



# **NORTHAM TOWN CENTRE CAR PARKING STRATEGY**

**Prepared for:** SHIRE OF NORTHAM

**Prepared by:** DONALD VEAL CONSULTANTS PTY LTD  
IN CONJUNCTION WITH BURGESS DESIGN GROUP



125 Oliver Street  
Mount Helena, WA 6082

Telephone +61 8 9572 2931  
Fax +61 8 9572 2936  
Mobile 0428 722 604  
Email [Donald.Veal@dvcworld.com](mailto:Donald.Veal@dvcworld.com)  
ABN 13 101 084 940

**DECEMBER 2011**

## DOCUMENT ISSUE AUTHORISATION

Issue	Rev	Date	Description	Checked By	Approved By
0	0	23/12/10	INTERNAL draft	NMW	HL
0	1	22/02/11	DRAFT REPORT	TD	HL
1	1	21/03/11	FINAL DRAFT REPORT	HL	BV
1	2	22/06/11	SHIRE OF NORTHAM	WB	CBH
1	3	21/12/11	ADOPTION BY COUNCIL	WB	COUNCIL

*The information contained in this document is solely for the use of the client identified for the purpose for which it has been prepared. It is not to be used by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party. All photographs remain the copyright of Donald Veal Consultants and are included for illustration only.*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Northam Town Centre Car Parking Strategy is a document developed by Donald Veal Consultants, in conjunction with Burgess Design Group for the Shire of Northam to more effectively manage parking within the town centre as the population grows. A range of measures have been suggested including the imposition of time limits, especially in higher demand parking areas, and plans to control parking more effectively within the town centre. The strategy seeks to better manage the parking within Northam's town centre and allow provisions for upgrades, expansion and changes to parking facilities into the future. This will make business more conducive in the town centre and encourage greater turnover of patrons.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	II
1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2 BACKGROUND.....	2
2.1 PARKING PLAYS AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN THE TRANSPORT SYSTEM .....	2
2.2 THE NORTHAM TOWNSITE.....	6
3 POLICY AND PLANNING CONTEXT.....	11
3.1 PLANNING DOCUMENTS.....	11
3.2 CONCURRENT STUDIES .....	20
3.3 TECHNICAL REPORTS.....	21
4 4 CONSULTATION .....	23
4.1 SHIRE OF NORTHAM.....	23
4.2 RETAIL AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS.....	25
5 FUTURE GROWTH SCENARIOS.....	26
5.1 POPULATION GROWTH .....	26
5.2 NORTHAM RAILWAY STATION PRECINCT.....	26
5.3 NORTHAM CENTRAL SHOPPING CENTRE AND REVITALISATION OF NORTHAM TOWN CENTRE.....	27
5.4 NORTHAM SURROUNDS .....	28
5.5 IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTRE .....	28
5.6 CHAIN STORE SUPERMARKETS AND DISCOUNT DEPARTMENT STORES .....	29
5.7 CENTRALISED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES .....	30
5.8 OLD HOSPITAL SITE.....	31
5.9 TRAIN AND BUS LINKAGES TO PERTH .....	32
5.10 SUMMARY OF FUTURE SCENARIOS AND ISSUES.....	32
6 ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES.....	34
6.1 ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE.....	34
6.2 SPECIALTY PARKING CONSIDERATIONS .....	34
6.3 EXISTING PARKING DEMAND PROFILE AND REVIEW OF CAR PARKING INFRASTRUCTURE.....	36
6.4 IDENTIFIED HOTSPOTS AND ISSUES .....	39
7 PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGY.....	40
7.1 PARKING DEMAND MANAGEMENT.....	40
7.2 PARKING SYSTEM MANAGEMENT .....	45
7.3 SPECIALTY PARKING CONSIDERATIONS .....	45
7.4 GUIDING PRINCIPLES, GOALS, AND OUTCOMES .....	51
8 PARKING STRATEGY FRAMEWORK .....	54
9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS .....	56
9.1 GENERAL IMPLICATIONS.....	56
9.2 CAR PARKING TRUST FUND.....	56
9.3 PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES .....	58
9.4 USER CHARGING .....	59
10 CONCLUSION .....	60

# 1 INTRODUCTION

Donald Veal Consultants, in conjunction with Burgess Design Group, has been commissioned to develop a car parking strategy framework for the Northam Town Centre, on behalf of the Shire of Northam. Parking supply and management, not only for private vehicles, but also for all types of road vehicles (buses, taxis, bicycles, delivery, and service vehicles) is an essential element of the transport system and plays a central role in shaping the urban amenity and economic activity of the town. The provision of parking within the Northam Town Centre is also important to serve those travelling from more remote communities or farms to access the services available in Northam.

This Car Parking Strategy involves a review of the existing car parking situation and development of options to ensure that the future car parking demands are adequately catered for including consideration of the following issues:

- Current car parking bay numbers and locations, public parking bays and bays on private property;
- Future parking requirements and generators for car parking;
- Future options for parking within the Northam Town Centre;
- Improvements for existing car parking areas to improve functionality; and
- Existing demand for bays versus the existing bays provided.

As part of addressing these issues and preparing the car parking strategy, Donald Veal Consultants and Burgess Design Group have reviewed previous studies, policy, and planning documents in relation to parking and consulted with the Shire of Northam to identify future parking requirements as well as to develop a consolidated and robust approach to managing parking into the future. A detailed assessment of existing public and private parking infrastructure was undertaken, with site inspections also detailing the current utilisation of parking.

As far as possible, the strategies in this report are consistent with the Shire of Northam's goals and aims which include:

- Enhance the qualities and benefits of our natural and built environment;
- Create an integrated urban centre with a full range of services;
- Sustain and maintain the distinctive character of the Shire and, in particular, the Town Centre;
- Balance development needs with sustainable economic, social, and environmental objectives;
- Continue a whole of government approach in the provision of infrastructure;
- Maintain and improve physical infrastructure to meet the needs of the local community; and
- Ensure all our activities have a strong focus on sustainability.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

Australia has an established history of high car ownership and usage. As a result, car parking has become a central focus in many areas, particularly those which provide employment and localised activity. Car parking serves not only local residents but workers, commuters, shoppers, visitors, students, and commercial operations such as freight or service delivery, to access employment and recreation opportunities and to attend social and cultural events.

### ***2.1 Parking Plays an Integral Role in the Transport System***

#### **2.1.1 Parking is Both Political and Emotional**

Those who work with parking policy and control know that they are dealing with an issue that provokes a strong emotional response verging on the irrational.

Free parking which is available for all has generally been perceived as an ideal objective for both policy and decision makers, with any proposed measures which have sought to constrain demand or determine priority for access bitterly resisted, often in an emotional and irrational way.

This level of emotional response is related to the availability of parking and its significant role and impact on the ability of private individuals to access employment and the range of services and facilities that the community offers. The attitude of many people has, in the past, been that if parking is not readily available and accessible to services and amenities, they would often make the choice to shop or go elsewhere.

However this attitude is starting to change. Parking users are starting to perceive the issue of cost of motor vehicle use (both personally and as a community) and for some trips, especially these associated with journey to work and education, are seeking alternatives to private car trips. There is an increasing realisation, especially amongst community decision-makers, that society cannot just keep devoting more and more land and money to the provision of free or low cost parking infrastructure. On an increasing basis, those agencies and providers who supply and manage parking are moving to critically assess the type and variety of parking demands, establish priorities for the supply, location and costing and making decisions about the conditions that parking will be made available to different users at different times of the day, week, and year.

The review of car parking in the Northam Town Centre and implementation of this car parking strategy gives the Shire an opportunity to provide for contemporary planning and engineering solutions to manage the impacts of private vehicle use and appropriately plan for integrated transport outcomes.

#### **2.1.2 Parking as a Critical Element of Northam's Movement Network**

Parking infrastructure is an essential and inherent element of a transport system and plays an integral role in Northam's movement network. The supply of an adequate amount of quality car parking which is well located in relation to destinations becomes a critical issue for people and businesses.

The average private car is parked for 97% of the time, and of that proportion, up to 25% of this time occurs when the vehicle is parked away from its home garage<sup>1</sup>. This proportion of time away from the home garage parking is a key area where private car use comes into the realm of local government. A Town Centre Car Parking Strategy which outlines a clear, concise, and manageable context for decision making and which positions car parking within a broader land use, movement and accessibility context is vital to enable Northam to overcome the challenges and constraints associated with the planning, delivery, and management of car parking.

In the context of Northam, much of the Shire's forecast population increase is expected to result from an escalation in special rural residential estates, and planned future use of the army base as a immigration detention centre catering for up to 1,500 asylum seekers and 400 support staff, which will generate a high level of access to the Northam Town Centre. Hence, there is a distinct need to plan well into the future and to develop a framework for the provision and management of long-term car parking requirements.

### **2.1.3 Parking: An Active or Passive Force?**

Car parking is usually perceived as a passive element of the transport system. However, there is a growing recognition that it is an essential contributor or an 'active' force on the operation of the transport system and contributes to the success of this system in meeting the needs of the population.

Car parking impacts directly on the following elements of a broader transport system:

- Trip generation (parking availability may encourage or prevent trips);
- Trip distribution (trips may go to different destinations if parking is or is not available);
- Network assignment – trips may be to same destination but the relative location of parking to origin and destination may involve route selection and diversion decisions;
- Urban amenity and attractiveness (surface parking lots and large parking structures can be ugly and very pedestrian unfriendly);
- Convenience of a destination (for those who are tied to a motor vehicle the availability of parking is critical);
- Safety and security (parking lots can be perceived as unsafe for individuals and their cars);
- Time of travel – trips may be rescheduled to take account of parking supply; and
- Viability, operational and economic, of modes that compete with or offer an alternative to the private car e.g. public transport, bicycles.

Parking also can significantly impact on urban form, amenity, and attractiveness. Poorly designed and maintained parking facilities can be unattractive and perceived as unfriendly and unsafe. Their scale can blight and overshadow other developments. If poorly managed, these may attract users who do not add to the economic or social vitality of an area e.g. employees can crowd out shoppers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Figures refer to Perth Metropolitan averages

In this context, the planning and provision of car parking within the Northam Town Centre is important if not critical to the enhancement and maintenance of social and economic well being.

## 2.1.4 Demand and Supply of Parking

Parking is often perceived as a simple one type fits all by those who do not appreciate the variety of needs and demands. Parking is multifaceted. The simplest interpretation of car parking would be that it is a division between on-street and off-street, public and private, long or short stay, unrestricted access or reserved. In relation to parking users, there are many and varied. A simple list of possible types of demand and supply requirements is shown in **Table 2.1**.

**Table 2.1: Types of parking**

<b>TYPE OF PARKING</b>	
<b>On-Street Parking</b>	
<b>Restricted</b>	By time, cost, permit, set bays etc.
<b>Unrestricted</b>	No time limits or restrictions on type of vehicle
<b>ACROD</b>	Standard dimension, extra width, extra length
<b>Motorcycle</b>	Smaller dimension
<b>Service/Delivery</b>	Parking available for freight delivery or pick or for tradespersons undertaking work at a site
<b>Off-Street Parking</b>	
<b>Public Short Stay</b>	Shoppers (restricted by time, cost etc)
<b>Public Short Stay</b>	Business related (restricted by use)
<b>Public Long Stay</b>	Unrestricted 4 hours and above – for commuters
<b>Tenant Long Stay</b>	Exclusively for staff/employees
<b>Tenant Visitor</b>	Exclusively for site visitors
<b>Service/Delivery</b>	For vehicles required for building or related services
<b>Special Parking</b>	
<b>Drop off/Pickup</b>	Kiss and ride at special land uses eg shopping centre, entertainment area
<b>Emergency</b>	Police, Fire and Ambulance
<b>Public Transport</b>	Bus, taxi, tourist bus drop off & layover
<b>Park ‘n’ Ride</b>	Formal and informal
<b>Special Needs</b>	ACROD, temporally disabled, parents with children,
<b>Residential</b>	On & off street
<b>Bicycle Parking</b>	Secure tenant, visitor/courier parking
<b>Lay over</b>	Bus parking whilst people attend events
<b>Servicing of Vehicles</b>	Space used by vehicles undergoing repairs etc
<b>Special Destinations</b>	Hospital, school, etc.
<b>Special Events</b>	Concert, show event

### **2.1.5 Paradigm Shift**

There is now a need to change the way things are done, and to recognise that parking is an active element which will impact on both land use and transport activity within the Northam Town Centre area.

Too many decision makers have in the past adopted a ‘backwards looking’ approach which has relied on the continuance of the currently paradigm of ‘predict and provide’ through the application of historical parking standards, which in some instances, has resulted, in undesirable parking outcomes at significant social, environmental, and economic costs. This “more of the same ” approach has led to an exponential growth in car parking supply but has not resulted in necessarily improved parking availability and cost-effectiveness or better parking experiences for users .

There is therefore a need to review and shift the existing approaches to a new paradigm which considers at the needs of users, the responsibilities of providers and also seeks to balance competing economic and social pressures and allocate parking on an "agreed need or priority" basis.

The establishment of relevant and appropriate car parking standards, prioritisation of supply between competing users and active management and compliance activities can actually enhance the attractiveness of those activity centres by reducing road traffic congestion and conflict.

### **2.1.6 Parking Impacts on Green Modes**

Short local journeys by means other than the private motor vehicle are often overlooked in the primary focus on fast middle and long-distance car trips. Typically walking or cycling journeys are short (less than 1 kilometre) but still play a significant role in a sustainable and balanced transport system. Many of these trips are also often associated with preferred car parking close to a desired destination with the last part of the trip made by walking or, in some cases, by bicycle, yet this intermodal travel is often overlooked.

Policies, strategies, and detailed design which favours the car plays a major role in limiting these other non-motorised modes, with an often less than desirable street environment resulting. When preparing this Car Parking Strategy, it was important to ensure the negative impacts of car parking on other travel modes are eliminated or minimised as far as possible at a strategic level.

### **2.1.7 Development of a Car Parking Strategy for the Northam Town Centre**

Parking matters can be broadly divided into two broad streams, those that deal with creation of a supply and those that consider the management of the supply. Supply measures typically seek to ensure that there is a ready supply of parking where as management measures seek to ensure that the supply is used to support other more general transport and land use objectives. As a result, a range of initiatives are required as part of the successful implementation of a parking strategy.

The key issues relating to car parking in the Northam Town Centre include the following:

- General historic ad hoc development of the Town Centre;
- The dominant 'Main Street' Fitzgerald Street strip which is approximately 1 kilometre in length with minimal formal access opportunities for areas which back direct onto it, such as the school precinct located along the Wellington Street frontage at the rear of the existing Woolworths development and the spacing of existing street blocks which can exceed 200 to 250 m at some locations;
- Reciprocal car parking opportunities;
- The ad hoc mixture of retail and office uses along Fitzgerald Street;
- The supply of car parking off the 'Main Street'; and
- 'Hot spots' such as the service/government agency cluster at the west end of the town centre and the major generators such as Coles, Target and Woolworths located more centrally.

