

GREATER GEELONG PLANNING SCHEME

AMENDMENT C393

EXPLANATORY REPORT

Who is the planning authority?

This Amendment has been prepared by the City of Greater Geelong which is the planning authority for this Amendment.

The Amendment has been made at the request of the City of Greater Geelong Council.

Land affected by the Amendment

The Amendment applies to the entire municipality.

What the amendment does

The Amendment seeks to implement the statutory recommendations of the *City of Greater Geelong Retail Strategy 2016-2036*, adopted November 2018, into the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme.

The Amendment will:

- Delete the retail policy provisions at Clause 21.07 *Economic Development and Employment*.
- Insert a new Clause 21.19 *Activity Centres* that includes an updated Geelong Retail Centre Hierarchy and identifies the Retail Strategy as a background document.
- Replace Clause 22.03 *Assessment Criteria for Retail Planning Applications* with a new Clause 22.03 *Assessment Criteria for Retail Planning Applications*.
- Amend the Schedule to Clause 34.01 Commercial 1 Zone.
- Amend the Schedule to Clause 72.08 Background Documents.

Why is the Amendment required?

The inaugural City of Greater Geelong Retail Strategy was prepared in 2006. Since then the municipality has experienced significant population growth, including the planning and development of new Greenfield communities. The nature and composition of the retail sector has also changed over this time.

Growth in retail floor space is strongly aligned to population growth. As a consequence, Council has prepared a new retail strategy to replace the previous 2006 strategy. SGS Economics and Planning (SGS) were engaged by Council to undertake a technical analysis of Greater Geelong's retail network in the context of recent retailing trends, land use, population growth and planning policy.

A draft retail strategy was prepared and proceeded to informal public consultation in early 2017. On behalf of Council, SGS also met with major retailers, developers, centre managers and trader groups. In November 2018 Council adopted a new retail strategy: *City of Greater Geelong Retail Strategy 2016-2036*.

Key findings and recommendations of the adopted Retail Strategy are:

- The retail system in Greater Geelong is sufficient to meet the needs of the existing population but will need to grow to meet future demand for retail services by 2036.

- Most residents in Greater Geelong have convenient access to a retail centre capable of meeting daily retail needs.
- Supports the expansion or redevelopment of existing centres over developing new centres. However the strategy also acknowledges that there will still be demand for new centres, for example, in instances where additional floor space cannot be accommodated in an existing centre or where demand is high enough to support a new centre.
- An additional 465,000 square metres of additional floor space is required over the life of this strategy to meet forecast population growth.
- To support Central Geelong as the premier retail destination within Greater Geelong.
- Demand for restricted retail floor space is high on the Bellarine Peninsula. There is sufficient land already zoned within the three designated restricted retail centres at Drysdale, Ocean Grove and Leopold to meet this demand.
- Areas experiencing high levels of residential growth such as Armstrong Creek, Ocean Grove and Lara have been intentionally planned to allow for new retail centres to establish as the population grows. Additional retail centres are not required in these locations.
- Continue to use Shop floor space caps to restrict the size of a centre. The strategy recommends the removal of floor space caps from smaller and neighbourhood centres, but applied them to sub-regional centres and centres in growth area locations.
- The strategy recommends that a number of changes be made to the Planning Policy Framework.

This Amendment therefore gives effect to the principles and recommendations contained within the 2018 Retail Strategy.

In order for the new principles and directions to have statutory weight in the consideration of rezoning requests and planning permit applications, it is necessary for the Retail Strategy to be included in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme.

How does the Amendment implement the objectives of planning in Victoria?

The Amendment implements the objectives of planning in Victoria pursuant to Section 4 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* by providing for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable uses and development of land.

How does the Amendment address any environmental, social and economic effects?

The Amendment does not directly impact on land use and development. Any 'on the ground' effects would be considered during a rezoning or planning permit application process.

However, at a policy level, the Amendment has given due regard in the consideration of environmental, social or economic effects in the following ways:

- Provide convenient access to goods and services, minimising the number, and length, of car trips.
- Encourage a competitive supply of goods and services, keeping prices down.
- Encourage walkable access to suppliers of day-to-day essentials.
- Create vibrant and inviting town and neighbourhood centres.
- Maintain an appropriate mix of sub-regional centres, that offer a wide range of retail goods and services.
- Improve and strengthen Central Geelong, acting as a flagship for the commercial and cultural life of Greater Geelong.
- Distribute restricted-retail activity within a hierarchy, with retailers located in centres in a selected number of specialised regional-restricted retail nodes.

- Prepare structure plans or urban design frameworks for centres at Belmont, Waurin Ponds, Pakington Street, Gordon Avenue and Separation Street.

