



COMMUNITY PLANNING PROGRAM

Information Pack

Bunjil lookout on Wadawurrung Country

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

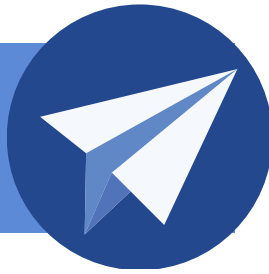
Golden Plains Shire spans the Traditional lands of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Peoples. Council acknowledges them as the Traditional Owners and Custodians and pays its respects to both Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Elders past, present and emerging. Council extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of Golden Plains Shire.

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Introduction



What is Community Planning?

Community planning aims to build the connection between communities and local government. It is a process where communities identify their goals for improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of their town.

A robust Community Plan is one that:

- Encompasses the views of as many people in the community as possible
- States a shared vision for the future
- Identifies key themes, resources and areas for action
- Includes monitoring and reviewing processes.

The Community Plan is a living document that is regularly reviewed to reflect the changing aspirations of the community.

What is the Community Planning Program?

The Community Planning Program is a Council supported initiative which provides the framework to assist communities to develop, implement and acquit 4-year Community Plans.

The Community Planning Program has been running since 2000 and since that time over 130 volunteer Community Coordinators have worked with their communities to develop, implement and report on Community Plans.

The aim of the program is to build a community's capacity to identify, design and implement projects in their community.

There are three core principles that underpin the Community Planning Program:

- Community members have a voice and the ability to contribute to the development of their towns community plan.
- Community members are best placed to identify and action projects to improve their own communities.
- More can be achieved for Golden Plains Shire communities if community members, Council and other key stakeholders work in partnership.

What is a Community Coordinator?

Community Coordinators play a critical role in bringing the diverse views of community members together in one local plan. They engage and consult with their communities on key issues and projects, identify and prioritise topics and use that information to develop a four-year action plan. Over the 4 years, Community Coordinators identify key stakeholders such as Project Champions, Project Volunteers, community groups or organisations, businesses, government and funding bodies to collaborate with to achieve outcomes under their plan.

What is a Project Champion?

Project Champions are community members who volunteer to assist Community Coordinators with the design and delivery of specific projects under the Community Plan. They have skill, expertise and/or passion in their specific project and have the ability to drive and lead the project to completion. They develop or use existing networks where possible to recruit Project Volunteers.

What is a Project Volunteer?

Project Volunteers work with Project Champions to assist in the delivery of a specific project. Project Volunteers' commitment may vary depending on the needs of the project and the capacity of the volunteer. Some Project Volunteers are activated to contribute to one off tasks like a tree planting session or writing a grant application. Other Project Volunteers are activated throughout a project at varying times while the project is being completed.

What is a Mentor and what is their role?

As part of the Community Planning Program, Council will engage experienced community development professionals who will provide mentoring and coaching throughout the development of the plan in areas such as:

- Consultation and engagement strategy
- Communication plans
- Stakeholder and community asset mapping
- Identifying key priorities
- Development of the final plan
- Guidance for a community launch

What is the process for Community Planning?

The Community Planning Program is a three-phase process:

- Phase 1: Planning
- Phase 2: Implementing
- Phase 3: Reporting

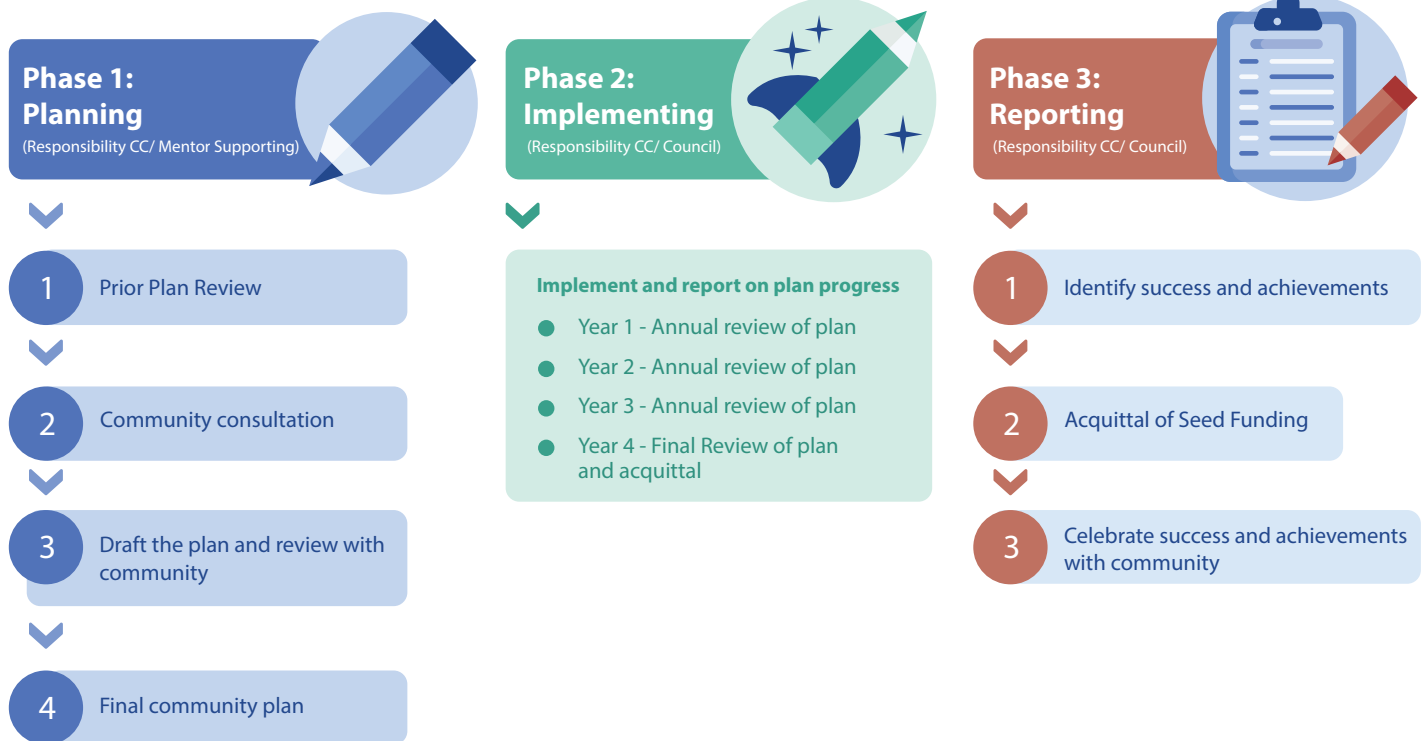
Your Community Plan will be a document that outlines your community's vision and priority projects for the next four years.

