



PENRITH CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

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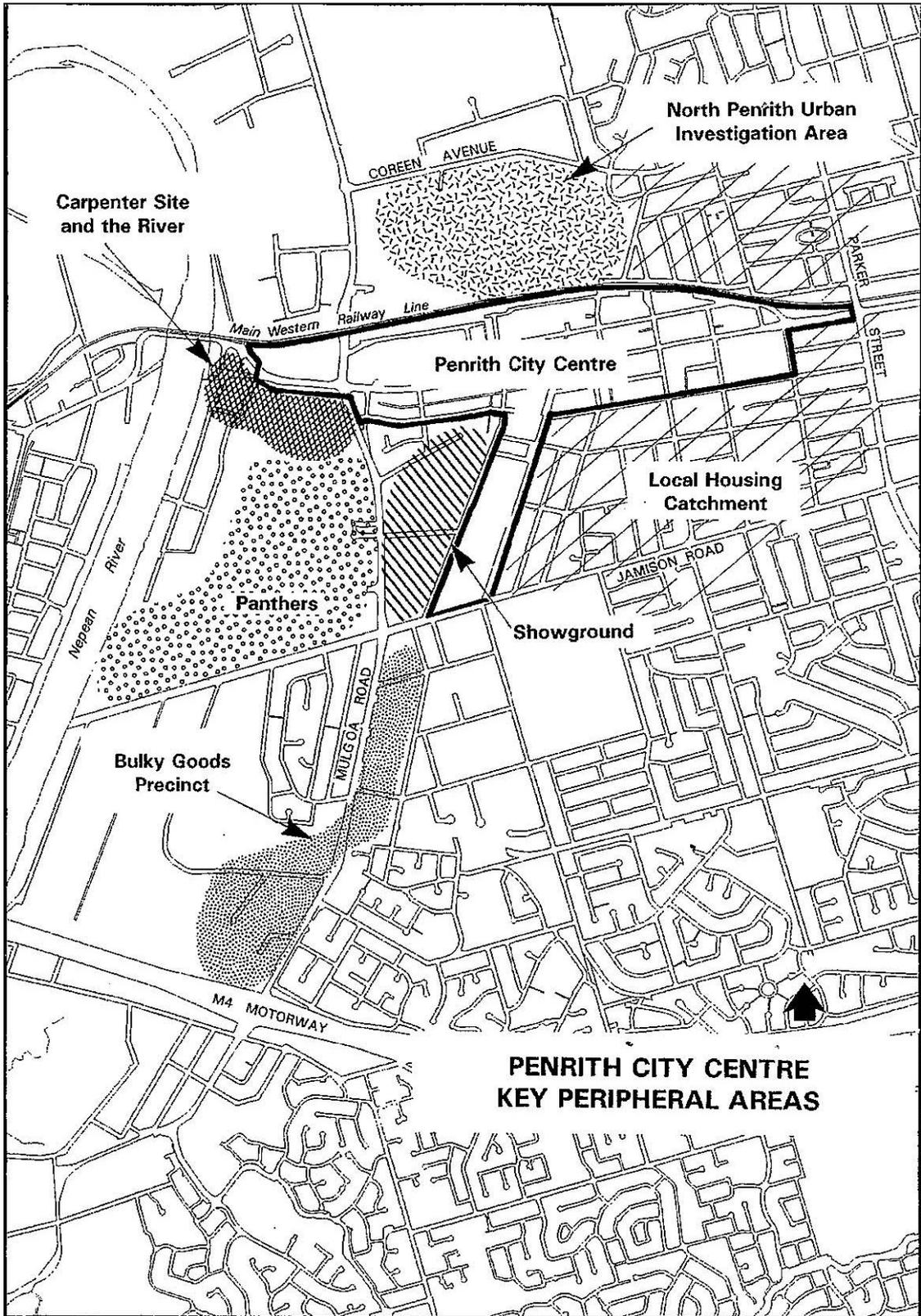


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Penrith City Centre and Key Peripheral Areas

Part 1 – Background

INTRODUCTION

The City of Penrith lies at Sydney's western edge at the base of the Blue Mountains. Its population has grown from 33,000 people in 1961, to more than 175,000 today. Penrith is now recognised as a major economic, social and administrative centre within metropolitan Sydney, providing leadership to the region.

Penrith City Centre is one of Sydney's major commercial centres, with some 100,000m² of commercial office space and 156,000m² of retail floor space. Its influence not only extends to the neighbouring local government areas of Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury, but much further to include the south-west corridor as well as Lithgow, Bathurst and beyond.

Over recent years, the City Centre has evolved into a much more complex centre, with an increasing commercial emphasis, social and cultural focus, and a broader range of services. Penrith's emergence as a principle economic centre for the outer Western Sydney Region is largely attributable to its diverse industrial base and a range of education, recreation and support activities that are already well established and have considerable potential for growth.

Penrith City Centre is poised to play an even more significant role. Along with Parramatta and Liverpool, Penrith City Centre has been identified as a Regional City in the State Government's Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney. Consolidating Penrith's role as a regional city is dependent on strengthening business investment and jobs growth, making the best use of the transport system and making the centre vital and vibrant.

However, there are concerns that the dynamics of change currently being experienced are not necessarily supporting the longer-term ambitions for the centre, particularly the leakage of retailing activities to peripheral centres, and the consolidation of major retail and leisure functions to the western end of the City Centre.

In late 2002, Penrith City Council commenced the *Our City Centres – Vitality and Viability Review*. The Review aims to develop a framework and provide future direction for the role and operation of Penrith City Centre and St Marys Town Centre as vital, viable and sustainable centres.

The Review was given added impetus in 2004 when the former Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources provided funding under the Planning Reform Funding Program towards the Review in recognition of the role of both Penrith and St Marys as 'Centres' in the Metropolitan Strategy.

The Review was undertaken in two stages. The first stage comprised extensive community consultation, involving dialogue with individuals and groups with an interest in the Centres, including users of the Centres, business owners, property owners, City workers, community organisations and services, relevant government departments and authorities, community groups, identified target groups (such as the City's younger and aged communities), visitors, and individuals in the City's wider communities.

A community vision for the Centre, underpinned by values and principles, was developed. The Community Visioning Process Report was completed in June 2005, and establishes a clear set of objectives for urban development, based on the strengths and opportunities within Penrith City Centre. Ensuring that growth responds to community desires and expectations for the city is a key challenge.

The first stage has also involved a review of the principal systems which bear upon the operation, development and growth of the Centres, including –

- *land use systems* eg access, public transport, parking, urban design analysis
- *economic systems* eg economic viability, servicing constraints, existing market trends, retail, commercial, residential and tourism activities, and

- *social systems* eg existing social and cultural values, constraints to recognising/ expressing the social and cultural elements of the City's communities, encouraging cultural diversity.

Specialist consultants were engaged to undertake an analysis of these principal systems and a number of technical studies were produced. The technical studies provide a broad analysis of the Centres' existing systems, and identify elements that constrain current activities.

The second stage of the Review involved more focussed investigations, and the development of strategies, that responded to the findings of the broader analysis undertaken in the first stage of the process. The *Penrith City Centre Strategy* is the culmination of this work, and identifies the key actions required to deliver a vital, viable and sustainable City Centre into the future.

The Strategy aims to guide future planning directions and to establish a set of principles for the development of revised planning controls for Penrith City Centre. The principles will inform the work to be undertaken by the Regional City Centres Taskforce, set up by the Department of Planning to review the planning for the identified Regional Cities, and subsequently inform the development of local planning controls to be incorporated into the Penrith Local Plan.

A NEW DIRECTION FOR OUR CITY CENTRES

The image of a great city stems largely from the quality of its public realm – its streets, boulevards, parks, squares, plazas, and waterfronts...A well-designed and well-managed public realm evokes community pride and creates a strong, positive image. The environment, in conjunction with a strong and diversified economic marketplace, attracts the development investment needed to sustain and enhance the economic and social heart of the city.¹

We certainly know those qualities which characterise an unappealing City Centre – feeling unsafe, a lack of quality outdoor public spaces, empty buildings and vacant land, vast tracts of surface car parking, a lack of variety and interest, and little or no pedestrian connectivity between different areas.

By contrast, a vibrant city contains two key elements:

- ❖ A mix and concentration of different uses which attract pedestrians and create a lively social environment, and
- ❖ Attractive, inviting and safe public spaces that make people want to visit them and generate a sense of community ownership and commitment to those spaces.

These qualities in a City Centre are worth striving for because they create significant and long lasting benefits for the community. It is important to build a vital and viable centre for and with the City's residents and communities. Attractive and vibrant centres help to spur investment in commercial, retail and residential development in the area bringing with them new jobs and economic growth.

The State Government's Metropolitan Strategy has nominated Penrith as a Regional City. This has significant implications for the new direction for Penrith City Centre, with housing and employment targets creating significant demands on space, and potential strain on the existing and desired future urban form of Penrith. The Department of Planning will expect Council to provide for the growth of 35,000 – 50,000 dwellings, and the provision of 30,000 jobs within the Penrith City Centre. These targets will require the establishment of clear and direct principles for growth to ensure that the Vision enunciated within this City Centre Strategy is achieved.

The Department of Planning has established a Regional City Centres Taskforce, consisting of architects, designers and planners, to assist Council in preparing regulatory controls to ensure that the Metropolitan Strategies targets are met in a manner that is consistent with community expectations. The City Centre Strategy provides an important basis for the Taskforce.

Apart from the economic benefits that can potentially accrue from City Centre revitalisation, there are also many social and environmental benefits. A City Centre, which contains a high quality public realm and a range of activities to attract visitors, creates a positive image for the region and engenders a strong sense of community pride. It also provides for a healthy lifestyle enabling people to walk or cycle to a variety of destinations, thus reducing car dependency and increasing opportunities for community interaction and hence community 'connectedness'.

Where public spaces are well-maintained and used both during the day and at night, people are more likely to feel safe, and crime less likely to occur. A safe and attractive City Centre in turn helps to attract a City Centre housing market which can take advantage of the proximity to services and transport, as well as add to the vibrancy and diversity of uses in the centre. The demand for adequate provision of commercial office space needs to be balanced against the advantages of city apartments, by providing for housing choices around a core commercial area. Within the context of Penrith it is envisioned that a mix of land uses could be facilitated to the south of High Street and east of Lawson Street with the commercial retail core focussed around the train station and adjacent areas. This would stimulate

¹ Cy Paumier, "Creating a Vibrant City Center", Urban Land Institute, Washington 2004

redevelopment of peripheral areas with a variety of land uses including residential development without limiting the intensity required of a regional commercial core.

City Centre housing plays an integral role in helping to meet the increasingly complex housing needs of a changing population. Whereas traditionally new housing largely comprised single dwellings on greenfield sites, there is now a shift towards providing a diversity of housing types across all communities so that all households, whether they be single person households, 'empty nesters', couples with children or group households etc, can access appropriate housing.

Concentrating a diverse range of activities within a City Centre and in areas within walking distance of the City Centre also reduces the number of trips taken by private vehicles. Where services are concentrated in the one area, there is no need to undertake multiple car trips in order to access such services. Providing better pedestrian linkages and attractive public spaces encourages people to walk around the centre rather than use their car. This increase in physical activity can result in improved health and well being at the same time as providing opportunities for community interaction and the development of a 'sense of community'.

The benefits that can emerge from creating a vibrant and attractive City Centre for Penrith are significant and long lasting. The key to achieving these benefits is critically dependent on a clear articulation of the many actions needed to achieve a great City Centre and a commitment from all those involved to their effective implementation.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

A good plan helps define the rules of the game for all the players, and, along with the tools used to implement it, provides a predictable framework for decision making and a basis for coordinating public and private investments.²

The success of any City Centre revitalisation is dependent on having a clear and workable strategy that identifies what the long-term intentions are for the City Centre, and how these intentions are to be achieved. City Centre strategies should be comprehensive in their scope, and not only focus on appropriate planning tools, but consider a much wider range of measures, such as infrastructure provision, City Centre management and promotion, and the promotion of healthy communities, to achieve longer term ambitions.

The purpose of the *Penrith City Centre Strategy* is to identify the key steps that, if implemented, will achieve the long-term vision of a sustainable and vital City Centre. It provides a statement of the policies that will need to be pursued and a list of actions that will need to be implemented over time if the Vision for the City Centre - a vibrant, forward-looking regional centre - is to be achieved. These key elements steps are identified as:

- **Imagining the Future** – in partnership with the community, identifying what the vision should be for the Penrith City Centre.
- **Building Community Support** – working with the community to realise the vision.
- **Achieving an Ecologically Sustainable Centre** – ensuring that all decisions regarding the future of Penrith City Centre are guided by the principles of sustainability.
- **Forging Strong Partnerships** – recognising that the success of the Strategy is dependent on commitment and cooperation from both the private and public sectors.
- **Creating Friendly and Attractive Places and Spaces** – focussing on the fundamental importance of human scale, street activation, high quality public realm, promotion of healthy lifestyles and pedestrian friendly environments.
- **Creating a Cultural/Entertainment Precinct** – identifying a cultural/entertainment focus as part of the centre revitalisation.
- **Making Housing and Mixed Uses a Priority** – ensuring a diversity of uses to generate activity and economic viability.
- **Managing Parking and Improving Access** – providing for improved public transport, cycling and pedestrian access to and within the City Centre and managing car parking more efficiently and in a way that supports a vibrant City Centre.
- **Fostering Economic Investment** – creating a City Centre which is attractive for business and which generates new job opportunities for the people of Penrith.
- **Achieving a Quality Built Environment** – promoting a high quality of development and ensuring a visually cohesive built form.
- **Providing the Right Planning, Development and Implementation Framework** - creating the right regulatory environment, including funding opportunities which facilitates development of the centre.

