



Ballina Retail Strategy



August, 2003

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Executive Summary

The Ballina Retail Strategy applies to the Ballina Local Government Area. Ballina Shire Council decided to prepare the Strategy in response to growing community interest regarding the future direction and viability of retailing within Ballina Shire. The Strategy has been prepared having regard to the provisions of the North Coast Regional Environmental Plan 1988 (as amended).

The Strategy explores a number of issues that are impacting on, or are likely to impact significantly upon, the regional economy and the Shire's business sectors. It also provides a planning and development framework by which to address these issues. As such, the Strategy will assist the retailing and business sectors, Council, government agencies and the general community in making planning and investment decisions regarding retail and commercial activities in the Shire.

An important input into the Retail Strategy is the document entitled "Ballina Retail Strategy Background Report" prepared by IBECON Pty Ltd, dated 13th January, 2003. IBECON Pty Ltd is a market research, retail and economic consultancy, which has been engaged by Council to provide a comprehensive analysis of issues effecting retail and commercial activities in the Shire. This analysis concludes that there will be continued strong population growth within the Shire, as well as moderate to strong growth in tourism. The combination of this population growth, tourism growth and increased real spending will result in continuing growth in retail sales dollars available in Ballina.

The key premise of the Strategy is that the two large retail precincts of Ballina Island – namely the Ballina Town Centre and Kerr Street Retailing Precinct continue to be the major retail centres in Ballina Shire. All decisions relating to the future development of retail activity in the Shire should be based on the principal of protecting the position of these facilities at the top of the retail hierarchy. Integral to the above, is discouraging the creation of additional major retailing outlets which are removed from the existing established centres.

The Retail Strategy also outlines a strategic direction for the future growth and development of retail facilities in each of the towns and villages in the Shire and establishes a hierarchy for the development of retailing in these areas. It also explores issues associated with the further development of bulky goods retailing in the Shire.



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1 Background Material

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Background

The Ballina Retail Strategy applies to the Ballina Local Government Area. Map 1 illustrates the various townships, villages and localities referred to within the document.

Ballina Shire Council has decided to prepare the Strategy in response to growing community interest regarding the future direction and viability of retailing within Ballina Shire. The Strategy has been prepared having regard to the provisions of clause 39 of the North Coast Regional Environmental Plan 1988 (as amended).

The Strategy has been prepared by Council's Strategic Services Section in conjunction with market research, retail and economic consultants, IBECON Pty Ltd. The Strategy was publicly exhibited from 12th April, 2003 to 30th May, 2003 and was subsequently adopted by Council at it's Planning Committee Meeting held on 14th August, 2003.

The Strategy explores a number of issues that are impacting on, or are likely to impact significantly upon, the regional economy and the Shire's business sectors. It also provides a planning and development framework by which to address these issues. As such, the Strategy will assist the retailing and business sectors, Council, government agencies and the general community in making planning and investment decisions regarding retail and commercial activities in the Shire.

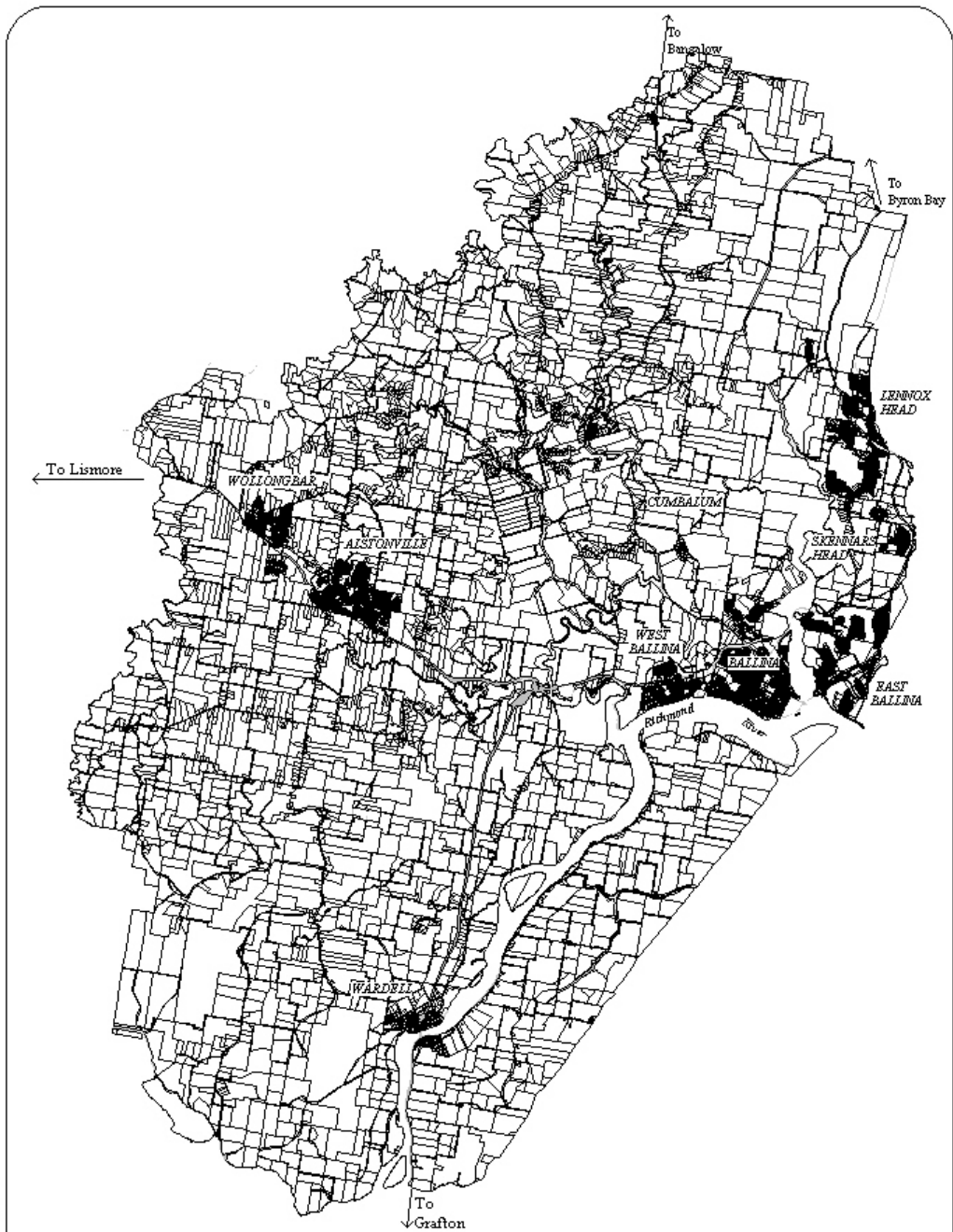
It is important to note, however, that the success or otherwise of retailing within Ballina Shire is dependant to a large degree on the business community itself - product range, price structures, service levels and trading hours are all factors which are outside of the range of responsibilities of Council. As such, it is considered that individual retailers, Chambers of Commerce and business groups will play vital roles in the implementation and success of the Strategy.

It also needs to be recognised that the retail needs of the Ballina community are not entirely accommodated within the Ballina Local Government Area. In this regard, retail facilities of a regional scale are already provided in Lismore. In addition, recent improvements to the Pacific Highway are expected to result in the Gold Coast assuming a greater importance in the provision of higher order retail facilities to the residents of Ballina Shire.


1.1.2 Aims and Objectives

This Strategy aims to ensure that future retail activities within Ballina Shire are conducted in a manner which meets the needs of the local community. The general objectives for this Strategy are:

- i) To provide a strategic framework for the development of retail activities within Ballina Shire;
- ii) To identify and commit to a retail hierarchy within Ballina Shire and establish a strategic plan by which to reinforce this hierarchy;
- iii) To consolidate the role and function of existing retail centres within Ballina Shire;
- iv) To encourage the development of the Ballina Town Centre as a viable and dynamic retail centre;
- v) To encourage the provision of retail activities in locations which are convenient and accessible to the community;
- vi) To provide a framework to guide the provision of services and support infrastructure by both Council and other providers;
- vii) To provide for specialised bulky goods retailing facilities within Ballina Shire; and
- viii) To reinforce the aims and objectives of the Ballina Local Environmental Plan 1987.



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CITY COUNCIL

Ballina Retail Strategy 2003

MAP 1

LOCALITIES REFERRED to in RETAIL STRATEGY

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Dept: Regulatory Services

Date: 21/02/2003



1.2 The Existing Planning Framework

The controls and requirements for retail and commercial development in Ballina Shire are contained in a number of different planning documents. As outlined below, the current requirements are multi-layered and do not focus, to any large degree, on setting a framework for future retail planning and development. The relevant planning instruments are documented below.

