



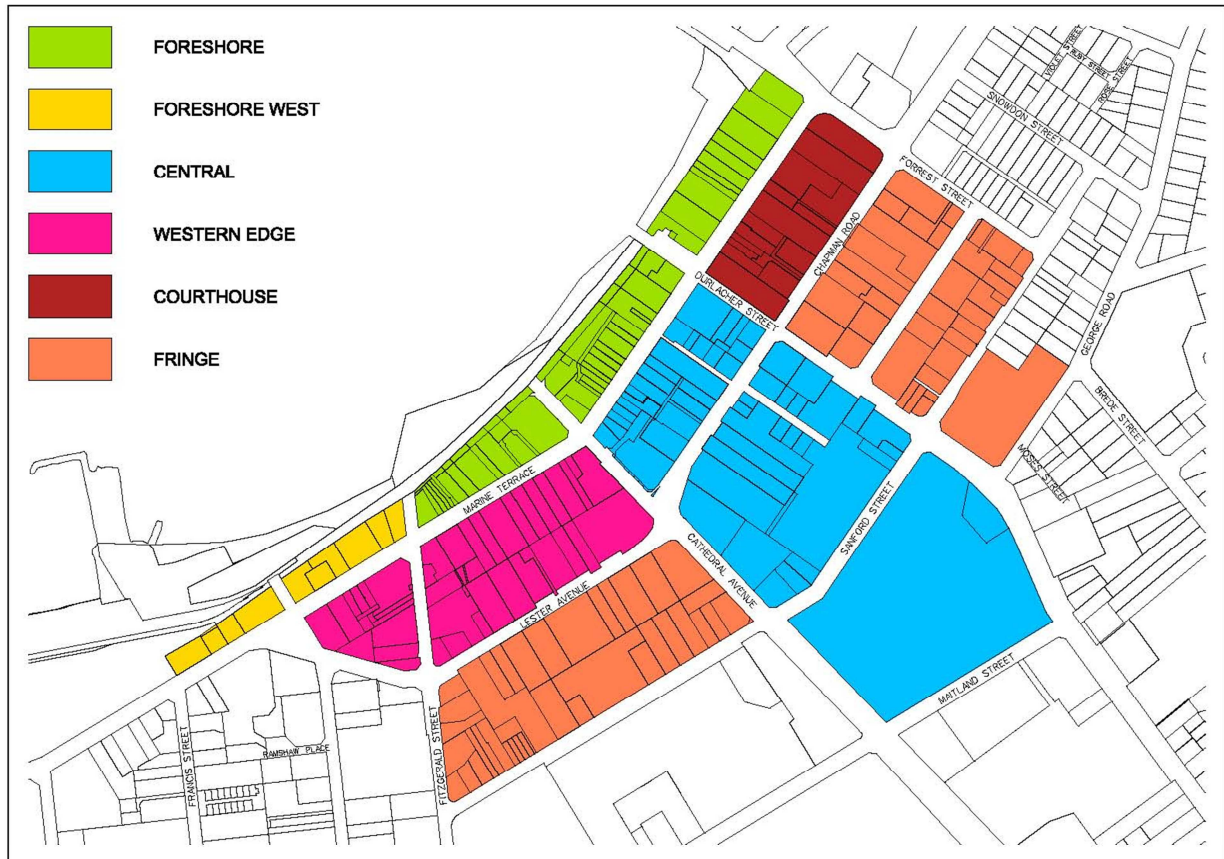
GERALDTON CBD REVITALISATION PROGRAM

MAY 2014

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The *Geraldton CBD Revitalisation Program* provides incentives to immediately drive desirable redevelopment and revitalisation in the CBD. It includes components designed to address barriers raised by stakeholders at a workshop held by the City on 6 November 2013.

For the purposes of this program, “CBD” refers to the coloured areas identified in the illustration below.



This Revitalisation Program and its outcomes will be reviewed annually by the CGG Executive Management Team and Council and is subject to revision, updates, and benchmarking against ongoing progress.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS:

1. CBD INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

In the context of city centre (CBD) redevelopment, it is the joint responsibility of the developer and the associated utility service provider to deliver the required infrastructure for power, water, sewer and fire services. The City's responsibility extends only to liaising with service providers and enforcing applicable servicing requirements under the National Construction Code¹.

Strategy 1:

The City will strongly advocate to the State Government and State agencies a shift in infrastructure strategic planning and delivery:

- **away** from single project-specific headworks delivery, at single developer cost, delivering only non-integrated single-site utility infrastructure capacity increments;
- **towards** coordinated planning and development of integrated multi-site headworks projects that deliver common user infrastructure capacity enhancements, with scale economies that reduce CBD headworks costs for developers;
- **informed by** a working group of representatives from the City, CBD stakeholders, relevant planning and development Departments, and infrastructure and utility service providers.

2. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION FEES

Maximum Development Applications fees for local government are set by the Planning and Development Regulations 2009². These fees can be reduced or waived entirely by the City. It is important to note that the City has no control over fees incurred in Development Assessment Panel³ applications.

Strategy 2:

Where the estimated cost of development is not more than \$50,000 the City may wave Development Application fees in the core area of the CBD (as defined in the City Centre Planning Policy⁴) for applications that propose land uses in accordance with the City Centre Planning Policy.

Where the estimated cost of development is more than \$50,000 the City may reimburse Development Application fees (once the development has commenced construction, as determined by the City) in the core area of the CBD (as defined in the City Centre Planning Policy) for applications that propose land uses in accordance with the City Centre Planning Policy.

3. DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS

The Planning and Development Act 2005⁵ generally prescribes a 60 day time frame for determination of applications for development approval. It is important to note that the City has no control over

¹ <http://www.abcb.gov.au/about-the-national-construction-code>

² http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_reg/padr2009345/

³ <http://daps.planning.wa.gov.au/>

⁴ <http://www.cgg.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/City%20Centre%20Planning%20Policy%202012.pdf>

⁵ http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/wa/consol_act/pada2005236/

the timeframe associated with Development Assessment Panel applications. The City encourages pre-application consultation to ensure that when a formal application is lodged it is determined in a timely manner and all issues have been addressed.

Strategy 3:

The City will continue to make town planning staff readily available for pre-application consultation. The City will track service delivery times and endeavour to determine completed applications within 20 working days.

NOTE: The timeframe is NOT APPLICABLE for Development Assessment Panel applications.

Strategy 4:

The City will continue to lobby the State Government to delegate the full development approval process back to the local government and remove (or at least make fully optional) the Development Assessment Panel process.

4. RATES CONCESSIONS

A rate concession period (primarily during construction phase) may improve the business case economics for larger new commercial developments.

Strategy 5:

The City may provide a concession on rates in the core area of the CBD (as defined in the City Centre Planning Policy) during the construction phase of a project, subject to:

- 1. The value of the building permit works exceeding \$500,000;*
- 2. The development is for a land use in accordance with the City Centre Planning Policy ;*
- 3. The concession applies only from the date construction has commenced on-site as determined by the City;*
- 4. The concession applies only until a Notice of Completion is given OR for a maximum of 2(two) years, whichever is sooner; and*
- 5. The construction must be on-going, as determined by the City.*
- 6. Where the value of the building permit works exceeds \$7 million, the City may negotiate a longer period of rates concessions.*
- 7. The City reserves the discretion to consider extension of rates concessions to the property owner beyond construction completion, with each project to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, on the merits of the proposal, appraised against strategic development goals of the City.*

5. CITY VIBRANCY

The City has adopted and is implementing the Geraldton City Centre Vibrancy Strategy⁶ which focuses on increasing the vibrancy of Geraldton's city centre. The Strategy is intended to provide a strategic focus and a framework for the City and other relevant organisations to commence the physical delivery of key initiatives that build on and further catalyze improvements within the city centre.

Strategy 6:

The City will continue to dedicate a staff member to the delivery of city centre vibrancy initiatives (currently the City Vibrancy Coordinator).

Strategy 7:

The City will utilise the funds generated from the current Differential Rate applied to unoccupiable buildings in the city centre⁷ to implement the recommendations of the Geraldton City Centre Vibrancy Strategy with a priority on the "Place Making – Quick Wins" detailed on page 41 of the Strategy⁸.

Strategy 8:

The City will seek the funded purchase of the former PTA land (Lot 601) between Foreshore Drive and Marine Terrace^{9,10}. The City will then on-sell the property (subject to development outcomes) with the proceeds from that sale to be utilised to implement the recommendations of the Geraldton City Centre Vibrancy Strategy and other vibrancy initiatives as determined by the City in conjunction with the Mid West Development Commission.

6. CAR PARKING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The City has adopted and is implementing both the City Centre Transport Planning & Car Parking Strategy¹¹ and the City Centre Car Parking Management Plan¹². These studies consider a number of parking issues in the city centre and the major findings associated with each. These include the ample availability of public parking at times of peak demand, the need to focus on making better use of the available parking rather than adding to the supply, and the need to use parking pricing as a Travel Demand Measure and public transport.

Strategy 9:

The City will utilise the funds generated from cash-in-lieu for car parking and the funds generated from the current Specified Area Rate for Car Parking to implement the recommendations of the City Centre Transport Planning & Car Parking Strategy and the City Centre Car Parking Management Plan.

⁶ <http://cgg.wa.gov.au/d/OP0023A3>

⁷ http://www.cgg.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/TF069%20-%20Attachment%20-%20Budget%202013-2014-Budget%20and%20Rating%20Principles%202013-2014_0_1.pdf, pp. 18-19.

