

Imagine
GREATER BENDIGO

**Host your own
conversation to
shape our future.**



Welcome to the Imagine Greater Bendigo community consultation toolkit.

Thank you for participating in **Imagine Greater Bendigo** – your opportunity to shape the future of our community and guide the work of Council over the coming years.

Imagine Greater Bendigo is the name given to this nine-month project, starting in February 2021, that will collect feedback to help develop a community vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan, and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan by October 2021. An Asset Plan will also be developed in 2022.

It is a requirement of the new Local Government Act (2020) and Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008) for every new Council to complete this work and openly engage with residents.

This is the first stage of community consultation. There will be further opportunities to have your say in April/May, 2021 and July/August, 2021

How to use this community consultation toolkit

This toolkit will help you to set up and lead conversations with your community group or committee. It includes:

1. Advice on how to prepare for and lead a discussion
2. Survey questions, divided into sections

Groups are encouraged to use the toolkit to guide discussion and complete the survey questions online, via the City of Greater Bendigo's new community engagement platform Let's Talk Greater Bendigo at www.letstalkgreaterbendigo.com.au/imagine

The survey will prompt you to provide information about your group. You can also print the toolkit and write in the survey section and return it to City of Greater Bendigo, PO Box 733, Bendigo, VIC 3552, or drop it into our Customer Service Centres at Hopetoun Street, Bendigo or High Street, Heathcote.

All surveys are to be completed and returned by February 28, 2021.

Your conversation can be as formal or informal as your group would like.

You also don't need to be experts. All you need is people that are willing to share and discuss ideas and have an interest in the future of our community.

For definitions of community vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, and Asset Plan, and for more information on the themes included in the survey and future consultation opportunities, visit www.letstalkgreaterbendigo.com.au/imagine

How to approach your discussion

Ask someone to write down (or type out) the discussion and ask someone to be a timekeeper.

Larger groups may want to use Post-it notes or note paper to capture views around the table and prioritise feedback (remembering it's ok to disagree and include a variety of views).

What you will need:

		Small group or informal discussion	Larger group or more formal discussion	Online (Zoom/ Microsoft Teams)
Background information	This guide	✓	✓	✓
	Email a link to Let's Talk Greater Bendigo to all participants	✓	✓	✓
Survey	Send link to participants			✓
	Email the toolkit to participants	✓	✓	
	Print the survey included in the toolkit	✓	✓	
	Assign a group member to scribe and complete the survey digitally via Let's Talk Greater Bendigo	OR ✓	OR ✓	✓
Slide pack	Each survey question will be presented on a PowerPoint slide, to help guide discussion		✓	✓
	The facilitator or another member of the group can share their screen via Microsoft Teams or Zoom, so the group can follow along			✓

1. Welcome everyone

2. Acknowledgment of Country

To view the City's Acknowledgement of Country, visit www.bendigo.vic.gov.au/Acknowledgement_of_Country

3. Introduction (5 minutes)

- The City of Greater Bendigo is preparing a new community vision, Council Plan, Financial Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, and Asset Plan. All feedback collected as part of today's discussion will help to prepare these documents, but it will be particularly helpful in forming the community vision – a statement outlining our community's goals for the future and how it would like Greater Bendigo to grow and develop.
- The purpose of the discussion today is to understand what it is you love and value about living in Greater Bendigo and where you think improvements or changes can be made.

4. Getting in the right headspace (10 minutes)

Before we complete the survey, take a few minutes to think about:

- What led you to live in Greater Bendigo? Why is it special to you? What do you value most about this place and its community?
- Imagine Greater Bendigo 30 years from now. What does Greater Bendigo offer people living here? What will people need to have a good quality of life? What will they value most?

Ask people to share their thoughts with the whole group, their own table, the person next to them or use this time as self-reflection.

5. Complete survey, by either: (20 minutes)

- Filling out a digital version at www.letstalkgreaterbendigo.com.au/imagine
- Printing and assigning a group member to write into the toolkit and mail or drop it back to the City

There will be a diversity of views and it is ok to disagree!

6. Thank everyone for their time

About your group

What is the name of your group/committee?

What is the purpose of your group?

How many people are in your group?

What age range do you have in your group?

Where are you meeting (town/suburb/area)?

