CITY OF GREATER
GEELONG

Contents

Introduction

PURPOSE

The Social Infrastructure Planning and Investment Policy aims to provide Council and the City of Greater Geelong with a guide for prioritising investment decisions and to provide our community with a clear understanding of Council's role and how decisions are made.

This Policy aims to ensure a fair and equitable approach to how investment is made in community places, spaces and services.

SCOPE

Social infrastructure relates to places and spaces of a communal, human or social nature that is required, by the different areas of the community, and progressively as a community grows. Social infrastructure provides for both informal and formal places and spaces providing access to community activities and services.

Social infrastructure is the sum of both 'hard' infrastructure (community facilities and public open space) and 'soft' infrastructure (support services, technology, information sharing, management systems, data and insights).

For the purposes of this Policy, social infrastructure includes:

In scope

- **Leisure and recreation** - aquatic, indoor sport and recreation facilities;
- **Outdoor and active recreation** - outdoor playing fields, outdoor sports courts, playgrounds, golf courses, boat ramps, skate parks, dog parks, off-road bike tracks / courses, walking trails and cycling paths for sport;
- **Public open spaces** - parks, walking trails and cycling paths for recreation, play spaces, passive reserves and active sports reserves;
- **Cultural spaces** - libraries, museums, art gallery, heritage spaces, performance spaces, memorials and public art;
- **Early years facilities** - childcare, kindergartens, playgroups and maternal and child health;
- **Targeted support spaces** - youth spaces, senior citizens, community / men's sheds, day respite spaces, social services, social housing, migrant service spaces and Aboriginal service spaces;
- **Community centres and spaces** - multipurpose community spaces, neighbourhood houses, community meeting rooms, community halls and community gardens;
- **Education and training spaces** - universities, TAFE, secondary and primary schools;
- **Health, safety and emergency services' facilities** - hospitals, community health services, police, ambulance, emergency services and fire stations;
- **Tourist facilities** - tourist information spaces;
- **Lighting** - lighting for sport and recreation;
- **Public toilets** - in public open space;
- **Third Spaces** - Third Spaces - footpaths, streets, plazas and public squares; and
- **Ancillary infrastructure** - associated with, and supports access to, social infrastructure.

Anything that is not represented in scope, as outlined above, is considered outside the scope of social infrastructure related to this Policy.

Policy

POLICY STATEMENTS

Social infrastructure is essential for the health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of the community.

The City will continue to ensure the provision of quality social infrastructure and play a key role in promoting social cohesion by providing focal points for community activity and places for people to meet and connect. The City's social infrastructure also provides opportunities for economic growth and serves as a key attractor for people to live, work, visit and play in the City.

The City aims to be an inclusive, diverse, healthy, equitable and socially connected community. The City will focus on addressing particular needs and obstacles faced by the community and priority groups across different areas of the municipality (including rural, coastal and urban areas) to ensure that investment decisions and processes are fair and transparent.

The City will strive for social infrastructure investment to keep pace with the scale of growth and to positively and sustainably shape the City for future generations to enjoy.

'Putting Our Community First' means using evidence and insights to deliver equity and access for all.

The City will plan and invest in services and infrastructure based on a clear set of principles and objectives to deliver on Council's commitment of 'Putting our Community First'.

The City will invest in social infrastructure that is consistent with its principles and with a particular focus to deliver social equity and accessibility.

The City will use evidence and community insights to inform its decision making.

The City will rely on processes that ensure there is transparency and that the community have a say in the planning and investment decisions the City makes.

Exploring new opportunities and embracing new ways of working, to ensure the community gets the social infrastructure it needs.

The City will take a strategic and holistic approach to planning and investing in social infrastructure that focuses on delivering community benefit and outcomes, embracing different ways of identifying needs and delivering outcomes.

The City will commit to a coordinated effort with all levels of government and will continue to explore opportunities to partner with the private and not-for-profit sectors in order to meet community needs and outcomes.

The City will continue to plan and invest in new facilities and services, and continue to monitor what is provided to ensure community needs are being met.

