting preparation of the *Toolamba Precinct Structure Plan 2018*.

The Structure Plan proposes to subdivide the subject land into new residential lots ranging between 800m<sup>2</sup> and 1,200m<sup>2</sup>, and along with it, plans to provide reticulated services to the township (at the developers' cost). Service delivery will require the extension of infrastructure from Tatura to the north-west.

## Bypass

Freight transport is a key factor in the state's economy, enabling the food and other goods produced to reach local, interstate and overseas markets, and the fulfilment of residents' needs. Straddling the junction of the Goulburn Valley Highway and Midland Highway, Greater Shepparton is an important hub in the state network.

The Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton Bypass has been designed to divert freight movements from the central areas of Shepparton and Mooroopna. Its construction is expected to be conducted over several stages, as funding becomes available.

Toolamba is the only small town that will have its own interchange, once the southern section of the Shepparton Bypass is constructed. The combination of new housing estates and more convenient road access to Shepparton and the region could spur rapid expansion of the township. A timeframe for construction of this section of the bypass has not been confirmed, but Council wishes to ensure that growth in the townships is strategically planned to manage the implications of the delivery of the bypass.

The location of the bypass, along with flood prone land, does limit the availability of developable land to the south and west of Toolamba.

## Environmental context

Toolamba is located within the Victorian Riverina bioregion, which is characterised by a flat to gently undulating landscape created by former stream channels and wide floodplain areas associated with major river systems.

The Toolamba townships are bounded by the Goulburn River and the Shepparton Regional Park on its eastern side. These environs are heavily vegetated, supporting flora and fauna biodiversity. While much of the surrounding land has been cleared for agricultural purposes, boundary plantings and scattered mature trees provide essential support for local fauna and birdlife.

Sustainable environmental practices are required to ensure that wetlands and vulnerable flora and fauna species are protected.

The flat landscape and degree of vegetated areas means that any development in Toolamba will need to take the risks of flooding and bushfire into account (see Section 2.3).



## Strategic Context

### State Strategy

#### **Victorian Planning Provisions**

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) provides the broad objectives and strategies for the State of Victoria in relation to key future directions.

The most relevant provisions are:

- Clause 11 Settlement
- Clause 13 Environmental Risks and Amenity
- Clause 14 Natural Resource Management
- Clause 15 Built Environment and Heritage
- Clause 16 Housing
- Clause 18 Transport
- Clause 19 Infrastructure

#### **Plan Melbourne 2050**

Plan Melbourne 2050 provides a high level planning strategy for Melbourne that addresses future population and employment growth in the central city, as well as the expansion and strengthening of physical, economic and social links across the state.

Although Plan Melbourne 2050 is predominantly a metropolitan planning strategy, it shapes the overarching approach to development across the state, particularly in regards to the principle of 20-minute neighbourhoods.

The application of a 20-minute neighbourhood framework is intended to guide development and infrastructure provision to enable residents to fulfil their needs within a 20-minute walk, cycle or public transport ride of their home.

The framework provides a useful tool for assessment of Toolamba's existing and potential capacity. It is discussed further in Section 3.0.

#### **Delivering the goods: Victorian Freight Plan 2018**

Delivering the Goods 2018 sets out priorities to support Victoria's freight and logistics systems through a period of unprecedented growth and change in response to increasing demand, global trends and technological innovation.

Greater Shepparton is a key freight hub, due to its position at the junction of the Goulburn Valley Highway and the Midland Highway, and the extent of its agricultural industries. The Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton Bypass will divert freight movements away from the highly urbanised areas of Shepparton and Mooroopna.

### Regional Strategy

#### **Hume Regional Growth Plan**

The Hume Regional Growth Plan encompasses the municipalities of Alpine, Benalla, Greater Shepparton, Indigo, Mansfield, Mitchell, Moira, Murrindindi, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta and Wodonga. The plan provides broad direction for regional land use and development, outlining more detailed planning frameworks for key regional centres.

The plan identifies Shepparton as the location for major growth and Toolamba is included within the 'Hinterland influence' catchment that surrounds Shepparton. Growth in the hinterland influence catchment needs to be managed to achieve an efficient settlement pattern.

### Local Strategies and Plans

#### **Greater Shepparton 2030 Strategy**

*The Greater Shepparton 2030 Strategy* (2006) provides a long-term vision for Greater Shepparton to guide planning, leadership, decision making and expectations about the municipality into the future. It includes a Framework Plan for Toolamba, but this has since been refined by the *Greater Shepparton Housing Strategy 2011*, and the *Township Frameworks Plan Review 2018*.

### **Greater Shepparton Council Plan 2017-2021**

The Council Plan sets out Council's Vision for Greater Shepparton to be a thriving economy in the food bowl of Victoria with excellent lifestyles, innovative agriculture, a diverse community, and abundant opportunities.

Incorporating the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan, the Council Plan aims to ensure that the municipality continues to be a place where people want to live, now and in the future.

### **Greater Shepparton Housing Strategy**

The Greater Shepparton Housing Strategy (2011) emphasises the need for planning to fulfil short and long-term housing needs, to provide for consolidated and sustainable growth, to respect the existing characters of Greater Shepparton's diverse housing settings, and to enable efficient management of the development process to benefit the entire community.

The strategy recognises Toolamba as having a unique setting, and the importance of managing the rate of development to protect its character. It notes that there is potential for reticulated sewer, and designates the land at 335 Rutherford Road Toolamba as Investigation Area 6, requiring further work on land conditions, servicing and development potential prior to consideration of rezoning.

The Strategy also nominated both townships as Minimal Change Areas due to their strong rural neighbourhood characteristics, vulnerability to environmental factors such as flooding, and valued landscape features. The Growth Area Plan has since been updated in the *Greater Shepparton Townships Framework Plan Review* (see below).

The objectives in managing residential development in Minimal Change Areas are to ensure that existing scale, character, and historic buildings are respected, that development does not cause detrimental impacts to significant natural features, and that environmentally friendly technologies are supported in new constructions.

### **Greater Shepparton Townships Framework Plan Review**

*The Greater Shepparton Townships Framework Plan Review (2018)* reviews nine township Framework Plans from the *Greater Shepparton Housing Strategy 2011*, including Toolamba, to reflect changes that have occurred since 2011.

The revised version of the Toolamba and Old Toolamba Framework Plan (Figure 4) displays overlays affecting the area (Bushfire Management, Floodway and Land Subject to Inundation), removes Investigation Area 6 from classification as an area for 'Long Term Future Growth', and corrects an anomaly in the settlement boundary, as shown in the map, opposite. Amendment C212 incorporated the review into the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme in 2020.

### **Greater Shepparton Cycling Strategy 2013-2017**

Council is keen to promote cycling due to the wide-ranging health, tourism and environmental benefits, including staged implementation of a connected and continuous cycling network. *The Cycling Strategy (2013)* identifies Toolamba and Old Toolamba as potential links in recreational cycling networks aligned to railway corridors, river and road systems.

### **Shepparton and Mooroopna 2050: Regional City Growth Plan**

While developing the Toolamba Growth Plan, Council also worked with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) to prepare the Shepparton and Mooroopna 2050: Regional Growth Plan, which aims to inform and guide sustainable development of Shepparton, Mooroopna and Kialla over the coming decades.

Although not directly applicable to Toolamba, these more urbanised areas provide key resources and opportunities for its residents, including employment, services, healthcare, education, retail and recreational facilities, and cultural pursuits.

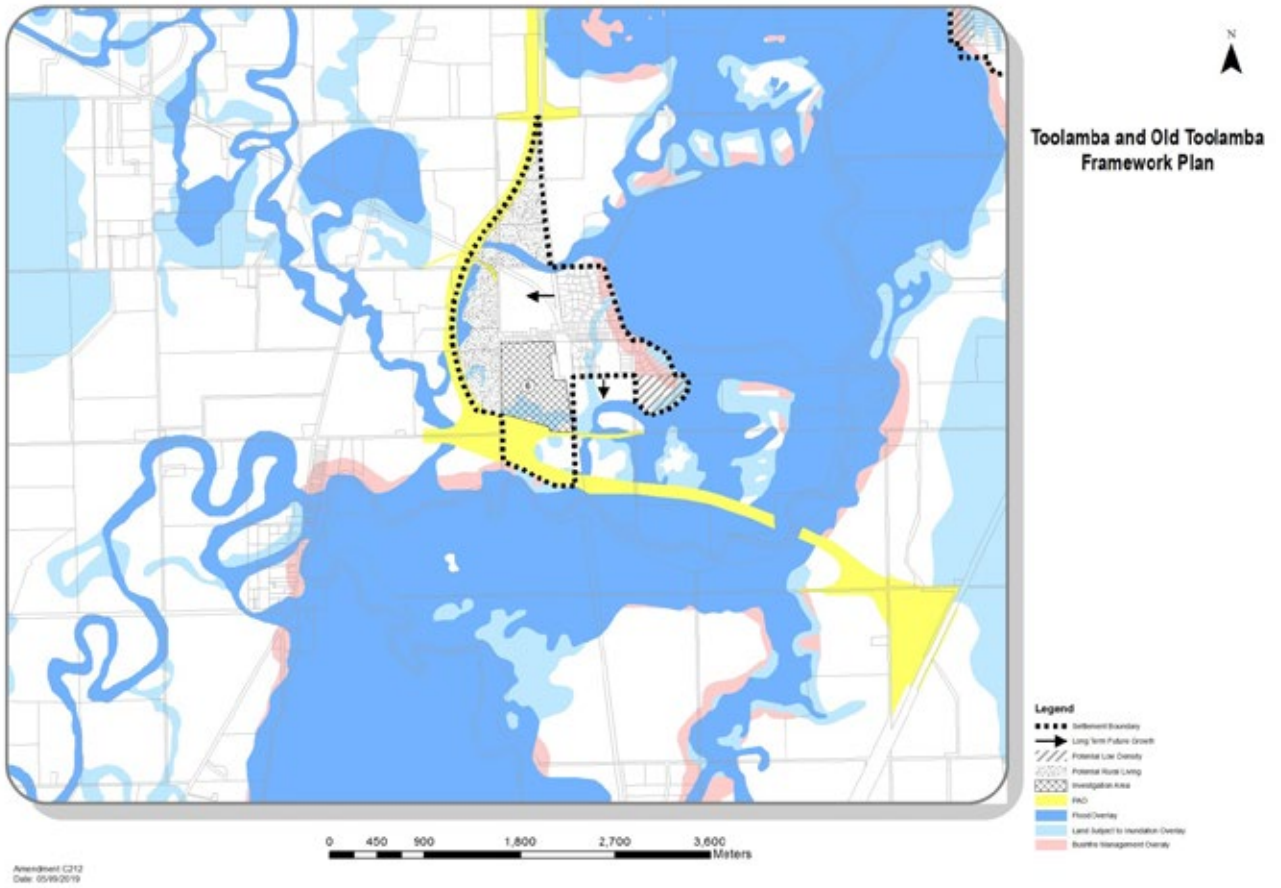


Figure 4. Toolamba and Old Toolamba Framework Plan (Greater Shepparton Townships Framework Plan Review 2019)

## Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme

The Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme guides use and development of land across the municipality.