An effective series of car parking approaches would typically consist of a range of measures that address issues such as:

- A hierarchy of needs or preferred users;
- Parking supply requirements for different uses, especially for special user or purposes such as disabled access and service/delivery loading bays;
- Time-based parking e.g. long versus short-stay demand;
- Zones which prioritise short-stay parking by allocating parking in closer proximity to retail and services and relegates anticipated long-stay parking to the outer fringes of the centre, such as in the vicinity of the Northam Railway Station;
- Removal of minimum car parking standard requirements for future urban development;
- The designation of a maximum cap on the number of parking bays on a site or district basis; and
- Recognition of car parking as a link in a whole of journey chain, not as an end in itself.

## ***2.2 The Northam Townsite***

### **2.2.1 Northam as a Regional Centre**

The Northam Townsite is located approximately 96km north-east of Perth and is the primary service and commercial activity node within the Shire of Northam, providing the local, and more broadly the Central Wheatbelt community, with a varied range of services such as banking, retail, shopping, and governance, and is home to a variety of recreation, culture, health, and education facilities.

Northam is the designated primary Regional Centre for the Avon Valley and Central Wheatbelt Region. It has been identified within the *Northam Marketing Strategy* as a 'Market Town,' which has been defined as surviving and expanding through the provision of services to surrounding towns and

communities. Conservative population forecasts indicate that the current Shire population of 11,044 residents is projected to increase by more than 26 percent by 2031.

A critical issue addressed in this Car Parking Strategy is how to not only address the existing car parking demand generated by the range of land uses within the Town Centre, but also to plan for the future urban growth within the Town Centre in order to result in balanced movement network outcomes which are sustainable and financially viable.

## **2.2.2 Historic Development of the Town**

The Town of Northam was first gazetted in 1836 and the early history of settlement is evident by a number of federation buildings throughout the town. However, the residual urban development outcomes arising out of the ‘historical ribbon’ and ‘grid’ development of the central town area have included the car parking supply evolving in an ad hoc manner rather than in a strategic manner. Community workshops undertaken for previous studies identified the “...*general feeling that past planning has been ad hoc and that the town is confused, fragmented, spread out, and needs focus.*” This Car Parking Strategy addresses this issue from a transport planning perspective, and provides recommendations on how to best progress the future planning, implementation and management of car parking infrastructure as well as any retroactive improvements which may be required to the existing car parking supply.

## **2.2.3 Study Area for the Car Parking Strategy**

The Car Parking Strategy study area itself is the Northam Town Centre, which is located on the eastern bank of the Avon River, encompassing an area extending from the existing railway corridor in the north to Gairdner Street in the south, and from the river to Chidlow Street. It covers an area of approximately 0.7km<sup>2</sup>, and is shown relative to the greater Northam area in **Figure 2.1**.

**Figure 2.1: Northam Town Centre Study Area**



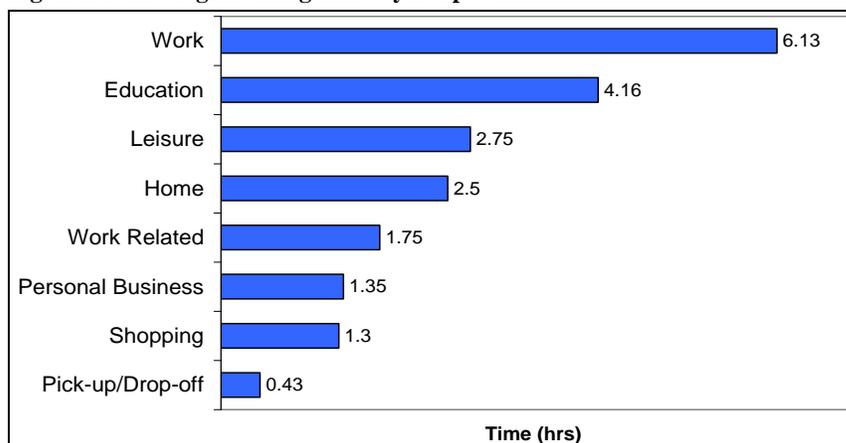
## 2.2.4 Land Use Characteristics

The predominant land use zoning within the Northam Town Centre include “*Town Centre*” and “*Business*,” with areas of “*Residential*” being located along the eastern boundary. Additional land use zoning includes “*Public Purpose*” zones such as churches, schools and community uses. As part of this project, the range of and synergies between the land uses were considered as integral to the Car Parking Strategy, with issues such as shared/reciprocal parking and the potential for commercial/retail spill over parking into residential areas being addressed.

## 2.2.5 Transport Statistics

The relationship between average parking time and intended purpose of trip is shown in **Figure 2.2**, derived from Travel Smart information collected for the South Perth region.

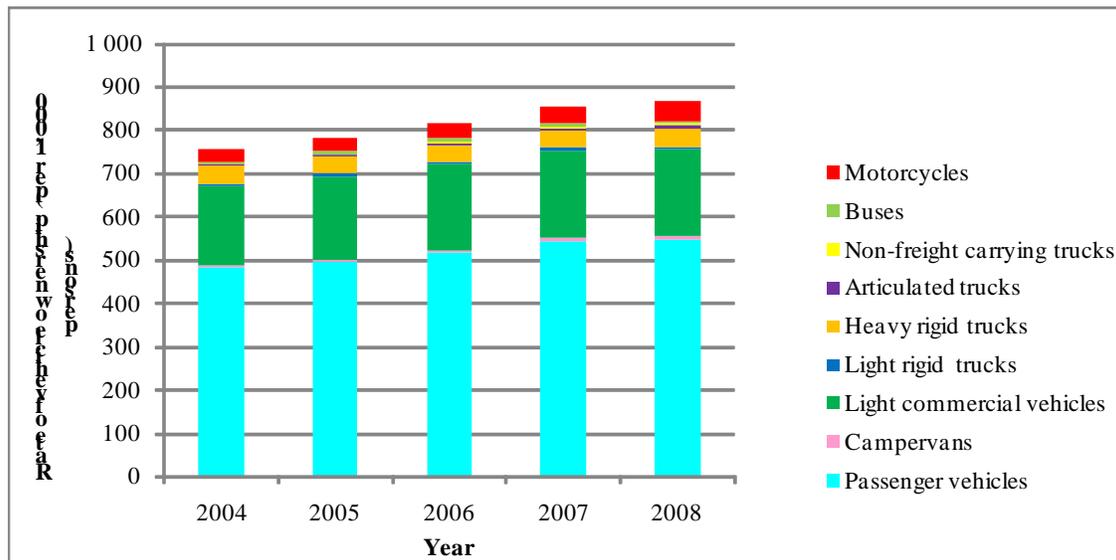
**Figure 2.2: Average Parking Time by Purpose**



It is clear that a range of car parking types is likely required to satisfy the existing and future needs of customers, visitors, and employees in Northam. Activities associated with work and education are located at one extreme of the parking spectrum with users demanding long-term parking. Land uses such as retail occupy the opposite end of the parking spectrum, with short-stay parking generally being demanded. This Car Parking Strategy developed for the Northam Town Centre caters for both ends of this spectrum.

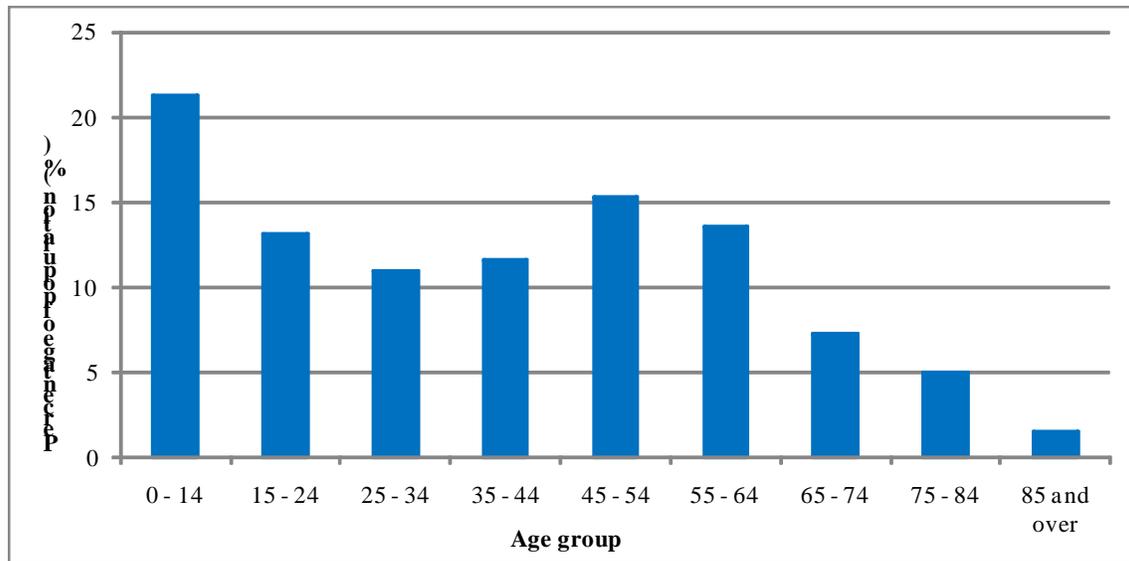
The rate of vehicle ownership within the Shire of Northam is increasing, as illustrated by **Figure 2.3**. A variety of vehicle types are present within the Shire, with passenger vehicles, light commercial vehicles, and motorcycles forming the majority.

**Figure 2.3: Rate of vehicle ownership (vehicles per 1,000 population)**



The Shire of Northam has a significant number of families with young children, evident by over 20 percent of the population being aged less than 15. The Shire is also home to a large portion of retirees, with approximately 14 percent of the population aged over 65. **Figure 2.4** illustrates the age groupings of the Shire of Northam’s population.

**Figure 2.4: Age Characteristics of Shire of Northam Population (2008 ABS data)**



As indicated by **Figure 2.2**, **Figure 2.3**, and **Figure 2.4**, the car parking strategy developed for the Northam Town Centre is required to suit a wide range of users, with differing trip purposes and travelling using different vehicle types.

## **3 POLICY AND PLANNING CONTEXT**

### ***3.1 Planning Documents***

The following, policies, local laws and schemes have been formulated as part of planning for future development within Northam. In assessing the future requirements for car parking within the study area, future growth scenarios outlined in these reports have been summarised along with the outcomes of relevant stakeholder consultation. It should be noted that the Shire of Northam and Town of Northam amalgamated in 2007 to form the current Shire of Northam. Both Schemes have been reviewed as part of this strategy, with the latest *Town Planning Scheme No. 5* used as the current scheme applicable to the study area.

#### ***3.1.1 The Avon Arc Sub-Regional Strategy***

The *Avon Arc Sub Regional Strategy* (AASRS) was published in 2001. Within the AASRS the *Strategic Policy Framework for Settlements* has as its objective; the management of settlement growth in locations which enhance the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the Avon Arc. It is predicted that the population of the Avon Arc will reach 40,000 by the year 2026, an increase of 20,000 people, which is to be directed primarily towards the existing built-up urban areas.

Northam has been identified in the AASRS as the Regional Service Centre, the highest order settlement which would cater for the major large-scale commercial and service activities, with a population forecast of more than 10,000 people by 2026. It is noted that as of 2011, the population of the Town was estimated to be 11,044 with up to 400 support staff to be added for the proposed immigration detention facility (although some of this 400 will be made up of existing residents). Therefore the current population could reach approximately 11,500 people by the end of 2011

The importance of encouraging and facilitating the continued growth of commercial and industrial activities in the region are vital to its sustainable growth into the future. Although it is anticipated that much of the growth in industrial development may be in the rural sector, a wide range of industrial and commercial activities should be encouraged for the region to prosper. This has been demonstrated by the development of the Avon Industrial Park, located 8 kilometres east of the Northam townsite.

The principle planning issues for the Town that arise from AASRS and are relevant to the Car Parking Strategy are as follows:

- Long term planning for urban growth (in particular facilitate the timely provision of serviced industrial land before development pressures);
- Costs of providing infrastructure and services;
- Funding to improve human services;
- Retention to heritage, character and natural landscape; and
- Urban consolidation and sustainability of infrastructure.

### 3.1.2 Plan for the Future 2010 – 2020 (Shire of Northam, 2010)

The Shire of Northam's *Plan for the Future 2010 – 2020* outlines the current and proposed services and facilities considered essential to support the growth of the Shire over the next decade. It identifies the precincts integral to longer term planning within the town, and the growth within these areas that will increase the demands for parking within Northam. These include:

***A new, and much improved, Northam Railway Station Precinct:*** Perth's rail network directly links Northam to the Perth CBD (just 96km away) using a transfer at the Midland Station. A revitalised Northam Railway Station Precinct could act as a hub for future development incorporating new commercial / office and accommodation facilities. The revitalised Railway Station Precinct should provide a first class entrance to the restaurant and entertainment precinct that will lie at the heart of the Northam Town Centre.

As stated the redevelopment may provide for significant development opportunities at the northern end of the study area, with significant areas for part and ride facilities and integrated transport outcomes through the use of public transport and a potential pedestrian link to the town centre and the anchor tenants of Coles and Woolworths.

***Major shopping centre redevelopment in the Northam CBD:*** The Town's major regional shopping centre precinct requires revitalisation to adequately cater for the range of existing and future major retail outlets. The expansion of Northam Central will generate more jobs – constituting a significant boost in local employment.

A redeveloped shopping precinct provides further opportunities to assess and manage car parking demand driven retail activities and improve the streetscape and on and off street car parking areas through landscaping and urban design initiatives.

***The revitalisation of Northam Town:*** ...improvements to include the refurbishment of Northam Train Station, the creation of safer railway crossings, urban design improvements and the transformation of Newcastle Street and Peel Terrace into safe and attractive boulevards.

These improvements will help the Town Centre become a more attractive place to visit and promote economic development, with a commensurate of car parking supply and demand.

***The Avon Industrial Park:*** Currently in its second stage of development, provides an excellent opportunity for large industrial businesses looking to expand their Western Australian operations.

Now into its second stage, the Avon Industrial Park has been developed to meet the needs of industries servicing the rural, resources and mineral processing markets. Featuring 203ha of industrial land within a total park area of 473ha, the estate is located 18km east of Northam and 116km east of Perth. The site was chosen for its ease of access and proximity to major transport routes, including the Trans-Australian rail line and Great Eastern Highway. This makes it a convenient staging point between Perth and regional areas of Western Australia. As the main service centre the development of the

industrial park will provide for further economic development of the Town Centre as it provides an administration and commercial function to service the industrial expansion.

The *Plan for the Future 2010 – 2020* provides further detail on the new initiatives within Northam that are planned over the five year period to 2015. Whilst not all of these facilities are located within the Northam Town Centre itself, they reflect the growth being experienced in Northam and may encourage users to visit the town centre as part of a linked trip. These more specific developments include:

***Northam Recreation Centre (\$12.5 million):*** To include three indoor courts, multi-purpose activity rooms, hospitality area, change rooms, storage facilities for users, lap pool, leisure water facility, and a hydrotherapy pool.

