



## **KINGSTON CENTRAL AREA MASTER PLAN REVIEW JANUARY 2009**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The preparation of the Kingston Central Area Master Plan is intended to provide Council with a framework within which future development can be guided and subsequently controlled. The Master Plan needs to encourage appropriate public and private investment. It should also provide the necessary guidance for the future construction of necessary public infrastructure and the development of planning instruments to ensure suitable development.

The Kingston Central Area Master Plan was endorsed in principle by Council in April 2008 and was subsequently publicly released. Since then, Council has received submissions from the public and affected land owners, and has conducted a number of related investigations. It is now an appropriate time to review these submissions and the work that has been done to date.

The Master Plan is conceptual in nature and it is apparent that it will evolve over time and there will need to be a number of changes made. It is very important that Council is able to explicitly state what it currently sees as being the updated Master Plan for the future development of this critically important central business district.

This report provides the background to the existing Master Plan and describes how it is being revised.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

The current Master Plan for the Kingston Central Area (KCA) was completed by consultants Collie Pty Ltd (previously Ratio Consultants) in March 2008 and was endorsed in principle by Council in April 2008. This Master Plan is actually a review of a previous Master Plan that was completed during 2003 and endorsed by a Council resolution on 15 December 2003. The main reason for the review (other than the lapse of time and the changes that had occurred during that period) was that the State Government had decided to relocate the Kingston High School. This potentially released a large area of land within the KCA for a range of purposes – commercial, community,

residential and open space. It was clear that this would have a major impact on previous planning assumptions for the KCA.

The first Master Plan for central Kingston was prepared by Ratio Consultants in 1990. It constituted a Development Plan for the Central Commercial Zone and included a long term structure plan that effectively proposed a large ring road based upon Beach Road, Church Street, Freeman Street and a new road along the edge of the high school boundary that joins back on to Beach Road. The large area within this ring road was proposed to be completely redeveloped with high quality pedestrian plazas and major retail and civic developments.

A supplementary report was also prepared by Ratio Consultants in 1995 called the Kingston Central Area Implementation Study. It expanded upon the Master Plan, particularly in regard to some practical implementation issues.

The 2003 Master Plan was primarily prepared by Annand Alcock Urban Design. It was quite conceptual in nature and provided a variety of urban design and development options. It dealt mainly with the core area that was bounded by Beach Road, Church Street, Freeman Street and the edge of the high school property. Within this area the existing street pattern was essentially retained, though the BP service station site was proposed to be converted to a central town park and John Street swung around to access Channel Highway at a right angle. The Channel Highway was still the main through road.

As previously noted, the 2008 Master Plan was heavily influenced by the availability of the high school property. With the additional land, this provided an excellent opportunity to have sufficient land to accommodate the necessary open space and development commensurate to the municipality's population increase. Previous master plans were heavily constrained and had focused on how to optimise the development opportunities within the limited area available.

One aspect that is common to all of the Master Plans is an analysis of the need for sufficient "floor space" to meet population projections. The Kingborough municipality has consistently been, over the last 15-20 years, the fastest growing municipality in Tasmania. Kingston itself has changed a great deal during this period with residential areas spreading out to the west and south, with significant commercial development only occurring in the CBD in the last 5 years. All of the Master Plans have focussed on the need to provide a future direction for this anticipated need for more civic and commercial development – anticipated in the sense that it was expected to follow the population growth that was occurring.

The primary task for Council is to exhibit the leadership necessary to effectively implement the Master Plan. This will primarily be done through Council's own capital works program and the regulation of future development proposals. In the case of the latter, it will be necessary to amend the Kingborough Planning Scheme 2000 in order that the appropriate standards can be defined and planning applications assessed against them.

Apart from the decisions being made by private developers themselves, the State Government has the most critical influence on the effective implementation of the Master Plan. This is because most development opportunities within central Kingston are located on Crown land (such as the high school property) and the Government is a major developer in its own right (eg a new Community Health Centre). This is

particularly relevant because the Council and the State Government have formally agreed to work cooperatively to ensure that the Master Plan is the basis for the central area's future development.