The Local Planning Policy Framework provides over-arching objectives and strategies for sustainable development across the municipality.

### Zones

The existing zones that apply to Toolamba and Old Toolamba reflect the predominant use of the land for agricultural purposes (refer to Figure )

The Township Zone applies to much of Toolamba to provide for residential development and a range of educational, religious, community and limited other uses to serve local needs.

Most of Old Toolamba, and the newest estate in Toolamba Township are within the Low Density Residential Zone, which specifies a minimum lot size of 0.4 hectare (4,000m<sup>2</sup>) in the absence of reticulated sewerage connections, to treat and retain all wastewater. Where reticulated services are available, the minimum lot size is 0.2 hectares (2,000m<sup>2</sup>).

Public land is protected by Public Use (PUZ), Public Conservation and Resource (PCRZ), and Road (RDZ) zones.



Figure 5. Zone Map



## Overlays

Overlays indicate land where particular issues need to be taken into account, often imposing restrictions on how the land can be used.

The Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) identifies land that is proposed to be acquired for the Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton Bypass, to reserve the land and ensure that changes to its use or development does not prejudice its future purpose.

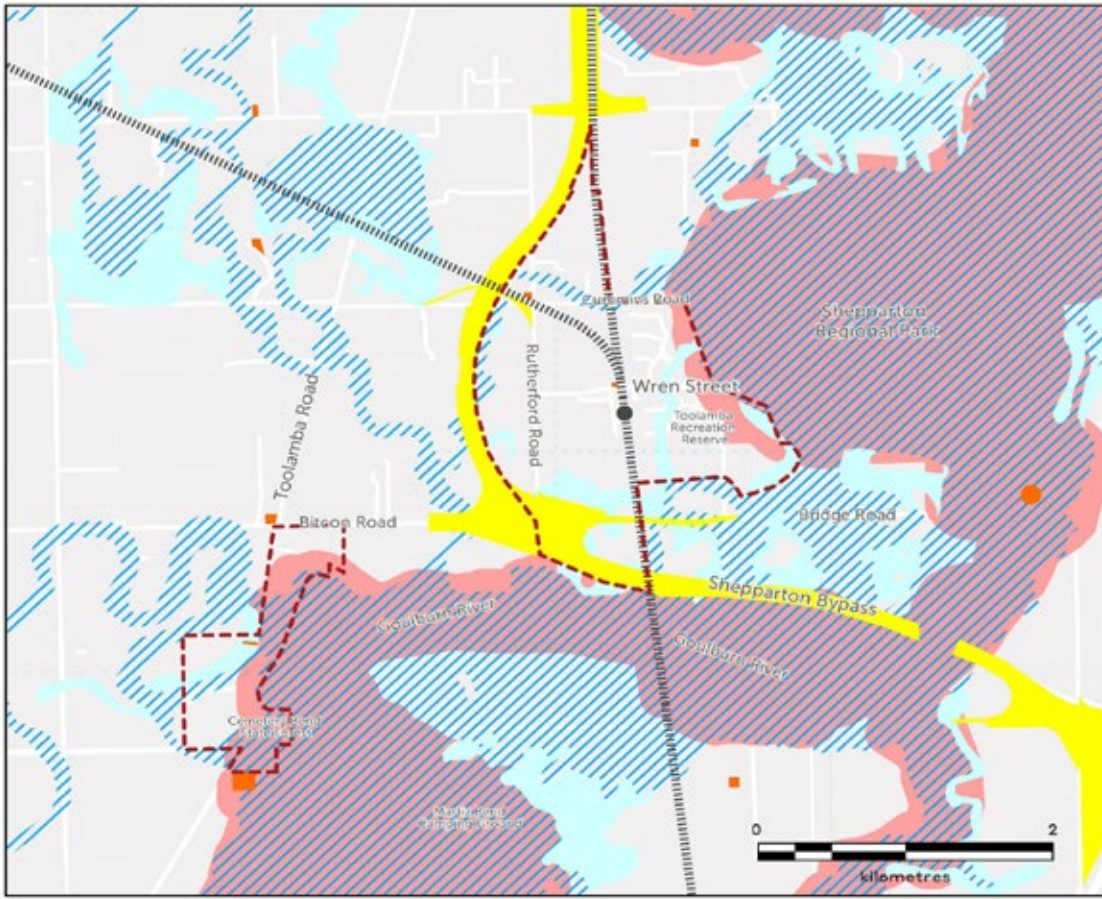
The Heritage Overlay (HO) applies to particular properties, such as the Junction Hotel, the General Store and the bridge, which have cultural heritage significance.

While the Shepparton Regional Park provides important recreational and amenity value to the Townships, it is accompanied by the risk of bushfire. The Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) identifies areas where bushfire hazard warrants protective measures, aiming to ensure that development is only permitted where risk to human life and property can be reduced to acceptable levels.

There are extensive areas around Toolamba that are affected when the Goulburn River experiences flooding. These are indicated by the Floodway (FO) and Land Subject to Inundation (LSIO) Overlays, which aim to ensure any development maintains free passage and temporary storage of floodwater, minimises flood damage, including soil erosion, sedimentation, and silting.

Depending on conditions, levels of flooding can vary, but overlays are determined by 1 in 100 year extents (1% Annual Exceedence Probability). This measure reflects the likelihood of flooding in any given year, not the expected frequency; for example, between September 2010 and January 2011, the town of Bridgewater in central Victoria experienced three significant flood events.





- Legend**
- Town Boundary
  - Trainline
  - Decommisioned Train Station
  - Public Acquisition Overlay
  - Floodway Overlay
  - Land Subject to Inundation Overlay
  - Bushfire Management Overlay
  - Heritage Overlay

Figure 6. Overlays Map

## Toolamba and District Community Plan

The Toolamba community have a keen and active interest in the future development of both Townships and are open to growth that retains the small-town character and unique community spirit of Toolamba.

The Toolamba and District Community Plan was originally developed in 2011 and updated in 2016. It includes an Action Plan that is reviewed annually to reflect the changing needs and aspirations of the community. The implementation of the Plan is driven by the community, but many of its actions are closely aligned to those of the Toolamba Growth Plan. Some of the goals in the Community Plan have been incorporated into the Growth Plan, including:

- Provision of a range of community activities and facilities
- Provision of walking and cycling paths/tracks
- Improvement of kerb / channel / guttering
- Support heritage
- Public transport connection



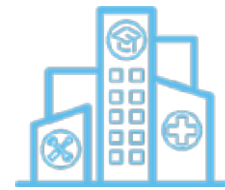
The image shows the exterior of the Toolamba Primary & Preschool building. The main entrance is covered by a grey overhang with a white roof. The building has a red brick base and a white upper section with vertical slats. There are stone pillars supporting the overhang. In the foreground, there is a paved area with a zebra crossing and two metal bollards. The sky is blue with some clouds.

WHERE EVERYONE COUNTS  
**TOOLAMBA**  
PRIMARY & PRESCHOOL

# CURRENT CONDITIONS

## Principles for Growth

The following Principles, derived from the Shepparton and Mooroopna 2050: Regional City Growth Plan 2020 underpin Greater Shepparton City Council's approach to planning for future growth across the municipality:



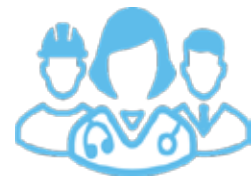
**Principle 1** – Resilient and sustainable development will be balanced across new and existing precincts

Future growth will be directed to carefully planned neighbourhoods with good access to services and amenities.



**Principle 2** – Local character, cultural heritage and community diversity will be celebrated

Places that have heritage or local significance will be appreciated and conserved. Diverse communities will be encouraged and supported



**Principle 3** – Inclusive and healthy communities will be encouraged and supported

Open spaces will be enhanced, active travel encouraged, and all opportunities utilised to support the community to connect and be active.



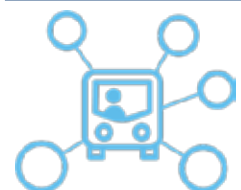
**Principle 4** – A healthy environment will be fostered

The natural environment will be protected and green spaces increased and integrated into urban settlements. Sustainable energy generation, waste management and transport opportunities will be encouraged.



**Principle 5** – Key precincts will be activated and/or renewed

Colocation of services and facilities in key precincts will be supported. Strategic redevelopment sites will be renewed or redeveloped for the community's benefit.



**Principle 6** – Comprehensive transport networks will be integrated into the urban form

Where possible, comprehensive transport networks including road, rail, freight, cycling and pedestrian infrastructure will be created.



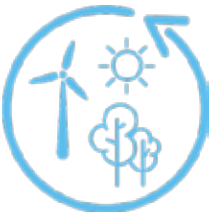
**Principle 7** – Productive agricultural land will be safeguarded

Future growth will be directed away from productive agricultural land and the region's agricultural offering will be strengthened.



**Principle 8** – Opportunities to support a thriving and varied economy will be pursued

Agriculture, freight, industry, education, and health will continue to be key economic drivers. New businesses will be attracted and existing businesses supported to grow.



**Principle 9** – A hierarchy of activity centres to support regional and local needs will be maintained

The hierarchy of commercial centres will be defined, and community infrastructure will be accessible and adaptable to changing needs.



**Principle 10** – Attractive and distinctive places and precincts will be protected and enhanced

The unique character of Greater Shepparton's places and precincts will be protected and enhanced

The principles provide guidance for consistency across all areas of Greater Shepparton but can also be adapted to suit the particular needs and character of each locality.

## The 20 Minute Neighbourhood

The concept is based on enabling residents to ‘live locally’ by promoting opportunities to meet most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk, cycle, or public transport trip from their home. A 20-minute neighbourhood can create a more cohesive and inclusive community with a vibrant local economy— reducing social exclusion, improving health and wellbeing, promoting a sense of place, reducing travel costs and traffic congestion, and reducing carbon emissions, objectives which support Greater Shepparton’s Principles for Growth.

The concept provides a robust framework to assess and discuss the needs of the townships and the infrastructure, facilities, and services that may be required, to guide Toolamba’s growth over the coming decades.

