

PLANNING REPORT

Bega Town Centre — A Plan to Steer Bega to Regional Centre

Prepared for

Bega Valley Shire Council, Bega Chamber of Commerce & Department of Planning

Prepared by

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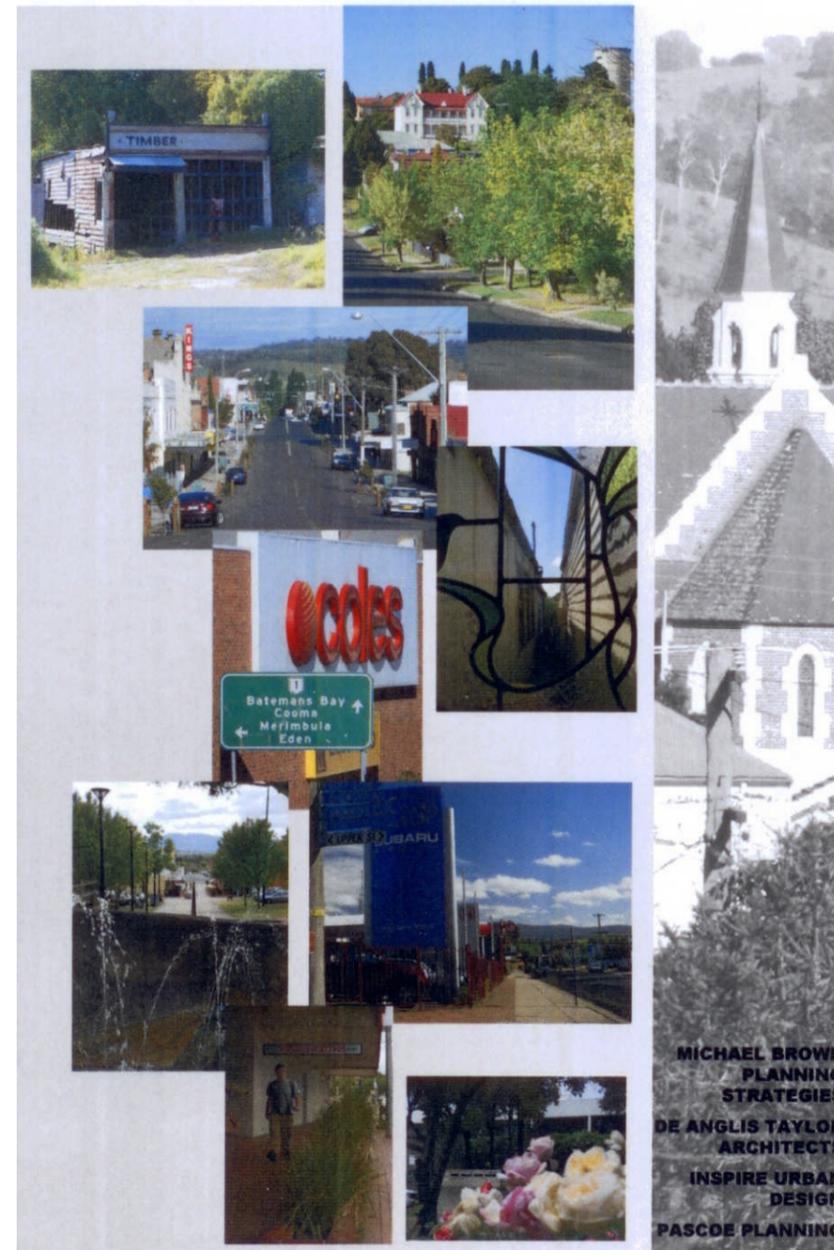


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2.0 BEGA – ITS EVOLUTION + POSITIONING

From its earliest days Bega grew as a settlement with a rural focus. This focus consolidated over the years as it emerged to service the rural communities of the Bega Valley. It has evolved into the administrative and cultural headquarters of the Valley.

The attraction of the nearby coastal villages and towns has seen population growth of recent times centered on these settlements. With this development focus and relative decline in rural prosperity, the future of Bega has been brought into sharp focus.

Both the NSW Department of Planning and Bega Valley Shire Council have clearly flagged Bega in their respective Strategic Plans, as a Regional Centre – the “Regional Capital” of the South Coast. Council’s Commercial Strategy also reinforces the role of Bega as the Regional Centre for the Shire. This Strategy identifies the following key objectives:

- To be the administrative and commercial centre of the Shire.
- Over the 20 year period, to assume the role of the major business centre of the Shire.
- To retain the heritage character of Bega as the Regional Centre with a rural theme set in a very attractive rural landscape.
- To expand tertiary education opportunities.
- To further access to the arts.
- To expand on Government and Community services relevant to the region’s needs.



Figure3 – Bega Study Area and its Context

3.0 REINFORCING THE REGIONAL CAPITAL STATUS - A NEW VISION

3.1 Visioning

Visioning seeks to describe and define a place that doesn't yet exist; to provide solutions to identified issues; problems and opportunities.

It is essential that a strong vision of Bega, as the future regional capital, be established at the outset.

3.2 A "Driver" and a "Stocktake" Measure

A vision should act as a driving mechanism for Bega's future. It should not only project a "target" but moreover it should act as a check mechanism to ensure that all strategies and actions are directed toward its realisation.

All energy be it government investment or initiatives, community actions and private investment and development decisions must be calibrated to reflect the vision.

3.3 Diverse Stakeholder "Ownership"

Given the diverse stakeholder interests in Bega, it is essential that any visioning exercise be inclusive. Some initial visioning work was undertaken for the Shire in the preparation of Council's 20-year Strategic Plan — Your Place, Our Place, Great Place (adopted September 2006). This work reinforced some of the direction contained in the Department of Planning's South Coast Regional Strategy.

A facilitated community workshop was conducted as an initial action in the development of a Town Centre Strategy/Structure Plan, Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan templates. This workshop used the previous visioning work and strategic plan development as a platform for re-engaging the community and fashioning an expanded and targeted vision for the town centre. Further focussed community engagement led to a refinement of the Strategy/Structure Plan and LEP/DCP templates.

3.4 Salient Elements of the Vision

Salient elements of the vision for the town centre and issues to address were identified and are grouped thematically as follows:

Bega — Key Elements/Qualities/Issues

Form

- Compact town
- Distinct edges
- Integration with landscape (Town in a landscape)
- Central plaza/activity node (Littleton Gardens)
- Template — what works now!
- Support activities on fringe
- Formalise opportunities on edge
- Medium density housing opportunities.

Feel

- Mature country town
- Clean green image
- Friendly, social place.

Social fabric

- Youth
- Strong sense of community
- Promotion of activities
- Welcoming community
- Indigenous recognition
- Unifying qualities of sport
- Markets
- Energise enhanced public buildings

Function

- Country service centre (services broader hinterland)
- Regional capital
- Tourist hub
- Business hub
- Health focus
- Education focus
- Cultural/arts hub
- Regional sports hub.

Design

- Don't compromise grid layout
- Distinct rural urban interface
- Heritage sensitivity
- Quality architecture
- Signage rationalisation
- Central civic precinct
- Capitalise on/integrate wetlands/river.

Accessibility/parking

- By-pass (long-term priority)
- Convenient, accessible parking
- Central core carpark
- Perimeter car park facilities
- Off road cycleways/pathways (beyond core)
- Ring road opportunities
- Enhanced pedestrian connectivity
- Sustainable transport opportunities.

Promotion

- Capitalise on Bega Cheese marketing
- Distinct climate and seasonality
- Regional function
- Awakening of the “Sleeping town” (i.e. after dark)

4.0 CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

A brief constraints (negative qualities) and opportunities (positive qualities) overview was undertaken and further informed the visioning exercise. Many of the identified issues have a degree of unity with the community visioning exercise. The overview is summarised below:

4.1 Opportunities and Positive Qualities

The following opportunities were identified at the community forum:

- An inspiring topographical context
- Ability to integrate with landscape setting
- A relatively intact Main Street
- A strong grid layout
- Significant development/redevelopment opportunities
- Relative lack of inappropriate development
- Compact Town Centre and capacity to capitalise on energy
- Central community focused Civic Precinct
- Mature country town atmosphere
- A welcoming community culture
- A strong indigenous tradition
- Higher order education and sports focus
- Cultural hub
- Foundations of a public art program
- Service centre to an expansive hinterland
- Capacity to generate developer funded infrastructure improvements
- Capacity to expand tourism focus



Bega’s attractive landscape setting and memorable architecture provide good opportunities to define the Centre’s future character

4.2 Constraints and Negative Qualities

The following constraints were identified at the community forum:

- Flood affectation
- Relative lack of engineering infrastructure
- “Tired appearance” of some public domain aspects
- Lack of upkeep of some shopfronts
- Lack of integration of some advertising
- General lack of tourist accommodation facilities
- Narrow nature of tourism focus
- Traffic congestion in peak tourist times
- Lack of provision for parking large recreational vehicles / caravans and signage directing to any parking facilities
- Limited funding to address infrastructure deficiencies
- Lack of housing diversity
- Deficiencies in parking provision
- Lack of integration with floodplain parklands
- Pedestrian network deficiencies

5.0 VISION

5.1 Function

Bega is recognised and functions as a regional centre – the cultural, administrative, service, educational and sporting capital of the Shire and beyond; a centre which respects and capitalises upon its natural and cultural contexts.

5.2 Statement of Desired Future Character

A Statement of Desired Future Character (DFC) was fashioned from the visioning exercise and further refined through subsequent community consultation. Such DFC is produced below. The DFC is worded as a future statement. **The words below in *italics* describe how Bega will look, feel and function in some 20 years time.**

“The City of Bega has evolved as a diverse yet compact regional centre reflecting its role as the capital of Bega Valley, which respects its landscape and heritage context. It functions as a service centre for an expanded tourist sector. Bega is a people place, which embraces visitors and residents of all ages. The welcoming, vibrant community is proud of its identity and strives for excellence.

In being a compact Centre it has a distinct core, perimeter of support activities and pronounced edges. Importantly it has forged strong linkages with its hinterland and in particular the river and wetlands. It is characterised by mixed uses and activities. Arriving at the town centre there are views to Mount Mumbulla and the hinterland.

Bega is the lead medical and educational centre in the Shire. It is underpinned by a centrally located new hospital facility and support specialist medical services. Major secondary schooling facilities, (both public and independent) a university campus and TAFE presence characterise the “higher order” educational presence and compliment diverse early childhood facilities.

It provides a focus for higher order sporting facilities/activities. The former racecourse is now a major sporting complex providing for a variety of events. This facility holds regular sporting competitions for the south coast region.

Further, Bega functions as a cultural and social hub for the Shire. People gather for both formal and informal productions and displays. Literature, art, drama and dance are celebrated in the civic precinct and beyond.

Walkers and cyclists travel safely along landscaped pathways past modern community, education and health care facilities towards a pedestrian orientated Town Centre. People can walk safely to the expanded university and mixed-use residential precincts.

This active new community is where people live, walk, recreate and engage in parks, cafes and shops. Anzac Day is celebrated outside the Memorial Gates in Carp Street, as it has done for a number of years.

The Civic Precinct, focused on Littleton Gardens has evolved as a quality multifunctional space. The park is a vibrant family friendly community space, a meeting/greeting space for both formal and informal activities. Christmas carols and other community activities are performed on the stage.

Expanded Council offices, a new multipurpose function centre and enhanced library and regional gallery anchor the space. Littleton Gardens maintains the cultural views to Mount Mumbulla to the north.

The sights, sounds and smells of the cafes overlooking Littleton Gardens are pleasant. People meet after work for drinks and dinner in the street cafes watching others strolling through Littleton Gardens. Passers-by talk about their experience at Littleton Gardens mentioning the relaxed families enjoying a concert played in the park and playing in safe, shady parkland. Littleton Gardens is decorated with banners announcing the upcoming festival of the “Valley to the Sea”.

An older couple sit and chat with friends beside the memorial rose garden overflowing with perfume from the roses. Young people gather to watch the live entertainment setting up on the stage. Indigenous art celebrates the aboriginal culture in the park. Local indigenous groups perform on the stage to celebrate special occasions. Visitors stop to admire the artwork illustrating Bega’s sense of place.

Diverse housing forms have evolved and characterise the Centre and provide for the varied needs of a diverse population growing with a pronounced aging profile. The challenge of increased residential densities has been sensitively pursued and does not compromise the quality and domestic feel of the residential and mixed-use precincts.

No one architectural theme dominates, rather the Centre comprises quality architecture which reflects the evolution of the Centre, including quality contemporary architecture which is sympathetic to the broader heritage context. Advertising integrates with the architectural detailing of buildings. There is a sense of order amongst the buildings which, whilst making individual statements, also contribute to the character of the Town Centre. The principles of energy efficiency, waste management, water management and safety are evident in the building designs.

The rich landscape context is enhanced by the avenues of largely exotic trees on the floodplain and the old entrances to town. A pronounced effect has been made to introduce trees as important framework elements of all Centre streetscapes.



Littleton Gardens: A Vibrant Civic Place

The unique heritage qualities are showcased in rejuvenated heritage items, which proudly champion their origins, including period colours and historic advertising themes and anchor the general architectural template.

The Centre is a pedestrian place with limited traffic access and a car parking core. Carp Street commercial properties have capitalised upon the enhanced plaza by orientating activities toward it. An enhanced pedestrian network services the Centre in a manner which integrates with shared pathways/cycleways radiating into the fringing residential areas and the support recreational areas.

