

GREATER SHEPPARTON CYCLING STRATEGY 2013 - 2017



GREATER
SHEPPARTON

Greater Shepparton City Council

Cycling Strategy 2013 - 2017

Final Report

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Council would like to acknowledge the contribution of Shepparton's Cycling Sport Clubs, Shepparton Bicycle User Group and Community Planning Groups and Council Advisory Committees in the development of the Cycling Strategy.

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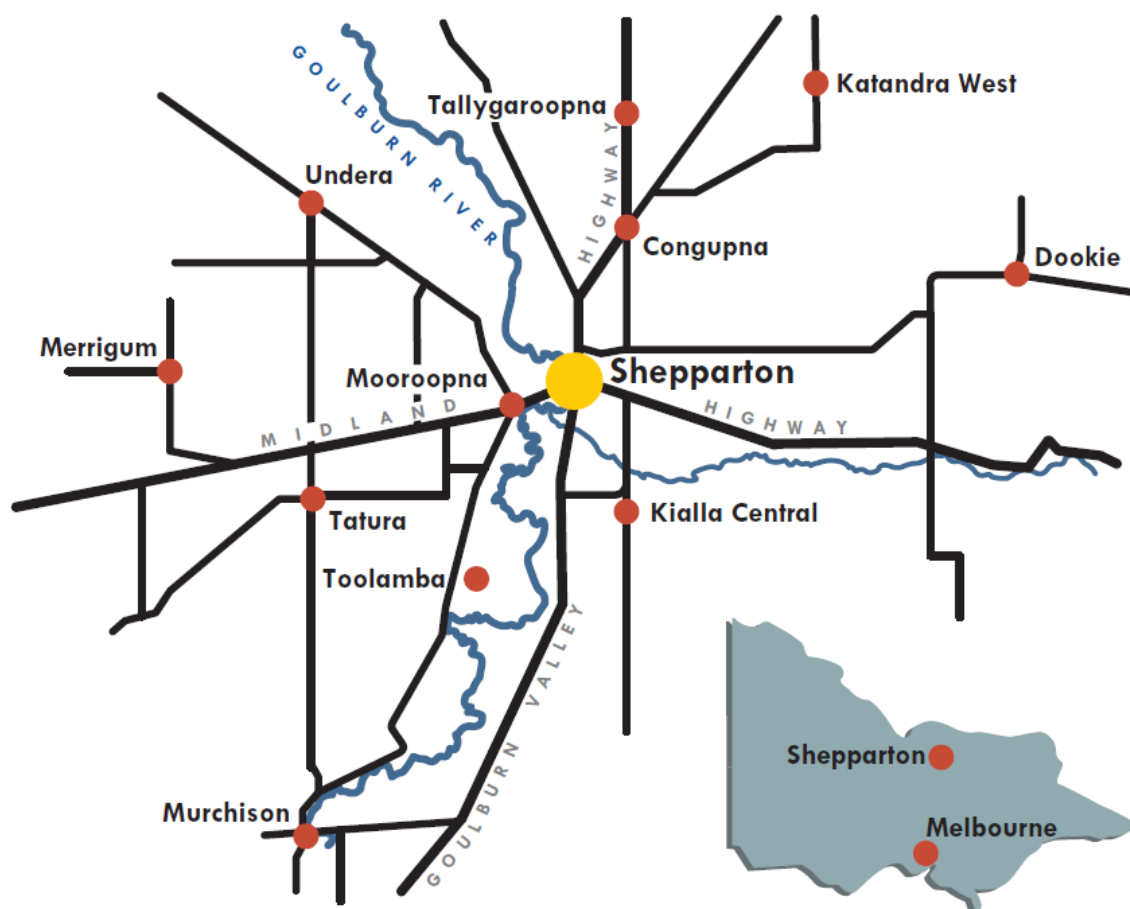
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Executive Summary

Greater Shepparton Cycling Strategy

The City of Greater Shepparton is in northern Victoria, approximately 180km north of the Melbourne CBD. The city has a population of around 60,000 and covers approximately 2,400 square kilometres, which makes it the fourth largest municipality in rural Victoria. It is made up of a number of small towns, except for Shepparton, which has a population of around 27,700, and is located in the centre of the study area at the intersections of the Goulburn River and Broken River and the Goulburn Valley Highway and Midland Highway (refer to Figure 1).

