

Review of the Shire of Christmas Island 2015 Local Planning Strategy

Community Engagement Workshops Outcomes Report

December 2021

1



SHIRE OF
CHRISTMAS ISLAND

CONTENT	page
1. Kampong Smith Point	
1.1 Background - coastal risks affecting the Kampong	3
1.2 Confirmation of proposed relocation areas	5
1.3 DITRDC proposed Cliff Park at the cove	6
1.4 Coastal Eco-tourism at Smith Point	7
1.5 General Strategic Issues	7
2. Settlement – Gaze road	
2.1 Mixed residential/commercial uses & <i>Airbnb</i>	8
2.2 Heritage	8
2.3 Reuse of the Settlement's Sports Hall	9
2.4 Renewable Energy	9
3. Poon Saan	
3.1 Amendment to the Light Industrial Area	10
3.2 Long term use of the CI Resort	10
4. Silver City	
4.1 Silver City future Residential areas	12
4.2 Adjustment of the Hospital site for future extension	14
4.3 Import of fossil fuel – Carbon emissions reduction	14
5. Drumsite	
5.1 Connectivity with the recreation centre	15
5.2 Gaze Road fuel tank relocation	15
5.3 Prospective Development at Tutor Close	16
5.4 Erosion of Murray Road along the conveyor	16

DISCLAIMER

Any representation, statement, opinion or advice expressed or implied in this document, prepared by Calmy Planning & Design Pty. Ltd. for the Shire of Christmas Island, are made in good faith and on the basis that the author is not liable for any loss whatsoever which may occur as a result of action taken or not taken in respect to the document content. Professional advice should be obtained before applying the information contained in this document to particular circumstances.

This report summarises the issues raised at five public Community Engagement Workshops held on Christmas Island in the second half of November 2021 as part of the formal Review of the Shire of Christmas Island (SOCl) *2015 Local Planning Strategy*.

1- KAMPONG – SMITH POINT PRECINCT

Community Engagement Workshop at the Malay Club - 17 November 2021

1.1 Background - coastal risks affecting the Kampong

Council Resolution

The SOCl resolved at its 22 September 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting to initiate a formal dialogue with the Kampong residents to collaboratively explore a future sustainable planning and social approach in response to on-going rock fall threats and recognised coastal risks affecting the ageing Kampong housing stock and amenities.

Coastal Risks affecting the Kampong

Coastal hazards such as shoreline erosion and inundation associated with storm surges and rock fall triggered by torrential rains are recognised risks having the potential to exercise significant pressure on the integrity of the Kampong built form and infrastructure with predictable impacts affecting residents.

Climate Change

There is scientific consensus within Australia and internationally that the effects of Climate Change such as bushfires and cyclones are increasing in frequency, scale and severity with potentially considerable physical, economic and social impacts on the communities involved. This is relevant to the Kampong and has been documented in the *2009 and 2012 Climate Change Risk Assessment for the Australian Indian Ocean Territories*. This issue is also identified in the *SoCl 2015 Local Planning Strategy* that specifically stipulates: “Develop a long term residential transition plan (20-30 years) for the Kampong towards safer existing and new urban areas”

Need to be prepared

This dialogue between the Shire and the Kampong community aim at identification or reserved areas in advance of any catastrophic event, which will provide the Kampong residents with agreed options and pathways to assist and timely protect their socio-economic interests.

Commonwealth responsibility

The Commonwealth is currently preparing a 30 years land use plan as part of the *Christmas Island Strategic Assessment (CISA)* dealing with environmental constraints and ultimately the opening-up of new Crown Land area for development.

As part of this process the Shire wants to ensure that the Kampong residents will ultimately be provided with suitable choices in location and housing types in agreed reserved areas should a future relocation be necessary.

Shire responsibility

Finally, the Shire is reviewing its Local Planning Strategy which, when endorsed, will identify agreed reserved residential areas for Kampong residents.

Kampong Coastal Risks Dialogue meeting 30th September 2020

The Commonwealth's Christmas Island Strategic Assessment (CISA) consultant created a Proposed Land Use Map showing what parcels of land were to be assessed for environmental and heritage clearance. The Shire responded to the map within the framework of the joint monthly DITCRD-SOCI teleconferences to move the CISA program preferably concurrently with the review of the Minister endorsed Shire 2015 Local Planning Strategy.

