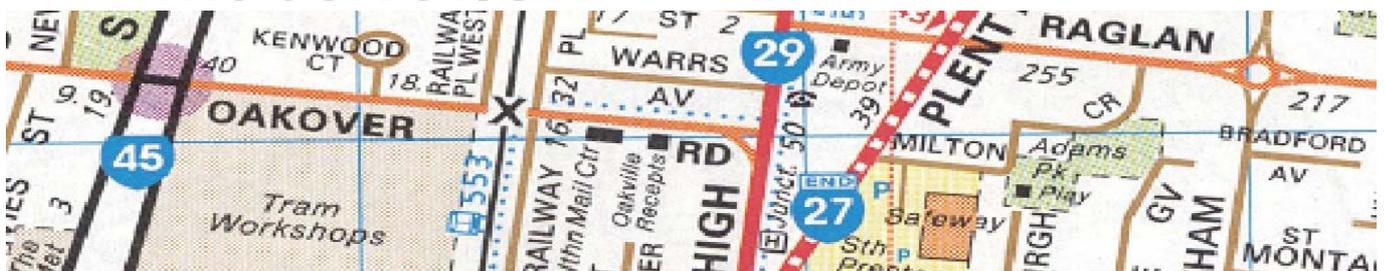


The JUNCTION INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN



**Strategic Planning Unit
December 2001**

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The JUNCTION

Integrated Development Plan

Adopted by the City of Darebin
19th December 2001

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The JUNCTION

INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN



**Prepared by Pinnacle Property Group Pty Ltd in conjunction
with KLM Gerner Consulting Group and the City of Darebin
December 2001.**

In developing the research, there has been significant interaction with the City of Darebin Project Control Group, comprising Council Officers from Strategic Planning, Statutory Planning and Economic Development. Furthermore, the City of Darebin has undertaken research and survey work required to support this study. The major contribution of this group in the preparation of the report is acknowledged and appreciated.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Junction Integrated Development Plan is to provide a framework for the review of the existing planning zones applying to the land under the Darebin Planning Scheme, with particular emphasis on the land zoned for industrial use and having regard to several large redundant sites central to the precinct.

The focus of the study area is the industrial zoned land in the area known as the Preston Junction, being the convergence of High Street and Plenty Road, Preston. More specifically, the area is defined as follows:

To the north: Bell Street (consideration has been given to the Business 2 and Residential 1 Zone land which front the south side of Bell Street).

To the west: The Epping Railway Line.

To the south: Dundas Street.

To the east: Industrial zoned properties between Plenty Road and Hotham Street, otherwise properties fronting the east side of Plenty Road.

CURRENT LAND USE

Traditionally, the study area has comprised a predominantly industrial precinct, centred around the historic land use industries of leather tanneries, piggeries and associated industries including footwear, clothing and bacon curing.

Many of these uses are now redundant or obsolete in the area given the availability of more appropriately located and serviced industrial land, in particular, further north in the suburbs of Reservoir and Thomastown.

The study area lies at a transition point part way along one of Melbourne's longest, traditional strip centres.

URBAN DESIGN

The cohesion of High Street that exists to the south of Dundas Street is lacking in the study area along both High Street and Plenty Road. Many properties along these frontages are of a tired appearance or poor presentation from an urban design perspective. Many of the buildings are heading or have reached the end of their economic and / or useful life.

The mixed use and industrial parts of the study area lack a distinctive identity and character in both the public and private realm. While the residential parts of the study area are quite discrete there is poor visual contrast between them and non-residential parts, with which they compete in terms of amenity and visual quality.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The study precinct has a number of identified strengths and weaknesses:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Stable commercial base.</p> <p>Re-development opportunities</p> <p>Identifiable precinct..</p> <p>Excellent road, rail and tram access</p> <p>Existing residential base.</p> <p>Local shopping facilities.</p> <p>Demand for residential re-development.</p>	<p>Poor presentation of many properties.</p> <p>Existence of vacant and under-utilised sites.</p> <p>Pedestrian safety concerns.</p> <p>Poor land use interface between industrial and residential uses.</p> <p>Limited public car parking.</p> <p>Lack of connection to High Street shops south of Dundas Street.</p> <p>Isolated industrial activity within the precinct.</p> <p>Fragmented ownership.</p> <p>Poor streetscape amenity and aesthetics.</p>

MARKET ASSESSMENT

Demand for large-scale industrial uses is directed towards newer industrial precincts, which provide better linkages to customers and suppliers, modern industrial services and infrastructure, the opportunity to up-date premises and technology and allow scope for expansion.

Small-scale industrial properties within the area continue to operate successfully. This is supported by relatively low rents and occupancy costs in comparison to the newer industrial precincts in nearby Thomastown.

It is not presently viable to refurbish or construct larger scale new commercial space in the precinct. Residential re-development provides the major development opportunity for the precinct.

There is little demand pressure for larger scale office space that would necessitate the expansion of the Business 2 zone to provide for new office development within the study area, outside of the existing Business 2 zones.

THE VISION

CORE RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL RE-DEVELOPMENT AREA

The large redundant industrial sites on High Street and Plenty Road in the south of the study area have the potential to provide comprehensive redevelopment opportunities for commercial and residential purposes.

The progressive replacement of the existing uses and vacant sites with new well-designed development should help to bring about a new perception of the intrinsic values of the area, such as its location advantages and provide the catalyst for a re-generation of the study area.

RESIDENTIAL PRECINCT

Extend the existing residential areas, to include the addition of some of the fringe rail land and the conversion of the land on each side of Milton Crescent.

INDUSTRIAL PRECINCT

Australia Post's site, and the industrial area at the north east portion of the study area, to be retained. Development controls that will protect the operations of Australia Post from encroachment of potentially sensitive aspects of residential development are proposed.

MULTI-USE PRECINCT

Remaining areas of land zoned Industrial 3 and the Business 3 Zone portion of the Howe Leather site be established as multi-purpose precinct which will facilitate:

- Smaller properties along High Street and Plenty Road to continue to function as mix of small businesses and some residential.
- Possible conversion into showrooms on the main roads.
- Potential for limited residential premises, for example, shop top living.

RETAIL PRECINCT

A strengthened retail precinct has been defined at the southern part of the study area, including the Otto Wurth and Safeway land, the Junction Hotel and the existing commercial properties on the west side of High Street.

SPECIFIC SITES

Design guidelines are recommended for key sites and precincts including:

Properties between Australia Post and High Street & between Raglan St, High St and Plenty Rd

- Opportunity for larger scale development comprising commercial, industrial and residential.
- Landscaped setbacks to frontages and setbacks at corners to enable feature specimen trees to be included.

Inclusion of buildings of up to six stories based on careful design and siting.

Otto Wurth site

- Improve image of properties around the intersection.
- Opportunities to link surrounding retail components.
- Conversion of the car sales yard to a retail use that includes a small civic space.
- Better integration of the strata titled shops near Safeway and improving access into Safeway car park.

Howe Leather

- Opportunity to use upper levels for residential.

Land between Oakover Road and Warrs Avenue

- Opportunity for medium-density residential dwellings oriented northwards, with the rears providing car access to screen habitable areas from Australia Post operations.

New on-street car parking for industrial uses

- Develop car parking areas at the entrances to residential streets such as Showers, Adeline and Gertrude Streets to protect residential streets from non-residential traffic and increase car parking capacity.

Railway Place East

- Improve access to residential blocks by extending and widening Railway Place East.
- Residential development on land surplus to rail needs.

URBAN DESIGN

A range of urban design improvements have been identified. These extend across the public and private realm and could be introduced progressively, some as discreet projects and some in associate with property re-developments.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

PLANNING SCHEME CONTROLS

The Industrial 3 zone is no longer the appropriate zone for most of the land within the study area. It is recommended that most of the land in the Industrial 3 zone be re-zoned to Business 2 zone.

This zone allows a wide range of uses to be approved, including offices, industry, residential and retail. Of all the zones that could be applied to facilitate a mix of uses, this zone would give Council the widest possible degree of discretion. In this regard it does not have the shortcomings of the Mixed Use Zone, in which a dwelling is a Section 1 (permitted) use.

It will be important to apply development criteria via a design development overlay. This will provide a flexible mechanism for introducing development guidelines within a schedule to the overlay for the critical sites. These guidelines should address details such as heights, setbacks and landscape treatments as detailed within Section 5.3.3 of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A major conclusion of this study is that there is a need to amend Darebin Planning Scheme to facilitate land use changes to better meet the changed role of the area.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The recommendations of the Junction Integrated Development Plan be incorporated into and inform the review of the Darebin Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS).

RECOMMENDATION 2

A Junction Area Local Policy be included in Clause 22 of the Darebin Planning Scheme to provide a comprehensive overview of the recommendations of the study and to provide clear direction for land owners, tenants and any prospective purchasers.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The objectives of the Junction Area Local Policy are to:

- Enhance the existing commercial spine along High Street and Plenty Road by encouraging a mix of uses.
- Improve the amenity of High Street and Plenty Road.
- Improve linkages between Preston South Shopping Centre and the High Street shops south of Dundas Street.

- Encourage re-development of redundant industrial sites central to the policy area for commercial, and medium to higher density residential purposes.
- Consolidate and improve the amenity of existing residential areas.
- Improve safety, amenity and surveillance of the Bell Railway Station.

The Local Policy should include a map of the proposed precincts and further detail of the recommendations as listed within this report.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That Council initiate rezonings to rezone the land around the Junction in accordance with the Proposed Zoning Changes referred to in Figure 9, to implement this study. This generally includes:

- Core Residential and Commercial Redevelopment Area to Business 1 and Business 2 zones;
- Multi-Purpose Area along High Street and Plenty Road to Business 2 zone;
- Consolidation of existing residential areas through extending the Residential 1 zone around Milton Crescent and north of Oakover Road.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That Council initiate rezonings to rezone the industrial area on the east side of Plenty Road north of Osborne Street to Business 3 Zone in accordance with the recommendations of Council's Industrial Land Use Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That Council initiate rezonings to rezone the existing residential areas to Residential 1 Zone in accordance with the Proposed Precincts (refer Figure 7). This includes land north of Railway Place East, industrial land between Oakover Road and Esther Streets and land around Milton Crescent.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That Council consider permit applications in the context of this Junction Integrated Development Strategy and give particular attention to managing the transition of this area from industrial uses to more residential development to minimise potential conflicts.

RECOMMENDATION 8

That Council apply development criteria via a Design and Development Overlay to specified key development sites to require an appropriate form of development to be achieved across the area, as this is the most appropriate and flexible mechanism for introducing development guidelines for the critical sites.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The overall design objectives for the Design and Development Overlay(s) should generally seek:

- To achieve high quality design outcomes for commercial and residential premises and to improve the visual amenity and image of High Street and Plenty Roads.
- To promote design excellence on landmark sites and for multi-storey buildings.
- To ensure the design of developments protects the residential amenity of existing dwellings and the operational requirements of existing businesses.
- To encourage the retention of the fabric of industrial buildings (or significant parts thereof) of heritage value within new developments.

The Schedule to the Design and Development Overlay should address details such as heights, setbacks, and landscape treatments, as outlined in Section 5.3.3 Urban Design, of this report.

RECOMMENDATION 10

All new developments should provide a self-sufficient level of car parking and limit reliance on on-street car parking. The level of car parking provided however, may be tempered by proximity to local services and public transport.

RECOMMENDATION 11

That Council undertake a feasibility study to investigate the potential to realign Railway Place East and improve the amenity and security of the area around Bell Train Station.

RECOMMENDATION 12

An Environmental Audit Overlay be applied to all land proposed to be re-zoned.

RECOMMENDATION 13

That Council adopt the following implementation schedule:

- Darebin City Council to endorse report.
- Preparation of a planning scheme amendment including Design and Development Overlay and Junction Policy.
- Exhibition of the planning scheme amendment.
- Panel hearing (if required).
- Planning scheme amendment adoption (subject to any modifications resultant from the public consultation phase [exhibition] and Panel hearing).
- Development of a detailed urban design, plan, costings and budget.
- Implementation of works program by Council and provision of landscape features (for example, corner feature tree sites as part of private development projects).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Darebin commissioned Pinnacle Property Group Pty Ltd (Pinnacle) and KLM Gerner Consulting Group (KLM Gerner) to prepare an Integrated Development Plan for the precinct situated around the intersection of High Street and Plenty Road, Preston, generally known as the “Junction”.

The Integrated Development Plan is to provide a framework for the review of the existing planning zones under the Darebin Planning Scheme applying to the land, with particular emphasis on the land zoned for industrial use and having regard to several large redundant sites central to the precinct.

The objectives of the study are:

- To establish a vision for the future re-development of the industrial zoned land within the precinct.
 - To identify mechanisms and an implementation strategy to effect this change.
 - To establish a series of re-development options that are viable both from a commercial and community perspective.
 - At a strategic level, prepare plans for the area addressing:
 - Land use.
 - Urban design.
 - Traffic movement.
 - Streetscape and landscape improvements.
 - Marketing and commercial strategies.
 - To establish an implementation plan to identify priorities and responsibilities.
- To establish the planning principles required to facilitate the change.

The impetus for change of the land use within the precinct has been driven by:

- A recognition by Council that an opportunity exists for urban renewal within the precinct.
- Many of the existing buildings constructed on sites within the precinct are functionally or economically obsolete.
- The availability of several significant buildings that are currently vacant with little prospect of re-use in the current form.
- Strong economic and property market conditions which provide the opportunity for re-development.

2.0 EXISTING SNAPSHOT

THE STUDY ZONE

The focus of the study area is the industrial zoned land in the area known as the Preston Junction, being the convergence of High Street and Plenty Road, Preston. More specifically, the area is defined as follows:

To the north: Bell Street (consideration has been given to the Business 2 and Residential 1 Zone land which front the south side of Bell Street).

To the west: The Epping Railway Line.

To the south: Dundas Street.

To the east: Industrial zoned properties between Plenty Road and Hotham Street, otherwise properties fronting the east side of Plenty Road.

A plan identifying the study is included as Figure 1.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Junction study area centres around the convergence of High Street and Plenty Road, south Preston. It is only eight kilometres from the centre of Melbourne, easily accessible along either High Street or St Georges Road, or by train or tram services.

To the north and south of the study area High Street forms a continuous and extensive retail strip shopping centre. To the south, the shopping strip extends from Dundas Street to James Street, Northcote, encompassing the suburbs of both Thornbury and Northcote. To the north, the strip extends from Bell Street through to Wood Street, Preston. In its overall context, High Street presents as an unusually long shopping retail strip.

Traditionally, the study area has comprised a predominantly industrial precinct, centred around the historic land use industries of leather tanneries, piggeries and associated industries including footwear, clothing, bacon curing and small goods. Many of these uses are now redundant or obsolete in the area given the availability of more appropriately located and serviced

industrial land, in particular, further north in the suburbs of Reservoir and Thomastown.

There is increasing demand within the study area for residential land uses. This has arisen from:

- The increasing trend towards urban consolidation within Melbourne.
- The strong residential market.
- The affordability of the precinct relative to the previously more sought after inner suburbs.
- The obsolescence of many of the industrial buildings within the area. This provides opportunities for conversion to alternative uses.

The leather, footwear and clothing industries have an historic presence in the study area arising from the manufacturing links. The industry has largely moved from a manufacturing and wholesale nature, to limited production and retail in the guise of “factory outlet” trading.



— STUDY AREA

DAREBIN JUNCTION
INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN



FIGURE 1

STUDY AREA

OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study area and municipality have been subject to several studies concerning land use, conclusions for which are relevant to the study. A summary of the studies is included in Appendix 1. Key issues are as follows:

WSC Consultants Pty Ltd; Strategy for Retail Activity Centres, 1997

The study area is identified as forming part of the Primary Neighbourhood Centre of High Street, Thornbury (surrounding Dundas/High/Plenty Junction) and the Peripheral Sales Centre of High Street Preston (between Dundas and Bell Street).

The Retail Strategy proposes the development of a business plan for each centre emphasising a community or neighbourhood focus. 'Creative' planning

controls are proposed that encourage a mix of uses including residential development.

With regard to the Peripheral Sales Centres, the strategy recognises that the City of Darebin is unlikely to attract additional 'big box' retailers. The existing peripheral Sales Centres should be given encouragement to improve appearance.