Traffic circulates freely through Bega's enhanced road grid. Opportunities for alternative priority routes have been capitalised upon and planning and funding for a by-pass secured. All buses circulate through the town with a principal 'terminus' and integrated shelters at Church Street, in a welcoming environment characterised by a widened and embellished footpath.

Convenient, accessible parking is fostered throughout the Centre. A car parking core is focussed upon the Civic Precinct in both public and private facilities at several levels. On-site and kerb side parking ensure that each town centre development precinct is essentially self contained.

The Centre has been the subject of a town centre enhancement program, which reflects in enhanced street furniture, public art and plantings, together with significant building façade enhancement."

6.0 PLANNING CONTEXT

Council's Strategic Plan and the Department of Planning's South Coast Regional Strategy provide the broad planning context for the future development of Bega. Further detail in respect of the role of the Bega Town Centre is detailed in Council's Commercial Strategy and the Council commissioned SGS Economic Model.

Prevailing Statutory Planning Instruments at the local level do not reflect Council's recently developed strategy for Bega and do not fully reflect the community's recently espoused vision. The prevailing State Statutory Instruments provide only a broad context.

6.1 Commercial Centres Strategy

Council's Draft Commercial Centres Strategy seeks to provide for the development of the Shire's town centres in a manner which is consistent with Council's Strategic Plan — Your Place, Our Place, Great Place and in general creates vibrant, attractive diverse economically sound centres that fulfill future demands.

Further, the draft Strategy seeks to ensure appropriate planning is in place to realise the adopted vision for each centre and that accompanying strategies for requisite infrastructure provision are developed and implemented.

(Note: The relevant planning for Bega Town Centre is clearly focussed upon the development of a Statement of Desired Future Character, Structure Plan, Zoning Strategy and Development Control Plan; salient elements of which are contained in this report)

Bega is identified in the draft Strategy to perform the role of a Regional Centre — the principal centre in the Shire and for the Far South Coast.

In performing this regional centre function, Bega is projected to "provide the range of commercial, retail and public services expected of a centre servicing the entire Shire and the sub-region extending beyond the Shire within reasonable access distances of the Centre. It is intended to be a centre for tourism, learning, health facilities, recreation, civil/cultural, community facilities and entertainment.

A "Bega Theme" is established in the draft Strategy and identifies a range of key objectives, a list of which is contained at Section 2.0 of this report.

6.2 Strategic Planning Projections

Population projections underpinning the draft Strategy suggest that the Bega Town Centre would service the needs of a permanent population in 2025 of some 45 — 50,000 people (including persons beyond the Shire boundaries). During the peak tourist period this figure is likely to approximate 70,000 people.

These projections are considered to be somewhat conservative given the regional growth which is likely to reflect a continuation of a more diverse "sea change" phenomenon, targeted and significant tourism growth and continued structural adjustment.

6.3 Bega Valley Local Environmental Plan 2002

The subject LEP is the principal local statutory planning instrument controlling development of Bega Town Centre. Under the subject planning instrument, the following zones apply as indicated in Figure 3 on the following page:

- 2 (a) – Residential Low Density
- 3 (a) – General Business
- 3 (b) – Special Business
- 4 (a) – Industrial
- 5 (a) – Special Uses (Civic Centre, Church, School, etc)
- 6 (a) – Existing Open Space

These zonings largely seek to reflect existing land uses and are not considered to represent a strategy which portrays the future vision for the Town Centre.

The LEP and its relevant controls reflect its principal Development Control Plan function. Its strategic qualities are somewhat limited and in need of review having regard to the strategic direction contained in this planning report and Council's recent strategy development and the desire/need to adopt a planning instrument consistent with the new Standard Instrument Local Environmental Plan Order.



Figure 3 – Existing Zoning

6.4 Development Control Plans

There exists a number of generic DCP's that are issue specific and pertain to the Shire including Bega Township. These plans include:

- Residential Standards
- Subdivision Standards
- Notification Policy
- Exempt and Complying Development
- Minimum Setbacks to Roads and Waterways
- Parking
- Contaminated Land
- Bed and Breakfast Establishments

All of the prevailing controls in the subject DCP's will be superseded by controls, in the proposed new Town Centre DCP, which have been customized to realise the vision developed.

6.5 Past Planning Strategies

The Bega Parking Study and Town Centre Analysis (1988) and Bega Main Street Study (1996), despite their rather dated nature, contain much information which retains some relevance and has informed the current planning work as encapsulated in this planning report.

6.6 State and Regional Planning Strategies/Policies

A raft of State and Regional strategies/policies have implications for the future development of Bega. The salient elements of such strategies/policies are summarised as follows:

6.6.1 South Coast Regional Strategy

The subject Strategy provides a 25 year land use strategy for the South Coast including Bega Valley. It is intended to guide local planning in realising the regional vision and in respect of Bega “promote a sustainable, attractive and livable future for the Bega Valley local government area.”

Bega is identified in the draft Strategy as an emerging major centre, with the capacity to grow into a strong regional administrative and service centre in the long-term.

The Strategy targets 3,800 new jobs in the Bega LGA. Increases are expected in the areas of finance, administration, business services, health and aged care as well as tourism; the dominant proportion of which are likely to occur in Bega.

6.6.2 Lower South Coast Regional Environmental Plan No 2

While dated this REP provides a framework to guide decisions on local planning and development and government and private investment and includes the land comprising the Bega Valley LGA. It provides guidelines in preparing local plans and lists matters for Council consideration in determining applications.

In respect of commercial land it seeks to encourage an adequate supply of zoned land in appropriate locations for employment activities.

Further, it details policies for plan preparation in respect of land for industry and business. In respect of business it expressly states in Clause 37 (a):

- (v) *there should be provisions to preserve the integrity of main business areas and future commercial zonings should preferably occur adjoining or adjacent to existing town centres wherever possible,*
- (vi) *commercial and business zones should be sufficiently flexible to enable the development of light service industries and other similar activities near central business areas,*

Whilst in subclause (c) it states that plans:

- (c) *should not substantially alter the location of existing zonings or substantially reduce the amount of land zoned for business development unless the council has made an assessment of the relevant area and is satisfied that the change will not have a detrimental impact on the existing or potential function of the area as a business centre.*

Provisions are also contained detailing requirements in respect of heritage conservation and regional services including transport, utility services and community services.

6.7 Zoning Strategy and LEP Amendment

The current planning work in the form of the draft Commercial Centres Strategy, the draft Vision, the draft Structure Plan and draft DCP has implications for the prevailing zonings. The zonings need to be adjusted to reflect the new strategic direction. In a similar manner some of the associated LEP development controls need to be varied. This review of the current LEP needs to occur in the context of the introduction of the new Local Environmental Plan Standard Instrument recently introduced by the Department of Planning.

Some independent LEP amendment actions have been recently commenced by Council in respect of prevailing zoning provisions. They have been undertaken as ‘traditional amendments’ to the prevailing LEP. The new zoning regime should be driven by the draft Structure Plan. In such context the following zoning is advanced ultimately for adoption:

- Commercial Core: B3 – Commercial Core
- Town Centre Support: B4 – Mixed Use
- Town Centre Support: SP1 – Special Activities (Bulky Goods Retail)
- Residential Support: R1 – General Residential

in accordance with the new Standard Instrument.

Until such time as preparation of the comprehensive LEP (in accordance with such instrument) the following zonings are recommended:

- General Business 3(a)
- Special Business 3(b), plus additional use of multi unit housing
- Residential Medium Density 2(b)

Development controls in the prevailing LEP which are inconsistent with the new strategic direction should be amended as part of the Town Centre LEP review process.

The new list of draft heritage items identified in the Town Centre should be the subject of an independent LEP amendment.

It is not considered necessary to adopt a pure land use driven zoning strategy, rather a place based approach that aligns with zonings is advanced. In this context rigid adherence to Special Use and Open Space zonings are negated. It should be noted that this does not diminish the public process for any Council dealings in respect of public lands in its custodianship. Nor does it threaten landuse activities currently zoned Special Uses or Open Space.

A relevant zoning map including recently initiated Council amendments and those proposed in the draft Structure Plan is contained in Figure 4 on proceeding page.

7.0 REALISING THE VISION

Realising the Vision and moreover the Statement of Desired Future Character will require the enactment of a series of preferred strategies and actions over time, which address the key issues.

These strategies and actions will be diverse and involve wide-ranging stakeholder input in the form of the public and private sectors, public/private partnerships and the community.

Some of these strategies and actions are contained in Council's Strategic Plan and supporting planning documents. Others are contained in the South Coast Regional Strategy; whilst others are alluded to in this report and will evolve over time.

A Town Centre Structure Plan and relevant Local Environmental Plan amendment and Development Control Plan and Design Guidelines are critical contributors to a relevant suite of strategies and actions; as are a Development Contributions Plan, government grants and Council's levy and budgetary strategy.

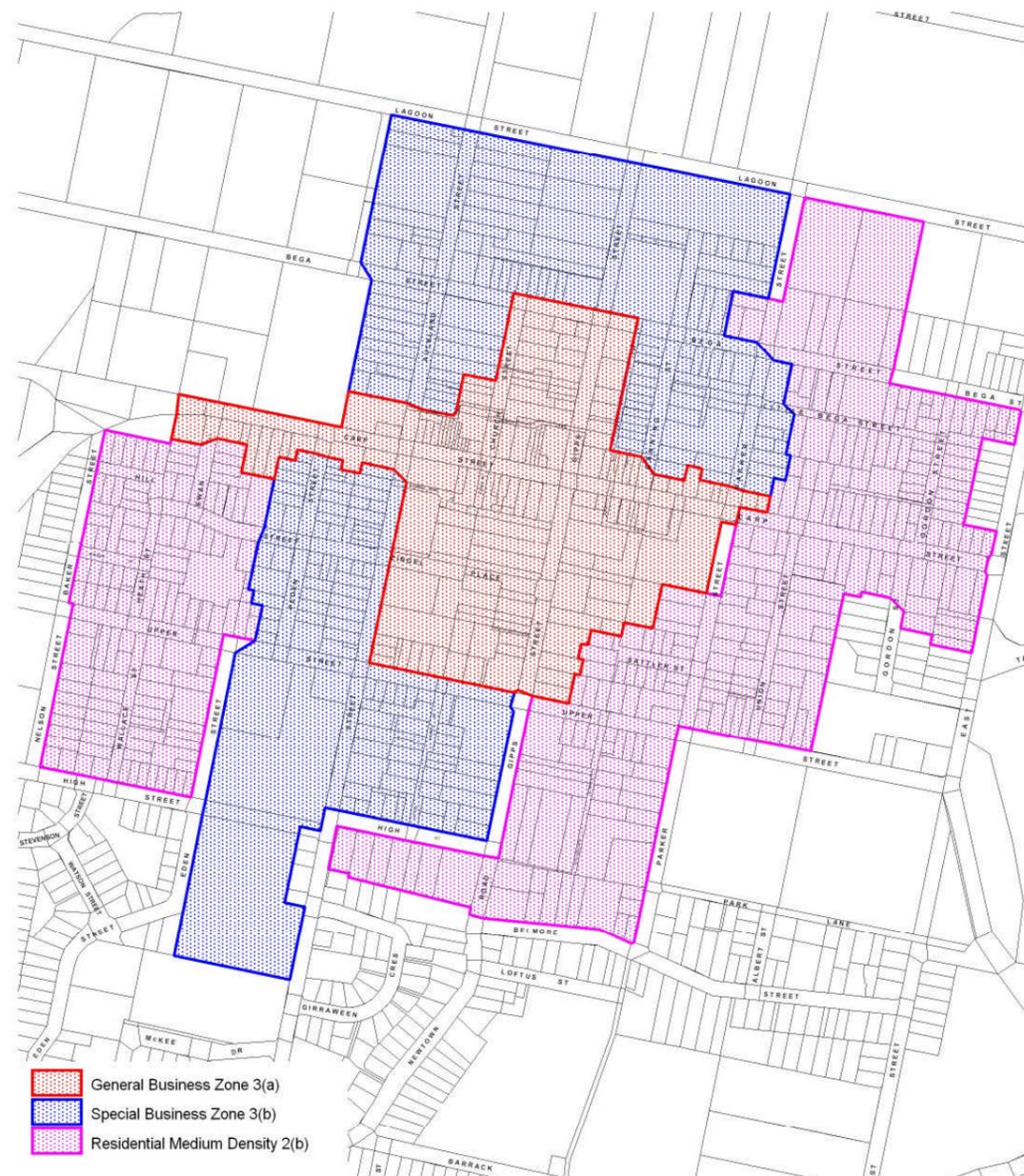


Figure 4 – New Zoning Map

8.0 TOWN CENTRE STRUCTURE PLAN AND ASSOCIATED CHARACTER

8.1 Introduction/Background

A Town Centre Structure Plan was developed from the preliminary planning work and community engagement. Specifically, it was informed by:

- The community visioning work including Council’s valued Consultation Group (Refer to Annexure A);
- Preliminary constraints and opportunities analysis;
- Regional and local strategies (including interpolation beyond current population growth trends and demands);
- Contemporary town centre urban design theory (modified for the local context)

The Key Features of the Plan and its supporting character are illustrated in Figure 5 and are summarised below

