

Utakarra Neighbourhood Activity Centre

Activity Centre Plan

Prepared for the City of Geraldton
on behalf of
PDJ Geraldton Pty Ltd

CITY OF GREATER GERALDTON

**THIS PLAN IS CERTIFIED AS THE
'APPROVED PLAN'**

REF. A18028 & TP12/086

SHEET 1 OF 1

SIGNED [Signature]

DATED 25/03/2015

October 2014

■ Land Use ■ Design ■ Strategy ■ Economics ■ Research

SHRAPNEL URBAN PLANNING

Telephone: +61 8 9388-2893

Fax: +61 8 9381-4208

E-mail: t.shrapnel@gmail.com

Web: www.shrapnel.com.au

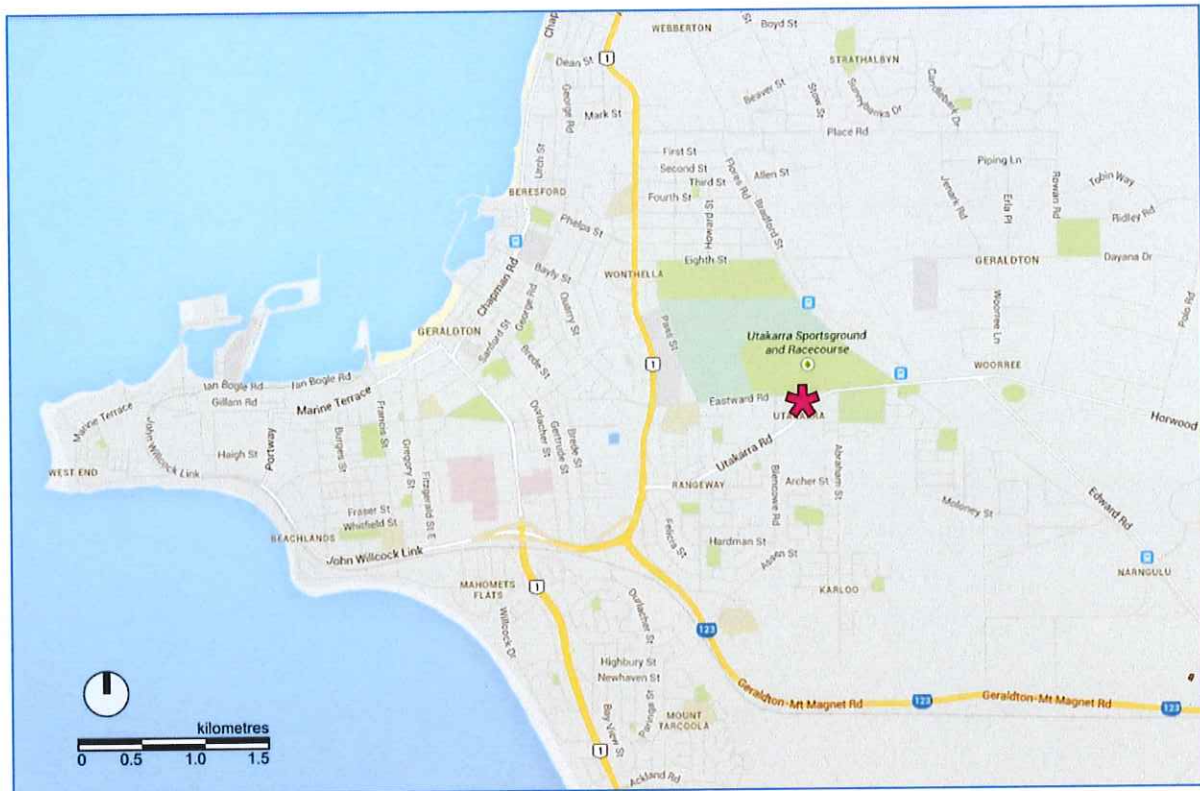
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INTRODUCTION

This report presents an indicative Centre Plan for a proposed neighbourhood activity centre in Geraldton, located at the intersection of UtaKarra and Eastward Roads, UtaKarra (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Location



The site is appropriately zoned and portion of it already accommodates an IGA supermarket. It is proposed to significantly expand the centre onto an adjacent site to accommodate a large liquor store, several smaller retail or commercial tenancies, and a restaurant/ fast food outlet.

The proposed development is currently the subject of a development application originally lodged with the City of Greater Geraldton early in 2012. The City requested additional information and a context assessment in order to process the application, but provision of those was deferred while various liquor licensing issues were being addressed. In August 2014 SHRAPNEL URBAN PLANNING was requested by the proponent to provide the necessary information and other material to the City of Greater Geraldton in order that the application could be processed. This required some significant changes to the original development plans, which have now been completed and lodged with the City. One of the additional requirements was the preparation of this Activity Centre Plan.

