A collaborative plan
Plan Greater Bendigo is a collaborative plan by the City of Greater Bendigo with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) and the regional office of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). Funding support was provided by the Victorian Planning Authority.

Acknowledgement of Country
The ancestors and descendants of the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung are the traditional owners of this Country. The City of Greater Bendigo acknowledges that they have been custodians for many centuries and continue to perform age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We all acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.
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Foreword

Mayor Cr Margaret O’Rourke, Greater Bendigo City Council

It is a great pleasure to introduce Plan Greater Bendigo.

Plan Greater Bendigo is a first-of-its-kind plan which identifies a shortlist of transformational, once in a generation projects.

These infrastructure projects will support a projected population of 200,000 people by the middle of this century.

Bendigo has so many strengths – a diverse economy, a thriving arts and culture scene which supports increasing tourism, wonderful parks and gardens, walking and cycling paths and is a regional hub for services including health and education. It is also a city that is experiencing steady growth as more and more people recognise Bendigo’s liveability.

As Bendigo continues to grow, we need to be ahead of the game and plan for future challenges and needs.

Plan Greater Bendigo helps us do this. It talks about how the delivery of certain infrastructure will help to better connect and create healthier, more inclusive communities, strengthen existing employment and attract new jobs and investment.

The plan provides Council and its various partners and government agencies with a clear vision and list of priorities to work towards over the coming years. I look forward to being a part of delivering this plan and ensuring Bendigo becomes the world’s most liveable community.
Statement from key stakeholders

**Jude Munro AO**  
Chair, Victorian Planning Authority

We are excited to have partnered with the City of Greater Bendigo on the preparation of the trailblazing Plan Greater Bendigo.

Bendigo’s population is set to double in the next 30 years.

Plan Greater Bendigo sets the benchmark for collaborative planning for a regional city. It sets up Greater Bendigo for staged delivery of infrastructure, and for bringing the community along with a growing population.

**Nigel McGuckian**  
Chair, Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership

Greater Bendigo is one of Victoria’s fastest growing regional cities, with a diverse and buoyant economy. Plan Greater Bendigo will help support this ongoing growth by providing a clear pipeline of short, medium and longer term infrastructure projects. A clear list of priorities will help to attract public and private sector investment for the benefit of the region.

The Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership recognises the importance of Bendigo to the Loddon Campaspe region as a whole. Plan Greater Bendigo provides important regional infrastructure which will benefit people throughout the Loddon Campaspe region.

Plan Greater Bendigo will make an important contribution to Regional Partnership priorities including lifestyle health, early years education, a strong regional economy, public lands and regional trails. By providing projects which support lifelong health and learning, Plan Greater Bendigo will help in providing greater opportunities to access education and improve community connectedness and well being.
Many have contributed

The City, VPA and DELWP would like to thank all those who have contributed to the development of Plan Greater Bendigo. A special thank you goes to the members of the Steering Committee and Technical Reference Group who have contributed their time in attending numerous meetings and provided significant input into Plan Greater Bendigo.

We would like to also thank all those in the community who have taken the time to review and to provide comment on the draft Plan Greater Bendigo documents.

Organisations represented on the Plan Greater Bendigo Steering Committee or Technical Reference Group

- Bendigo Bank
- Be.Bendigo
- Bendigo Health
- Bendigo Sustainability Group
- Bendigo TAFE
- Coliban Water
- Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
- Department of Education and Training
- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation
- La Trobe University
- Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership
- Loddon Mallee Waste and Resource Recovery Group
- North Central Catchment Management Authority
- Regional Development Victoria
- Transport for Victoria
- Urban Development Institute of Australia
- VicRoads
- Victorian Planning Authority
Framework plan

Healthy and inclusive communities

An adaptable and innovative regional economy

A resourceful and sustainable region

A stronger and more vibrant city centre
Plan Greater Bendigo

**Introduction**

Bendigo, central Victoria’s major regional service centre, was founded in 1851 on one of the world’s richest gold deposits. The Bendigo Creek valley, home to the Dja Dja Wurrung for thousands of years, was transformed overnight as miners from Europe, China and North America swarmed over the gullies and a town was established that quickly grew into a leading Australian city.

In the nineteenth century Bendigo became the world’s most productive and deepest goldfield and was known as the ‘Vienna of the South’, for its marvellous German inspired architecture.

Innovation, invention and local solutions were at the heart of Bendigo’s quest for gold and that approach to solving problems is still at the heart of Bendigo’s DNA.