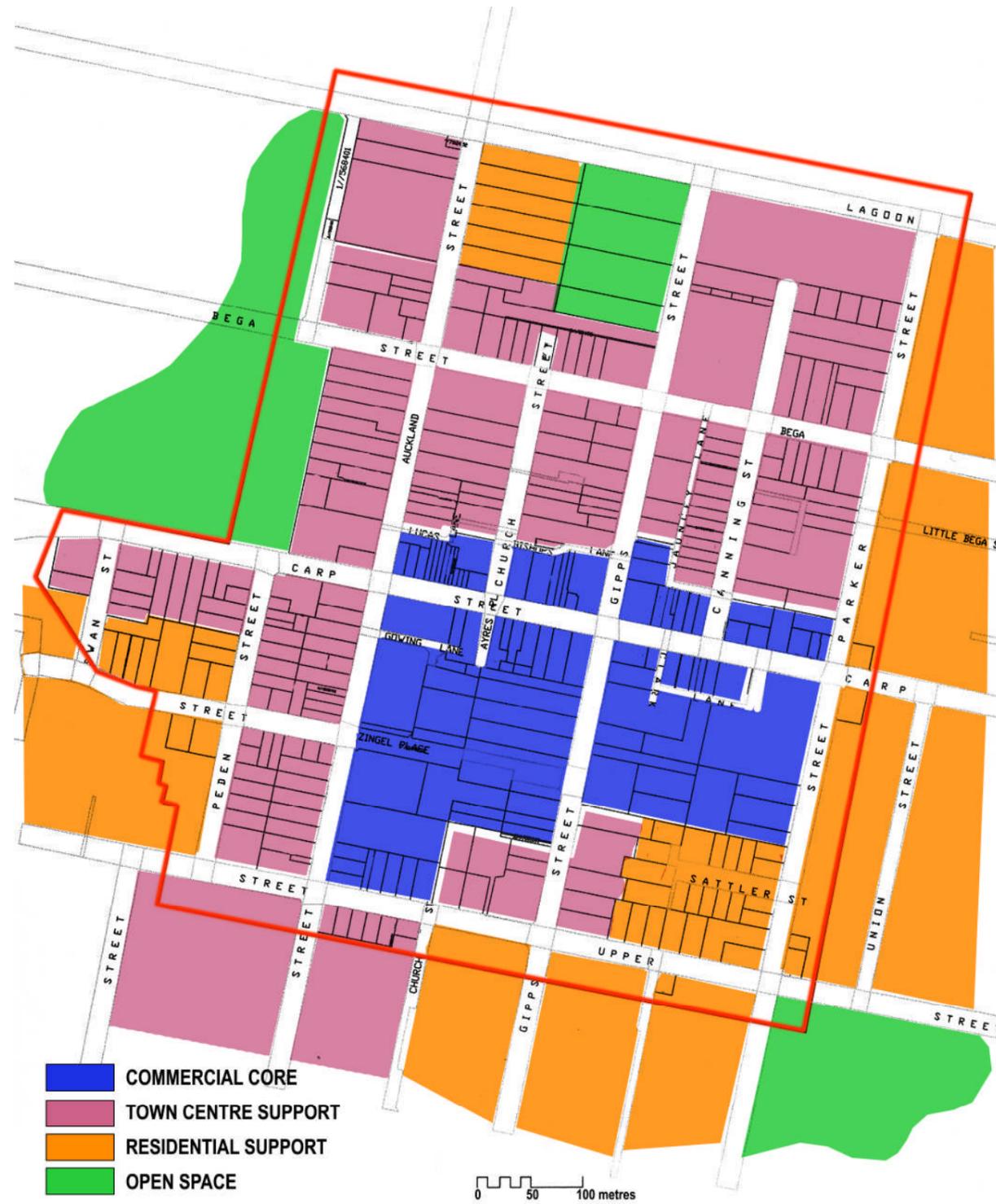


Figure 5 – Draft Structure Plan

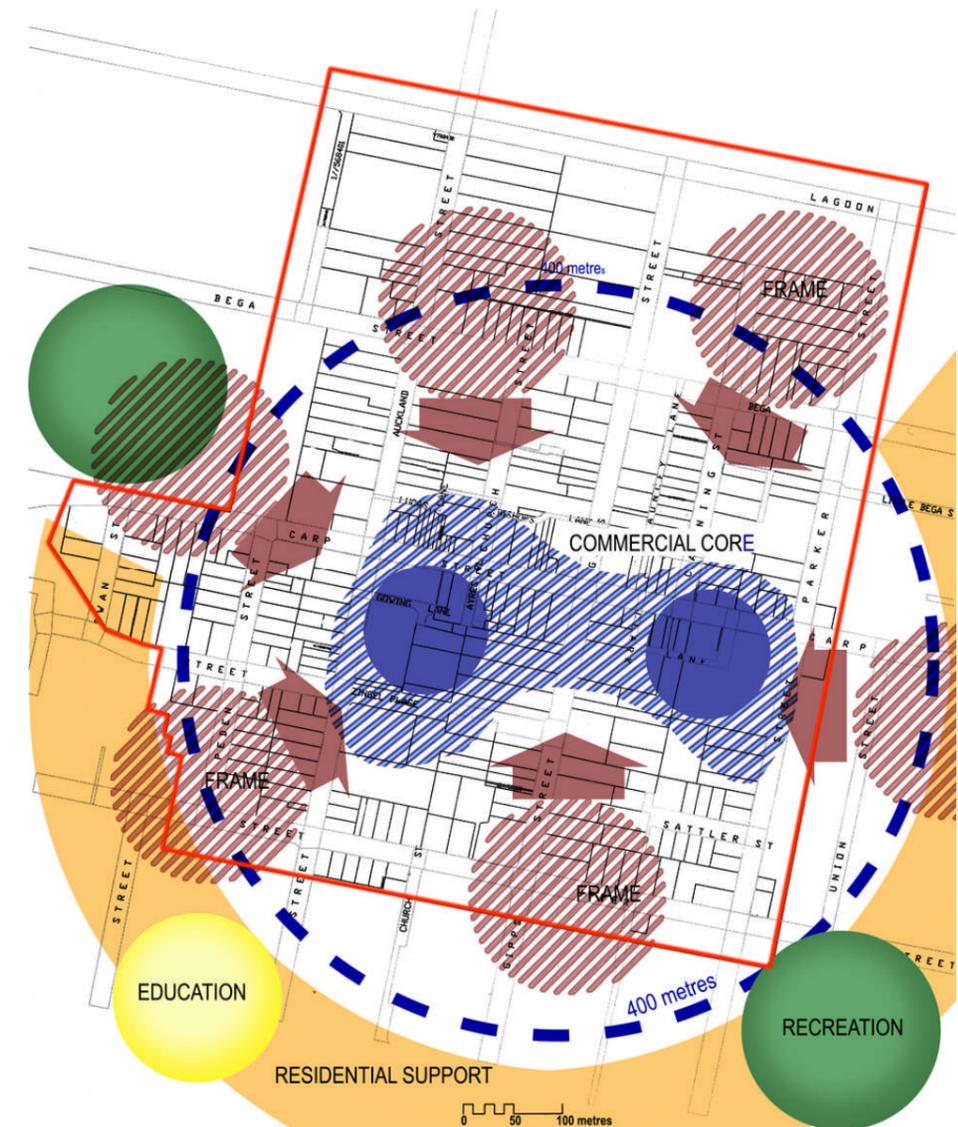


Figure 6 – The Compact City

8.2 A Compact Centre

- A compact Centre, which ensures that the required “energy” and vibrancy is realised.
- All major commercial/retail developments located in the core proper.
- Retail bulky good activities and service activities such as motor vehicle outlets, which reinforce the Centre proper (decentralisation of such facilities discouraged).
- Promotion and provision for “Down Town” housing opportunities.
- A Centre generally bounded by Bega Street, Parker Street, Upper Street and Auckland Street.
- Provision on the fringe for town centre support activities, (but non-promotion in the short-term).
- A redeveloped hospital located on the fringe of the Centre.



8.3 Commercial Core

- Creation and reinforcement of a distinct and pronounced commercial core.
- A core which provides for the higher order commercial/retail activities, with integrated support parking provision.
- Parking which is subservient to the streetscape.
- Provision of quality, high patronage public spaces in the core and integrated with major community activity nodes.
- “Down town” living opportunities.

8.4 Town Centre Support

- A “zone” of support activities, including in particular professional premises, educational facilities, retail bulky goods, health facilities and integrated medium density housing, which surround and integrate with the core.
- Sensitive integration of parking provision.
- Promotion of alternative housing opportunities.

8.5 Residential Support

- Retention of traditional housing forms and promotion on the fringe of opportunities for medium density residential redevelopment and in-fill development.
- Provision and promotion of housing mix opportunities.
- Residential redevelopment which generally retains a domestic scale.

8.6 Accessibility / Parking

- By-pass route reinforced as a priority infrastructure objective.
- Ultimate ‘reclaiming’ of Carp Street and Gipps Street as local pedestrian friendly streets.
- Identification and promotion of alternative priority route/s through/around the Centre and promoted.
- Implementation of local area traffic management improvements.
- Enhancement of pedestrian connectivity and improvement of amenity through targeted footpath widening and street furniture.
- Integration of multi-level parking with major commercial/retail developments in the core.
- Promotion of consolidated at grade precinct based parking.
- Optimisation of kerbside parking.
- Parking in cottage styled precincts is carefully integrated and does not dominate “domestic” qualities.

Appropriate fringe parking provision (and signage) for larger recreational vehicles and long-stay parkers.

