

12.3 DRAFT BALLARAT STRATEGY - POST EXHIBITION
Division: City Strategy
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RECOMMENDATION

Council resolves to:

1. Acknowledge the extensive community engagement undertaken to date on the Ballarat Strategy, and recognise that the document responds to more than 6,500 ideas and submissions made by individuals, community and business groups and Government Agencies.
2. Acknowledge submissions received during the engagement process for the Draft Ballarat Strategy and that the document received strong community and business support.
3. Adopt the Ballarat Strategy as Council's long-term strategic vision towards 2040.
4. Adopt the Ballarat Planning Scheme Review (2015) as the review required pursuant to section 12B of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, and forward the report to the Minister for Planning as required by section 12B (5) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.
5. Request the Minister for Planning to Authorise an Amendment C194 to the Ballarat Planning Scheme to incorporate the *Ballarat Strategy* into the Local Planning Policy Framework, and make other ancillary changes to the scheme, pursuant to section 8A(3) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and place C194 on exhibition pursuant to section 19 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today, Tomorrow, Together: The Ballarat Strategy outlines the long-term plan for a greener, more vibrant and connected Ballarat. It is supported by key concepts, policies and actions that will underpin land use decision-making in Ballarat over the next 25 years.

Following almost two years of community consultation, including more than 6,500 individual submissions and ideas, the draft Ballarat Strategy was released for comment in April 2015. During this final 6 week consultation period, 64 submissions were received. Public responses to the draft Strategy were overwhelmingly positive, articulating strong support for the importance and overall vision of the document, key concepts, policy directions and initiatives. The '10 Minute City', urban forest, convenience living corridors and urban renewal precincts were particularly strongly supported. A small number of concerns were raised from submitters, generally focussed on detailed implementation items. Where appropriate, the document has been updated in response.

This Report recommends Council adopt the *Ballarat Strategy* (2015) as Council's

long-term strategy for managing change towards 2040. The report also recommends Council adopt the *Ballarat Planning Scheme Review* (2015) which outlines the current performance of the planning scheme, considering the new strategic direction. To enable implementation of both elements, it is recommended there be a request for Authorisation from the Minister for Planning to prepare and exhibit an Amendment to the Ballarat Planning Scheme.

RATIONALE

Today Tomorrow Together: The Ballarat Strategy addresses an emerging gap in the long-term planning for Ballarat's future. The last time the City of Ballarat developed a detailed plan that sought to address the strategies for Ballarat's long-term growth was *The Ballarat Strategy Plan* in 1998. It was effective in planning for our city's growth to 90,000 people; however, Ballarat now has over 100,000 residents, and is forecast to grow to more than 160,000 people by 2040.

Previous Council decisions

At the Council meeting held on 22 April 2015 Council resolved (R126/15) to:

1. *Acknowledge the submissions received during the engagement process for the Preliminary Ballarat Strategy and the accompanying in-principle support for the policy direction and initiatives proposed.*
2. *Release the Draft Ballarat Strategy for community consultation.*
3. *Acknowledge the extensive community engagement undertaken to date on the Draft Ballarat Strategy and the contributions made by individuals, community groups and Government agencies.*

The Ballarat Strategy (final)

The Ballarat Strategy outlines the new 25 year vision for a *greener, more vibrant and connected Ballarat* (Attachment 1). A comprehensive range of policy directions and actions outline the plan to get there, based around two key platforms:

The '10 Minute City':

Supporting complete, liveable neighbourhoods within a compact city

The '10 Minute City' concept in Ballarat reflects community aspirations to maintain existing or improved levels of local access to destinations and services as the city grows over time. It is to be achieved by:

- Making land use decisions so housing growth patterns reinforce a compact city;
- Developing a network of complete local neighbourhoods;
- Recognising key precincts for urban renewal and convenience living;
- Transitioning towards a more sustainable transport network; and
- Supporting the economic transition towards the jobs of tomorrow.

The 'City in the Landscape':

Supporting Ballarat to be a greener and more vibrant regional city.

The 'City in the Landscape' concept reflects Ballarat's enviable physical, cultural and historical location within its landscape. The concept recognises that nothing should be viewed in isolation of its physical and non-physical context. It is achieved by:

- Adopting an urban forest approach to better manage our environment, improve the liveability and amenity of the City, and make us more resilient to a changing climate;

- Pursuing a new approach to managing change in our historic city and rural landscape;
- Local plans for local communities;
- Embracing the urban and rural landscape; and
- Recognising and responding to a changing climate, and being resilient to environmental impacts and risks.

Submissions

The draft Ballarat Strategy was released for community feedback from 23 April 2015 until 5 June 2015.

