

13/5/2022

Planning Panels Victoria
Attention: Beaufort Bypass Inquiry and Advisory Committee
Planning.panels@delwp.vic.gov.au

To whom it may concern

PYRENEES SHIRE COUNCIL SUBMISSION INTO THE BEAUFORT BYPASS ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS STATEMENT

Pyrenees Shire Council (Council) makes this submission in relation to the proposed Beaufort Bypass project and the accompanying Environmental Effects Statement that has been prepared and exhibited.

Council wishes to reiterate its in-principle support for the proposed Beaufort bypass, as per its resolution of October 2009, and continues to be supportive of the exhibited investigation area as being the route of least impact.

Council also wishes to acknowledge that the contents of this submission is not an exhaustive representation of the Pyrenees community's concerns and opinions. There will be views that Council has not been able to represent due to a constrained ability to engage with all stakeholders and community members, however encourages that individuals and community organisations make additional submissions to ensure the range of views are represented.

Background

During the establishment of the Beaufort Bypass EES, Pyrenees Shire Council negotiated inclusion of the following text into the documentation that forms the EES:

***“During pre-construction stages, RRV in partnership with Council, will develop transitional initiatives to reposition Beaufort from a highway town to a bypassed town to assist its economic and social recovery post Bypass.*”**



Transitional initiatives identified for Beaufort should generally be aligned with the Pyrenees Draft Economic Development Strategy (2019) and would include, but not limited to:

- Attracting new and diverse businesses and employment opportunities to Beaufort***
- Planning and design projects to be implemented in support of new and existing business and employment opportunities and population growth within the township***
- Identifying the critical population mass required to enhance the social and economic sustainability of Beaufort***
- Branding and promotion including appropriate signage***
- Public realm and amenity improvements***
- Identify infrastructure improvements that support tourism, investment and the liveability of Beaufort, and***
- Identifying potential resourcing and capacity building and funding options to support Council with implementation."***

Accordingly, Chapter 7 – Community Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement, contains the following:

In response to these concerns, prior to project construction the Department of Transport, in partnership with Council, will develop transitional initiatives to reposition Beaufort from a highway town to a bypassed town. This includes attracting new and diverse businesses and employment opportunities to Beaufort, and identifying infrastructure improvements that support tourism, investment, and the liveability of Beaufort.

Further, Chapter 12 – Social Effects provides that:

During pre-construction stages, RRV in partnership with Council will identify potential resourcing, capacity building and funding options to support Council with implementation of transitional initiatives to reposition Beaufort from a highway town to a bypassed town to assist its economic and social recovery post bypass.

Transitional initiatives identified for Beaufort will be aligned with the Pyrenees Economic Development Strategy – February 2020 and include, but not limited to:

- *attracting new and diverse businesses and employment opportunities to Beaufort*
- *planning and design projects to be implemented in support of new and existing business and employment opportunities and population growth within the township*
- *identifying the critical population mass required to enhance the social and economic sustainability of Beaufort*
- *branding and promotion including appropriate signage*
- *public realm and amenity improvements*



- *identify infrastructure improvements that support tourism, investment and the liveability of Beaufort.*

Strategic Considerations

Council is appreciative of the proponent's commitment to working together to progress the strategic initiatives identified in chapters 7, 12 and 13, and now seeks clarity around what form the partnership might take in terms of personnel and financial contributions.

Council also seeks to identify and confirm the specific strategic work that is to be undertaken in partnership, as well as a schedule of timing. This confirmation of commitment and timing will enable Council to be satisfied that the required strategic planning activities will be completed in a timeframe that allows for implementation of any actions and maximum effect to be had, prior to construction commencing.

Council agrees with the methodology identified at parts 13.4.1 and 13.4.2 of Chapter 13 - Land use and Economics, however seeks clarification as to who will be responsible for undertaking the identified tasks.

Council wishes to highlight that many of the Council developed strategies and plans referenced in the EES documentation, have since expired or have not been prepared to a standard that adequately informs the impact assessment and proposed mitigations identified in the preparation of the Beaufort Bypass Environmental Effects Statement. These documents include:

- *Pyrenees Shire Council Growth Strategy 2017 – 2021*
- *Pyrenees Shire Council Tourism Strategy 2016-2019*
- *Pyrenees Shire Council Plan (various years referenced and since expired)*
- *Pyrenees Shire Council Towards 10,000 – Economic Development Strategy*
- *Pyrenees Futures (Strategic Planning Project – Concept only)*

In addition (and somewhat complimentary) to the commitment provided by the proponent in Chapters 7, 12 and 13, Council seeks support from the proponent to have these strategies reviewed and amended to ensure that they adequately represent and plan for the impacts, both positive and negative, that can will result from the introduction of a Public Acquisition Overlay and the ultimate construction of the proposed bypass.