Purpose of report

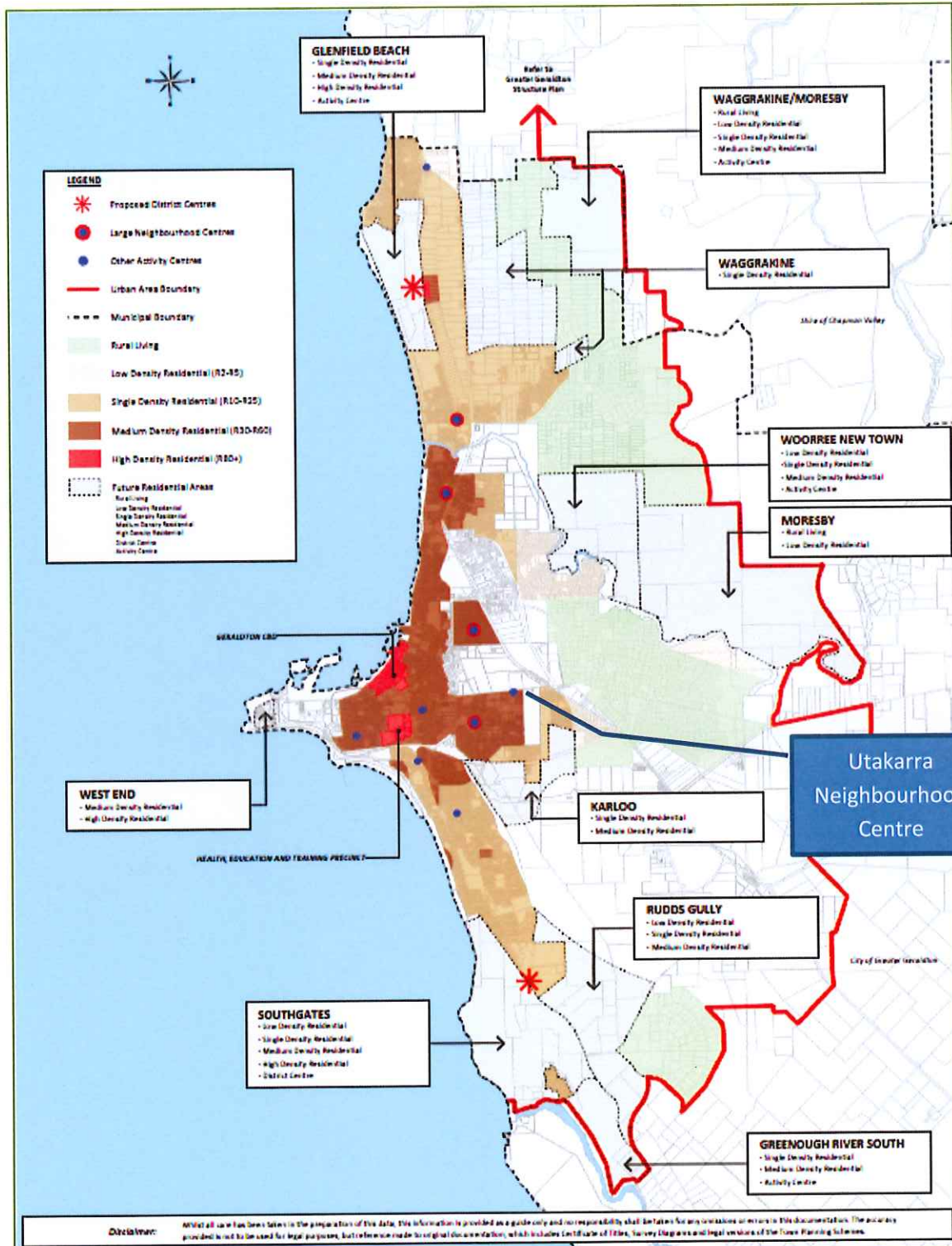
The main purpose of this activity centre plan is to provide a description and analysis of the physical and policy context within which the proposed development is to occur. This report also addresses some of the matters previously identified by the City as requiring to be addressed, but which couldn't be dealt with in the development application plans.

ACTIVITY CENTRE CONTEXT

Greater Geraldton

Figure 2 indicates where the Utakarra neighbourhood centre fits within the wider framework of activity centres serving Greater Geraldton.

Figure 2: Wider urban context



Source: City of Greater Geraldton Commercial Activity Centres Strategy (2013)

The Utkarra centre has been classified as a Neighbourhood Centre (Status 2) in the City's Commercial Activity Centres Strategy (CACS). The CACS envisages that neighbourhood centres:

have a greater focus on servicing the daily and weekly household shopping needs of residents and provide community facilities and a small range of other convenience services. Their relatively small scale and catchment enables them to have a greater local community focus and provide services, facilities and job opportunities that reflect the particular needs of their catchment. (Page 22)

A Status 2 neighbourhood centre means that the strategy for the centre is to maintain its current role, recognising that future private sector driven expansion is possible. The strategy envisages that neighbourhood centres are primarily focussed on servicing the needs of residents through provision of moderate levels of local/ household services and will also operate as a local node providing population driven employment.

The Utkarra neighbourhood activity centre will fulfil these roles, but it will also simultaneously fulfil a supplementary role. The centre is located towards the eastern periphery of the Greater Geraldton urban area and fronts a fairly significant distributor road with excellent connectivity to both urban and nearby rural districts. This connectivity will be greatly enhanced when the very significant Karloo-Wandina infrastructure project, which is currently under construction, is complete (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Karloo-Wandina Project (extract)

