BALLAN

Key Issues and Influences

Ballan is the second largest town within the Shire and has the role of a rural service centre and a commuter town with many residents travelling to Ballarat, Bacchus Marsh, or Melbourne for work. An industrial estate, local businesses and retail and wholesale trade provide local employment.

The Werribee River is the main environmental feature and physically divides the town into two distinct areas. There is a strong heritage streetscape appearance in the commercial centre and a range of health and community facilities including a hospital, maternal and child health centre, kindergarten, State and Catholic primary schools and recreational areas including the golf course and swimming pool to support the residents.

Ballan has an important role in forming part of Moorabool’s growth areas, secondary to the main growth fronts in Bacchus Marsh. As growth occurs, the town’s point of difference in housing, lifestyle choices, and rural amenity needs to be maintained in the long term, such that Ballan does not adopt a typical suburban role in the future. It’s strong historical character and rural setting need to be recognised to ensure future development is planned and undertaken sympathetically.

In parallel with its settlement role, Ballan’s socio-economic role is significant. The town provides the only substantial retail centre within Moorabool Shire, other than Bacchus Marsh, and is an important location for meeting local needs. In more recent years, Ballan has also performed a niche tourism role through a number of regular markets, annual festivals, shops and gourmet cafes. This role is anticipated to grow and become an integral component of Ballan in the future. Accordingly, Ballan’s function in catering for both local residents and visitors needs to be protected and enhanced into the future. An important measure in achieving this will be to encourage commercial uses oriented towards generating high activity, in combination with community facilities within or proximal to the core.

The town centre will retain its existing compact form and core, and new commercial use and development will be encouraged to locate within the town centre. New commercial use and development should be compatible with existing amenity and streetscape. Development of increased local level convenience retail facilities will be supported in the town centre. Use of existing shops in the town centre will be encouraged prior to construction of new buildings on the fringe of the town centre. Additionally, the built form of the town centre is highly important, and it is necessary to ensure that future development responds meaningfully to the strong historic elements.

The Ballan Industrial Precinct provides for a mix of business activities including manufacturing, transport and service companies. The Precinct is located in close proximity to the residential population, and is most suited to light industrial uses.

Objective—Character and Sense of Place

To protect and enhance Ballan’s character and sense of place as a country town, with historic built form and streetscapes, surrounded by scenic rural and natural areas.

Strategies

- Implement and maintain a township boundary until land supply approaches 15 years.
- Confine residential development within the township boundary, in accordance with the Ballan Framework Plan, to enhance the town’s sense of place.
- Ensure a clear separation between urban development and farming activities is retained.
- Ensure new development responds to environmental assets, landscape features, and views, including the Werribee River and its tributaries.
- Emphasise the country feel of the town by creating ‘gateways’ including:
- Larger residential allotments along the key approaches into town, as illustrated in the Ballan Framework Plan.
- Generous front and side setbacks for dwellings.
- Predominantly low, open-style fencing to contribute towards the experience of the town’s regional setting.
- Retained and enhanced vegetation.

- Create a path network that facilitates walking and cycling to the train station, the town core, open space and other key destinations within the town.

21.08-4
Objective - Environment
To protect and enhance Ballan’s environmental features as part of future development.

21.08-5
Strategies
- Encourage the retention of all watercourses in growth precincts, and provide appropriate buffers in accordance with Melbourne Water requirements.
- Create public land reserves along the Werribee River for new developments, and seek improvements to the river’s ecology and amenity through revegetation and landscaping.
- Ensure stormwater runoff is appropriately managed to minimise impacts on the Werribee River and its tributaries.

21.08-6
Objective - Residential Development
To guide residential development in accordance with Ballan’s future character and demographic needs.

21.08-7
Strategies
- Implement the Ballan Framework Plan.
- Support both infill and greenfield residential development to provide diverse housing opportunities.
- Ensure residential rezoning proposals, master/development plans, and subdivision have regard for Ballan’s character and sense of place by:
  - Reinforcing the predominant character of the town through use of tree lined streets within new subdivisions, as appropriate.
  - Strengthening connectivity of new development to the town centre core and key destinations, by enhancing pedestrian and cycling links.
  - Encouraging appropriate zoning controls to be applied to manage interfaces with rural land, waterways and the Western Freeway.
  - Ensuring new road alignments respond to natural topography, capture key views, and where possible, seek to retain to existing mature vegetation through deviations, deflections or localised road widening as appropriate.
  - Providing open spaces and places in Ballan’s growth precincts by incorporating and responding to natural features such as existing vegetation, topographical features and other character elements that contribute to Ballan’s character and natural landscape.
  - Ensuring growth precincts provide a diverse range of lot sizes which protect the country lifestyle character of Ballan;
- Retaining the landscape character of the Werribee River by protecting a corridor along the river and its tributaries. The width of corridors should take into account the recommendations of Melbourne Water where relevant.
- Providing diverse streetscapes, strong connectivity to public spaces and retaining the valued characteristics of Ballan.