1.2.1 North Coast Regional Environmental Plan 1988

The North Coast Regional Environmental Plan 1988 (the REP) provides a regional planning framework for the North Coast of NSW. It consolidates various policies relating to the region with the aim of protecting the natural environment, encouraging an efficient and attractive built environment and guiding development into a productive, yet environmentally sound, future. It also aims to co-ordinate activities related to growth, encourage optimum economic and social benefit and to promote the efficient commercial functioning of sub-regional and district centres.

The objective of the REP relating to commercial and industrial development involves encouraging an adequate supply of zoned land located where there are planned growth areas foreshadowed and where essential services can be provided with minimal environmental damage. In this regard, Clause 47 of the REP requires that before preparing a local environmental plan or granting consent to a development application on land in an urban area for commercial or industrial development, the Council shall take into consideration the following principles;

- strong multi-functional town centres should be maintained to focus the drawing power of individual businesses and maintain the integrity of the main business area by only zoning land for further commercial or retail development where that land adjoins or is adjacent to the existing town centre; and
- Provisions contained in local environmental plans relating to retail, commercial, business and industrial zones should be flexible, especially to enable the development of light service industry near the central business district.

The REP further requires that where a local environmental plan proposes retail, commercial or business purposes not adjacent to or adjoining the existing commercial centre, the development must be in accordance with a commercial/retail expansion strategy prepared by the Council.

1.2.2 Ballina Local Environmental Plan 1987

The Ballina Local Environmental Plan 1987 (the LEP) is the principal local environmental planning instrument for the Ballina Local Government Area. The general aims of the LEP are to encourage the proper management, development and conservation of natural and man made resources, to promote the social and economic welfare of the community and to provide a better environment. The LEP divides Ballina Shire into a series of zones and specifies the range of uses that are permissible within each zone. It then encourages the preparation of Development Control Plans (DCPs) to further clarify the preferred uses and development controls within different localities. The LEP provides for retail and commercial activities in the following ways:

Zone No.3 – Business Zone

The principal zone relating to business activities within the LEP is Zone No.3 - Business Zone which applies to the majority of commercial areas in the Ballina township. The Primary Objectives of the Business Zone are as follows:

- To regulate subdivision and use of land within the zone to maintain the status of the Ballina Central Business District as the retail, commercial and administrative centre of the Shire;
- To allocate sufficient land for retail, commercial and administrative purposes within the Shire and to regulate subdivision and use of that land so that it is developed within in accordance with a commercial hierarchy;
- To permit a wide range of uses within the zone which are associated with, and ancillary to or supportive of, the retail and service facilities within the zone, particularly tourist developments and industries referred to in Schedule 2 of the LEP; and
- To permit development where it is compatible with the commercial character of the zone and provides its residents with appropriate leisure facilities to ensure a high level of residential amenity.

Zone No.2 (b) - Village Area Zone

The Village Area Zone is the second mechanism by which the LEP allows for commercial development. This zone applies to the commercial areas of Alstonville, Lennox Head and Wardell and has the following primary objectives:

- To regulate the subdivision and use of land to permit a wide range of urban purposes; and
- To allow detailed provision to be made, by means of a development control plan, to set aside specific areas within the zone for varying housing densities, commercial and special uses and other urban and tourist facility purposes.

Zone No.4 – Industrial Zone

The Industrial Zone has a series of objectives relating primarily to the provision of industrial activities within the zone. Commercial premises and most shops are not encouraged within the zone as they typically conflict with the zone Objectives. A very limited range of retail activities which are listed in Schedule 3 of the LEP are permitted, subject to development consent. In addition, Clause 27, provides opportunities for the retailing of bulky goods^{1,2} within the industrial zone subject to the following requirements:

- Suitable land for the development is not available in any nearby business centre;
- To grant consent would not, by reason of the number of retail outlets which exist or are proposed on land within Zone No.4, alter the predominantly industrial nature of the zone; and
- The proposed development will not detrimentally affect the viability of any business centre.

¹ In Clause 27 “bulky goods” are defined as large goods which are, in the opinion of the council, of such a size and shape as to require – (a) a large area for handling, storage or display; and (b) easy and direct vehicular access to be collected by customers after sale.

² Clause 27 does not apply to development for the purposes of shops selling food or clothing or development for the purposes of produce stores.

Home Businesses

The LEP provides the following opportunities³ for people to work from home in residential and other zones within in the Shire:

- Home Occupations are low scale commercial activities carried out by the occupants of a dwelling which do not impact on the residential amenity of the locality and for which no development consent is required. Importantly, the definition of home occupation specifically precludes the sale of items or the exposure or offer for sale of items, by retail.
- Home Industries are small scale, low impact industries which may be conducted in residential areas with the development consent of Council.
- Professional Consulting Rooms are a room or number of rooms within the curtilage of a dwelling house used by not more than 3 legally qualified medical practitioners, dentists or healthcare professionals. Development consent is required from Council to operate a Professional Consulting Room.
- Consulting Rooms are a room or number of rooms within part of a dwelling, or the whole of a former dwelling used by not more than 3 professionals and associated support staff. Development consent is also required to undertake such activities.

1.2.3 Ballina Development Control Plan No. 1 – Urban Land

Ballina Development Control Plan No. 1 – Urban Land (DCP No.1) aims to encourage the proper management, development and conservation of resources, to promote the social and economic welfare of the community and to provide a better environment. It achieves this by dividing the urban areas of the Shire into different Control Plan Areas and providing objectives and detailed controls for the development of each area.

There are four Control Plan Areas within DCP No.1 which provide for retail and commercial development. These are as follows:

Control Plan Area C1 – Ballina Business District

This Control Plan Area applies to the Ballina Central Business District (CBD) and aims to reinforce this area as the principal commercial centre of the Shire. It achieves this by encouraging a wide range of retail, commercial, community and residential activities within the area. In addition, the controls applying to development within this area allow for a higher intensity of commercial development than permitted elsewhere in the Shire.

³ The following descriptions are paraphrased and are not the formal definitions contained within the LEP.

Control Plan Area C2 – District Centre

The District Centre designation applies to the Alstonville and Lennox Head village centres. The objectives of the C2 Control Plan Area relate to encouraging the consolidation and development of a range of retail, commercial, community and residential activities of a district scale. They also require that new development in these areas be designed so as to be compatible with the existing characters of these commercial centres.

Control Plan Area C3 – Local Centre

This Control Plan Area encourages the development of small scale local centres capable of servicing the day-to-day retail needs of surrounding neighbourhoods, villages and/or rural areas. This designation applies to the village centres of Wardell and Wollongbar as well as to the smaller commercial areas scattered throughout Ballina.

Control Plan Area C4 – Special Centre

Control Plan Area C4 recognises the existence of the Kerr Street Retailing Precinct on Ballina Island. The objectives of this Control Plan Area provide for the out of centre supermarket / discount department store complex and encourage retail activities such as supermarkets, discount department stores and ancillary specialty shops. Leisure related commercial activities are also encouraged.

1.2.4 DCP No. 6 – Alstonville Village Centre Enhancement

DCP No.6 - Alstonville Village Centre Enhancement was introduced in July, 1999. It is based on a 1998 study by Don Osborne and Associates acting on behalf of the Alstonville and Mainstreet Heritage and Enhancement Committee. The study found that the character of Alstonville was essentially derived from its heritage, its predominance of timber buildings, the mix of land uses and its parks, gardens and treed environs. Arising from this, the study recommended that a DCP be developed to protect and enhance the village character.

DCP No.6 sets out Council's general expectations for the future development of the village centre. It seeks to facilitate future development within the village centre with particular emphasis on ensuring the compatibility of new development with the character of the village centre in terms of land use, design and external appearance: particularly having regard for identified buildings of cultural and historic significance.

1.2.5 NSW Coastal Policy 1997

The NSW Coastal Policy 1997 provides a strategic policy framework for the coast in order to guide decision making. It sets a direction to be taken by local and State government in the planning and management of the NSW coast and in works and activities impacting on the coast. The Policy focuses on the environmental management of the coast and as such does not contain any direct references to retailing and commercial development. It is noted, however, that the policy does promote the creation of a "sustained and stimulating town centre environment".

1.3 Retail Strategy Background Report

A key input into the Retail Strategy is the document entitled "Ballina Retail Strategy Background Report" prepared by IBECON Pty Ltd, dated 13th January, 2003. IBECON Pty Ltd is a market research, retail and economic consultancy, which have been engaged by Ballina Shire Council to provide a comprehensive analysis of issues effecting retail and commercial activities in the Shire.