### **3. EXISTING MASTER PLAN**

The Master Plan itself proposes a new urban design for the central area that can be broadly described as containing the following proposals:

- Extending the existing retail core by providing a high quality pedestrian access north of Channel Court into the high school property.
- Providing for a series of supporting (mixed use) areas located around the expanded core retail precinct and consolidated car parking areas located at the edges.
- Providing a new internal ring-road distribution system based upon north-westerly extensions of Hutchins Street and Freeman Street. The existing Channel Highway becomes a slow-moving, pedestrian-based and active commercial street.
- Maintaining a green belt to the north and east of the central area and establishing a substantial town park that links this to the town centre.
- Creating a high quality "town square" type open space area within the very centre of Kingston and for it to be the focus of social and pedestrian activity.
- The built form within the central area is to be multi-level to ensure a compact town centre and ready access to nearby open space areas.
- Clearly defined precincts within the central area are provided in order that there is a diversity of functions – i.e. retail, civic and administrative, hospitality services, professional and commercial services, and public transport.
- Providing for medium density housing (such as apartments) within the town centre and on fringe areas.

The Master Plan itself contains a number of core principles which can be used as a means of assessing how it should be adapted over time and how suggested changes should be considered. These are listed below, together with examples of how these principles might guide further investigations that are necessary:

- *Future development should respect and work with the existing natural setting* – for example, consider whether enhanced views of the mountain can be obtained from public spaces within the KCA.
- *High quality public open space places should be introduced into the central area* – for example, consider the potential to expand on and link such open space areas as the proposed Town Square and Town Park.
- *Provide for a high quality pedestrian network within and surrounding the central area* – for example, consider how greater detail can be provided on streetscape and open space designs that show pedestrian routes and improved amenity.
- *Provide an internal road distribution system with good public transport opportunities and safe, attractive pedestrian access* – for example, provide more detail on road and streetscape design to achieve this.
- *Provide for a multi-level built form to ensure a compact town centre with optimal activity diversity and access to major public spaces* – for example, consider the opportunities to achieve this within particular precincts and provide for a range of building types and functions.

It is also important to consider that the Master Plan is aiming:

- To create a viable and sustainable town or sub-regional centre south of Hobart – to complement population growth and meet long term community needs
- For Central Kingston to be the primary focus for civic, commercial, administrative, entertainment and public transport facilities in Kingborough
- To meet the future community and commercial needs for additional land or “floor space” within an expanded town centre
- To build on past master planning efforts and best utilise the existing public infrastructure

These last four points provide a good summary of the Master Plan’s main objectives.

#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

At the April 2008 meeting, Council endorsed in principle the Kingston Central Area Master Plan as prepared by Collie Consultants (dated 31 March 2008). The Master Plan was then publicly released in conjunction with a Heads of Agreement that was signed by both Council and the State Government to work cooperatively on the implementation of the Master Plan.

Arrangements were then made to conduct a series of public workshops that would revisit the original results of the public consultation that was conducted when the Master Plan was being prepared. This original consultation involved two full-day workshops at the beginning of the master planning process in February 2007. The recent follow-up workshops were conducted on 16 July 2008 and consisted of three 2-hour sessions in the morning, afternoon and evening. All of the original attendees were invited and there were a number of public notices inviting others to attend as well. A total of about 100 persons attended the three sessions.

If a general theme could be drawn from these sessions, it was that the Master Plan should resolve the need to balance commercial interests with a desire for community spaces and places. It was generally considered that the Master Plan was a critical opportunity to get this balance right and to create a community “heart” within Kingston. The main issues raised are incorporated within the dot points below.

As well as these workshops, the Master Plan featured in an edition of the Kingborough News that was circulated to all of the households in the municipality. This edition contained a number of large descriptive articles and diagrams showing the Master Plan proposals. Public comment was sought up till mid-November 2008. During that period, about 10 individuals made submissions to Council in response to the Master Plan or had individual discussions with staff.

A summary or overview of the comments received is as follows:

##### General comments

- There has been little real enthusiasm expressed for the future development proposals contained within the Master Plan. The large articles contained in the July 2008 edition of the Kingborough News generated very little comment. The Master Plan’s proposals have failed to excite people about the future and most comments are more concerned about inappropriate development. This may be

mainly due to the difficulties in being able to visualise what the future may hold (from plans and diagrams), but the general lack of interest is a concern.

