



Shire of
Serpentine
Jarrahdale

Feasibility Review

Becoming a City



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Introduction

Section 2.4 of the *Local Government Act 1995* (the Act) provides that a local government district is to be designated a city, town or shire. Any district that is not designated a city or a town is to be designated a shire. The Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale is one of 103 Shires in the State.

Twenty-seven local governments have city-status while nine local governments are classified as towns.

Local governments that meet a threshold can apply to the Minister to be either a town and/or city. If approved, the change in status is made by order of the Governor.

The thresholds to be met are based on population and demographics and are set in the Act (as described in the section of the paper regarding legal considerations).

In 2020, Council adopted the Corporate Business Plan 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2024 which included the action:

“Plan and undertake a feasibility review inclusive of economic, technical, legal and scheduling considerations to assess the practicality of the Shire becoming a City.”

This paper presents the findings of this review. In undertaking the review, this paper has considered the following:

- the relevant legislation
- population estimates
- population forecasts
- experiences at other local governments.

The review has not involved community engagement at this stage.

Experience in other local governments demonstrates that whether a local government is a shire, town or city and the naming of the local government is of significant interest for some in the community. These have strong symbolic values and contribute to collective and in some cases individual sense of place.

Community engagement is critical to success but this community engagement must have sufficient information in order for that community engagement to be meaningful. The key message of the review is that while this paper deals with technical, legal and economic aspects, if further work is conducted it requires meaningful community participation.

This paper builds on a discussion paper that was distributed to Councillors in 2017 but not formally considered by Council. This paper also considers the Local Planning Strategy adopted by Council in 2020.

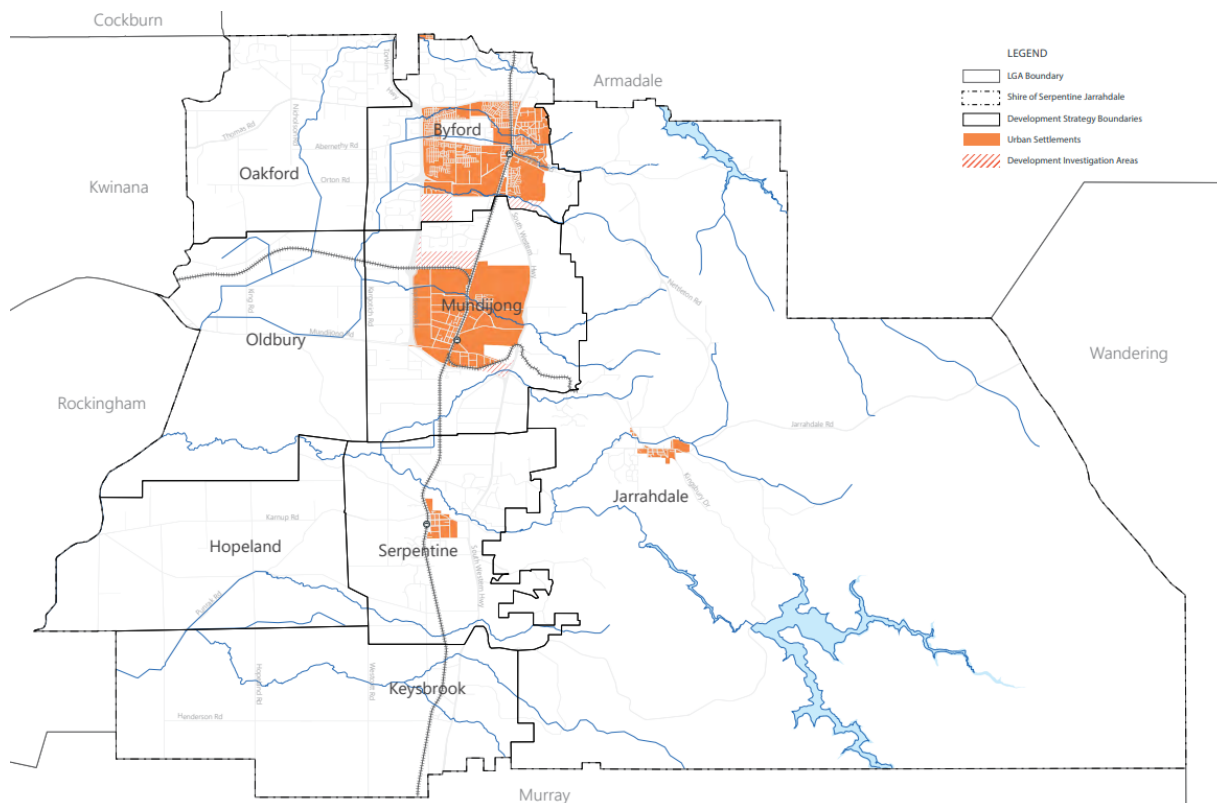
A brief history of the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

The history of the Shire as an administrative body can be traced to the formation of the Serpentine Road Board marks the first ex, which held its first meeting in 1897, the new Road Board controlled a corridor about 18.5km wide extending from Albany Highway to the coast.

In 1902, the Jarrahdale Road Board was formed and the two Road Boards, Serpentine and Jarrahdale functioned independently for almost a decade. In 1913 the Serpentine and Jarrahdale Road Boards combined to become the Serpentine Jarrahdale Road Board. Land west of the Serpentine River system was transferred to the Rockingham Road Board.

In July 1961, the Serpentine-Jarrahdale Road Board became the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale when seven Road Board members were sworn in as Shire Councillors. In 1977 the City of Armadale's Byford Ward was transferred to become part of the Shire.

Today, the Shire's landscape is a combination of the forests of the Darling Scrap surrounding the community of Jarrahdale to the coastal plain to the east with large tracts of rural land around Serpentine, extending northward to settlement of Mundijong and the urban environment of Byford, separated by stretches of mixed-use and perri-urban development.



What about a Town?

