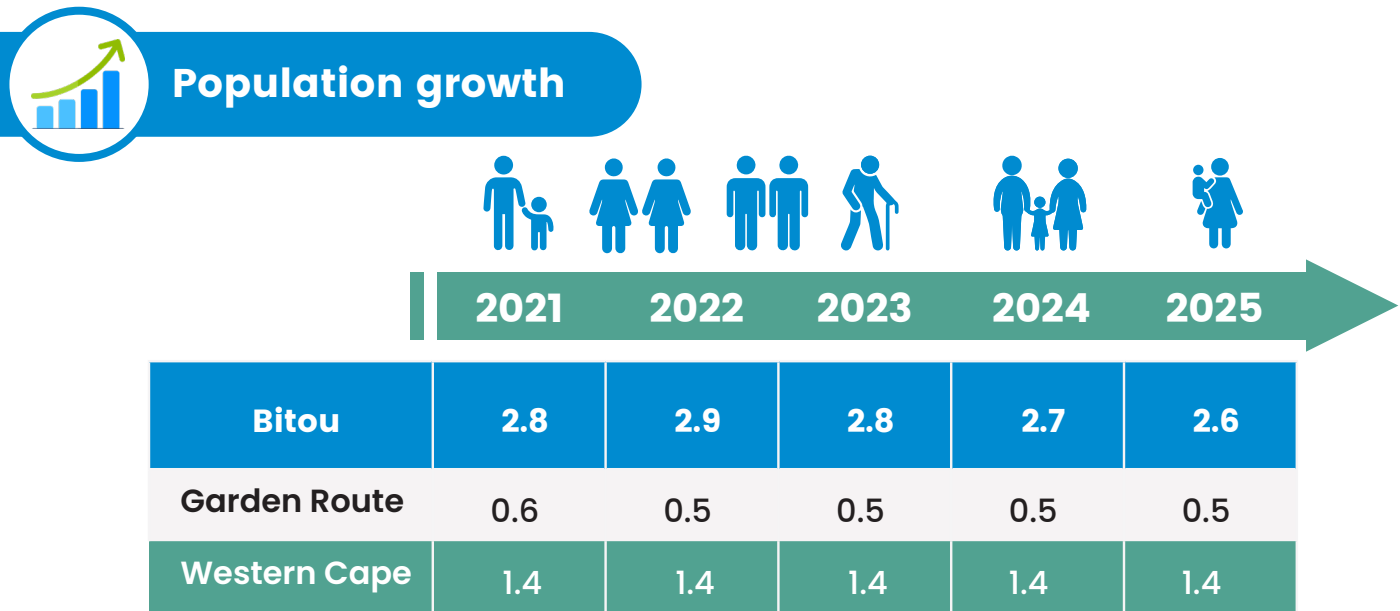


TOWN PLANNING – Stuart Comline

Plettenberg Bay is Experiencing Strong Growth

It is common knowledge that there is tremendous expansion underway in Plettenberg Bay and surrounding areas. Whether it is the increase in year-round traffic, schools expanding or record property sales, the town is experiencing significant growth. On the one hand, it is encouraging to reside in a town experiencing growth, when so many towns in the country are declining, but it also brings with it serious concerns for the availability of resources and infrastructure to support such growth.