Home to more than 110,000 people, Greater Bendigo is one of Australia’s 20 largest cities. Located in the nation’s fastest growing state, it is experiencing strong sustained population growth and investment. Bendigo is located only 150 kilometres north of Melbourne and is the state’s largest city in northern Victoria.

Greater Bendigo is located in the Loddon Campaspe region, an area with a population of over a quarter of a million people. Bendigo is a regional centre serving much of central and northern Victoria’s health, finance and education needs. Bendigo is also a major transport hub accessing many centres with road, rail, freight and air services.

Mining in Bendigo is still a major employer, but the city has transformed itself into an extraordinarily diverse economy. Bendigo boasts the state’s largest regional hospital and the headquarter of the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank, Australia’s fifth largest bank. Bendigo’s arts and creative industries scene is now pre-eminent and the city is home to Australia’s leading regional art gallery, which now sees annual visitor numbers at more than twice the City’s population.

Despite its mining history, health, education and finance are now the biggest employers. Bendigo has entered a new era of advanced high-tech manufacturing which exports products to every continent. Bendigo and the wider region is now one of Australia’s major food production and processing areas with a particular concentration of intensive animal industries. Greater Bendigo’s gross regional product is approaching $6B a year.

The forests surrounding the city have helped to define the urban form, keeping it compact and connected. Bendigo is a city with local 10-minute neighbourhoods and traditional communities.

It is on this foundation of

- sustained growth,
- respect for its heritage and environmental setting,
- a diversifying economy, and
- an expanded regional service centre role,

that the Greater Bendigo City Council is building its future.

Projected population growth will see 200,000 people call Greater Bendigo home by 2050, with about 85% living in urban Bendigo.

Continued growth provides a strong platform of opportunities for the future and if managed well can deliver prosperity for the whole municipality.
This growth also presents a series of challenges. How to provide for and support a much larger population, ensure Greater Bendigo’s ongoing liveability and deliver wealth that can be shared so that no group is left behind?

1. We need to house nearly double the number of people currently living in Greater Bendigo. Where will they live and what form of housing do they need?

2. How will the future economy provide the jobs that will be needed for a growing workforce?

3. What facilities and infrastructure will be needed to support a much larger population, when do they need to be built and where should they be located?

4. How can the Greater Bendigo community shape its growth so there is convenient access to resources and opportunities for all residents and all communities can share in the increased prosperity?

5. What changes are needed to ensure that with growth comes a continuing high level of amenity and liveability for all our residents?

Council, with the community and the support of the state government have embarked on a unique initiative - Plan Greater Bendigo to respond to these challenges.

By looking thirty years ahead it is possible to shape how Greater Bendigo will not only look and function but how it will feel, what it will value and what it will convey to the rest of the world. Council has a bold aspiration – to be the world’s most liveable community. What will need to be done to pursue such a lofty ambition?

People in the community are understandably asking: how will the city cope with growth, will our liveability be lost, will there be enough water, where are the jobs and how will we build the infrastructure we need? These are all legitimate questions. But they are not new; they are the same questions that all cities have asked as they have grown.

The most successful and liveable communities are those that have prepared and implemented plans to manage their growth and change.
What is Plan Greater Bendigo?

Plan Greater Bendigo is a deliberately bold and aspirational strategic infrastructure plan, which identifies a number of transformational projects to 2050. These projects both highlight and build on Greater Bendigo’s competitive advantages to provide a point of distinction over other regional cities.

Plan Greater Bendigo will be used as an advocacy tool to attract government and private sector investment in Greater Bendigo and the region. However it is not only about attracting government investment, Plan Greater Bendigo shows the strong collaboration relationships which exist between government and the private sector across the region. Having all parties working towards the same goals will much better position Greater Bendigo to attract and leverage private sector investment to deliver transformational infrastructure projects, which will support employment, population and housing growth as we move towards 200,000 residents.

Plan Greater Bendigo has been funded and developed in collaboration with the Victorian Planning Authority and the regional office of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, with input from various State Government Agencies.

Plan Greater Bendigo is the first stage of implementing the Loddon Mallee South (also referred to as the Loddon Campaspe) Regional Growth Plan (LMSRGP) (Victorian Government 2014). The LMSRGP is the strategic land use plan for the region to guide sustainable growth and change over the next 30 years.

The objectives of Plan Greater Bendigo are closely aligned with the interests of the Loddon Campaspe Regional Partnership, the conduit through which our region’s priorities are conveyed to State Government.
How is Plan Greater Bendigo structured?

