

# SPENCER STREET & BLAIR STREET PRECINCT

## ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES REPORT

PREPARED FOR  
**CITY OF BUNBURY**  
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Urbis has been commissioned by the City of Bunbury to engage with landowners and other stakeholders in the Spencer/Blair Street Precinct to identify potential opportunities, constraints, and priorities for delivering additional housing within the Precinct. Engagement outcomes will inform the City's approach to planning for the Precinct.

The City's Local Housing Strategy identifies that additional housing is required within the City of Bunbury and the Spencer/Blair Street Precinct is ideally located for the expansion of residential land uses. The Precinct is presently characterised by commercial land uses and very limited residential development. To date, there has been limited pursuit of residential/mixed use development opportunities as facilitated by the Local Planning Scheme.

The project aims to help unlock this precinct for more housing development by understanding the issues, impediments and opportunities experienced by key stakeholders.

The key findings of the engagement are:

1. The present cost and demand for mixed use development is a barrier
2. The absence of an aligned and integrated vision is a barrier
3. Improvement of pedestrian networks and environment will be important
4. There is a need to improve roads and infrastructure
5. There is a desire to retain current businesses
6. More open spaces/parks are sought
7. Parking improvements were identified as a need
8. There is potential for a demonstration project

To address these issues, it is recommended that the City consider the following actions:

1. Undertaking precinct structure planning for the area in partnership with key government agencies to provide a holistic framework to deliver public realm and built form controls which encourages mixed use development.
2. Undertake a property and zoning analysis to understand areas appropriate to retain as commercial and those unlikely to be redeveloped in the shorter term and ensure future zonings of the area can facilitate the desired level of activity for mixed use development.
3. Review parking utilisation within the Precinct including the public car parking facilities to understand the value in their retention and present operation compared to potential value as open space or pilot project site.
4. Undertake a traffic analysis to understand current and future movement network capacity and the key upgrades that may be required to improve existing movement and facilitate require future capacity.
5. Investigate the preparation of a Precinct Implementation Plan to map out the required infrastructure required and it's delivery to achieve the necessary supporting public realm to encourage greater provision of mixed use development.
6. Seek partnerships where possible to deliver infrastructure and pilot projects to demonstrate viability and appropriateness of mixed-use development within the Precinct.

The above actions are not ordered in any priority as they need to be considered in the context of time and cost investment by the City and the external assistance and funding the City may receive. This will inform the final priorities for the City in undertaking any of the above recommended actions.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This project is part of an ongoing process of engagement by the City with landowners in the Spencer Street and Blair Street Precinct (the Precinct). The aim is to understand the opportunities and constraints to delivering more housing within the Precinct, and to use this information to guide planning decisions including updates to the planning framework and public works for example.

## 1.1 THE PRECINCT

This Precinct was identified for further analysis as part of the City's Local Housing Strategy given its proximity to the City of Bunbury's Central Business District (CBD) and existing residential land uses. The boundaries of the Precinct are based on historical patterns of development and redevelopment.

The area was historically developed as a residential area with the local road layout reflective of this. As light industrial and service commercial uses moved into the area over time older dwellings made way for more commercial buildings. This has resulted in some land use conflicts, mismatch of built form and a road layout that is incompatible with commercial activity.

The properties fronting onto Spencer Street and Strickland Street are zoned Mixed Use under the City's Local Planning Scheme No. 8 (LPS8), which permits residential and mixed-use development (i.e., non-residential on the ground floor and residential above). However, there has been limited redevelopment within the mixed-use zone to date and what in-fill residential development there is, has been developed to a lower density than permitted.

The properties zoned Service Commercial under LPS8 do not have a consistent built form and several land uses such as Single Residential are non-conforming uses.

## 1.2 PROJECT AIMS

With the above context in mind, the project has the following aims:

- To educate and inform landowners of the existing development potential within the Mixed Use zone.
- To understand the landowners' perceived barriers to redevelopment of their sites within the Mixed Use zone.
- To understand the desire and suitability for the Mixed Use zone to be extended within the Precinct.
- To inform a vision for the future development of the area from which future decisions and planning framework derive.

The engagement exercises were designed around these aims with outcomes detailed within the relevant sections of this report.

## 2 ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

To achieve the project aims described at section 1.2, engagement activities were adopted with the following objectives:

- Fill gaps in the existing data and information collated by the City
- Understand the stakeholders: their interests, their desires/vision for the area and how this may align or conflict with the fulfillment of the City's Local Housing Strategy and local planning framework.
- Enhance stakeholder buy-in to the project
- Understand the relevant issues, challenges and opportunities impacting on the Precinct

These objectives were expanded upon in an Engagement Strategy prepared by Urbis which included stakeholder mapping, and an engagement methodology.

It is important to note that the Engagement Strategy was informed by previous engagement undertaken by the City of Bunbury with respect to residential land use and development within the Precinct. The outcomes of the original survey highlighted the need for further engagement with the landowners to take into account the following:

- How landowners want to see the whole precinct change and what they want for their own land?
- What specific land uses landowners want in which parts of the precinct?
- Perceived land use conflicts.
- Greater understanding of why landowners have not explored existing development opportunities within the Mixed-Use zone for higher density residential or mixed-use developments or if they have, what are the issues they have experienced.
- Clarify the appetite of landowners for residential or mixed-use development outcomes and consider if this is the right time for change to occur.

All of these factors informed the Engagement Strategy and the design of the exercises undertaken.

A copy of the Engagement Strategy is included at **Appendix A**.

# 3 STRUCTURE OF ENGAGEMENT

## 3.1 FOCUS GROUPS

### 3.1.1 Pre-reading

Landowners were invited to attend focus groups and once they had provided their RSVP, were provided pre-reading materials to provide greater context as to what the sessions would be covering.

The materials included:

- History of the area.
- Why the area is being investigated for more housing.
- A summary of the outcomes from the Stage 1 engagement undertaken by the City.
- What the current planning framework allows for.
- Examples of 'mixed use' development mainly in the South West region.
- Engagement themes that would be covered in the focus groups.

The invitation and pre-reading material sent to landowners is provided within **Appendix B**.

It should be noted that a number of non-landowner stakeholders were identified as having interest in the project and therefore were advised of the focus groups being held and the limited scope at present (being for landowners). Some of these stakeholders reached out and were interviewed as part of the chat groups/interviews.

### 3.1.2 Focus Group Sessions

An in-person focus group was attended by approximately 23 landowners along with City of Bunbury staff and observers from the Local State Member of Parliament office and the Hon. Mayor of Bunbury. The participants were seated in groups and participated in two individual exercises and four group exercises. The online focus group was attended by three landowner representatives, with the exercises carried out informally given the smaller group size.

Figure 1 Focus Group Session at Highway Hotel



As an introduction, Urbis provided context for the engagement being undertaken, background information about how the session was intended to run and an outline of some key issues to take into consideration when participating in the exercises. An outline of the content is as follows:



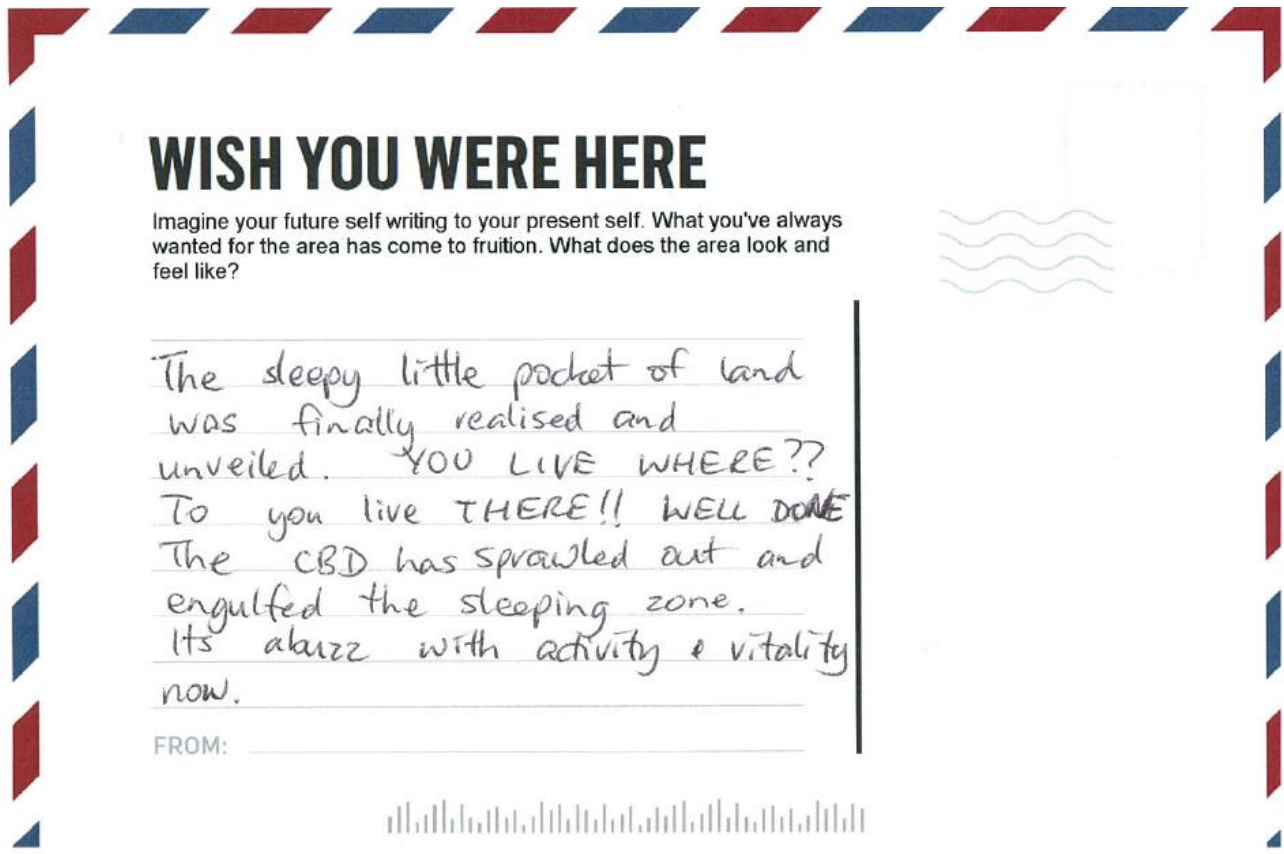
- Purpose of the session
- Ideal outcomes from the engagement
- Future pressures
- Survey results from stage 1
- Key responsibilities of the City of Bunbury
- History of the area (evolving over time)
- Existing zoning and planning context
- Example developments which are 'mixed use' or higher density residential
- Development feasibility

The exercises were designed to fulfill the consultation themes outlined within the City's brief but also to explore the themes raised from Stage 1 engagement (by the City), giving participants opportunity to expand on issues raised as part of that process.

As part of the first exercise, landowners were asked to rank (and add to) the reasons why the mixed-use development potential hadn't been taken up within the Precinct. The purpose of this exercise was to understand barriers to development and help to prioritise the same.

Landowners were then invited to write a postcard from the future to a friend or family member, assuming that the Precinct is (by then) the best it can be. The purpose of this exercise was to align participants behind the big picture, by helping them to define the picture itself. It helped to define a central 'vision' to frame further discussion and ideas, and against which potential outcomes could be assessed (refer section 5).

Figure 2 Example of visioning exercise response



These individual exercises were followed by several group activities across a variety of topics as outlined in the following table.

