

Submission

No 26

INQUIRY INTO THE UTILISATION OF RAIL CORRIDORS

Organisation: Gosford City Council

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22 February 2012

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Mr Charles Casuscelli MP
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Attention: Committee Chair

Dear Mr Casuscelli

Inquiry into the utilisation of rail corridors – Gosford Submission

Gosford City Council would like to make this submission in response to the invitation for submissions to the above Inquiry.

The location with the greatest potential in the Gosford Local Government Area for development to occur over the rail line is in the Gosford CBD which is zoned SP2 Railway Infrastructure.

The 2004 NSW Government's City of Cities strategy designates Gosford as the Regional City for the Central Coast. A comprehensive Gosford City Centre Masterplan (attached) was developed and adopted in August 2010, stating:

"As a Regional City, Gosford will encompass a wide range of activities and uses including a full range of business, government, retail, cultural, entertainment and recreational activities. It will be a focal point for regional transport and jobs."

After an extensive consultation process with all public and private landowners and the community, one of the key issues that continued to arise was the "disconnectedness" of the city generally which acts as a genuine barrier to future development. The rail corridor effectively severs the city centre into two with a mixed residential/medical precinct on the western side and separate commercial/retail/residential areas on the eastern side.

The Masterplan proposes to improve connectivity across the rail line from the Hospital precinct into the city centre core and its waterfront.

The SP2 Railway corridor zoning restricts development in the corridor to rail related uses only. This means the development of a Mixed Use type development across the rail corridor is currently prohibited.

A rezoning that allows Mixed use development over the rail corridor could permit an enhanced Transport Orientated Development around Gosford Station that could well contribute to a commercial solution to linking the Gosford Hospital precinct to the Gosford city centre that could have a major impact on revitalisation.

Yours sincerely

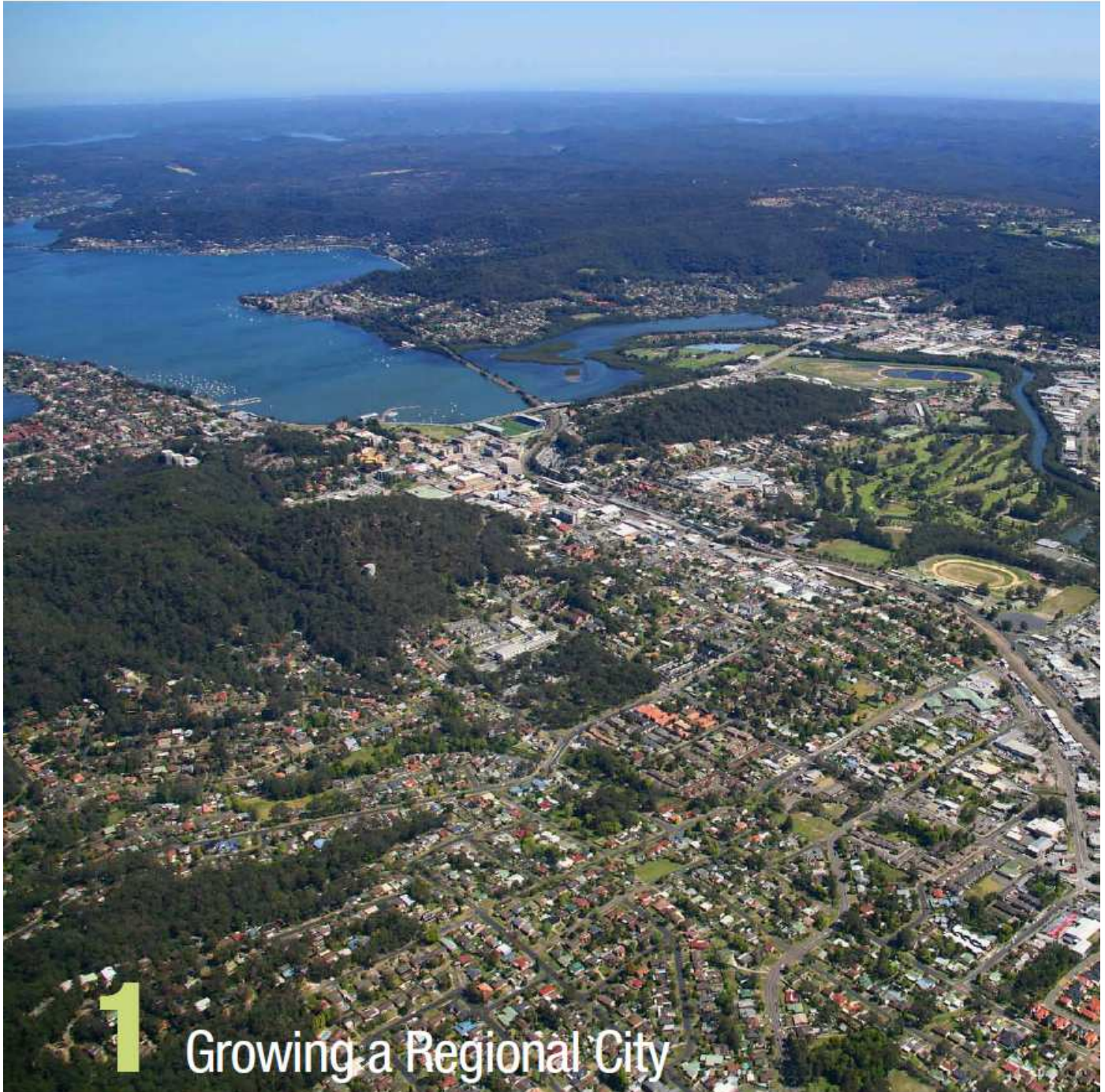
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Wilson', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Peter Wilson
General Manager