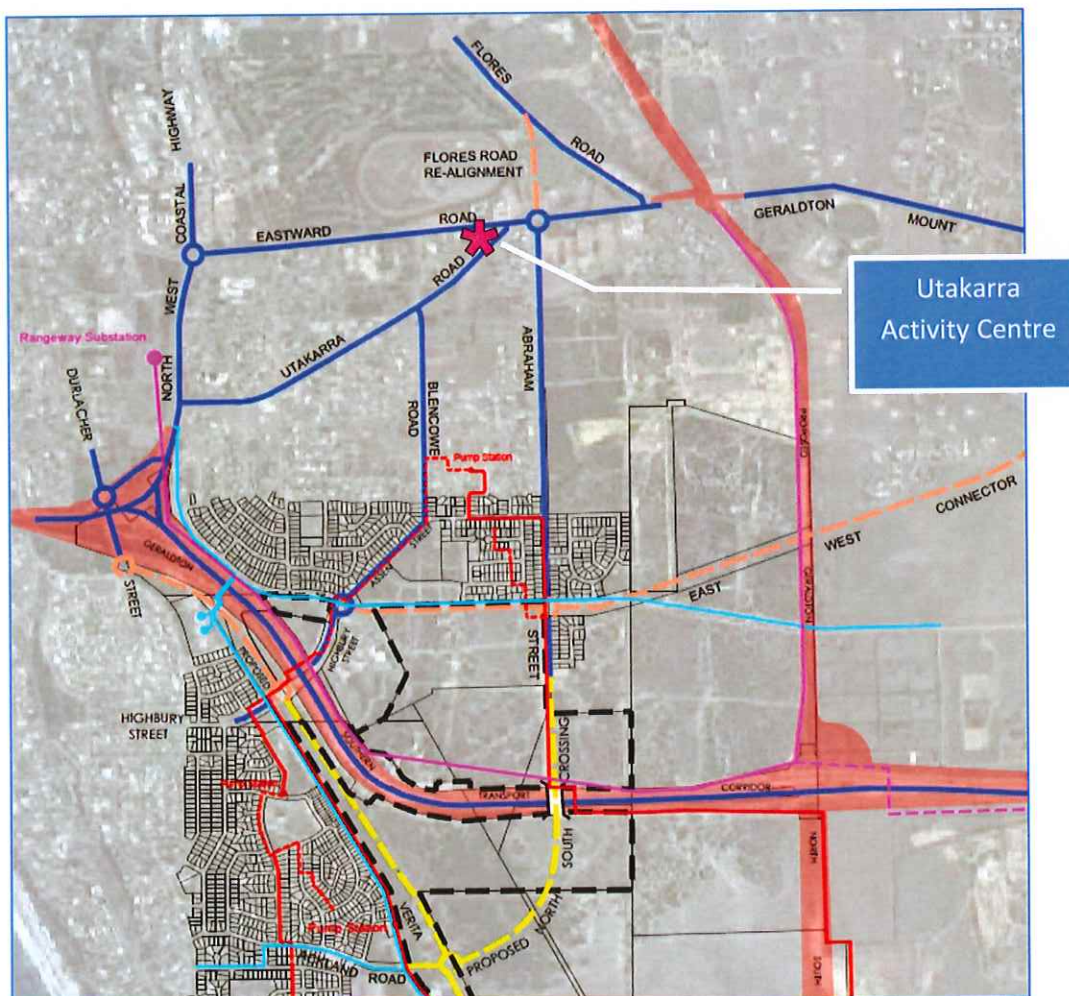
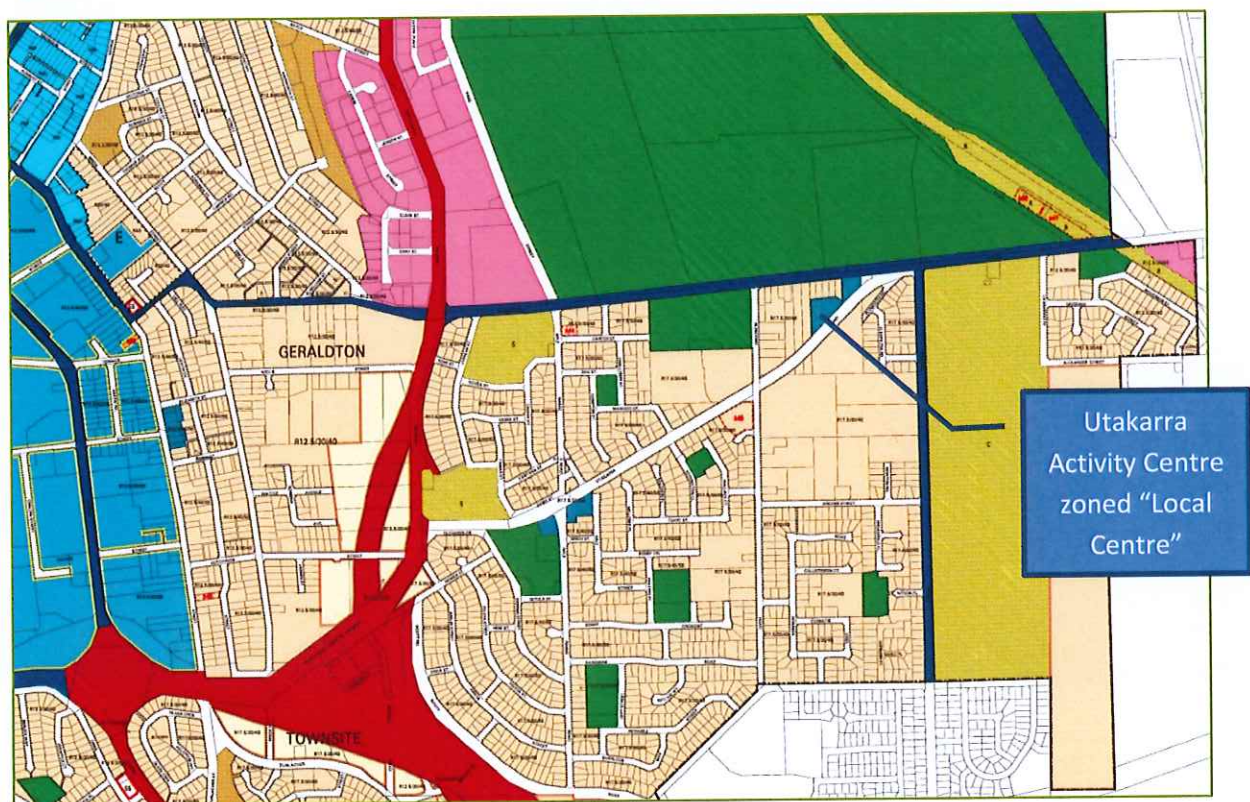


Figure 3 shows how it is proposed to realign Flores Road to connect with Abraham Street and an extended Eastward Road at a roundabout to be constructed to the immediate east of the UtaKarra Centre site. Other additions to the regional and sub-regional road network will further enhance the overall accessibility of the centre. The UtaKarra centre's market potential is therefore clearly somewhat different to that of most other neighbourhood centres. Largely for this reason, in addition to its neighbourhood serving role the centre site has also been identified as an excellent location for the proposed large independent liquor store.

