



GREAT SOUTHERN
RAIL TRAIL

VISITOR EXPERIENCE & MARKETING PLAN

2022 - 2031



SECTION 01

INTRODUCING THE GREAT SOUTHERN RAIL TRAIL

VISITOR EXPERIENCE
& MARKETING PLAN
2022 - 2031

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND
OBJECTIVES OF THE
VISITOR EXPERIENCE
& MARKETING PLAN

1.2 DEVELOPING THE PLAN

1.3 THE PLAN DURATION





1.1 INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

OVERVIEW

The Great Southern Rail Trail (GSRT), once a historic railway line, is now an immersive outdoor experience that takes people on a winding journey through the region's unique rural towns and villages, and from misty forests to lush meadows and iconic coastlines.

The GSRT has been recognised in several economic reports and studies conducted by the South Gippsland Shire Council and Destination Gippsland as an important asset for the local community, the region's economy, and as a tourism attraction with the potential to boost South Gippsland's reputation and economic prosperity.

As outlined in the South Gippsland Shire Council's Visitor Economy Strategy 2021-2031, the GSRT has received Federal, State & Local Government funding for its extension and is currently in a period of great development.

To support and guide the GSRT's development and marketing, we have created this Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan (The Plan). The Plan encompasses projects and activities that are designed to improve and facilitate the experiences visitors and Trail-users will have today, and as the Trail grows and develops. The Plan's scope includes physical and functional aspects of the Trail, as well as brand and promotional work, and community and business partnerships.

We acknowledge and appreciate that the visitor experience is influenced by factors beyond the scope of this Plan, such as Trail infrastructure, operations and business operator investment. The communication of these aspects, however, is an important part of the Plan so this more functional communication activity has still been included, where structural upgrade and change projects have not.



1.1 INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

OVERVIEW



GREAT SOUTHERN RAIL TRAIL AS AT 2022

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVES

A key aim of the South Gippsland Shire Council's Visitor Economy Strategy 2021–2031 is to make South Gippsland a year-round destination. In particular, we want to promote growth for South Gippsland in the traditionally low and shoulder seasons, as well as the traditional high season. We will drive visitation across all villages and towns by leveraging the GSRT as a key visitor experience, with year-round brand marketing.

The Plan has been developed with the following objectives in mind:

- Improve awareness of the GSRT and the region amongst local residents, businesses, Trail users and prospective visitors
- Support the towns and villages connected to the GSRT
- Promote and communicate the GSRT as a visitor destination
- Increase usage of the Trail by residents and visitors, and visitation, length of stay and spending per visitor
- Attract new investment and the creation of ancillary experiences
- Encourage and facilitate coordinated marketing between towns and businesses
- Support existing, and the attraction of new, events arts and cultural activities – on the Trail and in towns
- To have a consistent approach and product experience for the municipalities that the GSRT traverses

The Plan has also been developed to connect to, and help inform, other strategies and plans such as:

- South Gippsland Shire Council GSRT Management Plan (in development)
- South Gippsland Shire Council Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy (in development)
- Gippsland Tracks and Trails Feasibility Study
- The Gippsland Odyssey Trail Feasibility Study
- Towards 2030 Gippsland Destination Management Plan





1.2 DEVELOPING THE PLAN

To develop this Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan, we conducted a range of activities to understand the expectations and needs of the GSRT's current and future users as well as our community stakeholders; and to identify our challenges and opportunities to improve the experience along the GSRT and around its townships, and the wider world in which we are operating.

These activities included:

- South Gippsland Shire Council consultation sessions
- Councillor briefings and feedback sessions
- An audit of the current GSRT user experience
- Researching and learning from rail trails around the world
- Six stakeholder workshops with tourism operators, residents, local users, GSRT representatives and regional tourism specialists
- A community and GSRT user online survey to understand current experiences and research ideas for improving the GSRT experience
- A three-hour workshop session with the GSRT team to share findings and insights, and to workshop audience profiles and the desired future visitor experience for the GSRT

1.3 THE PLAN DURATION

The Plan is focused on informing projects and activities over a nine-year period from 2022-2031 to align to the Visitor Economy Strategy period. However, the Plan will be treated as a living document that is flexible enough to adapt to an ever-changing visitor and marketing landscape. It has been developed as a simple and actionable reference document to help the GSRT team, with the support of the wider South Gippsland Shire Council, achieve the projects and actions outlined.

The Plan will be regularly monitored and reviewed and respond to changes in technologies, channel opportunities, Council and visitor economy priorities and other significant influences.

To support feasible and sustained project progress, the Plan has two sections. The Major Projects section includes a comprehensive activity plan to guide the Council for the first 1.5 years of activity. This section should be reviewed regularly to ensure activities are on track, relevance is maintained and to adjust to any significant, unanticipated external changes or influences.

We have then created the Long-Term Projects section to outline the priority projects and activities that will support the GSRT objectives until 2032. Due to the long-term nature of these projects, it is not practical to assign great detail to them at this stage. However this should commence, prior to the completion of major projects, with regular reviews and updates.





SECTION 02

INSIGHTS & STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS

2.1 SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

2.2 THE GSRT USER JOURNEY

2.3 GSRT AUDIENCES AND
KEY MESSAGES





2.1 SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

DEVELOPING INSIGHTS

Council engaged Melbourne-based agency Cúpla to conduct brand and marketing research, consultation and workshops. Business operators, visitors, local groups and community members and Councillors provided feedback through group workshops, an online survey, and 1:1 meetings.

Through this comprehensive consultation, five key insights about the GSRT's current state, opportunities and challenges emerged and have been used to inform the projects and actions of this Visitor Experience and Marketing Plan to support and guide the GSRT's expansion, and align with the South Gippsland Shire Council Visitor Economy Plan 2021-2031.

The following five pages outline the five key insights that informed development of The Plan.

1. Moving into the experience mindset

The Trail must evolve from 'a community asset' mindset into a visitor experience mindset in order to elevate the GSRT to a premium visitor destination and offer.

An experience mindset means continuously anticipating and responding to the before, during and after stages of visiting the region and using the GSRT, prompting Council to take on a proactive role in facilitating positive visitor experiences.

This will not only encourage better on-Trail experiences but will better connect the Trail to our towns, which is how we will boost the tourism economy of the region.

Topline recommendations:

- Create plans that respond to needs and expectations across all stages of the visitor journey (see section 2.2 for more on this journey approach).
- Connect and integrate South Gippsland community and businesses better with the visitor experience in mind.
- Develop ideas and activities that will take the GSRT from basic to iconic, including areas from environmental regeneration, signage, infrastructure support and development, community inclusion, arts and culture, history and education, events and town immersion.
- Keep our audiences at the centre of all we do, asking ourselves who we're speaking to, what is their position and why this will help them have a better experience.

2.1 SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

2. Barriers and motivators

We must acknowledge and work with what is both motivating for people to come and use the GSRT, as well as what feels like a block to doing so. Motivating factors include beautiful natural scenery, healthy outdoor fun, exploring the region, novel and immersive experiences, engaging and exciting marketing and educational content, township offers, spending time with friends and family, and a sense of personal accomplishment. Blocks include:

- Lack of awareness
- Perception of the Trail not being well maintained, boring and/or underdeveloped
- Difficulty planning longer stays due to accommodation and bicycle transportation
- Lack of understanding about, and actual connection to, Wilson's Prom
- Perception and reality of inconsistent town and hospitality offers
- A sense that there is not much open or happening in towns

Topline recommendations:

- Help visitors prepare for barriers that we cannot change (distance, weather, inconsistent town offers) by communicating upfront about what to expect in a way that will enhance their experience. This includes ideas like recommended itineraries, accommodation directories organised by proximity and facilities, easy to find accessibility information, and weather forecasts and tips.
- Improve perception barriers by reorganising website and marketing content to respond to audience needs and wants, and clearly communicate the benefit that matters most to them, which GSRT provides.
- Keep our audiences at the centre of all we do, asking ourselves who we're speaking to, what is their position and why this will help them have a better experience.