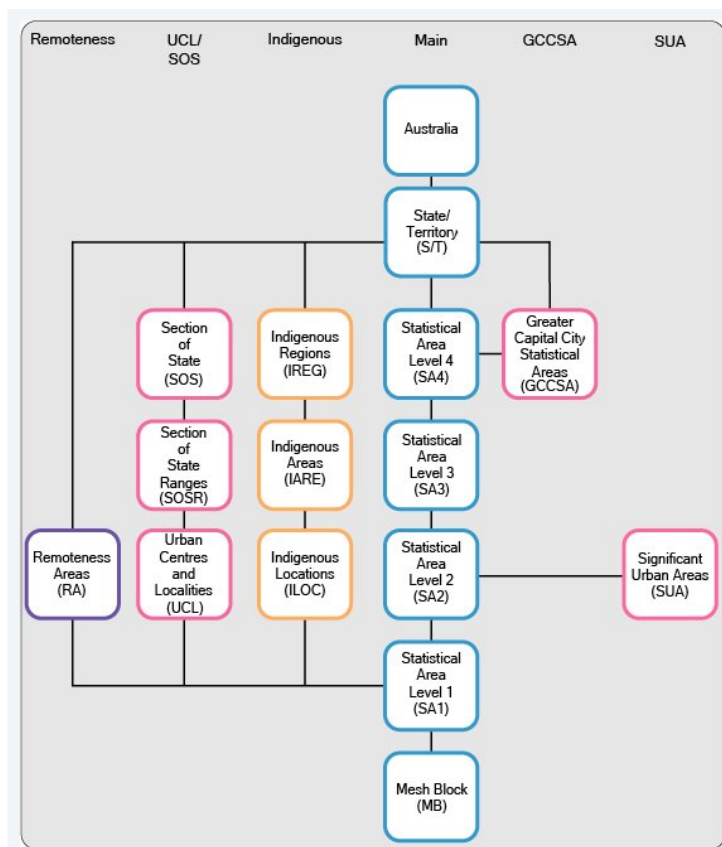
Section 2.4 of the Act provides that a district can be designated as a town if more than half of its inhabitants live in an urban area. As noted below, the Shire meets this criteria. Eight of the State's 137 local governments are classified as towns. Seven of the eight towns are in metropolitan Perth and most of these are small local governments located in Perth's inner and western suburbs such as the Town of Cottesloe, Town of Cambridge and Town of East Fremantle. Based on the types of districts classified as a town, the term town tends to be associated with inner-urban and village communities.

Population

Section 2.4(6) states that the number of inhabitants of a district at a particular time is to be taken as that established by the Government Statistician appointed under the *Statistics Act 1907* according to the information then available to that person. The Schedule of this Act provides that the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) will perform this role. As such, ABS data must inform whether the threshold is met. The following analysis provides a consideration of this matter.

Like all other districts in Western Australia, is divided into clusters according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics Australian Geographical Standard.

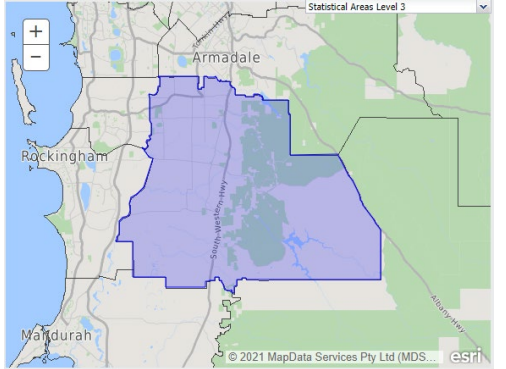
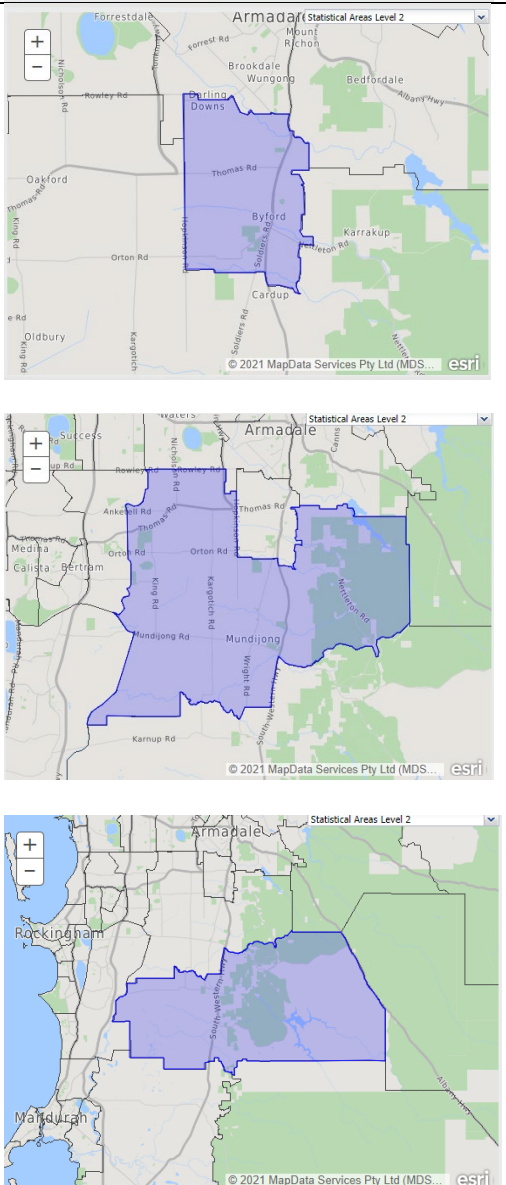
The Standard defines a complex hierarchy of for statistical classification. This classification involves both ABS structures as shown below and non-ABS structures such as electoral boundaries and local government areas. These non-ABS structures are built by the ABS from mesh blocks which are the smallest ABS geographical areas comprising 30 to 60 dwellings.

Figure: ABS Structures¹

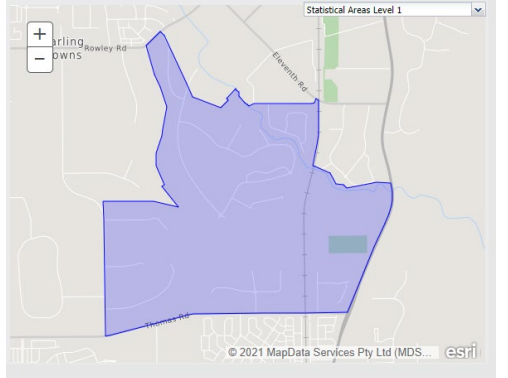
As shown in the table below, ABS's main form of statistical classification ranges incorporates large regional areas with multiple local governments in Statistical Area Level 4, through a District Level 3, sub-local government groupings at Level 3, to relatively small clusters at the Statistic Area Level 1 that together form conventional suburbs.