***Northam Cultural Centre (\$1.9 million):*** Built around the existing Old Railway Station, the Centre will accommodate Arts, Heritage, and Cultural exhibitions with space for workshops, cafe, and community groups. In the longer term, it is envisaged that this facility will be at the heart of a redeveloped West Northam housing and commercial area.

### **3.1.3 Local Planning Strategy (Town of Northam, 2000)**

The *Local Planning Strategy* was prepared by the Town of Northam to provide the strategic basis that was required for preparation of *Town Planning Scheme No. 5*, the current operational scheme in the study area. It provided information on the town profile and key issues, directions for urban expansion, a statement of aims and actions, and a summary of implications for the Scheme review.

The provision of car parking was not directly discussed in the *Local Planning Strategy*. However, the importance of the town as a regional urban area was emphasised and this has been recognised in preparing this Car Parking Strategy. The town of Northam is the Regional Service Centre for the Avon area; the highest order settlement type which caters for the major large-scale commercial and service activities. Easy access to Perth by road and the Avon Link rail services were expected to increase the growth prospects for the town. Car parking provision adequate to support a growing commercial and retail base would be required.

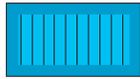
One of the principle planning issues identified in the *Local Planning Strategy* and AASRS was for urban consolidation and sustainability of infrastructure, with the desire for the town to have a distinctive character based on clear and cohesive town planning and attractive streetscapes. As car parking can have a major influence on the streetscape, this issue has been noted when preparing this Car Parking Strategy.

### **3.1.4 Town Planning Scheme No. 5 (Town of Northam, 2004)**

The Town of Northam's *Town Planning Scheme No. 5* applies to properties within the Northam Townsite, and sets out the planning aims and intentions for this area with guidance on and controls applicable to land use and development. The Town Planning Scheme Map presents the land use zonings for the Town, an extract from which is shown in **Figure 3.1** covering the study area for this Car Parking Strategy.



**Table 3.1: Zoning descriptions**



*Town Centre*

This zone provides for the main retail shopping and office needs of the town as a whole and the surrounding region. It should aim to have a “main street” environment with high levels of amenity to enhance the character of the town centre. It should provide for safe and efficient pedestrian and vehicular movement and provide sufficient parking for cars, caravans, and buses.



*Business*

The business zone should provide for offices and associated commercial services in an administrative and civic precinct of the town. Development should enhance the local amenity through the provision of public amenities and landscaping. It should provide for safe and efficient movement of pedestrians and vehicles and provide sufficient parking for cars and buses.



*Mixed Use*

The objective of this zone is to provide for a range of residential, office, commercial, and other compatible uses. It should provide for the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians and vehicles and high levels of landscaping and presentation of buildings to adjacent roads.



*Residential*

The residential zone provides for a variety of housing to meet the needs of different household types in accordance with the residential density code specified. Within the study area, R15/30 is specified.



*Public Purpose*

FS – Fire Station  
S – School  
W – Church



*Railway*



*Regional Road*

*Town Planning Scheme No. 5* also specifies the car parking requirements and details of the cash in lieu of car parking scheme for the town, replicated as follows:

## **5.10 Car Parking Requirements**

- 5.10.1 *The design of off-street car parking areas shall be in accordance with Australian Standards AS2890.1, AS2890.2, or any other requirements for engineering design of off-street car parking adopted by the Local Government. Car parking areas shall be constructed and maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Government, and shall include adequate provision for shade trees, customers and staff parking, and for manoeuvring, loading, and unloading of vehicles.*
- 5.10.2 *The minimum number of on-site car parking bays to be provided for specified developments shall be in accordance with Table 2. Where a use class or type of development is not specified in Table 2, the Local Government shall determine the number of car parking bays to be provided.*
- 5.10.3 *Notwithstanding sub-clause 5.10.2, the Local Government may determine that a general on-site car parking requirement shall apply to development proposed in the following zones –*
- (a) 1 bay per 20 sq m nla in the Town Centre, Local Centre and Business Zones;*
  - (b) 1 bay per 25 sq m nla in the Mixed Use Zone; and*
  - (c) 1 bay per 30 sq m nla in the Light and Service Industry Zone.*
- 5.10.4 *The Local Government may permit car parking to be provided in stages provided adequate space is set aside to its satisfaction on the land concerned to meet the full car parking requirement in the future, and the owner enters into an agreement to satisfactorily complete all the remaining stages when requested to do so by the Local Government.*
- 5.10.5 *If the Local Government grants planning approval for car parking on adjacent premises which rely on the reciprocal movement of vehicles or pedestrians between or across those premises, the adjacent landowners shall allow the necessary reciprocal access and parking at all times to the satisfaction of the Local Government.*

## **5.11 Cash In Lieu of Car Parking**

- 5.11.1 *The Local Government may accept a cash payment in lieu of the provision of on-site car parking subject to being satisfied that there is adequate provision for car parking, or a reasonable expectation that there will be adequate provision for public car parking, in the proximity of the proposed development.*
- 5.11.2 *The cash payment shall be calculated having regard to the likely cost of construction of the parking area or areas suitable for the proposed development and includes the value, as estimated by the Local Government, of that area of land which would have had to be provided to meet the car parking requirements specified for the proposed development.*
- 5.11.3 *Any cash payment received by the Local Government pursuant to this clause shall be paid into appropriate funds to be used to provide public car parks as deemed appropriate by the Local Government.*

### **3.1.5 Local Planning Strategy (Shire of Northam, 2005)**

The *Local Planning Strategy* was prepared by the Shire of Northam to provide an explanation of the content of the Shire's new Town Planning Scheme No. 3.

At the time of its preparation, the Town of Northam formed a separate local government area focussed at the centre of the Shire and hence there was limited reference to the Northam Townsite within the *Local Planning Strategy* of the Shire. However, it was stated that Northam is a town of regional significance and that that Town was discouraging urban sprawl and promoting infill development within the Northam Townsite. This is consistent with the Town's *Local Planning Strategy* (2000) and the AASRS.

The *Local Planning Strategy* identified that there had been an increased demand for rural residential lots, and that the Shire's subdivision strategy would result in the creation of 2,605 new lots in the Shire over the next 10 to 15 years. These new residents are likely to use the facilities and services located within the Northam Townsite and hence increase the demand for parking within the town.

### **3.1.6 Draft Local Planning Strategy (Shire of Northam 2010)**

The Shire is currently preparing a new draft Local Planning Strategy which is yet to be released for public consultation. The following information is taken from the Hames Sharley *Northam Development Plan*:

As the Strategy is currently being prepared, it contains the most recent information available in terms of:

- *“Population – for instance population projections by the WAPC indicate that the total population in the Townsite is currently around 7,000 and the population of the Shire will increase to 12,300 persons by 2021 which is an increase of 27.5%.*
- *Housing – There are 273 Department of Housing properties in the Northam Townsite which represents 11.5% of the total housing stock in the town, used to cater for social housing and government workers.*
- *Economic Development – The latest figures indicate that retail is the predominant employment type with 14% of workers employed in this sector, closely followed by the government sector at 12% and agriculture decreasing over time to 7%.*
- *Tourism – the need to continue to develop and promote the sustainable development of cultural, heritage and nature based tourism in the Shire.”*

The Draft Strategy identifies the following areas as having significant potential for revitalisation and redevelopment and are relevant to this Car Parking Strategy Project Area, either by being located within it or with an area of influence that may affect trip general and transport use:

- Minson Avenue, Fitzgerald Street and Wellington Street East in the town centre area including the old Northam hospital site on the corner of Wellington and Gardiner Streets;
- The area surrounding the Northam Railway Station along Peel Terrace;
- The old St Christopher's Hostel on Inkpen Street; and
- The old railway station and disused railway land located at the western end of Fitzgerald Street and Wellington Street West.

### **3.1.7 Town Planning Scheme No. 3 (Shire of Northam)**

*Town Planning Scheme No. 3* presents the types of use and development allowed in the different zones and the requirements for planning approval for developments. It applies to properties outside of the Northam town site, and thus is not directly relevant to the study area of this Car Parking Strategy.

The Town of Northam's *Town Planning Scheme No. 5* covers the Northam Townsite, and sets out the planning aims and intentions for this area with guidance on and controls applicable to land use and development. The Town is currently in the process of consolidating its schemes.

### **3.1.8 Parking and Parking Facilities Local Law (Shire of Northam, 2008)**

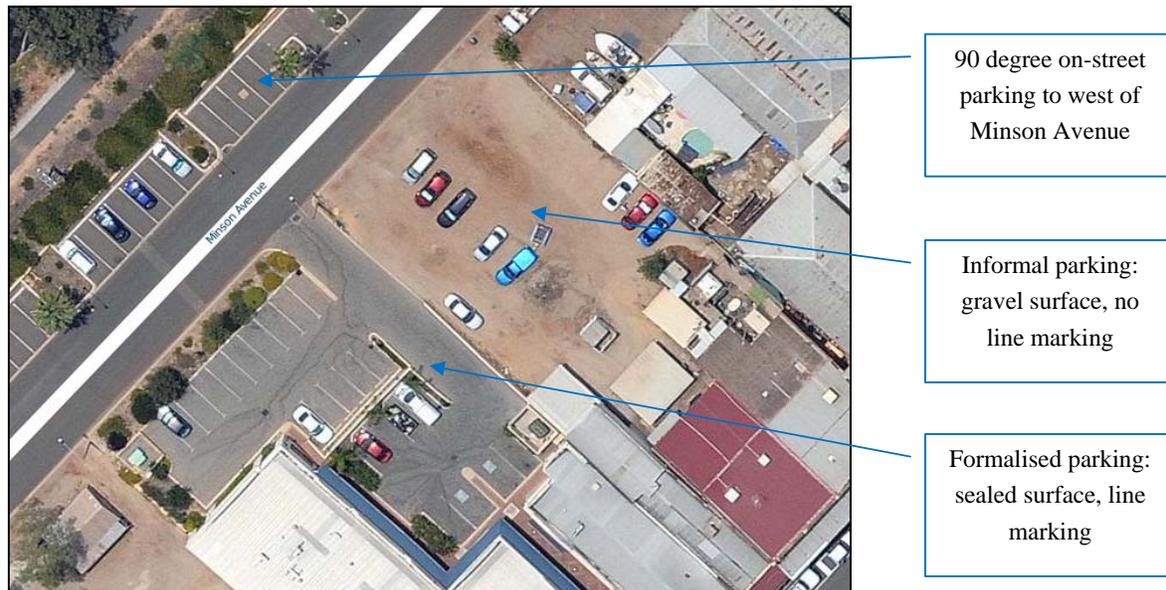
The *Parking and Parking Facilities Local Law* specifies the Shire of Northam's regulations and penalties in regards to parking. This local law covers the areas of metered zones, parking stalls and parking stations, general parking, parking and stopping, stopping in zones for particular vehicles, places where stopping is restricted, and miscellaneous issues including signage, special purpose and emergency vehicles, and obstruction of public places by vehicles. A schedule of the parking offences and penalties is provided in the Local Law.

### **3.1.9 Minson Avenue / Avon River Foreshore Plan (Hames Sharley, 2005)**

Minson Avenue is located along the western boundary of the study area, running approximately parallel to Fitzgerald Street. The *Minson Avenue / Avon River Foreshore Plan* covered the area of land spanning between Minson Avenue and the Avon River. The plan contained suggestions for both functional and aesthetic improvements for the foreshore and a number of these have been implemented. A copy of the *Foreshore Plan* is shown in **Figure 3.2**. The foreshore is predominately used for recreational purposes. Existing facilities include the senior playground, junior playground, a performance area / stage, BBQ and gazebo, and a pedestrian bridge over the Avon River (linking to Broome Terrace on the western bank of the river). The White Swan enclosure, open grassed areas, and numerous pathways along the foreshore would also attract people to this area for both passive and active recreational activities. The Northam Visitors Centre is located in this area and would attract tourists to the site. Aesthetic improvements will encourage more people to visit the foreshore area on a day-to-day basis which is expected to increase the demand for parking along Minson Avenue. One-off events, for example a community event held at the foreshore, are expected to represent the peak demand periods for parking in this area. In regards to parking facilities, the Foreshore Plan typically suggested off-street car parking to be provided (including for caravans, buses, and trailers) to the west of Minson Avenue, and for the properties with a frontage to Fitzgerald Street (access and parking from Minson Avenue) to 'tidy-up' the parking they provided with inclusion of landscaping and ACROD parking bays. The former of these suggestions has been implemented, with in the order of 186 car parking bays provided to the west of Minson Avenue (106 bays within off-street parking areas, and 80 bays as 90 degree on-street parking along the southern end of Minson Avenue). A dedicated off-street tour coach, caravan, and bus parking area has also been established. Suggestions for improvements to the parking east of Minson Avenue have partly been achieved and it is expected that this will continue to improve over time as land owners redevelop their sites. The contrast in parking quality to the east of Minson Avenue is highlighted in **Figure 3.3**.



**Figure 3.3: A View of the Contrast in Car Parking Infrastructure Quality – East of Minson Avenue (north of Gordon Street) (NearMap 2010)**



## **3.2 Concurrent Studies**

### **3.2.1 Minson Avenue Design Guidelines**

Historically, commercial properties have developed with a shop frontage to Fitzgerald Street with little or no access / facade to Minson Avenue. Several properties have been redeveloped and a number of landowners have inquired about redevelopment and overall guidance has been requested.

The outcomes of the *Minson Avenue Design Guidelines* study are to identify development options for landholdings with dual road frontage onto Minson Avenue, and to provide guidelines for future development within the study area including car parking requirements and assessment of current areas, options for mixed use (residential and commercial) development facades onto Minson Avenue, pedestrian movement and permeability and potential road widening for Minson Avenue to provide additional parking areas and possible development incentives for landowners.

The Car Parking Strategy is intended to recognise the significance of future urban design opportunities within the Town Centre and specifically within the Minson Avenue corridor in order to maximise accessibility outcomes for all users and sustainable integration of existing and future car parking infrastructure into these outcomes.

### **3.2.2 Laneway Review**

Within the Northam Townsite a number of laneways exist that provide primarily vehicle access to numerous properties which front onto them. The laneways are in a variety of tenureship, and the outcomes of this study are to identify the tenureship of all laneways within Northam Townsite, assess the condition and functionality of the laneways, and recommend an action for the laneways (change in tenures, upgrading / widening options, and/or closure).

As indicated earlier in the study, the existing street block layout within the Town Centre has resulted in limited 'formal' access opportunities between Minson Avenue and Wellington Street via Fitzgerald Street, largely due to the street block spacing of approximately 250 to 300 metres. While some connections between street blocks do exist, mainly in the form of informal private and public connections, maximising these connection opportunities is critical to the future planning of a highly accessible and legible car parking infrastructure arrangement.

### **3.2.3 Land Rationalisation Strategy**

The former Town of Northam previously identified existing freehold and Reserve Land within the Northam Townsite and recommended action on a number of land parcels. This review was undertaken a number of years ago and is now out of date. The purpose of the *Land Rationalisation Strategy* is to identify all land owned freehold by the Shire of Northam, identify all Crown land under the management of the Shire of Northam, review the previous work undertaken, recommend action for each freehold and Crown land under management orders, and recommend any changes in zoning or tenures for both freehold and crown land.

