

22.03 Assessment Criteria for Retail Planning Applications

DD/MM/YYYY
Proposed C393

This policy applies where a planning scheme amendment or planning permit is required for the use and/or development of land for a new or expanded provision of retail floorspace.

Policy Basis

The City of Greater Geelong is forecast to experience significant population growth increasing the demand for new and expanded retail services. It is critical to ensure our community has access to every day services within a 20 minute drive from home. Our retail centres should be encouraged to grow and transition over time to activity centres extending their offer to include uses other than retail.

The Geelong Retail Centre Hierarchy has been established to articulate the role and function fulfilled by centres of different sizes. The retail centre hierarchy can be found at Clause 21.19.

Expanding our existing centres is encouraged over developing new centres in out of centre locations

The expansion of several existing centres in Greater Geelong are constrained particularly at the subregional and neighbourhood centre level. Expansion of these centres should consider opportunities to make better use of at grade car parking areas and expand in a vertical direction.

~~Retail~~~~Supermarket~~-based centres should be within an 4800 metre walking distance to residential zoned land to limit car usage, encourage urban consolidation and better utilise existing infrastructure.

Growth should be directed to the locations identified in Clause 21.19. The amount of growth supportable within these locations will be determined by the application requirements identified within this clause.

A proposal which increases the floor area of an existing centre and remains consistent with the role and function of a centre identified in the Geelong retail centre hierarchy is considered a low impact proposal.

Out of centre development or development which alters the role and function of a centre identified in the Geelong retail centre hierarchy is considered to be a high impact proposal.

New development should provide high quality built form outcomes which are sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area and minimises amenity impacts on nearby sensitive land uses.

Objectives

- To ensure that applications or rezoning requests for new and expanded centres establish a demand for such use and demonstrate that there are no adverse impacts on nearby centres or the operation of the retail centre hierarchy.
- To support the viability of centres identified in the retail hierarchy.
- To ensure all high impact proposals provides a net community benefit
- To guide consideration of applications involving an increase in a maximum leasable floor area identified in the schedule to the Commercial 1 Zone,
- To ensure the design and layout of new or expanding centres minimise amenity impacts on surrounding uses and contributes positively to the streetscape and surrounding area.

Policy

Use applications

It is policy that an application demonstrate if the proposal is low or high impact, based on the following;

- a) Whether the proposal is considered to be in centre, edge of centre or out of centre.

- b) Whether the proposal conforms with the role and function identified in the Geelong Retail Centre Hierarchy as outlined in the table at Clause 21.19-5.

Proposals considered low impact ~~must~~^{should} submit an economic impact assessment.

Proposals considered high impact must submit an economic impact assessment, including a net community benefit assessment.

Buildings and works applications

It is policy to:

- Ensure blank walls and loading bays are not adjacent to sensitive land uses and key vehicle and pedestrian accessways to a centre.
- Ensure illuminated signage does not impact on sensitive land uses.
- Ensure new development provides visually interesting and active street frontages where buildings abut the street or a public space.
- Encourage car parking areas to be located to the side or rear of a centre.
- Ensure car parking areas do not visually dominate the front setback area of a centre by providing landscaping including canopy trees.
- Ensure there are safe and convenient pedestrian connections from car parking areas and the surrounding footpath network to the entrance(s) of a centre.

Application Requirements

Economic Impact Assessment

The following issues and information are required to be addressed as part of an economic impact assessment:

General

- Amount of overall retail floorspace.
- Number of retail tenancies and their floor area.
- All proposed land uses.
- The location and amount of floor space dedicated to shop uses within the development if the centre is listed in the schedule to the Commercial 1 Zone.
- Assessment of any likely impact on existing, planned or approved retail facilities.
- Description of anticipated benefits to the community (whether or not these can be monetised).
- Estimated net employment benefits (if any).

Retail Supply

- The existing supply of retail floor space serving the catchment, by type, size, role and function.
- Details of any other proposals for new or expanded retail development in the catchment or beyond, which could have an effect on the proposal, existing centres or planned development.
- Demonstrate how the proposed retail floorspace would fit into the Geelong retail centre hierarchy as detailed in Clause 21.19.
- Demonstrate whether the existing supply of retail floorspace is adequate to meet existing and foreseeable demand levels over a 15 year period.
- Whether there are any existing retail gaps in merchandise/services which the proposal will fill.

Retail Demand

- The need or demand for new or expanded retail floorspace provision to serve the identified catchment, taking into consideration the objectives and strategies contained in Clause 21.19.
- The current catchment population, forecast population and retail spending growth rate for a 15 year period.
- The extent to which the proposal will draw trade from beyond the catchment, and from passing trade.
- Whether the proposed or expanded retail provision would mean an expansion in the size of the catchment of that centre.
- Impacts on the catchment of nearby centres and the effect this may have on centres within those catchments.

Escape Spending

- Estimates of existing levels of escape spending from the catchment.
- Estimates on the share of this escape spending that could reasonably be retained by the proposal.

Impact on Existing Retail Facilities

- Assessment of the expected trading effects on existing or planned retail facilities based on each of the following scenarios; where relevant:
 - The proposal did not go ahead and existing centres in the catchment continue to trade.
 - The proposal is located adjoining an existing nearby centre already identified in the retail hierarchy or
 - Where an out of centre development is proposed, if the centre was approved.
- Demonstration of the extent to which the proposal is expected to lead to an overall improvement in the provision of retail facilities to the catchment population, including the potential for retaining spending that would otherwise escape to other centres.
- Demonstrate that the proposal will improve access to services by reducing travel times for residents.
- Demonstrate that a proposal which results in a development exceeding the maximum floor area specified in the schedule to the Commercial 1 Zone, does not impact on the timing, delivery and viability of other retail centres including planned centres.
- High impact proposals must demonstrate a net community benefit. The assessment must:
 - Establish a realistic outlook of what the floor space growth may be in the catchment, in the absence of the proposal over the coming 15 years (base case).
 - For an out of centre proposal, consider what the costs and benefits to the community are, if the out of centre proposal was to proceed as proposed.
 - Compare the costs and benefits of the proposal against the costs and benefit of the established base case.
 - Quantify and monetise the costs and benefits of the proposal versus the base case
 - As a minimum, the following costs must be considered:
 - Greater motorised travel externalities (air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, congestion)
 - Reduced consumer surplus (shoppers paying more in vehicle operating costs to achieve similar retail service outcomes).
 - Lost opportunities for more consolidated urban development.

- Potentially, impacting considerably on competing centres within the planned hierarchy (persistent vacancies, vandalism etc).
- Potential foregone opportunities for co-location of retail services with community uses.
- Potential loss of employment development through displacement of strategic commercial or industrial land.
- As a minimum, the following benefits must be considered:
 - Improved amenity and place quality at the out of centre location achieved through the development
 - Potentially, earlier provision of expanded retail services for the catchment population.

The Responsible Authority may waive any of the above requirements relating to an economic impact assessment.

Out of centre applications

An application for an out of centre development must demonstrate:

- Why the proposal cannot be accommodated within an existing centre identified in the retail hierarchy.
- Why the proposal cannot be accommodated on the edge of an existing centre identified in the retail hierarchy.
- That the proposal will not significantly impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area.
- That the location of the centre will reduce travel times for the community when compared to nearby existing centres with a similar retail offer.
- That the centre has excellent connectivity to the surrounding residential area(s).
- That the proposal will not result in traffic and safety conflicts between cars, trucks and pedestrians external to the site.

References

City of Greater Geelong Retail Strategy 2016-36, November 2018