Informing each of these strategies is the detailed investigation and evaluation of the principal systems which have shaped the way in which the City Centre has evolved, and which potentially will need to be modified if the Vision is to be achieved.

² Cy Paumier, *ibid*, p157

OVERVIEW OF PENRITH CITY CENTRE

Penrith City Centre is located 55km from Sydney's CBD at the foothills of the Blue Mountains escarpment and 1km east from the Nepean River. It is served by the Western rail line and the M4 highway.

There are many major regional facilities located in or nearby to the Penrith City Centre area, including:

- Nepean Hospital
- University of Western Sydney
- Western Sydney Institute of TAFE
- Penrith High School
- Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre and Q Theatre
- Jamison Park
- Penrith Stadium and Penrith Panthers
- Nepean River and environs including Tench Reserve and Regatta Park
- Sydney International Regatta Centre
- Penrith Whitewater Stadium
- Penrith Regional Gallery and Lewers Bequest
- Penrith Regional Library
- Westfield Penrith and Nepean Centro
- Law Courts and legal services
- Australian Tax Office
- Government agencies including Sydney Catchment Authority, DOCS, Education and Training, Fair Trading, RTA Motor Registry, Centrelink, Medicare
- Community services providers.

There are also several large urban development areas and sites which will enhance Penrith's role as a regional centre, including:

- Penrith Lakes
- Former ADI site, St Marys
- North Penrith Urban Area
- Werrington Enterprise, Living and Learning (WELL) Precinct
- Carpenter site
- Waterside.

The Penrith City Centre itself is approximately 2.5km long in the east-west direction, and 1km long in the north-south direction. Key boundaries include the Western Railway line to the north, Union Road, Woodriff Street and Lethbridge Street to the south, Parker Street to the east, and Mulgoa/Castlereagh Roads to the west.

The development of the Penrith Centre is largely due to the construction of two major transport infrastructure projects: (1) the construction of the Great Western Road from Parramatta in 1815, and (2) the building of the railway line to Penrith in 1863. Once the railway line reached Penrith it became a busy terminus as rail and road connections began and finished at Penrith.

Concurrent with the arrival of the railway, the first subdivision of the Hornseywood Estate south of the highway was advertised in 1863. It was not until twenty-two years later (1885) however, that a major subdivision of this estate was planned. Small house lots were surveyed in seven blocks near the highway, with larger allotments between Lethbridge and Jamison Roads, Woodriff and Doonmore Streets. The line of Woodriff Street followed the boundary of the original land grants, interrupting the regular north-south orientation of the streets.

At this time Penrith consisted of a cluster of buildings, mainly in three blocks, along the northern side of the highway, with three churches on the southern side, a bank and a few houses. Inns, shops, workshops, courthouse and houses lined the three blocks on the northern side; there was a scattering of houses along Henry and North Streets and others further towards the river.

Penrith was also a centre for law related activities. In 1817 the Penrith Courthouse was constructed on Henry Street. Over time Penrith has seen four courthouses and police stations, all built on the same site.

After the flurry of the subdivisions of the 1880s, the population of the Penrith, Nepean, and St. Marys Municipalities remained fairly static for some five decades. It was not until the 1950s that a strong impetus for growth emerged, and this was tied to the general expansion of the functions of the metropolitan area of Sydney.

Land Use Systems

Urban Structure

The following information regarding urban structure and urban fabric is drawn from the *Urban Design Analysis for the Penrith City Centre* prepared by the Government Architects Office for Penrith City Council (June 2004).

The City Centre is located on a pronounced river terrace east of the Nepean River and is predominantly flat, with the contours sloping gently down to the Nepean River. The landform begins to rise towards the eastern part of the City Centre, corresponding to a change in the street grid.

Penrith City Centre has a strong urban structure of east-west streets that presently enjoy good sun access. Shorter north-south streets connect these east-west streets. The east-west streets such as Henry Street, Great Western Highway, Belmore Street and Jane Street are the main thoroughfares that cater for the majority of traffic movements and connect to the major arterials of Mulgoa/Castlereagh Roads and Richmond/Parker Roads. The north-south streets serve local movements and are complemented by the network of lanes and pedestrian arcades.

Pedestrian laneways and cross-block links connect mid-block car parking areas to the surrounding streets and activities and allow good permeability of the deep city blocks. The system of lanes provides a second active frontage to shops along Henry and High Streets.

Typically, the subdivision pattern of the Penrith City Centre is composed of north-south orientated sites fronting east west streets. Typical street blocks are 130 metres deep, and this allows for perimeter buildings defining streets with central parking areas. A significant proportion of the City Centre is given over to surface car parking.

Because the City Centre is stretched over 2.5km the main areas of activity are dispersed and there is no sense of an actual 'centre'. The existing areas of activity are:

- Civic Centre and Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre/Q Theatre
- Westfield Penrith
- Railway Station and Bus Interchange
- Law and Order Precinct
- High Street
- Nepean Centro
- Penrith Panthers (outside the central CBD area)

Urban Fabric

In general, the buildings in the City Centre were built to define the streets well. Buildings along Henry and High Streets are characterised by shop-top buildings that create a well-defined street edge. However, the extent of street enclosure fragments at the railway station and on the edges of the City Centre.

Penrith City Centre is highly visible from higher vantage points to the east, west and north. The most visible building and a local landmark is the nine storey Australian Tax Office (47 metres high from footpath to top of roof). Elsewhere, the predominant building height in the centre is one to two storeys although there are some buildings of three to four storeys, including the Penrith Plaza and Penrith Council. Consolidation of building heights in line with the heights established by the Australian Tax Office within the central areas south of the train station will establish a clear point of focus and a clear centre for the city.

Gaps between buildings along Henry and High Streets indicate pedestrian through site links from car parks located in the centre of the block. These through site links provide for accessibility and connectivity and potentially offer good pedestrian amenity away from busy streets.

The railway station including the bus interchange area needs a better definition of the public domain by carefully scaled buildings with shops, restaurants and other public uses to mark this important city gateway and the arrival place to Penrith City. Belmore Street currently works as a place of transit rather than a destination.

Woodriff Street between Lethbridge and Allen Place is characterised by its strong landscaped character. This street has the potential to extend this 'green' character along its length from Soper Place to Derby St.

Access and Transport

An *Access and Transport Analysis of Penrith City Centre and St Marys Town Centre* was prepared by Sinclair Knight Merz on behalf of Penrith City Council (November 2004). Further analysis regarding access and car parking within the City Centre has been undertaken by Glazebrook and Associates, and was completed in May 2006. The following information is largely drawn from these works.

The main vehicular routes servicing Penrith City Centre are the east-west routes of the Great Western Highway (Henry Street) and Belmore Street/Jane Street and the north-south routes of Mulgoa/Castlereagh Roads and Parker Street. Other major access routes include High Street, Woodriff Street and Station Street.

The majority of roads in the City Centre are carrying significant volumes of traffic during peak hours. Vehicles currently experience significant delays in Mulgoa Road, westbound in High Street and westbound in the Great Western Highway approaching Parker Street during the afternoon peak. Traffic speeds within the City Centre are low, generally below 35 km/h.

Most intersections are operating at good or satisfactory levels of service. The exceptions are the intersections of Mulgoa Road/Great Western Highway and Jane Street/Castlereagh Road which operate at a poor level of service with vehicles and buses experiencing significant delays during the morning and evening peak. These intersections are currently being considered for upgrading.

The City Centre is served by the main Western Rail line, which provides relatively high frequency services during peak periods, as well as a good spread of services. The rail provides eastern connection to Sydney city via Parramatta and western connection to the Blue Mountains and Central Western NSW.

The rail services are well patronised by commuters with some 3,000 people boarding the train at Penrith during the morning peak. A significant proportion of these passengers drives to the train station in the morning and park in the commuters' car park or make use of local bus services.

Private bus operators under contract to the NSW Ministry of Transport provide bus services in the Penrith Local Government Area. Bus services provide for local trips, and as feeder services for rail travel. Bus service frequency is an issue, however, with there generally being a 30 minute time gap between services during non-peak periods.

The pedestrian network within the Penrith City Centre is by and large well defined. Footpaths within the City Centre are generally adequate and made of high quality materials. Conflicts exist between pedestrians and vehicles in Belmore Street at the bus rail interchange, and jaywalking is common in Station, High, Henry and Riley Streets.

There is no specific provision for cyclists in Penrith City Centre. However, there are a number of existing bikeways on the periphery of the City Centre, and there are plans to install bikeways along sections of a number of major routes, including Mulgoa Road, Great Western Highway, Belmore Street and Station Street.

Car Parking

Glazebrook and Associates prepared a Draft Penrith City Centre Parking Strategy (May 06), which aims to identify ways to facilitate the growth of Penrith in a manner that reduces the dependence on private vehicular access to the city. The Parking Strategy identifies a total 10,021 off street car parking spaces in the City Centre, including 3,594 in Penrith Plaza. Excluding the parking in Penrith Plaza, 4,629 spaces are long term (unrestricted) and the remainder (1,395) have some time restriction. There are also approximately 845 on street parking spaces.

The draft Car Parking Strategy estimates that if current car parking codes are applied to new development as envisioned through the City Centre Strategy, the total supply of parking in the City Centre would triple from 10,800 spaces now to 32,500 spaces when development was complete.

The Strategy proposes a revision of the existing car parking codes to respond to increased car parking demands, while reducing expectations and dependence upon vehicular access to the city. However, the study found that even with reduced demands for car parking, supply would need to be increased by 125% when fully developed, thus placing some pressure on access roads. A more detailed traffic modelling exercise is needed to analyse the likely impact of increased traffic to the centre, as well as increased background traffic from general growth in the Penrith area.

Economic Systems

An *Economic Analysis* of Penrith City Centre and St Marys was prepared for Council by Hill PDA (July 2004). Further studies were commissioned by the Department of Planning to inform the Metropolitan Strategy, including a review of Office Based Activities Locating out of centre prepared by Hill PDA (July 2005). Council's Employment Planning Strategy, endorsed for exhibition by Council in June 2006, also identifies actions relevant to the City Centre Strategy. The following information is based on these analyses, and on the requirements established by the Metropolitan Strategy.

Existing Economic Activity

Penrith is the regional centre for the Greater Western Sydney Region, with almost 200,000sqm of retail floor space (including the bulky goods precinct) and almost 100,000sqm of commercial space. The indoor retail centres of the Penrith City Centre include:

- Penrith Plaza, comprising approximately 60,800sqm of retail floor space. Major tenants include Myer, Target, Woolworths, Big W, Best and Less and Franklins.
- Nepean Centro, comprises approximately 19,000sqm of retail floor space. Major tenants include a Kmart discount department store and Coles supermarket.
- Penrith Centre, located on the corner of High Street and Station Street and comprising an approximate total retail floor space area of 6,000sqm.
- Henry Street Mall, containing around 2,200sqm of retail floor space, the major component being a Franklins supermarket.

- Henry Lawson Centre being 8,600sqm of space, predominantly bulky goods retailers including The Good Guys and Paul's Warehouse.

The 'main street' strip retailing in Penrith is primarily located along High Street, extending to Henry Street in the north and Union Road in the south, comprising a total of approximately 50,300sqm of retail space.

The Penrith City Centre is the seventh largest commercial centre in Greater Sydney, as defined by commercial office space and office employment. Penrith's office employment has increased 3.4% per annum from 1996 to 2001, compared to the growth rate in Parramatta of 2.1% and Chatswood of 1.9%, and actual job losses in Burwood and Bankstown. A key growth area in employment has been the growth in knowledge industries such as consultancy, accountancy and IT.

The supply of commercial office space is predominantly located in low rise office or retail/office buildings. The largest commercial buildings in the City Centre are the Australian Tax Office at 16,000sqm and the Council Civic Centre at 15,600sqm. These two buildings make up the majority of the existing A-grade commercial space.

The total commercial floorspace in the Penrith City Centre is almost 100,000sqm. The current ratio of commercial to retail floorspace is approximately 2:3, which is high for a regional centre. Most regional and sub regional centres surveyed by Hill PDA have a ratio of 1:3 for commercial to retail floor area. The higher than typical ratio of office space can be attributed to:

- The isolation of Penrith – 20km from Blacktown, 25km to Parramatta and close to 50km to the Sydney CBD make the need for regional office representation a necessity;
- The critical mass of the population. The Penrith catchment is 300,000+ which is comparable to Canberra. Such a size warrants regional offices.
- Council's active role in fostering government offices to locate in Penrith such as the ATO office and Sydney Catchment Authority.

Economic Trends

The Metropolitan Strategy, released by the NSW Government in December 2005, aims to locate 45% of all of Sydney's jobs within 27 centres by 2031. Penrith is nominated within the Metropolitan Strategy as a Regional City, which is defined as a focal point for regional transport and jobs, and with a full range of business, government, retail, cultural, recreation and entertainment activities. The Metropolitan Strategy has set a target of 30,000 jobs by 2031 for Penrith.