Statistical classification	Name	Associated image
Statistical Area 4	Perth – South East	<p>A map showing the Perth – South East Statistical Area Level 4. The map includes labels for Joondalup, Perth, Fremantle, Armadale, Rockingham, Mandurah, and Pinjarra. The map is titled 'Statistical Areas Level 4' and includes a copyright notice for 2021 MapData Services Pty Ltd (MDS) and ESRI.</p>

¹ [https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/australian+statistical+geography+standard+\(asgs\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/australian+statistical+geography+standard+(asgs))

Statistical Area 3	Serpentine-Jarrahdale ²	
Statistical Area 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Byford • Mundijong • Serpentine-Jarrahdale 	

² The Statistical Area 3 known as 'Serpentine-Jarrahdale' is technically not the same as Local Government Area occupied by the Shire through mesh blocks but for the purposes of this analysis the difference is negligible and use of the ABS main form of statistical classification outweighs the marginal difference between the datasets.

Statistical Area 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 59 areas with numerical designations between that range between 5114201 - 5114413 	
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For the purposes of Statistical Area 2, the Shire's population is divided into three areas as shown in the table below:

2016 Census data by Statistical Area 2

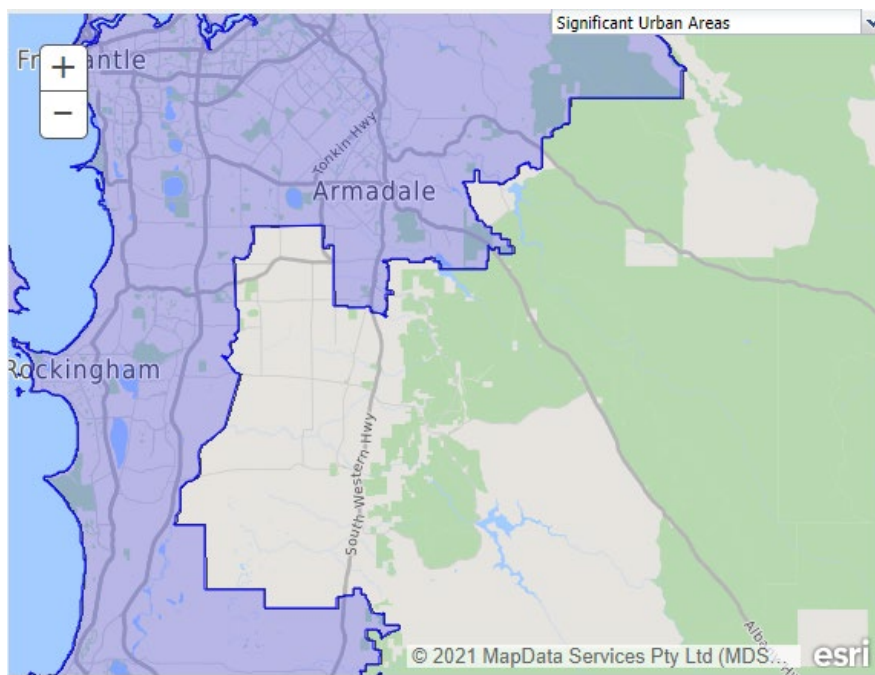
Statistical Area 2 – Name	Population
Byford (506061142)	16,112
Mundijong (506061143)	6,351
Serpentine-Jarrahdale (506061144)	4,416
Total	

To answer the question about the quantum of the population in the urban area, an analysis of Statistical Area Level 1 is required.

Under the ABS' Australian Statistical Geography Standard Level 1 Statistical Areas are defined as urban if they meet one of the following criteria:

- have an Urban Mesh Block population greater or equal to 45% of the total population and a dwelling density greater or equal to 45 dwellings per square (sq) Kilometre (km); or
- have a population density greater or equal to 100 persons per sq km AND a dwelling density greater or equal to 50 dwellings per sq km; or
- have a population density greater or equal to 200 person per sq km.

According to the ABS's framework, adjacent Statistical Area 1 that meet the criteria of urban are combined to form larger urban areas. In the Shire this has the effect of meaning that portions of Byford are part of the Perth Significant Urban Area.

Figure : Perth Significant Urban Area

In addition to the Significant Urban Area, urban areas as defined by the ABS include urban areas that are not part of a Significant Urban Area.

Outside of urban areas, the ABS uses the term localities which:

“Represent smaller discrete settlements with populations of at least 200 and less than 1,000 people... The definition of Localities is more subjective than for Urban Centres as their population can be well below the optimal for a single SA1. SA1 design therefore has a significant influence on their definition. In addition, there are many different configurations of small settlements, including villages, towns, clusters of peri - urban style development, and areas with significant tourism.³”

Localities can have urban characteristics but do not meet the ABS definition of an urban centre. Areas outside the significant urban area, urban centre and localities form what the ABS refers to as the ‘rural balance’.

Analysis

By examining the classification of each the Shire’s 59 Statistical Area 1 it is possible to determine the quantum of the population living in an urban area as defined by the ABS.

This analysis shows that as of the 2016 Census, 15,172 people in the Shire lived in Major Urban Areas defined by the ABS. A further 4,134 lived in ‘bounded localities’, which are areas with urban

³

<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Lookup/by%20Subject/1270.0.55.004~July%202016~Main%20Features~Design%20of%20UCL~8>

characteristics but are not urban⁴. The rural balance was made up by 7,578. Accordingly, by the ABS's classification system, 56.4 per cent of the Shire's population live in an urban area. A further 15.3 per cent live in localities that have some urban characteristics.

