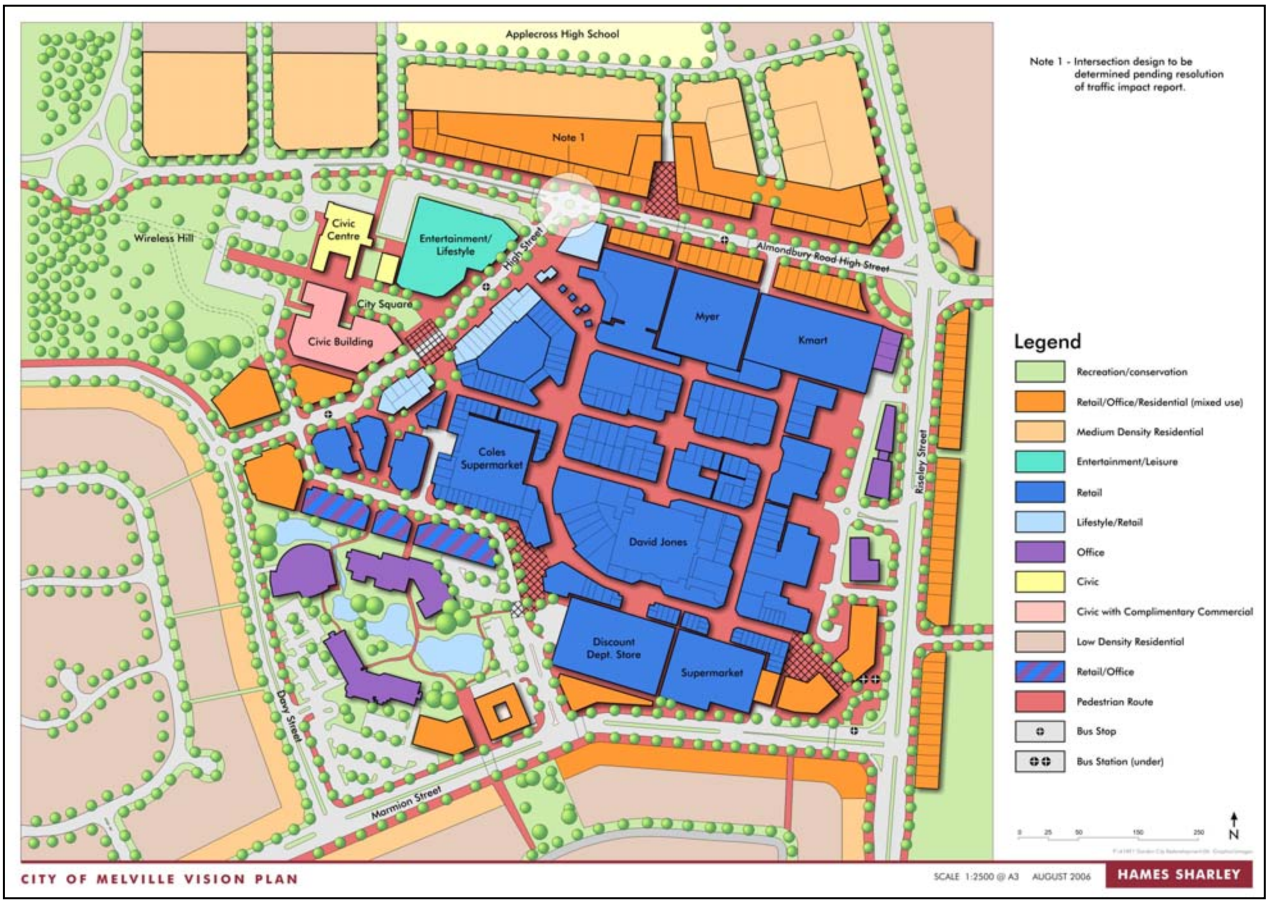
CHAPTER 4 CURRENT ISSUES

For a number of years the City of Melville has been developing a Vision for the long term development of the Melville City Centre. This task accords with the City of Melville Community Planning Scheme overarching objective in Chapter 3 of the Scheme, namely.

> *To encourage the City Centre to grow and evolve into a centre with a multitude of land uses and activities, especially entertainment, forming the focus of the municipality.*

The Vision includes appropriate development of the ‘frame’ identified in the Community Planning Scheme on the northern and eastern sides of the City Centre. The ‘frame’ comprises existing residential properties bounding the centre which are to be developed with suitable transition uses shielding the bulk of the main centre building from the houses behind. In particular there are proposals to develop the ’frame’ along Almondbury Road as a secondary ‘main street’ commercial area with an emphasis on offices and business.

