



TRACKS AND TRAILS STRATEGY 2023



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Golden Plains Shire spans the Traditional lands of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Peoples.

Council acknowledges them as the Traditional Owners and Custodians and pays its respects to both Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Elders past, present and emerging.

Council extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of Golden Plains Shire.

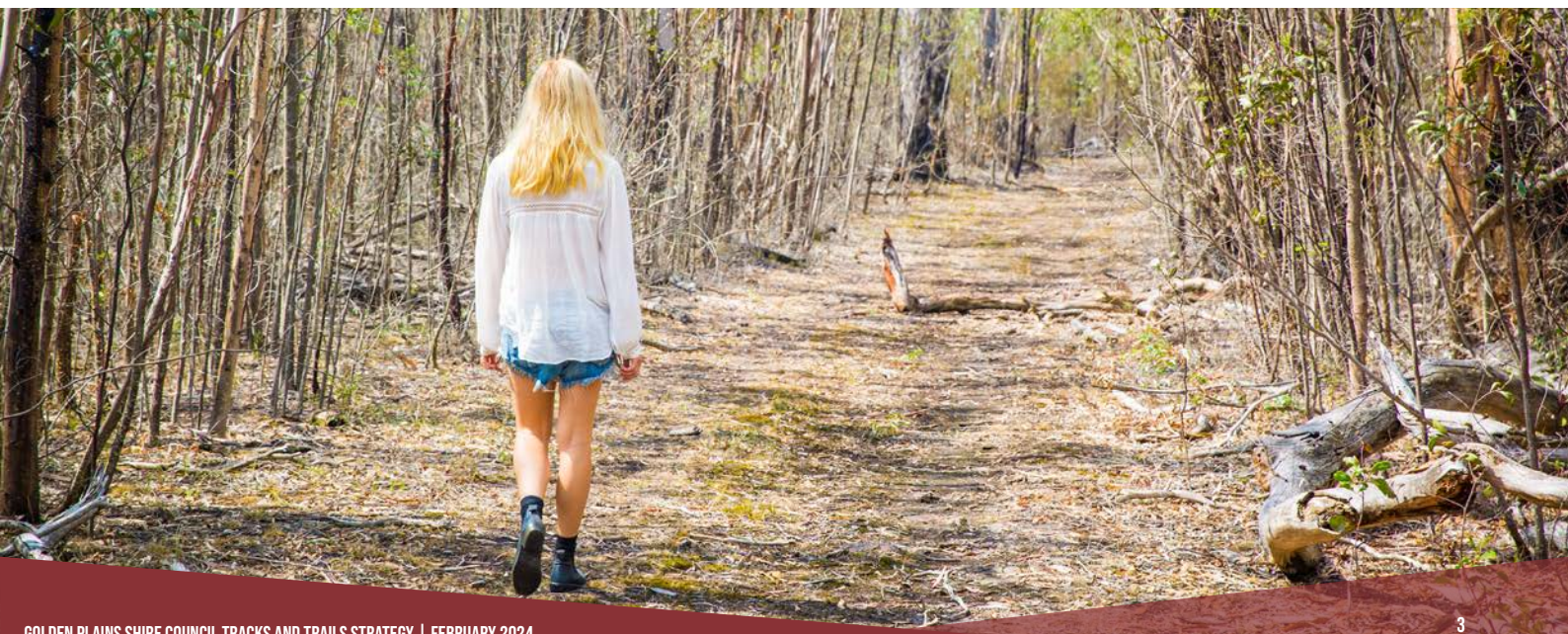


Artwork: 'Wabdallah' by Shu Brown

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The Tracks and Trails Strategy is being developed by Golden Plains Shire Council in partnership with Tredwell Management and the Victorian Government.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Golden Plains Shire Council Tracks and Trails Strategy (the Tracks and Trails Strategy) is a ten-year Strategy that presents the opportunity for the Golden Plains Shire Council (GPSC), with its partners and community, to embrace and build upon the region's recreational tracks and trails network.

The term 'Tracks and Trails' refers to the region's recreational trail network, with a focus on those that are Council-managed and cater for walking (excluding urban footpaths), trail running, mountain bike riding, cycling, and horse riding. The Tracks and Trails Strategy addresses the pressing need for strategic planning regarding tracks and trails across the region, and will ensure Council can effectively prioritise future upgrades, encourage physical activity, and budget and pro-actively plan ongoing maintenance for tracks and trails across GPS and between neighbouring Local Government Areas.

The Tracks and Trails Strategy aligns closely with the GPSC Community Vision 2040's four key themes: 'Community,' 'Liveability,' 'Sustainability,' and 'Prosperity', and can make a significant contribution to achieving the key priorities outlined under these themes. The enhancement and development of both existing and new tracks and trails within GPS also aligns with key Victorian Policy Objectives and the objectives of Active Victoria (2022-2026).

Through community consultation and trail audits, it was evident that tracks and trails are integral to the lifestyle offered in GPS, and provide significant visitor attraction opportunities. Community consultation and trail audits identified the following overarching opportunities:

- Develop high-quality and accessible trails that showcase the GPS region and attract intrastate and interstate visitors.
- Provide safe track and trail connections between townships separated from busy roads to encourage active transport and commuting.
- Activate trails through the development of accessible, connected, high-quality trail experiences, programs and events to encourage healthier and more active lifestyles for all GPS residents and children.
- Improve on-going track and trail maintenance and pest control.
- Improve signage and waymarking to existing tracks and trails.

- Create quality tracks for all abilities, ensuring everyone can access and enjoy them equally.
- Improved trail promotion and awareness.

The Tracks and Trails Strategy identifies the opportunities for upgrades and developments with the greatest potential to benefit the community, local economy and the natural environment by facilitating sustainable opportunities for exploring natural areas, focussing on tourism related developments and promoting environmentally-friendly transportation options.

The Tracks and Trail Strategy has a key focus on activating trails through improving accessibility, community connections, recreation connections, event suitability and providing unique experiences.

A total of 36 existing trails were identified across the GPS tracks and trails network which provide a broad range of experiences, and 18 key future track and trail opportunities were identified. With a regional approach and increased investment, the GPS regional tracks and trails Network offers incredible potential as an iconic, cohesive and interconnected trails network, incorporating benefits across the triple bottom line with positive environmental, economic and social outcomes.

The Tracks and Trails Strategy provides an overview of the project's strategic context and alignment with other planning initiatives, a review of relevant trends, best-practice trail planning and management, and highlights the findings from community consultation.

The tracks and trails network vision is outlined on the following page, this is underpinned by six (6) planning principles with the aim of achieving five (5) key goals for the region. A ten-year action plan has been developed which provides prioritised actions towards each of the goals to achieve the tracks and trails network vision.

The Action Plan Overview is included from page 27 onwards and includes timeframes, costs, partners and priorities for each action.

This Tracks and Trails Strategy is supported by the:

- **'Issues and Opportunities Paper'**, including all background information, context, trail planning and standards, trail management and funding, and existing trail audit findings, and;
- **'Detailed Action Plan'**, including trail hierarchies, priorities, timeframes, trail lengths, locations, estimated costs, required works, key partners, trail activation scores and mapping.

OUR VISION AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES

We have developed a vision for tracks and trails within GPS. The vision is underpinned by six planning principles, these principles will form the framework for the entire strategy over the next 10 years. Everything that Golden Plains Shire does in relation to tracks and trails will be assessed against these principles, as depicted in the following figure.



OUR GOALS

Five goals have been developed to help us achieve our vision.

GOAL A: INTEGRATED PLANNING & MANAGEMENT
GOAL B: QUALITY, SAFE, AND SUSTAINABLE NETWORK OF EXISTING TRAILS
GOAL C: SUSTAINABLE, RESPONSIBLE AND RELEVANT TRAIL DEVELOPMENTS
GOAL D: INFORMATION AND MARKETING
GOAL E: COMMUNITY, TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

These goals reflect the distinct areas that Council wishes to focus on in order to deliver the strategy and they also reflect regional and state-wide priorities in the tracks and trails sector. Each of the actions in this strategy is categorised under one of the five goals.

INTRODUCTION

STRATEGIC PLANNING PYRAMID

The establishment of a common Vision for the Tracks and Trails Strategy provides an overarching aim for Council, other organisations and the wider community to coordinate initiatives towards.

As illustrated below, the Vision is supported by planning Principles which provide consistent and clear rationale for the alignment and assessment of deliverables.

This sets the framework for the development of aspirational Goals (specific outcomes consistent with the Principles to fulfil the vision). Actions are then identified to deliver on each of the Goals and address the relevant issues identified during the research and consultation phases.

Utilising this approach produces a Strategy with clearly articulated actions, responsibilities assigned, and an estimate of likely resources required - resulting in a clear and actionable implementation plan to deliver the overall vision.



TRAILS HIERARCHY

A successful trails network requires trails of different levels of significance in order to meet the needs of different user group/market segments.

The trails hierarchy provides a guide for the level of infrastructure required for trails to meet the needs of their intended users and to ensure that an appropriate standard of facilities is provided.

A trails level on the hierarchy indicates the partnerships required to successfully manage the trail, the level of promotion likely to be appropriate and the infrastructure which can be expected by users.

The following summary of hierarchies have been developed from the from Victoria's Trails Strategy 2014-2024. Characteristics, attributes and examples of trail hierarchies have been included in the Issues and Opportunities Paper and the level of each Golden Plains trial in the hierarchy is also noted in the Detailed Action Plan.