3. Visitor brands inspire and inform

As a brand that will attract tourists, visitors and a variety of Trail users, we must not only inform but inspire as well. This will require us to become expert facilitators of the GSRT experience, including connecting towns, community groups and businesses to each other and to the Trail - showing them their role in promoting it and helping them to do so.

This is a long-term vision for the GSRT brand that will help us go from a basic community asset to an iconic tourism experience.

Topline recommendations:

- Using our current resources and content, we can begin to step into the role of an inspiring experience facilitator role. This would involve a website restructure, better use of social media and campaigns, content redevelopment, and a reprioritisation of key messages to our audiences.
- Improve how we Inform our potential visitors and Trail users by connecting all information provided to the benefits and experiences that matter to audiences rather than being purely functional, ensuring we are inspiring and engaging them at every opportunity.

2.1 SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

4. Towns are our frontline

Towns and community groups are our frontline partners in creating successful and positive visitor experiences. They are also where the 'visitor economy' goals are fulfilled. The GSRT is a free experience, but can act as the 'artery' of South Gippsland, driving people to visit, stay and spend money in towns.

To achieve this, we require investment and engagement from businesses and town stakeholders, and we also need to address the 'chicken and egg' scenario whereby visitors need amenities to be open in order to visit, while businesses need visitors already present to motivate them to open more.

The GSRT itself is an opportunity to pull visitors into the region and into towns. The GSRT team and brand can also help build relationships between the community and businesses, which will improve the visitor experience overall.

Topline recommendations:

- Recognise and integrate the importance of town businesses to the visitor experience, consult them regularly and support them with toolkits and other opportunities to enhance their visitor focus.
- Connect all GSRT propositions to towns - ensuring we keep the audience interest areas at the heart of these connections - and help people to understand why they should explore the entire Trail and towns along it.

5. Clarifying who we are

We need to define what is most authentic, distinctive and compelling about the GSRT experience so that we can better communicate ourselves to different audiences and help them to appreciate the GSRT and South Gippsland region.

With a clear sense of the GSRT brand purpose, we will have a foundation for all successful marketing and visitor experience activities, and the ability to build a consistent, compelling story long into the future.

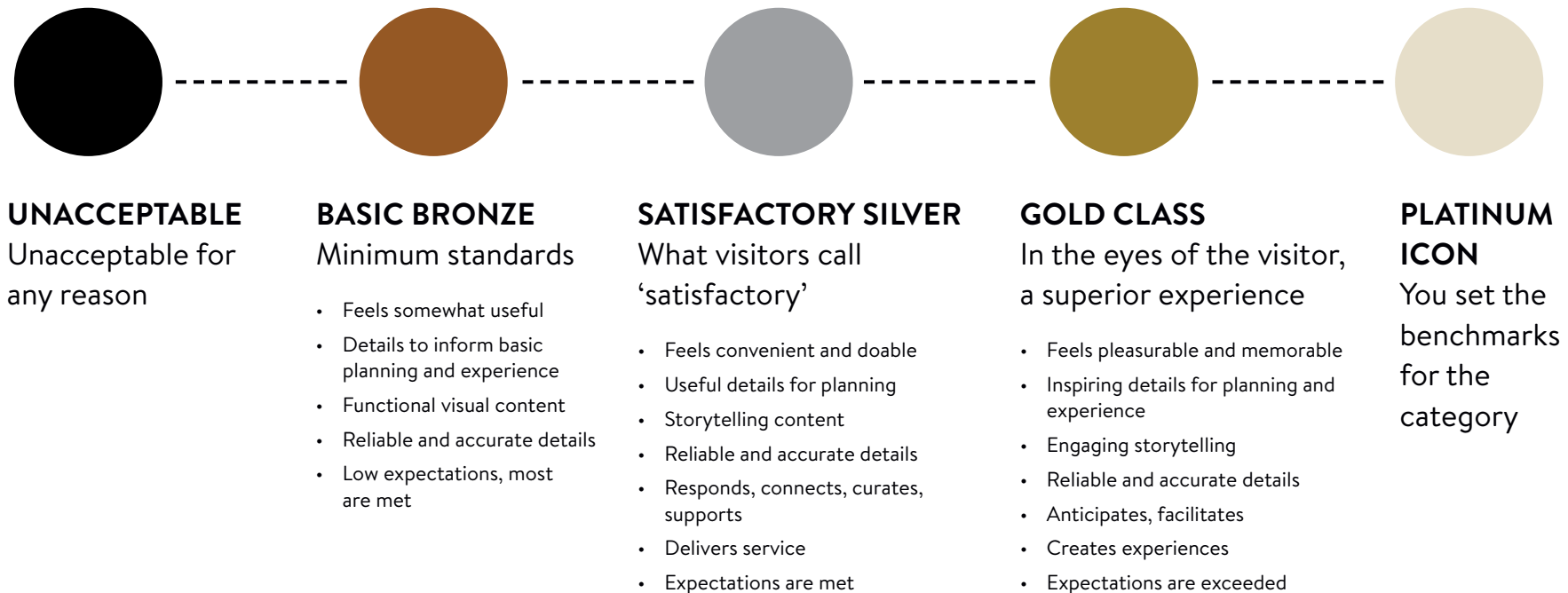
Topline recommendations:

- Develop brand foundations (positioning, value proposition, personality) and a framework to create a clear and consistent messaging around what the GSRT brand and experience does for the local community, the region, and for its visitors and users; and why it is different to other Trail or tourism experiences within and outside of our region. This GSRT brand framework should consider and align to the new South Gippsland brand identity and where appropriate the Gippsland All Kinds of Wonder brand and brand pillars.



2.1 SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS

GOING FROM INFORMATIVE TO INSPIRING



To build an **inspiring** and **visitor-minded** brand and experience, the Plan has projects and activities that will take the GSRT from being between a bronze and silver visitor experience, and towards gold and platinum.

2.2 THE GSRT USER JOURNEY

A TOOL AND MINDSET

A user journey is a linear map that can help us to deliver to the different stages a Trail user will go through to plan and engage with their GSRT trip. It covers:

- Awareness - first discovering the GSRT and being interested in finding out more
- Learning/Planning - deciding to learn more and plan a visit
- On-trail Engagement - Coming to the region and being on the Trail, and experiencing all we have to offer
- Reflect and Repeat - going back home with reflections and reviews that will determine if they would do it again, and recommend others to do so too

A journey map can be filled out with messages, actions and ideas for any specific type of user, as well as being completed as a broader experience map with a general user in mind. For this Plan, we used the journey map to develop audience profiles and key messages so that the Plan's activities respond to each phase of the visitor journey. It is also used to guide the development of major and long-term projects, ensuring that all future visitor experience and marketing activities are contextualised within the entire visitor journey.