FIGURE 4.1 MELVILLE CITY CENTRE VISION PLAN



Source: Hames Sharley 2006

The primary ‘main street’ is planned internal to the site linking Almondbury Road at the traffic circle to Davy Street. It will serve the purpose of providing peripheral access to the site giving both frontages considerable exposure to the vehicular and pedestrian traffic using it. More importantly it will also be the focus of entertainment and leisure functions linking through the City Square to the Council civic functions.

FIGURE 4.2
MELVILLE CITY CENTRE VISION PLAN IMAGES (extracts from promotional brochure)

Entertainment Leisure Precinct

Almondbury Road

Pedestrian Mall

Source: Hames Sharley 2002

The issue is how these objectives fit within the limitations of the current Metropolitan Centres Policy (2000) with respect to retail floorspace limitations. In the Metropolitan Centres Policy (2000) the City Centre is classified as a Regional Centre with floor area limits of 50,000m^2 unless otherwise approved in an endorsed Local Commercial Strategy. In the current Local Commercial Strategy endorsed by the Council and the Western Australian Planning Commission in 1993, the City Centre has approval to expand the 65,000m^2 nla retail floor area. 'Retail' floor area for policy purposes are those categories of retail classified as shop ('SHP' – Category 5) in the Planning Land Use Category (PLUC5) and listed in Appendix 4 of the Metropolitan Centres Policy (2000).

In the 2002 Commercial Survey by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure there was just under 60,000m^2 nla of Policy retail floor area. To achieve the Vision, the City Centre needs of the order of 80,000m^2 nla of retail floorspace. This would put the City Centre in the realms of a Strategic Regional Shopping Centres in the Metropolitan Centres Policy (2000).

In addressing the merit of the Vision for purposes of this Local Commercial Strategy review we have considered a number of related issues such as:

- The origins of the Metropolitan Centres Policy (2000) for regulating retail floorspace.

- The adequacy of the Metropolitan Centres Policy (2000) floorspace guidelines as a ‘yardstick’ for measuring retail floorspace requirements in the inner and middle metropolitan area. (Include discussion of penetration of former inner industrial areas)
- Fremantle’s evolving role as a major regional centre – especially as a major shopping place.
- Melville City Centre’s evolving role as a major regional centre – and how it fits into the metropolitan context of major places.

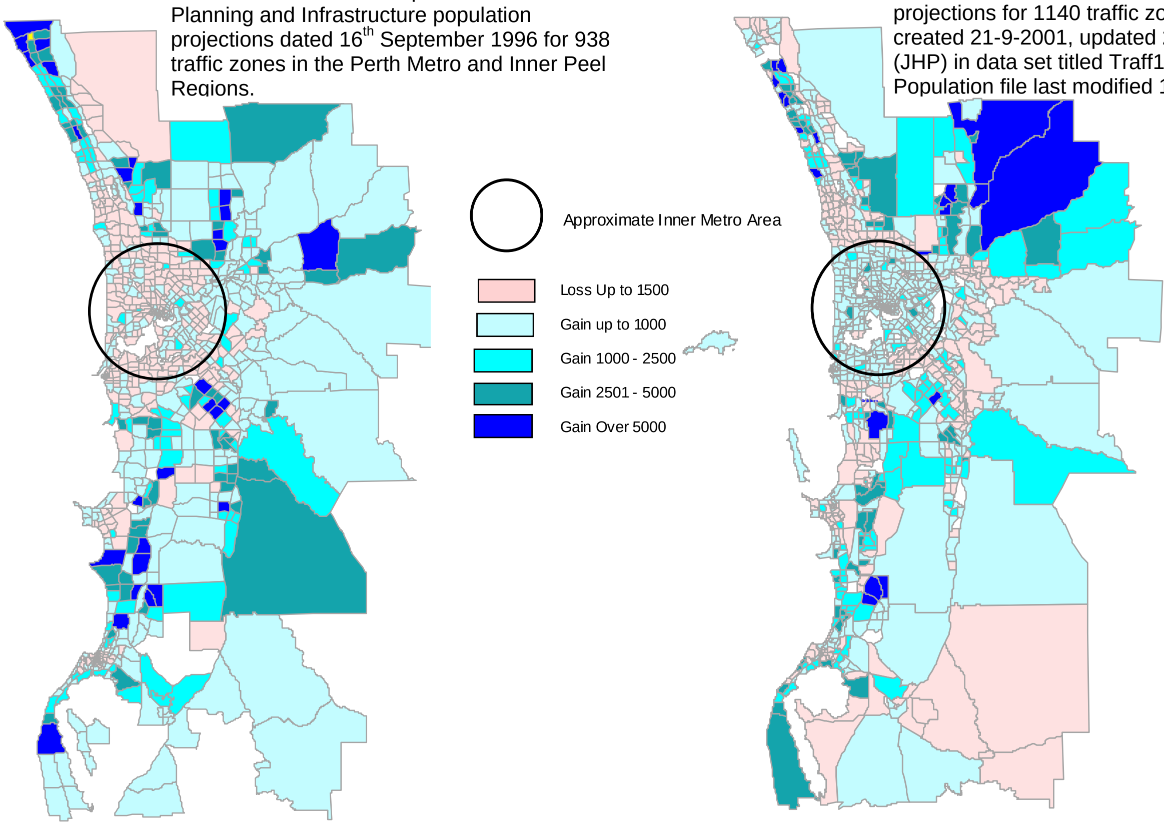
4.1 EMERGING TRENDS IN POPULATION GROWTH