### **3.2.4 Northam Development Plan**

The *Northam Development Plan* is a long term, strategic planning framework that outlines the key opportunities and constraints impacting upon the Northam Townsite as well as the main priorities and objectives for the future. The latter have been identified through planning analysis and stakeholder consultation.

The objective of the *Northam Development Plan* is to provide direction for the sustainable growth of the Northam townsite to 2020 and beyond. The Plan will act as a guiding document for the Shire in prioritising key activities over the next 15 to 20 years. It will also assist the Shire in seeking funding for development and infrastructure to achieve these goals.

## **3.3 Technical Reports**

The following documents have been reviewed and summarised in relation to car parking best practice.

### **3.3.1 Parking Management Best Practices (Litman 2006)**

*Parking Management Best Practices* presents the general principles that can be used to guide the planning of a parking management scheme, and provides numerous case studies in support of these. The ten general principles identified and considered in the preparation of this car parking strategy are:

- **Consumer Choice:** People should have a variety of parking and travel options from which to choose.
- **User Information:** Motorists should have information on their parking and travel options.
- **Sharing:** Parking facilities should serve multiple users and destinations.

- **Flexibility:** Parking plans should accommodate uncertainty and change.
- **Efficient Utilisation:** Parking facilities should be sized and managed so spaces are frequently occupied.
- **Prioritisation:** The most desirable spaces should be managed to favour higher priority users (those with a high turnover, such as short term visitors).
- **Pricing:** As much as possible, users should pay directly for the parking facilities they use.
- **Peak Management:** Special efforts should be made to deal with peak demand.
- **Quality versus Quantity:** Parking facility quality should be considered as important as quantity, including convenience, comfort, aesthetics, and security.
- **Comprehensive Analysis:** All significant costs and benefits should be considered in parking planning.

## 4 4 CONSULTATION

### 4.1 *Shire of Northam*

Detailed consultation and liaison with the Shire of Northam staff and other external consultants was undertaken and yielded a significant amount of detail and background information with regard to forward planning of the Town Centre, issues in relation to the provision of parking, and future urban development opportunities. These key issues include the following:

#### *The Northam Townsite*

- Northam is the largest centre in the Wheatbelt with a very wide and extended catchment area;
- The Shire as a whole is experiencing growth with the Town itself having had a population of 7,000 people 20 years ago. The population then decreased to approximately 5,000 residents but has recently increased to 7,000 people and is still on the rise. This residential population cohort consists of a broad demographic mix. Based upon information obtained from the Shire, the typical employment cohort consists of approximately 1,500 who commute into and out of the Town Centre on a typical weekday.
- Planning within the Northam Town Centre has had a limited strategic focus in the past. Development has generally been of an ad-hoc nature and associated changes to movement network patterns, including the demand for car parking in the area, have occurred largely due to the realignment of the existing railway line.
- The primary mode of transport into the Town Centre is the private motor vehicle.

#### *Public Transport*

- No local bus service is in place.
- The only existing public transport service consists of the TransWA regional bus service and the Avon Link rail service to and from the East Perth Railway Station.
- The Northam Airport does not currently cater for commercial service.
- The Shire of Northam is currently lobbying to secure a direct rail service into the Perth CBD.

#### *Existing Views on Parking*

- Fitzgerald Street is generally okay for short term on-street car parking to service the existing retail/service sector but the existing on-street infrastructure is unlikely to be able to service the anticipated long-term or commuter car parking demands into the future.
- How can current modern technology assist the transport task, particularly in the form of parking guidance systems?

- There is a perception of limited public car parking infrastructure in the Town Centre , with a resultant perceived high parking demand but low supply. It is acknowledged, however, that the existing public car parking could be managed and used more efficiently. A potential future vision was for parking to occur in the realm of the Minson Avenue frontage (both on- and off-street) and for patrons to access retail and service uses on Fitzgerald Street via formalised connections. However, this is not generally common practice under existing conditions, in due part to the legibility issues, and hence, this parking supply is underutilised.
- Drainage issues have impacted on car parking supply (eg clay soils, runoff, and unsuitable topography).

#### *Car Parking Trust*

- The Car Parking Trust is an established Shire reserve fund into which cash-in-lieu payments are made;
- The Shire has not yet established a protocol how to dedicate these funds; and
- The Trust currently has received payment from Woolworths as its first payment (as part of their upgrade works).

#### *Specific Sites and Developments*

- Discount department store chain Target is actively looking for a new site with the intent to establish a full size Target to replace the existing Target Country store on Fitzgerald Street.
- The Old Hospital site (approximately 20,000m<sup>2</sup>) is a key site for future urban development.
- Bus parking and pick up/drop off parent parking issues on Wellington Street associated with the St Josephs Senior School as part of discussions with St Joseph's administration.
- Woolworths is nearing finalisation of an upgrading project.
- Coles has indicated that a redevelopment of its existing store is currently being considered.
- IGA is considering the viability of establishing a store in Northam townsite.
- The proposed immigration detention centre is expected to result in an increase in the employment population of 300 to 400 new workers to the town.

#### *General Sites and Developments*

- Extended trading hours have recently begun in the Shire and the effects upon car parking in the town centre are yet to be seen.
- A need has been identified to relocated and centralise government agencies in a location or 'hub' off the main street, in order to open up further opportunities for additional retail uses along Fitzgerald Street.
- Consolidation of land use functions has been identified as a critical issue.

### *Outcomes of Car Parking Strategy*

- Structure the car parking strategy into targeted guiding principles, objectives and guidelines and identify key levers, mechanisms, opportunities and partnership opportunities to facilitate planning and implementation of the parking development framework.
- Be consistent with the intent and directions of the *Minson Avenue Design Guidelines Study*.
- Be robust enough to take into account the potential impacts of the redevelopment of the Old Hospital Site.

## **4.2 Retail and Commercial Developments**

The retail and commercial developments within the Northam Town Centre attract visitors and customers from a broader local and regional catchment resulting in a high demand for car parking. The trading hours primarily associated with the retail uses are the most influential determinant on peak parking demand. The standard trading hours of several of the major retail anchors and uses within the study area are indicated in **Table 4.1**.

**Table 4.1: Trading Hours for Major Retail Tenancies**

<b>Store</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thur</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>Sun</b>
Woolworths	8am-9pm	8am-9pm	8am-9pm	8am-9pm	8am-9pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm
Coles	8am-9pm	8am-9pm	8am-9pm	8am-9pm	8am-9pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm
Target Country	9am- 5.30pm	9am- 5.30pm	9am- 5.30pm	9am-7pm	9am- 5.30pm	9am-4pm	Closed

## **5 FUTURE GROWTH SCENARIOS**

### ***5.1 Population growth***

Indicative population forecasts for the Shire predict approximately 26 percent growth in the next 20 years. This forecast equates to an approximate increase of 2,860 people across the Shire, or approximately 1,820 people within the Town Northam alone. It should be noted that this population forecast does not take into account the potential growth associated with the proposed siting of an immigration detention centre within the Shire. Hames Sharley have extrapolated recent census data for the Shire and its hinterland having a total population of 21,519 and if the current average annual growth rate (AAGR) of 4.05 percent was maintained the population could reach 50,000 by 2030. A more modest AAGR of 2.8 to 2.9 percent however, has been adopted in the *Northam Development Plan*.

This anticipated growth will therefore have a resultant impact on increase for infrastructure, including an increase in demand on car parking infrastructure as Northam consolidates itself as the Regional Centre of the Wheatbelt.

### ***5.2 Northam Railway Station Precinct***

The existing rail service servicing Northam consists of the Avon Link service between the East Perth Railway Station via Midland Railway Station and the Northam Railway Station located at the northern apex of the study area with a travel time of approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes. It operates twice daily on each weekday (Monday to Friday) between Midland, Toodyay and Northam. Passengers arriving at Midland are able to connect with Perth's electrified suburban rail services. This service is currently underutilised with maximum patronage demand at 26 percent of capacity so it can be concluded that there is significant room for growth in the use of this service as the population increases in the study area.

The potential redevelopment of the existing railway station precinct could consist of a gateway or 'activity node' into the Town Centre for future office and commercial development and function as a key service/commercial area to accommodate the relocation of existing service and commercial uses. This gateway could also become an attractor for tourist and visitors to the town. This could then result in opportunities to enhance retail and tourism opportunities within the Town Centre to the south resulting in a larger and more varied range of retail tenancies within the Fitzgerald Street precinct.

It should also be noted that the existing adjacent pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and associated connective network may require significant future investment as part of any future upgrades to the railway precinct in order to promote a wider range of sustainable transport modes. On train bicycle storage could also be an important attractor for users who may need a form of transport once the train journey is complete. Landscaping and an upgraded railway station could also assist in promoting greater railway patronage into the Town Centre. Figure 4.1 shows the eastern facade and entry of the Northam Railway Station and associated car park. Existing car parking infrastructure at the railway station consists mainly of surface car parking bays arranged as angle car parking at the front of the

entrance, used mainly for pick-up and drop-off purposes, with additional car parking located to the north of the station building.

**Figure 4.1: Railway Station Car Park**



### ***5.3 Northam Central Shopping Centre AND Revitalisation of Northam Town centre***

The Northam Central Shopping Centre is anticipated to be significantly upgraded within the short-term (1 to 3 years) and will likely result in additional demand for public car parking bays, both on- and offsite .

As noted in the Town’s latest *Plan for the Future 2010-2020*, the revitalisation of the Northam Town Centre could be facilitated by the establishment of the Northam Redevelopment Authority in collaboration with State Government agencies, including Public Transport Authority and LandCorp, to oversee improvements in the area which may include, but not be limited to, the refurbishment of the existing Northam Railway Station, the upgrade of existing and implementation of additional safe railway crossings, introduction of enhanced urban design initiatives, including an upgrade of Minson Avenue and improvements to existing east-west public connectivity and accessibility between Minson Avenue and Wellington Street via Fitzgerald Street and the transformation of Newcastle Street and Peel Terrace into a safe and attractive boulevard.

These improvements within the Town Centre will promote the attractiveness and accessibility of the Town Centre as a more attractive place to visit and would result in enhanced economic development resulting in a commensurate impact on car parking demand and associated infrastructure.

An increase in the existing diversity in housing choice within the Town Centre could also be accommodated through a combination of additional mixed-use development and higher residential densities but these proposals would have to be carefully accommodated through a balance between activation and passive surveillance and potential segregation of existing retail and commercial land uses in order to dilute the concentration of these uses. Figures 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate a cross-section of retail uses along the existing Fitzgerald Street and the Town Centre Mall, respectively.

**Figure 4.2: Fitzgerald Street Retail Uses**



**Figure 4.3: Town Centre Mall**



## **5.4 Northam Surrounds**

According to the *Local Planning Strategy* (2000), a potential has been identified within the Shire to accommodate in excess of 1,500 additional residential lots with a further 248 Rural Residential allotments. If we base this excess in capacity on a population of 6,500, current as of 2000, and apply an average household size of 2.45 people, then the majority, if not all, of this capacity has already been taken up by the extra people currently living in the Shire.

While detailed analysis of residential land demand and supply in Northam is outside the scope of this study, it can be reasonably predicted that additional capacity to accommodate an increase in residential population within the Shire could be accommodated through infill development in or near the Town Centre. The potential for the application of reciprocal parking arrangement between residential and commercial uses will therefore need to be reviewed as part of the assessment and development of future Local Structure Plans and Development Applications.

## **5.5 IMMIGRATION Detention Centre**

The Commonwealth Government announced in 2010 that an immigration detention centre is proposed to be constructed adjoining to the Northam military base within the Shire to house 600 single male detainees. The centre is expected to be serviced by up to 400 support staff. This additional employment cohort is expected to have a significant impact on the demand for local services and associated car parking infrastructure.

The facility at Northam is planned to be progressively made operational, with the first stage originally scheduled to be ready around the end of November 2011. It is understood that the detention centre is currently being built but significant work will need to be undertaken to cater for the increase in population, including consideration of additional local school capacity with the facility intended as a medium- to long-term facility should a proportion of the work staff and their families relocate to the Northam locality.

There are positive financial and social benefits arising from the location of detention facilities in communities. These benefits include economic boosts, increased employment opportunities, contracting and tender opportunities, departmental and detention service provider staff joining local sporting and cultural groups. In addition, staff will be spending their wages with local businesses, which gives an economic boost to the town and, as noted above, have a resultant increase in demand for local movement network infrastructure, including car parking should they not be a drive in drive out workforce.

## ***5.6 Chain Store Supermarkets AND Discount Department Stores***

In addition to general urban design and landscaping improvements programmed for the Town Centre there are significant private landholdings which present significant redevelopment potential. The two largest supermarket retailers in Australia, Coles and Woolworths, have recently developed a program to improve and update their stores. Both stores are currently approximately 3,000m<sup>2</sup> nla in size. This represents a recognised series of contemporary changes to behaviour in the retail sector and the need for the large supermarket chains to cater for this new market.

As part of the store upgrades, there are likely opportunities to enhance and upgrade the existing operations and utilisation of both the on- and off-street car parking infrastructure associated with these retail uses and review opportunities for improved pedestrian and cycling links throughout the Town Centre as well as improved reciprocal use of car parking infrastructure. Coles has also indicated a desire to cater for Main Street or urban-format stores with upper floor car parking and zero front setbacks. In engaging with the developers of these uses, the economic viability of this design should be investigated.

The existing Target Country discount department store is currently located with zero setback to Fitzgerald Street and it is understood that Target are seriously considering upgrading to a standard Target format store with up to 4,000m<sup>2</sup> of floor space, representing an increase of 2,500m<sup>2</sup> (167%) over the existing store footprint. In addition, the IGA supermarket chain has been investigating sites within the Town Centre for a 1,500m<sup>2</sup> format store. Under current Town Planning Scheme requirements, this potential increase of an additional 4,000m<sup>2</sup> in floor space would require a 200 more car parking bays. The redevelopment of Target Country and potential construction of an IGA has resulted in an additional trigger for the Shire to review the existing demands for car parking within the Town Centre and to investigate how these future retail opportunities can be balanced against reciprocal parking arrangements and other modes of transport to ensure the Town benefits from these potential development proposals. Figures 4.4 and 4.5 illustrate the existing Woolworths surface car park at the rear of Fitzgerald Street (via Elizabeth Place and fronting onto Wellington Street) and the existing Red Rooster and Coles developments, respectively.

**Figure 4.4: Woolworths Car Park**



**Figure 4.5: Red Rooster and Coles at Rear**



The *Northam Development Plan* (NDP) provides an insight into the potential for a full Discount Department Store (DDS) to be located somewhere in the Town. As noted above, the expansion of retail opportunities to include this anchor has the potential to have a significant impact on both car parking demand and provision and the pattern of development within then Town Centre and needs to be carefully considered in both a planning and infrastructure provision context.