Each town will work through each phase at their own pace depending on their individual circumstances and resources. While some plans may be similar across the shire, each township is unique and diverse.

Refer to infographic: **page 3**.

Council can assist with:

- Advertising e.g. Expressions of Interest for new Community Coordinators
- Facilitating discussions with new and existing Community Coordinators about the program
- Providing advice and guidance in the implementation, acquittal and reporting of the plan
- The provision of some statistics and data



Tools and resources

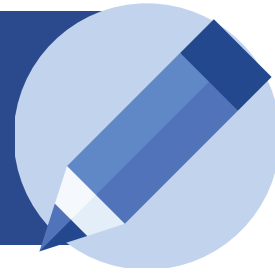
To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

- Acknowledgement of Country
- Community Planning model
- Community Planning process
- Community Coordinator role
- Volunteer hours calculator
- Volunteer plan
- Volunteer role template



Phase 1

Planning *(Responsibility: CC/Mentor supporting)*



The planning phase is integral to setting the foundations of a solid Community Plan. Allow enough time to ensure you feel you have all the relevant information you need to finalise and support the implementation of your plan. This phase can take between three to six months.

Community Coordinators will be contacted by Council and the Mentors, to set a time to meet and get this process started.

Below are the topics that may be covered at the first meeting with your Mentor:

- Review of the past plan – how it was developed, how it was implemented, what worked well, what didn't work well?
- Identify and recommend carry over of projects
- Talk about consultation and engagement methods
- Look at planning timelines for developing a plan
- Look at demographic data and identify changes for key population groups and hard to reach groups
- Develop a plan of who will do what and when for the planning phase
- Identify and design evaluation methods for projects under your plan
- Determine how Community Coordinators can raise awareness and participation in the Community Planning Program throughout the process

Acquittal of previous plan completed



What is an acquittal

An acquittal is the process of evaluating and reporting on the outcomes and expenditure of funds provided by a funding body. This is usually a condition in a funding agreement between the recipient of funding and the funding body.

Council staff will contact you three months prior to the new planning cycle to discuss the acquittal of your previous plan. In this instance the acquittal that is required relates to any funds you may have received under Council's Community Planning Seed Funding. Council will also confirm with you that you are ready for your next plan.

Council can assist with:

- Acquitting Seed Funding and reporting on your previous plan
- Identifying projects that might need to be carried over to your new plan
- Reporting to community and Council on achievements of previous plan

Tips

- Ensure you have an effective electronic record keeping system to capture all the important documents and information relevant to your plan that all current/future Community Coordinators will be able to access. This is important to enable consistency and continuity of delivering and completing your plan
- It is useful to have a Gmail account that can be passed from one Community Coordinator to the next e.g. yourtownnamecommunitycoordinator@gmail.com
- Save a spreadsheet for registering expenditure items and/or scan receipts as they come in so that you have records as evidence for acquittals

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

1. Google account and cloud-based storage

2. Expense tracker



Phase 1: Planning

Review of previous plan



Reviewing the previous plan before progressing into the next planning process can assist you to identify key learnings and overcome barriers, mitigate future risks, and develop a stronger plan.

Think about these questions....

- What did we complete?
- What didn't get started?
- What do we take over to the next plan?
- What becomes dormant?
- What were the barriers and challenges?
- What worked well?
- Did we have the right project partners?

Council can assist with:

- Reviewing your previous plan and preparing for your first session with Mentors

Tips for making the most out of the review of the Plan

When reviewing your plan, it is also helpful to review processes and systems as well as the projects. Some questions might be:

- Was our record keeping system effective?
- Was our communication effective?
- Did we have adequate resources to implement and complete our plan such as volunteers, equipment, knowledge, and expertise etc?

Reviewing the plan can be a fun exercise and a way to celebrate your successes. One way is to run a workshop mapping everything on butchers' paper. It is also an excuse to get everyone together, including k project partners, volunteers and community members. It may also assist you in recruiting new Community Coordinators or volunteers.

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

- SWOT Analysis template





Evaluation is crucial to success. It provides the opportunity to review things like the processes used, the impact of the plan, the outcomes achieved and even if the Community wants to engage in Community Planning again.

Setting up monitoring and evaluation systems from the beginning of the planning process will enable you to be flexible and agile with adapting your projects when encountering barriers and challenges along the way. It will give you a comprehensive pool of data to draw on for highlighting and sharing achievements with community and volunteers along the journey and for reporting to funders, sponsors and co-contributors to projects.

There are many ways to evaluate a Community Plan and the individual projects. It is important to make sure that you have an evaluation process that involves sound methods for gathering information and analysis.

There are two parts to effective evaluation:

- **Monitoring** occurs throughout the project to ensure you are meeting your objectives. Monitoring gives you direct insight into activity impacts.
- **Evaluation** comes at specific intervals, allowing you to reflect upon and analyse the collected data. Evaluation by month, quarter or year provides insight into any key changes you may need to make in the coming period.

