

BHA

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Planning Strategy
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**SUBMISSION re GREATER GEELONG PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT C375
BARWON HEADS STRUCTURE PLAN 2017 Implementation
TRAFFIC AND PARKING RESPONSE**

Dear Sir/Madam

Traffic and Parking, and the associated issues such as pedestrian amenity cause considerable friction in our town. The conflict between meeting an insatiable car parking demand needs to be balanced with maintaining our coastal village character and the informality of our local streets. The parking demand is constant and not only during peak holiday times.

There is an expectation that there will be a major increase in population and visitors throughout the year. There is also an impractical expectation from locals and visitors that there will be ample parking very close to their destination. There is very little signage to direct drivers to parking, and very little parking is timed. Barwon Coast provides all the beach parking, at the Bridge and "At the Heads".

Over time, the support by CoGG to waiver the requirement for developers to provide a statutory number of carparks, coupled with significant growth, has resulted in a parking availability problem. We note that the Ocean Grove Structure Plan makes developers responsible for providing parking that the development generates. However in Barwon Heads, even though new developments must consider parking demand impacts, the "expert traffic reports" which accompany planning applications are often inaccurate and taken midweek in the middle of winter. Every time a car park is waived our opportunity to improve car parking availability is compromised.

Drivers looking for car parks are more aggressive to secure car parks and conflict with growing numbers of pedestrians.

Conclusion

No major traffic and parking improvements are recommended in the BHSP2017. This is not acceptable. BHA's responses in the attached document identify specific transport and parking actions that should be included in the BHSP.

The only specific action committed to in the Plan is that CoGG will continue to monitor the parking situation and identify potential future infrastructure that could be undertaken subject to community feedback and budget availability. Again this is not acceptable. The BHA submission recommends that a commitment to undertake a Barwon Heads Traffic and Parking Study as a matter of urgency be included in the BHSP. This should include options

identification, consultation and an implementation program for agreed actions. The BHA Parking sub-committee is committed to support the CoGG in undertaking this study.

We will rely on this document to continue to lobby for a formal traffic and parking study and to change the attitude of CoGG to waiving valuable carparking.

We look forward to supporting our submission before a Panel.

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Key influences

BHSP2017 statement

Section 2.2 Part A Structure Plan of the BHSP2017 includes the following traffic and parking related Transport and Physical Infrastructure key influences.

1. The two month holiday season peak causes problems for managing traffic flow and parking provision during this time.
2. Barwon Heads has a very limited public transport service.
3. Opportunity to improve the operation and management of the community bus.
4. There is a lack of formal footpaths and cycle lanes within the township with primary linkages to key destinations and services.
5. A need to continue to monitor traffic and parking in the town and identify opportunities for improvements.

It is stated that these are sourced from the Background Report (Part C) which identifies and analyses the key issues, opportunities and constraints which assisted in determining the key BHSP2017 directions.

BHA Response

1. Two month holiday season peak

The BHA agrees that there are problems for managing traffic flow and parking provision within Barwon Heads.

The BHA does not agree that the problems are limited to a two month holiday season peak and the BHSP2017 position that *'outside of these peak times volumes on the arterial and collector roads are generally within the capacity of these roads and consistent with their function under the road system. Likewise, for parking outside of the key peak periods there is generally sufficient capacity within the commercial areas to cater for parking demands'* [page 15 of BHSP2017].

These problems extend well beyond a two month peak period. We strongly believe that traffic and parking problems are serious issues throughout the year, are less seasonal now than five years ago, are worsening as the encroaching growth areas population grows and the visitor numbers increase.

CoGC derived it's opinion of the problems being limited to the two month holiday season peak from the Barwon Heads Traffic and Parking Study (2010) conducted by consultant GTA, a 2015 car parking survey specific to the IGA supermarket redevelopment and a Bridge Road vehicle count in January 2014 and a Hitchcock Avenue traffic count in February 2010 and July 2013.

