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Chief Executive Officer
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Re: Cockburn Central Proposed Structure Plan

I write to comment on the Proposed Structure Plan for the Cockburn Central development. Although I am broadly supportive of the development and its aims, **I oppose the structure plan in its current form because it is not sufficiently pedestrian-friendly**, and without a high level of pedestrian traffic near the new railway station, Cockburn Central will not develop into a vibrant community.

Recommendations

- Both the "Beeliar Drive" precinct and the "Central" precinct should be deleted entirely.
- The "Town Square" precinct should be expanded westwards to meet the central north-south road.
- The "Park" precinct should be expanded to cover the remainder of Cockburn Central.

Rationale

To develop as a vibrant community, Cockburn Central needs to be comprised entirely of pedestrian-friendly spaces with limited roads or parking areas. A community appears to be 'vibrant' for one main reason: anyone entering it can see large numbers of people around. Thus, it is essential that development in this project encourage people to walk and to stay on or around the street.

As an example of this principle, **it is entirely inappropriate that "uses with a pedestrian/TOD focus" be limited to only the "town square" precinct**. In particular, the suggestion that the "Beeliar Drive" precinct – barely 200 metres from the railway station – be set aside for bulky goods retailing, heavy commercial, or other uses that rely on vehicle traffic will severely impede the success of Cockburn Central. The entire Cockburn Central site is within easy walking distance of what will be one of the largest railway stations on the suburban network, so the land should be used for buildings that generate pedestrian traffic rather than large car parking areas or buildings that require frequent truck access.

An excellent opportunity to provide an inviting pedestrian link between the Cockburn Central development and Gateways shopping centre (thus improving the vibrancy of both) has been squandered by the construction of “South Gate Commercial” on the northern end of the Gateways site. This structure, which is in a similar style to the proposed “Beeliar Drive” precinct, wastes too much space on car parking, provides limited facilities for pedestrians, and does not offer a clear path into Gateways for a person walking south. **It is essential that the mistakes of “South Gate Commercial” not be repeated across the road at Cockburn Central.**

The structure plan does repeat these mistakes, however, by proposing a 20-metre setback from Beeliar Drive. Buildings at Cockburn Central should instead be separated from Beeliar Drive only by the footpath and any retaining walls and access stairways. Parking should be limited (and underground wherever possible), while footpaths should be wide, easy to notice, and easy to use.

The structure plan suggests alfresco dining areas in the “town square” precinct, which is laudable because alfresco dining makes a strong contribution to an area’s vibrancy. However, dining establishments should not be limited to that single precinct – they should be present throughout the entire Cockburn Central site. For example, although it is appropriate to place taller buildings and higher-density residential uses in the “Central” precinct, **it is also crucial that the ground floor areas of these buildings provide room for shops, bars, and restaurants.** If this does not occur, crowds of people from the railway station will not venture past the very small “Town Square” precinct, which will limit the pedestrian traffic around Cockburn Central and prevent it becoming a truly vibrant community. Instead, **along their entire length the east-west roads leading toward the railway station should be encouraged to develop in a manner similar to Rokeby Road near Subiaco station, Market Street near Fremantle station, or Oxford Street near Leederville station.**

Providing a vibrant, people-friendly space at Cockburn Central is essential to the success of the development, and will bring a great many benefits to the broader Cockburn region. Crucially, it would address the gross lack of places for young people to spend time in and around Cockburn. However, this goal will not be achieved with the current structure plan. **As a young person, I would not want to “hang out” at Cockburn Central if there are large visible carparks or heavy truck movements.** Instead, all development around the entire Cockburn Central site should be focussed on land uses that attract pedestrians.

Yours sincerely,

Hourann Bosci