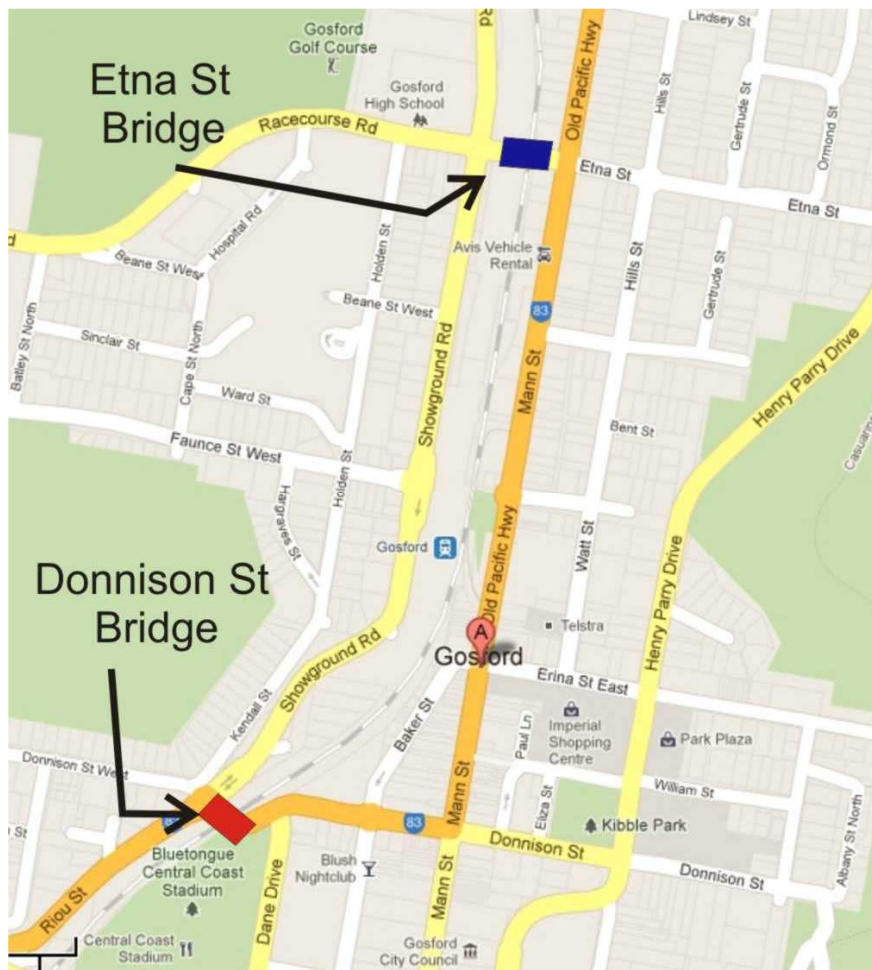
Comments provided in relation the Inquiry's Terms of Reference:

• providing opportunities for mixed use property development;

1. The hilly topography of the town centre and along the rail corridor is advantageous in some sections for potentially effective and attractive development to occur over the rail corridor. This option was investigated however ruled out largely due to the high costs involved to build over the rail corridor. Hence this opportunity is not in the Gosford Masterplan as it would require substantial investment and underwriting by the Government. Should the government wish to explore this highly desirable development potential then the Masterplan could be reviewed provided the Corridor could be rezoned to allow other than rail uses.



- 2 In regard to Gosford City Centre it is well known & documented that the original 2 town centre bridges at Etna & Donnison Streets are antiquated and the rail provides a barrier between the health precinct and the town centre as a whole (shown below). Any potential to remove the barrier for even part of the rail would serve to unite the town centre and perhaps provide catalyst for redevelopment in the area.



- 3 Development within & over the rail corridor has potential to provide a pedestrian link between the Health Precinct and city centre, thus relief from the barrier of the railway
- 4 Any new bridge proposals should be planned to account for future revitalisation potential of the city centre as envisaged in the masterplans and LEP. The masterplan talks about upgrading these 2 existing bridges and the potential for a new bridge at Faunce Street to connect the health precinct with the city centre as shown in the figure overleaf.