Our journey map is not just a research, planning or messaging tool, it is also the mindset with which we should all consider development for, and along, the GSRT. It ensures we do not favour a single phase of the visitor experience, and under-resource others, as it is built upon the premise that each stage must be passed through successfully in order for the user/visitor to have a positive and complete experience.

| AWARENESS Prospective visitors looking for a regional experience | LEARNING & PLANNING Prospective visitors enquiring for more information and making a decision about GSRT | VISITING Arriving, using, and exploring around the GSRT | REFLECT & REPEAT Visitors and users assess their experience and consider whether or not they'd repeat |
|--|---|---|---|
| General audience wants include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exciting and/or appealing first impressions • A trusted source (WoM, media, etc) | General audience wants include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging content alongside practical and functional information • To know "what's in it for me" | General audience wants include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence they can successfully engage and experience • Seamless support where needed | General audience wants include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of accomplishment • Memorable encounters • Easy and seamless to return back to reality |
| General audience needs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to encounter/find answers and ideas • Good reviews or enough information to pique interest | General audience needs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assurance it will be "worth it" • Easy to find, understand and use information • Easy to understand point of difference | General audience needs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate preparation • Easy to find, understand and use information • Overall good consistency | General audience needs include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To know there's more to discover and do • Responsiveness to their requests for feedback and/or support |
| Pain points include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruitless searching, no enticing response to "what to do?" "Where to go?" | Pain points include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not finding an answer to a question, "how do I get there?" "How hard will this be?" • Outdated, seemingly irrelevant or unappealing information and content | Pain points include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty beginning or completing • Boredom or lack of meaning generated • Physical experience; maintenance, weather, other people • Rude shocks due to lack of information, preparation or uncontrollable factors | Pain points include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning home • Negative memories outweighing positive • No follow up |

2.3 GSRT AUDIENCES

OUR AUDIENCE PROFILES

GSRT visitor experience and marketing activities will be effective and engaging if they meet the needs, wants and expectations of our audiences, and reduce their pain points.

A diverse range of visitors and users currently engage with GSRT as either a Trail experience and/or a branded organisation - or would benefit from doing so. This includes people who cycle, walk and run the Trail, as well as horse riders, and people of all abilities who may access the Trail in wheelchairs, on mobility scooters and other forms of supported mobility.

Through our consultation process, we have developed audience profiles to align different groups of people based on unifying needs, and attitudinal and behavioural characteristics, rather than typical demographics, as this provides a direct understanding of what motivates them and how we can respond to those motivations.

We have mapped out the visitor profiles against the visitor journey stages so that we have clear and achievable ways of translating this information into visitation and marketing activities according to the Plan. Our community profiles do not need to adhere to the visitor journey approach.

We have eight audience profiles outlined over the following pages.

| | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| LEISURE TRIPPERS & SIGHT-SEERS  | REGIONAL CULTURE & NATURE SEEKERS  | 01 Introduction |
| OUTDOORS ENTHUSIASTS  | REGULAR USERS  | 02 Insights & Foundations |
| BUSINESSES  | COMMUNITY & CULTURAL GROUPS  | 03 Major Projects |
| GOVERNMENT & PARTNERS  | OUR TEAM  | 04 Long-Term Projects |

THEY ARE:

- Inner-city/metropolitan or other regional Victorian individuals, couples, families with children or small groups of friends looking for a cost-effective and accessible trip away together
- Want to make the most of their time away but aren't locked into any particular schedule (open to different experiences)
- May be visiting friends or family in the region
- Need to accommodate a range of interests within a couple or group
- Motivated by novel experiences and ticking off bucket list items, "I've done the Penguins, The Prom, MoNA etc"
- Do not want to give up comfort, convenience and accessibility
- May be interested in packages, tours, and itineraries



2.3 GSRT AUDIENCES

LEISURE TRIPPERS & SIGHT-SEERS

| | AWARENESS Discovering us | LEARNING & PLANNING Planning their trip | VISITING Engaging and experiencing | REFLECTING & REPEATING After they've left |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| THEY WANT: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be inspired by the multitude of free, affordable and/or easy to access experiences for everyone in their travel group • To discover some new 'bucket list' experiences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-curated information and itineraries to make their planning easy and streamlined, including options for all budgets and interests • Assurance it will be convenient and accessible • Ability to book in advance • To be excited about what they'll encounter and experience - to get a taste of the experience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access to all amenities for travelling with ease, including transport to and from the Trail if required, good accommodation and dining options, on-trail comfort amenities and clear safety and navigation information • The ability to engage further with what they are seeing and experiencing along the Trail, so they can 'go deeper' if they wish • Novel experiences and encounters they can absorb, photograph and interact with so they can 'go deeper' if they wish | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wow-worthy moments they can share with friends and family • A sense of having seen the best our region can offer • Motivation to come back again and experience new, unique and seasonally changing things • To be the 'in-the-know' advocates, "you must go there and do it yourself" |
| WE WANT THEM TO: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for new experiences generally, and/or new ways to experience regional Victoria | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the Trail as a gateway to the region and an accessible, enjoyable experience for everyone in their group • Start their booking and planning process in advance to make the most of the whole region via the Trail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be excited, enthusiastic and wowed by our diversity of landscapes, and unique, quirky townships (and how close together they all are when accessing via the Trail) • Explore our towns along the Trail with an open mind • Use good Trail and town etiquette • Be comfortable prepared, informed and safe to minimise negative experiences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share our Trail, region and townships with their friends and family personally and via social media • Stay overnight and return more often for new experiences • See us as the destination rather than a place to stop along the way |
| COMMUNICATE TO THEM: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wind through Victoria's scenic South Gippsland from forest to coast, connecting you to natural diversity, arts, events and unique towns and villages along the way | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the Trail through the heart of South Gippsland to discover refreshing points of view • There are plenty of things to do along and near the Great Southern Rail Trail • Exploring the Great Southern Rail Trail is easy. Walk, cycle or ride - come down for the day, or stay a few nights in our unique towns | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are here to help you have an enjoyable time on the Great Southern Rail Trail; you're never far away from what you need • The Great Southern Rail Trail is special for many reasons. Discover the stories from the heart of South Gippsland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Great Southern Rail Trail is evolving and transforming with our communities, artists, craftspeople, and nature - discover more as the Trail grows • You can share your experiences with your friends and family, or even back with us - we'd love to feature your stories |

THEY ARE:

- Drawn to unique and locally relevant culture and nature experiences, on the look out for “local gems” to discover
- Seeking to feel immersed in a place and its stories, open to learning something new
- Motivated to explore new places and go off the beaten-track but unsure of where to start planning or discovering
- Quality-over-quantity minded
- Usually the first to tell their friends and family about interesting travel experiences



2.3 GSRT AUDIENCES REGIONAL CULTURE & NATURE SEEKERS

| | AWARENESS Discovering us | LEARNING & PLANNING Planning their trip | VISITING Engaging and experiencing | REFLECTING & REPEATING After they've left |
|-----------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| THEY WANT: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be inspired by the multitude of interesting and exciting experiences throughout Victoria • To immerse themselves in new natural and cultural experiences, and to find people, places and activities that are a bit special, unique and under-discovered | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-curated information and itineraries to make their planning easy and streamlined, including options for a range of different interests • Updates on new cultural events and experiences, as well as the seasonal opportunities in nature and local produce | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging experiences with cultural, historical and natural landmarks, including ways to ‘go deeper’ on-trail and find out more about what they are seeing and experiencing • Clear connection and signage to natural, cultural and culinary experiences off-trail • Explore and discover a richer Australian story • Access to all the important amenities that help them travel with ease, including transport to and from the Trail if required, good accommodation and dining options, on-trail comfort amenities and clear safety and navigation information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wow-worthy moments they can share with friends and family • Interesting stories, facts and encounters to muse on, share, and learn about more at home • An expanded sense of knowing the ‘real’ regional Victoria |
| WE WANT THEM TO: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of, and excited about, South Gippsland as an accessible, abundant and stimulating destination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the Trail as a gateway to the region and an accessible, enjoyable experience for everyone • Plan journeys with us around their cultural, culinary and natural interests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be wowed and immersed in our diversity of landscapes, and unique, quirky townships; stay longer and spend more (money and time) in our townships and their cultural and culinary experiences • Explore our towns along the Trail with an open mind • Show they value local art, goods and experiences by spending \$\$ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share our destination with their friends and family personally and via social media • Stay overnight and return more often, to learn more, revisit their favourite local places, and go further • Appreciate the knowledge and stories they have absorbed, sharing what they’ve learnt about our region’s history and culture |
| COMMUNICATE TO THEM: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore South Gippsland along a historic Trail winding through rolling hills, lush forests and country villages down to the iconic coastline • Use the Great Southern Rail Trail to visit South Gippsland’s accessible, quirky and unique towns, see our vibrant artist culture and communities, connect to our First Nations and Trail heritage, and participate in our growing and unique local events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Great Southern Rail Trail connects you to cultural, historic and natural encounters and experiences throughout South Gippsland • Expect a scenic immersion into the heart of South Gippsland, meandering at your own pace and in your own mode • Explore our different itineraries, or town-to-town Trail sections, to create a trip to your own interests and tastes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are here to help you have an enjoyable time on the Great Southern Rail Trail; you’re never far away from what you need • There’s more to see as the seasons change, there’s more to experience the further you go • Our locals have stories and histories from South Gippsland – strike up a conversation in town to learn more about the Great Southern Rail Trail and the region | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Great Southern Rail Trail is evolving and transforming with our communities, artists, craftspeople, and nature – discover more as the Trail grows • Stories and histories are always unfolding – discover deeper in your next visit • Keep up to date with wildlife sightings, new cultural experiences and our First Nations history and culture, by following us on social media and signing up for our newsletter |