Figure 1: City of Greater Shepparton



The area is relatively flat with a mild temperature and low annual rainfall, with the major land uses being associated with dairying and fruit growing. Along the river system, the adjacent land is made up of conservation and flood zoned land.

These elements of Greater Shepparton, along with Council's objective to make it a highly accessible and liveable area, provide it with a create opportunity to actively encourage bicycle use as a form of transport and recreation.

In this regard, Greater Shepparton City Council has undertaken a review of the previous Greater Shepparton Cycling Strategy (2006-2011) and is preparing an updated version (2013-2017). GTA Consultants were engaged to help undertake this review and update of the Greater Shepparton Cycling Strategy.

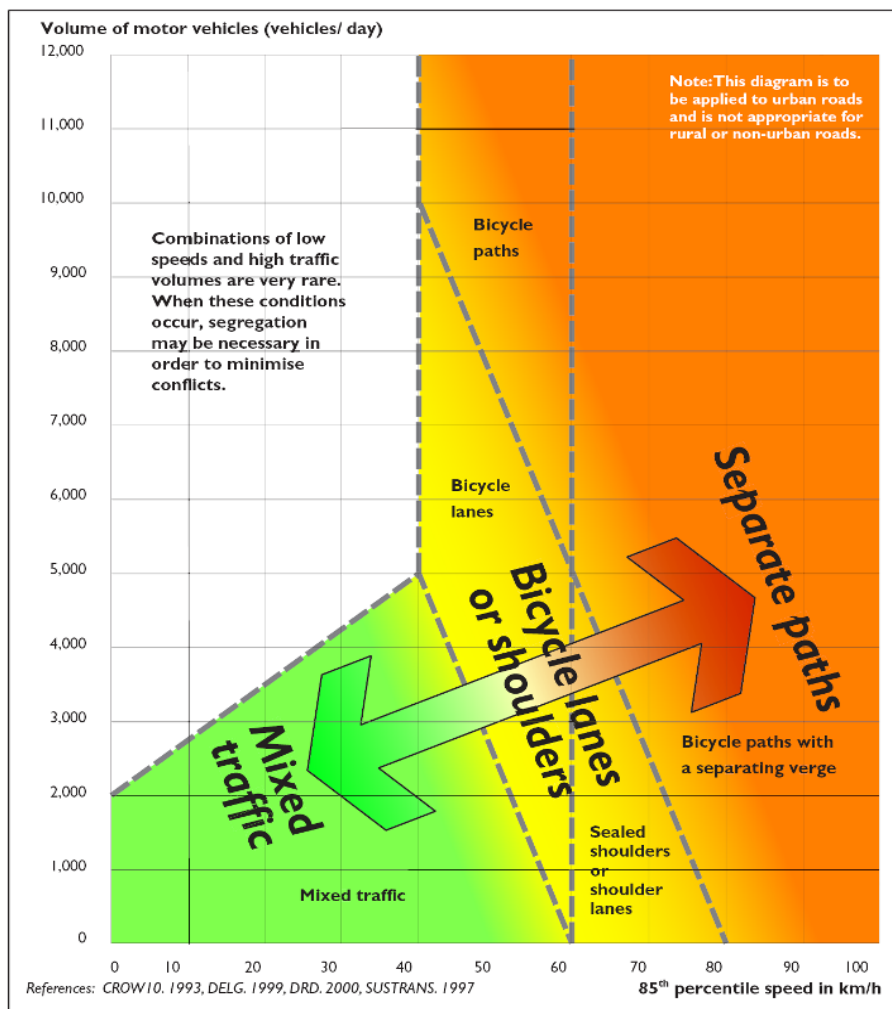
Background research has been undertaken of relevant documents, strategies and policies affecting cycling in Greater Shepparton. This has identified that there is growing support for bicycle use as a legitimate form of transport and recreation, both locally, state wide and nationally due to the wide ranging benefits to communities and individuals, especially in terms of cycling being a preventative health measure, with abilities to reduce rates of obesity, chronic disease, number of sick days and levels of depression, stress and anxiety, as well as being a basis to generate additional tourism, both through organised events and being a cycling holiday destination / stop-over. However, there are also a number of barriers to getting people to cycle. These relate to both the physical facilities provided as well as the attitudes and behaviours of the community that cycle and share the road network.