City of Darebin; Economic Development Strategy 1998 / 2002, June 1998

This study identified the key economic strengths of the municipality as:

- Proximity to the CBD, Melbourne Airport and Western Ring Road.
- Presence of quality education, training and research facilities.
- Strong manufacturing, wholesale and retail sectors and a number of very strong individual businesses.

The weaknesses of the municipality that need to be addressed are:

- Lack of greenfield sites for businesses.
- Poor visual image.
- Reliance on manufacturing, wholesale and retail sectors to provide jobs.
- No clearly defined office/commercial precinct.
- Low education and training levels amongst the local labour force.

City of Darebin, Going Places, The Darebin Integrated Travel Plan, June 2001

The Darebin Integrated Travel Plan was prepared by a working group of Council, State Government, community and travel industry representatives.

The objective of the Integrated Travel Plan to achieve *'safe and easy access for all members of Darebin's community to their places of work and other destinations such as shops and schools . . .'* The strategy emphasises that travel can adversely impact on the environment, human health, and the economic viability of businesses.

The Integrated Travel Plan encourages the shortening of journeys by encouraging a mix of land uses and increasing housing densities close to public transport.

The Integrated Travel Plan foreshadows the redevelopment of the area for *'a mixture of uses including new industrial development, factory sales and medium density housing.'*

The Integrated Travel Plan discourages the use of High Street by large vehicles passing through the area.

City of Darebin and Essential Economics; Linking Economic Development to Land Use Planning An Issues Paper, 2000

The paper focuses on increasing economic development by increasing local jobs.

Future directions for retailing in Darebin are likely to include:

- Increased demand for services throughout the retail hierarchy in response to the increasing population and increase of local household incomes.
- Continuing dominance of Northland Shopping Centre.
- Potential for expansion of peripheral sales on key arterial roads.
- Potential for further factory outlets that may operate in shopfronts rather than attached to factories, and possibly a factory outlet centre.
- Loss of convenience and grocery role for local neighbourhood shopping centres.
- Successful neighbourhood shopping centres will need to secure a niche role or be supported by a key anchor.

Opportunities for future large-scale office development in the municipality are considered to be limited. Small-scale office developments will continue to locate in neighbourhood and strip shopping centres.

The City of Whittlesea is the dominant location for recent industrial development in the north east sector and contains more than ten times the amount of industrial floor space than Darebin.

The footwear and leather manufacturing sector is the largest manufacturing employee in the municipality, and the city contains the largest concentration of footwear firms in Australia.

It is suggested that isolated pockets of industrial land are likely to come under pressure for rezoning, and industrial premises on main roads adjacent to business centres are likely to lose their industrial function.

The Junction industrial precinct is identified as '*a key area of opportunity for the municipality.*' The area has a mix of uses and generally poor amenity and many vacant buildings. Pressure is likely to mount for a mixed use zoning or the area could fragment into various business, industrial or residential zones. It is suggested the area could be developed along a particular theme such as, Commercial office precinct, footwear sales and design precinct or warehouse living precinct.

With regard to future prospects for the area a focus group workshop found:

- Factory outlets lack a critical mass.
- Sites in the precinct could be too constrained for peripheral sales.
- Small shops lack a significant residential catchment, although this could improve when residential redevelopment occurs.
- Industrial development is unlikely given existing building stock.
- Residential development is in strong demand, but could cause conflict with premises such as Oakville Receptions.
- Several major sites are available for redevelopment.
- The re-development of PANCH will impact on the area.
- The existing zoning is perceived as an impediment to re-development and investment.

The Preferred Future for the Junction envisages:

- An improved image as residential redevelopment of key sites occurs. This could include additional restaurants and cafes. Redevelopment should allow commercial use at street frontage.
- Existing industrial activity should be protected.

City of Darebin; Industrial Land Use Strategy, A Framework for Decision Making, November 2001

It is proposed that Local Area Plans be prepared for the re-zoning of large or complex areas. These plans should address:

- Land use conflict.
- Maximising job creation.
- Arrangements for traffic and parking.
- Desirable mix of activities.
- Streetscape improvements and similar.

In considering industrial re-zonings the first priority should be to retain economic activities and then to improve residential

amenity and to make use of existing infrastructure.

The study recommends the preparation of an Industrial Land Policy including design guidelines and Local Area Plans to guide industrial redevelopment in specific areas.

The study also recommends that Council work with any adversely affected industries or businesses to assist them in improving environmental efficiency to reduce off site impacts or to relocate to a more suitable location to ensure their long term viability.

City of Darebin; City of Darebin Heritage Review 1999

The former Watson and Patterson Bacon Curing Factory (now Otto Wurth Factory) and the Howe Leather Factory are the most significant heritage sites within the Junction study area. The Bell-Railway

residential area extending north of Showers Street generally between the railway line and High Street is a historically significant precinct.

CURRENT LAND USE

Land use characteristics of the study zone are summarised below:

Industrial

The area is characterised by the presence of larger scale, purpose built, leather manufacturing properties, and older housing stock. The former large-scale industrial properties are now generally under utilised, obsolete, vacant or being converted to residential uses. The only remaining large-scale, purely industrial property within the precinct, which continues to operate at full capacity, is the Australia Post premises.

Smaller scale industrial uses exist along High Street and Plenty Road at the northern end of the area generally to the north of Raglan Street. A number of these uses are automotive related. Traditional uses of shoe and clothing manufacturing are also present in this area and still operating at or near full site capacity.

Offices

There are no substantial office premises within the precinct. This use is generally limited to smaller scale business servicing the local community. The existing medium sized offices are mostly vacant.

Automotive Sales / Service

There are a number of small-scale automotive type businesses at the northern end of the study area, in addition to car yards at key locations including at the corner of Raglan and High Streets, and at the junction of High Street and Plenty Road.

Residential

Established residential areas comprising period style housing predominate in the infill areas between the railway, main roads and industrial areas. These properties originally serviced the key manufacturing industries and comprise mostly single storey, double fronted

detached dwellings. These are now being renovated and are generally intact.

Retail

Some small-scale retail premises are interspersed along High Street and Plenty Road. A concentration of retail uses exists immediately around The Junction, linking through to the High Street retail strip south of the study area. The Safeway supermarket on Plenty Road is a major presence in this location. The store fronts Plenty Road, but has access off Dundas Street and Milton Crescent.

General

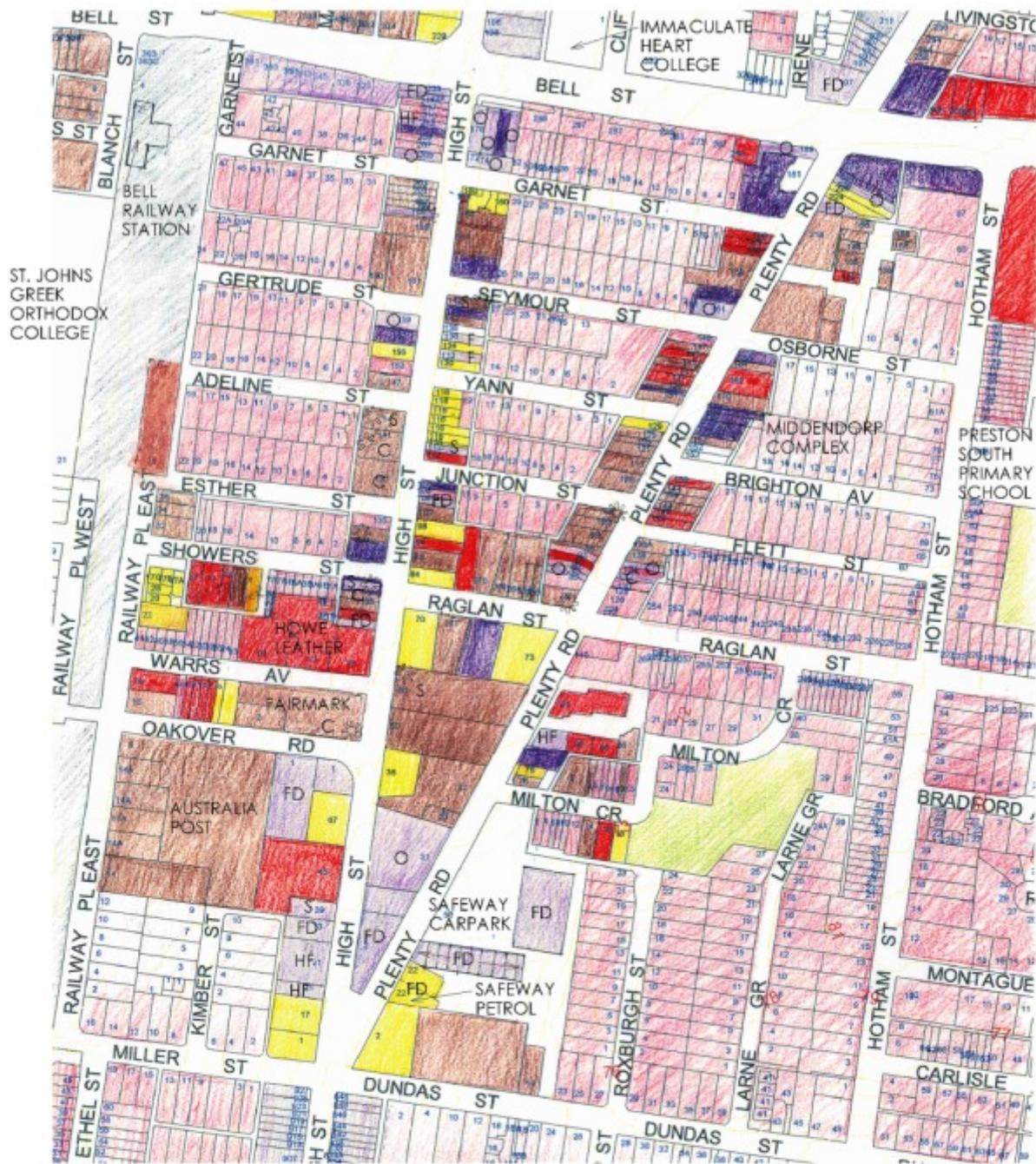
The study area north of Raglan Street is identified by a mix of commercial, retail and industrial properties fronting Plenty Road and High Street. A number of the premises are vacant. Many of the properties have a poor appearance as a consequence of a lack of maintenance and capital improvement. Residential properties front the east-west streets.

South of Raglan Street, there is a greater concentration of commercial and industrial properties generally and this area contains most of the larger scale uses. There is very little residential development within this area apart from the extreme south west portion of the precinct at the corner of Railway Place East and Miller Street.

Other key land uses within the precinct are a stand-alone Safeway supermarket and The Junction Hotel, a local landmark on the intersection of High Street and Plenty Road.

Other landmark properties include the Howe Leather and Standard Leather sites on High Street.

A land use map is included as Figure 2.



- INDUSTRIAL
- OFFICE
- AUTOMOTIVE SALES/SERVICE
- RESIDENTIAL
- PUBLIC TRANSPORT
- VACANT

RETAIL CATEGORIES:

- HF HOME FURNISHINGS
- FD FOOD & DRINK
- S SHOES
- C CLOTHES/ACCESSORIES
- FO FACTORY OUTLETS

DAREBIN JUNCTION
INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN



FIGURE 2

LAND USE PLAN



- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. SAFEWAY | 8. PAINT MOBILE | 15. DEL MONTE SUITS |
| 2. AUSTRALIA POST | 9. HOWE LEATHER | 16. JUNCTION HOTEL |
| 3. RECEPTION CENTRE | 10. WINDSOR SMITH | 17. FAIRMARK CLOTHING |
| 4. STANDARD LEATHER | 11. P.A.N.C.H. | 18. AUTOBARN |
| 5. AAMI | 12. BELL STATION & PTC LAND | 19. CEDARS BAKERY |
| 6. FOOTREST | 13. TONY BIANCO SHOES | --- STUDY AREA |
| 7. OTTO WURTH | 14. TELSTRA | |

OWNERSHIP PATTERN

Several key sites are generally held in single ownership and some limited consolidation with neighbouring properties has occurred. Ownership in the main however, is largely fragmented throughout the study area with smaller

sites being held in individual, separate ownership. The fragmentation of ownership will provide a major challenge in the renewal of the precinct.

A key sites plan is included as Figure 3.

EXISTING PLANNING CONTROLS

The Municipal Strategic Statement in the Darebin Planning Scheme contains several references that are relevant to the future of the study area and its current transitional phase.

Clause 21.04 notes:

“The challenge for Council will be to foster new employment sector growth whilst supporting existing industry. Economic development opportunities need to be expressed through responsive land use planning”.

Later in this clause (under ‘High Street Internodal Activity’), Council recognises that:

“Viability of land uses within the internodal activity areas requires review, given high vacancy rates and increased demand for land use change (that is, factory conversions to medium density housing etc).

Opportunities to facilitate land use change that leads to better usage of existing infrastructure and supports the function of the retail centre need to be explored by Council. Potential to encourage a mixture of uses, including additional residential development, is an option currently being reviewed by Council.”

Clause 21.10 Economic Development includes the following Strategy:

“Review industrial and commercial land uses along the High Street ‘internodal’ areas, and identify areas for land use change”

Clauses 21.10 Economic Development and 21.11 Housing and Communities Future Work identifies the need to:

“Prepare a Mixed Use Policy, which will set the parameters and preconditions for applying a Mixed Use Zone in locations undergoing land use change, namely the ‘internodal’ activity areas along High Street.”

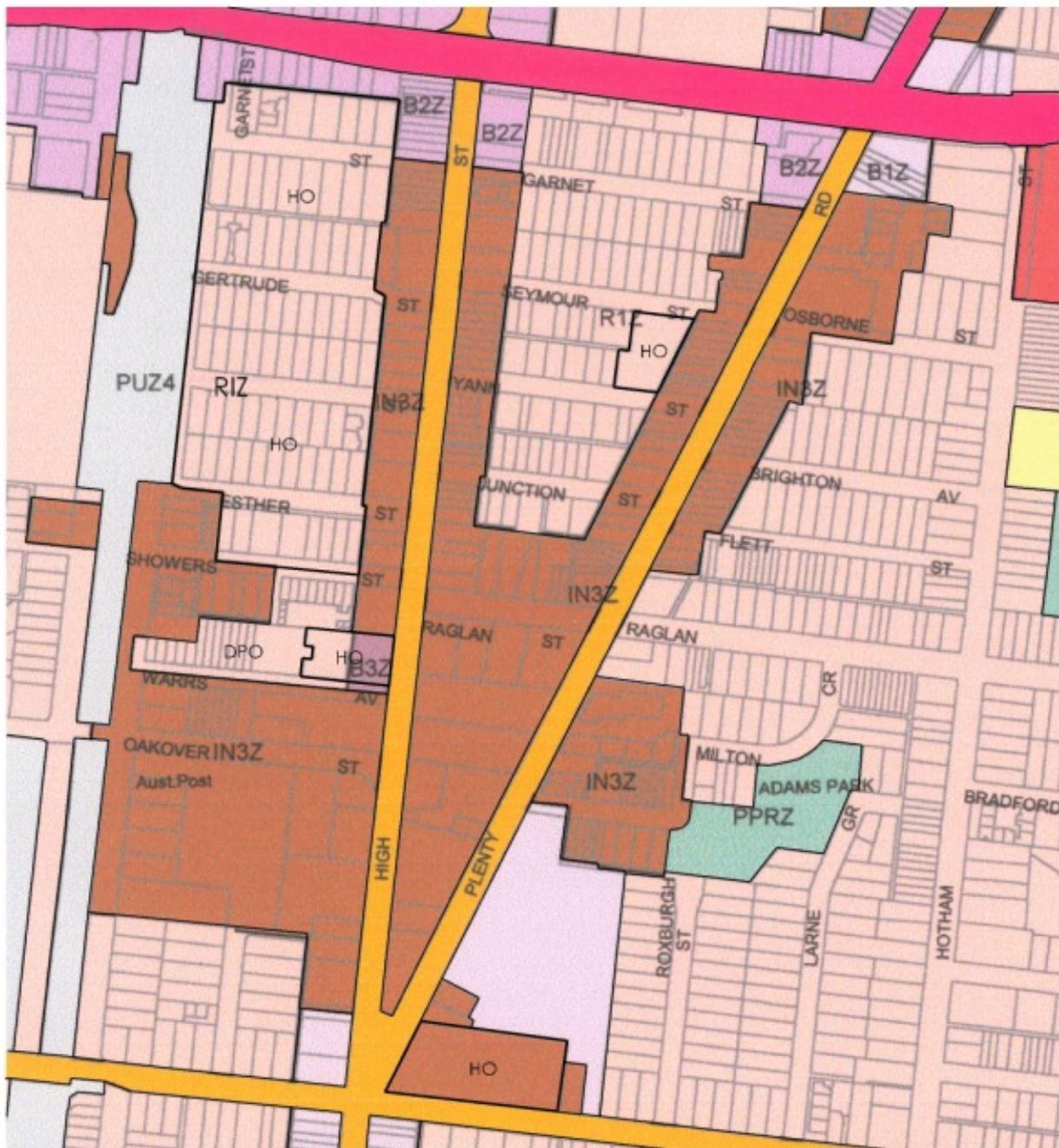
Council’s strategies include (Clause 21.11).

