

Report Stage
Final Draft Report

By
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Client
Baw Baw Shire Council

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Walhalla Masterplan

ratio:

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1. Foreword

Walhalla is a settlement surrounded by a stunning mountain landscape with a reputation for past glories. On top of one of Victoria's most successful gold veins, Walhalla used to be a thriving town.

As with all small towns founded on gold, the gold eventually runs out. The towns must then work collaboratively to re-define their future.

The future of Walhalla lies in tourism that sensibly takes advantage of its historical charm. Council, local residents, and visitors alike marvel in its rich history.

Walhalla, however, is not a museum piece. There remain a group of locals who are deeply connected and committed to the town.

A balance must be found between heritage and future prosperity, and tourism aspirations and the desires of a small community.

The challenge for Walhalla is how to benefit from this history without undermining it.

Uncontrolled development would be of detriment to the town. Yet, everyone agrees that some development must occur.

The task of this report is to decide what development is acceptable, needed, and realistic.

This study stems from a request from the community to develop a master plan that explores the future of infrastructure and services in Walhalla. The master plan will need to identify infrastructure gaps, outline specific recommendations that can be taken to provide the required infrastructure, and outline the responsible agencies.

Walhalla is a town full of big aspirations which need to be managed with respect to the heritage, the location, and the reality of the town's small population.

The initial focus of this report was Council-led infrastructure.

It quickly became clear that a different approach was needed.

By virtue of Walhalla's remote location, rich history, state-wide significance, and complex governance stemming from a history of land grabs and informal occupation, it requires a different approach.

Walhalla, its needs, and many possible futures have long been studied. Previous master plans have only been implemented sporadically.



Figure 1

There are several key reasons why.

1. The first is **governance** in its broadest sense.

We have bred in our communities in Victoria and Australia a belief that 'it's the government's responsibility'. That belief is regularly fed by political parties of all persuasions, none are free of the observation.

There is little here to encourage governments at all levels to fund new enterprise. It is too small a local population to garner large-scale political interest, and when sense settles in, there is no economic multiplier effect that delivers a dividend for the large capital sums that could give life to ideas passionately held by those who live in or have a sense of ownership in the future of the town.

2. The second is **co-operation**.

Visitors all have Walhalla's best interests at heart however individual and community groups do not have a shared vision for the future. The community is often at odds. A clear direction for the future may bring cohesion of purpose between all members of the community.

3. Then there is **service delivery**.

Agencies responsible for services are often seen by locals as demonstrating 'all care and no responsibility'. In reality, the agencies are often hard at work. The problem is, it's time to get out of the siloes. Easy to say but difficult to achieve, especially given that many agency officers demonstrate a high level of personal commitment to Walhalla and its community of interest, but feel they are constrained in their endeavours, and that such endeavours aren't welcomed by the community.

4. Finally, there is **money**.

There is no 'silver bullet' to Walhalla's future. Grants help but the cost of many ideas for the town are unlikely to be realised in the near future.

Walhalla needs new thinking, a new choreography of ideas and a realisation that major tranches of infrastructure money will be extremely difficult to secure.

After decades of reports saying much the same thing about Walhalla, and with little change, it is time to get a new approach.

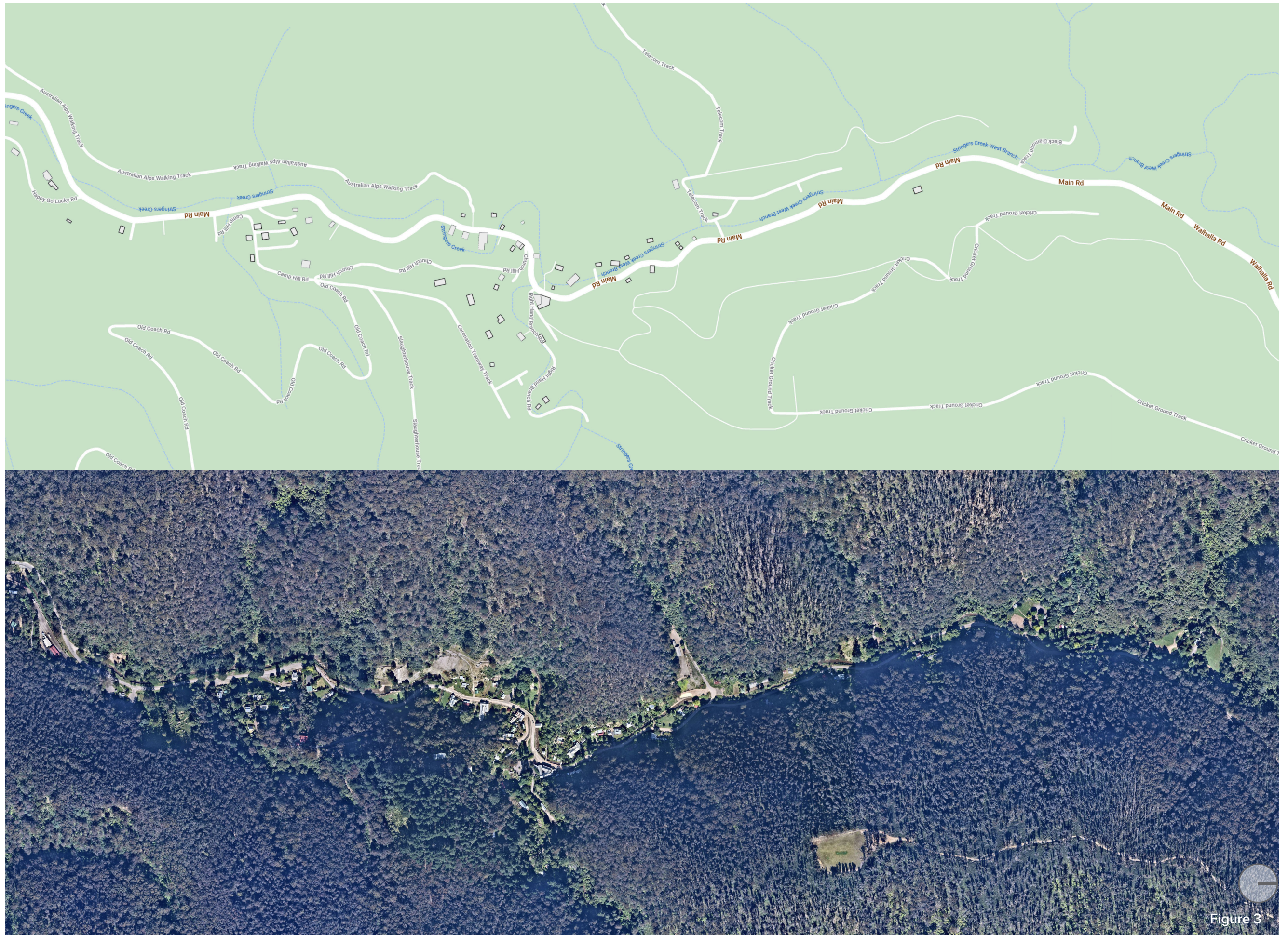
This is our suggestion: use adaptive pathways to find a rewarding future for the town, its inhabitants and landowners, and the agencies delivering services and infrastructure. What Walhalla does have is a rich history, and a group fiercely committed to seeing the town thrive once again.

Before we explain that concept, we will summarise the context: where is Walhalla, what is its history in summary, and what was Council's brief?

Take time to explore WALHALLA



Figure 2



2. Introduction

2.1 The task at hand

The brief for this study is to prepare a ‘master plan’ that identifies the infrastructure responsibilities of the Shire and the prospect for implementation.

This study stems from a request from the community to develop a master plan that explores the future of infrastructure and services in Walhalla.

The master plan will need to identify infrastructure gaps, outline specific recommendations that can be taken to provide the required infrastructure, and outline the responsible agencies.

The master plan outlines five key themes including:

- Governance
- Infrastructure
- History and heritage
- Tourism
- Environment

2.2 Where is Walhalla

Walhalla is an historic town approximately three hours from the heart of Melbourne. It sits on the remote eastern edge of the Shire of Baw Baw, a peri urban municipality increasingly affected by the outward growth of the Melbourne metropolis.

Walhalla is within the traditional lands of the Gunaikurnai people. Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) has been appointed the Registered Aboriginal Party of these lands. Their connection to Country remains.

Walhalla was established in the 1860’s as a gold mining town, and prospered thanks to sizeable gold deposits. In its hey-day, around the 1880’s, Walhalla had a population of 3,000 people, supporting 10 hotels, 7 churches, and over 30 shops. However, like most gold towns, bust followed boom and since the early 1900’s Walhalla has been in a relative state of decline.

Today, there remains 75 Victorian Heritage Database-listed places within the town. Few, however, are inhabited or used on a regular basis. There are approximately 20 permanent residents, and a handful of shops. Despite this decline, Walhalla remains a popular tourism destination.

