

29<sup>th</sup> February 2012

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Formal submission in response to:

**The Cardno/Landcorp Structure Plan & Report (P11002) of December 2011.**

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## Summary

First impressions of the Structure Plan reveal that a number of the visions – that we share with the broader Bremer Bay community - have been incorporated into the document's text and drawings. These include the retention of significant areas of remnant vegetation; the strengthening of one of the two existing centres of activity (in this case Gnombup Tce); increased vehicle permeability via a 'land swap' with the education department; and the shire's investment into the town through relocation of shire offices and civic facilities.

The Structure Plan is well considered and thorough but it does however, contain significant contradictions between the written objectives and the designed outcomes. With relatively minor modifications we believe these objectives – which are a good reflection of the community's aspirations - can be met.

On page seven we present a list of suggested modifications to the plan. These can be distilled down to two key 'tweaks': 1, integrate the visitor centre with the vegetation corridor to reinforce the interconnectivity of people and landscape, and 2, align the Civic Centre zone along main street to capitalize on views (from the 24 m contour) to the national park and town site. These tweaks will satisfy a great majority of the objectives identified by the consultants and community and will greatly enhance main street's 'activation'.

## 1. 'Main street' objective

### SP Report Text:

- 'Create a main street for Bremer Bay and tie the town together around a focal point for residents and visitors' (p6)
- 'Create a sense of arrival in Bremer Bay and serve to orientate visitors to sites and activities in the region' (p6)
- 'The ability to locate retail and commercial on both sides of the proposed main street is constrained by the retention of the remnant vegetation for the ecological corridor. From a design perspective the proposed location and configuration of the retail and commercial core is considered the most plausible on the basis that it does not turn its back on the natural landscape and will integrate with the other proposed precincts.' (p11)

### Our comment:

1. The Structure Plan's N-S street (as depicted) will not function as an effective 'main street' even when all four stages of the development are complete. This is because it will only have a few shops and houses on one side and bushland on the other. It is our opinion that there is not enough 'gravitational pull' to draw necessary passing traffic for the retail to prosper – particularly in Stage 1. It is likely that the N-S main street as depicted will be very similar in character to the existing Gnombup Tce, especially when we consider that, similar to Gnombup Tce, 'fencing' of the shrubland opposite the retail is proposed.
2. Key buildings in the Town Centre site actually face four different directions - N, S, E & W. As a basic principle of 'activation' key buildings should instead address the 'main street': as argued by Greg Davis (Tactics4) at the first community meeting in Bremer Bay. The plan is therefore not consistent with its own objective that "All retail and office and civic activity trades to a single street" (p 10).
3. The Residential precinct should not be sited as depicted, where it addresses the N-S main street. This is because it will lessen the vitality of the street and hamstring the ability for 'market driven' growth of commercial and civic activities along main street (That is unless the residential land facing main street can be rezoned to commercial at a later date).
4. The Structure Plan is actually very much like the urban pattern of Jerramungup – which is an assemblage of miscellaneous buildings scattered around a gridded road network. This is the opposite urban pattern to what one would expect if a main street pattern was the goal. It is our opinion that a fragmented development as proposed will suffer from a lack on concentrated human activity and will therefore encourage car-based mobility – an outcome which is not consistent with the fundamentals of contemporary urban design, nor Bremer Bay's vision.
5. The design objective that the retail does 'not turn its back on the natural landscape' is a sound objective in itself and thus it appears logical to have the retail on one side of main street – facing the so called 'vegetation corridor' on the other. However, this structure plan will not deliver an outcome which meets this objective. This is because: First, the vegetation corridor is effectively 'fenced off' (as per SP section B) and is thereby not *integrated* - in either a philosophical or functional sense - into the town centre. Second, the vegetation that is *integrated* is that which lies out the back of the buildings between carparks. Therefore this conception of a main street does not meet its own objective regarding how it addresses the vegetation – particularly when assessed in regard to the following Vegetation Objectives.