Plan Greater Bendigo is structured around four key goals. These goals are based around driving sustainable population and economic growth for the benefit of all residents, creating a strong core and striving for a healthier, better connected and educated community.

An adaptable and innovative economy

Improve access to education from an early age, better connect education and employment pathways and facilitate job creation to support a growing region.

Healthy and inclusive communities

Strive for inclusive prosperity by facilitating better access to reliable transport, creating strong Aboriginal communities, improving community wellbeing and building social connections.

A stronger and more vibrant city centre

Serve the needs of a growing city and region with diverse employment and services, active and highly valued public spaces, and a diverse residential population.

A resourceful and sustainable region

Be a leader in the implementation of One Planet Living and consider our relationship with the natural environment in all that we do.
Summary of engagement

Council consulted with a number of agencies, the community and stakeholders to prepare Plan Greater Bendigo.

Consultation on the draft Plan Greater Bendigo documents
Council consulted with the community on a draft Plan Greater Bendigo from 23 October until 1 December using a range of consultation and engagement methods. This included advertising in local papers, Facebook posts, website updates, a video and brochures. Council officers also attended two listening posts in Bendigo during the consultation period.

Over the consultation period there were 98 online surveys completed, as well as 9 submissions on behalf of agencies and stakeholder groups.

Overall feedback on the draft documents was positive, with a number of submissions requesting changes.

There was no clear standout project which was identified as the highest priority by respondents.

The most commonly mentioned project in the consultation that wasn’t included in the list of projects was the Central Deborah Goldmine which was mentioned by 15 respondents, followed by the City Centre revitalisation, mentioned by six respondents.

Consultation on the Plan Greater Bendigo discussion paper
The Plan Greater Bendigo discussion paper identified 70 infrastructure projects of benefit to Greater Bendigo and the region. The community were asked to identify their top and bottom infrastructure projects.

Council consulted on a Plan Greater Bendigo Discussion Paper from 20 March until 28 April 2017. A total of 294 surveys were completed over the consultation period, with a further 19 submissions received. There were a variety of views as to the top and bottom projects. Community engagement was one of the inputs into determining the final project selection. The top five projects and how they have been included are summarised as follows:

- Securing Bendigo’s Long Term Water Supply (integrated Water opportunities) – included under better using our existing water resources
- Outer arterial road – preparation of a business case for a western and northern by-pass has been identified, in line with the development of the Marong Business Park and development to the west of the City
- Bendigo Law Courts – included
- Managing Groundwater – turning a problem into a resource – included under better using our existing water resources
- Reimagining the Bendigo Creek – included

There were a number of other projects and ideas identified which have been considered in the preparation of Plan Greater Bendigo. Importantly while the majority of these have not been included in Plan Greater Bendigo, predominately due to size and responsibility, many have merit and should be considered to be progressed through other avenues.
Process in developing Plan Greater Bendigo

Council has been working with various State Government agencies since November 2016, on the preparation of Plan Greater Bendigo. A summary of the key dates is outlined below.

Plan Greater Bendigo Governance and Implementation

A steering committee with representation from relevant government agencies chaired by the City of Greater Bendigo will be formed to coordinate the delivery and implementation of Plan Greater Bendigo. Working groups will be formed (where they are not already in existence) to progress the delivery of immediate projects and coordinate agency involvement.

To further ensure accountability around the implementation of Plan Greater Bendigo, an annual report be put to Council outlining the actions completed in relation to the delivery of the projects within the document(s). This will include a summary of the findings and reporting on a series of indicators. These indicators will include:

- Progress on each project
- Project priorities relevant to population change
- Unemployment rate
- Gross Regional Product
- Energy use and costs
- Active and public transport use

Monitoring and review

Plan Greater Bendigo will be reviewed every 3 years. This will ensure it is kept current and is updated to reflect any projects which have been delivered, as well as identifying any new high priority projects which may emerge.
Greater Bendigo has a growing and diverse economy, with close to 5,000 jobs added over the last 10 years. Industries range from knowledge based sectors, to advanced manufacturing, and regionally, intensive animal industries. Key to the future economic success of Greater Bendigo will be the ability to proactively plan for future change and disruption. As part of this planning, the Department of Education and Training is working with industry and business partners, in collaboration with the City of Greater Bendigo, to prepare Bendigo’s young people for the transitions brought about by economic change.