Through analysis of population figures, average incomes and the location and size of the current Target country stores (at 1,142m<sup>2</sup>), the NDP notes that the current Target Country store could be expanded and approximately 13,000m<sup>2</sup> of total retail floor space could be accommodated with a population of 50,000 by 2030 (this includes expansion of both Coles and Woolworths, as well as a new IGA). There may also be potential for a Bunnings Warehouse-format store to enter the market. Further work to be undertaken as part of the NDP will examine the following future retail scenarios (taken from the NDP):

- *“Bunnings goes where Coles currently is, Coles goes to old hospital site and Target increases to 4,000 sqm (Country Target);*
- *Bunnings goes out of town in the light industrial area;*
- *Coles and Target go to the old hospital site;*
- *A new IGA and ancillary retail say cafe/catering is introduced on the old hospital site and office plus short stay accommodation is developed as a precinct. Target expands on current site; and*
- *Coles stays where it is and Bunnings located out of town in light industrial area.”*

## **5.7 Centralised Government Agencies**

The Shire has 24 Government agencies located within its environs which have been dispersed across the existing Town Centre in a mostly organic ad hoc arrangement. This includes the Department of Family and Children’s Services at the southern end of the Town Centre and the Department of Health Regional Offices near the intersection with Grey Street.

The Shire aspires to establish a centralised State and Commonwealth office node away from the existing Fitzgerald Street retail corridor which would assist with managing traffic and parking

demands during typical weekday business hours and as a consequence, realise additional car parking capacity currently used for long term parking which could be used to accommodate short-term car parking demand associated with these retail activities. This would also have the added benefit of increased weekend and weekday after-hours activity being consolidated within a more defined retail and entertainment precinct. Figure 4.6 shows existing informal commuter or long-term car parking arrangements currently in place within the Town Centre.

**Figure 4.6: Informal Long Term Car Parking**



## ***5.8 Old Hospital Site***

The Old Hospital site is a significant landmark site, both in terms of its proximity to the Town Centre as well as its overall size. It will be essential that a detailed Structure or Master Plan be prepared for this land parcel to ensure that future activities and development on the site in the context of linkages to the Town Centre are managed and coordinated. This plan would typically include consideration of the provision of car parking, including the impacts on local public infrastructure, identification of opportunities to apply reciprocal car parking standards and to integrate and plan for cohesive connections for cyclists, pedestrians, and the existing railway station and to Fitzgerald Street. Figure 4.7 illustrates the location of the site. A lease agreement could also be reached in the interim to facilitate employee parking (Tenant Long Stay) bays. Such an agreement could facilitate the shift of employee parking further to the periphery of the Town Centre enabling for parking spaces closer to Fitzgerald Street to be utilised by value add commuters such as shoppers.

**Figure 4.7: Old Hospital Site**



## ***5.9 Train and Bus Linkages to Perth***

As indicated earlier in this study, the Shire is lobbying the State Government and various stakeholders to establish a direct rail link to the Perth CBD with the focus on improving travel times to capitalise on the opportunities associated with local residents commuting into and out of Perth for work purposes. This proposal is similar to the existing catchment in the Mandurah area commuting to Perth and would have an impact on the demand for long-term commuter parking at the northern end of the study area in the vicinity of the railway station. It is also recognised that the existing local employment cohort within the Town Centre consists of approximately 1,500 people who travel by vast majority via private motor vehicle into and out of the Town Centre and its immediate environs on a typical weekday. Based upon this information, it should be recognised that there are significant opportunities to enhance access into and out of the Town Centre as well as planning for short-, medium- and long-term commuter car parking demands.

## ***5.10 Summary of future Scenarios and Issues***

In summary, the following critical issues have been identified as having the potential to significantly impact on both future urban development and infrastructure planning scenarios, how the Town will develop over time and therefore a key influencing factor in future car parking demand and integrated transport outcomes:

- Ongoing growth as the Regional Centre of the Wheatbelt;
- Residential and population growth and mixed-use development in the Town Centre;
- The future impacts of the proposed immigration detention centre;

- Relocation and co-location/clustering of existing State and Commonwealth Government agencies and services resulting in increased opportunities to enhance retail choice along the Fitzgerald Street frontage;
- Redevelopment of the major core retailers within the Town Centre and synergies with smaller retail tenancies and operators as both a critical issue and opportunity as the big retailers are anchor tenants and the potential to realise cash-in-lieu revenue through the Car Parking Trust arrangement;
- The redevelopment of the Old Hospital Site and potential for retail fragmentation;
- Redevelopment of the railway station precinct and upgrade of existing service to the Perth CBD with linkages to the Town Centre and demand for additional future long term commuter car parking and bicycle facilities; and
- Impact of general economic conditions and future employment in the Shire.

## **6 ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND FUTURE INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

### ***6.1 Road Infrastructure***

The primary connection associated with the existing road infrastructure into the Northam Town Centre is located at the northern end of the study area via Peel Terrace and Great Eastern Highway to Fitzgerald Street. Limited crossings are currently in place across the Avon River with Minson Avenue serving as the western boundary of the study area.

Pedestrian and cycle links also play an important role and are not currently part of the formalised local infrastructure. The upgrades of existing pedestrian and cycling infrastructure will be addressed in more detail in the *Minson Avenue Design Guidelines Study* and would allow for enhanced access for these ‘green’ modes of transport into the Town Centre from the north and west. With this infrastructure in place, the medium – to long-term location of car parking facilities at the northern end of the study area or ‘gateway node’ potentially proposed in and around the environs of the Northam Railway Station would provide improved opportunities for future office and service uses in this location within the northern half of the study area. This would also result in typical commuter vehicular traffic demands to be concentrated in this area freeing up capacity further to the south along Fitzgerald Street to more easily manage the demands associated with the retail and entertainment uses located between Hawes and Gordon Streets. As noted earlier in this study, the existing street block spacing is such that direct pedestrian desire lines are difficult to accommodate due to the typical spacing ranging between 250 to 300 metres, with limited laneway (both formal and informal/private and public) connections between existing car parking infrastructure along the Minson Avenue corridor and Fitzgerald Street.

### ***6.2 Specialty Parking Considerations***

Specialty parking refers to that which provides for the requirements of specific user groups within the community. Parking which falls within this group includes ACROD, service/delivery/courier parking and loading zones, bus embayments and layover bays. Based upon observations of the existing parking arrangements within the study area of special purpose users, the following presents an overview of the capacity for the existing system to cater for specialty parking users.

#### **6.2.1 ACROD Parking**

According to data provided from the Shire of Northam, there are currently twelve (12) off-street ACROD parking bays available within in the Northam Town Centre, out of approximately 1,900 on- and off-street public and private car parking bays in the area. This constitutes a total of less than 1 percent of the total supply. Throughout Australia there is a recognised shortage of parking bays provided for people with disabilities and the number of people who use this parking is increasing steadily.

The Building Code of Australia sets down the minimum ratio of parking bays that must be provided for people with disabilities. A ratio of 1% of the total number of parking bays in a carpark with more

than 10 spaces was set in 1988. It was in 1988 that the Building Code also gave people with disabilities a right to access in their communities, including parking. This legislation has meant that the number of accessible buildings, facilities and carparks has increased and people who need a higher level of access are able to participate in their communities more.

Whilst increased participation in the community is highly desirable, it has placed pressure on the number of parking bays provided for people with disabilities. The Australian Building Codes Board (ABCB) review of the ratio of parking bays found that whilst 1% of parking is provided, the people who use it now represent 3% of the population. The difficulty now is how finding a way to implement an increase that will be affective for people with disabilities.

It is recommended that the current twelve (12) ACROD bays representing 0.63% of the total 1900 car parking bays be increased to at least thirty-eight (38) ACROD bays representing 2% of the total car parking bays provided within the town centre. It is further proposed that Parents with Pram parking be included within this 2% of total parking bays and that these shared purpose bays are utilised close to retail and commercial attractions such as food retail outlets, banks and health facilities. It is envisaged that Precinct 1 shall have at least 9 (currently has 2), Precinct 2 shall have at least 9 (currently has 1), Precinct 3 shall have at least 10 (currently has 5) and Precinct 4 shall have at least 10 ACROD bays (currently has 4).

### **6.2.2 Loading Zones**

Based upon the surveys undertaken by the Shire, the main parking concerns for small business in the Town Centre relates to non-compliant use of designated private off-street parking. One of the major concerns relating to this non-compliance is that allocated off-street bays are then not available for use by employees for pick-up/delivery purposes. It has been noted that there is little designated parking for loading activities on private sites and the use of off-street parking bays to fulfil this purpose is therefore often required as is the need to accommodate on-street loading activities for street-front retail tenancies.

Depending upon the location and the relevant needs of users, the potential exists to allocate additional special purpose bays for both service/delivery purposes and pick-up/drop-off of ACROD entitled patrons. This combined special purpose loading bay would maximise the efficiency of available parking while ensuring specialty users have access to functional and available parking.

There is potential to have one of these combined special purpose loading bay per street block along Fitzgerald Street.

### **6.2.3 Bus Parking and Rest Stops**

Under existing conditions, bus parking and rest stops are available within the Northam Railway Station area as well as along the Minson Avenue frontage within the eastern car park. The location of St. Joseph's Senior School and Northam Primary School on the eastern side of Wellington Street also necessitates the need to accommodate buses on-street. While generally these facilities can accommodate the demands associated with the level of existing activity and services in the area, as additional bus services and other charter services come on stream, additional layover facilities and embayment's will be required outside of the existing railway station and in the vicinity of the Minson Avenue and Fitzgerald Street/Wellington Street frontages. It should also be noted that increasing

demand for Park 'n' Ride parking bays may need to be accommodated at the location of these layover and embayment facilities if upgrades to the existing railway service come on-stream and should be considered as low-value car parking.

### ***6.3 Existing parking demand profile and review of car parking infrastructure***

The existing supply of on- and off-street car parking bays is in the order of 1,900 bays which includes typical car bays, motorcycle bays, ACROD bays and service/loading bays. This supply does include informal parking areas, such as that located on Wellington Street opposite the Northam Railway Station as well as private off-street car parking facilities for tenancies within the broader study area.

The Shire of Northam has provided existing demand information for the study area which has been disaggregated into 4 main precincts with Fitzgerald Street broadly forming the main artery through the centre of each precinct. Existing parking restrictions are in place and signed along the majority of the corridor limiting car parking duration to 1 hour between the periods of 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. These precincts have been described below:

- Precinct 1- Peel Terrace to Hawes Street
- Precinct 2 – Hawes Street to Grey Street
- Precinct 3 – Grey Street to Gordon Street
- Precinct 4 – Gordon Street to Gairdner Street

Generally speaking, existing car parking supply has been observed in excess of existing demand within each precinct as a whole but it should be noted that within each precinct, the following key observations were made:

- Precinct 1 – Generally low demand for existing car parking (<40% typically as a proportion of available capacity) at the northern end of the precinct but demand increases towards the southern end of the precinct which fringes on the existing service tenancies such as Centrelink and the northern end of the retail corridor along Fitzgerald Street.
- Precinct 2 – Demand for on- and off-street car parking generally below capacity in eastern half of precinct centring around the Wellington Street spine with demand for car parking (both on- and off-street) increasing substantially to an average of approximately 80 % along the Fitzgerald Street frontage and then decreasing again west of Fitzgerald Street towards Minson Avenue. On-street car parking along Minson Avenue has a high demand in this location (approximately 70 %).
- Precinct 3 – High demand for on-street parking on Fitzgerald Street with approximately 60% of on-street car parking utilised along Minson Avenue frontage. Approximately 85% of existing supply within the eastern half (along Wellington Street frontage) is realised which is mainly due to demand for car parking within the Woolworths car park and associated with St. Josephs Senior School.

- Precinct 4 – Approximately 60% of car parking supply within the western half of the precinct (including Fitzgerald Street on-street parking) utilised with high demand for off-street car parking at the eastern rear of Fitzgerald Street and along the Wellington Street frontage due to the location of major government tenancies and services in this area and the Courthouse.

Insert

map

here

## **6.4 Identified hotspots and issues**

Key hotspots within the study have been identified as the underutilisation of public car parking facilities along the Minson Avenue corridor (both on- and off-street), high demand in the vicinity of key services and agencies such as Centrelink within Precinct 2, high demand in the vicinity of high turnover uses such as the Post Office at the northern end of Precinct 4, high demand for long term/commuter car parking within Precincts 1 and 4 and generally high utilisation of on-street car parking bays along Fitzgerald Street in the retail corridor in Precincts 2 and 3 and low utilisations of on- and off-street car parking bays within close walking distance to Fitzgerald Street.

Other key issues relate to community awareness in relation to available public car parking supply, inconsistent signage, low quality of line marking, way finding and car parking management and control. These issues are addressed further in Section 7.

## **7 PARKING MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The current parking management system in the Northam Town Centre is deemed to be effective and is robust enough to manage parking demands under existing conditions; however, into the future, continuing urban development and infrastructure pressures within the centre will ultimately require a staged modification of parking management systems as well as the provision of additional parking infrastructure. The progressive application of a range of parking management measures, due to general land use intensification and urban in-fill in addition to the pressures associated with major activity generators and changes to the transport infrastructure in the area will result in both an increase in overall car parking demand as well as a commensurate reduction in parking availability due to construction on existing vacant land currently utilised for formal and informal parking.

### **7.1 *Parking Demand Management***

In order to develop an appropriate and robust car parking management system, infrastructure and policy levers could be used to influence parking behaviour by modifying parking demand in a given area. These levers and mechanisms could include the introduction or adjustment of the existing unpaid public parking system, implementation and/or improvement/streamlining of existing signage and line marking and guidance and/or implementation of expanded parking duration restrictions in the area. These parking management strategies can maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of given parking resources in the Town Centre area.

#### **7.1.1 Short-Term (0 to 5 Years)**

As urban development continues to occur, there will continue to be a sustained demand for short-stay (1 to 2-hour maximum) car parking for social, shopping and other purposes. With the transition to a greater supply of short-stay on-street parking, many existing long-stay and commuter users will tend to shift towards the off-street supply. Currently, this off-street public parking supply primarily consists of all day free-of-charge parking which caters for the requirements of this user cohort. However, there is a perceived opportunity cost for patrons parking for short time periods within an all-day zone which has the potential to impact the attractiveness of the Northam Town Centre as a destination for visitor and shopping-oriented trips. A transition towards uncapped, timed off-street parking in key 'hot spots' and high demand areas along the Fitzgerald Street corridor would assist in addressing this discrepancy while still providing higher-value car parking.

Due to the extensive distribution of car parking within the study area, with the number of small car parks and differing parking management regimes, it can be difficult to find appropriate car parking proximate to a particular destination. Increased visibility and legibility as well as improved signage and guidance would assist in way-finding and could distribute the demand more effectively and efficiently over the available parking supply.

The range of management and control regimes currently operating within the study area consists mainly of enforcing short-term car parking along the Fitzgerald Street corridor with a focus on on-street car parking in the vicinity of the existing retail strip. However, lack of resourcing at a Local Government level can potentially result in less than optimum use of available car parking resources. Consolidation of major privately-owned car parks, such as the Coles and Woolworths car parks, under the Shire’s auspices for management and control would ensure a more equitable use of parking infrastructure for all patrons in the area. Optimisation of the existing system is not feasible while control of parking systems at locations such as off-street within the key retail activity nodes and in the vicinity of key employment generators, such as near the Northam Railway Station and within Precincts 3 and 4 has not been undertaken in a consistent and effective manner.