HIERARCHICAL LEVEL

INTERNATIONAL/NATIONAL:

World-class trail experiences located within the natural and cultural landscapes, with the highest standard of management & promotion. Attract visitors to Australia.

STATE:

Significant trail experiences which represent Victoria's varied landscapes, with a high standard of management & promotion. Attract visitors to Victoria.

REGIONAL:

A major trail or trail network that services a population centre or large regional community, with facilities and services of a standard and appeal that could attract visitors from outside the region.

LOCAL:

A trail that services the local community and provides facilities suited to local use. Some local trails may have potential for development to regional status.

It should be noted that the large majority of Golden Plains Shire Trails are Local with a very small number of trails (either current or potential new) classified as Regional.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

Golden Plains Shire community members are looking for more diverse ways to achieve their physical activity goals and connect with friends and family. At the forefront of this change is an increasing preference to participate in activities such as walking and cycling, which provide flexibility, and are affordable and inclusive. This Strategy assists GPSC to respond to this trend and ensure a network of fit for purpose tracks and trails and supporting infrastructure is provided.

An assessment of the current condition of GPS's existing tracks and trails and their connectivity to towns, social and recreation spaces, and capacity to cater to all abilities has been undertaken. Community consultation has identified the individual needs of each community within the Shire and assessed how they currently use and intend to use trails. The Strategy also includes investigation into ways to activate the Shire's tracks and trails through community implemented programs such as Park Run and Active Golden Plains, and through connecting tracks and trails to key recreation and community facilities.

GPSC aims to provide a desirable network of tracks and trails that cater to its growing population and attract visitors from neighbouring LGA's and interstate. The Strategy reflects the needs of the region, taking into consideration the areas unique demographics, participation trends, health concerns, and environmental, recreational and social issues.

The Strategy ensures Council can effectively prioritise future upgrades, encourage physical activity, budget and pro-actively plan ongoing maintenance, and monitor and evaluate the utilisation of tracks and trails across Golden Plains and between neighbouring Local Government Areas.

The Strategy informs Council's strategic planning development over the next 10 years and delivers infrastructure, participation and programming opportunities over the next 5 years.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The projects six stage methodology is outlined below, this was developed to ensure that the project incorporates relevant consultation, research and planning processes whilst meeting the project brief requirements.

The six stages include:

Stage 1: Project Start-up, Background Review and Trends Analysis

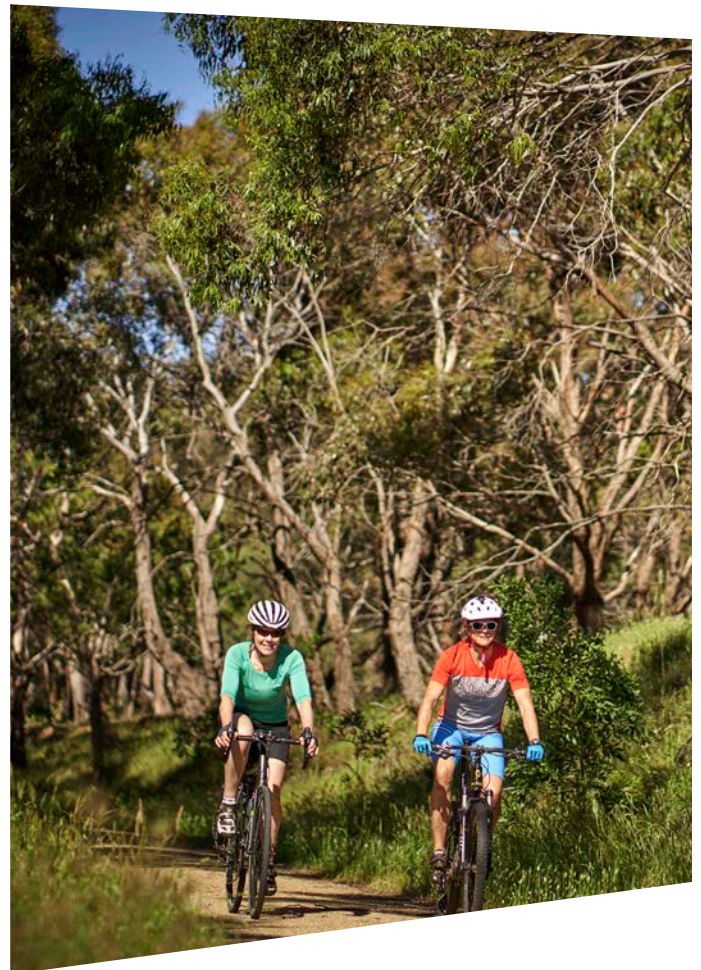
Stage 2: Consultation

Stage 3: On-ground Trail Audit and Mapping

Stage 4: Issues and Opportunities Paper

Stage 5: Draft Tracks and Trails Strategy and Detailed Action Plan

Stage 6: Final Tracks and Trails Strategy and Detailed Action Plan



OVERVIEW OF GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE COUNCIL

Golden Plains Shire is situated between two of Victoria's largest regional cities, Geelong and Ballarat, and covers an area of 2,702km². ABS Census data identified that in 2021 Golden Plains had a population of 24,985 people located across 56 vibrant rural Communities.

Renowned for its award-winning food and wine, iconic music festivals, goldfield heritage and friendly communities, Golden Plains is an attractive destination both to visit and call home.

Golden Plains is a fast growing region and is expected to have an additional 2,391 dwellings constructed in Bannockburn in the south-east of the Shire and an additional 1,020 dwellings constructed in the north-west of the Shire by 2036.

Golden Plains has a strong agricultural presence and produces 21% of Victoria's eggs, 11% of poultry, 4% of its sheep and lamb and 5% of Victoria's pork. The Golden Plains economy is closely linked to the regional economies of Geelong and Ballarat which function as product transfer markets; commercial centres and the source of hundreds of jobs, most significantly in traditional manufacturing.

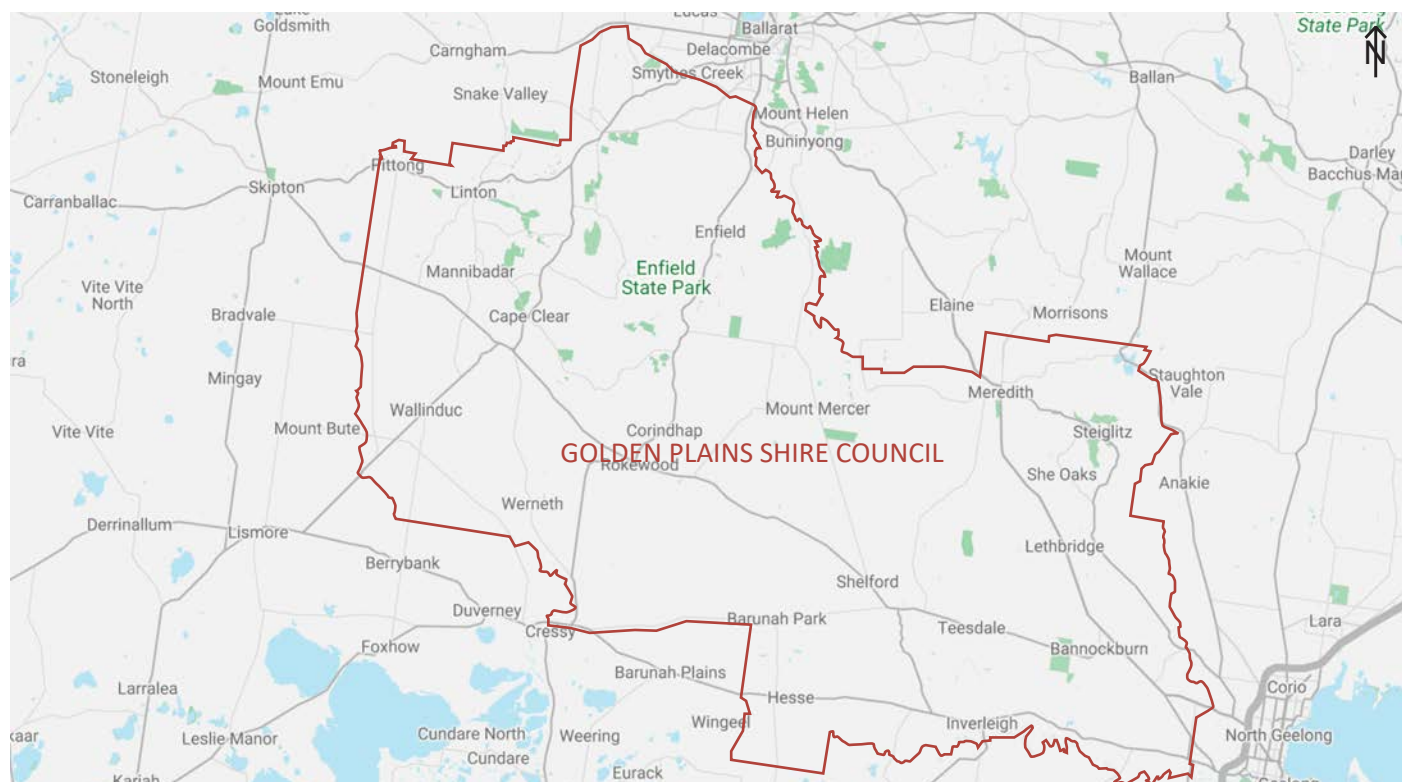
Golden Plains Shire features sweeping and rugged bush landscapes combined with historic townships and

growing communities to make for a wonderful place to live or visit. Locations such as the Brisbane Ranges National Park, Enfield State Forest and Moorabool River are popular for their wildflower displays, koalas, scenic drives, walks, trails and picnic grounds, offering day-trippers an enjoyable tourism experience.

