

# DOCUMENT REVIEW

Planning for Halls Gaps Village Centre over the last 17 years has largely been driven by three key documents; an urban design framework, a community plan and the masterplan which are discussed in the following section of this document.

In the case of the Urban Design Framework (which was undertaken in 2001) and the Community Plan (undertaken in 2011), the review has highlighted only those matters which are of continuing relevance to the Village Centre, and provided an assessment of whether there are outstanding matters which could be addressed by the Action Plan. In relation to the Masterplan, which addressed the full extent of Halls Gap, matters which are relevant to he Village Centre are highlighted, again, with comments on their continued relevance to the current project.

Where a matter may be relevant for consideration in later stages of this project, this is clearly highlighted (STAGE TWO).



Figure 9. 2001 Urban Design Framework

## HALLS GAP URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The Urban Design Framework was developed in 2001. This comprehensive document outlined numerous actions to guide development in the centre, primarily focused around the public realm. While many of these actions have been implemented, others remain incomplete or no longer align with best practice.

Matters to consider in relation to aspirations expressed by the Urban Design Framework include:

1. Streetscape upgrades along Grampians Road proposed including greater pedestrianisation though reduced road width, 45 degree parking and a wider eastern side
2. Heath Street developed as the main vehicular route with a bridge over Stoney Creek providing a connection to the north

Further investigations may be needed to establish if this option is feasible, having regard to the cost and other relevant environmental matters such as the removal of vegetation and the impact on existing residents.

3. High design standards and the use of local materials (such as sandstone, timber, gravel) should be applied
4. Planting of additional vegetation, in particular canopy trees (Manna Gums identified) with a focus on open space areas where many trees are getting older and along Heath Street.

For this aspiration to be realised, expectations and preferred materials need to be clearly defined and changes to the planning scheme undertaken to ensure their statutory weight. STAGE TWO

Opportunities for the protection of existing canopy trees and the planting of new vegetation to ensure the landscape character is enhanced should be pursued, as well as how this can be managed within the constraints of the Bushfire Management Overlay.

5. Paths should be granitic sand
6. An informal green link along Stoney Creek to Heath Street
7. Car parking access in Heath Street

This may be appropriate in some areas but maintenance and accessibility issues will also need to be considered. STAGE TWO

This could be pursued but would need the consent of private land owners given this parcel is privately owned.

While some car parking has been added since the UDF, there are further opportunities that could be explored through the Action Plan.

## HALLS GAP COMMUNITY PLAN (2011)

In addition to the formal 'planning' of the Village Centre through the 2001 Urban Design Framework, a Community Plan largely driven by local residents, also identified a number of actions relevant to the Village Centre which may influence this Action Plan.

Matters to consider in relation to aspirations expressed by the Community Plan include:

1. The undergrounding of powerlines
 

While the undergrounding of powerlines is not a Council responsibility, opportunities exist for Council to identify priority locations and consider where undergrounding or bundling of powerlines may be possible, particularly in association with any future public works projects. STAGE TWO
2. Decluttering of signage
 

The decluttering or rationalisation of signage along key corridor such as Grampians Road could be pursued through any proposed public realm works. STAGE TWO
3. Increased commercial floorspace
 

This is one of the drivers of this project and opportunities to unlock underutilised commercial land and to stimulate private investment in the Village Centre should be pursued.
4. Sustainability initiatives, particularly around active transport and water sensitive urban design (WSUD)
 

As with the decluttering of signage, opportunities for the integration of WSUD can be delivered through any subsequent public realm upgrades. STAGE TWO

Improvements to pedestrian and cycle connections, both in terms of safety and amenity will increase the likelihood of residents making active transport choices and should be pursued through the Action Plan
5. Improved and extended pedestrian paths
 

As noted above, improvements to the pedestrian network will need to be addressed through the Action Plan.
6. Public gathering spaces and seating
 

Gathering spaces to complement the 'focal' space delivered through the Visitor Information Centre development will be identified in the Action Plan, with subsequent 'concept plans' to provide further design details around specific seating locations etc.