Walhalla is an important piece of local and regional history, as well as being identified as a potential source of jobs and economic growth in Baw Baw Shire and the neighbouring LaTrobe Valley. The heritage is palpable. Gold-rush era buildings are nestled within a lush natural environment. The importance of respecting the town’s heritage cannot be understated.

Walhalla’s appeal lies in its heritage, there is no doubt about that. Preserving the past is key to a successful future for the town. However, there is risk in holding onto the heritage too tightly. If the town wants to remain a ‘living town’, present-day realities must be accepted.

In planning terms, the whole township is covered by the Heritage Overlay HO8, commencing just before ‘The Coach House’ and extending to the Chinese Gardens. On the ground, appreciation of Walhalla’s heritage commences along Walhalla Road, on the drive into town. The Thompson River rail crossing and train station form part of the heritage experience. Countless hours of restoration, maintenance, and research have been invested into the town’s built and natural features. Even though Walhalla was Victoria’s richest ever gold mine, the architectural style of the town is simple with small-scale buildings. However, their impressiveness extends well beyond the building footprints.

While Walhalla is known for its past, and in tourist promotion terms has a strong ‘brand’, it now needs to be known for its future. Relying solely on times gone by does not assist in achieving a sustainable future. Finding balance in the apparent tensions is key to finding a sustainable existence for the township.

This master plan is the latest in a suite of planning documents, elements of which have been implemented by the Shire and Government agencies over time. Further private and community initiatives have contributed to the value of Walhalla as a tourist destination and place of retreat from the pressures of the modern world.

There are plenty of ideas within agencies and the community about what should or could be done in Walhalla. Many are worthwhile. Getting them off the ground is the hard part.

So, before those ideas and responsibility for their implementation is described, what are adaptive pathways?



Figure 4

3. Adaptive Pathways

3.1 The method of approach

In its approach, this master plan differs from most. We are not providing a pre-determined end state for the town, doing so would be a disservice. Instead, we are providing the means for those involved in the township to take control of their future: an adaptive pathway.

‘Adaptive pathways’ are a method of planning for an uncertain future. The methodology emerged in response to climate change, but has since been adopted to suit a variety of contexts.

In the adaptive pathways approach, future goals and direction are provided, but exactly what form these take will be determined throughout the process of moving along the pathway.

While the Shire’s brief asked Ratio to identify its infrastructure responsibilities, the reality is it’s a collective responsibility to regenerate and manage a town. It rapidly became evident that infrastructure alone is insufficient.

In many senses the recommendation is not new. It’s about finding ways around hurdles. It provides steps to be undertaken in sequence, identifies the primary agency, and shows what the Shires’ responsibility is.

We know the future cannot be fully determined or predicted. The effects, or results, that the pathway works to achieve are not fixed states, rather aspirations for the future as communicated by the community and government agencies.

The town’s future as a sustainable, resilient town with a thriving tourism economy and content resident population is achieved through collective accumulative action.

The adaptive pathway approach is well suited to Walhalla, where balancing competing needs and desires emerged as a key challenge. Adaptive pathways are an inherently collaborative approach, allowing for frequent consultation with the community and stakeholders.

The adaptive pathway enables agencies and the wider community to identify who is responsible and what is possible within different scenarios and recognises what the potential flow-on effects are if they are achieved.

A recurring refrain from residents and agency representatives in our conversations at Walhalla has been that there is insufficient money to do what needs to be done, and insufficient clarity of resolve to get things done.

Finding who is responsible for what is exhausting to residents and those trying to contribute positively to Walhalla’s future. The governance of the town involves multiple stakeholders, vested interests, and agencies across all levels of governance. Taking a siloed approach will not help the town. The fact is that if Walhalla fails, it’s a responsibility shared amongst us all. The adaptive pathways approach seeks to break down the siloing of actions, responsibilities, and timelines. It reiterates the complex connectivity of this rich social-ecological system.

Baw Baw Shire is the primary conduit for most of the stewardship that will realise the aspirations set down in the decades-long reporting on Walhalla. As champions of Walhalla's future, they will work collaboratively with other agencies and external stakeholders to realise this Master Plan.

There is a collective responsibility that the technique of adaptive pathways can facilitate if used with skill by all parties. The interaction between agency and Shire interest is inextricably intertwined. Residents need to come together and manage the daily running of their town.

By way of an example of the appreciation of an ‘adaptive pathway’ process, a key request has been for reticulated sewage to be built in the town. This and other requests sometimes work on the assumption that failure to implement this infrastructure will cause the town to stultify and perhaps fail.

It’s expensive. What happens if it’s not installed?

The adaptive pathways method would say find alternatives.

Curious investigation in the right hands will find an answer.

The adaptive pathway is only as good as the participants in its arena, and their preparedness to make it work.

3.2 How does an adaptive pathway work?

An adaptive pathway can take many forms. The graphic at Figure 5 provides an example of the steps in an adaptive pathway, akin to the final adaptive pathway located on page 18.

No matter the form, the flow of actions in an adaptive pathway will reconcile long-term visions with immediate action through a sequencing of planning mechanisms.

Imagine that the pathway’s initiative is to build a sewerage system. The pathway in dark blue explores conventional reticulated methods. It gains support financially and is then built. The pathway is successful.

The same dark blue pathway could get to its first major step, but then not be supported. An alternative course of action is pursued seeking a similar end effect. The light blue pathway emerges. Creative and alternative thinking delivers a solution.

A further layer in this framework is to identify who is responsible and might carry the quest to a desired solution. In this example, only two stakeholders are represented. The reality in Walhalla is that there are multiple stakeholders.

It is important to keep the end goals front of mind, to see that a diversity of actions can lead to a collectively-envisioned future. As such, the ‘Effects’, or end goals, of the master plan’s adaptive pathway are not concrete actions, but rather some of the most commonly expressed aspirations for the future.

3.3 Managing risk

Walhalla is susceptible to natural disasters, and the small community currently has low-levels of resilience to recover from such events.

Certain actions within the adaptation pathway are included to mitigate the risk of natural disasters. They are vital steps required to safeguard all other initiatives taken and will protect residents and visitors into the future.

The entire town is covered by a Bushfire Management Overlay, with a modest area having a Bushfire Attack Level of 291. There is only one access road to the town, which is lengthy and surrounded by bush. There is no suitable place of refuge within Walhalla. The risk of bushfire needs to be carefully mitigated in accordance with the appropriate state requirements, and sufficient vegetation management.

A Floodway Overlay and Land Subject to Inundation Overlay follows Stringers Creek through the town. The West Gippsland Catchment Authority advised us that the location of planning mechanisms are incorrect, and therefore do not accurately or sufficiently protect the town. The 2021 flood was devastating to the community, and highlighted the importance of safeguarding these fragile heritage buildings with the most accurate data. A planning scheme amendment is required to re-align the flood-related overlays. Equally, a full hydrological study of the creek is deemed necessary, and was much called-for by the community. 75% of survey respondents supported a hydrological study of Stringers Creek.