- There was a view that the Master Plan was just “more of the same” and did not offer anything that was uniquely suited to Kingston or reflect what is important for Kingborough. What is our “point of difference”? What unique attractions can be provided that will really make both local people and visitors from further afield want to visit the KCA? It is apparent that more information is required for people to really understand what the future will provide and how the Master Plan can be an effective means of stimulating exciting development projects.

#### Public open space

- There was a fairly well held view that insufficient open space is being set aside. The Town Square in particular was regarded as being too small (it is proposed to be about 2,500m<sup>2</sup> in area) and there was a concern that it will be dominated by surrounding buildings and have no views. A concern was expressed that the design did not link open space areas or make the most of opportunities for mountain views.
- The proposed larger Town Park was regarded as being placed in the worst location for a public space, in that it is a low-lying area on the edge of the CBD. There was a feeling that such public spaces should be allocated the prime sites in order to maximise opportunities for public use.

#### Insufficient attention to community based needs

- There was a general view that the Master Plan focuses too much on the expansion of retail development opportunities – at the expense of community needs (such as might relate to health, arts and culture, education, meeting rooms, open space etc).
- There were various concerns that the Master Plan did not provide sufficient direction to know where to site particular community facilities (eg library, health centre, adult education) and this made people feel that such facilities will not be provided and commercial development will be favoured due to revenue raising priorities.
- There was frequent mention of the need for a greater cultural emphasis in that there should be new facilities that provide for gallery space and for the performing arts. It was felt that such an iconic building could constitute the central “heart” of the KCA and that the Master Plan should identify where this could be located.

#### An over-emphasis on car travel and insufficient attention to public transport

- Concerns were expressed that the Master Plan design was fundamentally based on the maximum use of private vehicles and should have emphasised the increased use of public transport. The main bus transit station and park-and-ride facilities within the KCA should have been identified.

#### Adverse impact on existing businesses

- A number of the existing businesses were particularly concerned about the impact that the Master Plan will have. This relates to road access (such as the proposed closure of John Street) and the presumption that their land will be developed in a certain manner that is not their own intention. In some instances they stated they would continue on with their existing business for the relatively long term (say 20 years) and in a manner that is quite contrary to the Master Plan.
- Too great an emphasis was felt to be placed on the future retail development of the high school and some existing businesses felt that this would be at the expense of their own long term viability. The internal ring road was also seen as being a barrier to pedestrians having easy access to any businesses located outside of it.

Some of these concerns can be accommodated by making some reasonable changes to the Master Plan. However in the case of most issues, further detailed investigations will be necessary. This is outlined in more detail later in this report (within sections 6 & 7).

## **5. OTHER IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES**

Since the completion of the Master Plan about a year ago, a number of new developments have been completed or are known to be proposed. These more recent developments have had a significant impact on the effective implementation of the Master Plan.

Channel Court is the most dominant retail centre within Kingston. It is now anticipated that the retail floor area within Channel Court will in future be greater than was anticipated within the Master Plan. Additional stages are proposed in future that will result in the eventual redevelopment of most of this entire block – with some parts developed to a number of storeys. This additional floor space within Channel Court is likely to reduce the need for so much retail floor space to be provided within, what will be, the former high school site.

The most recent redevelopment of Channel Court occurred along its Church Street frontage during 2008. This part of Church Street is to be upgraded by Council to a standard similar to (or better) than those parts of the road at either end (Church St and Freeman St). This will also facilitate its eventual use as part of the “ring road” within the KCA.

The recent construction of the Kingston Plaza development has had a significant impact on the effective implementation of the Master Plan. The excavated car park is within the area that would have included the extension of Hutchins Street through to John Street and the school site. This has made the design of such a road extension very difficult, in that a new road would need to bend around and run alongside this excavation. The location of the entrances into Kingston Plaza also impede the optimum design of the Hutchins Street extension intersections with the Channel Highway and John Street.