**HALLS GAP MASTERPLAN (2015)**

Perhaps the most relevant document, and the one which this Action Plan is intended to implement, is the *Halls Gap Master-Plan for Commercial Investment and Public Land Development* (the Masterplan), prepared by MvS Architects and adopted by Council in December 2016. The key focus of this document was the activation and further development of the tourism industry within Halls Gap, with particular reference to the delivery of the Grampians Peaks Long Distance Walk which will see further emphasis on Halls Gap as one of the Major Trailheads for this iconic walk. The Masterplan identifies a very broad range of actions and initiatives. The focus within this Action Plan is on those elements of the Masterplan which are relevant to the Village Centre area, noting many of these initiatives will be delivered by the private sector rather than Council. These relevant actions are identified to the right, along with some additional comments on their relevance to the Action Plan.

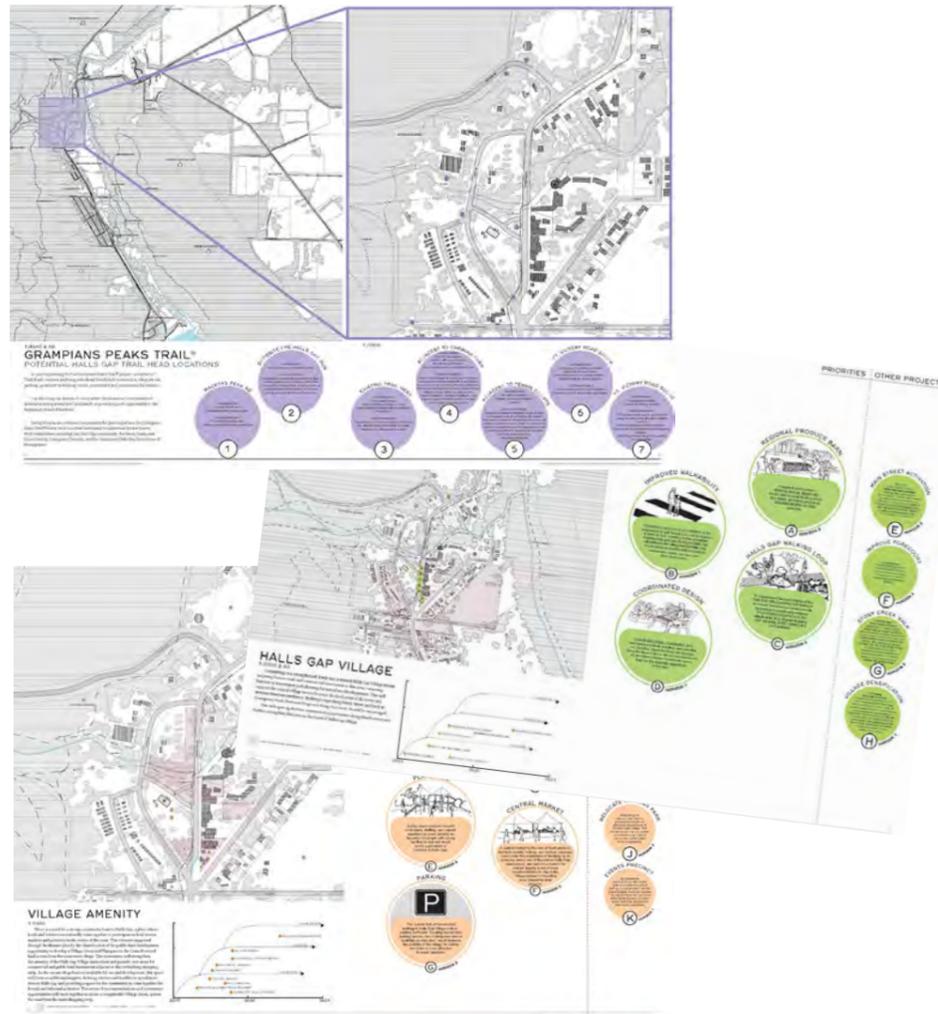


Figure 10. Pages from the Halls Gap Masterplan

Matters to consider in relation to aspirations expressed by the Masterplan include:

1. Transition Halls Gap to a 'walking town' with a connected network of walking and bicycle trails, including a Heath Street and Stoney Creek loop.  
As above, the Action Plan should consider projects to deliver these aspirations.
2. Need for a strong community 'heart' / event space  
The existing Community Hall contains a space for gathering, although this could be complemented by other spaces within the Village Centre.
3. Develop a Village Green and playspace on Council owned land across from main street shops  
This land is, in fact, owned by the State Government and managed by a Committee of Management. The development of a Village Green and playspace would need to be facilitated through that group, although if wider benefits to the Village Centre are determined, there may be opportunities for both parties to work together towards complementary outcomes through the Action Plan.
4. Commercial expansion on western side of Grampians Road opposite community hall  
The expansion of commercial uses into the green reserve is problematic and would require the transition of public open space to private ownership which is unlikely to be supported. It would also potentially compromise the critical 'landscape setting' of the Village Centre.
5. Heath Street further commercial opportunities  
As above, the Action Plan should consider projects to deliver these aspirations.
6. Main Street activation  
As above, the Action Plan should consider projects to deliver these aspirations.
7. 'Densify the Village'  
While additional infilling of underutilised land is one of the objectives of this Action Plan, this will need to be managed carefully having consideration for critical parameters such as contextual responses.
8. Protect the feel of the Village Centre, including views and set parameters for private design to ensure centre is attractive to the 'inspired by nature' tourists  
Following stages of the Action Plan could set these parameters and establish a rationale for an updated Design & Development Overlay. STAGE TWO
9. Establish a coordinated design approach of the public realm, including removal of overhead wires.  
Any streetscape upgrade proposed as part of the Action Plan should include development of a preferred palette of materials and finishes to ensure a cohesive centre. Ideally these would also be implemented within other public spaces such as the reserve. STAGE TWO

10. Seven options for the location of Grampians Peaks Trailhead identified  
The preferred Option (Option 4) is identified in this Action Plan.
11. The establishment of a brewery / distillery / deli / restaurant / lifestyle day spa targeted at walkers / regional produce barn / central market  
The delivery of these private initiatives will rely on private interest, facilitated by Council through improving access to currently underutilised areas of commercial land.
12. Wayfinding and signage within the centre should be improved  
This could be pursued though the second phase of the Action Plan. STAGE TWO
13. Create demarcated parking spaces  
Parking spaces have progressively been linemarked but further areas could be identified through the Action Plan as relevant.
14. Additional landscaping throughout the centre  
As above, the Action Plan should consider projects to deliver these aspirations.
15. Pool shading, minor renovations to the Community Hall and a sculpture for the forecourt, as well as free wifi within the Village Centre.  
These minor works are likely to be pursued separately, noting free wifi has already been established at the Community Hall.
16. Recommendations around relocating the Caravan Park and removing sections of track to increase caravan park privacy  
These are matters for the Committee of Management to determine.

## REVIEW FINDINGS

There are a number of matters which need to be highlighted in relation to the document review which are relevant to Stage One of the Action Plan, as follows:

- The Plan will need to focus on the delivery of improved pedestrian safety and amenity and enhance the path network
- Opportunities to deliver increased commercial floorspace should be pursued.
- The Plan should consider creatively how a range of public spaces can be delivered to facilitate informal gathering within the Village Centre.
- Further opportunities for streetscape improvements to Grampians Road should be explored, particularly in relation to how additional space for pedestrian movement and outdoor dining could be delivered, through increased footpath width or 'decluttering' of street furniture.
- Opportunities to deliver new vegetation and protect existing canopy trees should be pursued.
- Consideration should be given to how linkages along Stoney Creek and additional car parking in Heath Street could be delivered.
- The costs and benefits of delivering a 'through' link along Heath Street by constructing a new road and bridge should be considered carefully to ensure that this is appropriately balanced with the broader vision and aspirations for the Village Centre and does not negatively impact on existing businesses.
- Opportunities to deliver mutually beneficial outcomes within the Recreation Reserve space should be considered, as with other land managers but projects which Council is able to deliver on land they manage should be prioritised.
- Option 4 from the Masterplan should be confirmed as the preferred location for the Grampians Peaks Trailhead.