There are 3 types of evaluation methods.

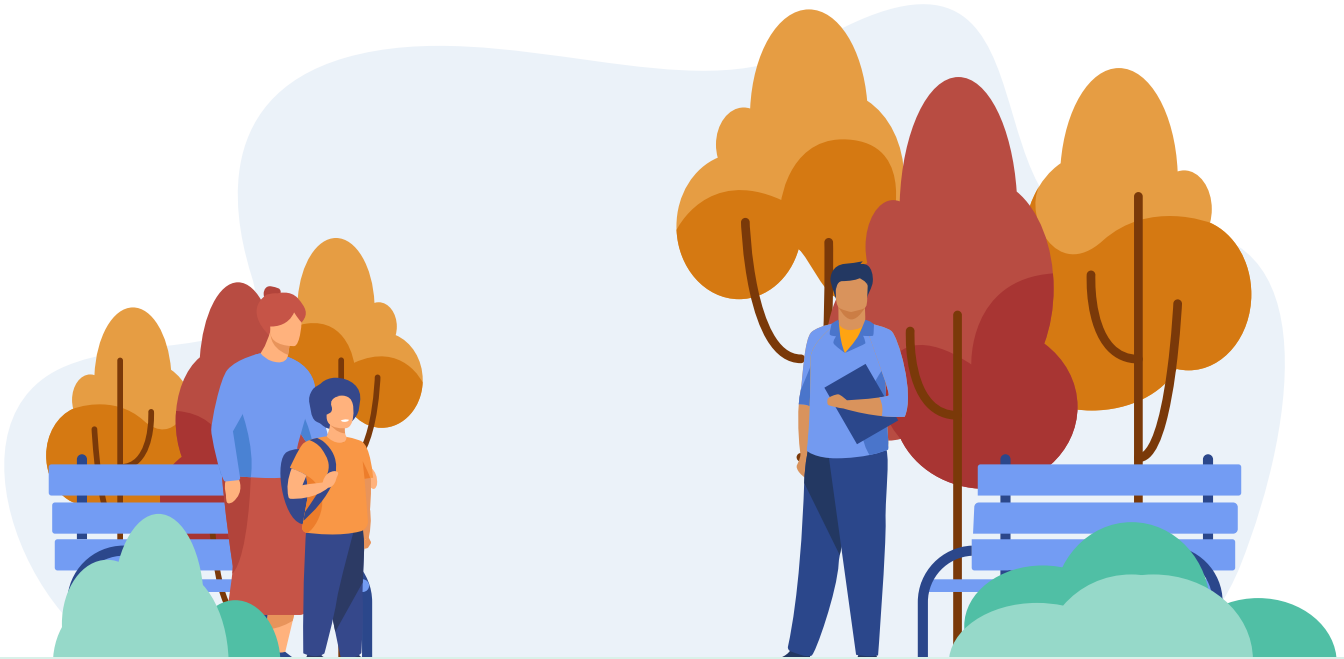
- **Quantitative Methods:** Data that can be 'counted' such as 'How many participated?', 'Who was involved?', 'What were the outcomes?' and can be collected through methods such as surveys, questionnaires, or observations.
- **Qualitative Methods:** Data that can be felt or described such as "What is the value added?", "Who was responsible?" "What is the likely Impact". Data can be collected through observations, interviews, group discussions, case studies etc.
- **Mixed Methods:** the evaluation of community engagement may need both qualitative and quantitative data methods because the diversity of issues addressed, and the choice of methods should fit the need for the evaluation, timeline, and resources available.

Some benefits to monitoring and evaluation are:

- Showcasing your progress
- It shows evidence of why targets and outcomes are or are not being achieved
- Helps you apply for funding support
- Enables deeper learning and helps strengthen your skills and knowledge
- It investigates factors that influence your activities highlighting lessons
- It is a great way to record your learnings and inform future work

Tips for measuring engagement

One criteria of a successful Community Plan is the engagement of at least 10% of the community. Demonstrating this participation rate is far easier to show if this goal is identified early and measured across the project through tools such as Facebook statistics, attendance at meetings and responses to surveys.



Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

1. Evaluation method template
2. Monitoring and evaluation plan template



Phase 1: Planning

Community Consultation methods



Community consultation is the process of talking with and/or receiving information from a broad range of community members to understand the diverse needs of the members of the community. The goal is to achieve positive and sustainable outcomes and equitable decision-making processes that help to strengthen relationships between community members.

Consider how you will promote the Community consultation process and how you will gather information from the community to inform your Community Plan. Refer to the tools and resources below for a list of different ways to engage the community.

Some examples could be:

- Using high foot traffic areas to engage with people, face to face
- Designing your engagement around existing community events
- Creating a fun event and inviting people along, e.g. tree planting days, community lunch/dinner, skate park events
- Connecting with local community groups, attending their meetings, activities to gather their thoughts
- Surveying using Facebook, local newsletter publications or hard copies available through schools, shops etc. See survey examples in tools and resources.

Ideally, successful consultation and engagement in the development of a Community Plan would use multiple methods to ensure a wide range of the community had been reached. Best practice indicates that at least 10% of the community population should be engaged to provide input into Community Planning.

Council can assist with:

- Council will provide each community with up to \$1,000 for Community Planning consultation and engagement including launch of the Community Plan. Once you have developed your Community Consultation Plan with Mentors the funds will be released.
- Advertising upcoming consultation opportunities, such as links to surveys, face to face engagement on Council's social media, printed newsletters, and media advertising.
- Providing support in the analysis of consultation information, if required.
- Linking into existing opportunities for consultation like local events and farmers/craft markets where appropriate.