While increased residential and mixed-use development and relocation/collocation and intensification of office and government tenancies within the study area are likely to increase the requirement for long-stay parking within the study area as a whole over the long term, the corresponding increase in retail and service industries will also increase the corresponding short-stay parking demand on-street either on Fitzgerald Street or within a short walking distance. In order to more effectively regulate the availability of the on-street supply, a transition away from a blanket 1-hour parking zone along Fitzgerald Street between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekdays and on Saturday mornings between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m. towards a graduated series of 15- 30- and 60-minute bays, particularly within Precincts 2 and 3, would assist in maximising turnover and retaining the current high levels of certainty for short stay business and social visitors.

Assessment of the location for different car parking types should be undertaken in accordance with the local land uses and associated likely customer/employee base. Short- stay shoppers are unlikely to walk more than 100 to 200m from their parking location to destination, while commuters will walk up to 500m. Research conducted by Smith and Butcher (1994) has concluded that the distance parking users are willing to walk depends primarily on the relative quality of their local environment. Table 7.1 describes the results of this research. This has important implications not only for the relevant distances from parking location to activity node, but also for the relative amenity of the pedestrian facilities along this route. For this reason, the provision of safe, secure and efficient pedestrian link can greatly increase the catchment area for a potential remote parking location and result in greater flexibility and opportunities in site selection. The table below presents gradation of maximum acceptable walking distance for level of service. ‘A’ being the best or ideal level of service, ‘B’ being a good level of service, ‘C’ being an average level of service and ‘D’ being below average but minimally acceptable level of service.

**Table 7.1: Maximum Acceptable Walking Distances from Parking**

LEVEL OF SERVICE	A	B	C	D
Climate controlled	300m	730m	1160m	1590m
Outdoor/Covered	150m	300m	460m	610m
Outdoor/Uncovered	120m	240m	370m	490m
Through Surface Lot	110m	210m	320m	430m

Inside Parking Facility	90m	180m	270m	370m
-------------------------	-----	------	------	------

Source: Smith and Butcher (1994)

Other key infrastructure initiatives which should be implemented within the short-term include improvement of existing on- and off-street public car parking facilities by way of upgrading existing signage and line marking and the implementation of way finding and information infrastructure to assist in better utilisation of existing car parking infrastructure. The existing Minson Avenue off-street car park should also be upgraded in the context of urban design initiatives and formalisation of private and public connections between Minson Avenue and Fitzgerald Street.

The application of the Car Parking Trust to any impending Woolworths redevelopment proposal should be formalised through Council approval and existing car parking policies and strategies should be modified to incorporate a formal process for the Shire to privately manage existing off-street private car parks within the study area.

Discussions with the PTA suggest that in the short term the level of public transport provision and infrastructure, including local bus routes and the existing Park 'n' Ride facility at the Northam Railway Station is unlikely to be upgraded in the short-term. Therefore, it is unrealistic to expect the mode share for public transport to shift significantly towards non-private car modes of transport under this scenario. Observations of the existing availability of both free informal and formal commuter parking in the vicinity of the existing railway station indicate that there is significant capacity during peak periods, within 400m walking distance; however, opportunities for car parking between 400 and 500m still exist. This corresponds to the Level of Service which this particular user (the commuter) is willing to accept, which is in contrast to visitors and shoppers to the major retail activity corridor along the central and southern end of Fitzgerald Street who expect much more proximate car parking facilities (usually less than 100m).

### **7.1.2 Transition Term (5 to 10 years)**

To ensure maximum return on investment in relation to car parking in the transition (5 to 10 year) period, the philosophy behind the location of long stay and commuter parking should be standardised through the application of a common management approach. Commuter parking should be located in close proximity to major access links and on the periphery of the Town Centre (at the northern or 'gateway' end proximate to the existing railway station) but still within approximately a 5 minute walk to major employment nodes. In order to accommodate these objectives, expansion and formalisation of existing surface car parking arrangements should be constructed within the Town Centre, with a focus at the northern end, to cater for future office and service development in order to accommodate for the demands associated with long stay and commuter parking requirements and potential expansion of the existing railway service to Perth. Another location which should be considered is at the south end of the study area east of Fitzgerald Street and potentially in the vicinity of and/or on the Old Hospital Site.

Discussions with the Shire regarding the redevelopment of the Old Hospital Site indicates that while there has been some indication that potentially a conference and/or function centre may be proposed for the site, the Shire's preferences would be likely more inclined towards governments offices and short stay accommodation development. It is anticipated that it is likely that due to the master planning required for the site is some time off and extensive consultation would be required, that this site might be suitable for an interim car park during the transition term until such time that more definitive development is proposed. In this case, further assessment of nearby locations should be undertaken to determine an alternative site that retains the inherent advantages of this option.

For any peripheral commuter parking solution to be effective, the management of the existing parking system must be modified due to the increased demand by visitors for short-term car parking in close proximity to desired services and facilities. Demand increases are likely across the spectrum, which will result in a greater requirement for on-street short-stay parking (between 15 and 60 minutes). To cater for this demand, on-street parking along Wellington Street within Precincts 2 and 3 should be limited to 2-hours during weekday periods extending from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with the 1-hour maximum duration maintained on Fitzgerald Street within Precincts 2 and 3, with the majority of bays to be converted to short stay bays (15 and 30 minutes). On-street car parking on Fitzgerald Street within Precincts 1 and 4 should be limited to 2-hours during typical weekday peak periods and on Saturday mornings, with on-street paid parking introduced into identified high traffic areas within Precincts 2 and 3. A consistent control and management regime, including the installation of parking occupancy sensors and other appropriate technologies, across the centralised precincts of the Shire would result in ensuring high-turnover parking is available close to retail and services.

The on-street unrestricted parking currently available on other streets, particularly along Minson Avenue should continue to be free of charge in order to spread existing car parking demands away from the Fitzgerald Street corridor to make better and efficient of existing infrastructure. On-street car parking in the vicinity of redeveloped major retail tenancies such as Woolworths, Target, Coles and IGA should also transition to short-stay (2-hour maximum) car parking in order to more effectively cater for efficient use of car parking infrastructure.

### **7.1.3 Long-Term (10 to 20 years)**

In the context of the long-term, the introduction of on-street and off-street paid parking in high demand locations would also assist in relocating longer stay parking demand to public and private off-street parking and generate capacity in and around short-stay high-activity generators. Parking fees for on-street parking should be set higher than the equivalent off-street parking to ensure continued availability for short-stay and high turnover users. The locations chosen for the initial stages of a paid parking implementation plan should be determined by assessing the usage characteristic of the existing on-street supply and the proximity of this supply to off-street parking facilities. This implies that on-street parking bays in the vicinity of Fitzgerald Street, Grey Street, Hawes Street and Gordon Street as well as along Wellington

Street between Hawes Street and Gordon Street, which have both a significant observed demand and relatively high capacity off-street car parking facilities nearby, would be prime locations for the introduction of a paid parking system.

In the long-term, opportunities for expansion of existing Park 'n' Ride at the Northam Railway Station exist, with the potential to expand the existing supply of long stay and commuter at the 'service and office gateway' node at the northern end of the study area. As part of this process, the Shire could, in conjunction with the PTA, initiate the construction of a pay-per-use long-stay/commuter multi-deck car parking structure which would have to consider pedestrian movements as a priority which in turn assist in increasing the distance commuters would be willing to walk. Any surplus commuter parking in the area could then be converted to higher value parking, i.e. unrestricted, timed paid parking during peak periods for visitors to the area as the area continues to redevelop to potentially introduce mixed-use and residential elements.

Appropriate and graduated pricing mechanisms should be put into place from on-street parking to central off-street parking to peripheral commuter parking will ensure that parking bays are available for those who require them, regardless of intended length of stay.

It is not likely nor be financially viable to convert existing public surface car parks within the Town Centre, particularly within Precincts 2 and 3, to multi-deck car parking structures not only due to constraints associated with existing site size, geometry and access, but also due to their lack of proximity to future major activity generators such as the existing hospital and railway station.

The Shire of Northam should explore strategic partnership and collaborative opportunities to expand the off-street car parking supply with entities such as any future Northam Redevelopment Authority, PTA, relevant State and Commonwealth departments and other major tenants. Revenue realised from paid parking should be considered as part of the Car Parking Trust Fund and thereby allocated to upgrading and managing public car parking within the Town Centre.

## **7.2 *Parking System Management***

While the public parking management approach seems to be operating well under existing conditions, both on-street and off-street under the current regulations, the same cannot be said for off-street private car parks. A survey of private car parks indicates that occupancy is, on the whole, fairly low in many locations, with small pockets of high demand which overwhelm existing supply. This is often due to dedicated tenant parking allocated for individual businesses in small numbers as part of a larger private car park with multiple businesses, such as the Northam Boulevard Shopping Centre. The insular attitude towards allocated bays leads to a false assessment of demand in the area. Increasing the flexibility of parking to accommodate the needs of prospective visitors as well as business owners will tend to improve efficiency and ensure a better result for all parties.

To guarantee that the available supply is equitably shared between all legitimate users, an effective parking compliance and control regime needs to be developed. This will be most successful when it is consistent across the whole of the Town Centre and is managed by the Shire directly. This management system would involve standardising and installing good quality signage and line marking for all car parks, including both public and private facilities, in addition to enforcing parking compliance within these car parks. The result of this would be a system where car parking management is more transparent, with better assurance for visitors and commuters that parking will be available. The increase in demand transparency will also allow for a greater awareness of parking shortfalls, not only within particular precincts, but within various short-stay zones with a range of parking restrictions. Monitoring of the parking demand characteristics will assist in the development of future planning modifications to address actual constraints in parking supply, rather than apparent ones.

The structure of the Shire parking compliance and control area will be dependent upon the management regime required. Given the size of the Northam Town Centre, it is feasible that all parking policy and management tasks remain under a single organisational structure.

## **7.3 *Specialty Parking Considerations***

### **7.3.1 *ACROD Parking***

Data collected from DPI indicates that there are currently in excess of 55,000 entitled ACROD permit holders in Western Australia and the demand for ACROD parking permits continues to increase at a rate of 8 to 10% per annum. A combination of increased mobility for people with disabilities and the ageing population suggests that this trend will continue in the future. This implies that additional ACROD bays may need to be established to ensure supply exists where appropriate, easily accessible in close proximity to intended destination.

Consideration should be made for additional on-street ACROD parking, both on- and off-street particularly in Precincts 2 and 3 and within Precinct 4 in the vicinity of the government agencies, Courthouse, Library and Post Office to ensure short-stay parking availability for people with disabilities, close to their intended destination. At each location, the likely visitor needs should be assessed to determine the type of ACROD bay best suited for purpose. On-street ACROD bays can be designed with standard, over-width and over-length dimensions depending upon geometry and adjacent street furniture and catering for users with different parking needs. Some increase in off-street ACROD parking may also be necessary with a target of 2% ACROD bays of the total complement of car parking. This would require an additional 5 to 8 spaces situated between the available car parks, ideally within the Visitor Centre and Library car parks and in the vicinity of the Courthouse. This would represent a reduction in capacity overall for these car parks which already have a high demand; however, the overall benefits to the community would outweigh the reduction in total capacity.

The provision of on-street pick-up/drop-off zones near the Library, Courthouse and Post Office as well as in proximity to the existing major retail tenancies in Precincts 2 and 3 could improve accessibility for ACROD eligible patrons.

### **7.3.2 Loading and Service/Delivery Parking**

Designated loading zones for service/delivery vehicles would improve the availability of car parking for these purposes while still minimising the requirements for business-only allocated bays currently utilised for loading/unloading purposes. Consultation with business representatives has identified a deficit in the existing supply of this type of specialty parking. While there are several off-street loading bays designated in the Town Centre, extended sections of street frontage do not have any availability for ensured loading/unloading. An increase in designated loading zones within the retail nexus in Precincts 2 and 3 would allow for service/delivery parking to small businesses in this area, while broadening the restrictions for current single-user parking bays allocated to these businesses.

It may be appropriate to provide shared parking bays for both loading and ACROD pick-up/drop-off with short (15-minute) time limits. This would maximise the functionality of specialty parking while minimising the impact on other short-stay parkers in the area.

### **7.3.3 Bicycle Parking and End-of-Trip Facilities**

Cycling accounts for at present 2 to 3 percent of all trips in the Perth Metropolitan Area. Western Australia State Governments have made a considerable investment of over \$70 million since the mid 1990's in the development of the Perth Bicycle Network (PBN). For example, Main Roads WA has built, adjacent to all the major freeways and significant roads that it is responsible for, cycle ways or dual use paths. A detailed Local Bicycle Plan is slated to be commissioned by the Shire of Northam in 2011 and will address details relating to network upgrades and associated infrastructure.

Growth in cycling is also driven by a variety of forces within our broader society, as well as features of bicycles and their users. The bicycle has the flexibility and convenience similar to the private motor vehicle and users can reach and depart destinations easily. This is via a direct route and as per their own schedule with users not dependent on others to get to and from their destination. The increased cost of operating private vehicles and the constraints at some destinations on motor vehicle parking encourages substitution of the car for bicycle. The population is becoming more health and environment conscious and sees the bicycle as a way that these interests can be practically achieved, especially as there is already significant opportunity to upgrade and enhance existing bicycling route infrastructure into and out of the Northam Town Centre for both recreational and commuter users, which will make bicycle use increasingly safer and more practical. There is increasing on-site provision of bicycle parking infrastructure for commuters, casual visitors and shoppers making it practical for users to 'park' their bicycle at or near their destination. The bicycle is cheap to acquire, operate and maintain.

A significant element of bicycle use is discretionary whereby users have a choice of the bicycle or ready access to other modes. However, for some users, the bicycle is the best and/or only mode that meets their transport needs and with only about 45% of the population not having ready access to a private vehicle; this makes the bicycle, for many, the only practical means of access and mobility.

For these reasons cycling in and around the Northam Town Centre is anticipated to increase, especially for trips less than five kilometres in length where cycling becomes competitive to the private vehicle in regards to total journey time. In particular, for trips under one kilometre, it will become a primary means of transport.

Bicycle parking in the area should be considered consistent with the guidelines put forward by Austroads and the Department of Transport. These guidelines provide information on the number and type of bicycle parking facilities to be installed in a given location, as suggested by the adjacent land uses.

Bicycle parking has two main impacts in the context of parking provision. Effective, secure and convenient bicycle parking can greatly increase the cycling mode share, reducing parking demand by commuters and visitors, particularly for local residents. When we consider that a number of the de facto commuter car parks are consistently full, particularly in Precincts 1 and 4, any transition in mode split away from private vehicles will have a resultant positive impact on parking demand. Secondly, improvement in bicycle parking and infrastructure promotes the use of cycling as part of a "trip chain" whereby cycling forms a leg of parking which incorporates other modes, including private vehicle use and public transport. Even for those persons who employ private vehicle and cycling modes, localised car parking pressures can be reduced due to parking outside of the immediate destination i.e. away from high demand areas. Figure 7.1 shows examples of suggested bicycle parking infrastructure.