- Ensure new development provides path networks which:
  - Integrate with existing or planned open space networks, and include pathways within the open space where it is part of the property undergoing development.
  - Connect to existing and planned external networks.

- Ensure new development in Minimal Growth Areas of the Ballan Framework Plan:
  - Encourages low density housing types, generally in the form of detached housing, with dual occupancies only supported on sites that do not compromise the preferred neighbourhood character.
  - Conserves and enhances attributes that contribute to the environmental significance, heritage values and the preferred neighbourhood character of the precinct.
  - Encourages new dwellings to be setback from all boundaries to accommodate landscaping and to maintain the sense of openness.
  - Encourages new dwellings to be designed in accordance with the predominant building height of the street.

- Ensure new development in Natural Growth Areas of the Ballan Framework Plan:
  - Encourages low scale medium density housing and alternative housing typologies (such as co-housing, retirement villages, aged care, etcetera) on lots that are accessible to public transport, the town centre core and open space.
  - Discourages boundary to boundary development.
  - Encourages new dwellings which are consistent with the predominant building height of the street and which complement the preferred character of the area.

- Ensure new development in Greenfield Growth Areas of the Ballan Framework Plan:
  - Is in accordance with the Ballan Framework Plan.
  - Supports the logical sequencing of development within the defined township boundary in a manner that can efficiently access existing services, and bring forward key infrastructure and services where needed.
  - Considers flood risk and drainage, buffers to the industrial land, transport connectivity, the interface with the railway corridor, the high pressure gas pipeline, and availability and capacity of water supply and sewerage infrastructure.
  - Avoids interim subdivision of land in identified ‘greenfield’ areas prior to rezoning, to minimise further fragmentation and maintain growth potential.
  - Responds to topography, landscape, vegetation, and natural features.
  - Provides passive open space within 400m walkable catchments as part of future subdivision to meet passive recreation needs for future residents.
  - Encourages a diversity of lot sizes and housing choices.
Objective - Town Centre

To retain the town centre core as the main commercial and retail precinct with supporting non-residential uses.

Strategies

- Support the growth of existing and the establishment of new higher order education and health related uses.
- Encourage the expansion of existing health facilities to occur in proximity to existing services and facilities.
- Encourage commercial development to be consolidated within the existing town centre through infill development, and discourage rezoning for commercial purposes outside the town centre.
- Encourage the redevelopment of underutilised sites and where possible, the retrofitting of existing buildings to provide for commercial or office uses.
- Ensure new development complements the character of the town core, having regard to its heritage places, zero to small setbacks from the street, materials, roof forms, etcetera.
- Encourage tourism focused uses such as accommodation, food, beverage, arts and craft, and other such uses to enhance the visitor experience.

Objective - Industrial Precinct

To ensure the industrial precinct is retained as a significant employer within the town while also providing a range of service based industrial uses to Ballan and the region.

Strategies

- Maintain the extent of existing industrial zoning to the south-east of the town, and only rezone land for expansion in response to low vacancy and demonstrable demand.
- Encourage industrial uses to locate with the industrial precinct.
- Support the establishment of a range of industrial uses, scaled in accordance with the subsidiary role of Ballan within the broader region.
- Ensure residential development does not encroach on the industrial precinct and associated buffer areas, as applicable.

Further Strategic Work

- Prepare a development contributions scheme to support the provision of appropriate physical infrastructure for growth precincts and their linkages to the town centre.
- Prepare Urban Design Guidelines for residential subdivision and the town centre, addressing the public realm, built form, subdivision design, gateway treatments and interface with arterial roads, waterways, natural environment and landscape, front fencing and sustainability.
- Prepare an implementation strategy for the delivery of future path networks.
- Prepare a landscape masterplan for the Werribee River open space network to ensure the delivery of an open space network that is functional, complementary to Ballan’s character and the natural environment.
- Prepare Street Tree Planting Guidelines for subdivision and town centre landscaping.
Ballan Framework Plan