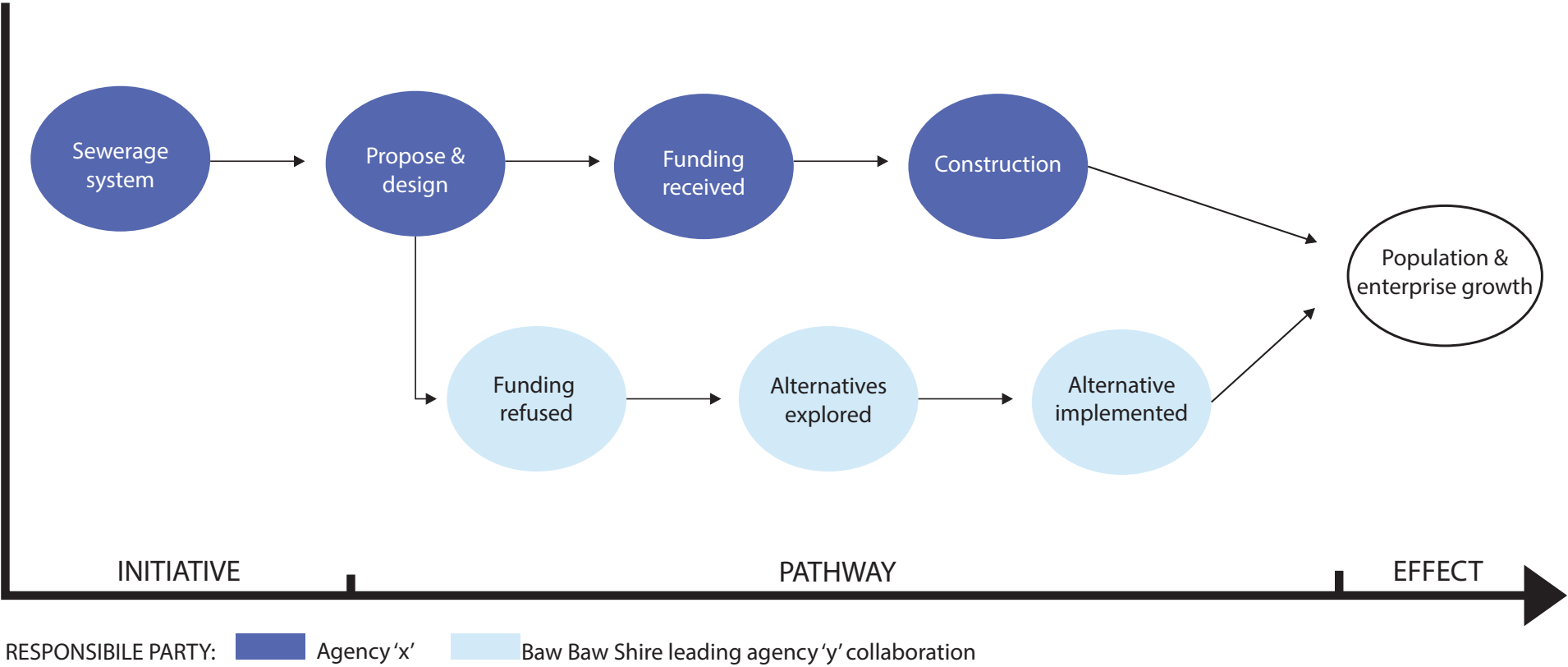


Figure 5

4. What We Heard

There was a strong desire within the community to contribute to this master plan. Amongst community members and consulted government agencies there is no shortage of interest and dedication to the future of the town. 13 one-on-one or small group meetings were held, and the online survey received 28 responses.

The one-on-one sessions were organised so that community members could provide honest feedback on their perceived issues around the town, and their aspirations for the future. Ratio met with the community both on-site in the Mechanics Institute Hall and online. We were also able to explore parts of the town with certain community members, visiting their dwellings and places of business.

The online survey was available for interested persons to provide written submissions relating to twenty-eight quantitative and qualitative questions. The survey sought to provide insight regarding various key identified 'issues', and the respective infrastructure opportunities arising from these.

Survey responses were provided by various parties including (but not limited to) residents; business owners; visitors; and volunteers.



Figure 6

Everyone wanted development to occur, albeit to varying degrees. A total of 62 actions were identified throughout the engagement process. Any development, however, must be respectful of the heritage value. 89% of survey respondents stated they 'very much' valued the history of Walhalla.

The community, self-reflectively, are aware of their limited capabilities. They are a passionate group who would benefit from expert experience and advice, and thus are looking to the Shire and State to provide leadership and guidance. Still, they are a crucial component to the town's management, and need to be recognised as such.

The 20 most frequently mentioned actions were:

1. Increase maintenance of the town and heritage features
2. Waste-disposal (sewerage) solution and reticulated water
3. Camping to be formalised and monetised
4. Hydrological study of Stringers Creek
5. Railway extension to Erica
6. Generator or alternative power supply for times of blackouts
7. A footpath running through the town
8. Reinstate historical street lighting
9. Public toilet provision is insufficient
10. Additional road barriers along the drive into Walhalla
11. Resolve the complicated governance structures
12. Waterwheel interpretation
13. Implement place of refuge for times of disaster
14. Address the ad-hoc car parking in the town centre
15. Protect heritage features and buildings
16. Improve access along Church Hill Road
17. Create a sense of arrival
18. A sustainable population reached
19. Provide a green waste service
20. Tied, between:
 - a. Extend the Alpine Trail through the town
 - b. Resolve land tenure uncertainty within the town

5. Community Feedback

The overarching community feedback was the desire to see Walhalla thrive and address the various challenges facing the community.

Feedback from the in-person meetings and online survey has been collated and grouped into seven overarching themes:

- Governance
- Infrastructure
- History
- Economy
- Tourism
- Movement
- Environment.

The extent of feedback was substantial, and at times contradictory. An understandable consequence. As consultants our role is to find a balance. The community welcomed us and provided vital information. We have taken their requests and endeavoured to create a cohesive vision and path forward for the town. The recommendations emerging from community consultation are listed in Section 6.

5.1 Governance

The most common complaint from the community was frustration over a perceived lack of action from government agencies. They were also frustrated at the lack of prior consultation, the lack of coordination between state-level agencies, a reactive rather than proactive approach to disaster management, and unkept promises.

Survey respondents clearly identified a complex relationship in the governance of the town and the multitude of agencies which are required to be involved given the historic, tourism, and environmental assets of the Walhalla area.

Community complaints around governance extend to the maintenance of Crown Land, which reportedly is poorly maintained and vegetation encroaches onto private property. Residents are maintaining the Crown Land, in order to protect their dwellings and minimise the overall fire hazard.

Further, the survey responses outlined a clear desire for improved governance over the Walhalla Cricket Ground. Specifically, the survey responses almost unanimously sought for the use of the Walhalla Cricket Ground to be opened up for community and tourism purposes. Given these responses, and subsequent investigation into the requirements and processes of Parks Victoria, there appears to be a wide-spread misunderstanding within the community as to what is, and isn't, allowed to take place on the ground. See Recommendation 9 on page 20 for further details.

Positively, it was reported that the Community Recovery Committee (CRC) has been successful in bringing people together and building capacity through soft-infrastructure investments. This example demonstrates the benefit of Council-community partnerships, and highlights the importance of soft-infrastructure investments.

Respondents have stressed that agencies should work together, increase communication, and demonstrate better leadership of the town. They urge agencies to undertake their required responsibilities.

5.2 Infrastructure

Provision of infrastructure is complicated within Walhalla, with its remoteness, stringent Bushfire Management and Heritage controls concurrently applying to all land, and often unclear land tenure status.

Sewerage was the most-requested service. Some businesses requested the certainty of a long-term sewerage management solution. For residents, it is understood that construction of new dwellings is almost impossible due to no pre-approved sewerage management approach for the town. Quite simply, the town cannot grow and achieve a sustainable population if more dwellings cannot be constructed.

People advocated for additional accommodation and housing. Some residents were open to sympathetic modern developments occurring in areas that cannot be seen from the main street.

Residents also requested an independent power supply to be used in case of blackouts, more public toilets (or facilities for campers), a sense of arrival in town, additional road barriers, and upgrades to Church Hill Road.

The survey respondents outlined a strong desire to reinstate historical street lighting, noting that it was frequently identified by almost half of the survey respondents as a key infrastructure requirement for Walhalla, and will support the heritage characteristics of the township.

5.3 History

The town's historical value is fragile, and could be easily eroded by unsympathetic developments.

Residents demanded that government agencies adhere to the Heritage Guidelines, noting that over 85% of survey respondents identified that adhering to the historic guidelines is critical to the management of the town's history. Many requested that the colour of the road be reinstated by DTP after their recent works.

Local residents must also themselves adhere to the heritage guidelines. The idea of a 'welcome pack' for new residents that outlines the heritage requirements was well received.

However, as they are, these guidelines are complex and may be challenging for many. If the town's population is to grow, the Shire must work with community members to ensure awareness and an understanding of the unique requirements. Bi-annual information sessions with Council planners could be of benefit.

82% of survey respondents strongly agreed with the statement: "History is crucial to the future of Walhalla".

6. Community Group Feedback

6.1 Walhalla Mountain Rivers Tourism Association

The tourism association seeks to encourage growth of the tourist economy, promote Walhalla as a destination of choice, and lobby to the government for funding opportunities. They, like most within the town, see tourism as the future economic lifeline of Walhalla.

To grow the tourism industry and economic viability of Walhalla, the Tourism Association has four priorities:

- Increase co-ordination amongst tourism operators,
- Extend the Railway to Erica,
- Increase events and tourist ‘drawcards’,
- Ensure the heritage value of the town is respected and maintained.

They also have four key concerns:

- The Association is reliant on inconsistent government funding,
- The complicated nature of governance structures halt development within the town,
- Heritage guidelines are being ignored,
- Business capabilities need improving, through training and collaboration

In terms of infrastructure, their first request is to find a solution to the lack of formalised sewerage treatment/removal facilities. They find that a solution to this identified problem is required to support business growth. Currently, some business owners spend significant funds on sewerage pump outs, and the restrained sewerage capacity limits overnight visitor numbers.

Secondly, the Association wishes to see carparking revised within the town.

Thirdly, they support the formalisation and an increase of camping spaces.

6.2 Walhalla Goldfields Railway (WGR)

The WGR is one of the largest businesses in town, operating an historical narrow-gauge track between Walhalla and Thompson Station. Run primarily by volunteers, the Railway is a unique experience, and a big tourism draw card within the town. It won the 2022 Gippsland Tourism Activities and Attractions award.