2.3 GSRT AUDIENCES OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS

THEY ARE:

- Regional and urban visitors travelling with friends for an event or sporting activity or looking to use the Trail as an active leisure/outdoors exercise asset
- The Trail, or a Trail event, is more likely to be the main drawcard, but are willing to look further and spend more if the information and inspiration are there
- Seeking out the next stop to tick off another bucket list item
- Looking for exciting and memorable new experiences in nature
- More likely to undertake longer portions of the Trail, and return to complete it
- Use, or would consider, touring or equipment hiring companies and shuttle services

| | AWARENESS Discovering us | LEARNING & PLANNING Planning their trip | VISITING Engaging and experiencing | REFLECTING & REPEATING After they've left |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| THEY WANT: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel connected to rewarding outdoors experiences • Inspiration from a multitude of interesting outdoor experiences, with varying difficulties and local features • Experiences they can build on i.e other trails or activities to increase the challenge/duration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-curated information and itineraries about the different outdoors experiences, routes, hiring and transportation, and suitable accommodation options that are available • To know there will be great scenic views along their journey and where exactly to expect them • Easy to find practical information on amenities, water, shelter, topography, e-bike charging stations, horse troughs and bike racks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging, rewarding and engaging outdoor adventures of all kinds - by foot, by bike or on horseback • Access to all the important amenities that help them travel with ease, including transport to and from the Trail if required, good accommodation and dining options, on-trail comfort amenities and clear safety and navigation information • Special, seasonal and multi-use events connected to the Trail that they can use to challenge themselves and see the region | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wow-worthy moments they can share with friends and family • Ticked off another bucket list item • More events for further adventures and challenges • Opportunity to try different segments |
| WE WANT THEM TO: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of and excited about South Gippsland as an accessible, abundant and stimulating natural destination • Be interested to attend an event, or plan one, connected to the Trail and our natural landscapes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be excited, enthusiastic and wowed by our diversity of landscapes • Look for opportunities to travel the Trail via their preferred mode/s of activity, including seeking out or organising groups and events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be wowed and immersed in our diversity of landscapes, and unique, quirky townships • Demonstrate good Trail etiquette • Enjoy the entire length of the Trail as much as possible • Explore our towns along the Trail with an open mind • Show they value local businesses by trying a new experience or activity and spending their \$\$ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share our destination with their friends and family personally and via social media • Return to complete the Trail or try the next extensions as they happen • Leave positive reviews for the towns businesses and the Trail on outdoor enthusiasts forums and groups |
| COMMUNICATE TO THEM: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be immersed in South Gippsland's scenic landscapes any time of year, with something new to do every season • Walk, run, cycle or ride by horseback the Great Southern Rail Trail, one of Victoria's longest and ever-growing Trails, to experience natural diversity from hills to Coast, farmland to wetland and everything in between | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Great Southern Rail Trail is a 100km+ kilometres meandering corridor throughout South Gippsland, where you can enjoy walks, runs and rides amongst lush forest down to iconic coastlines • Stop in at our many townships to enjoy culture, arts, South Gippsland produce, and events along your journey • Try a self-guided exploration of the Trail, or a guided tour with equipment hire and shuttle service from our local businesses • Looking for more adventures? Explore the different trails and hikes around, and connected to, The Great Southern Rail Trail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Great Southern Rail Trail is great for different abilities to experience South Gippsland's scenic outdoors • There are things to learn, see, taste and explore along your journey • Are you prepared for your journey? Know how to get help if you need it. Contact the GSRT team on xxxxx/the Shire Council on xxxxx • Need assistance accessing or exiting the GSRT? Here are our accessible entry points and distances between them | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each season is unique along the Great Southern Rail Trail, offering a diversity of landscape, weather, and events each time you visit • One Trail section only tells one part of the Great Southern Rail Trail story. Explore the full length to discover more of South Gippsland • Come join another on-trail event, or start one of your own |



2.3 GSRT AUDIENCES REGULAR USERS

THEY ARE:

- Local residents of the towns along, or in close proximity to, the Trail
- Very familiar with the sections close to where they live but may be less aware or knowledgeable about sections beyond
- Using the Trail for convenience or socially, for exercise and/or commuting
- May be single-purpose users, unaware of the Trail's full potential, variety of access options or wider role in the region
- Preconceived ideas of what other business/experiences are available in the region - may be limiting them to look for more/different
- Interested in using the trail more
- Focused on, and passionate about, Trail maintenance, safety, and etiquette

| | AWARENESS Discovering us | LEARNING & PLANNING Planning their trip | VISITING Engaging and experiencing | REFLECTING & REPEATING After they've left |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| THEY WANT: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something new to do in their local area • To know what's happening in the region | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-curated information to make their regular visits easy and streamlined • Inspiration to go beyond what they know - a taste of other experiences • Understanding of how the full Trail connects throughout the whole region, and the places it can take them in their own backyard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well maintained Trail and facilities whether they are using it to get from location A to location B, exercise, connect with friends and family or unwind and relax • Engaging and interactive points of interest with the ability to 'go deeper' via digital and physical connections to add meaning to their routine • To see the Trail's and region's potential brought to life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make plans to explore new sections of the Trail • To have local 'bragging rights' about the Trail - to feel pride in sharing about this great asset for their community and out-of-town visitors |
| WE WANT THEM TO: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be curious about what's happening in their backyard • Be aware that things are changing and happening in the region • Turn to local destination and events websites for inspiration to further explore their own region | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit the GSRT website and/or follow social media for detailed information • Plan to explore beyond their local area using the Trail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get involved with our townships, natural events and activations, using the Trail as a way to connect and access • Practice good shared path etiquette • See opportunities for community initiatives and get in touch with us to help bring these ideas to life | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to use the Trail frequently, and also for new purposes and in new ways • Be excited and enthusiastic about this great asset • Share the Trail with friends and family, and make recommendations for places to see or experiences to have along the Trail • Provide feedback to the council on the Trail experience and help us to constantly improve |
| COMMUNICATE TO THEM: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore a new perspective and take a wider view of South Gippsland • There are always things improving, happening, growing and evolving along the Great Southern Rail Trail | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover what's happening in our Trail towns and wider South Gippsland region; where to grab a coffee and sit down for a meal after a refreshing journey on the Great Southern Rail Trail - be a tourist in your own, lush and diverse backyard • The Great Southern Rail Trail brings, and supports you to visit, arts, events, history and culture in South Gippsland | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover the different stories from South Gippsland along the Great Southern Rail Trail • The Great Southern Rail Trail team is dedicated to creating an enjoyable and safe Trail experience for everyone, and we ask you to do your part too • See something you want to talk about? An idea for the Trail or an issue along the Trail? Get in touch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where to next? How to explore beyond your doorstep with the Great Southern Rail Trail • Inviting friends and family to stay? Use the Great Southern Rail Trail as a great way to show them around and enjoy our diverse outdoors • Connect with us to share an event or idea for the Great Southern Rail Trail |