The construction of the new Medical Centre on John Street will also result in some potential changes to the Master Plan. The Master Plan indicates a future road to be located alongside the school boundary and adjoining the high rear wall of the Medical

Centre and shops. This is not satisfactory and the road layout would need to change so that other development backs on to this rear wall.

The presence of the Medical Centre has created an opportunity to establish a health/medical precinct within the CBD (there are many complementary services nearby) and it appears that the proposed new Community Health Centre could also be located within the school property nearby. Such a scenario appears sensible but would be contrary to the Master Plan's commercial/retail proposals.

In order for Hutchins Street to be extended as proposed within the Master Plan, it would be necessary for the land to be compulsorily acquired by Council. The acquisition costs have been thoroughly investigated and have been found to be virtually prohibitive – particularly when subsequent road construction costs are also considered. Under other circumstances, private development would contribute financially to the infrastructure upon which it depends. In this case, it is clear that the road extension will open up some significant areas for such development, but Council is not able to legally recover the costs of land acquisition and road construction from these future developments. Without this guaranteed funding source, the extension of Hutchins Street is beyond Council's resources.

A fundamental principle in future will be that Council will strive to ensure that individual development applications also contribute financially to the public infrastructure that they directly rely upon. In order for this to occur, Council must be able to establish that particular developments will directly benefit from the future construction of public infrastructure and that there is a fully accountable scheme in place to support this.

As mentioned in the "public comments" section, particular concerns have been raised by some existing land owners within John Street. They require continued vehicular access to John Street and the proposed closure within the Master Plan must either be abandoned or await the provision of another suitable access solution.

John Street is a reasonably narrow road and is not suited to being a major traffic thoroughfare in the longer term. In the longer term, the streetscapes within the KCA are planned to be much more highly pedestrianised, with street trees and rest areas. The future solution for John Street should encourage traffic to take other routes to enable its streetscape to be improved.

The retention of the John Street businesses in their current location significantly impedes the establishment of the large retail centre on the school site as advocated by the Master Plan. Pedestrian access would also be impeded from Channel Court through to any other retail centre on the school property. The proposed establishment of the Town Square (on the BP site) is compromised due to the need to retain John Street – in that the park will have roads on either side of it and will have a significantly reduced area and pedestrian amenity.

## **6. REVISED MASTER PLAN**

As a result of the abovementioned issues and the submitted public comments, it is proposed to revise the Master Plan in a number of areas.

The most obvious changes relate to the road pattern. At the back of this report is a diagram that shows the altered longer term road layout. The main features of this altered layout are:

- Hutchins Street is not to be extended through to the other side of the Channel Highway.
- A new road into the high school site from Beach Road would be constructed as part of a new “ring road” system. This road is aligned so that it enters Beach Road at a right angle and there is sufficient space to the high school’s boundary to allow some development and/or open space and tree retention.
- This ring road would include a continuation of this road through to an extension of Freeman Street, which then connects onto Church Street and Beach Road. A broader strategy could be employed to reduce the through traffic on Beach Road by encouraging Blackmans Bay residents who are travelling to Hobart to use Algona Road and the Kingston By-pass (rather than Roslyn Avenue).
- If a future road from John Street is required into the main school property, then this would need to be via the existing parcel that is already owned by the Crown. The need for this road will depend upon the way in which the high school property is developed and if another exit from John Street is required. The main access into the school property would still be from the Freeman Street roundabout.
- The southern part of John Street would be one-way for northerly traffic – recognising the deficient junction at the Channel Highway and retaining the need for road access to private properties. An alternative to this might be for John Street to swing around and enter the Channel Highway at a right angle through the BP site (however this impedes access to some private properties). This might enable John Street to then be a two-way road and the small central park would then be located over the existing John Street junction.
- A new roundabout is likely to be needed in Freeman Street at the Denison Street junction and traffic signals (and pedestrian crossings) installed at the Channel Highway/Hutchins Street and Beach Road/Church Street junctions.
- Provision has been made for a possible cul-de-sac (within the school site) behind the properties fronting the Channel Highway. This would facilitate vehicular access to be via this road, rather than the steep entrances off the relatively narrow highway formation.