At the time the Metropolitan Centres Policy floorspace guidelines were formulated in 1991, there was the supposition that inner and middle metropolitan population numbers would fall relative to the outer metropolitan corridors because of the aging of the inner and middle metropolitan area population. The supposition is reflected in population projections issued by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure up until 1997. The changing suppositions are reflected in **Figure 4.3** below.

FIGURE 4.3 THE CHANGING ASSUMPTIONS FOR POPULATION GROWTH 2001 - 2026

Source: Derived from Department for Planning and Infrastructure population projections dated 16th September 1996 for 938 traffic zones in the Perth Metro and Inner Peel Regions.

Source: Derived from population projections for 1140 traffic zones created 21-9-2001, updated 2-5-2001 (JHP) in data set titled Traff1100. Population file last modified 16/9/2001.



Population Growth Assumptions
Pre 1997/98

Population Growth Assumptions
Population Report No 4 – Medium Series

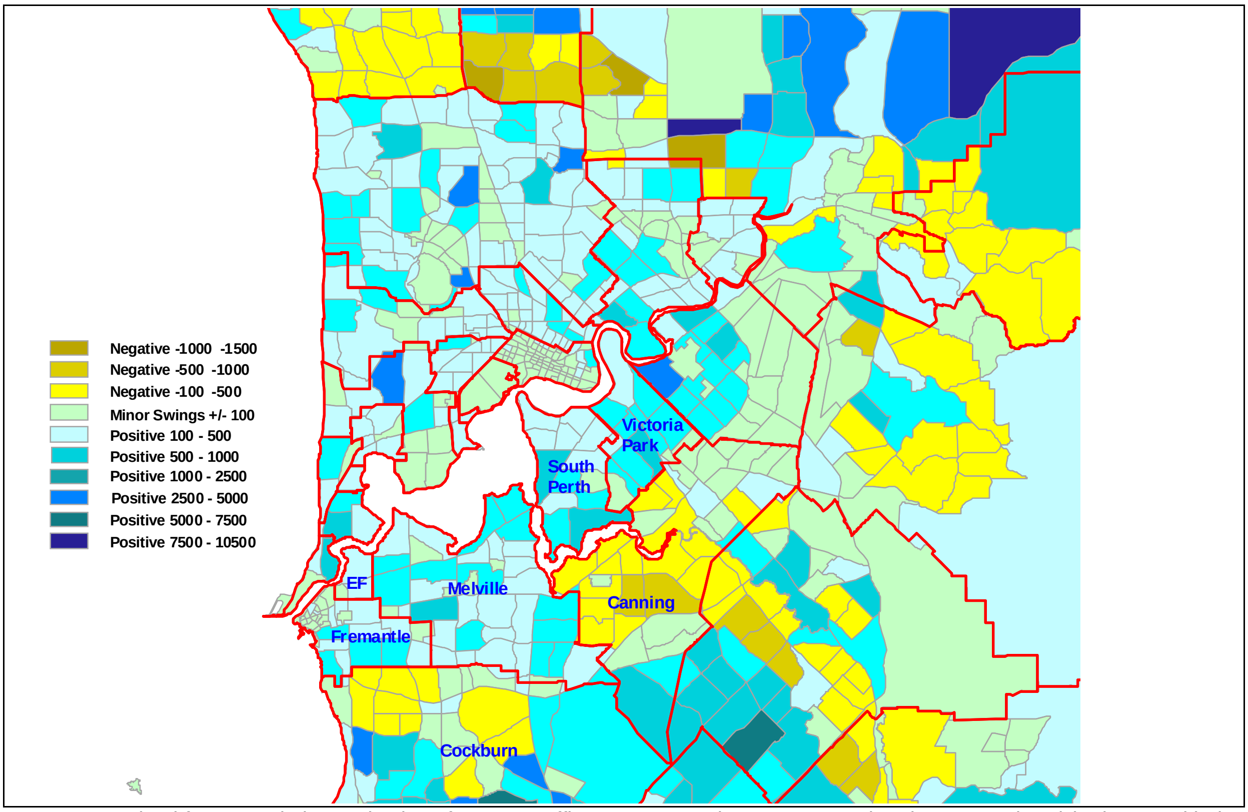
Recent inner and middle metropolitan housing trends have caused the Department for Planning and Infrastructure to revise its thinking about future metropolitan growth trends. These changes are reflected in their report *Western Australia Tomorrow – Population Report No. 4 (October 2000).* These projections have indicated an expected rise in inner metropolitan populations in the period 2001 – 2026 at the expense of declines or slower growth in the outer corridors.