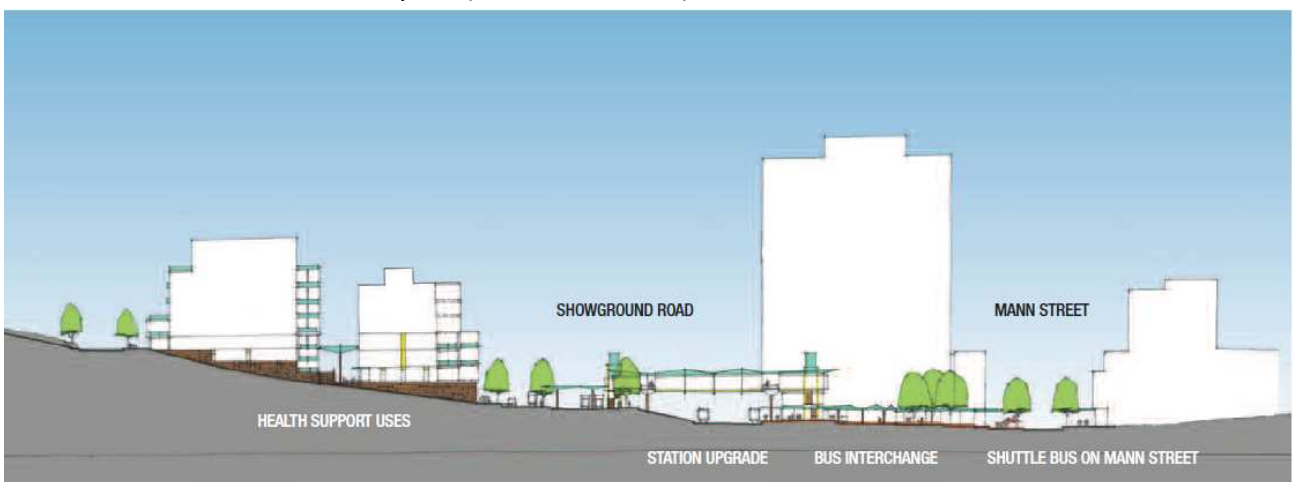


Proposed Pedestrian Network

- 5 The Gosford City Centre Masterplan (Gosford City Council, 2009) was prepared as a community led renewal masterplan for the Gosford City Centre. The focus of the renewal master plan was to develop a sustainable approach to accommodating 6,000 new jobs and 10,000 new residents, with these people expected to live and work in the centre by 2031. Therefore, while better transport infrastructure and policies will improve quality of life for these people, the focus of the master plan was to lift the existing transport provision to a level where the local community has a sustainable and equitable travel choice.

- 6 The Renewal Master Plan identified the following transport related projects that would help to underpin the renewal of Gosford City Centre:
 1. Improving access to the waterfront and enabling waterfront development;
 2. Overcoming gradient changes through a Gosford Interchange transit oriented development, with high quality
 3. public transport facilities and east-west connections from Mann Street towards Gosford Hospital;
 4. A potential city centre Loop Bus to connect the city centre, interchange and hospital precincts; (now been provided by Transport NSW)
 5. Upgrade of Mann Street as the main street of Gosford, including streetscape upgrades, cycling links and
 6. management of bus services;
 7. Improving east-west connectivity across the rail line through upgrades of Etna Street, Donnison Street and Gosford Station overbridges; and
 8. Various intersection upgrades for traffic performance, safety or accessibility reasons.

9. Showground Road and Mann Street both run 'parallel' to the rail corridor and provide bus and pedestrian access on either side of the station at different levels to the station. The adjacent Health Precinct is at a higher level again than Showground Road. Pedestrian access between the station and hospital precinct is currently very steep with a mini bus currently providing limited services for transfer to the hospital (as shown below)