2.3 GSRT AUDIENCES BUSINESSES

THEY ARE:

- Locally run businesses servicing and connecting with both residents and visitors
- Tourism operators and support service businesses like accommodation and dining, as well as other tourism and visitor experiences
- People considering building a new business in the region
- Looking for new ways to innovate their offerings and grow their business
- Often providing local recommendations
- Knowledgeable of their local area and offers
- Not always sure of their value or role in the region's visitor economy
- Interested in opportunities to innovate but need support

THEY WANT:

- To be kept up to date with changes happening that will be of interest to their customers
- To see GSRT marketing to will increase visitation in the region
- To be able to contribute to the marketing of the Trail
- Events opportunities to provide substantial boosts to their businesses throughout the year, and/or that they can get involved in
- The community to create innovative business offerings that will fill gaps in the market and help bring more people to the region, or get them to stay longer and spend more
- Easy and direct ways to understand how they can help their customers explore the region and see the best on offer; collateral and messaging to help them sell the Trail and our region
- Understanding of Trail work, upgrades and other processes that may affect their business and customers
- A supportive partnership mentality from the GSRT team
- Clear, actionable answers for questions around regulations, safety, liability, and their responsibilities in relation to the Trail

WE WANT THEM TO:

- See themselves as visitor-facing businesses and a vital part of our visitor economy
- Understand their place and role in promoting the GSRT and feel confident to do so; connect themselves to the GSRT and other experiences/towns along it by providing inputs and content and then sharing this back out with visitors and community
- Create excellent experiences by investing in their business and its marketing
- Build partnerships with other local businesses for cross promotion/ collaborative experiences
- Put forward ideas, work with us to market and promote the Trail through a range of platforms
- Seek us out for advice and information
- Appreciate what the GSRT team is responsible for and how we can work together

COMMUNICATE TO THEM:

- The Great Southern Rail Trail team is committed to engaging, supporting and championing every business and tourism operator to elevate the visitor experience along and around the Trail, and throughout our whole South Gippsland region
- There are many ways to get involved - connect with us to share content about your business, itinerary opportunities, an event or other idea for - to connect to - the Great Southern Rail Trail
- We are creating more opportunities to collaborate and cross-promote, and develop cross-business events and activities for visitors to the region and Trail
- We are here to help you be informed about the best experiences for your customers along the Great Southern Rail Trail, and how to connect yourself to these and promote them to your customers

HOW WE REACH THEM:

- Council database via email/ bulletins to update on activities and opportunities
- Business events and engagement sessions - online, in-person, forums and networking
- Promotions to direct visitors to businesses
- Our website to promote businesses and events along the Trail
- Social media
- Support and content to create visitor campaigns; requesting their content and inviting them to input to campaigns, become 'featured businesses' and 'guides'



2.3 GSRT AUDIENCES **COMMUNITY & CULTURAL GROUPS**

THEY ARE:

- Special interest groups, communities or associations connected and supporting the region in some way eg nature, history, cultural preservation, business associations, regular user groups, environmental and conservation groups, and school groups
- Passionate about their specific cause or mission and how it interacts with the GSRT
- Includes our volunteers or non-employees who work closely with us on a regular basis or for specific projects
- May be hesitant to trust, or engage with, the Council if their cause wasn't treated with importance enough previously
- Vital to making the visitor experience a positive one, including bringing their friends and family from all over the state and country
- Unclear and unsure what is special and enticing about the GSRT to visitors, or their role in supporting and promoting this
- Adjoining landowners along the trail provide support and are important as they enhance the experience along the trail

THEY WANT:

- To be heard, supported engaged and valued- they're central to the GSRT experience and not an afterthought
- To ensure that growing visitation to the region only enhances the Trail experience, and the natural diversity, sustainability and townships along the Trail; that visitation will not negatively impact the Trail or their communities
- Sustainable jobs and economic growth for the community

WE WANT THEM TO:

- Welcome visitors and engage with them
- Become product/service innovators, content creators and storytellers for our visitors, including sharing their recommendations
- Bring any ideas, issues and concerns to Council with a positive, collaborative and problem-solving mindset; and help us to solve, address or facilitate them
- Feel a sense of ownership over the GSRT, and want to input to its visitor marketing and communications
- Visit the GSRT, use it to travel around our region and to their communities, and participate in events and activities - to be our advocates

COMMUNICATE TO THEM:

- The Great Southern Rail Trail team is committed to facilitating tourism that sustainably supports and preserves our regional environment, community and culture, and ensures a great experience on-trail for everyone
- We want our community to help visitors understand and experience our nature and towns, and we will provide opportunities to engage, share ideas, debate and improve together
- We are dedicated to ensuring different Trail users and interest groups are heard, respected, and their needs are taken into consideration with every action, activity or improvement
- The Great Southern Rail Trail team acknowledges the significance of the country to Traditional Owners and First Nations People. We are committed to on-going consultation, feedback and learning together
- We invite you as our community to help improve the Great Southern Rail Trail experience
- Connect with us to share an event or activity idea for the Great Southern Rail Trail, or feedback on Trail maintenance or improvement

HOW WE REACH THEM:

- Signage and collateral in towns and on Trail
- Social media and our website
- Regular public updates and consultation opportunities - newsletters and public forums
- Word of mouth



2.3 GSRT AUDIENCES GOVERNMENT & PARTNERS

THEY ARE:

- Federal and state Government funders and stakeholders
- Organisations we partner with now or could in the future, in focus areas such as conservation/management, education or sustainable tourism
- Local Government areas including neighbouring Councils that collaborate with South Gippsland Shire Council
- Associations, tourism bodies and influential organisations promoting Victoria, Gippsland, and/or South Gippsland
- Supportive of, developing and contributing to, feasible and desirable innovations, improvements to and offers in the region for visitors and community
- At different levels of active engagement in learning about what we're doing and connecting to the GSRT

THEY WANT:

- To see growth of tourism in the region
- To work together and learn together to drive growth of visitor economy in the region; and for us to contribute more to visitor economy in Victoria and Australia
- Open and clear communication - full understanding of the plan for communication and marketing of the GSRT and South Gippsland
- Opportunities for collaboration - proactive engagement from us, as well as highly responsive to their ideas and engagement with us

WE WANT THEM TO:

- Collaborate with us with ideas, projects and opportunities to grow and improve the GSRT offering and its role in, and connection to, the wider South Gippsland region and Victoria's tourism
- Feel a sense of ownership over the GSRT - as key partners, funders, contributors and storytellers
- Talk about and promote the work we do together with their audiences and customers
- Connect with us regularly, attend meetings and forums and actively maintain partnership with us
- Be motivated and committed to continuing to invest in the Trail

COMMUNICATE TO THEM:

- We work in partnership with people and organisations to create a premium regional Victorian Rail Trail experience, that acts as an artery carrying visitors to the rest of the South Gippsland region
- Our work together will transform the visitor experience in South Gippsland; the Great Southern Rail Trail is a connector to our towns, nature, history and culture, and is an asset that we see as becoming iconic and a rail trail benchmark
- Sustainability for the community and environment is very important to us, and we are constantly working with all our partners to drive sustainable visitor growth in our region
- Join us in creating projects, events and activations that showcase the creativity, culture, history and natural wonder of the townships and landscape along the Great Southern Rail Trail

HOW WE REACH THEM:

- Council database via email/ bulletins to update on activities and opportunities
- Business events and engagement sessions - online, in-person, forums and networking
- Targeted, one to one communications - face to face and email
- Via our website
- PR and trade press ads



THEY ARE:

- All the people who work with us in Council, Trail management and maintenance, visitor experience and more
- Advocates and champions of their area of work; they place importance on their responsibilities but may be disconnected from other roles and projects
- Likely to be juggling other Council duties, or their own day-to-day work if they are not Council employees