Sixty four (64) submissions were received, including late submissions, from a wide range of business groups, Government Agencies, community leaders, special interest groups and individuals. Of those, approximately 50 provided strong support, 10 provided general support but requested specific changes, 2 identified specific areas of concern, whilst just 2 submissions suggested the Strategy fell short of their expectations. Given that more than 6,500 separate ideas and submissions have been considered to date, and this final stage of consultation alone included direct contact with almost 700 residents, organisations and community groups, this is an overwhelmingly positive result.

Feedback focused on the following key points:

- General support for the importance and overall vision of the document;
- Support for implementation into the Ballarat Planning Scheme as quickly as possible;
- Support for core elements, including the *10 Minute City* concept, urban forest, convenience living corridors, complete neighbourhoods, urban renewal precincts, a more sustainable transport system and a focus on activation of the CBD; and
- Support for the continuation of projects already underway, including Ballarat West Growth Area, Ballarat West Employment Zone and Western Link Road and Eureka Stadium Precinct.

A small number of submissions requested refinement of the document, often focusing on wording, local issues, specific projects or specific pieces of land. Refinement requests were across the full range of issues, usually relating to emphasis, or the proposed response. All suggestions have been reviewed and the document updated where possible.

Key issues of concern generally related to:

Detail not provided for local areas

Submitters outlined a range of specific local issues sought to be addressed, particularly for the Buninyong Township. These issues are important and the Ballarat Strategy outlines how local area plans will be prepared to resolve these very issues. A community forum to commence the first township plan, for Learmonth, is scheduled for late July 2015.

Request for additional content on specific issues

Submitters with specific areas of interest outlined a range of additional material, emphasis and project ideas, including: specific routes for new walking, cycling and bus connections and the need for a gender lens to be applied to planning. This level of detail is too specific for a strategic level plan, but the ideas have been recorded and will be used to inform future detailed implementation of the strategy.

Lack of monitoring and key performance indicators

Submitters raised concern at the lack of detailed performance indicators. Measuring performance is an important part of all planning, and future projects, programs and decisions will be closely assessed against the intent of the Ballarat Strategy.

In terms of specific measurement of performance, it is important to recognise the respective roles of the long-term strategy (25+ years) and the Council Plan (4 years). Guided by the aspirations and context of the long-term strategy, it is the responsibility of the Council of the day to develop and implement the Council Plan, linked to the annual budget, capital works program, and operational plans, to affect real change. This is the appropriate forum for the detailed monitoring of performance, as it appropriately links resources with outcomes.

Site specific requests for land to be included in the Greenfield Investigation Areas

Submissions were received in relation to two specific pieces of land not recognised as future greenfield investigation areas; an 55ha area immediately south of the current Lucas Activity Centre and a 575 ha precinct dissected by Remembrance Drive at 614 Cuthberts Road, Cardigan. Both submitters requested their land be considered for future greenfield development.

The Strategy, however, makes it clear the investigation areas simply indicate land which meets the principle of the '10 Minute City' and where long-term development could potentially support Ballarat as a compact, highly liveable and well-connected city. As such, these areas are the subject of separate more detailed investigation. The Ballarat Strategy makes no assessment of the potential feasibility of these sites, nor any assessment of the merits or otherwise of development on the submitter's land. Those submitters would be able to argue the merits of their land when a decision is required on the future site for additional greenfield supply, which is a separate matter to the Ballarat Strategy. Ballarat Strategy outlines how those assessments will be undertaken at that future time.

The Strategy does not meet personal expectations

Two submitters outlined a wide range of concerns with the Ballarat Strategy, governance, financial management, City of Ballarat more generally, and outlined their own expectations for a long-term strategic plan for Ballarat. Their views are noted, but not shared by Council officers nor other submitters to this or previous stages of the project.

A full record of submissions and Council's response is included as Attachment 2.

Ballarat Planning Scheme Review (2015)

Section 12B of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* requires a planning authority to regularly review the provisions of the planning scheme. The purpose of the review is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the planning scheme in achieving:

- The objectives of planning in Victoria;
- The objectives and strategies of the planning scheme including the State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) and the Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF); and
- The review should assess whether the scheme provisions, such as local planning policies, zones, overlays and schedules have been effective and efficient in achieving the objectives and strategies of the planning scheme.

The review also provides the opportunity to evaluate the planning scheme to ensure that it:

- Is consistent in form and content with any directions or guidelines issued by the Minister under section 7(5) of the Act;
- Sets out effectively the policy objectives for use and development of land in the area to which the planning scheme applies; and
- Makes effective use of State provisions and local provisions to give effect to State and local planning policy objectives.