Table 1 Description of focus group exercises

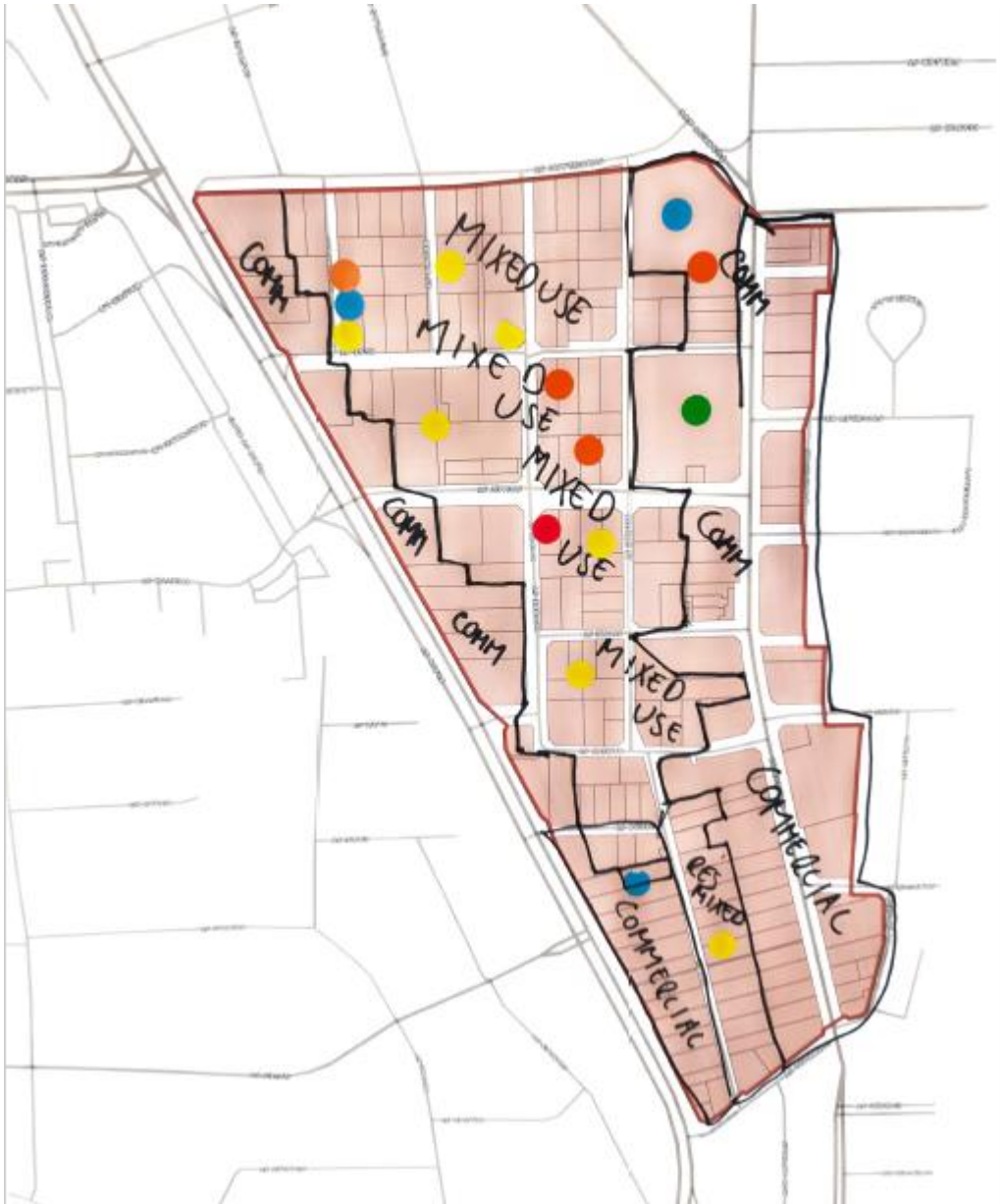
Topic	Issues	Method
Infrastructure	The infrastructure exercise covered issues including	Landowners were asked to rate several key issues to provide a

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Issues</b>	<b>Method</b>
	underground power, road widening and footpaths, public car parking, open space.	priority list to obtain a level of consensus.
Land use	The land use exercise sought to gauge the areas which may have more potential for mixed use and residential development, others which are functioning well for commercial activity and where other types of land uses may be appropriate (if at all).	Landowners were asked to place coloured dots which aligned to a specific issue on a plan of the Precinct. Landowners were also able to annotate the plans to provide rationale for their choices.
Movement network	The movement network exercise covered issues including pedestrian network, commercial vehicle access, road type, main road access and bike lanes/parking.	Landowners were asked to rate several key issues to provide a priority list to attempt to obtain a level of consensus.
Amenity	The amenity exercise sought to understand the areas of conflict and areas which would benefit the most from improvements (car parking, landscaping, footpaths, etc.).	Landowners were asked to place coloured dots which aligned to a specific issue on a plan of the precinct. Landowners were also able to annotate the plans to provide rationale for their choices.

The infrastructure and movement network activities were informed by the responses received from the Stage 1 engagement undertaken but were designed to provide a priority list for the City to inform the recommendations and key actions.

The land use and amenity exercises were interactive and required more discussion and collaboration between group members resulting in a series of annotated plans prepared by the groups. An example is provided overleaf from the land use exercise activity.

Figure 3 Example of Group Exercise maps (Land Use)



The Focus Group presentation is provided at **Appendix C**.

## 3.2 CHAT GROUPS

Several chat groups/meetings were held with landowners, a local real estate agent, a local architecture firm and several government agencies. Each chat group/meeting was structured to reflect the unique perspective and information that could be obtained to benefit the project.

The landowners interviewed were either:

- Unable to attend the focus group sessions;
- Attended and expressed a unique perspective to their groups; or
- Were not able to participate in the focus groups as fully as they would have liked.

The meeting with a local architect was undertaken based on their experience trying to progress a mixed-use development within the Precinct previously to understand why it didn't proceed, what they see as barriers to greater up-take of redevelopment opportunities and potential solutions to see the area provide for more mixed-use development.

The meeting with the local property manager was undertaken to understand the difficulties some landowners within the Service Commercial zone are experiencing in leasing their properties, why they obtained and are keeping their properties, any issues/problems within the area, where they see the most opportunity for change and how they see the area changing over time.

The meetings with government agencies were specific to each agency's function and purpose and the unique perspective that they can provide from servicing the precinct, experiences in delivery of land/development in other precincts and opportunities for assistance/collaboration to deliver more housing within the City of Bunbury.

As some of the questions and discussion points for the chat group came from the outcomes of the focus groups, it was an opportunity to explore themes from the focus groups in further detail.

# 4 SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT FEEDBACK

## 4.1 SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUPS OUTCOMES

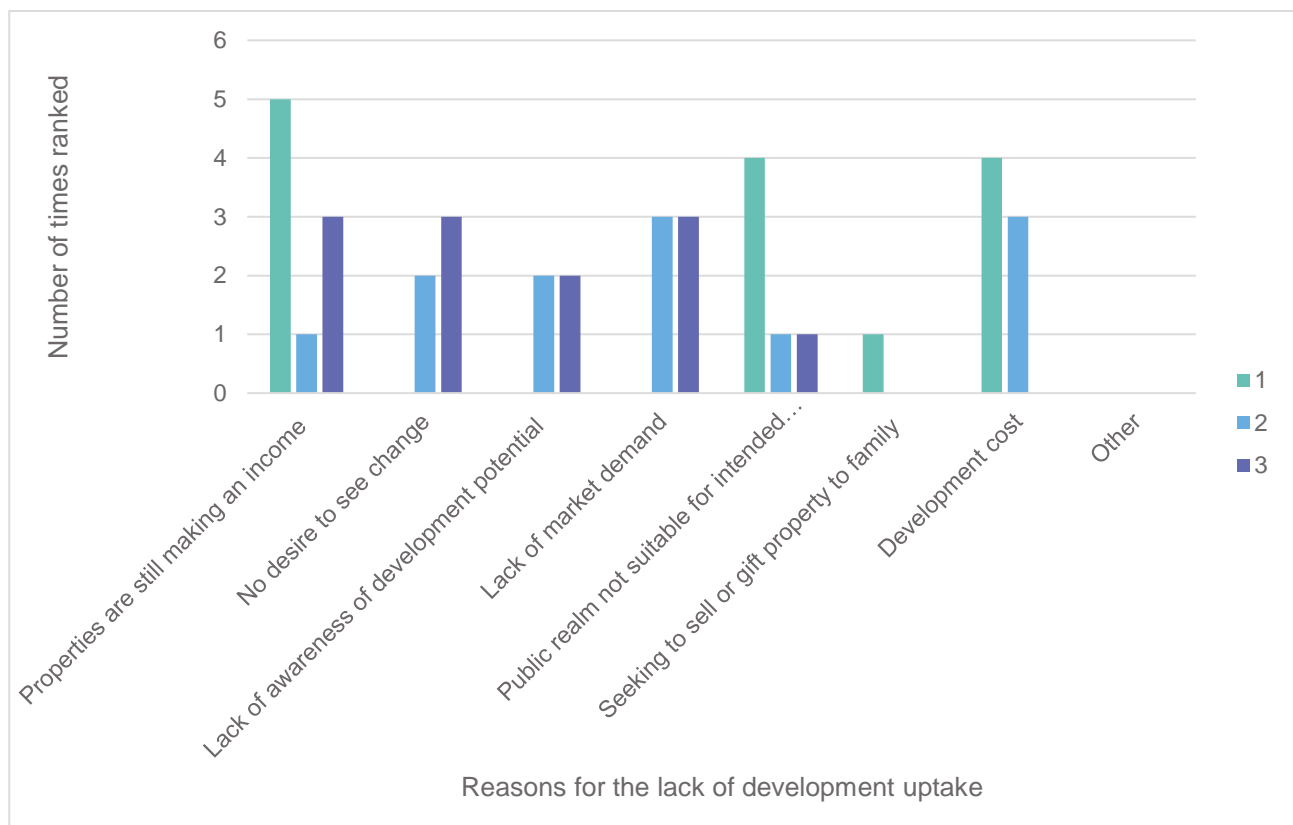
### 4.1.1 Redevelopment Uptake

In the first exercise, landowners were asked what they considered the biggest reason for the lack of development uptake within the existing Mixed Use area, ideally ranking the reasons from highest to lowest. The options provided were as follows:

- Properties still making an income
- No desire to see change
- Lack of awareness of development potential
- Lack of market demand
- Public realm not suitable for intended development
- Seeking to sell or gift property to family
- Development cost
- Other

The most popular reason was 'properties still making income' and 'public realm not suitable for intended development', closely followed were 'lack of market demand', 'lack of awareness of development potential' and 'development cost'. Noting that not all landowners completed the exercise with all issues ranked, the below table has listed the top three most commonly 'ranked' reasons as this was able to be extrapolated consistently from the responses provided.

Figure 4 Exercise 1 Responses



Other reasons which were listed by participants included the following:

- Red tape.
- Restrictions by Council on land use (i.e., café drive through refused).
- Lack of 'Permitted' land uses in Local Planning Scheme.
- Crime.
- Availability of cheap land outside of Bunbury.

- Development in the Precinct would compete with city centre.
- Limited capacity to develop/ lack of funding.
- Cost of relocation and continued of operation of business.

The online group highlighted the following barriers to higher density residential/mixed use development:

- The area is already working well as a commercial/business precinct.
- Construction materials and labour shortages.
- The city centre is a more appropriate location.
- Apartment developments are supported but this is heavily influenced by supply and demand factors – there is no guarantee of a return in investment and therefore likely not presently commercially viable. There may be demand for more housing, especially more affordable one-bedroom product, but this may not be economical to provide.
- The area is not necessarily ideal for residential in terms of attractiveness of the location.