## 2. Vegetation objectives

### SP Report Text:

- *'The land earmarked for the town centre contains a significant number of signature species found in the Fitzgerald River National Park. With careful design and planning the botanical story can be brought into the foreground or 'front yard' of the TC development' (p4).*
- *'The Long term economic future of Bremer Bay is intrinsically linked to its role as a gateway to the FRNP and as a base for those attracted to its natural assets' (p12)*
- *'Preserve low heathland landscape with appropriate new landscape character' (Design Principles)*
- *'Integrate with nature' (Design Principles)*
- *'It is important for native vegetation to be retained ... maintain the integrity of streetscapes along Garnett Rd and John Street' (p12)*
- VEGETATION CORRIDOR
  - *'Bremer Bay townsite is located at a pinch point in the wider vegetation macrocorridors. The subject site provides a key linkage between Reserve 511 and the Unallocated Crown Land to the north of the Primary School. Current environmental studies fail to consider the regional values of the vegetation on site. Recommendation that at least some of the remnant vegetation be retained with a maximum width to limit 'edge effects'. (stakeholder feedback on earlier structure plan - p 5)*
  - *'The plan highlights the existing remnant vegetation corridor and brings the natural environment into the development as an intrinsic element of the proposed Main Street.' (p 9)*

### Our comment:

1. Within the landscape ecology and botany communities, landscape connectivity *vis a vis* 'Vegetation Corridor' is not a universally accepted characteristic of the biota particular to the Bremer Bay Town Centre Site. We do acknowledge that this corridor protection approach has nevertheless presented an outcome that is consistent with the community's concern for retention of the site's biodiverse shrubland. We argue however that the limits imposed by retaining *a maximum width to limit 'edge effects'* seriously restricts the functionality of the town centre, particularly in relation to achieving other fundamental objectives such as 'integration', 'orientation' and 'identity of place'. Taking such a purist approach to corridor protection seriously limits the opportunity to create more constructive engagement with the landscape assets of the site and broader region.

2. By fencing the edge of the John Street shrubland this will hardly protect it! A similar relationship to the Grombup Tce shrubland is a case in point: this site experiences very little engagement or appreciation from either visitors or locals. It is generally viewed pejoratively as leftover 'scrub' rather than as a healthy representative of the National Park's biota.

3. The Town Centre should be an exemplar of integration not exclusion. What is proposed in the structure plan is against the principle of the Fitzgerald Biosphere Reserve which is the demonstration of effective integration of human activity with biodiversity not the separation of one from another.

4. The structure plan shows a gridded square road arrangement with buildings facing outward to each road. The shrubland is broken into small clusters between buildings and as such it will not sustain itself. These areas will be difficult to maintain, left over bits of unloved, out the back, 'scrub' – a perpetuation of the decades-long unsustainable landscape management practices in the townsite and its greater region.

5. Similarly, shrubland along Garnett Rd is broken up considerably with driveways, turnarounds, buildings and pedestrian ways. It is likely that such vegetation will degrade through weed infestation and erosion – so called 'edge effects'.

6. There is consistent reference to 'heath' vegetation in the text. This not a correct representation of this vegetation. It should be reworded to 'mallee/banksia shrubland' (or specifically 'diverse mallee and banksia shrubland').

### 3. Civic Precinct

#### SP Report Text:

- "Opportunity for the design of the TC to capitalize on views and relate to the topography of the site and the greater landscape' (p 4)
- *'The benefit of locating the civic uses in this location enables future built form to utilize the 26m contour to capitalize on views to and from the site which was expressed as a key design consideration during the preparation of the plan' (p11).*

#### Our comments:

1. Our photographic survey (page 12) demonstrates that the 26 m contour does not provide views of the landscape. Indeed views even from a two storey structure would be limited from this position. Furthermore, if view were indeed available then these would be obscured by the future residential area to the north as depicted on the Structure Plan.

2. Views of the greater landscape and town site are best gained from the 24 m contour which is at the same elevation as the primary school. Our photographs on page 11 show that from this contour the landform 'drops away' to reveal the town site, and estuary below, along with the FRNP mountains in the background.

### 4. Visitor Centre ('11')

- Location/planning design: SW corner of the site.
- *'Create a sense of arrival in Bremer Bay and serve to orientate visitors to sites and activities of the region' (p6)*

Our comment:

The site shown at corner of Garnet and Bremer Bay-Borden Road is highly problematic for the following reasons:

1. It is too disconnected from the civic area - meaning that synergies between two are not able to be capitalized on.
2. The site is subject to strong and cold SW winds
3. The location does not integrate at all with the landscape the facility itself it is promoting/presenting.
4. In this location the visitor centre takes significant 'energy' and 'activation' away from retail area.
5. In this location it does not help orientate visitors as it adds to the fragmentation of the town centre. That is, visitors are highly likely to turn left up Garnet Road and continue to the primary school and residential subdivision to the West – rather than be directed to the commercial and civic facilities.
6. The visitor centre and its objectives are not discussed in the text which appears to be an omission given that its role in the town centre could and should be significant.