Ensuring a sufficient ongoing supply of commercial and industrial land will be essential in supporting medium and large business expansion and investment in Greater Bendigo. This will include delivery of supporting infrastructure and the Marong Business Park at the recently rezoned 313 hectare piece of land in Marong. Improving connections to the west of the City will be essential in supporting the significant population and commercial growth expected. This includes the preparation of a business case to support the delivery of a western and northern bypass to improve freight and transport connections between Marong, Bendigo and the Calder Highway, including upgrading the Calder Alternative to four lanes, and improving connections to the north of the Marong Township.

The second stage of the redevelopment of the Bendigo Airport is complete, including the construction of a new runway, enabling aircraft carrying up to 70 passengers to land. Attracting a large commercial operator to the Bendigo Airport would be transformative, facilitating investment and visitor growth across the region. This would be further supported by development of an associated business precinct at the airport.

With over 11,000 students at La Trobe, Bendigo TAFE and Monash University, Greater Bendigo is a knowledge city with significant potential for growth. For example, if La Trobe University alone grew by only 5 per cent per annum for the next decade, this would boost student numbers by 3,000. A growth in student numbers is supported by the $50 million investment La Trobe is making in their Flora Hill campus, combined with the construction of the State Government funded tech school on the site, and the recent significant investment in the revitalisation of Bendigo TAFE. The delivery of short term hostel or dormitory style accommodation in the city centre would drive educational tourism in the City as well as provide an affordable accommodation option for short term visitors.

Greater Bendigo is a knowledge city with significant potential for growth, and the City benefits from a variety of educational providers and institutions, from early childhood centres through to schools ranging from government and Catholic, to independent, which are supported by organisations like the Science Discovery centre. While the proportion of residents completing school is growing, at 41 per cent this is still 18 per cent lower that the figure across Greater Melbourne. To help improve these figures, the Department of Education and Training is currently working with a range of educational stakeholders to develop a new ten-year education plan for the Bendigo region, with the Bendigo Education Plan 2028. This plan will be designed in consultation with the community and will ensure everyone has access to high-quality educational services from early childhood through to post-school skills and training. The City of Greater Bendigo is committed to working with all education providers to plan for and deliver facilities to meet the needs of a growing population.

The Victorian Government has committed to a range of significant Education State reforms from early childhood to post-school skills and training, and is investing record funding into systems and resources so that every Victorian can access an excellent education. The Education State reforms provide a unique opportunity for investment in Greater Bendigo’s early childhood, school and training sectors.
A focus on early planning for economic change and disruption, and the growing attractiveness of Greater Bendigo as a destination for tourism and residential growth, has meant the municipality has been resilient to economic change. Greater Bendigo’s economy has continued to grow across a diverse range of sectors. We have attracted a number of medium and larger scale businesses which have established and expanded in Greater Bendigo, including in the Marong Business Park. Growth in the business park and the west of Bendigo has been aided by the delivery of supporting infrastructure, ‘smart use of water’ and improved transport and freight connections. This includes the construction of a western and northern bypass and upgrade of the Calder Alternative between Ravenswood and Marong.

Commercial flights are now departing and arriving at Bendigo Airport, with regular flights interstate and to second tier international cities. This has helped to stimulate a complete transformation of the City leveraging investment and leading to a significant increase in international and interstate visitors.

Investment in higher education and student accommodation has led to a growing number of interstate and international students choosing to complete further study in Greater Bendigo. La Trobe has continued to build on its success in a number of programs including its success in STEAM education and is progressing towards 10,000 students. Monash University has continued to grow. There are a growing number of school students also taking advantage of the tech school at La Trobe. Bendigo TAFE has dramatically expanded following the completion of its health and community, and food and fibre centres of excellence. Bendigo is now widely regarded as a university city.

New schools have been planned and delivered concurrently with population growth. The Victorian Government’s focus on lifelong learning, starting in the early years, has led to a more inclusive and equal community. There are a growing number of students from across the region transitioning into TAFE and tertiary education, with the expanded course offering meaning many students are choosing to stay in Greater Bendigo to complete this study. This has led to improvements in the skills and employability of residents.
The positive attributes and growth story of Greater Bendigo can mask the underlying social issues. These include a widening inequality gap, marginalisation and poorer health outcomes for certain groups in certain areas, including in rural areas, and among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Amongst those least able to afford housing, there are currently over 1,400 people on the public housing wait or transfer list. The staged redevelopment of housing estates over time, starting with Virginia Hill in Eaglehawk, provides opportunities to create more connected and welcoming environments, improving resident wellbeing.