Zoning

The activity centre site is already zoned "Local Centre" in the City's Town Planning Scheme No. 3 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Extract from TPS 3 Scheme Map



Under TPS 3, the permissibility status of the proposed/ potential uses in the centre is as follows:

- Fast Food Outlet: 'SA'
- Liquor Store: 'SA'
- Office: 'P'
- Restaurant: 'AA'
- Shop: 'P'
- Shop – Local Convenience: 'AA'

'P'	means that the use is permitted, provided it complies with the relevant standards and requirements laid down in the Scheme and all conditions (if any) imposed by Council in granting its planning consent.
'AA'	means that the Council may, at its discretion, permit the use.
'SA'	means that the Council may, at its discretion, permit the use after notice of application has been given in accordance with the provisions of Clause 7.2.

Clause 7.2 of the Scheme sets out the process for public advertising of a proposal. It is understood that the development application for the proposed expansion of the Utakarra activity centre is yet to be advertised.

Local Context

There is a significant amount of urban development in the general vicinity of the site, mainly to the south and west/ south west (Figure 5). For the purposes of this centre plan, the boundary of the centre has been extended to the north beyond the existing zoning boundaries in order to provide for some obvious longer term future redevelopment potential.

Figure 5: Defined centre boundary in local neighbourhood context



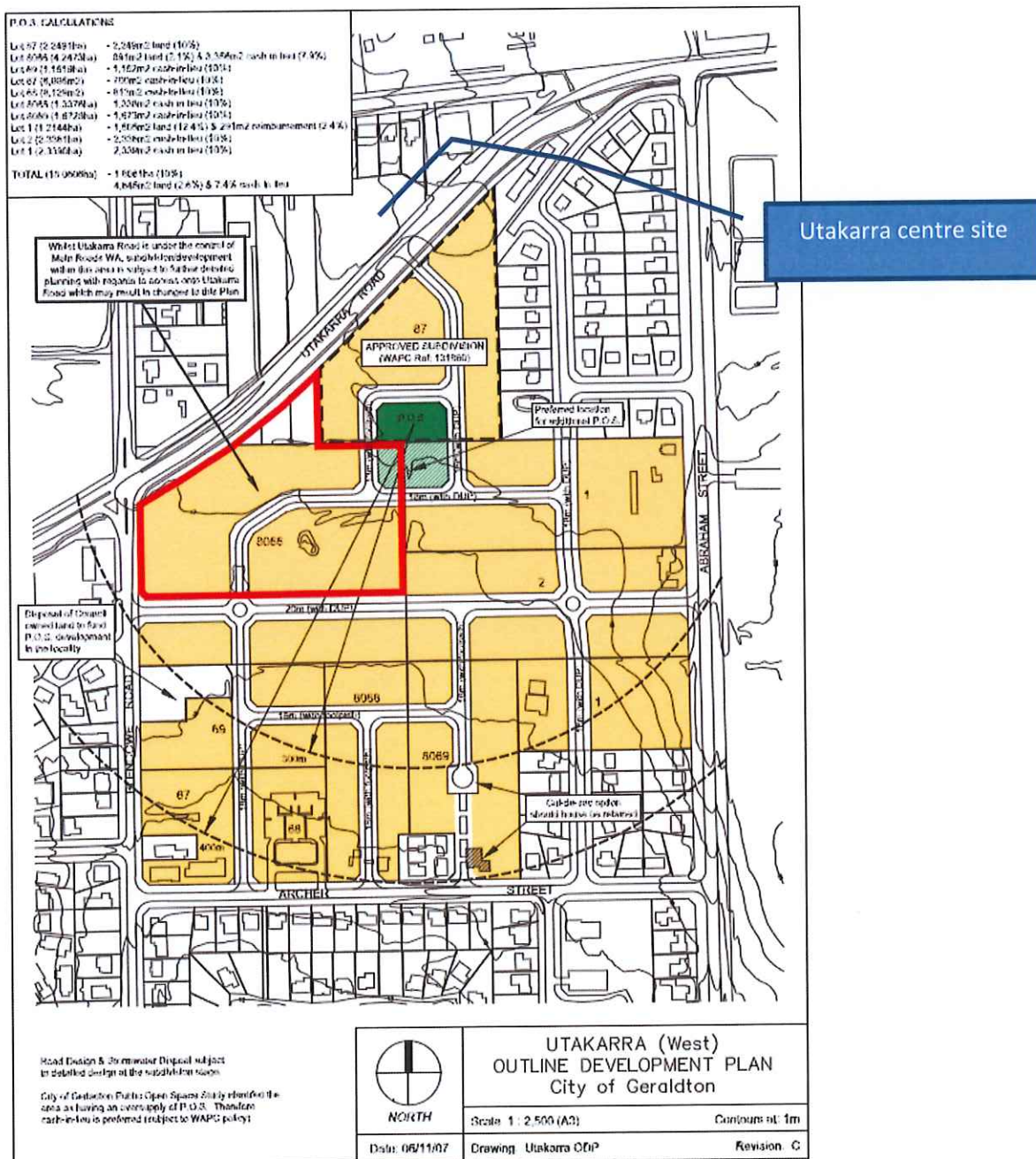
There is another neighbourhood centre (Rangeway) located on Utakarra Road about a kilometre to the south-west of the Utakarra centre (Figure 5). According to the CACS, the Utakarra centre is in the "Eastern" sector of the city, in which the overall population is projected to increase from its 2011 total of about 3,000 people to about 5,000 by 2031.