Table: Statistical Area 1 population by ABS Urban and Locality Criteria

	Population (2016 Census)	Area (Square KM)
Bounded Locality	4,134	37.7
Cardup (L)	633	7.1
5114305	633	7.1
Jarrahdale (L)	751	3.0
5114412	349	0.8
5114413	402	2.2
Mundijong (L)	1,479	20.2
5114301	308	13.2
5114313	494	5.6
5114314	384	0.6
5114315	293	0.8
Serpentine (L)	1,271	7.4
5114402	277	3.2
5114403	407	2.8
5114406	587	1.3
Major Urban	15,172	20.1
Perth (WA)	15,172	20.1
5114205	460	0.3
5114206	487	0.6
5114207	291	0.4
5114208	857	2.1
5114210	271	0.5
5114211	906	1.1
5114214	719	0.4
5114215	404	0.3
5114216	773	0.3
5114217	321	0.2
5114218	907	0.3
5114219	389	0.7
5114220	666	0.2
5114221	390	0.6
5114222	656	0.2
5114223	758	0.5
5114224	229	0.6
5114225	289	3.5
5114226	741	0.3
5114227	547	1.3

⁴ <https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/frequently+asked+questions>

5114228	616	0.4
5114229	1,173	0.4
5114230	638	0.4
5114231	0	0.5
5114232	420	2.0
5114233	371	0.1
5114234	868	0.3
5114235	25	1.5
Rural Balance	7,578	846.9
Remainder of State/Territory (WA)	7,578	846.9
5114201	382	4.7
5114212	178	1.5
5114213	371	3.1
5114302	338	41.1
5114303	340	64.1
5114304	481	3.9
5114306	451	103.4
5114307	347	4.0
5114308	472	3.7
5114309	319	4.2
5114310	317	12.4
5114311	449	7.5
5114312	734	15.2
5114401	323	3.5
5114404	412	4.2
5114405	282	4.9
5114407	336	51.4
5114408	304	129.1
5114409	314	21.3
5114410	78	275.5
5114411	350	88.4
Grand Total	26,884	904.8

As of the 2016 Census, the Shire did not meet the legislative criteria to be declared as a City but did meet the criteria to be a Town. As explored below, with population growth, the estimated population of the Shire exceeds the threshold with a population of 32,562 (Source: ABS 3235.0 Estimated Resident Population Age 30 June 2019). This will likely be confirmed by the 2021 Census.

The Cities of Perth (28,832), Nedlands (22,534) and Subiaco (17,251) were designated as Cities long before the current Act but retain their status despite not meeting the current population bar. Other metropolitan Cities with relatively small populations include Fremantle (31,084), Vincent (36,561), and Belmont (42,078).

Serpentine Jarrahdale is the 24th largest local government by population and the second largest

local government by population behind the Shire of Mundaring (39,100) that has not achieved city status.

Name change

In achieving 'City Status', there is a question of the local government's name. The name does not necessarily need to be changed but if the name was proposed to change, there are additional processes.

First, the Local Government by Absolute Majority must make a proposal to the Local Government Advisory Board to change the name (Schedule 2.2, Clause 9)

Second, Section 2.3 requires the Local Government Advisory Board to first consider the matter and approve it, then the Minister approve it before being made by the Governor.

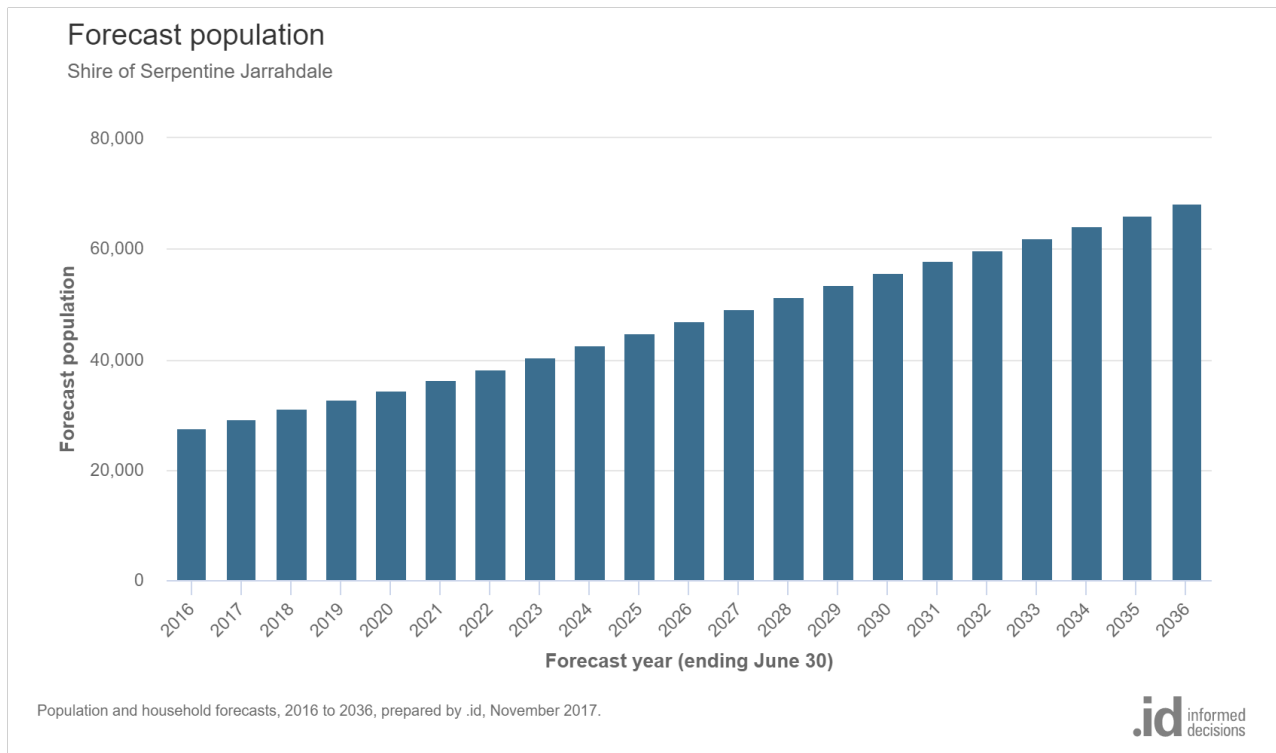
While the process of naming local governments is outside its purview, the Policies and Standards for Geographic Naming in Western Australia is instructive. This document states that administrative boundaries should be named after:

- names from Aboriginal languages formerly identified with the general area
- descriptive names appropriate to the features
- names of pioneers who were relevant to the area
- names of persons who died during war service
- names associated with historical events connected with the area
- flora or fauna native to the area.