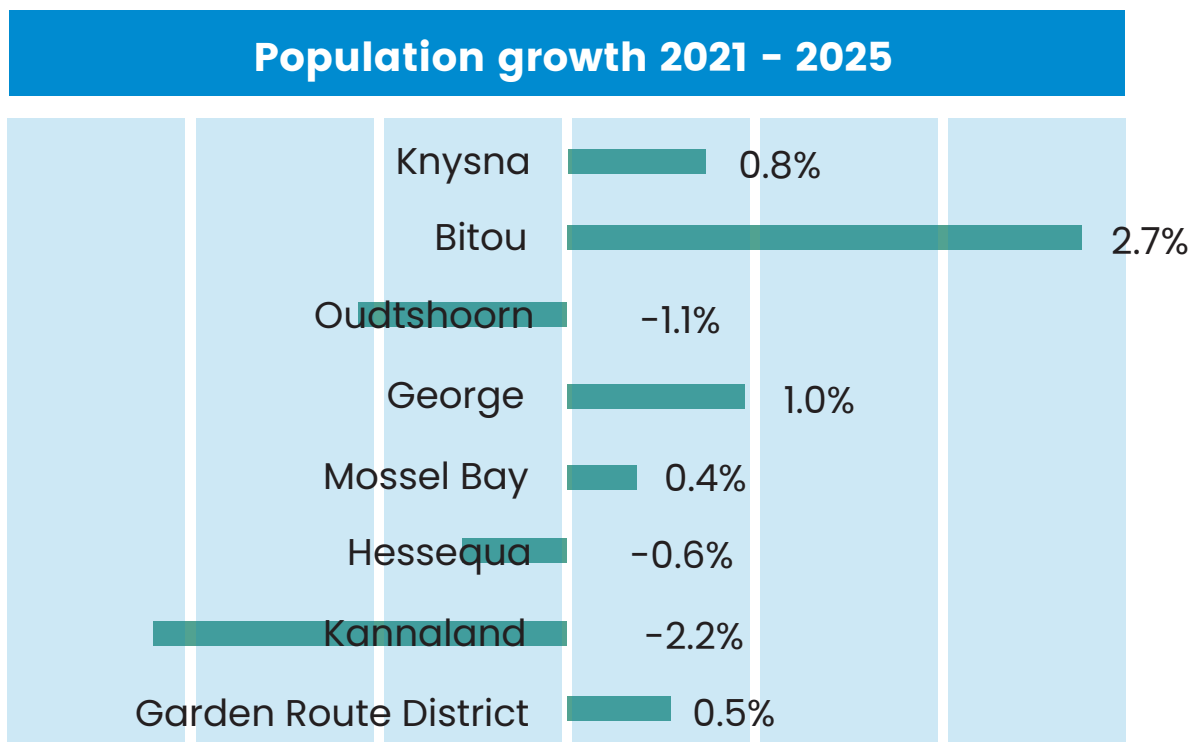
Housing Developments have been Reviewed

These are issues that concern your Association to the extent that we have undertaken a comprehensive review of the proposed new developments in the town. This was done by quantifying applications for developments and residential plans submitted to municipal departments along with government plans for township development. Currently, there are plans or applications on record for some 7,000 new housing units that could possibly house an additional 27,000 people. It need be stated that not all of these units are approved, nor are they all financed. Some will not be completed and it may take many years to complete the successful developments. Also, the indicated growth need be placed in perspective by reviewing the population growth over the past 26 years, where the town's past, current and projected population is recorded in the following table.

Bitou's population:

1996	2001	2011	2016	2022	2025
Census (Est) 18,010	Census 29,182	Census 49,162	(Est) 59,157	(Est) 70,000	WC Govt's estimate 77,243

According to Western Cape Government figures, Bitou is expected to grow much faster than other towns in the Garden Route.



Housing Approvals are Accelerating

The Association routinely liaises with the three municipal departments that manage housing, including; Town Planning, Building Control and Human Settlements, who have willingly and regularly provided the Association with plans, applications and approvals for housing development.

In the past twelve months, the Association has reviewed 103 applications from the Town Planning Department for land use, rezoning or removal of restrictive conditions, a precursor to obtaining building permission. Where it is deemed necessary, the Association has objected to proposed developments and followed up with meetings and representations to the Municipality, such as on Erf 156 on Signal Hill, where the Association has persistently urged the municipality to enforce and execute on the High Court demolition order. Although the majority of these applications are for individual residential properties, five are for mixed or commercial developments, six are for new builds

or extensions to retirement complexes (bringing the total for the area to twelve retirement villages) and eight are for multi-unit residential estates. Some 4000 of the proposed housing units are municipal/government plans for high-density suburbs and townships. Although government's financial ability to fund new housing diminishes each year, in the past year there has been a welcome upgrade in the quality of housing in Qolweni. Also, a start has been made to new housing in Ebenezer.

Over the past five years, plans approved for new-build houses by the Building Control Department have averaged 110 new houses per year. This has increased to an annualized rate of 175 new-build houses per year for the first six months of 2022, emphasising the increase in the rate of development in the town.

Bitou's Population Density (per WC Government Socio Economic Profile)

Kannaland	Hessequa	Oudtshoorn	George	Mossel Bay	Bitou
5 people/km ²	9 people/km ²	26 people/km ²	43 people/km ²	48 people/km ²	70 people/km ²

Town Planning Needs to Consider Impact on Infrastructure and Critical Services

The main area of concern for the Association, in respect of town planning is the long term availability of water supply. Simply stated, the town cannot continue to expand without implementing a long-term plan to augment the town's water supply. A further concern is that certain areas of the town have old infrastructure (water, sewage, electricity and roads) that have reached the limit of their economic life and require replacing or refurbishing. The Municipality is not allocating adequate resources for the replacement and maintenance of infrastructure, let alone for expansions. Further resources need to be directed to these aspects.

A further concern is that the town continues to experience isolated cases of "rogue" construction and approvals of inappropriate building plans. The municipality, which has some very capable and professional town planning officers, needs to pro-actively tighten disciplines on granting approvals to such developments.

The Need to Balance Housing Development and Economic Growth

Finally, we are concerned that as the town expands, with new arrivals as retirees, or as business people working remotely from our area and migration from elsewhere, not all of the new arrivals are in a position to fully contribute to the town's economy. Accordingly, revenue into, and employment opportunities within, the town lag behind asset growth. This should influence the rate of new housing development and/or should encourage new business/employment opportunities to be created.

Estimate of Possible new builds based on applications, new build trends and long term government housing plans

Municipal Department	Category /Area	New Units Estimate
Town Planning	Retirement Homes	746
	Mid density homes	489
	Upmarket Flats/ Estates	37
	Mixed Income Residential	512
	Commercial/Retail	130
	Subtotal	1914
Human Settlements	Kwanokuthula	428
	Kurland	300
	Green Valley	500
	Qolweni	1233
	Ebenezer	1500
	Kranshoek	457
	Subtotal	4418
Building Control	New-Build homes (estimate)	1100 in 10 years
	Subtotal	1100
	TOTAL	7432