OBJECTIVES

The Council and City of Greater Geelong are committed to all sections of the community having reasonable access to the places, spaces and services they need. The City's objectives and aspirations for social infrastructure are:

Objective	Description	Aims
Equitable	Fair access to facilities and services that are needed across the municipality including healthy, safe and inclusive places, spaces and services.	Social equity, based on need, for all in the community.
Accessible	Accessible for all abilities, affordable and easy for people to get to.	Fair distribution, universally designed and affordable for all.
Adaptable	Flexible to meet the changing needs of the community and can be used for more than one purpose.	Responsive to changing needs and a range of uses.
Integrated	Integrated with other services where possible and a place for people to come together.	A seamless and positive experience of our services.
Sustainable	Environmentally, fiscally, socially and culturally responsible, well designed, effectively managed and usage is optimised, now and into the future.	Meet our Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) obligations, as part of our commitment to the UNESCO City of Design designation, value managed places, spaces and services and ensure efficiency of operation.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles underpin the City's planning and investment decision making.

Principle – As a principle the City will:	What will this look like in practice?
Consult and engage with the community and stakeholders	The City will connect meaningfully with the community and stakeholders in planning for infrastructure and access to support and services. The City will make a commitment to engaging with the community to ensure the community has a voice and can influence investment priorities. The City cannot solve the complex issues alone and through collaborative partnerships the City will work with others to deliver shared outcomes for maximum community benefit.
Be driven by evidence of need and the benefit to the community	The City will take a purposeful and strategic approach to funding projects that deliver meaningful community benefit and social impact. The City will ensure that decisions are aligned to the agreed provision standards, robust evidence and intelligence, and the insights of the community. As a priority, the City will consider solutions that meet the place-based needs of the community and focus on addressing social challenges and opportunities.
Provide access to services where it is needed, in a timely way	The City will ensure that service and infrastructure design, location, investment and support arrangements will address the particular needs and obstacles faced by the community, priority groups and areas, and those required progressively over time. The City will ensure that the community has access to infrastructure, support and services where it is needed and as soon as practicable.
Align decisions with Council's role, strategic priorities, and needs of the community	The City will ensure that community spend is focussed on delivering on strategic objectives and priorities, while ensuring there are appropriate mechanisms to consider valuable community led ideas and initiatives. The City will play a stronger role as an advocate, leader, facilitator, planner, monitor and funder of social infrastructure. The City will continue to fulfil a variety of roles as appropriate, including the support and delivery of infrastructure, while ensuring they first explore partnering opportunities that leverage the best outcome for the community.
Demonstrate fairness and transparency in decision making	The City will be fair and transparent in its funding priorities, processes and decision making. The City will provide the community with a clear understanding of Council's role and how decisions are made to ensure that the community understands what is planned for the place that they live.

ROLE

The City of Greater Geelong will continue to ensure the community has access to the social infrastructure it needs.

The City will focus on partnerships in the delivery of social infrastructure to increase Council's capacity to respond to needs in the community and maximise the community benefit that can be achieved from investments in social infrastructure.

While the City will continue to build and provide the infrastructure necessary to meet community needs, it will focus on pursuing opportunities to deliver the social infrastructure outcomes in partnership with others.

The City's partnership role will encompass:

- The joint funding of social infrastructure with other levels of government to deliver on the needs of the community. The funding of Council and all levels of government should be consistent with the objectives and principles of this Policy.

- Exploring opportunities with the private sector, where market conditions allow, when the community benefit can be demonstrated, while ensuring the policy principles and objectives can be achieved.

- Continuing to work together with community clubs, organisations and the not-for-profit sector to deliver on shared priorities and maximise the capacity and contributions that local clubs and community organisations can make in delivering the best value possible for the community.

The following provides a summary of the City of Greater Geelong's primary roles and responsibilities (as it relates to social infrastructure).

