



GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY PLANNING POLICY

Effective: 26 March 2024



COMMUNITY PLANNING POLICY

Version:	4
Business Unit:	Community Wellbeing
Responsible Officer:	Community Development Coordinator
Adopted By:	Council on 26 March 2024
Next Review:	1 February 2028

1. PURPOSE

Greater Shepparton City Council (Council) is committed to working in partnership with small town and neighbourhood communities to implement the Community Planning Program.

Community Planning is planning for the future of an area that is led by the community. The purpose of Community Planning is to give local people greater ownership over their small town or neighbourhood by empowering individuals and groups to take a proactive role in shaping the future of the areas in which they live.

The Policy outlines how Council will support communities to develop, implement and review Community Plans.

2. OBJECTIVE

Council's Community Planning program aims to:

1. Ensure communities within the municipality have an understanding of community planning.
2. Ensure the community planning process values democracy, trust, equity, social justice, openness, mutual respect, collaboration and inclusion.
3. Increase the capacity of individuals and communities and be guided by the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach.
4. Acknowledge that community members have the desire and knowledge to contribute to decision making in their own communities.
5. Focus on achieving sustainable and realistic outcomes, in flexible and innovative ways, which empower and improve Greater Shepparton communities.

3. SCOPE

Council is committed to the development, implementation and review of the Community Planning program. The Community Planning Policy specifies the Community Planning principles and strategic direction for the implementation of the Community Planning program within Greater Shepparton.

4. DEFINITIONS

Reference term	Definition
ABCD	Asset Based Community Development – The place-based philosophy which guides Council’s Community Planning Program.
Capacity Building	Development of awareness, knowledge, skills and operational capability by certain people, normally the community, to achieve their purpose.
Community	A community is defined as a small town or neighbourhood.
Community Plan	A Community Plan is a written document which identifies a community’s goals for the future and the priorities it has identified to achieve this vision.
Community Plan Implementation Fund (CPIF)	Council budget allocated specifically to contribute towards implementation of Community Plans and priorities.
Community Plan Group	Group of community members who form to oversee the development, implementation and review of a Community Plan.
Community Development Officer	A staff member from Council’s Community Wellbeing Department whose role is to act as a conduit between Council and the Community Plan Group.
Gender Equity	Fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities on the basis of gender.
Intersectionality	The ways in which different aspects of a person’s identity can expose them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.
Neighbourhood	A neighbourhood is a geographically localised community within a larger city (i.e. Shepparton).

Reference term	Definition
Small Town	Small towns have been defined through ABS Census data as the largest townships (excluding Shepparton) within the municipality up to a population of 19,999.
Working Group	Small task groups may be established to work on particular Community Plan projects. They will be sub-groups of the Community Plan Group.

5. POLICY

5.1 Community Planning Principles

The purpose of Community Planning is to empower and provide opportunities to local people to be proactive, influential and take ownership in shaping the future plans in the areas in which they live.

The Community Planning process in Greater Shepparton is guided by the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which is a global movement that considers local assets as the primary building blocks of sustainable communities. This approach encourages:

- Mapping capacities and assets within the community
- Using local assets to increase opportunities
- Community driven development and empowerment
- Building a community vision and plan.

Community Planning is based on the principle that local people are invariably the best source of knowledge and wisdom about their surroundings and, when this is harnessed, achieves better decision making results for all stakeholders. Each community identifies their own priorities and needs based on their own local identity, culture, history and assets. Council recognises, as a local government entity, it has a role to play in encouraging and facilitating activities that lead to community empowerment.

“If you want to know how the shoe fits ask the person who is wearing it, not the person who made it”

5.2 Develop, Implement and Review Community Plan Groups

Building on existing strengths and skills, members of the local community may identify the need to establish a Community Plan Group to assist with planning and advocacy for the future of their community.

In establishing and operating a Community Plan Group, the community will:

- Remove or reduce barriers to participation by considering gender equity, intersectionality, and diversity, when forming/administering a group, developing a plan, and delivering projects.
- Facilitate and administer the group.
- Provide Council with a copy of meeting notes following each meeting.
- Consider having a Terms of Reference which outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Group.
- Meet on a regular basis to progress agreed actions and priorities from the Community Plan.
- Develop a Community Plan, which is reflective of the priorities of the wider community.
- Review Community Plans periodically as agreed in the noted plan.
- If necessary, join with an established group that will take on the additional function of a Community Plan Group.
- Establish Working Sub-Groups, as required, to assist with implementing projects, activations or portfolios.
- Community Plan development is supported by Council for all suitably self-identified communities within the Greater Shepparton municipality.

In supporting Community Plan Groups, Council will:

- Provide a Community Development Officer to act as a conduit between Council and the community to assist the process of Community Plan implementation. This Officer will act as a contact point for the community, regularly attend meetings and will assist with the development, implementation and review of Community Plans and included actions.
- Support groups to consider gender equity, intersectionality, and diversity; when forming/administering a group, developing a plan, and delivering projects.
- Note, rather than adopt or endorse, Community Plans (and significant reviews) at an Ordinary Council Meeting to acknowledge that the community plans are 'owned' and driven by the community rather than

Council.

- Recognise that Community Plans are strategic documents which contain actions of varying priority levels and timelines.
- Encourage the community to be key-contributors to the development process including identifying key community groups and stakeholders and exploring innovative consultation mechanisms to ensure that community members from a range of backgrounds have an opportunity to be involved.
- Identify appropriate funding opportunities and advocate, where appropriate, for funding to achieve priority actions identified within the noted Community Plans.
- Commit funds each financial year, subject to annual budgetary processes, towards implementing priority actions identified within the noted Community Plans.
- Support Groups to review their Community Plans as required.
- Support Groups who seek to establish Working Sub-Groups to assist with implementing projects, activations or portfolios.
- Obtain public liability insurance to cover community members for meetings, community led events and activities where applicable.

6. RELATED POLICIES

- Greater Shepparton City Council, Council Plan 2021 – 2025
- Greater Shepparton City Council Community Engagement Policy
- Procedure: Community Planning

7. RELATED LEGISLATION

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*

8. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every four years by the Community Development Coordinator in partnership with internal and external stakeholders. It may be reviewed earlier upon recommendations for the Greater Shepparton City Council Executive Leadership Team.

DOCUMENT REVISIONS

Version #	Date Adopted	Date Effective
1	17 th December 2013	17 December 2013
2	18 th July 2017	18 July 2017
3	21 st December 2021	21 December 2021
4	26 March 2024	26 March 2024