In terms of the current state of play for cycling within Greater Shepparton, an evaluation of the current cycling conditions, including a review of what facilities have been implemented as part of the 2006 Cycling Strategy has been undertaken. **The review indicates that a significant level of investment over the last five years has been completed. These facilities could broadly be considered to be those that have been able to be easily accommodated within the existing built environment. As such, there is the beginning of a connected and continuous bicycle network within Greater Shepparton. However, there are still significant pinch points and missing links.** To achieve this end, the on-going consideration and investment in cycling facilities is required, and it is the purpose of the Cycling Strategy to identify the next most feasible facilities and initiatives to be implemented that will see the largest increase in bicycle use in Greater Shepparton.

In order to understand how the community perceives the current cycling environment in Greater Shepparton and where they want to see it head into the future, a range of targeted consultation mechanisms were developed to extract the relevant information from various groups for consideration and identification of the most feasible cycling facilities and initiatives. In this regard, information received revolved around new facilities, the maintenance and condition of existing facilities, and safety concerns. (Refer to Appendix F)

To be able to consider and identify the most feasible cycling facilities and initiatives, the latest cycling design philosophies to support current and potential cycle use has been presented and used. These indicated that there is a **large latent demand for cycling as a form of transport** and recreation within the general community. However, to engage these potential users, the facilities and initiatives must create an environment whereby people **perceive cycling to be a feasible option**, especially in comparison to the use of private motor vehicles. More specifically, safety is the key element in determining what facilities are perceived as being viable by cyclists, and one of the main ways that safety is perceived by cyclists is through the level of separation afforded them to motorised traffic. **For guidance on what level of separation is generally required, reference is given to Figure 2.1 of Cycling Aspects of Austroads Design (refer to Figure 2).** As such, it came as no surprise that residents indicated that **physically separated facilities from traffic are preferred. But, due to the limited space and high cost of such facilities, providing this type of facility is not feasible in every location.** However, through the modification of the traffic volume and / or operating speed, the resulting cycling environment can potentially be conducive for cycling by the general population.

Figure 2: Minimum Levels of Separation



Other facility considerations were also outlined as well as a process to evaluate and prioritise facilities and initiatives, which becomes critical in achieving the greatest return on investment.

Utilising this design basis, a review of the commuter and recreational cycling facilities within Greater Shepparton was undertaken. The process also noted those facilities proposed within the 2006 Cycling Strategy, VicRoads Municipal Bicycle Network for Shepparton and latest Precinct Structure Plans for the five residential growth corridors. From this, a comprehensive bicycle network was identified within seven of the townships in Greater Shepparton. **These proposed bicycle networks are not expected to all be implemented within the short-term, but it is considered appropriate that a network blue print be outlined as early as possible to ensure other competing factors do not compromise the potential for their eventual implementation.** Furthermore, the facilities required within the growing urban areas of the seven townships may change, however, **as long as the design framework presented within the Cycling Strategy is the basis for choosing the associated bicycle facility,** they can be expected to be appropriate and encourage more people to cycle for transport and recreation.

A specific focus of the Cycling Strategy was also on sports cycling. Within Greater Shepparton there are already a strong number of sport cycling clubs, events and facilities. These were reviewed with specific actions outlined to further promote each of the main types of sports cycling and how they more generally link into increasing the number of people cycling for transport and recreation.

A similar process was also undertaken regarding cycling tourism initiatives and facilities within Greater Shepparton. Again, there are already significant activities occurring and it is the aim to further build on these given their link to getting more people cycling, but also due to the potential economic growth it could generate in the area.

All the actions identified through this process have been numbered throughout the strategy and summarised within an **action plan in Section 9.1**. Each of the actions is to be evaluated and prioritised by the responsible departments within Council to implement over the short to long-term. Furthermore, an identification of the planning mechanisms available to Council to give greater political and policy strength has been provided. It is noted that, **should the Cycling Strategy, or at least the design framework, be incorporated into the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme, it would be a first in Victoria** and further demonstrate the City of Greater Shepparton's commitment to cycling, as a legitimate form of transport and recreation.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Cycling Strategy Methodology	1
1.3 References	2
2. Background Research	3
2.1 Literature Review	3
2.2 Cycling Benefits and Barriers	12
3. Review of Existing Cycling Environment	15
3.1 Study Area	15
3.2 Bicycle Count Data	16
3.3 Review of Bicycle Crash Stats in Greater Shepparton	16
3.4 Review of Previous Greater Shepparton Cycling Strategy	18
3.5 Existing Cycling Environment Summary	18
4. Community Engagement and Consultation	19
4.1 Consultative Approach	19
4.2 Consultative Scope	19
4.3 Community and Stakeholder Responses	19
4.4 Council Department Consultation	23
4.5 State Government Consultation	23
5. Cycling Encouragement Approaches	25
5.1 Preamble	25
5.2 Bicycle Facilities and Infrastructure	25
5.3 Education, Awareness and Promotion	36
5.4 Project Assessment Framework	37
5.5 DDA Considerations	40
5.6 Design Implications on Maintenance	40
6. Commuter and Recreational Cycling	44
6.1 Preamble	44
6.2 Catchments of Major Trip Generators	44
6.3 New Residential Developments	49
6.4 Within Townships	52
6.5 Between Townships	69
6.6 End of Trip Facilities	72
6.7 Bicycle Route Signing	74
6.8 Updated MBN	76

