

8.6 Smart Community Strategy

REPORT BY THE MANAGER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
TO 17 JULY 2024 ORDINARY MEETING
GOV400105, ECO800001

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Manager Economic Development on the Smart Community Strategy;**
2. **place the Smart Community Strategy on public exhibition for 28 days; and**
3. **receive a further report following the conclusion of the public exhibition period to consider any submissions received, or if at the end of the public exhibition period, if no submissions are received, adopt the Smart Community Strategy as proposed.**

Executive summary

The Smart Community Strategy has been developed to provide direction for Council and the community to ensure focus on relevant initiatives that provide the most appropriate benefits to the community both now and into the future. This Strategy establishes the roadmap to guide and accelerate smart community action in the Mid-Western Region.

Disclosure of Interest

Nil

Detailed report

The Smart Community Strategy describes a portfolio of services that can be implemented to transform and improve the way residents, visitors, businesses and governments interact with their environment in the course of their lives. Smart Communities utilise information and communications technology to connect people, processes data and things in ways that make the community more liveable, workable and sustainable.

The objective of the Strategy is to create a community that is economically, environmentally and technologically efficient supporting Council's vision to develop a prosperous and progressive community that we are proud to call home.

The Strategy has been aligned to the five themes of the Community Plan, being:

- Looking after our community
- Protecting our natural environment
- Building a strong local economy
- Connecting our region
- Good government

And further broken into live, short term (1-2 years), medium term (2-5 years) and to investigate initiatives, and are as follows:

Live Initiatives

Protecting our environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart water meters and monitoring • Drones for weeds monitoring • LED street lighting
Building a strong local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart economic analytics tool • Virtual reality marketing videos
Connecting our region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mt Misery live feed • Electric vehicle charging stations

Short Term Initiatives (12-24 months)

Looking after our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitalising our heritage assets
Protecting our natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council solar energy farm
Connecting our region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart warning systems
Good government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public mapping

Medium Term Initiatives (2-5 Years)

Looking after our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free CBD Wi-Fi • Smart benches and seats • Smart sensors for passive and active parks lighting
Protecting our natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart irrigation solutions for parks and gardens • Smart lighting in restrooms
Building a strong local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart digital town signage • Pedestrian sensor movements
Connecting our region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cameras on vehicles
Good government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce electric vehicles to Council fleet • Mobile request system • Automation and efficiency using AI

To Investigate Initiatives

Looking after our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCTV in CBD • Digital arts expansion in cultural centre
Protecting our natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart waste bins • Smart street lighting
Building a strong local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil moisture live reporting (agriculture)
Connecting our region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automated vehicles • Smart parking sensor solutions • Ride-share solutions
Good government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart community digital platforms • Utilise data to optimise facility hire • 3D modelling of urban planning

It is recommended that Council place the Smart Community Strategy on public exhibition and receive a further report following conclusion of the public exhibition period to consider any submissions received, or if at the end of the public exhibition period, if no submissions are received, adopt the Smart Community Strategy as proposed.

Community Plan implications

Theme	Building a Strong Local Economy
Goal	An attractive business and economic environment
Strategy	Support the expansion of essential infrastructure and services to match business and industry development in the region

Strategic implications

Council Strategies

Community Plan
Mid-Western Regional Economic Development Strategy – 2023 Update
ITC Strategy
Mid-Western Region Emergency Plan
MWRC Cultural Plan 2023-2033
Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan
Recreation Strategy
Community Engagement Strategy

Council Policies

Asset Management Policy
Camera Surveillance Policy
Community Engagement Policy
Compliance and Enforcement Policy
Informational and Directional Signage Policy

Legislation

Privacy Act 1988
Local Government Act 1993

Financial implications

Not Applicable

Associated Risks

If the Smart Community Strategy is not adopted, there is a risk of Council falling behind technologically, leading to outdated infrastructure and increased maintenance costs. This can result in economic disadvantages, such as reduced competitiveness and slower economic growth, as well as environmental impacts due to inefficient resource use and failure to meet sustainability goals. Additionally, the quality of life for residents may decline without the benefits of smart technologies, and operational inefficiencies may persist, leading to slower, more labour-intensive processes and poor data management.

Moreover, the absence of a Smart Community Strategy can increase the region's vulnerability to security breaches and emergencies and may result in non-compliance with evolving regulations. Embracing smart technologies is essential for Council to remain competitive, efficient, and responsive to community needs.

MICHELE MINI
MANAGER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ALINA AZAR
DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT

25 June 2024

Attachments: 1. Smart Community Strategy. (separately attached)

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM
GENERAL MANAGER