In conjunction with the development of the Ballarat Strategy, a review of the current Ballarat Planning Scheme has been undertaken. The review concludes that the current Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF) does not adequately represent the vision, key issues and opportunities nor strategic direction for growth and change supported by the community. It is also noted that the current content of the LPPF is in many cases outdated, poorly phrased or expressed, a duplicate of State Policy or a redundant control. A number of technical deficiencies have also been identified. The scheme requires significant review and modification to remain a relevant and useful guide to decision-making.

LEGISLATION, COUNCIL PLAN, STRATEGY AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

A planning scheme amendment is required to embed *Today Tomorrow Together: The Ballarat Strategy* into the Local Planning Policy Framework of the Ballarat Planning Scheme. The Strategy will also provide overarching guidance for future Council Plans and other strategy documents and provide local guidance on implementing the Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan and related State and Regional planning frameworks. It is a key tool for implementing the findings of Ballarat Imagine and Our Vision of the Future.

REPORTING AND COMPLIANCE STATEMENTS *(do not delete this table)*

Implications	Considered in Report?	Implications identified?
Human Rights	Yes	No
Social/Cultural	Yes	Yes
Environmental/Sustainability	Yes	Yes
Economic	Yes	Yes
Financial/Resources	Yes	No
Risk Management	No	No
Implementation and Marketing	Yes	No
Evaluation and Review	Yes	No

Social/Cultural - 'Today Tomorrow Together: The Ballarat Strategy' will have substantial positive social impacts over the long term. The deep community engagement and development of a vision for Ballarat's future has identified the aspects of Ballarat that the community values the most. This includes things like heritage places and the ease with which people can get around in Ballarat. Now that they have been identified, Council can work to protect and enhance them.

Second, it will guide Council's delivery of community infrastructure and services over the long term. This includes assisting Council to ensure that growing areas receive the community services they require.

Environmental/Sustainability - The Ballarat Strategy will help to deliver environmental goals. Having a strategy of this type allows growth to be guided to locations where it has a lower environmental impact, and to better integrate biodiversity into decision-making.

Economic - The Ballarat Strategy will support economic growth. For example, by identifying where growth will occur, it will allow service and infrastructure providers, including Council, to plan effectively to meet the needs of a growing city. This is critical for ensuring infrastructure is provided in a timely and cost-effective fashion. In the long term, better infrastructure planning leads to lower rates and lower charges for water, sewerage and so on.

Financial/Resources - 'Today Tomorrow Together: The Ballarat Strategy' sets the long-term priorities for Ballarat. It does not, however, prescribe specific costs or resourcing.

CONSULTATION

The Ballarat Strategy is the product of continuous and extensive community engagement since early 2013, including the following:

Ballarat Imagine

Ballarat Imagine, commenced in February 2013, outlined what our community values about Ballarat now and our collective aspirations for Ballarat's future. A wide range of engagement opportunities and feedback were provided via postcards, social media forums and Council's website, which resulted in over 6,000 responses.

10 Game Changing Questions for Ballarat's Future

Extensive consultation commenced in April 2014 seeking community feedback on the '*Game Changing Questions*' to guide policy directives. Extensive engagement opportunities included several workshops, drop-in sessions and social media.

The Preliminary Ballarat Strategy

The Preliminary Ballarat Strategy was released in November 2014 and was an important opportunity for the community to provide feedback on the general direction, concepts and structure of the Ballarat Strategy at an interim stage. The Preliminary Ballarat Strategy outlined the policy direction and associated initiatives proposed to deliver the vision of the community by 2040.

Draft Ballarat Strategy

Members of the Ballarat community were invited to participate in the engagement process via Facebook and other social media discussions; *Have Your Say* on the city's webpage; the online forum for the Draft Strategy; written submissions, and by requesting a meeting with Council Officers.

Almost 700 individuals, groups and businesses were directly informed of the consultation period. This is in addition to notification in the Winter edition of 'My Ballarat', which contained a two-page spread outlining the key points of the Draft Ballarat Strategy and inviting members of the public to have their say – sent to all properties in the Municipality.

OFFICER' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Council Officers affirm that no direct or indirect interests need to be declared in relation to the matter of this Report.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Ballarat Imagine What You Said;
- *Today Tomorrow Together: The Ballarat Strategy* – Our Vision for 2040;
- *Today Tomorrow Together: The Ballarat Strategy* - 10 Game Changing Questions for Ballarat's Future;
- *Today Tomorrow Together: The Ballarat Strategy* - 10 Game Changing Questions for Ballarat's Future What You Said;
- Preliminary Ballarat Strategy – Policy direction, initiatives and the way forward;
- Today Tomorrow Together: The Draft Ballarat Strategy;
- Central Highlands Regional Growth Plan, and
- Plan Melbourne.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Today, Tomorrow, Together: The Ballarat Strategy (Final)
- 2 Draft Ballarat Strategy - Summary of Submissions
- 3 Ballarat Planning Scheme Review (2015)