Population growth, rising real disposable incomes, innovation and change within the retail industry have underpinned a rapid increase in the supply of retail floor space throughout Australia. Recent shifts in retailing have included the emergence of the regional and 'super-regional' centre (such as Westfields), retailing targeted at convenience and 'just-in-time' shopping to meet daily and weekly shopping needs (with quick and convenient parking and extended trading hours), category killers (eg Bunnings, Harvey Norman, IKEA) and bulky goods centres.

These trends are polarising the retail hierarchy with the larger regional centres, such as Westfield Penrith Plaza in the City Centre, positioning themselves for a more dominant role in the provision of entertainment and customer services, matched with increased retail floor space. The more successful smaller centres have moved towards the concept of convenience centres with greater emphasis on food retailing, just-in-time shopping, fast foods, local services and petrol. This polarisation of the retail hierarchy has been at the expense of the sub-regional centres and district centres.

However, although the historic trends towards larger stores and centres may continue for some time, it won't necessarily continue indefinitely. More people are juggling careers and family and increasingly must squeeze in shopping where they can, rather than adhere to a standard schedule. Busy shoppers today are less inclined to spend as much time as they once did wandering through vast shopping complexes. The trend is towards a decline in average time spent shopping, and the replacement of the once-a-week shop with a series of small shopping trips.

Regional centres, because of their size and complexity, will find it hard to provide convenience shopping despite the presence of large supermarkets. The small existing centres that have learnt to reinvent their role as a convenience centre are the ones that will be successful and where they can cater to a market niche for convenience of 'quick-in' and 'quick-out' shopping.

With regard to commercial space, Penrith City Centre is capturing about 30% of the market share within the Local Government Area. With continued population growth over the next 10 years, the demand for commercial space should expand at a minimum of 1,000 to 2,000sqm per annum. If, however, Penrith could compete more effectively with the growing business parks and offer the cosmopolitan and cultural lifestyle as identified in Council's vision, then office accommodation could grow by 50,000sqm over the next ten years.

The City of Penrith currently does not have a business park that will attract large corporate firms. For such firms to locate in the Penrith City Centre, there needs to be a significant shift that not only demonstrates the cost advantages of Penrith but also the lifestyle attributes of the centre and its environs, including access to the Nepean River and the Blue Mountains. Unlike other western suburb commercial centres, Penrith has the potential to offer such a lifestyle.

The draft Employment Planning Strategy identifies the need to renew existing town centres within an agreed retail hierarchy, and to build on the strengths of key community assets (such as University of Western Sydney and Nepean Hospital). The Employment Planning Strategy recognises, however, that Council has limited influence on the factors affecting business and employment growth, and that the provision of adequately zoned land for employment growth and the development of strong networks with local businesses and marketing Penrith's advantages to a broader network, are key actions for the Council to pursue.

Social Systems

Demographic Trends and Implications

Penrith is the third largest local government area (LGA) in Western Sydney, behind Blacktown and Fairfield with a population of 171,870 as at 2001. By 2019, it is estimated that the population of Penrith will increase by a further 25 per cent to 215,117, or an additional 43,247 persons. Additional growth (beyond the abovementioned estimations) is likely as a consequence of the Metropolitan Strategy's population targets, but as yet the extent of additional growth is not determined. The Department of Planning has identified that an additional 70,000 people will need to be accommodated (outside the release areas) within North West Sector – comprising Penrith, Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury LGAs.

The population of Penrith is much younger than in other parts of Sydney, with higher proportions of children and lower proportions of people aged over 65. However, between 1991 and 2001, the 45 to 54 age group – the Baby Boomers – recorded the largest increase, by almost 10,000, over the decade. As this group ages over the next twenty years, the older population of the area will increase significantly as a result. Despite this trend, Penrith is not in danger of its substantial child population decreasing in the near future, as population growth is still being driven by strong natural increase.

The number of households in the Penrith LGA increased by 80 per cent between 1981 and 2001, from 31,846 to 57,249 households, whilst at the same time the average household size fell from 3.4 persons in 1981 to 2.8 persons in 2001, a decline of just under a fifth. Couples without children and lone person households accounted for over half of the increase in household numbers between 1991 and 2001. In fact, lone person households had the largest absolute increase (3,378) of all household types in Penrith during this period. Proportionally, the largest increases were recorded for lone person households (58 per cent) and one parent families (53 per cent). Couples without children grew by 35 per cent over the period, while couples with children only increased by just 4 per cent.

The current trends towards a greater proportion of lone person and childless couple households are set to continue. While family households will still form the largest household group in the coming years, the implication of these trends is that there will be greater demand for suitable housing from smaller households. These changes imply a marked shift in the household needs of residents, away from 'traditional' suburban family housing to much more diverse housing requirements.

Penrith has one of the lower proportions of population born overseas in Western Sydney. In fact, the proportion of people born overseas living in Penrith fell over the twenty years to 2001, from 23 per cent in 1981 to 21 per cent in 2001.

There is a lower proportion of the poorest household compared to the region as a whole, and a high proportion of middle to higher income households. Almost half (47%) of the resident population in Penrith is in work, which is higher than elsewhere in the region, and the unemployment rate of 5.9% is significantly lower (2001 Census).

While Penrith has matured and established itself as one of the major local government areas in the State in the last quarter of a century, substantial population growth pressure will continue. This will increase the demand for services, infrastructure upgrading and local employment. The City Centre will play an important role in meeting this demand.

The rate of new housing outputs experienced over the last two decades will be repeated over the next two. However, it is unlikely that the future housing need will simply be an extension of the past twenty years' style of development. Penrith's population is changing. The new smaller households will be a diverse group, including many younger people as well as those in the older years. There will be a greater propensity for households to break up and re-form.

Council is also currently undertaking an Integrated Transport and Land Use Study (ITLUS). This Study will identify improved transport options for residents of Penrith City, and aims to reduce reliance on the private motor vehicle. The ITLUS will assist in determining which locations are appropriate for growth and consolidation.

The nature of employment is also changing. Since 1981 there has been significant growth in the percentage of people employed part-time, and such a pattern is projected to continue for some time into the future. At the same time, people are also working longer hours and more women are entering the workforce. This means retailers and centres need to adapt to changing consumer needs. Consumers now have less time to shop and there is a greater trend towards 'just in time' shopping. When people do have time to engage in leisure activities, they will increasingly be demanding higher quality shopping and leisure experiences.

Conversely, despite reduced inflation and increased economic activity and industrial reform, there continues to be increasing household income disparity and many families struggle in poverty. A great City Centre must embrace and provide the necessary retailing and social environment to support all its community, not just those with higher incomes. Liveable cities must focus on their citizens, including those that are not a readily visible part of the economic or cultural environment, such as children, youth and elderly people.

Residential Areas adjoining Penrith City Centre

*(The following information is drawn from the ABS 2001 Census and a social profile prepared by Council in 2004 for the **Our Centres Review**.)*

The closest residential areas to the Penrith City Centre are Lemongrove (Area 1) and that part of Penrith Suburb which is located to the south of the Main Western Railway Line (Area 2).

Area 1 is bounded by the Main Western Railway line to the south, Parker St., Coreen Ave, and Castlereagh Rd, and has a population of 2336 persons. Area 2 is bounded by the Main Western Railway line to the north, Parker St, Jamison Rd, and Nepean River, and has a population of 5949 persons. Both areas are older established areas with an aging housing stock.

According to the 2001 Census there are 1038 dwellings in Area 1, and 2723 dwellings in Area 2. Both areas have a significantly lower proportion of dwellings being purchased (approximately 12% for each area) compared to 37% for Penrith LGA. The proportion of fully owned dwellings is also lower, with 21% in Area 1, and 29% of dwellings being fully owned in Area 2 (compared to 32% for the Penrith LGA). On the other hand, both areas have a higher percentage of public housing dwellings (approx 11% for each suburb as compared to 5% for Penrith LGA) and a significantly higher percentage of private rental dwellings (46% for Area 1 and 40% for Area 2), compared to 20% for the Penrith LGA.

The household occupancy rate for Area 1 is 2.50 persons per dwelling, compared to 2.29 persons per dwelling for Area 2. This rate is lower than the occupancy rate of 3.0 persons per dwelling for the Penrith LGA.

There is a significantly higher proportion of single person households in both Area 1 (39%) and Area 2 (42%). This compares to 17% for single person households in the Penrith LGA. A major contributing factor to this difference is the higher number of semi-detached townhouses, flats and units in Area 1 (61%) and Area 2 (53%), compared to 13% for the Penrith LGA.

Both areas have an older age profile than the Penrith LGA. In 2001 there were 436 persons in Area 1 who were 65 years or older, and 1196 person in Area 2. This equates to approximately 19% of the total population for both areas, which is a significantly higher percentage than the 7% for the Penrith LGA.

Approximately 132 families in Area 1 and 352 families in Area 2 earn less than \$500 per week. This equates to 26% of the total population of each area, compared to 20% for the Penrith LGA. As noted above, there are a large number of single person households in both areas. These are not defined as families and given the older aged profile in both areas, many of these single person households will be aged pensioners.

However, 34% of families in both Area 1 and Area 2 earn more than \$1000 a week. This is the same percentage as the number of families in the Penrith LGA who earn more than \$1000 a week.

Cultural Resources

Penrith CBD has a number of cultural activities including the Dame Joan Sutherland Centre for Performing Arts Centre and the Q Theatre. Penrith Panthers World of Entertainment, close to the Penrith Centre, draws patronage from across metropolitan Sydney to the club. This has a multiplier effect for Penrith, in the provision of services and employment.

A *Cultural Development Analysis* for the Penrith City Centre and St Marys Town Centre was prepared by Deborah Mills for the Our City Centres' Review (March 2005). The analysis found that Penrith LGA has some 135 cultural businesses and 68 artists. 66 of the cultural businesses are located within the City Centre, with music, craft and dance suppliers the most numerous. Apart from the main cultural activities mentioned above, there are nine clubs and

pubs, two commercial galleries, six digital media businesses, two recording studios and 11 community cultural organisations within the Penrith LGA.

Professional non-profit cultural organisations are few in number, and the amateur and professional / amateur organisations appear to be dependent on the energy and commitment of a few dedicated volunteers. The levels of support available to these local organisations would again appear to be minimal, although in many cases Council provides access to accommodation at minimal or no cost.

The *Cultural Development Analysis* found that the cultural infrastructure of Penrith City is fragile, under-developed, unrecognised and isolated. The analysis suggests that if Council's vision of a cosmopolitan and mature city offering an extensive range of cultural experiences is to be achieved, there needs to be a significant shift in the understanding of the relationship of cultural development to urban design, community wellbeing, economic development and environmental sustainability.

Community Services

The Penrith City Centre has an extensive range of community services and resources that reflect the City's regional role. This includes Federal and State Government agency services such as Centrelink, the Child Support Agency, the NSW Department of Housing, the NSW Department of Community Services, and the Penrith Community Health Centre.

A significant number of non-government organisations and groups are also located in the City Centre. Many of these receive funding from the Federal or State Government to deliver services to the residents of the Penrith LGA, and in some cases the sub-region.

Council provides accommodation for some of these services in the Community Connections, a co-location facility that houses a number of services targeting the frail aged and people with a disability. The Old Penrith Council Chambers also houses a small number of community services that require a CBD location for effective service delivery.

Council has recently received a draft report by Elton Consulting assessing Social Services and Community Organisations Accommodation Needs. The study found that there was ongoing demand from community organisations for increased space within the City's centres. Many community organisations have clients that depend upon centrally located and accessible services, but have limited resources, which makes funding commercial rents within the City Centre difficult. It is important that the services offered by the community organisations should be maintained within the City Centre, however Council needs to prioritise works and demands for additional space, and to lobby State and Federal levels of government to ensure that these services are adequately funded.

The main Penrith City Library is adjacent to the Penrith Civic Centre, is open seven days a week and provides information, resources and an important community hub for local residents.

Other major services located in the Penrith City Centre include PCYC, Penrith Senior Citizens Centre and a number of job network providers.

A number of child care centres are also located either in the City Centre or in the immediately adjacent residential areas.

Social Values

The *Community Attitudes & Aspirations Survey of Penrith City Residents* was conducted as part of the *PLANS for Our Future Project*, undertaken by Urbis Keys Young in partnership with Stratcorp Consulting for Penrith City Council in 2002. This report identified that the most important characteristics of the Penrith LGA for all residents were:

- Its quiet peaceful atmosphere
- Its convenient location, and
- The friendliness of the local people.

A significant number of people in response to the question 'what three things do you like best about the area?' responded in terms of its location and access to natural features such as bushland, river and mountains, or access to services and facilities rather than a specific facility or characteristic. Access to a range of locations and facilities is clearly a key advantage for residents of the Penrith LGA.

The second aim of the survey was to identify residents' participation in recreation and social activities, and their views about further development of services and facilities in the Penrith LGA. Participation in informal passive recreation activities was by far the most popular activity reported with 77% of respondents noting they had participated in activities such as walking, picnicking and socialising with friends within the last 12 months. The overall importance placed on access to public open space and natural bushland reflects the high level of passive informal recreation activity.

The next most popular activities were informal active recreation, such as playing a game in the local park, reported by 47%, and attending a community event or festival reported by 40% of respondents. The least popular activity reported was participation in art and craft activities, with only 18 % of respondents noting they had participated in this activity within the last 12 months.