⁸ <http://cgg.wa.gov.au/d/OP0023A3>

⁹ <http://www.cgg.wa.gov.au/news/city-seeks-purchase-pta-land>

¹⁰ <http://goo.gl/maps/zo2Uh>

¹¹ <http://cgg.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/City%20Centre%20Transport%20Planning%20%26%20Car%20Parking%20Strategy%20%28final%20December%202011%29.pdf>

¹² http://cgg.wa.gov.au/sites/default/files/City%20Centre%20Car%20Parking%20Management%20Plan_0.pdf

Strategy 10:

The City will continue its advocacy and lobbying of the State government to improve and provide additional public transport options for the city centre (and the wider Geraldton area).

7. GERALDTON'S PROFILE

Indications are that there is a general difficulty in obtaining finance for property developments in the city centre. These difficulties include a lack of banking confidence in the Geraldton region for investments and overly restrictive criteria for business financing. Whilst Geraldton is promoted in a number of ways (e.g., as a tourist destination) it is purported that Geraldton could be more effectively promoted and marketed as a desirable destination for investing or developing new projects.

Strategy 11:

The City (in conjunction with key industry/business stakeholders) will create and market a new "Investment Prospectus" to promote Geraldton as a destination for investors.

Strategy 12:

The City will arrange visits by key stakeholders associated with financing development (such as bankers, financiers, superannuation fund managers and other financial industry representatives) to raise Geraldton's investment profile.

8. GOVERNMENT OFFICES

Currently there are some 27 State government agencies with offices in Geraldton, along with several Federal government offices. There are numerous benefits in consolidating many of these agencies into a centralised location in the city centre.

Strategy 13:

The City will advocate and lobby the State and Federal governments to centralise the location of appropriate offices in the city centre.

9. LAND ASSEMBLY

The prevalence of multiple small lots in the CBD area makes it a particularly difficult, and sometimes overly expensive, to assemble land into a sizable parcel for larger developments. It is important to note that the City has no control over the land subdivision process which is regulated by the WA Planning Commission¹³. The City Centre Planning Policy provides additional height bonuses (subject to certain criteria) for development on land parcels over 1,000m².

¹³ http://www.planning.wa.gov.au/dop_pub_pdf/ap10_subdivision.pdf

Strategy 14:

The City will waive subdivision clearance fees in the core area of the CBD (as defined in the City Centre Planning Policy).

10. REGIONAL ACCESSIBILITY

The absence of commercial flights to and from the Pilbara is severely restricting the regional accessibility of Geraldton, forcing FIFO traffic to Perth.

Strategy 15:

The City will work with industry and the airlines to determine if there is a supportable business case to justify additional flights to and from the Pilbara and petition the airlines to consider revisions of current schedules to better meet the needs of Geraldton travelers.

11. PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND AMENITY

The general poor state of unoccupied properties (cleanliness, appearance, etc.) is detracting from the overall appearance of the CBD.

Strategy 16:

The City will continue to work with property owners to identify low-cost solutions to address dilapidated, unsightly and poorly-maintained buildings in order to increase the activation and amenity of the city centre.

Strategy 17:

The City will continue to apply a differential rate for un-occupiable buildings in the city centre.

Strategy 18:

The City will continue to take every measure available under the relevant legislation to encourage the redevelopment, or, if necessary, the demolition of un-occupiable buildings in the core area of the CBD (as defined in the City Centre Planning Policy).

12. HERITAGE

In some instances the costs to redevelop a heritage building and bring the development up to current standards is placing the commercial viability of projects at risk. It is important to note that the City has a strong commitment to heritage conservation as evidenced in numerous strategies and policies including the Strategic Community Plan 2013 – 2023, Heritage Strategy and the City Centre Planning Policy. This commitment extends further to the provision of a heritage advisory service and establishment of a heritage committee to assist developers with redevelopment and revitalization of heritage buildings in the city centre.

Strategy 19:

The City will continue to subsidize the provision of a Regional Heritage Advisory service.

Strategy 20:

The City will continue with the Heritage Advisory Committee.

Strategy 21:

The City will continue to participate in the Heritage Loan Subsidy Scheme¹⁴ currently administered by the WA Local Government Association and the State Heritage Office¹⁵.

Strategy 22:

The City will continue to actively implement heritage plans and strategies (e.g., Heritage Strategy, Strategic Community Plan) and review these documents annually for relevance to community needs and to ensure that the content remains current.

APPENDICES:

APPENDIX 1: DESKTOP RESEARCH INFORMATION

APPENDIX 2: City Centre Redevelopment Workshop – 6th November 2013 “Summary of Outcomes”

APPENDIX 3: Extracts from the City Centre Planning Policy

¹⁴ <http://stateheritage.wa.gov.au/conservation-and-development/grants-incentives/heritage-loan-subsidy-scheme>

¹⁵ <http://www.heritage.wa.gov.au/>