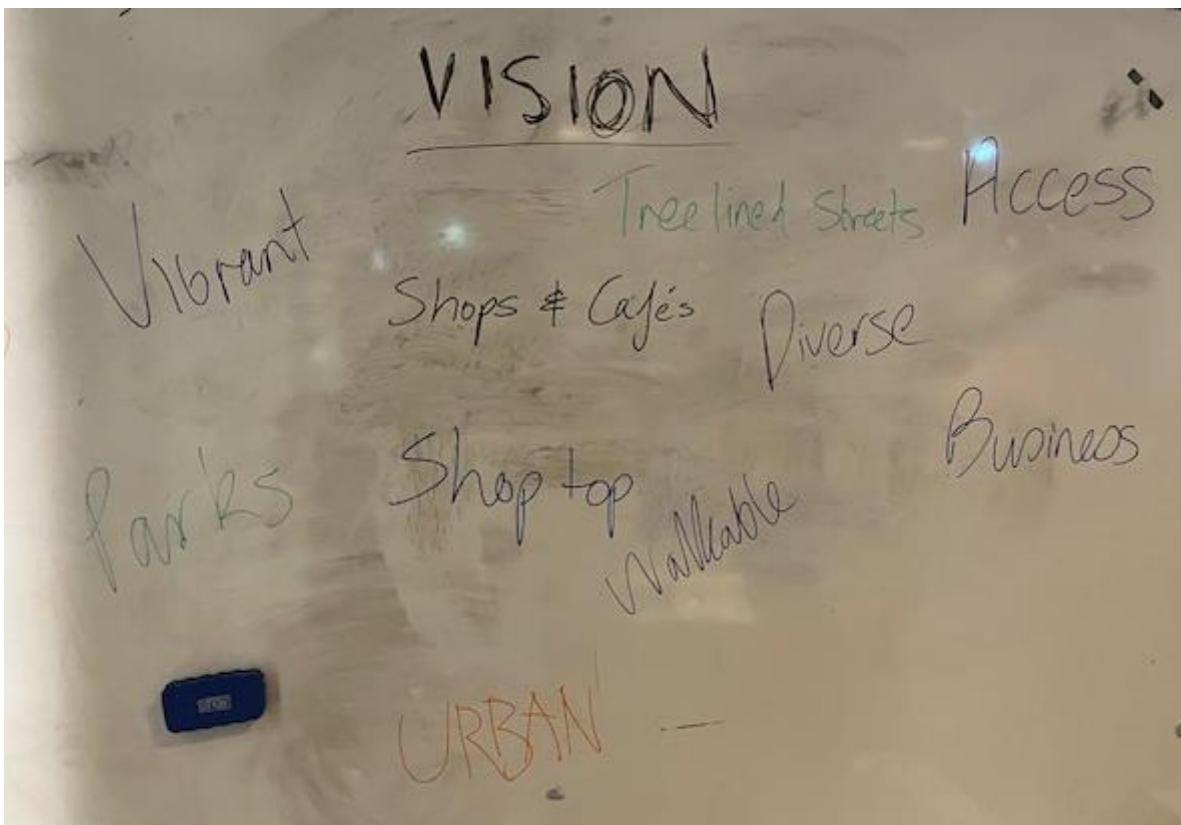
#### 4.1.2 Vision for the Future

The key themes which emerged from this exercise can be summarised as:

- **Built form** – shop-top housing (but not too high), European style of living, local businesses co-existing and mixing with residential, quality housing.
- **Land use** – vibrant/diverse, smaller businesses, shops/cafes, entertainment venues, places to meet friends/family, small supermarkets/grocers, an extension of the CBD, busy and bustling centre, large businesses on Blair Street retained.
- **Access and public realm** – walkable, tree lined, low-speed traffic, links into the CBD, accessibility for aged persons, wider roads, public transport, quality open spaces, parks used by residents and local workers, street lighting, parking.
- **Innovation** – i.e., investment into the area, sustainable transport (e-scooters and e-bikes), greater provision of public transport.

One participant sought no change and wishes to retain the area as it is now.

Figure 5 Key Themes emerging from the in-person focus group



The key themes which emerged from the on-line focus group session are as follows:

- Liveable surroundings are important
- Bunbury is growing and it's important to plan for future lifestyles
- Medium density living is becoming more popular, people are living in smaller homes and able to get around more efficiently
- The culture and spirit of Bunbury is thriving
- The area should still have a professional "spirit" which in turn encourages demand for residential with the occasional cafe
- There is good open space and slower traffic

Many of the landowners saw the logic behind this area transitioning to a mixed-use precinct over time given the proximity of the CBD as well as the increased need for housing and housing diversity within Bunbury. Many landowners described the future of the Precinct as being a thriving mixed-use precinct with businesses which are already in the Precinct, and new businesses with residential above. Many also described an attractive and walkable public realm experience and existing businesses being catered for.

There were some landowners against substantive change to the Precinct with many noting the existing positive attributes of the area, but overall conceded that there is desire to see improvement.

Overall, there was agreement that what the area could use is:

**“... a little bit of love”**

### **4.1.3 Infrastructure**

Landowners were asked to rank potential infrastructure improvements to catalyse mixed use/high density residential development from most to least important as a group. The issues listed were as follows:

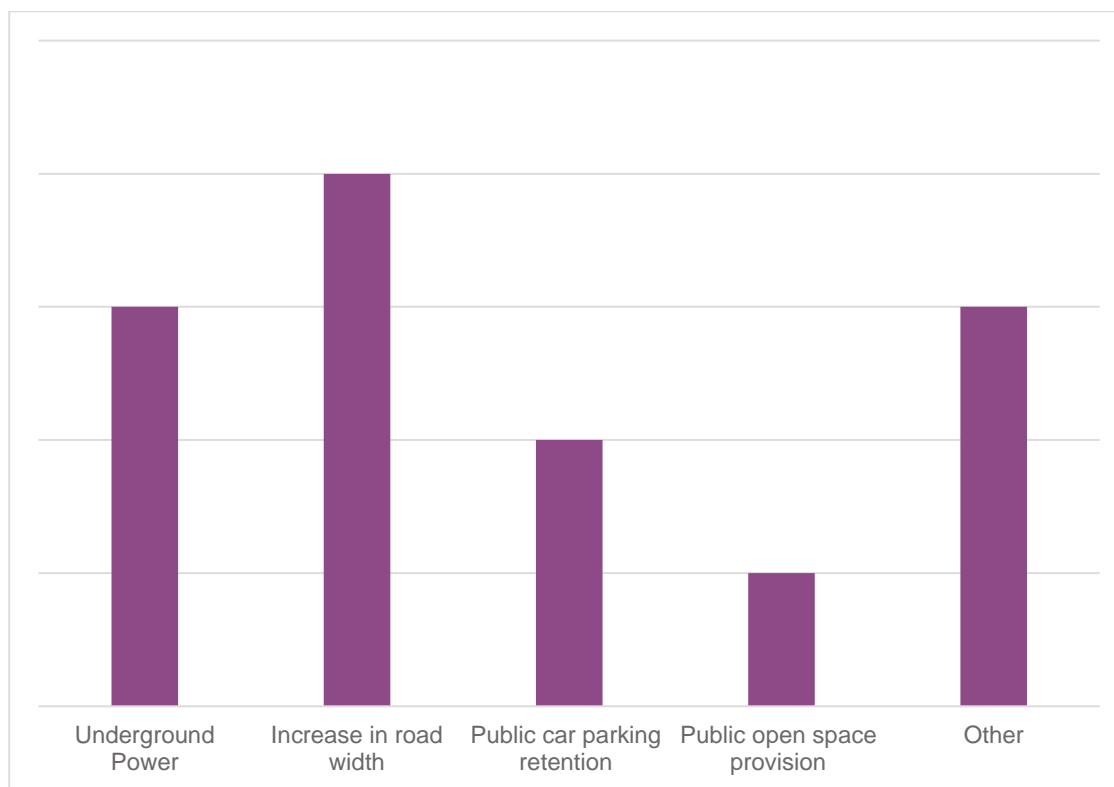
- Underground power
- Increase in road widths
- Public car parking retention
- Public open space provision
- Other

The increase in road widths (namely for the ability to provide more footpaths) was identified as the priority and was raised several times in the focus group exercises and discussion. This also extended to discussion around the provision of better-quality pedestrian amenity through street trees.

Landowners acknowledged that good mixed-use areas are ones which are highly walkable, where people can easily get around outside through active transport and where there are connections between the areas of activity as well as to and from car parking areas.

We note that public open space provision was ranked lowest but was identified by the group as important in the visioning exercise.

Figure 6 Exercise 3 Outcomes Infrastructure



The 'other' potential infrastructure improvements raised by the group included:

- Cycle paths
- Internet access
- Street trees
- Drainage
- Landscaping
- Accessibility

The online focus group session noted the following as being key issues within the Precinct:

- Bunbury is built as a car city and therefore there needs to be appropriate number of car parking spaces
- There is a need to provide good street lighting to ensure that the area is safe

#### 4.1.4 Land use

Whilst there was no consensus in each group or within the online session, but general observations included:

- There was support for open space to be provided within the area. Public open space should be small pocket park in style and ideally centrally located.
- There was a lot of support for greater up-take of residential development within the Precinct, especially in the southern portion of the area where there are existing residential properties.
- A mix of land uses (especially in the northern areas) seemed sensible to participants but ultimately this will be determined by the market.
- Residential can make the area feel a "calmer" and provide a greater level of day and night activity
- Existing commercial businesses were valued and should be retained – especially along Blair Street
- The existing presence of medical land uses and businesses along Spencer Street was seen as a major draw card and worthy of retention.
- Need to manage conflict between uses noting that commercial belongs in the area and new residential needs to respect this. Other areas have previously been more commercial with car yards and the like but changed over time to include more residential as demand has increased (i.e., Victoria Park).



Figure 7 Land Use Exercise Findings

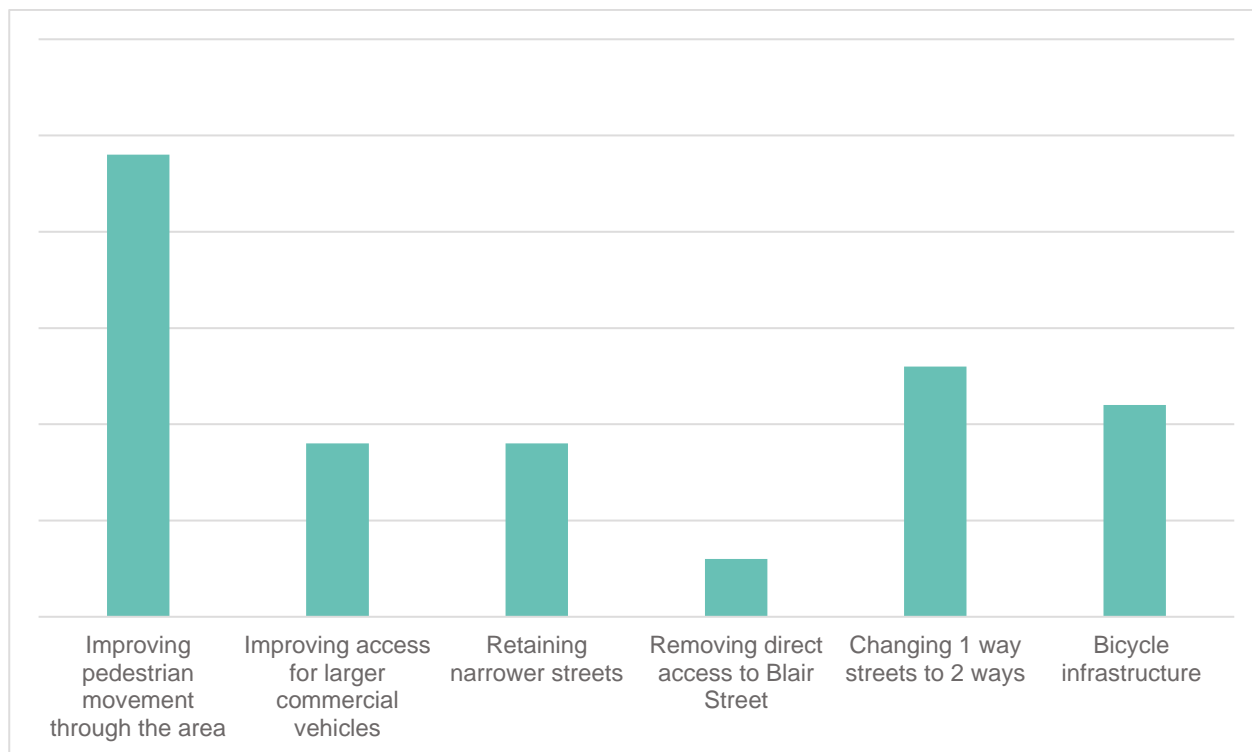
# LAND USE



## 4.1.5 Movement Network

The highest priority for participants was improving the pedestrian movement through the area. They also noted that access should be retained to Blair Street and expressed a preference for wider streets to promote a pedestrian environment (rather than to provide for more traffic).

Figure 8 Exercise 5 outcomes



The online focus group made the following observations and comments:

- Walking is difficult in some areas with the need to cross the road a lot to get through the Precinct - the Precinct would greatly benefit from more footpaths.
- Traffic lights/pedestrian crossings will assist people to cross busier roads more safely. However, people can be waiting at the Spencer Street / Forrest Ave / Beach Road lights for a long time.
- Desire for traffic calming in some streets.

