

Mr Michael Lennon
Chairperson
State Planning Commission

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Dear Mr Lennon

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Draft Planning and Design Code – Phase 3 – November 2020

Our client, Revelop, has authorised Access Planning to lodge the following submission to the 2020 Code version released last month for consultation.

The proposed Code provisions applying to the client's land have been reviewed as to the adequacy of the Code policy having the capacity to support the development options that are desired for the land in order to achieve a proper and balanced development of the site.

Details of the affected land and the existing and proposed zoning

485 Main North Road, Evanston

(CTs 6037/191, 6121/14, 6121/153 and 6121/154)

Existing zoning: **Business Zone**

Proposed Code November 2020 zoning: **Employment Zone**

Background

In the Gawler (CT) Development Plan (consolidated 18 July 2019), the subject land is within a Business Zone whose prime objective is to accommodate a range of specified business activities which are articulated in the Desired Character as –

- Bulky Goods Outlet*
- Motor Showroom*
- Motor Repair Station*
- Petrol Filling Station (with an exception)*
- Plant Nursery*
- Restaurant (less than 300 square metres)*
- Service Industry*
- Service Trade Premises*
- Veterinary Practice*
- Warehousing*

Although the range of uses do not expressly include a shop, small-scale retailing is nonetheless acknowledged as being a suitable form of development. The subject land does contain a mixture of land use activity that is accommodated within multiple buildings with shared car parking. Tenancies range from bulky goods and service trade premises, to shops, cafes and offices and to a petrol filling station sited adjacent to the Main North Road.

However, the zone policy framework tends to be discriminatory against large-scale retailing such as a supermarket.

The owner of the land (our client) recently lodged an application to re-model existing tenancies to facilitate a supermarket operation and a bottle shop which did not involve any substantive building work or expansion. Accompanying that application were investigations which confirmed that retail development in the form of a supermarket on the subject land would not economically impact on other retail activity in the locality.

Unfortunately, the application was not successful because of the emphasis placed upon the current zone's evident retail floor area restrictions, with the rationale supporting the supermarket proposal itself being subordinate to that issue.

However, significantly, an Economic Impact Assessment report was undertaken by Macroplan (Attached) as part of that application for a change of land use to convert existing building space into a single supermarket establishment as well as a separate bottle shop. This report concluded that the proposed supermarket will:

- serve the growing needs of the catchment
- provide the community with an additional local shopping destination
- create greater competition and choice
- create additional employment opportunities (estimated at 91 additional jobs)
- will alleviate a supply deficit in supermarket floorspace in its trade area

and that its impacts

- would be dispersed across a range of retail centres
- not threaten the ongoing viability of any existing retail centre or retail shop.

The report clearly demonstrated that a range of economic and social benefits are likely to arise from the proposed supermarket including a wider range of shopping preferences for existing and future residents in the trade area and, as highlighted above, additional employment opportunities arising from the operation of the supermarket.

Furthermore, the Macroplan studies confirm the development would have limited impacts on the Gawler Town Centre as the principal shopping destination for the region. The impacts will not threaten any existing centre's ability to continue to operate successfully in the future and it determined that a net community benefit would result from the development of a supermarket on the subject land.

The economic factors that support existing retail industry in the locality, including the Gawler Town centre itself, would therefore not be compromised by similar business/retail ventures taking place at the site. Again, there is a complementary relationship between the existing centres that would enhance the diversity of shopping opportunities for the community.

It is notable as well that the subject land already displays convincing characteristics of a functioning centre-focussed zone, with an established commercial and 'big store' building form and layout that reinforces a retail and business activity and presence.

Socially, the centre is already a meeting place for the local community with a number of cafes providing an opportunity for social interaction. Economically, it is again stressed that the proposed supermarket will generate some 91 new employment opportunities. Estimates for wages, local services, maintenance and repair can be expected to exceed one million dollars annually.

Accordingly, the subject land has some major advantages to offer the Gawler community as a more conventional centre with broader land use diversity than as a more limited business-related complex with allied commercial activities.

The retail potential and capability of the site to provide for a supermarket facility is therefore soundly based.

Proposed Code zoning October 2019

In the 2019 version of the Code released for consultation, the subject land was to be contained within a **Suburban Activity Centre Zone**, a transition that was strongly agreed to by our client. This was felt to be an acceptable outcome since the new Code zone's provisions adequately reflect not only the type of development already taken place on the site but also had the capacity to accommodate the development aspirations of the centre's owner which are to promote a broader variety of and choice for retailing.

It was noted at the time that the zone placed a strong emphasis upon a range of land uses that are able to provide for most of the daily and weekly shopping needs of the community, as well as presenting a focus for business and community life. This objective is reflected in the diverse list of envisaged land uses in DTS/DPF 1.1, with a shop being one of these; nor were any floor area limitations placed on the size of shops that could possibly be developed in this zone.

Accordingly, at that time, the owner believed that the Code's proposed zoning framework was an ideal fit for the existing role and intended purpose of the centre and would enable a balanced range of land uses that would be of benefit to the wider Gawler community. It was also noted that the existing centre immediately to the north, which contains both an Aldi and Coles supermarket, was likewise to form part of the Suburban Activity Centre Zone.