There is a widespread, long held, wish amongst the community and WGR to extend the railway to nearby Erica. For the WGR, this would expand their business opportunities and uplift operations to become a sustainable business, as opposed to a volunteer-run organisation. For the community, the track extension would allow visitors to park at Erica, and further pedestrianise the township of Walhalla.

This is a lofty ambition, with many challenges and obstacles. Primarily, the cost is sizeable, and associated risks are high.

The WGR’s vision in the short term is to release a business case and feasibility study, to advocate for the railway extension. In the longer term, they wish to extend the line, grow their business, and operate 7 days a week. They reported that the extension of the railway line is an economic multiplier for their business, and crucial for the future success of the town.

The WGR is a private organisation, and Council’s capabilities are limited to an advocacy role. WGR can petition to Council for advocacy support.

The WGR is currently facing a number of costs associated with maintaining the rail line, the many bridges it crosses, and the locomotive fleet. Private investment or government grants are a potential way forward.

6.3 Walhalla Heritage & Development League Inc. (WH&DL)

The WH&DL was established in 1945 to support and protect the town’s gold-era heritage. With over 200 members, they are a well-regarded authority around the history of the town. They own the Corner Stores buildings, and maintain a collection of historic photographs and records. Whilst their primary focus is on maintaining the heritage values, they do support and call for a number of developments within the township.

Primarily, they request a town-wide approach to sewerage, so that the system can support an increase in tourist numbers, and withstand the influx of people in peak periods, such as easter. Secondly, they request upgrades to the main road so that traffic is minimised, cars are discouraged from parking along the main street, and the primary mode of transport to visit around the town is via foot. They identified that cars parked within the historic town centre detract from the heritage facades, and block the impressive scenic views. Their third concern in relation to the tourist experience was regarding camping. They would like to see improved camping facilities in more locations. Local residents must also themselves adhere to the heritage guidelines. The idea of a ‘welcome pack’ for new residents that outlines the heritage requirements was well received.

The WH&DL have also worked to install historical signage around town. The township would benefit from an overarching wayfinding study, which could incorporate maps, historical information, parking directions, and other identified needs.

Beyond requests for improvements to tourist-related infrastructure, the WH&DL also identified issues of land management. They believe declaring Walhalla a Natural Disaster Location would be of benefit to the town, opening up greater funding opportunities to support disaster mitigation and recovery. They would like to see increased collaboration between government agencies to achieve a stream-lined governance system for the town. They request that a committee similar to those in place for the Alpine Resorts be explored.

In response to the 2021 flood, they request a hydrologist be engaged to assess water management measures, taking a whole-of-system approach to Stringers Creek. They request the development of restriction points to trap debris in the occurrence of a flood event before it flows through the town and potentially damages historic structures, and would like improved maintenance of vegetation within the creek’s riparian zone.

The WH&DL also voiced concerns around the unreliable telecommunications services, which are often cut-off in the event of a natural disaster, posing safety concerns for visitors who may rely on emergency warnings and up-to-date advice. They support the purchase of a generator or battery storage system, to provide the town with electricity and thus communication services in times of system black-out.

Finally, they request funding so that they can continue their work to maintain heritage buildings, and can look to explore rebuilding significant sites that have since fallen into disrepair.

6.4 Waterwheel Committee

A small but aspirational group, the Waterwheel committee envisions celebrating the seven waterwheels that once stood in Stringers Creek. They seek to increase the number of tourist attractions in Walhalla, and foster a greater awareness of and appreciation for the history of the town.

The journey of the largest Waterwheel (weighing 20 tons), from Port Albert to Walhalla on a cart, is certainly an impressive feat. Telling the story embeds the importance of historical regional links throughout Gippsland, and speaks to the potential of these links to be maintained into the future.

The Waterwheel committee have supplied preliminary drawings of their vision for the Waterwheel display, which may include information boards, a miniature replica waterwheel, and make use of light displays to create a hologram effect. They have raised substantial funds, contributed to by the broader community. However, the next steps appear unclear, facing challenges with implementing their vision.

It is suggested that the committee utilise some of their funds to engage a graphic artist, who can help refine their vision and produce drawings and plans suitable for grant applications. Collaboration with agency groups will be required after their vision is finalised, as the committee do not hold land upon which the display can be located.

This local initiative is well regarded amongst the community, with 88% of survey respondents stating they supported a waterwheel interpretation within Walhalla.

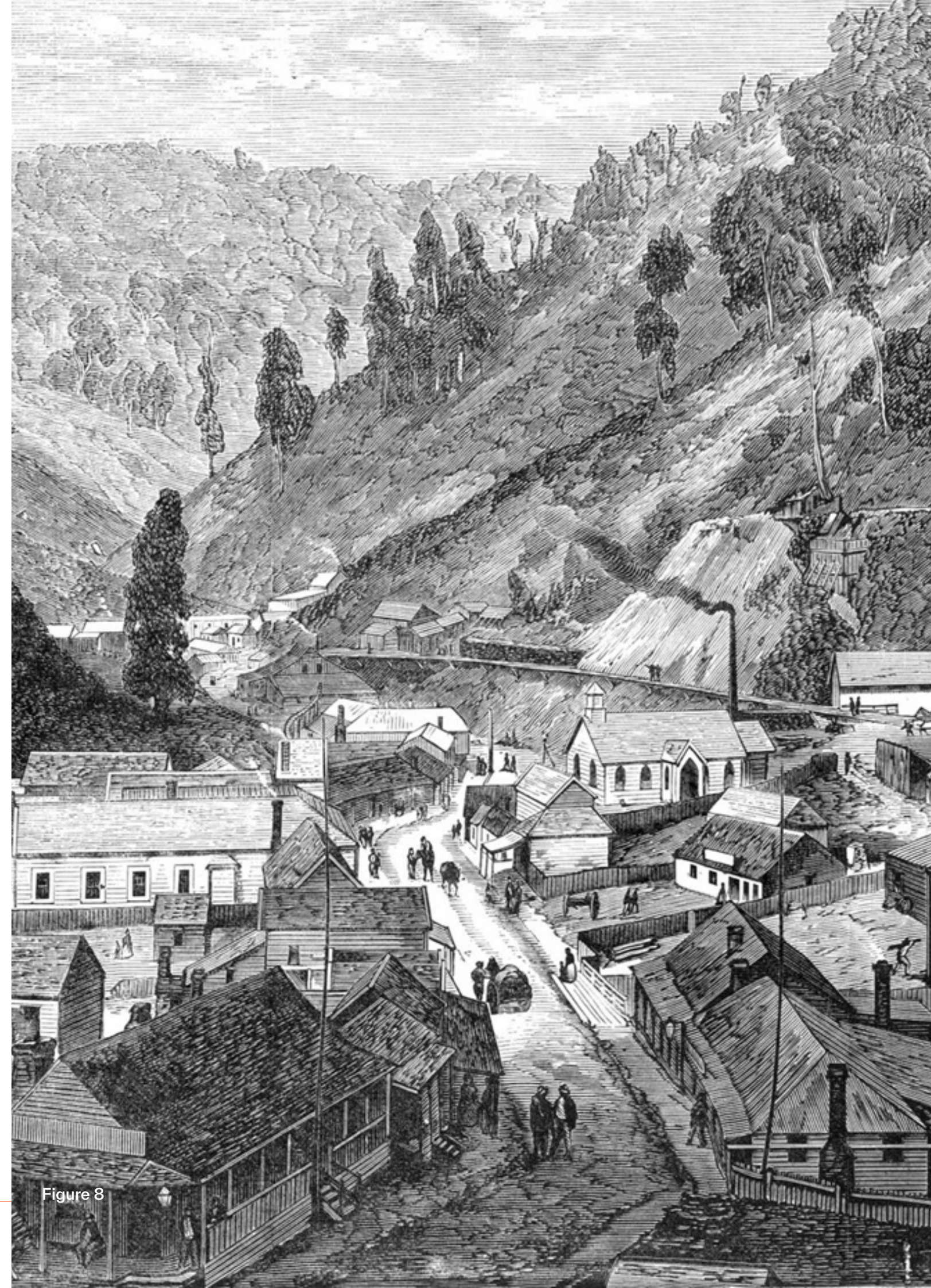


Figure 8

7. Agency Feedback

7.1 Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA)

DEECA are land owners of multiple sites within Walhalla, the management of which is organised by the Walhalla Board of Management (WBoM) under the Crown Land (Reserves) Act 1978. These sites include:

- Walhalla Mechanics Institute
- The historic Walhalla Post Office
- Walhalla Railway
- The Long Tunnel Extended Gold Mine
- The former Walhalla State School site
- The Chinese Gardens campground

DEECA are heavily invested in supporting the local community, and will be a key player in the future of the town. They brought four key issues to our attention.