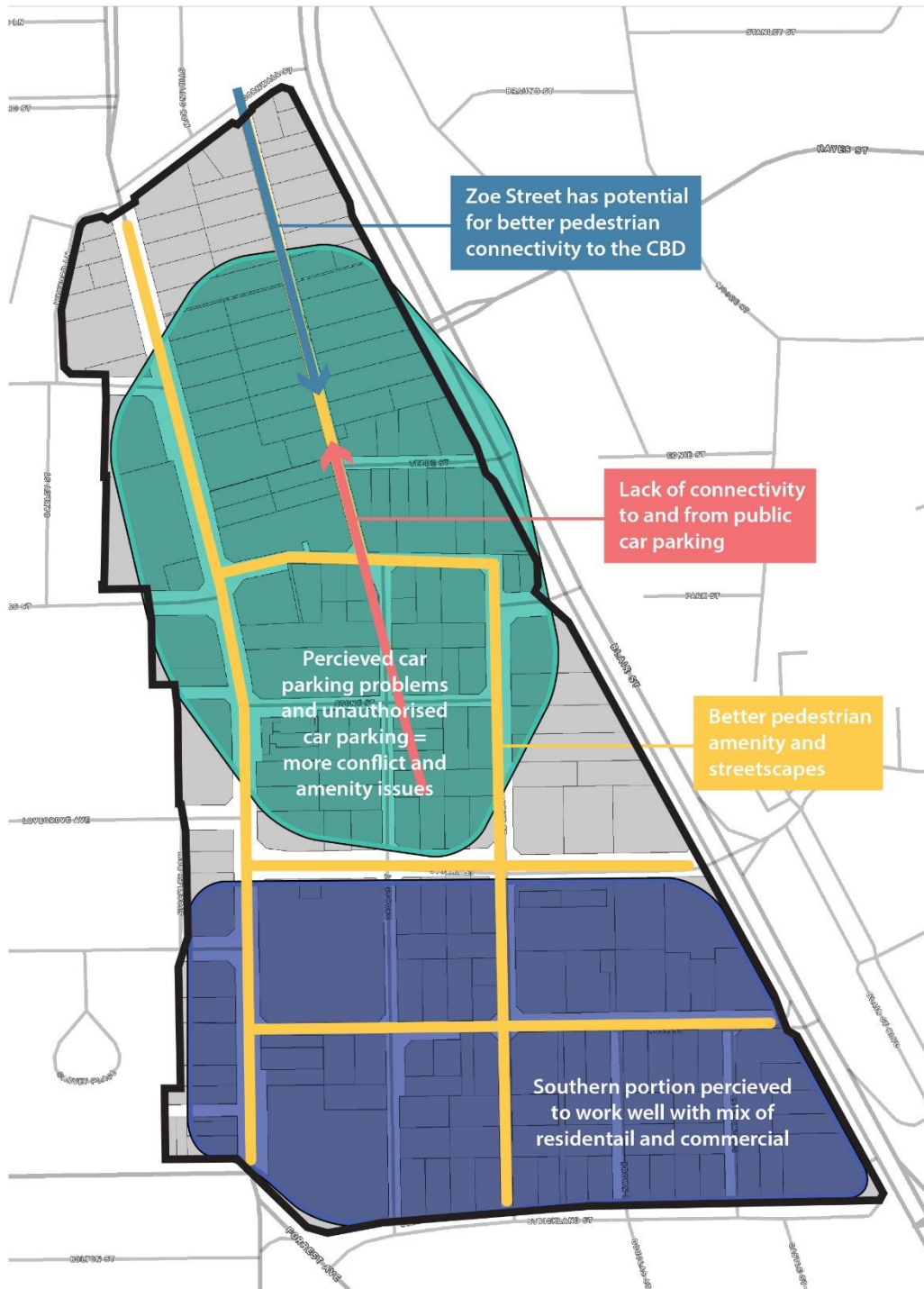
## 4.1.6 Amenity

General observations from the group included:

- The southern portion of the Precinct works well even with a mixture of residential and commercial land use.
- There is a perception of a lack of car parking and car parking problems within the Precinct (not enough car parking within the area to support businesses).
- More residential may assist in reducing demand for car parking during the day.
- Most amenity concerns/conflicts occur more centrally in the narrower streets within the Precinct.
- There is a lack of connectivity to public car parking provided via footpaths and this contributes to people parking illegally within the area.
- Paths of travel need to be accessible and direct for all persons and ideally provided both sides of the road.
- There is a balance between building something commercially viable and having enough car parking – support from the City helps in the form of providing public car parking and allowing for reduced car parking on site.
- Zoe Street has the potential to create connection into the CBD with improved public realm
- Footpaths need to be supported by a pedestrian-friendly environment (shade trees, for example)

Figure 9 Amenity Exercise Findings

# AMENITY



## 4.2 SUMMARY OF CHAT GROUP OUTCOMES

Further to the findings from the focus groups, a couple of key themes emerged from the chat groups as outlined below.

### 4.2.1 Market Influence

Many of the participants believe that the cost of development is a key reason as to why the existing Mixed Use zoned land hasn't been developed to a greater level. The cost of purchasing a single or semi-detached dwellings further out of the CBD compared to the price point that an apartment would need to sell for to cover the development costs within the area is perceived to be unviable presently and the area will not become more attractive for apartment development until this cost difference narrows.

The Department of Communities has advised that they presently do not have interest in acquiring land within the Precinct as they have assets nearby which can be retrofitted to better suit present needs at much lower cost. They advised that they are prioritising acquisition of assets outside of the CBD with easy access to services, and in a built form which prevents conflict between residents and provides access to a small parcel of open space. Therefore, the most ideal format they have found is a medium density model with limited communal spaces and access to a small courtyard. Apartment developments are only seen as being somewhat viable for aged persons with a two-bedroom product more appropriate – however many of the aged residents have always lived in a more detached style of housing and therefore aren't as attracted to apartment living compared to a medium density style of housing.

When discussing the present market conditions, some landowners referenced that construction costs were currently very high and that many existing properties are making income without considerable investment being required. It was also expressed that there is a perception that many properties are owned outright and by persons with no immediate plans to redevelop. Therefore, when land becomes less available, the cost of construction compared to the price of return is more favourable and there is greater uptake of apartments elsewhere within the central Bunbury region, there will be likely more demand for more apartments within the Precinct.

It was raised that there may be demand for temporary accommodation, workers accommodation and build-to-rent and these forms of residential development may work but there may be low availability of suitable land within the area. The South West Development Commission believed that the cost of development for new developments is likely much higher compared to the costs for retrofitting existing facilities (either elsewhere or within the Precinct) for worker accommodation, making new development less feasible within the Precinct.

### 4.2.2 Existing Business Community

Several respondents are existing business owners within the Precinct. Most considered that existing business in the Precinct are well-located to take advantage of the proximity to the CBD, affordable property prices and high exposure (especially along Spencer Street and Blair Street). The lack of availability of alternate locations and/or costs to relocate was considered a major reason why many businesses are seeking to stay in the Precinct. Some of the landowners acknowledged that over the long term, this area seemed suitable for mixed use development, but a blanket approach may not be appropriate as some areas are working well as solely commercial.

Most believed that Blair Street properties having high exposure to a busier road, may be more appropriate to stay commercial over the longer term. The southern portion of the Precinct has the highest proportion of existing residential development and was seen by participants to be the most appropriate to accommodate further residential and mixed-use development in the short term.

In some of the engagement discussions, it was raised that there is a perception that many of the landowners within the Precinct may not seek to develop their properties due to their age and/or reasonable income already being received from existing properties. The local property manager interviewed advised that their observation was that the buildings which were older and of poorer quality were more difficult to lease than the newer buildings which were tenanted, owners making good income and had successful businesses operating from them.

### 4.2.3 Activity Attractor

A common theme raised was the need for an attractor of activity and people within the Precinct to make the area more attractive to live within (due to proximity to the CBD and potential attractors). Uses such as

hospitals, universities or substantial offices attract larger volumes of people who demand visit shops, cafes, and businesses, perhaps even live close to school/work. These kinds of attractors are seen as important to the vitality and economic performance of CBDs and their supporting neighbourhoods. It was seen that the area would be a logical supporter of CBD activity – as demand for space within the CBD is taken up in the future and opportunities for new development become rarer or more constrained, it will be a natural next choice for new development to be located Precinct due to the existing connections into the CBD.

The potential for a pilot project to illustrate the viability of mixed-use development in the Precinct was raised. This would involve identification of a parcel of land and demonstration that a mixed-use development can be provided at a profit with market demand to take up this opportunity, so that the others will follow and seek out these opportunities elsewhere in the Precinct. In discussions with some of the government entities that would usually be involved in this space, they advised that their present focus is elsewhere within the South West/Bunbury region where they can provide land/housing in less constrained manner for their purposes. Constraints identified include the lack of perceived market demand for apartment living outside of the waterfront areas in Bunbury and the public realm not being conducive for mixed use development (i.e., walkability, outlook, and open space).

It was seen that finding a product which can deliver on an existing demand, such as affordable housing for aged persons or a built-to-rent project to house workers for specific projects may make this pilot project more likely to happen. It was acknowledged that the delivery of the pilot project would need to be a joint venture with a housing provider or a company which has demand for housing along with developer with land ready and available for development and this may require significant advocacy to achieve.

#### **4.2.4 Service Provision**

No significant barrier to Mixed Use/higher density residential density from a servicing perspective was raised by service agency participants in Stage 2 engagement undertaken (Aqwest, Main Roads WA and DPLH).

It should be noted that in the first stage of consultation undertaken by the City, the Water Corporation advised that some sewer upgrades may be needed to facilitate additional housing within the Precinct.

## 5 ANALYSIS OF KEY ISSUES

Based on the feedback from the engagement sessions, the following represents key issues for residential development within the Precinct as highlighted by the participants:

1. The present cost and demand for mixed use development are a barrier
2. The absence of an aligned and integrated vision is a barrier
3. Improvement of pedestrian networks and environment will be important
4. There is a need to improve roads and infrastructure
5. There is a desire to retain current businesses
6. More open spaces/parks are sought
7. Parking improvements were identified as a need
8. There is potential for a demonstration project

These issues are discussed in detail below, with this analysis informing the recommendations outlined in section 6 of this report.

### 5.1 KEY ISSUE 1: COST AND DEMAND FOR MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT

The responses from the landowners did not indicate that there were significant planning framework limitations to the delivery of mixed-use development within the existing mixed-use areas – rather it seems more evident that market factors and the attractiveness of the area for residential development is not yet evolved.

The cost of development, land holding costs and demand from buyers/renters are all significant factors in determining the feasibility of the residential/mixed use development, as well as understanding what factors have made this area unattractive or unviable for redevelopment (where there is existing development potential). Our engagement found that some of the landowners within the Service Commercial zone within the Precinct believed residential development should be permitted within the Precinct to provide greater return on their investment, but it is not known if simply permitting residential development within this zone would necessarily translate to immediate redevelopment uptake or the appropriate built form that should be provided within the more constrained service-commercial areas (i.e., narrow streets).

Additionally, whilst there is an aging population and a large portion of cohort in single and couple households, this has not translated into high demand for apartments. Factors attributing to this mismatch may be the price-point and offering of the existing and proposed apartment stock, the cost of development exceeding return preventing more affordable stock coming into the market, residents lack of familiarity with/attraction to apartment living and the comparatively affordable price point of existing housing stock (to new apartment development).

### 5.2 KEY ISSUE 2: NEED FOR VISION

While we undertook a visioning exercise as part of the focus group to align discussion for participants, this was high level only and is not a substitute for a formal vision and principles process. Any future process to develop a vision and guiding principles should be done as part of a formal Precinct Structure Planning process – refer to section 6.

Understanding the future for the area is important in the creation of necessary frameworks to support the changes and investments required to achieve this vision including the assessment of future development applications. More specifically the area does not know what it is presently with a mixture of residential and commercial presently within the area. The City has competing priorities with more residential development opportunities required to provide greater density and mixture of housing types but also this area has many successful businesses within the area contributing to the community and service provision for the area. The creation of a strategic intent will then inform if there is any necessary change to the zoning of the area and the future direction this area should take.

This is important because a vision will align the relevant stakeholders to collectively work towards a common goal, and to guide individual decisions made by the City such as in relation to a capital works program, major projects, subdivision recommendations to the WAPC and development application decisions.

