

7<sup>th</sup> February 2022  
Ref No: 4176-1002

Planners North  
By email: [steve@plannersnorth.com.au](mailto:steve@plannersnorth.com.au)

**Attention: Steve Connelly**

Dear Steve

**Preliminary Traffic and Parking Assessment - Proposed Recreation Facility (indoor) at 34 Racecourse Rd, Ballina**

Planners North has submitted a Planning Proposal to Ballina Shire Council on behalf of Mr John Reynolds. The proposal is to establish a gymnastics focused Recreation Facility (indoor) at 34 Racecourse Road, Ballina (Lot 1 DP 812651). This property is zoned RU2 Rural Landscape. This zoning does not permit the intended use, so the proposal is to amend the LEP to allow the proposed use with development consent. Council has requested a preliminary traffic and parking assessment to support the proposal.

**Site Description**

The site is located towards the eastern end of Racecourse Road, 300 m before the road terminates at a dead end. Racecourse Road is 750 m in length in total, providing access to a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential land uses, including a veterinary hospital, the Ballina Jockey Club and Racecourse, equestrian and racing stables, self-storage units, building materials store, Telstra depot, civil earthworks company, a café, and approximately ten residential dwellings.

The Racecourse Road reserve comprises an 11 m wide sealed flexible pavement within a 23 m wide reserve, comfortably allowing for two-way traffic and parallel parking on both sides of the road. There is upright kerb and gutter on both sides for most of its length, with no kerb or gutter on the east/southern side of the road for the last 150 m where the road adjoins the canal. The verges are turfed with no formalised footpath. Stormwater drainage is managed by a pit and pipe network. The whole length is within a 50 km/h speed zone, as indicated by the speed signs at the start of the road.

Racecourse Road commences in the west at a T-intersection with Southern Cross Drive within the Southern Cross Industrial Estate. The intersection includes basic left and right turn treatments from out of the minor road (Racecourse Road), a short channelised right turn lane from Southern Cross Drive into Racecourse Road, and a short acceleration lane for traffic turning out of Racecourse Road onto Southern Cross Drive. The intersection is constructed entirely with a rigid concrete pavement. Linemarking and signage are in good condition and appear to be in accordance with the relevant standards, as is the geometry and lighting.



The intersection of Southern Cross Drive and Racecourse Road is approximately 260 m north of the intersection of Southern Cross Drive and Tamarind Drive. The latter comprises basic left and right turn treatments out of the minor road (Southern Cross Drive), and full length channelised left and right turn lanes from Tamarind Drive into Southern Cross Drive. Linemarking, signage, lighting and geometry all appear suitable. Tamarind Drive was once the Pacific Highway until the Ballina Bypass was completed in 2012. As such, Tamarind Drive is suitable for high and heavy traffic volumes, and links the Ballina Industrial Estate to all surrounding areas.

## Site Access

The property at 34 Racecourse Road is accessed via Racecourse Road, Southern Cross Drive and Tamarind Drive. The road infrastructure associated with all three of these roads is in good condition and suitable for taking heavy vehicles and relatively high volumes of traffic.

No impediments relating to accessing the site have been identified. Access into the property is currently easily achieved by vehicles towing horse floats. There is ample width available in the Racecourse Road carriageway to allow for vehicles to enter and exit the site without obstructing other traffic. It has been concluded that access to the site and into the property will not pose any issues to the operation of the proposed development.

## Pedestrians and Cyclists

There is a concrete shared path along the eastern side of Southern Cross Drive with kerb ramps and a refuge island to facilitate crossing Racecourse Road. This path links the area to the Cumbalum residential development to the northwest, to the Ballina CBD to the south, and further to East Ballina and Lennox Head in the east and northeast. Although there are no formal foot- or shared paths along Racecourse Road, the wide carriageway is considered highly suitable for cycle traffic. Similarly, the wide turfed verges are considered suitable for foot traffic from the shared path to the subject site, being a distance of 450 m. Given the low traffic volumes on Racecourse Road and the 50 km/h speed zone, use of the road carriageway for pedestrians is also considered to be acceptable.