Tips for great community engagement

- Using a variety of consultation methods will help you to reach a broader cross section of your community, which will potentially give you more insight into the thoughts and ideas of your community and may also assist with recruiting volunteers for projects on the final plan
- If you are developing a survey, check out the How to write a Survey Info Sheet in the Resource Kit to make sure you haven't created biased questions. This can be done unintentionally and skew your data
- Test out your community survey with Community Coordinators or a focus group (a willing community group or organisation) to gain feedback and refine your survey for better results
- Remember the single most common reason people don't volunteer or participate is because they haven't been asked directly

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

1. Designing an effective survey information
2. Community asset mapping example
3. Community consultation information
4. Community engagement journey map
5. Stakeholder mapping template



Phase 1: Planning

Research and data



Each component of a Community Plan helps to tell a story about that community. Pictures can show the reader images of events, projects, people, and the environment. It is not expected that you include extensive data and the good news is that there is a lot of data about communities derived from the Census.

Data about who lives in the community helps build the picture of what services are needed or will be needed, what are the trends in your community and the broader community that might influence the needs of your community.

Research and data are important tools that can be used to:

- Provide a current picture of your community; the people who live, visit or use services within your community
- Provide opportunities to build insights into the capacity to meet current and future needs of your community
- Assist with making informed decisions through an evidenced based approach
- Provide the ability to tell a narrative that is factually based and is accountable and transparent
- Assist with prioritising needs against community aspirations
- Help you understand current and future activity in your town and region, e.g. infrastructure/housing strategies, town growth plans etc

Council can assist with:

- Identifying any relevant Council documentation that might assist in your Community Planning process
- Assist in identifying external data or information sources where required

Tips

- It might be useful to do a call out across your community to see if there are any community members who may assist you with gathering and analysing data or have experienced with research as a micro volunteering opportunity (short, one-off volunteering for a specific purpose)
- Remember your Community Plan will be read by a wide range of people including residents, Councillors, Council staff, potential funders, and even potential residents. Current data can help you tell a clear story



Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

- [Designing an effective survey information](#)



Website links helpful for this section:

1. .id community demographic resources:
<https://profile.id.com.au/golden-plains>
2. VicHealth - connected and supported communities:
<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/search/connected-and-supportive-communities>
3. VicHealth - health indicators survey:
<https://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au> (and search “health indicators survey”)
4. Plan snapshot
<https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/>

Phase 1: Planning

Undertake community consultation



Done well, community consultation can empower community members by strengthening their personal skills and the capacity of their communities as a whole.

Community consultation is when community members have the chance to give their opinions and ideas about what they think will make their community a better place to live, work or play in. It is a chance to establish agreement as to what you want to plan together.

Identifying and engaging the community about what they would like to see in a Community Plan and how they might be able to contribute. It's good to consider:

- The audience, who are the people in your community and how can they share their ideas?
- What are the best strategies to engage different groups in the community e.g. social media, surveys, town meetings, information stands, community newsletters, community notice boards, suggestion boxes etc
- Engaging in some targeted discussions with your local community groups and committees
- Arranging a community meeting or an open day at your local hall, shops, park or other spaces and invite people to come and chat about the plan

Benefits of community and stakeholder engagements are that they:

- Enable the community to become involved in creating the community they want through the delivery of projects
- Help build long term relationships, trust and links people to others in the community
- Can assist in building the capacity and strength of communities
- Can assist in harnessing the collective power of volunteers to support community led action and projects
- Bring more perspectives and expands options for decision making
- Can assist in mitigating or reducing project risk factors

How to identify Project Champions?

Project Champions are community members who volunteer to assist Community Coordinators with the design and delivery of specific projects under the Community Plan. They advocate through their networks to engage and get people excited about a particular project.

A Project Champion may have some leadership skills, may be a great communicator, or be someone who can remain objective, fair, and equitable and can motivate action.

During engagement and consultation processes Community Coordinators might be able to identify Project Champions through:

- Face to face discussions with community groups and residents while gathering information for the Community Plan
- Additional questions on surveys asking for Project Champions
- Developing a register of potential volunteers and their interest areas
- Using existing networks and mapping out local community groups

Project Champions can then be easily identified and contacted once priority projects have been finalised on the Community Plan and at the implementation phase (Phase 2).

Council can assist with:

- Identifying and linking Community Coordinators to local groups
- Advertising and assisting in generating interest in being a Project Champion
- Assist identifying specific roles and responsibilities for project volunteers

Tips for identifying Project Champions

- Project Champions already exist in your community. One way to identify them is to undertake a stakeholder mapping exercise and another is to use your existing networks to help identify the current people you know
- Project Champions also appear when a project idea emerges. They are the people who want to create something in their community. Your role as the Community Coordinator is to foster their involvement and support them to realise their idea

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

1. Community Planning survey sample
2. Communications plan template
3. Media release template
4. Social media plan and timeline template
5. Plan the plan meeting agenda template
6. Priorities and drivers information





Collecting data is one part of research, analysing it gives the story. This is what helps individuals and funders take action to support projects.

Gather the raw data from the community consultation processes such as the community survey, workshop material or town meeting discussions and look at trends to compile a story of what the data is telling you.

From this create a list of priorities for the draft Community Plan that you can share with the community and gain their feedback before completing the final plan.

If there is a long list of aspirations and you are having trouble prioritising projects for the draft plan you could:

- Send a follow up survey to get people to prioritise the list by number preference (all or top 10).
- Have a voting box in a public place like the local corner store, community hall or post office.
- Hold a community meeting and workshop priorities through processes that allow people to discuss and vote for their top picks.

Council can assist with:

- Assisting and supporting Community Coordinators, with Mentors to facilitate a community meeting for priority setting.

