Alice Springs Central Area

Land Use Objectives & Planning Concepts

Department of Lands, Planning & Environment
November 1996
# ALICE SPRINGS CENTRAL AREA LAND USE OBJECTIVES

## Introduction

- Declaration of the Minister 1
- The Vision 2
- Intended Outcomes 2

## General Objectives

1. Town Structure & Built Form 4
2. Environment & Heritage 4
3. Mobility, Transport & Parkings 5

## Precinct Objectives

1. Todd Street Tourism Precinct 7
2. Central Commercial Precinct 8
3. Anzac Hill & Todd River Precinct 9
4. Heritage & Billy Goat Hill Precinct 10
5. Southern Medical Precinct 10
6. Western Precinct 11

# ALICE SPRINGS CENTRAL AREA PLANNING CONCEPTS

## Ministers Message

14

## Section 1 Context

1.1 Introduction 15
1.2 Background 15
1.3 Land Use Objectives 17

## Section 2 Development Issues

2.1 Introduction 20
2.2 Growth Prospects and Population Horizons 20
2.3 Potential Floorspace Requirements 21
2.4 Height Limits in the Central Business District 22
2.5 Options for Future Development 23
Section 3  Land Use Concepts

3.1 Introduction 24
3.2 Commercial 24
3.3 Residential 24
3.4 Civic & Community 25
3.5 Entertainment 25
3.6 Tourism 25
3.7 Open Space 26

Section 4  Discussion of the 'General' Objectives

1. Town Structure & Built Form 27
2. Environment & Heritage 27
3. Mobility, Transport & Parking 28
4. Buildings and Urban Design 29

Section 5  Discussion of the Precinct Objectives

1. Todd Street Tourism Precinct 30
2. Central Commercial Precinct 30
3. Anzac Hill & Todd River Precinct 31
4. Heritage & Billy Goat Hill Precinct 31
5. Southern Medical Precinct 32
6. Western Precinct 33

List of Tables

1. Population of Visitor Growth 20
2. Alice Springs - Population Growth Prospects 21

List of Figures

1. Alice Springs Central Area Land Use Concept Plan 3
2. Alice Springs Central Area 16
3. Central Area Precinct Boundaries 19

Appendix 1 35

Appendix 2 36
Alice Springs Central Area
Land Use Objectives
Pursuant to Section 8(1) of the Planning Act 1993, I declare the Alice Springs Central Area Land Use Objectives to be a land use objective of the Northern Territory.

MIKE REED
Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment

Date 28/11/96

The Alice Springs Central Area Land Use Objectives are supported by the companion document *Alice Springs Central Area Planning Concepts*. 
THE VISION

This document establishes the Government’s planning and development objectives for the Alice Springs Central Area. The objectives establish a policy framework within which the Central Area will be a vibrant and attractive commercial and community centre servicing the needs of the regional community and visitors.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

The Alice Springs Central Area land use objectives are designed to achieve:

• a compact commercial centre characterised by its vitality and attractive physical setting;
• a business environment conducive to economic growth and able to attract and support higher order commercial activities;
• a town with a unique character that provides visitors with a range of positive experiences;
• quality urban design and buildings which take advantage of climate, heritage values and the town’s natural setting;
• increased awareness of Aboriginal culture;
• streetscaping that has an emphasis on shade and pedestrian comfort;
• an efficient transport interchange system and road and traffic network;
• a comprehensive network of footpaths and bicycle facilities throughout the area;
• more accessible and frequently used parks, open space and recreation facilities; and
• adequate, convenient and affordable car parking facilities.
These objectives apply within the boundary of the Alice Springs Central Area Land Use Concept Plan

1. **Town Structure and Built Form**

1.1 The Central Area is the major focus for retail, office and entertainment activities.

1.2 Land uses, design features and development strategies that are encouraged within the Central Area include:

(a) a compact and vibrant commercial centre focused within the CBD;

(b) the long term opportunity to expand the CBD function into the Western Precinct when it can be clearly demonstrated that such an expansion is necessary and will have minimal impact on the commercial viability of the CBD;

(c) high retail and office occupancy rates that provide investment certainty and consumer convenience;

(d) a physical appearance that is attractive to residents, visitors and investors; and

(e) a particular emphasis on quality urban design along the major thoroughfares and other highly visible and pedestrianised areas.

2. **Environment and Heritage**

2.1 The natural features, setting and physical evidence of the town’s history that are within and around the Central Area will be maintained and enhanced to reinforce the contribution that they make to the area’s appeal and image.

2.2 Land uses, design features and development strategies that are encouraged within the Central Area include:

(a) views and vistas to the Todd River and the surrounding hills and ranges from natural vantage points such as Anzac Hill and Billy Goat Hill as well as from street level;

(b) areas of natural open space in and adjoining the town centre;
(c) aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sites of cultural, heritage and environmental
importance that contribute to the character, form and amenity of the town;

(d) heritage management plans;

(e) appropriate heritage, cultural and environmental elements incorporated into building
design and streetscapes; and

(f) interpretative information for visitors.

3. **Mobility, Transport and Parking**

3.1 The transport network within the Central Area will combine adequate car parking
capacity, convenience and accessibility with an increased emphasis on access, convenience
and mobility for pedestrians, cyclists, the elderly and disabled.