The background report and associated appendices provide a detailed analysis and forecast of the Region's demography, current and projected retail needs, sales and retail impacts in the region. A copy of the Background Report forms Part 3 of this Strategy. The major conclusions of the Ballina Retail Strategy Background Report are as follows:

1. There will be continuing strong population growth in the region and in Ballina Shire LGA. The distribution of this population growth within Ballina Shire LGA is shown in Map 6 (at page 11 of the Background Report).
2. There will be continuing moderate to strong growth in tourism to Ballina Shire as a destination with strong growth continuing in overnight stayers.
3. The combination of this population growth, tourism growth and increased real spending at about 1-1.5% per annum will result in continuing growth in retail sales dollars available from Residents, Workers and Tourists in Ballina and the surrounding LGAs.
4. There is currently a small over supply of shop floor space in Ballina Shire LGA, partly reflecting the large sizes of many under utilised shops. This does not represent a major problem as the vacancy rate is currently low to moderate.
5. The proposed Pacific Highway diversion will result in some loss in trade particularly in the Ballina Town Centre and hence there is a need to encourage development and changes to existing shops to service and encourage the growth of destination tourist business.
6. There is currently a significant level of escape spending out of Ballina, although there are also large, partially offsetting flows back into the Shire from adjoining LGAs.
7. The recently completed Stage I and foreshadowed Stage II developments for Ballina Fair have had and will have a net positive effect on all retail sales in the whole of Ballina, although there has been some negative impact on other traders both the nearby Coles/Kmart and other shops in the Ballina Town Centre.
8. The proposed Bruxner Highway by-pass of Alstonville will possibly have a small net positive effect on retailing in Alstonville.
9. Where possible, for the immediate future encouragement should be given to consolidating retail outlets rather than increasing their dispersion both throughout the Shire and within each location of shops.

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10. In the longer term there is a market place based case for the possible development of a new, or expansion of existing, centres in Lennox Head, East Ballina and Cumbalum.
 11. Council has recently decided to implement a Ballina Town Centre Management Plan, comprising substantial beautification, traffic management and riverside enhancement projects. Together with an appropriate marketing and awareness program and, hopefully, the co-operation of shop owners and traders, in the modification of the retail offer over a number of years in Ballina Town Centre, this should mitigate against the other adverse impacts likely to affect the Town Centre.
 12. Any future proposed closures of major commercial activity, such as Banks, Post Offices or other services in the Ballina Town Centre should be resisted strongly as these would result in detrimental effects on trade levels in that location.

In addition to the above, the IBECON report provides detailed information regarding the expected future retail requirements of the Shire together with a number of important issues facing retailing, commercial and tourist development. These issues will be discussed in the following Retail Strategy document.



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2 The Retail Strategy

2.1 Major Retail Centres

2.1.1 Introduction

Ballina Island comprises an area bounded by the Richmond River and North Creek. These waterways are linked by way of a canal, thereby forming the “island”. There are two main commercial areas on Ballina Island – the Ballina Town Centre and the Kerr Street Retailing Precinct. Map 2 illustrates the location of these retail centres. As outlined in the IBECON report, these centres form the principal retailing areas in Ballina Shire providing the higher order retail and commercial facilities in the Shire.

The key premise of this Retail Strategy is that the two large retail precincts of Ballina Island – namely the Ballina Town Centre and Kerr Street Retailing Precinct continue to be the major retail centres in Ballina Shire. All decisions relating to the future development of retail activity in the Shire should be based on the principal of protecting the position of these facilities at the top of the retail hierarchy. Integral to the above, is discouraging the creation of additional major retailing outlets which are removed from the existing established centres.

2.1.2 Ballina Town Centre

The Ballina Town Centre is the original retail and commercial centre in the Ballina Local Government Area. As is typical with such centres, it has evolved over the past century in a relatively ad-hoc manner – responding as needed to changing technology, community needs and market forces. Whilst both the Ballina Local Environmental Plan and Ballina DCP No.1 – Urban Land identify the Ballina Town Centre as the principal commercial area within the Shire, very little detail is provided within these documents to guide development within the town centre. In 2003, the town centre has the following characteristics:

- An elongated commercial area stretching along River Street from Norton Street to Kerr street and beyond;
- A wide range of civic and service functions occur within the CBD providing opportunities for multi-purpose visits to the town centre. Examples include the Post Office, Police Station and the Council Administration Centre;
- Commercial, personal and quasi-retail services including legal and medical services, employment agencies, banks, hairdressers and the like. The presence of these employers is an important contributor to the economic performance of the town centre;
- No distinct precincts providing for specific types of business activities – however market forces have resulted in different areas being developed for different types of activities. In this regard, retail activity focuses on River Street, with commercial offices predominately located along Tamar Street. Very little business activity occurs along the riverfront;
- Fragmented ownership of property resulting in little co-ordination of built form, marketing strategies or trading hours;
- Subdivision pattern providing properties with narrow street frontages and deep blocks – resulting in shop layouts not reflecting modern trends in retailing; and
- Dispersed carparking located on both public and private land within the centre.

The Ballina Town Centre is facing increased pressures from a number of sources including retailing at the Ballina Fair complex and likely impacts of future bulky goods retailing facilities. In addition, IBECON has advised that there may be future pressures to close some banks within the Ballina CBD which will further impact on activity within the CBD.

As such, it is considered timely that a Strategy be put in place to ensure the ongoing viability and vitality of the area. As such, the Retail Strategy for the Ballina Town Centre comprises three distinct, yet complementary, actions. These actions are based on the premise that the success of the Strategy requires the commitment of both Council and the local business community. It is noted that work has already commenced on the implementation of Actions 1 and 2, and a commitment has been made to complete Action 3 in the new financial year. The actions are as follows;

Action 1. Undertake the upgrade of the key public areas within the Ballina Town Centre

In recent times, Council has undertaken detailed investigations into the refurbishment and landscaping of public areas within the Ballina Town Centre. This work culminated in the preparation of a draft Masterplan outlining proposed upgrades to River Street (between Martin and Grant Streets) and the riverfront area along Fawcett Street. In summary, the Masterplan involves the following:

- Rationalised parking and improved traffic management;
- Widening of footpaths and improved pedestrian linkages;
- Avenue tree planting;
- Alfresco dining opportunities and sail shade areas;
- Improved signage and other infrastructure;
- Comprehensive landscaping of the river front area;
- Children play areas; and
- Riverside café / seafood outlet.

Following public exhibition in March, 2002, Council resolved to support the upgrading of the CBD on a staged basis, contingent on the availability of funds. The first stage of this work, Stage 1A, is scheduled for completion in November, 2003. This work will involve landscaping of the riverfront area, Riverwalk Arcade and the central pedestrian crossing in River Street.

Action 2. Town Centre Management Strategy

Integral to the upgrade of the Ballina CBD, it is necessary to develop a strategy for the future management, maintenance and promotional activities in that locality. A Ballina Town Centre Management Study has therefore been drafted which involves the following:

- Reviewing the current performance of the centre and identifying issues impacting on performance;
- Identifying market and use opportunities for the centre arising from the improvements program; and
- Advising Council on CBD management, including the management tasks required, implications of centre management, roles and responsibilities of key players and possible management structures.

Comments on the proposals within this study will be sought from the public in the near future. Following exhibition, Council will determine the preferred management strategy for the centre.

Action 3. Prepare, exhibit and adopt a Development Control Plan for the Ballina Town Centre

Whilst the enhancement and management of the public areas of the Ballina CBD is important to the ongoing viability of the centre, it is also necessary to ensure that new development on private land is complementary to this work. As such, a Development Control Plan (DCP) is to be prepared by Council as a matter of high priority in the 2003/2004 financial year. It is envisaged that key elements of the DCP will include the following:

- Provision of leisure, dining and tourism related activities along the riverfront area;
- Encouraging the development of office, commercial and other “employers” outside the core retail area of the Town Centre – ie Tamar Street;
- Restricting the further expansion of commercial activities into the surrounding residential areas;
- Rationalising carparking locations and requirements;
- Providing urban design criteria for developments within the Ballina CBD; and
- Development of criteria to endeavour to ensure that new retail developments are designed in a manner which is consistent with contemporary concepts of retail design.

2.1.3 Kerr Street Retailing Precinct

The second major retail facility in Ballina is the Kerr Street Retailing Precinct. Located at the northern end of Kerr Street (the Pacific Highway), total annual sales in this location now exceed those in the Ballina Town Centre - even though the total amount of occupied floor space is considerably less.

The Ballina Fair shopping complex, located on the western side of Kerr Street, was initially constructed in the late 1980s. In 1998 consent was granted for the extension and refurbishment of the facility. The current retail floor space is approximately 11,000m². This includes two large supermarket facilities and a variety of specialty retail and non-retail floor space. Several franchise takeaway food establishments are also provided in the site as well as a cinema, indoor swimming pool and gymnasium. The development plans for the project have foreshadowed the further expansion of the centre over the northern carpark of the site. Referred to as “stage 2”, the expansion plans envisage the development of a discount department store with a floor space of approximately 6,500m².