Figure 7, below, demonstrates the key elements needed to ‘live locally’, which are explored in the following sections. While the area’s flat topography is ideal for walking and cycling, Toolamba’s size will inhibit local delivery of some services, at least in the short to medium term. To address this, the framework has been extended to encompass a 20-minute car ride where necessary, reflecting Toolamba’s context within Greater Shepparton.

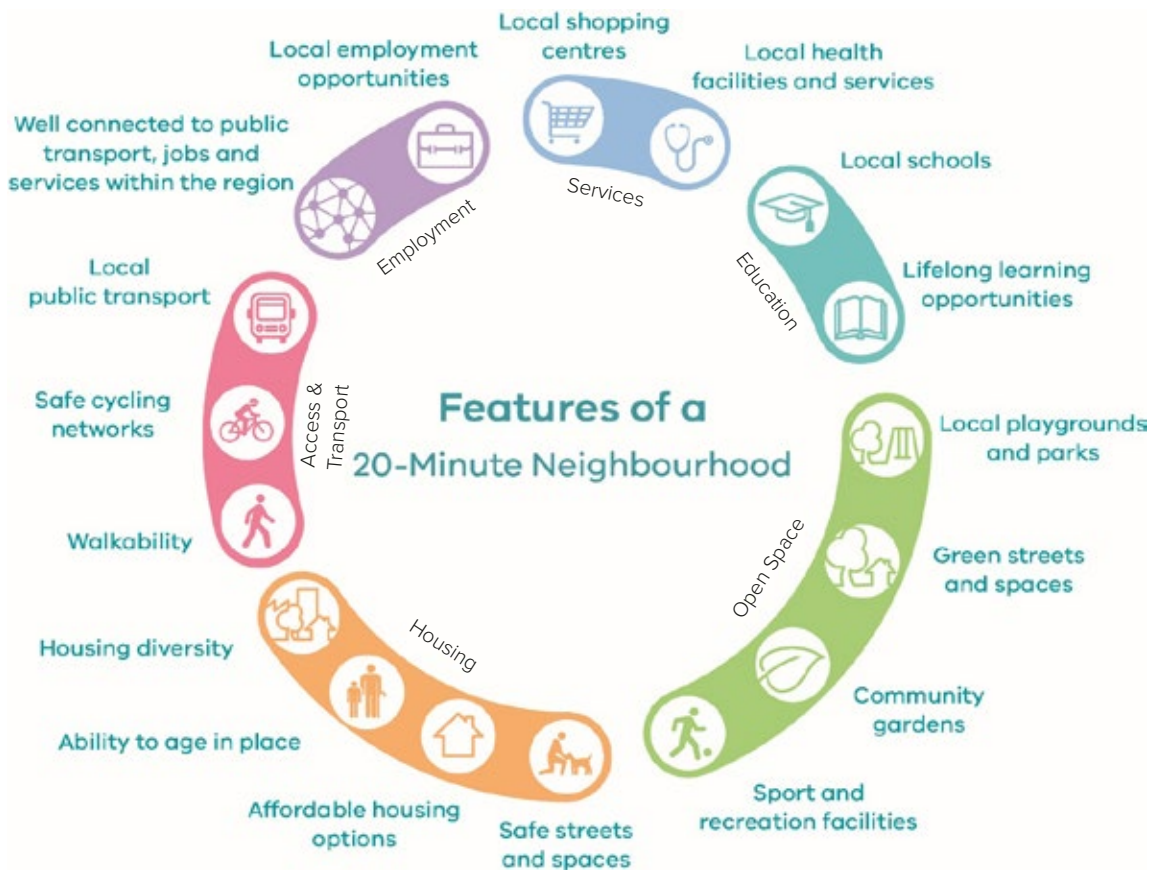


Figure 7. 20-minute Neighbourhoods Model (categories added)





## Housing

### ***Housing diversity***

According to 2016 Census data, Toolamba's housing stock is entirely comprised of detached dwellings, with no units, townhouses or apartments. Of this stock, 52.9% of stock is 3 bedroom, 40.0% four or more bedrooms, and only 5.9% are 1 or 2 bedrooms, although 15.2% of households are single person. Only 14.6% of dwellings are rented, with 51% under mortgage, and 33.2% owned outright.

While the built form varies widely, large setbacks and substantial vegetation are consistent elements of the streetscapes, enabled by the necessary minimum 4,000m<sup>2</sup> block size where reticulated sewerage services are not available. Smaller blocks along Wren Street pre-date these planning requirements, but mature trees along and behind the streetscape ensure harmonious blending. Toolamba's spaciousness and greenery are primary elements in the rural character of the townships, identified as key characteristics in community consultation for both current enjoyment and future aspiration.

### ***Ability to age in place***

Toolamba's close-knit community and network of community-based activities and organisations is likely to provide the social support and potentially also physical support for ageing members of the community. However, the built form of the townships is not highly conducive to fulfilling the needs of older people. More than 90% of houses have 3 or more bedrooms, leaving few options to downsize into a smaller home, and all are located on individual blocks that create significant maintenance burdens. While Toolamba is currently small enough to be within a 20-minute walk or cycle of the general store, playground and hotel, the absence of footpaths is a hazard for those with limited mobility. In addition, if a resident is unable to drive, employment, medical services, and other services and facilities available in Kialla, Shepparton and Mooropna may be out of reach, restricting the fulfilment of daily needs.

### ***Affordable Housing options***

Current property prices in Toolamba are inherently 'affordable', with both median rent and median mortgage repayments that are lower than state and national figures. The abundant supply of land that is suitable for residential development around Toolamba suggests extensive capacity for staged release to maintain affordability for those able to enter the market. However, the provision of infrastructure to secure the supply of reticulated sewerage services is likely to add a considerable amount to purchase prices.

The existing lack of diversity in housing size and configuration, and the low number of rental properties are not favourable for the provision of Affordable Housing, which is defined by the Planning and Environment Act 1987 as 'housing, including Social Housing, that is appropriate for the needs of very low, low, and moderate income households'. There are few options available for households to respond to changes in circumstance without moving out of the townships.

### ***Safe streets and spaces***

The feeling of safety and security in Toolamba was the second most popular response to the Community Consultation question 'What do you love about Toolamba?', relating closely to the first, the connected and friendly community, a primary factor in passive surveillance. Both also featured strongly in the aspirations for 2050. There is a particular association with the ability for children to navigate and move around the townships by themselves. Census data indicates that all households have at least one motor vehicle, with 80.8% owning two or more, for a total of 247 vehicles. Although walking and cycling may serve local needs, the low level of public transport connectivity suggests Toolamba is currently dominated by car transport to enable access to other places within the municipality and the state.





## Open Space

### ***Local playgrounds, parks and community gardens***

Colaura Gardens is centrally located on Wren Street, adjacent to the General Store. It is named for two local girls whose lives were lost in 2006 and features a memorial garden. It provides a playground, open space, public toilets, BBQ facilities and pavilion, book exchange, water fountain, shaded areas and seating, as well as directional and interpretive signage for the town.

Toolamba enjoys proximity to the Shepparton Regional Park, with a network of tracks providing access to Daunts Bend to the east, and an approach to the Goulburn River to the south from Rutherford Road. The natural amenity of the locality is highly valued by the community, particularly the bird- and wildlife.

### ***Green streets and spaces***

Mature trees and vegetation are an important characteristic of the townships, a foundation of its rural identity.

### ***Sport and recreation facilities***

The Toolamba Recreation Reserve is a significant sport and recreation facility, offering tennis courts, sports oval, public toilets, and Community Centre with kitchen facilities.

## Access & Transport

### **Local Public Transport**

Since the closure and removal of Toolamba Railway Station, public transport service to the township is limited to some bus services.

Although the community indicated it would welcome the reopening of the station, VicTrack have indicated that there is no current intention to do so.

### **Safe Cycling Networks**

While there are shared use tracks in the locality, cycling within and between the townships is limited to on-road travel.

### **Walkability**

The relatively small settlement footprint of Toolamba allows a high degree of walkability in terms of accessing the places and features of the town, particularly as they are largely concentrated in Wren Street. There are also informal walking trails along the Goulburn River.

### **Vehicle Networks**

The 20-minute neighbourhood model is predicated on fulfilling all daily needs within a 20-minute walk, cycle or public transport trip from one's home, which provides an opportunity for Toolamba to focus its primary infrastructure along Wren Street.

However, both current and projected scenarios for Toolamba suggest that access to Shepparton, Mooroopna, Tatura and Kialla will remain an integral resource for larger retail, medical and other services and facilities. Census data from 2016 identifies that all dwellings have at least one car (16.1%), while 40.8% have two, and 40% have 3 or more (3.1% not stated).

### **Toolamba Bridge**

The historic Toolamba Bridge was originally built in 1900, and refurbished in the 1950s, becoming a local landmark. However, in recent years it has required structural upgrades to maintain safe passage, causing closures that impact car and bus access, and reduction of the load limit. Decking and cross beams were replaced in 2017, with works undertaken to reinforce the lower piers, cross heads, girders, crossbeams, kerbs, decking and guard rails in 2019. These works have reinstated a 10-tonne limit, increasing vehicular access.

The bridge is expected to be duplicated within 8-10 years, with a desire to preserve the existing bridge for its historic significance.

## Employment

### ***Local Employment Opportunities***

Toolamba is primarily an agricultural district with activities such as fruit and vegetable growing, dairy farming, cropping, wool growing, and cattle & sheep grazing.

The Toolamba Primary School and Kindergarten provide the largest proportion of jobs in Toolamba. The general store and hotel support limited retail and commercial employment opportunities.

### ***Connections within the region***

Many local residents work in nearby towns such as Kialla, Tatura, Mooroopna and Shepparton.

## Services

### ***Local shopping centres***

Toolamba contains a local General Store and hotel on Wren Street. This local activity centre has the long-term opportunity to expand and provide more community based commercial activities.

### ***Local health facilities and services***

There are no medical facilities in Toolamba. Residents travel to nearby townships such as Mooroopna or Shepparton.

## Education

### ***Local schools***

Toolamba Primary School and Kindergarten were constructed in 2012, following the destruction of the previous weatherboard buildings by fire in 2010. It is designed to accommodate approximately 200 students, and should continue to provide adequate capacity for the local community into the future.

Secondary education will continue to be provided by schools outside of the townships.

### ***Lifelong learning opportunities***

Higher education is provided by a number of tertiary institutions based in Shepparton, including La Trobe University and GOTAFE. A large number of online courses are available and 88.1% of dwellings have internet access.