Firstly, land tenure within Walhalla is complex and often not well defined. Due to the way the town expanded during the gold rush, land parcels are managed by a range of government agencies, all with varying responsibilities and capacities. This accumulates in confusion and frustration within the local community over inconsistent maintenance and lines of communication. This was a complaint often raised during meetings with local residents. It would be of benefit to all government agencies and the local community to undertake a comprehensive and definitive review of land and facility management. The results of which should be clearly communicated to residents.

Secondly, also stemming from the ad hoc expansion of the town, 42 private dwellings have been constructed on Crown land. The consequence of this issue is that private individuals do not own the land on which their home is constructed, and banks therefore will not offer loans for redevelopment or the purchase of these properties. This halts development, growth, and investment opportunities within the town. DEECA have been surveying these lots in preparation for a Hardship Land Sale, which would see the title of the lots exchanged to residents. A planning scheme amendment is required to undertake the sale, rezoning the lands from PCRZ to SUZ1. It is our understanding that collaboration with the CFA would be required for the amendment to proceed. An Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) must also be negotiated with the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation as the Native Title holders over the lands, prior to any sale being able to proceed. This process provides Native Title holders a right of veto to the sale and an agreement has not yet been achieved. The planning scheme amendment and subsequent Hardship Land Sale should be a priority in the agency working group meetings established as part of this master planning process.

The third issue is the development of the WBoM. DEECA have invested large amounts of time and soft infrastructure to develop the Board into a strategic mechanism for the town’s advancement. It would be beneficial to the Board, and thus the town, to apply for government grants to facilitate their economic growth and elevation of property assets. The WBoM are a key stakeholder within the town, and greater collaboration with other community agencies would also be of benefit. A strategic document is expected to be released by the WBoM by the end of 2023.

Finally, whilst the Walhalla Goldfields Railway (WGR) is operational on DEECA land, they do not have recurrent funding through the agency. It is an expectation of the licencing agreement that the WGR generate funds through their business operations to maintain their assets. As discussed above, there is ambition amongst the community to extend the railway line to Erica. Funding for such a project would require substantial governance overhaul within the WGR, who are presently a volunteer agency. There are grants available to the WGR, and it is suggested that they work to improve their governance structure and operational viability in the short term, before seeking grants to extend the railway.

7.2 Department of Transport and Planning

DTP manage the main arterial road leading to, and passing through, Walhalla. As a state-level agency, their main priorities are to implement the Road Management Act and ensure the highest level of safety for all road users.

DTP, like DEECA, expressed interest in a review of land and facility management, noting that zones of management are unclear throughout the town. The result of such a study would be to clarify boundaries between agencies, or to establish zones of shared responsibility, which is a suggestion DTP believe suitable for Walhalla.

DTP’s management of roads is from a movement perspective. Yet, they have heard requests from the community to activate the road reserve in Walhalla, taking more of a place-based approach. Collaboration with Council and the community would be required to enact such a shift in management perspective. However, as with all agencies, DTP have struggled to achieve consensus within Walhalla, which complicates and delays works.

The community is very concerned with how the town, and the road, looks. They expect 100% compliance to the heritage guidelines. DTP can appreciate this desire, however they are held responsible to state-level requirements for roads, which are established to achieve a safe road environment. It is recommended that DTP undertake a review of the heritage guidelines for Walhalla, and explore how they can be implemented whilst still respecting the Road Management Act, and overall ensuring high levels of safety.

A key recommendation of this master plan is to undertake a traffic and pedestrian movement study. DTP would be a key stakeholder in such a process. The result of such a report would be to slow and reduce traffic movement through the town, which will increase safety and reduce pedestrian-vehicle interactions. This may allow for some flexibility to adhere to the heritage guidelines, such as having no centre white lines throughout the historic town centre.

7.3 West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA)

WGCMA are the referral authority who manage the waterway health for Stringers Creek. As the creek winds through the centre of Walhalla, they are influential in the success of the town, most notably in relation to risk mitigation. Stringers Creek has significant flooding risks.

The WGCMA believe that there is an opportunity for coordinated management of Stringers creek through a Wayterway Management Plan, developed in collaboration with the community and other agencies.

The 2021 flood was devastating for the town, causing extensive damage and social impacts. To protect the creek and township against future flood events, a full hydrological study of the creek is required. To date, repairs of the creek walls have been ad hoc, and the creek is not being considered as a singular natural system. The stability of creek walls is a major concern for adjacent asset owners, with erosion posing a serious issue. With residences and heritage buildings constructed in such close proximity to the waterway, there is little room for movement.

A detailed Water Management Plan would coordinate all government agencies, facilitate increased stabilisation works of the creek walls, establish a shared weed control project, and may consider naturalisation of the creek system and walls (where possible whilst respecting heritage aspects). Furthermore, a review of the recent flood mapping that was completed prior to the June 2019 may lead to an update to the Flood Overlays within the Planning Scheme.

The collective effect of such actions would be increased mitigation against future flooding. It is important to note, however, that flooding will always remain a concern within Walhalla. In the online survey, the vast majority of respondents supported a comprehensive review of Stringers Creek.

7.4 Parks Victoria

Parks Victoria (ParksVic) manage the majority of the Crown Land that surrounds Walhalla, which is classified as an Historical Area. They also manage some parcels of land and walking tracks within the township itself.

ParksVic's management of Walhalla is outlined in their Greater Alpine National Parks Management Plan (2016). In the document, and through conversations with agency staff, it is clear that the walking trails through the area are a top priority.

Their overarching goal for Walhalla is to "provide the opportunities for recreation and exploration of an historic gold mining township, which supports the Walhalla community and regional tourism". The goal summarises a key challenge for ParksVic - preserving the historical features of Walhalla whilst encouraging local residents and the broader community to experience and enjoy the unique area. Strategies detailed within the Management Plan include promoting the Great Walhalla Alpine Trail as a key experience, and promotion of all the walking trails in and around Walhalla.

In our engagement with ParksVic, they suggested it would be useful to undertake a mapping exercise that identifies connectivity gaps within their network of trails, and planning for new linkages. They were also very supportive of increased signage and storytelling, so that the history of Walhalla is well understood and appreciated by visitors. ParksVic have signage guides that must be followed, but encourage collaboration with and suggestions from the local community.

ParksVic were supportive of a review of local land management, to determine responsibilities of each of the government agencies. ParksVic actually undertook a similar activity in 2015, which would be an excellent starting point. During their 2015 study, ParksVic identified areas of land that may be better managed by different government agencies. This would need to be determined in a collaborative manner with all of the agencies present and consenting.



Figure 9.

8. Walhalla Agency Working Group

The primary recommendation to emerge out of this master planning process is for the government agencies who manage land, water, or have a stake in Walhalla to form a working group.

The following agencies have committed to the Walhalla Agency Working Group: Baw Baw Shire, ParksVic, WGCMA, DEECA, and DTP. They will work alongside Baw Baw Shire to ensure implementation of the adaptive pathway.

The intent behind this recommendation is twofold.

Firstly, this working group will benefit the agencies. Management of Walhalla falls under multiple state agencies. Their areas of interest are often overlapping, abutting, or not well defined. After consulting with many of these agencies, we have come to understand that numerous issues facing Walhalla require collaborative action. Formalised, regular meetings would facilitate such action. We anticipate that regular meetings will ease some of the burden placed on these agencies, as they can find a pathway forward that combines their strengths and mobilises collective action.

Secondly, this working group will be of benefit to the Walhalla community. The residents of Walhalla are fed up with a perceived lack of action by these agencies. The community have high demands and expectations for their town, and need to see that progress is being made. This master plan comes after a long line of plans that have not been implemented. Quite simply, the local community need to see that the master plan is being implemented. Equally, residents' demands for action need to be focused on achievable, realistic steps. It is also confusing for residents to know who to contact when something goes wrong. Having a regular working group will funnel residents' feedback, and alleviate the burden of calling around to multiple agencies.

After discussions with Baw Baw Shire, the remit and format of the Walhalla Agency Working Group (WAWG) is clear:

- The WAWG will be chaired by Baw Baw Shire, and meet once a quarter.
- Directly affected residents or members of the local community may be invited to attend certain sessions.
- Once per year, the WAWG will hold a town meeting, where all community members can attend, to discuss the progress of the working group. At this yearly meeting, the WAWG will celebrate their wins with the local community, and discuss ongoing progress or barriers faced. Open lines of communication should facilitate greater trust of government within the community.
- The remit of the working group will be to implement the recommendations contained within this master plan document. However, a position should also be created within Council, so that there is an individual spearheading action, organising the WAWG, and who ultimately is responsible for ensuring the recommendations are implemented.

Baw Baw Shire is the conduit through which this master plan will be implemented. However, the WAWG will play a crucial role in its success.



Figure 10

9. A Path Forward

The planning system searches for consistency and order, two qualities missing in Walhalla. The system struggles to implement its optimised, refined mechanisms in this town. So, rather than persevering for alternatives, planning has often been challenged by the case of Walhalla.

This place is so complex and unique that only a truly fit-for-purpose approach will do.

