

BLACKWOOD

Township Improvement Plan Submission



Produced by Blackwood Progress Association
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Introduction

With the aim of supplementing the Moorabool Shire's online community engagement, Blackwood Progress Association has conducted extensive on-the-ground consultation and discussion with locals on the subject of the Township Improvement Plan.

We understand from Council that this plan constitutes the initial phase of the Structure Plan for Blackwood Township, as detailed in the Small Towns and Settlements Strategy Document (a key driver of Shire's planning under the Moorabool 2041 framework). So, although some of the community suggestions in this submission may fall outside the scope of the current Township Improvement Plan, we include them here to illustrate community thinking on the larger picture. Under Moorabool 2041 "Blackwood is identified for a Structure Plan to protect and enhance the local heritage and significant environment surrounding the settlement" and "support...managed growth of retail and tourism opportunities".

Blackwood Progress Association has for decades, with the Council's encouragement, provided a representative voice for the community of Blackwood. We look forward to working further with Council and the local community on this most important long-term project. What becomes obvious from reading the comments compiled below is that the town of Blackwood knows who it is and knows what it wants. We locals look forward to being valued partners in the "future planning and development" [Moorabool 2041] of the town we love.

~ Brendan Hehir, Blackwood Progress Association (Pres.)

Overall character of town



- An historic bush town with great natural attractions and a long-standing tourist economy. Unique in Moorabool. Let's play to our strengths in planning infrastructure.
- Upgrade streetscape in keeping with heritage of town.
- We don't need 'beautification' ie. urbanisation but practical things like paths.
- I love Blackwood as it is but we need maintenance and signage on walking tracks.
- Keep it simple in town.
- Heritage sign. Otherwise leave Blackwood alone.
- No urban graffiti eg. metal bike hoops which trip people over. If installed make them rustic.
- No flower beds. We are a forest town with plenty of beauty already.
- Encourage visitors to come into town. Note that in the next few years local and intrastate tourism will increase as overseas travel is restricted.

Outdoor areas and community gathering areas



- A rotunda, in a style complementing the surrounding historical buildings would give a sense of a town centre. It would encourage people to stay, house tourist information and provide a bandstand to showcase our many local musicians. A BBQ and playground would round off the infrastructure.
- The Uniting Church (under renovation and re-opening soon as a community centre) fronts onto the town centre with its triangular parcel of land. The Church has offered the use of this land for development of a “town centre”.
- Build a rotunda in keeping with Hotel and Hat shop facades on the raised park area where currently there is a non-functional noticeboard. Can have low-key music events on weekends to encourage visitors but also to encourage community gathering.
- A beautifully designed and easily-accessible noticeboard which has information and map to springs and advertises various walks.

- Erection of a shelter and seats where people can drink a take- away coffee with a friend, as in Trentham . Must be appropriately designed and sympathetic to streetscape and environment.
- More and better park benches. This point was repeated many times.
- Heritage tree block (by pub)- develop block so that there is a picnic area under the heritage tree in the middle of town.
- More seating around town with a sheltered area.
- We need a produce store- a co- op where we can sell /swap plants and edibles.
- The Blackwood Pub should be developed as a co-op, part-owned by council run as a not for profit . Any profit goes to council to put back into developing the area.
- Blackwood needs restaurant cafe permits.
- Park development, shade area and planting. Picnic tables and steps up to raised park area in middle of town.
- The path around the oval to be resurfaced to make it safe for people with mobility aids and wheelchair use. There are people in town who rely on that path for their exercise and wellbeing.
- Picnic tables and a small adventure playground on flat area opposite tennis courts. It will also bring visitors to our area.
- The land on corner of Martin and Whalebone Road to be developed into a park.
- Make the community hall more visible from main road.
- Playground behind community hall needs repair and renewal.
- An adventure playground near the big oak heritage tree.
- Possible outdoor community area near cemetery where there is public land.
- Establishment of Uniting church as a community centre is underway - establishing a drop-in type centre on select days for specified hours where people can meet. Can be staffed by volunteers eg. book swap, tea/ coffee, meetings, film screenings.
- Uniting church/ festival is planned to celebrate elements of water, fire, earth. Earth element can be honoured by planting and making a permanent display in church grounds which are a public place and will host markets and musical events.
- Tidy up community hall, the playground behind it.
- Planting around community hall.
- Develop community outdoor space /park.
- Support Landcare group to weed, regenerate and preserve native plants and general area around town.
- When there is planting around town - include edible plants that can be picked eg. parsley, fejoa.