Economic Considerations

Council notes that the assumptions used to inform the economic report and forecasted impacts, have included an analysis of traffic movements (among other values). It is understood that the traffic data was collected on a 12-hour period on a Thursday.



Council's observations of visitation to and through Beaufort occurs at a significantly higher rate from Friday through to Sunday. Further, many of the retail traders do not open their businesses early during the week as a result of the reduced visitation.

It is on this basis that Council remains unclear as to the accuracy of the forecasted economic loss to the Beaufort Economy, particularly regarding highway dependent retail.

Council encourages the proponent, or its contractor, to have regard for this when preparing the Business Disruption Plan and identifying other transitional initiatives, as identified in Table 10.1 of the *Regional Economy Existing Conditions Impact Assessment – Final Report May 2021*, mitigations.

Land Use Planning Considerations

In addition to the strategic work identified in chapters 7, 12 and 13, Council also requests that the proponent supports an update to the Pyrenees Planning Scheme to reflect the introduction of a POA (if supported). Such amendments are required to define Beaufort's role as a highway service centre and to support residential growth that responds to a new 'hard' edge of town being established by the bypass.

- 02.02 "To ensure a vibrant and sustainable municipality, that provides for its people a healthy lifestyle and a supportive community, in the context of a rural environment."
- 02.03-1 Beaufort's influence (particularly as a retail centre) is tempered by its proximity to the nearby regional centre of Ballarat. However, its function as a highway service centre is expected to become more important now that the Western Highway bypasses Ballarat.

Beaufort's role as the Shire's principal town for urban development should be supported by:

- Retaining Beaufort's character and sense of place.
- Retaining the rural character and the amenity of areas adjacent to the Western Highway on the eastern approach to the township.
- Accommodating further community facilities within the existing commercial precinct.
- 16.01-1L Direct residential development to areas within townships that have the potential to accommodate infill development and where water and sewerage services are provided.

Discourage the expansion of the low-lying area of Beaufort north of the railway due to drainage issues and the isolation of the area from community facilities.



- 17.02-1L Develop Beaufort’s role as a highway service centre by encouraging highway service facilities to locate within Beaufort itself, along the Western Highway to the west of the central area.

Conclusion

Council acknowledges that much of the strategic work identified in chapters 7, 12 and 13 is largely a function that a well-resourced council should be undertaking as part of their ongoing commitment to strategic growth and economic development. However, Council does not have the current resourcing or financial capacity to undertake this work, and seeks assurance that the proponent will work with Pyrenees Shire Council, both through the provision of expertise (human) and financial resources, to undertake the strategic tasks identified.

The specific strategies and projects that Council require significant assistance in delivering, include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Development of a Beaufort Framework Plan (including stakeholder engagement and strategic analysis)
- Beaufort Streetscape Activation plan and delivery (including stakeholder engagement, detailed design, and partial delivery)
- Planning Scheme Amendment (including the development of all explanatory material, community engagement and exhibition)
- Development of a Beaufort Growth Strategy to identify and expediate opportunities to facilitate and encourage growth and activation
- Development of a Tourism strategy which identifies opportunities to enhance Beaufort’s profile as a destination town
- Development of an Economic Adaptation Strategy (incorporating elements of the Business Disruption Plan) to assist Beaufort’s commercial and industrial sectors in identifying new opportunities and transitioning to new markets

To further mitigate economic and social impacts on the Beaufort community, Council seeks a commitment by the proponent to provide the following:

- Well-designed off ramps that utilise width, line of sight, lighting, and signage to encourage township visitation by highway users
- An improvement to the amenity of the Beaufort-Lexton Road (VicRoads managed road) which will form as the primary entrance into the township post bypass
- Ensure the provision of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure along Main Lead Road to encourage continued recreational use of Camp Hill Forest
- A financial contribution into place making initiatives that will encourage visitation by highway users, including an off-leash dog park, public toilet facilities, electric vehicle



recharging stations, recreational vehicle facilities and passive recreation infrastructure

Thank you for taking the time to consider the contents of this submission. Council looks forward to presenting elements at the upcoming hearing.

To discuss the contents of this submission further, please contact Katie Gleisner, Manager Planning and Development, on 03 5349 1100 or katie.gleisner@pyrenees.vic.gov.au.

Kind Regards



Jim Nolan
Chief Executive Officer