The adaptive pathway approach urges us to find solutions, much like the Walhalla residents. There were approximately 70 requested actions that emerged from the consultation process. Not all have been included as recommendations. Many of the requests were for infrastructure or initiatives that lie outside of a council's scope. They, however, were great ideas that the community or businesses could further explore and invest in.

The following recommendations will create an environment in which community life and businesses can flourish. They have been identified for their capacity to spark further investment, activity, and improvements within Walhalla. With these initiatives, Baw Baw Shire can further fulfill its responsibility to create a platform upon which community life and private enterprise can thrive.

The following adaptive pathway is deceptively simple yet complex. The directives, pathways, clear. The responsibility, assigned. The possible future is beginning to be envisioned and within reach.

The complexity lies in the collaboration. In the typical mainstreamed, siloed approach, complexity is challenging. Yet, Walhalla is complex, and so only the complexity of collaborative action will work to save the town.

We encourage the town, residents, Shire, and government agencies to create the best possible future.

There are five categories of initiatives, which will contribute to eight envisioned future states. It is important to focus local and government efforts on commonly agreed upon outcomes.

The eight future states represent well-regarded, commonly-held aspirations for the future of Walhalla, as communicated by local residents and invested stakeholders. They are:

- Increase and improve tourism attractions
- Increase revenue
- Increase collective action
- Safety
- Population growth
- Historical preservation
- Increase well-being
- Healthy natural environment



Figure 11

10. Walhalla's Adaptive Pathway

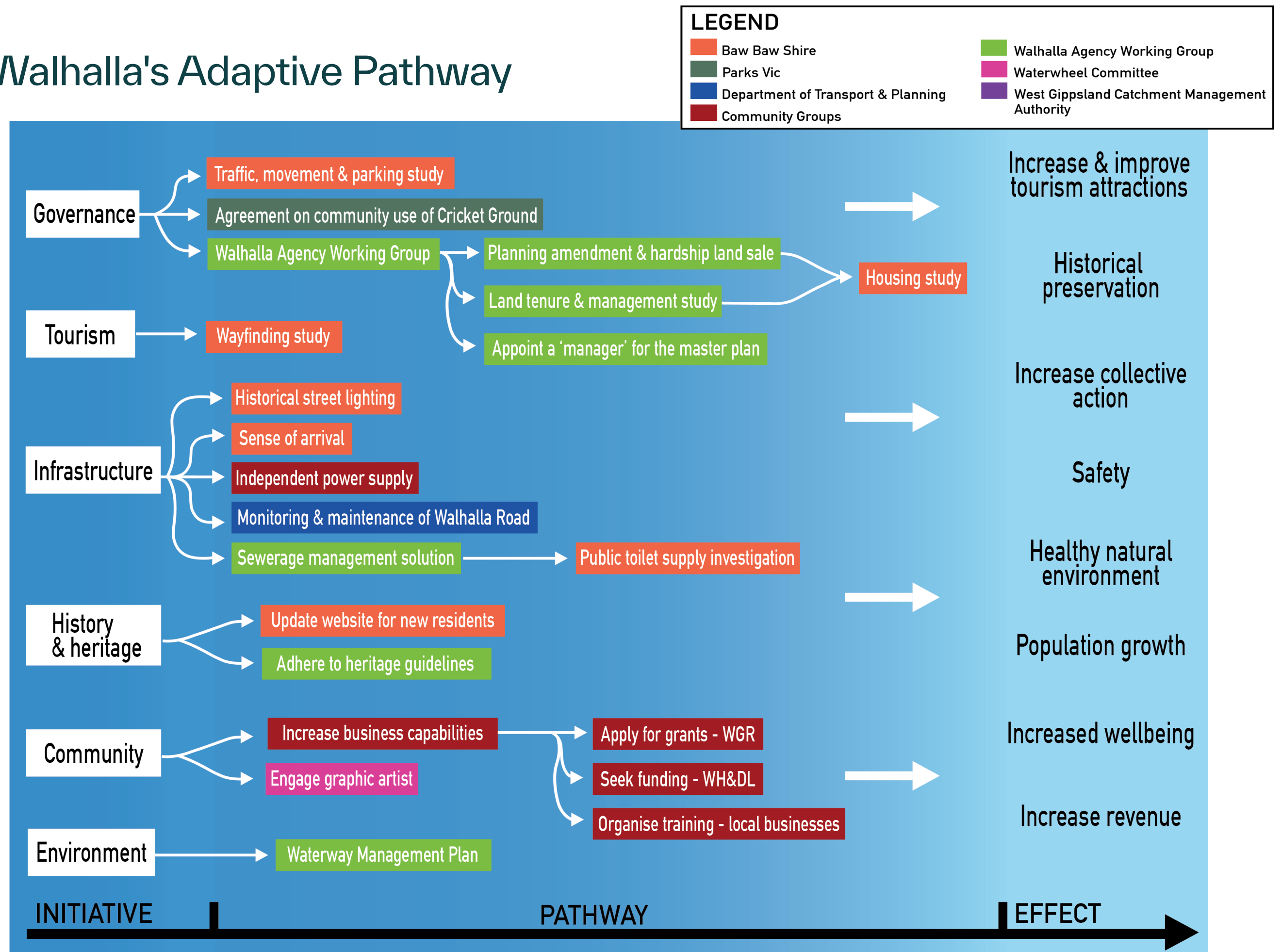


Figure 12

11. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been grouped and ordered thematically. The numbering system does not respresent a ranking of priorities.

Governance

1. Establish a Walhalla Agency Working Group.

Baw Baw Shire to establish and chair collaborative group meetings with state-level agency bodies involved in Walhalla. See section 8 of this report.

2. Baw Baw Shire and WAWG to create a position that is responsible for the implementation of this masterplan.

As has been discussed, there have been many previous studies and 'masterplans' for Walhalla that have not been fully implemented. This has disheartened the local community and cannot continue with this report.

To ensure accountability, assist in implementing the recommendations listed here, and facilitate the running of the WAWG, it is crucial that a position be created within the Shire. The position, however, would be co-funded by the WAWG, and work to facilitate streamlined relations between government agencies and the community.

This individual would be responsible for delivering the masterplan.

The WAWG will determine financing agreements for this position upon official commencement of working group meetings.

3. WAWG to undertake comprehensive and definitive land and facility management review of all public land (including Crown land) in Walhalla.

Land parcels in Walhalla are managed by a range of government agencies, all with varying responsibilities and capacities. This accumulates in confusion and frustration within the local community over inconsistent maintenance and lines of communication. This was a complaint often raised during meetings with local residents. DEECA also identified that such a study would be beneficial.

To resolve uncertainty, streamline and standardise agency management, and relieve the frustration amongst residents, a comprehensive and definitive review of land and facility management should be undertaken. The results of which should be clearly communicated to residents.

4. Baw Baw Shire to undertake a planning scheme amendment to facilitate the Hardship Land Sale of the 42 affected propertites.

As discussed in section 7.1, a number of private dwellings have been constructed on Crown Land. DEECA are working to prepare surveys of the affected sites, in preparation for a Hardship Land Sale, which would see the transfer of ownership to those currently living in the dwellings.

However, you cannot sell land zoned PCRZ, so a rezoning to SUZ1 is required. This necessitates collaboration from the Shire, CFA, and GLaWAC. This process should be managed by the WAWG, but the final planning scheme amendment will be undertaken by the Shire.

5. Baw Baw Shire to explore alternative accommodation models to boost supply.

To ensure a viable, successful future for Walhalla as a 'living town', population increase needs to occur.

Population growth is tied to housing and accommodation supply. For Baw Baw Shire to safeguard the future of the township and alleviate some of the pressures impacting economic growth, we recommend that they investigate possibilities to increase land and housing availability through fit-for-purpose solutions.

Walhalla is a unique location that requires a unique housing offering. Possible scope for sustainable, low-impact, low-footprint, and adaptable dwellings has been identified. Tiny homes are a potential solution. It is advisable that the Shire investigate alternatives that can be embedded within their planning policies.

Much of the community agreed that Walhalla needed to grow its population to reach a sustainable, permanent base of residents. Yet, there were varying thoughts around exactly how big the sustainable population should be. The most popular response in the online survey was 81-100 people, with 29% of votes. Following that was a population of 51-80 permanent residents, with 21% of votes.

We also spoke to business owners and sole traders who cannot find staff. They reported that the issue was there is no accommodation in town.

6. Baw Baw Shire and Department of Transport and Planning to conduct a detailed traffic and movement study.

This study will investigate parking requirements and pedestrian facilities, and explore the potential for alternative transport modes. As expressed previously, the road is central in Walhalla. Cars and pedestrians alike move throughout the town on this one thoroughfare.

In times of low-visitation, the shared car-pedestrian space functions to a reasonable level of success. However, during peak periods, parked cars overwhelm the narrow road, traffic backs up, and pedestrians are placed in an unsafe environment.

