MIDCOAST council

GHDWOODHEAD

DRAFT Manning Health / Taree CBD Precinct Plan Report

MidCoast Council

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Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to provide a masterplan for MidCoast Council to develop the Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct.

Limitations

This report has been prepared by GHDWoodhead for MidCoast Council and may only be used and relied on by MidCoast Council for the purpose agreed between GHDWoodhead and the MidCoast Council as set out in this report.

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The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this report are based on conditions encountered and information reviewed at the date of preparation of the report.

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Cover image courtesy of TasteFest on the Manning

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 OVERVIEW

The Precinct Plan presented in this report has been created to capture the essence of Taree and to reinforce its strengths, as an important strategic centre for the Hunter Region.

Historically, the settlement of Taree has grown incrementally, linked to diverse industrial and agricultural economies. Taree's central business district (CBD), has grown to serve as an important civic, cultural, business and services centre, sustaining a wide population network; and will continue to do so into the future.

This precinct plan is intended to guide the future development of the Taree CBD over the next 15 - 20 years, to reinforce and showcase Taree, as a vibrant, liveable and inclusive community.

Based on detailed review and analysis of the existing assets and function of the town centre and adjacent Manning Rural Referral Hospital, the Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct Plan identifies opportunities for growth and investment, and provides the structure for a thriving and vibrant centre through a coordinated vision.

The precinct plan also identifies a number of key functional and urban design related opportunities for developing further detailed plans to enhance the Taree CBD for residents and visitors alike.

The local Biripi people have a strong established culture in the Manning Valley. The name Taree is derived from their word 'Tareebit' meaning 'Place of the Sandpaper Fig'. Since European settlement, historically the focus of trade utilised the Manning River for transport of goods beyond the region.

Sunrise over the Manning River

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1.2 STUDY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct Plan provides a planning framework for the future expansion of medical and support services for the Manning Rural Referral Hospital, additional business opportunities, increased residential opportunities and urban design improvements in the adjoining Taree Central Business District.

1.3 CONTEXT

The Hunter Region, MidCoast Council Area and Taree

Taree is located on the Mid North Coast of NSW, situated on the Manning River approximately 16 km from the coast, 317 km north of Sydney by road or 247 km by air.

Located within the MidCoast Council Local Government Area (LGA), Taree covers an area of approximately 45 km² with a population of 16,197 recorded in 2016.

Taree has a concentration of government, educational, leisure, cultural facilities and services, a mix of commercial and retail activities, including two major shopping centres located within the CBD.

The Manning Rural Referral Hospital, located within Taree, together with the Mayo Private Hospital, Foster Private Hospital and support services form the primary medical facilities for the MidCoast LGA.

AIMS

Increase the number of businesses (particularly medical related) operating in the study area

Increase the number of people living in the study area

OBJECTIVES

Identify planning changes that can be undertaken to:

- Permit the expansion of medical related businesses that support the Manning Rural Referral Hospital
- Increase the number, density and height of permissible developments commensurate with Taree's status as a Strategic Centre in the Hunter Regional Plan 2036
- Increase residential opportunities within the core commercial area
- Increase residential opportunities outside the core commercial area to support its functioning
- Ensure that large shopping centres are only permitted within the core CBD area

Develop strategies that can be implemented to:

- Attract medical related businesses that underpin a medical precinct and support the Manning Rural Referral Hospital
- Attract other additional businesses to the precinct
- Activate the interface between the town centre and the Manning River foreshore, including re-focusing/re-orientating buildings towards the river and foreshore area and how the area may be more effectively used
- Fill business gaps in the Taree economy
- Encourage the provision of affordable and adaptable housing
- Provide opportunities for seniors living in close proximity to the CBD and river
- Increase the number of people living and working in the precinct
- Provide additional carparking opportunities around the hospital to meet the needs of the future population
- Promote greater pedestrian/cycle mobility to and within the precinct
- Make the precinct more visually appealing
- Ensure that Taree plays an increasing role in housing MidCoast Council's growing population
- Ensure that Taree provides for a range of housing options to cater for young people through to seniors living in affordable housing through to high value housing

Study area

1.4 STUDY AREA

The Manning Health Precinct and Taree CBD study area is approximately 1.5 km² and bounded by Commerce Street to the west, the Manning River to the south, Browns Creek to the east and Wrigley Park and the North Coast Railway to the north.