2.3 GSRT AUDIENCES **COUNCIL TEAM**

THEY WANT:

- To feel equally valued and appreciated - every person, department and volunteer role matters to ensure we develop and manage a premium GSRT asset and experience
- To be a part of the team that is improving, maintaining and evolving the GSRT - everyone working together (across multiple departments and projects)
- Be kept up to date and understand what is going on in areas they do not work in, with opportunities to connect and get more engaged if they wish
- Clear direction on messaging - how we communicate, what we communicate and to whom, about the GSRT and its connection to South Gippsland's wider visitor and community offer

WE WANT THEM TO:

- To continue and grow their passion and enthusiasm for the work they do maintaining, evolving, innovating and communicating the GSRT
- To expand this passion and care to the whole GSRT team and experience, and all its various audiences
- Connect more with each other, and work together to amplify our outcomes and visitor experience
- Understand the value of the GSRT and how we talk about it/promote it to visitors, our community and external stakeholders

COMMUNICATE TO THEM:

- The Great Southern Rail Trail is a visitor brand and experience that connects people from all over Victoria, and beyond, to our special, thriving region with so much to offer - it is the artery of South Gippsland
- It is always transforming and improving thanks to all of our work, and the way we work together
- Each team member and role is crucial to making sure people using the Trail have a wonderful experience, and are encouraged to stay longer, spend more and return more often
- Let's share with each other, bring new ideas to the table, give and receive support so that we can make the Great Southern Rail Trail a benchmark Trail experience that is well maintained, interesting, memorable and deeply connected into our whole region - and one that is worth doing again and again

HOW WE REACH THEM:

- Internal communications, newsletters and bulletins
- Collateral in Council offices
- Team meetings, co-creation sessions and social events - including cross-department and volunteers
- Our website
- Strong induction and ongoing training



SECTION 03

MAJOR PROJECTS



3.1 MAJOR PROJECTS
OVERVIEW AND MAP

3.2 MAJOR PROJECTS
ACTIVITIES

01

Introduction

02

Insights & Foundations

03

Major Projects

04

Long-Term Projects



3.1 MAJOR PROJECTS OVERVIEW

There are six major projects we want to complete to coincide with the completion of the Trail extension from Nyora to Yarram, that will set us up for an improved, and continuously improving, GSRT visitor experience and marketing communications.

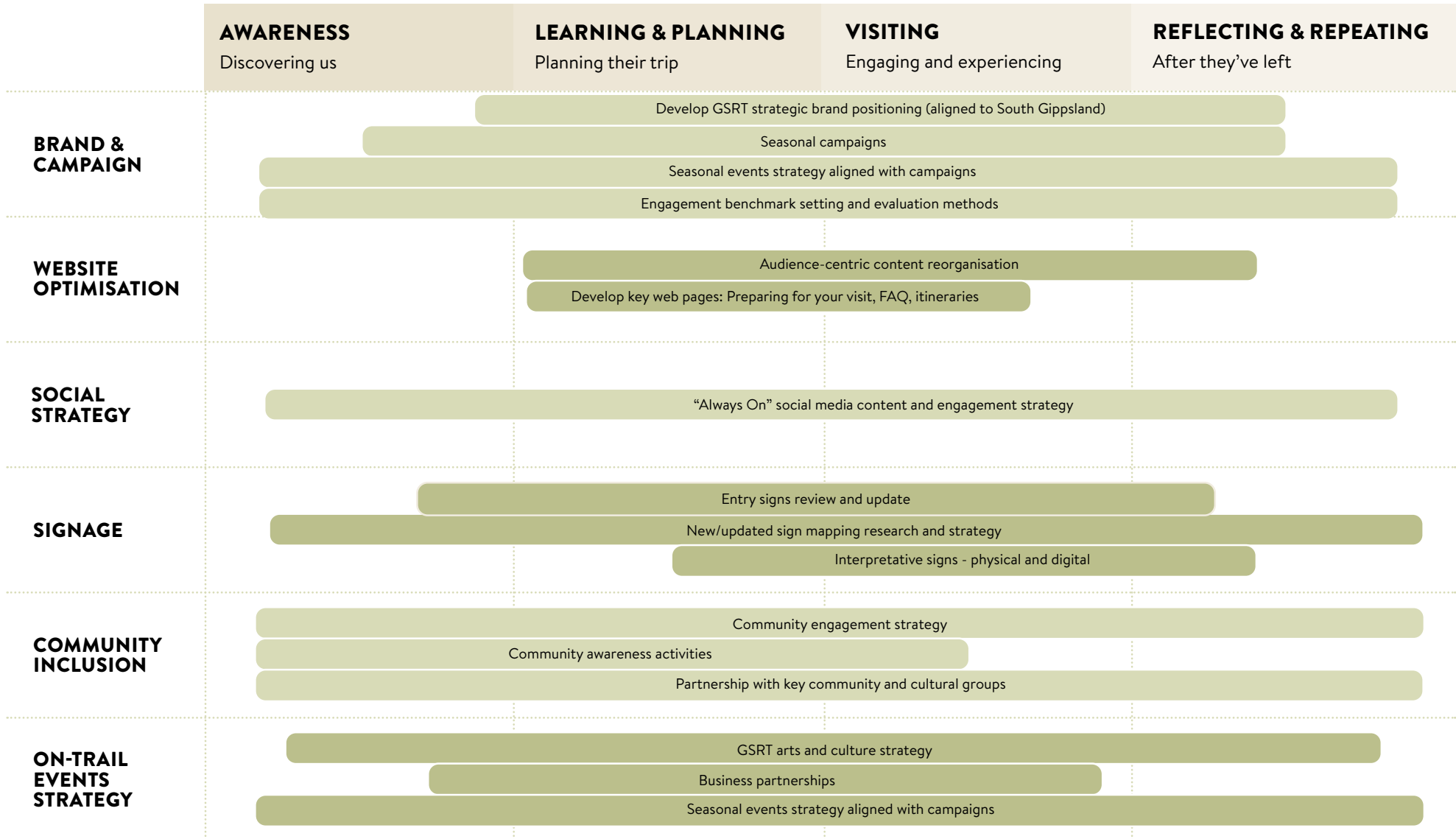
These have been identified as the most desirable, feasible and viable projects related to the insights from our consultation and research work, and aligned to what our various audiences want from us and what we want from them.

Each project connects to the user journey framework and will build across each stage so that visitors today and tomorrow will have successful and memorable experiences along the GSRT and in Trail towns. Within each project are several sub-projects and sets of activities, or deliverables, that specifically address the Plan's key objectives.

Projects are subject to resourcing, budget requirements, external influences, and on-going development. For this reason, they should be regularly reviewed - every quarter - and adjusted to ensure progress can be maintained or redirected as needed. Timelines and budgets are suggestive and have been formulated to encourage development as well as to create the proper foundations for the Plan's Long-Term Projects.