Does the Amendment address relevant bushfire risk?

Bushfire risk is not a relevant consideration as part of this Amendment.

Does the Amendment comply with the requirements of any Minister's Direction applicable to the amendment?

The Amendment is consistent with the Ministerial Direction on the Form and Content of Planning Schemes under section 7(5) of the Act and Ministerial Direction 11 Strategic Assessment of Amendments as the Explanatory Report includes all requirements to be met.

The Amendment is also consistent with Ministerial Direction No. 15 The Planning Scheme Amendment Process.

How does the Amendment support or implement the Planning Policy Framework and any adopted State policy?

The Amendment implements a number of State planning policies, particularly Clause 11 – *Victoria*.

Clause 11.01-1S *Settlement* and Clause 11.01-1R *Settlement (Geelong G21)* outline strategies to promote regional development, including to develop compact urban areas based around existing or planned activity centres to maximise accessibility to facilities and services. Furthermore, strategies should ensure retail, office-based employment, community facilities and services are concentrated in central locations. The important role of Central Geelong is highlighted.

Clause 11.03-1S *Activity centres* seeks to encourage the concentration of major retail, residential, commercial, administrative, entertainment and cultural developments into activity centres that are highly accessible to the community.

Strategies should:

- Cater for a range of centres that differ in size and function.
- Support the role and function of each centre in the context of its classification, the policies for housing intensification, and development of the public transport network.
- Give clear direction on preferred locations for investment.
- Reduce the number of private motorised trips by concentrating activities that generate high numbers of (non-freight) trips in highly accessible activity centres.
- Support the continued growth and diversification of activity centres to give communities access to a wide range of goods and services, provide local employment and support local economies.

At Clause 11.03-2S *Growth areas* there is direction to implement growth area framework plans, while at Clause 11.03-4S *Coastal settlement* there is support for a network of diverse settlements that provide for a broad range of economic opportunities and services.

The Amendment seeks to reinforce the established hierarchy of retail centres in Greater Geelong. This is an important policy position given the diverse settlement patterns of the municipality – from Central Geelong at the top of the retail hierarchy, to the differing role and function of town centres.

The Amendment supports expansion of existing centres over development of new centres, though new centres are identified in urban growth locations. The *City of Greater Geelong Retail Strategy 2016-2036* finds that all residential development fronts in Geelong are well planned for, with new retail centre locations identified as the population grows.

Other State clauses that are supported by the Amendment include 17.01-1S *Diversified economy*, 17.01-1R *Diversified economy - Geelong G21* and 17.02-2S *Out-of-centre development*. These policies seek to:

- Protect and strengthen existing and planned employment areas and plan for new employment areas.
- Facilitate growth in a range of employment sectors including retail, based on existing and emerging factors – such as the rate of population growth.
- Discourage proposals for expansion of single use retail and commercial facilities outside activity centres.
- Give preference to locations in or on the border of an activity centre for expansion of single use retail and commercial facilities.

How does the Amendment support or implement the Local Planning Policy Framework, and specifically the Municipal Strategic Statement?

During the preparation and adoption of the *City of Greater Geelong Retail Strategy 2016-2036* thorough consideration was given to all relevant Council policies, many of which are found in the Municipal Strategic Statement.

Clause 21.06 *Settlement and Housing* says there is an environmental, economic and social imperative to reduce urban sprawl and improve accessibility to urban services, principally by consolidating urban development around places of activity and public transport infrastructure. The policy emphasises that new infill development should be directed to well serviced areas and should be of a high design quality and respond to the locality.

A key strategy at 21.06-3 *Urban consolidation* is to maximise housing opportunities in and close to activity centres consistent with their primary commercial and retail role. These areas are identified as 'increased housing diversity areas' and the Amendment recognises the important role retail centres play in supporting housing consolidation objectives.

The Amendment continues to up-hold the well-established hierarchy of retail centres in Greater Geelong (Clause 21.07 *Economic Development and Employment*). This is the primary applicable strategic policy, noting the Amendment proposes to extract out the 'retail' policy sections and insert an updated policy in a new Clause 21.19 *Activity Centres*.