“Promote the conversion of existing buildings for residential purposes where sites have become vacant and are no longer viable for their original purpose.

Develop a policy which sets the parameters for the appropriate siting and development of mixed use housing activity.”

The MSS and Local Policies recognise the need to provide for land use and employment changes by reviewing the zoning and particular policy provisions.

In this context and having regard to the findings outlined in this study, the existing pattern of zoning is limited in its ability to facilitate changes to the pattern



B1 Z - BUSINESS 1 ZONE
 B2 Z - BUSINESS 2 ZONE
 IN3 Z - INDUSTRIAL 3 ZONE
 R1 Z - RESIDENTIAL 1 ZONE

PPRZ - PUBLIC PARK & RECREATION ZONE
 PUZ4 - PUBLIC USE ZONE -TRANSPORT
 HO - HERITAGE OVERLAY (———)
 DPO - DEVELOPMENT PLAN OVERLAY

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 INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLAN



KLM Gerner
 Consulting
 Group



FIGURE 4

ZONING PLAN
 DAREBIN PLANNING SCHEME

of land uses so that the study area can better meet contemporary requirements.

Existing Use Rights

Clause 63 of the Darebin Planning Scheme provides “existing use” rights for existing legally established businesses should land be re-zoned. This allows an existing business to continue to operate although it may not “conform” to the new zone control, that is, an industrial use can continue to operate in a new residential zone. Council can not prevent the continuation of these businesses and there is some limited scope for these businesses to up-grade or extend subject to the issue of a planning permit by Council.

The existing zones and brief comments on their relevance to the MSS, Local Policy settings and findings of this study follows. A copy of the existing zoning plan and planning scheme provisions, including overlays, is included as Figure 4.

Residential 1 Zone (R1Z)

R1Z applies to residential areas, parts of which are also included within a Heritage Overlay.

This zone is considered to be appropriate where applied but there are opportunities to extend it along the edges of the rail corridor and other parts of the study area to facilitate residential conversion.

Industrial 3 Zone (IN3Z)

The zone includes the Australia Post site and most of the land that has frontages to High Street and Plenty Road. The Purpose of this zone includes:

“To provide a buffer between the Industrial 1 Zone or Industrial 2 Zone and local communities, which allows for industries and associated uses compatible with the nearby community.”

There are no Industrial 1 or Industrial 2 zones in or adjacent to the study area.

Residential uses are prohibited and there are limitations on retailing such as ‘seconds’ stores.

Retention of this zone would severely limit the opportunities and flexibility for development of mixed uses where these are considered to be appropriate.

The Industrial 3 zone is appropriate where it is intended to retain industrial uses, for example, Australia Post.

Business 2 and Business 3 Zones (B2Z & B3Z)

Most of the land around the intersections of High Street and Plenty Roads with Bell Street are zoned Business 2 Zone. There is a small area zoned Business 1 at the north east corner of Plenty Road at Bell Street.

Howe Leather site

The part of the Howe Leather site fronting High Street is zoned Business 3, with a **Development Plan Overlay**. This zone is intended “To encourage the integrated development of offices and manufacturing industries associated with commercial and industrial uses.”

This zone goes some way towards introducing flexibility to adapt this important former industrial building for a mixture of uses. However, it prohibits accommodation (other than a caretaker’s residence) including dwellings. This limits the potential to include residential uses at the upper levels of the building fronting High Street, which would enhance the viability of conversion of the lower levels to commercial uses such as showrooms.

The application of the Business 2 Zone to the front portion of the site would address this shortcoming, by permitting accommodation. This is considered more appropriate zone for the site. To enable

accommodation in the front portion of the building under the Business 2 Zone a new Development Plan would need to be approved. (If the redevelopment of the site does not proceed under the existing Development Plan Overlay (DPO) Council may wish to discuss replacing the DPO with a Design and Development Overlay with the owner of the land, in order to facilitate redevelopment of this central site.)

Where it is proposed that site consolidation be encouraged to facilitate re-development, urban design objectives such as building heights and setbacks could be controlled by the use of a Design Development Overlay. This overlay offers more flexibility than a Development Plan Overlay and is less prescriptive.

URBAN DESIGN

The study area lies at a transition point part way along one of Melbourne's longest, traditional strip centres.

The cohesion of the continuous High Street building facades that exists to the south of Dundas Street is lacking in the study area along both High Street and Plenty Road due to variation in building form and size. Many properties along these frontages have a tired appearance or poor presentation from an urban design perspective.

The mixed use and industrial parts of the study area lack a distinctive identity and character in both the public and private realm. While the residential parts of the study area are quite discrete there is poor visual contrast between them and non-residential areas, with which they compete in terms of amenity and visual quality.

Implementation of a vision that addresses the following issues would do much to enhance the urban design qualities of the study area. Key issues include:

- The punctuation point at the intersection of Plenty Road, High Street and Dundas Street presents a real opportunity to establish a new image for the study area.

Special attention is needed with regard to the future utilisation of the road frontages around the landmark

Junction Hotel and Safeway Supermarket sites. These frontages could provide for landscaping and public art. Replacement of the car sale yard on the corner of Plenty Road and Dundas Street with a small town space that is framed by well-designed commercial premises, for example, would do much to upgrade the attraction of this intersection and to introduce a sense of place.

- In the public realm the proliferation of wires and poles is visually disruptive and contributes to a discordant and rather neglected appearance that interrupts the views towards the City and along the main roads.
- There is a lack of tree planting within the High Street and Plenty Road reservations and within property frontages that could introduce some softness into the streetscape.
- A street tree-planting program could enhance residential streets within and adjacent to the study precinct.
- Strengthened planting and attention to development opportunities along the rail corridor would enhance the rail station, an essential asset of the precinct.

- A reduction in the scale of signs (especially those that cover large portions of buildings, for example, Autobarn) and rationalisation of signs would enhance the appearance of the area.
- On key or landmark sites where there is a proliferation of signage, Council should review existing planning permits and/or seek rationalisation of signs with individual land owners.
- Re-development of vacant commercial/industrial sites with the inclusion of taller buildings

than currently exist would introduce interest and contrast into the area. Developments such as these could include planted setback to contrast with the hard-edged character where buildings abut the building line.

Many of these changes could be facilitated as changes of use and re-developments occur. These initiatives can be enhanced by public works undertaken by Council and the utility services companies.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The study area is well serviced by infrastructure, although the appearance is often untidy. Key infrastructure elements include:

Public Transport

The area is well serviced by the Bell Railway Station, Plenty Road / High Street tram services, and bus services on High Street, Bell Street and Dundas Streets. Tram services on St Georges Road are also easily accessible from the study area. The amenity of Bell Station however, is very poor having regard to safety, aesthetic appearance, maintenance and the standard of facilities.

There is an issue with capacity of trains utilising the Epping line. During morning peak periods, trains are often fully occupied by the time they reach Preston due to the recent high levels of development in the Epping area.

Electricity

A major visual blight of the area is the presence of overhead power transmission and tram cables. In several instances, overhead wires become the dominant

aerial visual element accentuated by the lack of vegetation.

Drainage

Enquiries indicate that there are no issues regarding drainage in the study area. Council has no intention to improve drainage to the area and changes of use will not necessarily impact on capacity, although future development will require underground drainage. Most storm water presently flows over land until it collects at a low point. The precinct is not subject to flood inundation measured at a one in a one hundred year event.

Traffic

Council has an Integrated Travel Plan which aims to reduce the focus and reliance on car and truck transport. Its primary objective is to achieve maximum performance from major roads such as St Georges Road and Bell Street. High Street (in this section), Plenty Road and Dundas Street are all local roads controlled by Council. Plenty Road north

of Bell Street is a declared main road and Bell Street is a State highway.

Council is currently developing a transport management plan for High Street. The preliminary report has been presented to VicRoads for comment. The key aims are to:

- Maintain existing traffic volumes with no further increases.
- Improve pedestrian safety.
- Improve parking in shopping precincts.
- Improve public transport access.
- Focus on High Street becoming a shopping strip rather than a transport thoroughfare.
- Reduce “cycle” times at intersections so that pedestrians are less inclined to jaywalk and cars are less inclined to run red lights.
- Insert kerb outstands:
 - Reduce width for crossings.
 - Provide prominence of tram stops.
 - Possible median treatments in High Street.
 - Improve tree scapes.

A summary of the aims of the report is included as Appendix 2.

The current problems with High Street traffic flow are related to the intersections rather than “mid-block” street issues.

Traffic strategies also relate to utilising key infrastructure such as increasing housing densities around train stations and tram stops.

There is a traffic issue in relation to the Safeway site. Large vehicles, which require access to the site for loading, are unable to perform right hand turns at the Junction from the south, and must negotiate residential streets to enter Dundas Street, and then access the site. This conflicts with the residential amenity of the local streets.

Council’s traffic engineer advises that traffic lights are proposed to be introduced at the corner of Plenty Road and Raglan Street.

Parking

Parking problems are most evident at the interface of residential with commercial and industrial properties.

On-street parking on High Street in the study area is generally at around 50% to 70% occupancy overall. No off-street public car parking exists in the study area.

SURVEY RESULTS

Approximately 200 commercial and industrial property owners and occupants have been surveyed to gain an understanding of their occupancy within the study area. A total of 149 responses were received, comprising 65 from tenants and 84 from owners.

The survey was conducted in two parts:

- All premises, other than the key sites, were visited and questionnaires completed on-site.

- All land owners were mailed a questionnaire and asked to complete it and return to Council.

Survey results are discussed below. Tabulated survey results are included in Appendix 3.

Key property owners and occupants were contacted directly by telephone. The general results of these discussions are discussed in Section 3.1.

Key Survey Results

Key results from the formal survey responses are summarised:

Long-Term Property Ownership

A significant number of property owners have owned their properties for greater than ten years (50%). Similarly, a large number of tenants have also been in occupation for greater than ten years (29%), although most have been tenants for between one and five years (38%). Lower turnover reduces the natural inclination for uses to revitalize a precinct through premises fit outs and upgrades. The current overall poor presentation of the properties in the precinct is likely to be at least in part due to this. It also indicates the stability of established businesses located in the area, including the “destination” nature of commerce in the area.

Property Use

Industrial purposes (factory, warehouse, workshop) is the most dominant use (37%) with shops (19%) and offices 9% following. This is typical of the nature of historic land uses in the area.

Reason for Owning

Most properties (59%) are owned for owner-occupation, whilst 24% are owned for investment purposes.

Appropriate Zoning

55% of property owners and 68% of tenants believe the industrial zone for most properties is appropriate, although 25% of owners believe it is not appropriate.

Of those who believe that the zoning is inappropriate, owners favour either a residential or mixed-use zone, whilst tenants favour a commercial office zone.

Future Intentions to Expand or Reduce

The primary response of business owners (46%) and tenants (66%) is that they do not intend to expand or up-grade their business operations in the junction location.

Conversely, a majority of owners (54%) and tenants (68%) do not intend to reduce or re-locate their business operations.

This reinforces the relatively historical static nature of property uses within the area.

Future Intentions to Continue Operation from the Location

The dominant response from property owners was that they intend to continue to operate their business from this location for a period of greater than ten years (37%). The main response from tenants indicated they have a shorter-term horizon of continuing to operate for one to five years. A total of 48% intend to operate their business for in excess of five years.

This would indicate a level of satisfaction from existing users that the precinct will continue to meet its needs.

Improvements

Most property owners and tenants have highlighted landscape and streetscape improvements, and increased car parking, as the primary areas for improvement sought within the area.

Summary of Issues Raised in Survey Discussions

A useful outcome of the interviews conducted with occupiers was the anecdotal comments made outside the framework of survey questions. These responses provide an additional insight in respect of issues affecting the precinct. Issues identified in the interviews include:

Streetscape

Improved street paving and street trees would increase local pride and vitality.

Conversely, several businesses felt that landscape and streetscape improvements were unnecessary. They were of the opinion that the area was light industrial in nature, which didn't require aesthetic upgrade in order to help the economic functioning of the precinct.

Some businesses complained about rubbish dumping in laneways, graffiti and general untidiness. The rundown appearance of some properties in the area was also raised.

Safety

The lack of visual interest and passive surveillance from vacant lots is reducing the incidence of foot traffic. As a result, many tenants indicated that they had to keep their front doors locked to prevent theft.

Many Plenty Road businesses, especially on the east side, cited the presence of drug users as a serious problem. However, businesses differed in their opinion of the cause and extent of the problem.

Some believed it had improved since PANCH and an associated needle exchange facility has closed. Others believed the situation was worse, and still others believed the problem had been constant over the past few years.

Associated with the drug problems were the issues of theft from shops and cars.

Car Parking

All day commuters into the City are occupying a significant proportion of car parking outside the main street properties.

Staff are becoming frustrated as there is nowhere for them to park, and customers are driven away because of the lack of short-term parking. Several retailers commented on the general need of increased car parking to entice residents and shoppers back into the area.

Public Facilities

Several service retailers wanted to see a public toilet facility located along High St to encourage shoppers (especially mothers with children) to the Junction precinct. Additionally, it was believed that sheltered seating and interesting bus and tram shelters would increase attractiveness and economic vitality.

Economic Survival

A theme emerging from the existing light industry users was that whilst they were not opposed to a higher residential mix in the area, they were worried of perceptions that their use is 'noisy and dirty' would push them out. They also wanted to protect existing industries from rental increases, and retain spaces for deliveries.

Preston as a Good Business Area

Many of the businesses, particularly in the auto repairs trade, but also in some of the office suites, believed that Preston was a particularly good area in which to do business. One factory unit owner described Preston as busy, central and vibrant compared to Thomastown, despite rents being almost double in Thomastown compared to Preston.

The central location was also cited as a key benefit of the precinct. This is in the Northern Region context of the Metropolitan area generally and in some cases, country Victoria.

3.0 PRECINCT OPPORTUNITIES AND CONSTRAINTS

KEY SITES

The consultant team and project control group members identified a number of key sites which exist within the study area. The continued or future uses of these sites will in some way impact on the future of the study area. The identified sites and their significance are discussed in Table 1. The properties correspond to

the numbered sites referred to in Figure 3. (Note: These discussions do not necessarily reflect the views of the individual property owners or tenants. The comments included are those of the consultant and are only intended to stimulate discussion and thought).

PROPERTY	DESCRIPTION	SIGNIFICANCE
1. Safeway Dundas Street and Plenty Road	Large site zoned Business 1 containing Safeway supermarket and a number of strata titled shops	The property is an island zoning of Business 1 surrounded by Industrial 3 and residential. Opportunity for possible future re-development and / or linking the site through to the retail strip south of Dundas Street.
2. Australia Post Railway Place, East	Large-scale fully operational mail distribution facility zoned Industrial 3.	Site is fully operational. Interfaces with surrounding properties will be very important.
3. Reception Centre Oakover Road	Large stand-alone reception centre zoned Industrial 3 with vacant car park adjacent and fronting High Street. Evening functions regularly occur.	The use of this property suffers from the lack of available car parking. Interface with surrounding properties will be very important. Possible future re-development site.
4. Standard Leather High Street	Landmark former leather manufacturing site existing between High Street and Plenty Road and including adjoining allotment fronting Raglan Street. Currently zoned Industrial 3.	Site is under utilised and under negotiation for sale. This site provides the opportunity for large-scale residential re-development with the potential to provide major impetus into the area.
5. AAMI property Plenty Road	Former AAMI assessing centre and offices. Zoned Industrial 3.	Property is surrounded by residential to the north and east and industrial to the south. Has been vacant for some time and the owners are seeking to convert to residential.
6. Footrest Footwear High Street	Factory outlet property zoned Industrial 3.	Property recently purchased by the former tenant with intention to continue to operate and enhance the retail offer from the property.
7. Otto Wurth Corner Dundas Street & Plenty Road	Strategically located and historically classified bacon and curing facility zoned Industrial 3. Ownership includes car yard on corner Plenty Road & Dundas St.	Very significant property with large junction presence and link between Safeway supermarket and retail strip south of Dundas Street.