The Railway Precinct Concept Section

• **generating income for funding future infrastructure projects;**

- 7 While there is a Gosford Masterplan supported by the community, there appears to be limited funding available to now implement and upgrade much needed infrastructure to improve access across the rail corridor and major upgrading of the bus interchange.
- 8 In respect of car park in lieu of provision on site matters, Page 72 of the Gosford City Centre DCP states that Council's Carparking DCP 111 is to be referred to.
- DCP 111 states the following:
 - **2.6 Cash Contribution in Lieu**
 - **2.6.1** *In a number of commercial centres, a cash contribution may be required or accepted in lieu of the provision of all or some of the car parking requirement being provided on the site. The centres where cash contributions are required are listed in Appendix A.*
 - **2.6.2** *The sum payable in respect of a parking space in each of the centres identified is determined periodically by the Council. Details can be obtained by reference to the appropriate Section 94 Contribution Plan for the provision of Car Parking. In the following commercial centres, **no more than two thirds of the calculated parking requirement is to be provided on site, the balance is to be provided by way of cash contribution.***
 - According to Clause 2.6.1 the Gosford City Centre is listed as a 'centre where cash contributions are required'.
 - Applying the limitations of Clause 2.6.2, the development would only be permitted to provide 2/3 or 27 spaces (18 spaces) with the remaining 9 spaces provided as a cash contribution.
 - These Cash Contribution outcomes are no longer permitted under the provisions of the Gosford City Centre LEP 2007 as outlined below.
- 9 In making the Gosford City Centre LEP 2007, previous s94 plans were repealed in full or in part as a result of the s94A levy plan for the Gosford City Centre coming into force.
- 10 In respect to the S94A levy plan, the 4% levy, which is currently proposed to be reduced to 1% for 2 years from the gazettal of the Gosford City Centre Incentive Provisions draft local environmental plan. The S94A levy plan does not provide for contributions to be taken for carparking spaces within the Gosford City Centre area. The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, 1979 does permit a Section 94 contributions plan which can provide for contributions to be taken in lieu of the provision of carparking where a s94a levy plan is in force.

11 Clause 22C of the GCC LEP 2007 where it says that car parking must be provided on site unless Council is satisfied that the provision of car parking is adequately provided elsewhere is that the car parking can be provided elsewhere in the Gosford City centre. This could include the developer providing a cash contribution under a VPA.

• ***facilitating sustainable urban renewal and development;***

12 Council has demonstrated leadership in the area of environmental sustainability for many years. Some example projects include:

- a. Management of the Coastal Open Space System (COSS)
- b. The Gosford City water mining dual reticulation system
- c. Responding to climate change via the development of a draft climate change policy and several climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, sea level rise planning.

13 The Masterplan will build on this work by actively pursuing:

- a. Reductions in water consumption
- b. Reductions in energy consumption
- c. Reduce automobile travel
- d. Cut greenhouse gas emissions
- e. Make land-use decisions that create a more efficient and walkable city
- f. Improve building energy performance
- g. Increase biodiversity
- h. Mitigate the impact of sea level rise.

14 Council is also undertaking revitalisation initiatives with major upgrades occurring in places for people, such as Kibble Park redevelopment and Mann Street and Baker Street streetscape upgrades. The Masterplan's five main Activity Nodes are shown overleaf.

15 In terms of reducing emissions and green house gases numerous transport challenges must be addressed. Historically, due to geographic constraints much of the arterial road network supporting the city centre tends to travel along surrounding valleys and around water bodies and actually passes through the city centre local streets. The result is excessive traffic volumes (including trucks and buses) and severe congestion at peak times.

16 This extra traffic burden of through traffic is contradictory to the revitalisation objectives of the Masterplan in terms of creating active spaces and promoting sustainable transport modes of cycling, bus and train.

To address these challenges an innovative **Gosford Transport Mobility and Accessibility Plan (TMAP)** was completed by Transport NSW in December 2010 for all transport agencies to develop an integrated approach and solution.