In spite of more train and bus services and improved cycle and pedestrian connections, close to three out of four residents are choosing to drive to work, a figure that has consistently grown over the last 20 years. This is contributing to an unhealthy community, with 53 per cent of adults overweight or obese, and 52 per cent of adults not meeting daily physical activity guidelines.

The City is focused on building complete neighbourhoods within both urban and rural communities, enabling residents to access services and facilities without needing a car. With growth comes the opportunity to better utilise existing infrastructure, and to provide more housing in areas close to services and transport. This includes better utilising vacant government land to provide a range of housing types and businesses.

The potential to build a world class intra-city rail network by the reinstatement of old, and rollout of new stations would set Greater Bendigo apart from other similarly sized regional cities. This would also provide a great chance to link with the significant investments presented through the preparation of a business case for a Melbourne CBD-Tullamarine rail link. As this state shaping project develops, there is opportunity to leverage benefits for Bendigo and the region. The City of Greater Bendigo will champion the regional benefits that would result from better connecting Bendigo and the region to the Tullamarine Airport.

The delivery of a shuttle service between Castlemaine and Echuca would support employment, education and regional connections. Train speeds between Bendigo and the Melbourne city centre would be improved by upgrading the track between Bendigo and Kyneton.

The redevelopment of the Bendigo Hospital precinct makes it the largest in regional Victoria. This combined with the redevelopment of St John of God Hospital has contributed to a growing number of medical and allied health professionals relocating to the city in recent years. An opportunity exists to leverage these significant investments to attract a health research institute to the precinct. A further opportunity for innovation and to create much needed skilled jobs in a small township exists in the delivery of the only dementia village in the southern hemisphere, at Heathcote.

The delivery of community hubs, in small townships and disadvantaged areas, would provide a variety of services in a single location and could include early learning facilities, youth hubs, libraries and employment support.

Close to two per cent of the Greater Bendigo population identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People. There is growing awareness in the community and greater recognition of the traditional owners - the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung peoples - who are the rightful custodians. There is still work to be done in closing the gap in health and access to opportunities, and in ensuring all residents understand the history of Greater Bendigo and the importance of the traditional owners.

The rollout of stage one of the new Bendigo District Aboriginal Co-operative community hub and centre has been completed, providing a variety of health services to the local community. Funding is currently being sought for the second stage of this project which will deliver a variety of broader services including a conference centre, education, and training facilities.
The focus on infrastructure delivery to support inclusive growth has led to a more equal community and improved wellbeing outcomes. As a result of residents becoming more active from an early age and a focus on preventative health, there has been a reduction in chronic disease in the community.

The redevelopment of housing estates and various public land sites has provided more options for households to access affordable housing in well serviced locations, helping build complete communities.

Significant investment in active and public transport (and local transport) including fully separated bike lanes and the reinstatement and construction of a number of train stations, has encouraged many residents to utilise active transport for their daily commute. There are now regular 20 minute peak and 40 minute off peak services to all stations including Elmore. Services now also run frequently between Castlemaine and Echuca. Signalling improvements and the upgrade of the track between Bendigo and Kyneton has enabled faster trains to run regularly between Bendigo and the Melbourne city centre. Bendigo is better connected to the Tullamarine Airport.

A health research institute has been established in Bendigo, building on the success of the Bendigo Hospital, and there are further expansion plans for both the Bendigo Hospital precinct and St John of God Hospital to support a growing population. The Heathcote Dementia Village has been constructed, attracting a number of new skilled residents into Heathcote, and supporting economic growth.

The community has a strong knowledge from an early age about the importance of the Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung peoples in the history of Greater Bendigo. There are purpose-built facilities which support Aboriginal people to connect with their history and provide support resources to ensure that this recognition is ongoing. This history is now embedded and integral to all that we do and considered in the early stages of projects. As a result of the delivery of the BDAC community hub and centre, there have been significant improvements in the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people across the region.

A series of community hubs have been delivered in both small townships and disadvantaged areas, enabling residents to access a number of services in a single location, improving community connection and wellbeing.