Table 1 KEY SITES		
PROPERTY	DESCRIPTION	SIGNIFICANCE
8. Paint Shop High Street	Bulky retail premises located in apex of High Street and Plenty Road with frontages to each. Zoned Industrial 3.	Recently established retail property strengthening retail presence at the south end of the study area.
9. Howe Leather High Street	Key landmark and historic property running from High Street to Railway Place East. Zoned Business 3 and Residential 1.	Substantial property in the process of being re-developed which will provide a significant catalyst to activating the area. Current Development Plan proposes retail uses at High Street ground level frontage, commercial above and residential behind.
10. Windsor Smith High Street	Shoe manufacturing and outlet property zoned Industrial 3.	Well-known outlet store providing key opportunity to anchor future retail outlet nature of the northern portion of the study area.
11. PANCH Bell Street	Regionally significant former Preston and Northcote Community Hospital re-development site located outside of study area, but in close proximity.	Large-scale development site of regional significance, the re-development of which will bring large numbers of people into the study area.
12. Bell Station and Public Transport Corporation land Railway Place East	Railway station, car parking and leased industrial shed.	Key public transport link into the study area. Opportunity for significant improvement, safety and aesthetic improvement and potential for re-development of surplus land. Opportunity to strengthen links into the study area.
13. Tony Bianco Shoes High Street	Shoe manufacturing and retail outlet. Zoned Industrial 3.	Opportunity to continue the presence of an historic land use within the area and maintain the retail offer.
14. Telstra Building 180 Plenty Road	Office building zoned Industrial 3.	Currently vacant and provides opportunity for conversion.
15. Del Monti Suits 154 High Street	Established retail showroom zoned Industrial 3.	Opportunity to continue links with historic land uses and maintain the retail use.
16. Junction Hotel Cnr High Street, Plenty Road & Dundas Street	Landmark site on the junction zoned Industrial 3.	Potential focal point of the land uses immediately around the junction itself.
17. Fairmark Clothing High Street	Clothing manufacturing and distribution outlet zoned Industrial 3.	Potential for future re-development or continuation of historic land use.
18. Autobarn High Street	Key retail site located on north west corner of Junction.	Opportunity to improve the appearance of this property as a key visual site.
19. Cedars Bakery High Street	Café and convenience shop.	Proprietor has applied for a use which is prohibited within the existing Industrial 3 zone.

PRECINCT ANALYSIS

From our analysis of the precinct, we have identified the key strengths and weaknesses from a land use and urban design context as follows:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A stable commercial base focussed on High Street and Plenty Road anchored by a number of key businesses who have successfully operated within the area for many years. The presence of such viable business clearly provides a corner stone for future development within the area. ▪ Conversely, there are also other less viable operations within the precinct that frequently turn over. This provides the opportunity for either re-development or the introduction of stronger, more dynamic and vibrant businesses. • The High Street and Plenty Road junction is well known and identifiable within northern metropolitan Melbourne and within the City of Darebin. • There is excellent road, rail and tram access to the precinct. • There is an existing residential base which provides a standard of accommodation that is well received within its particular real estate market. • Local shopping facilities are available both within the precinct itself but more particularly to the north and south. The precinct also has good linkages to major shopping facilities at Northland. • Residential re-development has commenced. There is also considerable impetus for the re-development of existing sites within the precinct. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The poor presentation in several areas, including High Street and Plenty Road, the Bell Station precinct, Milton Crescent and the railway station land and corridor. ▪ Several vacant and under utilised sites which significantly reduces the overall amenity of the precinct. ▪ Pedestrian safety concerns in relation to pedestrian precinct near the Bell Station. ▪ Poor land use interface, particularly between the industrial and residential uses. ▪ Limited public car parking. ▪ Lack of connection between the South Preston Shopping Centre (Safeway) and High Street shops south of Dundas Street. ▪ Isolated industrial activity in a number of areas within the precinct. ▪ Fragmented ownership. ▪ Poor streetscape amenity and aesthetics.

The key strengths and weaknesses are summarised in the plan included as Figure 5.

Opportunities and Constraints

From the above, we have identified a number of key opportunities and constraints for the precinct. These are outlined in Table 2 and Table 3 and are summarised in **Figure 6**.

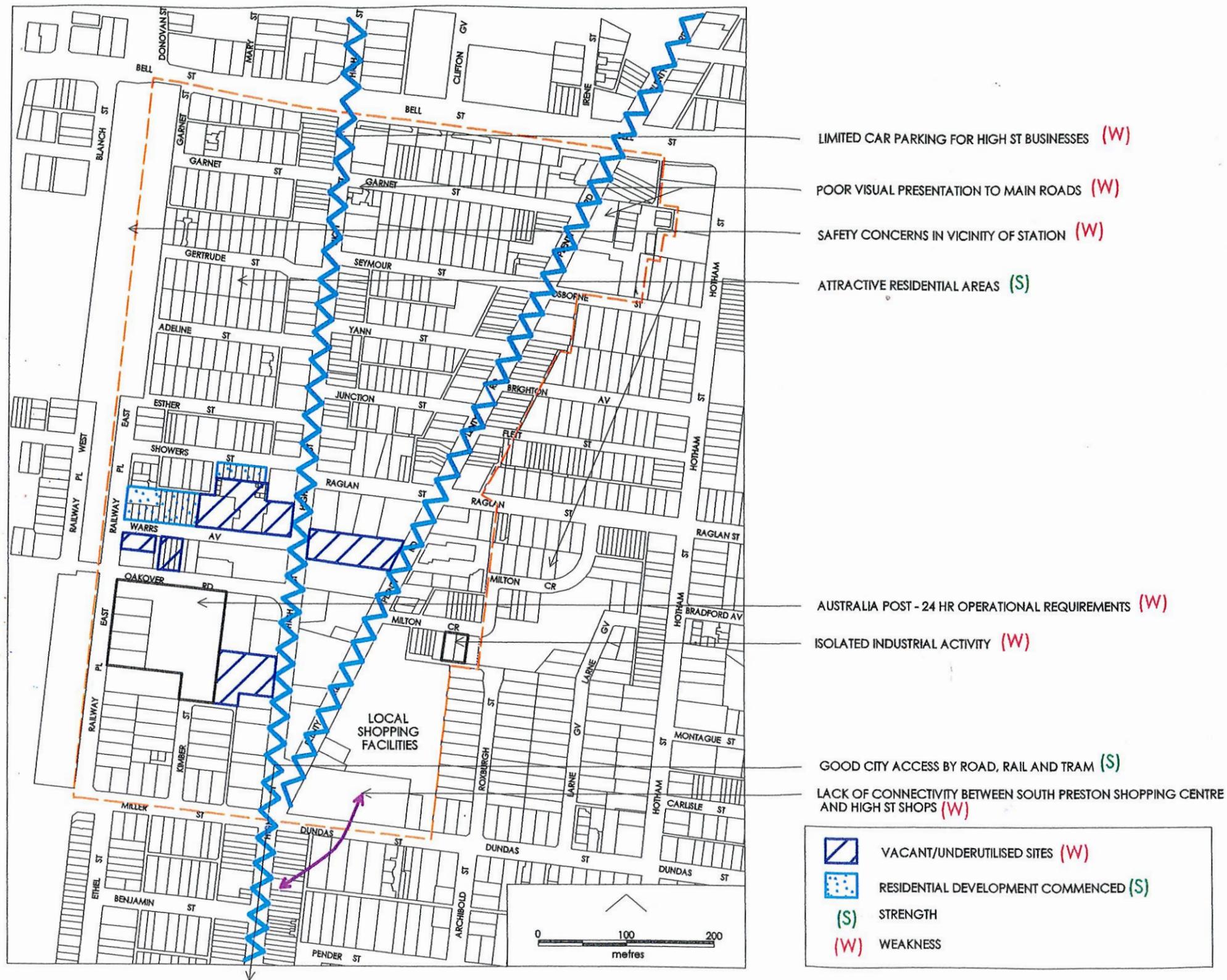
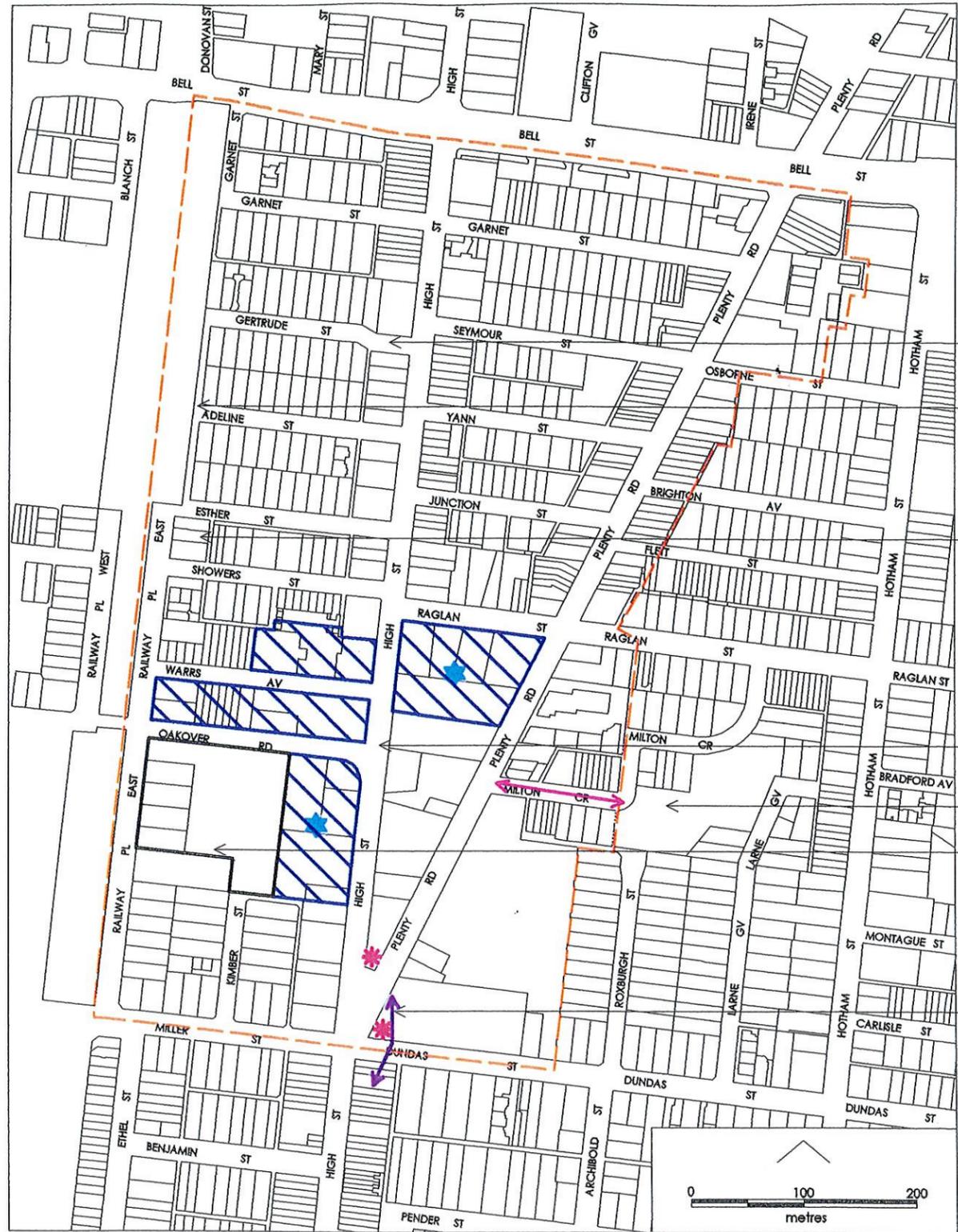


Table 2 The Opportunities

Issue	Comments / Possible Actions
Many current buildings are at, or nearing, the end of their economic life presenting opportunities for redevelopment.	Rezoning to facilitate appropriate development.
Residential development is the main driver for re-development of the precinct driven by a strong market. New townhouse style residential development has commenced. Residential development offers the opportunity to revitalise the area.	Planning support to facilitate and control residential redevelopment activity.
Increased residential activity may attract new retail / service businesses.	Planning support to facilitate and control residential redevelopment activity.
Close proximity to Bell Railway Station and tram service.	There is a need to improve pedestrian access and safety to railway station. Improve location or access to tram stops. Encourage public transport use – marketing opportunity for new residents.
Opportunity to encourage businesses associated with historic land uses and build upon concentration of footwear activities.	Planning to facilitate / support required from retailers / attract further factory outlets.
Opportunity to establish urban design theme which reflects historic land uses. Examples include rural related uses, tanneries, piggeries and footwear manufacture.	Urban design opportunity or theme.
Opportunity to improve image of gateway precinct, and create links between High Street and Preston South shopping centre to generate economic activity.	Urban design / Planning / Marketing / Promotion. Public and private land.
Ability to divide the study area into discrete land use precincts to manage potential land use conflicts.	Planning and market compatibility and acceptance.
Presence of large-scale re-development sites that can generate further re-development opportunities of surrounding sites.	Facilitation of development of large, key sites.
There are several key sites located in between Oakover Road and Showers Street.	This provides the opportunity to establish a precinct with higher density development.
Apparent landowner / developer support for change.	Harness this potential investment.
Opportunity to improve amenity of surrounding residential areas.	Planning / urban design opportunity.
There is land available within the retail precinct.	This provides the opportunity to achieve significant change.
The ability to in effect create a break in the commercial use patterns that exist along the general length of High Street to both the south and north of the precinct.	Planning / urban design opportunity.
The availability of significant sites at the south of the precinct which can allow for “bookend” commercial development which can consolidate the retail precincts to the south and provide a transitional land use pattern for predominant residential to the north.	Planning / urban design opportunity.

Table 2 The Opportunities

Issue	Comments / Possible Actions
Macro-economic restrictions on historic industries maintaining a presence in the area.	Marketing and planning solution to encourage factory / retail outlets. Ability to steer market forces may be limited.
Fragmentation of land ownership and small-scale allotments with main road frontages.	Successful development of major sites and the maintenance of market demand will ultimately promote the consolidation of sites over the longer term. This can be supported by planning.
Apparent lack of public car parking on High Street.	Consider existing and potential car parking requirements. Council facilitation of off-site public car parking opportunities through joint developments, site acquisition or rate schemes.
Perception of road access difficulties/ congestion and heavy traffic volumes.	VicRoads discussions; promote alternative routes.
Council is currently receiving ad-hoc redevelopment applications over land within the area.	Planning strategy.
Poor visual and image presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dilapidated buildings. • Lack of greenery / open space. • Streetscape improvements required. • Bundling of overhead cables. • Underground future services. • Façade treatments / grants / rate schemes.
Existence of small-scale industrial uses (panel beaters, automotive industry) adjacent to residential properties.	Identification of alternative locations and encouragement / incentives to re-locate.
Inappropriate existing uses on key sites.	Facilitate re-location to more suitable premises.
Stalled development on Howe Leather site.	Re-zone front portion of site to Business 2 to allow residential development at upper levels.
Residential development is the driver for re-development, rather than commercial / retail; doesn't appear to be natural demand for replacement industrial / commercial / retail or office uses.	Promotion / planning facilitation; mixed uses on larger scale sites; discrete precincts.
Competition from other retail precincts with competitive advantages for commercial / retail activity.	Consider the advantages and whether precinct can compete.
Potential for conflict between remaining industrial uses and new residential uses.	Planning strategy to manage interface between land uses.
Limited opportunity to create meaningful open spaces.	Can be partially overcome by creating such precincts within the development.