## 5. Entry statement

The SP Report indicates that there are two entry statements: near the intersection of Garnett Rd and Borden Bremer Rd ('landscape master plan'), and at the roundabout (p13).

Our comment:

1. An entry statement at the roundabout is more essential than one at Garnett Rd – this is because visitors need to be drawn into the retail area/main street with the greatest of ease to see those elements which signal – 'town centre'.
2. With an entry statement and visitor centre at the cnr. Garnett Rd, visitors are more likely to drive down Garnett Rd and end up at the Primary School and residential subdivision – as discussed above, this would create greater disorientation rather than less.

## 6. 'Civic Square'

The SP shows the Civic Square as a forecourt to the civic centre – providing a sense of 'address' for the civic activities.

Our comment:

1. The square is a good concept in principle. The size would need to be determined from a sound consideration of the types of uses envisaged.
2. Relating the civic square to the civic buildings as a forecourt is in itself a good planning principle.
3. Wind protection is an important consideration.
4. There is an opportunity for the square to address and incorporate the Mallee/Banksia Shrubland on the opposite site of the NS main street.

## 7. Gnombup Tce

The SP shows the western end of Gnombup Tce as one way.

Our comment:

1. Greater vehicular circulation and permeability is preferable over less – particularly in this service commercial strip which relies heavily on ‘passing trade’.

## 8. Retail buildings

- The SP depicts a retail streetscape of single storey buildings (Fig 12, and sections A, B & C ) but in another illustration it is depicted as two storey (last page ‘perspective sketch’).

Our comment:

Consistency in the representation of this streetscape would be beneficial particularly for the lay people of Bremer Bay.

## 9. Structure Plan graphics/plans generally

- The principal plans of the SP are oriented with North facing to the left of page.
- The Town Centre Master Plan addresses not the whole site but rather a portion bounded by Freeman Drive, the Main Street, Garnet Rd and Borden-Bremer Bay Rd.

Our comment:

1. It is unfortunate that the plans have not been presented in the conventional orientation with North facing up the page. Consistency in this regard is important because both design professionals and lay people alike have become accustomed to reviewing representations of this site (eg Gray & Lewis) with North oriented up the page. This inconsistency reduces the legibility of the plans and is likely to lead to misreading of their intent.

2. Legibility of the total site in question is also problematic because only a portion of the site is addressed in the majority of the plans. This had led to – in more than one instance – reviewers misreading the master plan area (bounded by the four streets) as being the much larger area of the whole Town Centre Site (eg they assume that ‘New Main Street’ refers to John Street)

## Suggested modifications '10 Point Plan'

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1. The landscaping plan should address the entire site bounded by Gnombup Tce, Mary, Garnet and John Streets. By restricting the planning activities to New main street, Freeman Drive, Grombup Tce and Garnett St the full opportunities (and constraints) for the site are not attended to sufficiently.
2. The future visitor centre should be relocated to the heart of the town centre and sited within the mallee/banksia shrubland to provide direct engagement with the landscape – in doing so this will create the necessary activation of the main street. The argument for biological interconnectedness should not exclude human activity because interconnectivity is itself a fundamental tenet of the Biopshere Reserve - of which Bremer Bay is a landmark exemplar. On page 14 we present are concept idea of the visitor centre as a 'semi transparent' structure that frames the mallee/banskai shrubland and greater landscape.
3. Rotate and move the residential precinct to run N-S between Garnett Rd and the Civic precinct as shown on page 9.
4. Orientate the Civic Centre site along the main street and locate it close to and upon the 24 metre contour so as to capitalize on views to the FRNP estuary, John street shrubland and the existing town site. Doing so will aid in the activation of the main street (page 9)
5. Locating the visitor centre where we propose – presents the opportunity for a vertical structure – lookout – to view directly down to the existing town centre. This visual link should be supported with a dual use path linking the two sites – thus aiding in the evolution of the Town Centre from stages 1 through to 3 (page 11)
6. Make Gnombup Tce two-way for its entirety so as to ensure growth in this area.
7. Provide for greater protection of shrubland along Garnett Rd so as to provide a necessary wind break to residential and commercial precincts.
8. Increase the size of 'partitioned' shrubland around/between the town centre buildings to ensure its sustainment.
9. Eliminate vegetation protection fences and instead design for integration rather than 'protection'. For example, treat main street as a street with commercial and civic on one side and a botanic garden on the other – integrating play areas, barbeque area, and the visitor centre in the shrubland – in a similar manner as done by DEC in National parks and Kings Park Botanic Gardens.
10. Entry statements: Do not have two in the town centre – have one at the roundabout to help with stage 1 implementation of the retail area and have one on the outskirts of town indicating that visitors are about to arrive and thus signal the 'slowing down and looking' process.

