

5.11 MURRAYSBURG (population: ± 5 000)



Figure 5.11.1.1 Murraysburg: Aerial photograph

5.11.1 SPATIAL ANALYSIS, see Figures 5.11.1.2

Sub-regional location

- Enjoys good tar road access on the R 63 between Victoria West (90kms) and Graaff Reinet (92kms), Cape Town (650kms) and Johannesburg (860kms), are the nearest large towns and the N1 is 43kms away. The municipal headquarters are at Beaufort West (158kms);
- Similar to Merweville, although much older, (± 1850), Murraysburg, was established because it was too far to either Richmond (± 90 kms) or Graaff Reinet to attend church services and register births and deaths;
- It is located in the wettest and most fertile part of the municipality and has performed relatively well compared especially to Laingsburg and Prince Albert municipalities with regards to agricultural GVA and employment, i.e. it has performed less badly (MERO, Provincial Dept of Treasury 2012, p25);
- There have been significant declines in agricultural employment although there has been less of an impact in Murraysburg, and the town is serving as a refuge for ex farmworkers; and,
- There seems to have been an increase in manufacturing but the exact nature of this is not known.

Layout pattern

- In general the town is fairly compact with most people living within a 1km radius from the town centre;
- From its layout Murraysburg appears much larger than it actually is because the northern part of the town, comprising agricultural allotments on the same grid as the three rows of urban blocks between Sir George Grey and Location Street, remain hardly developed to this day. Thus, in actual fact, its original built up area is not much larger than Merweville;
- However, the low income section of the town is substantially bigger than that of Merweville;
- There are large amounts of vacant land between Angelier and Location Streets;
- The new township extension comprises ever decreasing smaller blocks with the smallest in the extreme west. Units in this extension have all been built on the back boundaries leaving very little private space; and,
- As happens with many Karoo towns, the various sports codes' facilities, instead of being concentrated in a single complex where some level of viable threshold facility can be achieved, especially for social activities, are scattered across the northern part of the town.

Urban quality

- The original part of Murraysburg presents a contradictory quality of a number of vacant but neat shop fronts with a small core of operating shops and attractive, restored historic buildings set within shady treed avenues; and,
- Moving southwards the denser residential areas, largely devoid of trees, are cut off from the CBD area by a range of wind swept open spaces including the cemeteries at the entrance to the town, and vacant and undeveloped land around the schools and institutions between Location and Angelier Streets.

Challenges and potential

- The town is dependent on ground water and any potential threats to this, such as fracking, are of concern;
- There is a small but vibrant tourism industry and the town is located midway between Victoria West and Graaff Reinet, both tourism and heritage hubs;
- The future of the town's low income and low skilled unemployed would seem to lie more in the agri and eco-tourism industries; and,
- ± 570 (352 backlog – 220 future need) households on waiting list. 64% BNG, 31% GAP and 4% market.