3.2 Land uses, design features and development strategies that are encouraged within the
Central Area include:

(a) pedestrian links, signposting and weather protection devices on buildings;

(b) greater priority to pedestrian mobility and convenience;

(c) appropriate car parking capacity, convenience and accessibility;

(d) variety in the use of transport, including cycling, walking and public transport;

(e) no increase in direct property access to Stott Terrace and the Stuart Highway; and

(f) implementation of the recommendations of the *Alice Springs Traffic and Parking
Study, 1995.*

4. **Buildings and Urban Design**

4.1 The design and approval of buildings and other development will take account of the
town’s natural setting and feature quality urban design within a three storey height
limit.
4.2 Land uses, design features and development strategies that are encouraged within the Central Area include:

(a) design that provides for energy and water conservation and which is appropriate for the Central Australian climate and environment;

(b) upper storey setbacks and variation in roofing styles and heights to minimise any ‘plateau’ effect within the three storey height limit;

(c) advertising signs that do not detract from the natural and built environments, or the appearance, efficiency and safety of public areas;

(d) local materials and colours that reflect the town’s natural setting;

(e) paving, street furniture, signs, colours and textures in streets and open space areas that are consistent and visually unifying;

(f) weather protection devices on buildings, streets and public places to provide personal comfort, shade, rest and improved streetscapes; and

(g) pedestrian links through buildings and their integration with public areas.
The following land use objectives apply to the precincts identified on the Alice Springs Central Area Land Use Concept Plan.

Although the precinct boundaries are in some respects subjective and may change over time, they are intended to encourage development of a particular character and type, and result in land uses that are sympathetic to the historical, natural and built characteristics of each precinct.

1. **Todd Street Tourism Precinct**

1.1 The principal function of the precinct is provide for tourism and commercial uses in an attractive physical environment that take advantage of the precinct’s natural setting.

1.2 Land uses and design features that are encouraged in the precinct include:

   (a) quality urban design that responds to the physical setting, and is of a scale and form that reflects the pedestrian character of the precinct;

   (b) stepped building heights along the Mall to provide a low rise building form at a pedestrian level with successive upper floor levels setback from the street frontage;

   (c) design detail and community art that make the Todd Mall a place of visual interest;

   (d) development along Leichhardt Terrace that is visually oriented toward the Todd River;

   (e) direct pedestrian access from the Mall through to Leichhardt Terrace and the Todd River; and

   (f) landscaping treatments that enhance and are consistent with the natural environment of the Todd River.

1.4 Strategies that improve traffic circulation, parking, and pedestrian and cyclist mobility and safety are encouraged, including:

   (a) the development of a ground level carparking facility in the Civic Centre adjacent to Stott Terrace;

   (b) the upgrading of Stott Terrace, including the provision of an appropriate bicycle path;
(c) longer term redevelopment of Council carparking at the corner of Hartley Street and Gregory Terrace to provide a multi-storey parking facility;

(d) appropriate cycle path facilities on or adjacent to Wills Terrace; and

(e) upgrading of Leichhardt Terrace to reduce the speed environment, improve pedestrian facilities and rationalise parking.

2. Central Commercial Precinct

2.1 The principal function of the precinct is to provide a compact and accessible commercial centre that is the primary shopping and office node in the region.

2.2 Land uses and design features that are encouraged in the precinct include:

(a) an emphasis on consolidation and redevelopment rather than an expansion into the Western Precinct;

(b) siting and design of buildings that provide for co-ordinated, block-wide development;

(c) the development of Parsons Street as a principal road and pedestrian axis through the Central Business District and as a link to the Western Precinct;

(d) improved pedestrian mobility between major developments, within and outside the precinct;

(e) a longer term reduction in the speed environment to enhance cyclist and pedestrian mobility and safety; and

(f) the retention of views to Anzac and Billy Goat Hills and the MacDonnell Ranges.

2.3 Strategies that improve traffic circulation, parking, and pedestrian and cyclist mobility and safety are encouraged, including:

(a) upgrading Stott Terrace, including the provision of an appropriate bicycle path;

(b) investigating and implementing appropriate bicycle path facilities on or adjacent to Wills Terrace; and
(c) providing appropriate access for service and emergency vehicles to service the precinct.

3. **Anzac Hill and Todd River Precinct**

3.1 The principal function of the precinct is to provide a recreation, tourism and education resource for visitors and the community.

3.2 Land uses and design features that are encouraged in the precinct include:

(a) landscape planting and design that is sympathetic to the river environment and other natural features;

(b) viewing areas and interpretative information that focus on the natural environment;

(c) the relocation from the Anzac Hill area of any incompatible uses that detract from the hill's appearance or cultural significance; and

(d) greater visual orientation of new development toward the Charles and Todd Rivers.

3.3 Strategies that improve traffic circulation, parking, and pedestrian and cyclist mobility and safety are encouraged, including:

(a) the upgrading of Leichhardt Terrace to reduce the speed environment, improve pedestrian facilities and rationalise parking;

(b) improvement in pedestrian, cycling and vehicle access over the Todd River from Wills Terrace to Sturt Terrace;

(c) improvement in public accessibility with the use of signs, appropriate car parking facilities, cycle paths, pedestrian and public transport connections; and

(d) development of appropriate bicycle path facilities on or adjacent to Wills Terrace.
4. **Heritage and Billy Goat Hill Precinct**

4.1 The principal function of the precinct is to provide for a variety of tourism, commercial and community uses while maintaining the physical evidence of the town’s development and history through the implementation of the *Alice Springs Heritage Precinct Conservation Management Plan, 1994*.