We thank the shire for this opportunity to provide feedback on the Cardno/Landcorp structure, and sincerely hope our comments are constructive. It is our intention always to ensure the best outcome for Bremer Bay's present and future communities.

With regards,



Dr Ian Weir

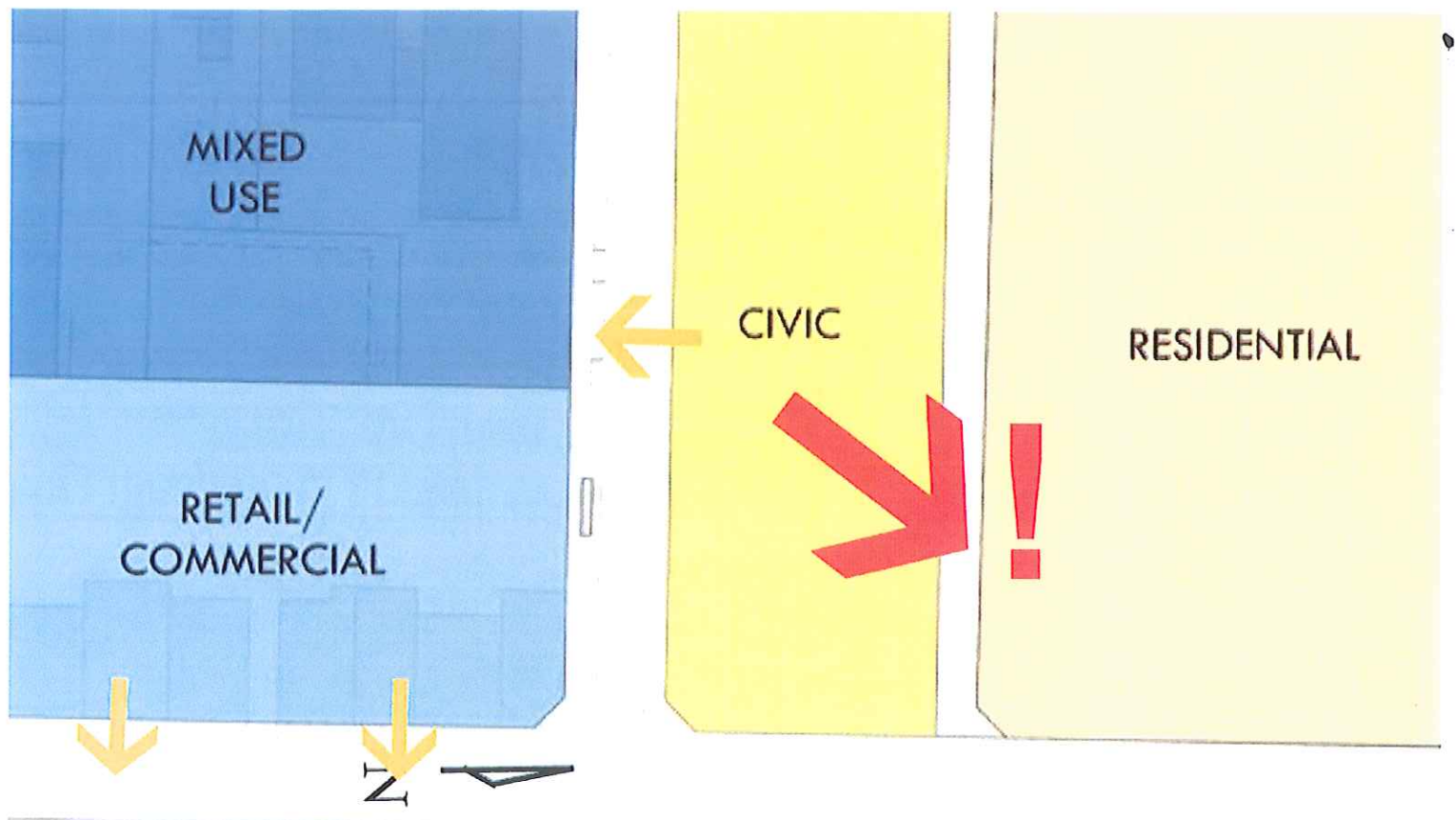
**Chair of the Bremer Bay Design Coordination Group**

- On behalf of, Daniela Simon, Nathan McQuoid, Tara Pittard, James Quinton and Tinka Sack and myself.