Empty shop fronts along Sir George Grey Street



Residential cottages along Beaufort Street



New Houses in Murraysburg south near Hope Street

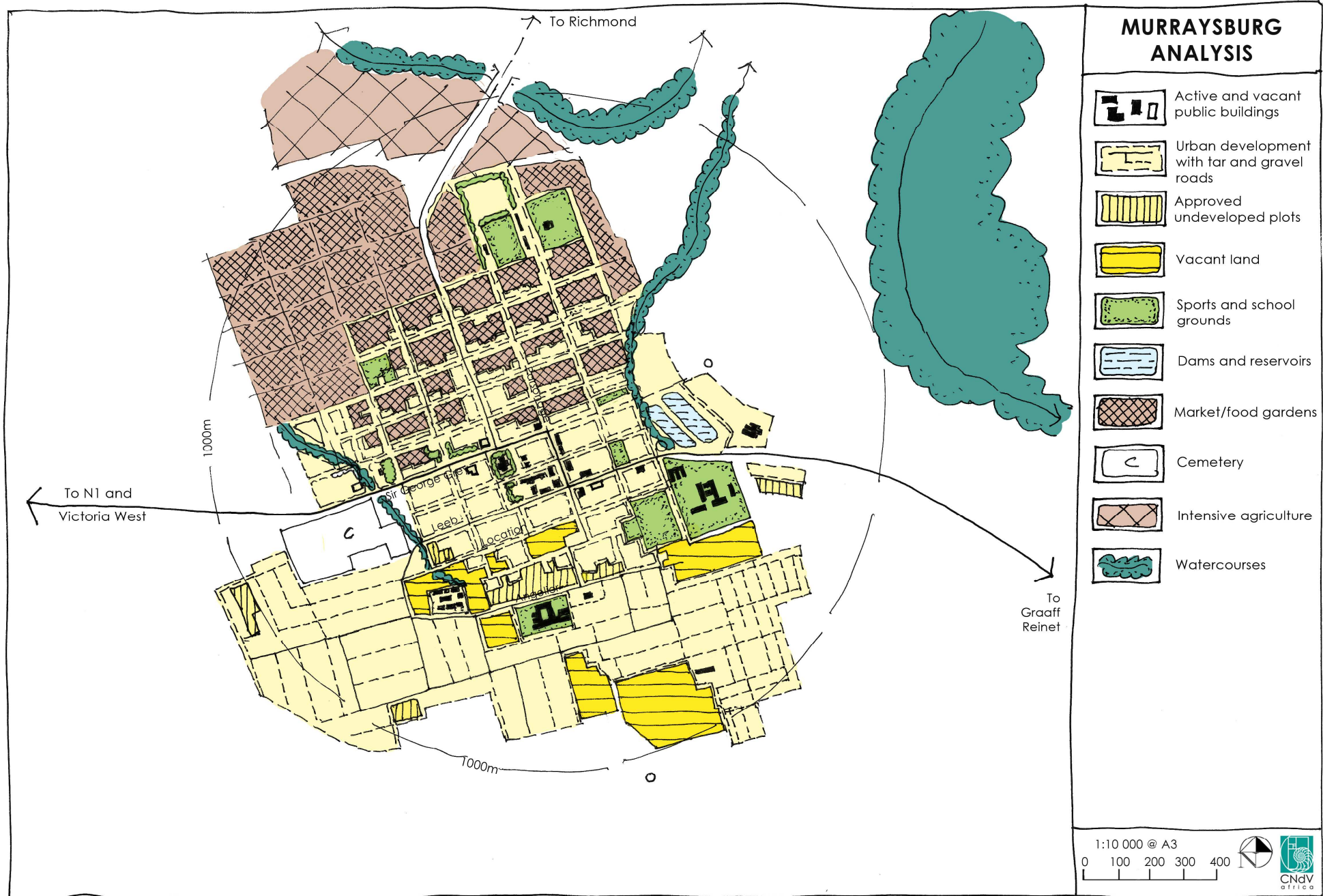


Figure 5.11.1.2 Murraysburg: Analysis

5.11.2 MURRAYSBURG: DRAFT SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK, see Figure 5.11.2.1

5.11.2.1 Core landscape areas

- Encourage market and food gardening on the large blocks to the north of the town generally north of Hoffmeyer Street. Depending on their ownership they should be available to all who wish to use them for food or market gardening;
- Determine river corridor set back lines from which intensive agriculture (plowing) and urban development are prohibited. In the interim they should be set back 32 m from the banks; and,
- Plant or infill a tree lined street network linking Sir George Grey and Leeb Street including Parsonage and Church streets to create a pinwheel around the Church that also integrates the southern part of the town along a new road, Church street extension linking to the school on Angelier Street.

5.11.2.2 Urban Development

- Incentivise development of approved vacant plots for GAP housing, particularly those closest to Church Street Extension;
- Encourage all new BNG (to be appropriately designed) and GAP housing to be located on vacant land with the centre of the town first so as to promote integration before using peripherally located land

5.11.2.3 Heritage Areas

- Investigate declaring the centre of the town from midblock between Location and Leeb Streets to the south to midblock above Hoffmeyer Street in the north as a heritage conservation area with guidelines to assist the renovation and restoration of existing buildings and the design of new buildings within this precinct;

5.11.2.4 Urban Restructuring

- All gateways into town should be enhanced to improve its sense of arrival;
- Upgrade the road pavement and plant trees along the street network as described in section 5.11.2.1 above, focusing around the Church as a focal point to integrate and link the northern and southern parts of the town;
- Extending Church street southwards to the school on Angelier Street is critical to successfully achieving this link;
- This will entail paving the unmade section of Church street south between Leeb and St Andrew's Streets and then creating a new road, Church Street Extension, through the undeveloped plots between St Andrews and Angelier Streets; and,
- Concentrating all new housing developments on the vacant or undeveloped land in this vicinity rather than constructing large new townships on the periphery will also assist urban restructuring. However, this implies projects of a much smaller number of units in each phase. Although this may not be as financially viable for housing developers in the short term, it will contribute to a more sustainable and better integrated urban fabric in the long term.