Younger age groups were more likely to participate in organised sport and active recreation, while older age groups tended to participate more in community festivals, attend museums and art and craft activities. Those facilities which were seen as very important to be improved by the greatest number of respondents, were in general those which provided recreation or cultural activity to the widest range of groups within the community providing venues for passive or active informal recreation.

The Community Visioning Process for the Our City Centres Review (discussed further below) also identified similar values and aspirations. This consultation found that, in the main, people wanted to maintain the rural values of community and friendliness while being able to access all that a contemporary urban environment has to offer. Many felt that Penrith already offered this balance. Some, however, felt that Penrith was not especially unique and expressed concern about Penrith's 'westie' image.

The views expressed by the people of Penrith in both these surveys have implications for the Penrith City Centre Strategy. Clearly, the historic rural character of the area is highly valued by the community, as is Penrith's connection to the natural environment. People do not want to see this character lost, but at the same time want access to those activities and services that strong urban centres can provide. The high participation rate in informal and passive recreation activities also suggests that there is an opportunity to provide for such experiences within the City Centre.

KEY CHALLENGES FACING PENRITH

The following are the key challenges that will need to be addressed if Penrith City Centre is to become a mature and cosmopolitan centre. Most of these challenges have been identified in the economic analysis prepared by Hill PDA, July 2004.

The need for diversity – Penrith CBD cannot afford to be dominated by retail activities. A healthy city contains a wide mix of uses that offer people a variety of reasons to visit the centre. This provides not only a spin off for the other uses, but also activates the city throughout the day and night. The inclusion of residential, cultural and entertainment activities make the city a living place. Meeting housing and employment targets set by the State government for the Metropolitan Strategy will require an intensification of development in some locations. Core commercial and retail areas will be established centrally around the railway station to improve the central form of the city, whilst allowing for a greater mix and diversity of land uses, with particular emphasis on encouraging increased levels of housing within the city, adjacent to these core areas and within walkable distances from the centre.

Achieving a balance of activities – Penrith CBD runs the risk of being a tale of two cities, with Penrith Plaza being the dominant retail town activity, and the commercial precinct with High Street being a historical fragment of the old rural town. Activities must be balanced. There is a need not only to open Penrith Plaza to the main street but also to complement its dominant retail uses with other uses such as offices, restaurants and city housing. In addition, adequate concentrations of commercial office space around a central core need to be provided in order that Penrith can respond to the demands required as a Regional City as defined by the Metropolitan Strategy.

Encouraging compactness and development intensity – At present, the Penrith CBD is spread along a very long spine, roughly the same distance as Circular Quay to Central in Sydney's CBD. A compact centre promotes pedestrian activity so that people are encouraged to walk out of the offices at lunchtime and interact. Cafes help to provide meeting places and opportunities for creative minds and people to interact. Footpath widening and the creation of side walk cafes, florists, newsstands etc are common tools to create sense of place. An intensity of development is needed to provide critical mass to justify public transport investment and generate street level activity.

Creating functional linkages – There needs to be a path of integrated open space, armature of parks, cycle and pedestrian networks and distinctive streetscape treatments. Development of this network will encourage physical activity and social interaction, thereby improving the overall health of residents and visitors. Consideration needs to be given to a whole city plan that looks not simply at the defined CBD boundary but a broader boundary that encompasses the Nepean River, Penrith Panthers Entertainment Precinct, Mulgoa Road Bulky Goods Precinct and Penrith Stadium.

Encouraging the growth of cultural activities – To be a truly great City Centre, Penrith must nurture and expand its cultural resource base. This involves establishing cultural enterprise incubators, promoting the arts and music of the region, supporting local amateur groups and providing for stronger connections with Nepean River and Penrith's history.

Building a positive identity – Penrith needs to build on its strengths and focus on its competitive advantages, particularly its relationship to the Nepean River and the Blue Mountains. Focusing on building a positive identity will foster business confidence and community support for the long term strategy and vision. The public announcement of the vision and the resulting strategy is a marketing tool in itself. Allowing for the growth of the city as required by the Metropolitan Strategy, whilst maintaining the connections to the natural environment including the river and farmlands within the LGA, will be a challenge. Maintaining the identity of Penrith as identified within the community consultations is imperative to ensuring community ownership and acceptance of the City Centre Strategy and subsequent plans implementing the Strategy.

Encouraging positive social interaction – A liveable city focuses on its citizens, including those that are not visibly and directly shaping or contributing to the economic or cultural environment, such as children, youth and elderly people, who are no longer active in the

workforce. Creating a fabric of meeting places that encourages and invites positive social interaction will contribute to enliven the city, improve the health (including the physical, mental and social well being) of residents and visitors, and make the Centre a safer and more attractive place to be.

The following strategies provide the framework for achieving a prosperous, culturally-enriched and cosmopolitan City Centre. A long-term commitment to their implementation is required if this vision is to be achieved.

Part 2 – Strategies and Actions for Creating a Viable and Vital Penrith City Centre

Imagining the Future – The Vision

Having a vision for a place is fundamental if any form of large scale or long term redevelopment is to occur. The vision provides an intention for the continuing development of a place – without this intention there is little reason to begin the process in the first place. The vision should encompass what the place is to look like, how it is to operate and what it is to provide for the future. It should address market potential, urban design, community needs and aspirations – detailing what the community and stakeholders want the place to be.

Creating a vision involves the input of all stakeholders and therefore acts as a tool to measure the level of community interest and support for any proposed City Centre revitalisation. It provides a sense of how the community wants a place to grow and change, identifies what is important and uncovers the emotional, economic and financial reasons for the City Centre revitalisation.

The vision should be bold and innovative, drawing on history, character, and strengths of the community. However, it must also be tempered with realism to ensure that the objectives are achievable.

The vision provides the guide for the strategic plan, informing the development standards, land use policy and the many other issues required to be addressed in such a document.

Creating a vision for the Penrith City Centre

In 2004, Penrith City Council undertook a Community Visioning and Consultation Process, as part of Stage One of the *Our City Centres Review*. The City Centres Review aimed to stimulate debate about the framework, direction and planning of both Penrith and St Marys.

The community visioning process was undertaken by Village Well, as part of Stage One of the Centres Review project. It was undertaken with the view that the vision, principles and values created for Penrith would build on previous Council community consultations and would complement the broader context of Council's vision for the Penrith Region.

Vision for the Penrith Region

Council's vision is one of a sustainable and prosperous region with a harmony of urban and rural qualities and a strong commitment to environmental protection and enhancement. It would offer both the cosmopolitan and cultural lifestyles of a mature city and the casual character of a rural community.

A broad cross section of stakeholders was consulted as part of the community visioning process for St Marys and Penrith, including the Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Penrith City Centre Association, retailers and shopping centre managers, service authorities, centre users, residents, community groups and private business representatives.

A number of community consultation methods were used, including workshops, 'listening posts', one-to-one interviews and focus groups. The feedback received from these sessions informed the creation of objectives, principles and desired characteristics for the Penrith City Centre. These in turn enabled the crystallisation of a vision for the centre. The Community Visioning Process Report was completed in January 2005.

A Vision for Penrith City Centre

The following vision was derived from the community consultation for Penrith.

Vision for Penrith City Centre

Penrith City Centre is a vibrant, forward-looking regional centre that provides quality urban living within easy access to unique natural surrounds

Underpinning the overall vision for Penrith City Centre is a number of values, principles, and objectives identified during the visioning process. These value statements provide more detail as to the type of place Penrith CBD is to become, identify what features are important to local residents and provide greater meaning to the vision for the centre.

The community identified the following as the values that it would like to see guide the future development of Penrith City Centre:

VALUES

Integrity

Justice

Tolerance

Connection

Courage

Generosity

Sustainability

The community also identified a number of principles that should guide the future of Penrith:

- We are a city for everyone
- We are safe, attractive and healthy
- We have a strong and evolving sense of self
- We are open to positive change and continual learning
- We respect our past
- We foster innovation and creativity
- We respect and nurture our environment and our assets
- We are committed to a collaborative approach to governance
- We provide leadership to the region.

Building on these principles and values are the key objectives for the strategy:

- To create a civic, people-friendly centre that focuses on social cohesiveness.
- To mature proudly as a regional city that offers a more relaxed pace than metropolitan Sydney.
- To maintain tangible links to the rural past and the unique natural and community assets.
- To offer contemporary products and services that are relevant to the people of Penrith.
- To cultivate local talent and provide local employment opportunities.
- To establish and foster leadership that serves the greater good of the City Centre and the region.

The realisation of this vision and the values, principles and objectives that underpin it, will require the enthusiastic and unwavering support and participation of not only the Council, but also other government agencies, the private sector and the community.

Recommended Strategies and Actions

The Penrith City Centre Strategy recommends a series of policy actions that identifies areas of responsibility for each policy action as well as a timeframe. It is intended that the policy directions included in the Strategy would provide the basis for the revitalisation of the Penrith City Centre.

Step 1: Building Community Support

The community that works in, lives around and frequents a City Centre holds an enormous wealth of knowledge about the operational intricacies of the centre, and in some respects may effectively claim some form of 'ownership' over the place. This depth of knowledge of and affinity with a place provides valuable understanding to a possible development strategy regarding what is 'right' or 'wrong' about a place, or what can be done to improve what is there already. Involving the community from the outset can provide insight into local attitudes about a place and can help to guide the strategy or identify a problematic issue to be addressed that may not otherwise be identified.

Involvement of the community in the revitalisation of a City Centre promotes community ownership of the process, providing greater involvement in the redevelopment. This then creates interest and support for the revitalisation, with less 'roadblocks' or problems further down the track from unsupportive or uninformed community members. Involvement of the various community stakeholders in the process from the outset results in an outcome that is welcomed by a majority of the stakeholders.

Any sort of City Centre revitalisation cannot be undertaken by Council in isolation. Partnerships with the community should form the basis of any such project of this scale. Partnerships are the only way to successfully implement a City Centre strategy and gain ownership for the overall project. Such partnerships should be based on community spirit and loyalty.

Strategies for involving the community in the short and long term

The Penrith community's involvement in the revitalisation of the Penrith CBD should not stop now. There needs to be an ongoing commitment to involving all stakeholders in not only the formulation of the vision and strategies, but also in their implementation. There needs to be continuous opportunity for input and involvement.

Step 1	Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
1.1	Market the strengths of Penrith and promote a positive image for investment in Penrith City Centre	Develop a 3D model of the City Centre	Council	Completed 2005
1.2		Prepare artists impression of future City Centre	Council	2006 / 2007
1.3		Incorporate 3D model and artists impressions into material for Strategy	Council	2006 / 2007
1.4		Use the 3D model to promote development sites to potential developers and the community.	Council	Ongoing
1.5		Investigate methods of 'branding' the City Centre to create a unique marketable image which has relevance to the centre, its community / environment or its past and develop a marketing strategy.	Council	2006 / 2007 and ongoing
1.6		Develop and implement a marketing action plan in stages focusing initially on a business prospectus and highly visible aspects such as implementation of branding, public domain improvements, development of key sites etc.	Council	2006 / 2007 and ongoing
1.7		Undertake ongoing marketing throughout the lifetime of the strategy timing key initiatives to maximise opportunities to showcase achievements	Council	2006 / 2007 and ongoing
1.8		Prepare and implement an annual calendar of events for the City Centre which increases visitation to the centre (especially out of normal business hours)	Council	2006 / 2007 and ongoing
1.9		Incorporate into the marketing strategy the broader marketing of the Penrith region as offering a lifestyle opportunity for executives and professionals.	Council	2006 / 2007 and ongoing
1.10	Establish a Stewards Group	Consider establishing a Stewards Group, terms of reference and responsibilities.	Council	2006 / 2007
1.11	Promote Public Domain Improvements	Publicise improvements through a variety of media such as posters, signage, pamphlets, newspapers and newsletters, etc.	Council	Ongoing
1.12	Demonstration Projects	Give priority to key projects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ developing a new City Park ▪ improving access with new car parking facilities and shuttle buses ▪ improving the public domain and accessible pedestrian networks ▪ facilitating a high quality demonstration development, and ▪ advancing community and cultural projects. 	Council	2006 / 2008

Step 2: Achieving an Ecologically Sustainable Centre

Penrith City Council has adopted the principles of sustainability to guide its decisions and actions. Sustainability is changing the way we operate. It means integrating economic, environmental and social considerations into decision-making, balancing short-term priorities with longer-term needs and engaging with people.

Council has introduced the Sustainable Penrith program which includes initiatives to reduce the City's greenhouse gas emissions, encourage a healthy local economy, ensure sustainability principles are integrated into new development, build community links and protect the natural environment.

A vibrant and vital City Centre is also a tolerant, inclusive and sustainable City Centre. A City Centre that is easy to walk and cycle around, that provides for intensification and diversity of uses, that manages travel demand effectively and achieves a high quality and long lasting urban fabric, is one that is sustainable into the future. It is also a centre that provides for the physical, mental and social well being of its inhabitants.

Council is committed to strive for best practice architectural and environmentally sustainable design, particularly in terms of energy efficiency, water conservation, waste minimisation and resource minimisation. It is also committed to the principles of travel demand management, reducing the reliance on private vehicles and providing for enhanced public transport, pedestrian and cycle networks to facilitate sustainable access to the City Centre.