3.1 MAJOR PROJECTS MAP





3.2 MAJOR PROJECTS

ACTIVITIES

| PROJECT | ACTIVITY | PURPOSE | DELIVERABLES | TIMINGS |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|---|
| BRAND & CAMPAIGN | Strategic brand positioning | Prioritise and highlight the most authentic, distinctive and compelling promise of the GSRT, to anchor hero brand communications in this proposition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop GSRT brand positioning, value proposition and personality (aligned to what will be the new South Gippsland brand foundations) | Short term |
| | Seasonal campaigns | Develop seasonal story and offer for the Trail; create 'key season' campaigns to engage visitors seeking a variety of landscape, offer and experience. Prepare launch to coincide to completion of extension to Nyora and Yarram. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align on key activities, experiences and events on offer for Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter Develop campaign idea/story and creative assets for each season Develop media/channels schedule for digital, outdoor/evolving signage, radio, social media and in-region/on-trail assets Collaboration with partnered media and content creators Media kit and business partner promotional packages Partner with Destination Gippsland All Kinds of Wonder brand where appropriate | Short to medium term for launch, then on-going |
| | Events aligned with campaigns and social media | Align events with campaigns and social media content that will create incentives and novelty for visitors to return to the Trail, and explore more of the GSRT and townships' offer. Collaborate with event organisers and community networks to leverage from existing events. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with event organisers and community networks Ensure events are aligned and featured in campaigns and social media content | Short to medium term for launch, then on-going |
| | Engagement benchmark setting and evaluation methods | Regularly evaluate performance and engagement over an 18 month period to ensure the brand and content strategies are reaching and connecting with audiences effectively and fulfilling marketing objectives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish relevant and appropriate benchmarks and methods for evaluating level of social media engagement and successful performance according to marketing objectives Create evaluation schedule Assess need for adjustments | Complete first evaluation in the short-term; on-going at medium-term interval |
| WEBSITE OPTIMISATION | Audience-centric content reorganisation and adjustments | Re-organise how Trail segments, activities, itineraries and amenities are listed and communicated to respond to audience needs and interests, and ensure all headings are relevant to local and non-local perspective, are engaging and inspiring. Ensure all links are working and relevant, and upload full brochure content to webpages. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current website content and structure audit; review against new audience profiles and develop updated content categories Re-write/re-order content aligned to new content categories Re-flow new categories and content to existing website look and feel/wireframe structure | Short term |
| | Develop web pages: Preparing for your visit, FAQs, needs-based itineraries | Plan and create additional webpages to pre-emptively answer any doubts, questions, concerns potential visitors may have in an inspiring and helpful manner. Includes the development of itineraries which may be published on webpages and email newsletters, or downloadable content upon sign up. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit website for pages that require updating, and lacking pages that need to be developed Plan webpages according to audience needs and brand objectives; consider pages for FAQs, preparing for your visit or 'how to explore' Ensure complete information is available on webpages (do not rely on brochure uploads) Develop a content engagement strategy for itineraries to address brand and marketing objectives Develop a set of up to 5 x itineraries based on specific areas of interest such as culture/ art, natural wonders, culinary and local produce etc Upload to website and promote publication | Short term |
| SOCIAL STRATEGY | "Always On" social media content and engagement strategy | Formulate a social media content and engagement strategy aligned to the audience profiles developed as part of this process, regularly addressing their wants/ needs and feeding out the key messaging. This should be consistently executed over the 18 month period separate to the campaign-specific social media, with incremental evaluations and opportunities for adjustment so that audience awareness and engagement can be successfully built over the period. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with partnered media and content creators Delegate management of social accounts and responsibilities Develop strategic audience-centric approach to responding to users and sharing user-generated content Observe public comments and feedback in Victorian trail groups, forums Create a content calendar with regular branded social content, anchored in audience needs and wants Scope for social collaboration opportunities on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube for Victorian travel content creators Observe and analyse performance and feedback for adjusting content and engagement strategy | Complete in the short-term, then on-going |



3.2 MAJOR PROJECTS

ACTIVITIES

| PROJECT | ACTIVITY | PURPOSE | DELIVERABLES | TIMINGS |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| SIGNAGE | Entry signs review and update | Ensure that the information on hero signs about the GSRT communicates the experience's most authentic, distinctive and compelling feature (value proposition). Explore viability and feasibility of overprint stickers to update entry signs and implementing QR codes on signs for seasonal information or app and map downloads. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct brand strategy work to review and refine GSRT offer proposition is accurate and appropriate for long-term use (for example with trail lengths mentioned) If required, update signs with overprint stickers | Short term |
| | New/updated sign mapping research and strategy | Research and plan optimum locations for all signage types based on audience pain points, behaviour and desires, to ensure signs will be effectively found and read, and visitors can navigate too, and on, the Trail with ease and improved experience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update signs (sign and sign content) for wayfinding, brand/promotional, safety and emergency signs Include in sign strategy brand and promotional signage in towns to ensure visitors can discover and learn about the GSRT. Consider use of QR code technology to include seasonal and updated information. Plan for navigational signage in towns, on HWY, along the Trail, at all entrance points – includes distance to points of interest, nearest exist, facilities and amenities such as water, shelter, seatings, toilets, bike stations, and directions towards public transport stations. Install directional signage along the Hwy to ensure visitors can discover entry points along the GSRT. Include easy to understand and detailed safety and emergency signs at main points and along the Trail to help users feel prepared. Consider wildlife and weather hazards, injuries, road safety, and other emergencies. | Medium term |
| | Interpretative signs – physical and digital | Develop placement and content strategy for interpretative signage that will educate and inspire different visitors. Consider sourcing information about wildlife, birds, natural features, history, agriculture, town stories, cycling facts such as best times to complete, and First Nations people's information (if lacking or contended, acknowledge this in signs using digital technology such as QR codes so that it can be updated as changes occur). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct research and/or consultation into desirability, feasibility and viability of interpretative signage. Consider where interpretative content can be integrated on navigational signage for efficiency Trials may be conducted with QR sticker on existing signs (not recommended for long-term use as it excludes those without access or ability to use smart phone technology, or may rely on internet connection where there is none) | Medium term |
| ENGAGEMENT | Community inclusion | Empower community members and organisations to support activity along the GSRT. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Community Inclusion Plan that identifies community members and groups to participate in future activities and projects related to the GSRT. | Short to Medium to develop and then ongoing |
| | Local business engagement | Supporting and growing key businesses that service GSRT users and visitors, and developing ideas with them on how to improve the visitor experience. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media kit and business partner promotional packages Collaboration and/or partnership with business operator associations Email businesses with feedback and suggestion opportunities Explore opportunities for packages, events, and campaign partnerships (competition prizes, for example) | Complete in the short-term, then on-going with regular short-term sessions |
| | Maintenance and management communications | Communicate regularly and pro-actively with visitor audiences and relevant non-visitor audiences about GSRT maintenance and development updates, environmental maintenance, safety, works in progress, and changes through multiple platforms and channels to increase awareness, engagement and buy in, as well as opportunities for feedback. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance and management communications will form part of the GSRT Management Plan | Short-term, align with extension completion |
| EVENTS & CULTURAL ACTIVITY | GSRT arts and culture | The GSRT is considered in Council's Visitor Economy Strategy 2021–2031 and Council's Arts, Culture and Creative Industries Strategy 2022–2026 | | |