The main themes to emerge from the high-level visioning exercise are outlined in the below figure.

Figure 10 Vision Themes



### 5.3 KEY ISSUES 3 AND 4 – PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY AND MOVEMENT NETWORK

One of the greatest benefits of living within a town centre or mixed-use precinct is the ability to walk, cycle or use other non-motorised forms of transport to get around. The Precinct presently has a distinct lack of footpath infrastructure which severely limits the desirability and potential functionality as a true mixed-use Precinct. Many of the roads are under-width for their intended purpose and not designed to accommodate footpaths, high volumes of traffic or larger commercial vehicles by modern standards. This may be due to the area initially being developed as residential with small lots. Some roads are presently limited to one-way traffic due to reduced road reservation widths (Ramsey, Stone, and Rose Streets) and some of the vehicles accessing the area are larger commercial vehicles.

Some of the roads would benefit from widening and truncations being taken at intersections. The main benefit of widening in many locations is the ability to provide footpaths and remove obstructions from within existing footpaths. Footpaths would ideally need to be provided which are unencumbered by other infrastructure and include appropriate shade/weather protection. However, road widening is often a difficult and slow process if the planning process is used to acquire land and fund the upgrades. The alternate method to purchase land and fund the upgrades through the capital works program is a very costly exercise and can be difficult if there are existing development/obstructions within the identified road widening area.

The City has advised that a master planning exercise is proposed for the area to map and identify required infrastructure upgrades within the area (excluding utilities). The master planning is pending the outcomes of this engagement to inform the timing and scope of the master planning process. Once the required

infrastructure upgrades have been determined, they should be costed and prioritised accordingly to inform the future decision making. Once the required upgrades are costed, the City may need to consider the appropriate funding mechanism. It is likely that these costs may be significant and therefore obtaining State Government assistance in the delivery of the necessary upgrades may be required. This assistance is likely required to be supported by robust business/Implementation Plan to demonstrate the cost/benefit of the investment.

Additionally, once the required upgrades are determined, further engagement with landowners and businesses within the Precinct will be a valuable in determining the highest need in terms of easy to obtain information and implement. This feedback can be incorporated into the City's master planning for the area and assist in advocacy required to obtain the necessary funding for the works required.

## **5.4 KEY ISSUE 5: RETAIN CURRENT BUSINESSES**

Respondents often mentioned certain businesses and sub-areas within the Precinct which provide an important service and are highly valued by the community. This was evident in some of the exercises undertaken in the focus groups resulting in desire to see some sub-areas be retained for commercial purposes. This relates not only to the commercial sustainability of the Precinct, but also the contribution that these businesses make to local character. It was also noted that some businesses were more suitable than others to be retained within the Precinct longer term with car service and sales yards not seen as highly desirable to be retained long term – and being a potential redevelopment opportunity. A consideration for future design processes will be the way in which residential land uses can interface and interrelate with commercial uses, whether as part of a mixed-use development or on adjacent/nearby land.

Understanding the key areas of successful businesses (and some which have been there for a long time) which are appropriate to retain as commercial long term will inform any necessary staging of the Precinct as well as interface/transitioning requirements for new development. This analysis will also inform the number of suitable properties to deliver mixed use development. If there is a certain level or intensity of activity desired within the Precinct (i.e., dwellings per hectare), retaining some properties for solely commercial purposes may have implication for the density and building form appropriate for the remainder of the precinct. The location of businesses appropriate to retain longer term may also impact ability to assemble land for an appropriately sized lot to accommodate mixed use development.

## **5.5 KEY ISSUE 6 AND 7: PARKING AND OPEN SPACE**

The area also has two public car parking facilities within the Precinct area at no. 6 – 12 Stuart Street and no. 18 – 22 Zoe Street. These car parks are controlled by the City and provide support to the local businesses, however if the areas become more residential in nature, the demand for public car parking may decrease and these spaces may be more valuable for public open space provision. These car parks also contain some of the only tree canopy cover within the area.

If greater connectivity via footpaths is provided to these car parking facilities and greater emphasis is placed on policing verge parking, these facilities may be more efficiently used and improve the functionality and amenity of areas where there are more obvious car parking problems.

Whilst some of the feedback received during the engagement undertaken indicated that many businesses presently rely on the public car parking provided by the City and this has improved the viability of these businesses remaining within the area, keeping this arrangement in place needs to be weighed against the delivery of the future vision for the Precinct, the appropriateness of these businesses staying in the area long term and the value of the land remaining as 'free car parking'. Therefore, analysis into the utilisation of the car parks will be important for the future of the area to understand how much value businesses place on these parking assets versus emerging demand for open space within the area.

Many respondents believe that the area would benefit from open space so that employees and future (and current) residents would have somewhere to walk to and sit outside. As more residential development is provided within the area, there will be increased demand for open space with access to open space more important as density of residential development increases. The need to convert public car parking to public open space or obtain new land for open space within the precinct will inform the future planning of the area. Additionally, the value placed on smaller pocket parks and parklets may be explored, especially as an interim measure to address demand for outdoor public space within the Precinct.



## 5.6 KEY ISSUE 8: NEED FOR PILOT PROJECT / ATTRACTOR

As outlined within the outcomes from the chat groups, the location of a business/institution or activity which attracts a significant workforce, population or visitor cohort will generate supporting activity which will in turn increase demand for property to deliver shops, cafes and residential opportunities close to these activities. Many participants mentioned this need for an attractor to generate activity and demand for property/new development. Respondents also identified that the City centre is presently experiencing reduced demand for property with vacant tenancies with businesses either no longer viable or relocating to other areas within the City of Bunbury. Encouraging significant attractors into the Precinct or City centre is therefore likely to assist in the transition of the area to provide more mixed-use development and become more vibrant and diverse.

Another method mentioned in the chat groups was the potential to have a pilot project to demonstrate to landowners the viability of developing land for mixed use development. Being the first development may be perceived as being more difficult as there are no examples to follow and market demand may be untested. A prominent example of the successful delivery of a mixed-use development within the precinct may encourage others follow. Whilst the market may not allow for mixed use developments to proceed if reliant on pre-sales of apartments or commercial tenancies, other models such as build to rent providers, co-living accommodation or workers accommodation may be viable if there is found to be inadequate rental stock and need/desire to be located close to amenities (or an attractor). Seeking partnerships and demonstrating market viability to deliver new mixed-use development in the interim will assist under the existing planning framework applicable to the area and in the future.

# 6 POTENTIAL RESPONSES

Based on the previous analysis and participant feedback we have identified a range of potential responses for the City’s consideration. These are described below, including comment on matters relating to implementation. These potential responses may be influenced by other factors which may impact their appropriateness to pursue (i.e., resourcing, budgetary, political influences).

## 6.1 PRECINCT STRUCTURE PLANNING

### 6.1.1 Description

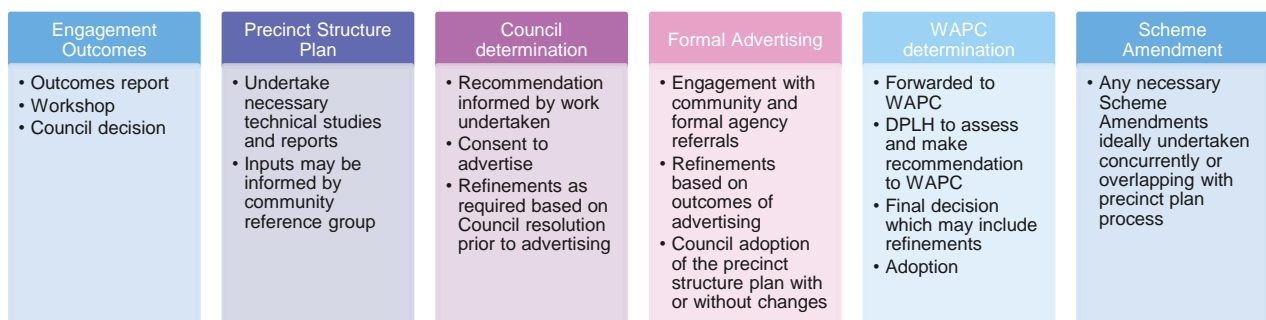
The coordination of the planning and development of an area is ideally undertaken through the preparation of a Precinct Structure Plan which looks at a wider range of issues including (but not limited to) zoning, density, and land use permissibility. State Planning Policy 7.2 – Precinct Design (SPP 7.2) guides the preparation of planning and design for existing and new precincts. Precinct planning provides a planning framework covering six design areas and may be progressed concurrently with any necessary scheme amendments to provide the required zoning, density, and land use permissibility (which is required to be located within a local planning scheme). A Precinct Structure Plan can contain controls relevant to the following:

- Urban Ecology
- Urban Structure
- Public Realm
- Movement
- Land Use
- Built Form

Precinct planning is informed by a vision for the Precinct which guides the design responses. The Precinct Structure Plan is also required to be supported by technical reports and explanatory section which explains the rationale for the planning framework proposed. Some of the required inputs are also reflected in the more specific recommendations that follow and are more directly linked to the outcomes from the engagement. Generally, good design incorporates a range of inputs and balances competing requirements and objectives to deliver outcomes which are aligned with an adopted vision. We therefore believe that the preparation of a Precinct Structure Plan will provide the best alignment with the key issues which have come from the as it would include many (if not all) of the recommendations outlined below.

A Precinct Structure Plan can provide the necessary coordination of several inputs and statutory framework to achieve a transformation of the area which is more consistent with the future vision for the area. Importantly a Precinct Structure Plan can also provide guidance and incentives with respect to the staged implementation of the vision which will be important for a substantial land area comprised of multiple landowners. Should the City elect to pursue the Precinct Structure Plan process, a timeframe to commence work (or part of the work) should also be considered as this will in turn will inform the timeframe of the subsequent process which is outlined below.

Figure 11 Precinct Structure Planning Process



It should be noted that a Precinct Structure Plan process would take approximately 2 years from start to finish with the preparation to take approximately 6-9 months (which may be reduced depending on the extent of change, work that may have already been undertaken by the City and studies and reports which feed into

the content being able to be undertaken concurrently), the advertising and collating of outcomes to take 3-4 months and then DPLH assessment and reporting to the WAPC likely to take 3-6 months (depending on government priorities, level of support and early engagement with DPLH undertaken though the preparation of the Precinct Structure Plan). If a Scheme Amendment is required, this is ideally undertaken as concurrently as possible to save time and ensure it contains all necessary controls are implemented concurrently and removes and conflicts to enable implementation of the Precinct Structure Plan once adopted.

Preparing a Precinct Structure Plan may be a costly exercise, however based on feedback from the DPLH, there may be funding/task resourcing available from the DPLH. Further engagement in this respect is recommended to understand the full extent of the DPLH assistance in this regard.

Whilst the market demand for greater apartment and mixed-use development within the area may not currently be present and some areas may be appropriate to stay commercial longer term, having a local planning framework in place to support appropriate future development is ideal as it will prevent interim development that will compromise the orderly and proper development and ensure capital works are undertaken consistent with a future vision for the area. Furthermore, it will mean that when the market is ready, the planning has been undertaken to ensure appropriate development can occur in as streamlined a manner as possible – de-risking the ‘planning’ aspect of new development.

This exercise also needs to consider the existing successful businesses operating from within the area which contribute to the local economy. This means that in the preparation of the Precinct Structure Plan, these businesses and careful consideration is applied to their short- and medium-term interests, but overall ensure that alignment with the long-term vision for the Precinct is prioritised.

### **6.1.2 Opportunities and Barriers**

There is presently an enthusiastic landowner group who are keen to participate in the future planning of the area, have significant local knowledge and understand the value of engaging in the planning process early. By delaying the planning process, this level of momentum may be lost, and landowners may become more difficult to engage with later.

There is of course considerable cost and time associated with preparing a precinct structure plan and therefore this needs to be taken into consideration in the City’s staffing capacity and budget accordingly. However, there may be opportunity to partner with the DPLH to prepare the Precinct Structure Plan and share costs where possible. If the time and cost of preparation is not able to be supported by the City at this stage, then this may be substantial barrier to being able to undertake this process.