1.5 WHY PREPARE THE PLAN

Taree is part of the Hunter Region and is nominated as a Strategic Centre within the NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment's (DPIE) Hunter Regional Plan (HRP) 2036.

The HRP nominates specific planning priorities for strategic centres within the Hunter Region, to build on the directions and actions in the HRP and achieve outcomes on the ground. There are two priority actions for MidCoast Council for Taree that require specific plans to provide a strategic planning framework enabling zoning and other changes, being:

- Maintain the retail and commercial role of the CBD, centred on Victoria Street
- Support the Manning Rural Referral Hospital by developing a health precinct cluster

These two priority actions are related, due to the close proximity of the hospital and CBD to each other (adjoining), and as a result have been combined into the one plan.

At its meeting on 26 July 2017 the Administrator resolved to endorse the preparation of a Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct Plan.

1.6 HOW DOES THE PRECINCT PLAN RELATE TO COUNCIL'S OTHER PLANS

This precinct plan is one part of a much larger Council project – 'Zoning in on our future' - aimed at developing a clear, consistent planning framework that will guide the way land use will be managed across the entire region. There are six key projects currently being undertaken to inform the new Local Environmental Plan (LEP), which include:

- Rural Strategy
- Housing Strategy
- **Manning Health / Taree CBD Precinct Plan**
- Employment Zones Review
- Infrastructure Zone Review
- Recreation Zones Review

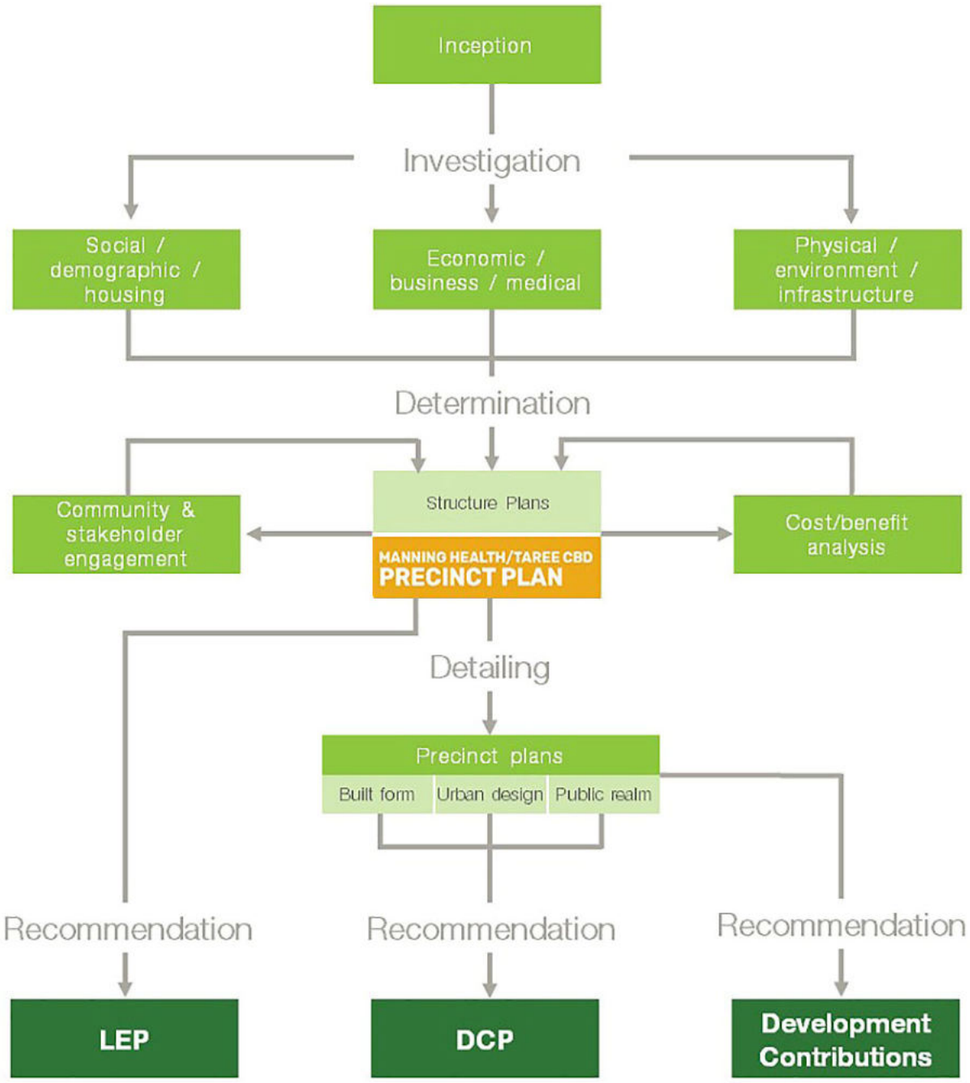
ZONING IN on our future
MANNING HEALTH/TAREE CBD PRECINCT PLAN