The Coles/Kmart development is location on the eastern side of Kerr Street opposite the Ballina Fair development. Developed in the early 1980s, the facility provides in the order of 10,000m² of retail floor space together with associated carparking. This floor space is divided between the Coles supermarket and the Kmart discount department store.

The combined Kerr Street Retailing Precinct has several distinct retail advantages over the Ballina Town centre. The advantages include:

- Ballina Fair Complex planned & constructed in a integrated manner;
- Close concentration of retail activities;
- Ample, convenient carparking;
- Good vehicular access – both from the external road network and between the car parking areas and the shops;
- 3 supermarkets in close proximity providing both a perception and a practice that they are highly competitive with regard to pricing and service;
- Presence of the only discount department store in the Ballina / Byron area;
- Layout of shops and circulation spaces in accordance with modern concepts in retailing; and
- Coordinated marketing strategy.

It is considered that the design advantages of the Kerr Street Retailing Precinct will ensure the continued strength of retailing at this location. This Strategy encourages the reinforcement of retail activities in this location by identifying preferred sites for expansion of the Precinct.

In this regard, should expansion of retailing in this location be considered, it should occur either by way of consolidation of the existing retail developments or expansion to locations immediately adjacent to the existing facilities. Following consideration of surrounding land uses, subdivision patterns and road layouts, the following preferred locations for expansion have been identified:

i. Western side of Kerr Street

- Expansion of Ballina Fair over the northern car park (as foreshadowed in previous development proposals over the site)

ii. Eastern side of Kerr Street

- Expansion of Coles/Kmart over existing carpark; and
- Expansion over what is currently the Tinkerbell Caravan Park.

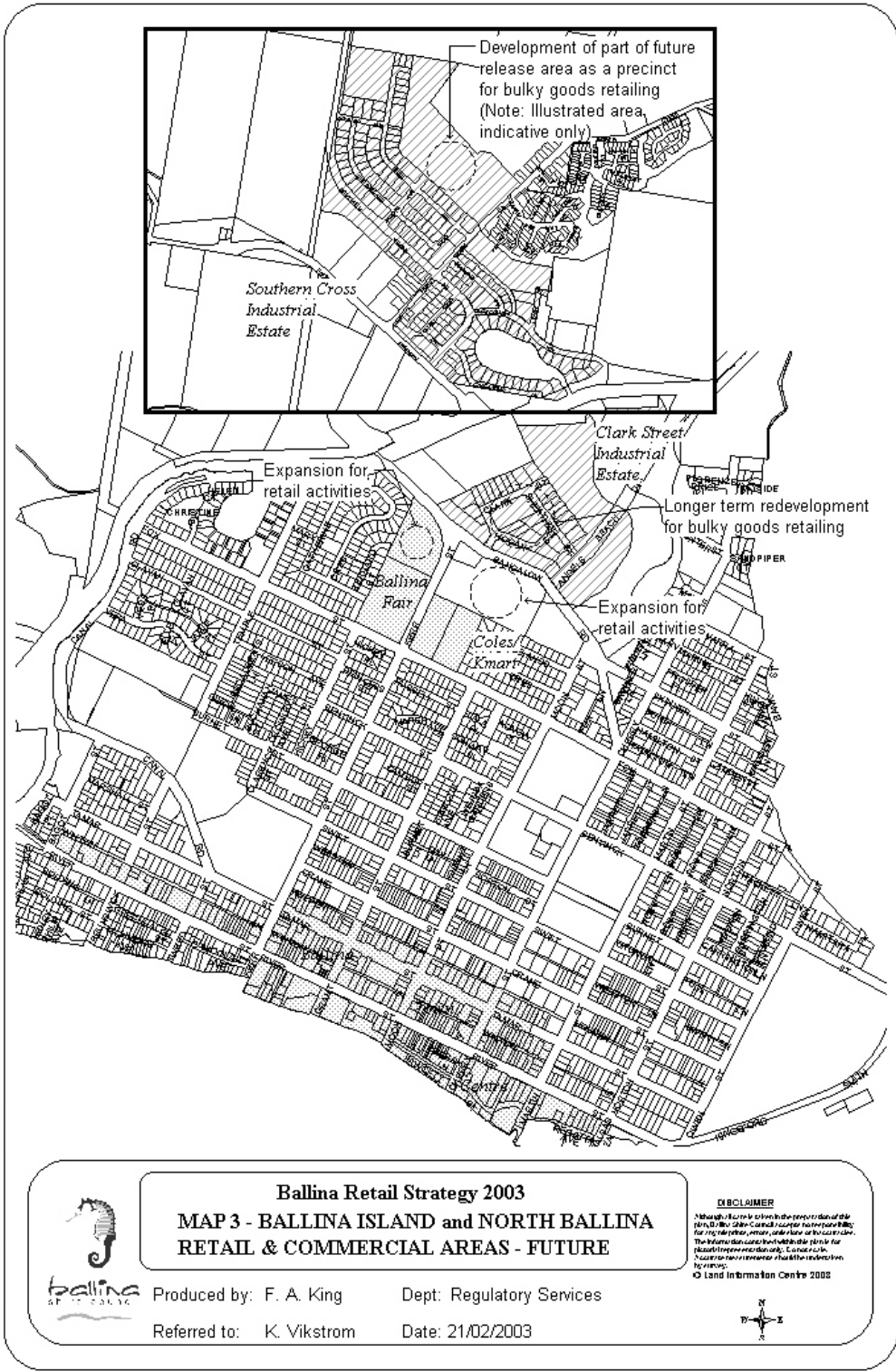
As discussed in Part 2.3.1 of the Retail Strategy, the expansion of retailing in these localities will also reinforce the concept of the redevelopment of the Clark Street Industrial Estate as a precinct for bulky goods retailing in the longer term.

2.1.4 Conclusion

The above Strategy provides for the expansion of retail development in both the Ballina Town Centre and the Kerr Street Retailing Precinct. It is acknowledged that, should retail development in the Kerr Street Retailing Precinct expand substantially, this Precinct is likely to assume the role of the principal retail centre in the Shire. However, through the implementation of the range of initiatives proposed in the Ballina Town Centre, it is envisaged that the Town Centre will continue to develop as the primary commercial, office and dining precinct in the Shire supported by a vibrant specialty retail sector. In this way, the Ballina Town Centre and Kerr Street Retailing Precinct will share the top of the Shire's retail hierarchy by providing different, but complementary, services.



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Ballina Retail Strategy 2003
MAP 3 - BALLINA ISLAND and NORTH BALLINA
RETAIL & COMMERCIAL AREAS - FUTURE

Produced by: F. A. King Dept: Regulatory Services
 Referred to: K. Vikstrom Date: 21/02/2003

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2.2 Other Retail Centres

2.2.1 East Ballina

East Ballina is the area within the township of Ballina between North Creek and the Pacific Ocean. The settlement adjoins the locality of Skennars Head to the north. The East Ballina area is serviced by a shopping centre which provides retail facilities to service the day to day needs of the local community. Map 4 illustrates the location of this facility.

IBECON Pty Ltd has identified that from a supply and demand perspective, the East Ballina area could support the equivalent of a District Centre once the population capacity is reached in this area. However, given the proximity of East Ballina to the major retail areas of the Kerr Street Retailing Precinct and the Ballina Town Centre, this Retail Strategy does not propose the significant expansion of retail facilities within East Ballina.

Rather, it is proposed that there be an opportunity for consolidation of retail activities within the East Ballina Shopping Centre, with no significant increase in retail floor space at the centre. Higher order retail activities to service the resident population will be provided by the facilities provided on Ballina Island.

2.2.1 Lennox Head

Lennox Head is located on the coast approximately ten kilometres to the north of East Ballina. There are currently three areas in Lennox Head which are nominated for commercial activities by Council's planning documents. These are the existing Village Centre located on Ballina Street, the service station/landscape supply premises on Byron Street and an area adjacent to Hutley Drive in a future stage of the Pacific Pines Estate. Each of these centres is illustrated on Map 4.

The Village Centre originally developed as a traditional "strip" shopping centre servicing the local population, the tourist industry and passing traffic. With the construction of the Lennox Head Bypass in 1994 a significant proportion of the through traffic was removed and the level of amenity substantially improved. The location of the Village Centre adjacent to the ocean is unique in Ballina Shire. This, combined with the reduction of through traffic, has resulted in the area becoming increasingly focussed on leisure related activities – restaurants, cafes, accommodation etc.