The left hand illustration shows a GIS analysis of population projections by Main Roads Traffic Zones dated September 1996 supplied by the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. At that time the projections reflected an assumption that the inner and middle metro area population would decline in the period 2001 – 2026. The right hand illustration shows a similar analysis for Department for Planning and Infrastructure population projections in 2000. In this case the inner and middle metropolitan area is expected to have significant population growth in the period 2001 – 2026.

The projections in Population Report No. 4 were based on the 1996 Census, checks with the most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics *Estimated Residential Population for 2001 (Publication 3218.0 – 3 April 2003)* show that the projections are within an acceptable limit of error (1.5% overall). The Department for Planning and Infrastructure has therefore agreed that the small area projections by Main Roads Traffic Zones derived from *Population Report No. 4* as used in this study are acceptable for Local Commercial Strategy purposes.

A clearer indication of current population growth projections for the next 25 years in the inner and middle metropolitan area is shown in **Figure 4.4**.

FIGURE 4.4 CURRENT SUPPOSITIONS FOR POPULATION GROWTH IN THE INNER AND MIDDLE METROPOLITAN AREA 2001 – 2026



Source: Derived from population projections for 1140 traffic zones created 21-9-2001, updated 2-5-2001 (JHP) in data set titled Traff1100. Population file last modified 16/9/2001.

Figure 4.4 shows a distinct change in growth assumptions at the boundaries on inner, middle and outer local authorities. Increases are fairy consistent throughout the inner and middle areas. The implications of the above analysis combined with the analysis showing increased per capita floorspace ratios in the inner areas are promising for the Melville City Centre Vision. Evidence of retail growth in the inner metropolitan area outstripping population growth is now added to the prospect of fairly substantial population growth in the same areas.

The trends noted above are becoming self evident in Melville. There has been considerable expansion of the larger centres at the District and Regional level over the last decade. Yet the 2002 commercial survey and recent on-site inspections shows that there are virtually no shop vacancies in the Melville City Centre or any of the District Centres in the southern suburbs.

The Carousel Shopping centre at Cannington has recently been expanded to 73,000m^2. It has no uncommitted vacancies and appears to be trading well. The same cannot be said for Fremantle City Centre.