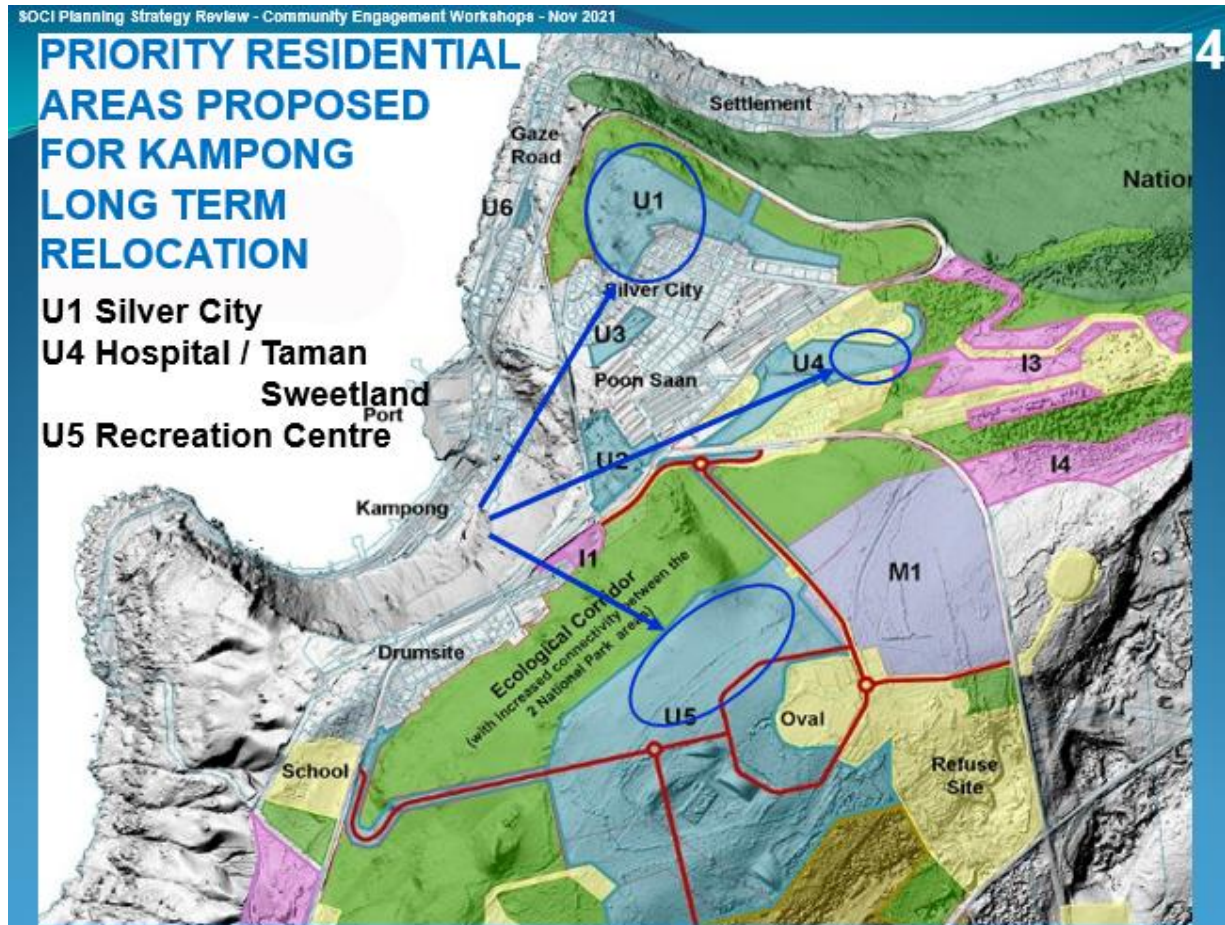
The Shire's Planning Response map differed in especially the key area of how much land to make available for future urban use. The Shire identified the opportunity to request for a significant portion of land adjacent to the Recreation Centre and Cricket Ground to be considered for environmental assessment under the CISA plan. This site would significantly increase the amount of land marked for future urban use for the next 30 years over the Commonwealth's Proposed Land Use Map.

The Shire also identified another area north of Silver City for urban to provide adequate choices in addressing the future long term possible need to relocate residents from the Kampong as a consequence of the effects of climate change i.e. accelerating sea level rise and increased storm surge risks. Residents and Shire Councillors present at the meeting were all in agreement that all measures to preserve habitability in the Cove should be exhausted first before any relocation occurs.

Residents supported the Shire's Planning Response Map. The Shire resolved to put this map forward in future meetings with the Commonwealth as the supported position of Kampong residents in regards to long term options on climate change management. The Shire also resolved to return to the Kampong residents in the future to report on the on-going dialogue with the Commonwealth in regards to the matter.

1.2 Confirmation of proposed relocation areas

The following drawing was presented for discussion at the Kampong 17 November 2021 Community Engagement Workshop.



2020 SOCI proposed CI Strategic Assessment (CISA) Land Use Plan

Three future residential areas deemed suitable for the orderly and progressive relocation of the Kampong residents have been identified by the Shire for the following reasons:

Area **U1** - North of Silver City can provide built form density similar to the Kampong with equal/superior sweeping ocean views.

Area **U4** – Between Taman Sweetland and the Hospital could accommodate Independent Living Units and Age Care.