## **6.2 PROPERTY AND ZONING ANALYSIS**

### **6.2.1 Description**

The below table provides a rudimental analysis from the focus group comments and desktop review of the lot sizes, use and present zoning. This has informed if the lots are suitable to accommodate mixed use development in the more immediate to medium term. The allocation is explained further below

- Suitable – the zoning is established to permit residential and mixed use development, there are redevelopment opportunities within the street block and less constraints in terms of land amalgamation, tenure, site access or existing built form age/quality. There are also blocks which have barriers to overcome such as land fragmentation, zoning and/or existing commerciality of businesses/development on site but are appropriate in the longer term.
- Not Suitable – the properties which interface with Blair Street experience high traffic exposure which is good for businesses and commercial activity but is poor for residential amenity. Other factors include the present uses on site and likelihood of redeveloped being low even in the longer term.

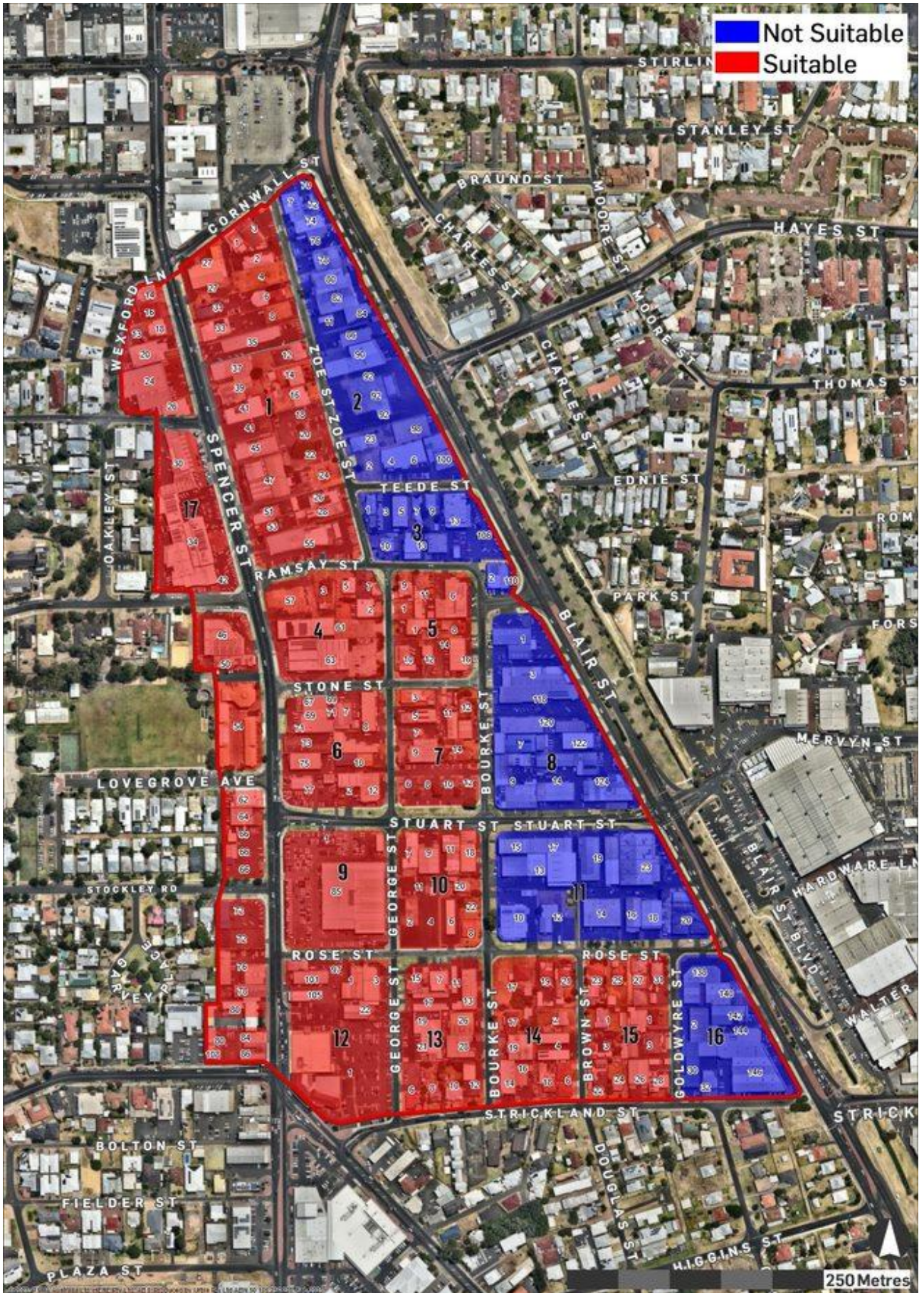
Table 2 Street Block Analysis

Street block	Description	Focus Group comments	Zoning	Appropriate for Mixed Use Development
1	Mix of larger (amalgamated) lots and smaller scale lots  Mostly commercial  Some residential  Public car park	Suitable for mixed use development  Considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Proximity to City centre</li> <li>- Accessible</li> <li>- Existing built form poorer quality</li> <li>- Public car park usage</li> </ul>	Mixed Use Commercial facing Spencer Street and Service Commercial facing Zoe Street	Suitable
2	Mix of smaller lots (northern portion) and larger lots (southern portion)  All commercial	Not as suitable for mixed-use development  Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing commercial businesses worthy of retention</li> <li>- Proximity to City centre</li> <li>- High exposure to Blair Street traffic</li> <li>- Larger lots</li> </ul>	Service Commercial	Not Suitable
3	Smaller scale lots  Mostly commercial – including car dealership  Some residential	Not as suitable for mixed use development  Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing commercial businesses worthy of retention</li> <li>- Proximity to City centre</li> <li>- High exposure to Blair Street traffic</li> </ul>	Service Commercial	Not Suitable
4	Mix of amalgamated lots and single residential  Mostly commercial	Suitable for mixed use development  Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Large sites</li> <li>- Good accessibility</li> <li>- Building condition</li> </ul>	Mixed Use Commercial facing Spencer Street and Service Commercial facing Ramsay Street	Suitable
5	Smaller lots  Mostly commercial (automotive repairs, air-con and bathroom showroom)  One residential lot	Suitable for mixed use development  Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Smaller lots and fragmented land ownership</li> <li>- Inadequate car parking</li> <li>- Poorer quality built form</li> <li>- Open space may be appropriate here</li> </ul>	Service Commercial	Suitable
6	Larger lots  All commercial (mostly showrooms, including 2 car showroom)	Suitable for mixed use development  Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing commercial businesses worthy of retention</li> <li>- High exposure to Spencer Street and Stuart Street</li> <li>- Larger lots</li> <li>- Strata lots</li> </ul>	Mixed Use Commercial facing Spencer, Stuart and Stone Street and Service Commercial facing George Street	Suitable
7	Smaller lots  Mostly residential, some commercial  Public car park	Suitable for mixed use Development  Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Smaller lots and fragmented land ownership</li> <li>- Public car park usage</li> </ul>	Service Commercial	Suitable

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exposure to Stuart Street</li> <li>- May be appropriate for open space provision</li> </ul>		
8	Larger lots All commercial	<p>Not as suitable for mixed use development</p> <p>Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High exposure to Blair Street and Stuart Street</li> <li>- Existing commercial businesses worthy of retention</li> </ul>	Service Commercial	Not Suitable
9	One large site All commercial	<p>Suitable for mixed use development</p> <p>Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing commercial businesses worthy of retention</li> <li>- Newer built form</li> <li>- Lack of land fragmentation</li> <li>- Highly accessible from Spencer Street and Stuart Street</li> </ul>	Mixed Use Commercial and Service Commercial for north-eastern section	Suitable
10	Mix of amalgamated lots and single residential Mostly commercial	<p>Suitable for mixed use development</p> <p>Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land fragmentation</li> <li>- Land use conflict</li> <li>- Some newer buildings but some lower quality buildings</li> <li>- Vacant/hardstand lots</li> </ul>	Service Commercial	Suitable
11	Larger lots All commercial	<p>Not as suitable for mixed use development</p> <p>Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing commercial businesses worthy of retention</li> <li>- Newer built form</li> <li>- Larger lots</li> <li>- High exposure to Blair Street and Stuart Street</li> </ul>	Service Commercial	Not Suitable
12	Larger lots All commercial (including Church, Garden Centre, Highway Hotel and Dan Murphy's)	<p>Not as suitable for mixed use development</p> <p>Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing commercial businesses worthy of retention</li> <li>- Higher quality built form</li> <li>- Larger lots</li> <li>- High exposure to Spencer Street and Strickland Street</li> </ul>	Mixed Use Commercial	Suitable
13	Mix of amalgamated lots and single residential	<p>Suitable for mixed use development</p> <p>Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land fragmentation</li> <li>- Land use conflict</li> <li>- Existing residential</li> <li>- Older building stock</li> </ul>	Mixed Use Commercial	Suitable
14	Smaller lots Mostly residential	<p>Suitable for mixed use development</p> <p>Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land fragmentation</li> <li>- Land use conflict</li> <li>- Existing residential</li> </ul>	Mixed Use Commercial	Suitable

		- Older building stock		
15	Smaller lots  All residential	Suitable for mixed use development  Considerations - Land fragmentation - Land use conflict - Existing residential - Older building stock	Mixed Use Commercial	Suitable
16	Mix of larger (amalgamated) lots and smaller scale lots  All commercial (mostly showrooms)	Not as suitable for mixed use development  Considerations - Existing commercial businesses worthy of retention - Higher quality built form - High exposure to Blair Street and Strickland Street	Service Commercial	Not Suitable
17	No consistency  All commercial (except for 14 – 18 Spencer St)	Suitable for mixed use development  Considerations - Existing commercial businesses worthy of retention - Proximity to City centre - Mixture of lot sizes - Access and streetscape	Mixed Use Commercial	Suitable

Figure 12 Sub Area Map



The above analysis would ideally be further critiqued in the context of survey/audit of the existing property condition and level of activity to provide a more robust understanding of which sub-areas are functioning well and those which are perhaps having access, parking, and amenity issues. This may change the suggested priorities accordingly. This information may also be used to inform which areas are worth more immediate efforts (i.e., infrastructure upgrades) over others in terms of unlocking potential for more mixed use and residential development.

This analysis should also be used to understand the likely dwelling yields capable of being achieved in short-, medium- and longer-term scenarios. The desirable dwelling yield for the Precinct is dependent on the level of activity desired and the content of the City's Local Housing Strategy (which also needs to consider the outcomes from analysis of other housing opportunity areas) – i.e., dwellings per hectare.

The dwelling yields can be undertaken with additional scenarios other than the existing density with one or two different zoning and density scenarios applied to determine the number of additional dwellings likely to be provided in a short-, medium- and long-term timeframe. In addition to the above, market testing as well as exploring 'build to rent' viability and partnerships may inform necessary zoning, density and built form controls required. The tax concessions available for build-to-rent developments along with the current and forecasted higher rental demand may make the delivery of a build to rent development more viable – however there may be a density and/or property size required to facilitate this.

## 6.2.2 Opportunity and Barriers

A significant challenge for this project is the identification of an ideal dwelling yield for the area (i.e., level of activity) and ensuring that the yield is achievable. This exercise will be helpful in deciding which sub-areas may be worth more immediate attention and which may presently operate well as is. It is an exercise which can be done by city officers and will provide valuable insights to inform if the zoning over the properties is appropriate as is or if change is required.

Another consideration is that the timing of the analysis and the market conditions may impact the findings and therefore the analysis should be undertaken at time when the City is committed to following through with the findings with any necessary changes to the applicable planning framework. Also, the level of success that a business has is not linked to the condition of the property and therefore this will need to be reconciled in the analysis.

A barrier in the analysis is establishing baselines – the findings may vary if the analysis is undertaken by a more than one person, therefore establishing some criteria for the analysis may assist in ensuring consistency.

## 6.3 PARKING SURVEY

### 6.3.1 Description

Understanding the use of existing parking facilities in terms of length of stay and availability will illuminate if appropriate to convert to public open space for the Precinct in the long term and/or introduce timing restrictions, or to even utilise land for a pilot project (if open space is deemed to be not required or not suitable in the locations of the existing public car parking facilities). It would be useful to obtain more information in relation to the following:

- Are the cars using the facilities staying for extended periods of time (i.e., staff) or shorter periods of staff (i.e., visitors)?
- What is the availability of car parking based on morning, midday, and afternoon times? Are there times of peak demand?
- What is the value of the asset? Is paid parking appropriate within this area?
- Are there many cars parked illegally within the Precinct area not using the public car parking?
- Can car parking be provided on-street in some locations, more dispersed throughout the Precinct?
- Are there businesses which are responsible for unauthorised car parking?
- Are there some businesses utilising the public car parking more than others?