As a neighbourhood centre the Utakarra centre has the theoretical potential under the CACS to expand to between 4,000 and 6,000 sqm (Page 23), with up to 2,200 sqm being estimated as feasible by 2016 under Population Scenario 2 (medium growth rate). These estimates only have marginal relevance to the current proposal due to the nature of the liquor store proposed, the trade area of which will extend well beyond the normal boundaries of the average neighbourhood centre.

Future nearby residential development

A significant area to the immediate south of the site is planned for future urban development (Figure 6). It is estimated that development of the vacant land could eventually yield approximately an additional 150 residential dwelling units.

Figure 6: Utakarra (West) Outline Development Plan



Source: City of Greater Geraldton

The Centre Plan area

The site as it currently exists is illustrated in Figure 7. Lot 86, the largest lot within the centre, is 6,638 sqm in area. A detailed site survey of Lot 86 is included in the new set of development application plans recently provided to the City. Lot 84, which contains the existing IGA (which also incorporates a small liquor section), is 3,197 sqm in area. The existing Local Centre zone, which comprises both Lot 86 and 84, therefore totals 9,835 sqm. The other lots within the defined centre plan boundary total 5,257 sqm.

Figure 7: Lot 86 within the context of the defined Centre Plan area



The Centre Plan area includes the residential lots to the immediate north of Lot 86. Due to the irregular shape of the current zoned area, these would be the most logical additions to the centre, should its expansion ever be considered. Any such development in this area need not necessarily be commercial, but could potentially comprise medium to high density residential development, or a mix of residential and commercial development. The centre plan is therefore looking well ahead to the long term potential offered by the site, as well as the immediate development proposal under consideration by the City.

The section of Utakarra Road where it passes the centre has also been included within the centre plan area due to the main pedestrian/ cycle path on its southern side, and the width of the road reserve. This offers the potential for a minor realignment of the carriageway to make street parking in the proposed new centre easier and safer. Also, due to the existing and planned residential development south of Utakarra Road, suitable road crossings need to be identified on the centre plan.

ACTIVITY CENTRE DESIGN

An Indicative Centre Plan for the Utakarra neighbourhood centre is presented on the following page. This places the design of the proposed development on Lot 86 within the context of other centre elements – both existing and potential. The centre plan as a whole is thus “indicative” to the extent that it covers an area and includes some proposals beyond the direct control and responsibility of the developer of Lot 86. The centre plan includes a generalised outline of the design actually proposed for Lot 86 and subject of the detailed development plans provided to the City separately. Specific detailed features of the design of the Lot 86 development have been more relevantly listed in the covering letter accompanying the modified development plans. The key elements of the Indicative Centre Plan as a whole are:

- Centre to have significant street frontage to Utakarra Road, with most parking behind.
- Nevertheless, good visibility of parking area/s from Utakarra Road approaches and the centre entrance.
- Several vehicular access driveways from Utakarra Road, with IGA’s Eastward Road driveways retained (the existing IGA operator was approached about, but did not want, a shared driveway serving both Lots 86 and 84).
- Existing IGA retained as is, but with some potential rationalisation and tidying up of the car parking and access arrangements.
- Excellent future pedestrian/ cycle access to surrounding areas, with focal point and Utakarra crossings at the entrance to the Lot 86 development, and the IGA.
- Vacant land to the immediate east of IGA (currently road reserve) could become a landscaped public open space (currently vested as a R.O.W.).
- Scope identified for possible longer-term future expansion of the centre through redevelopment of residential properties to the immediate north of Lot 86.
- Alternatively, in time, this area may be suitable for redevelopment for medium/ high density housing.

The tenancies arrangement for the proposed centre as a whole is as follows:

Component	Floorspace (Sqm)
Existing IGA	828
Proposed New Development	
Liquor store	1,200
Retail/ commercial units	557
Restaurant/ Fast Food Outlet	235
Total New Development	1,992
Total Centre	2,820

The number of car bays currently on the IGA site is indeterminate. A total of 85 car bays are proposed in the new addition to the centre, 6 of which are on-street. Three additional on-street bays and greater manoeuvring area for on-street parking would be possible if the Utakarra Road carriageway was relocated slightly southwards, thus improving sightlines from exit driveways.

Eastward Road

Public Open Space

Ukarakā Road

Existing IGA

unloading

Possible future centre expansion or redevelopment for medium/ high density housing

pedestrians/ cyclists

future residential area

future residential area

Retail or other commercial tenancies

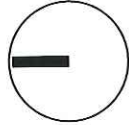
Liquor Store

Drive-through Restaurant/ Fast food

unloading

INDICATIVE CENTRE PLAN

Utakarā Neighbourhood Activity Centre



Plan contains planning and design input by
Shrapnel Urban Planning
Craig Smith Architects
Mackay Urban Design