-  KEY DEVELOPMENT SITES (O)
-  OPPORTUNITY FOR MULTISTOREY BUILDING (O)
-  OPPORTUNITY
-  CONSTRAINT
-  KEY SITES FOR URBAN DESIGN STATEMENTS

- PROVIDE ADDITIONAL ON-STREET CARPARKING FOR EXISTING BUSINESSES (O)
- IMPROVE SAFETY OF STATION PRECINCT BY UPGRADING LANE (O)
- CONSOLIDATE RESIDENTIAL AREA (O)
- IMPROVE APPEARANCE OF HIGH STREET, LANDSCAPING, FEATURE TREES AND STREET FURNITURE (O)
- IMPROVE VISUAL LINKAGE TO EXISTING PARK (O)
- ANY NEW DEVELOPMENT TO CONSIDER OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF AUSTRALIA POST (C)
- POTENTIAL TO IMPROVE LINKAGES BETWEEN EXISTING SHOPS (O)

4.0 MARKET ASSESSMENT

MARKET OVERVIEW

In the late-1800's a number of leather tanneries established in the study area, in addition to bacon and curing industries. These uses were associated with pig farming which had established in the area. The existence of the leather tanneries subsequently spawned associated leather and clothing manufacturers, which continued in the area up until recent years. Some smaller scale traditional uses continue, including Otto Wurth small goods. Some of the footwear manufacturing businesses now mostly function as retail outlets and are well established in the precinct.

However, many of the traditional businesses have now closed and re-located from the area for a variety of reasons, including:

- Macro-economic pressures leading to operations moving offshore;
- More appropriate industrial land being made available providing better linkages to customers and suppliers, modern industrial services and infrastructure;
- Other sites providing opportunities to up-date premises and technology and allowing scope for expansion.

A number of these key properties are now either vacant or under utilised.

In recent years, market demand for residential development sites has spread from the inner suburbs of Melbourne. Some of these suburbs had similar land use characteristics and re-development opportunities as the study area, including Richmond, Abbotsford, Collingwood, Fitzroy and Brunswick.

This market has been fuelled by high prices in those inner suburbs, forcing prospective purchasers and developers to consider the next ring of suburbs

including Northcote, Thornbury and now Preston. As a consequence, there now exists strong pressure for the re-development of previous industrial properties for residential use.

The smaller scale industrial properties within the area, including mostly automotive workshops, continue to operate successfully. To some degree, however, this is supported by relatively low rents and occupancy costs in the Junction in comparison to the newer industrial precincts of nearby Thomastown. Pressure for conversion of these smaller sites has not yet materialised. It is anticipated that the larger sites providing opportunity for large scale development will be utilized in the first instance. It will probably be a number of years before the smaller infill sites outgrow their current use.

A large amount of small-scale retail accommodation is situated immediately to the north and south of the precinct in the well-established retail precincts of High Street, Preston and High Street, Thornbury. Retail is currently a prohibited use in the study area. It is likely that retail demand in the area is weak due to the difficulty in gaining a permit for a prohibited use, existing alternative opportunities in the adjoining strip centres, and also pressure from larger scale centres such as the Preston Market and Northland Shopping Centre. These properties are better serviced with car parking, stronger retail presences including local shopping opportunities, and national retailers.

The subject precinct is not a sought after office location, although several stand-alone smaller scale office buildings exist. Most of these are now vacant and are proving difficult to re-lease. Alternative locations exist in the suburbs where office

precincts can agglomerate. There will be increased supply of office space within the general area when the re-development of the PANCH site proceeds providing approximately 10,000 square metres of office space.

It is probable that it is presently not viable to refurbish or construct new commercial office space on the key re-development sites in the study area. Residential provides the major development opportunity in the current market. Stand alone retail development may be marginally viable, although the lack of appropriate sites and competition from nearby centres and traffic and access issues would make it difficult to initiate larger scale development. The integration of some retail in mixed use developments may allow subsidisation from other uses.

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Market opportunities in the area are likely to be re-development of key sites into residential and the consolidation of existing retail.

There may be future flow on opportunities for retail development to service the anticipated increase in the population that is likely to locate to the area, although this is expected to be smaller scale in nature and restricted mostly to service businesses such as cafes, hairdressing and convenience stores.

The overall real estate market continues to be reasonably strong, in particular the residential market which is likely to be further boosted by the recent reductions in official interest rates. However, continuing global uncertainty and the recent high profile corporate collapses of previously iconic Australian companies is likely to soften business investment sentiment and impact on the domestic economy in the medium to long-term. This should have a flow on effect into the commercial property market, potentially dampening demand within the next two year period.

The combination of existing retail with an overall increase in population may provide a critical mass to attract retail outlets into the precinct in the future. This critical mass does not presently exist, although some of the existing retail outlets are well established and will continue to trade. In the event of the population increase, there will be opportunities for mixed-use development to incorporate residential uses and Ground Floor retail. As indicated above, at present, any commercial development will be subsidised by residential in mixed use developments.

MARKET CONSTRAINTS

From a market perspective, there is likely to be little demand for existing office buildings to be used as offices, or for sites to be re-developed into offices. Existing office sites may therefore need to contemplate alternative uses. These include the Telstra building, AAMI building and Western Mining offices.

There will be continued demand for smaller single fronted offices to be used by businesses servicing the local community.

Likewise, there is not expected to be any future demand for re-development of large-scale sites for industrial purposes, or a continuation of past industrial uses, as these sites and uses are now largely

obsolete. There may be a continued demand for "factoriette" style development given the number of existing small-scale industrial uses including automotive which operate from the area

and when have indicated a desire to continue operating from the area. Furthermore there are some locational advantages for particular uses (access to public transport).

MOST PROBABLE OUTCOMES

The most probable outcomes from a market viewpoint are for re-development of large-scale sites to a residential use. To achieve good outcomes and to initiate redevelopment, a flexible approach should be adopted.

The key to the future of the precinct will be to encourage re-development and developers to acquire properties and develop them with as much flexibility as possible regarding their end use. The study area is in a transitional period and will be more quickly rejuvenated by market led uses.

This will include the opportunity for a use such as residential with a clear existing demand level as opposed to designated retail uses where the ability to attract an occupant is much more uncertain and reduces the viability of the overall project.

Residential activity is the economic driver for commercial precincts such as the Junction. This can be through visitation from other residential precincts, or the existence of a permanent residential population. The fact that there is strong residential demand for the precinct

provides an opportunity for a market led regeneration. This combined with the availability of major sites ready for redevelopment present an opportunity for change over the shorter term.

A consequence of such development will be to reinforce the viability of the existing smaller retail and service businesses in the precinct. Furthermore new and greater diversity businesses may well be attracted to the precinct.

However, in the longer term there are likely to be rent increases which may bring pressure upon some well-established businesses, which may have been operating at the relative margins to continue.

There may also be conflict between future residential uses and existing businesses, particularly those of an industrial flavour (that is, Australia Post) or which conflict with parking, deliveries and after-hour's disturbance. This is where planning will be very important to ensure appropriate treatment of the interface of the different uses within the study area.



5.0 LAND USE VISION

THE DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

There has, for some time, been a change in the nature of property use within the precinct. These include:

- A shift away from the traditional manufacturing industrial uses to a business and services use.
- A market wide shift away from smaller shopfront retail to larger scale “big box” and alternative shopping centre retail located outside the study area.
- A resurgence of the precinct as a viable residential location and a market requirement for a higher density residential development.

The consequence is that the industrial zoning within the junction precinct is progressively becoming more inappropriate.

- Many of the buildings constructed on properties within the precinct including a number of major facilities are now nearing the end of their economic or useful life.

- Some of these facilities have no future utility whilst others are very poor. Re-development within the precinct must be encouraged.
- A recognition by the community and Council that there are poor interfaces between uses.
- A critical need to address the land uses within the vicinity of the Bell Station and the associated railway precinct from both a community safety and overall user amenity perspective.
- High Street generally presents as a very long and continuous retail strip. The diversity of land uses in the Junction presents an opportunity to break this strip, thus reinforcing the retail functions of the areas to both the north and south.
- Poor urban amenity, particularly along High Street and Plenty Road.

THE HURDLES TO CHANGE

The key hurdles for change are as follows:

Whilst there are several strategic sites that can be re-developed, the northern sector of High Street and Plenty Road comprises smaller allotments with a fragmented ownership pattern. This will need consolidation to facilitate significant development.

There is a significant impetus to improve the presentation of both the High Street

and Plenty Road frontages. The opportunities to achieve a significant change are limited by:

- The narrowness of both Plenty Road and High Street.
- The fact that both roads are reasonably highly trafficked arterial roads.
- The presence of significant infrastructure, particularly high-tension electricity cables in High Street.

- The lack of opportunity to create public open space.
- No obvious opportunities to introduce significant and convenient public car parking.
- The recognition that there will be industrial uses that will continue to operate within the area.

THE VISION

A clear 'Vision' for the study area has been identified, based on the definition of several precincts. This approach enables a future direction to be identified for strengthening of the land uses, improving development opportunities, enhancing the quality of urban design and amenity and for improving access and parking arrangements.

The precincts are detailed in Figure 7.

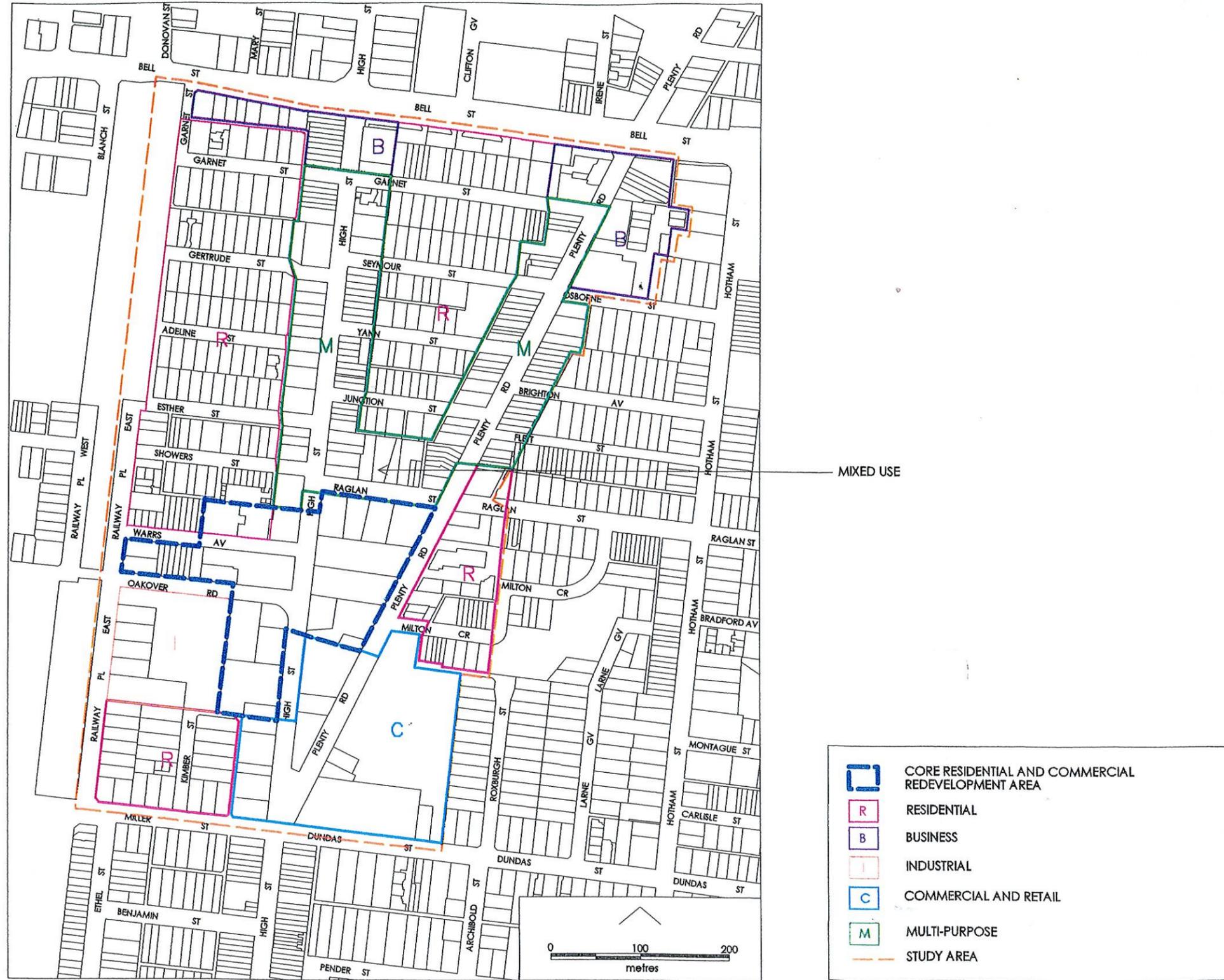
Core Residential and Commercial Redevelopment Area

The large redundant factory sites fronting High Street generally south of Raglan Street, present real re-development opportunities, and comprise the most significant land use change recommended as part of this study. It is recommended this industrial area be re-zoned to facilitate commercial and residential land uses.

The size of these sites including Howe Leather, Standard Leather and Western Mining provide the opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment of commercial space at ground floor level fronting High Street, and residential development on adjacent streets and at upper levels. Redevelopment would be further aided by consolidation of multiple sites. This form of redevelopment has commenced on the Howe Leather site.

The separation of these sites from existing single storey dwellings allows consideration of multi-storey residential /apartment components especially on the isolated sites between High Street and Plenty Road. Buildings with increased heights would need to be subject to careful attention to location and design. There will be outstanding views from the upper floors. The residential components should assist to make the commercial components viable.

The progressive replacement of the existing uses and vacant sites with new well-designed development should help to bring about a new perception of the intrinsic values of the area, such as its location advantages, availability of public transport and local services.



Residential

It is proposed to consolidate and enhance the existing residential areas and reduce potential conflict with industry over time.

This will be achieved by:

- Including industrial properties, some of which are vacant, north and south of Showers Street within the surrounding residential area.
- Converting land between Warrs Avenue and Oakover Road to residential reinforcing this western residential precinct.
- Extending Railway Place East northward to provide some additional residential allotments, and in doing so, improve the safety, amenity and community surveillance of the Bell Station precinct.

- Allowing for the conversion to residential of industrial land on the east side of Plenty Road on either side of Milton Crescent. This will further encourage the articulation of a clear break between the retail areas to the south and the mixed uses to the northern part of the study area.

The increase in the extent of residential land will facilitate an increase in the housing stock and enable the amenity of the area to be enhanced.

Where commercial or industrial premises are proposed to be re-zoned for residential purposes, these businesses may continue to operate on the basis of “existing use” rights as provided for in the Darebin Planning Scheme. Council can not prevent the continuation of these businesses and there is some limited scope for these businesses to up-grade or extend subject to the issue of a planning permit by Council (refer Appendix 5 for a copy of the Existing Use provision).

Industrial

The Australia Post site in Oakover Road and the adjoining site at 14 Railway Place East are the only sites within the study area to be retained for industrial purposes. It is considered appropriate to apply development controls to land surrounding the Australia Post site to ensure that any future residential development is designed in a manner to minimise amenity conflicts with Australia Post operations.

The property located at 14 Railway Place East, currently used for light industrial purposes and which effectively encroaches into the south west corner of the Australia Post site, could be retained

for industrial purposes or re-zoned to Residential 1 at some time in the future, given its location. A key consideration will be its interface with the Australia Post site.

The interface between any new development proposed and existing industrial or commercial uses should be given careful consideration and appropriate treatment determined to limit the potential for future amenity issues. This may include noise attenuation treatments or similar.

Multi-Purpose

This area is occupied by a significant number of small businesses fronting High Street and Plenty Road, generally north of Raglan Street. The recent survey found that most existing business operators proposed to continue occupying premises in the future.

It is anticipated that this area will continue to function as a mix of small businesses including “factory” retail sales with some residential premises.

Showroom retail or wholesale could prove popular in the future given the high degree of exposure to the main roads.

The existing mix of businesses and proximity of dwellings abutting the rear of many of the businesses favours replacement of the existing industrial zone with a business zone to limit future land use conflicts.