Passenger Service  
1880-1982

**TOOLAMBA**

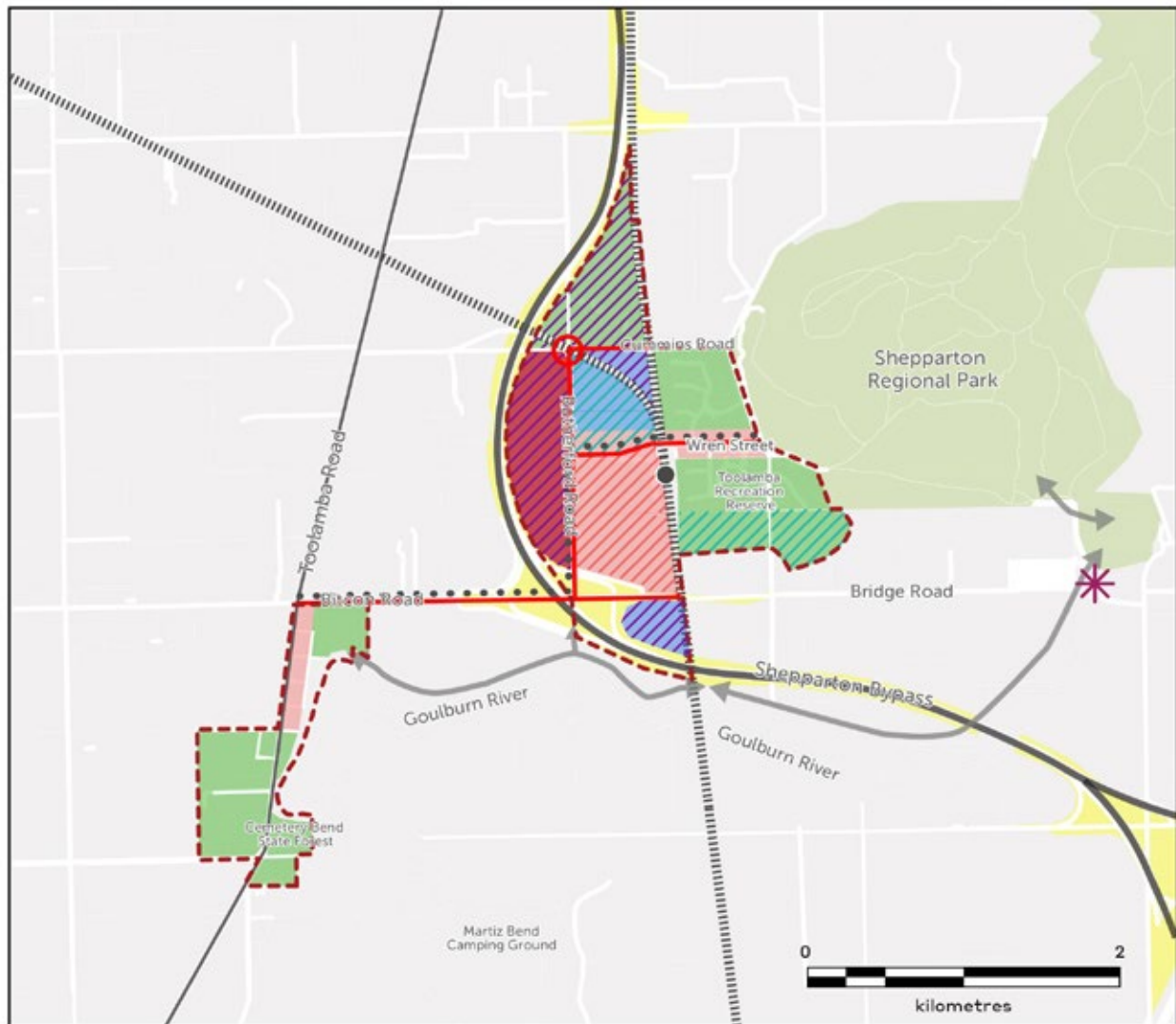
1927-45

Tea Rooms

# THE GROWTH PLAN

## Framework Plan

The Toolamba Townships Framework Plan, shown in Figure 8, provides the overall framework for managing long term change within the towns of Toolamba and Old Toolamba.



### Legend

- |                              |   |                               |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Township Boundary            | Higher Density (800-2000m <sup>2</sup> lots)          | Public Acquisition Overlay    |
| Proposed Shepparton Bypass   | Moderate Density (2000-4000m <sup>2</sup> lots)       | Road Upgrades                 |
| Trainline                    | Low Density (>4000m <sup>2</sup> )                    | Intersection Upgrade          |
| Decommissioned Train Station | Potential Mixed Use (Subject to future consideration) | Walking/Cycling Path Upgrades |
| Shepparton Regional Park     | Short-term Growth                                     | Indicative Walking Trail      |
|                              | Medium-term Growth                                    | Potential New Bridge          |
|                              | Long-term Growth                                      |                               |

Figure 8. Toolamba's Strategic Framework Plan

## Housing

A greater diversity of housing types and sizes will improve the provision of sustainable housing options in the townships, which will benefit residents by allowing relocation to accommodate changing needs without losing social networks and support. This will be particularly beneficial if household size continues to decrease and as the population ages.

Toolamba's green and spacious feel are key contributors to the character of the townships, so future estates should maintain proportional setbacks and generous landscaping. The Toolamba Housing and Streetscape Typologies 2020 provides guidance on the character attributes for new development to retain the existing rural atmosphere of the townships.

Continued growth may require assessment of traffic movement and impacts, both before and after construction of the Bypass. Future estates should consider access to surrounding roads to minimise traffic utilising Wren Street, particularly in proximity to the Kindergarten and Primary School, as well as evacuation in the event of flooding or fire.

The construction of a connecting road between Bridge Road and Bitcon Road will eventually assist in alleviating traffic impacts on Wren Street. This connection is a long-term plan for consideration at the time of the bypass construction.

### Revised Settlement Boundary

The proposed settlement boundary for the Toolamba townships is provided in Figure 9, below.

The current rate of growth is not a significant driver for expansion, as there is enough capacity in zoned vacant and undeveloped low-density residential land to cater for growth in the Toolamba townships into the future. However, the location and size of blocks require further consideration to give the diversity of location and configuration that is needed to support the changing needs of the community.

It is also expected that the planned construction of the Shepparton Bypass has the potential to increase the rate of growth by improving accessibility and travel times to the townships. This may mean that the demand for growth in Toolamba is not fully known until this time, although ways to accommodate this outcome must be anticipated.

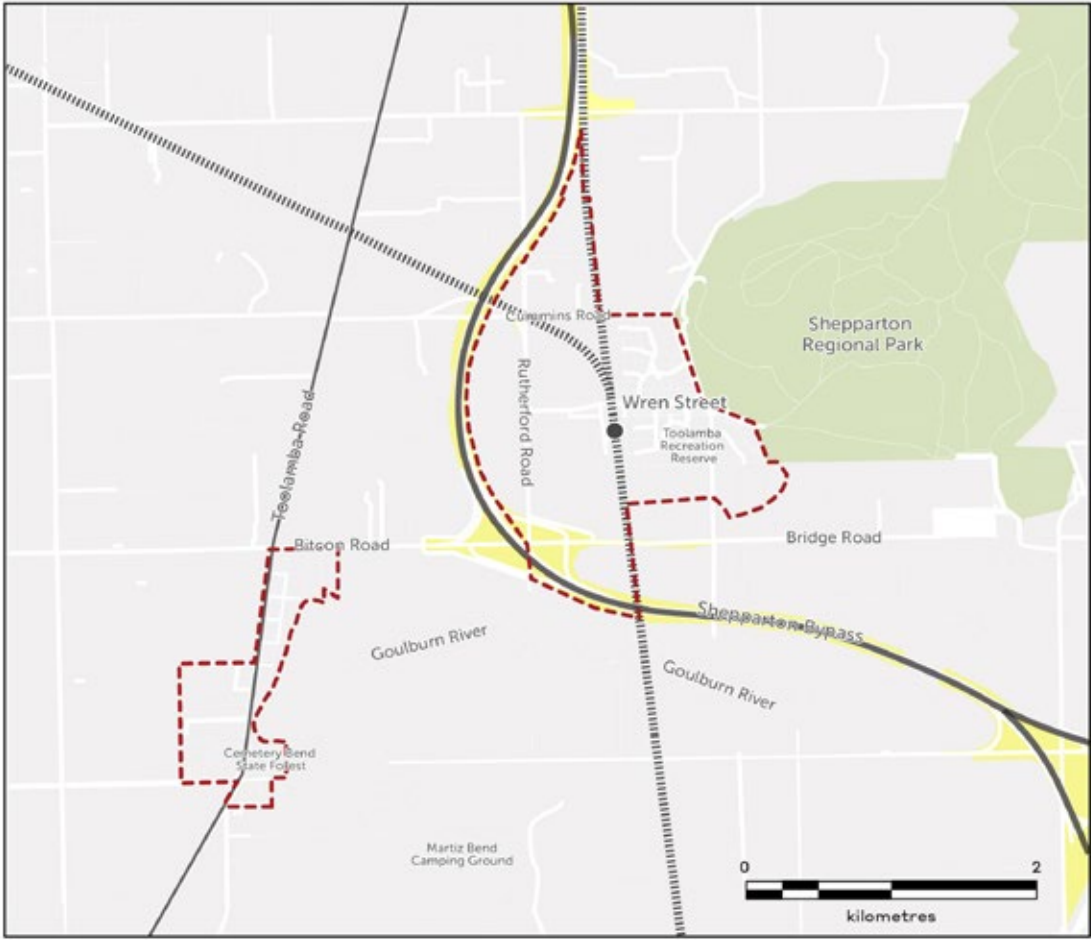
The revised settlement boundary reflects the Future Direction (see Section 1.3) and Principles for Growth (see Section 3.1), aiming for resilient and sustainable development to support the growing community.

The Shepparton Regional Park and the proposed Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton Bypass form obvious barriers to the expansion of Toolamba Township. Residential development will need to take noise and other amenity issues from the Bypass into consideration. Setbacks and vegetation screening will be important design considerations for properties adjacent to the Bypass.

While construction of the southern part of the Bypass may be many years in the future, it will influence Toolamba's development in that the required land cannot be used for a purpose which may establish 'existing use' rights that impact delivery of the Bypass.

It is expected that Toolamba's commercial and community services will continue to be concentrated along Wren Street, so the revised settlement boundary consolidates development within walking and cycling distance of these facilities. Areas close to Wren Street should be developed first to maintain town cohesion.





- Legend**
- - - Township Boundary/Toolamba Study Area
  - Public Acquisition Overlay
  - Proposed Shepparton Bypass
  - Trainline
  - Decommissioned Train Station

Figure 9. Toolamba's Proposed Settlement Boundary

## Housing diversity

The existing settlement pattern concentrates smaller lots on or within close proximity to Wren Street, with larger lots further out.