Currently there is an extensive network of tracks and trails within GPS that provide and promote physical activity. These tracks and trails are maintained by Council, Parks Victoria and community groups. A number of these formalised trails are currently utilised heavily by local residents and attract tourists to the region from neighbouring LGA's due to their unique flora and fauna and experiences offered, such as the Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trail.

There are a large number of informal tracks and trails that are regularly utilised by the local community and have the potential to increase visitation and aid in boosting the local economy.

This strategy identifies the current issues and opportunities relating to tracks and trails in Golden Plains. It proposes a ten-year action plan to enhance GPS's trail activation, tourism, economy, experiences, and community connectivity, health and well-being.



LITERATURE REVIEW OVERVIEW

A wide range of background information has been reviewed to inform the development of the Tracks and Trails Strategy and ensure alignment with wider objectives across state, regional, and local areas. The reviewed documents have been listed below and the full literature review is in the Issues and Opportunities Paper.

NATIONAL LEVEL DOCUMENTS

- The Australian Physical Literacy Framework, Sport Australia (2019)
- Blueprint for an Active Australia, Heart Foundation (2019)

STATE LEVEL DOCUMENTS

- Active Victoria (2022-2026)
- Bushwalking Victoria Strategic Plan (2020)
- Victorian Trails Strategy (2014-2024)
- Victorian Cycling Strategy (2018-2028)

MUNICIPAL LEVEL DOCUMENTS

- Golden Plains Shire Active Ageing and Inclusion Plan (2020-2024)
- Golden Plains Shire Community Development Strategy (2015-2019)
- Golden Plains Shire Economic Development, Tourism and Investment Attraction Strategy (2022-2032)
- Golden Plains Shire Community Vision 2040
- Golden Plains Shire Municipal Public Health and Well-being Action Plan (2021-2025)
- Golden Plains Shire Paths and Trails Strategy (2013-2017)
- Golden Plains Shire Roads Strategy (2013)
- Golden Plains Shire Environment Strategy (2019-2027)
- Golden Plains Shire Transport Connections Study (2022)
- Golden Plains Shire Open Space Strategy (2013-2017)
- Golden Plains Shire Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (2020-2030)
- Golden Plains Asset Plan (2022-2032)
- Golden Plains Shire Play Space Strategy (2019-2029)

LOCAL LEVEL DOCUMENTS

- Bannockburn Growth Plan (2021)
- Inverleigh Structure Plan (2019)
- Teesdale Structure Plan (2021)
- Community Plans

SURROUNDING LGA/REGIONAL DOCUMENTS

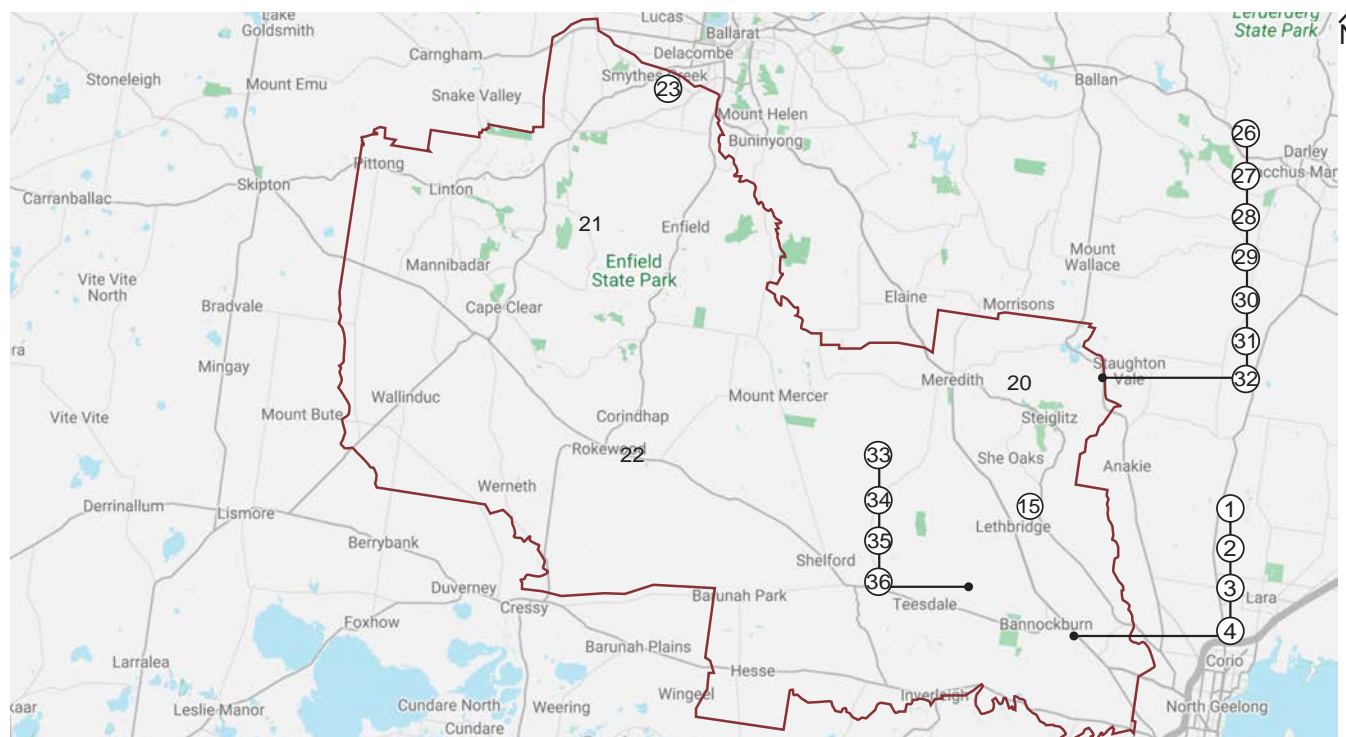
- G21 Integrated Transport Strategy (2021-2041)
- Moorabool Shire Council Hike and Bike Strategy (2015)
- Moorabool Shire Council Facilities Strategy Plan (2015)
- Moorabool Shire Council Female Friendly Sport and Recreation Participation and Infrastructure Strategy (2022-2032)
- City of Ballarat West Precinct Structure Plan (2016)
- City of Ballarat Open space strategy (2008)
- Moorabool Shire Council Age Well Live Well Strategy (2022-2025)
- Corangamite Shire Council Recreation and Open Space Strategy (2016-2026)
- Corangamite Shire Council Trails Management Policy (2019)
- Geelong Principal Cycling Network
- Greater Geelong Cycle Strategy - Volume 1 (2008)
- Ballarat Cycling Action Plan (2017-2023)
- Rivers of the Barwon / Barre Warre Yulluk Action Plan

Concepts/proposals/submissions from community members and groups have also been reviewed as part of the community consultation process.



EXISTING TRACKS AND TRAILS

There are currently 36 formal and informal existing recreational tracks and trails across GPS. as detailed in the issues and opportunities paper.



LEGEND

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| ① Bannockburn Bushland (South) | ⑪ Kangaroo Track via Links Track Loop | ⑲ Police Paddocks |
| ② Bannockburn Bushland (North) | ⑫ River Track | ⑳ Ibis Middleton Walk, Meredith |
| ③ Wabdullah Reserve | ⑬ Leigh River and Barwon Junction River Trails | ㉑ Jubilee Mine Historic Walk |
| ④ Bruce's Creek, Bannockburn | ⑭ Bruce Creek, Lethbridge | ㉒ Kuruc-a-ruc Trail |
| ⑤ Rainbow Bird Trail | ⑮ Lethbridge Lake | ㉓ Ross Creek Recreation Reserve Nature Loop |
| ⑥ Dereel Lagoon | ⑯ Meredith/Bamganie State Forest Circuit | ㉔ Boden's Water Races |
| ⑦ Long Gully Loop | ⑰ Possum Road & Moorabool River Loop | ㉕ Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trail |
| ⑧ Surface Point Loop | ⑱ Meredith Steiglitz Road to Byrne Road | ㉖ Hay and Burchell Walking Trail |
| ⑨ Enfield Bald Hills Loop Trail | | ㉗ Brisbane Ranges Extended Circuit |
| ⑩ Inverleigh Flora Loop | | ㉘ Deadman's & Grahams Gully Loop |
| | | ㉙ Three Creeks Walk |
| | | ㉚ Beards Gully & Deadman's Loop |
| | | ㉛ Steiglitz Historic Walk |
| | | ㉜ Friday's Trail, Brisbane Ranges National Park |
| | | ㉝ Teesdale Grassy Woodlands/Don Wallace Reserve |
| | | ㉞ Chinaman's Lagoon |
| | | ㉟ Bike/walking path, Shelford-Bannockburn Rd |
| | | ㊱ Turtle Bend |

DEMAND FOR TRACKS AND TRAILS

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Tracks and trails play an important role in facilitating physical activity in Golden Plains Shire, as identified in the table below. Recreational walking, cycling, jogging and bush walking represent four of the top six activities listed and can be facilitated by the provision of tracks and trails.

