

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

THE PRECINCT

**BAKERY HILL AND
BRIDGE MALL PRECINCT**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bakery Hill Urban Renewal Plan will provide a long-term strategic vision for the Precinct and will include recommendations to guide future land use planning, enhance public spaces and improve connectivity commercial vitality and safety through Precinct.

The first stage of the community engagement process commenced in November 2018 where Council engaged with the community through face-to-face forums and online engagement tools. Council received a variety of feedback through this engagement including formal written submissions, online surveys and a series of online mapping tool activities completed. Phase 2 of the community engagement process, which included the establishment of a shopfront within the Bridge Mall to provide information and to gather further feedback, and the formation of a community reference group, commenced in March 2019.

Council has consolidated the feedback from both phases of the community engagement and have identified four key themes that will guide the preparation of the Bakery Hill and Bridge Mall Urban Renewal Plan.

The key themes are as follows:

A STRONG APPETITE FOR CHANGE WITHIN THE PRECINCT

There is a strong desire for change and improvement within the precinct including the need for more eating and dining areas to encourage foot traffic and to create a night time economy, which in turn will create increased levels of safety throughout the Precinct. Furthermore, public and active transport options need to be addressed within the Precinct which will provide opportunity for higher density residential development within the precinct.

A STRONGER CONNECTION AND CELEBRATION TO THE PRECINCT'S HISTORY AND STORY

Re-establishing a relationship with the Yarrowee River and linking this to Ballarat's Indigenous Heritage along with the restoration and maintenance of Ballarat's celebrated historical buildings and architecture within the Precinct.

THE BRIDGE MALL NEEDS TO BE A RETURN TO ITS ROLE AS A KEY DESTINATION WITHIN BALLARAT'S CBD

A more diverse retail mix is needed to offer a point of difference to enclosed shopping centres (Stockland, Central Square) and surrounding big box retailers. This would allow opportunity for more independent shops for Ballarat's creative community. The Precinct also presents an opportunity to facilitate inclusive public open space and greening.

FACILITATING MOVEMENT WITHIN THE BRIDGE MALL ITSELF

The potential of opening the Bridge Mall to slow moving one or two-way car traffic, creating passive surveillance and incidental exposure to Bridge Mall's shops.

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1. THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

This Chapter provides a summary and report of the two phases of community engagement which occurred between November and December 2018 and March and June 2019 for the Bakery Hill and Bridge Mall Urban Renewal project.

The City of Ballarat (Council) acknowledges the importance of this precinct in the broader context of the municipality and is committed to working collaboratively with the community to understand how to best transform the precinct into a thriving, inclusive and sustainable centre and urban heart for Ballarat. This project will ensure that the Bakery Hill and Bridge Mall Precinct can become a great place for people to live, work, visit and learn locally.

The first phase of engagement sought to clarify and understand the aspirations of the many users of the

precinct to achieve greater vibrancy, activity, jobs and investment in the heart of the city. The second phase allowed Council to respond to the information heard through the initial consultation phase through the 'response to your feedback' document and gave the community an opportunity to further discuss any additional gaps that had been overlooked during phase 1 of consultation.

1.1 BAKERY HILL AND BRIDGE MALL STUDY AREA

The study area comprises of approximately 70ha of land and incorporates mix of residential and commercial uses.

Figure 1 below provides the boundaries of the precinct.



Figure 1: Precinct boundary

2. HOW WE ENGAGED

Community engagement is critical in understanding both the physical and social landscape of the Precinct, how people use the different spaces, in addition to understanding what the community imagine for the future of their city.

To achieve the best outcome for the community, Council committed to reaching and collaborating with as many diverse groups as possible and to receive detailed and comprehensive feedback about the project. Feedback received from the community engagement process has been used to inform the draft urban renewal plan, in addition to the ongoing implementation actions which will arise from the plan.

Through both phases of community engagement, the community was alerted to the consultation process through a series of outlets, including the distribution of flyers, social media, radio announcements and a general media release to various media outlets.

2.1 PHASE 1 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Phase 1 of the community consultation was held between November and December 2018. Council engaged Capire Consulting Group to help tailor an engagement program to inform the initial introduction of the project as well as to guide the early stages of information gathering. One of the main objectives for the first stage of consultation was to hear from a variety of voices that represent the broader community. To achieve this, Council encouraged community participation through online engagement (including surveys and online mapping tools), various pop-up sessions, workshops and other opportunities for face to face conversations.

Through the engagement process, the community and stakeholders were asked:

- What do you love about the Precinct?
- What do you want to retain within the Precinct?
- What do imagine for the future of the Precinct?

Face-to-face engagement

Face-to-face engagement allowed Council to hear from a variety of voices that represent the Community. This was achieved by offering different ways for community to get involved and provide their feedback on the project.

There were over 200 face-to-face conversations held through the following activities:

- Community pop-ups, 1 at the Spring Fest in November 2018 and 2 at the Bridge Mall Farmer's Market in November 2018 and April 2019.
- Two three hour-long community visioning workshops
- One student workshop
- Five Advisory Committee meetings, including:
 - The Bridge Mall Business Association
 - The Heritage Management Sub-Committee
 - The Koorie Engagement and Action Group
 - The Intercultural Advisory Committee
 - The Disability Advisory Committee
- Approximately 80 trader doorknocks
- One Enquiry by Design Workshop
- A government authorities stakeholder meeting

Online Engagement

Online engagement was conducted through City of Ballarat's 'MySay' webpage where community members could complete an online survey or utilise the mapping tool where they could directly identify specific areas in the Bakery Hill and Bridge Mall Precinct and leave comments on how the area was currently operating from a user's perspective.