Area **U5** – In close proximity to the Recreation Centre, outside the mining lease and on flat land. This area can accommodate low density residential on large blocks.

The representatives of the Kampong community support the Shire in securing part of these 3 Unallocated Crown Land assets for the exclusive purpose of the progressive relocation of the Kampong Residents over time.

The identification of these areas is to be reflected in the SOCI Local Planning Strategy with the reinforced expectation that they will also be included for environmental assessment under the on-going Christmas Island Strategic Assessment (CISA).

Who would acquire the land?

In fulfilling its planning and socio-economic mandate, the Shire is considering acquiring these land assets from the Commonwealth in order to guarantee their protection and timely availability to the Kampong residents whilst ensuring a timely and orderly roll-out of the relocation program.

Who will pay for the provision of new housing if a catastrophic event occurs?

The provision of public housing is and will remain the responsibility of the Commonwealth. Kampong residents in the private blocks will have the responsibility to finance their own relocation with some assistance from the Commonwealth. In a case of force majeure, it is fair to assume that the Commonwealth would consider some hardship assistance as was the case in the 2019-2020 Australian bushfire season. However, that assistance may not cover the full value of the losses and the private owners would have to have some financial contingency of their own.

A number of financial models and possible partnership arrangements for the provision of housing have been identified in the Commonwealth *2011 Christmas Island Housing Needs Assessment*. These options for the provision of housing will require to be re-examined and most certainly further developed. Collective and or Co-operative arrangements designed specifically for the development of housing at economic rates will most certainly need to be given consideration.

What about playgrounds for kids and the mosque in the new areas?

The areas dedicated to the Kampong residents will be zoned *Urban Development* under the Scheme. These areas will require the formulation of Structure Plans with input from the Kampong residents as pre-requisite to development. At that point the Kampong residents will be invited to formulate their own requirements for Public Open Spaces, Commercial activities, Place of Worship, Community amenities, Housing densities and Housing types.

What will happen to the Kampong precinct once residents have evacuated the area?

There will be provisions in the new Town Planning Scheme to prevent any future residential or tourism accommodation at Flying fish cove. This will be consistent with the requirements of the *WA State Planning Policy 2.6 – Coastal Planning*. Once evacuated, the area will remain available for the establishment of Public Open Space, Community amenities and specific forms of Commercial use.

1.3 DITRDC proposed Cliff Park at the cove

The *DITRDC sponsored 2020 Flying Fish Cove Draft Master Plan* has documented for the record that the majority of the Kampong community was against the removal of the Kampong boat parking area and its replacement with a “Cliff Park” inclusive of lawn area, BBQ, Shelter and associated ocean pool. In its majority the Kampong residents remain opposed to such land use change and for this reason alone the Shire has no mandate to support the Local Scheme Reserve change, from Public Purpose-Port to Public Open Space, that would otherwise be necessary to implement the Cliff Park proposal.

1.4 Coastal Eco-tourism at Smith Point

The possibility of re-zoning the Smith Point Unallocated Crown Land lower terrace southward, starting at the Local Scheme Reserve Public Purpose: Sewer 500m meter buffer, was first envisaged in 2016 to possibly accommodate the Extreme Divers group. This low footprint concept similar to the Swell Lodge north of the Dales was not given further consideration. The Kampong resident community has expressed its opposition to this concept because of the potential impact on crab migration and the possible disruption on bird nesting. In addition the introduction of tourism activities in that location could be subject to unpredictable interruption of traffic and access due to rock fall events.

1.5 General Strategic Issues

A number of strategic issues applicable to all settled areas were raised as follow:

- The provision of Age Care accommodation remains insufficient in the context of an increasing need;
- There is a shortage of affordable accommodation for young people who are not eligible to access public housing;
- There are limitation to the 1st Home Buyer Scheme and
- The existing High School was accommodating 800 students in the 1990's compared to just over 200 today.

2. SETTLEMENT – GAZE ROAD PRECINCT

Community Engagement Workshop at the SOCI training Room- 18 November 2021

2.1 Mixed residential/commercial uses & Airbnb

There is recognition that the Gaze Road area remains the prime tourism precinct on the Island. Several properties along Gaze Road are defined as non-conforming under the Town Planning Scheme with a combination of Tourism, Commercial and Residential uses intertwined in a single zoning for historic reasons or to respond to housing or tourism accommodation in chronic shortage. The SOCI will consider rezoning these area Mixe Use on a case by case basis after consulting the owners.

The new form of short stay accommodation namely *Airbnb* is providing additional hospitality offerings for tourists and visitors. Whilst this increases opportunities for tourism it has the potential to change behavioural dynamics in Residential areas in particular. In response the SOCI has sought advice from the WA Local Government Association as it may consider introducing a policy dealing with *Airbnb* rental activities. A draft of such policy could be introduced the Shire Council for consideration in the forthcoming months.