7. Sports Cycling	78
7.1 Preamble	78
7.2 Types of Cycling Sports	78
7.3 Road Cycling	78
7.4 Track Cycling	81
7.5 BMX Cycling	81
7.6 Mountain Biking	83
8. Tourism Cycling	85
8.1 Preamble	85
8.2 Types of Tourism Cycling	85
8.3 Existing Tourism Cycling	86
8.4 Existing Constraints	88
8.5 New Facilities and Initiatives	88
9. Action Plan	92
9.1 Recommended Actions	92
9.2 Statutory Implementation	95

Appendices

- A: Additional Literature Reviews
- B: Bicycle Count Data & Maps
- C: Bicycle Crash Stats Data and Maps
- D: Implemented Bicycle Facilities
- E: Dates and Groups Consulted
- F: Tabulated Summary of Consultation and Responses

Figures

Figure 3.1: City of Greater Shepparton	15
Figure 5.1: Four Types of Cyclists	27
Figure 5.2: Minimum Levels of Separation	29
Figure 5.3: Methods of Separation	30
Figure 5.4: Bicycle Circulating Lane within a Roundabout	33
Figure 5.5: Mixed Traffic Circulating Lane within a Roundabout	34
Figure 5.6: Sharrow Bicycle Marking	34
Figure 6.1: Shepparton North Existing and Proposed Facilities	54
Figure 6.2: Shepparton South Existing and Proposed Facilities	56
Figure 6.3: Mooroopna Existing and Proposed Facilities	58
Figure 6.4: Murchison Existing and Proposed Facilities	60

Table of Contents



Figure 6.5:	Tatura Existing and Proposed Facilities	62
Figure 6.6:	Toolamba Proposed Facilities	64
Figure 6.7:	Merrigum Proposed Facilities	66
Figure 6.8:	Dookie Proposed Facilities	68
Figure 6.9:	Connections between Townships	71
Figure 6.10:	Bicycle Parking Hanging Rail	73
Figure 6.11:	Route Signage – Pavement Marking Examples	75
Figure 6.12:	Destination and Distance Examples	75
Figure 6.13:	Update to VicRoads MBN for Shepparton	77
Figure 7.1:	BMX Track and Surrounds – Nationals 2010	82
Figure 7.2:	Mount Major Mountain Bike Park Site Plan	83
Figure 9.1:	Statutory Power of Implementation Options	96
Figure 9.2:	Timing to Implement and Flexibility of Statutory Options	97

Tables

Table 3.1:	Bicycle Accidents Summary by Location	17
Table 3.2:	Bicycle Accidents Summary by DCA Type	17
Table 3.3:	Bicycle Accidents Summary by Severity	17
Table 5.1:	Categories of Cyclists and their Characteristics	26
Table 5.2:	Bicycle User Group Categories and Characteristics	28
Table 5.3:	Recommended Bicycle Facilities based on Road Characteristics	31
Table 5.4:	Economic Benefits of Cycling	38
Table 5.5:	Priority Evaluation Matrix	39
Table 5.6:	Action Evaluation Matrix	40
Table 5.7:	Life Cycle Costs for Path Surface Materials	41
Table 6.1:	Shepparton North Proposed Facility	53
Table 6.2:	Shepparton South Proposed Facility	55
Table 6.3:	Mooroopna Proposed Facility	57
Table 6.4:	Murchison Proposed Facility	59
Table 6.5:	Tatura Proposed Facility	61
Table 6.6:	Summary of Existing Bicycle Parking Facilities	72
Table 6.7:	Statutory Requirements for Bicycle Facilities	73
Table 9.1:	Recommended Actions	92