Retail

A strengthened retail precinct has been defined at the southern part of the study area, including the Otto Wurth and Safeway land, the Junction Hotel and the existing commercial properties on the west side of High Street.

Specific Sites

The following sites warrant special attention.

Details of the design guidelines are included in the next section.

Otto Wurth

It will be important to improve the image of properties around the intersection and to recognise the opportunities to facilitate a better arrangement of the retail components in and around the Safeway site. Particular attention is needed to the conversion of the car sales yard on the corner of Dundas Street and Plenty Road to a retail use that includes a small civic space, better integration of the strata title shops near Safeway and to improving access into the Safeway car park.

Should the Otto Wurth land become available, the opportunities that this would present for implementing these improvements should be carefully considered.

One example of a use that would acknowledge the heritage of the study area would be a trade outlet mall possibly based on footwear. This could be designed to take advantage of the corner exposure, integrated with the existing car parking area. It could introduce a new facility that would add to the drawing power of the area, without competing with the retail strip to the south. Heritage values of the site will need to be taken into consideration as part of any re-development.

Howe Leather

It is considered that refurbishment of this important property is being constrained by the existing zoning and Development Plan. The opportunity to use the upper levels facing High Street for residential cannot be exploited under the existing plan.

A change in zoning to Business 2 and subsequent review of the Development Plan is recommended.

Properties Between Australia Post and High Street and Between Raglan Street, High Street, Plenty Road

As noted, these properties present an opportunity for larger scale development comprising commercial, industrial, residential, and including landscaped setbacks to the frontages. The creation of setbacks at the corners would enable feature specimen trees to be included.

With careful design and siting, the inclusion of buildings of up to six stories could enhance the character of the area.

Railway Place East

Residential access to the residential blocks to the west of High Street could be improved by extending and widening Railway Place East, in association with the residential development of land surplus to rail needs.

The access and security of the area around Bell Station could be improved through the relocation of the northern portion of Railway Place East and the development of residential opportunities that overlook the street.

Land Between Oakover Road and Warrs Avenue

This is a relatively narrow strip with many properties fronting both Warrs Avenue and Oakover Road. This double street frontage provides the opportunity to develop medium density residential dwellings oriented northwards, so that there is no southern outlook of habitable rooms that could experience disturbance from traffic noise emanating from the Australia Post operations. Access to car parking associated with residential development should be from the south, with the associated structures forming a screen to the habitable areas.

New On-Street Car Parking for Industrial Uses

There is a shortage of land for car parking for the shallow properties that face High Street. One possible way of alleviating this problem could be to develop car-parking areas at the entrances to residential streets such as Showers, Adeline and Gertrude Streets. These could assist to protect these residential streets from the intrusion of non-residential traffic and would increase the car parking capacity in the area. The width of these streets may limit access to one-way with angle parking on one or both sides of the street (if possible).

An example of this is illustrated in Figure 8A. Clearly, these suggestions are included to present possible options only, and would require further investigation and design by qualified traffic engineers.

Urban Design

A range of urban design improvements has been identified. These extend across the **public and private realm** and could be introduced progressively, some as discrete projects and some in association with property redevelopments. The actions and opportunities that are listed below are also shown in Table 4. Options to fund the actions and opportunities are identified in Appendix 4. The actions are represented in Figures 8A and 8B.

Table 4 Actions and Opportunities		
PUBLIC REALM		
Location	Description	Implementation
High Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected street tree planting using fastigiate species or varieties that develop tall trunks and spreading canopies above the level of trucks and wires. Central two to three metre wide median with tree planting, or planting on either side of the road. This planting could form part of kerb outstands for bus or tram shops (would need to be considered in the context of the Traffic Management Plan – High Street). Investigate costs and potential funding sources for bundling of the aerial cabling or underground cabling. Reduce the number of poles and replace with simple steel standards. Paint poles, public signs etc with theme colour. Refurbish sidewalks and kerbs to improve appearance. 	<p>Council</p> <p>Council</p> <p>AGL</p> <p>Council, AGL</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p>
Plenty Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected street tree planting using fastigiate species or varieties that develop tall trunks and spreading canopies above the level of trucks and wires. Investigate costs and potential funding sources for bundling of aerial cabling or underground cabling. Reduce the number of poles and replace with simple steel standards. Paint poles, public signs etc with theme colour. Refurbish sidewalks and kerbs to improve appearance. 	<p>Council</p> <p>AGL</p> <p>Council, AGL, Tram Company</p> <p>Council</p> <p>Council</p>
Residential streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend and replace inappropriate trees with species that allow street light through foliage for night time safety. 	<p>Council</p>
Rail Corridor / Railway Place East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend and replace existing trees along rail reserve and in street reservation with species that allow street light through foliage. Excise land for residential development and for extension/widening of Railway Place East. 	<p>VicTrack & Council</p> <p>VicTrack & Council</p>
Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open space within the study area is limited. Visual links to the adjacent park in Milton Street can be improved through tree planting along this street. Open space in the commercial area is to be provided by way of small spaces at key intersections to provide feature tree and seating for regular day time use. 	<p>Council</p> <p>Council</p>

PRIVATE REALM

Location	Description	Implementation
Major re-development site (Standard Leather site and adjacent land Raglan St South)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two storey buildings acceptable built up to High Street and Plenty Road frontages provided active commercial use such as showrooms. • Passive uses such as offices may be up to three stories, with a three metre landscaped set back. • 7 metre x 7 metre setback to be included at street corners where shown within which large specimen tree is to be planted and maintained. • May include building up to six stories, set back within 1 Horizontal : 2 Vertical angle behind lower building (or portion of the building), which is to be treated as a podium to the taller building. • Overshadowing of any amenity areas on properties to the south is to be avoided, although the commercial nature of these premises limits over shadowing concerns. • Site is not identified in Council's recent heritage study. • Negotiate rationalisation of telecommunication towers or inclusion of equipment into new buildings. <p>Note: All major re-developments should provide a self-sufficient level of car parking so as to limit impacts on adjacent land.</p>	<p>Prepare Design and Development Overlay.</p> <p>Re-zone to B2Z.</p>
Major redevelopment site (west side of High Street south of Oakover Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings to be set back behind five metre landscaped strip. • May include building up to six stories, set back within 1 Horizontal : 2 Vertical angle behind lower building, which is to be treated as a podium to the taller building. • Overshadowing of amenity areas on properties to the south is to be avoided. 	<p>Prepare Design and Development Overlay.</p> <p>Re-zone to B2Z.</p>
Core Commercial and Residential Redevelopment Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage active uses at ground level and allow residential uses at upper levels. 	Council re-zoning
Warrs Avenue / Oakover Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential building of three/four stories (including car parking level(s)). Habitable rooms to face north, windows and other openings on south to be limited to minimise any potential amenity conflicts with Australia Post. • Could include home offices. • Car parking from south. 	<p>Prepare Design and Development Overlay</p> <p>Re-zone to R1Z.</p>

Table 4 Actions and Opportunities (cont)

PRIVATE REALM		
Location	Description	Implementation
Commercial land between Milton Cr, Dundas Street, Plenty Road (Preston South Shopping Centre, car yard)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restructure car parking layout and entrance arrangements.• Ten metre corner setback to create small civic space on the corner of Plenty Road and Dundas Street that includes feature tree, public art. Preferably face with active commercial uses.• Incorporate centre sign and entrance signs.• Three metre planting setbacks to all street frontages, including specimen trees.• Re-structure small shops and integrate any development on the Otto Wurth Site, when appropriate.	Prepare Design and Development Overlay
Junction Hotel	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create small civic space that includes feature tree, public art.	Negotiate with Owner.
AAMI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow residential conversion.	Council re-zoning.
Signs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simplify and reduce number of signs.• Remove / replace full/extensive facade signs.	Council advertising code and negotiations with owners.



IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY OF STATION AND ACCESS
ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL LOTS AND EXTEND RAILWAY EAST PLACE

LANDSCAPE THEME FOR HIGH ST AND PLENTY RD- CENTRAL MEDIAN PLANTING OR PLANTING ASSOCIATED WITH KERB OUTSTANDS FOR BUS STOPS (---)
HIGH ST AND PLENTY RD: PAINT OUT POLES, REDUCE WIRES AND POLES, INFORMAL TREE PLANTING

RAIL CORRIDOR PLANTING

IMPROVED PLANTING IN RESIDENTIAL STREETS (---)

ON-STREET PARKING AREA FOR INDUSTRY. (P)
SEE OPTIONS 1 AND 2

CORNER SETBACKS FOR FEATURE TREE AND SEATING (*)

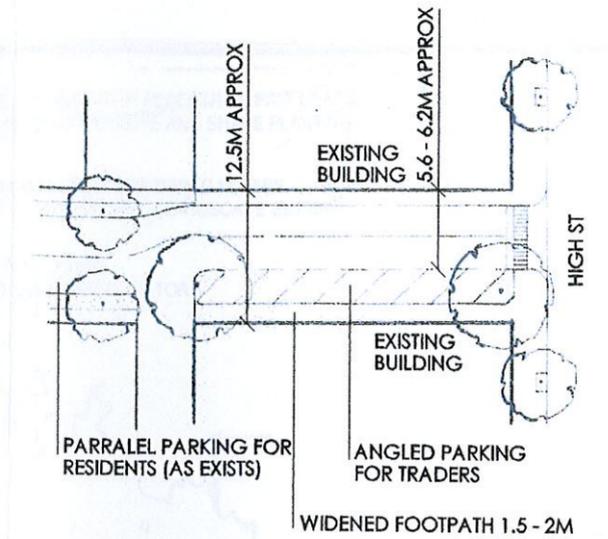
SETBACK, HEIGHT, LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES(---)

ENHANCE LINKAGE TO OPEN SPACE

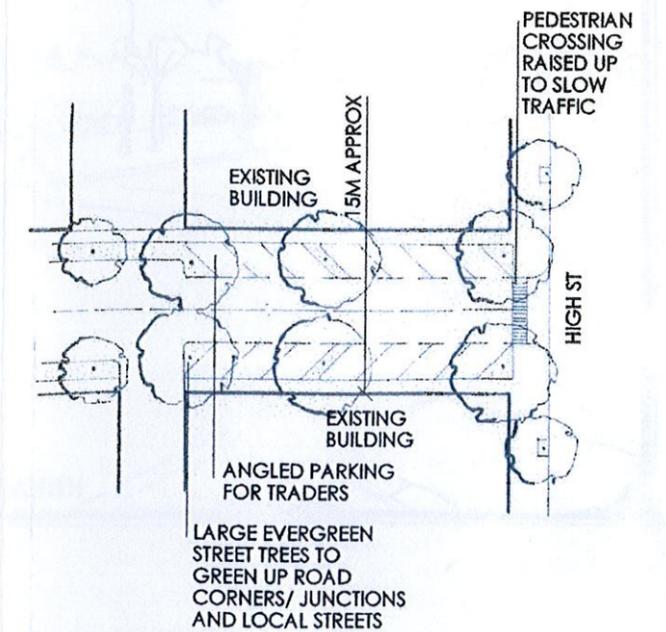
IMPROVE ENTRY ACCESS AND FRONTAGE PLANTING ALONG SAFEWAY SITE

ACTIVE RETAIL FRONTAGE TO CIVIC SPACE

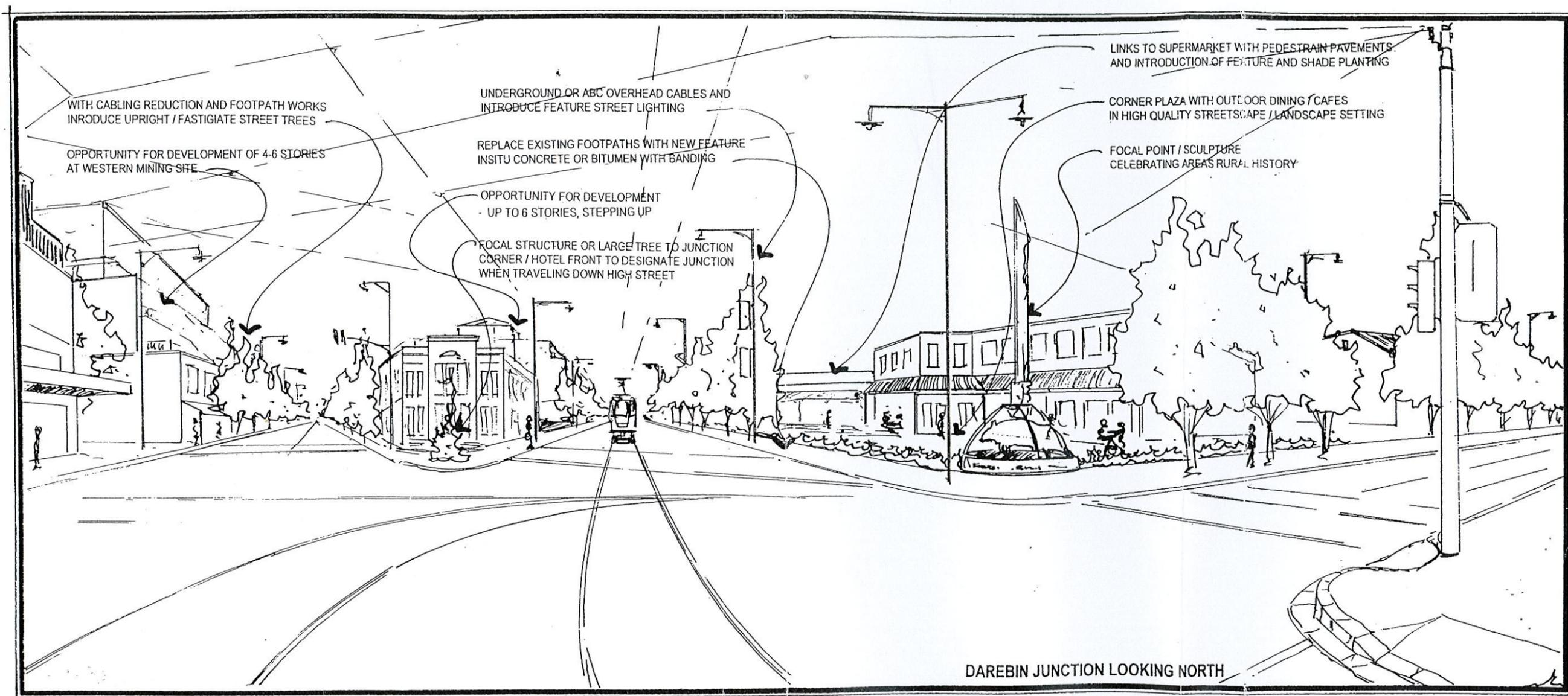
FEATURE TREE, PUBLIC ART, CIVIC SPACES



OPTION 1 - NARROW STREET



OPTION 2 - WIDER STREET



6 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

PLANNING SCHEME CONTROLS

The conclusion of this study is that there is a need to amend Darebin Planning Scheme to facilitate land use changes to better meet the changing role of the area.

Local Planning Policy Framework

Municipal Strategic Statement

The Municipal Strategic Statement of the Planning Scheme sets the key land use policy directions for Council. The Economic Development section of the MSS identifies the broad structural changes occurring within traditional local industries and encourages investigation of the land use consequences. Clause 22.10 specifically proposes to:

‘Review industrial and commercial land uses along the High Street ‘internodal’ areas, and identify areas for land use change.’

The current study can be seen as forming part of this wider review process.

Concurrently, the Housing Development section of the MSS proposes reuse of redundant sites and building in suitable locations for housing purposes, as well as recognising the long standing difficulties created by residential and industrial interfaces. These issues are integral to the study.

The recommendations of the study should be included in the MSS by way of reference (not incorporation). It is understood that Council has commenced a comprehensive review of the MSS and various recent strategic studies will be given consideration at this time.

Local Policy

A Junction Area Local Policy should be included in Clause 22 of the Darebin MSS to provide a comprehensive overview of the recommendations of this study and to provide clear direction for land owners, tenants and any prospective purchasers.