4.2 Land uses and design features that are encouraged in the precinct include:

(a) the preservation, enhancement and protection of the historic character of the Precinct;

(b) development associated with individual buildings and sites of heritage significance that is of an appropriate nature and does not detract from the significance of the precinct; and

(c) development on vacant allotments that is compatible with the character of the precinct and does not detract from its significance.

4.3 Public use and awareness of the heritage and history of the precinct will be encouraged through the promotion of strategies that include:

(a) interpretative information that focuses on the history of the precinct;

(b) pedestrian access within the precinct with suitable shade, shelter and street furniture; and

(c) an appropriate entrance feature for the precinct at the intersection of Stott Terrace and Hartley Street.

5. **Southern Medical Precinct**

5.1 The principal function of the precinct is to provide for a consolidation of regional medical and health facilities within a central and accessible location.

5.2 Land uses and design features that are encouraged in the precinct include:

(a) complementary medical and health services and facilities;

(b) medium and high density residential development;
(c) development of a scale and form that is sympathetic with adjacent heritage buildings and places;

(d) priority to local traffic, pedestrian comfort and residential amenity by encouraging heavier traffic to use the arterial road system, particularly on the periphery of the residential areas; and

(e) visual and noise attenuation measures between residential and non-residential uses to protect and enhance residential amenity.

6. **Western Precinct**

6.1 The principal function of the precinct is to provide a long term opportunity for expansion of the Central Business District function, while permitting a range of interim uses.

6.2 Interim development of the precinct will feature;

   (a) low density retailing, service industries and warehousing uses that complement rather than compete with existing commercial activity in the Central Business District;

   (b) low development densities, high landscaping standards and ample provision for car parking and vehicle movement;

   (c) a co-ordinated subdivision and road network that will minimise constraints to future redevelopment; and

   (d) appropriate stormwater and drainage treatments that will maximise future development potential and minimise any down stream and off-site impacts.

6.3 Longer term use of the precinct for an expansion of the Central Business District will only occur when it can be demonstrated that such expansion is necessary and will have minimal impact on the viability of commercial activity within the Central Business District.

6.4 Development in the precinct will feature:

   (a) road access through an extension of Parsons Street; and
(b) setbacks and landscaping along the Stuart Highway frontage that recognise the high visibility of the site and the desire to minimise negative visual impacts.

6.5 The railway and highway functions within the precinct will be reinforced through the promotion of development strategies that include:

(a) development of a transport interchange that is integrated with existing and future road, rail and pedestrian links and which serves as a major public focus in the town;

(b) development of a major parking facility to service the western side of the Central Area that provides for coach, bus and caravan parking with pedestrian linkages to the town centre; and

(c) provision of landscaped pedestrian paths, bicycle paths and direction signs to enhance the character and amenity of the precinct in accordance with its importance as a gateway to the town centre.
Alice Springs Central Area Planning Concepts
ALICE SPRINGS CENTRAL AREA
PLANNING CONCEPTS

The Alice Springs Central Area Planning Concepts document has been produced as a companion document to the Alice Springs Central Area Land Use Objectives which have been declared as the Northern Territory Government’s Land Use Objectives for the Alice Springs Central Area pursuant to Section 8(1) of the Planning Act, 1993.

The Planning Concepts Document provides background and explanatory information for the Land Use Objectives and illustrates the Government’s vision for future development in the Alice Springs Central Area. I recommend that this document be read in conjunction with the Land Use Objectives.

MIKE REED
1.1 Introduction

This document provides the background to the Land Use Objectives for the Alice Springs Central Area that have been declared by the Minister for Lands, Planning and Environment. Although this document does not have the formal status of declared objectives, it is recommended that it be read in conjunction with the objectives as a guide to their interpretation and implementation.

The objectives apply to the area shown on the attached locality plan (Figure 1) and are intended to encourage the following outcomes:

- a compact commercial centre characterised by its vitality and attractive physical setting;
- a business environment conducive to economic growth and able to attract and support higher order commercial activities;
- a town with a unique character that provides visitors with a range of positive experiences;
- quality urban design and buildings that take advantage of climate, heritage values and the town’s natural setting;
- increased awareness of Aboriginal culture;
- streetscaping that has an emphasis on shade and greater pedestrian comfort;
- an efficient transport interchange system and road and traffic network;
- a comprehensive network of footpaths and bicycle facilities;
- more accessible and frequently used parks, open space and recreation facilities; and
- adequate, convenient and affordable car parking facilities.

1.2 Background
Figure 1 - Alice Springs Central Area

Central Area Boundary
Central Business District Boundary
The Central Area objectives evolved out of the Alice Springs Central Area Project which was initiated by the Northern Territory Government to provide a planning mechanism for addressing issues that arose from the rapid growth and development of the town centre.

There had been increasing Government and community concern about the impacts of development on the character of the town centre and recognition of the need to better co-ordinate and facilitate public and private sector development.

The project commenced with a public display held between December 1992 and February 1993 which sought public involvement in identifying the key issues and stimulating community discussion. These issues were then investigated and evaluated, resulting in a range of options, guidelines and strategies being prepared.

This information was included in a further public display held between May and July 1994 called “Alice Springs An Oasis Town - Achieving the Vision”. After the completion of the “Achieving the Vision” display, the objectives were revised and placed on final public exhibition for six weeks over May and June 1996.

After this final exhibition the objectives were again revised in light of the comments and submissions that were received, before being declared under Section 8(1) of the Planning Act.