Step 2: Strategies and actions for achieving a sustainable City Centre

Step 2	Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
2.1	Achieving a sustainable City Centre	<p>Prepare sustainability criteria to guide development activities in the City Centre that incorporate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minimise potable water demand from Sydney's mains supply and use best practice sustainable design principles, technology and management practices to conserve water. ▪ Maximise the use of renewable energy sources, reduce energy consumption and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. ▪ Energy efficient design especially in relation to lighting, heating and cooling systems. ▪ Consider whole of life impacts on the environment. ▪ Ensure buildings are adaptable, to cater for changes in use and 'whole of life' residential living needs ▪ Protect existing items and areas of cultural and heritage significance, and optimise the potential re-use of heritage buildings. ▪ No adversely impact on water quality of adjacent creeks and the Nepean River. ▪ Minimise waste generation and ensure that opportunities for waste reduction and recycling are maximised. 	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	Completed 2005
2.2		Incorporate sustainability criteria into the City Centre DCP, LEP and plans of management to ensure all future development achieves sustainability objectives	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2005 / 2007 and ongoing
2.3		Implement sustainability through Council's planning controls, actions and plans of management	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	Ongoing
2.4		Explore options for measuring the ecological footprint of the City Centre	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2005 / 2007 and ongoing

Step 3: Forging Strong Partnerships

Downtown revitalization requires a high degree of cooperation and is best achieved when a unique 'private public' process is used.³

A strong partnership between local government and the private sector is fundamental to the successful implementation of a City Centre strategy. Whilst it is possible for the public sector to undertake improvements to the public domain, and to even involve itself in catalyst development projects, it is the private sector that holds the key to building the critical mass needed to spur a cycle of sustainable future growth.

A successful transformation of a City Centre depends on the ability of the private and public sectors to cooperate under a partnership arrangement that engenders community support, minimises project risk and meets the interests of stakeholders. Landowners have contributed significantly to the development of this Strategy and its policy directions.

Council and others in the public sector can only do so much to promote revitalisation – plans can be drawn up with the best intentions for future development, but without the support of the private sector very little will be accomplished on the ground. The private sector, as part of the community, can provide valuable insight into the development of a strategy for the place, and in the end it is the private sector that will provide much of the capital to enable realisation of the vision in accordance with the strategy.

It is also important that individual property owners work together with the public sector in creating a successful City Centre. Individual property owners are responsible for making a myriad of decisions which influence the character of the centre such as reuse and renovation of buildings as well as ongoing maintenance. Conversely, changes in the character of the whole centre will influence the success of each individual initiative.

There are over 600 businesses, financial and professional services, government agencies and community services within the Penrith City Centre. Supporting these businesses are a number of organisations which are involved in business promotion and advocacy, including the Penrith City Centre Association, Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Penrith Valley Economic Development Corporation.

The Penrith City Centre Association (PCCA) employs a City Centre Manager to coordinate the marketing and management of the City Centre, and has prepared a Business and Marketing Plan. The Plan aims to improve the attractiveness and economic viability of the Centre, including working closely with Council on the City revitalisation program. There are also actions aimed at involving property owners in enhancing the appearance of the City Centre, such as a coordinated program of façade painting. The PCCA has provided an extensive submission to Council regarding the ongoing marketing and presentation of the City Centre, which have been reflected in this Strategy.

The Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce is the largest business Chamber in NSW with over 500 members. It meets regularly with Council staff, and is involved in reviewing major developments in the region, as well as providing specialist business advice and services to members.

The Penrith Valley Economic Development Corporation was established and funded by Council and consists of representatives from the City's key learning and training institutions, industry bodies and the Council as well as key business people. Its objectives include assisting the growth of business in the region, facilitating cooperative action amongst the City's businesses, institutions and people, and attracting and assisting the establishment of new, viable businesses to the region.

³ C.B. Leinberger, "Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalization", The Brookings Institution Research Brief, March 2005

Strategies and Actions for forging strong partnerships in the City Centre revitalisation

Step 3	Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
3.1	Develop joint partnerships	Identify Council owned land which can be redeveloped in a manner which achieves City Centre objectives, for example, mixed uses, a very high quality built form, significant improvements to the public domain.	Council	Ongoing
3.2		Involve the private sector through the Penrith City Centre Association to progress the objectives of the strategy and identify projects which the private sector can undertake which support the achievement of the Strategy.	Council and City Centre Association	Ongoing
3.3	Establish a Stewards Group	Through the Penrith City Centre Association identify and target business owners for involvement in the Our City Centres Stewards Group.	Council and City Centre Association	Ongoing
3.4	Integration of Business Plan	Form a City Centre Marketing Working Group to identify responsibilities, coordinate marketing activities and to minimise duplication.	Council and City Centre Association	2006 / 2007
3.5	Incentives	Investigate incentives to encourage appropriate development and investment in the City Centre.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	Ongoing
3.6	Investment Opportunities	Identify and promote investment opportunities through the use of 3D modelling and mapping tools.	Council	2006 / 2008

Step 4: Creating Friendly and Attractive Places and Spaces

What makes a City Centre truly great is its 'walkable urbanity' – the characteristic that makes people find centres so attractive and interesting that they want to walk through them and experience the sights and sounds that they have to offer. Great centres are places that encourage human activity and interaction, where people can feel safe and where the full range of human needs and aspirations can be met. They are centres that provide for the health and well being of their inhabitants.

To achieve walkable urbanity there must be:

- a logical organising structure of streets, pedestrian linkages, open spaces and uses,
- distinctive identity of place,
- visual variety and complexity,
- an emphasis on high quality, and
- a feeling of comfort and safety.

A logical organising structure of streets, paths, open spaces and land uses is essential so that residents and visitors are able to understand how the centre is organised, and how to make their way around the city. A simple and clear development pattern based on a predictable and unifying sequence of similarly sized blocks and regularly spaced intersections is required, as well as a logical hierarchy of streets and pedestrian linkages. Open spaces are vital to this organising structure as they enhance the legibility of the centre by providing highly visible landmarks. Buildings also play an important role in reinforcing the overall city pattern – where there are vacant lots, surface car parks or deep building setbacks the logic of the City Centre structure is undermined.

A distinctive identity is also an important element in the creation of attractive city spaces. Elements that make up a distinctive identity include the history of the place reflected in its historic buildings and landmarks, the centre's geography such as its topography and relationship to natural assets, its public spaces and streetscapes, public art and landmarks. New development and public improvements need to reinforce and enhance the centre's identity as defined through these various elements.

Visual variety and complexity are needed to provide a stimulating environment for people to visit. Architectural detailing, banners, street vendors, cafes, markets and so on all add to the visual interest of a centre. At the same time, such visual variety should not be chaotic or diminish the overall cohesive appearance of the city.

The quality of materials, landscaping, street furniture and architectural detailing all contribute to the experience of a place. The highest quality that can be afforded should be used together with a high level of maintenance. Aiming for a high quality of spaces will not only enhance the pedestrian experience and engender community pride in the place, it will also be a tangible expression of the commitment to the creation of a great centre.

Feeling safe and comfortable is particularly important if public spaces are to be successful. Spaces that are active, visible, well planned and well maintained feel safe and secure.

Public places should promote informal social interaction as well as allow for the more formal use of public space by way of cafes, restaurants, cultural venues, community uses and the like. Spaces need to be provided that are not intimidating for people who only want to congregate, meet or enjoy the space without necessarily having to do so through sitting in a café, restaurant or the like. However it is important that these public spaces are located in the vicinity of more active uses so as to ensure casual surveillance and thereby increase the feeling of public safety. Consideration also needs to be given to providing appropriate amenities (seating, bubblers, toilets etc) and ensuring that measures are in place to protect people from the climate (street trees/canopies to protect from sun, sunny/protected areas for warmth during winter).

Penrith's existing pedestrian environment

At present, the legibility of the Penrith City Centre is not evident. The City Centre is stretched over 2.5km and there is no sense of arrival, either from Penrith Station or from the main arterial roads. The most visible landmark is the Australian Tax Office building.

For a City Centre of this size, there are very few parks or high quality public spaces where people can congregate or just sit and eat their lunch, or where children can play. Of those 'green' spaces that are provided, most are located on the periphery of the centre rather than in the centre.

The centre is also dominated by surface carparking. The pedestrian network is particularly difficult to navigate for first time visitors. There is no defined cycle network.

Active centres or magnets are spread over the centre with little relationship between them. Active frontages at street level are not consistent throughout the centre or, in particular, along the main pedestrian routes. The greatest concentration of active frontages occurs where car parking is easily accessible.

The quality of public spaces is variable, as there is no consistency in streetscape treatment or built form.

Strategies and Actions for creating friendly and attractive places and spaces in Penrith

The success of the *Our City Centres* initiative depends on the creation of public spaces and a pedestrian environment that encourages people to walk and experience the centre. To achieve this, a strong commitment is required, together with a considerable upfront investment by the public sector to create these places. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that improvements in the pedestrian environment cannot be accomplished throughout the Centre all at once. Efforts should be focussed on a core area so that there are immediate tangible results, helping to foster community support and providing impetus to expand to other areas.

Step 4	Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
4.1	Increase Open Space	Prepare an open space plan for the City Centre which identifies new parks and other open space and green areas which are interlinked	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2007
4.2		Prepare a landscape strategy for the City Centre which provides for a cohesive, consistent and high quality approach to landscaping across the centre and which achieves the creation of a green layer of interconnected spaces consistent with the open space plan.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2007
4.3		Provide an accessible central City park (possibly in Allen Place) around which a range of activities such as cafes, restaurants, shops, bars and the like can be located	Council	To be determined
4.4		Investigate the potential for community and cultural activities in the Woodriff Gardens / Carpenter Precinct, that will enhance connections between the City Centre and the River.	Council	2006 / 2007
4.5	Improve permeability and accessibility within the centre.	Prepare a pedestrian and bicycle plan for the City Centre which improves accessibility, encourages walking and cycling, reduces reliance on short car trips and links retail, commercial, residential, open space and car parking areas.	Council	2006 / 2007
4.6		Provide well defined and visually appealing pedestrian linkages to the central City park which are part of the broader legible pedestrian and cycle network	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2007
4.7		Introduce scramble crossings at key intersections to reinforce the pedestrian network eg Riley / Henry, Station / Henry.	Council	2006 / 2007
4.8		Incorporate pedestrian and cycle networks in City Centre improvements	Council	2006 / 2007
4.9		Investigate and improve accessibility within the public domain.	Council	2006 / 2007
4.10	Enhance streetscape	Use cultural planning approaches to develop and implement high quality street furniture, landscape, lighting and signage which is coordinated and which enhances the distinctive identity of the City Centre.	Council	2006 / 2007 and ongoing
4.11		Implement a coordinated signage / way finding program specific to the City Centre which incorporates City Centre branding and encourages the use of the pedestrian/cycle network	Council and City Centre Association	Ongoing
4.12		Install banner poles throughout the City Centre in strategic locations for use during promotional events, festivals, concerts etc.	Council	2007 / 2008

Step 4	Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
4.13	Provide and encourage public art, which contribute to the distinctive identity of the centre.	Prepare and adopt a Cultural Development / Public Art Policy	Council	2006 / 2008
4.14		Establish a Cultural Development Advisory Committee.	Council	2006 / 2008 and ongoing
4.15		Commission art works by local artists for installation at identified locations within the City Centre. These should reflect a connection with Penrith, its geography and its history.	Council	Ongoing
4.16	Improve use of public domain	Encourage the use of streets, parks and civic spaces for a range of activities such as markets, kiosks, flower vendors and community and cultural events such as street theatre and musical concerts.	Council and City Centre Association	Ongoing
4.17		Ensure ongoing maintenance and management of public domain is of a high standard. Give high priority to the maintenance of public infrastructure to ensure presentation of facilities is attractive and functional.	Council	Ongoing
4.18		Investigate ways to secure funding for and management of on-going maintenance and general up-keep of the public domain to a high level	Council	Ongoing
4.19		Focus public domain improvements on improving the health and well being of residents, workers and visitors through measures such as providing for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ increased physical activity (encouraging walking / cycling), ▪ community interaction (provision of meeting places), ▪ safe environments, ▪ equitable access. 	Council	Ongoing
4.20		Prepare and implement an annual calendar of events for the City Centre which increases visitation to the centre (especially out of normal business hours).	Council	2007 and ongoing
4.21		Publicise opportunities for community use of public spaces for community events, markets and the like. Investigate opportunities to provide space free or for nominal amount for events which meet specified criteria.	Council	Ongoing
4.22	Improve City Centre planning controls	Incorporate requirements in City Centre DCP for provision of public art, water features etc , where appropriate, as part of major development projects.	Council and Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
4.23		Incorporate in City Centre Section 94 Contributions Plan a requirement for contributions from developers towards public art.	Council and Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
4.24		Incorporate planning controls into the City Centre DCP to require active building frontages at street level to encourage pedestrian activity. Avoid setting back new buildings from street edges, unless the intention is to activate the setback through the provision of plazas, green spaces and the like, which are part of the overall open space network.	Council and Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
4.25		Limit residential development on ground and first floors, to ensure active and semi public land uses are retained at street and first floor levels.	Council and Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008

Step 4	Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
4.26		Identify active and 'pedestrian priority' streets in precinct plans.	Council and Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
4.27		Require secure bicycle parking in major new developments for use by residents and workers.	Council	2006 / 2008
4.28		Identify new links, where needed, to improve accessibility and require that these be accommodated in any development proposals.	Council	2006 / 2008
4.29	Improve safety within the City Centre	Allow for short stay on-street parking and vehicle circulation through the City Centre to ensure activity and surveillance.	Council	2006 / 2008
4.30		Provide for active uses to improve casual surveillance and safety in areas surrounding the bus/ rail interchange.	Council	Ongoing

Step 5: Creating a Cultural/Entertainment Precinct

Cultural and entertainment facilities help to establish the City Centre as a leisure and visitor destination and to enhance its image and quality of life. Special events and other civic activities enhance the Centre's attraction and help to increase the number of visitors and in turn the amount of expenditure. These activities improve the City Centre's appeal as an environment in which to live and work. To unlock the potential for cultural and entertainment facilities, they should be an integral part of the fabric of the City Centre.