Attached drawings:

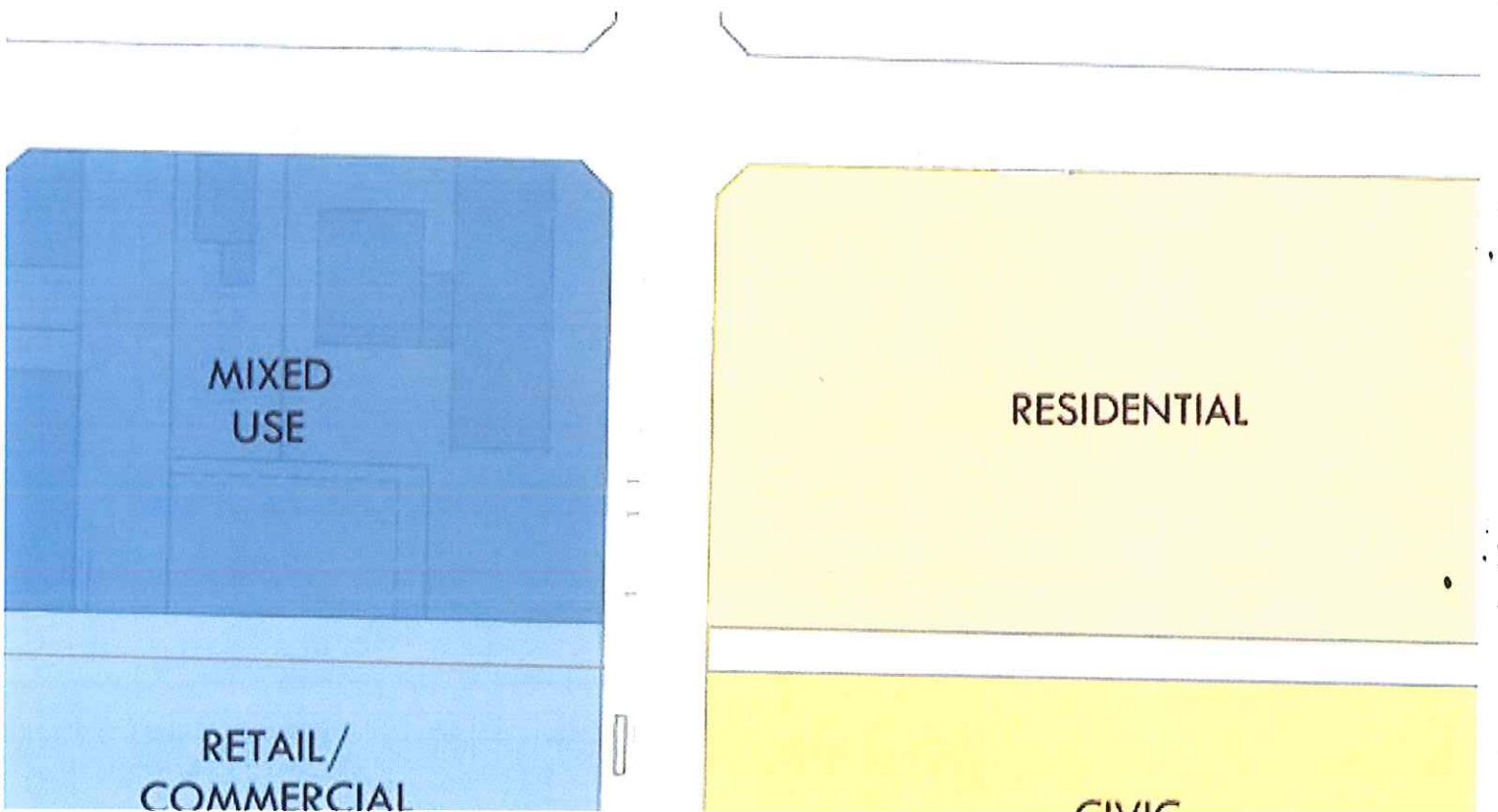
- Page 9: Precinct zoning – structure plan and suggested modification
- Page 10: Precinct zoning – proposed with visitor centre in vegetation corridor
- Page 11: Aerial photo and site photos – proposed zoning and views from 24 m contour
- Page 12: Aerial photo - Structure plan zoning with poor views
- Page 13: Annotated structure plan
- Page 14: Concept for 'semi transparent' visitor centre