AUSPLAY SPORT PARTICIPATION TABLE, TOP 10 ADULT ACTIVITIES, 2022

RANK	ACTIVITY	VIC ADULT PARTICIPATION RATE	ESTIMATE ('000)
1	Walking (Recreational)	46.9%	2,698.2
2	Fitness/Gym	38.5%	2,218.8
3	Athletics, track and field (includes jogging and running)	19.6%	1,130.9
4	Cycling	16.6%	957.0
5	Swimming	16.0%	923.0
6	Bush walking	9.0%	520.8
7	Yoga	6.6%	382.1
8	Tennis	6.5%	372.4
9	Basketball	6.4%	368.0
10	Golf	5.9%	339.9



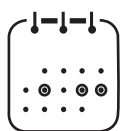
86.8% OF REGIONAL VICTORIA'S POPULATION WALK OR USE A MOBILITY AID AT LEAST ONCE IN A TYPICAL WEEK FOR TEN MINUTES OR MORE¹.



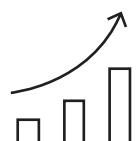
APPROXIMATELY **70%** WALK FOR RECREATION AND EXERCISE¹.



APPROXIMATELY **45%** WALK FOR DOG WALKING¹.



ON AVERAGE PEOPLE AGED 15 AND OVER IN VICTORIA WALK **4.9 DAYS** OVER A **7 DAY** PERIOD¹.



INTEREST IN TRAIL AND OFF-ROAD ACTIVITIES HAS INCREASED DRAMATICALLY OVER THE LAST YEAR, WITH A **55%** INCREASE IN GRAVEL RIDING ON STRAVA, **16%** RISE IN TRAIL RUNNING, **13%** IN MOUNTAIN BIKING, AND A **10%** INCREASE IN HIKING².



19.2% OF REGIONAL VICTORIANS RIDE A BIKE IN A TYPICAL WEEK COMPARED TO **17.1%** FOR THE STATE OF VICTORIA¹.



IN VICTORIA, APPROXIMATELY **1.1M** RESIDENTS RIDE A BICYCLE IN A TYPICAL WEEK AND **2.5M** RESIDENTS RIDE AT LEAST ONCE IN A TYPICAL YEAR¹.



OF THE PEOPLE WHO CYCLED IN VICTORIA IN THE LAST MONTH, **74.5%** CYCLED FOR RECREATION AND **45.8%** USED A BICYCLE FOR TRANSPORT. THE MAIN TRANSPORT PURPOSES FOR RIDING WERE COMMUTING TO WORK OR EDUCATION AND TO VISIT FRIENDS AND RELATIVES¹.



GLOBAL EBIKE ACTIVITY ON STRAVA INCREASED BY **23%** IN 2023².



IN 2023, GEN Z ATHLETES WERE ALMOST **TWICE** AS LIKELY TO UPLOAD RUNS AS RIDES TO STRAVA. BOOMERS WERE **TWICE** AS LIKELY TO UPLOAD RIDES AS RUNS².

(1) CWANZ 'National Walking and Cycling Participation Survey, 2023
(2) Strava Global Trend Report, 2023

THE IMPACT OF TRACKS AND TRAILS

Tracks and trails have the potential to yield significant positive benefits by addressing prevalent social and community trends. It is essential to understand the trends in the Golden Plains Shire communities and strategically plan for facilities, programs, and services in the future, in a manner that integrates tracks and trails.



PHYSICAL INACTIVITY AND OBESITY

The GPSC VicHealth Indicators Survey (2015) identified that 22.3% of GPS residents engaged in no physical activity during a typical week compared to Victoria's 18.9%. A smaller proportion (35.4%) of GPS residents engaged in physical activity four or more days per week compared to the Victorian average (41.3%).

- An increasing need to provide accessible and affordable physical activity opportunities across GPS to encourage regular exercise and healthy lifestyle habits
- Trails can contribute to health outcomes through providing both active recreational opportunities and active transport routes.



EVOLVING TOURISM TRENDS AND TARGET MARKETS

The GPSC Economic Development, Tourism and Investment Attraction Strategy (2022-2032) encourages the region to extend its visitor experiences across the Shire.

- Residents and businesses in the region can benefit from income generated from trail-related tourism. Higher quality and quantity of trails & associated infrastructure can support these opportunities.
- Provision and promotion of trail networks and events will attract more visitors and encourage travellers to stay in the area for longer.



COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AND VOLUNTEERISM

AusPlay Participation data for Victoria indicates a strong increase in volunteers for sport and recreational activities from 2021 to 2022. From January to December 2022 there were a total of 449,100 male (15.9%) and 357,600 female (12.2%) volunteers. This is up from 417,000 males (15.1%) and 321,200 females (11.2%) in 2021.

- Trail projects are often dependent on community leadership & volunteer efforts which are invaluable resources. It is imperative that volunteers are effectively supported, recognised & valued enabling them to continue to contribute to the trails network.



POPULATION GROWTH AND CHANGE

The latest ABS data identifies that GPS has experienced rapid population growth over the last ten years, growing from 18,770 people in 2011 to 24,985 people 2021. This is an overall increase of 33.1% at a rate of 621 new residents per year.

Profile Id estimates the GPS population for 2023 is 25,651, and is forecast to grow to 42,607 by 2041, a growth of 16,956 people or 66.1% over 18 years.

- Ensuring the trail network meets population growth and preferences across different age groups is crucial for relevant recreation opportunities. Long-term planning, such as preserving natural areas and trail corridors, will support the region's growth and prosperity.



CULTURAL DIVERSITY

GPSC is committed to reducing barriers for groups most at risk of being excluded from the community. These people include those with disability, who are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD), who are Indigenous, who identify as LGBTIQ, young and older people and those facing socioeconomic disadvantage.

- It is important that trail-based activities offered within GPS cater for people from different cultural backgrounds. For example, Indigenous people may be more likely to engage in trail activities which acknowledge the region's cultural significance.
- New arrivals to Australia may require high levels of information relating to safety requirements in Australia's natural areas.

PARTICIPATION, ACTIVATION AND RECREATION

ACTIVATING TRAILS

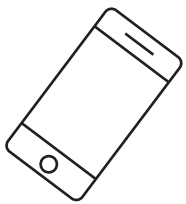
Trails assume a pivotal role in stimulating local communities, ultimately leading to an improvement in the overall quality of life. When trails are accessible, interconnected, and well-kept, they wield a positive influence on the levels of physical activity within the community, fostering activation of community facilities and infrastructure and engagement in sports and active recreational pursuits. Below identifies the ways in which the Tracks and Trails Strategy will activate GPS's tracks and trails.

ACCESS FOR ALL



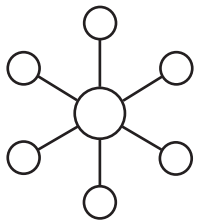
- **Accessibility:** Ensure that a variety of trails are family, wheelchair and adaptive cycle accessible and designed to meet Australian guidelines.
- **Trail Length and Variety:** Create trails of varying lengths and difficulty levels to cater to a wide range of fitness levels. Include short loops for beginners and longer, more challenging routes for experienced users.
- **Inclusive Activities:** Offer trails that cater to different interests and age groups, such as family nature walks, local events (such as Parkrun), and educational, historic and cultural trails.

PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND ONLINE PLATFORMS



- **Online platforms:** Adding accurate and up-to-date trail mapping and information to online platforms and apps including Council's website, Alltrails, Trailforks and Mapmyfitness will activate GPS's trails through attracting a broader audience of users from any location, helping them to identify trail opportunities and plan for activities.
- **Interval Markers:** Install markers at regular intervals along trails to help users track their progress and set exercise goals. These markers can encourage interval training, and can be incorporated into waymarking signage.
- **Support events:** Supporting events that utilise the tracks and trails network is a key way to activate trails. This can include walking, cycling, running and horse riding events, art and cultural installations and larger regional and national events.

COMMUNITY AND ACTIVE RECREATION CONNECTIONS



- **Connectivity:** Create a network of trails that connect various neighbourhoods, parks, points of interest, and community and recreational facilities, including playspaces, skateparks, recreation reserves and open spaces. This encourages trail activation through providing a network of trails that provide both recreational and practical purposes, such as commuting to work, education, recreation areas or shopping.

TRAIL EXPERIENCE



- **Unique Experiences:** Provide unique cultural and natural trail user experiences and link in to unique local businesses and sustainable accommodation providers.
- **Maintenance:** Regularly maintain tracks and trails to keep them clean and attractive.

ACHIEVING ACTIVE VICTORIAN POLICY OBJECTIVES

ACTIVE VICTORIA (2022-2026)

The Tracks and Trails Strategy aligns with the Active Victoria Strategic Framework (2022-2026) which has a vision to 'build a thriving, inclusive and connected sport and active recreation sector that benefits all Victorians'.

GPSC can incorporate the Active Victoria policy objectives into their plans over the next five years in the following ways:

OBJECTIVE: CONNECTING COMMUNITIES:

'All Victorians have access to high-quality environments and appropriate participation opportunities'.