One benefit of providing entertainment and cultural opportunities within a City Centre is to retain people in the centre after the daytime commercial and retailing activities have closed. Night time entertainment activities enhance the appeal of a place after dark, provide a place for people to be after hours, and help to create a new identity for the centre, whilst activating the street and improving the perception of public safety.

Different entertainment concepts appeal to different people, and these varied uses can be accommodated in close proximity to each other, creating a specific hub of activity and enabling people to walk between different venues. Attracting various people into the City Centre makes the place a more diverse and interesting place to be.

By integrating entertainment and cultural activities within the City Centre, cultural amenities can be seen not as something remote or apart from everyday life, but fundamental to people's needs.

What opportunities exist to improve, enhance and expand cultural activities?

The Cultural Development Analysis of Penrith CBD and St Marys Town Centre by Deborah Mills (March 2005) identified that there are extensive possibilities to enhance and expand the existing cultural facilities and opportunities within the CBD. The Penrith City Centre already houses the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre, a regionally-sized performance space which could be promoted as a multi-art form performing arts centre, and as a lively meeting place for Penrith City and Greater Western Sydney. Further to this, and on a larger scale, there are opportunities to provide joint initiatives with other councils in the region to promote the sharing of cultural resources, events and infrastructure. A joint initiative of this sort would help to promote cultural activities throughout Western Sydney and provide a broader base for local artists.

Penrith City Centre has been identified over the years as having a poor public domain. It has also been well documented that the quality of a public domain can be improved substantially through promotion of the arts and cultural events, which attract people and play a critical role in creating an inclusive, distinctive and vibrant City Centre.

Penrith City has an extensive array of Indigenous and European cultural heritage, as well as natural heritage, however presently the area's heritage is not legible. This heritage can be promoted and made more accessible to the public for appreciation and everyday use (especially in terms of natural heritage). Heightening awareness of heritage values will contribute to the cultural richness and knowledge base of the community about its origins, which in turns helps to create identity and a sense of belonging.

As the City Centre develops, the cost of land, and in turn, rent will increase, making it increasingly unaffordable for smaller, establishing artists to find performance or other accommodation. Penrith Council is in a strong position as a significant landholder within the City Centre to support emerging artists by making some of their landholdings available for affordable spaces to be used by smaller creative groups or industries. In this way, cultural organisations will have an environment in which they can develop, and at the same time offer a wider and more diverse range of artists and cultural resources within the City Centre. A draft Social Services and Community Accommodation Needs Study (May 2006) has been prepared by consultants and provides recommended actions to respond to the needs of community organisations and social services.

A major cultural and entertainment precinct is situated south west of the City Centre, around Penrith Panthers World of Entertainment, Penrith Park, the Showground and Paceway Function Centre. Immediately north of these community and entertainment facilities is a large expanse of Council owned land, known as the Carpenter Precinct, and also Woodriff Gardens which, together, have the potential to build upon the existing cultural and entertainment precinct. Creation of an open air concert facility, similar to the Myer Music Bowl in Melbourne or the Domain in Sydney, in conjunction with public parklands, botanical gardens and a pedestrian parkway linking to the Nepean River would provide a regional space that would attract concerts, festivals and other public events to Penrith. In the longer term, a connection to the River would facilitate a greater relationship between the City Centre and the water, which is currently acknowledged as one of the three elements, along with mountains and lakes, defining the Penrith region. Land along the River frontage also has the potential for redevelopment into restaurants/café's, picnic grounds and parklands, enabling greater public access to the waterway. Council has been and will continue to work with stakeholders on this project.

These new opportunities should not detract from ongoing support required for the existing cultural and community facilities provided in the City Centre. As cultural facilities are important in achieving street activation, new facilities should be grouped in generally centralised areas to promote pedestrian movement between different uses. A mix of uses such as restaurants, theatres, cinemas and other related activities enable patrons to enjoy, for example, a meal before a show, within a reasonable walking distance of each other.

Strategies and actions for improving the provision of cultural services, activities, facilities and opportunities

Step 5	Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
5.1	Develop an Entertainment Precinct and a cultural focus for the region	Identify through precinct plans entertainment precincts, including Riley / High Streets in the vicinity of Penrith Plaza and around Allen Place / Woodriff and High Streets in the vicinity of the proposed central City Park	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
5.2		Investigate initiatives to enable establishment of specific entertainment / restaurant precincts.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
5.3		Provide for outdoor eating in identified areas through public domain improvements etc to promote activity and vitality within the centre	Council	2006 / 2008
5.4		Investigate opportunities for sharing of cultural facilities and measures to attract cultural groups to Penrith for performances. [These may include provision of small performance spaces, subsidising leasing costs, financial assistance etc].	Council	Ongoing
5.5		Investigate the potential for community and cultural activities in the Woodriff Gardens / Carpenter Precinct, that will enhance connections between the City Centre and the River.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2007
5.6		Investigate establishing a program of free public events	Council	2006 / 2008
5.7	Celebrate and learn from local history	Use public art and cultural planning processes to interpret the history of Penrith.	Council	Ongoing
5.8		Facilitate opportunities to interpret, display and care for Penrith City's rich Indigenous and European Cultural heritage. Opportunities may include professionally curated exhibitions and performances in collaboration with local communities and cultural organisations. Ensure that these collaborative projects provide support to local artists and arts organisations and offer opportunities for professional development.	Council	Ongoing
5.9		Incorporate the history of the City of Penrith into the 'branding' of the Centre.	Council and City Centre Association	Ongoing
5.10	Support and help to promote emerging artists.	Appoint a Cultural Development Officer whose role will be to manage community cultural facilities within the City Centre and support emerging talent from local schools and UWS.	Council	2006 / 2008
5.11	Support existing Cultural Facilities	Implement the strategies in the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre's Business Plan to position the Centre as a multi art form Performing Arts Centre, and as a lively meeting place for Penrith City and Greater Western Sydney.	Council and Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre	Ongoing
5.12	Involving the community	Develop partnerships and collaborations with local artists, cultural and other community groups, businesses and developers to ensure input into the design and refurbishment process, particularly of the public domain and community facilities.	Council	Ongoing

Step 6: Making Housing and Mixed Use a Priority

Growth in housing within commercial centres has been driven by a number of changing socio demographic influences. These influences include an increase in household formation made up primarily of empty nesters and young professionals, a renewed interest in urban lifestyles and historic architecture and a shift in the preferred housing choice from suburban home to apartments – as described by Hill PDA (July 2004), a shift from “sense of space to sense of place”. In addition, a concentration of cultural and entertainment activities within centres has made City Centre living attractive for social interaction. Together these factors combined with accessibility to work and/or public transport and housing affordability have fuelled the growth in urban living throughout Australian cities.

Just as households are increasingly being attracted to City Centres for the offers they provide, housing and mixed-use development within a City Centre has become integral to its success. As noted by Hill PDA,

Residential living in town centres is recognised as an important element of fostering the living city concept. Local residents in a centre extend the level of activity past office and shopping hours.

Housing extends the vitality of a centre and provides a market for a variety of uses and a group to lobby for high quality public services and infrastructure (ULI, 2004). Housing and mixed-use development is therefore vital to achieve a vibrant, active and interesting centre which operates, and is safe, at all hours.

While inner and middle ring areas within the Sydney Metropolitan Area have experienced significant development pressure for housing and mixed-use development within major centres over the past decade, this trend is clearly attributable to matters such as the quality of the urban environment and the price differential between apartment and detached dwelling stock in the locality. However, over the same period Penrith City Centre has not experienced a significant increase in such demand partly attributable to the fact that “the cost saving of a Penrith City apartment compared to a house in the suburbs is not as substantial as similar comparisons between apartments and detached dwellings in middle and inner ring suburbs of Sydney” (Hill PDA, July 2004). However it is anticipated that with rising land and housing costs this is likely to change over time resulting in an increased cost differential and subsequently additional demand.

While some mixed use and higher density residential development currently exists around the periphery of the Penrith City Centre, no such development has occurred within the Centre itself. It is considered that these provisions have not been taken up due to a number of factors including:

- high development costs associated with car parking provision (particularly given the high water table and related costs of basement car park construction, and high rate of provision required by Council controls);
- the affordability of single dwellings in new areas compared to apartments in the centre;
- the existing urban environment within the Centre does not provide an attractive lifestyle and sufficient cultural and entertainment opportunities to make it an attractive living option when compared to more traditional suburban living.

To establish Penrith City Centre as a vital, interesting place to live it is essential that key strategies are implemented in the early stages to improve the urban domain and concurrently establish housing and mixed-use development within the Centre at the early stages. Strategies should be based on addressing the issues identified above, which have to date limited attempts to encourage this form of development within the Centre.

In addition strategies need to address the other more general barriers which exist to prevent the establishment of City Centre housing. These include difficulties in assembling sites, relatively high land costs, greater market risk, especially in initial stages, negative perceptions about crime, congestion and parking, and noise, garbage and quality of life issues.

Step 6: Strategies and actions to deliver housing choice within the City Centre

Step 6	Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
6.1	Encourage a variety of housing choice and mixed use development within the City Centre	Prepare precinct plans which clearly identify areas where residential and mixed use development is encouraged.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006
6.2		Investigate incentives to encourage residential and mixed use development within the City Centre	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2007
6.3		Investigate options for the provision of affordable housing within the City Centre as part of the city wide Residential Review	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2007 / 2008
6.4		Prepare planning controls which encourage variety and affordability of housing types to accommodate a broad range of housing groups including 'key worker' accommodation	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
6.5		Work with public housing providers to identify opportunities for the provision, management and ongoing maintenance of low cost housing within the City Centre	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	Ongoing
6.6		Ensure potential land use conflicts are considered through precinct planning.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
6.7		Include in planning controls and guidelines detailed requirements aimed at ensuring a high quality standard of apartment development	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
6.8	Joint Ventures/ demonstration projects	Encourage demonstration projects to clearly illustrate the standard of apartment living that can be achieved in the City Centre whilst still achieving appropriate development margins.	Council	Ongoing
6.9		Undertake consultations with major developers active in the multi unit residential market to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ understand development cost issues ▪ cooperatively seek to improve standard of residential development in City Centre ▪ publicise model apartment designs ▪ build relationships which may lead to improved design and potentially joint venture arrangements, and ▪ promote Strategy objectives and actions. 	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2009

Step 7: Managing Parking and Improving Access

Auto access and parking are critical to the City Centre's success as a market. Nevertheless, a planning approach that consistently gives priority to efficient traffic flows and inexpensive surface car parking for individual developments will lower the quality of the pedestrian environment. All central areas should be designed with the pedestrian in mind, and on key retail streets, the pedestrian should receive top priority. While vehicular traffic and on street parking should not be excluded, cars and parking should be carefully managed to avoid overwhelming the human scale of the streets.⁴

Decisions about traffic management and car parking are among the most important in making the City Centre a high quality place for people. Inevitably, there needs to be trade-offs between vehicle, public transport and pedestrian needs and difficult decisions need to be made so that an appropriate development pattern and urban environment can be created.

Vehicle access to the City Centre must be based on a logical and well defined street hierarchy. In planning for better vehicle circulation, the objectives should be to:

- provide reasonable access to the City Centre,
- ensure through-traffic is guided around the central core area and local City Centre traffic is directed to major parking areas,
- design the circulation system so that drivers are readily able to orient themselves.

However, in developing a good vehicle circulation system, it is important not to trade off the quality of the pedestrian environment or the integrity of the existing urban fabric in order to optimise car movements.

Car parking is another major issue that needs careful consideration. Large surface car parks break up the urban environment, increase distances between shops and services, and prevent integrated development. Sufficient car parking must be provided to encourage patronage of a centre, yet it is also crucial to minimise the land area required to do so. Open car parking lots and multi-storey car parking stations do not contribute to an attractive public domain and are therefore inappropriate in locations where active street frontages are sought. Underground car parking or the internalisation of car parking within centralised parking structures with active uses fronting streets are, in terms of the public domain, the best way to provide for vehicles within the City Centre.

The challenge in developing an appropriate car parking strategy is that different activities require different parking regimes - short stay parking of 5-15 minutes for quick shopping trips and to pick up and drop off passengers, longer stay parking of 2-3 hours for longer shopping trips and related activities, and all day parking for City Centre workers who cannot access the centre by other modes of transport. In addition parking requirements may vary significantly between time periods; that is, weekdays, after hours and weekends.