The objectives of the Junction Area Local Policy are broadly to:

- Enhance the existing commercial spine along High Street and Plenty Road by continuing to encourage a mix of uses.
- Improve the amenity of High Street and Plenty Road.
- Improve linkages between Preston South Shopping Centre and the High Street shops south of Dundas Street.
- Encourage re-development of redundant industrial sites central to the policy area for commercial and medium and- higher density residential purposes.
- Consolidate and improve the amenity of existing residential areas.
- Improve safety, amenity and surveillance of the Bell Railway Station.

The Local Policy should include a map of the proposed precincts and further detail of the recommendations as listed within this report.

Zones

The proposed zoning changes are outlined in Figure 9. These accord with the proposed precincts identified in Figure 7.

It is considered that the Industrial 3 Zone is no longer appropriate for the precincts identified as:

- **Core Residential and Commercial Redevelopment Area.**
- **Multi-Purpose Area along High Street and Plenty Road.**

After reviewing alternative zones, it is considered that most of the land that is included in the Industrial 3 Zone should be re-zoned Business 2 Zone. This also includes the front portion of the Howe Leather site, which is currently zoned Business 3.

This zone allows a wide range of uses to be approved, including offices, industry, residential and retail. Of all the zones that could be applied to facilitate a mix of uses, this zone would give Council the widest possible degree of discretion. In this regard it does not have the shortcomings of the Mixed Use Zone, in which a dwelling is a Section 1 “as-of-right” (no permit required) use, that Council is unable to control.

The industrial area on the east side of Plenty Road north of Osborne Street should be rezoned to Business 3 Zone in accordance with the recommendations of Council’s Industrial Land Use Strategy.

The existing residential areas are to be consolidated in accordance with the Proposed Precincts (Figure 7) and land re-zoned to Residential 1 Zone. This includes land north of Railway Place East, industrial land between Oakover Road and Esther Streets and land around Milton Crescent.

A Business 1 Zone is proposed to recognise retail activity around the Junction of High Street and Plenty Road and will include the re-zoning of Cedars Bakery property at 21 – 37 High (reference Council minutes 5.12 dated 8 June 2001).

Application of the Junction Area Local Policy referred to earlier and reference to this report would provide guidance for decisions by Council on permit applications.

It will be important also to apply development criteria via a Design and Development Overlay to certain sites.



Overlays

The Design and Development Overlay is the most appropriate and flexible mechanism for introducing development guidelines for the critical sites.

It is considered that a single Schedule should apply to areas identified in Figure 9 with design requirements listed for the specific sites.

The overall Design Objectives for the overlay should generally seek:

- To achieve high quality design outcomes for commercial and residential premises and to improve the visual amenity and image of High Street and Plenty Roads.
- To promote design excellence on landmark sites and for multi-storey buildings.

- To ensure the design of developments protects the residential amenity of existing dwellings and the operational requirements of existing businesses.
- To encourage the retention of the fabric of industrial buildings (or significant parts thereof) of heritage value within new developments.

The Schedule to the Overlay should address details such as heights, setbacks, and landscape treatments, as outlined in Section 5.3.3 of this report.

Any new developments should provide a self-sufficient level of car parking and limit reliance on on-street car parking. The level of car parking provided however, may be tempered by proximity to local services and public transport.

An Environmental Audit Overlay will need to be applied to all land proposed to be re-zoned.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following outlines the implement program to achieve the recommendations of this study:

- Darebin City Council to endorse report.
- Preparation of a planning scheme amendment including a Design and Development Overlay.
- Exhibition of the planning scheme amendment which allows further consultation.
- Panel hearing (if required).
- Planning scheme amendment adoption.
- Development of a detailed urban design, plan, costings and budget.
- Implementation of works program by Council and provision of landscape features (for example, corner feature tree sites as part of private development projects).

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

In implementing the proposed changes, there are several issues which need to be addressed to ensure that the proposed changes are communicated effectively.

Issues include the following:

- The program as outlined above provides a summary of the process to be adopted in order to implement the suggested changes. The process will involve wide community consultation albeit it is expected that the primary interest will come from existing occupants within the area. It is important that an appropriate community consultation process is put in place as a part of the exhibition process to ensure that the community is advised of the reasons for the amendment and that where possible, support is sought from as wider group as possible.
- It is essential that a communication strategy is developed to ensure that existing businesses are reassured that they will be entitled to maintain their on-going use in accordance with existing user rights. All building owners and tenants that are effected by the amendment must be contacted individually as part of the amendment process.
- The proposed changes over time will result in a significant increase in the residential nature of the precinct. This can potentially cause use interface conflicts. To some degree, this has been addressed in the proposed changes. It is important that this is specifically addressed with those key users who may be impacted.
- The proposed changes provide an opportunity to significantly improve the overall Junction precinct. On the basis that any amendment to the planning scheme is approved, the market should be made aware of the changes. There are specific activities undertaken to ensure that the market is aware of the changes.

This should include the following:

- Existing owners, particularly those of major sites.
- Property and planning professionals and real estate agents.
- The Council's economic development unit.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

A major conclusion of this study is that there is a need to amend Darebin Planning Scheme to facilitate land use changes to better meet the changed role of the area.

RECOMMENDATION 1

The recommendations of the Junction Integrated Development Plan be incorporated into and inform the review of the Darebin Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS).

RECOMMENDATION 2

A Junction Area Local Policy be included in Clause 22 of the Darebin Planning Scheme to provide a comprehensive overview of the recommendations of the study and to provide clear direction for land owners, tenants and any prospective purchasers.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The objectives of the Junction Area Local Policy are to:

- Enhance the existing commercial spine along High Street and Plenty Road by encouraging a mix of uses.
- Improve the amenity of High Street and Plenty Road.
- Improve linkages between Preston South Shopping Centre and the High Street shops south of Dundas Street.
- Encourage re-development of redundant industrial sites central to the policy area for commercial, and medium to higher density residential purposes.
- Consolidate and improve the amenity of existing residential areas.
- Improve safety, amenity and surveillance of the Bell Railway Station.

The Local Policy should include a map of the proposed precincts and further detail of the recommendations as listed within this report.

RECOMMENDATION 4

That Council initiate rezonings to rezone the land around the Junction in accordance with the Proposed Zoning Changes referred to in Figure 9, to implement this study. This generally includes:

- Core Residential and Commercial Redevelopment Area to Business 1 and Business 2 zones;
- Multi-Purpose Area along High Street and Plenty Road to Business 2 zone;
- Consolidation of existing residential areas through extending the Residential 1 zone around Milton Crescent and north of Oakover Road.

RECOMMENDATION 5

That Council initiate rezonings to rezone the industrial area on the east side of Plenty Road north of Osborne Street to Business 3 Zone in accordance with the recommendations of Council's Industrial Land Use Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION 6

That Council initiate rezonings to rezone the existing residential areas to Residential 1 Zone in accordance with the Proposed Precincts (refer Figure 7). This includes land north of Railway Place East, industrial land between Oakover Road and Esther Streets and land around Milton Crescent.

RECOMMENDATION 7

That Council consider permit applications in the context of this Junction Integrated Development Strategy and give particular attention to managing the transition of this area from industrial uses to more residential development to minimise potential conflicts.

RECOMMENDATION 8

That Council apply development criteria via a Design and Development Overlay to specified key development sites to require an appropriate form of development to be achieved across the area, as this is the most appropriate and flexible mechanism for introducing development guidelines for the critical sites.

RECOMMENDATION 9

The overall design objectives for the Design and Development Overlay should generally seek:

- To achieve high quality design outcomes for commercial and residential premises and to improve the visual amenity and image of High Street and Plenty Roads.
- To promote design excellence on landmark sites and for multi-storey buildings.
- To ensure the design of developments protects the residential amenity of existing dwellings and the operational requirements of existing businesses.
- To encourage the retention of the fabric of industrial buildings (or significant parts thereof) of heritage value within new developments.

The Schedule to the Design and Development Overlay should address details such as heights, setbacks, and landscape treatments, as outlined in Section 5.3.3 Urban Design, of this report.

RECOMMENDATION 10

All new developments should provide a self-sufficient level of car parking and limit reliance on on-street car parking. The level of car parking provided however, may be tempered by proximity to local services and public transport.

RECOMMENDATION 11

That Council undertake a feasibility study to investigate the potential to realign Railway Place East and improve the amenity and security of the area around Bell Train Station.

RECOMMENDATION 12

An Environmental Audit Overlay be applied to all land proposed to be re-zoned.

RECOMMENDATION 13

That Council adopt the following implementation schedule:

- Darebin City Council to endorse report.
- Preparation of a planning scheme amendment including Design and Development Overlay and Junction Policy.
- Exhibition of the planning scheme amendment.
- Panel hearing (if required).
- Planning scheme amendment adoption (subject to any modifications resultant from the public consultation phase [exhibition] and Panel hearing).
- Development of a detailed urban design, plan, costings and budget.
- Implementation of works program by Council and provision of landscape features (for example, corner feature tree sites as part of private development projects).

APPENDIX 1

Summary of Studies

The following literature has been reviewed, and is summarised below in the context of this study.

WSC Consultants Pty Ltd (1997) Strategy for Retail Activity Centres, 1997

The strategy identifies the hierarchy of retail activity centres within the municipality. Northland Shopping Centre is the one Regional Centre and Preston District Centre and Northcote Central/Plaza are the two Sub Regional Centres. There are eight primary Neighbourhood retail centres and more than forty Secondary Neighbourhood centres and three Peripheral Sale Centres.

The study area is identified as forming part of the Primary Neighbourhood Centre of High Street, Thornbury (surrounding Dundas/High/Plenty Junction) and the Peripheral Sales Centre of High Street Preston (between Dundas and Bell Street).

The strategy identifies potential for significant increases of floor area at Northland and Northcote Centre and Plaza, and notes the recent peripheral sales additions of a Bunnings, Harvey Norman and Officeworks within the municipality, and a Paint Mobile at the Junction. Various urban design improvements are proposed in the vicinity of the Northcote Town Hall to create an 'arts focus'.

Retail turnover data indicates a significantly lower performance than the average for the Melbourne Statistical Division. The overall future outlook for retailing in the municipality suggests that the role of existing centres is unlikely to experience significant change and future development should focus on refining roles and redevelopment of existing sites within centres. The strategy proposes the development of a business plan for each centre emphasising a community or neighbourhood focus. 'Creative' planning controls are proposed that encourage a mix of uses including residential development.

With regard to the Peripheral Sales Centres, the strategy recognises that the City of Darebin is unlikely to attract additional 'big box' retailers. The existing peripheral Sales Centres should be given encouragement to improve appearance.

Specific details and implications of the Strategy for the High Street, Thornbury Centre (around Dundas Street) are outlined below:

- The centre contains 74 retail premises, 25 office premises and 16 vacant premises.
Note: This precinct includes premises south of Dundas Street which are not included in the Junction study area.
- Key characteristics are a retail food emphasis with a significant number of restaurants with a community, recreation and office role.
- The Trade Area of the centre is identified as extending generally from Thornbury Station north to Murray Road, and between the railway line and Albert Street.
- The area has a large overseas born population (43.4%) predominantly from Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia. The median household income is slightly lower than that of the City of Darebin.
- The strategy identifies issues of traffic congestion, lack of parking, poor overall presentation and large number of vacant premises.
- The strategy suggests strengthening of the recreation role (function centres), improving integration between the South Preston shopping centre and High Street, encouraging convenience retail activity, facilitating non-retail and service activities, providing urban design guidelines and attractive entrance features to better identify the centre.

City of Darebin (1998) Economic Development Strategy 1998-2002, June 1998

The Economic Development Strategy provides a comprehensive outline of demographic and economic factors affecting the municipality.

The key economic strengths of the municipality are:

- Proximity to the CBD, Melbourne Airport and Western Ring Road.
- Presence of quality education, training and research facilities.
- Strong manufacturing, wholesale and retail sectors and a number of very strong individual businesses.

Weaknesses of the municipality that need to be addressed are:

- Lack of greenfield sites for businesses.
- Poor visual image.
- Reliance on manufacturing, wholesale and retail sectors to provide jobs.
- No clearly defined office/commercial precinct.
- Low education and training levels amongst the local labour force.

The Economic Development Strategy suggests Darebin's competitive advantages including location, training facilities and multi-cultural image should be better promoted. Infrastructure should be adequate for industry needs and town planning regulations should be sufficiently flexible.

An Economic Development Action plan outlines a range of initiatives for the short and medium term primarily focused upon marketing, improving business networks research and revitalising retail activity centres.

City of Darebin, Going Places, The Darebin Integrated Travel Plan, Adopted June 2001

The Darebin Integrated Travel Plan was prepared by a working group of Council, State Government, community and travel industry representatives.

The objective of the Integrated Travel Plan to a achieve *'safe and easy access for all members of Darebin's community to their places of work and other destinations such as shops and schools . . .'* The strategy emphasises that travel can adversely impact on the environment, human health, and the economic viability of businesses.

The Integrated Travel Plan encourages the shortening of journeys. This can be achieved by encouraging a mix of land uses and increasing housing densities close to public transport especially railway stations, shopping centres or other popular destinations.

Council encourages medium density housing along High Street to support the existing shops and public transport. The Dundas Junction shops are identified as a key travel destination within the municipality. The Integrated Travel Plan foreshadows the redevelopment of the area for *'a mixture of uses including new industrial development, factory sales and medium density housing.'*

The Integrated Travel Plan considers a range of other issues including public transport, road safety, traffic congestion and heavy transport. It is noted that the Plan discourages the use of High Street by large vehicles passing through the area.

City of Darebin & Essential Economics, Linking Economic Development to Land Use Planning An Issues Paper, September 2000

This comprehensive issues paper aims to assist Council in managing land use change in the City of Darebin caused by major changes to economic activities, property prices and population renewal.

The paper focuses upon increasing economic development by increasing local jobs. Twenty five percent of resident workers are employed with the municipality and this has significant benefits for individuals, local businesses and Council. The study encourages the continued influx of higher income households to support the local economy.

Re-development and renewal of Darebin's industrial sector has been slow. The municipality has generally not attracted new more intensive economic activities. This may be linked to the skills of the local labour force, lack of attractive sites and limited transport links in comparison to other areas. The paper however suggests that this situation is changing to accord with '*an outward wave of economic growth from the strongly performing Inner Melbourne Area.*' The demand for residential properties in Darebin has substantially increased house prices in recent years.

Future Directions

Future directions for retailing in Darebin are likely to include:

- Increased demand for services throughout the retail hierarchy in response to the increasing population and increase of local household incomes.
- Continuing dominance of Northland Shopping Centre.
- Potential for expansion of peripheral sales on key arterial roads.
- Potential for further factory outlets that may operate in shopfronts rather than attached to factories, and possibly a factory outlet centre.
- Loss of convenience and grocery role for local neighbourhood shopping centres.

Successful neighbourhood shopping centres will need to secure a niche role or be supported by a key anchor.

Opportunities for future large-scale office development in the municipality are considered to be limited, although redevelopment of the PANCH site could trigger further office development in the vicinity, but this would require significant improvements to the appearance of the locality including the Bell Railway Station.

Small-scale office developments will continue to locate in neighbourhood and strip shopping centres.

There was growth in the total number of industrial premises in Darebin between 1994 and 1998. This growth was largely confined to those enterprises employing less than 5 people, and most growth was in motor vehicle sales and servicing, road transport and wood and paper products industries. The number of larger firms declined. The City of Whittlesea is the dominant location for recent industrial development in the north east sector and contains more than ten times the amount of industrial floor space than Darebin.

The footwear and leather manufacturing sector is the largest manufacturing employee in the municipality, and the city contains the largest concentration of footwear firms in Australia. The paper suggests that unless appropriate action is taken by the industry, manufacturing is likely to move to greenfield sites or off-shore.

It is suggested that isolated pockets of industrial land are likely to come under pressure for rezoning, and industrial premises on main roads adjacent to business centres are likely to lose their industrial function.

The Junction industrial precinct is identified as '*a key area of opportunity for the municipality.*' The area has a mix of uses and generally poor amenity and many vacant buildings. Pressure is likely to mount for a mixed use zoning or the area could fragment into various business, industrial or residential zones. It is suggested the area could be developed along a particular theme such as, Commercial office precinct, footwear sales and design precinct or warehouse living precinct.

A case study of the Junction forms part of the paper. A focus group provided the following comments:

- The key assets of the area are industrial activity especially footwear (although declining), factory outlets, Safeway, a refurbished hotel and good public transport.