Version: 201410101700



Liveable Neighbourhoods

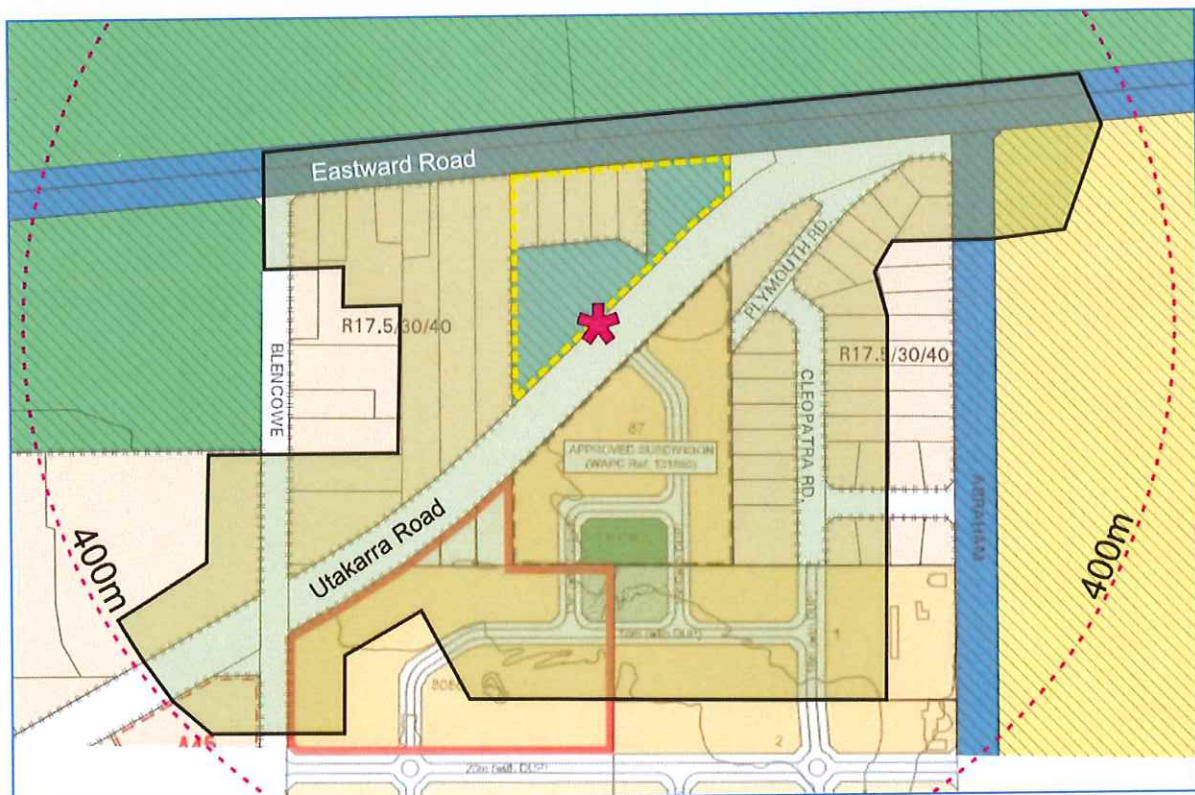
Alignment of proposed developments with Liveable Neighbourhoods principles in centre and neighbourhood design generally is always desirable, but in certain situations such alignment is only partially achievable. This is one of those situations.

Location aspects

It is fairly obvious that the location of the Utaskarra Centre is not in complete alignment with Liveable Neighbourhoods principles, largely for historical reasons. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the existing IGA is very popular with residents of the general area and passing motorists alike. Also, as previously mentioned, the main retail outlet proposed in the new development on Lot 86 – a large independent liquor store – will have a fairly wide trade area, which makes the centre's location and siting on a significant road a favourable characteristic rather than a negative one.

Notwithstanding the Utaskarra centre's locational characteristics, it will still serve as a walkable destination for the existing and future residential areas closest to it. A ped-shed analysis based on a 400 metres walking distance from the centre is presented in Figure 8. This ped-shed is based on the current structure plan for the residential area to the south of the Utaskarra centre having been implemented. It is estimated that at full development there will be approximately 110 dwelling units within the defined ped-shed – more if the residential area to the immediate north of Lot 86 is eventually redeveloped for medium density housing.

Figure 8: Ped-shed analysis based on 400 metre walkable distance from proposed new centre entrance



Centre design aspects

Notwithstanding the locational constraints in terms of the preferred Liveable Neighbourhoods criteria, the proposed centre design itself is fairly closely in accord with most positive Liveable Neighbourhoods example designs and published criteria, namely:

- Located on a reasonably busy street
- Active “main street” frontage, with on-street parking
- Main centre car park to rear of buildings, rather than in front with buildings set back
- Several tenancies suited for retail or other commercial tenants (e.g. local offices) offering some scope for a non-retail mix of uses depending on market conditions
- Centre located adjacent to major pedestrian/ cycleway and will provide bike racks
- Designing out crime features specifically:
 - Glazed/recessed corners allowing surveillance around corners
 - Ability to close the drive-through lane and arcade out of hours removes potential hiding places/dead environments
 - On-street parking provides active street frontage and natural surveillance
 - Site and emergency lighting
 - Appropriate level of security on the liquor store
 - Enclosed bin store (arson prevention).
- High quality public realm envisaged, with wide high-vis centre entrance, 3 metre wide footpaths and public art designed to also serve as windbreak
- Room for logical northwards expansion of centre and/ or
- Alternative future medium/ high density residential redevelopment opportunities.

Fast Food Outlets Policy

Rather than being constructed on a separate individual lot, the proposed restaurant/ fast food outlet is planned as an integrated component of the centre development. As indicated in the Centre Plan (and the development application plans), it is to be located on the south-western side of the centre, separated from the liquor store by a drive-through that exits into one of the centre’s main vehicular access/ exit driveways. Its previously planned location at the eastern end of the centre proved not to be feasible in vehicle queuing terms and other more general aspects of design.

The proposed restaurant/ fast food outlet will be a very positive addition to the activity centre, adding diversity and helping keep activity at the centre going at times when the other tenancies are closed. In addition, the fast food outlet component is in accordance with the City of Geraldton’s Fast Food Outlet’s Local Planning Policy because:

- The proposed drive-through area has the capacity to queue up to 11 cars without impeding other traffic exiting the centre via the south-western access driveway. The left turn from the drive-through into the centre’s exit driveway complies with engineering requirements for turning circles.
- Parking for sit-down patrons of the restaurant will be shared with other centre users either on-street or in a small car park to the immediate west of the restaurant; but for the most part in the main centre car park to the rear of the centre. Pedestrian access from the rear car park to the restaurant will be most conveniently achieved via the safe route through the centre entrance and front footpath.
- At present there is vacant land adjoining the proposed restaurant/ fast food outlet on the western side, so nuisance from the facility will be minimal. However, should development of the adjacent land occur in the future, then consideration should naturally be given to the

proximity of the restaurant by those proponents when planning and designing whatever development is to occur there.