The small townships and rural areas of Greater Bendigo and the region are thriving. The unique strengths of each community have been highlighted and promoted. This includes improved connectivity, access to frequent and reliable public transport, more walking and cycling paths, and world class broadband which has attracted increasing numbers of new residents and visitors to these communities each year.
A stronger and more vibrant city centre

Re-imagine the city centre creating a dynamic service, employment, residential and visitor hub that makes the most of our renowned heritage architecture and valued public spaces

The city centre is defined by its prominent civic heritage architecture, and is well known for its tourism offering including the Bendigo Art Gallery, Australia’s premier regional art gallery, and the Chinese Museum/Golden Dragon Museum. This is supported by the thriving café and restaurant culture and a packed calendar of events including the renowned Bendigo Easter Festival.

With close to 14,000 jobs, the Bendigo city centre has one of the highest concentrations of employment within the state. While this includes large organisations such as Bendigo and Adelaide Bank – the only top 100 company based in regional Australia – Bendigo Hospital and Council offices, the majority of businesses are small, employing less than five people. The delivery of a “gov hub” would support the relocation of various levels of government into a single building, fostering idea generation and collaboration.

Currently less than one per cent of Greater Bendigo residents live within the city centre. Despite some recently constructed medium density developments, it currently lacks a strong, defined core. Council is about to commence a new revitalisation plan to help in better activating the city centre, driving residential, retail and office growth. This would be supported by the redevelopment of the vacant land in and around the Bendigo Train Station, creating a sense of arrival and acting as a key gateway to the city.

Ideally situated in Pall Mall, the Bendigo Law Courts are now insufficiently sized and not safe for family law matters. The potential redevelopment/relocation of these law courts would create a significant and long-lasting boost to construction and associated industries in the City, following the completion of the Bendigo Hospital precinct.

NOW

Court Services Victoria

Develop a new Bendigo Law Courts building to improve safety and to support a successful justice precinct.
The Bendigo CBD is well-recognised as an employment hub and there is a growing number of medium and large businesses establishing professional offices there. The attraction of State and Federal Government agencies and the relocation of a number of other government agencies into a single “gov-hub” has further augmented the skill base within the CBD. It has also helped in stimulating private sector investment and associated business growth. There are now substantially more commuters arriving at Bendigo Station each morning. This has been complemented by the redevelopment of vacant land in and around the Bendigo Train Station, giving it a European feel and creating an impressive sense of arrival into the city centre. Improvements in pedestrian and cycling infrastructure mean there has been a substantial increase in the number of residents accessing the city centre by active transport.

Closer to 10,000, or five per cent of residents, call the Bendigo city centre home. These residents live in a number of medium density developments and shop top housing, which have been designed to complement the existing heritage architecture.

The growth in employment and population, combined with an ever increasing number of interstate and international visitors attending the many events and tourist attractions, (including the revitalised Chinese Museum/Golden Dragon Museum) have contributed to a vibrant day and night time economy. This includes strong retail and hospitality sectors which have helped in better activating a number of the City’s laneways.

The redevelopment/relocation of the Bendigo Law Courts has led to a flourishing justice precinct and the courts are now appropriate for family law matters.
Our communities, like other communities around the world, are confronted by a number of challenges; climate change, depletion of natural resources, loss of biodiversity, increasing costs, water scarcity and developmental pressures. Rising groundwater is another local challenge. These challenges are not only a threat to the health of the natural environment, they threaten the health of our community and the wealth and liveability of our region.

To move towards a more sustainable future, Council has embraced the One Planet Living framework as part of the Greater Bendigo Environment Strategy 2016-2021, as well as the Community Plan 2017-2021. The Environment Strategy has bold 20 year goals including zero carbon, 100% renewable energy and zero waste to landfill. The One Planet platform allows the City to holistically consider the impact of various actions on the natural environment. It offers the opportunity for the City to become a leader in moving towards alternative energy technologies, and making more effective use of our limited natural resources.

Climate change has already led to both reduced average rainfall and to more frequent intense rainfall events so becoming smarter in the way we use our existing water resources will reduce the need to obtain increasing amounts of water from other regions. Coliban Water has a strong focus on Integrated Water Management and is investigating options for making the most of alternative water sources such as recycled and stormwater. Bendigo is also one of five Australian cities chosen to be part of an integrated research project with the Cooperative Research Centre in Water Sensitive Cities and one of two cities chosen to research how to develop a full transition strategy and implementation plan.

The rising groundwater in Greater Bendigo is currently a problem but investigations are underway into long term solutions that will turn this problem into a resource.