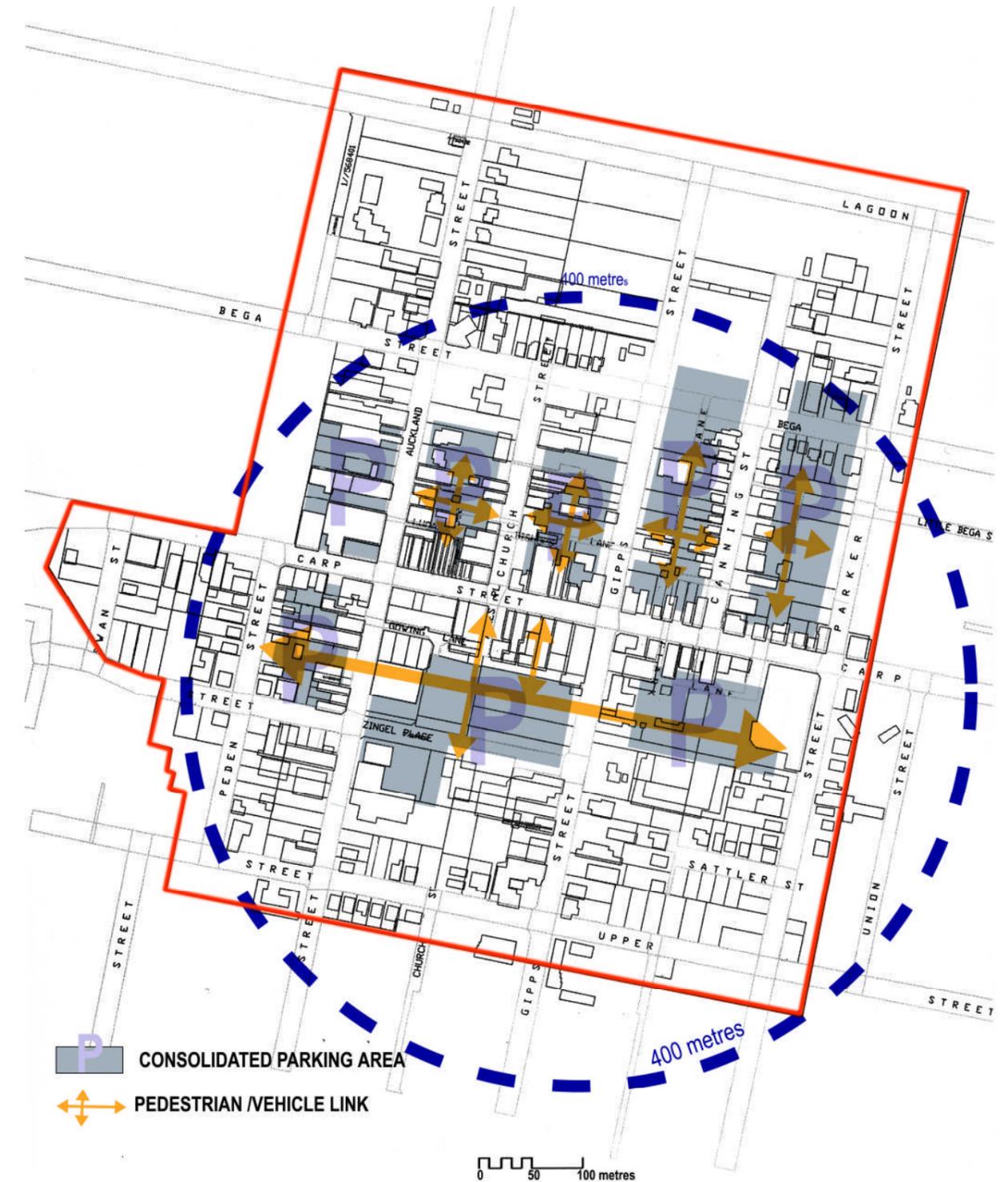


Figure 7 – Accessibility / Parking

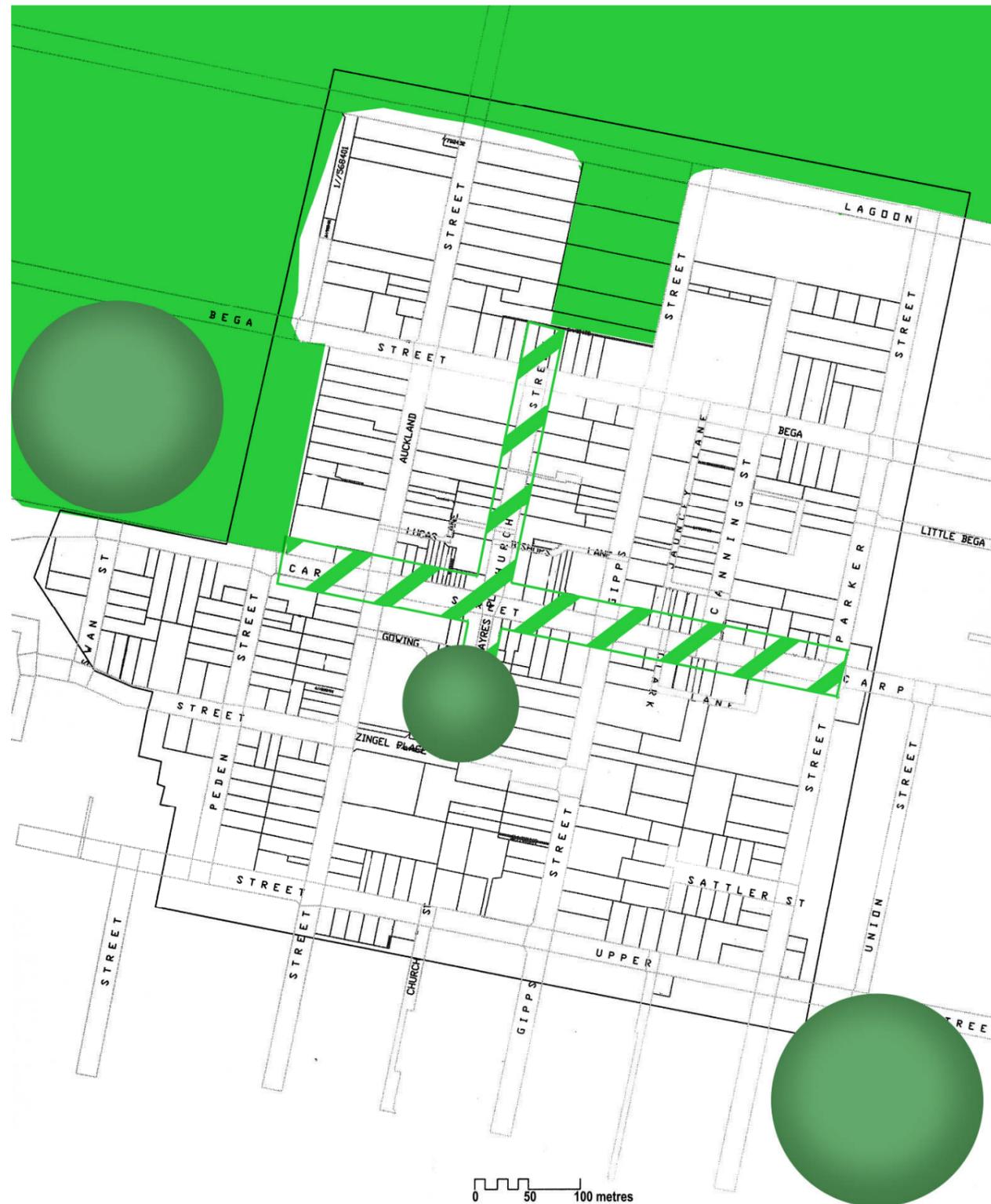


Figure 8 – Landscape and Public Domain

8.7 Landscape / Public Domain

- Expansion and enhancement of existing town centre local parks, where possible.
- Extension of the landscaping (principally exotic) which typifies the perimeter and edges of the floodplain to penetrate the town centre.
- Improvement of the pedestrian amenity.
- A redeveloped Littleton Gardens Precinct.
- Enhanced levels of public art provision.

8.8 Context

- Context of edge protruding into floodplain is optimised upon.
- Vistas to the floodplains, exotic vegetation and surrounding backdrop of hills is reinforced.
- A central core dominated by two storey buildings, with higher buildings being the exception, but promoted if good quality urban design is achieved and does not unnecessarily impact on important view lines, especially on strategic sites.
- Support residential development generally not exceeding 2 storeys, unless utilising sloping terrain or providing elevator access to each floor level within the development.
- Contemporary quality building dispersed between period buildings reflective of different architectural periods.
- Inappropriate alterations to period buildings retrofitted.
- Promotion of a strong edge delineation in a distinctive rural/urban interface.
- Capitalisation and integration of the wetlands/river with the Centre.

8.9 Zoning

- Establishment of a zoning regime for the Town Centre and environs. The zoning regime should have regard to the Department of Planning's LEP template and should be flexible to encourage redevelopment opportunities for the Bega Township.
- An interim zoning amendment pending adoption of new Shire wide comprehensive LEP.

9.0 TOWN CENTRE PRECINCTS (CHARACTER AREAS)

The Bega Town Centre exhibits a series of precincts with variable character. This character largely emerges from the nature and form of existing land use activities and the physical improvements, which are attached to such developments. It builds upon existing desirable character qualities whilst facilitating progressive redevelopment.

These character areas largely inform the template for the new Bega Town Centre Structure Plan and DCP. A vision is established for future land use activities in each area and the qualities that each will exhibit.

9.1 Commercial Core

The commercial core comprises Precincts 1 – 3 inclusive and 8; namely Carp Street (Main Street) and immediate environs, the Civic Precinct/Littleton Gardens and the Coles precinct. These areas should be considered B3 Commercial Core in the comprehensive LEP.

9.1.1 Precinct 1: Carp Street (Commercial Main street)

Carp Street performs the function of a traditional Main street shopping/commercial strip. It anchors a commercial core which should be reinforced in a generally southerly direction and further reinforced on its eastern and western flanks by major retail complexes.

The strip largely comprises two storey buildings or single storey buildings with extended parapets, with generally continuous awning treatments and shop fronts and advertising in various states of repair. No one architectural theme dominates the Main street landscape.

Elements of a public art program are evidenced in the footpath pavement. Street furniture is modest and a street planting program commenced. Major public monuments are located off the main carriageway.

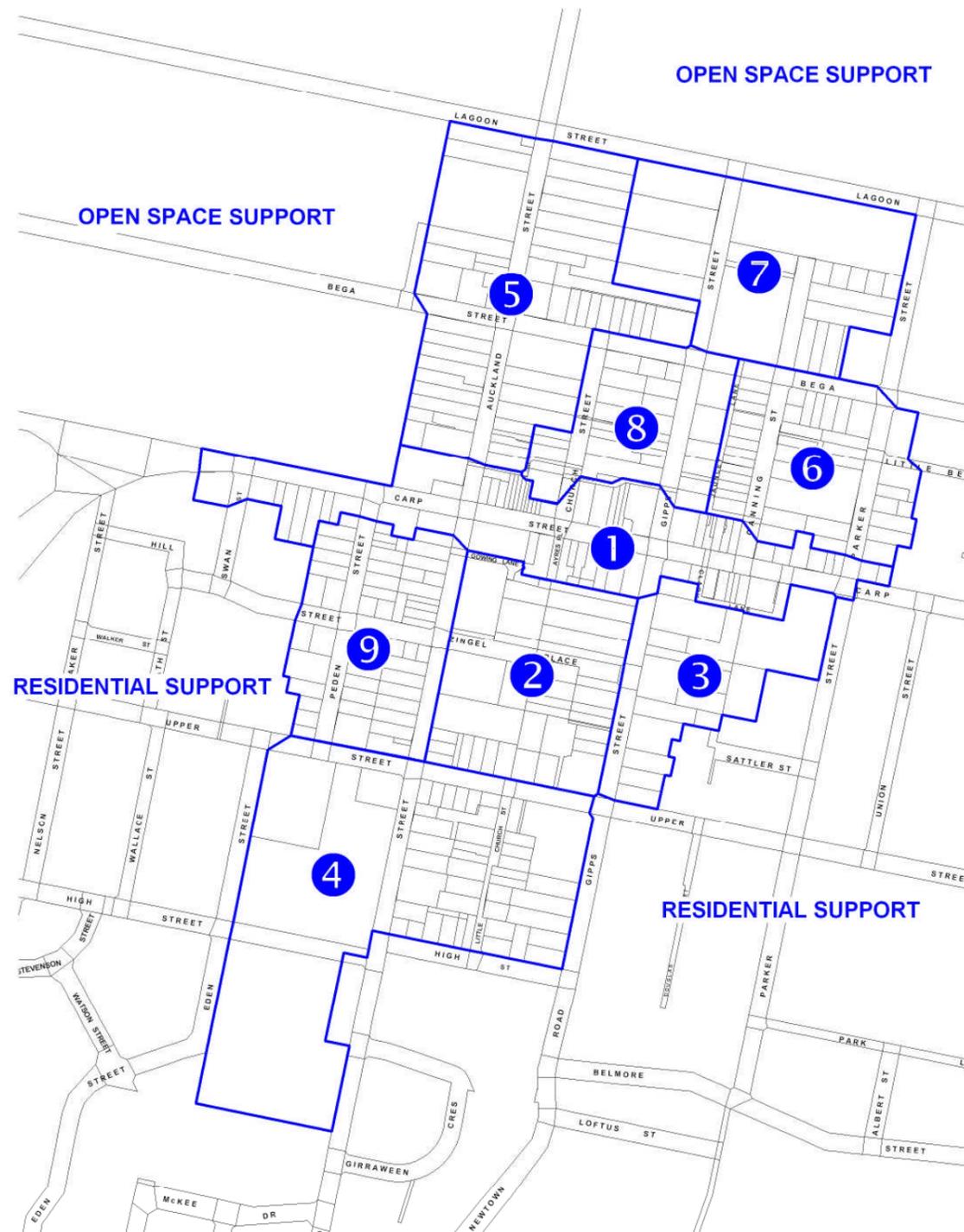


Figure 9 – Character Precincts

People stroll along the street, frequenting the commercial premises/shops and availing themselves of the public seating opportunities, particularly under the vine clad terrace structures.

The street should retain this two storey character so as to provide for pedestrian scale street life and not to dwarf and overshadow this public space and to permit glimpses of its distant landscape context.

High patronage specialty shops will increasingly occupy refurbished and rejuvenated shops with enhanced shopfronts and awnings and integrated advertising. They will address the pedestrian space and entice customers to 'come in'.

New development/redevelopment and the adaptive reuse of significant buildings should carefully integrate with the streetscape and heritage character.

9.1.2 Precinct 2 – Civic Precinct/Littleton Gardens

The site bounded by Carp, Auckland, Gipps and Upper Streets, including Zingel Place is considered suitable for the creation of a Town Square enclosed by civic, community and retail land uses generally. The Civic Centre Precinct forms an integral part of the Town Centre. The precinct includes a number of civic uses providing a range of services and facilities, such as the Council Administration Building, the Civic Centre, Library and the Bega Regional Art Gallery. The precinct also includes Littleton Gardens, public car parking, toilet facilities and shopping facilities. An illustration of the potential development outcome is presented in Figure 10 on the following page.

This area comprises the community soul of Bega. It is dominated by community and civic activities in public buildings and an increasingly tired landscape setting.

Council has the dominant presence and anchors the range of civic facilities and amenities. The area has an important local memorial role and is of importance in terms of indigenous cultural heritage.

A small shopping mall and the major local commercial club premises 'back onto' this area.

The area provides an opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment and provision of a 'higher order' shopping mall, new club premises and enhanced cultural facilities and public amenities in a re-energised and reconfigured landscape context.

The rejuvenated precinct will be a people place which has strong pedestrian linkages with the Main street shopping strip and 'enshrines' the Mount Mumbulla visual axis.



Rejuvenation and enhancement of Zingel Place forms a key component of the strategy



Figure 10: Possible Development Outcome: Zingel Place

Opportunities to activate all edges of the civic plaza will be optimised and will reinforce the human quality of the place.

Ample disabled parking provision should be made and appropriate provision for service vehicles. Other vehicles will be denied access to this area in pursuit of improved pedestrian safety.

Appropriate and accessible complementary parking should be made available in an integrated multi-level car park attached to the new shopping mall. Through traffic from Zingel Place will be negated as it is potentially embraced as part of the redevelopment scheme.

The Civic Precinct includes the western extension of the commercial core and needs to link closely with the “Coles” precinct.

The Auckland and Upper Street frontages provide scope for comprehensive redevelopment and are understood to be the focus of current planning/development initiatives. Any redevelopment scheme should ensure that development is built on the street alignment and that expansive walls are minimised and/or articulated and treated appropriately. Service facilities should not dominate the streetscape and appropriate acoustic measures should be embraced.

The expansive nature of the Auckland Street frontage and significant rise from Carp Street to Upper Street should dictate that any building/s respect the fall of the land and building bulk is broken up accordingly. Examples of possible elevation treatments are illustrated in Figure 11 on Page 26 of this report.