Potential growth in the Toolamba townships needs to reflect this model and provide diversity in lot sizes to encourage a range of housing types and cater to the needs of all residents.

This is a typical development pattern for a town with a central activity focus, as it promotes increased walking and cycling, close to the town centre. It does not necessarily mean that there is significant demand for any one type of development, as it is preparing for a good urban structure that will enable the town to grow and function appropriately well into the future.

The indicative densities of the areas within the Toolamba townships are provided in Figure . This outcome provides three residential typologies based on density:

- Higher density lots of 800-2,000m<sup>2</sup>;
- Moderate density lots of 2,000-4,000m<sup>2</sup>;
- Low density lots greater than 4,000m<sup>2</sup>.

This layout within the expanded Toolamba boundary ensures areas close to Wren Street continue to enjoy easy access to facilities and services, to enable downsizing or smaller households.

The provision of a variety of housing types and models is recommended to provide a diversity of housing options, although the generous setbacks and landscaping that contribute to the local neighbourhood character and atmosphere should be maintained.

Development of residential land will only occur as demand enables it, however growth must consider the staging outlined in Figure 11, to ensure it is logical and contiguous.

## Provision of Reticulated Sewerage Services

Toolamba has been identified as a priority town for reticulated sewerage services in Council's Domestic Waste Water Management Plan 2008, and the provision of these services is a key determinant of growth in the township.

The Toolamba Precinct Structure Plan includes the delivery of the required infrastructure to connect reticulated services to Toolamba. State Environmental Protection Policy (Waters) (SEPP (Waters)) requires connection to reticulated services where available. Consequently, all new residential development on the western side of the Seymour-Shepparton rail line must connect to these services once the infrastructure is in place.

Residents with existing, efficient septic systems will not be required to connect to the reticulated services, however, properties with older systems which may not be functioning effectively may be required to utilise the services under SEPP(Waters).

While reticulated sewerage services enable smaller block sizes, it is not desirable for all future development to consist of blocks under 2,000m<sup>2</sup>, to preserve Toolamba's character and amenity. The Framework Plan indicates a mix of block sizes to provide necessary diversity for future needs.

## Ability to age in place

Ageing in place gives the community the opportunity to continue to access the services and/or way of life they have previously enjoyed, as they age. This can have a very broad definition, but for Toolamba it aims to improve walking paths, provide opportunities to downsize in housing (allowing residents to continue to live in town, without the higher maintenance requirements) and offer alternative or increased modes of public transport to access services further away.

The provision of affordable housing and diversity of housing type in the Toolamba townships will provide greater ability for residents to age in place, which may involve downsizing from the more typical 3+ bedroom homes, or large farms, to smaller homes offering easy access to facilities in Wren Street.

Specialised housing to cater for higher care needs, such as retirement or assisted living, will be considered as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of housing demand in Toolamba. Longer term growth opportunities to the west of Rutherford Road could be considered at such time.

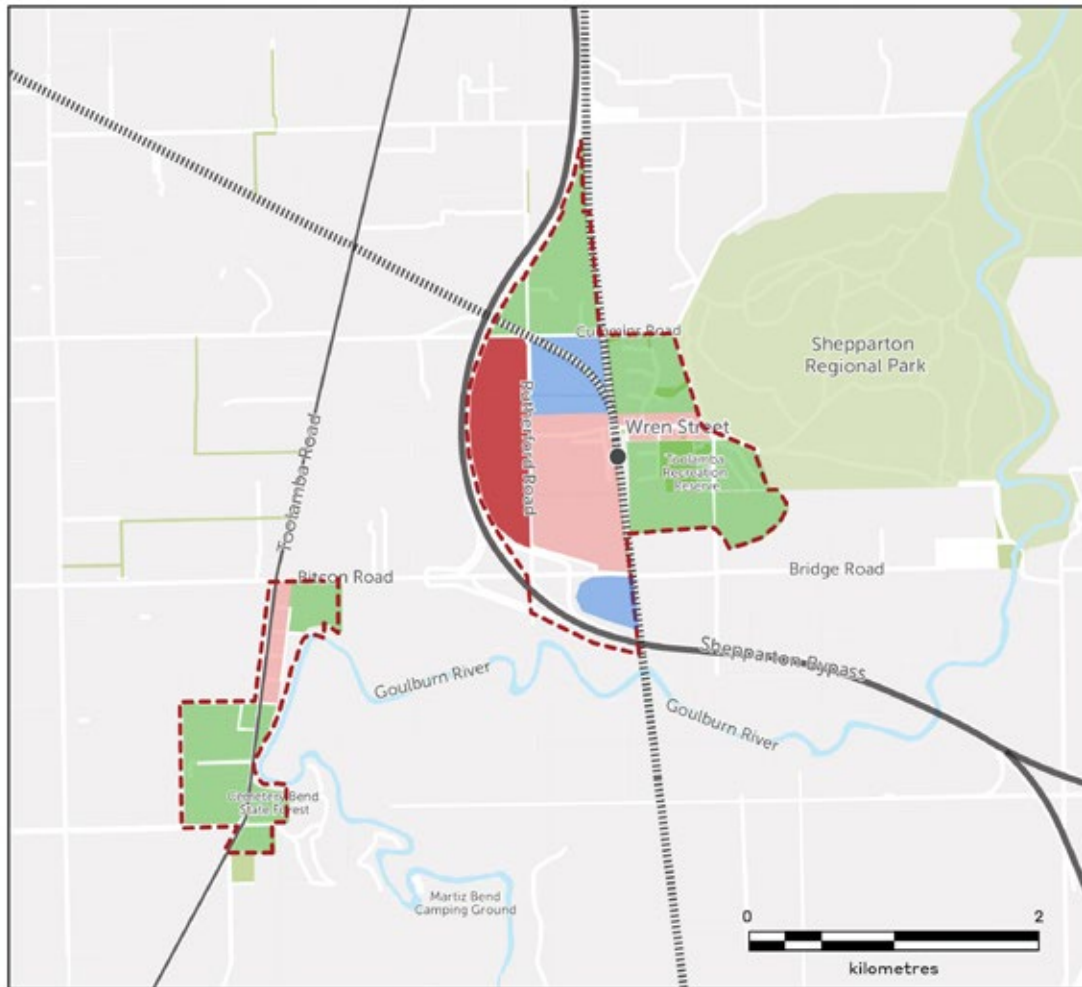
Opportunities to improve access and movement are discussed further at sections 4.4 and 4.5.

## Affordable Housing options

While Toolamba is not well suited to the provision of 'Affordable Housing'<sup>2</sup>, largely due to its distance from services and employment opportunities, and deficiency of public transport, residential development should be carefully staged to maintain reasonable market demand and pricing, and attention should be given to providing suitable housing diversity, in size and type, to respond to changing demographics.

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<sup>2</sup> In June 2018, 'Affordable Housing' is defined under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* as 'housing, including Social Housing', that is appropriate for very low, low, and moderate income households.'



**Legend**

- Township Boundary/Toolamba Study Area
- Proposed Shepparton Bypass
- Trainline
- Decommissioned Train Station
- Shepparton Regional Park
- Waterways/Waterbodies
- Higher Density (800-2000m<sup>2</sup> lots)
- Moderate Density (2000-4000m<sup>2</sup> lots)
- Low Density (>4000m<sup>2</sup>)
- Potential Mixed Use (subject to future consideration)

Figure 10. Toolamba's Proposed Density Plan

## Safe streets and spaces

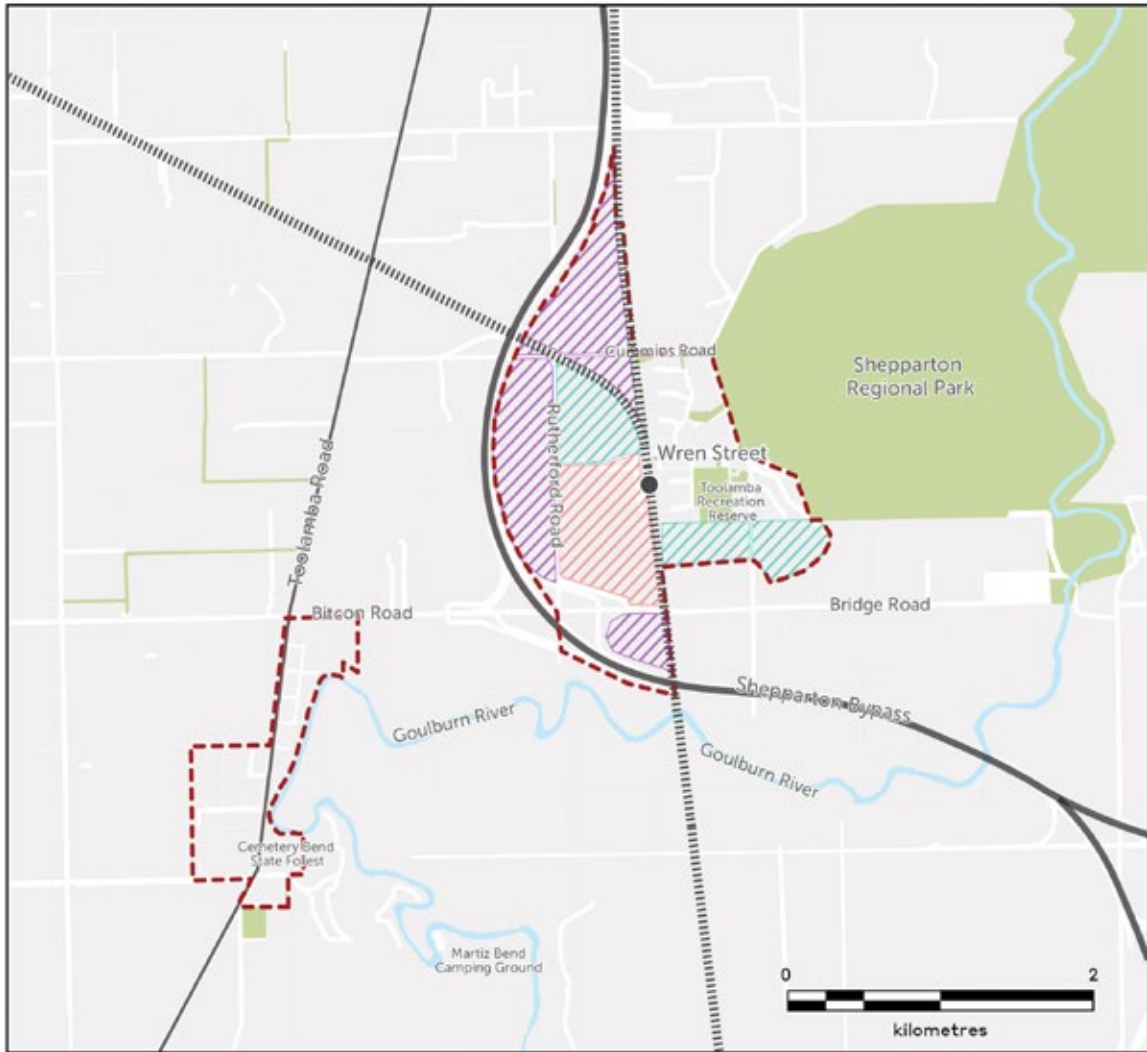
The character of the Toolamba townships is described as a 'rural feel' by many residents, which is closely associated with quiet streets and feelings of safety.