The current practice of sending large amounts of waste to landfill is both expensive and unsustainable. In the past Greater Bendigo had one of the worst residential waste diversion rates in the state. However, since the introduction of the organics waste collection in September 2016, more than 12,000 tonnes of waste has been diverted from landfill. Despite this, based on current rates and with the large amount of commercial waste also being sent to landfill, the Eaglehawk Landfill is likely to reach capacity by 2021. An alternative will need to be found and the City has the opportunity to come up with an innovative solution to meet the long term needs of a growing and changing population.

The temperate climate across Greater Bendigo and the region means it is well placed to harness renewable energy, including wind and solar. Significant potential exists in delivering renewable energy on vacant land, particularly land not suitable for urban uses, as well as in conjunction with the delivery of future business parks. This will offer a unique advantage and make it more affordable for businesses to choose Greater Bendigo as a destination.

Use of existing mining tunnels for the generation, storage and delivery of energy creates a unique opportunity for Greater Bendigo, and if proven feasible could form a key part of Bendigo’s future 100% renewable system.

The cycling and walking trail along the Bendigo Creek is one of Bendigo’s greatest recreational assets, as well as forming an important tourism connector that includes the Central Deborah Goldmine, City Centre, through to Lake Weeroona. In spite of this along some stretches it essentially remains a stormwater receiving drain. The community have called for restoration, regeneration and improvements to the creek, which could include the delivery of the “low line” walking and cycling corridor, increasing the amount of native vegetation, the establishment of a regional wetland, and investigation of a recreational water park.

A resourceful and sustainable region

Embrace the One Planet Living principles and understand that our health and prosperity is deeply interconnected to the health of our natural environment.
Various agencies

Leverage investment in renewable and alternative energy generation to reduce costs to businesses and households, including completion of the business case into a pumped hydro-storage system.

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Coliban Water

Better using our existing water resources

Make the most of our existing water resources by reducing our potable water use and using groundwater to benefit the city.

City of Greater Bendigo

New waste management arrangements

Deliver an innovative, long term waste solution that meets the needs of a growing population, while implementing initiatives that enable zero waste sent to landfill within 20 years.

Towards 2050

While climate change has led to a hotter and drier climate, the City has proactively prepared for these changes. This includes reducing our per capita water use and using alternative water sources for non-potable purposes in all developments. There have been investigations into the use of recycled potable water. Technology has helped improve our resilience to localised flooding.

Greater Bendigo is not only carbon neutral but now exports energy, which has helped make it more affordable for new residents and grow employment in new areas.

Renewable energy has been delivered concurrently with the construction of new business parks. A comparative reduction in energy costs has enabled existing businesses to expand and encouraged more new businesses to choose Bendigo as a destination, providing a number of new employment opportunities.

Most households now have very low or zero energy bills and enjoy homes that are comfortable all year round. We have attracted an international research institute based around targeting new technologies and maximising our natural resources, and this has also supported growth in locally based undergraduate and post-graduate study options.

Both the community and local businesses have become much more cognisant of their waste generation. With recycling options for all waste streams this now means zero waste being sent to landfill. A new waste management arrangement has been implemented which includes alternatives for disposal of commercial waste. More food scarcity now means that food is valued more highly. Residents are educated from an early age on whole-of-food lifecycle and very little food is wasted.

Groundwater is no longer a problem but a valuable source of water, with a long term solution having been implemented.

The City planned early for the widespread introduction of electric vehicles and they are now the norm, with many recharge points located across the City. Private car ownership and use has decreased in favour of shared vehicles and more active modes, including electric bikes. Various improvements along the Bendigo Creek Corridor, mean it is now one of the most highly regarded recreational and visitor destinations in the region. A number of residents now commute to work and travel around the City along the “low line.”
### Action Plan Summary*

The following table provides a summary of the implementation for each of the projects in Plan Greater Bendigo. At the time of writing this document, while some of the projects have been funded in part, none are fully funded. Note the delivery of projects is often predicated on a positive business case.