Technical considerations

Forecast growth

Using ABS data as a base, ID Demographics provides population forecasts of local government areas. By 2030, the Shire's population is forecast to grow to 59,847 and to 68,335 by 2036. By 2050 the forecast population of the Shire grows to over 113,000.



As shown below much of this population growth is expected in the Byford and Mundijong areas.

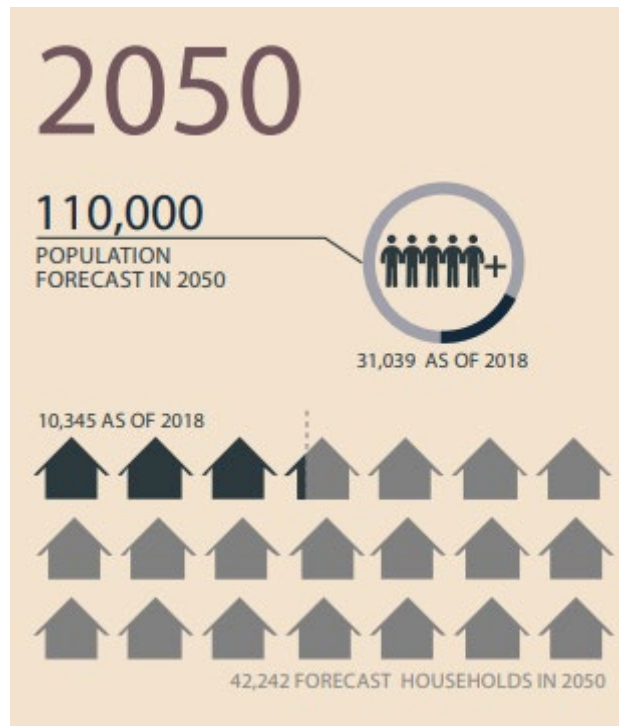
Table: Forecast population, Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale

Area	Forecast Population 2021	Forecast population 2036
Byford	21,519	35,399
Cardup	2,038	1,979
Darling Downs	3,356	3,722
Oakford / Oldbury	722	830
Mundijong	3,680	20,961
Jarrahdale	2,474	2,524
Serpentine	2,068	2,284
Hopeland - Keysbrook	546	636
	36,403	68,335

[Source: .ID]

Serpentine Jarrahdale's neighbours too are expected to grow. Armadale, for example, to the immediate north's population is forecast to grow from 97,705 to 141,177. With the growing in Armadale southern suburbs coupled with the grow in Serpentine Jarrahdale's northern suburbs, the characteristics of the area separated by the boundary will become increasingly metropolitan and city-like.

This growth is reflected in the Shire's Local Planning Strategy which identifies that by 2050, the population within the district is expected to grow to 2050.



[Source: Local Planning Strategy]

Community perception

The name of a place can have significant meaning and be a strong force in collective perceptions. The term Shire denotes rural and can have connotations to English Counties. In some respects, the evocations of rural, in-land, farming and peaceful that can be drawn from the term are apt in Serpentine Jarrahdale. For parts the community that are less apt descriptor.

The Shire's current *Strategic Community Plan 2017-2027* describes the vision of the district as 'City living offering a rural lifestyle with abundant opportunities for a diverse community'. The use of the term 'City' coupled with 'rural' is indicative of the dichotomy that exists within the district.

The transition to the term 'City' in describing the district would alter the way that the district is perceived externally and by the community. For some this change would be minor but for others it would be significant and either welcomed or contested.

City has connotations to being 'grown up', 'vibrant', and busy. Whether these evocations resonate and are viewed positively or negatively will depend on the individual and their values and priorities. Experience in Kalamunda has shown that in a community of more than 60,000 people there was opposition to the transition on the grounds that the unique rural characteristics of the Shire would be lost.

In the immediate term, a proposal to change the status of the Shire might unintentionally reignite

concerns about rating methods and be seen as subterfuge to change the status of properties rated on the basis of the unimproved land. As noted below, while the basis of rating land has no correlation to whether a local government is a city, town or shire, the use of the term 'rural purposes' in denoting unimproved land and the associated perception that with a city comes more urban and less rural pursuits could result in a collective linking of the two separate elements by the public.

The consideration of the change in status is difficult to separate from the name of a local government. The Town of Serpentine Jarrahdale or City of Serpentine Jarrahdale may be appealing or not to the individual but others are entirely possible and bring with them their own set of connotation, evocation and meaning. A 'City of Byford', 'City of Mundijong', or 'City of Serpentine Falls' could welcome and contribute to a sense of place or be perceived negatively.

Widespread community engagement would need to occur to ascertain viewpoints on the perception of the change. As explored below, as recognition and status are often viewed as key drivers of the change to encourage investment, engagement should also consider the viewpoints of people outside the district, especially businesses. The timing of this engagement though is critical. Engagement too early can unnecessarily lead to expectations that a change is inevitable or preordained, while engagement too late can result in decisions not being adequately informed by community sentiment and a lack of critical buy-in and support.

Local Planning Strategy

The future vision for the Shire from a land-use and design perspective has been mostly and fully described in the Shire's Local Planning Strategy adopted by Council in 2020. This document notes that forecast growth will test the rural characteristics of the Shire and:

"The urban areas will need to accommodate increased residential densities, employment opportunities, a range of services and facilities and improved transport connections. The nodal urban development structure comprised of defined urban centres separated by rural wedges is central to the preservation of the Shire's rural character and heritage values which distinguish urban development in the Shire from other urban areas within the metropolitan region."

The Kalamunda experience

In April 2015, the then Shire of Kalamunda Council resolved unanimously to pursue city status, including extensive community consultation.

In February 2017, the proposal survived a Special Electors Meeting attended by 207 electors which had resolved to call on Council to withdraw the request.

At its February 2017 meeting, Council had received a petition from 270 signatures in favour of

city status. The Shire's Council resolved to proceed 8/4.

As of 2021, two of the eight Councillors who voted for the motion are still on Council, (25 per cent), compared to 75 per cent of Councillors who voted against.

At the time of the resolution to proceed, there were approximately 60,000 residents in Kalamunda.

The Karratha experience

At the December 2013, Ordinary Council Meeting the Council of the Shire of Roebourne resolved to 7-4 to lodge a proposal to the Minister for Local Government to change the name of the district to the City of Karratha.