In November, 2002, Ballina Shire Council adopted the Lennox Head Community Aspirations Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan is intended to be an umbrella document which provides guidance for future Council activities – including town planning, works programs and annual budgets. It was prepared in close consultation with the Lennox Head community and seeks to reflect the ambitions of that community.

As part of the plan preparation process, the community identified the existing Lennox Head Village Centre to be the "heart" of the community which fulfils important social, retailing and economic functions. The planning process also identified the following matters to be the key issues to be considered in the planning of the Village Centre and commercial development of Lennox Head:

-
- The Village Centre should remain the main commercial area in Lennox Head, with other commercial areas being lower in the retail hierarchy. Large supermarkets and malls should be provided in Ballina;
 - There needs to be a rationalisation of parking and traffic flows in the Village Centre;
 - Development should be low scale and not more than two storeys in height;
 - Alfresco dining and eating establishments are likely to become more popular in the future and suitable controls should be provided for such facilities;
 - There is a need for improved maintenance and cleanliness in the Village Centre;
 - New commercial developments should not limit access to the beach and should aim to improve pedestrian access between Park Lane and Ballina Street; and
 - There is increasing demand for a low-key light industrial / arts / craft estate in Lennox Head.

The Strategic Plan endeavours to address these issues by introducing a range of development principles and strategic actions which will be implemented by Council in Lennox Head. The actions are reproduced below and form the Retail Strategy for the Lennox Head area.

Action 1. *Lennox Head Village Centre Development Control Plan*

In accordance with Council's previous resolutions on this matter, a Development Control Plan (DCP) for the Lennox Head Village Centre will be prepared for exhibition as a matter of very high priority. The DCP will incorporate urban design controls for private land, a review of carparking and traffic flows and principles for subsequent streetscape initiatives. This work shall have regard for projected population growth in the area.

Action 2. *Commercial Hierarchy*

Retail and commercial development in Lennox Head will be established in accordance with the following hierarchy:

- The Village Centre will be the principal commercial area in Lennox Head and will provide facilities and services of a district scale. No increase or expansion of the existing zoned commercial area will occur. The Village Centre is the commercial and social hub of Lennox Head and planning for the area will enhance this role into the future.
- A second commercial area will be provided in Pacific Pines Estate to complement those facilities found in the Village Centre. This facility shall be lower in the retail hierarchy than the Village Centre and provide facilities of a neighbourhood scale to service the residents located in this area and enhance walkability.
- Other areas zoned for commercial activities within the district will provide convenience facilities of a local scale.
- Higher order retail and commercial facilities including major supermarkets, shopping malls and bulky goods retailing will be provided elsewhere such as Ballina.

It is noted that the IBECON report has identified that, from a retail demand perspective, there would be capacity for a substantial increase in retail floor space in Lennox Head. However, the Lennox Head Strategic Plan has identified that the provision of this floor space would be inconsistent with the preferred future character of Lennox Head. As such, this Retail Strategy supports the retail hierarchy documented above.

Action 3. Village Centre Beautification

A Landscaping and Beautification Scheme for the Lennox Head Village Centre shall be prepared and implemented.

Action 4. Pacific Pines Neighbourhood Centre

Any application for the development of the Pacific Pines Neighbourhood Centre shall be accompanied by a retail analysis undertaken by a professional experienced in the field which demonstrates compliance with the hierarchy outlined above.

Action 5. Tourism Development

Council's planning controls will be reviewed so as to incorporate detailed controls for the design and location of tourism development in Lennox Head. The aim of this work is to ensure that tourism developments are low key and limited in scale and number so as to manage impacts on the resident community. This work will also identify preferred locations for motels, backpacker hostels etc so as to minimise impacts on residential amenity. The results of this work will be included in the drafting of the Ballina Tourism Strategy.

Action 6. Light Industrial Area

A low key light Industrial / Arts / Craft Park will be planned for at an appropriate location in Lennox Head. The investigation and provision of this facility will occur via the following steps:

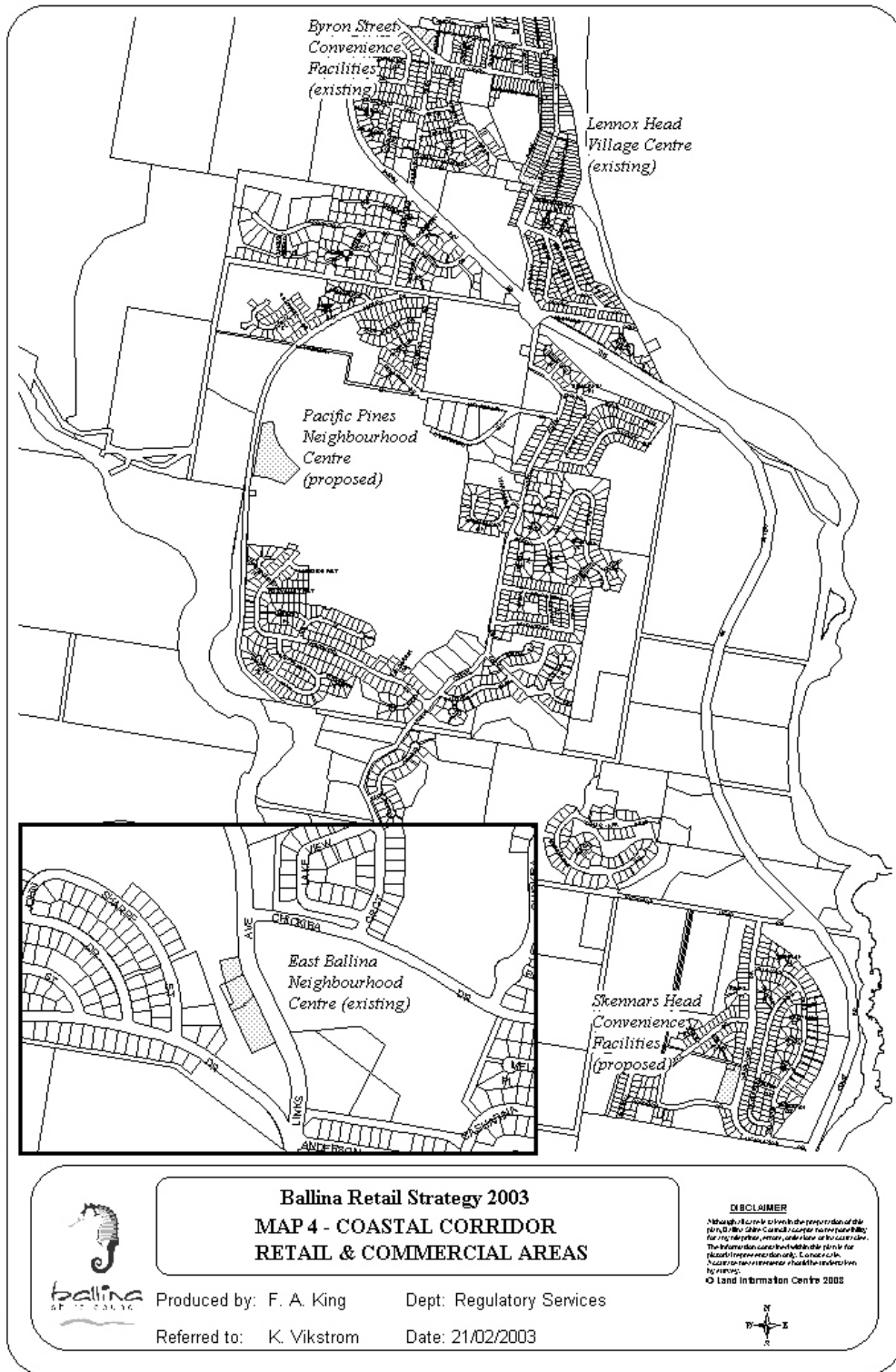
- Investigations into the need for such a facility;
- Investigations into the appropriate site for such a facility; and
- Provision of facility.

Detailed site selection criteria and design controls will be developed prior to approval relating to accessibility and minimising environmental, visual or amenity impacts.

2.2.3 Skennars Head

The planning for the existing settlement of Skennars Head (namely Headlands Estate) was considered as part of the preparation of the Lennox Head Strategic Plan. This work identified that small scale retail activities to service the needs of the local resident community may be provided within Headlands Estate. Larger scale retail facilities will, however, not be accommodated within the centre, with residents accessing such facilities in Lennox Head, East Ballina or Ballina.

At such time as rezoning proposals or development proposals are received for other areas within Skennars Head, detailed assessments will need to occur concerning the scale of retailing provided in this area. It is envisaged, however, that facilities of a local scale only would be provided in these areas.

