

## Survey Results – Conservation Zone Discussion Paper

**Commenced:** 17 December 2020 **and Closed:** 15 February 2021

**Q1 There are currently very few lots in private ownership that have a “conservation” zoning that falls within this category. What could be done to try to increase landowner interest to consider joining the conservation program? Do current incentives provide enough encouragement versus the obligations that are associated with having land zoned as conservation?**

- i. Provide advertised benefits for doing this. There is nothing readily available about it. Advertise in local FB groups. I have no idea what the incentives are.
- ii. Not sure
- iii. No I believe the Shire does not do the right thing by the landowner and too much emphasis on landowner responsibility
- iv. Make the process as simple as possible, remove doubt surrounding the cost of the program. Enlist the assistance of an environmental consultancy that has a fixed cost and aligns with the shire and landowners views. The rate reduction is a minimal incentive to those willing to conserve bushland. Having conservation targets to achieve through a management plan along with grants funding and Landcare support is far more important in the scheme of conservation than a mild rate reduction. The big hidden issue is the effect on land values through re zoning.
- v. Reduced fees, incentives to rehabilitate the land and provide habitat for wildlife.
- vi. it does not appear that current incentives will provide enough encouragement. What is the actual cost to a landholder to have their land zoned conservation? Is it the \$30-40K mentioned in the Discussion Paper? The disincentives listed at the bottom of page 3 might unfortunately override the incentive of a 50% rate reduction. A restrictive covenant on the Title may be a more cost-effective way of protecting the bush in perpetuity.
- vii. Conservation is a lifestyle/mindset – you generally don’t flip in and out according to trends. Additionally, how many properties are worthy of Conservation zoning. The strategy of Healthy habitats was to target specific properties, through support and rates concessions, landholders may be willing to re-zone. There would need to be a budget line allocation to support.
- viii. The uptake of this incentive will come down to the individual interests on the landholder. The type of person who we should be targeting are those that have the will and interest in preserving and conserving the environment. It is these people who we will get the best benefit from. We need to ensure that people don’t see this as a way to get reduced rates without putting protection measures in place on their vegetation and properties. Making a process that makes it easy for the resident to be able to participate, and not having a huge financial burden. The Shire will need resources to facilitate this process, both in staff and associated funding. We should try and encourage Conservation covenants on the selected properties as these are linked to land titles.

**Q2 What degree of Impact should be placed on prospective purchasers of land that is zoned conservation? There has been some discussion as to the restrictions that the zoning places on any new owners may be unreasonable, especially when ownership changes a number of times and the knowledge of what the conservation zone means, becomes lost through transfer. Should transfer in ownership affect the expectations that come with the conservation zone?**

- i. Place a notification on the land title like a memorial. That way subsequent owners would be aware of the expectations.
- ii. Yes

- iii. If it already in conservation area then yes it has to be followed forward however the Shire has a responsibility in this space too
- iv. Prospective purchasers should be made aware of their obligation to continue the management plan, once zoned the zoning should be permanent
- v. No. Keep these zones!
- vi. transfer of ownership issues would not happen with a NTWA covenant due to the Absolute Caveat placed on title which allows the NTWA to discuss the covenant and obligations with new landholders before they buy.
- vii. Again let the buyer beware. If you are not into Conservation – find another property, this is not unreasonable. Further development should not fragment any of the bush areas, also more landholders would create more complications in trying conserve and protect areas cross smaller property boundaries.
- viii. Good point, but if the zone of the property is connected to the landholder, then we incur costs each time the property is sold, and the next owner wants to continue. I think the idea is to be able to provide more long-term protection for this vegetation across time and property owners. The biggest challenge is when the new land holders are not interested in preserving or protecting the bush on their properties. I think if this is the case, then we need to take the rating off the property.

**Q3 Should the conservation zone contemplate additional incentives, such as a clustered subdivision potential that enables a limited subdivision of now more than one lot to be created? Should further development potential be contemplated?**

- i. Yes. Conservation may change. Needs for land may change in time.
- ii. Not sure. These questions are tricky
- iii. Surely conservation is just that How do you manage cluster development around conservation areas without negative impingement
- iv. As an incentive yes STCA and nature based, as aligns with proposed LPP 4.21 or along similar lines
- v. Future development should be considered case by case only. Conservation should be a priority.
- vi. Subdivision of bushland which is under covenant/protection should not be supported as it will require clearing of bush land for property boundaries, firebreaks and other development requirements which leads to degradation of the bushland. However, subdivision of cleared land on the property could be considered.
- vii. Further development should not diminish conservation values or allow a mosaic effect of decline. Consider Banksia Woodlands – once covered the entire Swan Coastal Plain. In 2017 declared Threatened Ecological Community due to death by 1000 cuts.
- viii. Further development should not fragment any of the bush areas, also more landholders would create more complications in trying conserve and protect areas cross smaller property boundaries.

**Q4 Should the criteria for considering land being included in the conservation zone be made more flexible / broader, to encourage greater degrees of uptake?**

- i. Yes
- ii. Yes

- iii. No because it then detracts from the true meaning of conservation poorly maintained conservation land is not worth having or identifying
- iv. A standard must be kept and align with current legislation and biodiversity benchmarks. Loosening the standards will not achieve anything unless there is a commitment to drastically alter, improve the lesser land to a higher standard to align with local or regional biodiverse bushland corridors and interconnectivity
- v. Yes
- vi. This may be undesirable as there will be less rates paid to the Shire if criteria is too flexible or broad and also the integrity of what constitutes "Nature Conservation" may be demeaned.
- vii. If the land is not of a standard to meet Conservation zoning, why diminish the criteria. Just rezone portion which is conservation. It will potentially result in appeals down the track.
- viii. This suggestion has the potential to protect more areas, but it would need to be decided as to what the criteria would be. There could be an opportunity to encourage people to enhance the quality of the bushland and get a better conservation outcome and better benefits from their works.

**Q5 Should additional non-financial support be considered to further incentivise uptake of the conservation zone?**

- i. –
- ii. Yes
- iii. Unsure as most support would require financing somewhere
- iv. Yes
- v. Yes
- vi. Yes, non-financial support such as providing stewardship visits to landholders, busy bees for weed control etc. should be considered.
- vii. Yes, flora surveys, weed mapping, partnership with Landcare SJ line budget item to implement HHSP annually, and reportable, separate to general funding. Landholders generally don't trust the Shire (sorry if I popped a bubble) but they trust Landcare. It provides the conduit for support.
- viii. Further development should not fragment any of the bush areas, also more landholders would create more complications in trying conserve and protect areas cross smaller property boundaries

**Q6 Should the Shire proactively encourage landowners to consider becoming part of the conservation zone initiative?**

- i. Yes
- ii. Yes
- iii. Only if the shire are going to not change zoning etc every 5 years
- iv. Yes
- v. Corridors and areas of significance should be identified, owners contacted, and programs developed to assist owners in understanding the merit in placing some or all of the significant areas in conservation zones. This should include disclosure of processes, costs, time, obligations and reward for landowners and the benefit to flora and fauna.
- vi. Yes, proactively encouraging landholders is important and could be done in partnership with the NTW A.

- vii. yes, if there is a commitment to conservation values in Shire policy/guiding documents (eg Biodiversity strategy). Partner with Landcare SJ/PHCC/DBCA in implementation.
- viii. There is a large amount of vegetation that is contained within private properties, with development progressing across the landscape, there is a net loss in the amount of vegetation in the Shire. Any way that we can protect, enhance and reduce the loss of native vegetation on private properties has to be a positive outcome. This would then help the Shire towards the goals within the Biodiversity Strategy.