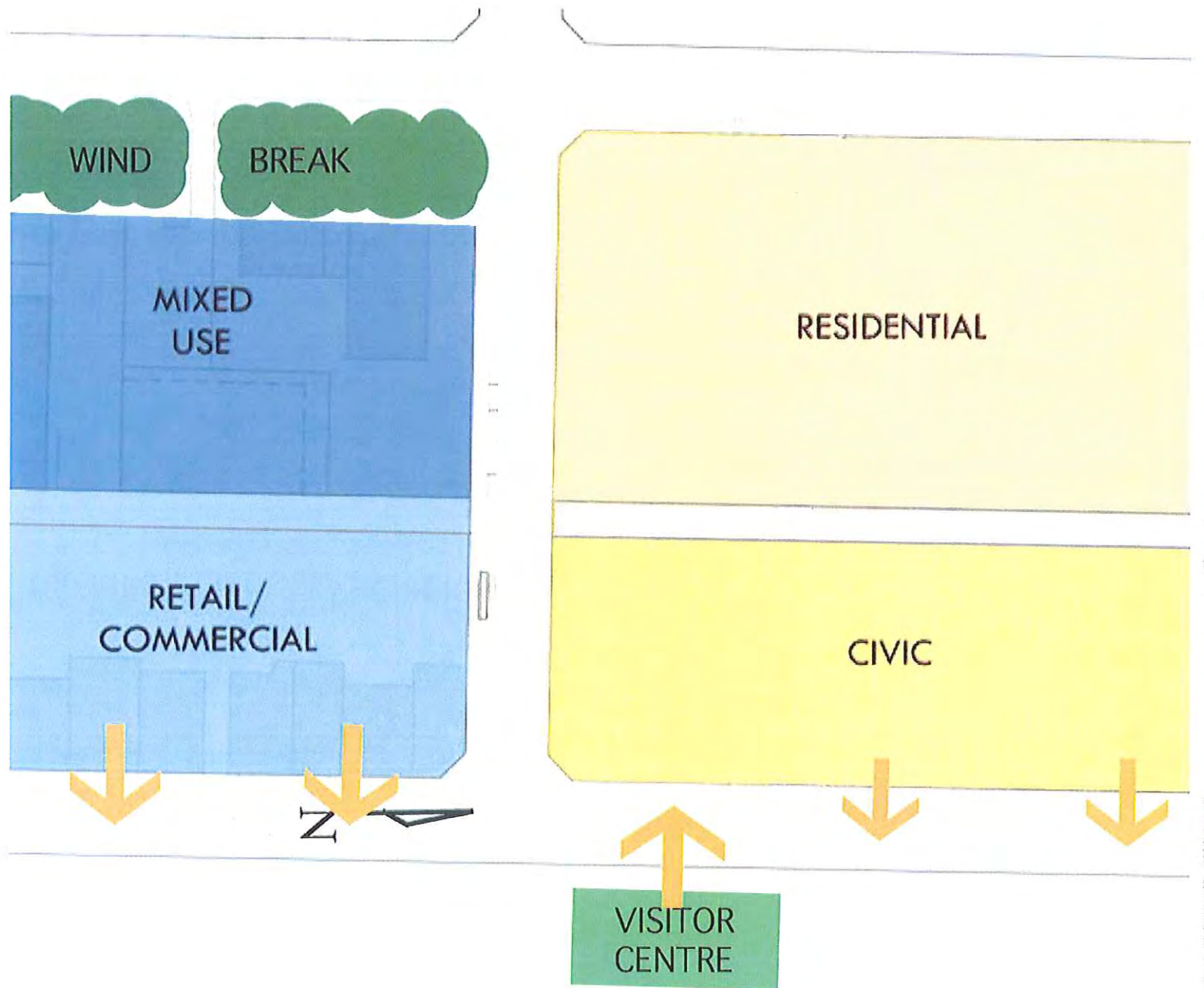


*Precinct Plan*

PROPOSAL - ROTATE CIVIC AND RESIDENTIAL 90 DEGREES: 'MAIN STREET' AND ACHIEVE 'EXPOSURE' OBJECTIVES AND VIEWS FROM CIVIC AREA.