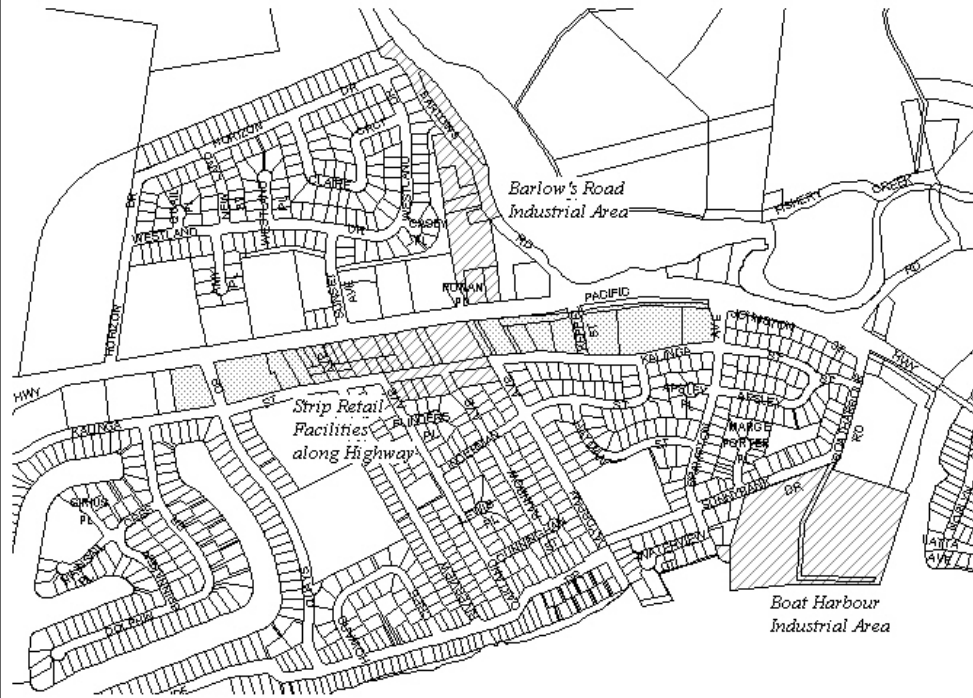
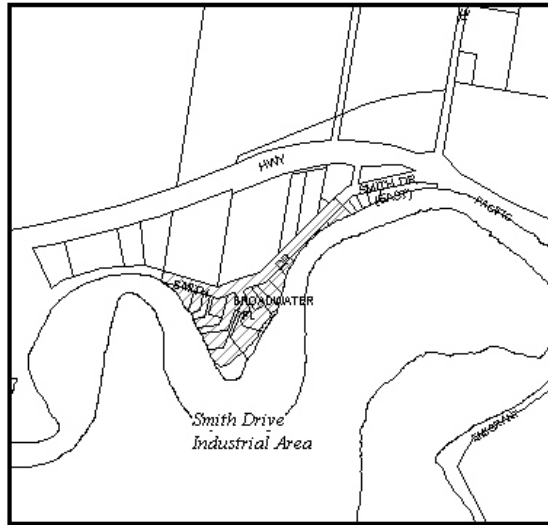


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2.2.4 West Ballina

Retail activities within the existing zoned area of West Ballina fall into two general categories. Small scale retail activities to service the local residential population are provided at the Key West Shopping Centre adjacent to the intersection of Kalinga Street and the Pacific Highway. This centre provides convenience retail facilities such as a butcher, bakery and tavern. In addition to these local shops, there are also a number of commercial facilities targeting the significant vehicle numbers utilising the Pacific Highway. These “strip retailing” facilities include commercial accommodation and motor vehicle dealerships. Map 5 illustrates the location of these facilities.

The Retail Strategy for West Ballina proposes that there be a consolidation of convenience retail facilities within, or immediately adjacent to, the existing Key West Shopping Centre. Any proposal to significantly expand these facilities will require detailed assessment of the retail impacts of such developments on the existing commercial centre. Higher order retail activities to service the resident population should be provided by the major centres located on Ballina Island.



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Ballina Retail Strategy 2003
MAP 5 - WEST BALLINA
RETAIL & COMMERCIAL AREAS

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 Referred to: K. Vikstrom Date: 21/02/2003

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2.2.5 The Plateau Villages

There are two existing villages located on the Alstonville Plateau in Ballina Shire – namely Alstonville and Wollongbar. The planning of these centres has been founded on the basis of discrete planning units being separated by buffer areas. The width of the buffer area varies - but is sufficient to maintain the individuality of the respective centres but is not so great as to prevent an interrelationship from occurring. As such, there is a level of shared resources between the two centres. From a retailing and commercial perspective, Alstonville provides these services at a district scale, with Wollongbar providing retail and commercial facilities to service the local community. Additional commercial and bulky good retail activities occur at the Russellton Industrial Estate.

There are two main factors which are expected to impact on future retailing on the plateau – population growth and the proposed Alstonville Bypass.

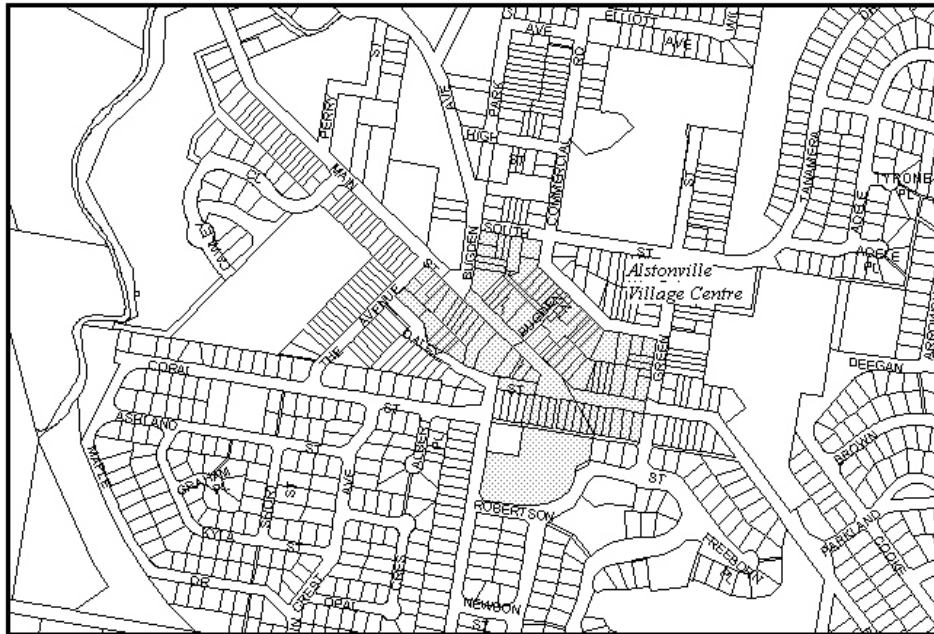
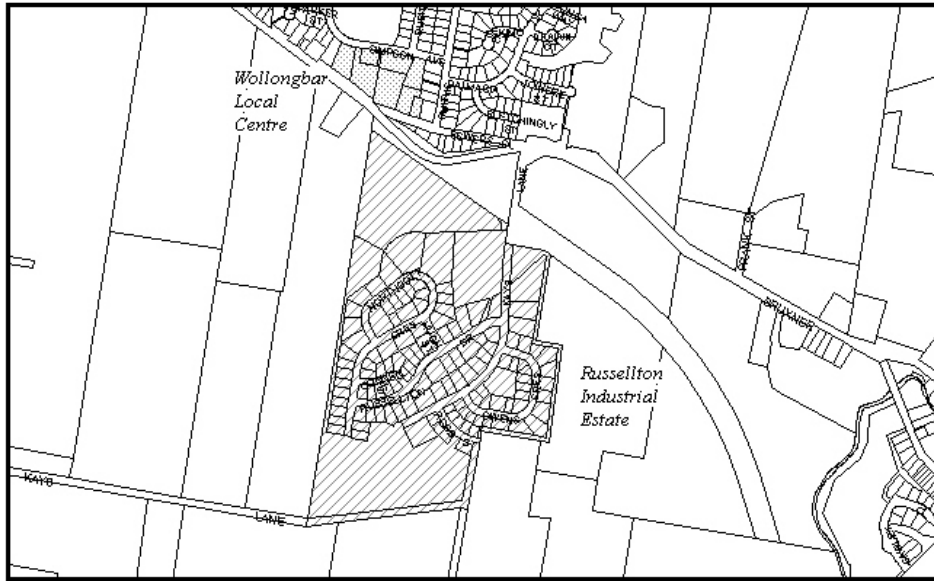
Population Growth – As with other areas of Ballina Shire, the plateau area has experienced strong population growth in the past and it is expected that this demand will continue into the future. The planning for population growth on the plateau has, to date, been undertaken on the basis of identified “target” resident populations of 5,000 for Alstonville and 4,500 for Wollongbar, with additional population being provided in what has been called the “third plateau village”. Council has recently resolved, however, to discontinue investigations relating to the 3rd Village. As such, alternative strategies relating to population growth will need to be developed.