The City already may have undertaken this survey or have data available to answer some or all of the above questions and therefore the timing and cost of this exercise may be relatively quick and low. This exercise is not dependent on the earlier activities being undertaken and therefore it can occur either before or as part of a precinct structure plan process.



This survey can illuminate if there is unauthorised car parking prevalent in the area, how well used the public car parking areas are, if the locations of the public car parking areas are appropriate and if certain businesses are more reliant on the public car parking than others. The outcomes of the survey will therefore be integral to inform the best use of the City's parking assets in the future – such as retaining as public car parking, implementing charges for its use, sale of the assets for other purposes or conversion to public open space.

### **6.3.2 Opportunity and Barriers**

The public car parking areas are considerable assets owned by the City which may be appropriate to stay as is, facilitate a pilot project or provide public open space in the future. The most appropriate outcome for these assets will be dependent on the need in the future, especially if the area is proposed to accommodate more mixed use. These assets offer great opportunity to provide the necessary catalyst or supporting infrastructure to see this change occur or to foster a more thriving business community.

The existing business community and their present reliance on public car parking may be a substantial barrier to obtaining support for any changes to the existing car parking arrangements. The risk is that long term, these facilities are retained there is no incentive for businesses to relocate to more suitable premises or provide the appropriate required car parking on site – keeping the status quo within the area longer term. Further engagement with the landowners and businesses within the area may illuminate some solutions which provide both short- and medium-term solutions whilst not compromising delivery of the longer-term vision for the area.

## **6.4 TRANSPORT ANALYSIS**

### **6.4.1 Description**

Undertaking a transport analysis will enable greater understanding of the existing and future road capacity and where any necessary upgrades are required for the road, bicycle, and pedestrian networks. The analysis would need to be consistent with Volume 2 of the Western Australian Planning Commission Transport Guidelines and report on existing daily traffic volumes, daily traffic capacities based on road type, any proposed increase or decrease to local road daily traffic volumes, intersection performance and identify any necessary upgrades to the local road network to improve safety and performance. This is also recommended to include analysis of the pedestrian network and cycle network to determine where footpaths and cycle paths may be provided at maximum benefit for the Precinct.

This information would be informed and tested based on the outcomes from the property and zoning analysis recommended. The outcomes of this would advise the extent of existing capacity and potential future capacity (with any necessary road modifications). The resultant traffic analysis would then be used to affirm or correct proposed zonings and densities appropriate within the area.

This analysis would not take a substantial amount of time but would ideally proceed the property and zoning analysis to inform ideal future scenarios for the modelling. The cost of this activity is dependent on whether the City undertakes this or if it is contracted out, but usually local governments undertake audits of their local road network as part of their normal day-to-day functions which may assist in reducing additional cost being required to be allocated to this work.

### **6.4.2 Opportunity and Barriers**

Analysis of the movement network and impact of increased residential density compared to existing volumes would be of substantial benefit to inform if road widening (and requisite width) is required. This exercise will also provide an understanding of the locations where footpaths may be of greatest benefit, can be more easily delivered without widening and where there are the most constraints. This information will be highly valuable in informing the capital works program and future planning of the area and even if not undertaken in the short or medium term, will ensure that any interim decision-making and works undertaken are consistent do not undermine ability for these works to be implemented at an appropriate time.

If precinct structure planning or property and zoning analysis is not undertaken, then the analysis will be less accurate for the future scenario. Furthermore, if the analysis is only undertaken based on the existing scenario (i.e., in isolation) and does not considering a future scenario for the area changing for more mixed use or the provision of streetscape upgrades, then there is possibility that any works undertaken may compromise future development/streetscape outcomes or not be as necessary in the future.

## 6.5 PRECINCT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

### 6.5.1 Description

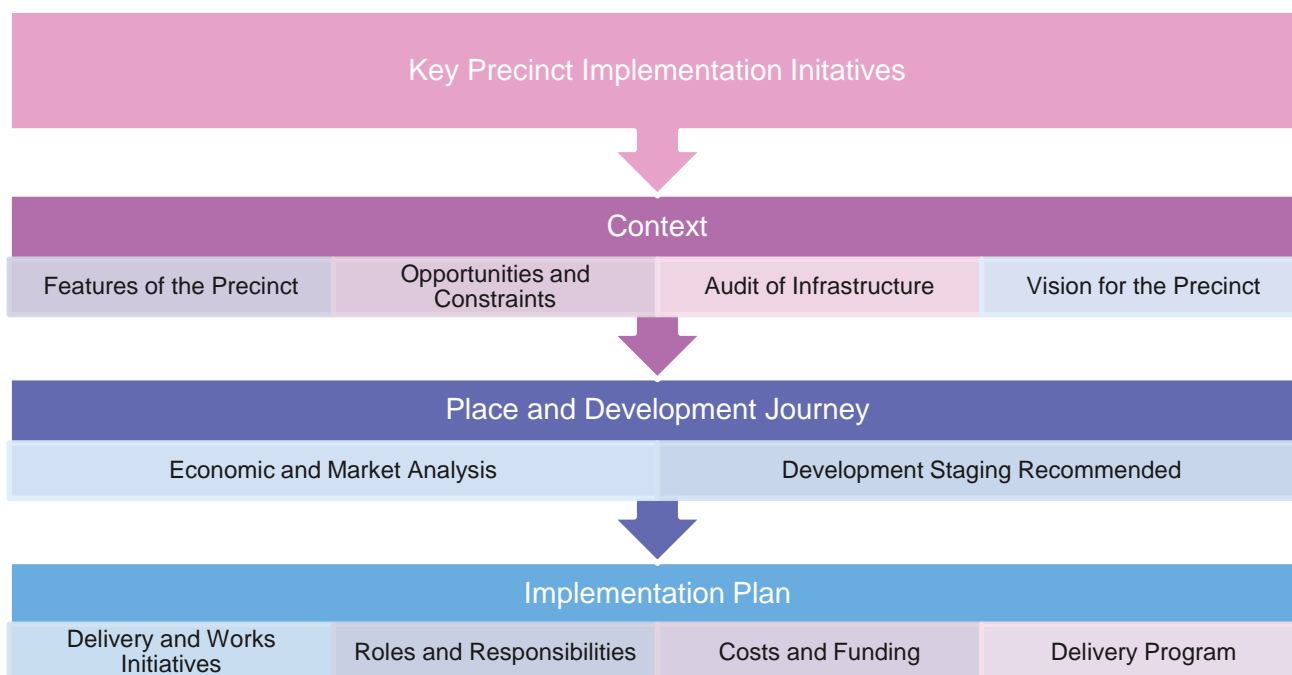
A key issue raised during the engagement undertaken is the poor-quality public realm within the area which is considered to be incompatible with a residential area. Upgrades to roads, footpaths, street lighting and provision of street trees and landscaping – whilst are the responsibility of local government, are costly to provide and ideally undertaken in a coordinated manner to ensure that investment made provides greatest benefit over a longer term. To make this area more attractive for residential and mixed use development, it is therefore recommended to upgrade the streetscape and infrastructure accordingly to be compatible with the future vision for the area. Noting the significant costs that may be associated with the necessary infrastructure, requiring landowners and/or the City to fully fund these upgrades may place too significant a burden to actually result in the completion of the necessary infrastructure. Therefore an 'Implementation Plan' approach may be required.

An Implementation Plan is a tool used by agencies such as DevelopmentWA to:

- Identify the vision for the area (in the absence of a local planning framework or strategy)
- Provide a realistic understanding of how the Project Area can be successfully delivered in stages in alignment with an overall vision for the area.
- Identify key initiatives requiring government activity and investment (and timing of the investments) to stimulate development and realise the long term vision for the Project Area; and
- Promote collaboration between key government organisations with key delivery roles.

This Implementation Plan can sit outside of a local planning framework and be used as a key advocacy piece to obtain State Government funding for infrastructure. The content of an Implementation Plan is ideally informed by the following:

Figure 13 Implementation Plan Content / Process



This Implementation Plan would also include a spatial plan, mapping where the necessary land, infrastructure and upgrades would occur aligned with a time and cost schedule. The roles and responsibilities would be clearly outlined in terms of the City, relevant State Government agency and/or landowners.

In preparing the Implementation Plan, the undertaking of an audit of the required City infrastructure upgrades should be based on the existing development context being maintained and also in the context of greater uptake of development being undertaken. This may assist in understanding both immediate and future

infrastructure required to assist in prioritisation of works and projects. Additionally, further engagement on this issue may assist the City in determining an appropriate mechanism for funding and prioritisation of the works required.

Furthermore, the delivery of the infrastructure identified may be prioritised by the availability of external sources of funding to assist in delivery. This project would ideally be undertaken in a partnership arrangement given the benefits to multiple parties.

## **6.5.2 Opportunity and Barriers**

As identified within the engagement, the public realm has been identified as being a major barrier to the uptake of mixed-use development opportunities. The identification and delivery of infrastructure is therefore seen a crucial aspect in the fulfilment of the future vision of the area, but also to enhance and maintain the existing business offerings within the area presently.

The cost of delivery and potentially the requirement to obtain land is likely to be a considerable barrier to the delivery but noting the longer-term nature of this project – if it is plausible for the upgrades/changes to be fulfilled over time, the upgrades should be pursued. Ideally through a coordinated strategy which is prepared in partnership will enable longer term vision to be delivered.

In terms of other utility upgrades, keeping service agencies informed throughout and requesting input at key stages is highly advised, however there may be a need to make specific requests for information from service agencies through the planning and engagement processes.

## **6.6 COLLABORATION AND ADVOCACY**

### **6.6.1 Description**

The first development in a new area or in-fill precinct can be a great catalyst for change as they establish a baseline in terms of market and community acceptance and assist in de-risking the decision for other developments to follow. Sometimes this requires another party to step in and assist in advocating for change – often being local government and state government agencies. By packaging up land, undertaking public realm improvements, demonstrating built form that is possible under the applicable planning framework and then undertaking a market feasibility – these tasks substantially de-risk the private sector investing into the area and incentivises others to do the same. The City of Bunbury has done this in some respects in the disposal of some of their land assets to encourage specific types of development to attract tourism accommodation to the central Bunbury area.

In addition to the above, seeking out collaborations with the private sector and joint ventures can provide opportunities which otherwise could not be facilitated by the parties in isolation. Connecting landowners and residential developers or those with substantial residential housing requirements may also produce outcomes otherwise not possible without these connections being facilitated by the City and State.

Given the emphasis placed on the need for public realm improvements communicated in the engagement process and the likely costs of wholistic upgrades for the area, advocacy, and collaboration with the State Government in preparing the necessary documentation and undertaking the upgrades is recommended as a matter of priority. The preparation of an Implementation Plan which identifies the necessary projects and their likely cost and priority of the projects will be a valuable tool in advocating for funding assistance from the State Government and other agencies.

The timing of collaboration and advocacy would be on-going and as opportunities may arise. The costs of this would be entirely dependent on the opportunity that may arise accordingly. Each opportunity should be considered on its merits and potentially undergo a cost-benefit analysis to understand if the opportunity is worth pursuing.

### **6.6.2 Opportunities and Barriers**

The opportunity afforded by collaboration and advocacy work undertaken by the City can assist in the faster transition and unlocking of key sites for appropriate redevelopment. Furthermore, any land acquisition and

disposal would also need to be consistent with the City’s Community and Planning strategies and be undertaken in accordance with legislative/policy requirements.

The present nature of the market and desirability of the area for mixed use development is seen as a considerable barrier to new projects being pursued in the Precinct and therefore, other actions/recommendations may need to be undertaken prior to the City seeing more opportunity or greater return from their investment into any advocacy or pilot project in the Precinct.