The important elements of the built form which contribute to this character are centred on the small, rural nature of the Toolamba townships and a relatively low amount of vehicle movements. Relevant built form elements include generous lot sizes, setbacks and the use of canopy trees in landscaping. These elements combine to ensure the built form does not dominate the streetscape.

Feedback makes it clear that the preference is for this rural feel to prevail even as the population grows. *The Toolamba Housing and Streetscape Typologies 2020* provides guidance to promote important elements that contribute to the preferred character, such as generous setbacks, canopy trees and landscaping are included as requirements for all new development, for all indicative densities

## Housing Actions

- Adopt and implement the Growth Plan and the Toolamba Housing and Streetscape Typologies 2020 to ensure potential future growth is managed effectively.
- Monitor the demand for growth and change, based on the construction of the Shepparton Bypass. Adjust priorities accordingly, if required.
- Rezone land intended to be serviced by reticulated sewerage identified for higher density development within the proposed settlement boundary to provide for lots between 800 – 2,000 square metres (refer to Appendix);
- Rezone land intended to be serviced by reticulated sewerage and identified for moderate density development within the proposed settlement boundary to provide for lots between 2,000 – 4,000 square metres;
- Rezone land not intended to be serviced by reticulated sewerage and identified for low density development within the proposed settlement boundary to provide for lots 4,000 m<sup>2</sup> or more;
- Adopt the staging associated with the Growth Plan to provide land for residential development incrementally to ensure logical, natural and affordable growth. Non-contiguous land must not be approved, unless substantial strategic justification and demand is demonstrated.
- Direct growth away from areas with environmental constraints, such as mapped hazards or dense vegetation cover.
- Advocate for increased public transport services between Toolamba and surrounding centres such as Tatura, Mooroopna and Shepparton to allow residents a greater ability to age in place.
- Ensure rezoning provides for development that respects the preferred character of the area, including but not limited to generous setbacks and landscaping.



- Legend**
- Township Boundary/Toolamba Study Area
  - Proposed Shepparton Bypass
  - Trainline
  - Decommissioned Train Station
  - Shepparton Regional Park
  - Waterways/Waterbodies
  - Short-term Growth
  - Medium-term Growth
  - Long-term Growth

Figure 11. Toolamba's Proposed Staging Plan

## Open Space

Natural features surrounding Toolamba form geographic constraints to development. However, they also contribute to growth demand, as they create scenic landscapes and opportunities for recreation in open space, which is part of what makes the Toolamba townships a desirable place to live.

Conservation of the natural environment and open spaces is dealt with through the application of the settlement boundary. However, protecting and enhancing canopy trees, vegetation and landscaping within the settlement boundary is also considered as part of the design guidelines for managing future growth and respecting the Toolamba townships' rural landscape and character.

This landscape importance should also be prioritised by appropriately implementing Greater Shepparton's Landscape Plan Guide, 2017, to incorporate vegetation buffers with indigenous plants and sustainable landscape design.

The interface between rural residential and existing or potential agricultural land uses should be considered with any new allotments along Toolamba Road and on the edges of the settlement boundary. Larger setbacks and landscaped open spaces will provide screening and buffers between these land uses and contribute to the rural feel and natural landscape that characterises the Toolamba townships.

## Local playgrounds, parks and community gardens

Provision of local pocket parks and areas of passive open space will be required alongside new residential development. Larger proposals, such as the PSP area, must incorporate areas of open space within the subdivision.

Colaura Gardens and the Toolamba Recreation Reserve are and will continue to be the townships' major open space assets. They will require ongoing investment and improvement in community infrastructure, as the population grows.

## Green streets and spaces

The Toolamba townships are characterised in part by consistently generous setbacks and the planting/retention of canopy trees. These elements combine to ensure the built form does not dominate the streetscape and instead creates green, leafy streets. This contributes to what the community refer to as the 'rural feel' of the area, and feedback makes it clear that the preference is for this rural feel to prevail.

All new development, regardless of lot size, should also respond to the preferred neighbourhood character by ensuring adequate permeable space is provided for landscaping and the planting of canopy trees. The species used in landscaping should be the same or similar to indigenous and native species found in the local area, and where possible sourced locally.

In areas of new development, the protection of existing vegetation should be prioritised to ensure individual species and patches of vegetation continue to contribute to the landscape and neighbourhood character.

An indication of tree density in the Toolamba townships alongside the proposed settlement boundary is provided in Figure 11, which shows the most heavily vegetated areas are associated with the Goulburn River and Shepparton Regional Park.

Council expects to undertake further strategic work to investigate the viability of a Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) or similar, to protect these areas of vegetation from development.

Enhancing the provision of well-connected and accessible open spaces is also a priority for any new development, especially in those areas designated for higher density development. New development, including within the Toolamba PSP area should:

- Ensure allotments and streets front and address any adjacent public open spaces to maximise safety and visual surveillance.
- Create open space networks that are accessible and include a mix of both passive and functional spaces.
- Include open spaces that are low maintenance with indigenous plant species and sustainable designs.

In addition, within the Toolamba PSP area, open space and landscape links should be designed with a focus on providing direct links to the commercial heart on Wren Street, to encourage the development of a central gathering place adjacent to Colaura Gardens and the Junction Hotel.

## Sport and recreation facilities

The Toolamba Recreation Reserve will continue to offer a wealth of active recreation opportunities for residents. As the population grows, there will be an increase in demand on these existing facilities. Maintenance of existing facilities should be an ongoing priority, with future upgrades and additions being provided within the existing recreation reserve, rather than on new land.

Long term opportunities to expand recreation facilities should be considered to the west of Rutherford Road.

## Open Space Actions

Prioritise undertaking further strategic work alongside DELWP, to investigate the application of a Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) to protect significant areas of vegetation.

Periodically assess the provision of open space for passive and active recreation, ensuring new facilities are planned for and provided as the population grows

Ensure new development includes street trees and landscaping that include a diversity of indigenous and native species.

Ensure new development avoids removal of native vegetation and mature trees as far as possible and minimises removal where it becomes necessary.

Maintain and enhance the Toolamba Recreation Reserve to meet the active recreation needs of the growing population.

Ensure the establishment of any new active recreation uses are complementary to the existing services and are provided within the existing recreation reserve where possible.





- Legend**
- Township Boundary/Toolamba Study Area
  - Proposed Shepparton Bypass
  - Trainline
  - Decommissioned Train Station
  - Waterways/Waterbodies
  - Tree Density - Scattered
  - Tree Density - Medium
  - Tree Density - Dense

Figure 12. Indicative Tree Density

## Access & Transport

Walking and cycling are important modes of transport in Toolamba, enabling social connections and accessibility for all age groups. Shared use, off-road paths should be incorporated into future residential development.

At time of writing, Greater Shepparton City Council is undertaking preparation of an updated Cycling Strategy which will examine the potential to connect Toolamba to the wider municipal network, including the State Government's Strategic Cycling Corridors.

Council will continue to advocate for improved public transport services in and around Toolamba to service not only the existing population, but also to reflect the increased need as the town grows. While Council are not decision makers in rail transport provision, they will also campaign for the reopening of the station if the opportunity arises.

Vehicular access will continue to allow access to the wider municipality to provide amenities and opportunities not available due to the townships' size, particularly following the construction of the Goulburn Valley Highway Shepparton Bypass. Traffic movements and impacts will require periodic assessment; increased utilisation of Wren Street as a thoroughfare may require infrastructure upgrades and traffic management measures, to ensure safe passage for pedestrians. This is especially important in the area adjacent to the school, due to its restricted access.

## Local Public Transport

Increased public bus services will vastly improve the opportunities for residents, particularly those with limited mobility and school-aged children, to access a wider range of services and facilities outside of Toolamba.

The new Toolamba Bridge should be designed to allow for bus access. Additionally, bus routes should be negotiated to provide direct links to Mooroopna, Shepparton and public and private secondary schools.

While increased bus services will require staging as the town grows, there is an opportunity in the short-medium term to investigate the provision of a local community bus service, which may be pursued through the Community Planning process when population growth supports its feasibility.

Passenger rail services will greatly improve accessibility of the Toolamba townships to Shepparton and Melbourne. Whilst acknowledging the current lack of interest from the State Government to reinstate the railway station and passenger services, Council should ensure that any future development future-proofs the capacity to deliver these services in the long-term.

## Safe Cycling Networks

It is recommended that the development of a new walking and cycling trail be conducted in two stages. The first stage will follow the above proposed alignment, ensuring that a public track is provided for the community in the shorter term, as it was identified as a high priority in the Toolamba Community Plan (2016).

The second stage will connect the stage 1 trail to Old Toolamba following the community alignment. This will allow for a complete looped trail that provides an important link between the two townships. This stage of the trail will require negotiation with Parks Victoria and licenses to be obtained, such as a land tenure agreement for Greater Shepparton Council. The trail connection into Old Toolamba will also be subject to negotiations, as land connecting the township and the Goulburn River Parkland may be currently occupied.

A long-term opportunity to then link this trail along the Goulburn River further north, via the Toolamba Bridge, should be considered as the town grows.

At a broader level, a Shepparton-Mooroopna-Toolamba loop cycle path would be supported by the Toolamba community. This should be considered as a part of the Greater Shepparton Cycle Strategy.

## Walkability

The expansion of the townships' settlement boundary is based on an 800-metre (or 10 minute) walkable catchment from the local activity centre on Wren Street. Smaller lot sizes are concentrated in closer proximity to the centre to enhance this opportunity to walk to services in town.

New developments should prioritise this walkability into the town centre, along Wren Street and into the school precinct. Pedestrian paths should be direct along roads and through proposed open space links.

Orienting new dwellings and buildings towards the street and open spaces will increase the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, by providing passive surveillance. However, pedestrian scale lighting should also be considered in all new developments to increase levels of safety.