During the course of the project a number of initiatives were undertaken to address issues raised during the community consultation process. Projects such as the Urban Enhancement Program and the Alice Springs Traffic and Parking Study, 1995 will continue to be developed in response to issues associated with the Central Area and the objectives.

1.3 Land Use Objectives

Under the requirements of Section 8 of the Planning Act, land use objectives play a central role in providing an opportunity for community involvement in the planning process, as well as direction for Government and industry in land use policy and development control. The Central Area Project involved extensive community consultation which was critical in identifying issues and determining future directions for the area.

The objectives for the Central Area have been defined, firstly, as ‘general’ objectives that relate to broad issues that affect development throughout the area, and secondly, on the basis of specific areas called ‘precincts’. The general objectives have been defined under the headings of:
• Town Structure and Built Form;
• Environment and Heritage;
• Mobility, Transport and Parking; and
• Buildings and Urban Design.

The precinct boundaries identify areas that have a common character or unifying development theme and include:

• Todd Street Tourism;
• Central Commercial;
• Anzac Hill and Todd River;
• Heritage and Billy Goat Hill;
• Southern Medical; and
• Western.

Where the objectives differ from the *Alice Springs Regional Land Use Structure Plan, 1989*, which identifies a range of uses for the area, the Structure Plan is amended. Also, where the objectives are inconsistent with the *Alice Springs Town Plan, 1992*, the Northern Territory Planning Authority must initiate action to amend the Town Plan.
Figure 2 - Central Area Precinct Boundaries

A Todd Street Tourism
B Central Commercial
C ANZAC Hill & Todd River
D Heritage & Billy Goat Hill
E Southern Medical
F Western
2.1 Introduction

The development of objectives for the Central Area involved a number of investigations into the future commercial needs of the town and the current and future functions of the Central Area. The information provided by these investigations was considered in light of the many public responses that were received during the various public displays and exhibitions that were held. This section provides a summary of those matters that were investigated and which form the basis of many of the objectives.

2.2 Growth Prospects and Population Horizons

The investigation of development strategies and land needs for the Central Area was based on population scenarios of 35,000 and 50,000 people. These population levels represent long term planning horizons and it will be necessary to review the development of the town and the appropriateness of the objectives on a regular basis. Although it is anticipated that the general intent of the objectives will continue to be relevant to the form of the town over the long term, changing circumstances will need to be monitored.

The objectives are not based on a particular growth rate because of the wide variation in growth that has occurred over the past 30 years and the consequent difficulty in establishing a historical trend. For example, between 1966 and 1981 average annual growth was 7.3%, from 1976 to 1981 the rate had dropped to 5.4%, 1981 to 1986 growth was 4.3% and from

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resident Population</td>
<td>9 558</td>
<td>16 092</td>
<td>17 900</td>
<td>23 021</td>
<td>24 250</td>
<td>24 678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region ^3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9 541</td>
<td>11 306</td>
<td>9 522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors ^4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>308 000</td>
<td>348 000</td>
<td>443 000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(1) Census boundary change in 1988, subsequent figures not directly comparable with previous years.
(2) Estimated (Bureau of Statistics 28/8/94)
(3) Variation occurs as a result of changes to calculation methods.
(4) Northern Territory Travel Monitor (Visitors to the Centre)
1986 to 1991 the rate had further declined to 2.5%. More recent estimates suggest a current growth rate of around 1%.
It is possible that over the next 20 years the population could increase by around 60% to over 35,000 with a modest growth rate of 2%. It should be noted however, that the average annual growth rate over the last 20 years has been approximately 4.5%. from a 1971 population level of 9,558 people.

It is not anticipated that the town will experience similar long term growth rates although the planning strategy should be regularly reviewed in the light of actual growth rates.

### 2.3 Potential Land Use Requirements

The Central Area and the CBD include a wide range of activities, and although the mixed use character of the area is likely to remain within the foreseeable future, there will be increasing pressure for additional commercial floorspace as the town’s population grows.

This will necessitate a rationalisation of activities within the CBD, and require new development to make more efficient use of the available land if a compact commercial area is to be retained. It will also require a greater emphasis on retail and office development in preference to other types of land uses.

In assessing the implications of future growth on land use in the CBD, projections for future office and retail floor space needs at the 35,000 and 50,000 population levels were prepared.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>24 678</td>
<td>25 936</td>
<td>27 259</td>
<td>28 649</td>
<td>30 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>24 678</td>
<td>26 585</td>
<td>28 640</td>
<td>30 853</td>
<td>33 238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>24 678</td>
<td>27 247</td>
<td>30 082</td>
<td>33 213</td>
<td>36 670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>24 678</td>
<td>27 921</td>
<td>31 590</td>
<td>35 741</td>
<td>40 438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>24 678</td>
<td>28 609</td>
<td>33 165</td>
<td>38 448</td>
<td>44 571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>24 678</td>
<td>30 753</td>
<td>38 324</td>
<td>47 759</td>
<td>59 516</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
(1) % growth rate from 1991 Census to 1993/94 ABS estimate equates to 0.9 % average annual growth.
(2) ABS estimate of long term growth rate for the NT is 1.5 %.
These projections which are included as an appendix to this report, were also used as the basis of the traffic and parking demand analysis provided in the *Alice Springs Traffic and Parking Study, 1995*. This study also calculated the likely land area requirements associated with future office and retail needs.

This analysis suggests that population levels of 35,000 and 50,000, would require respective amounts of gross office floorspace of approximately 33,300m$^2$ and 47,600m$^2$. These floorspace figures translate into approximate land areas of 6.7 and 9.5 hectares, assuming that 50% of the total site area would be available to accommodate office built form.