Alstonville Bypass - The Main Street of Alstonville commercial area currently is subjected to the traffic travelling on the Bruxner Highway. It is estimated that approximately 45% of the existing traffic travelling along Main Street, Alstonville is “through traffic” (that is, traffic which does not have Alstonville or Wollongbar as either an origin or destination)⁴. Construction of the Bypass will therefore significantly reduce traffic levels experienced along this road and consequently improve the pedestrian amenity of the locality. IBECON Pty Ltd has concluded that, on the assumption that tourist related traffic is diverted to Alstonville, the net affect could be slightly beneficial to retailing in Alstonville.

Having regard to the above, the Retail Strategy for the Plateau Villages is as follows:

- Maintain the respective hierarchical retail functions of Wollongbar and Alstonville. That is, Alstonville is to provide retail, commercial, community and residential services at a district scale, whilst Wollongbar shall provide such activities to service the local community;
- Retain the existing boundaries of the commercial zones within Alstonville and Wollongbar. Any proposals to further disaggregate or spread the commercial areas should be discouraged. With regard to Alstonville, retail activities should be consolidated within a core area of the village centre;
- Maintain and enhance the existing character of the Alstonville Village Centre, through the consistent application and implementation of DCP No.6;
- Maintain the integrity of the Russellton Industrial Estate by consistently applying clause 27 of the Ballina Local Environmental Plan 1987 (Retailing of bulky goods within zone 4); and
- Continued lobbying of relevant State Agencies for early implementation of the Alstonville Bypass.

⁴ As calculated by the Environmental Impact Statement for the Alstonville Bypass, 1998



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**Ballina Retail Strategy 2003
MAP 6 - PLATEAU VILLAGES
RETAIL & COMMERCIAL AREAS**

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2.2.6 Wardell

Council has recently adopted the Wardell Strategic and Land Use Plan. This Plan explores a range of issues associated with the future planning and development of the area. As part of this work, the following issues were identified which are relevant to the development of retail facilities in the village:

- The community values the existing “village atmosphere” experienced in Wardell and wishes for this to be retained into the future. Any expansion of retail and commercial activity would need to complement and enhance the existing character;
- Wardell is in close proximity to a number of areas of high environmental value. Parts of the locality are also the subject of hazards such as flooding and bushfire risk. As such, while it appears that there is some opportunity for expansion of the settlement, there is little scope for the population to grow to a level which would sustain a substantial increase in retail activity in the area;
- The character of the commercial area of Wardell is unique within the Shire, being close to the Richmond River and containing a number of heritage buildings. This character, combined with the proximity of the settlement to the Pacific Highway may provide opportunities for low key retailing targeted at the tourist / day tripper market;
- One of the major attractions for the village of Wardell is the Richmond River. Boating, fishing and watersports attract local tourism and potentially provide a boost to the village economy; and
- The Pacific Highway is a significant issue for the town. Safe access for residents and visitors to Wardell and East Wardell requires consideration, as well as addressing speed zones within the limits of Wardell itself.

The community also identified that the provision of local opportunities for employment and business is important for many reasons. These include providing opportunity for young people in the village, attracting new investment and supporting a vibrant and diverse community. The following actions were therefore identified in the Strategic Plan with respect to improving the potential for business development and therefore local employment opportunities.

Action 1A. Entrance Statement to Wardell Landscaping plan for Richmond Street

This action contains two elements. Firstly, it aims to provide a welcoming entrance statement to Wardell to enhance recognition of the village. Secondly, it recognizes that work is required to design and implement landscaping improvements for Richmond Street to provide the central business area with an identity and make it more attractive for both business and residents.

Action 1B. Improve Access to the Richmond River

This action aims to ensure pedestrian and boating access to the Richmond River is safe and integrated into an overall plan which enhances the community’s utilisation of the River.

Action 1C Increase awareness of Wardell as a day trip tourism location

Wardell has many natural attractions such as access to the Richmond River, proximity to Patch's Beach and opportunities for ecotourism. European and Aboriginal cultural heritage may also be catalysts for attracting tourism to Wardell. Wardell's location also facilitates linkages via the Richmond River to various locations such as Ballina and the Broadwater. This action identifies that these opportunities need to be taken advantage of in the development of Tourism Plans and Strategies for the area.

Action 1D Investigate options for review of access to Wardell and East Wardell off Pacific Highway, including actions to reduce speed through town limits.

This action has been identified by the business community as a very high priority as well as the subject of numerous community representations to the Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA). The review will be undertaken in partnership by Council's Traffic Committee and the RTA, and will consider the accident history and any available traffic speed records in assessing options to ensure ongoing safety.

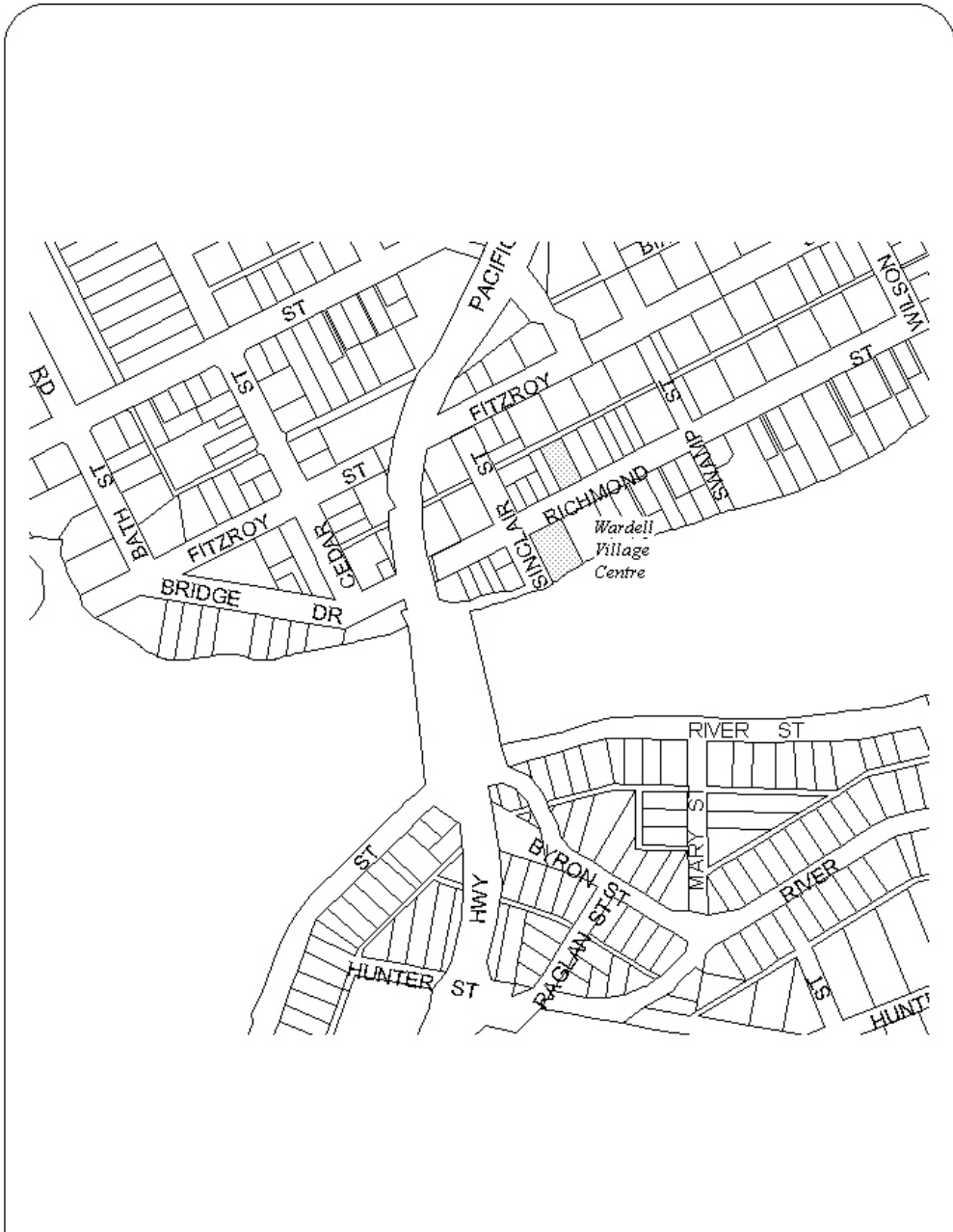
2.2.7 Cumbalum

Both the IBECON report and Council's Urban Land Release Strategy have identified that there will be continued strong population growth in the Ballina area into the future. Council's planning strategies have identified that in the longer term, this growth will be accommodated predominately in the future growth area known as Cumbalum to the north of Ballina. It is currently anticipated that the future population of this area will be in the order of 13500. As such, it is important that adequate supplies of suitably zoned land are provided to service the anticipated future population of this area. As illustrated on Map 8, the Cumbalum area has broadly been divided into two expansion areas – being the southern and northern development sectors.