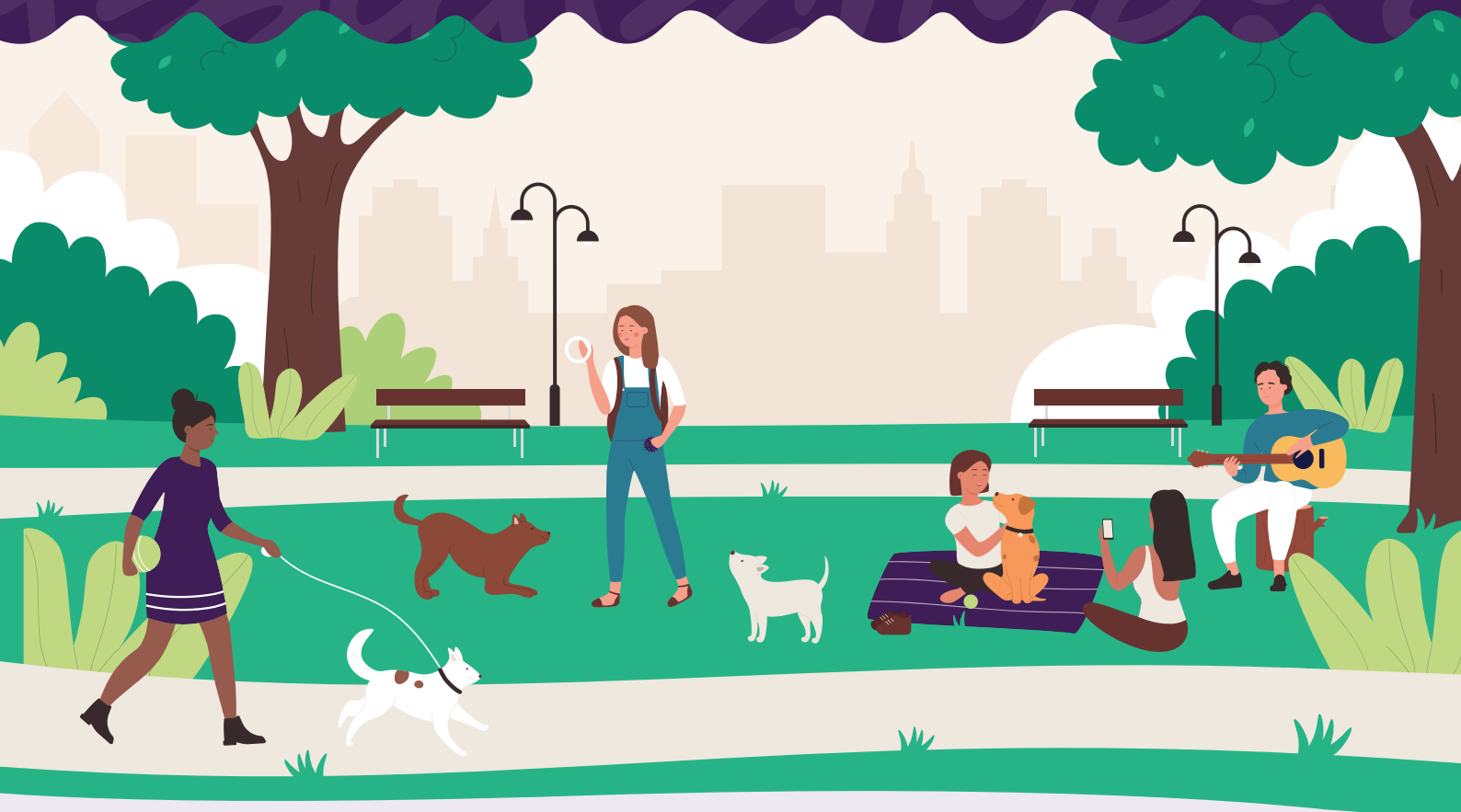
Group contact

Name

Phone number

Email





Imagine Greater Bendigo 30 years from now. What do you see?

We all want to live in a community where we can enjoy the best possible quality of life. We all have different ideas on what we need to be able to do this, so this is your time to imagine a Greater Bendigo that has everything you, your family, friends and community need to succeed, be well and happy.

Today, around 120,000 people live in Greater Bendigo and by 2050 our population is expected to grow to 200,000.

Greater Bendigo has many strengths – a diverse economy, a thriving arts and culture scene that attracts tourists to our region, wonderful parks and gardens, great walking and cycling paths, and our city is a regional hub for a range of services.

As we imagine our future community, there are many challenges and opportunities to think about. In 2020 we watched a dangerous and devastating bushfire season unfold, experienced the life-changing impacts of COVID-19 and know the world's recovery from the pandemic will be long, and saw people around the world have their strongest conversation yet about racial and other inequalities.

As the world continues to change and Greater Bendigo changes with it, now is the time to plan for our future. How will we look after our environment, create a more inclusive community where everyone has access to equal

opportunities, learn to adapt to new technology, grow our economy and make sure people have what they need to live a good life?