4.2 FREMANTLE'S EVOLVING ROLE AS A MAJOR REGIONAL CENTRE – ESPECIALLY AS A MAJOR SHOPPING PLACE

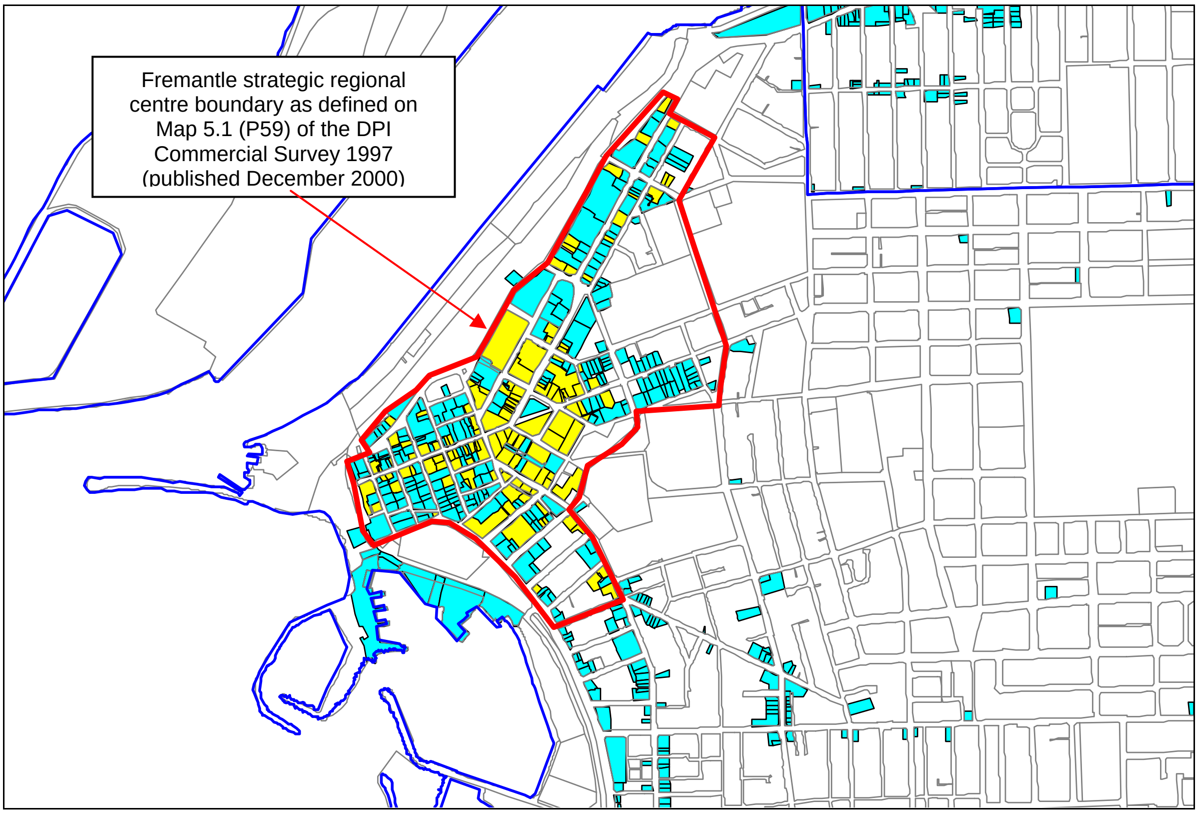
The reason for this analysis is because Fremantle City Centre is susceptible to developments of major Regional and District centres in the City of Melville.

Fremantle City Centre is designated as a Strategic Regional Centre in the Metropolitan Centres Policy (2000). Historically it has only been second to Perth City Centre in importance. In the 1960s and 1970s it was also the most important shopping place outside Perth. Over the last two decades, particularly the last decade, its commercial emphasis has been moving away from shopping. Within the City Centre itself there has been an internal rearrangement of the commercial land uses. The focus of shopping has moved away from High Street towards Queen Street, the link between what remains of the Myer Department Store, the Target Discount Department Store and the Coles supermarket in the Woolstores Shopping Centre on Cantonment Street.

The spatial distribution of shopping in Fremantle in 2002 in the Department for Planning and Infrastructure Commercial Survey is shown on **Figure 4.5**

In **Figure 4.5** the blue shaded areas are the surveyed Commercial Complexes. The yellow highlighted areas have at least some shopping. For functional purposes the Fremantle Shopping Area is taken to be that within 400 metres radius of the intersection of High and Market Streets, the traditional heart of the City. For Fremantle analytical purposes all the land uses within the area bordered red, which is the extent of the Fremantle strategic regional centre defined in the 1997 commercial survey have been counted.