To cater for population levels of 35,000 and 50,000, the respective amounts of gross retail floor space that would be required are approximately 53,200m$^2$ and 76,000 m$^2$. These floorspace figures translate into approximate land areas of 13.3 and 19 hectares, assuming that 40% of the total site area would be available to accommodate retail built form, and allowing adequate site area for ground level parking, landscaping and public space.

It is estimated that the land area available for development in the CBD, excluding roads, is approximately 24.5 hectares. This suggests that up to the 35,000 population, office and retail development, together with car parking, could be accommodated in the CBD with minor consolidation. At the 50,000 population, however, new development would require more significant consolidation and the relocation of various uses that do not require a CBD location. This would also require additional multi-storey development within the existing 3 storey height limit.

The availability of land for retail and office uses may also be more limited if significant tourist accommodation is developed within the Central Area.

Land availability will need to be monitored and appropriate strategies developed to ensure that sufficient land is available for commercial redevelopment. It will be desirable to review the supply and demand for land within the CBD during the next five years and assess the opportunities for large scale commercial development.

### 2.4 Height Limits in the Central Business District

The Alice Springs Town Plan establishes the maximum building height in the CBD as 3 storeys. The objectives retain this limit on the basis that an increase in height limit is unnecessary because of the CBD’s ability to cater for significant additional retail and office development, and because the restriction contributes to protecting the area’s visual and environmental qualities.
The issue has been considered in the past, including during the review of the Town Plan in 1991 and in subsequent Central Area Project displays, with seemingly little interest in raising the height limit. There would be merit, however, in monitoring commercial floorspace needs in the CBD, and consequently whether the height limit may need to be reviewed at some time in the future.

### 2.5 Options for Future Development

The need to provide for a future expansion of the CBD will be largely determined by the success or otherwise of strategies that seek to consolidate retail and office development within the existing CBD. In the event that population growth or other factors warrant an expansion of the CBD there are major constraints such as Anzac Hill to the north, the hospital complex to the south, the Todd River to the east and the Stuart Highway to the west.

Expansion of the CBD north past Anzac Hill or east across the Todd River are not seen as workable or desirable options for achieving efficient land use for the CBD. Traffic and transport considerations, as well as the impact on open space and residential areas preclude the choice of these two localities.

Alternatively, development to the south would need to cross Stott Terrace which is the primary east/west arterial link through the town centre. In addition, the presence of the Hartley Street heritage precinct may impede substantial redevelopment if the character and history of the area are to be retained. Further south, the hospital complex imposes another significant barrier to redevelopment. Development of the land between Gap Road and the Todd River for retail use would promote strip development, stretch the provision of public resources such as car parking and public transport, and forgo the benefits of a compact CBD.

The remaining option is to extend the CBD westward either over the Stuart Highway or by relocating the Highway further west again. Crossing the Stuart Highway would involve a major physical and psychological barrier to establishing an integrated and compact CBD. The latter option of realigning the Highway west would provide a substantial and less encumbered area for redevelopment but may not be a practical route or a financially acceptable option.

Of all these long term options, expansion into the western precinct is the most practical and would reinforce the existing and expanded transport interchange function within the area.

This option should not be exercised, however, until it is clearly demonstrated that there is insufficient capacity within the CBD to accommodate additional commercial floorspace.
Premature or inappropriate development in the western precinct could weaken existing commercial activity.

3.1 Introduction

This section provides a general discussion of land uses within the Central Area and background information that was relevant to the preparation of the objectives.

3.2 Commercial

It is proposed that the Central Area, and the CBD in particular, remain the preferred location for higher order retail and office development within the current planning horizon. The dispersal of these facilities elsewhere within the town may impact on the commercial viability of the Central Area and detract from the town’s ability to attract and support higher order retail and office services. Consolidation is also preferred because of the practical constraints and associated costs of expanding beyond the current CBD boundaries.

Consequently, a key feature of the land use objectives is the emphasis placed on retaining a compact and vital CBD that also retains a sense of Alice Springs character. This will require that the scale and form of new development be sympathetic to the town’s environment. The objectives encourage design features such as setbacks for upper storey development and an emphasis on retaining views to natural features.

To retain the option of a longer term expansion of the CBD into the western precinct, the objectives also propose that this area be used in the interim for low intensity uses that will minimise impediments to longer term redevelopment and complement rather than compete with the commercial function of the CBD.

3.3 Residential

Residential accommodation within the Central Area is confined mainly to the south and consists largely of older established dwellings and flat and unit development. There is little mixed use development where residential accommodation is incorporated within retail and office development.

This lack of residential development within the Central Area was highlighted in many responses received during the course of the project which referred to the growing trend in other urban centres for higher residential densities within and around CBDs.
Given the likely longer term competition for commercial land within the CBD and the constraints on its expansion, there will be limited opportunity for large scale residential development. There is scope, however, for high density residential accommodation to be incorporated within future multi-storey retail and office developments. This would reinforce the commercial viability of the Central Area and provide lifestyle opportunities to take advantage of the entertainment and recreation facilities clustered within and around the CBD.

### 3.4 Civic and Community

Civic and community facilities are well represented in the Central Area, but with the exception of Town Council facilities, there is not a readily identifiable civic domain or precinct. The central location of community facilities is appropriate for a town of Alice Springs’ size and residential distribution, and is likely to remain a feature of the CBD in the foreseeable future.