On 1 July 2014, the Shire of Roebourne was changed to the City of Karratha.

At the 16 June 2014 Council Meeting, the Council resolved not to purchase Mayoral regalia at a cost of \$3,000. The Officer's Report on the item noted that costs for ceremonial chains could be up to \$50,000.

Of the seven Councillors who voted for the shift, 3 were subsequently re-elected. Only one of the three Councillors that voted against were subsequently re-elected.

Economic considerations

The possible economic impacts can occur in respect to the economic impacts on the local government entity as well as the broader community.

Economic impacts on the local government entity

Operating grants

The rationale for a change in status is frequently cited as being in the form of economic benefits for both the organisation and the wider community. For the local government, one of the benefits is said to materialise in the form of additional grants. The data from local governments in respect to operating grants appears to show the opposite. In fact, the experience of local governments that have transitioned to cities is that their operating grants have declined post change.

In the years immediately following the change from Town to City, the City of Kwinana's operating grants fell both in real terms and as a percentage of total expenditure.

Table: Town / City of Kwinana Grants

Status	Financial Year	Operating Grants	Total Operating Revenue	Operating Grants as a percentage of Total Operating Revenue
Town	2012/2013	\$11,016,458	\$53,675,027	20.5%
City	2013/2014	\$14,291,759	\$58,427,070	24.5%
	2014/2015	\$19,124,397	\$67,270,911	28.4%
	2015/2016	\$12,119,463	\$64,093,908	18.9%
	2016/2017	\$8,909,512	\$61,204,478	14.6%
	2017/2018	\$8,468,213	\$63,438,258	13.3%
	2018/2019	\$8,608,169	\$63,815,748	13.5%

[Source: MyCouncil]

At the City of Busselton the difference is less profound in real terms but still represents a decline in the percentage of operating grants vs total operating revenue.

Table: Shire / City of Busselton Grants

Status	Financial Year	Operating Grants	Total Operating Revenue	Operating Grants as a percentage of Total Operating Revenue
Shire	2012/2013	\$6,403,843	\$53,118,838	12.1%
City	2013/2014	\$4,741,717	\$54,759,012	8.7%
	2014/2015	\$5,725,267	\$59,576,003	9.6%
	2015/2016	\$4,423,460	\$64,110,615	6.9%
	2016/2017	\$6,364,207	\$67,650,939	9.4%
	2017/2018	\$4,736,243	\$68,322,042	6.9%
	2018/2019	\$6,079,293	\$74,060,458	8.2%

At the City of Kalamunda, operating grants declined dramatically following the shift to a city, and in 2018-19 represented less than 5.0% of total operating revenue.

Shire / City of Kalamunda Grants

Status	Financial Year	Operating Grants	Total Operating Revenue	Operating Grants as a percentage of Total Operating Revenue
Shire	2012/2013	\$5,645,098	\$46,287,743	12.2%
	2013/2014	\$4,613,487	\$48,128,155	9.5%
	2014/2015	\$6,868,761	\$52,914,686	12.9%
	2015/2016	\$4,882,108	\$54,068,330	9.0%
	2016/2017	\$6,773,668	\$59,797,673	11.3%
City	2017/2018	\$2,683,366	\$57,244,212	4.6%
	2018/2019	\$2,854,853	\$57,432,478	4.9%

At the City of Karratha, operating grants swing considerably with the timing of the Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants. Here, the heavy reliance on the Financial Assistance Grants that can fluctuate between years makes definitive judgements more difficult to make.

Shire of Roebourne / City of Karratha Grants

Status	Financial Year	Operating Grants	Total Operating Revenue	Operating Grants as a percentage of Total Operating Revenue
Shire	2012/2013	\$10,444,600	\$92,248,762	11.3%
	2013/2014	\$7,410,418	\$94,270,803	7.9%
City	2014/2015	\$18,473,358	\$139,249,774	13.3%
	2015/2016	\$8,650,227	\$92,281,772	9.4%
	2016/2017	\$12,585,500	\$95,908,787	13.1%
	2017/2018	\$9,022,035	\$92,296,610	9.8%
	2018/2019	\$13,840,155	\$96,328,944	14.4%

As shown in the table in respect to the Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale, operating grants as a percentage of total operating revenue have fluctuated but declined in the last three years since 2016-17.

Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale Grants

Status	Financial Year	Operating Grants	Total Operating Revenue	Operating Grants as a percentage of Total Operating Revenue
Shire	2012/2013	\$2,958,255	\$23,529,257	12.6%
	2013/2014	\$2,163,935	\$23,490,214	9.2%
	2014/2015	\$4,366,900	\$28,381,374	15.4%
	2015/2016	\$2,422,830	\$28,221,053	8.6%

Status	Financial Year	Operating Grants	Total Operating Revenue	Operating Grants as a percentage of Total Operating Revenue
	2016/2017	\$4,639,865	\$32,547,447	14.3%
	2017/2018	\$3,630,698	\$32,638,451	11.1%
	2018/2019	\$3,659,699	\$34,859,884	10.5%
	2019/2020	\$3,957,960	\$35,786,284	11.0%

It is impossible to say whether a change in status to a city would contribute to an increase in operating grants and if such an increase was to occur, to quantify that increase. In respect to Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants which make up a significant proportion of the Shire's annual operating grant revenue, a shift to city status is unlikely to have an impact.

Financial Assistance Grants

Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants form a significant part of the revenue of many local governments. The quantum that each local government receives is determined according to the methodology set by the Local Government Grants Commission (LGGC). The LGGC methodology considers the financial capacity of the local government and factors such as distance; geography; socio-economic conditions of the populace; climate; and access to health care.

Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants recognise that the community's that local governments serve are different with different challenges. The Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants attempt to ensure that everyone in Australia receives a base level of service regardless of the local government they live in. Based on the formula, local governments that are smaller, more remote or have other challenges receive greater funding.

There are thirty local governments that receive the minimum grant. The Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale does not receive a minimum grant.

The formula does not consider whether a local government is a town, shire or a city although as cities and towns generally have common characteristics that are the LGGC formula considers to demonstrate less need to compensate for there are no Shires that are on minimum grant. Based on the LGGC formula, the Shire of Boddington is the closest local government classed as Shire to being a minimum grant Council.