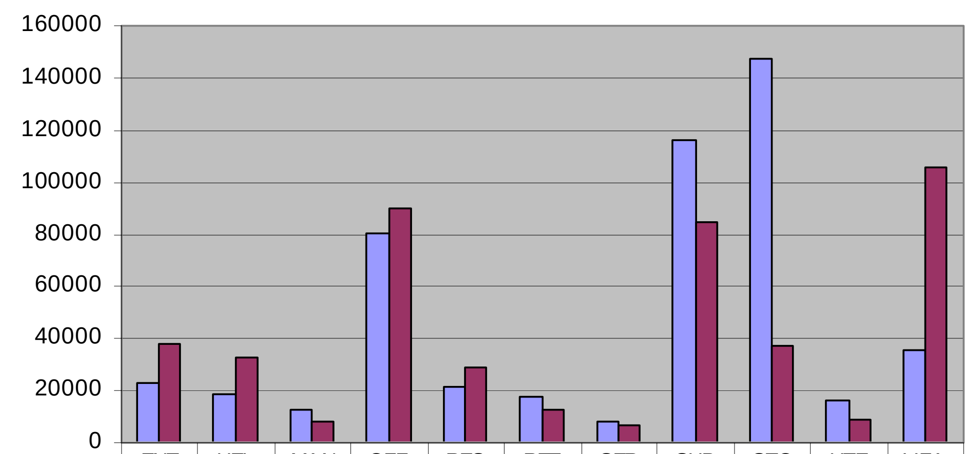
FIGURE 4.5 SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF SHOPPING IN FREMANTLE STRATEGIC REGIONAL CENTRE



Source: Department for Planning and Infrastructure Commercial Survey 1990 & Fremantle Strategic Regional Centre delineation from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure 1997 Commercial Survey (Map 5.9 P51).

Fremantle City Centre is made up of a diverse range of land uses that have been changing over time. Changes to the land use structure over the period 1990 - 2002 are reflected on **Figure 4.6**.

FIGURE 4.6 CHANGES IN LAND USE IN FREMANTLE STRATEGIC REGIONAL CENTRE 1990 – 2001



	ENT	HEL	MAN	OFF	RES	RET	SER	SHP	STO	UTE	VFA
1990 NLA	23405	18882	12535	80002	21502	18003	8142	116329	147138	16499	35452
2001 NLA	37874	32913	8364	90297	29365	12618	6617	84953	37154	8737	105474

Source: Department for Planning and Infrastructure Commercial Survey 1990 (Published 1993) and DPI Commercial Survey 2002 (Unpublished).

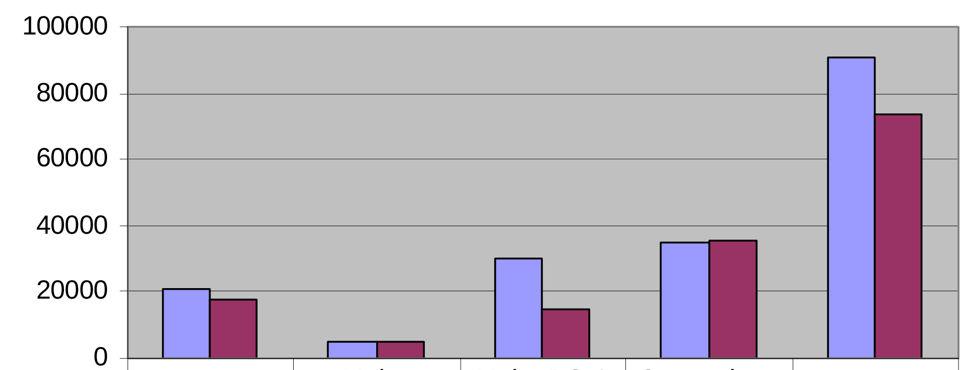
Figure 4.6 shows there have been significant gains in the entertainment, educational (HEL= Health, Entertainment and Education) mostly by Notre Dame University, office and residential floorspace. However, these gains have been more than offset by very significant falls in shopping, warehousing and utilities (such as the Water Corporation office etc). Vacant floor area has more than doubled although most of this coincides with the fall in warehousing attributed to the closure of the Woolstores.

In fact the situation is worse than the current 2002 survey data shows. The 2002 data shows two floors of shop/retail of about 4,250m^2 NLA each making a total of 8,500m^2 NLA. In fact only half the second floor is operating – about 2,150m^2 making a total of about 6,400m^2 NLA. In addition, two of the Myer's floors (about 8,500m^2) are boarded up and effectively vacant, but are shown as warehousing in the 2002 survey. Other small apparent data errors need to be checked.