Tips

Put a call out on social media or use your current contacts/networks to see if you have any experienced people in your community, willing or able to volunteer to assist you in analysing your data and information

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

- [Priorities and drivers information](#)



Phase 1: Planning

Draft the plan



You have finished the consultation and have collected relevant information that might influence and support the Community Plan. You have analysed the data and created a narrative which has identified the aspirations of your community.

Now it's time to draft the Community Plan.

Successful Community Plans have two features in common, they tell a compelling story of that community, and they guide and motivate shared action.

The key components of the draft plan could include:

- Title of the plan
- Acknowledgment of Traditional Owners
- Values/Community vision
- Past achievements
- How the plan was developed
- Purpose of the plan
- Demographics/town information and map
- Key themes
- Key projects, timelines, expected outcomes
- Key stakeholders and resources needed (Community Groups, Council/Govt, Volunteer numbers, equipment and infrastructure).
- Identify where you may need funding and from what potential sources (Grants, sponsorship, in-kind, fundraising etc).
- Acknowledgments, endorsement
- How you will share progress and measure success.

Funding rounds per year (March and September). For more information, email communitygrants@gplains.vic.gov.au

Council also hosts an online grant portal called Grants Guru which provides access to information regarding State and Federal and Philanthropic funding opportunities, please visit www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/grant-finder to access further information.

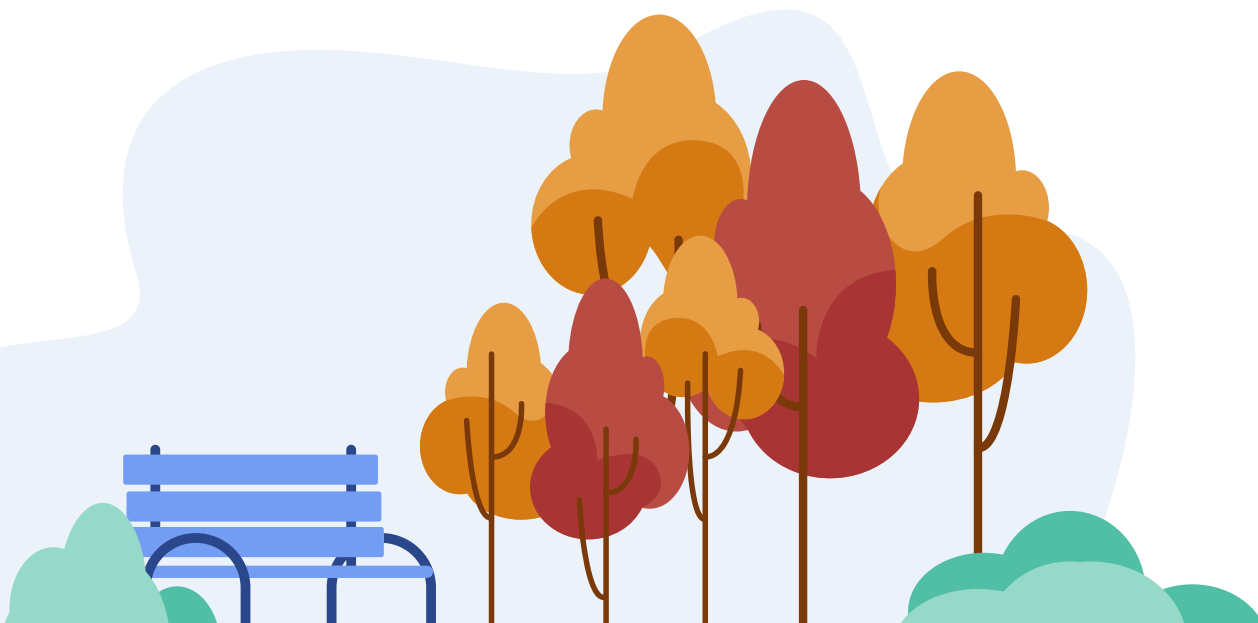
Council can assist with:

- Reviewing the draft plan and providing feedback where requested.

Tips for creating a great Community Plan

A good Community Plan is well-balanced and could include a combination of smaller/feasible activities and advocacy oriented/big expenditure capital activities. Goals should be:

- Specific- Well defined and clear.
- Measurable- With specific criteria that assists in measuring your progress.
- Achievable- Attainable, not impossible to achieve with the resources you have.
- Realistic- Within reach of community action.
- Timely- Clearly defined timeline with a start and finish date.



Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

1. Typical contents of a Community Plan information
2. Community Projects & Activities Summary



Phase 1: Planning

Community consultation on the draft plan



Community Coordinators engage and consult their community to assist in making better decisions that incorporate the interests and concerns of all affected stakeholders, now it's time to share the draft plan with the community.

Sharing the draft plan will enable you to gather additional feedback and refine your plan further. It is also a great way of activating your community and volunteers ensuring that you have the ability to resource your projects, so they are achievable and meaningful.

When sharing the Draft Plan (overview of key themes, priorities, actions, stakeholders, timeframes) you will need to ensure that you communicate with the community:

- The intention of sharing the draft plan.
- How you developed the plan and identified key priorities (evidence-based approach).
- Set a timeframe for feedback, and expectations around what you will, can or can't do with the feedback.
- Call out to volunteers and Project Champions.
- How you will communicate the final plan and next steps.

Once you have received feedback (if any) on the draft plan, create a summary of the feedback (as a record and so you can communicate this when you circulate your final plan) and discuss whether the feedback is reasonable or required to be included in your final plan.

Council can assist with:

- Promoting draft plans through Council communications where requested.

Tips

- Be clear and direct with your communication, ensure that you use an evidence-based approach to how priorities were set to demonstrate accountability and transparency to the process and the draft plan.
- The feedback process on your draft plan is to give you an indication of the level of community support for your final plan, and the ability to receive feedback and tweak accordingly and if appropriate.