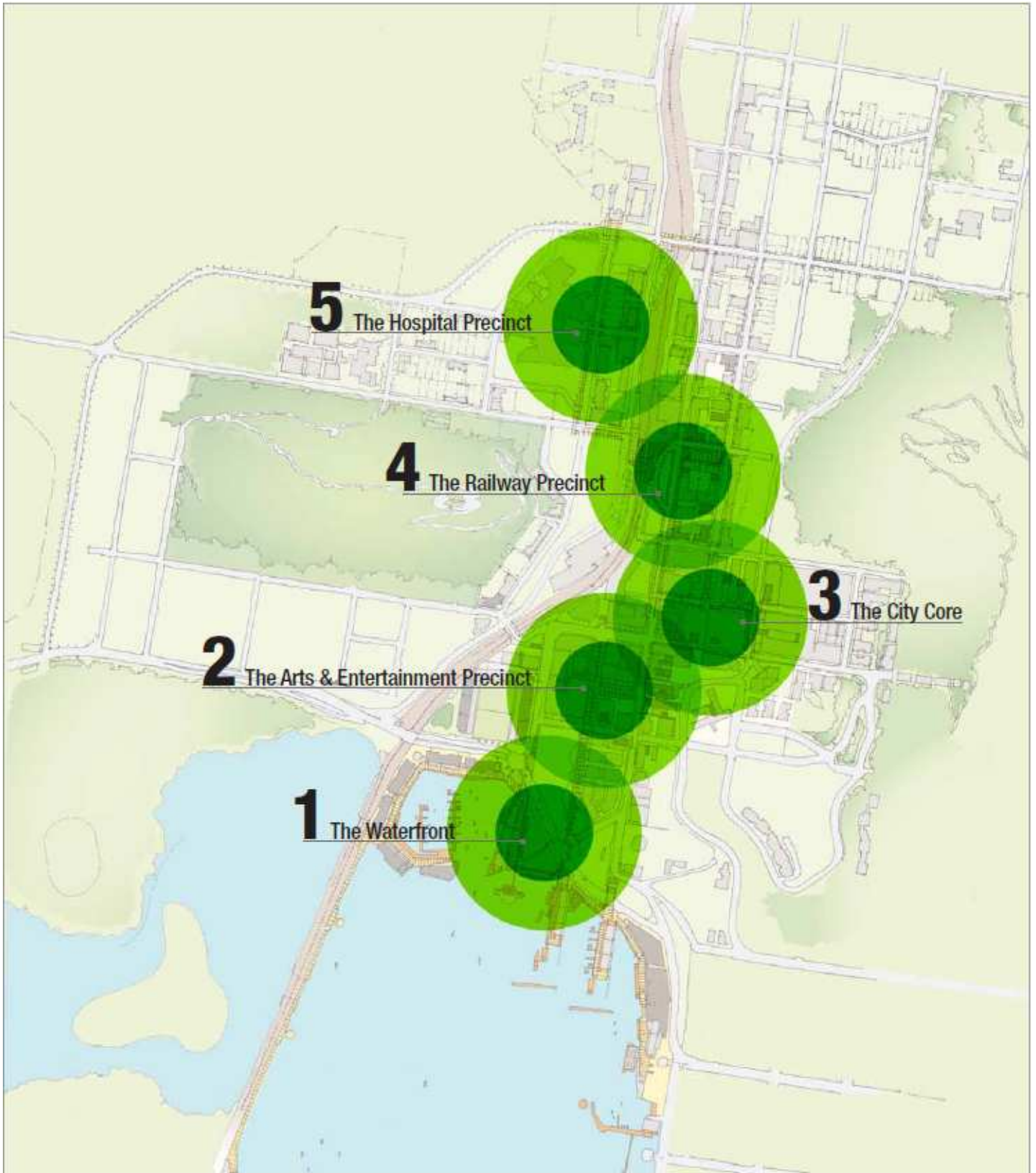


Figure 2.2 - Activity Nodes

The TMAP for Gosford City Centre presents an opportunity to further realise and strengthen Gosford’s role as a Regional Waterfront City. Gosford benefits from an outstanding natural setting, yet the city’s street network and transport assets do not fully utilise its greatest assets and it has been described as a ‘disconnected city’. In 2006, over 30,000 commuters travelled each day from the Central Coast Region to Sydney and Newcastle, on existing road and rail infrastructure.

The primary purpose of the TMAP is to increase the public transport share of work trips into Gosford city centre.

All potential measures considered and recommended in the TMAP are grouped into travel behaviour, walking, cycling, buses, ferry, road network and parking with timescales for potential implementation as follows:

- Short term measures - which could be delivered within 3-5 years (2010 - 2016).
- Medium term measures - which could be delivered within the next 5-10 years (2016 - 2021).
- Long term - which could be delivered within the next 10-15 years (2021 - 2036).

As a result of these measures the mode of transport to work into Gosford city centre is expected to grow from current levels of 6% using non-car modes (a combination who walk, cycle, bus and train) to 10% by 2036.

Non-car mode share	2006 ^d	2016	2021	2036
With Implementation of TMAP Measures	6%	8%	9%	10%
Public Transport mode share increase	0%	2%	3%	4%

Note – The mode share presented in the TMAP will be further confirmed using the RTA’s strategic model.

The 10% mode share for journeys to work by non-car modes requires Implementation of the potential package of measures and policy changes to guide future development in a sustainable manner. Progress against the 10% Target will be measured over the life of the TMAP.

Key TMAP recommendations are:

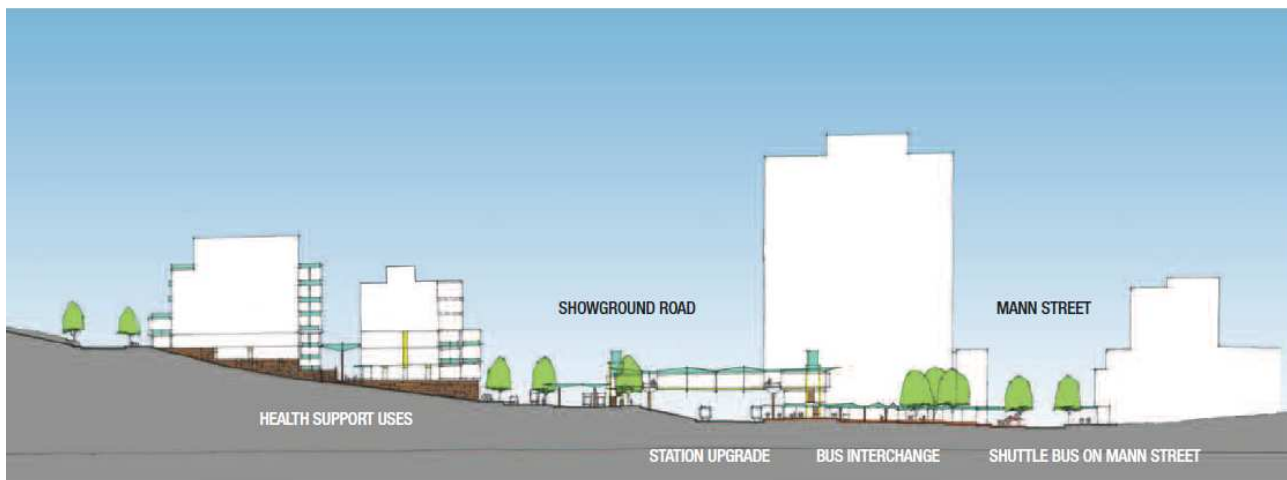
- An overarching travel behaviour change program, making Gosford a demonstration sustainable travel city;
- Comprehensive parking strategy and parking management measures to encourage modal shift;
- Bus frequency, easily recognisable bus services and route consolidation to improve access and perception;
- Targeted walking, cycling and road network interventions;