2.2 Heritage

The Nurses Quarter/Virgin castle site could be redeveloped.

Should we have a Heritage Management Plan?

The reference for the management of heritage matters on Christmas Island is the *Godden MacKay Logan Nov 1998 Heritage Review and Guidelines* ⁸ who have been instrumental in the registration of the Settlement and Gaze Road precincts in the Register of the National Estate.

Private redevelopment of significant heritage buildings identified in the GML review is feasible through the heritage Self-Assessment process under the EPBC Act.

What caused the demolition of the old open air cinema projection room?

The structural integrity of the projection room was irremeably compromised and presented unacceptable risk for the future users of the proposed skate park area. A heritage Self-Assessment was conducted and noted as follow: “*Whilst the building is located within the Commonwealth Heritage Listed Christmas Island Settlement Services precinct it must be noted that the 1998 Godden McKay Logan (GML) Christmas Island Heritage Review prepared for the then Department of Transport and Regional Development has evaluated the building as being of Low Heritage Significance.*

Furthermore the “small, now isolated skillion roof buildings, part of the former cinema are deemed not contributing to the heritage value of the precinct In effect the Projection Room building and the Film Store are identified as uncharacteristic, intrusive or obsolescent”.

As constructed drawings of the projection room have been established for the record, prior to demolition, as expected under the Self-Assessment process.

2.3 Reuse of the Settlement's Sports Hall

The Reuse of the Settlement Sports Hall (SSH) was first recommended in the *SOCI 2011 Gaze Road Urban Design Masterplan*. This was followed by the *Settlement Sports Hall (SSH) Refurbishment June 2017 Preliminary Design Concept*.

Since 2017 the SOCI made three unsuccessful grant applications to the DITRDC with the objective to implement the refurbishment design concept that involved: the relocation and upgrade of the existing Tourism Association outlet; the repatriation of museum pieces from Tajin House; a community function space; a café-restaurants and revenue-generating leasable commercial spaces for the upkeep of the facility.

The SSH site is located within the Public Open Space zone. The SOCI is now considering approaching the DITRDC to secure ownership of the building. Should such request be successful, the SOCI will seek to include the SSH site in Commercial zone with the objective to attract private investment for its refurbishment.

Why the redevelopment of the foreshore has not followed the original plan?

The recent redevelopment of the foreshore is the result of many changes and alterations from the *Feb. 2020 Settlement Cinema Reactivation Plan 1st Draft* design. This was caused by the need to accommodate suggestions and ideas generated through SOCI's formal community engagement processes that, at times, raised conflicting aspirations requiring the need to make changes and accommodate new design ideas. Nevertheless, it can be said the redevelopment of the foreshore for public active recreation from the Police Padang to the Settlement Sports Hall has been well appreciated by all age groups.

What about a Discovery Centre for Christmas Island?

Some members of the community have expressed interest in promoting the development of a Discovery Centre for Christmas Island. This question dovetail with the SSH refurbishment.

Similar centres built in WA in recent years have proven, in spite of their iconic design and fantastic displays, to generate losses and financial stress to the Local Government Authorities involved. The SOCI has no plan to promote nor become the operator of such type of Centre for Christmas Island.

2.4 Renewable Energy

There is clear consensus that planning for carbon emission reduction on Christmas is becoming a pressing matter. In that context homes, commercial and administrative spaces, industrial activities and all our vehicles large or small must ultimately be powered by green electricity rather the diesel electricity generated at the power station.

The two sustainable renewable energy sources for Christmas Island are solar and wind. Solar could be deployed in cleared areas such as the airfield and disused mining areas whilst wind power could be capture by medium size commercial wind turbines possibly at south point.

A third option associated with wave power is also suggested. It is not clear at this stage if this option would be technically feasible and financially viable given the acutely steep marine topography surrounding the island and the added off shore cost to operate and maintain such facility.

3. POON SAAN PRECINCT

Community Engagement Workshop at the Poon Saan Seniors Centre - 22 November 2022

3.1 Amendment to the Light Industrial Area

The presentation of the Council-endorsed plan for the Light Industrial Area (LIA) has generated a discussion around the facilitation of red crabs crossing for existing and new roads in the context of the environmental corridor, the crossing of Phosphate Hill road and the proposed Murray Road runabout. The protection and management of red crabs is the responsibility of the National park. The task is particularly demanding during the October/November 8 weeks crab migration whilst intendedly running over crabs is an offence.

It is asserted that input from the National Park manager for red crabs migration would be essential during the design and construction stages when implementing the new LIA road system. Overhead and underpass red crabs crossing options would require consideration including the location, orientation and type of longitudinal barriers.

The SOCI is considering the need to seek red crabs migration input from National Park as a condition to grant Development Approval for all new significant development across the Island.