*Dependent on funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project implementation</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Long</th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>An adaptable and innovative regional economy</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Marong Business Park including supporting infrastructure and a freight and logistics facility</td>
<td>PD, PSI, BM</td>
<td>BM, PSI, DL</td>
<td>BM, PSI, DL</td>
<td>IA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bendigo Airport – Business Park and Terminal</td>
<td>BM, PSI, DL</td>
<td>IA, DL</td>
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<td>IA</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Securing our industrial and business land needs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting early access to education, training and employment pathways</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Revitalisation of Bendigo’s TAFE city campus</td>
<td>BM</td>
<td>DL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short term student/hostel accommodation in the city centre</td>
<td>FS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinated program of new school development to meet growing demand</td>
<td>PD</td>
<td>PSI, DL</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Healthy and inclusive communities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Upgrade the rail track between Bendigo and Kyneton</td>
<td>BM</td>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Connectivity for small towns and neighbouring regional centres</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bendigo metro rail - continuing implementation</td>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>BM</td>
<td>BM</td>
<td>DL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community hubs</td>
<td>PD</td>
<td>BM, PSI, DL</td>
<td>BM</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dja Dja Wurrung corporate and community centre</td>
<td>BM, PSI</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A strong and vibrant city core</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bendigo Law Courts</td>
<td>BM, DL</td>
<td>DL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bendigo Railway Station Activity Centre</td>
<td>PSI, BM</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>IA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bendigo “Gov Hub” – Office co-location of Government agencies</td>
<td>BM, DL</td>
<td>DL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golden Dragon Museum/Bendigo Chinatown</td>
<td>BM</td>
<td>DL</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>A resourceful and sustainable region</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reimagining the Bendigo Creek</td>
<td>PD, PSI, DL</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td></td>
<td>BM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better use our existing water resources</td>
<td>PSI, BM</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>PSI, BM, IA, DL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan for a renewable energy future</td>
<td>FS, BM</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>DL</td>
<td>PSI, IA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New waste management arrangements</td>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>DL</td>
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*Plan Greater Bendigo*
Beyond Plan Greater Bendigo

During the course of the preparation of Plan Greater Bendigo various concepts, ideas and proposals have been put forward that go beyond the progressive pipeline of infrastructure that would be required as the City grows to 200,000 people. These aspirations represent bold thinking. They are projects, developments and proposals that would propel Greater Bendigo to be leader in particular fields. The listing of possible or speculative transformational initiatives is not endorsed by the government departments and agencies that have collaborated with the City on Plan Greater Bendigo. But they have been put forward by the City of Greater Bendigo as things that ‘could be’ rather than things that ‘should be’.

Each of these bold ideas has merit in its own right. Each potentially takes Bendigo down possible paths which could progressively reshape the City in ways that would define in the future. They are not presented in order of priority. They are listed to assist conversations and considerations that should take place about the future development of Greater Bendigo. They go beyond an agenda of fairly predictable forces that can be systematically planned; rather they are about imagined futures. These projects would build on the enterprise and innovation which already exists in the community, people and organisations, and qualities associated with the approach of Greater Bendigo residents challenge, adversity and to harness opportunity.

Greater Bendigo should aspire to be a community that:

- Retains its youth or attracts them to return because it is a place that offers them all or most of what they can find elsewhere
- Progressively reduces the level of poverty and disadvantage through expanding and sharing educational and job opportunities
- Deeply values its natural environment
- Celebrates its diverse cultural heritage and history, and
- Shares its wealth and prosperity across all communities

These are not easy aspirations to achieve and in imagining different futures it is important that various ideas are still grounded in reality and delivering on these basic values, concepts and qualities.

Over the next three decades Greater Bendigo is presented with a wealth of opportunities to build boldly on its current asset base. It’s a future Greater Bendigo which envisages:

- Faster and more frequent rail connections to and from Melbourne and other regional destinations, a city connected directly to the Melbourne International Airport by rail and also to the high speed rail serving the Australian eastern corridor
- Bendigo Airport serving as the direct connection to all major Australian interstate airports for the hundreds of thousands of people living in central and northern Victoria
- An arts and creative industries mecca which places us on the global circuit
- An advanced manufacturing sector which is leading Australia in a number of specialised fields and, which like the rest of the City, is powered by renewable energy because Bendigo is a leading city and research centre in non-fossil fuels, recycling, use of potable recycled water and sustainable living
- The strength of our health provision and preventative programs, financial services, advanced engineering and manufacturing sectors, and arts and creative industries has led to nationally significant concentrations in research and post school education and training resulting in presence of a number of universities collaborating with the city, business and the community
- Bendigo becoming a major national and international tourism destination thanks to its extraordinary public and open space assets including our beautiful 19th century built heritage forming part of a world heritage listed central Victorian goldfields region.
- The City capitalising on a city centre historic tramway and living social history museum that tells the story of Bendigo stretching from Crusoe Reservoir to Huntly based on the public space and walking and cycling corridor formed by the Bendigo Creek restored in many stretches to a natural environment setting in conjunction with the Dja Dja Wurrung.