The new layout has been assessed from a traffic perspective. A traffic study was conducted in December 2008. The modelling that was done included traffic generation figures that predict the eventual development within the KCA and the likely traffic behaviour that will be exhibited. The traffic modelling indicated that the revised road system operates efficiently under forecasted traffic conditions in 2017. No significant traffic congestion issues were noted, apart from some minor delays at the main roundabouts.

The traffic study found that there would be a moderate reduction in traffic along the Channel Highway as a result of the modifications. This is seen as desirable to improve pedestrian safety and increase pedestrian crossing opportunities. There would be a

moderate increase in traffic volume along John Street compared to existing conditions, with most of this seeking a more direct route and avoiding the Beach Road/Channel Highway intersection. There would be a substantial increase in traffic using Church Street, again bypassing the Channel Highway through the CBD. No intersections experienced any significant congestion in terms of delays and queues and the proposed extent of traffic generation would not significantly adversely impact on the surrounding areas.

In assessing the future traffic loads it has been assumed that the future development of the school site is likely to be a mix or combination of residential/office/retail, plus other community/civic based uses. This is different to a single very large retail style development that was proposed in the Master Plan. The need for such large retail areas of floor space is expected to be met within Channel Court's future development stages and other areas within the KCA (including the school site).

The precise nature and type of development that is to occur on the school site in the longer term is of course not yet known. The Master Plan should provide a direction forward in this regard, but it will be subject to many more investigations which have already been alluded to. The revised road layout does however provide a framework within which development sites can be allocated (and subsequently subdivided) and open space areas defined. In doing so, it is important that there are standards and processes in place that ensure the overall development has a coherent and integrated form.

An essential difference however is that the KCA's core retail area is to now be focussed on the Channel Highway, rather than on a new pedestrian spine that was to be created by the Master Plan from Channel Court through into a new large retail development within the school site. This will facilitate the upgrade and redevelopment of the Channel Highway by Council in a manner that maximises the streetscape amenity and actively discourages traffic from using the Channel Highway in preference to other routes. It is anticipated that this work would be done as soon as is practical. It would essentially extend the work that has been recently done at the western end of the Highway, down from the large Freeman Street roundabout to Beach Road.

This work is to encourage an active streetscape that attracts greater use. It is important that future redevelopment that fronts onto the Channel Highway encourages an active engagement with the street and draws people out to move about between the various services and facilities. This will be the main "connector" area within the KCA and pedestrian amenity and safety must be paramount. It will set a standard for the design of subsequent nearby development – both in the public and private realm.

The final design and allocation of land for open space purposes is yet to be finalised. It is still desirable that the BP site be eventually utilised as a central town park and provide a "breathing space" for shoppers and workers within the central area. It would also be beneficial to link this public space to other similar areas, rather than it being seen as an isolated pocket. The concept at this stage is that there would be a cascading series of open spaces starting from the war memorial area at the roundabout, down to open spaces where the Council car park and BP service station are both located, then to an area within the school grounds where there are existing trees worthy of retention, and finally down to the large town park (similar to the Master Plan proposal) that links in to public walking/bike trails to nearby residential areas.

These potential changes to the open space network within the KCA should meet a number of concerns that were publicly raised – in terms of insufficient open space and its poor location. Some of the open space suggestions that have been made by the public will be difficult to pursue due to the associated land purchase costs. More detailed urban design investigations are necessary to accommodate the open space areas within the revised road network and the likely development of adjoining private properties. This includes how the John street/Channel Highway junction is to be treated – as described earlier (5<sup>th</sup> dot point above), plus the option of an eventual full closure of this junction.

There is a great deal of flexibility still retained within this revised Master Plan and so there is a need for a more investigations and detailed planning. For example, there are questions still remaining about where the best sites are for the various State Government and Council facilities. The most likely scenario is that they stay where they essentially are and the Adult Education area be redeveloped to provide an improved level of services. An alternative is that they all be relocated on to the school site and be redeveloped within a more parkland environment. Any eventual Master Plan needs to accommodate the fact that the KCA will undergo redevelopment over time and will evolve.