Although the location of some of these services in the Central Area may become increasingly relevant if higher residential densities develop, there is likely to be pressure for some services to relocate as new and more distant residential areas are developed and need more immediate access to these services. It is also likely that future demand for commercial development within the CBD will increase property values and lead to the relocation of some non commercial activities.

Competition for land in the Central Area and the adequacy of community service provision will need to be monitored, although there is no current need to modify the locational pattern of these facilities.

### 3.5 Entertainment

Although the Central Area hosts a diverse range of entertainment facilities it is nonetheless an under utilised resource that can provide a focus for a wide range of passive and active entertainment.

Ongoing revitalisation of the area, through improved pedestrian and visitor facilities and comfort, as well as a greater emphasis on providing links between existing and new facilities, should encourage higher levels of usage and reinforce the viability of entertainment facilities and activities. Added to this is a need for increased security, particularly during the evening, to encourage increased use of the area outside business hours.

### 3.6 Tourism
The Central Area is well serviced by a range of tourist accommodation and other tourism related facilities, while the Todd Mall, in particular, provides a focus for many tourist activities and services.

Tourist accommodation within the Central Area is well catered for and contributes to the vitality and viability of the Central Area. It is also assists in providing an appropriate mix of tourist accommodation types and locations within the town as a whole.

Many responses to the project supported the ongoing presence of these facilities within the Central Area but also called for them to be better integrated through improved urban design and streetscape, greater emphasis on pedestrian comfort and protection of the natural features which contribute to the character of the town. The rationale for these improvements is the need to reinforce the character of Alice Springs as an outback town rather than as a tourist resort.

Given the importance of tourism to the town’s economy and the contribution it makes to retaining vitality within the Central Area, the objectives have been designed to encourage an urban form and mix of uses that are attractive to tourists and the local community.

### 3.7 Open Space

Arguably the greatest physical assets of the town’s Central Area are its natural features. The Todd and Charles Rivers, together with Anzac and Billy Goat Hill have largely determined the layout of the town, while more formalised open space areas such as Anzac Oval contribute to its appeal. The Central Area also benefits from views to the MacDonnell Ranges which provide a spectacular backdrop to many of the built up areas.

Apart from the aesthetic appeal of the town’s setting, the areas of natural open space are also
significant recreation and tourism assets that should be retained and where appropriate, sympathetically developed for recreational use.
This section provides the background to the ‘General’ objectives and is included as a guide to their interpretation and implementation. For these reasons, it is recommended that this information be read in conjunction with the objectives, and to assist this a common numbering format is used.

1. **Town Structure and Built Form**

The key objective is that the existing Central Business District remain the focus for higher order retail and office activities within the foreseeable future. It has been estimated that the CBD is capable of providing sufficient commercial floorspace for a population of over 50,000 people, although the extent to which this will be achieved will be largely dependent on encouraging redevelopment and higher commercial densities within the CBD.

The objective of consolidating commercial activity in the CBD implies that high occupancy rates will be maintained and is based on the desirability of providing:

- consumer convenience through a compact commercial area;
- investor confidence that lot consolidation and redevelopment are commercially viable; and
- a vibrant and attractive centre for tourists and visitors.

Although the objectives provide for a possible longer term expansion of the CBD function into the Western Precinct, this should not occur unless it can be clearly demonstrated that such an expansion is necessary and will have minimal impact on the viability of commercial activity in the CBD.

Within the general policy of consolidating development within the CBD, the objectives also encourage an emphasis on high quality urban design, particularly along the major thoroughfares and other highly visible and pedestrianised areas. This is desirable, not only for the benefit of residents, but also in recognition of the importance of tourism to the town’s economy and the need to provide an urban setting that is attractive and interesting.

2. **Environment and Heritage**
DISCUSSION of the GENERAL OBJECTIVES

Alice Springs is instantly recognisable because of its physical setting and the highly visible natural features such as the Todd River and Anzac and Billy Goat Hills. The town’s identity is also reinforced by those elements of the built environment that provide the physical evidence of its history and development.

It is a key objective that these features are retained and enhanced so that the town’s unique character is reinforced, rather than diluted through inappropriate or unsympathetic development. A number of supporting strategies are encouraged, including:

- Retaining views to and from the natural features within and around the Central Area;
- Providing areas of open space and protecting Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sites of heritage, cultural and environmental importance that contribute to the character form and amenity of the town;
- Preparing and implementing heritage and environment management plans; and
- Incorporating appropriate heritage, cultural and environmental elements and interpretative information into building design and streetscapes.

The design and approval of development proposals should take account of these matters, particularly as the density of development within the area increases.

3. Mobility, Transport and Parking

The objectives promote a combination of two underlying strategies:

- Providing adequate vehicle accessibility and carparking within a Central Area that will be more intensively developed and used; and
- Increasing the emphasis on access, mobility and convenience for pedestrians, cyclists, the elderly and disabled.

Although the Central Area will be able to cater for traffic movements and parking needs associated with a 50,000 population, it will require sensitive planning and an efficient use of the available land. As the town grows and the Central Area provides higher levels of commercial floorspace, the levels of service for traffic and parking are likely to decline and a greater emphasis will need to be placed on providing and encouraging alternative forms of transport.
Within the CBD a range of strategies will need to be adopted, including signals at appropriate intersections, additional multi storey car parking, speed reduction in the core area and improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities. These strategies were recommended in the Alice Springs Traffic and Parking Study 1995, which provides a useful basis for assessing future development proposals and strategies. The recommendations of this study are included in Appendix 2.