As stated in pg. 108 of the BHSP2017 *"The largest 'parking' study undertaken was in 2007 and this incorporated an area from the town centre up to Geelong Road west to Golf Links Road and south to Bell Street. There were a total of 1,645 spaces in this area (not including off street parking other than the hotel car park). A study in 2008 showed that there is around 273 parking spaces in the core commercial area. The 2010 GTA study concluded that there is generally sufficient car parking capacity within the commercial area to cater for parking demands, other than at absolute peak holiday periods'*.

We note that the largest study of 2007 was undertaken over a decade ago in March which the GTA report recognised was outside of the peak holiday season.

The GTA study was prepared by on behalf of Council to complement the BHSP 2010. Objectives of the study were to:

- Establish the current parking supply and demand within the core commercial area of Barwon Heads, and traffic volumes on key roads;
- Identify local operation, amenity and safety issues relating to car parking, traffic, public transport, cycling and walking; and
- Propose balanced and achievable solutions to the identified issues, taking into consideration the natural amenity and character of Barwon Heads.

While the 2010 GTA study acknowledged that traffic volumes and parking pressures would increase over time in response to specific factors it did not identify all key factors or provide any future projections of traffic volumes or parking demands.

The GTA study excluded *'the strategic issues of the future routing of any extensions to the Geelong Ring Road and the location and impact of an additional bridge over the Barwon River'*.

The BHA considers the key factors impacting on traffic volumes and parking pressures are:

- New Barwon River bridge has been built;
- New growth zones including Armstrong Creek which are resulting in increased traffic volumes through Barwon Heads;
- Rapid Ocean Grove residential development particularly to the north of Grubb Road;
- Large trucks are using Barwon Heads as the regular route, through Hitchcock Avenue as well as the arterial roads as a result of increased load capacity of the new Barwon Heads Bridge which also impacts on pavement life and condition;
- Geelong Ring Road extension diverts traffic through Barwon Heads;
- Significant residential and commercial development in Barwon Heads (including the increase in listing of Hitchcock Avenue units as holiday lets resulting in a significant impact on street parking capacity);
- Significant waivers of on-site parking requirements for most if not all developments in the mixed use and residential growth zones resulted in a spread of commercial parking into residential areas; and
- Student numbers at the Barwon Heads Primary School have doubled to over 500 over the past 10 years.

The BHA believes that most surveys and information relating to parking provided for new developments appear to be obtained during times which are inconsistent with high demands and do not reflect the actual parking habits and impacts.

We note that GTA advise *'Ultimately, it would be desirable for a new road link over the Barwon River to be constructed in Marshall to the south of Breakwater Road, which would assist in reducing the volume of traffic travelling through Barwon Heads which is associated with Armstrong Creek and the Ring Road'*.

BHA believes:

1. The 2010 GTA is not relevant to the current traffic and parking issues facing Barwon Heads;
2. Comprehensive traffic counts and parking surveys have not been undertaken over the last decade and to our knowledge there are no reliable forward projections;
3. Significant growth in traffic volumes and parking pressures has occurred over the past decade and will continue unabated under the BHSP2017.
4. The increasing stress on parking provisions is in part due to an increase in visitors and “locals” from the new growth zones who have adopting Barwon Heads for facilities and coastal recreation.
5. The problems are considered to extend over significant periods of the year such that arterial (VicRoads) and collector (CoGG) roads are beyond the capacity and inconsistent with function and the parking capacity, as currently supplied and regulated, is generally insufficient within the commercial areas to cater for parking demands.
6. These problems will be exacerbated over the next decade unless urgently addressed.

Barwon Heads has a very limited public transport service.

Agreed.

Opportunity to improve the operation and management of the community bus.

Agreed.

There is a lack of formal footpaths and cycle lanes within the township with primary linkages to key destinations and services.

Agreed.