• **facilitation of transit oriented development schemes around railway stations;**

18 Transport orientated development is supported in the Masterplan.

The TMAP cites “ the Gosford City Centre Renewal Master Plan identifies the opportunity to create a transit oriented development at Gosford Interchange, which could include employment and residential developments, together with a high quality bus/rail interchange. The proposed development would also work to overcome the grade difference between Mann Street in the east and Holden Street in the west, across the rail line and Showground Road. A concept schematic of the potential development is provided in the Figure below.

The potential to provide a transit oriented development that overcomes the grade change within the city and lessens the severance caused by the railway should be encouraged and pursued if feasible with private sector funding. This would be a catalyst project for Gosford and would create a transport focussed gateway to the City Centre.”



The Railway Precinct Concept Section

19 While there is a Gosford Masterplan and TMAP there appears to be limited funding available to implement the required public infrastructure and act as a catalyst for further development and redevelopment to occur.

20 Gosford station should be developed into a expanded Transport Orientated Development that improves connectivity to the Hospital Precinct and The City Centre core. This would require part of the rail corridor to be rezoned from SP2 to allow other than rail uses.

- **connectivity of communities either side of railway lines.**

21 There are two older bridges over 100 years old in town at Etna and Donnison Streets that require upgrading. Both bridges do not meet standards for disabled access.

22 The Etna Street Bridge, with its critical location straddling the rail line between the high working and school populations at the Gosford Hospital and the Schools in West Gosford and city centre, as well as being one of two main access points from Pacific Highway to the City Centre is a key point of constraint within the heart of the City, and as such is both a critical catalyst in revitalisation and a key constraint holding back greater connectivity.



Etna Street rail
overbridge looking west
showing inadequate
footway/ cyclist/ traffic
areas

23 Donnison Street Bridge (shown overleaf) upgrading would provide much needed improvements in east-west connectivity for pedestrians, cyclists, cars, trucks and buses. Access to the Gosford Hospital is severely constrained at peak times and should be upgraded to a standard deserving of a regional hospital which is also used as a training facility. The upgrade is critically important for revitalization as it allows Showground Road to operate strategically as a bypass of the city centre core (Mann Street). The existing bridge and roundabout currently operate at capacity at peak times.

24 Donnison Bridge



Donnison Street rail overbridge looking west showing inadequate footway/cyclist /traffic areas

- 25 These older bridges have been complemented with a new Brian McGowan Bridge built in 1995 which has a shared footpath cycleway along its southern side. Fortunately the new bridge provides good connectivity on the southern side as it links into a network of cycleways along the waterfront and to the west towards Adcock Park/West Gosford
- 26 Gosford Transport Mobility and Accessibility Plan (TMAP) has been completed by Transport NSW to review accessibility levels within the City Centre and to in from surrounding areas.
- 27 The Masterplan proposes to improve connectivity to and across the railway line to improve access between the Health Precinct and the city centre core and its waterfront.
- 28 The topography in Gosford City Centre is hilly in places. If desired the potential exists for a higher level of development to be encouraged from higher areas down to lower areas requiring larger amalgamated lots areas. This potential exists for the medical precinct with its higher elevation being becoming better connected with the low lying Gosford Railway Station with a mixed use link from the core of the medical precinct to and over the rail corridor to potentially be integrated into Mixed development one the eastern side of the line.

- **the current planning and policy framework**

29 The Masterplan could be altered to include the use of the rail corridor above the tracks for other uses such as parking, shops, and particularly a connection from one side of the rail line to the other in the City Centre. The planning framework will need to change to permit this if in accordance with an overall Gosford Masterplan or adopted strategy rather than one off developments by State Rail.