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

1. 1.18 Typical contents of a Community Plan
2. 1.19 Examples of other Community Plans
3. 1.20 Community 'plan snapshot' sample



Phase 1: Planning

Write up the final plan



You have made it! All your hard work has paid off and you are now able to finalise the plan. There are many ways to present a Community Plan: it is your plan and your community's story to tell. There are key points that most Community Plans include because they fit together to give a reader a clear picture.

Check that you have included:

- Your community vision, past plan achievements.
- Information about your community e.g. history, population data, significant points of interest.
- Your planning process and evidence on how you developed your plan.
- Key themes, priorities and actions.
- Project Champions and key partners/stakeholders for each project.
- Resources needed to complete each project.
- Estimated budget and funding sources for specific projects/actions (grants, fundraising, sponsorship, in-kind).
- Identified where you will apply your Seed Funding from Council.

Council can assist with:

- Reviewing and providing feedback where requested.

Tips

Photos are a great way to share the story. You can use photos:

- Of past projects
- Of the community meetings
- Of key places of interest in your community
- Of potential project site

NOTE: be sure you get consent from those people featured in any photos before using them

- Check all your facts e.g., ensure that past projects were completed before including them under "Past Projects".
- Seek permission from Community Coordinators for contact details on public Community Plan, otherwise use a generic contact email address.
- If you have a very detailed plan with multiple pages, you may want to do an overview on one page to share with the community.

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

1. Typical contents of a Community Plan
2. Examples of other Community Plans



Phase 1: Planning

Prepare the 'plan snapshot'



Community Plans are listed on Council's website. This serves as a record of your community's goals for the next four years, is a way to celebrate your successes and is available for anyone to read.

To facilitate this process a template is used which is called a 'Plan snapshot'. It captures the highlights of your Community Plan along with key information to be displayed on Council's Website.

Mentors will assist Community Coordinators with filtering the relevant information from their Community Plan to the plan snapshot prior to presenting to Council.

As a part of the Community Planning Program you will need to "launch" and present your final plan to community. Council provides funds to deliver a community launch as per your "community engagement and town's plan". You will need to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are invited to your launch including Mayor and all Councillors for Golden Plains Shire. Council officers can assist you in the development of your launch event.

Council can assist with:

- Uploading final Community Plans on the Council website.
- Supporting the launch event for the Community Plan.

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

- Community 'plan snapshot' information sample



Phase 1: Planning

Apply for SEED funding



What is Seed Funding?

Seed Funding is the provision of a grant from Council to enable local communities to ‘kick-start’ projects or to fund small projects identified in the Community Plan. Many grants require a contribution from the applicant and Seed Funding gives communities the opportunity to apply for funding, to support the delivery of larger projects that they may have originally thought beyond their capacity.

Previously, Council has approved Seed Funding for priority projects in the Community Plans in the following examples below:

- Design and development of a Community Garden at Soldiers Memorial Hall, Dereel, Seed Funding allocated to this project was \$500.
- Development of new maps, signage and brochures designed to provide information about our heritage, ecology and geology, Dereel, Seed Funding allocated to this project was \$1,000.
- Work in partnership with Haddon Lions Club to upgrade Lions Park for such things as: fenced off area from river (safety for children), beautification, playground, lighting for BBQ, paths, Haddon, Seed Funding allocated to this project was \$2,000.
- Look at options to develop a community house for adult learning local day activities for all age groups. Neighbourhood House in the hall, Teesdale, initial Seed Funding allocated to this project was \$2,000 for a consultant.
- To promote community connectedness and opportunities to enhance the health and wellbeing of community members by establishing such things as: safe bike and walking tracks / paths, exercise stations, upgrades and equipment to recreation reserve, Ross Creek/ Smythes Creek, Seed Funding allocated to this project was \$2,000.
- Create opportunities for the community to come together by establishing and supporting such things as: Avenue of Honour celebrations August 2018, markets or car boot sales, activities in the Hall, community get togethers, activities for young people and kids, workshops and learning opportunities, partnership projects with the school, Ross Creek/ Smythes Creek, Seed Funding allocated to this project was \$2,000.

Council can provide Seed Funding, through an application process to those communities who develop a Community Plan that:

- Demonstrates effective consultation and engagement in the development of their plan with at least 10% of the community.
- Demonstrates consultation with a broad range of community members.
- Identifies projects that will build community capacity.
- Meet the Seed Funding eligibility requirements.
- Identify and secure an auspicing body to administer funds.
- Have booked a date to launch the community plan with the community.
- Invite the Mayor and Councillors to the launch.

Invite Who will auspice the community projects?

The Community Coordinators and Project Champions can look to align the projects with an auspice organisation. See the toolkit for auspicng arrangements

How do I apply for Seed Funding?

Applications for Council's Seed Funding program will be received through the Smarty Grants Portal. Once you have completed the plan snapshot and spoken with Council Officers you can start your application process. Applications need to align with funding guidelines, please access Council website for further information.

How will my application be assessed?

Once you have submitted your application it will undergo an eligibility check against areas outlined in the guidelines. Council Officers will contact you if there are any further questions to ensure eligibility (if required). Applications will then be assessed against:

- Projects that are clearly identified on the Community Plan.
- Demonstrated evidence of wider community consultation has occurred and endorsement of community plan by your community.
- Demonstrated community benefit of project.
- Demonstrated community impact of allocation of funds and project.
- Demonstrated alignment with the Golden Plains Shire Community Vision 2040.

When will I be notified of the outcome?

Applicants will be notified in writing within 28 days of receipt of application, an agreement will also be issued to applicants that will outline the terms and conditions of funding. Upon the return of the funding agreement all funds will be released to the nominated auspicng body.