Fremantle's declining role as a regional shopping centre is indicated by **Figure 4.7** (below). The categories of retailing included in the graph are those considered to have a regional influence. Convenience shopping and personal services were not included.

Figure 4.7 shows falls in all the sub-categories of regionally orientated shopping, including restaurants. The fall in restaurant floorspace was unexpected. The most telling reductions are the falls in department store floor area (two whole floors of Myer). The single large supermarket (Coles) in the Woolstore Centre, has continued since 1990.. Without full-line major stores as anchor tenants the City Centre's role as a regional shopping destination is diminished.

FIGURE 4.7 CHANGES IN REGIONAL ORIENTATED RETAIL FLOORSPACE IN FREMANTLE STRATEGIC REGIONAL CENTRE 1990-2001
(Convenience Shopping Excluded)



	Restaurants	Major Supermarket	Major DS & DDS	Comparison Specialty	Totals
1990	20706	5076	30043	34738	90563
2001	18076	5076	14796	35392	73340

Source: Department for Planning and Infrastructure Commercial Survey 1990 (Published 1993) and DPI Commercial Survey 2002 (Unpublished).

With regard to restaurants it is interesting that an analysis of the restaurant names showed that there had been close to a 100% turnover of restaurant operators between 1990 and 2002.

From a trading perspective it is unlikely that Fremantle City Centre will ever regain the dominance in retailing that it once had. The explanation lies in its trade area. Over 75% of Fremantle's 5 kilometre radius trade area (which is normally associated with about 80% of a major centres trade potential) is ocean or non-residential land uses. Added to this Fremantle's parking policies and charges are not conducive to shoppers in business hours. Local accessibility and traffic congestion are further impediments.

The Fremantle City Council is in the course of preparing a Local Planning Strategy to its Town Planning Scheme No. 4. It is intended that this Strategy replace the existing policy documents including the Local Commercial Strategy (1999). A number of statements are made in this document which tend to confirm the trends indicated above. No explanation is given in the Planning Strategy Report as to their cause or effect. The statements include:

(a) *There are concerns that the city centre economic activity is becoming dominated by entertainment and tourism uses. There is a need to strengthen the retail and commercial sectors to facilitate a diverse local economy, in keeping with the regional centre function of the city centre.*

(b) *There is concern among residents at the loss of 'local shops' in the city centre. This may in time be influenced by the growth of the city centre residential population.*

(c) *There is concern about the homogeneity of economic activity/uses developing in the city centre especially entertainment/tourism related uses. There is a need to ensure land use mix and restrain the domination of any one or two land uses (ie. 'tourism', entertainment).*

(d) *Regional-status businesses/government departments are moving away from the city centre. Anecdotal evidence indicates that this is due to a lack of 'A' grade (Commonwealth standard) office space. This relocation can only be facilitated by major redevelopment of office space in the city centre (new buildings or renovations).*

(e) *There is a need to plan for the growth of education and associated facilities within the city centre.*

From a policy perspective the recent trends away from retailing do not diminish Fremantle's status as a City second only to Perth. Its history and heritage guarantee that. However, the Strategy for Fremantle should recognise trends and promote them. The trends indicated by the land use surveys are

- Education – Notre Dame University is expanding harmoniously within the City's heritage objectives.
- Inner city residential is becoming increasingly prestigious and popular.
- Fremantle is a foremost National and State wide tourism centre
- Fremantle has a metropolitan appeal as an entertainment centre.

Fremantle should adapt to develop niche markets for which it has the most attributes. Suburban retail shopping is not one of them.

4.3 MELVILLE CITY CENTRE'S EVOLVING ROLE AS A MAJOR REGIONAL CENTRE – AND HOW IT FITS INTO THE METROPOLITAN CONTEXT OF REGIONAL CENTRES

In contrast to Fremantle, Melville City Centre's strength is its regional shopping facilities. Given the trends indicating that there will be increasing retailing potential in the inner areas over the next 25 years Melville City Centre is well placed to serve the strategic shopping needs of the southern and south western inner and intermediate metropolitan area.