- **regulatory and policy barriers to implementing rail corridor projects;**

30 No further comments

- **issues relating to the financing and funding of such projects;**

31 Even though the Gosford Masterplan and TMAP are complete there appears to be major available funding shortfalls to implement the required public infrastructure so as to act as a catalyst for further development and redevelopment to occur.

32 For example in regard to implementing the TMAP which was completed in December 2010, Council is respectfully waiting for Transport NSW to form an “Implementation Working Group” as identified in the TMAP Measure 11 as extracted below:

Measure 11: TMAP Implementation Working Group

Implementation timeframe: Ongoing

Overview: Transport NSW will establish a Working Group to oversee the implementation of the TMAP outcomes and to ensure cross government involvement.

Lead Agency: Transport NSW

Supporting Agency: Gosford City Council

Transport NSW in partnership with Gosford City Council and other key government stakeholders will convene regular meetings to ensure the delivery of TMAP outcomes and measures overtime.

• **methods of assessing the compatibility of projects with the local community;**

33 Council won the RH Doherty Awards 2010 recognising leading practice in Communication Management for the Gosford Challenge, local community involvement is outlined on page 12 of the Masterplan reproduced below:

THE PROCESS FOLLOWED WAS ONE OF SYSTEMATICALLY COLLECTING AND COLLATING THE VIEWS AND ASPIRATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY. THAT LISTENING, CHECKING AND RE-CHECKING WAS VALIDATED BY TESTING, RESEARCH AND PROFESSIONAL CONSULTATION.



“In 2004 Gosford City Council (Council) commenced planning the entire Local Government Area’s future with its community. That work culminated in the community’s ‘Vision 2025’ document, which was adopted by Council in 2006.

The community clearly articulated a need to have a Regional City that would be the central connection point for the many coastal and hinterland villages; a city that provides both a range of services and diversity of jobs.

Council formed a small team in 2008 to start planning to revitalise the Gosford City Centre, and was quick to realise that it alone could not achieve the full potential of the City. In late 2008, Council and the Land and Property Management Authority (LPMA) joined forces to partner, cosponsor and co-lead The Gosford Challenge. It soon followed that all State Government landowners within the City would commit to the process by placing their land and support into the project.

Council and LPMA formed a small project steering group (PSG) to guide and move the project forward and this group attracted representatives from the Department of Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Planning, both of which offered invaluable support, knowledge and commitment to the PSG. The first step for the PSG was to ensure inclusive community participation was integral to the entire process. The second step was to produce an implementable Masterplan to guide the renewal and revitalisation of Gosford.

*The process that followed was one of systematically collecting and collating the views and aspirations of the community. That listening, checking and rechecking was validated by testing, research and professional consultation. This Masterplan is the outcome of an intensive process of data collection and listening, and workshop after workshop that culminated in the **Design Charrette** in October 2009.*

The Design Charrette was a six-day intensive and collaborative design process where well-briefed individuals with non design-related expertise, from business people to parents; community associations and churches; sporting bodies and schools and other community members, worked with professional designers to come up with the design solutions to complex urban circumstances. These design solutions underpinned the key design strategies for this Masterplan. The principles, goals and objectives for the Charrette were produced by the 130 community representatives that attended the two workshops that preceded the Charrette.

The Charrette required 'give and take' by the community members with differing views but the strength of this procedure is that necessary compromises were reached within the design process itself, culminating in an outcome on which all members signed off, on behalf of their wider community.

Much is made of the community's role in informing the work of relevant professionals (urban planners, architects, engineers etc) and this role is neither incidental nor token. The community has been, is and will continue to be front and centre in The Challenge, reflecting the deeply held belief of the Challenge Team that authentic community participation is paramount in revitalisation projects of this scale."