Dedicated trails that utilise proposed open space links and the Goulburn River will connect new development to the local centre and provide a permeable pedestrian network that encourages walkability.

## Vehicle Network

The Shepparton Bypass will improve accessibility between Toolamba and surrounding areas. It is expected to increase visitation and growth to the Toolamba townships.

Although the section of the Shepparton Bypass which crosses the district has not been designated a completion timeframe, it is important to understand how the bypass site can be planned and designed well to ensure accessibility within the townships is not lost.

Upgrades to several roads will also be considered and integrated as development progresses. Bitcon Road, Rutherford Road, Cummins Road and Wren Street are identified for future upgrades, as they will enhance accessibility to Toolamba and provide an augmented connection to Old Toolamba. The Cummins Road-railway intersection will also require upgrading prior to any residential development to its north.

Road and intersection upgrades will be negotiated with developers and relevant agencies, as part of future residential development proposals, to ensure these works are undertaken as required.

As the town grows and greater services provided, the need to upgrade these roads will be increased and the traffic volumes should be monitored. However, in order to alleviate increased pressure on Wren Street and the school carpark, the road should eventually be upgraded with shared cycle and pedestrian infrastructure, to offer residents with alternative and active transport opportunities.

### ***Toolamba Bridge***

The future provision of a new bridge over the Goulburn River to replace the Toolamba Bridge will greatly improve the road access into Toolamba. The new bridge will have an increased road limit and will allow for access by a broader range of vehicles, potentially providing more goods and services to the township.

Providing access for larger vehicles, including buses, will also open opportunities for the local community to access alternative school catchments and cut down travel time for students.

## Access & Transport Actions

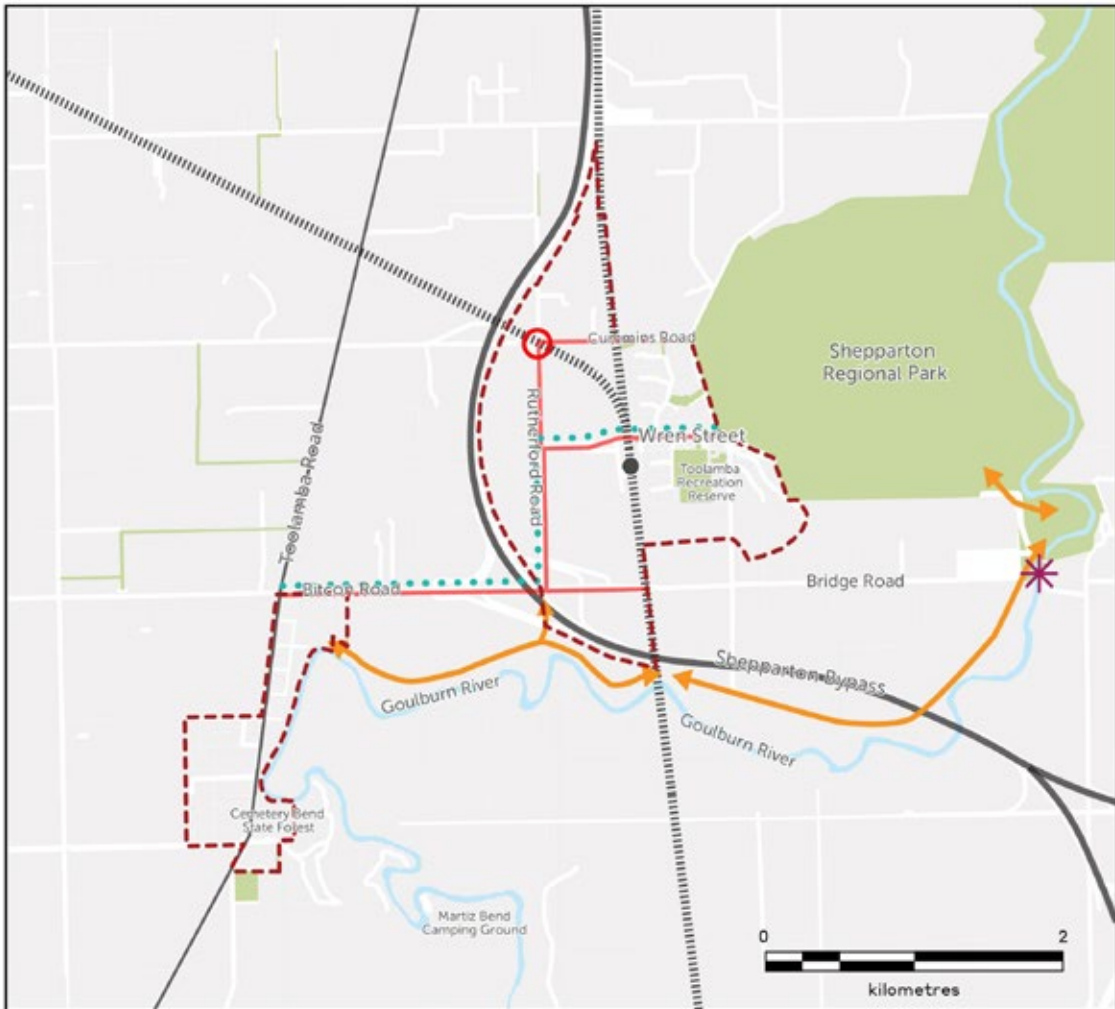
Collaborate with the Department of Transport on the Shepparton Bypass project to ensure maximum accessibility is maintained between Toolamba and Old Toolamba, including walking and cycling.

- Advocate for pedestrian and cyclist trails and trail crossings associated with the Shepparton Bypass.
- Continue to identify key cycling and pedestrian pathways to improve the existing and future connectivity, as the town grows.
- Investigate safe pedestrian crossing of the railway line along Wren Street, in concert with future residential or commercial development.
- Collaborate with VicRoads for the provision of a new bridge over the Goulburn River to provide for heavy vehicle (including bus) access.
- Negotiate new and additional bus routes between Toolamba and nearby towns.
- Advocate to Department of Transport and V/Line for long-term passenger rail services to be reinstated in Toolamba.
- Ensure that any future development future-proofs the capacity to deliver passenger rail services in the long-term.
- Maintain existing pedestrian and cyclist trails and provide new off-road trails in key locations.

Potential improvements to the road network include:

- Bitcon Road:
  - › Road widening
  - › Lane markings
  - › Walking and cycling path provision
- Rutherford Road:
  - › Road widening
  - › Signage
  - › Lane markings
  - › Walking and cycling path provision
- Wren Street:
  - › Separated footpaths
  - › Lane markings
  - › Kerb, channel and guttering upgrade
  - › Walking and cycling path provision
- Cummins Road
  - › Road surfacing, and drainage infrastructure
  - › Road widening
  - › Lane markings
  - › Walking and cycling path provision
  - › Signage





- Legend**
- - - Township Boundary/Toolamba Study Area
  - Proposed Shepparton Bypass
  - ||||| Trainline
  - Decommissioned Train Station
  - Open Space
  - Waterways/Waterbodies
  - Road Upgrades
  - Intersection Upgrade
  - Walking/Cycling Path Upgrades
  - Indicative Walking Trail
  - \* Potential New Bridge

Figure 13. Toolamba's Potential Accessibility Improvements

## Employment

### Local Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities in Toolamba are somewhat limited. It is expected that existing employment opportunities such as the commercial offering along Wren Street, Toolamba Primary School and Council services will continue to grow while new complementary uses and home-based businesses will establish.

There may be an opportunity for employment-generating land uses that do not undermine the function of Wren Street provided in other locations and this will be investigated further in concert with population growth.

### Connections within the region

Wren Street, Toolamba is a small, local activity centre that services the immediate needs of the townships' residents.

Employment opportunities are found in the larger activity centres such as Tatura, Mooroopna and Shepparton. As the townships grow, expansion of public transport modes and routes will provide access to wider opportunities.

## Services

### Local shopping centres

Future incremental commercial and community development should occur along Wren Street to further enhance its role and function as a local activity centre within Toolamba. This should include focusing future commercial development towards the 'commercial heart' of the town, which includes from the area around the existing General Store and the Junction Hotel.

A safe railway crossing (e.g. signalised gates) would be required to support increased pedestrian traffic in this centre.

In supporting Wren Street as the 'main street' of Toolamba, public realm improvements should also be implemented through better footpaths, angled car parking and street furniture where appropriate.

### Community and Social Infrastructure

As the population grows, there will be a greater demand for health-based facilities in the Toolamba townships, as well as other supporting community infrastructure, such as a community centre or library. Council may also augment or increase provision of health and social services from the Toolamba Community Centre relative to the population.

Health and community services will continue to be provided by the surrounding localities of Tatura, Mooroopna and Shepparton. In the short-term, improved public transport access to these centres will be prioritised, while advocating for the introduction of health and community facilities in Toolamba may become feasible in the longer term.

The need for additional commercial and community facilities will be monitored as the population grows and the demographics change. There is an opportunity for Council to align the future provision of community infrastructure with proposed development and the staging of growth. This could be identified in the 5-yearly review of the Community Infrastructure Plan and via Section 173 Agreements with developers.

There is an opportunity in the short term to co-locate health and community-based infrastructure in the existing school/recreation reserve precinct. However, in the longer term and for land uses requiring more space, these uses should be located west of Rutherford Road.

## Infrastructure

Reticulated sewerage infrastructure is a benefit for the town and its residents, offering much more flexibility and diversity in housing options and land uses.

Based on the proposed densities of some of Toolamba's residential growth areas, sewerage infrastructure would be a requirement, given much of the proposed lots are less than 4,000sqm. New development within the proposed medium and higher density areas, as described on the Framework Plan, would include lots of less than 4,000m<sup>2</sup> and therefore would be required to connect to reticulated sewerage. This includes a large proportion of land to the west of the Seymour-Shepparton rail line.

It is anticipated that further discussion with Goulburn Valley Water would be required to understand the staging and cost implications for the town. However, the initial costs to bring sewerage infrastructure to Toolamba, will be borne by the developer.

Reticulated sewerage infrastructure is not anticipated to be feasible for Old Toolamba, given that the demand for development is not identified.

## Services Actions

- Promote provision of local shops along Wren Street in concert with population growth to meet more of the townships' immediate needs.
- Work closely with developers to provide reticulated sewerage in Toolamba.
- Monitor and facilitate more community services and facilities as the population grows, in alignment with the 5-yearly Community Infrastructure Plan review.
- Identify opportunities to enter into Section 173 Agreements with developers as they arise, to provide or fund new community infrastructure.
- Continue to work with the CFA to ensure all new development can adequately be managed from a wildfire protection perspective.
- Monitor the need to upgrade any future infrastructure (e.g. natural gas supply and water) as the population grows.