As an adjunct to these strategies, the Department of Transport and Works has advised that there should be no increase in direct property access to Stott Terrace and the Stuart Highway.

4. **Buildings and Urban Design**

The objectives encourage the design and approval of development to take into account the town’s natural setting and the desirability of improving the overall quality of design throughout the town.

The objectives also maintain a three storey height limit as a key tool for controlling the mass and scale of new development, particularly in relation to retaining views. Within the three storey limit, upper storey setbacks and variations in roof styles and heights are encouraged as means of minimising a ‘plateau’ effect. This is of particular concern in the Central Business
District where development density will continue to increase.

The Central Area precincts have been defined in an attempt to depict areas of similar land use and to reinforce the positive elements of the town’s existing structure. Although the precinct boundaries are in some respects subjective and may change over time, they are intended to identify areas of a particular character and type for which the objectives encourage complementary land use and development.

It is recommended that this section be read in conjunction with the precinct objectives, and to assist this a common numbering format is used.

1. **Todd Street Tourism Precinct**

The Todd Street Tourism Precinct is one of the Town’s primary tourism and community assets. The objectives establish that it will continue to contain a mixture of office and retail uses but with a particular emphasis on tourism and entertainment facilities. In recognition of the commercial importance of the precinct and the attraction of its physical setting and natural features, the objectives encourage land uses and design features that reinforce its tourism function and protect and enhance those physical elements that contribute to its character.

Development in the precinct has been focussed on the Todd Mall and there remains significant scope to broaden this focus to include Leichhardt Terrace and Todd Street, south of the Mall. The redevelopment of Leichhardt Terrace in particular, should better utilise views of the Todd River by focussing development toward the river.

A range of strategies are encouraged that will improve traffic circulation, parking, and pedestrian and cyclist mobility and safety. Key strategies include the development of a ground level carparking facility in the Civic Centre adjacent to Stott Terrace and the longer term redevelopment of the Council carparking facility at the corner of Hartley Street and Gregory Terrace into a multi-storey parking facility. The objectives also encourage strategies such as a reduction in the speed environment and improved cyclist and pedestrian facilities in recognition of the precinct’s tourism function and high degree of pedestrian use.

2. **Central Commercial Precinct**

The Central Commercial Precinct is the core area for retail and office floorspace and the objectives propose that this function continue. It has been estimated that consolidation and redevelopment within the boundary of the current CBD can provide sufficient commercial
floorspace to cater for the town’s needs up to and beyond a population of 50,000. In order for this to occur, however, there will need to be more efficient use of the area and a need for co-ordinated, block wide development, particularly with the retention of the current 3 storey height limit.

Although retail and office uses are preferred in this precinct, it is acknowledged that it currently serves a mixed use function including tourism and institutional uses. It is expected that this mixed use function will continue for some time and it is acknowledged that this characteristic provides variety and interest within the area. For these reasons there is no immediate need to be more prescriptive about the types of uses that may be permitted other than to express a general preference for office and retail development.

A major element of future development in the precinct is expected to be an increased emphasis on Parsons Street as the main east-west axis through the CBD and as a link to the Western Precinct. It will also be necessary to upgrade Stott Terrace at some time in the future.

3. **Anzac Hill and Todd River Precinct**

The principle function of the precinct is to provide a recreation, tourism and education resource for visitors and the community. The objectives encourage a range of strategies that reinforce this function and enhance the contribution that the natural features of the precinct make to the character of the town.

Short term strategies include landscape planting and design that reinforce the attractiveness of the natural environment, and the provision of interpretative information that focuses on the natural features in the precinct. Over the longer term it would be desirable for development along Leichhardt Terrace to have a greater visual focus toward the river and for uses in the Anzac Hill area that detract from its appearance or cultural significance to relocate. In the interim there may be merit in limiting the opportunities for these uses to expand, minimising impediments to any future relocation.

The *Alice Springs Traffic and Parking Study, 1995* made a number of recommendations about the development of Leichhardt Terrace, including a reduction in its speed environment and the removal of informal carparking. New development should contribute to an overall improvement in the appearance of this area and should take account of the significance of the Todd River.

4. **Heritage and Billy Goat Hill Precinct**
DISCUSSION of the PRECINCT OBJECTIVES

This precinct includes a variety of tourism, residential, commercial and institutional uses and the objectives acknowledge that this mixed use function will continue, but within a development framework that retains the physical evidence of the town’s development and history. The Alice Springs Heritage Precinct Conservation Management Plan, 1994 provides this framework and its implementation is a key objective.

As well as protecting individual sites, the objectives highlight the need for sympathetic development of sites that may not be individually significant but which contribute to the overall character of the area. Development of these sites should be compatible with sites of significance.

To increase the awareness and use of the precinct, strategies are encouraged such as improving pedestrian facilities and comfort, and providing interpretative information that promotes greater understanding of the significance of the area.

The precinct also includes the former Alice Springs jail, of which, a number of structures have been identified as being of historical significance. Although the objectives do not identify any specific uses for individual buildings or for the vacant areas within the site, there is a general recognition that the precinct, and consequently the jail site, will continue to serve a mixed use function. Development proposals for the site should therefore be assessed against the recommendations of the Conservation Management Plan and in terms of their compatibility with the heritage values of the precinct and individual sites that may be affected. These should be the key factors in considering the appropriateness of any development proposal, rather than the type of use that is proposed.