Any redevelopment should also have an active frontage to a refurbished Littleton Gardens. Safe and convenient access should be made available approximately mid-block for pedestrian movement between Auckland Street and the Civic Precinct/Littleton Gardens.

Opportunities for integrating multi-level car parking facilities with major redevelopment schemes should be optimised.

Gowing Lane should be retained as a service lane for buildings and businesses in the immediate precinct.

Any rooftop plant or equipment should be appropriately screened so as to minimise their impact when viewed from public places in particular.

The Gipps Street frontage is largely undeveloped and devoted to surface level car parking provision. It also provides an opportunity for comprehensive future redevelopment. Any redevelopment should embrace similar principles to those enunciated in respect of the Auckland Street frontage as they relate principally to site responsive building design, servicing accessibility and integrated on-site parking provision.

Bus servicing facilities should be rationalised so as not to compromise the redevelopment of the area and to ensure appropriate access to such services.

The following principles/strategies are considered appropriate:

- To retain the Council Administrative Building, in particular its administrative functions within the Town Centre;
- To preserve the opportunity for the expansion of the Council Administrative Building in a westerly direction towards the current civic centre and incorporate the expansion of the library, the retro-fitting of the Council Building, the relocation of the arts centre into an expanded building and the provision of a new civic centre providing for the needs of the community.
- The closure of the western end of Zingel Place and incorporating this land within a new shopping complex;
- To redesign Littleton Gardens by providing a performance stage and expanded open space area and other facilities;
- To provide for the ‘sleeving’ of shops along the frontage of the expanded retail development fronting the expanded open space;
- To reduce the amount of car parking in the west so the open space area can be expanded to a size suitable for a regional centre;
- To make provision for emergency vehicles and short stay drop-off/pick-up zone associated with the new civic centre and RSL building;
- To retain the Civic Centre as a professional entertainment, function and reception centre in its proposed new building within the Civic Centre Precinct;
- To promote the ability of the Civic Centre to provide additional services (e.g. hospitality training and stage performances, conferences)
- To provide a direct link between the Council Administrative Building and the Civic Centre.

9.1.3 Precinct 3 ‘Coles’ – Upper, Gipps and Parker Streets

The subject area comprises the eastern prolongation of the commercial core and rises upslope in a southerly direction.

The Central Hotel/Coles/Town Centre Motel provides a site capable of comprehensive redevelopment and is understood to have been the subject of current planning/development initiatives at least for part of the site.

The careful integration and restoration of heritage items including the Central Hotel and related outbuildings should be considered in any redevelopment scheme.

Enhanced pedestrian and vehicle access to the precinct should similarly be integrated in any redevelopment scheme with a focus upon linking Gipps and Parker Streets in a pedestrian sense as a minimum.

The following principles should be central to redevelopment:

- Development should generally be “street aligned”.
- Expansive walls should be minimised and/or articulated and treated appropriately.
- Service facilities should not dominate the streetscape.
- Appropriate acoustic measures should be embraced.
- Buildings rising up the slope from Carp Street should respect the fall of the land and ensure building bulk is appropriate.
- Optimum parking opportunities should be integrated.
- Rooftop plant should be appropriately screened.
- Appropriate decontamination of the site should occur where required.
- The southern interface abuts residential development and should ensure an appropriate interface treatment.

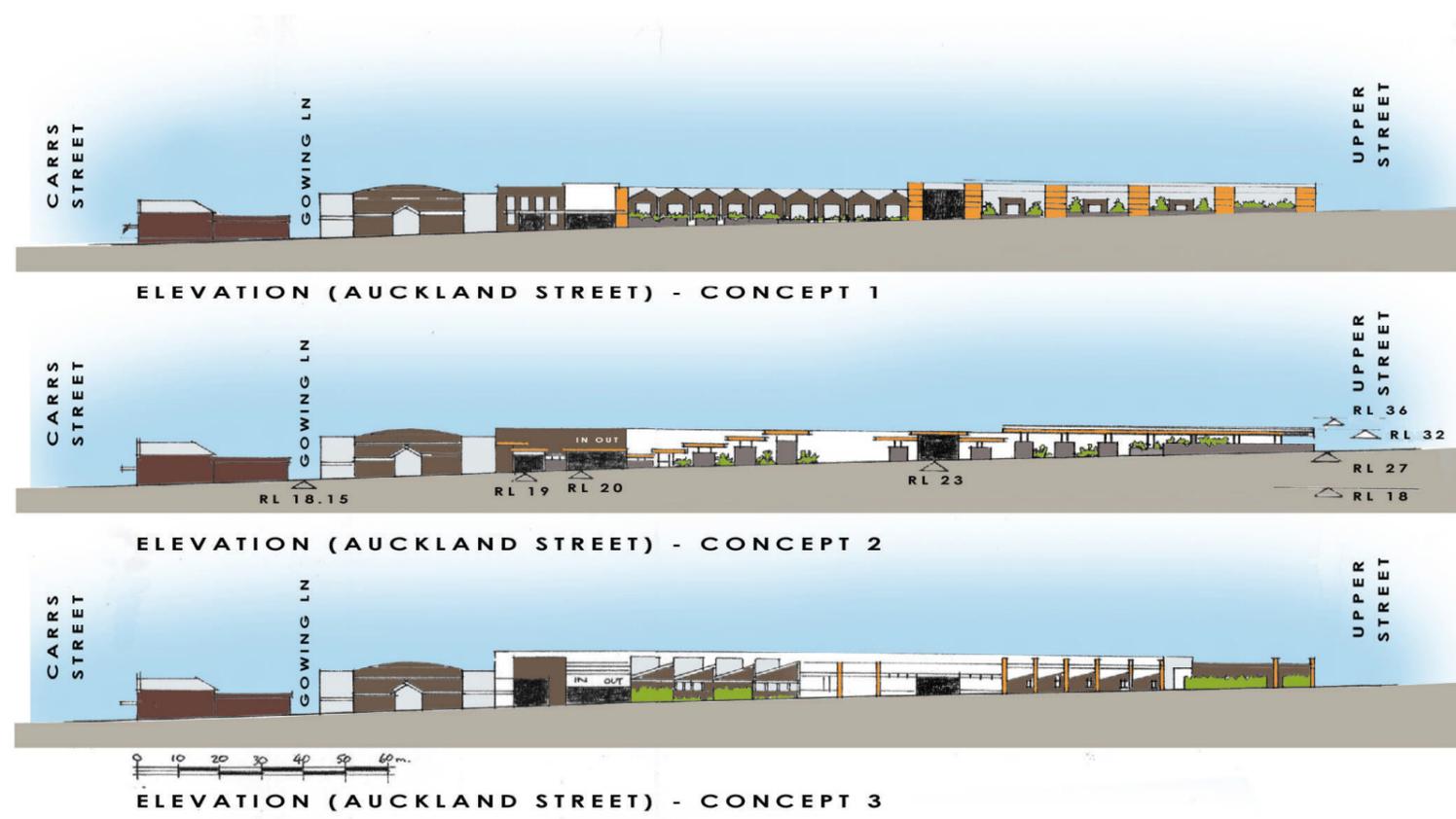


Figure 11 – Design of Possible Elevation Design Scenarios

9.2 Town Centre Support

The support area as the name suggests provides a mix of supporting commercial style development, residential development and support infrastructure. Most of the precinct should ultimately be zoned B4 – Mixed Use. In the interim it should be rezoned 3 (b) (as amended). It comprises some 6 character areas described below:

9.2.1 Precinct 4 - Eden, Upper, (Southern) Auckland, Little Church and Gipps Streets

This area is dominated by educational facilities, public purposes, and in particular the Bega High School and Police Station. Other educational facilities and commercial activities will potentially cluster in this locality over time as it assumes a mixed-use character. The precinct should ultimately be zoned B4 – Mixed Use. In the interim it should be zoned 3 (b), as amended.

Provision for safe pedestrian and vehicle movement through and around this precinct will remain a priority. Arrangements for bus set down/pick up will continue to evolve over time as demands change and increasingly more hospitable arrangements are championed.

Enhanced perimeter plantings (non-screening) should be pursued in the precinct, whilst road crossings are also enhanced.

9.2.2 Precinct 5 - Lower Gipps, Bega, (Northern) Auckland Streets

The subject precinct has a strong community focus evidenced in the existing school, museum and educational/child care facilities. This focus should be reinforced. The precinct should ultimately be zoned B4 – Mixed Use. In the interim it should be zoned 3 (b), as amended.

The area opposite the Bega Primary School (eastern side of Auckland Street) and adjacent to the museum precinct should be considered for medium density/seniors lifestyle living and capitalise upon its street address and visual access to the wetlands and floodplain generally.

The area to the south of the school precinct should be considered for ancillary retail bulky goods type activities and represents an extension to the Auckland Street West major retail bulky goods precinct.

Lower lying areas should be subject to filling to improve the utility of the subject lands providing ‘flood free’ building platforms, without compromising environmental quality and significantly exacerbating flood impacts.

9.2.3 Precinct 6 - Lower Parker Street (West), Bega and Gipps Streets

The Parker/Canning/Gipps Street component of the area comprises an intact cottage precinct, which has undergone incremental transformation as cottages have been converted and expanded for professional office functions, particularly medical. Limited aged care/hospital facilities are present.

On-site and kerbside parking provision exists. Parking should be retained as subservient to the cottage dominance and generally afford maximum utility with minimalist impact. Opportunities for consolidating parking provision should also be pursued.

The precinct should be encouraged to continue to be ‘gentrified’ in such manner, with every emphasis placed upon ensuring preservation of the cottage feel.

Enhanced pedestrian access to the Main street precinct should be pursued.

The precinct should ultimately be zoned B4 – Mixed Use. In the interim it should be zoned 3 (b), as amended.

9.2.4 Precinct 7 – The Spenco Site

This precinct provides an opportunity for comprehensive filling and the development of bulky goods outlets. The area to the west of Gipps Street provides an opportunity for overflow and long stay parking.

Intensive landscape buffering should occur on Parker Street to screen the typically larger bulky goods buildings and provide amenity to car parking and visual buffering for residential development and Mumbulla School and activities. This landscaping should potentially extend onto land on the western side of Parker Street. Similarly the northern boundary should be extensively planted so as to ensure screening from the Riverine parklands.

Bulky goods buildings should be orientated to the west and have rear elevations and service areas to the east, so as to minimise acoustic impacts on nearby residents.

A long-term/tourist vehicle parking area should be located adjacent to Precinct 5 and Gipps Street, overlooking the wetlands. It should be linked by enhanced pedestrian access to the

Carp Street precinct. Appropriate signposting should be installed at relevant locations directing the general public to such facility.

This future scenario has been developed notwithstanding initial community support for residential development. However, the desire to have bulky goods trading support the town centre and some of the lot amalgamation issues associated with other lands identified for such purposes influence the promotion of the site for bulky goods development. Further, previous industrial uses and inherent land values would impact on the viability of residential development. The precinct should ultimately be considered for rezoning SPI – Special Activities (Bulky Goods Retail). In the interim it should be zoned 3 (b), as amended.

9.2.5 Precinct 8 - Lower Gipps, Bega and Church Streets

The subject precinct apart from the church dominance (northwestern corner) is the subject of modest development. It lends itself to low-rise generally street aligned redevelopment with integrated parking, which respects a reasonable church curtilage.

The northeastern area of the precinct is subject to inundation by floodwaters. It is the site of a significant weeping tree and of major cultural significance to the local indigenous community. An appropriate curtilage and management regime should be implemented to ensure its integrity is preserved in the redevelopment of the precinct.

Moderate filling of the lower lying component of the precinct should occur as part of the comprehensive redevelopment of the precinct.

The Church Street bus set-down should be expanded and appropriate shelter enhancement pursued, as the locality is designated the major bus ‘terminus’ in the Town Centre.

Commercial activity and eateries should be encouraged in the Church Street locality to ensure a vibrant locality which enhances the passive surveillance of the bus “interchange”.

Residential accommodation should be encouraged in a mixed-use configuration, as an upper level use of premises (shop-top housing). The precinct should ultimately be zoned B3 – Commercial Core. In the interim it should be zoned 3 (a).

9.2.6 Precinct 9 - Auckland Street (West), Corner Carp and Peden Streets and Peden Street East

The subject precinct is rather mixed in nature with many lower profile lower density occupiers of space, with generally modest capital improvements. The northern extremity has a general rural service feel and is subject to inundation of floodwaters as is the entry to Carp Street.

The area should become the major focus of ancillary retail bulky goods trading and services. This will entail redevelopment involving some lot consolidation over time and the construction of substantial new buildings with significant on-site parking provision. It will also involve conserving, respecting and reinterpreting some of the rural influences.

New buildings should generally have a street presence with integrated parking to the rear or side. Opportunities for consolidating parking areas should be pursued. The western side of Peden Street should retain the cottage character but facilitate adaptive reuse for commercial office purposes and sympathetic cottage scaled redevelopment for commercial purposes, where justified.

The precinct should ultimately be zoned B4 – Mixed Use. In the interim it should be zoned 3 (b), as amended.

Many of the new buildings will be generally of a large footprint and involve the use of tilt-up concrete panels or the like. It is important that such buildings exhibit a contemporary country feel and that stark, single dimension facades be avoided.