- The southern development sector is the area extending between the existing rural residential development known as Cumbalum Heights Estate and Sandy Flat Road. It is anticipated that the total population of this area will be in the order of 5500. Development consent has been granted for the development of the southern most portion of the site, referred to as Ballina Heights Estate and civil construction has commenced.

Within the Ballina Heights development, a 1.7 hectare site has been set aside for the purpose of a Village Centre. It is envisaged that this area will accommodate retail space having a gross leasable area in the order of 4200m². The site for the commercial centre has been chosen to service the population of the whole southern sector of the Cumbalum development (ie approximately 5500 people). In this regard, the location adjacent to the northern extremity of the Ballina Heights development will allow its utilisation by future residents of the remaining portion of the southern sector. Its ready access to the main arterial road within the southern sector, known as Cumbalum Way, will encourage the use of the proposed commercial area in this way; and

The northern development sector extends north from Sandy Flat Road to Ross Lane. Council's adopted Urban Land Release Strategy indicates that the rezoning of this land will not be commenced until the medium to long term. It is envisaged that broad structure planning for this work will commence as soon as Council's resources allow.



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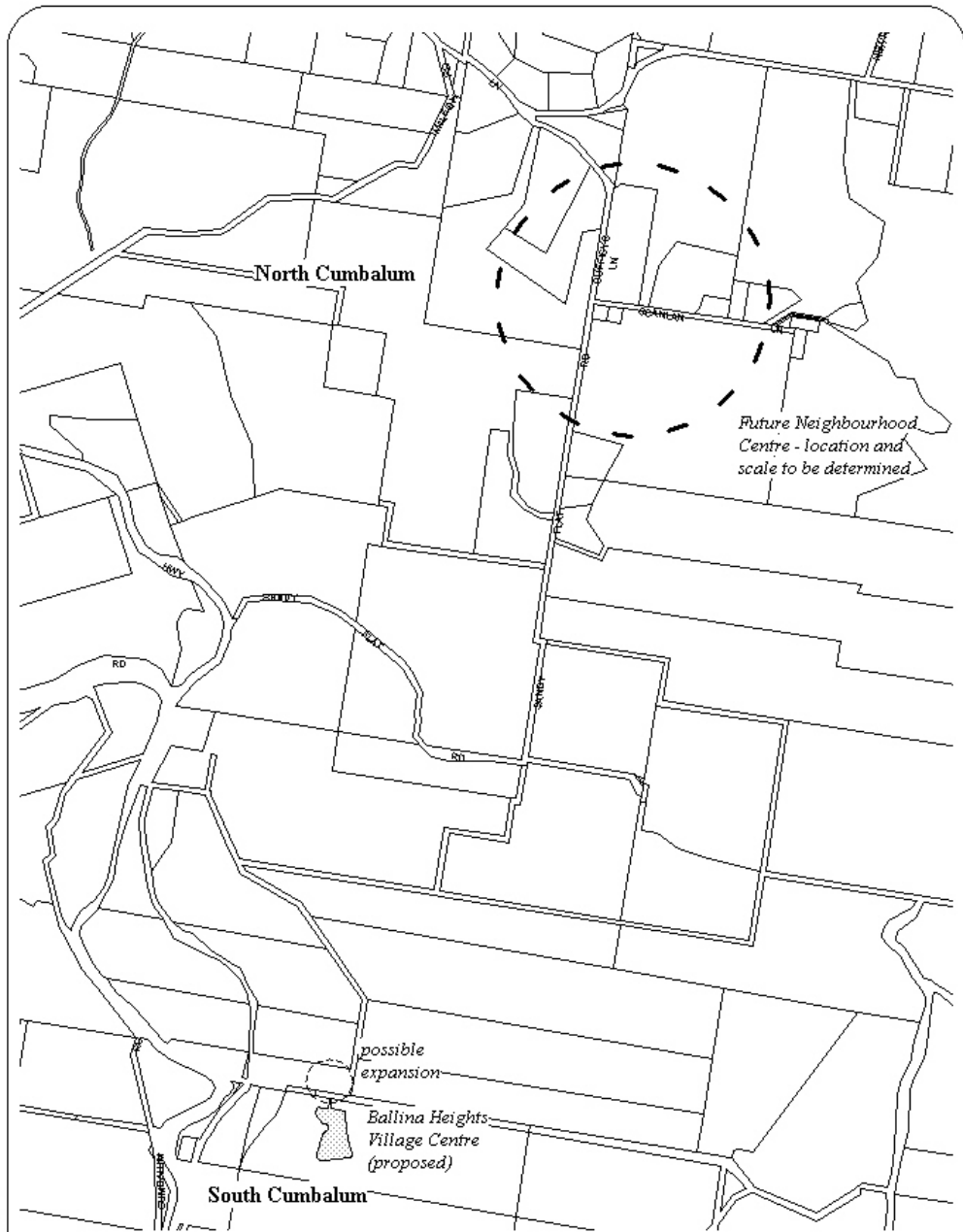


Ballina Retail Strategy 2003
MAP 7 - WARDELL
RETAIL & COMMERCIAL AREAS

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Ballina Retail Strategy 2003
MAP 8 - CUMBALUM
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2.3 Other Issues

2.3.1 Bulky Goods Retailing

In recent times, Council has received several requests and inquiries concerning potential sites for bulky goods retailing in Ballina Shire. As such, the Retail Strategy seeks to establish a framework for the provision of larger scale bulky goods retailing facilities in the Shire.

Bulky goods retailing is currently permitted within the zoned commercial areas of the Shire and, under certain circumstances, the industrial zones. The subdivision pattern within the existing commercial centres has resulted in the fragmentation of the ownership of properties within this area. As such, whilst sufficient commercially zoned land is available, it is difficult for prospective bulky goods retailers to economically obtain parcels of sufficient size to accommodate bulky goods retailing facilities and associated parking and loading facilities. This has resulted in increasing pressure on the industrial areas of the Shire to provide retailing of this kind.

Sections 5.60 – 5.65 of the Ballina Retail Strategy Background Report provide a discussion regarding the various definitions and characteristics of bulky goods retailing. Section 6.24 documents preferred locational criteria for bulky goods retailing in Ballina Shire. In summary, this work identifies that:

1. Bulk retail locations need to be situated on or close to major roads with good access for large vehicles;
2. It is preferable that bulky goods retailing be located in quasi retail locations as distinct from industrial zones, where residents usually do not need to have easy access;
3. In non-metropolitan areas, it is preferable to minimise the extent to which bulk retail is spread throughout the region. This is particularly intended to prevent alienation of areas which might be otherwise more appropriately zoned for other use...and also to ensure that locations requiring large vehicle movements are not spread throughout areas which are inappropriate such as residential zones.

In recognition of the above, and in an attempt to maintain the focus of the industrial zones for their intended purpose, it is proposed that the following two areas focussed on Bulky Goods retailing facilities will be established;

- **Southern Cross Industrial Estate** – This Estate is the main industrial estate in Ballina and contains a wide variety of industrial activities. In recent years, however, there has been an increasing number of non-industrial activities which have established throughout the Estate. In an attempt to mitigate against this trend, it is considered appropriate to establish a bulky-goods retailing precinct as part of the future expansion of the Estate. The location of this facility is indicatively illustrated on Map 3. It should be noted, however, that detailed site selection processes will need to occur prior to the exact site being finalised.

-
- **Clark Street Industrial Area** – This area is an older industrial estate which contains a range of light industrial activities. A plan illustrating the location of the Estate is contained on Map 3. It also contains a number of bulky goods retailing outlets such as hardware stores, gardening shops and second hand furniture shops. Whilst this area is zoned for industrial purposes, its viability for industrial activities in the longer term is considered doubtful. In particular, it is considered that the proximity of the site to arterial roads and the Ballina Fair/ Coles/Kmart retail area will place added pressures for its conversion into quasi-retail activities. The possible redevelopment of the Tinkerbell Caravan Park for retail purposes, would also impact in this regard.

It is therefore proposed that planning controls for this area will be adjusted to provide for the longer term redevelopment of this area into a discrete bulky-goods retailing precinct.

3 Retail Strategy Background Report

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