A need to continue to monitor traffic and parking in the town and identify opportunities for improvements.

BHA agrees there is a critical need monitor traffic and parking in the town and identify opportunities for improvements.

We note that the 2010 GTA study recommended regular traffic counts at key locations during peak and off-peak periods to establish trends in traffic growth and distribution which has not been undertaken to our knowledge.

BHA does not agree with the BHSP2017 inference that historical monitoring has been adequate. As described above the lack of comprehensive monitoring over the last decade has contributed to the traffic and parking problems that Barwon Heads currently face.

Principles and Directions

The principles and direction for traffic and parking are presented in Section 3.3.2 of the BHSP2017's Part A Structure Plan.

BHSP2017 statement

Principles

To deliver an improved and sustainable transport network.

Directions

1. Support improvements to road, footpath, cycle paths infrastructure where improvements are funded by Special Rates and Charges Schemes and are prioritised in a Council strategy or plan and supported by the community;
2. Support the ongoing upgrading of open space, leisure and recreation areas undertaken for and on behalf of public land managers, including provision of pedestrian/bicycle linkages;
3. Encourage the improvement of the transport, parking and pedestrian and cycling network where prioritised in a Council strategy or plan;
4. Ensure the continual monitoring and assessment of the traffic and parking network and recommend improvement works where necessary;
5. Ensure that any improvements to the pedestrian and cycling network takes into consideration the streetscape values of the area;
6. Investigate the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Hitchcock Avenue and Geelong Road;
7. Advocate for any future traffic works undertaken by VicRoads along Bridge Road or Golf Links Road to adequately consider and improve the pedestrian environment;
8. Improve parking opportunities by:
 - Formalising the parking area on the corner of Ozone Road and Seaview Avenue, through the use of materials sympathetic to the coastal environment (E.g. Informal topping (no asphalt), informal markers and directional signage)
 - Informal sealing and line-marking the parking area at the rear of the community hall and the parking area adjacent to the senior citizens centre;
9. Advocate for increased bus services between Barwon Heads and Geelong;
10. Support the summer community bus run by Barwon Coast Committee of Management and Council consider improving the funding and/or potentially take responsibility for managing the service;

BHA Response

Principle - To deliver an improved and sustainable transport network

BHA agree with this principle.

There is also need for a parking principle.

Support improvements to road, footpath, cycle paths infrastructure where improvements are funded by Special Rates and Charges Schemes and are prioritised in a Council strategy or plan and supported by the community

The BHA acknowledges that *'there will sometimes be a need to provide footpaths to improve pedestrian connections and active travel around the town; although these should be prioritised in high movement areas and/or the most direct route.'*

A schedule is required to review Barwon Head's roads under CoGG's responsibility, footpaths, and bicycle paths. This should include community consultation on works and funding mechanisms. It is not acceptable for the Barwon Heads community to wait for an undefined Council strategy or plan.

The BHA is of the view that as this infrastructure would provide a broad regional benefit through visitations as well as a local benefit and hence the primary source of funding should be consolidated revenue rather than Special Rates and Charges.

Support the ongoing upgrading of open space, leisure and recreation areas undertaken for and on behalf of public land managers, including provision of pedestrian/bicycle linkages

BHA supports the CoGC commitment to install bicycle lanes along Sheepwash Road from the Round the Heads Trail to Barwon Heads Village Park and to advocate for an off-road shared path along the foreshore from Barwon Heads to the proposed off-road path in Surf Coast Shire

Encourage the improvement of the transport, parking and pedestrian and cycling network where prioritised in a Council strategy or plan

A schedule is required to review Barwon Heads transport, parking and pedestrian and cycling network. This should include community consultation. It is not acceptable for the Barwon Heads community to wait for an undefined Council strategy or plan.

Ensure the continual monitoring and assessment of the traffic and parking network and recommend improvement works where necessary

This principle is inadequate.