Along streets, short stay parking is appropriate, as it allows good accessibility for people to run quick errands and undertake single purchases while at the same time creating street activity. Priority in the more centralised locations should be given to short-term retail or business customer use, whilst longer term or all day parking can be provided further out from the City Centre.

Car parking demand, especially for longer-stay parking, can be managed through the promotion of the use of public transport to access the centre by City Centre workers. For example, the cost of long term or all-day parking in the centre could be increased to reduce affordability and encourage public transport use. In addition commuter shuttle buses could be provided to transport workers from out of centre car parking structures into the City Centre.

The amount of surface level car parking can be reduced by the construction of multi-storey car parking stations in peripheral areas, however there are limits on the economic feasibility of

⁴ Cy Paumier, op cit, p45

these structures. City Centre parking should be designed and located so as not to interfere with the amenity of the main street or other pedestrian thoroughfares.

In addition the sharing of car parking spaces by businesses during the day and other entertainment or cultural uses at night is appropriate and should be recognised in car parking requirements.

Public transport provision, both to and within a city, is important to ensure an accessible and vital centre. The aim is to decrease reliance on the private vehicle and make other transport options attractive and viable. Free internal shuttle bus services help to reduce reliance on the car for trips within the centre, and encourage interaction with the public domain. These services need to be of a high frequency, reliable, clean and visible and become part of the city's identity over time. The route for this service needs to be integrated into the pedestrian network and provide for direct and quick movement around the city.

An accessible City Centre should also include a safe and legible cycleway network. Where well-planned cycle routes are available, there is potential for a significant number of trips to be undertaken by this mode rather than by cars. Bicycle use also activates the pedestrian environment and offers a more intimate City Centre experience. A successful cycleway network also relies on appropriate facilities for bicycle parking.

Issues with the existing transport and parking situation in Penrith

The road hierarchy in the City Centre provides a logical pattern of north south and east west streets although the majority of roads carry significant volumes of traffic during peak hours. The speed of vehicles in the City Centre is generally low which is desirable in areas of high pedestrian activity. However, the existing traffic situation in the centre provides significant opportunities for pedestrian-vehicle conflicts. This could be overcome by further reinforcing the primacy of pedestrian movements over vehicles.

Penrith City Centre is well serviced by car parking with some parking places provided in anticipation of future demand (eg Judges Place). Despite this there is still a perception by some City workers that there is an insufficient supply of all-day car parking in close proximity to places of employment. Surface car parking comprises the overwhelming majority of spaces within the City Centre. Large swathes of car parking are located particularly towards the western end of the City, along Union Road, and up towards the railway station. Smaller pockets of parking are also scattered throughout the City Centre. Council owns the majority of this surface car parking.

There are commuter car parking facilities located close to the train station and bus / rail interchange. These facilities are also available for other users, including employees in the City Centre.

The existing large areas of surface car parking in the City Centre hinder the attainment of a vital City Centre. The surface car parking consumes a significant proportion of the overall land area, creating large areas of open land between building uses and fragmenting the urban structure. As a result, shops and services are forced to spread out to accommodate the surface car parking. In addition, as there is so much car parking available, driving between car parking lots becomes attractive to the customer, instead of walking, increasing reliance on the car and removing pedestrians from the public domain.

Bus services which provide access to the centre from surrounding suburbs are less than optimal with most passengers having to wait for at least 30 minutes from one service to the next. In addition there are concerns that current negotiations with private bus services regarding future contracts may not necessarily deliver a similar or improved level of service sufficient to encourage higher bus usage.

Within the City Centre there is little priority for public transport on the traffic lanes. There is no bus lane, transit lane or bus priority signals in the streets within or at the periphery of the City Centre. Signage to direct people to public transport is also currently inadequate. No priority exists for cyclists on the road networks. Cyclists have to share the roads with vehicles. Also there are no bicycle parking facilities in the off-street car parks in the City Centre, except Belmore Street commuter carparks where bicycle lockers exist for commuters.

Council has already started to move, over time, in the direction of managing travel demand as an alternative to simply seeking to meet the unconstrained parking demand in the City Centre. Actions initiated by Council include reviewing the time limits on public car parking spaces, reviewing car parking requirements for new development and lobbying public and private transport operators for improved public transport services. The Glazebrook Associates Penrith City Centre Parking Strategy (May 2006) has identified that the current Council Car Parking DCP requires review in order to limit the amount of car parking required within the City Centre over the next 25 years.

Short, medium and long term actions are required for the future provision and management of car parking in the City Centre that will better encourage and develop public transport usage, and still meet the needs of all user groups. Better management of the travel demands of different user groups seeking to access the Centre requires a better understanding of their individual needs. Investigating the specific needs of the users of the City Centre will enable a balanced and sustainable response to be developed to support an accessible centre.

Strategies and actions for improving car parking and access to Penrith City Centre

Step 7	Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
7.1	Understand access and transport issues within Penrith	Undertake detailed surveys and investigations to identify different user needs and the parking provision for different land use types, the potential for limiting on-site parking requirements for commercial, retail and residential development within the Centre, appropriate time zones and future pay parking arrangements, user awareness information requirements, and the safety and security of car parking.	Council	Initial survey undertaken October / November 2006. Continuing in 2006 / 2007
7.2	Plan for improved access to the City Centre	Prepare an Accessibility Action Plan to identify appropriate short, medium and long term actions to improve access to the City Centre based on travel demand management principles.	Council	2006 / 2007
7.3		Prepare a car parking strategy and Section 94 Contributions Plan that identifies appropriate car parking requirements for residential, commercial and retail developments.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	Draft prepared, to be completed (+ S94 Plan) 2006 / 2007
7.4		Investigate the long-term relocation of car parking to peripheral sites in multi deck form to maximise land use efficiency, with the provision of shuttle buses to transport workers and others to the City Centre.	Council	2006 / 2007
7.5	Review car parking provision	Manage short stay car parking to ensure availability of spaces and regular turnover.	Council	Ongoing
7.6.		Identify opportunities to relocate existing car parking spaces from surface parking areas, so that the land is available to use in ways that better contribute to the vitality and viability of the Centre.	Council	2006 / 2007
7.7		Require car parking for new development to be located within buildings and buffered from street frontages by other land uses.	Council	Ongoing
7.8		Identify opportunities for shared use of car parking by multiple users.	Council	Ongoing
7.9		Limit long-term car parking within the Centre and provide spaces for short-term parking for shoppers and visitors.	Council	2006 / 2007
7.10	Reduce reliance on private vehicular access to the City Centre	Continue lobbying State Rail and private bus companies to improve public transport services.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	Ongoing
7.11		Encourage transit-oriented development in and around the City Centre close to existing public transport.	Council	Ongoing
7.12	Reduce pedestrian/vehicular conflict	Prepare a bicycle plan for the City Centre which is integrated with the overall planned network, gives a high priority to bicycle access through the City Centre, makes provision for bike parking facilities within new development, along streets, and major nodes and activity areas.	Council	2006 / 2008
7.13		Provide for appropriate traffic management through the implementation of the Penrith City Centre Traffic Management Scheme.	Council	Ongoing
7.14		Develop a network that identifies 'pedestrian priority' precincts, encourages pedestrian access, improves amenity, reduces vehicle conflict, and enhances legibility.	Council	Ongoing

Step 8: Fostering Economic Investment

A City Centre that is vibrant and attractive is also one that attracts economic investment and creates jobs. Most importantly, the City Centre's character as a place plays a key role in whether it succeeds economically:

The strongest and most prevalent economic function in a City Centre is performed by office uses however, over the last decade and a half there has been a significant decline in office development in the major commercial centres of Sydney; much of it has instead shifted to emerging business park developments and industrial zones along the new motor transport corridors of Sydney. At the same time, Hill PDA has suggested the following key factors are underpinning the re-emergence of City Centres as places for office location⁵:

- *Land costs and diminishing availability are encouraging more efficient land uses. Car oriented developments are considered inefficient and are poorly integrated with other land uses.*
- *The sense of place or identity a City Centre holds is most important, as workers, residents and shoppers alike increasingly want to experience the sense of community embodied in a true City Centre*
- *Lifestyle benefits of being located within a City Centre are growing in importance ie: the opportunity and convenience to meet easily with clients, business associates.*
- *There is always a perceived prestige associated to being located within the City Centre.*
- *There are a growing number of business facilities which require high level accessibility by customers in well serviced transport nodes for them to be able to "sell" their product.*
- *There is a greater level of centralisation and specialisation in office based activity, with some sectors displaying a particularly strong preference for a central city location, such as those associated with communications, finance and insurance, property and business services.*

The nomination of Penrith as a Regional City within the Metropolitan Strategy will boost interest and investment within the centre, as the State Government's expectations for the delivery of jobs within the centre increases. Continued lobbying to State and Federal government departments is required in order to attract government departments to locate within the City Centre.

Nonetheless, it needs to be recognised that the potential for continuing growth in office development in the City Centre is limited. Other economic activities are also needed, such as local retailing, service providers, housing and cultural / entertainment uses, as part of the overall strategy to foster economic growth and create jobs in the City Centre.

⁵ Hill PDA, "Where is all the Office Space Going? Attracting Commercial Development to Regional Centres" , September, 2004

Strategies to foster economic investment

Step 8	Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
8.1	Develop Penrith as a Regional City	Lobby the Department of Planning to attract resources to facilitate the growth of Penrith as a Regional City in a manner that is consistent with the vision, strategies and actions identified within this City Centre Strategy.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	Ongoing
8.2		Ensure City wide LEP appropriately zones the City Centre and its surrounds	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
8.3		Review, with the Department of Planning, the potential for a Business Park in the City of Penrith that complements and supports the activities of Penrith as a Regional City.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
8.4	Identify precincts to ensure a balance of activities	Create precincts and develop planning controls that encourage a clustering of activities and urban design responses that foster linkages between precincts within the City Centre.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
8.5		Identify precincts within the City Centre suitable for local small business and service providers and ensure that planning controls for these precincts allow an appropriate range of uses and facilitate development	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
8.6	Build a positive identity	Promote the City Centre image and lifestyle marketing an image / brand. <i>Refer to actions and strategies listed under Step 1 Building community support.</i>	Council	Ongoing
8.7		Recognise the synergy of promoting the arts and economic development <i>Refer to Step 4 - Creating friendly and attractive places and spaces, and Step 5 - Creating a Cultural/ Entertainment precinct.</i>	Council	Ongoing
8.8		Investigate opportunities for Council to enter into joint venture projects with the private sector to undertake catalyst development projects.	Council	Ongoing
8.9	Facilitate economic development	Ensure parking for business is provided at appropriate levels. <i>Refer to Step 7 – Managing Parking and Improving Access.</i>	Council	Ongoing
8.10		Undertake a review of development costs and recommend how future investment can be attracted to the City Centre.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
8.11		Lobby State and Federal governments to encourage the location of regional offices within Penrith.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	Ongoing
8.12	Improve worker amenity	Improve the amenity for office workers with improved streetscape and public facilities landscape. <i>Refer to Step 4 - Creating friendly and attractive places and spaces.</i>	Council	2006 / 2008

Step 9: Achieving a Quality Built Environment

The architectural character and quality of buildings in a City Centre make a significant contribution towards its overall attractiveness and identity. It is not enough just to concentrate efforts towards achieving a high quality pedestrian environment; the quality of the adjoining built form is crucial to the effectiveness of any City Centre strategy. A high quality built environment attracts economic activity and investment and engenders pride in the community.

Attractive places and spaces are highly dependent on the quality of the surrounding built form. Functional and visual continuity of the urban structure is one of the most difficult challenges in creating great centres. Too often, our City Centres are characterised by an incoherent jumble of different architectural styles, building forms and pedestrian treatments. Unlike buildings constructed pre-20th century where the basic building scale, forms, orientation and materials were relatively consistent, technological innovation and modern architecture have allowed for a greater range in building form, scale, materials and character. As a result, many new centres are characterised by contrast rather than cohesion.

It is important to note, however, that diversity in architectural styles is not inherently bad, provided that it is contained within a design framework that allows for variation in individual building styles whilst maintaining an overall coherent and identifiable theme for the place as a whole.

There are a number of related elements that contribute to visual and functional continuity:

- consistent building heights, massing, scale, overall organisation of building facades with a clear address to the street
- a continuous developed edge along streets that gives clear definition/ address to the street space
- continuity and rhythm at ground level, that is, similarities in quality and style of building materials, consistent relationship between solid and glazed elements, clearly defined ground and upper storeys
- functional groupings of associated activities which have similar building requirements

The built form in Penrith City Centre

Whilst the buildings within the City Centre, particularly along Henry Street and High Street, have created a well-defined street edge, this street wall begins to erode east of Evan Street and west of the junction of Henry and High Streets. The largest building areas are the Penrith Plaza and Nepean Centro. These buildings contrast with the traditional fine city grain. Both of these developments offer an internalised shopping experience and have limited contribution to the City's richness and the public amenity overall.

Recent developments at Penrith Plaza have resulted in a more integrated design with the city. The establishment of 'eat streets' and orientation of entries to existing pedestrian thoroughfares has improved the connectivity of the shopping centre to the city. These type of developments are encouraged and Council will work to continue these improvements.

The overhead bridge on Station Street creates a jarring element in the overall urban structure of Penrith, and disrupts important views to the north and south. The improvement of this area, including Allen Place and the Spotlight building is key to improving the walkability and usability of the city due to the centrality of the location.