The essential objectives and principles of the Master Plan are being retained, despite the changes that are being proposed here. For example, one of the Master Plan's main objectives is to increase CBD floor space – to make it a truly sustainable commercial/community environment and reduce the need for CBD-type services to be scattered throughout Kingston. The advocated changes will not reduce the creation of additional floor space and these same objectives are still to be met. The proposed redesign is still true to the essential objectives and design principles of the Master Plan and is also responding to the concerns raised by the public submissions in a positive manner.

It is felt that the ultimate road and land use design (as outlined in this report and indicated on the attached diagram) is a viable long term solution. There will still need to be further investigations and consultation, but the conclusion here is that this is the best direction forward that can be determined at this time. The next section outlines the work that must now be done.

## **7. IMPLEMENTATION OF MASTER PLAN**

The further work to be done to implement the Master Plan can essentially be broken down into the following various tasks:

- (i) further investigations into detailed design aspects
- (ii) Council's capital works program
- (iii) appropriate amendments to the planning scheme

At each stage, there will be a need for public consultation and Council is also very conscious of the close liaison and cooperation that is necessary with the State Government. Future decisions and processes must be open and transparent, and Council is keen to benefit from the advice and suggestions that might be made by any interested person.

### **7.1 Further Investigations**

## Urban design

It is important that any approach taken in guiding future development within the KCA is informed by relevant contemporary experience elsewhere. Kingston was recently visited by eminent Danish architect Lars Gemzoe and Council officers had the opportunity to discuss the Master Plan and related urban design issues with him. Further opportunities will be taken up with other professional and academic urban design specialists.

Urban areas are never “finished” in the sense that evolution and change must be accommodated. Developed areas go through changes and renovation and this clearly evident in such a place as the Kingston CBD. This very transience provides opportunities that might be restricted if we regarded our urban form as being the finished product. Like most things, the urban form is always undergoing a process of self-improvement.

This ongoing improvement should be guided by urban design guidelines and these too should be implemented through the appropriate regulatory instrument – in this case the Kingborough Planning Scheme 2000. In preparing such guidelines, Council will need to take into account such issues as:

- the natural setting – terrain, preservation of views, climatic factors
- vegetation – themes, species, location of plantings
- pedestrian routes and pathways
- road design – junction design, cross sections, footpaths, cycle lanes
- parking design – location, on or off street, commuters, workers, visitors
- public transport – routes, stops, main transit area, park and ride
- public spaces design – amenity, safety, access
- streetscape – lighting, furniture, paving materials, public art
- stormwater management – water sensitive urban design
- building design – height, style, bulk, overshadowing, overlooking

There also are opportunities to utilise software that models the existing and potential urban landscape. This will be useful in gaining a better understanding of such issues as future building or streetscape appearance, bulk, shape, overshadowing etc. It would assist in designing prospective developments, in assessing development proposals and in public consultation.

It is also important to incorporate critical sustainability elements. This particularly relates to the contemporary impacts of higher fuel prices and climate change. How is the urban form influenced by the need for greater energy efficiency and alternative transport opportunities? The Master Plan should effectively “future proof” the CBD and it should be readily apparent how this is to be done. An integrated package of measures needs to be prepared that has considered many available options – such as:

- public transport use encouraged
- a much more heavily vegetated central area
- easy walking both within and around the KCA
- bicycle friendly – bike lanes and storage
- compact and accessible town centre
- streetscapes that provide for a vibrant and diverse street culture
- clean, attractive and welcoming public spaces
- public spaces that provide sufficient space and amenity for relaxation
- space for cultural events and markets (eg farmers markets, festivals)

- energy efficient buildings (possible net producers of energy)
- optimise use of alternative energy forms (solar, wind, geothermal)
- use of local building materials
- water sensitive urban design principles for stormwater
- learning and educational facilities
- community meeting places – both informal outdoor and formal indoor
- separate motor cars from pedestrians
- include residential components within the KCA

These are all elements that can be introduced as the Master Plan is progressively implemented and in conjunction with the further investigations required to develop the urban design guidelines. Council may be able to develop manuals that provide visual examples of what is appropriate and the desired qualities are able to be shown to prospective developers and the public alike.