## Public Transport

Ballina is serviced by Ballina Buslines, which offers three services within the Ballina CBD, being 661, 668 and 669. All three services stop within the Ballina CBD at bus stops 61/89 and/or 92 on Kerr Street and Bangalow Road respectively. These stops are within a 20 minutes' walk of the subject site along established shared path routes, with the exception of Racecourse Road. The route is flat and deemed to be a safe and convenient facility for cyclists and pedestrians. Although there is no formal path along Racecourse Road, the wide carriageway and verges are considered suitable for providing safe, comfortable access for pedestrians (and cyclists) from the end of the shared path network to the site.

The frequency of the services varies, but buses generally arrive every 30 to 60 minutes on weekdays and around 2 hours on Saturdays. In addition to the CBD bus stops, there is another stop (no. 92) on North Creek Road within 10 minutes' walk of the site. Buses stop here ten times throughout the day on weekdays and six times on Saturday. The frequency of bus services stopping close to the site and the associated 10- or 20-minute walk from the bus stop to the site along flat terrain is considered to be sufficiently convenient to allow staff and patrons of the proposed development to choose public transport in lieu of driving to the site.



## Parking Provisions

The *Guide to Traffic Generating Development* (2002 RTA), herein referred to as the RTA Guide, categorises a gymnasium under 'recreational facilities', and defines it as, 'a building, room, or number of rooms, used for organised or instructed indoor exercise, typically including aerobics, weigh / circuit training, etc. Ancillary facilities such as health care services, spa / sauna and a small apparel sales area are commonly provided within gymnasiums. Although this does not precisely match the intended usage, it is considered that the proposed usage will have similar traffic generating properties.

The RTA Guide recommends that a gymnasium located in a 'metropolitan sub-regional area' should supply 4.5 car parking spaces per 100 m<sup>2</sup> of gross floor area (GFA) as a minimum, or desirably 7.5 spaces per 100 m<sup>2</sup> GFA.

Chapter 2 of the Ballina Shire Development Control Plan (DCP) 2012, *General and Environmental Consideration* also provides parking rates for 'recreational facilities (indoor)', as follows:

- |                  |                                       |                     |                      |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| ■ Bowling alley: | 3 spaces per lane                     | ■ Dance studio:     | 1 space per 3 pupils |
| ■ Squash courts: | 3 spaces per court                    | ■ Other activities: | On merit             |
| ■ Gymnasium:     | 4.5 spaces per 100 m <sup>2</sup> GFA |                     |                      |

It is understood that the proposed usage will be for junior gymnastics with an absolute maximum of 150 pupils. The proponent suggests that the operation will align more closely to a dance studio than a traditional gym. Applying the above rates for a dance studio with 150 pupils gives a recommended supply of 50 parking spaces.

The proposed development includes approximately 1,290 m<sup>2</sup> GFA, thus, using the rate of 4.5 spaces per 100 m<sup>2</sup> GFA for a 'gymnasium', the minimum parking provisions recommended by the RTA Guide and the Ballina Shire DCP is 59 parking bays.


The proposal includes provision of 60 parking bays, which is greater than the minimum recommended by the RTA Guide and the Ballina Shire DCP. The site is in close proximity to a shared path network providing a safe, convenient and flat route from the nearby Ferngrove and River Oaks residential estates, the Ballina CBD, East and West Ballina, and (with a small incline) Ballina Heights and Cumbalum. Similarly, it is within an easy walking distance of bus stops serviced frequently on weekdays and Saturdays. As such, the proposed parking provisions are considered reasonable and appropriate for the proposed use and site location.

Parking provisions shall be in accordance with AS 2890.1 'Parking facilities: Off-street car parking', including parking bay and aisle dimensions. It is recommended that provisions be made for secure bike parking, including end-of-trip facilities such as changerooms, lockers and showers.