## 6.7 SCHEME AMENDMENT (WITHOUT PRECINCT STRUCTURE PLAN)

### 6.7.1 Description

In the undertaking of several studies (as recommended above), the City may consider there to be limited benefits to the preparation of a Precinct Structure Plan and instead elect to progress to a Scheme Amendment with supporting Local Planning Policy and/or Local Development Plan to provide supporting framework to enable the required development to be facilitated.

From the property and zoning analysis and market analysis, the City may determine that some additional street blocks are appropriate to be included within the Mixed Use Commercial zone and/or have a higher density code permitted. Additionally controls to support the acquisition of land are likely more appropriate within a Local Planning Scheme over a Precinct Structure Plan. Furthermore, the City may incorporate a range of density and development incentives to improve the viability and attractiveness of development within the Precinct. Ultimately this pathway should still be supported by a range of work which has informed the necessary changes and controls to achieve an overarching vision for the area.

### 6.7.2 Opportunities and Barriers

There are considerable cost and time advantages of progressing a Scheme Amendment without a Precinct Structure Plan which may enable suitable development to progress sooner. Additionally, a Local Planning Scheme provides for greater certainty and control with ability to have non-discretionary elements (if deemed necessary for the future planning of the area). A Scheme Amendment is ultimately required to be signed off by the Minister for Planning on the advice from the Western Australian Planning Commission (WAPC) and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) and therefore it is recommended that early discussions are held with the DPLH officers to ensure that there is support for this approach if selected.

Some disadvantages of progressing a Scheme Amendment in the absence of a Precinct Structure Plan is that a Local Planning Scheme cannot provide the same level of guidance in relation to staging and other peripheral planning issues (such as public realm improvements and overall vision for the Precinct) and a Local Planning Scheme is not difficult to amend than a Precinct Structure Plan.

## 6.8 WEIGHTING AND ALIGNMENT OF POTENTIAL RESPONSES

### 6.8.1 Vision Alignment

The below table outlines the potential responses and assesses the level of alignment each of these actions/recommendations has against the high-level vision themes which came from the engagement undertaken. A rating of 5 indicates a high level of alignment with the vision theme with a rating of 1 being of lower alignment. The total score indicates the potential priority of the recommendation/action.

Table 3 Vision Alignment

Potential action	Vibrant and Diverse	Urban	Accessible	Loved	Score
Precinct Structure Planning	5	5	5	5	20

Potential action	Vibrant and Diverse	Urban	Accessible	Loved	Score
Property and Zoning Analysis	4	4	1	4	13
Parking Survey	1	2	4	2	9
Transport Analysis	1	3	4	3	11
Infrastructure Implementation Plan	2	4	5	5	16
Collaboration and Advocacy	4	4	1	4	13
Scheme Amendment	2	4	2	2	10

The above assessment demonstrates that a Precinct Structure Plan will provide the most alignment with the outcomes from the vision themes and will encompass many of the individual recommendations. Undertaking analysis of the required infrastructure and streetscape upgrades and then planning for or undertaking these works offers the next highest level of alignment with the vision themes – ideally through the initial preparation of an Implementation Plan.

While the parking survey scored poorly relative to other potential responses, it should be noted that it would generally be undertaken in any case as part of the precinct structure planning process.

## 6.8.2 Issues Alignment

The below table lists the potential action/recommendation and alignment with the key issues to emerge from the engagement undertaken to date. The below table outlines the proposed recommendations and assesses each of these against the key issues identified through engagement. A rating of 5 indicates a high level of alignment with the key issue with a rating of 1 being of lower alignment. The total score also can be used to indicate the potential priority of the recommendation/action.

Table 4 Issues Alignment

Potential action	1 – Cost & Demand	2 – Vision	3 – Pedestrian connectivity	4 – Movement Network	5 – Current Businesses	6 – Parking	7 – Open space	8 – Pilot project / Attractor	Total
Precinct Structure Planning	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		7
Property and Zoning Analysis	x	x			x		x	x	5
Parking Survey				x	x	x			3
Transport Analysis			x	x		x			3

Potential action	1 – Cost & Demand	2 – Vision	3 – Pedestrian connectivity	4 – Movement Network	5 – Current Businesses	6 – Parking	7 – Open space	8 – Pilot project / Attractor	Total
Infrastructure Implementation Plan	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		7
Collaboration and Advocacy	x	x						x	3
Scheme Amendment	x			x			x	x	4

The above assessment also concludes that the Precinct Structure Planning process and undertaking infrastructure and streetscape analysis and upgrades have high levels of alignment with the key issues raised from the engagement undertaken.

### 6.8.3 Prioritising

All this section needs to say is based on the preceding analysis; the City's priorities should be:

1. Preparation of a Precinct Structure Plan
2. Infrastructure Implementation Plan
3. Property and Zoning Analysis

A precinct structure plan is the clear priority to achieve what the city wants to achieve and note that it has the benefit of addressing/incorporating all the other issues and potential responses.

Noting the above recommendations, the above priority list order and undertaking may be influenced by range of factors including time and cost investment by the City, if other housing investigation areas are more suitable or require more immediate investment, external assistance and the present market conditions.

Should the precinct planning process not be committed to in the short term, we believe it would be ideal to still undertake monitoring (such as development uptake within the Precinct, apartment and mixed-use developments undertaken elsewhere in the City, number of new dwellings delivered within City of Bunbury, cost of development and market conditions generally, capacity within the capital works program and external funding opportunities and partnerships). This may inform appropriate timing for precinct structure planning to be undertaken.

## 6.9 OTHER PLANNING FRAMEWORK OPTIONS

### 6.9.1 Local Development Plans

Local Development Plans are used to guide development and subdivision with more specific subdivision design/layout and built form controls applicable for a defined area. They also can specify exemptions for certain types of development within the applicable area. In the context of the Precinct, Local Development Plans are appropriate for a smaller scale area (such as a street block or sub-area) but should ideally be guided by a higher level of structure planning to ensure that development of the Local Development Plan does not compromise the wider planning of the area. Furthermore, Local Development Plans and Local Planning Policies provide for the same level of control, however Local Development Plans require the consent of the WAPC/DPLH to prepare unless this is specified within the Local Planning Scheme, or a subdivision approval as being required.

If a staged approach was to be considered (i.e., only a couple of sub-areas identified as appropriate for mixed use or residential development) and additional planning framework was identified as required to facilitate new development, then a Local Development Plan process would be an appropriate planning framework to use. This should be considered in the context of the development of the sub-area not compromising the future development of other sub-areas.

Furthermore, some of the ideal outcomes may require a concurrent Scheme Amendment to enable a 'head of power' provision within the Local Planning Scheme to enforce subdivision requirements or the taking land through the subdivision or development application process. The following cannot be contained within a Local Development Plan:

- Zoning and Land Use permissibility
- Density
- Road widening being able to be taken at subdivision/development application stage
- Bonus density requirements
- Development Contributions

A Local Development Plan has 'due regard' weight in decision making. This means that all content can be varied (subject to appropriate rationale to do so). The process to amend a Local Development Plan is also undertaken at the local government level and able to be facilitated quickly.

Noting that this approach requires WAPC/DPLH consent to prepare and may require Scheme Amendment for some provisions, if this approach was chosen to be pursued further, it is recommended to seek DPLH advice to see if this would be supported early in the preparation/investigation process.

## **6.9.2 Local Planning Policy**

A Local Planning Policy is required to be prepared by the Local Government and can provide a built form and controls and development guidance for new development. A Local Planning Policy does have limitations with the following controls still ideally located within the Local Planning Scheme:

- Zoning and Land Use permissibility
- Density
- Road widening being able to be taken at subdivision/development application stage
- Bonus density requirements
- Development Contributions

Subdivision design is also more appropriate within a Local Development Plan over a Local Planning Policy. A Local Planning Policy does not require the consent of the WAPC/DPLH to prepare and is discretionary in nature – with all provisions of a Local Planning Policy having 'due regard' weight. This means that all content can be varied (subject to appropriate rationale to do so).

The process to amend a Local Planning Policy is also undertaken entirely at the local government level and able to be facilitated in a shorter time frame comparative to other planning tools.

## **6.9.3 Local Planning Scheme Amendment (with Precinct Structure Plan)**

A Local Planning Scheme contains both discretionary and non-discretionary provisions to guide subdivision and development within a Local Government Area. The re-development of an area may require the change to zoning, change in land use permissibility, require head of power controls such a road widening provisions and development contribution plan areas.

The process for a Precinct Structure Plan preparation will often require a concurrent Local Planning Scheme amendment to ensure there is an appropriate statutory framework to ensure development and subdivision can occur in accordance with the precinct structure plan.

As outlined earlier the future planning of the area may in one shape or form require a Scheme Amendment and due to their lengthy process, it is recommended that prior to undertaking this process, the content of the amendment is robust as possible to avoid having to do any further amendments. Therefore, a Precinct Structure Planning process is the recommended initial planning process as it will holistically plan an area to inform the land use, intensity, traffic and movement, public realm and built form – all of which may inform necessary Scheme Amendments.

# 7 CONCLUSION

## 7.1 FURTHER ENGAGEMENT

Landowners and other stakeholders should be kept informed of the progress of this project, including invitation to attend council meeting/s when arranged and advised to the decision from Council as to whether to proceed with further work and likely timing of this work commencing.

Future targeted engagement with specific landowners and stakeholders in the form of a community reference group may also assist the City in informing the content and prioritisation of some to benefit decision makers and minimise change and opposition in future more formal consultation processes.

It is also recommended that the City’s dedicated page to this project is updated regularly so that information is easily accessible for interested parties – especially the timeline of the program for the project and key milestones.

Regardless of the adopted actions from this engagement, and further engagement needs to be informed by an engagement strategy. Engagement will also be a very important part of precinct structure planning and therefore should be considered from the inception of the Precinct Structure Planning process.

## 7.2 CITY’S CONSULTATION THEMES ASSESMENT

The below table outlines the information the City sought from the Stage 2 engagement and how the engagement undertaken has sought to address each issue/question.

Table 5 Consultation Themes

Consultation Themes	Engagement response / outcome
How landowners want to see the whole precinct change and what they want for their own block.	The second exercise from the focus groups and many of the interview questions sought to understand the future vision and direction of the area.
What specific land uses landowners want in which parts of the precinct. Rather than focusing on the ‘Mixed Use – Commercial’ or ‘Service Commercial’ zoning, get an understanding of what land uses are wanted in the area.	The land use activity within the focus groups sought to understand what was appropriate for residential, commercial, and other land uses. This activity encouraged landowners to also discuss other land uses that may be appropriate.
What land use conflicts the landowners see.	The amenity exercise from the focus groups as well as some of the interview questions sought to understand where land-use, parking and public realm conflicts are observed and therefore where improvements may be required.
The City would be interested to gain a greater understanding of why landowners have not explored existing development opportunities for higher density residential or mixed-use developments within the precinct or if they have, what are the issues?	The first exercise from the focus groups sought to understand both individual and wider perception of the lack of development uptake.  Some of the chat groups also raised this question and explored with some landowners as to why developments have not proceeded.



Consultation Themes	Engagement response / outcome
Clarify the appetite of landowners for residential or mixed-use outcomes and consider if this is the right time for change to occur.	<p>The first exercise in the focus groups sought to understand individual and wider perception of the lack of development uptake.</p> <p>In the chat groups, this was further explored to understand what the barriers (real or perceived) are to seeing additional development being undertaken within the area.</p>

## 7.3 ENGAGEMENT PROCESS FINDINGS

Through the engagement undertaken, the following process-based outcomes were observed:

- The engagement exercises designed from the focus groups would have benefitted from internal referral to the City’s infrastructure team to inform some of the key issues to obtain feedback from the community on.
- Three focus groups were arranged, however there was overwhelming preference for the Thursday night focus group held at the Highway Hotel over the session proposed on Saturday morning at the City of Bunbury offices and the online session held on the Monday afternoon during the day. To overcome this, additional facilitator and City resources were used, and larger session was held on Thursday.
- This session would have benefitted from individual facilitators at the tables due to the number of attendees. This would have likely informed more robust results in the exercises and greater consistency in the outcomes from each group (i.e., not content but quality).
- The online session was not well attended but provided more qualitative feedback from a more ‘business owner/staff’ perspective – this session may have benefitted from a different structure which encouraged consensus via the exercises.
- The chat groups with government agencies and developers provided good background information and different perspective which provided robust outcomes.

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