#### Parking, public transport and “park-and-ride”

Parking is already a significant issue within the KCA and it is frequently reported that there are problems at certain locations. There is a shortage of long term parking spaces. An overall parking strategy will need to be developed that accommodates the needs of short term visitors (eg shoppers), workers (eg employees of local businesses) and commuters (eg the “park-and-ride” users).

Council is proposing to prepare an Integrated Transport Strategy for the municipality during 2009. This strategy will provide an overall framework for parking, public transport and park-and-ride facilities, and this will inform how these should be best provided for within the KCA. The more detailed investigations and site designs for the KCA can then be undertaken.

A regional public bus transit station will need to be located within the KCA and there already is a strong demand/need for long term car parking areas for both work commuters travelling into Hobart and local Kingston workers. Such needs must be incorporated within an overall parking strategy for the KCA that takes into account the parking requirements for private developments and the need for larger public facilities.

One of the objectives of the Master Plan is that people should be encouraged to park their car and walk comfortably around the KCA to wherever they need to go. This requires a high level of pedestrian amenity and convenience – the KCA should be designed as walkable town centre with a vibrant and diverse street culture. The way that the streetscapes are designed should give out clear messages that a visitor should quickly find a convenient car park and then be able to enjoy the experience of walking around the area. The KCA should be compact and accessible and the parking strategy has an important part to play in this.

#### Development precincts within the Master Plan

The Master Plan proposes that certain precincts should be developed for particular purposes. This creates an illusion of certainty that probably cannot be sustained. Further investigations will be required to see how the future use of certain precincts can be effectively controlled (eg via the planning scheme) or encouraged (eg via incentives). Various comments have been made that the proposed land uses allocated to certain precincts is not necessarily desirable or is too limiting. The other criticism is that in allocating such uses for certain precincts, the Master Plan has still not defined where

some particular essential developments could be located – such as a bus transit station, an expanded Community Health Centre or a new community/cultural centre.

The Master Plan needs to be further reviewed in the light of recent developments and known proposals. This includes revisiting the floor space calculations and locations where those needs can be best met. State Government investigations are being conducted into some of the existing and future government or civic related uses (such as a site for a new Community Health Centre). The outcomes from these other investigations need to be accommodated within the Master Plan.

This issue (of allocating future land uses) affects all land within the KCA, but it is particularly relevant to the high school property. It is proposed in this report that the future mix of potential uses on this site change somewhat from what is recommended within the Master Plan. Apart from a number of significant areas of open space, the school site is anticipated to be developed for a range of community and civic based uses, plus an appropriate mix of high density residential (upper storey apartments), hotel/motel, restaurants, offices (professional services), entertainment and associated retail. There are exciting opportunities to make the most of the natural features of the site and how development proposals are to fit in with adjoining open space areas. This needs to be investigated in more detail in regard to site designs and the level of future development control required.

The open space that is created within the KCA must fulfil a number of functions – ranging from aesthetic (eg views), environmental (eg tree planting and retention), engineering (eg stormwater management), rest and relaxation (eg for shoppers and workers), public events (eg festivals and markets) and pedestrian links (eg through the KCA and to neighbouring areas). The precise dimensions of the open space areas are yet to be defined. For example, how the John Street/Channel Highway junction is designed will influence how the potential central town park on the BP site might be designed.

## **7.2 Capital Works**

Council's future capital works programs will stipulate where public infrastructure is to be upgraded within the KCA. It is likely that this will be mainly in the areas of road construction and improvement – including footpaths, vegetation, drainage and street furniture. There also will be projects that look to provide for public car parking and for the development of parks and reserves. Future opportunities may also exist for other recreational and cultural facilities that are needed in response to more detailed Master Plan investigations.

It is recognised that the permanent public infrastructure that is provided by Council will have a significant impact on how people will respond to the KCA. It will impact on how people behave and move around within the KCA. This infrastructure will also set a standard that private development will be expected to emulate.

Council's capital works program must be prioritised and staged over time. There are limited available financial resources, with Council striving to balance the respective needs for all parts of the municipality – while at the same time recognising that this a critical time for the long term sustainable development of the municipality's commercial hub. Only a limited amount of on-ground work can be done by Council in any one year

within the KCA and, as more detailed work is done on the Master Plan, a future staged works program can be developed for the next 5-10 years.