## Impact on the Existing Road Network

The proposed development on site allows for a 5.0 m wide ROW (right of way) along the northern boundary at the rear of the property and returning south for a distance of approximately 10 m along the eastern boundary, thus allowing continued access from the stables located on neighbouring properties to the Ballina Jockey Club which shares a boundary with the subject site.

The RTA Guide suggests that gymnasiums in sub-regional areas generate 45 vehicular daily trips per 100 m<sup>2</sup> of gross floor area (GFA) and an evening peak of 9 trips per 100 m<sup>2</sup> GFA per hour occurring around 6:00 pm on weekdays. The proposed development includes approximately 1,290 m<sup>2</sup> GFA, and hence is expected to generate in the order of 585 vehicular trips per day with an afternoon peak around 117 trips per hour. Note that a 'trip' is defined in the RTA Guide as a one-way vehicular movement from one point to another, excluding the return journey. Therefore a vehicle entering and



leaving the site counts as two trips, and the estimate of 585 vehicular trips generated by the development would be 293 vehicles accessing the site each day.

The western portion of Racecourse Road is within the Southern Cross Industrial estate. As such, Racecourse Road has been designed and constructed to cope with industrial traffic. Its 11 m wide carriageway is slightly less than the 13 m carriageway width specified for industrial areas in Chapter D1 of the Northern Rivers Local Government Development Design Specification (NRLG), 'Geometric Road Design'. However, it is significantly wider than the 7-9 m specified for a 'local street' or the 6 m specified for rural residential roads. Additionally, the 23 m road reserve is wider than the 20 m specified by NRLG for industrial areas and the 15-17 m specified for local streets. According to NRLG, a road with carriageway width of 11 m (such as a collector street) allowing parking within the road carriageway on both sides of the road, can carry up to 3,000 vehicles per day. Although existing traffic volumes are unknown, they are estimated to be under 2,000 vehicles per day, with the exception of days on which major racing events are held at the Ballina Jockey Club. Thus, an additional 585 vehicular trips per day is not expected to affect the efficiency or safety of the existing traffic network in the vicinity of the site.

Further, it is anticipated that the expected peak vehicular movements (6 pm) will occur after the peak of the existing traffic in the area (5 pm). Therefore the peak traffic from the development is not expected to noticeably increase the existing peak.

## Conclusions

- The site can be easily accessed from Tamarind Drive (the old Pacific Highway) via Southern Cross Drive. The road network providing access to the site is in good condition and design to cope with high and heavy traffic volumes. No impediments relating to accessing the site have been identified.
- Pedestrians and cyclists can safely and conveniently access the site via the existing shared path network which connects such areas as West, East and central Ballina, Ballina Heights (Cumbalum) and the Southern Cross Industrial Estate. Although the route from these areas to the site includes a stretch of approximately 450 m along Racecourse Road without a formalised path, the existing wide carriageway and wide, turfed verges are deemed to be acceptable for use by pedestrians and cyclists wishing to access the proposed development.
- The existing public transport services operating in Ballina provide convenient services to allow staff and patrons of the facility to travel to the site via bus, with only a short, flat walk from the nearest bus stops to the proposed development.
- It is recommended that walking and cycling to the site be encouraged to minimise demand for parking on site. This can be achieved by using noticeboards and company websites to display shared path network maps, bus timetables and maps, and by providing suitable end-of-trip facilities such as secure bicycle parking, changerooms, lockers and showers.
- Parking provisions are considered to be adequate for the proposed development and the site location in accordance with the RTA Guide and Ballina Shire's DCP 2012.
- The proposed indoor recreational facility at 34 Racecourse Road may generate 585 vehicular trips per day. However, it is not expected to negatively impact on the safety or efficiency of the existing road network due to the existing width of the Racecourse Road carriageway and reserve. It is anticipated that the peak hourly traffic generated by the development will not coincide with the peak hourly traffic for the surrounding network.

Yours sincerely

**GeoLINK**



**Michelle Erwin**

Senior Civil Engineer