**Figure 7.1: Bicycle Parking Infrastructure**



The Northam Town Centre is expected to have a significant increase in population in the short-to transition-term and will therefore have an increased catchment within an easy 5 km cycling distance and a significant population of some thousands within the Town Centre study area itself. This population growth combined with the greater intensity and diversity of development within and around the study area will increase demand for access and therefore parking. Some of this demand for access will be met by catering for bicycles, in particular by ensuring there is a supply of bicycle parking that meets the needs of the many different users within the Town Centre.

Therefore, cycling as a means of accessing and moving into, out of and within the Northam Town Centre, will over the next 5 to 10 years play an increasingly important role. In order to enable efficient and effective use of cycling as a mode of transport into and throughout the centre, connections must be maintained between critical activity nodes. In addition, connections from external cycling routes into the Shire itself and continuing into the Town Centre are required. Effective infrastructure and well-maintained and signed routes encourage the expansion of the cycling population and contributing towards a decreased demand for other types of road and parking infrastructure.

Cycling will meet commuter, shopper, future tourism demands and recreational transport and access demands in a way that is cheap and efficient for not only cycle users but also providers of transport services and parking. Bicycle users consume relatively little space and their parking needs can usually be met for relatively little cost, if planned for appropriately. Bicycle use also leads to reduced motor vehicle parking demand as increasing numbers of workers and visitors substitute the car for the bicycle. This reduces the need to provide significant qualities

of expensive land and to build expensive motor vehicle parking infrastructure. For this reason it is sensible for motor vehicle parking providers such as the PTA, local government and private owners/operators of commercial offices, retail premises and attractions to provide bicycle parking infrastructure.

Bicycle parking can be divided into two broad categories including the following:

- Long stay parkers, typically commuters or students; and
- Short stay parkers, typically shopper and recreational visitors.

These classes of users have different needs in regards to bicycle parking infrastructure.

An important factor in encouraging the use of the bicycle as a transport mode rather than merely a recreational activity is the provision of secure parking at the destination. Surveys and anecdotal information from cyclists, and especially commuters, demonstrate that the chief constraint on increase in cycling mode share is not the quality or safety of the route to and from a destination, but in fact the presence of safe and secure bicycle parking. This is the priority factor influencing the decision of whether to use a bicycle for transport or recreation.

For bicycles parked for long period of time the level of security afforded by the parking facilities needs to be greater. Security is best achieved by the implementation of cycle only parking within a secure location and access control which prevents casual uncontrolled access to the area. Ideally such area should also be monitored by CCTV or some form of access control that allows the identification of those who enter and leave the area. There are various measures ranging from a simple 'cage' with some form of lock or more sophisticated options like electronic access arrangement requiring the use of codes. The greater the level of identification of individuals users the greater the level of security of both users and their bicycles and related possessions

Cyclists who commute also need other practical facilities such as showers and change areas with provision for drying areas for towels and clothes, lockers to store cycling clothes, helmets and other particulars.

Like motor vehicle commuters, cycling parking for commuters does not have to be located 'close' to the final destination. Cycle commuters are prepared to put up with the 'inconvenience of security' in order to achieve a high standard of physical security of their bicycles and themselves. Usually commuter bicycle parking can be based on-site. The current Australian Standards on bicycle parking provides an overall guidance as to the quantum and various types of parking required. However there is now an emerging trend to incorporate some provision for secure bicycle parking within public car parks for commuters. For example, the City of Perth will provide approximately 50 secure cycle parking spaces in the new 1,050 car parking bay facility currently under construction in Elder Street. The Shire of Northam could investigate as part of its Local Bicycle Plan the best location to implement secure end-of-trip facility(ies) within the Town Centre which are likely to be in the vicinity of the railway station and at a

location midway between the centroids of Precincts 3 and 4 to serve the southern end of the study area.

In contrast to commuter cycling for work and education purposes, the casual cyclist's parking needs relate to typically short-stay trips such as shopping, medical and other trips. These users typically want proximity and convenience with a reasonable level of security provided by a simple lock that attaches the bicycle to a rail of some type. This is because the bicycle is going to be parked for a shorter period of time and the commensurate level of security required by the parking facilities is not as high.

Short stay bicycle parking is best located in areas adjacent to the entrance/exits of sites in areas with reasonable level of activity during the normal operating hours of the site. The current Australian Standards on bicycle parking provide a guidance as to the quantum needed and styles available for this type of parking.

### **7.3.4 Motorcycle and Scooter Parking**

Recently, the popularity of mopeds and scooters has increased, especially in urban areas, due to concerns regarding road congestion and advantages in costs of purchase and maintenance. While a review of travel statistics indicates that less than 1% of the average population utilises motorcycle or scooter transport, this represents a small but significant decrease in demand for parking spaces in the Town Centre. As development within the Northam Town Centre intensifies coupled with anticipated increases in petrol pricing over the long-term, it is anticipated that the mode share of these vehicles will continue to rise.

In order to support this trend, additional on-street motorcycle bays should be provided in popular areas of the Town Centre, particularly along the Fitzgerald Street retail corridor within Precincts 2 and 3, with price concessions considered for parking in formal off-street parking areas in the long-term and support for developments incorporating some quantum of motorcycle/scooter parking within their proposed designs. On-street parking situated in pavement areas should also consider the installation of a concrete hardstand to ensure sufficient stability for parked motorcycles.

## 7.4 Guiding Principles, Goals, and Outcomes

In order to effectively implement a Parking Management Strategy and associated framework, a set of primary guiding principles, goals and outcomes have been established to guide and direct the management and operation of public car parking in the Town Centre. These include the following:

### Guiding Principles:

1. Maintain an appropriate supply of affordable, secure, convenient and appealing shared public parking that is accessible to all segments of the community.
2. Enhance the attractiveness of the Northam Town Centre by utilising progressive urban design principles that support compact urban development, pedestrian legibility, safety, security and visual appeal.
3. Encourage and support sustainable economic development in the Town Centre by engaging the private sector in partnerships for the provision of strategically located public car parks.
4. Provide facilities and programs that support public transit, taxis, ride sharing, cycling and walking by demonstrating transport demand management principles through initiatives such as TravelSmart.
5. Operate as a financially self-sustaining parking enterprise in order to effectively deliver services that support good urban design, economic development and transport demand management.
6. Engage the community in consultation to support decision making and operate with transparency by regularly communicating with community stakeholders.

### Goals:

- To support the Northam Strategic Plan and associated vision for the central Town Centre area by minimising central commuter parking and encouraging higher density through the use of parking facilities that are well located and suited for purpose;
- To foster economic development by assisting the private sector in achieving the urban vision through strategic public investment in the provision of public parking facilities and services;
- To implement transport demand management by influencing commuter mode choice through parking supply management and pricing and the provision of alternative commuting options through the parking program; and
- Each component of the parking strategy should satisfy one or more of these goals in order to be of value in supporting the overall planning vision for the development of the Northam Town Centre.

## Outcomes:

### Short term 1-5 years

- Capped parking periods - 30 minute and 1 hour capped parking on Fitzgerald Street;
- Increased control through the provision of staff (Rangers/ Parking Inspectors) time for issuing of friendly warnings and later, parking tickets to overstayed users;
- On-street ACROD, and loading/pick-up/drop-off to reduce the dependence on off-street bays for specialty parking, the location of these bays should be derived by assessing visitor needs on a case by case basis to determine the type of ACROD bay best suited for purpose (Recommended that precinct 1 has 9, Precinct 2 has 9, Precinct 3 has 10 and Precinct 4 has 10 ACROD bays);
- Parking locations further away from Fitzgerald Street to be allowed for longer stay parking (2hrs); and
- Increased visibility and legibility as well as improved signage and guidance would assist in way-finding and could distribute the demand more effectively and efficiently over the available parking supply.

### Transition Term 5-10 years

- Designation of on-street short-stay paid parking in the Town Centre at strategic key high turnover locations and relevant timing restrictions ranging from 15-60 minutes in the long-term; and
- Upgrade of informal parking bays to include signage and line marking to create greater aesthetic appeal and sense of security within these parking areas and encouraging use of parking facilities toward Minson Avenue and Wellington Street.
- Strategic employee parking (Tenant Long-Stay) to be established toward the periphery of the town centre to free up spaces for value add users such as shoppers Utilisation of under-used parking areas for employee parking (e.g. Catholic Church on Wellington Street, Bernard Park on Minson Avenue, Train Station on Peel Terrace and the Old Hospital site on Wellington Street). All located toward the periphery yet still within 200-500 metres of employment nodes;

### Long Term 10+ years

- On-street parking priced higher than off-street to encourage off-street occupancy and increase turnover rate;
- Conversion of existing public off-street car parks to hourly paid parking in the Town Centre, uncapped but priced to ensure turnover and to encourage long-stay parking towards the periphery;
- Private parking restrictions to be decreased in order to remove artificial supply constraints and improving efficiency;
- Parking management and control for all significant 'private' car parks to be negotiated with the Shire of Northam;

- Off-street commuter and long-stay public car parking to be located on the periphery, near major access routes and either within a 150 to 400m pedestrian walking distance to the Town Centre businesses or in close proximity to a potential local bus system within the Town Centre;
- Long stay and commuter parking to be constructed in partnership with significant land owners and operators and be staged initially as surface car parking and then ultimately as a multi-deck facility(ies) in the vicinity of the Northam Railway Station, if required;
- Multi-deck structured to be located only where required for the purposes of high demand land uses such as the redevelopment of significant retail generators within the Town Centre and/or relocation of major tenants and government services, including the redevelopment/upgrade of the existing Old Hospital Site and tertiary education, where land constraints exist; otherwise, long stay and commuter car parking to be constructed at-grade surface at locations such as along the Minson Avenue corridor or at the northern end of the Fitzgerald Street, in proximity to the Northam Railway Station to allow for redevelopment in the future; and
- Relocate and centralise government agencies in a location or ‘hub’ off the main street, in order to open up further opportunities for additional retail uses along Fitzgerald Street.

## 8 PARKING STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

Based upon the primary guiding principles, goals and outcomes established in the assessment, a detailed and staged parking strategy framework has been developed which addresses system management, infrastructure, finance and green transport opportunities associated with the planning, provision and management of public car parking in the Northam Town Centre.

SYSTEM MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES		SHORT TERM	TRANSITION TERM	LONG TERM	
1.	Approve Guiding Principles	APPROVE	ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION		
2.	Review Existing Car Parking Trends & Identify Capacity/Supply Constraints		IMPLEMENT		
3.	Increase On- and Off-Street ACROD Parking		IMPLEMENT		
4.	New On-Street Loading Zones	IMPLEMENT			
5.	Upgrade Existing Line Marking/Signage/Way Finding	APPROVE	ONGOING IMPLEMENTATION		
6.	Efficiency Plan to Reduce Tenant-Only Parking		IMPLEMENT		
7.	Develop Agreements with Private Landowners for Parking Management by DoP/Local Government			IMPLEMENT	
8.	Standardise On-Street Parking System inTown Centre	IMPLEMENT			
9.	Identify Priority On-Street Car Parking Areas		IMPLEMENT		
10.	Transition Implement Parking Management Zones			IMPLEMENT	
11.	Modify Town Planing Scheme to Incorporate Concessional Parking Standards as Part of Car Parking Trust Application		IMPLEMENT		

INFRASTRUCTURE OPPORTUNITIES		SHORT TERM			TRANSITION TERM			LONG TERM		
1.	Identify and Plan Major Off-Street Car Parking Locations							PLAN	CONSTRUCT	
2.	Evaluate Demand for Public Agency/Office/Service Node at Northern Gateway/Railway Precinct and		EVALUATE	PLAN	CONSTRUCT					
3.	Expand Existing Facilities where Required to Accommodate Demand Generated by Additional Development at Key Nodes					PLAN		CONSTRUCT		
4.	Identify and Implement Road System Upgrades		PLAN	CONSTRUCT						
5.	Identify Sites for Long Stay Car Parking at Southern Gateway								PLAN	

FINANCE OPPORTUNITIES		SHORT TERM			TRANSITION TERM			LONG TERM		
1.	Approve and Apply Car Parking Trust	IMPLEMENT								
2.	Cash-In-Lieu Policy for University/Health Campus/Major Activity Areas									
3.	Phase In Charging for On-Street Parking (City Centre)					PLAN & REVIEW		SURPLUS REVENUE TO PARKING FUND		
4.	Acquisition of Land/Negotiate with PTA & Other Partners					NEGOTIATE			IMPLEMENT	
5.	Establish Parking Charging Policy									
6.	Establish Revenue Collection Framework									
		10% p.a. Tenant Rate Increase / 25% Timed Parking Rate Increase every 5 years								

GREEN TRANSPORT OPPORTUNITIES		SHORT TERM			TRANSITION TERM			LONG TERM			
1.	Establish strategic partnership with PTA, NRA & Other Partners				IMPLEMENT						
2.	Link Parking Strategy to Implementation of Green Transport Upgrades (Cycling & Walking)				IMPLEMENT						
3.	Implement Dedicated Motorcycle/Scooter/Small Car Bays		IMPLEMENT		EVALUATE / IMPLEMENT						
4.	Provide Dedicated Public Bicycle Parking / End-of-Trip Facilities				IMPLEMENT			EVALUATE / IMPLEMENT			
5.	Investigate Upgrades to Existing Railway Service & Feasibility of Local Bus Service				EVALUATE					IMPLEMENT	

## 9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

### 9.1 *General Implications*

The infrastructure, land and opportunity costs associated with parking facilities can result in a complicated set of influences. The major factors associated with determining the type of facility relate to the nature of the parking demand and the type of users which will determine the potential return on investment.

The most cost efficient way of providing car parking is through the construction of surface car parking which can range in cost from \$2,200 to \$4,500 per bay for construction and \$50 to \$100 per bay per year for ongoing maintenance. The typical life cycle for a surface car park is 15 to 20 years. In contrast, a multi-deck car parking facility can range in cost from \$20,000 to \$30,000 per bay, notwithstanding land costs, plus ongoing maintenance on an annualized basis. The cost differential for a multi-deck car parking structure is based upon whether it operates as a standalone facility or is integrated into a development as well as the proposed number of levels and the amount of fire detection and security involved.

### 9.2 *Car Parking Trust Fund*

A number of financing mechanisms exist to fund car parking infrastructure. For example, as a development incentive as well as a primary source of funds from the private sector (i.e., public-private partnerships), the Shire currently has mechanisms in place to accept cash-in-lieu payments for car parking as part of the land development process. This mechanism would encourage a higher density compact development as envisioned in both the Shire's *Northam Development Plan* and associated visions and strategies. This policy would also facilitate developments which, due to a number of financial, physical and urban design constraints, cannot provide sufficient self-contained parking at a reasonable cost or if all. This mechanism could also encourage the creation of strategically located public parking facilities which could be efficiently shared by a range of users in a cost effective manner and would discourage the proliferation of smaller and inefficient parking facilities.

