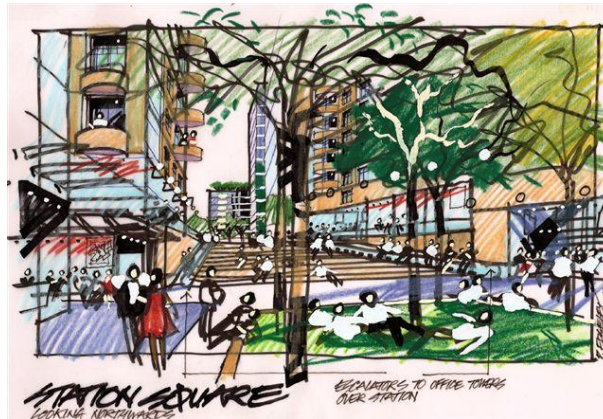




## TOWARDS A LONG TERM TRANSPORT PLAN FOR STIRLING



**OUR CLIENT** Against the backdrop of the population of Perth, Western Australia, reaching 4 million people by 2050, the Stirling area, just north of Perth, has been identified as strategic city centre to be developed over the next 20 years. This centre was founded on the vision of society, diversity and sustainability with a goal to become 'the world's most sustainable city' by 2031.

The Stirling Alliance was formed in July 2008 as a collaborative partnership between the community, several government agencies and key stakeholders, dedicated to achieving 'best

for community' outcomes by working together towards a shared vision for the Stirling City Centre.

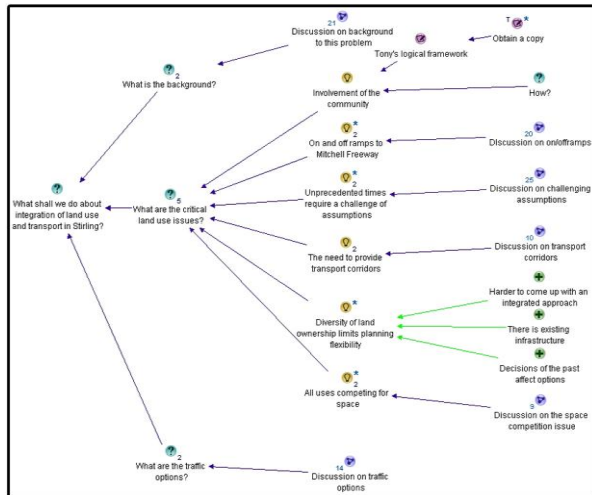
**THE CHALLENGE** The Stirling City Centre is beset by many challenges ranging from a lack of cohesion or 'heart' in the city due to past planning, an inadequate transport infrastructure, as well as contamination and pollution.

One key outcome required of The Stirling Alliance was for it to come up with a long term solution for the transport challenges of the area. This has proven to be a difficult and divisive (wicked) problem where the complexity of all the interlocking issues and divergent stakeholder views and experiences had caused progress to slow, be fractured, and ultimately stall.

It was clear that the 'business as usual' problem solving methods were not working in this case and The Stirling Alliance was unable to tap into the latent potential of the participants involved.

**THE SERVICE** Seven Sigma Business Solutions specialises in offering sensemaking and IT services to businesses in a variety of industries both locally and globally. Seven Sigma's primary focus is to aid problem resolution by improving collaboration through the combination of facilitation and web-based technologies. Through expert use of a

conversation visualisation technique known as Dialogue Mapping, Seven Sigma aims to promote and capture constructive collaboration which is then communicated to a wider audience via the medium of web-based technologies.



Seven Sigma is uniquely skilled in the discipline of Dialogue Mapping, the only recognized Cognexus Designated Partner\* in the world.

By employing Dialogue Mapping as a facilitation technique, Seven Sigma aims to engage all stakeholders and provide a constructive environment in which to communicate. Dialogue Mapping employs the use of a simple, but powerful, visual structure known as an Issue Map as the centerpiece on which all conversation is captured. Through the use of a simple structure, all elements and rationale of a conversation, and subsequent decisions, are captured in a manner that can be easily reflected upon. The Issue Map, as required, can then be provided to parties external to the discussions for their perusal.

**THE SOLUTION** Seven Sigma was engaged to provide Dialogue Mapping services for a

series of facilitated long term transport planning workshops. By the end of half a dozen workshops, the group was able to get past many road blocks, and discuss the pros, cons and characteristics of eight transport options without the chaos and pullback that had marred previous attempts.