5. Southern Medical Precinct

The principal land use in this precinct is the hospital but it also includes residential development. The objectives seek to consolidate and reinforce the medical and health function of the area in recognition of its central location and accessibility, and consequently encourage complementary medical and health facilities.

In recognition of the existing residential development in the area, the objectives encourage visual and noise attenuation measures between residential and non residential uses to protect and enhance residential amenity. There may also be scope for higher density residential development in the area to take advantage of its central location and proximity to hospital facilities, although such development should not constrain the future operation or expansion of the hospital or associated facilities.
6. **Western Precinct**

The Western Precinct has been identified as the preferred option for an expansion of the CBD function, but because the current CBD is capable of providing sufficient commercial floorspace to provide for a possible 50,000 population, this option is long term. The objectives identify appropriate interim uses for the area that will minimise constraints to more intensive redevelopment in the future and which will complement rather than compete with commercial activity in the CBD.

Interim development will provide for low development densities, high landscaping standards and ample provision for car parking and vehicle movement, while uses will be confined to light industry, warehousing, tourist accommodation and low density retailing. Low density retailing relates to the sale of goods that require large floor areas for display and storage and which have a relatively low turnover.

The restrictions on interim retail development in the area are intended to protect the viability of commercial activity in the CBD and to safeguard against a dispersal of higher order commercial floorspace that may result in losses of consumer convenience and investor confidence. The strategy to consolidate and reinforce commercial development in the CBD will need to be monitored, however, to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for additional floorspace to be provided.

The precinct will also have a continuing transport function including the railway station and potential future uses such as a major parking facility to service the western side of the Central Area. It is proposed that the area will feature a co-ordinated subdivision and road network, and road access will be provided by an extension of Parsons Street into the area.
Appendices
# Appendix 1

Projections of Retail and Commercial Floorspace Demand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>?</th>
<th>?</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POPULATION</td>
<td>1,728</td>
<td>2,450</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>Assumed to remain at 7% of the population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL RETAIL WORKERS</td>
<td>1,382</td>
<td>1,960</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>Assumed to remain at 80% of total retail workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBD RETAIL WORKERS</td>
<td>42,330m²</td>
<td>53,200m²</td>
<td>76,000m²</td>
<td>Assumes that 80% of all retail floor space is in the CBD. Total floor space provided at 1.9m² per person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROSS CBD RETAIL FLOOR SPACE</td>
<td>37,037m²</td>
<td>46,550m²</td>
<td>66,500m²</td>
<td>Ratio of gross to net floor space of 1:0.875.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NET CBD</td>
<td>1,974</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>Assumed to remain at 8% of the population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL OFFICE WORKERS</td>
<td>1,678</td>
<td>2,380</td>
<td>3,400</td>
<td>Assumed to remain at 85% of all office workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBD OFFICE WORKERS</td>
<td>28,957m²</td>
<td>33,320m²</td>
<td>47,600m²</td>
<td>Assumes that 85% of all office floor space is in the CBD. Floor space provided at 14m² per worker.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROSS CBD OFFICE FLOOR SPACE</td>
<td>23,166m²</td>
<td>26,656m²</td>
<td>38,080m²</td>
<td>Ratio of gross to net floor space of 1:0.8.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
* Census Figures


**Appendix 2**

Alice Springs Traffic and Parking Study

**Alice Springs Traffic and Parking Study, 1995**

**Summary of Recommendations** (1)

**Parking Recommendations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population (000)</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 27-28            | 0-2 years | • Develop a surface level car parking facility in the Civic Centre adjacent to Stott Terrace  
|                  |        | • Rationalise parking in Leichhardt Terrace/Todd River as part of the Leichhardt Terrace upgrade. |
| 27-30            | 0-5 years | • Develop surface level parking west of the Stuart Highway to principally accommodate coach, caravan and tourist parking. |
| 30-35            | 5-10 years | • Review time restrictions on all on-street parking including within the Heritage Precinct.  
|                  |        | • Commence redevelopment of Council Parking in Hartley Street to provide multi-storey development. |
| 35+              | 10+ years | • Upgrade facility west of the Stuart Highway commensurate with land use developments. |

**Traffic Recommendations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population (000)</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Treatment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 27-28            | 0-2 years | • Signalise Stott/Hartley  
|                  |        | • Investigate and implement bicycle facilities on or adjacent to Wills Terrace.  
|                  |        | • Initiate final design of Stott Terrace upgrade including design and implementation of interim cycle path.  
|                  |        | • Replace brick paving in Gregory Terrace because of potential safety problem.  
|                  |        | • Upgrade Leichhardt Terrace to reduce speed environment, improve pedestrian facilities and rationalise parking.  
|                  |        | • Investigate treatment of Railway/Parsons intersection to address accident problem.  
|                  |        | • Review layouts and signal phasing designs at Wills/Stuart and Stuart/Stott intersections to address accident problems. |
| 27-30            | 2-5 years | • Upgrade Stott Terrace to improve safety at intersections and lane utilisation, and provide cyclepaths on both sides of the road.  
|                  |        | • Coordinate traffic signals on Stott Terrace to reduce delays and stops to through traffic.  
|                  |        | • Signalise Parsons/Stuart intersection.  
|                  |        | • Extend Parsons Street west of the Stuart Highway. |
| 30-35+           | 5-15 years | • Reduce the speed environment in the core CBD to improve bicycle and pedestrian mobility. |

**NOTES**

(1) Several of these recommendations have been implemented since the completion of the report.