Factors to be addressed by staff and Council in considering entering into a cash-in-lieu arrangement includes, but are not limited to the following:

- Consistency with the objectives of Town Planning Scheme, and the Northam Development Plan and associated visions and policies;
- Requirements/concerns of commenting agencies;
- Consistency with the objectives of the Parking Strategy;
- Whether there is an identified local government interest in providing public parking facilities in the immediate area;
- The timing for the delivery of the public parking facilities and the adequacy of alternatives to on-site parking until public parking facilities is [sic] delivered;
- Whether the on-site parking deficiency would result in a hardship for the site or surrounding area;

- Ability of the site to accommodate the proposed development, based on the available supply of parking; and
- The number of spaces proposed to be considered for payment-in-lieu

It is important to note that the success of cash-in-lieu parking arrangements can be substantially compromised if the Shire approves parking concessions in order to relieve owners from any obligation to provide car parking according to the zoning requirements, which would then relieve them of the need to provide cash-in-lieu. Concessions should only be approved where the applicant can clearly demonstrate that the parking requirement is excessive and not simply as a mechanism to allow applicants to proceed because they are unable to provide what is deemed to be an appropriate amount of parking.

The consideration of maximum parking caps would modify the requirements of cash-in-lieu. A development which is deemed to generate a parking demand in excess of the allowable parking under the maximum precinct number would be required, therefore, to contribute the full amount towards investment in supply for the equivalent excess demand. The establishment of a maximum parking cap also provides additional flexibility in terms of plot ratios and offset requirements with parking provided more efficiently and effectively off-site allowing a more favourable use of land for developments.

Should the Shire approve a concession because it is technically justifiable, the applicant should still have the ability to use the cash-in-lieu program to further reduce the amount of parking required on-site.

The cash-in-lieu amount should be set at a discount to the actual cost of providing the parking to:

- Provide a financial incentive for developers to contribute to the creation of strategically located public parking facilities;
- Recognise that the Shire will be able to recover some of the costs through user fees;
- Recognise that parking spaces are not allocated to specific users on a reserved basis, although the general supply will be available to meet demand;
- Recognise that the contributor will not have an ownership interest in the public parking facilities;
- Recognise that the parking may not be as conveniently located to a specific development compared to on site or other nearby parking facilities;
- Recognise that all or a portion of the parking may not be constructed at the same time as the development; and
- Recognise that the developer/owner will not have any control over parking fees and use regulations.

Some Local Governments have attempted to charge developers/builders the full cost of the parking bay which results in little or no take up of the offer, except for very small infill projects which have no alternative and find it financially palatable. This is because the value of a parking bay which the developers do not own or control cannot be worth the same as the cost of

building one on their own land over which they then have full control. Given these factors, the cash-in-lieu rate in other LGA's is often set at 50% of the estimated cost of providing a new parking bay, although this is often not evident because the value set does not come with an explanation in the fee schedule.

The existing cash-in-lieu program which the Shire has proposed operates as part of the newly created Car Parking Trust Fund. In theory, the structure of the fund should be that it specifies that the amount should be the equivalent cost to the developer of provision of the parking, including the cost of land. This allows little incentive on face value other than those associated with developments space constraints.

It should be noted that the decision to accept cash-in-lieu should remain at the discretion of the Shire and not become an automatic right. This will allow the Shire to ensure that if it accepts cash-in-lieu payments, there is a reasonable expectation that municipal parking is already available to serve the development or that the Shire will be able to provide a supply increase in the short term.

It is also necessary to ensure that planning for the provision of future parking structures is transparent and that contributors to the cash-in-lieu fund are given clear indication as to what their payments are funding. This will ensure that developers continue to see benefits in contributing towards public parking, over the intrinsic advantages visible on-site.

Another mechanism would be the establishment of a dedicated car parking infrastructure fund, into which cash-in-lieu payments would be directed, under a modified arrangement and out of which the planning, upgrading and management of car parking facilities would be funded.

### ***9.3 Partnerships and Collaboration Opportunities***

Although the primary vehicle for financing and initiating new facility construction should be focused on the cash-in-lieu program, the Shire should also consider potential opportunities to deliver parking infrastructure through strategic partnerships and collaboration in the context of specific development opportunities and where this would result in achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the Parking Strategy Framework outlined in Section 8 of this report. The primary goals of this arrangement would be to promote enhanced urban design principles, economic development, and transport demand management. In order to achieve these goals, it is important that any partnership arrangement, as a matter of priority, maintain Shire control over the pricing of car parking, the use of the bays, the design of the facility and the ability to expand the infrastructure, as required, to satisfy key objectives of usability, universal access and asset management.

Some potential partnerships could include the following:

- Collaboration with the PTA regarding the size and location for future park 'n' ride in the transition- to long-term time timeframes at the Northam Railway Station;

- Partnership with the Department of Health to establish off-site overflow and special-use parking catering particularly to visitors to the Northam Health Campus and associated specialist medical practitioners; and
- Potential for development of a multi-deck parking structure in the vicinity of the proposed education and cultural precinct within the Northam Redevelopment Area. This could provide sufficient parking to cater for the demand of a large number of users, including students of the proposed education facility, which would contribute a high demand for parking during term. The intensity of use will depend upon final enrolment numbers and the structure of the school year.

## **9.4 User Charging**

The issues relating to cash-in-lieu, the application of the Car Parking Trust and partnership opportunities are outlined in Section 9.2; however, in order to fully fund improved and new car parking facilities, user charging plays a key role in financing this infrastructure. There are potentially three broad charging options to fund new or improved parking:

- Costs are recovered from users of the new facility after it commences operation;
- Existing user charges are increased to build up capital to cover the cost of the new or improved parking facility; and
- A combination of the above.

Recovering costs, paid parking and its control:

- Paid parking implementations would be one way that the Shire could charge users for parking services. Payment for parking in the long term has been outlined in this strategy to be situated mainly along Fitzgerald Street. The most appropriate form of paid parking would be the use of ticket machines which could be paid for at the time parking is needed. This form of paid parking would be most appropriate for the context of this strategy. The alternative would be to issue parking permits. Parking permits however could encourage a permit holder to park in a paid parking zone. Permits could therefore be used rather for designated employee parking areas toward the periphery of the town centre, to encourage the use of these parking bays by commuters;
- Another benefit of paid parking is it allows individuals to buy as much or as little parking as they desire which in turn makes them aware of the amount of time they are parking for thus reducing parking times;
- Small time units should be used, particularly on Fitzgerald Street, (5 minute blocks rather than hour blocks) so that users don't pay for more parking than they need;
- Fees should be higher and for shorter time periods in most convenient locations to encourage greatest turnover of cars in these locations; and
- The control of paid parking may not be successful unless the regulations are enforced, although beginning with friendly reminders first off. It will be foreseen that the implementation of paid parking will therefore correlate with the need to employ the

appropriate staff (Rangers/ Parking Inspectors) to undertake duties to control parking. Those parking without permits, or longer than the designated timeframe of a parking zone, should be issued with friendly reminders followed by infringement notices. The cost of employing staff to undertake duties to control parking is something the Shire of Northam must take into account when considering to implement paid parking.

A user charging regime should accomplish the following:

- Offset operating costs;
- Offset debt servicing costs;
- Support a capital or sinking fund to meet depreciation and future 'heavy' maintenance or upgrade of existing facilities to new community standards demands;
- Build up the Car Parking Trust reserve for fund future infrastructure expansion;
- Be market related or at least be set with the market in mind so that that any 'subsidy' can readily be identified; and
- Ensure that there is always parking available for priority users such as special needs groups like ACROD or users who value add to the Town Centre e.g. shoppers and other visitors.

## **10 CONCLUSION**

This Car Parking Strategy has involved a review of the existing car parking situation and development of options to ensure that future car parking demands are adequately catered for including consideration of the possible issues the Northam Town Centre will face in the future in relation to car parking. Some of these key issues included the following:

- Current car parking bay numbers and locations, are adequate at the current time however the use of these bays by long term parking rather than short term parking shows that there was a need for long term parking for employees to be located further toward the periphery of the town centre;
- Parking requirements and generators for car parking such as Coles, Target and Woolworths which are located centrally within the town centre and currently creating a high demand for parking space which could create parking congestion in the future;
- A detailed assessment of existing public and private parking infrastructure was undertaken, with site inspections also detailing the current utilisation of parking. This inspection was able to demonstrate which areas within the Northam Town Centre were currently being utilised or conversely underutilised to provide scope as to how parking will be managed in the future. The key areas of focus for parking were generally within close proximity to Fitzgerald Street, particularly within Precincts 2, 3 and 4.

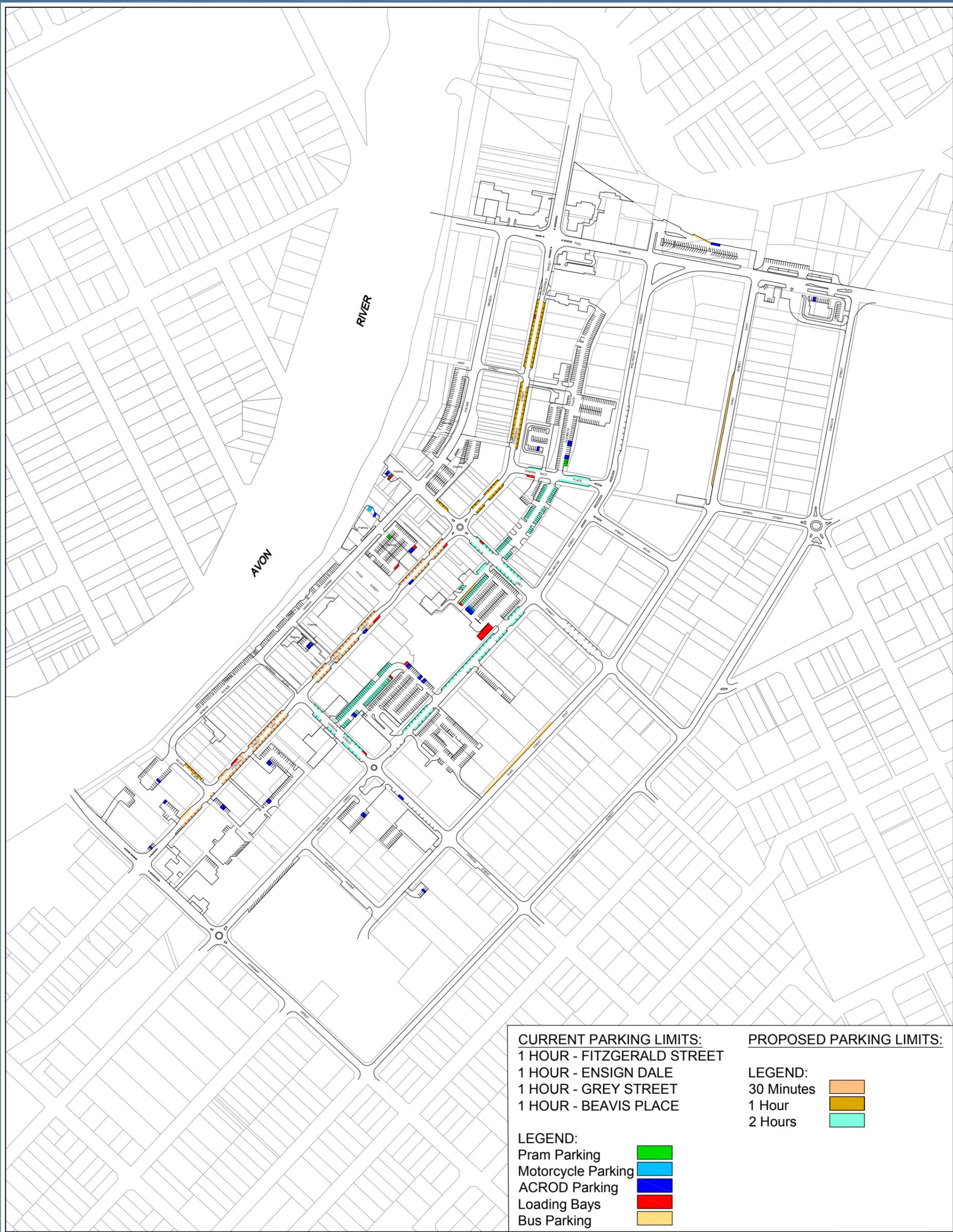
Below are some of the key outcomes derived by the strategy in response to the above issues as well as abiding by the Guiding Principles, Goals and Outcomes of the Strategy:

- Capped parking periods - 30 minute and 1 hour capped parking on Fitzgerald Street;
- Increased control of parking through the provision of staff (Rangers/ Parking Inspectors) time for issuing of notices and fines to overstayed users;
- Parking locations further away from Fitzgerald Street to be allowed for longer stay parking (2hrs);
- Increased visibility and legibility as well as improved signage and guidance would assist in way-finding and could distribute the demand more effectively and efficiently over the available parking supply;
- Improvements to existing car parking areas, in particular informal car parking areas to improve functionality through increased signage and line marking of parking bays, and in turn increasing the appeal of these parking areas; and
- The introduction of other initiatives as outlined throughout the Strategy.

As far as possible, the strategies in this report are consistent with the Shire of Northam's goals and aims which include:

- Enhance the qualities and benefits of our natural and built environment;
- Create an integrated urban centre with a full range of services;
- Sustain and maintain the distinctive character of the Shire and, in particular, the Town Centre;
- Balance development needs with sustainable economic, social, and environmental objectives;
- Continue a whole of government approach in the provision of infrastructure;
- Maintain and improve physical infrastructure to meet the needs of the local community; and
- Ensure all our activities have a strong focus on sustainability.

In conclusion the Car Parking Strategy should help guide the future of car parking within the Northam Town Centre while being consistent with the Shire's goals and aims into the future, allowing for the effective and efficient use of car parking infrastructure to ensure that supply of parking can adequately relate to the demand, being both Short Term demand and Tenant Long Stay (Employee) demand. Overall improvement of car parking infrastructure through improvements in signage and way finding implementations, in correlation with the introduction of paid parking and capped bays in the long term should create a more viable, efficient and aesthetically pleasing parking environment into the future for the Northam Town Centre.



**CURRENT PARKING LIMITS:**  
 1 HOUR - FITZGERALD STREET  
 1 HOUR - ENSIGN DALE  
 1 HOUR - GREY STREET  
 1 HOUR - BEAVIS PLACE

**LEGEND:**  
 Pram Parking   
 Motorcycle Parking   
 ACROD Parking   
 Loading Bays   
 Bus Parking 

**PROPOSED PARKING LIMITS:**  
**LEGEND:**  
 30 Minutes   
 1 Hour   
 2 Hours 

SHIRE OF NORTHAM  
 395 FITZGERALD STREET  
 PO BOX 613  
 NORTHAM WA 6401  
 PH: (08) 9622 6100 FAX: (08) 9622 1910



# CAR PARKING STRATEGY MAP

NORTHAM TOWNSITE  
 SHIRE OF NORTHAM



SCALE 1:2500 @ A1  
 DATE: 22.12.2011