It's also important to consider Greater Bendigo's role as a leading regional city in central Victoria. People in surrounding towns and communities look to Bendigo for education, employment, healthcare, sport and recreation, and access to the arts and events.

So think about what makes Greater Bendigo a great place to live now and what would make it an even better place to live in 30 years from now.

Your feedback will help to shape the future of Greater Bendigo.

What we mean by Greater Bendigo

Greater Bendigo describes the entire municipality, so it includes the city centre, urban area and rural areas, including small towns and villages.

When we refer to Greater Bendigo as a hub for central Victoria, this means residents in surrounding Council areas look to us for a range of services they may not have access to in their own communities.

Section 1

Section 1 builds on the activity of ‘getting in the right headspace’. We want to understand what people value about Greater Bendigo right now.

You don't need to get the group's agreement on this – it is about getting a range of views from the group. However, if there is strong agreement on any point, please write this information down.

Question 1: What makes Greater Bendigo a great place to live now?

Section 2

Section 2 helps us understand how people want to see Greater Bendigo grow and develop in the future.

Ask people, individually or in small groups, then discuss what participants agree on and any differences. Write down outcomes of the discussion.

Question 2: What would make Greater Bendigo an even better place to live 30 years from now?

Section 3 is divided into six themes and summarises feedback from recent community engagement opportunities about what our community values most about where they live.

We want to see if you agree with this feedback or if there is anything else you would like to add. Ask people, individually or in small groups, to consider these themes and write down what participants agree on and any differences. Add additional points the group feels are missing.

Thinking about recent times, we would also like people to consider what is most important to them now. Have your priorities changed compared to what you might have said in 2019?

Theme 1: A healthy, liveable community

Community members said they value:

- Cool, shady and green streets with accessible parks and play spaces
- Access to cheap, healthy food
- Walking and cycling paths for people of all ages and abilities
- Growing more food locally in schools, community gardens and on farms
- Affordable, safe and secure housing
- Better access to public transport and walking and cycling paths to move around
- Better access to health services for older residents

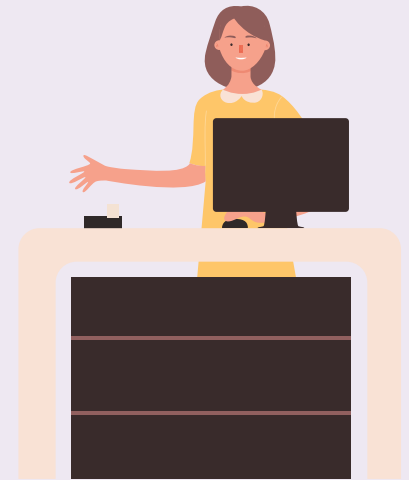
The **Greater Bendigo Community Plan 2017-2021** defines a liveable community as ‘one that enables people to live healthy, safe, harmonious lives in attractive and affordable settings. Liveable places have an excellent range of services for children and adults of all ages and facilities that are accessible to all. They don’t make unsustainable demands on the environment.

Question 3: When you imagine a future Greater Bendigo, what do you value for a healthy, liveable community?

Theme 2: A strong, inclusive and sustainable economy

Community members said they value:

- More opportunities for young people to go to university or TAFE so they can stay in Greater Bendigo
- More job opportunities for young people and people with a disability
- Support for local artists and businesses, particularly after COVID-19
- Promote and sell a wide variety of local produce in the community
- An economy that addresses disadvantage, attracts visitors and is sustainable
- Supporting people whose income and employment was hit particularly hard by COVID-19, including women, young people and temporary visa holders
- Supporting young people whose schooling and education has been interrupted by COVID-19



Question 4: When you imagine a future Greater Bendigo, what do you value for a strong, inclusive and sustainable economy?

Theme 3: Aboriginal reconciliation and celebration of diversity

Community members said they value:

- Seeing more examples of Aboriginal culture and history across Greater Bendigo
- Better job opportunities, procurement and improved economic outcomes for Aboriginal people
- Aboriginal families and children being supported to connect to their culture
- Increasing community understanding of the cultural practices and values of Traditional Owners
- Seeing the goals of Traditional Owners reflected in long-term plans for Greater Bendigo
- Working together to meet the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum
- Working together to build a welcoming city by addressing racism



Question 5: When you imagine a future Greater Bendigo, what do you value for Aboriginal reconciliation and celebration of diversity?