1.7 THE PROCESS

The Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct Plan has been prepared, using a highly collaborative approach. The diagram opposite maps out the planning process developed for this project

The investigation and analysis conducted as part of the initial phase of work and the community and stakeholder consultation provides a strong foundation upon which the precinct plan was developed. Specialist technical input and advice sought to ensure a sound framework, which is feasible and locally relevant.

The detailing phase will be subject to subsequent specific plans as required by Council with implementation of recommendations being up to Council to undertake.



The precinct planning process

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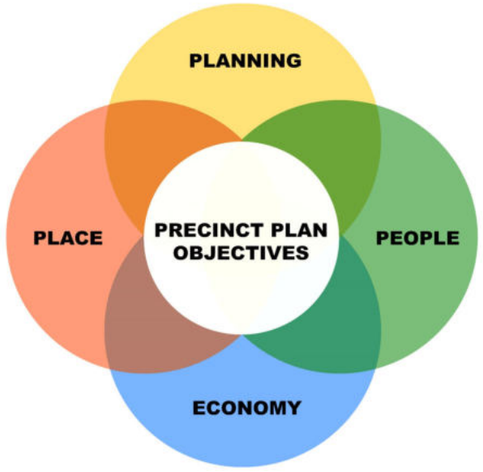
2 INVESTIGATION

2.1. FINDINGS AND OPPORTUNITIES

A detailed account of the investigation undertaken for the study area is presented in full, within the 'Context and Analysis' report prepared in June, 2018.

Analysis was undertaken to identify the factors of influence and provide an assessment of the potential constraints and opportunities they pose to the overall success in achieving the aims of the precinct plan. In developing the Context and Analysis report, consideration of the objectives where assessed against criteria grouped into four main categories; Planning, Place, People and Economy.

Context and Analysis



Context and Analysis Criteria

2.2. MEDICAL INDUSTRY

Health care and social assistance is currently the largest employer hiring a total of 286 persons. Growth in this industry is likely to continue.

As demand for health services continues to rise, accelerated by an aging population, pressure will be placed on local health care systems and services to evolve to meet the needs of a growing population.

The Manning Rural Referral Hospital and support services is the primary medical precinct servicing the LGA, particularly for emergency care. The Manning Rural Referral Hospital regularly transports patients that require a higher level of care than is locally available, via air ambulance from Taree Regional Airport, to other hospitals.

There is a concentration of medical support services not only directly around the Manning Rural Referral Hospital, but throughout the wider Taree CBD area. With the trend away from hospital care to home care (particularly for persons aged over 60 years), the need to be in close proximity to the hospital is diminishing. Additionally new levels of connectivity, automation and remote analysis are increasingly influencing the way in which health care is provided.

Telehealth tools, mobile health tools, electronic medical records and remote monitoring devices are all shown to improve access and quality of care for patients and practitioners. So while telehealth technologies will assist in the need for future expansions to current hospital facilities, allied health and aged care is less likely to rely on this proximity.

MEDICAL INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES

- Vertical retirement villages and medihotels within the precinct but not necessarily adjacent to the hospital
- Promote hospital staff accommodation within the precinct
- High amenity specialist accommodation within precinct but not necessarily adjacent to hospital
- Increased and or better management of carparking adjacent to or with proximity to hospital
- Promote allied health services to be located near hospital for use of diagnostics
- Promote and grow particular specialist services associated with the hospital

2.3. GENERAL BUSINESS

The size and function of the CBD is a product of the role it plays in the region for the provision of retail and commercial services, it is influenced by the close proximity of Port Macquarie and Forster and consequential potential for escape expenditure.