Green Travel Plans Local Planning Policy

The City's Green Travel Plans policy is a valuable initiative aimed at increasing the sustainability of development and transport by encouraging a reduction in car use in favour of other local transport modes – walking, cycling, and use of public transport. Given that the only existing land use in the activity centre at the moment is the existing IGA, and that the majority of the future centre has not even been approved yet, let alone constructed, it is considered to be somewhat premature to create an effective "Travel Plan", as such, at this point in time. Preparation of such a plan can only sensibly be done when land uses are in operation, necessary data can be obtained, and business operators can be involved and/ or consulted during preparation of the Travel Plan.

For this reason, what is sought to be achieved as far as this activity centre plan is concerned, is to identify the opportunities that currently exist for utilisation in the future Travel Plan process, as well as the facilities that are going to be provided in the new centre development that will make it more practicable to eventually formulate a feasible and effective Travel Plan.

Opportunities

The opportunities for travel planning offered by the site and its location are:

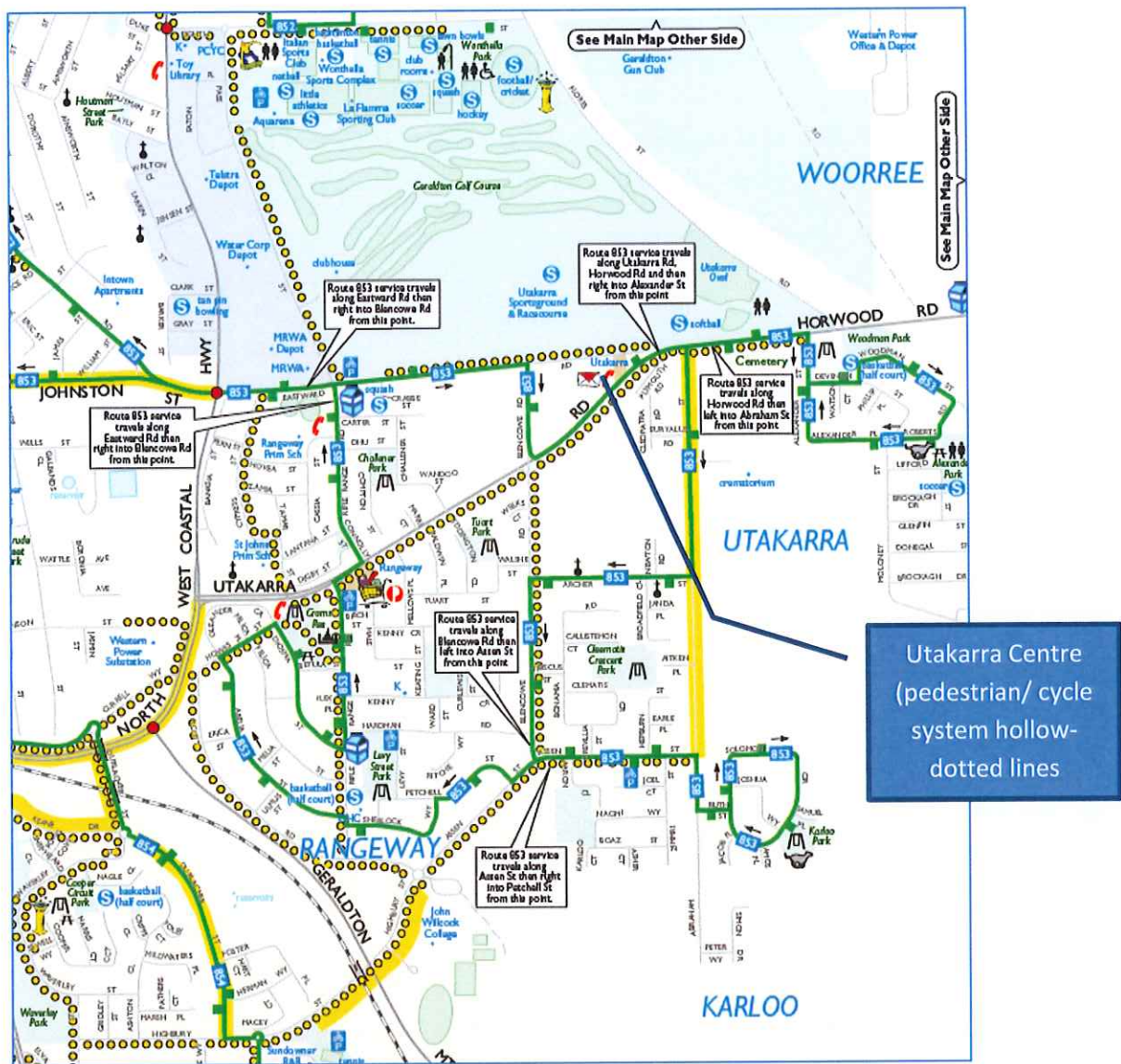
- Frontage to a reasonably significant distributor road (good connectivity to other parts of Geraldton, set to improve greatly due to the Karloo-Wandina project)
- UtaKarra Road shared Pedestrian/ Cycle system with excellent connectivity throughout the district (opportunities for significant pedestrian/ cycle use) – see Figure 9.
- Flat terrain throughout the district (increases the feasibility of using the pedestrian/ cycle network for a greater number of people)
- Additional housing development planned to the immediate south of the centre (more households to be established within easy pedestrian/ cycle access)
- Bus route along UtaKarra Road (potential for the frequency of service to be increased over time as demand for the service increases with centre development).