The other factor that must be considered is how Council's own works program fits in with private development projects and the built and financial contributions to public infrastructure that private development can/should make. It will therefore be necessary to develop an up-front developer contributions scheme. Developers must know beforehand what is to be expected from them in regard to "headworks" type contributions. It may also be necessary for certain incentives to be offered for particular desired developments that would not otherwise be considered. The imposition of developer contributions will require a "head of power" to be installed within the planning scheme.

### **7.3 Planning Scheme Amendments**

One of the most critical means of implementing the Master Plan is by way of ensuring that the planning scheme has complementary provisions that require future development proposals to achieve the Master Plan's objectives.

Changes to the Kingborough Planning Scheme 2000 will be necessary to put the Master Plan into effect. There will need to be some relatively minor zoning changes. Most of the land would be zoned Business and Civic under the current scheme with the open space areas being zoned Recreation. It is envisaged at this stage that the planning scheme would include a separate Schedule that specifically deals with future development within the KCA. This Schedule could also be transferred (and adapted if necessary) across to any new planning scheme that is prepared for the municipality in the future.

The most likely issues that would need to be targeted within the new Schedule include:

- Road layout, frontage and streetscape
- Building setbacks, height, bulk and style
- Pedestrian amenity and public spaces
- Car parking
- Landscaping

It is anticipated that standards would be developed that address these issues in a manner that achieves the objectives of the Master Plan. These standards would be derived from the urban design investigations mentioned earlier. They will need to be similar to how such standards are applied elsewhere in the scheme – that is, in regard to a consistent definition, although it is expected that the standards within the KCA Schedule may be more detailed and stringent. The existing planning scheme may not have anticipated the scale or type of development that might now be appropriate within the KCA.

The strategic background to the planning scheme amendments will need to justify the proposed changes by showing how the Master Plan meets the broader needs of the municipality and region. It must be linked to other planning exercises and this particularly relates to the Kingborough municipality's own settlement strategy and the hierarchy of urban centres, together with the directions that are (or are likely to be) within a Southern Region Land Use Strategy.

The Kingston Central Area is the primary commercial hub for the municipality and arguably for the region south of Hobart. Outside of the Hobart CBD the main shopping centres of Glenorchy, Clarence and Kingborough constitute the regional commercial centres to the north, east and south respectively. Within Kingborough the hierarchy of commercial areas is essentially as follows:

- Level 1: Primary destination centre – Kingston CBD
- Level 2: Convenience centres – Kingston Beach, Kingston Town, Blackmans Bay, Margate and (in future) Huntingfield
- Level 3: Local centres – Tarooma, Snug, Kettering, Woodbridge etc

The planning scheme would need to be prepared/maintained in a way that strengthens this hierarchy and ensures the viability and pre-eminence of the KCA.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

A Master Plan for central Kingston is required in order that future development can occur in a coordinated and efficient manner. Vehicular traffic and pedestrians need to be able to move through the area safely and conveniently. Appropriate development control standards must be applied to ensure public amenity is protected and desirable land uses encouraged. Ideally, new development within the KCA should also be designed to have a greatly reduced ecological footprint and to encourage the use of public transport. The design of new buildings and public spaces must incorporate energy efficiency, public amenity and convenience features.

The Master Plan provides the necessary strategic framework. It must be adaptable and its practical application must recognise the realities of private land ownership, existing use rights, public resource and funding limitations, community views and legal "heads of power" to enforce desired objectives. This report has reviewed the existing Master Plan within this context.

It may appear that as a result, more questions are being asked than answers provided – such as is indicated by the extent of urban design investigations that are regarded as being necessary. However this review, or taking stock of the current situation, is a critical step in being able to now move forward. The existing principles and objectives of the existing Master Plan have been confirmed and a revised road layout has been determined. This road layout provides a basic framework from which to move forward and it is now necessary for Council to progress the various tasks outlined within this report as quickly as is practical.

In the meantime, comments or suggestions are welcome.

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January 2009

DIAGRAM SHOWING PROPOSED FUTURE ROAD LAYOUT WITHIN THE KINGSTON CENTRAL AREA – subject to further detailed site design