- Some new development such as Paintmobile have occurred but other local shops have closed as large employers moved out of the area. There is some demand for peripheral sales.
- Residential redevelopment is occurring.
- With regard to future prospects for the area:
 - The factory outlets lack a critical mass in comparison to other factory outlet concentrations.
 - Sites in the precinct could be too constrained for peripheral sales.
 - Small shops lack a significant residential catchment, although this could improve when residential redevelopment occurs.
 - Industrial development is unlikely given existing building stock.
 - Residential development is likely to be in strong demand, but could cause night time conflict with premises such as Oakville Receptions.
 - Several major sites are available for redevelopment.
 - The re-development of PANCH will impact on the area.
 - The existing zoning is perceived as an impediment to re-development and investment.
- The Preferred Future for the Junction envisages:
 - An improved image as residential redevelopment of key sites occurs. This could include additional restaurants and cafes. Redevelopment should allow commercial use at street frontage.
 - Existing industrial activity should be protected.

The paper offers an alternative opinion to the focus group and suggests the area could provide premises for the rapidly growing business service sector. This could include small offices, workshops and studios with warehouse style housing and street front cafes. Commercial frontages should be retained for showrooms rather than small shops. The paper coins the term 'Preston Bohemia' to describe the future of the area and further promotes high quality urban design within the precinct.

City of Darebin Industrial Land Use Strategy, A Framework for Decision Making, November 2001

This paper provides a strategic framework for decision making concerning the rezoning of industrial land. It is argued that there is a need to retain industrial land to accommodate the many existing and future enterprises, but some smaller industrial areas are no longer performing well or are substantially vacant. It is acknowledged that Darebin cannot compete for 'greenfield' type industrial premises within its existing industrial areas.

It is proposed that Local Area Plans be prepared for the re-zoning of large or complex areas. These plans should address:

- Land use conflict.
- Maximising job creation.
- Arrangements for traffic and parking.
- Desirable mix of activities.
- Streetscape improvements and similar.

In considering industrial re-zonings the first priority should be to retain economic activities and then to improve residential amenity and to make use of existing infrastructure.

The paper provides a number of assessment sheets to be applied to industrial rezoning requests. The assessment sheets address site and building characteristics, development interest, and viability of the industrial precinct and residential amenity. The next step in assessment is the preparation of a planning balance sheet to weigh the costs and benefits of the proposal.

The study recommends the preparation of Commercial and Industrial Land Polices including design guidelines and Local Area Plans to guide industrial re-zonings development in specific areas.

Darebin City Council, City of Darebin Heritage Review, 1999

The former Watson and Patterson Bacon Curing Factory (now Otto Wurth Factory) and the Howe Leather Factory are the most significant heritage sites within the Junction study area. The Bell-Railway residential area extending north of Showers Street generally between the railway line and High Street is a historically significant precinct.

Watson and Patterson Former Bacon-Curing Factory (Otto Wurth Factory).

The Watson and Patterson Former Bacon-Curing Factory located on the north side of Dundas Street to the east of Plenty Road has historical significance in the metropolitan context. The bacon curing factory established on the site in 1862 is likely to be one of the first in Victoria. The buildings on the site date from the early twentieth century. Preston was an important pig farming centre and the complex is one of the last remaining links with this early rural activity.

Howe Leather Factory

The site of the Howe Leather Factory at 99-103 High Street has been used for leather tanning since the early 1880's and occupied by the Howe company since 1910. The existing red-brick building which remains substantially and is a local landmark was constructed in 1920. Similar to the Bacon-Curing Factory the building provides links to the early farming and industrial activity in Preston.

Bell Railway Residential Area

The Bell Railway Area located between the commercial properties fronting High Street and the railway line was developed between 1910 and 1921. The area contains a large number of 'distinctive and consistently designed Arts and Crafts influenced cottages'.

The area is associated with David Clifton, founder of the Clifton brickworks, and the houses may have been constructed for brick works employees. Although houses fronting Showers Street are included in the Bell Railway Residential Area these houses do not appear to be of the same period.

APPENDIX 2

The Transport Management Plan – High Street (Summary)

Summary of the Aims of the Transport Management Plan for High Street

North-South Corridor High Street Action Plan

The Action Plan proposes, amongst other things, to:

- Give priority to public transport and improve modal interchange;
- Review traffic signal operation and introduce queue management techniques (to maintain and where possible improve vehicle capacity);
- Remove Clearways in retail focus areas of High Street;
- Improve pedestrian and cycling conditions; and
- Improve visibility and safety of bus and tram stops.

A Transport Management Plan for High Street

Major elements of this project are:

- Removal of the clearway restrictions in some areas, mainly in the retail focus areas;
- Queue management techniques to maintain traffic capacity;
- Traffic management techniques, driver perception techniques and landscape strategies to improve driver behaviour and to support Council policy regarding the retail areas along High Street;
- Review traffic signal operation to promote pedestrian safety and priorities for public transport;
- Measures to improve safety and convenience for the disabled;
- Measures to promote cycling, such as provision of cycle routes, secure cycle parking and crossing facilities;
- Measures to improve public transport interchange between bus, tram and railway, including improved signage and improvements to pedestrian routes;
- Measures to ensure safe and commodious operation of a north/south route via St Georges Road, to ensure traffic travelling through Darebin can do so in safety.

Desired Outcomes of the Project are:

- Progressive removal of clearways and the maintenance of the existing capacity of High Street and the effect of this proposal on:
 - All road users in High Street including car traffic, public transport, freight traffic, cyclists and pedestrians.
 - Effects external to the High Street corridor.
 - Plans showing specific improvement proposals.
 - Develop an implementation work program.
 - Develop a monitoring program.

APPENDIX 3

Survey Results

Please note that figures relate to the percentages of responses from either the 65 renters, or 84 owners, who responded to the survey. Approximately 200 properties were surveyed.

Question 1	
Do you own or rent your property in the Junction?	
Own:	84
Rent:	65

Question 2		
How long have you owned or rented your property in the Junction?		
	Own	Rent
Less than 1 year	1%	11%
Between 1 and 5 years	17%	38%
Between 5 and 10 years	23%	11%
Greater than 10 years	50%	29%

Question 3	
Is your property a:	
Residence	1%
Factory / Warehouse / Workshop	37%
Yard	4%
Shop	19%
Office	9%
Vacant Land	-
Showroom	-
Hotel	1%

Question 4		
What is your primary reason for owning / renting the property?		
	Own	Rent
Owner Occupier	13%	-
Current Investment	24%	-
Investment for Future	13%	-
Redevelopment	-	-
Inherited	1%	-
To Operate Business	46%	91%
To Live	-	2%

Question 5
If you operate a business from the property, what are the advantages of operating your business in this location?

Various responses given. These have been reflected within the body of the report.

Question 6
What are the disadvantages?

Various responses given. These have been reflected within the body of the report.

Question 7
Do you plan to expand / up-grade your business in this location?

	Own	Rent
Yes	10%	14%
No	46%	66%
Undecided	17%	6%

Question 8
Do you plan to reduce / re-locate your business from this location?

	Own	Rent
Yes	4%	3%
No	54%	68%
Undecided	12%	5%

Question 9
How long do you intend to operate your business from this location?

	Own	Rent
Less than 1 year	1%	6%
Between 1 and 5 years	8%	34%
Between 5 and 10 years	12%	25%
Greater than 10 years	37%	23%

Question 10
How many people are employed in your business at this address?

20 businesses with greater than 10.

Question 11		
If you are a property owner, would you have any desire to consolidate your land with a neighbouring property?		
	Own	Rent
Yes	15%	N/A
No	51%	N/A
Undecided	20%	N/A

Question 12		
Many of the properties within the Junction precinct are currently zoned for industrial purposes. Do you think this zone is appropriate?		
	Own	Rent
Yes	55%	68%
No	25%	14%
Undecided	13%	3%

Question 13		
If you believe this zone is inappropriate, would you prefer to see properties re-zoned generally to:		
	Own	Rent
Residential	10%	12%
Commercial (Office)	1%	35%
Mixed Use	14%	5%
Retail	5%	2%

Question 14		
What do you think needs to be done to improve the area?		
	Own	Rent
Landscape and Streetscape Improvements	17%	12%
New Development	6%	8%
Increased Commercial Activity	8%	8%
Increased Residential Activity	5%	0%
Increased Car Parking	17%	25%
Better General Cleanliness	4%	8%
Policing	0%	8%
Traffic Management	2%	3%

APPENDIX 4

Funding Options

FUNDING

Council has recognised in its Industrial Land Use Strategy the following options available to fund the identified improvement works.

Council recognised the need to seek contributions toward the cost of the provision of social and physical infrastructure incorporating the following strategy into the Municipal Strategic Statement in 1999:

“Measure the impact of new development and, where appropriate, require developers to contribute to additional or augmented social/physical infrastructure.”

Council can seek contributions from developers and the community to fund these improvements via a number of techniques as discussed below.

Development Contributions Policy

In March 1999 Council adopted a Development Contributions Policy to give effect to an element of the Council Plan 1998 which was to ensure:

“The planning and implementation of timely and relevant social, cultural and recreational policies and funding programs to meet the needs of the diverse Darebin community”.

Council’s Development Contributions Policy has two specific objectives:

- To address all relevant development contribution levy requirements as part of the development approvals process.
- To apply an appropriate development contribution levy which, when tested, is found to be viable and feasible in accordance with legislative requirements and which satisfies the criteria of Need, Nexus, Equity and Accountability.

This policy recognised that infrastructure and services within the municipality catered to a level of demand determined by past development and that changes resulting from urban consolidation and the conversion of industrial buildings is impacting on the population patterns and the demand for facilities.

The policy identifies Development Contribution Plans and Section 173 agreements as vehicles for requiring contributions and it points out that these contributions could be by direct provision (that is, providing the land or constructing the facility) or by cash contribution.

Development Contributions Plans

The Planning and Environment (Development Contributions) Act 1995 provided for Councils to collect contributions or levies through an approved Development Contribution Plan (DCP) which would be incorporated into the Darebin Planning Scheme via an amendment.

Two components to Development Contribution Plans were identified as Physical Infrastructure, payable up front for items such as roads, drains, open space or land

for community infrastructure, and Social or Community Infrastructure which included community meeting halls, pre-schools, maternal and child health care centres.

An upper limit of \$450 per lot for residential development was applied to the Community Infrastructure levy. Non-residential development could attract a development contribution of up to 0.25% of construction costs for community infrastructure. This means an apartment complex of 40 homes would only be required to contribute \$18,000 to infrastructure yet, in a small or isolated locality 40 additional homes may have a substantial impact on local services.

The Department of Infrastructure is currently reviewing the use of DCPs and Darebin is part of a pilot project. Development Contribution Plans have not been utilized by most Councils probably due to their cumbersome nature and the onerous work required by Councils to introduce them. A comprehensive impact analysis is required to inform the level of contributions which must address the tests of need, nexus, equity and accountability.

Negotiated Section 173 Agreements

Under Section 173 of the Planning and Environment Act Council may negotiate with developers for the provision of infrastructure or a contribution toward the provision of infrastructure. This is done as part of the permit process and the Section 173 is included as a permit condition.

The benefit of Section 173 agreements is that it gives Council and the developers the scope and flexibility, by agreement, to move beyond the stringent rules and tests of the Development Contributions Act 1995.

Section 173 are the most common mechanism to obtain development contributions in Victoria. Council planners can assess a development application, determining the likely impact on community infrastructure and facilities and negotiate an appropriate contribution.

Special Rate Levy

Section 163 of the Local Government Act 1989 provides for Councils to levy special rates and charges. These Special rates and charges may be levied on any specified area for the purpose of "*defraying any expenses*". Special Rate Levies are currently used in some retail centres in the City of Darebin to help Council market and promote the local centre.

The use of a special levy would enable Council to direct the cost of improvements to the community that is considered to benefit. Costs for tasks such as the bundling of overhead cabling could then be defrayed amongst the wider community which would benefit from the improved streetscape and thus minimise the cost to any individual or company.

Special rate levies are advantageous in that they can be applied to a larger community benefiting from the improvements and are not restricted to individual developments as are DCP's and Section 173 Agreements.

APPENDIX 5

Existing Use Provisions

63 EXISTING USES

63.01 Extent of existing use rights

An existing use right is established in relation to use of land under this scheme if any of the following apply:

- The use was lawfully carried out immediately before the approval date.
- A permit for the use had been granted immediately before the approval date and the use commences before the permit expires.
- A permit for the use has been granted under Clause 63.08 and the use commences before the permit expires.
- Proof of continuous use for 15 years is established under Clause 63.11.
- The use is a lawful continuation by a utility service provider or other private body of a use previously carried on by a Minister, government department or public authority, even where the continuation of the use is no longer for a public purpose.

63.02 Characterisation of use

If a use of land is being characterised to assess the extent of any existing use right, the use is to be characterised by the purpose of the actual use at the relevant date, subject to any conditions or restrictions applying to the use at that date, and not by the classification in the table to Clause 74 or in Section 1, 2 or 3 of any zone.

63.03 Effect of definitions on existing use rights

The definition of a term in this scheme, or the amendment of any definition, does not increase or restrict the extent of any existing use right established prior to the inclusion of the definition or amendment.

63.04 Section 1 uses

A use in Section 1 of a zone for which an existing use right is established may continue provided any condition or restriction to which the use was subject and which applies to the use in Section 1 of the zone continues to be met.

63.05 Sections 2 and 3 uses

A use in Section 2 or 3 of a zone for which an existing use right is established may continue provided:

- No building or works are constructed or carried out without a permit. A permit must not be granted unless the building or works complies with any other building or works requirement in this scheme.
- Any condition or restriction to which the use was subject continues to be met. This includes any implied restriction on the extent of the land subject to the existing use right or the extent of activities within the use.
- The amenity of the area is not damaged or further damaged by a change in the activities beyond the limited purpose of the use preserved by the existing use right.

63.06 Expiration of existing use rights

An existing use right expires if either:

- The use has stopped for a continuous period of 2 years, or has stopped for two or more periods which together total 2 years in any period of 3 years.
- In the case of a use which is seasonal in nature, the use does not take place for 2 years in succession.

63.07 Compliance with codes of practice

A use for which an existing use right is established must comply with any relevant code of practice incorporated in this scheme if either:

- The instrument of approval of the code of practice has been ratified by Parliament in accordance with Section 55 of the Conservation Forests and Lands Act 1987.
- The code of practice is approved or ratified by Parliament under an Act.

63.08 Alternative use

If land is used for a use in Section of zone for which an existing use right is established, a permit may be granted to use the land for an alternative use which does not comply with this scheme. The responsible authority must be satisfied that the use of the land for the alternative use will be less detrimental to the amenity of the locality.

63.09 Shop conditions

A permit must not be granted to:

- Construct or carry out a building or works under Clause 63.05 for a shop with a leasable floor area exceeding 500 square metres.
- Use land under Clause 63.08 for a shop with a leasable floor area exceeding 500 square metres.

63.10 Damaged or destroyed buildings or works

If at least 50 percent of the gross floor area of a building or at least 50 percent of the area of any works is damaged or destroyed so that the use cannot continue without the building or works being reconstructed, the land must be used in conformity with this scheme, unless a permit is granted to continue the use, and to construct or carry out buildings or works.

63.11 Proof of continuous use

If, in relation to an application or proceeding under the Act or this scheme, including an application for a certificate of compliance under Section 97N of the Act, the extent of any existing use right for a period in excess of 15 years is in question, it is sufficient proof of the establishment of the existing use right if the use has been carried out continuously for 15 years prior to the date of the application or proceeding.

An existing use right may be established under this clause even if the use did not comply with the scheme immediately prior to or during the 15 year period, unless either:

- At any time before or after commencement of the 15 year period the use has been held to be unlawful by a decision of a court or tribunal.
- During the 15 year period, the responsible authority has clearly and unambiguously given a written direction for the use to cease by reason of its non-compliance with the scheme.

63.12 Decision guidelines

Before deciding on an application under Clause 63.05, 63.08 or 63.10, in addition to the decision guidelines in Clause 65 and any other requirements of the Act, the responsible authority must consider the extent to which compliance can be achieved with all scheme requirements that can reasonably be met.