3.2 Long term use of the CI Resort

In the wider Island-wide context the question of the future use of the CI Resort was debated.

10

Background

The CI resort has been used intermittently since the closure of the Casino in April 1998.

With the significant reduction of activity at the North West Point Detention Centre the need to accommodate Detention Centre staff at the resort ceased in 2015 and led to the permanent closure of the facility in April of that year.

Since then the SOCI has been concerned with the rapid and on-going deterioration of the buildings and commissioned *Riverside Building Approvals* to carry out a preliminary *National Construction Code-Building Code of Australia* compliance and associated legislation inspection/report.

The purpose of such report is to identify what would be required from the Lessee of the CI resort before approval to reopen the facility to the public could be granted by the SOCI.

What could the resort be used for moving forward?

The Australian Government on-going investigation into *Crown Casino* leaves the perspective of the Commonwealth re-issuing a gambling Licence on Christmas Island in the short to medium term highly unlikely and that concerns directly the CI Resort.

That said the CI resort, with its 156 bedrooms, remains a sizable asset with considerable re-use prospect and convenient access to and from the Airport plateau via Lilly Beach Rd. and to and from the Settlement via Golf Course Rd.

In late 2018 the CI Resort was visited by the Singapore based *Temasek Polytechnic School of Applied Sciences* Director who suggested that the resort could make an excellent, and somehow cost effective, research and education complex for International and Australian teachers and students alike. Incidental commercial activities normally find in such complex could also be easily included.

With its direct access to the Ocean the CI Resort is also ideally placed to host marine research activities. This would not preclude the maintenance of a tourism component as well as securing guaranteed involvement and access to all CI permanent resident age groups in the research, education, recreation and hospitality activities such as café and restaurant(s).

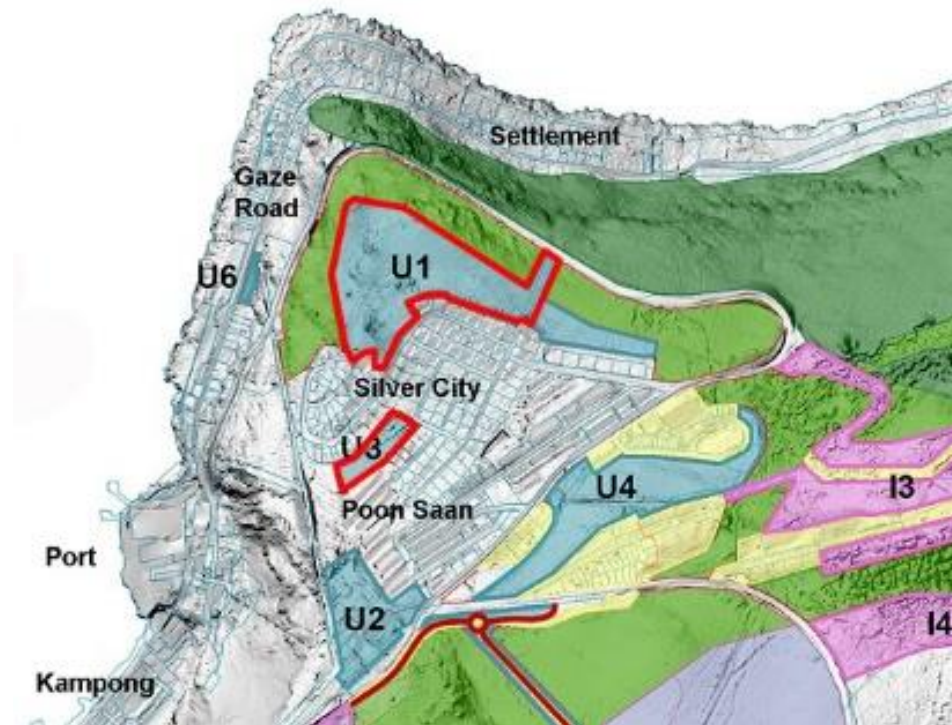
Given the diverse land uses possibilities described above the SOCI is likely to seek from the Commonwealth (as the “land owner”) agreement to change the zoning of the property from Tourism to Mixed Use as part of the review of the SOCI Town Planning Scheme No.3. This would provide greater flexibility for the potential re-purpose of the CI resort and maintain the continuation of tourism as a use class on that site.

4. SILVER CITY PRECINCT

Community Engagement Workshop at the Poon Saan Seniors Centre - 23 November 2021

4.1 Silver City future Residential areas

Two areas deemed suitable for the provision of urban development under the CISA land use plan have identified within the Silver City Precinct as shown in the following drawing:



2020 SOCI proposed CISA Land Use Plan

Area U1

Located north of the existing Silver City settlement, area **U1** is set back from the National Park to minimise potential impact on the Frigate Birds and contained within 7% to 12% slope to minimise future development costs as much as feasible. The SOCI is committed to reserve/protect part of Area U1 for the ultimate relocation of some Kampong residents who have indicated interest in the area.