Opportunities for mixed usage should not be ignored in the redevelopment of the area.

9.3 Residential Support Precinct

The residential support precinct (residential areas fringing Precincts 1 – 9) currently comprises a predominantly residential precinct dominated by a diverse array of residential premises, with principally a domestic scale and detached character.

It should develop with a more diverse and intense array of housing products providing for a variety of accommodation needs that wish to capitalise upon proximity to the town centre and all that it offers commercially and socially.

The demand and economics of redevelopment in many instances are likely to be questionable in the short to medium term. The housing form will evolve as the market matures. The evolution is likely to be incremental. Notwithstanding, densities (including medium density housing and seniors living opportunities) should be clearly established and promoted. Redevelopment, however, must clearly seek to conserve the general character of the area and the more substantial/heritage buildings and associated landscape settings. Indeed, careful attention will need to be devoted to ensuring that it does not ‘overpower’ existing development or detract from the positive qualities of the existing streetscapes, which desirably should be conserved. This care will need to be particularly acute in the vicinity of heritage items. Appropriate lot amalgamation will be required to ensure reasonable built form, residential amenity and streetscape outcomes.

Development at increased residential densities in particular will need to be particularly responsive to the generally sensitive prevailing residential amenity.

9.4 Open Space Support

This multi-purpose open space area aligns with the Bega River floodplain and coupled with the more expansive flood affected areas and wetlands provides a buffer and pleasant transition between the City and the countryside. It offers even further scope for community and recreation activities, improved access for cyclists and pedestrians and beautification/enhancement.

The area rather than ‘sitting on the perimeter’ needs to be integrated and enlivened as part of the town centre. Numerous opportunities exist for further engaging the community in respect of these lands.

10.0 GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES / REQUIREMENTS

Realisation of any design vision is generally not easily achieved. To assist in this regard the following design principles / requirements have been developed and will ultimately inform the draft DCP.

10.1 Sustainability

The principles of sustainability have been identified as a platform for developing the new vision for Bega and the draft Structure Plan.

These principles are multi-dimensional and should be reflected in natural systems, social and economic outcomes. The draft Structure Plan at an overarching level seeks to reinforce this concept through promotion of the diverse and permeable compact city concept, which is integrated with the immediate environment.

The following principles should be embraced in the quest for a sustainable city.

Energy Efficiency

- Development should be efficient in terms of energy use.
- Energy consumption should be reduced by minimising the use of mechanical ventilation, particularly air conditioning.
- The compact city layout should be reinforced and supported with an increasingly permeable movement network that promotes reduced distances of travel and alternative movement means and minimises energy consumption.
- Solar cells and solar hot water systems should be encouraged.

Solar Access and Overshadowing

- Buildings should be designed to optimise solar access to habitable rooms, work spaces and open space and optimise the use of skylights, internal courtyards and the like.
- Overshadowing should be minimised through a focus upon appropriate building bulk and orientation of buildings and spaces.

Natural Ventilation

- Buildings should be designed to optimise access to fresh air and to assist in promoting thermal comfort.
- Internal layouts should promote natural ventilation where possible.

Water Management

- Developments should incorporate the principles of water sensitive urban design (WSUD).
- Impervious surfaces should be minimised.
- Integrated systems for collecting, reusing, flood mitigation and treatment of stormwater runoff should be employed.
- The objectives of water management should be consistent with BASIX. Water efficient fixtures should be utilised.
- Development should not exacerbate stormwater flows on flooding of other properties.
- Adequate provision should be made for the collection and disposal of surface and roof water runoff.

Waste Management

- Design should ensure waste minimisation and efficient disposal of waste generated by developments.
- The waste management system should be designed to and located to minimise aesthetic, odour and noise impacts.
- Garbage and recycling facilities are to promote waste minimisation principles.
- Waste management systems of residential and non-residential uses should be separated.
- Garbage collection points must be accessible and provide for efficient waste collection.

Natural Systems

- Changes to the natural hydrology of the area should be minimised.
- Foster ecological linkages with the river, floodplain and wetlands.
- Protect and augment existing remnant vegetation on both public and private land.
- Promote biodiversity in planting on public lands and corridors.
- Promote a green image for the town.

Social

- A sense of place should be promoted in development initiatives.
- Housing diversity should be provided for and encouraged, including smaller low cost structures, increased densities, shop-top housing and the like.
- Accessibility planning should have regard to the mobility needs of the whole community.
- Community infrastructure should be provided and designed for cultural diversity and flexibility of usage.
- Consolidate and expand community facilities within close proximity to the core.
- Maintain the vitality of the traditional retail strips along Carp Street.
- Promote active street frontages and passive surveillance in urban design.
- Enhance the amenity of the town centre; including improved street furniture, building façade upgrade program expanded public spaces and tree planting programs.

Built Form

- Increased development densities that do not detract from prevailing character should be promoted.
- Building bulk should have regard to the principles of energy efficiency, natural ventilation, solar access and overshadowing.
- Buildings should optimise permeability in layout.
- Building design should contribute to optimising the utility and amenity of contiguous open space areas and activating streets.
- Built form should contribute to promoting a sense of place.
- Retain and rehabilitate existing buildings that display heritage qualities.
- Ensure new development is sympathetic to prevailing heritage quality.

10.2 Views and Vistas

The views and vistas, associated with Bega's commanding country town setting, anchoring the floodplains and respecting the mountain backdrops set it apart as a unique place. These iconic views and vistas are magnified by the prevailing topography and the alignment of the grid street pattern and some street plantings.

Not only is a pleasant aesthetic context evidenced, but important cultural linkages with the indigenous community are afforded. The views and vistas should be reinforced and conserved through adoption of the following principles/actions.

- Views along public streets to the Bega River and its associated floodplains and wetlands and the distant surrounding landscape should be retained and embellished through framework planting and the like, particularly in the Town Square (Littleton Gardens).
- The unique views to Mount Mumbulla and the hinterland should be recognised and preserved.
- Opportunities to maintain view corridors from Upper Street should be pursued in redevelopment scenarios.
- Opportunities to preserve and enhance strategic plantings in the town centre and immediate environs should be pursued.
- Large-scale buildings should generally not exceed the "visual absorption" capacity of the town centre when viewed from a distance.
- Buildings should generally be responsive to prevailing topography and in so doing minimise building bulk and its attendant impacts on views.
- Signature buildings performing a significant view marker function should be conserved and enhanced, whilst new buildings performing such functions should be encouraged.

- The removal, relocation and/or screening of features and buildings, which detract from the ambience and views of the town centre and environs, should be promoted.

10.3 Accessibility, Parking, Movement and Circulation

Access to and through the town centre and movement about a rejuvenated and redeveloped centre and immediate environs rank highly as qualities creating an accessible and relatively safe place. Opportunities to create enhanced vehicular and pedestrian permeability and connectivity should underpin redevelopment. Increased densities and activity alone will introduce demands for a “finer grained” access plan.

The most critical improvements to local accessibility are highlighted in the DCP: within the town centre there is a need for improved accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists. Access for people with disabilities will also be improved throughout the town centre.

The overarching objective should be to sensitively balance traffic management and car parking requirements with the desire to create a pedestrian friendly environment within the town centre. Improved town centre amenity is further dependent upon removal of traffic, with no town centre destination, via the priority construction of the By-pass

The following accessibility principles have informed the Structure Plan and should similarly inform development and redevelopment proposals and accessibility objectives generally:

- The proposed By-pass should be pursued as an overarching accessibility objective and as a priority.
- Alternative priority routes should be optimised.
- Opportunities to foster a “finer grained” accessibility network should be pursued, including pedestrian paths.
- All development/redevelopment proposals should be considered in terms of precinct and centre scale accessibility objectives.
- Buildings should be designed to optimise “overlooking” and “passive surveillance” of public places and thoroughfares and in particular private and public walkways.
- Pedestrian arcade style development should provide an inviting width, be lined with active shop fronts on both sides, be straight and maintain a line of sight and be open for extended periods.
- Footpaths construction should be formalised along all streets.
- Street and public space lighting and furniture should be provided along key pedestrian routes.
- Pedestrian and vehicle access to buildings should be separated.
- Access to parking and loading facilities should be provided from secondary streets or laneways where possible to protect the amenity of the public domain and reduce conflicts.
- The accessibility network should make provision for mobility-impaired persons.
- Focal nodes and commercial activity should be fostered to activate pedestrian spaces.
- Pedestrian priority should be improved on streets with local area traffic management installations, including blisters and landscaping.
- Increase the width of pedestrian pavements where possible in the core.
- Ensure appropriate multi-purpose accessibility to the Town Square.

Annexure B presents a list of recommended accessibility improvements focussed upon traffic movements.

Convenient, accessible parking is considered vital to the functioning and attractiveness of commercial centres. Expectations of this nature tend to be more prevalent in existing towns where patrons and residents are confronted with the nature of competing demands (as is commonly experienced in metropolitan locations) and the need to constantly seek balance.

On-site parking in the front of properties is generally considered inappropriate and should be ‘retrofitted’ over time where practical. Parking and access to it should not dominate the streetscape in other secondary streets, particularly in ‘domestic’ scale developments. The following urban design principles/requirements are inherent in the Structure Plan and should be pursued in development schemes and public enhancement works:

- Consolidated at-grade precinct based parking should be promoted.
- Kerbside parking should be optimised.
- Appropriate fringe area parking should be provided for larger recreational vehicles and long-stay parkers.
- Adequate parking should be provided for all uses and activities without compromising amenity or pedestrian safety.
- Parking should be provided in convenient and accessible locations.
- Integrated multi-level parking should be provided with major developments.
- Large surface car parks adjacent to streets should generally be avoided or at least adequately softened by landscaping.
- Private on-site parking should not be visible from public streets and places; whilst ‘low-key’ developments should retain the ‘domestic’ scale of the dwelling (This should particularly be the case with the adaptive reuse of cottages for professional purposes).
- Car parking structures at street level and where adjoining public places should present an active frontage to adjoining streets and public spaces.
- No car park or service entry should be more than 6 metres in length along any building frontage and where practicable should not be located in pedestrian areas.
- The parking requirements in the RTA Guidelines for Traffic Generating Development should apply.
- Visitor parking spaces should be clearly marked.
- The use of on-street car parking should be maximised for the town.
- Appropriate provision should be made for bicycle parking facilities.

Figure 12 over page summaries the proposed package of traffic management/accessibility measures.

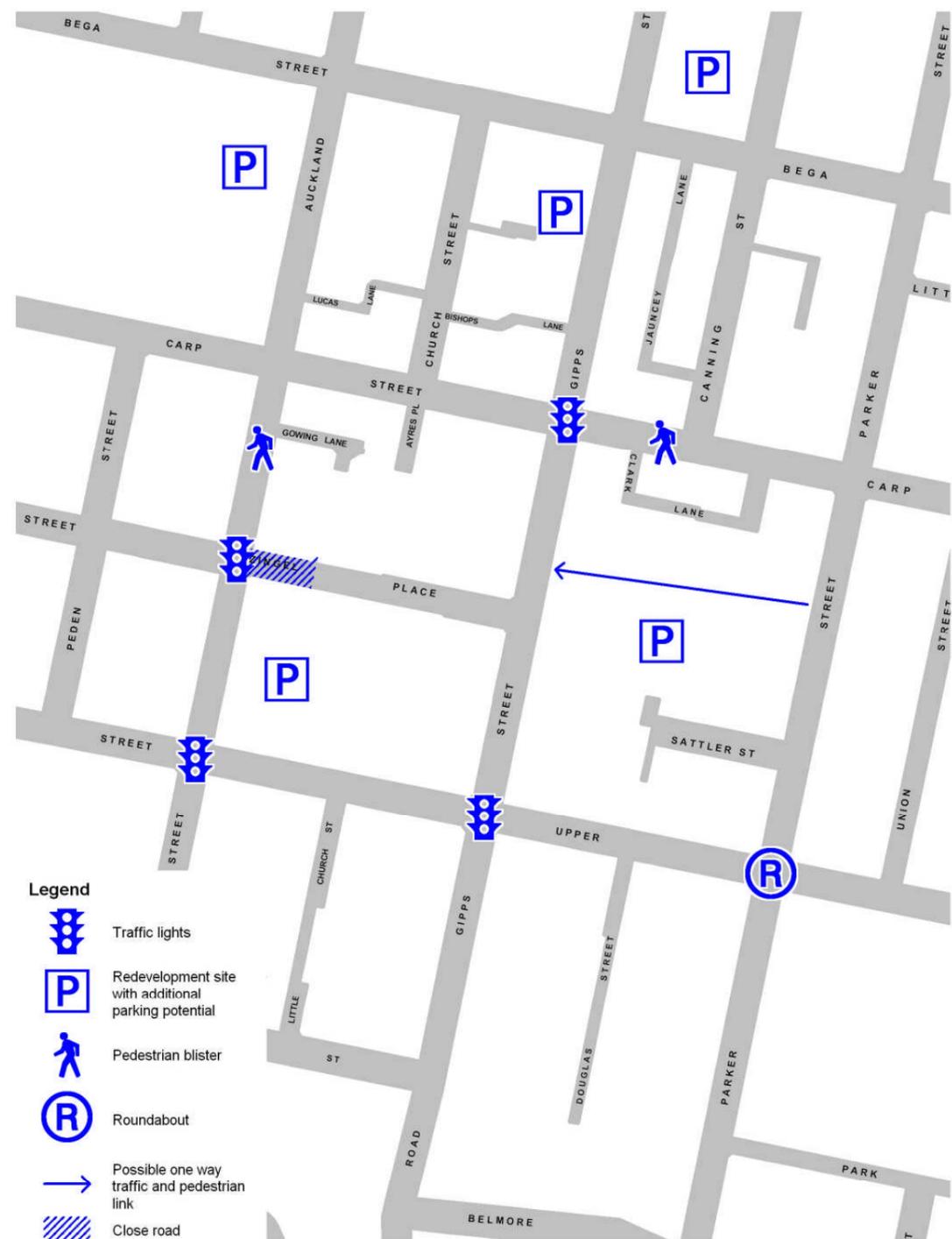


Figure 12 – Traffic Management/Accessibility Measures

Apart from perhaps 2 or 3 larger retail developments, the commercial growth of Bega over the next decade will rest more with renovation of and extensions to existing commercial premises. While it is desirable to encourage more residential in the inner town, this is not projected to be high volume in the first 10 years.