Amended Code zoning November 2020

With the latest amended Code version, the existing Business Zone is now proposed to be transitioned over as an **Employment Zone**. This means that the whole zoning intent between the two Code consultation versions has been significantly altered, to the extent that the retail potential for the site to accommodate a modest supermarket complex has been completely disregarded and development options negated.

The new Code zone has limitations as to the scale of retail development possible and is now even more rigid in its position on shops than the 2019 zone version. The downsizing of the presence of shops in this zone is difficult to comprehend in light of the zone's prime focus, ie on employment generating activities. Retailing is on the whole an intensive employment industry and should be encouraged. In any event, it is argued that this Code zone is an inappropriate and incongruous replacement for the subject land as against the originally proposed **Suburban Activity Centre Zone**.

The reasons for the change in zoning between the two versions have not been explained or dealt with anywhere in depth.

It has been noted that the Town of Gawler made a submission which, in part, raised the issue as to appropriateness of the Suburban Activity Centre Zone relative to the existing Business Zone covering this site but it did not articulate a strong case as to why specifically it was not an appropriate match for the subject land apart from general reasons of scale and intensity relating to envisaged forms of development. There was not a clear or strong objection from the Council that explicitly argued with force against the application of the

Suburban Activity Centre Zone to this actual site. The submission tended to raise the matter more in a generic manner only.

It is therefore puzzling to the client that such a major change between the two versions has been made without serious evidence-based investigations and substantiation as to why the zoning needed to be altered at all.

Submission

It is strongly recommended that the 2020 proposed Code Zone, ie the Employment Zone, be abandoned for the subject land and that the site be transitioned over as part of the **Suburban Activity Centre Zone** as was originally intended in the 2019 version of the Code. As pointed out, no sound reasoning has been articulated as to why this zone is not an acceptable zoning solution for the subject land. The policy structure of that zoning will provide land use options that have the potential to provide benefits and choice to the Gawler local community.

This submission therefore argues for the adoption of the **Suburban Activity Centre Zone** for the subject land only. Such a rezoning is therefore site-specific and would have no ramifications for the application of the Employment Zone proposed elsewhere.

It is noted that the extent of Suburban Activity Centre Zone's roll-out within the Gawler district is physically limited in any case. Apart from the centre immediately to the north of the subject land (ie the one that accommodates the Aldi and Coles supermarkets), the only other instance where this zone is proposed is the currently undeveloped site at the junction of Angle Vale Road and Coventry Road at Evanston Gardens.

Consequently, if this submission is accepted, then there will be only three instances of this zone throughout Gawler (with only two of these already developed), notwithstanding the main Gawler Town centre which is proposed to become a Township Main Street Zone.

Accordingly, the proposed **Suburban Activity Centre Zone** should be re-applied specifically to the subject land itself, as was the case with the 2019 version of the Code, and that the Employment Zone model be discarded.

There are no adverse economic or other implications on existing centres and retail activity beyond the boundaries of the subject land in adopting this zoning. It is not feasible to suggest that the hierarchy of centres, as a strategy in the Development Plan, would be seriously prejudiced by an additional Suburban Activity Centre Zone covering this site since it is noted that, although the Development Plan directs the location of shops primarily to designated centre-focussed zones, the hierarchy principle, notably, also refer to Business Zones (the current zoning of the subject land) as suitable locations for shops as well. The conceptual centre-based framework in the Development Plan would tend to be reinforced by the subject land's centre status.

All reasonable factors being taken into consideration, this submission is of the view that the subject land justifies being transitioned over into the Code's **Suburban Activity Centre Zone** as originally intended by the Commission and recommends that the Commission support such an outcome.

Summary

It is believed that the benefits, economic and social, gained from applying the **Suburban Activity Centre Zone** to the subject land far outweigh the proposed transition to an

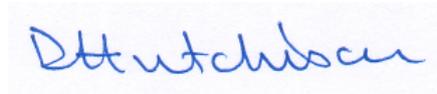
Employment Zone which has limited potential to respond to the local community's retailing needs and to generate community vibrancy.

Such a zone transition will not undermine the objectives and viability of other centres and would have limited impacts on the Gawler Town Centre as the principal shopping destination for the region. Neither would the clear retail focus of the proposed the **Suburban Activity Centre Zone** and a consequent supermarket facility on the subject land significantly imbalance the supply or sustainability of established centres in the Gawler district as has been verified by professional economic impact studies that have been commissioned by our client.

Taking all elements and issues into account, the adoption of the proposed zone over the site is appropriate and represents a suitable conversion in the context of the spatial zoning pattern for centres that are distributed throughout Gawler, and as was confirmed by the Commission itself in its 2019 consultation version of the Code.

If you require any further clarification or validation and especially the recommendation supporting the adoption of the **Suburban Activity Centre Zone** at 485 Main North Road, Evanston please contact me on 08 8130 7222 during business hours.

Yours sincerely



David Hutchison BA CPP PIA
ACCESS PLANNING (SA) PTY LTD