Area U3

Background

The SOCI requested formally from the Commonwealth, as custodian of Crown Land, the creation of a residential Outline Development Plan (ODP) for this area on the 7 August 2002.

At the invitation of the Attorney General's Department, engineering firm GHD formulated an ODP for the area in May 2010. The ODP was endorsed by the Commonwealth the following year and subsequently incorporated in the 2016 SOCI Local Planning Scheme (LPS) No.2 (See ODP Layout and associated LPS No.2 extract next page).

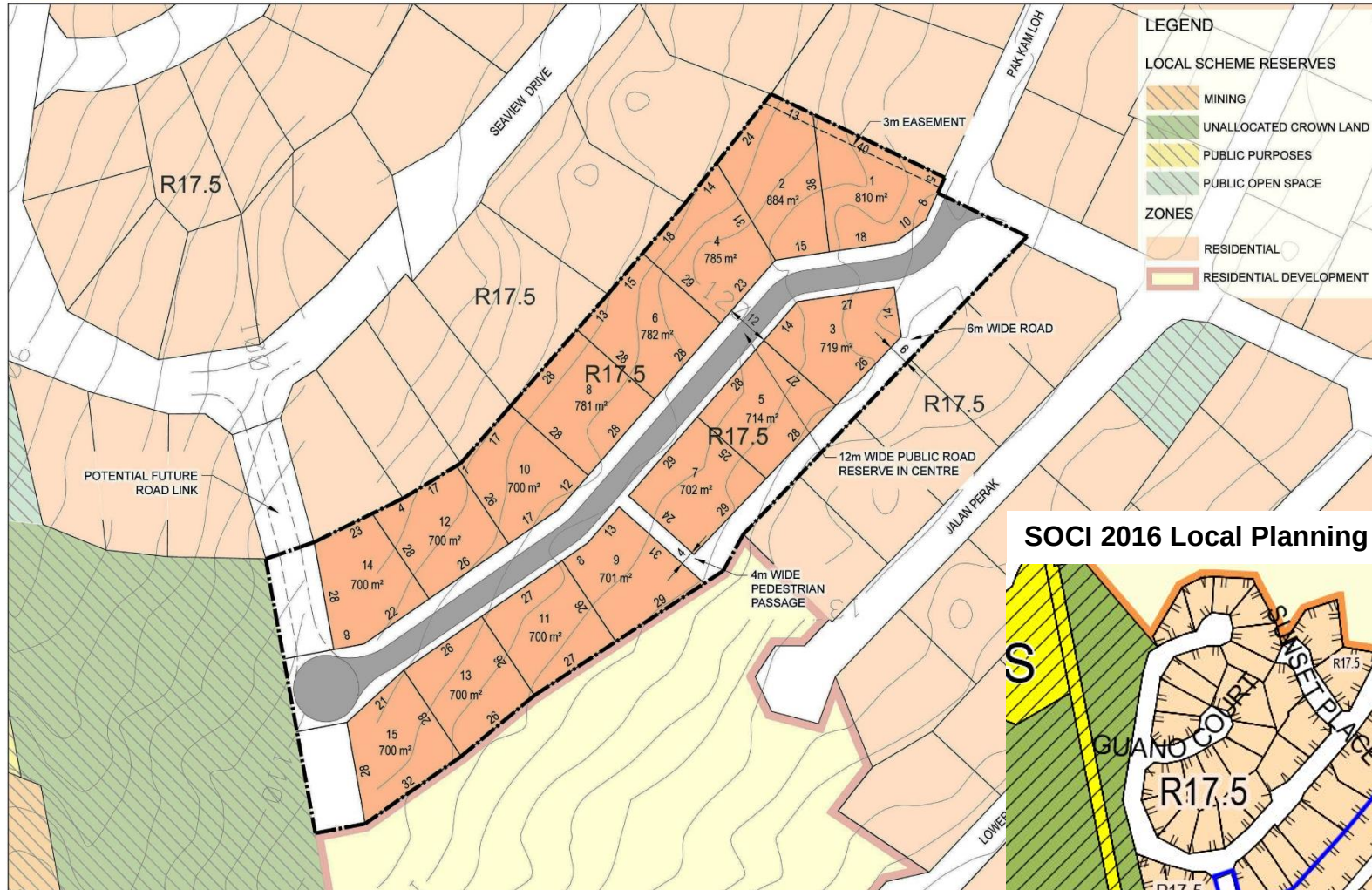
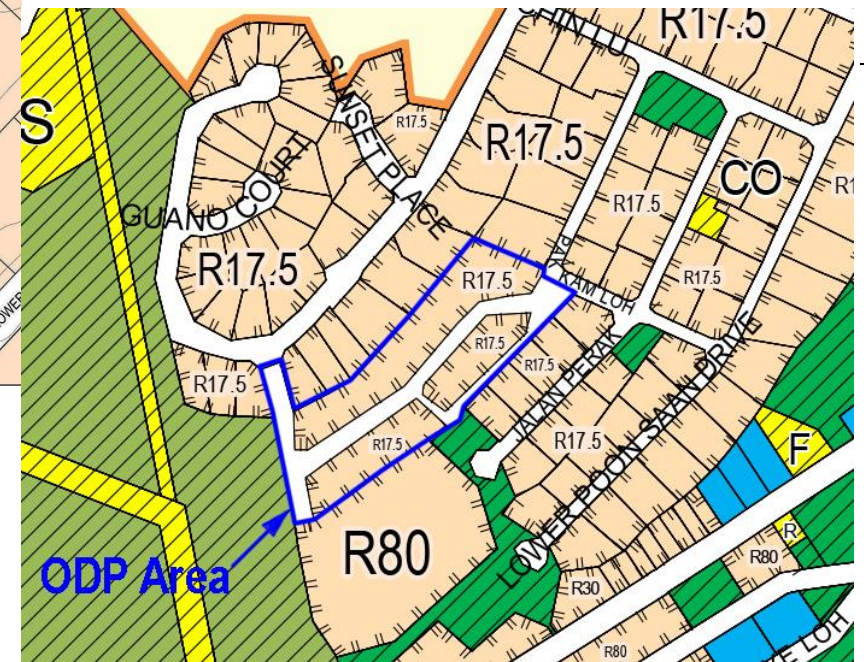