1. Increase and promote trail opportunities so Victorians can participate in ways that suit them
2. Target trail development and promotional efforts towards individuals and communities who participate less
3. Improve track and trail infrastructure coordination to better meet demand, with a focus on areas and populations who need it most
4. Deliver inclusive, multi-use and sustainable trail infrastructure

OBJECTIVE: BUILDING VALUE

'The sport and active recreation workforce create positive experiences for people'.

1. Attract and retain a skilled trail management team and workforce (paid and unpaid)
2. Promote more financially sustainable organisations that reduce duplication and inefficiencies in trail development and delivery
3. Implement frameworks to create safe and inclusive trail settings
4. Build insights through better use of evidence and data

OBJECTIVE: ENDURING LEGACY

'The sport and active recreation workforce create positive experiences for people'.

1. Develop a world-leading suite of local, regional and state trail facilities
2. Invest in trail infrastructure that can host international and regional events and support event content that boosts the Victorian economy
3. Partner to maximise leverage from investment in Victoria's major events

By aligning the Tracks and Trails Strategy with these Active Victoria and Victorian Government policy objectives, GPSC can create a healthier, more vibrant, and sustainable community that benefits residents, businesses, and the environment.

Tracks and Trails also make a valuable contribution to achieving a broad range of Victorian Government policy objectives, these can be achieved by incorporating the following initiatives into Council plans over the next five years:

1. ESTABLISHING THRIVING PLACES AND COMMUNITIES THAT ARE SAFE, FAIR AND INCLUSIVE

- Develop and maintain tracks and trails that connect key community and recreational facilities, providing safe and active transport corridors.
- Encourage cultural and heritage awareness through sharing & storytelling along the trails.
- Organise educational programs and events in natural settings to promote environmental awareness and appreciation.
- Ensure the trails are designed to be accessible and enjoyable for people of all abilities and age groups.

2. SUPPORTING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF ALL VICTORIANS

- Promote the use of trails for physical activity in nature, which contributes to social, mental, spiritual, and physical well-being.
- Organise community events and activities along the trails to foster social connectedness.
- Encourage personal development by creating trails that offer challenges and opportunities for achievement.

3. BUILDING QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Invest in high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure that enhances the overall user experience and ensures safety.
- Regularly maintain and upgrade the infrastructure to meet the needs of trail users, making them comfortable and encouraging usage.

4. DEVELOPING A STRONG AND INNOVATIVE ECONOMY

- Recognise the economic benefits of trails, such as reducing healthcare costs associated with inactivity and attracting high-value travellers to the region.
- Promote and support industries related to events, eco-tourism, recreation, food, hospitality, and services that can benefit from the presence of trails.
- Engage volunteers and create employment opportunities related to trail maintenance and development.

5. CONTRIBUTING TO VICTORIA'S TRANSITION TO A NET-ZERO EMISSIONS AND CLIMATE RESILIENT ECONOMY BY 2050

- Develop trails that provide green, active transport linkages, reducing traffic congestion and carbon emissions.
- Promote environmental education and awareness along the trails to encourage stewardship and protection of natural resources.
- Implement practices that mitigate the impacts of human exploration in natural areas to help preserve the environment.



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION SUMMARY

The Tracks and Trails Strategy's actions have been informed by community consultation and stakeholder engagement. A series of consultation mechanisms were utilised to engage with the wider community and key stakeholders, including:

- Online Community Survey
- Internal Stakeholder Meetings
- Key External Stakeholder Meetings
- Community Trails Workshops
- Targeted Stakeholder Interviews

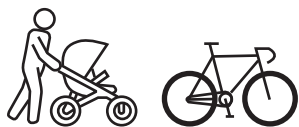
This section provides a summary of consultation findings, the full community consultation findings are included in the Issues and Opportunities Paper.

KEY OVERARCHING THEMES FOR GPS TRACKS AND TRAILS

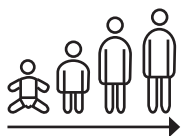
The key overarching themes uncovered during the consultation period for GPS tracks and trails include:



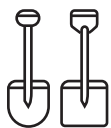
DEVELOP HIGH QUALITY AND ACCESSIBLE TRAILS THAT SHOWCASE THE GPS REGION AND ATTRACT INTRASTATE AND INTERSTATE VISITORS.



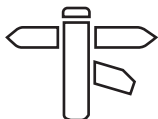
PROVIDE SAFE TRACK AND TRAIL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TOWNSHIPS SEPARATED FROM BUSY ROADS TO ENCOURAGE ACTIVE TRANSPORT AND COMMUTING.



ACTIVATE TRAILS THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESSIBLE, CONNECTED, HIGH-QUALITY TRAIL EXPERIENCES, PROGRAMS AND EVENTS TO ENCOURAGE HEALTHIER AND MORE ACTIVE LIFESTYLES FOR ALL GPS RESIDENTS AND CHILDREN.



IMPROVE ON-GOING TRACK AND TRAIL MAINTENANCE AND PEST CONTROL.



IMPROVE SIGNAGE AND WAYMARKING TO EXISTING TRACKS AND TRAILS.



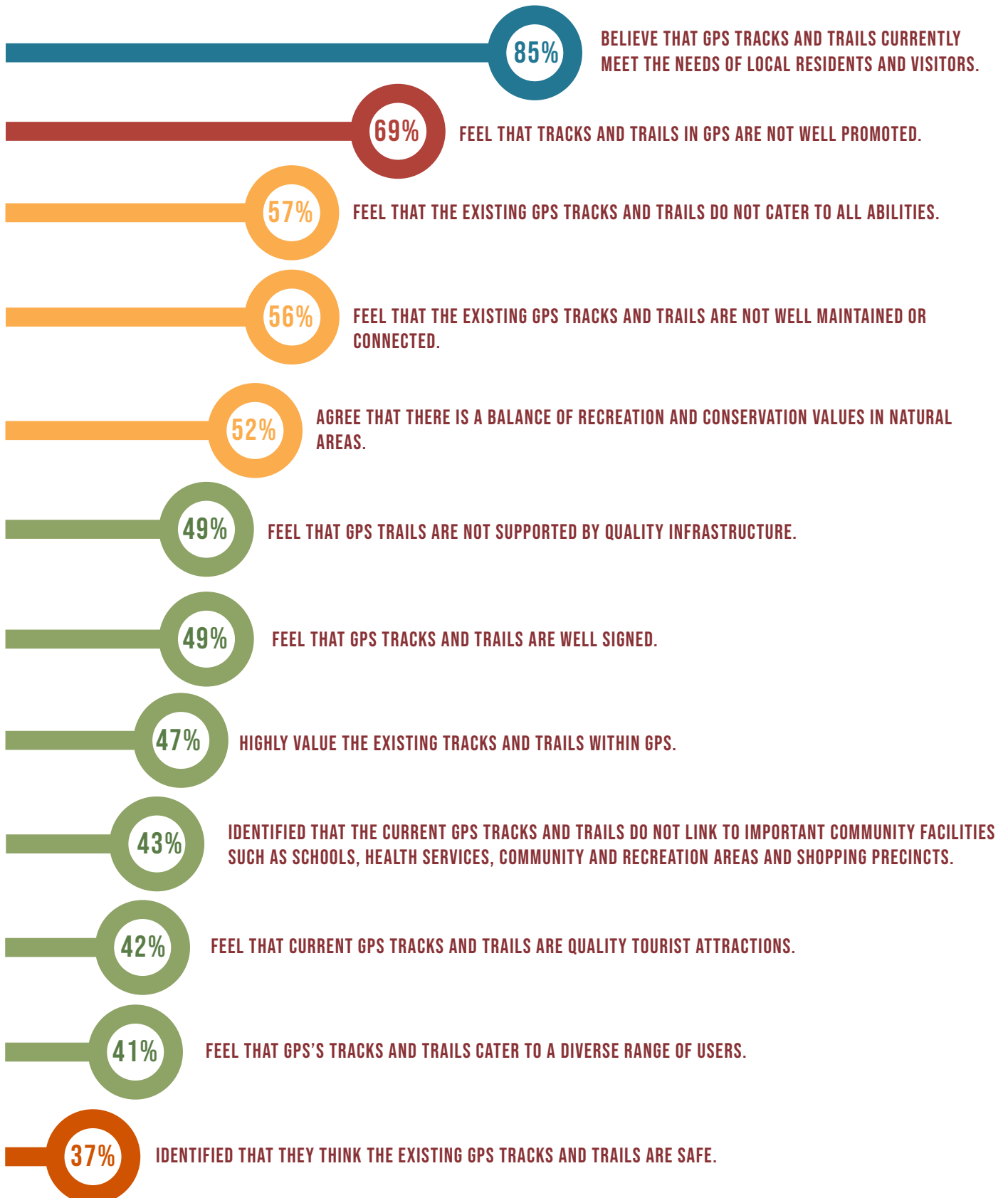
CREATE QUALITY TRACKS FOR ALL ABILITIES, ENSURING EVERYONE CAN ACCESS AND ENJOY THEM EQUALLY.



IMPROVE TRAIL PROMOTION AND AWARENESS.

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE TRACKS AND TRAILS FEEDBACK

Key findings regarding the existing GPS trails from the 197 online survey responses have been captured below:



GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE TRACKS AND TRAILS NETWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the community engagement process, potential prospects for track and trail expansion and developments were identified. Feedback from the community emphasised the requirement for the establishment of trails that facilitate vital linkages into and within GPS. The subsequent enhancements and connections for trails outlined below emerged as significant focal points repeatedly highlighted during the consultation phase.



KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) associated with GPS's tracks and trails are identified below. These attributes are derived from the key findings of the Issues and Opportunities Paper.

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong community interest and support for trails. • Local culture of outdoor recreational activities. • Large network of state conservation areas, State forests & Council/Crown bushland. • Regional and coordinated approach to Tourism. • GPS has a strong volunteering community who can help to support events and trail projects. In the last 12 months, 16.3% of GPS's population completed voluntary work through an organisation compared to 13.3% for the state of Victoria. • There is a large existing network of tracks and trails within GPS which require, in many cases, limited works and effective promotion to bring them to a high standard and help them become more accessible and available. • There is a broad spectrum of beautiful natural settings and experiences available that appeal to cyclists, walkers, runners, horse riders and general tourists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High/increasing participation in walking and cycling. • Improving the physical and mental well-being of the community through accessible and affordable trail opportunities for all abilities. • Enhanced community and visitor awareness, appreciation & stewardship of GPS trails & natural areas. • Provision of low cost, easily accessible recreation and physical activity opportunities. • Integration with existing and new local businesses/industries to service trail use. • Enhancing inter-township connectivity through trails and active transport. • Enhanced community awareness, appreciation & stewardship of trails & natural areas. • Development/improvement of themed trail experiences to showcase the region (e.g. heritage). • Opportunities for Traditional Owner input into the trails network to grow cultural tourism and showcase Indigenous connections to country and their stories through infrastructure such as interpretive signage. • Increasing tourism & population numbers. • Synergies across Council, government & achieving multiple sub-aims identified in Golden Plains Shire Community Vision 2040.
WEAKNESSES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of coordinated approach to providing information about trails within the region. • Inconsistent range of signage styles/condition. • Limited and inconsistent mapping and quality promotional material at Visitor Information Centres and on online platforms. • Different quality of supporting infrastructure along individual tracks and trails. • Poor maintenance of many existing trails with the need for formal on-going maintenance plans and processes to be established with volunteers, community groups and Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impacts upon environmental and cultural heritage values. • Limited capability of landowners to financially contribute to trail development & management. • Private land crossing key strategic trail corridors. • Inappropriate and unauthorised use of trails or damage to supporting infrastructure (e.g. rubbish dumping, vandalism, use by motorised vehicles) having negative impacts upon trail user experiences. • Competing funding priorities. • Volunteer burnout could occur.

EXISTING TRACK AND TRAIL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The summary of key issues and opportunities for GPS's existing tracks and trails have been identified below which have been used to inform the Action Plan. The full audit findings and opportunities for each of the existing tracks and trails within GPS are included within the Issues and Opportunities Paper.

KEY EXISTING TRACK AND TRAIL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES



Many of the tracks and trails are in poor to reasonable condition with many experiencing overgrown vegetation and there is a need for on-going maintenance plans.



Signage and waymarking is sparse or non-existent on many of the existing trails, and many of the existing signs vary in style, have deteriorated over time and require refurbishment or replacement.



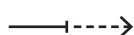
Many trails lack supporting infrastructure such as seating, shade shelters, drinking fountains and picnic facilities.



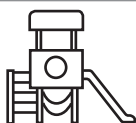
Existing trails can be difficult to find due to lack of promotion, mapping and designated trailhead areas.



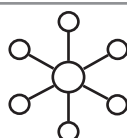
In some locations, walkers, mountain bikers, horse riders and 4wd's utilise the same trails which have various impacts on the surface condition and a trail user code of conduct is required.



There are key locations where existing trails can be extended to provide additional benefit to the community by connecting to key community facilities, residential and commercial areas.



Many trails can be activated more effectively by connecting to active facilities such as playspaces, skateparks and recreational areas, and through upgrading trails to cater to all abilities.



There is a need to connect GPS townships through trails for cyclists, runners/joggers, walkers and horse riders. Road corridors are typically wide and can allow for trails to be developed a safe distance from roads and moving vehicles.



NEW TRAIL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

New trail opportunities have been identified through the findings of the community consultation, online survey and key stakeholder interviews, existing trails audit, demand, trends and population analysis and SWOT Analysis. These trail development opportunities are community driven initiatives that have the potential to provide economic, tourism, health and well-being benefits and encourage activation of trails within GPS.

REF	TRAIL NAME	OPPORTUNITY
①	Inverleigh to Bannockburn	Provide a key safe commuting and recreational connection between Inverleigh and Bannockburn townships via a multi-use trail set back off of the main road.
②	Bannockburn to Geelong Principal Cycling Network	Connect Bannockburn to the Geelong Principal Cycling Network via Batesford.
③	Bannockburn to Teesdale	Provide a key commuting and recreational connection between Teesdale and Bannockburn townships via a multi-use trail set back off of the main road.
④	Bannockburn to Bannockburn Bushland	Connect Bruce's Creek trail to Bannockburn Bushland via Bannockburn Lagoon.
⑤	Bannockburn to Lethbridge	Provide a key commuting and recreational connection between Lethbridge and Bannockburn townships via a multi-use trail set back off of the main road.
⑥	Moorabool River	Support development of the Moorabool River Master Plan at Riverstone Estate, Batesford and explore potential to also develop a trail south-east along Moorabool River to Fyansford, Geelong.
⑦	Haddon to Smythes Creek	Connect Smythes Creek to Haddon via a multi-use trail and connect the trail into the Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trail in Haddon to extend connections to further townships.
⑧	Leigh/Barwon River Junction Trail extension	Explore the opportunity to extend Leigh/Barwon River Junction Trails to Berthon Park subdivision, Inverleigh Nature Conservation Reserve and Inverleigh Golf Club.
⑨	Yarrowee Creek	Explore the opportunity to develop a trail along Yarrowee Creek to connect into Ballarat Yarrowee Trail via Cambrian Hill and explore potential to be extended to Garibaldi.
⑩	Ross Creek to Smythesdale	Explore the opportunity to connect Ross Creek to Smythesdale and connect the trail into the Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trail in Smythesdale to extend connections to further townships.
⑪	Woody River Track	Explore the opportunity to formalise Woody River Track and include improved signage and waymarking (i.e. Smythesdale Campground to River Track).
⑫	Woody Yaloak Wetland Development Master Plan trails	Support development of the Woody Yaloak Master Plan loop around the proposed wetland and nature reserve from Woody Yaloak Recreation Reserve and explore potential to formalise and extend existing trail between Snakes Road and Whites Road further south.

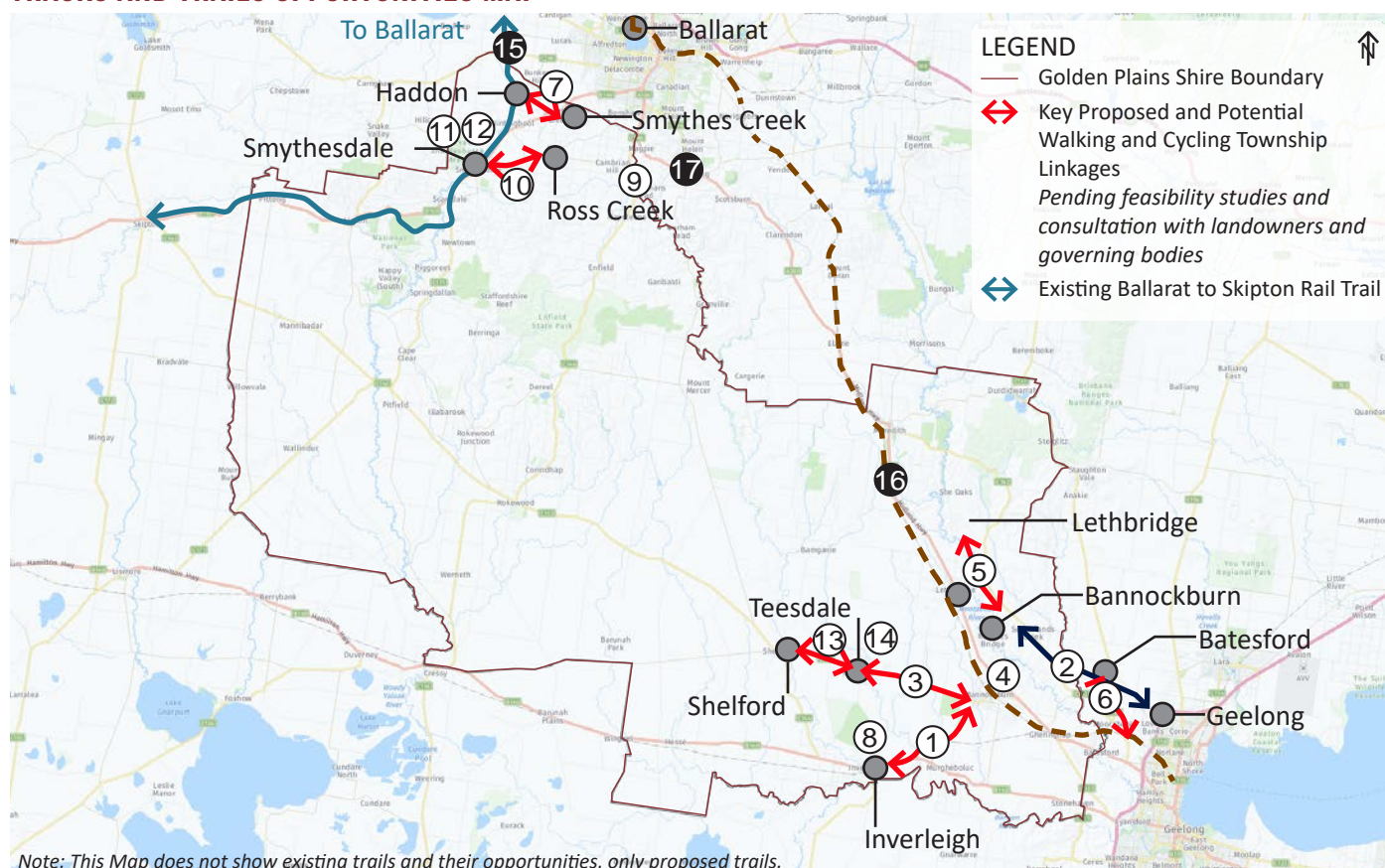
KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

REF	TRAIL NAME	OPPORTUNITY
13	Teesdale to Shelford	Provide a key safe commuting and recreational connection between Teesdale and Shelford townships via a multi-use trail set back off of the main road.
14	Shaws Road to Native Hut Creek, Teesdale	New connection from the end of Shaw's Road in Teesdale to Native Hut Creek and lava bank.