Role		What will this look like in practice?
First Response	**Advocacy**	Providing and leveraging influence to proceed on a project by working with and engaging developers, government and community members in decision-making, including utilising advisory committees, working groups and peak bodies.
	Leadership	Demonstrating leadership through strategic planning, policy development, innovation and execution, and the strategic facilitation of key stakeholders for the purposes of achieving community objectives and outcomes.
	Planning and Service Development	Play a coordinating role by planning the types and location of community infrastructure through strategic, statutory and service planning.
	Partnerships and Coordination	Where appropriate, support government, private sector and community service providers to plan facilities and deliver services. The City will explore this option where market conditions allow and where efficient, sustainable and/or integrated service delivery can be achieved. Where appropriate, partner with and empower the community, private and not-for-profit sector to deliver on shared priorities that maximise community benefit.
	Feasibility and Funding	Responsible for capital and/or operational funding, from time to time, in cooperation and/or in partnership with others.
When Required	**Building / Land Provision**	Construct and develop community infrastructure either directly or through funding agreements and contracts.
	Operating and Delivery	Provide services either directly or through funding, service agreements and contracts. Where appropriate, act as the 'safety net' to the community where a critical service is no longer available and/or the community is at risk.

HOW WE MAKE DECISIONS - PRIORITISATION FRAMEWORK

When considering and prioritising an investment decision the Council and the City of Greater Geelong will use tools and methods that ensure the following questions are considered:

- Does it address an identified need or deliver a community benefit?

- Is it consistent with the City's role and is the City the best placed organisation to address this?

- Is it consistent with the objectives, aims and principles for social infrastructure?

- Is it consistent with the City's strategic priorities (e.g. Council Plan, service and asset management requirements and/or legislative requirements)?

- Are there social, environmental, cultural or economic implications and what are they?

- Can the City afford it and can the City afford not to do it?

HOW WE PROCESS OUR INVESTMENT DECISIONS

Council is committed to processing our investment decisions fairly and transparently.

To achieve this Council will process investment decisions using two key mechanisms - our 'Annual Budget' and 'Community Grants' processes.

The **Annual Budget** process will be the appropriate process to consider investments in social infrastructure where the investment is a legislated or contractual obligation and/or where it is a major strategic priority for the Council.

The budget process will also consider community led ideas and initiatives that aren't eligible for community grants and/or are request for ongoing support.

The **Community Grants** process will be the appropriate process where an item is a community led initiative and is a request for one-off funding or support.

In this process the Council will rely on an independent panel drawn from the community to undertake an assessment of community initiatives and provide a recommendation to Council for decision.

Implementation of this Policy

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The City's commitment to the implementation of this Policy includes, but is not limited to:

- Provide a rolling four (4) year community infrastructure plan in alignment with Council Plan and the long term financial plan; and

- Conduct an annual review of social infrastructure priorities in consultation with Council and involving the community through an annual engagement process.

REVIEW

The City should review this Policy concurrently with the development of the Council Plan every 4 years.

Definitions

This section defines the key terms used in this Policy.

CITY

The City of Greater Geelong organisation, led by the CEO.

COUNCIL

The City of Greater Geelong Council comprising elected councillors and led by the Mayor.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Social infrastructure – meaning assets relating community places, spaces and services.

Social Infrastructure relates to places and spaces of a communal, human or social nature that is required progressively as a community grows. Social infrastructure provides for both informal and formal places and spaces providing access to community activities and services. Social infrastructure is the sum of both **hard infrastructure** (community facilities and public open space) and **soft infrastructure** (support services, technology, information sharing, management systems, data and insights).

Civil Infrastructure relates to the physical networks necessary for the functioning of a modern community (for example; roads, bridges, railways, drainage, street furniture and telecommunications).

Civic Infrastructure relates to places of Council administration and other business (for example; administration buildings, customer service centres and town halls).

Corporate Assets relate to items such as smart assets, fleet equipment, information and communication technology.

INVESTMENT

Investment in this Policy means the provision of time, support, resources and/or financial investment for the creation of capital or community capacity capable of producing a community benefit and other capacity, capital or services.

References

This section outlines any document that relates to and/or is referred to in the policy or was used to develop this Policy.

- Social Equity Principles.

- Community Investment Support Fund Council Policy.

- Greater Geelong Social Infrastructure Plan - Generation One
  2020-2023