There has been a long desire within the Walhalla community to pedestrianise the town. This is a legitimate idea worth exploring.

One potential method to discourage cars from driving through the town is to formalise parking areas before the entry into the narrow historic core. People would be encouraged to leave their cars and walk a short distance. This idea, and more, should be explored in a detailed traffic and movement study that takes a holistic approach to managing pedestrian, car, and bike movement throughout the town.

7. WGR to explore grant opportunities to increase their capacity as an organisation.

The Walhalla Goldfields Railway has lofty ambitions to extend their current track to Erica. They see this as a means to increase their income, brand awareness, and employment opportunities.

The enormity of this task cannot be underestimated. If it is a dream that WGR and the community want to fight for, then WGR needs to start this process with increasing their organisational capacity. Presently, they are a volunteer organisation with 1.5 staff members.

It is understood that the WGR is also exploring a feasibility study, which is another important step. If the WGR can continue to grow, then one day the railway extension may be realised.

<p>8. WH&DL to explore funding/grant possibilities to maintain heritage buildings.</p> <p>The WH&DL requested greater funding so that they can continue their work of maintaining heritage buildings, and can look to explore rebuilding significant sites that have fallen into disrepair.</p> <p>As many of these sites are located on private land, there is little scope for council to assist in these requests. It is suggested, then, that the WH&DL explore alternative funding pathways.</p> <p>9. Agreement reached on community use of Walhalla Cricket Ground.</p> <p>The Walhalla Cricket Ground is managed by ParksVic, however mostly maintained by the local cricket club. The community have expressed desire to use this space more often, for cricket, community gatherings, and to host visitors.</p> <p>Having engaged with both the community and ParksVic, there appears to be misunderstandings as to how the cricket ground can be used. Under ParksVic's management guidelines, the community are able to use the Cricket Ground under some circumstances.</p> <p>The community can use the Cricket Ground, as of right, for groups of up to 30 people. However, once the use becomes an 'event' (over 30 people, or entry fees are charged), then there is a process that the community must go through to obtain a permit. Permits are required for insurance purposes and to ensure events are in keeping with the heritage values of the area. This process is documented on the ParksVic website.</p> <p>To assist in fostering more open lines of communication, ParksVic recommended that the community register as formal volunteers. By doing this, they will have access to Park Connect, the online portal that volunteers use to track usage of ParksVic land. For example, the monthly maintenance, local matches, or small gatherings, can be recorded and easily approved.</p> <p>Registering as formal volunteers should be the first step in fostering a more cohesive, collaborative approach to the management and use of the Cricket Ground. It will assist in alleviating the day-to-day frustrations within the community of managing the ground.</p>	<p>However, a longer-term vision should also be negotiated between ParksVic and the community. It is important that ParksVic works with the community so that they understand the requirements, and can both work to establish a shared vision of how the ground may be used in the future.</p> <p>It would be of benefit to the community to utilise the Cricket Ground to foster greater social relations. It is an existing, underutilised asset that would serve this purpose well.</p> <p>Infrastructure</p> <p>10. WAWG to investigate and propose a long-term, whole-of-town, sewerage management solution.</p> <p>There are a number of sewerage-management models currently in use within Walhalla. However, some businesses and community members experience uncertainty around the legislation, or ongoing maintenance of these facilities.</p> <p>It may be that a whole-of-town solution needs to be created. Alternatively, a solution may already be in use. Investigations uncovered that recent builds have been approved with EPA-compliant sewerage management.</p> <p>The WAWG should investigate existing and potential solutions, and work on a communications campaign to inform the community and potential investors of their options.</p> <p>11. Baw Baw Shire to investigate current public toilet provision.</p> <p>Community members complained that in peak periods, the current public toilet provision was inadequate for tourists and visitors to the town.</p> <p>The Shire should investigate the need for and present supply of public toilets available in the town through their next shire-wide study. The results of this study will determine if further public toilets are required. If so, Council should work to install them as soon as possible.</p> <p>12. Baw Baw Shire to reinstate historic street lighting.</p> <p>Walhalla was one of the earlier towns to have street lighting. This is one aspect of Walhalla's history of mechanical and industrial excellence, often related to the early mining activities.</p>	<p>Re-instating the street lighting would be a celebration of Walhalla's rich history. It would also provide another feature that contributes to the historical 'living town' experience for tourists. Iconic heritage lighting may contribute to night-time festivals and events within the township.</p> <p>13. Baw Baw Shire to establish a sense of arrival in town.</p> <p>One's experience of Walhalla begins at the turn-off to Walhalla Road. It is a journey through gorgeous lush landscape and historical marvels.</p> <p>This experience of travel is an important aspect of Walhalla's brand. It helps mark it as a place to visit, something special, and somewhere different. The journey through bushland is akin to travelling through time.</p> <p>This journey, then, should be followed by the experience of 'arriving'. At present, there is little to officially welcome you to the town of Walhalla. The signs at the start of the township do not carry much visual presence, and leave little impression on arriving tourists.</p> <p>The arrival to town would be strengthened through the presence of a sign, large plaque, or sculpture that sets the tone for the rest of your experience.</p> <p>We understand that there is works underway for a 'resilience sculpture' element at the entry to the township. This could form an appropriate welcome structure when grounded in landscaped surrounds.</p> <p>14. Residents to source an independent power supply through government grants, with the assistance of Council.</p> <p>Many residents were concerned about the power outages that occur in Walhalla during times of emergency. Of most concern was the impact these blackouts have on mobile phone service. Clearly, being able to communicate is essential in a time of emergency.</p> <p>The Shire, through the CRC, should work with the community to identify available grants, and write a letter of support for when the community does apply for a grant.</p>
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15. Department of Transport and Planning will continue to maintain and monitor Walhalla Road in accordance with the Road Management Act and road safety requirements.

We acknowledge that this is a windy, rural road, and road safety measures have been undertaken and will continue to be monitored as required under the Road Management Act.

DTO welcomes feedback from the community in relation to Walhalla Road.

Many locals reported a low sense of security when driving along Walhalla Road. Reports of witnessing many near-misses, reckless driving, and speeding need to be directed to Victoria Police.

History and Heritage

16. Baw Baw Shire to update 'New Residents' website page with a link that re-directs to the heritage and built form requirements for Walhalla.

Much like modern work done by government agencies, inappropriate development by private land owners can deduct from Walhalla's heritage-town status.

Given that the heritage controls are so stringent and specific to Walhalla, it is recommended that the Shire ensure ease of access to the planning requirements for new residents.

17. Government agencies to adhere to the Heritage guidelines when undertaking works, where possible.

Walhalla has very strict heritage guidelines. They work to govern and maintain the significance of the town as a heritage feature. They also ensure a cohesive experience of the built form within the township.

Not following these guidelines risks undermining the already fragile heritage values of the township. Government agencies should adhere to the guidelines wherever possible.

Many government agencies are exempt from following heritage controls for reasons of safety. Safety should not be compromised, and so it can be expected that some modern infrastructure will be evident within the town.

Tourism

18. Implementation of 2018/2019 Wayfinding Study.

A whole-of-town wayfinding study was undertaken by Baw Baw Shire in the 2018/2019 financial year.

Some recommendations of this study have been implemented, such as signs detailing significant historical features of the town. Other aspects, such as the 'Park and Walk' signs, have not been produced. These signs would play an important role in minimising traffic congestion within the town, by encouraging tourists to explore the Main Street on foot. These signs, and others not yet implemented from the study, should be installed.

19. Waterwheel Committee to engage graphic artist.

The Waterwheel Committee are a dedicated group of three local residents. They have gathered a significant sum of funding, but are lost for direction as to where to take their idea next.

It is recommended that a graphic artist be engaged, through the use of their existing funds, to help the Committee consolidate their pitch, and create drawings that can be taken to Council, or used for grant applications.

20. Community and Walhalla and Mountain Rivers Tourism Association to improve business capabilities.

Walhalla is a tourist town. For the local residents, tourism provides for much of the economic activity within Walhalla. For Walhalla to grow in popularity, and to increase the amount of money spent in the town, local tourism operators may benefit from training or business development.

The Walhalla and Mountain Rivers Tourism Association has as its remit to improve tourism outcomes for the town. As the local association, they could work to provide training courses for the township. Alternatively, local businesses could come together and seek these courses themselves.

The Baw Baw Shire Economic Development and Visitor Economy Strategy (2022-2025) provides guidance as to the type of capacity and business building that could be sought through targeted training sessions.

Environment

21. Create a Waterway Management Plan.

Stringers Creek is a beautiful asset and a key feature of the town that at the same time poses a risk to the built environment throughout Walhalla. Safeguarding the town, as much as possible, against natural disasters is a key safety priority. The creek needs to be maintained and managed to minimise the risk of further flooding events.