The BHA believes that a new Barwon Heads Traffic and Parking Study be undertaken as a matter of urgency. This should include:

- traffic volume surveys (arterial, collector and residential);
- parking availability survey – location, form, and time limits – if any) (CoGG and BCCOM);
- identification of future sources and volumes of traffic and visitations;
- future projections of traffic flows (with modelling) and parking demands;
- parking usage at various times;
- assess capacity to waive car parking requirements and recommend a town wide cap with a proposed implementation mechanism;
- options identification;
- consultation;
- recommendations;
- implementation program

Within this study consideration should be given to:

- Risks to traffic movements should the Spit be flooded due to climate change and/or significant storm surges;
- Analysis of 40 km speed limits with possible extension along Hitchcock Avenue to Geelong Road and other high usage residential areas;
- Regulatory mechanisms for timed parking bays and enforcing speed limits in residential 40 km and 50 km speed zones; and
- Provisions for CoGG to work with VicRoads to improve the condition of Barwon Heads Road which is in a poor state for the increasing traffic and cyclists.

It is recommended that CoGG consult with the BHA Parking sub-committee which was formed in late 2017. The CoGG and BCCOM are invited participants on this committee.

Ensure that any improvements to the pedestrian and cycling network takes into consideration the streetscape values of the area

Agreed.

Investigate the construction of a roundabout at the intersection of Hitchcock Avenue and Geelong Road

Agreed as a high priority.

Consideration should also be given to the traffic management at the intersection of Hitchcock Avenue and Ozone Road where traffic volumes have increased significantly and there have been multiple accident near misses over the past year.

Advocate for any future traffic works undertaken by VicRoads along Bridge Road or Golf Links Road to adequately consider and improve the pedestrian environment

Agreed.

This should include consideration of other pedestrian crossings on Golf Links Road north of the school crossing.

Improve parking opportunities by:

- Formalising the parking area on the corner of Ozone Road and Seaview Avenue, through the use of materials sympathetic to the coastal environment (E.g. Informal topping (no asphalt), informal markers and directional signage)

Agreed

- Informal sealing and line-marking the parking area at the rear of the community hall and the parking area adjacent to the senior citizens centre

Agreed

We note that most of the parking in Barwon Heads is on the street, on residential roads, in Church grounds or provided by BCCM.

BHA believes that the following parking improvement opportunities should be carefully considered in the new Barwon Heads Traffic and Parking Study:

- residential carparking permits to existing dwellings bordering the town centre (as provide in Ocean Grove and other parts of Geelong especially around the commercial areas);
- increase in timed parking spots including along Flinders Parade;
- park and ride opportunities;
- improved regulation of timed parking bays;
- more parking spots for buses;
- disabled parking; and

In addition the following should be implemented immediately

- Effective enforce of current parking restrictions;
- Restrict parking waivers for new developments;

- Require Developers to include parking assessments taken over summer and weekends rather than mid-week in winter;
- Deny resident parking permits to new developments which seek waiver of parking and require disclosure at the time of sale; and
- Regular joint communiques by CoGG and BCCM on parking options.

Advocate for increased bus services between Barwon Heads and Geelong

Agreed.

Support the summer community bus run by Barwon Coast Committee of Management and Council consider improving the funding and/or potentially take responsibility for managing the service

Agreed.

Conclusion

No major traffic and parking improvements are recommended in the BHSP2017. This is not acceptable. BHA's responses above identify specific transport and parking actions that should be included in the BHSP.

The only specific action is that CoGC will continue to monitor the parking situation and identify potential future infrastructure that could be undertaken subject to community feedback and budget availability. Again this is not acceptable. The BHA submission recommends that a commitment to undertake a Barwon Heads Traffic and Parking Study as a matter of urgency be included in the BHSP. This should include options identification, consultation and an implementation program for agreed actions. The BHA Parking sub-committee is committed to support the CoGG in undertaking this study.