SECTION 04

LONG-TERM PROJECTS



4.1 LONG-TERM PROJECTS
OVERVIEW AND MAP

4.2 LONG-TERM
PROJECTS ACTIVITIES

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Long-Term Projects



4.1 LONG-TERM PROJECTS OVERVIEW

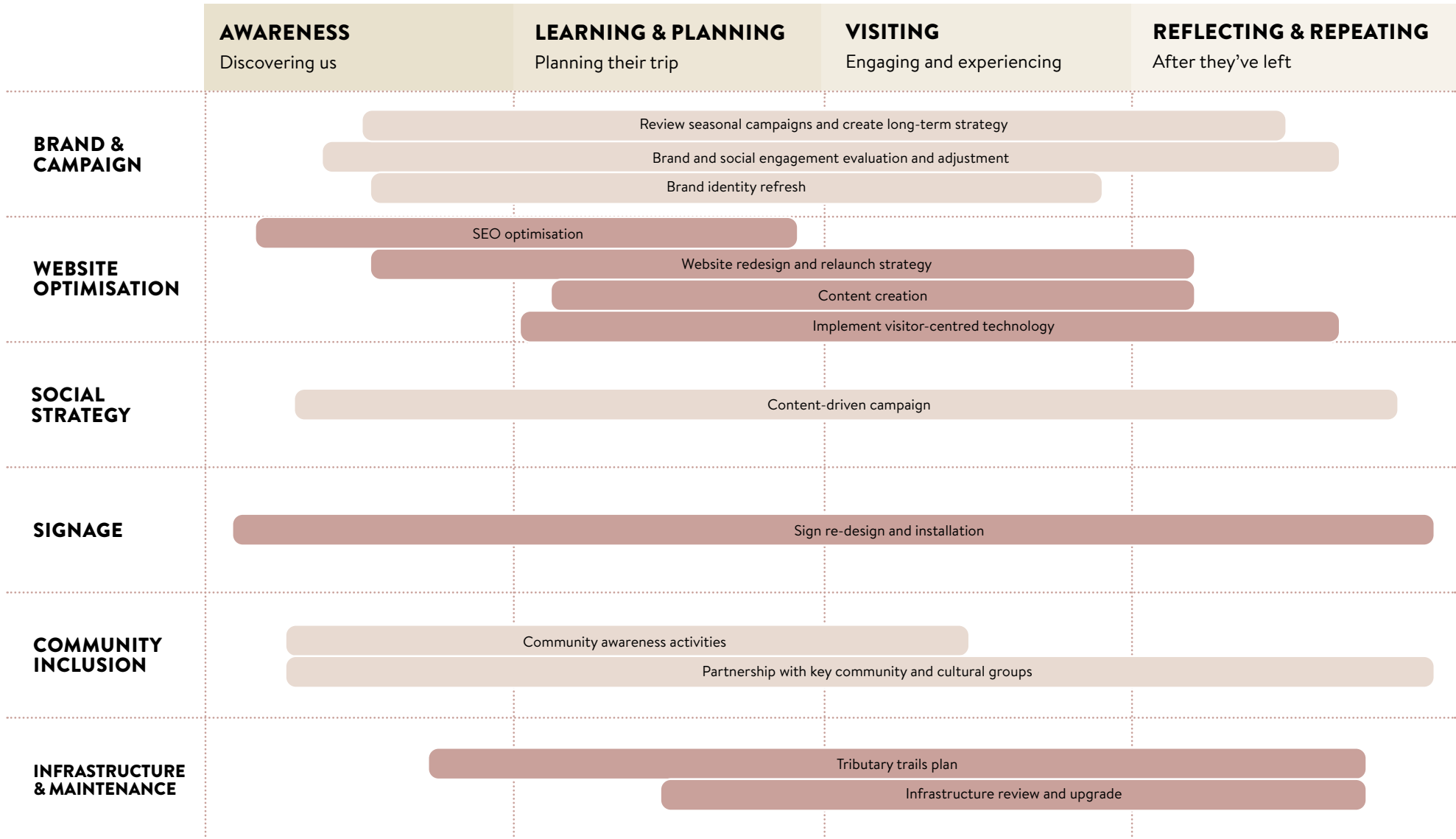
Once the six major projects have been implemented and/or are underway, there are six long-term projects proposed for the GSRT's development. These have been formulated based on the Plan's consultation work and put forward as the currently known priorities that will support the GSRT team and South Gippsland Shire Council to realise Visitor Economy goals and objectives by 2031.

These long-term projects also connect to the user journey framework and contain several sub-projects that continue to fulfil the Plan's key objectives. Depending on the success and implementation of the major projects, the long-term projects may be adjusted as needed. No doubt new and additional priorities will emerge during the nine-year period, which will further build out the bi-annual major projects action plans with more detail and clearer deliverables.

The long-term projects activities do not include detail such as budget and specific timelines as we are currently too far out to accurately outline these. Long-term projects should be reviewed every two years as the next bi-annual activity period is planned, with detailed deliverables, budgets and resourcing requirements outlined then.



4.1 LONG-TERM PROJECTS MAP





4.2 LONG-TERM PROJECTS

ACTIVITIES

| PROJECT | ACTIVITY | PURPOSE |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| BRAND & CAMPAIGN | Review seasonal campaigns and create strategy and goals for yearly seasonal campaigns | Review past seasonal campaign's success, areas for improvement, and new opportunities presenting for future campaigns to inform a longer-term strategy for seasonal campaigns and events. Include business packages, content and media collaborations, competitions, and community activities. |
| | Brand identity refresh | Assess the need to refresh the existing brand identity to align with the strategic brand work completed from Major Projects of this plan, and to support the website redesign and relaunch proposed as a long-term project. |
| | Brand and social engagement evaluation and adjustment | Conduct every 12 months to test changes/improvements made in the GSRT brand and visitor experience, and recognise areas of strengths, challenges and opportunities for development. Evaluate level of brand and social media engagement and successful performance over the 18 month period to assess if the social strategy reached and connected with audiences effectively and fulfilled initial marketing objectives. Adjust benchmarks and methods, if needed, for evaluation for 6 month intervals. Includes reviewing and adjusting 'always on' social media content and engagement strategy. |
| WEBSITE OPTIMISATION | Website redesign and relaunch strategy | Re-design the GSRT website for improved user experience. Consider better user interactions, increased webpage responsiveness, re-design information layout and create new audience-centric content as needed. |
| | SEO optimisation | Conduct SEO research to identify how visitor audiences are using internet search to find new things to do in the region, in Victoria and Australia. Implement research findings into GSRT website content in user-friendly and relevant ways with the intention to be as helpful and engaging as possible. |
| | Content creation: tours, providers and accommodation directory, new or updated itineraries | Research to collect and curate the most relevant and desirable local services and businesses for visitor audiences, and develop need and interest based directories to be hosted on the GSRT website. Include operating hours, proximity to Trail, facilities, features, and appropriate and working links. An accommodation directory, for example, may be organised by location along the Trail, visitor needs (shuttle service, bike storage, etc), and includes private camping grounds (use Hipcamp, Yoke and similar apps to source). Connect this activity to business engagement strategy. |
| | Implement visitor-centered technology | Plan and implement web-based and digital technology to improve the visitor experience during planning, engagement and reflecting stages. Include live weather conditions on GSRT website, interactive maps (Google or trail apps), research into visitor mobile app opportunities and self-guided digital tours. |
| SOCIAL STRATEGY | Content-driven campaign | Create a content-driven social campaign to highlight and feature local operators along and around the Trail. Executions include instagram 'takeovers', videos, emails with interviews or local tips. May be part of a larger South Gippsland destination campaign if appropriate. |
| SIGNAGE STRATEGY | Sign re-design and installation | Per the signage strategy in Major Projects, implement the re-design and installation of signs across informative, way-finding, interpretative and promotional categories. |
| COMMUNITY INCLUSION | Community awareness activities | Inform local community businesses and groups of updates and changes to GSRT through targeted communications, promotion, and invitations to co-design sessions and opportunities to engage and host events, create packages, or other community based initiatives. Include anything else relevant from the Community Inclusion Plan. |
| | Partnership with key community and cultural groups | Invite key community and cultural groups to partner with GSRT to develop and improve community and visitor experiences; consider sustainable environmental practices, arts and culture, hospitality and retail innovations, advertising strategies, events, including First Nations' consultation, and more. Please note: First Nations consultation may be considered as its own project. |
| TRAIL OPTIMISATION | Infrastructure review | Review all GSRT infrastructure such as water fountains, bike maintenance, bike racks, horse and dog troughs, etc. and assess need for improvements based on visitor and community feedback. Ensure there is clear and friendly communication about works in progress on site as well as where relevant, such as on social media and the GSRT website. Please note: while this as a visitor experience recommendation, it needs alignment with the infrastructure team and their existing plans. |
| | Tributary trails plan | Conduct feasibility and viability study into 'tributary trails' to provide more access points to the GSRT and to also extend the Trail experience into towns, providing 'micro' experiences for visitors and locals. This may be tested by creating temporary interest-based trails in towns using stickers and signs, or creating temporary content to connect the GSRT to neighbouring trails. |



**GREAT SOUTHERN
RAIL TRAIL**

SOUTH GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

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