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

- 1.20. Community 'plan snapshot' information sample



Phase 1: Planning

Launch Community Plan



Community Coordinators will be required to launch the final plan to the community. This is an important phase in the process as it provides an opportunity to celebrate success, to build enthusiasm and support for projects and acknowledge the finalisation of the planning process.

This is also a great opportunity to activate volunteers for implementation of your priority projects.

Mentors and Council Officer will support Community Coordinators in the development of a presentation and launch event.

Your presentation could include:

- What methods you used for consultation with your community, the results from the consultations and how information was analysed to determine key priorities.
- Methods undertaken to identify current priority projects on the plan.
- The key areas and actions under the plan, projects and what your community is aiming to do.
- Acknowledgement of stakeholders and contributions by Community Coordinators.

Some ideas to launch event could be;

- Morning tea with community.
- Attached to an existing or annual event happening in your community.
- Community dinner
- Family fun day
- Big sporting or other types of events.

Council can assist with:

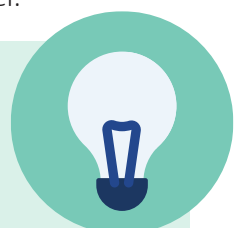
- Assisting with preparation and launch of your presentation to Community.
- Invitation to the Mayor and Councillors and diary bookings.

Tips for a successful launch event

- Ensure you have available copies of the plan for community or visually displayed in the space.
- Focus on the new and emerging projects.
- Use this time to recruit volunteers for priority projects.
- Use this event to get your community excited about future projects and working together.

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources relating to this section click [here](#).



Phase 2

Implementation *(Responsibility: CC/Council)*



Implement and report on plan progress

- Year 1 - Annual review of plan
- Year 2 - Annual review of plan
- Year 3 - Annual review of plan
- Year 4 - Final Review of plan and acquitta



What is implementation of a project

This is when your group connects with stakeholders, grant funding streams, or advocacy to bring about the priority project listed within the community plan. This is the process of putting the project into action.

Community Coordinators, together with the community groups and stakeholders are responsible for delivering each project outlined in the Community Plan over the 4-year cycle of the plan.

Best practice approaches to the management of community projects demonstrate a clear plan for the delivery, tracking and reviewing of projects by developing a plan that outlines:

- Key partners, stakeholders and volunteers on the project and their specific roles outlined (get them involved in drafting project plan, they will be able to provide expertise and the labour for your project).
- Project description, timelines and a delivery of action and outcomes (what are you aiming to achieve).
- Risk management register (identifying any requirements like Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), Insurances and other equipment).
- A clear and realistic budget including identifying funding sources (including Seed Funding from Council) and in-kind support.
- Requirements outlined by funding bodies that need to be considered in the delivery of project milestones.

There are clear benefits to collecting evidence to share progress or completion of a project with key stakeholders, community, and funding bodies. It is a good idea to set down early on a guideline about the proportion of time and resources to be allotted to this purpose. Funding agreements will also assist in guiding the level of documented evidence that is proportionate to the project.

The table below provides an overview of the cycle of key actions annually for the successful delivery and acquittal of a 4-year plan under Council Community Planning Program, especially related to projects you have applied for under Council's Community Planning Seed Funding program.

Implementation of a Plan				
Stage	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Work with Project Champions	●	●	●	●
Track Progress of priority projects (using tools)	●	●	●	●
Communicate Progress with Community	●	●	●	●
Annual Review	●	●	●	
Variation (if required)		●	●	●
Final Review (Overall Plan)				●
Acquittal (Overall Plan)				●

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

- [Stakeholder Mapping](#)



Working with Project Champions

- Inclusive processes for decision making – it is important to use inclusive or participatory decision making when planning and implementing activities. Processes that involves all partners in planning and decision making are more likely to build a clear sense of purpose, enthusiasm and ownership.
- Encouraging participation – a very real risk faced by many groups is that too few people end up doing much of the work. This can lead to burn out and sometimes even the collapse of a group or project. Having a Project Champion with a highly motivated group of volunteers is great, but on bigger projects it might be advantageous to seek volunteers for particular jobs or for a day, or even a couple of hours to assist the core group to sustain momentum and share the load.

Try and make all experiences and tasks rewarding so people want to stay involved.

- Have flexible timeframes- don't be too rigid about things happening on time.
- Thanking volunteers regularly, privately or publicly, is encouraged.
- Understand and manage expectations – what can realistically be achieved.
- Keep tasks manageable so people aren't daunted, provides a range of different sized tasks, e.g., small one-off contributions and bigger more challenging tasks.
- Dealing with conflict – Conflict is normal in a group; it inevitably arises where people are working together to try and make something happen. It is important to immediately deal with it as it arises and learn from it, as individuals and as a group.
- Celebrating achievements – Contributes to motivation of the delivery of the project, acknowledges the contribution by volunteers and assists with delivery of successful outcomes.
- Doing the project- appointing a Project Champion will assist with sticking to your project plan, keeping on task and will be the point of contact for volunteers to ensure there is a cohesive environment for the project and project vision is a shared vision.
- Tracking progress – Ensure that you are tracking progress against your project plan, this will assist you with communicating your progress with community, key stakeholders, funding bodies and Council. Tracking could include:
 - Budget – receipts, income and expenses.
 - Completed milestones or progress against what you have said in your plan.
 - Any funding agreement milestones or acquittal requirements.
 - Research, testimonials, photos etc.
 - Feedback gathered from stakeholders or volunteers.

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

1. Tracking sheet tool
2. Expense Tracker
3. Project Plan Template (needs to be designed)



Communicate progress with community

Sharing progress of your community projects is important because:

- It keeps the delivery of the priority projects on the Community Plan visible to the community.
- Keeps a healthy momentum with the community spirit.
- Encourages participation on projects and recruiting new volunteers.
- Acknowledges the contribution of Project Champions and volunteers, celebrating success.
- Provides accountability to key stakeholders and funding bodies.
- Provides a platform where you can thank your volunteers for the hard work they have done.