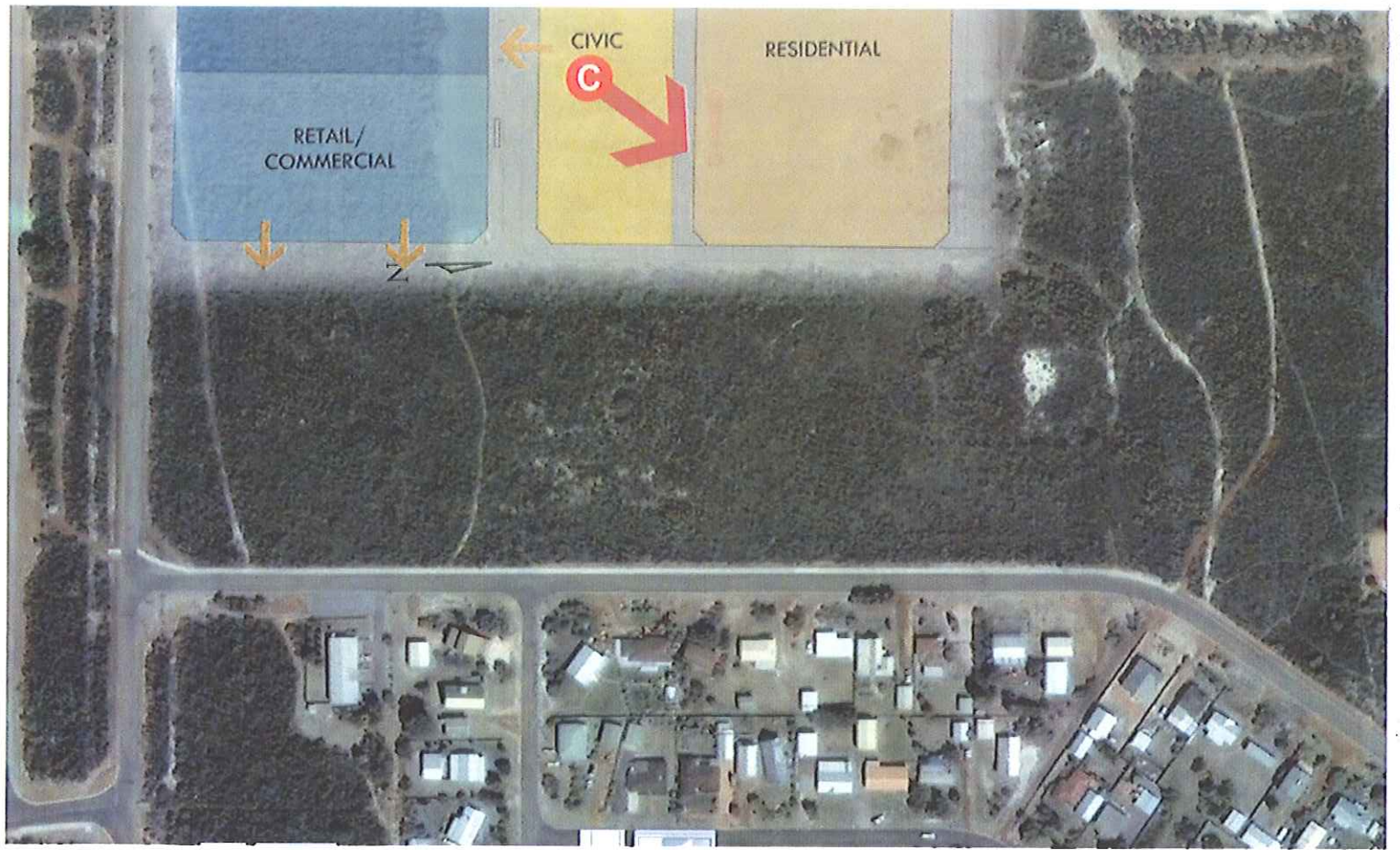
# EXISTING VEGETATION STRIP ALONG GARNETT ROAD D BREAK.