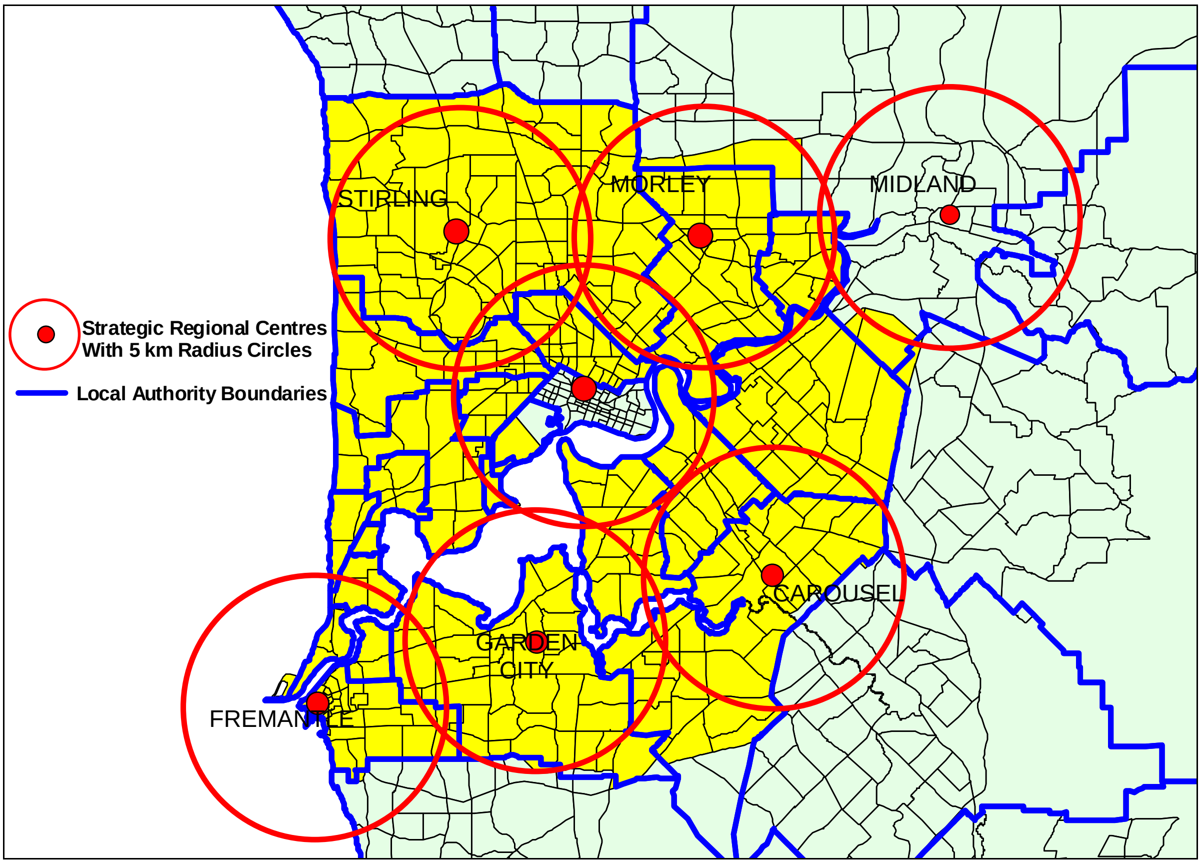
It is unlikely that Carousel in the City of Canning, which has just been expanded to nearly double its former size (now 73,000m^2 nla), is suitably placed for further expansion to serve the Melville or Fremantle trade areas. Reference to **Figure 4.8** below shows that much of Carousel's five kilometre catchment expects declining or static population numbers over the next 25 years.

In principle, the analysis in this chapter supports an expansion of Melville City Centre in accordance with its Vision. The City Centre is well placed geographically and functionally to serve a strategic regional role in the inner southern suburbs.

Figure 4.8 illustrates that Melville City Centre is located approximately equidistant to the other inner and middle City Strategic Regional Centres including Perth CBD and is in an appropriate geographical location to fill the strategic functions envisaged in the City Centre Vision.

In Chapter 5 an assessment will be made of the ultimate retail floorspace potential for the Melville City Centre at 2026. Time horizons for the proposed staging of implementation of the Vision will also be suggested.

FIGURE 4.8 - MELVILLE CITY CENTRE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE OTHER MAJOR INNER AND MIDDLE METROPOLITAN STRATEGIC REGIONAL CENTRES



Source: ArcView GIS 2003