EXTERNAL TRAIL OPPORTUNITIES

REF	TRAIL NAME	OPPORTUNITY
15	Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trail to Centre of Ballarat.	Support the City of Ballarat in the extension of Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trail into Ballarat's town centre.
16	Ballarat to Geelong	Explore the opportunity to develop a rail trail along the live railway line that travels from Ballarat to Geelong through Elaine, Meredith, Lethbridge, Bannockburn and Batesford to provide a key recreation and commuting connection between all townships and connect the south-eastern towns of Golden Plains to northern Golden Plains and Ballarat. The linkages between townships such as Teesdale, Inverleigh and Shelford will further support this development.
17	Goldfields Trail	Explore the opportunity to connect into the Goldfields Trail which currently travels 210km from Bendigo to Bunninyong through Castlemaine, Daylesford, Creswick and Ballarat to draw additional overnight visitors into GPS.

TRACKS AND TRAILS OPPORTUNITIES MAP



ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW

The following pages provide an overview of the Action Plan including the overall priority, timeframe, trail length, location, estimated cost and link to the Detailed Action Plan. The Detailed Action Plan outlines additional specific information including the required works, key partners, hierarchy of trails and trail activation scores.

PROJECT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The Action Plan uses the following justification / ratings throughout the Strategy. The locations of these have been identified on the below indicative Action Plan table.

- ① An overall priority rating based on the track or trails need/demand, feasibility, location and benefit:
 - High
 - Medium
 - Low
- ② An indicative timeframe for implementation:
 - Short (0 - 5 years)
 - Medium (5 - 10 years)
 - Longer (10+ years)
 - Ongoing
- ③ A cost estimate to inform Council with its budget processes:
 - Low (L) <\$50,000
 - Medium (M) \$50,000 - \$100,000
 - High (H) \$100,000 - \$500,000
 - Major Project (MP) >\$500,000
- ④ Refers to the Detailed Action Plan (DAP) page reference where further information on the action is provided
- ⑤ **Short Term Priority Projects:** Grey highlighted actions indicate projects with short term actions that have high demand, can be more readily implemented, provide community benefits and require limited investment in the short term.

REF	ACTION	① OVERALL PRIORITY	② TIMEFRAME	TRAIL LENGTH	LOCATION	③ COST	④ DAP PAGE #
	Action	High/ Medium/ Low	Short/Medium/ Long/ Ongoing	Trail length	Trail Location	L, M, H	
	Action ⑤	High/ Medium/ Low	Short/Medium/ Long/ Ongoing	Trail length	Trail Location	L, M, H	

GOAL A: INTEGRATED PLANNING & MANAGEMENT

Underpinning a sustainable, integrated, and accessible trails network is a strategic framework and coordinated approach with prioritised investment and appropriate allocation of resources.

REF	ACTION	OVERALL PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	TRAIL LENGTH	LOCATION	COST	DAP PAGE #
A1	Integrated Framework: <i>Implement an integrated framework for the planning and management of recreational tracks and trails across GPS.</i>						6
A1.1	<i>GPSC Trail Control Group</i>	High	Short	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	7
A1.2	<i>Dedicated Staff Position</i>	High	Short / Medium	N/A	Shire Wide	Medium	7
A1.3	<i>Integrated Planning</i>	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	7
A1.4	<i>Trail Working Group</i>	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	7
A1.5	<i>Volunteers</i>	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	7
A1.6	<i>Funding and Resources</i>	High	Short	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	7
A1.7	<i>Cross- Tenure Collaboration</i>	High	Short	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	8
A1.8	<i>Trail User Code of Conduct</i>	High	High/Short	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	8
A2	Standardised Trail Planning, Management and Maintenance: <i>Ensure that consistent, comprehensive and best practice processes are utilised in the planning, management and maintenance of the GPS trail network.</i>						9
A2.1	<i>8 Stage Trail Development Process</i>	High	Short	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	9
A2.2	<i>Trail Naming</i>	High	Short	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	9
A2.3	<i>Audit and Assessment Process</i>	High	Short	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	10
A2.4	<i>Compliance</i>	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	10



GOAL B: QUALITY, SAFE, AND SUSTAINABLE NETWORK OF EXISTING TRAILS

Existing trails are enhanced to provide high quality, safe, and sustainable opportunities for residents and visitors with a range of interests and abilities.

REF	ACTION	OVERALL PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	TRAIL LENGTH	LOCATION	COST	DAP PAGE #
B1	Bannockburn Bushland (South)	High	Short	5km	Bannockburn	M	11
B2	Bannockburn Bushland (North)	High	Short	3.6km	Bannockburn	M	12
B3	Wabdullah Reserve	Low	Short to Long	1.2km	Bannockburn	H	12
B4	Bruce's Creek	High	Short to Long	2.2km	Bannockburn	MP	13
B5	Rainbow Bird Trail, Dereel	High	Short to Medium	35km	Dereel	L	13
B6	Dereel Lagoon	High	Short to Medium	2.5km	Dereel	L	14
B7	Long Gully Loop	Medium	Short	7.1km	Enfield	L	14
B8	Surface Point Loop	Medium	Short	1km	Enfield	L	14
B9	Enfield Bald Hills Loop Trail	Medium	Short	15km	Enfield	L	15
B10	Inverleigh Flora Loop, Inverleigh Nature Conservation Reserve	Medium	Short to Medium	10km	Inverleigh	M	15
B11	Kangaroo Track via Links Track Loop	Medium	Short to Medium	4.3km	Inverleigh	M	16
B12	River Track, Inverleigh	High	Short to Long	2.3km	Inverleigh	M	16
B13	Leigh River and Barwon Junction River Trails	High	Short to Long	3km	Inverleigh	H	17
B14	Bruce Creek, Lethbridge	Low	Short to Medium	800m	Lethbridge	H	18
B15	Lethbridge Lake	Low	Short	550m	Lethbridge	L	18
B16	Meredith State Forest/ Bamganie State Forest Circuit	Low	Short to Medium	7.4km	Meredith	L	19
B17	Possum Road & Moorabool River Loop	Low	Short to Medium	4.3km	Meredith	L	19
B18	Meredith Steiglitz Road to Byrne Road	Low	Short to Medium	3.9km	Meredith	L	20
B19	Police Paddocks	Medium	Short to Medium	4km	Meredith	H	20
B20	Ibis Middleton Walk, Meredith	Low	Short to Long	683m	Meredith	H	21
B21	Jubilee Mine Historic Walk	High	Short to Long	900 m	Newtown	M	21

ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW

REF	ACTION	OVERALL PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	TRAIL LENGTH	LOCATION	COST	DAP PAGE #
B22	Kuruc-a-ruc Trail	High	Short	13.3km	Rokewood	L	22
B23	Ross Creek Recreation Reserve Nature Loop	Low	Short to Medium	1km	Ross Creek	L	22
B24	Bodens Water Races	Medium	Short to Long	5.1km	Ross Creek	H	23
B25	Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trail	High	Short to Long	54.7km	Skipton	MP	24
B26	Hay and Burchell Walking Trail	Low	Short	8.4km	Steiglitz	L	25
B27	Brisbane Ranges Extended Circuit	Low	Short	17.9km	Steiglitz	L	25
B28	Deadman's & Grahams Gully Loop	Low		6.8km	Steiglitz	L	26
B29	Three Creeks Walk	Low	Short	14.5km	Steiglitz	L	26
B30	Beards Gully & Deadman's Loop	Low	Short	9.8km	Steiglitz	L	26
B31	Steiglitz Historic Walk	High	Short	600m	Steiglitz	L	27
B32	Friday's Trail, Brisbane Ranges National Park	High	Short / Ongoing	11.4km	Steiglitz	L	27
B33	Teesdale Grassy Woodlands / Don Wallace Reserve	Low	Short	1.2km	Teesdale	L	28
B34	Chinaman's Lagoon	Low	Short to Medium	1.5km	Teesdale	L	28
B35	Bike/walking path, Shelford-Bannockburn Road	High	Short to Long	4km	Teesdale	H	29
B36	Turtle Bend	Low	Short to Long	1km	Teesdale	L	29



GOAL C: SUSTAINABLE, RESPONSIBLE AND RELEVANT TRAIL DEVELOPMENTS

New trail developments are strategic, well- considered, responsive to community need and considerate of key stakeholders.