Figure 3: Outline Development Plan

SOCI 2016 Local Planning Scheme No.2 map extract



What about risk of runoff flowing into the properties to the north-west?

The 2010 ODP report provides a detailed analysis of drainage arrangements affecting the site and stipulates requirements for the future development of the subdivision based on comprehensive drainage modeling. The onus will be on the party responsible for the construction of the subdivision to ensure that surrounding developed areas cannot be affected by water runoff as required under the regulations.

5. DRUMSITE PRECINCT

Community Engagement Workshop at the Poon Saan Seniors Centre - 25 November 2021

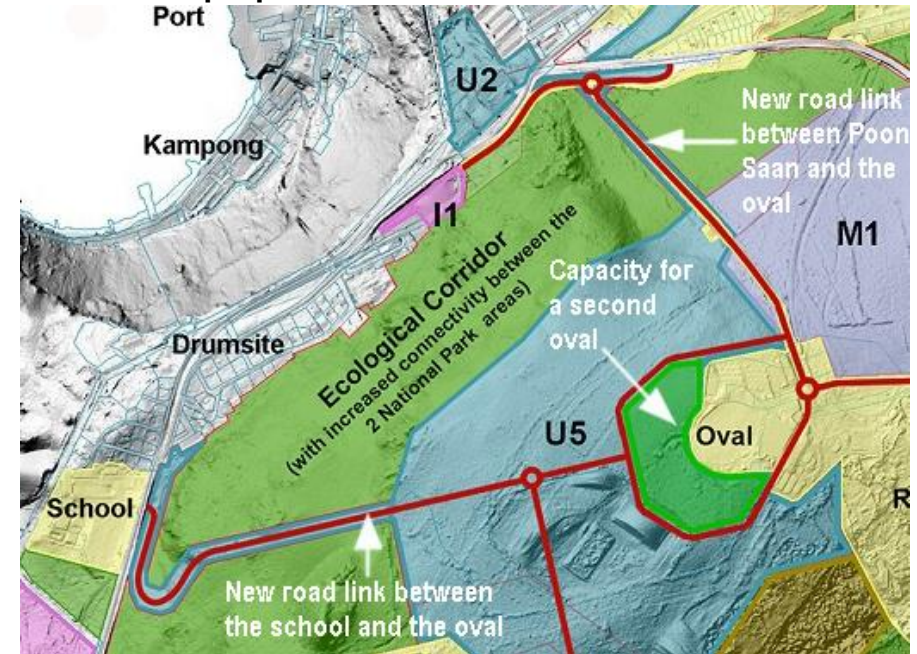
5.1 Connectivity with the recreation centre

The SOCI 2015 Local Planning Strategy acknowledges the Phosphate Hill area around the recreation centre offers significant developable land to cater for the long-term growth of the island. To ensure the orderly development of the area the Strategy suggest that a direct road connection be established between the CI District High School and the oval and another road be established between the oval and the Poon Saan precinct. This approach is upheld in the attached 2020 SOCI proposed CI Strategic Assessment (CISA) Land Use Plan.

What should happen around the oval?