Theme 4: A healthy natural environment that promotes resilience to a changing climate

Community members said they value:

- Create well-designed spaces that are mindful of our future climate
- Minimise impacts to local wildlife, plants and trees as Greater Bendigo grows
- Recognise Traditional Owners' connection to the land and local knowledge
- Protect existing trees, improve habitats and support conservation
- Plant more indigenous plants
- Strengthen connections and relationships between farmers / producers, schools and the general community
- Use the COVID-19 recovery as an opportunity to invest in projects that have positive impacts on the environment (e.g. improve energy efficiency of housing and buildings)



Question 6: When you imagine a future Greater Bendigo what do you value for a healthy natural environment that promotes resilience to a changing climate?

Theme 5: A vibrant, creative community

Community members said they value:

- Recognition of the importance and benefits of creativity
- Greater understanding and representation of Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural and creative practices
- Activation of public and private creative spaces
- Opportunities for connection and collaboration with artists and the wider community
- Opportunities to grow networks that are supportive and inclusive
- Support opportunities for local artists and their initiatives
- Inclusion of culturally diverse people in local arts and creative industries

The City of Greater Bendigo's **Greater CREATIVE Bendigo** strategy defines cultural and creative industries as traditional arts, cultural activities and heritage, innovative technologies, design and the digital age. It is a broad definition that can include performing arts, broadcasting, film, television and digital media, galleries and libraries, literature and print media, visual arts and crafts, design (e.g. online games, architecture, app development) and environment (e.g. botanic gardens).

Question 7: When you imagine a future Greater Bendigo, what do you value in a vibrant, creative community?

Theme 6: A supportive community and social environment

Community members said they value:

- Family-friendly events and activities for people from different generations
- Working together to address loneliness and social isolation
- Improving support and services for mental health, homelessness and financial stress
- Working together to make Greater Bendigo feel safe and welcoming for all and preventing family violence
- Improving internet access, especially for rural residents and households with no internet
- The way the community has banded together during COVID-19
- Support for community sport, recreation and community groups to increase social connection after COVID-19



Question 8: When you imagine a future Greater Bendigo, what do you value in a supportive community and social environment?

Section 4 is optional and focuses on finance and managing future population growth. These topics will be explored in more detail in stage 2 of community consultation for Imagine Greater Bendigo, but it would be great to get some feedback now.

The purpose of these questions is to get the group's thoughts on:

- How we prioritise delivering services to our growing and changing community
- Where and how we grow to make sure our city, townships and rural areas continue to provide what people need to live good lives, within the resources available to us

Finance

Rate-capping and maintaining spending on all current services is a significant challenge that limits our ability to fund new projects and initiatives.

As an example, the City will need to spend more every year for the next 10 years just to maintain existing assets. This will need to increase from \$33M per year in 2020 to \$40M in the future.

Without major change to service delivery or significantly more financial support from other levels of government, there will be less money available to fund new initiatives and maintain existing services or infrastructure. This will require prioritisation of the City's services.

The City is required to provide a number of services to the community. These services need to be provided fairly and meet the many different needs of residents. With this in mind:

Examples of services include access to swimming pools, garbage collection, immunisation, aged care, early years, Bendigo Art Gallery and Ulumbarra and The Capital theatres, events such as the Bendigo Easter Festival, sports fields, play spaces and animal rescue.

Examples of infrastructure include swimming pool maintenance, footpaths, road and drainage construction and maintenance, car parks, public furniture, community buildings (e.g. community halls) and public toilets.

Question 9: How should Council prioritise which services it delivers to our growing and changing community, while also maintaining infrastructure it is responsible for and investing in new projects as they are needed?

Question 10: If you had to choose how Council funded future services and new projects, which of the below options would you prefer? Tick the box:

☐

Pay a slightly higher rates bill to continue to fund new and current services and infrastructure, meaning the City would need to apply to the Victorian Government to raise rates above the set rate cap

☐

Prioritise and reduce current services so as not to pay more in rates?

Managing growth

Greater Bendigo's population is predicted to grow significantly over the next 30 years, from around 120,000 today to 200,000 people by 2050.

The purpose of this exercise is to get your thoughts on how our city, suburbs and rural townships should grow using the money Council has available, so as residents can have access to what they need to live good lives.

We'd like you to think about your neighbourhood. It's up to your group how you want to define 'neighbourhood' – it might be a suburb, town or even the whole Greater Bendigo area.



Question 11: What are the most important issues you think we need to consider if Greater Bendigo's population nearly doubles in size (as predicted) by 2050?

All finished!

Thank you for completing this survey. If anyone in your group would like to complete the survey themselves and provide their individual thoughts, they can visit www.letstalkgreaterbendigo.com.au/imagine