Centre facilities

The facilities to be provided within the new centre development include:

- Highly visible bike racks (security for high-end commuter bikes as well as more ordinary models)
- Provision for showers, toilets and lockers within all commercial tenancies (essential for dedicated cycle commuters, especially during summer months)
- Excellent footpaths fronting centre (safe and attractive pedestrian/ cycle and bus arrival potential)
- UtaKarra Road crossings from wider pedestrian/ cycle system directly opposite new development's main entrance and existing IGA.
- Opportunity for a new bus stop to be located directly outside new development.

Figure 9: Bus routes and pedestrian/ cycle system



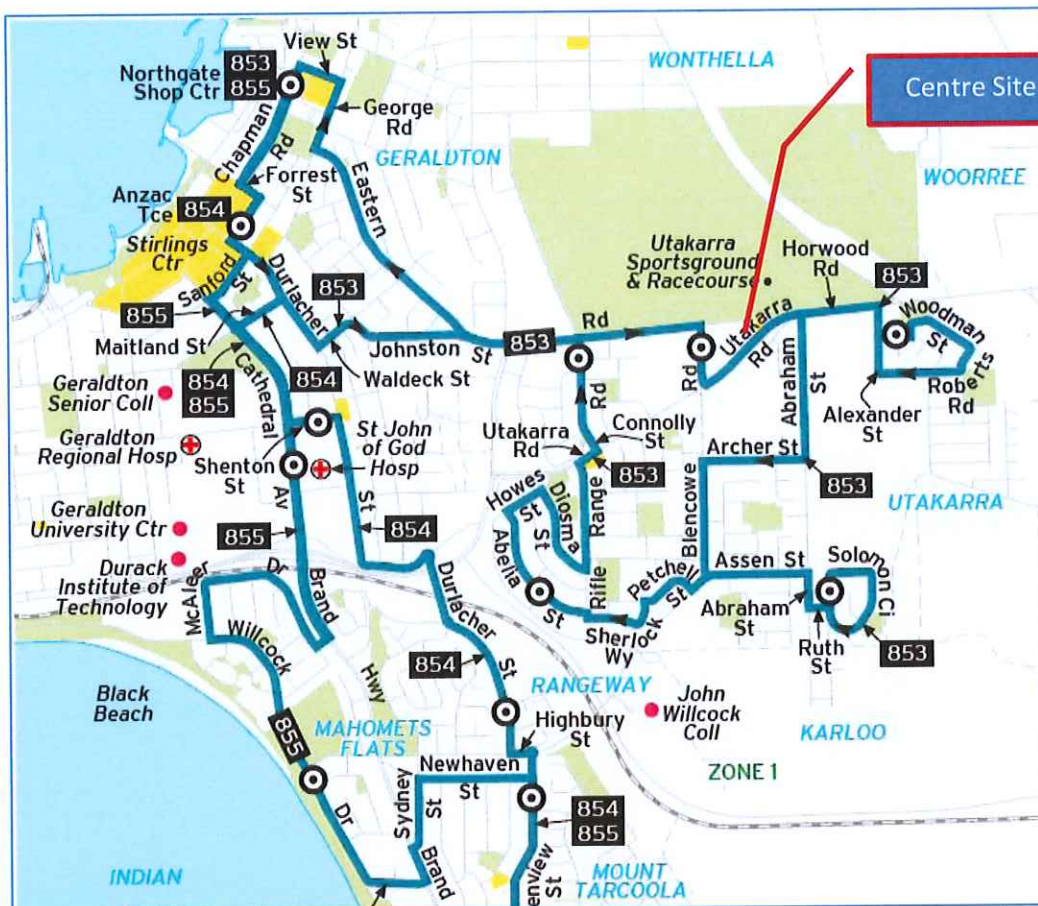
Employees

It is roughly estimated that, at full development, there could be approximately 30-40 employees working in the activity centre as a whole during normal working hours. Even if a relatively small proportion of these could be encouraged to take alternative forms of transport to work, thus reducing the space taken up by employees’ cars, it would be advantageous.

Bus service

There is currently an hourly weekday bus service (853) which travels along Utakarra Road and could potentially serve for both shoppers and employees at the centre. At present the route is a “circle” route, so the buses on Utakarra Road only travel in the north-easterly direction. However, greater frequency than an hour between services would be required before the bus journey would suit most commuters. Both the existing bus route and services will probably be reviewed and perhaps modified upon completion of the Karloo-Wandina project.

Figure 10: Bus Routes - Service 853 passes the centre on Utkarra Road



Conclusion (Green Travel Plan Policy)

As discussed above, it is considered that production of an actual Travel Plan at this stage of the Utkarra Centre's evolution would be a theoretical exercise only. It is considered that after the centre has been constructed and is tenanted and operational would be the right time to arrange for a Green Travel Plan to be prepared. Preparation of the plan at that stage could, through interviews, surveys, etc., take account of valuable data such as:

- The actual tenanted land uses that have established in the centre
- The actual number of employees working in the centre
- Where they live
- Demographics (age, etc)
- Current transport modes
- The origins and demographic characteristics of customers
- Their transport modes
- Interest in alternative travel modes
- Etc.

This real world information could be analysed and utilised to create a genuinely interesting and useful Green Travel Plan that could subsequently be monitored and evaluated from time to time.

Public art

It is intended to create a high quality, attractive work of public art in a prominent location at or near the entrance of the new development component of the activity centre on Lot 86. In order to maintain the pedestrian connectivity with the street and reduce the effect of the prevailing winds on the space, it is proposed to create an art installation that will help diffuse wind at the entrance to the centre.

There is potential to engage local artists/craftsmen to design & manufacture the installation as laser-cut screens. The proponent is keen to liaise with the City in relation to the proposed public art in order to ensure a quality installation that is harmonious with both community values as well as commercial interests.