It should be noted that the absence of major development with ‘self-contained’ parking provision, development is likely to be incremental over an extensive development horizon. It is unlikely that Council will need to consider a two-storey car park in the first 10 years, provided a new major complex is developed with its own parking.

Significant parking contributions are not likely to accrue and the demand for further independent decked car parking is not likely to emerge in the short to medium term. Councils parking strategy in the short to medium term should focus upon acquisition and rationalisation of more surface level parking on the perimeter for longer stay and large vehicle parking.

10.4 Public Domain and Community

The public domain performs an important function in contributing to the feel of a place. It has a symbiotic relationship with the private domain. Investment in public places and infrastructure is critical if the context for new and rejuvenated buildings is to be optimised.

Streetscape and landscape works within public streets, places and spaces should be co-ordinated to reinforce the character of the centre and ensure the development of attractive, high quality, memorable and comfortable public places.

Capital investment in the public domain typically involves major commitment and to be effective must occur with limited staging, in a particularly finite time frame. Major private redevelopment initiatives may provide the catalyst for significant public domain enhancement, as may public/private ‘partnerships’. The Civic Precinct/Littleton Gardens is a case in point.

Rationalisation of stormwater drainage, limited footpath widening and pavement enhancement, the creation of quality spaces, the installation of enhanced street furniture and public/private investment in public art and framework planting should represent the immediate focus.

The following principles are inherent in the Structure Plan and should inform controls and implementation:

- Clear boundaries between the public and private domain should be promoted to increase security, privacy and safety.
- Public spaces should be designed to provide an appropriate interface with commercial activity, adequate opportunities for integrated public facilities and public art and relevant recreational experiences.
- All street furniture is to be co-ordinated.
- The stormwater drainage system should be rationalised.
- Public art should be integrated in the public domain over time.
- The provision of street trees and public domain landscaping should be consistent.
- The perimeter exotic species plantings should penetrate the town centre.
- Development should aspire to the highest standards in landscape design, construction and maintenance and exhibit themes that reflect and promote the achievement of the vision for Bega.
- Landscaping should promote the latest ESD principles and practices.
- Lighting and directional signage should be provided to all pedestrian paths, car park areas, building entries, and public spaces.
- The Riverine environment should be protected and enhanced and public access optimised as a major public/community asset, including the opportunities for community gardens and permaculture.
- Linkages between public assets and the broader community should be enhanced.
- New community facilities should generally be multipurpose in nature.
- Any redevelopment or refurbishment of the Memorial Hall should ensure maximum flexibility including management arrangements.

10.5 Signage

Signage is an important element of any centre. It performs important directional and identification functions in terms of commercial and retail premises and public facilities.

Signage should provide structure and legibility and serve to reinforce the Centre's image and identity in an integrated manner. Signage should not increase visual clutter. Directional signage is generally less problematic than advertising signage. There exists in most commercial centres a view that more distinguishing advertisements and greater exposure to corporate colours is critical to success.

The answer, however, is very much one of balance and careful integration with a building's architectural features. Some good examples of attainment of this principle are reflected in Bega at present. The following principles/requirements are critical to realisation of the objectives:

- Signage should be consistent with the desired character of the area and with the development of thematic advertising for Bega.
- Signage should not detract from the amenity of the area.
- Signage should not obscure or compromise important views, dominate the skyline or reduce the quality of vistas.
- The viewing rights of other advertisers should be respected.
- The scale, proportion and form of advertising should be appropriate to the streetscape setting or landscape.
- All signage should be contained within the envelope of buildings and should have regard to the architectural features of the building.
- Rooftop and above awning signs should not be permitted.
- Commercial signage is to be generally limited to identification signage. (Located above entrances or suspended under verandahs or awnings).
- The uses of brightly lit neon, moving and backlit signage should be avoided.
- Signage indicating tourist features/facilities should be provided, particularly indicating the location of car parks, etc.

10.6 Character

An urban area exhibits a feel, which has an immediate impact upon residents and visitors alike. The feel is created in large part by materials of construction, the method of application and arrangement of materials and the palate of colours, which tend to dominate.

Dominant architectural styles also exert a strong influence on character. And although there is not one dominant architectural style, generally the grander and more significant buildings provide an important lead, "mimicry" should, however, be avoided.

Quality contemporary architecture which is sympathetic to the heritage qualities of the town and evokes a relaxed country atmosphere should generally be pursued.

The success of the final design outcome will be largely attributable to detailing. Basic forms can fall well short of the desired outcome if the final selection of materials, their combination and/or method of application are flawed. Fenestration may also be poorly detailed. The application of colours may be inappropriate.

Successful contemporary country buildings are often simply detailed, however the proportion of openings to wall area, the extent of roof and gable size and 'overhang', and the extent of unbroken walls is critical.

Built form should contribute to the "place" by defining and enclosing public places.

Buildings should contribute to the local distinctiveness of the town centre by not only pursuing a contemporary country theme, but by using a varied palette of colours, materials and finishes which also draw their inspiration locally and from history.

10.6.1 Public Domain

The public domain contributes significantly to the character of a place. Street furniture, street plantings, paving and public art initiatives should be pursued with an understanding of their respective contributions to the relaxed country character feel.

10.6.2 Materials/Finishes

The local building palette was historically dominated by the use of stone and timber. These materials and their contemporary interpretation should be used extensively in new buildings (See Design Guidelines for recommended palette).

10.6.3 Detailing

One of the most important facets of a successful building is good detailing (as referred to previously). Combined with correct material usage, the quality of detailing, whether simple or complex is paramount. Successful country buildings are often simply detailed, however, the proportion of openings to wall areas, the extent of roof and gable size and 'overhang' and extent of unbroken walls is critical.

10.6.4 Colours

Colours should be drawn from a palette, which provides a tangible link to the history and character of the place, as well as surrounding development in the Valley. Generally, they should comprise:

Colours and finishes can vary from precinct and it is felt that colours and finishes of new developments should generally respect (but not necessarily replicate) the neighbouring buildings within that precinct.

For example external walls on many buildings vary from painted fibro and rendered/stuccoed brick, generally in light white/off white and cream tones, to dark red or brown face brickwork, sometimes with brick banding or with rendered inserts. These colours should be considered for new developments.

Overt (strong) non complimentary colours or buildings painted a specific strong non complimentary colour to suit advertising requirements or specific advertising design use will not be supported within the CBD area

Roofs range from the traditional predominantly red painted or colorbond corrugated iron to subtle greens, greys, and off white or natural zincalume finishes. These complimentary colours should be considered in new developments particularly because of Bega's topography which allows many roofs to be seen from within the city. The use of zincalume on roofs is to be avoided where possible due to reflection and glare issues.

The use of contrasting window trim to that of the wall colour should be considered in any coordinated colour scheme.

10.7 Roofscape

The roofscape of traditional towns, particularly where developed on a landform of variable topography contribute an important dimension to the character of an area.

The conservation of glimpses of the Bega roofscape should form an integral element of the development/redevelopment of the Centre and environs. Further, new development should ensure the breakdown of roof massing.

The following urban design principles/requirements should be adopted in respect of the Bega roofscape:

- Glimpses of the general Bega centre roofscape should be retained.
- The massing of roofs of new buildings should be "broken up".
- Flat roofs should be minimised and screened by parapets.
- Parapets and roof design should screen any rooftop service infrastructure.
- Rooftop plant and equipment should be integrated into the design of the building so as not to detract from the appearance of development.

10.8 Landmark Features

Key features in the streetscape add an important dimension to the character of a centre. They focus the eye and add an element of integrated variety.

Landmark features should be emphasised, with such objective likely to be realised by the following design principle.

- Corner sites, the termination of vistas along streets, key bends in a street or a key point in the façade of a larger building will generally be accentuated by larger scale buildings with elements such as:
 - towers
 - articulated tall elements
 - entrances
 - balconies
 - strong sense of material and colour
 - roof forms
 - articulated parapets or gables
 - built elements encroaching on the setback of an upper level

10.9 Heritage

Bega's heritage qualities contribute significantly to the character of the place. They should be conserved and form the corner stone for new development, without being universally "mimicked", but rather respected. The following principles should be pursued in this regard:

- The significance of heritage items and their setting should be retained and where possible enhanced.
- Important heritage landmarks should become urban design features.
- Adequate curtilages should be maintained.
- Development should have regard to the prevailing heritage fabric and character.
- The scale and bulk of any new buildings must not detract from heritage items and the precinct generally.
- New development must not obstruct important views or vistas to buildings and places of historic and aesthetic significance.
- Siting of any new development should have regard to the streetscape presence of existing heritage items.
- The architectural form of new buildings should respect prevailing heritage qualities. (Issues to consider, as a minimum, include roof form, proportion and location of windows and doors). They should not precisely imitate neighbouring heritage items, but rather complement them through massing, scale, setback and orientation, detailing and materials, roof forms and coursing lines.
- Architectural detail of extensions/renovations of heritage items should be contextual to their period of development.
- New work should minimise overuse of historical architectural features, with preference given to uncomplicated interpretative forms and detailing.
- Heritage items should reuse existing materials where possible and repair rather than replace individual elements, such as windows and doors.
- New materials and detailing of heritage items should be compatible with existing and consideration given to colour, texture and type of materials and finishes.
- Uses of existing heritage items should preferably involve minimalist change.
- Signage should be responsive to the significant aesthetic qualities of heritage items and precincts.
- Signs placed on heritage items should have regard to the architectural features of the building.
- The heritage values of existing signs should be respected.
- The installation of signage on heritage items should be reversible
- Internally illuminated signs on heritage items should only occur where a reconstruction of an original significant sign.
- To develop a character in keeping with localised heritage items, which will contribute to the town.
- Heritage significance should be reinforced by formal street plantings, banners, flagpoles and the like.

10.10 Built Form (General)

The design outcomes sought are based on a built form that recognises and responds to a human scale and produces a unique Bega character. It should be noted that these Built Form principles are of a generic nature. Their application and specific nature may vary between precincts.

The built form should importantly reinforce a sense of place.

10.10.1 Massing

Building mass is a critical element in creating a sense of place. Buildings of minimum 2 storeys should be encouraged either through redevelopment or extended parapet treatment. Opportunities for buildings in excess of 2 storeys exist, but need to have regard to location in the streetscape. Indeed pockets of 2 storey, 3 storey and 4 storey development can occur.

The following massing principles/requirements should be observed in realising the Structure Plan.

- Buildings should generally be consistent in form; massing and articulation with the "grander" buildings of the town centre i.e. 2 storeys with a significant roof.
- Development may exceed the preceding limit where the impact is acceptable and developments provide lift access.
- Generally there should be a gradation of massing from the denser town centre core outwards, including residential development.

10.10.2 Setbacks/Building Footprints

Building setbacks have an important contributory streetscape impact and represent an important element of the final built form outcome. Generally in a commercial context of a traditional Main street zero front building setbacks (appropriately accessed and articulated) contribute to the vibrancy of the footpath activity zone and architectural impact.

Generally, higher density residential redevelopment should retain traditional domestic cottage setbacks. Setbacks in such case should contribute positively to the establishment of new streetscapes.

The following setback principles are advanced to realise the underlying objectives:

- Setbacks should protect and enhance the relationship of the building to the streetscape character and role and function.
- Unless expressly constrained all non residential development or redevelopment in the commercial zones should be constructed to the front property boundary.
- Higher density residential development/redevelopment should have regard to SEPP 65 provisions and the NSW "Residential Flat Design Code".
- All "residential" streets should have a landscaped front setback.
- Building footprints should be restricted to allow deep soil zones for planting of canopy trees.
- Encourage street edge buildings along the Town Square interface to address the open space and streetscape.
- Prevent unacceptable levels of overshadowing of open space, public domain areas, and adjacent residential development.

10.11 Residential Development

Residential development associated with town centres generally adds to the vibrancy of a centre and brings the advantages to residents of a "down town" setting. Residents warmly embrace ready access to goods and services, quality public spaces and concentrated leisure and recreation opportunities. Increases in activity over extended hours introduce enhanced prospects of passive surveillance.

Residential living may occur in a variety of forms in such locations. It may typically include shop top housing, mixed-use developments generally, residential flat buildings, townhouses and villas, duplexes, senior living units or single dwellings. Integration within a town centre often introduces a range of challenges, with Bega being no exception. Development/redevelopment must be sympathetic to prevailing residential amenity.