Existing building envelope controls encourage buildings with a 'pyramid' or 'ziggurat' form with deep floor plates at ground level in an attempt to maximise solar access to streets and public spaces. In addition inconsistent built form is created through the use of bonus floor space provisions for residential development. This is contrary to good urban design which aims for continuous, enclosing street walls, consistent building setbacks and height, and cohesion and repetition in the architectural composition of buildings to reinforce the perception of the street as a defined space. In order to maintain solar access to streets, the heights of the enclosing street walls will need rigorous assessment.

Strategies to achieve a high quality built form in Penrith City Centre

Step 9	Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
9.1	Prepare detailed planning and design guidelines	Prepare guidelines to be incorporated into the Penrith City Centre Development Control Plan, using the precinct plans. <i>Refer to Step 4 - Creating friendly places and spaces, and Step 10 - Providing the right planning, development and implementation framework.</i>	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
9.2	City Centre Design Review Panel	Investigate and identify the preferred model for a Design Review Panel, including composition and terms of reference	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008

Step 10: Providing the Right Planning, Development and Implementation Framework

Traditional regulatory approaches to planning for City Centres have struggled to deliver vibrant centres which are people centred. A planning system which is heavily based on zoning and the segregation of land uses does not provide for the creation of a place that “people will find so special that they will visit them repeatedly, invest in them and choose them as residences” (ULI, 2002). Where centres have developed which exhibit a strong sense of place, this has generally been accidental rather than as a result of a clearly articulated and implemented plan. To transform City Centres it is therefore essential to move from a system of segregated land uses to a focus on mixed use development and place making.

To realise the continuing revitalisation of Penrith City Centre it is critical to create the right regulatory environment which provides for and promotes the types of development which will contribute to attainment of the vision and provides for the creation of the “place” that is Penrith City Centre.

This work now needs to be undertaken within the context of a changed planning framework for the State, introduced by the Department of Planning and requiring the use of standard templates for all local government areas. Penrith is one of the first local government areas required to introduce the standard template. In addition, Penrith as a Regional City will be required to meet numeric targets for housing and job growth within the City Centre. To achieve these outcomes, Penrith will be assisted by the Regional City Centres Taskforce established by the State Government.

It is also vital to the success of the Strategy that regulatory controls provide for partnerships in the implementation of the vision. It is important to recognise that public commitment in the Centre through measures such as upgrading of the public domain and government investment in key projects will act as catalysts for private investment. It is similarly important to ensure that development within the centre is competitive from a regional perspective, that is, development returns are equal to, if not greater than, other similarly sized centres. In this regard it is essential that regulatory costs, such as car parking requirements or development contributions do not “price Penrith out of the market” and result in a leaking of investment to other centres.

The Strategy actions therefore need to be underpinned by planning controls and development guidelines which encourage forms of development that support and drive the realisation of the vision.

Whilst the existing planning controls in the Penrith City Centre have attempted to generate high quality commercial and other development, and sought to ensure an appropriate public domain, a number of the controls have unintentionally acted against these aspirations. For example, while an attempt has been made to ‘kick-start’ residential development within the Centre through the introduction of floor space bonuses this has largely been unsuccessful, in part due to development costs associated with meeting Council’s car parking code. Further, encouraging residential development in the City Centre by offering developers bonus floor space has the potential to create an inconsistent built form outcome for the City Centre, which can impact adversely on amenity.

Similarly, while the building envelope controls are based on the objective of maintaining the existing scale of, and solar access to, the east west streets, they have the effect of prescribing a ‘pyramid’ or ‘ziggurat’ building form with deep floor plates. Such building forms do not create strong street edge definition.

A clear planning framework for achieving the vision and for coordinating changes in the City Centre’s physical structure is critical. The key is to ensure that the planning controls are tested so that the resulting built form is understood and agreed upon at the outset, and so that developers can be confident that development that meets the planning parameters is also economically viable.

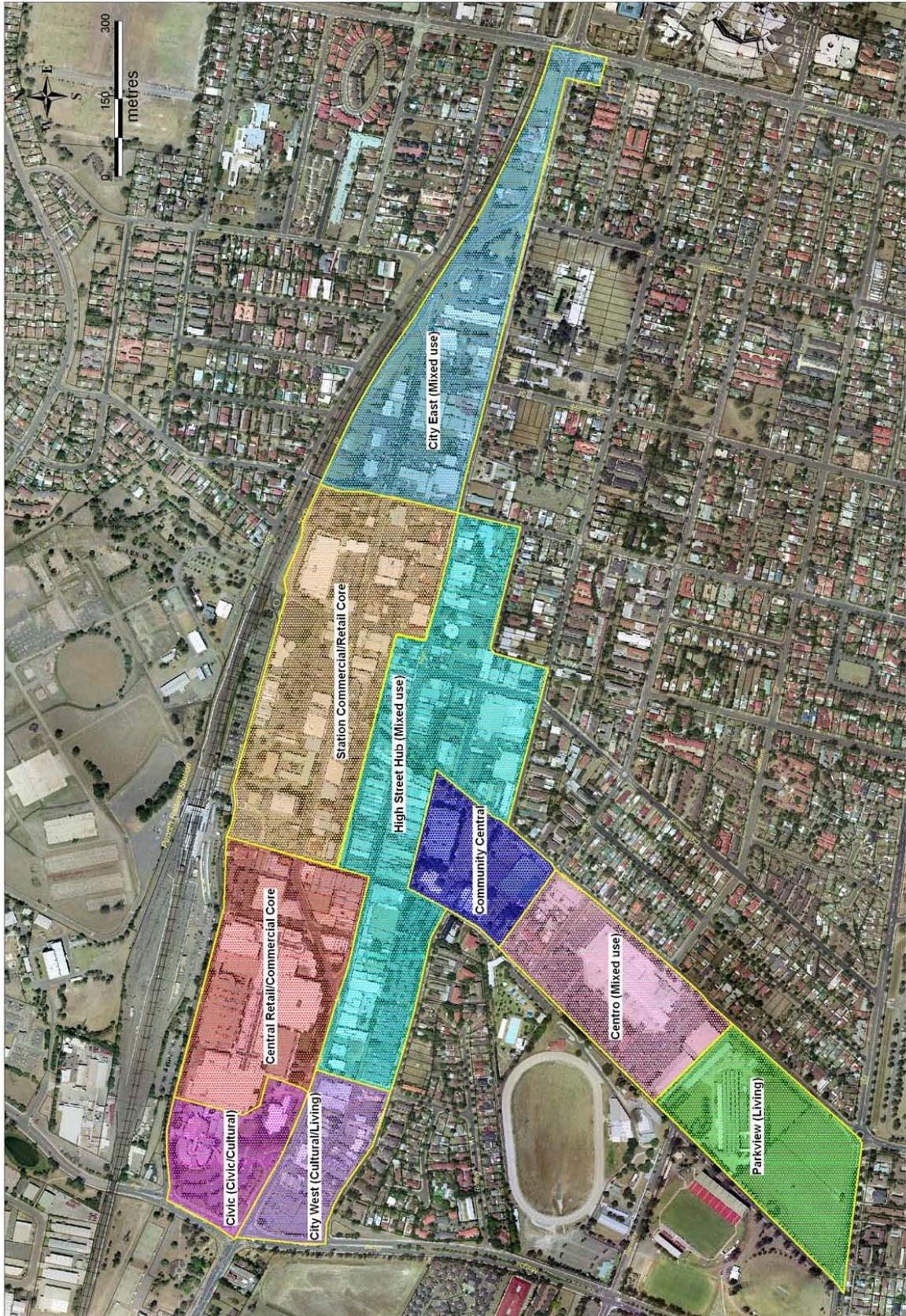
A new planning regulatory framework for the Penrith City Centre should aim to achieve the following:

- Through education, prescription, guidance and example, a high quality urban environment which is consistent with the vision and which provides for flexibility and innovation.
- A mix of land uses which can respond to market demand but which can also evolve over time in response to changing community needs.
- Provide for precincts allowing a core of commercial and retail development.
- A development and investment environment within Penrith City Centre which is financially attractive when compared with other similar centres.
- Car parking requirements which adopt a traffic demand management approach based on need and accessibility while at the same time providing good accessibility for the full range of Centre users (that is, shoppers, workers, commuters, visitors etc).
- A healthy environment which contributes to the physical, mental and social well being of residents, workers and visitors through equitable access, walkability, opportunities for social interaction, a safe environment and appropriate recreational opportunities, services and facilities.

Strategies and Actions to provide the right planning, development and implementation framework

Step 10	Strategy	Policy Action	Responsibility	Time Frame
10.1	Create planning controls that facilitate the right type of development	Prepare a plan showing the future structure of the Centre, including the hierarchy of streets, squares, laneways, parks and their character / function and future environmental qualities.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2007
10.2		Prepare a draft Local Environmental Plan which identifies appropriate zones, land uses etc, and a City Centre Development Control Plan which will identify the broad development controls to apply in the City Centre	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2007
10.3		Investigate opportunities for encouraging appropriate development in the Centre, including identifying Council owned land / buildings for redevelopment	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2007
10.4		Encourage building forms, construction methods and tenure arrangements to enable building adaptation for commercial and/or residential uses.	Council	2006 / 2008
10.5		Review State Government and other relevant 'active health' policy documents, and incorporate appropriate requirements into the DCP.	Council	2006 / 2008
10.6		Prepare detailed precinct plans which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies the future structure of the centre, ▪ Provides for a built form which is of a high quality, fine grained and which gives priority to the pedestrian and public domain, ▪ Details a range of planning and development controls aimed at achieving visual coherence and a unified urban structure, ▪ Ensures that buildings are able to be adapted for a range of commercial and / or residential uses over time. 	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2007
10.7	Ensure planning controls are viable	Undertake a viability analysis of the proposed planning controls	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2007
10.8	Resource assessment of new applications	Investigate and identify preferred model for a Design Review Panel, including composition and terms of reference	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2008
10.9	Ensure the implementation of the Strategy is viable	Prepare a funding plan to support the implementation of the City Centre Strategy including investigating viable transport solutions, Contribution Plans, Developer Agreements, partnerships, grants and other funding opportunities, State / Commonwealth government partnerships, and Council's existing programs and services.	Council and DoP Regional Cities Taskforce	2006 / 2007
10.11	Stage Works to deliver early outcomes	Prepare a Staging Plan for projects and works that will improve the Public Domain. <i>Refer to Step 4 - Creating Friendly and Attractive places and spaces.</i>	Council and City Centre Association	2006 / 2007

Penrith City Centre – Activity Precincts



Penrith City Centre – Activity Precincts

Generally the identified activity precincts acknowledge and reinforce existing patterns of use in the City Centre. The intention is to establish a series of legible precincts that define the retail and commercial centre whilst promoting mixed uses that integrate appropriately.

Precinct 1 - High Street Hub (Mixed Use)

The 'hub' of activities – the focus of the city centre and the central retail spine – active uses and a vibrant street life with cafes and restaurants and community activities locate here. A Central Park is created and creates a connecting and vibrant green heart for the city. Residential activities are located above ground levels, maintaining active frontages. A two storey maximum height is maintained at street frontage in order to allow plenty of light into the street, with higher built forms set back from the street frontage.

Precinct 2 – Central Retail / Commercial Core

Development within this precinct provides the core of retail development within the city centre. This precinct aims to improve the integration of Westfield Penrith Plaza with the rest of the Penrith City Centre. A new Central Square adjoins this area, and green avenues enhance the walkability of the area.

Precinct 3 – Station Commercial / Retail Core

Reflecting the regional role of Penrith City, this precinct provides a commercial core to the city, with supporting retail activity that is easily accessible and well serviced by decked car parking. The western end of the precinct provides important entry statements for arrival from the train station. Public walkways are improved and the quality of development is high; there are active ground floor uses and heritage values are retained.

Precinct 4 – City East (Mixed Use)

This precinct is important to the revitalisation of Penrith, providing higher density apartments amongst an array of land uses appropriate to a regional city. New development focuses on walkability with internalised car parking structures. Development of higher parts of the precinct maintains views to the Blue Mountains.

Precinct 5 – Centro (Mixed Use)

Connectivity to the city centre is improved through the encouragement of future development to the north of the existing centre. Also pedestrian connectivity to the entertainment/ leisure/ recreation areas around Panthers is improved.

Precinct 6 – Parkview (Living)

The focus of development within this precinct is for apartments with a range of ancillary land uses. Live/ work opportunities with a range of housing types are available within walkable distances to the city centre.

Precinct 7 – City West (Cultural / Living)

This precinct contains a range of cultural facilities complementing the uses within the JSPAC opposite creating an active and interesting place. Live/ work opportunities are provided in higher density development. Development adjacent to the Castlereagh/ GWH intersection is setback to provide a landscaped entry point to the city and views west to the Blue Mountains are maintained.

Precinct 8 – Civic (Civic / Cultural)

This precinct contains Council, the library and JSPAC. This precinct will be retained for civic and cultural uses creating a vibrant and active place for the community. The locality provides quality open spaces and contributes to a landscaped enhancement of the Castlereagh / High Street interchange.

Precinct 9 – Community Central

This precinct is a central focus for the community, and contains a range of community and cultural uses. Pedestrian connectivity to the city centre, the Nepean Centro / Parkview precinct, and recreation precincts is improved, and green spaces are retained.