View from school on Angelier Street across undeveloped plots along axis of proposed Church street extension showing visual link to church and well located land to be used for GAP and BNG housing according to the principle of the socio-economic gradient



Former building on corner Parsonage and Sir George Grey Streets previously in poor condition when used as a shop (Google Street view 2010). Now restored and used for its original purpose

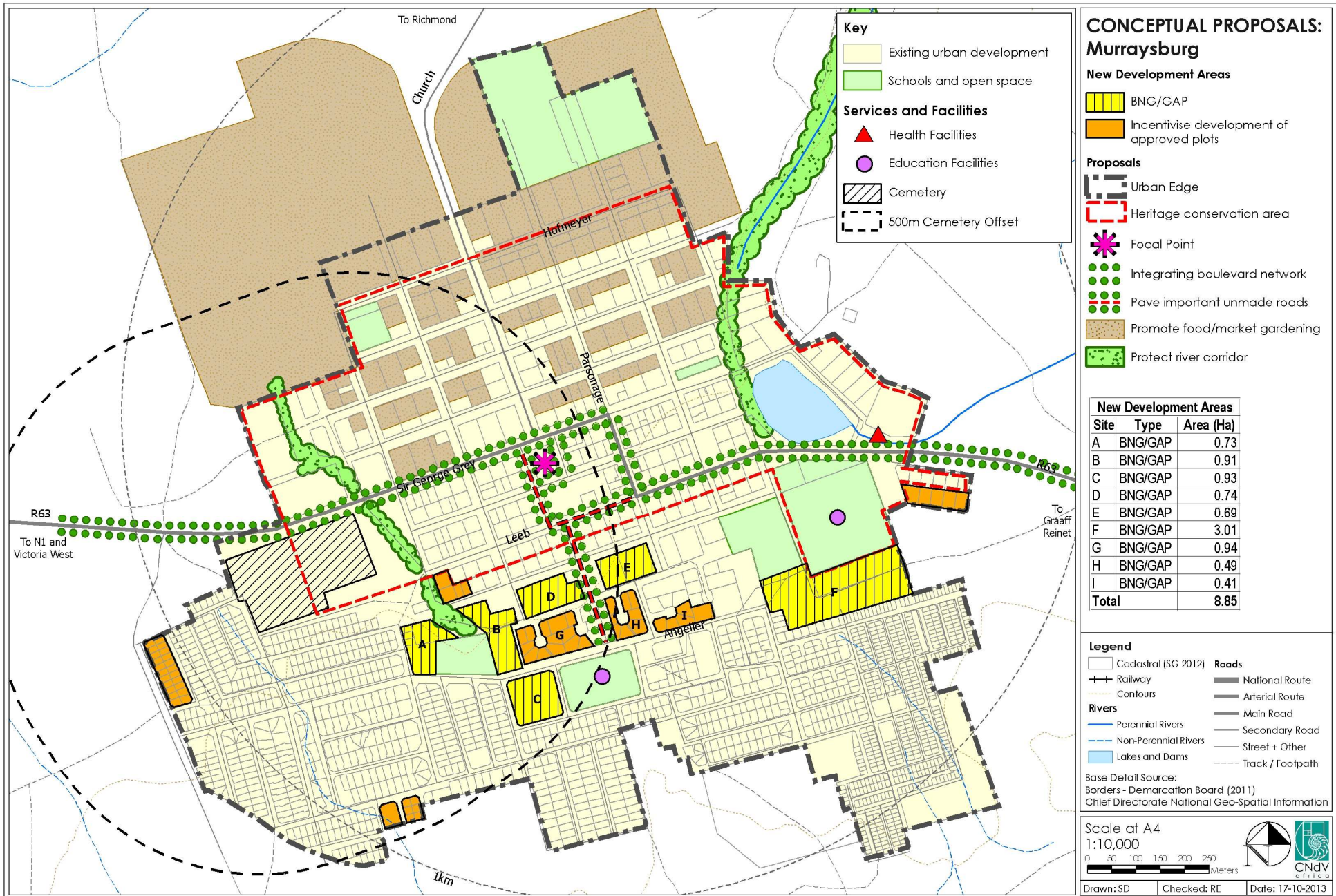


Figure 5.11.2.1 Murraysburg: Spatial Development Framework