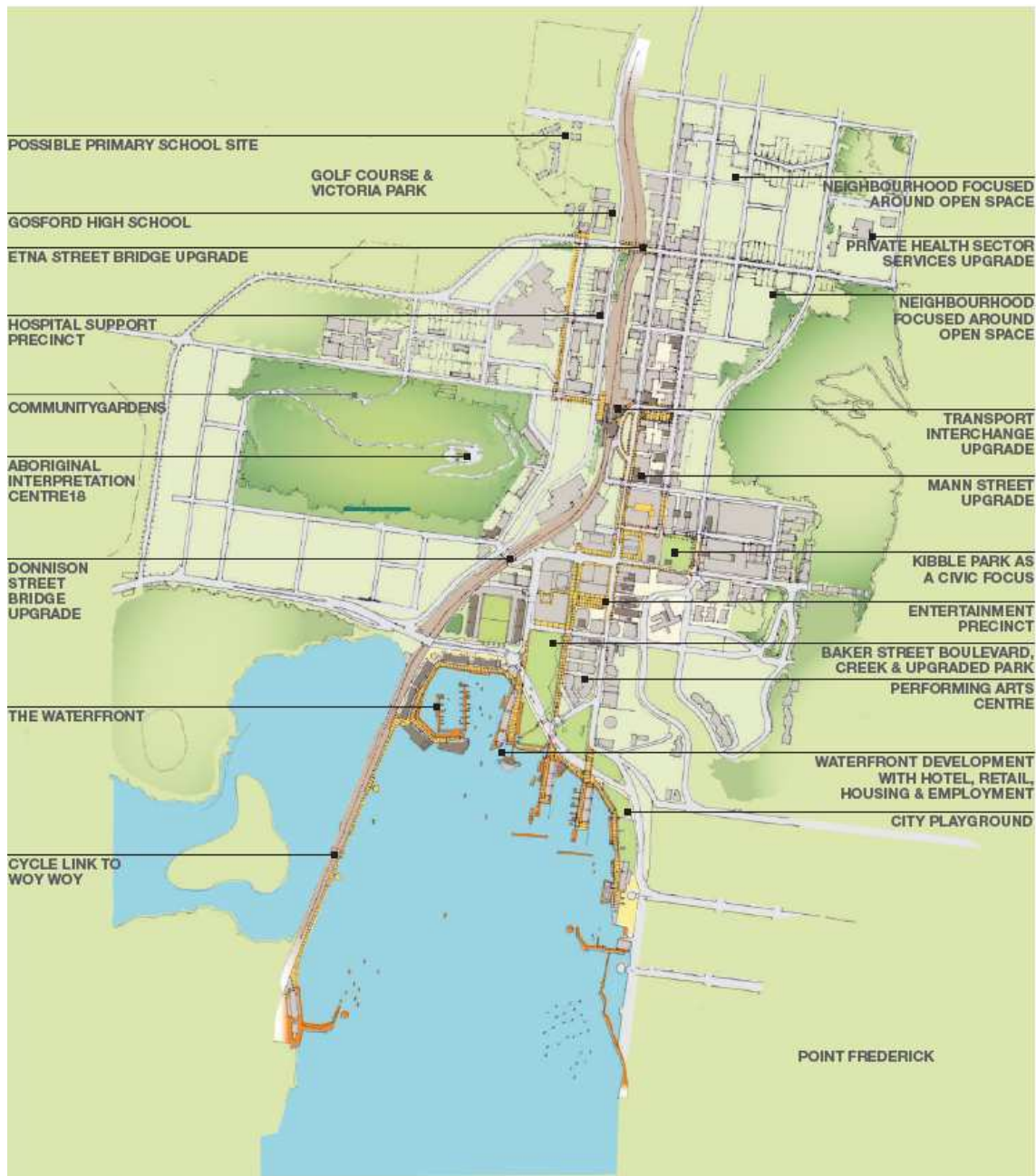


Figure 2.1 - The Charrette Masterplan

• **examples of best practice from other jurisdictions**

34 Chatswood and St Leonards railway stations have effective and attractive mixed use development over their rail corridors, with St Leonards in particular also catering for a residential tower. I note that under a current draft LEP, Chatswood is proposing to make B3 Commercial over the rail corridor.

35 The NSW State Government has designated Gosford a Regional City of Sydney along with Parramatta, Liverpool and Penrith. They have also designated Gosford the Regional City of the Central Coast, as Newcastle is to the Hunter and Wollongong is to the Illawarra. Significant Government investment in infrastructure has supported growth in all these Regional Cities, through less so in Gosford as detailed in the table below.

Regional NSW Cities							
REGION		Gosford	Newcastle	Parramatta	Penrith	Liverpool	Wollongong
		Central Coast	Hunter Valley	Greater Western Sydney	North West	South West	Illawarra
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE							
Population of Region	2006-08	304 700	529 200	668 200	760 000	409 700	282 300
	2031	400 000	675 000	780 300	1 024 317	742 272	327 600
Employment of Region	2006-08	125 254	228 334	308 500	240 000	119 500	100 765
	2031	170 500	294 334	389 500	367 000	208 500	130 765
FACILITIES (In Centre)							
Hospital		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
University Campus		✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓
TAFE Regional		x	x	x	x	✓	✓
TAFE		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Convention & Exhibition Centres		x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
Museums		x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Concert Hall / Entertainment Centre / Theatres/Playhouse		x	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
Stadiums		✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓
Town Hall		x	✓	✓	x	x	✓
Library		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Art Galleries & Cultural Centre		x	✓	x	✓	✓	x
Civic Square/precinct		x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Schools		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional Shopping Centre		x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conservatorium		✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓
Sporting Facilities Indoor/ Outdoor		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community Meeting Centre		x	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Regional Park/Recreational Facilities		x	x	✓	✓	✓	✓
TRANSPORT (In Centre)							
Stations		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interchange		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	x
Shuttle Bus		x	✓	✓	x	x	✓
CBD By-Pass/Ring Road		x	✓	✓	x	✓	✓