Becoming a city will not positively result in an increase in financial assistance grants and appears unlikely to result in a decrease as the 'cost adjustors' used by the LGCC relate to matters unrelated to the symbolic or status aspects of a city.

Capital grants

Unlike operating grants, there may be a correlation between the receipt of capital grants and City status, although this would be difficult to establish. While technically in the Peel for the purposes of the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993*, the Shire has not been a significant beneficiary of Country Local Government Fund (CLGF) or Royalties of Regions Funding. This is perhaps because of the unique status of the Shire being simultaneously regional for the purposes of the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993* and metropolitan for the purposes of the *Local Government Act 1995*.

Funding for capital projects is unpredictable with a multitude of factors that go into why State and Federal Governments choose to provide funding for one project and not another, in one location and not another, or in a particular sequence.

Notionally, demonstrating capacity to deliver is one factor that may be assisted by city status. With City-status comes greater exposure and point identified by the cities of Busselton, Kwinana and Karratha.

However, quantifying the level of impact and exposure resulting from the change is difficult. As demonstrated in volume of commitments and promises made for capital projects in the Shire prior to the 2021 State Government election, large injections of capital funding can appear driven by other factors and independent of the symbolic status conferred by City.

Impact on Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Banding

Being declared a city does not automatically equate to being a Band 1 (highest) Salaries and Allowances Tribunal (SAT) Band local government. The cities of Kalamunda, South Perth, Vincent and Subiaco are band 2 (like Serpentine Jarrahdale), despite being cities, while the Town of Port Hedland is a Band 1 despite being a town.

Rates and property valuation

There is no impact associated with the basis of rating methodology and city status. A city can have unimproved land as equally as a shire can have land valued based on the Gross Rental Value and vice versa. The valuation equally is not dependent of the type of district.

Economic impacts on the broader community

Attracting investment is critical to a prosperous and diverse economy.

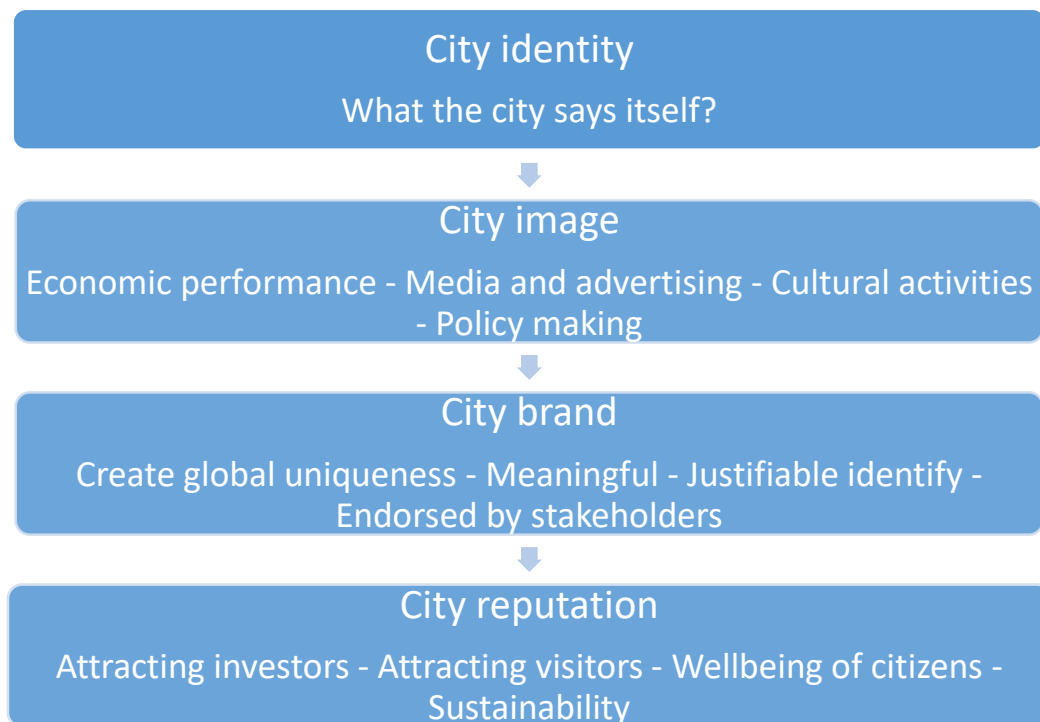
“Put simply, investors are attracted to a city if there are opportunities to make money. They will assess the attractiveness of a city’s opportunities by estimating their likely return or profit, and will be drawn to cities which offer them the best combination of scale, risk and return.” [Source: Centre for Cities⁵]

Attractiveness can many forms including tax incentives, cheap and suitable land, good logistics, skilled and available workforce, limited regulation and a business-friendly community.

Reputation and recognition can also be an important element in attracting investment.

Academic literature has found that a district’s reputation and recognition is simultaneously a product of what a community says about itself and what others think about it.⁶ As shown in the figure below, the process for strengthening a district’s reputation in the first instance is a question of its identity then image and brand.