This question was extensively analysed in the *October 2011 Report for Urban Design Master Plan – Vagabond Road Sports & Recreation Precinct*. The Master Plan provides for: an enlarged carpark to cater for the recreation centre and the football/cricket oval; a dedicated additional soccer ground, a hockey ground and multiple tennis court. Again, such allowance is reflected in the proposed CISA Land Use Plan

2020 SOCI proposed CISA Land Use Plan



5.2 Gaze Road fuel tank relocation

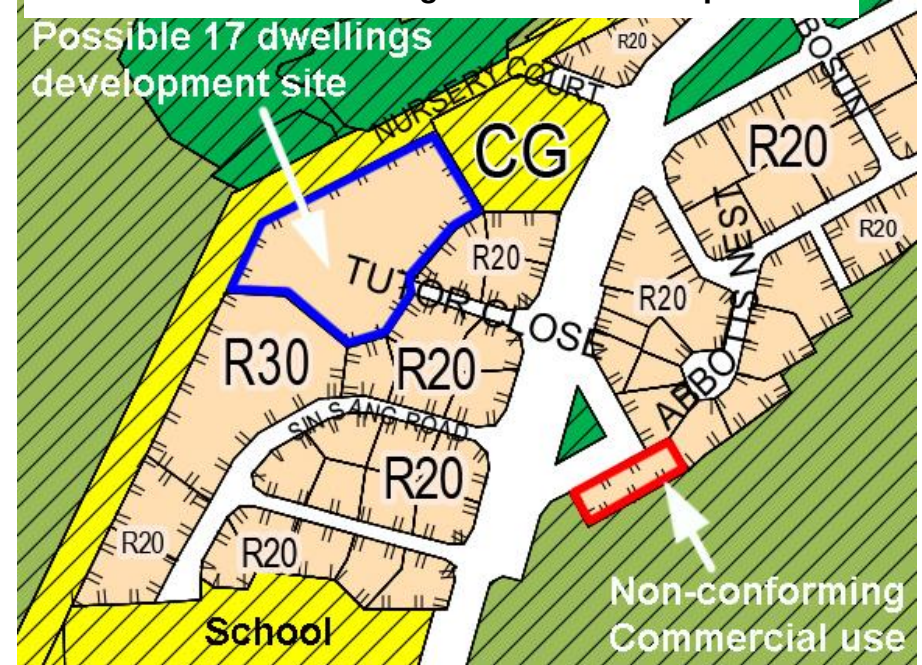
The relocation of the Gaze Road fuel tank was discussed. An Inquiry on *The proposed improvement to fuel storage and supply on Christmas Island 2012* concluded that the Gaze Road tank and associated service station be closed whilst fuel storage could be consolidated at Smith Point and a new distribution point for vehicles be established at Murray Road opposite the existing power station fuel storage. The community was split 50-50 for the service station relocation (non-central location & red crab migration). Despite an approved budget and project estimate of \$M 19.5 and a favourable recommendation from the parliamentary Public Works Committee, the project was abandoned. The foreseeable transition to clean energy is rendering the relocation less and less probable as time passes.

5.3 Prospective Development at Tutor Close

The potential (but at this stage speculative) development of 17 dwellings at the end of Tutor Close raised the following issues:

- Tutor Close roadway would need to be adjusted to accommodate two-way vehicular movements;
- A pedestrian footpath on one side would need to be provided for the safe pedestrian movement of the new residents and children in particular;
- A speed hump to link such footpath with the Murray Road footpath would need consideration;
- No excision of land on the properties facing Tutor Close would be permitted and
- The longitudinal profile of the upgraded roadway would remain the same as the current profile.
- The Tutor Close roadway will be impacted by construction vehicles and the installation of underground services. This and other transformations induced by the development may trigger a developer contribution

SOCI 2016 Local Planning Scheme No.2 map extract



5.4 CIP office

The CIP office is a Commercial operation yet the site is zoned Residential under the Planning Scheme thus making the Commercial activity a non-conforming use. The question was asked if this was an issue.

The continuation of a non-conforming use is permissible under the Planning Scheme for an undisclosed period of time.

However, *Clause 4.10* of the Scheme stipulates: “Where a non-conforming use of any land has been discontinued for a period of 6 months the land must not be used after that period otherwise than in conformity with the provisions of the Scheme.”

The Review of the Scheme could allow the rezoning of the site to Commercial. This is feasible but it would require the consent of the land owner.

5.4 Erosion of Murray Road along the conveyor

The continuous erosion of the upper section of the Flying Fish Cove cliff remains a preoccupation for the long-term stability of Murray Road who has already been deviated from its original alignment in recent times. Works to further control runoffs from the Drumsite plateau to minimise water flowing down the cove have been carried out but more may be required. The long-term alignment of Murray Road could change again in the future if erosion activities caused by heavy downpour cannot be controlled. The extreme case scenario could require the Murray Road traffic to be redirected in the long-term to Lam Lok Loh.