Roads



- Provide a signage audit and comprehensive signage plan for Blackwood. The town, because of its sprawling nature (5km by road diameter) and hilly terrain is a difficult, sometimes dangerous, place to navigate and discover. Even regular visitors are unaware of many of our attractions. Signs that dependably guide visitors around our roads and trails are crucial to the safe enjoyment of the area.
- Skinners road washes away when it rains.
- The town of Blackwood is bisected by the Greendale-Trentham Road. The road effectively funnels potential visitors (at speed) straight through, concealing the town's attractions. Creating a sense of township along this road will slow traffic, aiding pedestrian and local traffic safety and encouraging travellers, through effective signage, to explore the town.
- Pedestrian safety issues. Safe, accessible footpaths. Safe road crossings.
- Golden Point Road is dangerous . From Martin Street to Springs Caravan Park turn-off. Is used by pedestrians ,cyclists ,big cars with trailers and trucks simultaneously. This road is too narrow, there are several pits and other obvious hazards. Vehicles often speeding.
- Intersection into town needs to be developed so that there is clear signage to Blackwood and also to slow traffic.
- Slow down traffic in the middle of town.
- Grace Street needs repairs
- Safe and straightforward connectivity is needed around this town eg. providing a reasonable way to cross the Lerderberg Bridge as a pedestrian and safely connect the town centre with the sportsground.
- Golden Point Road needs designated walking path.



- Definitely against marked out parking spaces in town.
- Clearly-marked parking spaces on Main Street so no more parking obstructing driveways or taking up two spots.
- Blackwood should be a 'quiet town'. I don't mind trail bikes and 4WDs coming to use our facilities but should not use town as a (noisy) staging area. Speed is also an issue.
- Limits needed on Simmons Reef and Golden Point Roads.
- Walking tracks.

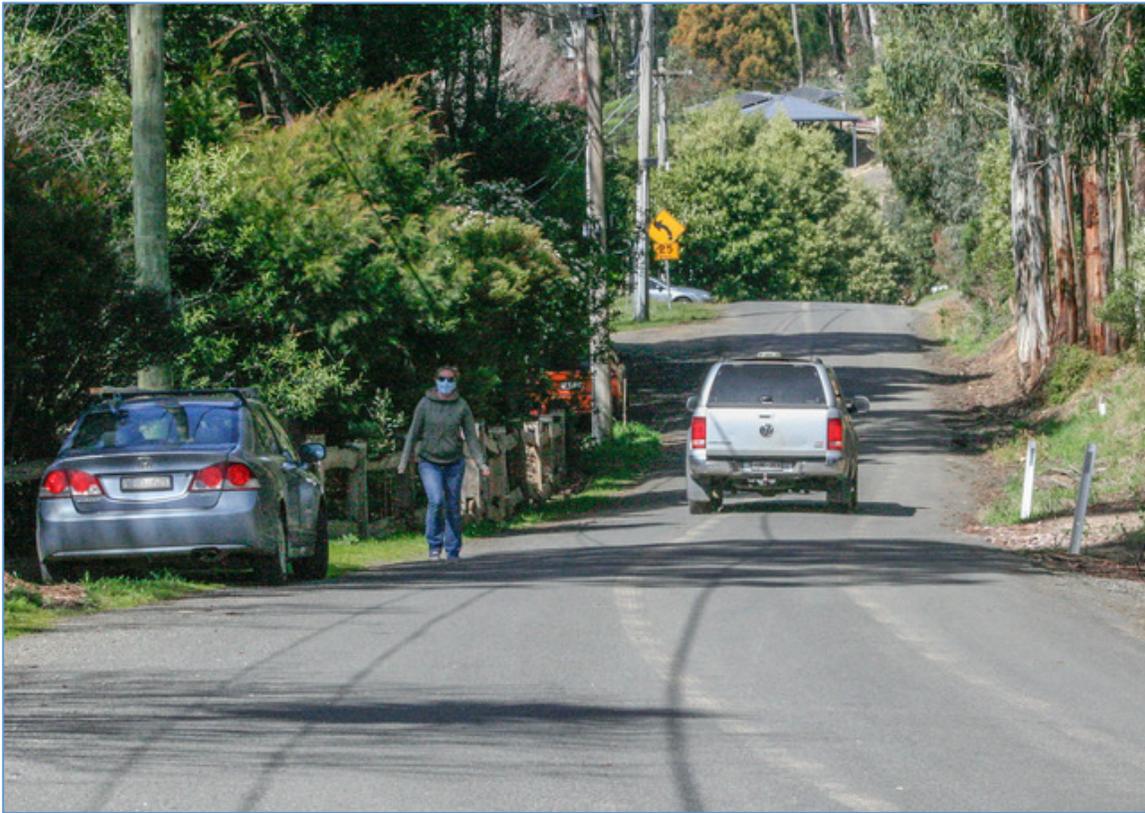
The following points were mentioned repeatedly:

- Construct more walking trails around town with clear marking of trails. Ensure maintenance of signage to keep walkers safe.
- Develop the walking trails with good signage.
- Encourage bike riding and walking rather than trailbikes. Bike paths to encourage safety.
- Maintain walking tracks.

Encourage visitors to town

- Bench seats. Replace aged stock with 30-50 new seats around town.
- Encourage small events post-covid to bring tourists back to town.
- A beautiful, unique artist-designed noticeboard for community and visitor use.
- Circular walking routes emanating from the town centre in a “clover leaf” fashion, well-signposted and giving distance and time, difficulty and attractions. This type of sign will in effect provide a guided tour for the visitor.
- An Avenue of Honour for the history of Blackwood eg. mining and coach history.
- Encourage visitors. Develop a Mad Mile bike ride starting from wombat sign to Lerderderg river bridge.
- Nicely-designed heritage noticeboard which includes an accurate map of walks and other local features.
- Replant the Avenue of Honour leading to the mineral springs area.
- An hour’s walk around town. West Moorabool Heritage study has already got the information so utilize their work and incorporate identified historical precincts in our town.
- Local artists’ trail with a safe display area. Encourage drop-in to artist studios.
- Signage and information for a Heritage/Historical trail.
- Including buildings, heritage trees, houses, information boards and mosaics.
- Musical highway from the wombat sign to the river. Corrugations in road produce music when driven at a certain speed.
- Enable establishment of local cafes by granting permits that don’t require permanent car parking on their premises. Ample parking around town.
- Historic precinct. Large appropriate sign at the intersection with a child’s crossing. From St Erth to Mineral Springs to Avenue of Honour bike and walk trails around historic precinct. Make it safe for pedestrians and kids. A family historical experience.

Safety



- Assessment of dangerous trees on council land - avoid the impact on power when they come down in a storm.
- Fire risk, burning-off or other management of public land around edge of town.
- For many years community groups and individuals have tried to secure regular maintenance of public land within the town, chiefly for fire mitigation. Because of the unusual make up of this town, in part due to the mass exodus of people after mining, we seem to have inherited many abandoned or unclaimed areas throughout the town, all unmaintained and fire risks. This is true of both private and public lands. We have tried as a community to track down individuals and government agencies responsible for these lands, occasionally with some success at cleaning up these plots, only to have to follow up the next year. With the help of Moorabool Shire and DELWP, let's make a definitive audit of these lands and develop a plan of ongoing maintenance.
- Install and maintain walking track signs. Too many instances of people getting lost.