All rationale voiced by participants were captured and built upon. The need to go over "old ground" was significantly reduced, and those "Aha!" breakthrough moments began to be fostered and cultivated. By the end of the 6th workshop all options had been developed sufficiently to take to the broader community, in the form of poster sized dialogue maps, along with topography maps, satellite imagery and other supporting documentation.

For the first time the rationale of the Stirling Alliance participants were truly visible and transparent: One authoritative source containing discussions of all characteristics of each option. All stakeholders were able to refer to these Issue Maps and supporting documents to gain understanding and derive insight for all decisions made.

**THE RESULT** Via Dialogue Mapping, after only six sessions, Seven Sigma was able to achieve a significant breakthrough for the Stirling Alliance. Seven Sigma's expert practitioners provided the Alliance with a rich environment which aided in the exploration of solutions without the debilitating effects of chaos and pullback that had long marred previous attempts. All rationale from the options examined were incorporated into an enquiry by design, multi-criterial assessment process that ultimately resulted in an agreed solution endorsed by all stakeholders.

\* [http://cognexus.org/designated\\_partners.htm](http://cognexus.org/designated_partners.htm)



Bodhi Alliance creates an enabling environment where community, business and governments work together to realise shared visions. Bodhi's highly qualified, professional team combines specialist research and evaluation services with extensive experience working with government, business and community at all levels. Offering a strategic and integrated approach to the implementation, analysis and reporting of research and consultation outcomes.

The ability of their team to develop relationships across the community from a project's outset guides its success from a management and community perspective. Their research with government tells them that successful implementation and growth occurs in an environment of trust and shared values. Fostering a culture of collaboration and trust are two dimensions of social capital and together with good governance and open dialogue builds relationships that strengthen the bonds between same-minded people and builds bridges to connect those who think differently.

Bodhi's 5 step process: (1) Develop a shared culture (vision and values); (2) Promote good governance (leadership and relationships); (3) Work within systems (find opportunities to network); (4) Use the sustainability cycle of planning, assessment, delivery, evaluation; and (5) Integrate into existing systems and strengthen social capital.

Bodhi Alliance is committed to building resilient healthy communities. They provide the following services: policy planning and review, integrated and impact assessment, needs analysis, program evaluation, performance evaluation, statistical analysis, values based decision-making, social research, community and cultural development, community engagement and event management.

## **MARIE VERSHUER** Director

### **"Seven Sigma**

#### **Opportunities and New Friends Found**

Finally the tool I have been looking for- after 30 years working as a social researcher, educator and consultation advisor.

I have worked with Seven Sigma on several projects, all *Wicked Problems* that have ranged from shared visioning to others that are highly contested. I have been surprised how effectively the Seven Sigma process and the dialogue mapping tool has changed conflict into connect and has unlocked innovative solutions.

## **Testimonial**

The process that is based on dialogue mapping and specialist facilitation captures the wisdom of the crowds to unlock and identify opportunities, share knowledge, build capacity and shared learning, utilise and build social capital. These outcomes are demonstrated through increased trust, strengthened relationships, connected networks and collaborative action.

An example where this process has been used recently was the conflicting priority of the freeway reserve through a proposed city centre. For 13 years the landuse had been debated and the recent attempts to resolve the problem had led to further entrenched opposed positions.

The first step in the process was to open up the debate and provide a safe environment where all options could be explored no matter how impractical or improbable. This opening of debate provided the opportunity for all to understand the values and goals that were underlying the positions taken. The next step was to identify the shared goals and values and to use these as assessment criteria to assess all the possible options developed. This is the important difference in the technique – the assessment criteria were not predetermined by the project initiator and used to guide development, but rather were a broader agreed set of criteria used to assess the possibilities. The next step was to synergize the top scoring possibilities into a preferred option and then use integrated assessment to look at the consequences and implications and further refine the option into an agreed plan. All this was undertaken within 3 months and the relationships built on the road to resolution are now assisting in implementation.

In short I would use dialogue mapping and the Seven Sigma process in all situations where there is complexity or where innovation or change is required. It is an inclusive process that allows people of all ages and abilities to have valued input and provides the shared understanding, goal alignment and shared learning required to meet the challenges of finding and applying solutions across the system. "