Having one document that can drive ongoing management of the waterway will be beneficial to all stakeholders across government and the community. It will encourage greater collaboration and provide security for how the creek is to be managed into the future.

Residents were very concerned about the need for the creek walls to be replaced. The Waterway Management Plan will determine if this upgrade is required or not. Other action items may include weed management and appropriate revegetation.

The WAWG, as a collective, should advocate for funding for this Management Plan. Such a request is well supported by the local community, and will shift from a reactive approach to waterway management, to a proactive one.

The agency tasked with leading the Waterway Management Plan is to be determined by the WAWG upon application for funding.

12. How to Use The Master Plan to Regenerate Walhalla.

In the simplest of terms, it starts with **having a go**, by trying things and not being afraid of failure. It is fitting that in a town that emerged out of settler spirit and a gold boom, our recommendation is to make do with what is available, to be adaptive.

To stimulate the township of Walhalla, and get 'green shoots' emerging, focus on this master plan for at least a period of four to five years. This will be facilitated through the appointment of a coordinator in charge of implementing the aspirations of the master plan, who employs the technique of adaptive pathways. Monitor, over the period of three years, the successes large and small of the initiatives sought in the master plan. After this time, it is important to be open to new ideas so long as they are not at the expense of the initiatives included in this report. Through these incremental steps, the future success of the township will become clear.

Mainly, tourism is the future of this town. It is a future that relies so heavily upon the town's past. However, protecting the past too tightly runs the risk of compromising the future. Balance is a key theme throughout this master plan. Balance, by its very nature, cannot be pre-determined. Balance is a verb, and thus a state of being that requires constant attention and action. The adaptive pathway approach encourages constant re-assessment of the right balance for Walhalla. It will be determined by the community, state agencies, tourists, and the Shire. Heritage must support, not block, future prosperity.

As Lynch (1960) observes, **in the built environment “there is no final result, only a continuous succession of phases”**. The adaptive pathway is not a prescriptive means to achieve a pre-determined final result. The final 'effects' are commonly-shared aspirations and possible, attainable, futures for the township of Walhalla.

The town of Yackandandah, faced with its only servo closing, set up a co-op and bought it out. They run it and now make a profit that in turn has led to other initiatives.

On the Greek Island of Santorini, when water was not easily available to grow wine grapes the population looked at what it had. Rich volcanic soil and relatively high levels of humidity. They found a grape variety that did not need much water, in fact it thrived on water sucked from the moisture laden air passing over the Aegean, and yielded a grape infused with a mineral content derived from the volcanic soil that made it some of the best wine in Greece, sold at premium prices locally and internationally.

The Walhalla rail effectively to nowhere needed to provide food for tourists and opened a café. Largely run on volunteer lines it reinforces the rail experience and keeps tourists coming back.

This master plan provides the means for the community and agencies to take control of the future of the town. Our initial brief was to identify what infrastructure is needed. It quickly became evident that a wider approach was required, considering more than physical infrastructure, and more than what the Shire is responsible for.

The recommendations were chosen from a long list of suggestions from stakeholders. Not all could be included, those that were needed to be realistic, achievable, and have the greatest impact for further growth. The method by which ideas are fostered and grown needs respectful choreography at all levels. Most importantly new ideas need to be tested in the reality of now, not what might be. 'Green shoots' are always small and need to be nurtured. Many of those 'green shoots' raised during this master plan process are good ideas, and could be further explored through private initiatives and enterprise.

Walhalla enjoys a 'brand' of intrigue about the past in a beautiful environment. It has great assets. In recent times though they have been neglected for want of a pathway that works. The forgoing is a methodology that we believe can break the cycle if applied with perseverance and diligence. Collaborative action is needed. Funding will be required. Government and other assistance will support the town's immediate future. With successful management, funding and small steps will result in job growth, which will grow the permanent population, which will in turn continue economic development.

The future is emergent. Today with this master plan, like any day, is an opportunity for Walhalla to become the town that many dream of.

Appendix A:

Implementation Table

	Initiative	Responsible Stakeholder	Specified Action	Measurable Outcome	Time Frame	Priority
1	Walhalla Agency Working Group	Agency Working Group	Baw Baw Shire to establish and chair collaborative group meetings with State-level agency bodies involved in Walhalla.	Signed agreement and terms of reference (see page 16 of the report).	Short term	High
2	Create a position that is responsible for the implementation of this masterplan	Baw Baw Shire & WAWG	Appoint a co-funded position within the Shire to ensure the implementation of this masterplan.	Position filled.	Short term	High
3	Land and facility management	Agency Working Group	Undertake comprehensive and definitive land and facility management review of all public land in Walhalla.	Review presented to Agency working group and the local community.	Medium term	High
4	Planning Scheme amendment & hardship land sale	Baw Baw Shire & DEECA	Planning scheme amendment to rezone land, and subsequent sale of affected properties that are built on Crown Land.	Planning Scheme amendment approved, a number of dwellings sold.	Medium - Long term	High
5	Study on alternative housing models	Baw Baw Shire	Conduct or commission a Housing Study of Walhalla to investigate appropriate, alternative housing typologies (e.g., tiny homes).	Walhalla Housing Study.	Long term	Medium
6	Traffic and Movement study	Baw Baw Shire & DTP	Conduct or commission study to address parking needs, walkability, and explore the potential for alternative transport modes.	Walhalla Movement and Place Study.	Short - Medium term	High
7	WGR to increase organisational capacity	WGR	WGR to seek funding to support their organisational growth and increase in capacity.	Increased volunteerism and improved business planning.	Short - Medium term	High
8	WH&DL to seek funding for heritage maintenance	WH&DL	WH&DL to seek funding to increase their ability to protect and maintain local heritage assets.	Apply for two grants in the 2023/24 financial year.	Short - Medium term	High
9	Agreement reached on community use of Walhalla Cricket Ground	ParksVic and the community	ParksVic to work with community to educate them on ParksVic's processes, and encourage the community to register as formal volunteers. Negotiations and agreement on a shared vision and future use of the ground reached between community and ParksVic. Community encouraged to use the Cricket Ground for local, social, and sport purposes.	Mutual understanding of use of ground reached.	Ongoing	Medium

	Initiative	Responsible Stakeholder	Specified Action	Measurable Outcome	Time Frame	Priority
10	Investigate and propose a long-term, whole-of-town sewerage management system	Agency Working Group	Baw Baw Shire to collaborate with relevant agencies and publish an approved list of waste treatment options for Walhalla.	Published list of acceptable waste treatment options.	Short term	High
11	Investigate public toilet provision	Baw Baw Shire	Develop a Shire-wide Public Toilet Strategy.	Assessment of public toilet needs and provision in Walhalla.	Medium term	Medium
12	Reinstate historical street lighting	Baw Baw Shire	Investigation, planning, and scoping review of street lighting and historical aspects.	Determination of lifecycle cost and if lighting will be installed.	Medium - Long term	Low
13	Create a sense of arrival in town	Baw Baw Shire	Commission the creation of a 'welcome' sign, or other arrival marker that is deemed appropriate.	Completed marker that acknowledges the start of Walhalla.	Short - Medium term * subject to funding availability	Medium
14	Independent power supply	Local community	Community groups to apply for funding for an alternate power supply, Baw Baw Shire to write letter of support.	Funding secured and alternative power supply installed.	Medium - Long term	Medium
15	Continual monitoring of Walhalla Road	DT&P	Monitoring in accordance with the Road Management Act.	Meets requirements.	Ongoing	Medium
16	Update new residents website	Baw Baw Shire	Update 'New Residents' page of website to include a link to the heritage guidelines for Walhalla.	Website updated.	Medium term	Low
17	Government agencies to adhere to Heritage Guidelines	Agency Working Group	WAWG to conduct review of Heritage Guidelines and implications for their works during a quarterly meeting.	Review undertaken, WAWG to communicate limitations or exclusions in application of guidelines to the community (e.g. for safety reasons).	Short term	High
18	Wayfinding study implemented	Baw Baw Shire	Council to complete installment of the recent Walhalla Wayfind Study.	Implemented Wayfinding Study	Short term	Medium

	Initiative	Responsible Stakeholder	Specified Action	Measurable Outcome	Time Frame	Priority
19	Waterwheel Committee to engage graphic artist	Waterhweel Committee	Engage graphic artist to assist in refining their vision and to create promotional images. Next steps may include a feasibility study, business plan, or negotiation with land owners.	Drawings received, presented to Council or funding body.	Short term	Low
20	Improve business acumen	Community and/or Walhalla and Mountain Rivers Tourism Association	Walhalla business training sessions/capacity building workshops, to be guided by an external professional.	At least one workshop/training session per year for the duration of this masterplan.	Medium - Long term	Medium
21	Waterway Management Plan	WGCMA & WAWG	WAWG to apply for funding, and then undertake, a Waterway Management Plan for Stringers Creek.	Waterway Management Plan is published.	Medium term	High