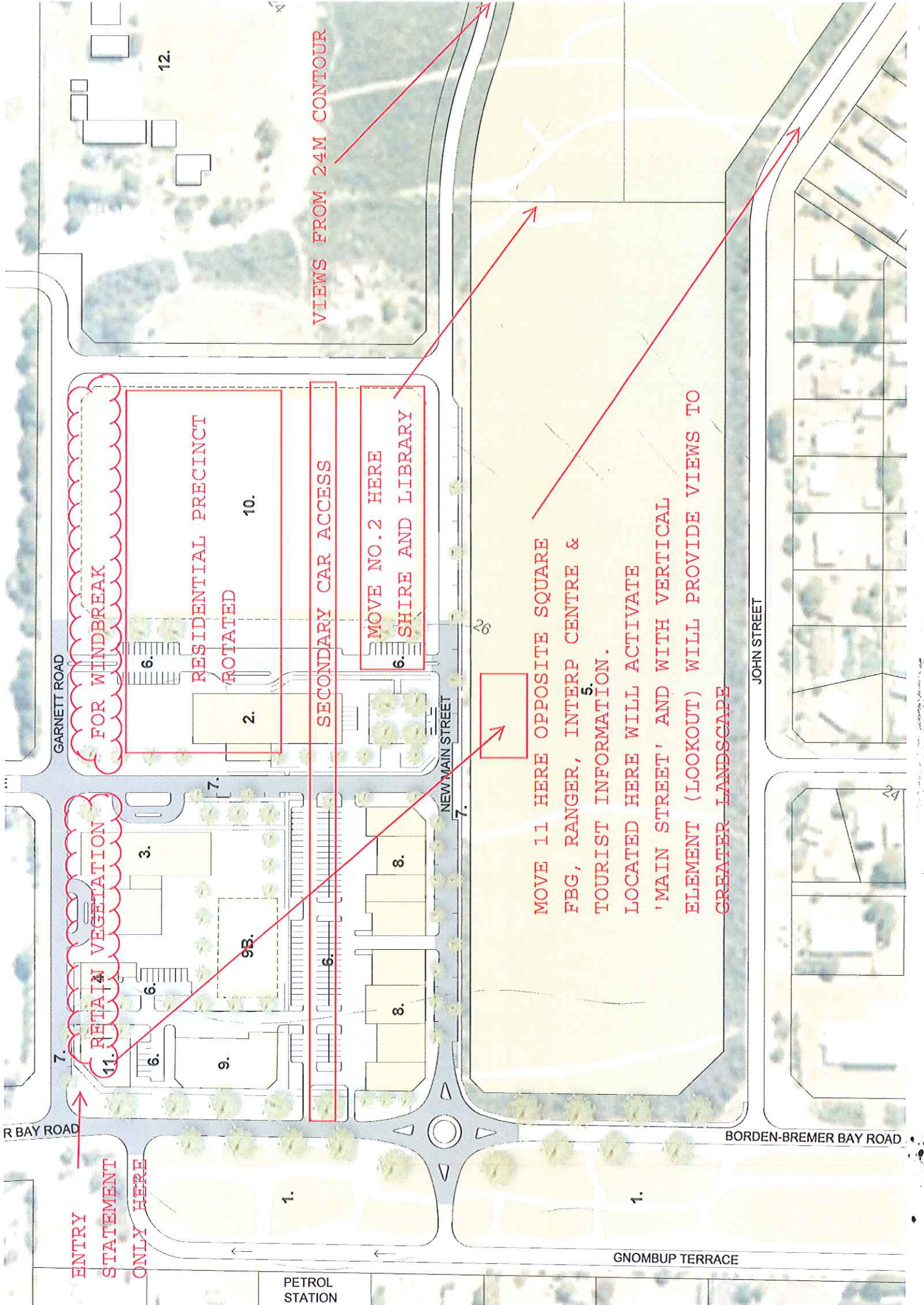




# O PLAN: ZONING DIAGRAM SUPERIMPOSED ON AERIAL PHOTO







ENTRY STATEMENT ONLY HERE

11. RETAIN VEGETATION

FOR WINDBREAK

RESIDENTIAL PRECINCT ROTATED

SECONDARY CAR ACCESS

MOVE NO.2 HERE SHIRE AND LIBRARY

MOVE 11 HERE OPPOSITE SQUARE FBG, RANGER, INTERP CENTRE & TOURIST INFORMATION. LOCATED HERE WILL ACTIVATE 'MAIN STREET' AND WITH VERTICAL ELEMENT (LOOKOUT) WILL PROVIDE VIEWS TO GREATER LANDSCAPE

VIEWS FROM 24M CONTOUR

R BAY ROAD

GARNETT ROAD

NEW MAIN STREET

JOHN STREET

BORDEN-BREMER BAY ROAD

GNOMBUP TERRACE

PETROL STATION

12.

10.

9B.

9.

2.

8.

8.

7.

1.

1.

A6

24



# Herald Biosphere Group

## RNP

Three peninsulars and bays  
sensitive, solar passive design  
rent and weed information for local residents  
environment) notice boards

## II

ties  
it - child friendly  
d for views and vegetation protection  
via an international design competition  
worlds leading botanists (eg Steve Hopper)  
nical landscape story with human activity  
iosphere reserve development  
a verandah/roof  
tage 1 to activate sales of retail land.



## NEW MAIN STREET

## NATURE RESERVE

## Visitor Centre