## Education

### Local schools

The Department of Education and the Victorian School Building Authority will monitor usage of Toolamba Preschool and Primary School to determine whether it may need augmentation and investment to cater for the growing population, while demand for secondary schools will continue to be fulfilled by surrounding localities.

### Lifelong learning opportunities

Opportunities for higher education such as university and TAFE will continue to be provided for in Shepparton. Rather than seek to establish these uses permanently in Toolamba, provision of public transport to these centres from Toolamba should be prioritised.

Opportunities to partner with existing educators, advocate for new programs or provide broad learning opportunities outside of regular business hours could be explored at the primary school (such as evening classes) or at the local community centre. The primary school and community centre will continue to be the core social assets of the townships which provide opportunity for learning and educational experiences.

### Education Actions

- Explore opportunities to provide training and educational programs at the primary school and/or community centre through Community Planning.
- Continue to work with the Victorian School Building Authority (VSBA) to monitor growth, as part of its commitment to ensure all Victorian students have access to high-quality education, as the population grows.



# IMPLEMENTATION

## Action Plan

The Action Plan builds on the strategies and recommendations discussed throughout the Toolamba Townships Growth Plan. It presents a consolidated Action Plan (as provided in this section) to realise the vision and objectives for the Toolamba Townships.

The Action Plan will be used as a guide to identify Council's role, responsibilities and priority for each recommended action. It relates to the key themes used in this report: heritage & character, settlement, movement & access and infrastructure; as well as general actions to implement the Growth Plan into the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme.

It is important to note that while the Growth Plan has a 30-year horizon, the Action Plan will be monitored on an ongoing basis, with a full review of the Growth Plan expected in 10-15 years.

Additionally, the Council has an ongoing role in reviewing the Community Plan, Residential Land Supply Assessments and planning permit applications (as they are proposed), which inevitably require closely monitoring the implementation of the Growth Plan's strategies and actions.

## Council's Roles

Greater Shepparton City Council will play a number of different roles in the implementation of the Growth Plan, including Planner, Provider, Advocate, Partner/Facilitator, Educator and Regulator. A description of these various roles is provided below.

- **Planner** – in relation to its urban and social planning responsibilities
- **Advocate** – representing community needs and interests to Federal and State Governments and the private sector
- **Partner / Facilitator** – working closely with developers, landowners, residents and businesses
- **Educator** – providing information to businesses, residents and interest groups
- **Regulator** – ensuring that built form, infrastructure and other elements of the environment meet town planning, building, transport and public health regulations.

## Action Plan

The table overleaf presents an example of the consolidated action plan that will be completed to implement the Toolamba Townships Growth Plan, incorporating the objectives and actions discussed in the preceding chapters.

The following order applies to the priorities:

- Immediate (0 - 2 years)
- High (0 - 5 years)
- Medium (6 - 15 years)
- Ongoing (continual / as need arises)

ACTION	COUNCIL ROLE	PRIORITY	
<b>General</b>			
<b>1</b>	Implement the Toolamba Growth Plan and the <i>Toolamba Housing and Streetscape Typologies 2020</i> through a Planning Scheme Amendment.	Planner	Immediate (0-2 years)
	1a. Amend the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) at Clause 21.02 to incorporate the Toolamba Townships Growth Plan and highlight the vision and principles for managing growth.	Planner	Immediate (0-2 years)
	1b. Adopt the proposed settlement boundary and staging plan by incorporating the Toolamba Growth Plan to the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme	Planner	Immediate (0-2 years)
	1c. Prepare a schedule to the Design and Development Overlay (DDO) to implement Design Guidelines to guide development in Toolamba	Planner	Immediate (0-2 years)
<b>2</b>	Facilitate the rezoning of land within the proposed settlement boundary to achieve residential development at the desired densities.	Planner	Ongoing
<b>Open Space</b>			
<b>3</b>	Schedule and conduct periodic assessment of the provision of open space for passive and active recreation, ensuring open space is planned for and provided as the population grows.	Planner	Ongoing
<b>4</b>	Support new development to include street trees and landscaping.	Regulator	Ongoing
<b>5</b>	Undertake further strategic work to apply a Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) that protects dense medium and scattered tree densities from development, in collaboration with the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.	Planner	High (0-5 years)
<b>Access &amp; Transport</b>			
<b>6</b>	Advocate to Department of Transport: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For locally accessible pedestrian and cyclist trails.</li> <li>• For a new bridge to replace the Toolamba bridge, provide for heavy vehicle (including bus) access.</li> <li>• Throughout the Shepparton Bypass project to ensure accessibility is maintained between Toolamba and Old Toolamba.</li> </ul>	Advocate	Ongoing
<b>7</b>	Advocate to Public Transport Victoria (PTV) for more local bus services between Toolamba and Shepparton-Mooroopna.	Medium	Medium (6 - 15 years)
<b>8</b>	Provide new, off-road trails in key locations (such as along the Goulburn River) to better connect Toolamba and Old Toolamba.	Planner/Provider/ Facilitator	Medium (6 - 15 years)

ACTION	COUNCIL ROLE	PRIORITY	
<b>General</b>			
<b>9</b>	Improve the local road and footpath network at key locations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bitcon Road</li> <li>• Rutherford Road</li> <li>• Wren Street</li> <li>• Cummins Road</li> </ul>	Advocate	Ongoing
<b>10</b>	Investigate safe pedestrian crossing of the railway line along Wren Street, in concert with future residential or commercial development.	Facilitator	Medium (6 - 15 years)
<b>11</b>	Develop a gateway and signage plan to enhance the town centre's entrances on Bridge Road and Rutherford Road in order to create an improved welcoming first impression, and improve wayfinding and directional signage throughout the town.	Provider/Facilitator (with Community)	Medium (6 - 15 years)
<b>Employment</b>			
<b>12</b>	Facilitate the long-term potential for a second hub of employment-generating land uses in another location that does not detract from Wren Street as the primary activity centre.	Advocate Partner / Facilitator	Medium (6 - 15 years)
<b>Services</b>			
<b>13</b>	Work closely with developers to introduce reticulated sewerage to Toolamba.	Partner / Facilitator	High (0 - 5 years)
<b>14</b>	Monitor and provide more community services and facilities as the population grows.	Advocate Partner / Facilitator	Ongoing
<b>15</b>	Monitor the need for any servicing infrastructure upgrades as the population grows.	Advocate Partner / Facilitator	Ongoing
<b>Education</b>			
<b>16</b>	Collaborate with the Department of Education and Victorian School Building Authority to monitor the Toolamba Primary School and augment facilities commensurate to population growth and demand for education.	Advocate (Department of Education)	Ongoing
<b>17</b>	Support opportunities to provide training and educational programs at the primary school and/or community centre as they arise.	Facilitator	Medium (6 - 15 years)

## Planning Scheme

This section identifies the recommended planning scheme controls to implement the Toolamba Townships Growth Plan.

Local content in zone schedules will include provisions to preserve the rural and landscape character of Toolamba, the need for increased housing diversity, and other provisions as identified.

## Zones

Changes to the zones will be implemented based on the Growth Plan and the need to appropriately accommodate future growth and improvements to the town.

The following is recommended:

- Rezone land (refer to Appendix) identified for standard density to allow for the development of new, smaller residential lots within the town centre.
- Rezone land (refer to Appendix) identified for moderate density to encourage a mix of lot sizes and provide an increased supply of developable residential land.
- Rezone land (refer to Appendix) identified for lower density to ensure a long-term outlook for residential growth over the next 30 years.

The Low Density Residential Zone already provides different minimum lot size requirements depending on whether the land is serviced by reticulated sewerage infrastructure.

Expansion of the Township Zone along and close to Wren Street will allow for an increased offering of commercial and retail services within the town centre.

## Overlays

### ***Design & Development Overlay***

It is recommended that a Design and Development Overlay (DDO) be applied to all land identified for growth as shown in Figure .

The DDO is the most appropriate tool in the Planning Scheme to manage built form outcomes. It provides the mechanism to include the key elements of the residential design principles that relate to residential development in Toolamba.

The DDO should contain the design principles relevant to development on private land, including building heights, setbacks, and material requirements. The schedule will be tailored to provide objectives, strategies and decision guidelines for Council that have been crafted specifically for Toolamba.

The DDO schedule should contain:

- Design objectives derived from each of the principles.
- General design guidelines.
- A section for each aspect of development on private land that will outline design guidelines for:
  - › Built form (e.g. height and setbacks)
  - › Landscape
  - › Lighting and safety
  - › Access and movement.

The DDO should refer to the *Toolamba Housing and Streetscape Typologies 2020*.

The Development Plan Overlay (DPO) has also been considered, however, this is an unwieldy tool that requires additional work in the preparation of development plans and direct landowner involvement. The DPO exempts a proposal from third party appeal rights for proposals that comply with the development plan once it is approved.

### ***Vegetation Protection Overlay***

It is recommended that Council undertake further strategic work to apply a Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) to all land identified as having dense, moderate and scattered tree density as shown on Figure .

The VPO will ensure the protection of significant specimens and clusters of trees in these areas and minimise the loss of vegetation resulting from development. It provides further environmental controls that will help maintain the habitats of native vegetation in the face of future growth.

The VPO schedule would contain:

- A statement of the nature and significance of the vegetation to be protected.
- The vegetation protection objectives to be achieved
- General decision guidelines.



## Appendix – Minimum Lot Sizes of Residential Zones

Zone		Minimum Lot Size	Notes
LDRZ	Low Density Residential Zone	0.4 hectares (with no reticulated sewer) 0.2 hectares (with reticulated sewer)	Provides for rural residential style development on larger-format lots. The provision of reticulated sewer infrastructure reduces the minimum lot size.
MUZ	Mixed Use Zone	Discretionary (generally greater than 500 square metres)	Provides for development such as shop-tops or residential units / apartments with a retail or commercial offering at ground level. Typical in larger activity centres and near public transport hubs.
TZ	Township Zone	Discretionary (generally greater than 500 square metres)	Provides for a wide range of uses (including some commercial / retail) to serve as the activity centre for smaller townships such as Toolamba.
RGZ	Residential Growth Zone	Discretionary (generally greater than 500 square metres)	Provides for a larger built form and a high level of housing diversity (units, apartments, etc.)
GRZ	General Residential Zone	Discretionary (generally greater than 500 square metres)	Provides for housing diversity and an increased built form.
NRZ	Neighbourhood Residential Zone	Discretionary (generally greater than 500 square metres)	Provides for typical suburban development of detached dwellings and some instances of townhouses.



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