Figure: Process for strengthening reputation



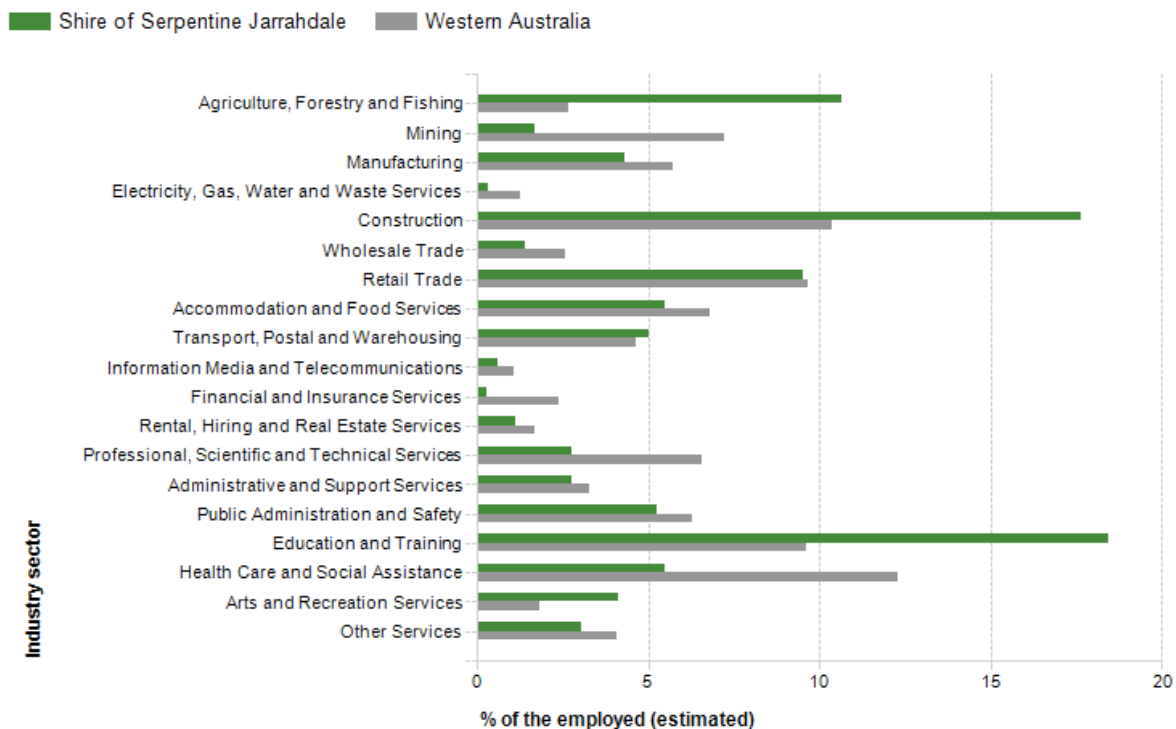
Economically, the Shire’s current profile reflects the high-grow, transitional status of the Shire. Construction is the leading employer (16.2%), followed by Education and Training (15.5%). However, in keeping with the rural aspects of the district, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (12%) remains the third highest employer (down from 12.9% in 2013-14). In contrast, in the Shire’s

⁵ <https://www.centreforcities.org/reader/investors-want-guide-cities/makes-city-attractive-investors/>

⁶ <https://cityterritoryarchitecture.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40410-019-0101-4>

immediate neighbours to the north, the City of Armadale, Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing represents just 1.4% of the City's employment [Source: ID].

Employment (total) by industry 2017/18



Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2018
Compiled and presented in economy.id by .id the population experts

.id the population experts

The Shire's *Economic Development Strategy 2018-2023* describes the unique circumstances presented in the Shire and the opportunities and challenges it presents.

The Strategy identifies future economic opportunities in the following areas:

- Food processing
- Advanced manufacturing
- Warehouse and logistics
- Westport – Intermodal Hub
- Agriculture and Livestock
- Horticulture and Aquaculture
- Equine
- Tourism, Trails and Events
- Automotive and Recreational Vehicles
- Multi Motor Sports
- Complex
- Health, Aged Care and Retirement Living
- High Tech and Innovation
- Renewable Energy
- Defence

These industries reflect a combination of traditionally 'city' and 'shire' economies and some that fit in both. Agriculture and Livestock, Horticulture and Aquaculture, Equine and to a degree Food processing and renewable energy are all rural industries, while Health, Aged Care and Retirement Living, High Tech and Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing might be more associated with a 'City' environment.

The transition to a City would be a clear statement of intent towards the latter types of opportunities. Whether similarly the transition to a city would give rural economies pause is also possible and would require engagement with current and possible investors.

The vision of a combined rural and city economies is reflected in the Local Planning Strategy which states the objective to:

“Enhance our local competitiveness by seizing opportunities to diversity through innovation, research and development to create value-added goods, services and increased efficiencies. Ensure, as our Shire grows, new homes, employment areas and places to shop are located in areas that are well planned, connected and affordable. Ensure as the Shire grows, strong governance will guide well designed growth that makes the most efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure and investment.”

Scheduling considerations

Becoming a City does not occur overnight. Successful transitions involve extensive community engagement. The Shire of Kalamunda’s occasionally difficult transition took almost two years.

The 2021 Census will confirm that the Shire has met the threshold for City-status, if this is an option to be pursued. The results of the 2021 Census will be available in June 2022. By then the Shire’s population is expected to be over 36,000.

In the next 18 months the Shire will undertake a review of its Strategic Community Plan. This critical process will inform the long-term vision for the Shire and provide an opportunity for detailed and considered community engagement on the district’s identify and brand into the future.

The next few years presents an exciting period of infrastructure growth in the Shire. The Thomas Road over Rail project as part of Metronet is expected to be completed towards the end of 2022. The Tonkin Highway extension to South Western Highway is anticipated to be complete in 2024 and the Byford Health Hub, Keirnan Park Recreation Precinct will shape future growth in the Shire.

Investigations are also underway into construction of a new administration building commencing in 2032. In considering scheduling for a shift in identity and branding, synergies and opportunities may exist to coincidence a shift to a city-status with the construction of a new administration building. By 2032 the Shire’s population is forecast to be almost 60,000.

Conclusion

A combination of southern growth from traditional metropolitan Perth and internal growth within the district, is rapidly altering the landscape of the Shire. Investment in Metronet, the West Mundijong Industrial Area, and housing predominately in Byford and Mundijong will contribute to the Shire becoming more urban and City-like.

A population analysis contained in this paper shows that the population of the Shire has likely exceeded the thresholds required by the Act but whether City-Status should be pursued is a question that requires more than just numbers to answer.

City-Status is about identity, image, brand and reputation. It is about how the community that lives and works in the district wants to be perceived.

This involves a conversation with the community but as noted above it can be a difficult conversation. Experience in other local governments have shown that the mention of city status can be interpreted by the community as a retreat from rural values with consequential risks to the environment and heritage.

Experience has also shown of the importance of investing in this engagement and dedicating significant energy to journey with the community.

The question of whether the potential change in image, brand and reputation is worth the investment is difficult to quantify. Economically, local governments that have undergone the transition have not received significant increases in grants and largely had their operating grants decline. However, it is impossible to say whether there was a causation or even correlation between the financial fortunes of the local government and their new city status. Studies have found the importance of reputation in respect to attracting investment but this is only one factor with the more quantifiable attractors of tax incentives, affordable land and a suitable workforce being perhaps more important initially.