10.11.1 Mixed-use Development

Mixed-use development involves different uses being designed to co-exist in close and compatible relationship to one another either horizontally on adjacent parcels of land, or vertically within the same building. By fostering an appropriate range of uses – commercial, retail, residential, entertainment, dining etc. Vibrant centres can be created; centres that are safe, attractive, sustainable and convenient for people.

Developments proposing a residential component must first demonstrate the compatibility of the proposed uses within a mixed use development context with specific reference to adjoining and adjacent developments which may generate environmental disturbances such as noise and the like. In a mixed use context residential development at ground floor should be avoided.

The following design principles/requirements should underpin residential development in the broader Bega Town Centre area.

10.11.2 Residential Flat Development

Residential flat buildings comprising three or more levels should comply with the provisions of State Environmental Planning Policy No.65-Design Quality of Residential Flat Development as amplified by the “Residential Flat Design Code: produced by Planning NSW.

10.11.3 Medium Density Residential Development and Mixed-use Development

Solar Access and Overshadowing

- Reasonable access to sunlight should be provided for living spaces within buildings and open space areas around dwellings.

Overlooking and Acoustic Privacy

- Development should not overlook living spaces within surrounding buildings and private open space areas.
- Development should address noise emissions and the like from non-residential uses in close proximity.
- Development should contain noise between dwellings and mixed-use developments without unreasonable transmission between uses and to adjoining dwellings.

Private and Communal Open Space

- Adequate private open space should be provided and be readily accessible in the case of ground floor dwelling units.
- An adequate balcony or rooftop area conveniently accessible should be provided for dwellings above ground level.
- Appropriate and accessible communal open space should be provided to each residential and mixed-use development.
- Communal open space should include appropriate levels of embellishment and facilities.

10.12 Access and Adaptability

- Reasonable access should be provided across common property.
- Adequate provision should be made available for impaired people.

10.13 Site facilities and Services

- Site facilities should be provided that are adequate in size and conveniently located for residents, Town Centre uses and visitors.
- Site facilities should be of practical and attractive design and easy to maintain.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION

11.1 Realising the Vision

Realising the Vision and moreover the Statement of Desired Future Character will require the enactment of a series of preferred strategies and actions over time, which address the key issues.

As mentioned in Section 8, some of these strategies and actions are contained in Council's Strategic Plan and supporting planning documents. Others are contained in the South Coast Regional Strategy; whilst others are alluded to in this report and will evolve over time.

11.2 Planning Framework

A Town Centre Structure Plan and relevant Local Environmental Plan amendment and Development Control Plan and Design Guidelines are critical contributors to a relevant suite of strategies and actions.

The Structure Plan, LEP amendment strategy and principles for a relevant DCP form part of this report. They are in draft form and should proceed to formal public exhibition, accompanied by this report. The development of the DCP and more detailed design guidelines will assist in the successful implementation of the strategies and realisation of the vision.

11.3 Funding Strategy

While the Bega Township, as the emerging regional Centre, will be a major focus of Council's planning and investment in public infrastructure, there are obvious constraints in managing 20 settlements which include at least 4 other significant towns. Major new retail needs to contribute significantly to improvements to the public domain, car parking and traffic flow. Traffic and infrastructure studies will be required for all larger proposals (over 2000m²).

A range of funding strategies need to be further explored to establish how the vision and identified outcomes are likely to be achieved. It is clear that the Council, Public authorities and private sector are all stakeholders in the vision and through individual and collaborative actions over time will contribute to its realisation.

A relevant review of prevailing Developer Contribution Plans and the entering of Developer Agreements will be a critical element in realising many of the projected public domain improvements. Major development proposals will make significant contributions and conduct "Works in Kind". There will, however, be the need for more widespread contributions.

Accordingly the Contribution Plan review should also evaluate the prospects of a modest contribution by all new residential development to town centre infrastructure improvements, given the future residents will be occasioning demand for augmentation and enhancement as a result of such residents patronising the centre.

The rationalisation of publicly held assets such as the community hall and Zingel Place roadway (closure) will be critical to realising a rejuvenated Civic Precinct, including new Littleton Gardens, new multipurpose community hall, Regional Art Gallery and Library and enhanced Council office accommodation.

Council's Management Plan and Budget Process will also need to address Council commitments over time.

11.4 Specific Issues

Development and Growth

Objective To foster a more robust, sustainable local economy

Strategies Promote Bega as a tourist centre and Regional Centre.
Support and leverage off the Bega Cheese Company.
Promotion of Bega as a centre for investment.
Adoption of a planning framework that provides for growth.
Encourage and foster a strong Chamber of Commerce.

Image and Amenity

Objective An attractive, well maintained, vibrant (yet relaxed) contemporary country town.

Strategy Foster a sense of place.
Embellish the existing landscape framework and built form base.
Target a building improvement program focussed principally on the Main Street.

Built Form and Heritage

Objective To ensure built form responds to its general context is sensitive to prevailing heritage qualities and promotes quality contemporary structures.

Strategies Ensure compatibility of infill development.
Ensure conservation of significant vegetation and heritage items.
Promote an urban design forum for local designs.
Continue provision of heritage advisory program.
Explore a heritage incentives program.

Accessibility and Parking

Objective To promote enhanced accessibility and amenity for both vehicle movements and pedestrian/cyclists and facilitate convenient, accessible, rationalised parking.

Strategies Promote implementation of the Bega By-pass.
Provide 'missing' vehicle and pedestrian links over time.
Facilitate further enhancements in traffic circulation by identifying priority routes.
Provide clear directional signage, particularly for alternate routes, parking and large recreational vehicle and long-term parking.
Rationalise off street parking.
Retain and increase kerbside parking.
Pursue selective footpath widening to enhance pedestrian amenity.
Formalise on-road cycle routes and provide relevant linkages.
Promote off-road multipurpose cycleways.
Provide secure bicycle parking facilities and basic amenity.

Public Transport

Objective To facilitate enhance public transport provision and patronage levels.

Strategies Rationalise existing bus stops and enhance same.
Ensure consolidation where possible, but not at the expense of accessibility.

Landscaping and Street Character

Objective To conserve and enhance the landscape and visual character of streets and soften built form.

Strategies Develop and implement a comprehensive street planting program.
Enhance town entrances, particularly from the south.
Enhance the image of the commercial precinct by utilising awnings and integrated street plantings.
Encourage landscape improvements to existing properties.
Require comprehensive sustainable landscaping of all new development.

Public Open Space and Natural Systems

Objective To provide a network of diverse, high quality sustainable public parks, reserves and natural areas.

Strategies Develop a program to expand and enhance local parks and reserves, including enhanced biodiversity.
Pursue diversity in the design for enhanced parks and reserves.
Investigate opportunities for redeveloping the former racecourse as a regional sports centre.
Facilitate extension of bio-linkages from river to the town centre.
Protect and augment existing remnant vegetation.
Develop a program to capitalise upon and integrate the wetlands.
Ensure any filling proposals are fully modeled.
Relocate the clock tower to Littleton Gardens.

Water Management

Objective To promote the principles of sustainable total water cycle management.

Strategies Optimise rainwater detention and harvesting.
Require limited on-site re-use.

Community Services and Facilities

Objective To promote a diverse range of community facilities.

Strategies Pursue the rationalisation and enhancement of community facilities and services generally.
Pursue the development of enhanced cultural facilities focussed on the Civic Precinct.
Plan for and provide a new multipurpose community facility, with a number of servicing options.

Housing

Objective To foster housing diversity and encourage enhanced sustainability of building design.

Strategies Explore housing co-operative opportunities.
Endeavour to retain the overwhelming domestic feel as increased residential densities are pursued.
Foster and promote mixed-use development in the town centre, including a residential component.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The planning process for the Bega Town Centre has reached a point where a clear vision and strategy have evolved and a suite of relevant draft planning documents (to advance realisation of the Vision and accompanying Strategy) prepared through a consultative process.

It is accordingly recommended that Council (with the support of the Community Reference Group):

- (a) Adopt this report and the accompanying draft planning documents as a pragmatic strategy for realising the evolution of Bega Town Centre as a Regional Centre.
- (b) Concurrently finalise the Draft DCP/Design Guidelines document.
- (c) Concurrently develop a relevant Developer Contributions Plan.
- (d) Prepare a relevant Local Environmental Plan amendment.
- (e) Proceed to publicly exhibit the foregoing planning documents including:
 - (i) This Planning Report;
 - (ii) The Draft Structure Plan;
 - (iii) The Draft Town Centre Development Control Plan;
 - (iv) A Draft Developer Contribution Plan Amendment;
 - (v) A comprehensive amendment to the prevailing LEP.
- (f) Develop a more detailed set of Design Guidelines to accompany the DCP.
- (g) Develop a funding strategy beyond the Contributions Plan.
- (h) Explore the establishment of a Design Review Panel for major development proposals.

13.0 CONCLUSION

The Bega Township has arrived at a critical point in its development. Council, the community and Department of Planning optimistically see it fulfilling a Regional Centre function for Bega LGA and beyond. Indeed, it is strategically acknowledged as the “Regional Capital” for the NSW Far South Coast.

A 20 year (+) vision has been developed to more fully articulate the evolution of Bega as a future regional centre. This vision has as a clear base some initial visioning work undertaken in partnership with the local community in the development of Council’s 20 year Strategic Plan – Your Place, Our Place, Great Place (2006) and recent strategy development by the Department of Planning.

The community was re-engaged in the current planning exercise and reviewed and further developed a vision and its amplification in the form of a Statement of Desired Future Character.

A Structure Plan was derived from the subject community visioning work, constraints and opportunities analysis, regional and local planning strategies and contemporary urban design theory. The plan is largely a spatial plan depicting the general arrangement of landuses, their relationships, functional interconnectedness and underpinning accessibility strategy.

The clear and distinguishing feature of the Structure Plan is that of a “Compact City” within an inspiring and sensitive natural and cultural context.

A series of Town Centre Precincts (Character Areas) were identified and basic development parameters established for each. Detailed master planning level work was undertaken in respect of the Civic Precinct.

Detailed general design principles were developed to further inform the evolution of the Character Areas and the development of a DCP.

A template and principles for a comprehensive draft DCP has been prepared having regard to the background planning work. Further, a zoning strategy has been developed which acknowledges recent actions by Council in this regard and the Structure Plan. Such strategy needs to be taken to its conclusion as an amendment to the prevailing LEP.

An outline implementation strategy was developed including the need for diverse, multi-stakeholder funding strategies.

Finalisation of the draft DCP and Design Guidelines should take place to further assist in realising the Vision. Further, the need for a relevant Contributions Plan and broader Funding Strategy should be pursued.

It is clear, however, that significant improvements to the public domain and community assets will be strongly founded upon engaging with the private sector in an appropriate manner.

Council is now clearly in a position to adopt and advance the suite of draft planning documents and this report as a strategy for realising the evolution of Bega Town Centre as a quality, personable, somewhat relaxed Regional Centre and engage in formal public consultation.

Annexure A – Consultation Participants

Council's Bega DCP Consultation Group.

Council is most appreciative of the efforts of the following individuals and organisations.

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Warren Page

Bega Chamber of Commerce

Bega Area Committee

Annexure B – Traffic and Parking Proposals

Traffic circulation is a critical factor for the emerging regional centre. Council's preferred scenario is for the Bega By-pass to proceed as a priority matter. Once this is achieved, the Carp and Gipps Street areas can be better reclaimed for local traffic and pedestrian use- including consideration of options such as more pedestrian space, blisters and landscaping.

Given the pressing demands on Council's budget across numerous settlements and growth being the main factor creating the demand for traffic improvements, there is no justification in funding for these works coming from current rate payers.

Council should consider implementing a traffic and streetscape improvements Contributions Plan (S94) that imposes a modest contribution on all residential development (given all residents will access the regional centre). The bulk of the works should be funded from new commercial development in Bega.

Detail on suggested traffic improvements for the Town centre and a suggested staging hierarchy for those improvements are as follows:

Priority One (implement as soon as funds are available):

- Carp Street / Gipps Street intersection - control busy mix of pedestrians and vehicles with lights (some crash history, shops and highway traffic)
- Auckland Street / Upper Street intersection - control busy mix pedestrians and vehicles with lights (crash history, school, significant traffic generation)

Priority Two:

- Carp Street mid block east of Gipps Street vicinity Canning Street - pedestrian blisters or refuge (shops, medical, traffic)
- Auckland Street / Zingel Place intersection or variation as entry to new mall - control busy mix pedestrians and vehicles with lights (crash history, shops, major car park, significant traffic generation)
- Auckland Street mid block north of Carp Street - pedestrian blisters or refuge (some crash history, shops, school route)
- Upper Street / Gipps Street intersection - control busy traffic with lights (awkward intersection, highway traffic, Upper Street generation)
- Gowing Lane – heavy vehicle access required to service existing
- Gipps Street east of Zingel Place – need for pedestrian access and vehicle egress from proposed development on east (Coles) side of Gipps Street (SH1)

Priority Three:

- Auckland Street / Newtown Road intersection - improve junction layout (highway traffic plus Auckland Street generation)
- Upper Street / Parker Street intersection - control cross traffic on busy Upper Street with roundabout (crash history and proximity to recreation, pool etc may consider lights)