Clause 21.07 contains the following relevant provisions:

Key issues and influences

- *The City of Greater Geelong Retail Activity Centre Hierarchy has been established to articulate the role and function fulfilled by centres of different sizes.*
- *The retail hierarchy supports the primacy of Central Geelong as the focus of retail activity in the region.*
- *There is a need to ensure a mix of commercial uses in activity centres.*
- *The retail hierarchy will be enhanced through high quality urban design and improved pedestrian and public transport accessibility.*
- *There is increasing development pressure for sites located away from activity centres, particularly for bulky goods and other large format retail development types that seek large sites with the capacity for significant car parking.*

Objectives

- *To facilitate the development of vibrant and viable retail activity centres in accordance with the Geelong Retail Activity Centre Hierarchy included at Clause 21.07-8.*
- *To ensure all major retail developments, and out of centre developments, provide a clear net community benefit.*

Strategies

- *Ensure that new retail development is directed to activity centres and is consistent with the role and function described in the Retail Activity Centre Hierarchy included at Clause 21.07-8.*
- *Ensure Central Geelong remains the primary retail activity centre in the G21 Region and the focus of retail activity in the G21 region.*
- *Encourage a mix of retail, office, cafes, entertainment, housing, education and community facilities to locate within activity centres.*
- *Require that applications for new centres establish the retail need for such use and development and demonstrate that there are no adverse impacts on the operation of the retail activity centres hierarchy.*

The Amendment will also replace Local policy 22.03 *Assessment criteria for retail planning applications* with an updated policy. Currently all major retail developments and out-of-centre developments are to provide a net community benefit to be approved. Applications for new centres must prove there is a need and establish that the proposed centre will not negatively impact on the Retail Hierarchy.

Clause 22.03 establishes assessment criteria for retail planning applications, planning scheme amendments and floor space restrictions. The proposed revised policy will continue to apply where a planning scheme amendment or planning permit application is required for new or expanded provision of retail floor space.

Does the Amendment make proper use of the Victoria Planning Provisions?

The Amendment makes proper use of the Victorian Planning Provisions by using policy to strengthen the role of the Geelong Retail Centre Hierarchy and guide decision making for planning permit applications and requests to rezone land for retail uses.

Clause 34.01 Commercial 1 Zone provides for planning schemes outside of metropolitan Melbourne to specify maximum leasable floor areas for Shop in a schedule. The Amendment will continue to use floor space caps to restrict the size of individual centres. Proposals to expand a centre beyond the size of a cap will require a planning permit for use. Established local and neighbourhood centres have been removed from the Schedule.

How does the Amendment address the views of any relevant agency?

The Amendment will be referred to relevant agencies as part of the statutory exhibition process.

Does the Amendment address relevant requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010?

The Amendment addresses the requirements of the Transport Integration Act 2010.

The Amendment is consistent with the transport system objectives of the *Act*, in particular those contained in *Section 11 – Integration of transport and land use*. This section requires a focus on maximising access to residences, employment, services and recreation, and reducing the need for private motor vehicle transport and the extent of travel.

The *Greater Geelong Retail Strategy 2016-2036* and Amendment C393 reinforce the established hierarchy of retail centres. Relevant objectives of the Strategy are to:

- Reduce the need for shoppers to travel long distances from home to access retail services.
- Locate any new retail centres on sites that have existing, or potential future, access to public transport services and quality road access for private vehicles.
- Reduce travel distances for day-to-day needs by encouraging development of a dense network of convenience-based local and neighbourhood centres within walking distance for all residential areas of Greater Geelong (approximately 800 metres).

- Where demand exists, make it easier to expand existing centres, without undermining the structure of the centre's hierarchy.

Resource and administrative costs

- **What impact will the new planning provisions have on the resource and administrative costs of the responsible authority?**

The Amendment will have negligible impact on the City's resource and administrative costs.

Where you may inspect this Amendment

The Amendment is available for public inspection, free of charge, during office hours at the following places:

Greater Geelong City Council , Customer Service Centre, Ground Floor, 100 Brougham Street. GEELONG – 8.00am to 5.00pm weekdays

'Amendments' section of the City's website www.geelongaustralia.com.au/amendments/

The Amendment can also be inspected free of charge at the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning website at www.delwp.vic.gov.au/public-inspection

Submissions

Any person who may be affected by the Amendment may make a submission to the planning authority.

Submissions about Amendment C393 should be received by **Monday 20 May 2019** and addressed to:

The Coordinator
Strategic Implementation
City of Greater Geelong

- either by mail to: PO Box 104, GEELONG VIC 3220
- or by email to: strategicplanning@geelongcity.vic.gov.au
- or lodged online at: www.geelongaustralia.com.au/amendments

Panel hearing dates

In accordance with clause 4(2) of Ministerial Direction No.15 the following panel hearing dates have been set for this amendment:

- Directions hearing: week beginning 29 July 2019
- Panel hearing: week beginning 26 August 2019

Further information

For further information about Amendment C393, please contact the Strategic Implementation Unit at the City of Greater Geelong on (03) 5272 4496 or via email strategicplanning@geelongcity.vic.gov.au