REF	ACTION	OVERALL PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	TRAIL LENGTH	LOCATION	COST	DAP PAGE #
C1	Inverleigh to Bannockburn	High	Short to Long	15km	Inverleigh/ Bannockburn	MP	30
C2	Bannockburn and Inverleigh to Geelong Principal Bicycle Network	High	Short to Medium	19km/ 28km	Bannockburn / Geelong	MP	32
C3	Bannockburn to Teesdale	High	Short to Long	10.4km	Bannockburn / Teesdale	MP	34
C4	Bannockburn to Bannockburn Bushland	High	Short to Medium	2.6km	Bannockburn	MP	36
C5	Bannockburn to Lethbridge	High	Short to Long	13.6km	Bannockburn / Lethbridge	MP	38
C6	Moorabool River: <i>Support Moorabool River Master Plans proposed trails and explore feasibility of extending trails south to Fyansford, Geelong.</i>	Low	Short to Medium	10.4km	Batesford	MP	40
C7	Haddon to Smythes Creek	Medium	Short to Long	4.3km	Haddon/ Smythes Creek	MP	43
C8	Leigh/Barwon River Junction Trail Extension: <i>Extend the Leigh/Barwon River Junction Trail to connect to Berthon Park subdivision and Inverleigh Nature Conservation Reserve.</i>	High	Short to Medium	1.3km	Inverleigh	MP	45
C9	Yarrowee Creek: <i>Extend Yarrowee Creek Trail in Sebastopol south along the Yarrowee Creek to Napoleons via Cambrian Hill..</i>	Medium	Short to Long	7.5km	Napoleons/ Cambrian Hill	MP	47
C10	Ross Creek to Smythesdale	Medium	Short to Long	6.8km	Ross Creek/ Smythesdale	MP	49
C11	Woody River Track: <i>Develop a loop trail along the Woody Yaloak River in Smythesdale utilising the Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail.</i>	Medium	Medium to Long	1.8km	Smythesdale	MP	51

ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW

REF	ACTION	OVERALL PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	TRAIL LENGTH	LOCATION	COST	DAP PAGE #
C12	Woody Yaloak Wetland Development Concept Plan Trail: <i>Support the development of the Woody Yaloak Wetland Development Concept Plan trail at the Woody Yaloak Recreation Reserve.</i>	Low	Short to Medium	1km	Teesdale/ Shelford	MP	53
C13	Teesdale to Shelford	High	Short to Long	5.7km	Teesdale	MP	55
C14	Shaws Road to Native Hut Creek, Teesdale: <i>Develop a short trail from Shaws Road to Native Hut Creek.</i>	Low	Long	229m	Ballarat	H	57
C15	Ballarat to Skipton Rail Trail to Centre of Ballarat: <i>Support City of Ballarat in the extension of the Ballarat-Skipton Rail Trail to Ballarat's CBD.</i>	High	Short	-	Ballarat	L	59
C16	Ballarat to Geelong: <i>Explore the feasibility of developing a rail trail along the Geelong to Ballarat line via Bannockburn.</i>	High	Medium	84km	GPSC	H	60
C17	Goldfields Track: <i>Explore the opportunity to connect GPS into the Goldfields Trail for tourism purposes.</i>	High	Medium	-	GPSC	M	62



GOAL D: INFORMATION AND MARKETING

Consistent and reliable trail information encourages recreational trail users to confidently, safely and sustainably explore the region's natural areas.

REF	ACTION	OVERALL PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	TRAIL LENGTH	LOCATION	COST	DAP PAGE #
D1	Trail Information: Provide consistent and reliable signage, maps and supporting information for all trails across the Shire.						65
D1.1	Signage Templates	High	Short	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	65
D1.2	Signage Installation	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	High	65
D1.3	Map/Brochures	High	Short	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	65
D1.4	Council Website	High	Short	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	65
D1.5	Budget	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	66
D1.6	Third Party Information Platforms	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	66
D2	Promotion and Marketing:: Enhance promotion and marketing of trail opportunities across the region.						65
D2.1	Coordinated Marketing	High	Medium	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	
D2.2	Promotion	Medium	Medium	N/A	Shire Wide	Medium	
D2.3	Visitor Information Centres	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	
D2.4	Trail Accreditation	High	Short	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	
D2.5	Hierarchical Promotion	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	

GOAL E: COMMUNITY, TOURISM & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Trails contribute significantly to the region's community, tourism and economic development.

REF	ACTION	OVERALL PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME	TRAIL LENGTH	LOCATION	COST	DAP PAGE #
E1	Community, Tourism and Economic Development: Use trail development and provision as a community, tourism and economic development tool.						65
E1.1	Promotion	High	Short	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	69
E1.2	Events	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	69
E1.3	Installations and pop-ups	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	69
E1.4	Towns & Villages	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	69
E1.5	Economic Development	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	69
E1.6	Collaborate	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	70
E1.7	Environmental Protection	High	Ongoing	N/A	Shire Wide	Low	70

MAINTENANCE

MAINTENANCE AND ANNUAL COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST ESTIMATES

GPSC directly manage/maintain approximately 265 km of tracks and trails and there is 211 km of proposed tracks and trails.

The on-going maintenance costs for trails in Australia can vary significantly depending on various factors, including the trails location, usage, local conditions, extreme weather events and detrimental activities such as vandalism. This makes predicting on-going maintenance expenses challenging.

Estimated maintenance costs per meter squared (m²) have been developed for asphalt, compacted rubble, compacted cement rubble and informal gravel trails. These costs exclude other maintenance items such as weed control, drainage, litter and debris removal, repairs to infrastructure and signage and vegetation management. These should be used as a guide only.

SURFACE TYPE	COST (PER M ²)
Asphalt surface maintenance	\$0.98
Compacted Rubble surface maintenance	\$1.33
Compacted Cement Treated Rubble surface maintenance	\$2.17
Informal gravel trail	\$0.50

Including additional maintenance items to surface repair, such as weed control, drainage maintenance, litter and debris removal and supporting infrastructure repair, it is estimated to allow for approximately \$1 to \$2 per meter square (m²) for all surface types.



MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

The 'Guidelines For The Planning, Design, Construction And Maintenance of Recreational Trails In South Australia (2016)' state that annual maintenance costs can be kept at a minimum by ensuring that inspection and works programs stay on schedule.

The Guidelines provide a typical maintenance schedule for trails which has been provided below and can be applied to GPS's tracks and trails network.

MAINTENANCE TASK	FREQUENCY
Checking trail head and other facilities for damage or vandalism	Monthly if possible
Checking all signage and trail marking and replacing any missing	Two monthly at a minimum or damaged signs
Clearing and/or repairing erosion control devices and other	Three monthly erosion/water issues (monthly if possible)
Checking and clearing all trail surfaces, especially regrowth	Annually, in spring (or when vegetation dry enough) at least
Pruning trail-side and overhanging vegetation	Annually
Checking major structures, such as bridges, boardwalks and walkways	Annually
Arranging a regular Hazard Inspection Report	Annually
Checking currency and distribution of trail brochure and updating when necessary	Annually

Source: Guidelines For The Planning, Design, Construction And Maintenance of Recreational Trails In South Australia (2016)

Constructing trails to Australian Standards can also aid in reducing on-going maintenance costs, as well as volunteerism. In the case of volunteerism, it is important to note that the capacity of a volunteer team to consistently fulfil maintenance duties may vary depending on the availability of its members, and it is important to not burn-out volunteers to encourage continuity and promote volunteer attraction.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

RESOURCING

This Tracks and Trails Strategy will need to be adequately resourced to achieve successful implementation of the identified actions and delivery of the overall vision for the region.

Implementation has not been funded and the Strategy will be reliant on Council budget cycles and external funding. Council budget cycles plan and allocate financial resources for various programs, services, and infrastructure projects. GPSC's budget cycles reflect Council's commitment to striking a balance between rate revenue, the long-term financial sustainability of Golden Plains, whilst maintaining and improving services that are valued by the community.

Potential external funding sources are available through federal and state government programs which could support the development of trail projects. In addition to government funding programs, private and commercial sector opportunities may also be available. Government funding programs continually change so it is recommended that the relevant websites are frequently reviewed. All current funding opportunities will be identified with the Final Tracks and Trails Strategy.

Opportunities to form partnerships with other potential stakeholders, including land managers or commercial entities with interests in trail development will need to be sought to deliver synergies and successful outcomes in the implementation of the Action Plan.

STRATEGY REVIEW, EVALUATION AND UPDATE

The implementation of the Action Plan should be continually monitored by Council staff, in collaboration with the proposed Trail Working Group (Outlined under Strategy A1 - Integrated Framework), with annual reports to Council.

The Tracks and Trails Strategy should be reviewed and updated by 2028 (five years). This process is to include an audit of the status of each action within the action plan. Actions may be amended, removed or re-prioritised. This evaluation should consider current trends, population and demographic shifts, and community engagement is encouraged during this process to ensure that the evolving needs and aspirations of the community are identified and reflected.



2 Pope Street, Bannockburn, VIC 3331
19 Heales Street, Smythesdale, VIC 3351
PO Box 111, Bannockburn, VIC 3331

☎ 5220 7111
@ enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au
💻 goldenplains.vic.gov.au

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