The purpose of the survey was to capture the vision for the Bakery Hill and Bridge Mall Precinct. The survey asked 9 open ended questions and 3 questions asking for details relating to the respondent's personal circumstances to gain a better understanding of the demographic profile of users and interested community members/business owners.

The online mapping tool provided an alternative way to gain feedback from the community. This involved the display of an electronic map of the Precinct on the Internet and participants were asked to leave suggestions for the Precinct adding a comment at a location on the map. The comments were displayed publicly on the map to allow community members to view other ideas and suggestions for the future.

Over 150 people, mostly residents, completed the online survey and five participants made 20 mapping tool entries. The project page had 629 visits by 380 participants.

2.2 PHASE 2 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Phase 2 of community consultation commenced on March 2019 and concluded in June 2019. As part of phase 2, Council released a 'Response to your Feedback' document which identified the key themes arising from phase 1 and sought further feedback from the community to address any gaps as well as making further suggestions and contributions to the project. Council also opened a pop-up shop in the Bridge Mall (consultation at 16 Bridge) and established a Community Working Group.

Consultation @ 16 Bridge

City of Ballarat conducted face-to-face consultation called 'Consultation @ 16 Bridge' (located at 16 Bridge Mall) throughout the duration of the Phase 2 consultation. The 'pop-up-shop' was open 3 days a week between March and May, providing an opportunity for community to discuss the project face to face with project officers.

As part of the phase 2 consultation, the Consultation @ 16 Bridge provided an alternative way to engage directly with the community.

Response to feedback survey

A second survey was developed for Phase 2 of the consultation and was made publically available to the community. The survey called for a request to comment on the "Response to Feedback" document which was distributed during the Phase 2 of the consultation in response to the feedback that was heard throughout Phase 1. The survey asked 11 open ended questions and 3 questions asking for details relating to the respondent's personal circumstances to gain a better understanding of the demographic profile. Council received a further 15 completed surveys by the end of the Phase 2 consultation.

Community Working Group

Phase 2 of the community consultation saw the formation of the Community Working Group (CWG), brought together as a cross section of the community in order to achieve a collaborative process for the project. Community were invited to apply for the CWG in February 2019 and the first meeting was convened in March. Candidates were assessed based on demographic, profession and their background within the community.

Once finalised, 17 community members were selected to take part in the CWG. The CWG then met on 4 occasions between March and June 2019 where participants collaborated in small groups to workshop ideas, have in-depth discussion and express their vision for the future of the Bakery Hill and Bridge Mall Precinct.

As a result of the Community Working Group process, members worked collaboratively and participated in activities designed to target more specific issues and opportunities for the project. Over the 3 months, 4 different workshop formats were used to ensure that Working Group members had ample opportunity analyse, understand and offer creative suggestions that could contribute towards the urban renewal plan.



3. WHAT WE HEARD

From the feedback received during both phases of the consultation, Council noted 4 key emerging themes which have been summarised below.

There is strong appetite for change within the precinct

- There is a strong desire for change and improvement within the precinct – business as usual is not an option.
- Bridge Mall needs more eating and dining areas to encourage foot traffic and to create a night time economy.
- Opportunity for higher density residential development within the precinct to create vibrancy and movement, while facilitating convenience living and alternative housing options.
- The perception of safety is a challenge within Bridge Mall and surrounding areas and streets and needs to be addressed for the precinct to become inviting and inclusive.
- Public transport and active transport need to be facilitated and offer logical routes throughout the Bridge Mall and wider Bakery Hill precinct
- Encourage the current large players within the Precinct, including Coles, Safeway and Norwich Plaza to play a stronger role in activating the precinct through enhanced landscaping and more active building frontages

There should be a stronger connection and celebration to the Precinct's history and story

- Re-establish a relationship with the Yarrowee River which runs underneath Bridge Mall and highlights links to Ballarat's Indigenous Heritage and the precinct's historical use as a food bowl for the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Warrung peoples.
- Historical buildings and architecture are the most cherished and celebrated element of the precinct. Historical buildings should be retained and enhanced through restorations and maintenance to avoid deterioration into the future.
- Ballarat's Indigenous and Colonial History needs a stronger physical presence within the precinct

The Bridge Mall needs a new purpose/ there needs to be a return to its role as a key destination within Ballarat's CBD

- There needs to be a more diverse and curated retail mix that offers a point of difference to nearby enclosed shopping centres (Stockland, Central Square) and surrounding big box retailers.
- There is opportunity for small independent shops and spaces to showcase Ballarat's artisans, artists and makers.
- Public open space is a key concern within the precinct. Bridge Mall and its surrounding streets present an opportunity to facilitate public open space and greening.

Facilitating more movement within the Bridge Mall itself

- The potentiality of opening the Bridge Mall to slow moving one or two-way car traffic, creating passive surveillance and incidental exposure to Bridge Mall's shops.



4. NEXT STEPS

The summary of initial consultation feedback outlined above provides an important synopsis of what are the current values of the Bakery Hill and Bridge Mall Precinct and importantly, the key aspirations for the future of the Precinct. Submissions have been reviewed by Council and are being used to inform the development of a

draft vision and objectives which will be utilised during the drafting and development of the Bakery Hill and Bridge Mall Urban Renewal Plan. Once drafted, the urban renewal plan will be subject to further community consultation and review in August 2019.