You can communicate your progress with the community through methods such as;

- Social Media – through online community pages or setting up a Facebook/Instagram page purely dedicated to sharing progressing on the community plan.
- Local newsletters and Community Notice Boards- featuring stories and photos.
- Share with Council's communications team or other key partners/stakeholders for them to share in their engagement tools.
- Emailing progress to stakeholders to share at their group meetings.
- Town meetings or established events throughout the year in your community.
- Media releases with print media such as Golden Plains Times.

Annual Review of Plan (first, second and third years)

To support Community Coordinators/Project Champions in the delivery, tracking and review of priority projects outlined on the Community Plan, Council Officers will undertake a 12 monthly review process which will assist Community Coordinators with:

- Progress and tracking of individual projects.
- Identify any variations that maybe needed and fill out appropriate forms.
- Annually collating information on completed projects and providing check points over the 4 year-cycle of the plan assists with keeping projects on track, and provides any easy approach to the final acquittal, such as:
 - Final receipts, budget, or quotes.
 - Overview of project delivery and outcomes.
 - Identifying variations to spend on projects and aligning back to budget and seed funding.
 - Photos or other communications documentation.
 - Volunteer information such as volunteer numbers and hour and in-kind support.

Council Officers will contact Community Coordinators/Project Champions annually, set a meeting a time and gather the information at that meeting. This exercise is not meant to be onerous on Coordinators/Project Champions but designed to assist in mitigating potential risks to spending and acquitting seed funding and progression and completion of the plan over the four years for communities.

A checklist will be provided to Community Coordinators/Project champions to consider prior to meeting with Council Officers, available in the toolkit.

This information will then be uploaded by Council Officers in Smarty Grants system to assist Coordinators/Project Champions with the acquittal of the plan and seed funding at the end of the 4-year cycle.

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

- [Community Planning Annual Review Checklist](#)



What is a variation

A variation may be required if there have been major changes to the scope of your project that received seed funding, including budget, timelines, and outcomes of ability to deliver the project.

A variation can be applied for at any stage of the delivery of your Community Plan that seed funding has been applied for and should be identified as soon as practicable and discussed with Council Officers so they are able to assist with keeping on track with the delivery of your priority projects. Council Officers will be able to supply you with a variation form that will need to be submitted for approval.

Best practice methods in any variation to a project would be to ensure that if there are any major changes to a project that this would be communicated and feedback would be sought by key stakeholders before applying for a variation. Having all key stakeholders support will assist in the approval process.

For example; In some cases, additional permits may be required, or a new community consultation process will have to be conducted to obtain community approval for the new project direction.

Tools and resources

To view or download the tools and resources listed below relating to this section: [click here](#)

- [Community Planning Variation Form](#)



Final review of year overall Plan (4th Year)

In the 4th year of the delivery of your Community Plan, Community Coordinators/Project Champions would have undertaken 3 annual reviews with Council Officers and built a good level of documentation to complete a final review of the plan. You now should be in position to acquit your Seed Funding.

Council Officers will contact coordinators in the final stages of the delivery of the 4th year of the plan, to set a meeting time and gather final information to prepare Community Coordinators/Projects Champions for the acquittal process. Phase 3: Reporting outlines the next key stages for finalising the 4 cycle of community planning.

Phase 3

Reporting *(Responsibility: CC/Council)*



1

Identify success and achievements



2

Acquittal of Seed Funding



3

Celebrate success and achievements with community



What is Reporting

This is the final acquittal document that will bring together all the recorded information from the previous 3 years of annual reviews throughout the duration of the implementation phase as part of the Community Planning Program.

During your 3 annual review processes you have undertaken, past receipts, quotes, variation forms, photos, social media excerpts etc have been collected by Council Officers and stored within the Smarty Grants system that holds your Seed funding application and acquittal in readiness for you to complete your final acquittal document.

There are two components to an acquittal process, one is the written component, and the other is a financial component.

- Written component- Is where you will provide evidence of the delivery and outcome of each priority project.
- Financial component- Is where you will reconcile the expenditure against the original budget and provide documented evidence of where you have spent your Seed funding.

Community Coordinators/Project Champions will receive an email from the Smarty Grants portal 6 weeks out from the finishing date of your plan with a notification to complete the seed funding acquittal via a link in the email. Once you have clicked on this link it will directly open the acquittal in Smarty Grants portal. Council Officers are available to discuss your acquittal if you need further assistance.

Once Council Officers have received your completed acquittal, it will be assessed within 6 weeks. Once approved you will receive notification that your acquittal has been finalised and you will be eligible to proceed into the next cycle of the Community Planning Program.

Acquittals will be used by Council Officers to inform Council reporting including photos, and other relevant documentation.

Celebrating success and achievements with your community acknowledges the commitment undertaken by the Community Coordinators/Project Champions, volunteers, and stakeholders in the delivery of a 4 year plan. An opportunity to recognise the journey and identify learnings strengthens relationships, supports the feel-good milestones, fosters community spirit and champions the important aspects involved in the delivery of a Community Plan.

Accountability and transparency to your community highlights key learnings for future planning.

You can share your successes and achievements with community through several methods:

Using social media – through online community pages or using the Facebook/Instagram page to share the achievements of your plan.

- Local newsletters and Community Notice Boards- featuring stories and photos.
- Share with key partners/stakeholders for them to share in their engagement tools.
- Emailing to stakeholders to share.
- Town meetings or established event where you celebrate with your community .
- Media releases with print media such as Golden Plains Times, Inverleigh news.
- Design or print a document of your achievements available to your community.
- Council Officers will cross promote and share the success and achievements by Community Coordinators and their stakeholders where identified.



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8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

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