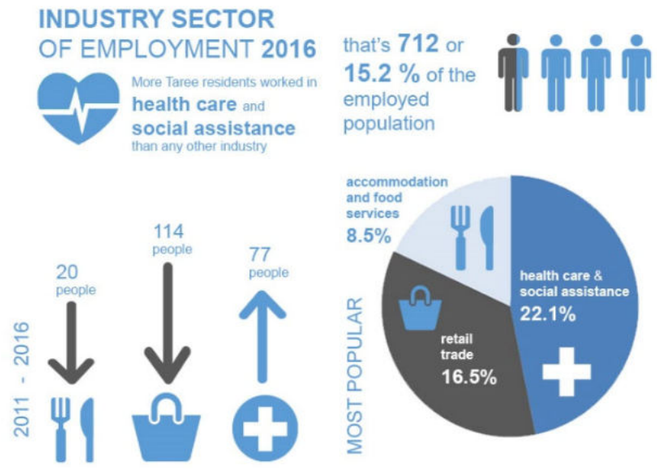
The growth and development of the Taree CBD has, and will continue to be, influenced by these sub-regional relationships and structural changes in the regional economy. The opportunity is presented for the CBD to develop a specific role and further define its identity within the LGA hierarchy of urban centres.

RETAIL AND FOOD

The retail and food industries are likely to continue to be one of the major employers within Taree.

The Taree CBD has the advantage over other similar towns like Forster in that its two major shopping centres are located within the CBD. With virtually no housing opportunities within the core CBD, businesses have suffered with a lack of residents available in the immediate area to support trade, particularly at night and on weekends.

The average stay at the two major shopping centres is 20 minutes, with the majority of visitors arriving by car. While visitors frequently move between the two adjacent centres, there is little spill over into surrounding streets to support smaller local businesses.



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016

TOURISM

Over 25 per cent of the LGA's economy is directly or indirectly supported by tourism. Future improvements and investment in tourism initiatives will benefit other sectors and industries, as well as the regions communities, including infrastructure and contributing to the vibrancy and sense of place of the region through quality produce, arts, cultural and events among other things.

The Taree CBD has significant potential for the inclusions of additional accommodation, cafes and restaurants, cultural, recreational and night time economy activities and drawcards all of which will assist in maintaining the existing markets and also targeting new higher value markets previously mentioned.

Existing cultural, nature and sporting events like the hockey tournament, rowing regatta and Easter Powerboat Spectacular attract a number of visitors to the region each year. Continued support and promotion of existing activities such as the night bazaar, farmers markets and Tastefest and collaboration with local communities, businesses and other key stakeholders across the region will facilitate the growth of the visitor economy and strengthen economic development for the region.

Nature based and adventure tourism has been recognised as having clear opportunities that leverage the region's natural assets through the introduction of more nature-based sport and events.

Nature based and adventure tourism

2.4. RESIDENTIAL MARKET

The forecast change in population structure and household types has specific implications for the CBD.

33 per cent of the Taree population rents. A forecast increase in 'lone persons', persons over 60 and young persons are likely to drive demand for appropriately sized and affordable living options located within close proximity to services.

An analysis of current housing market demand in Taree indicates that the median price for units has increased 34.2 per cent over the last two years whilst the price of houses and townhouses has remained stable, this suggests that the current supply of rental unit/apartment living options in Taree is not addressing current market demand.

While there is the need to introduce affordable, centrally located unit/apartment living options to address gaps in the market, there is also an opportunity to cater for higher value residential accommodation, particularly within the core CBD and river foreshore areas. There is also significant potential for seniors living accommodation within the precinct.

GENERAL BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

- Define and promote the CBD identity within the LGA hierarchy of urban centres
- Encourage and promote agglomeration of business types to strengthen and define the CBD - particularly food and beverage businesses along Victoria Street
- Promote Council's 'Vibrant Spaces' program
- Promote markets and market stall operations by addressing permissibility and cutting red tape
- Promote Taree as a centre for nature and adventure based tourism throughout the region
- Support visitor growth with more accommodation options and enhancement of the tourism assets
- Promote aboriginal based tourism
- Urban renewal in Taree to take advantage of and improve access to the Manning River
- Develop tailor made experiences with emphasis on the river
- Opportunities for grants or partnerships with other organisations to enhance funding
- Forster/Tuncurry, Old Bar and Harrington areas have a number of residential expansion and intensification areas which will be reliant on support services in Taree CBD

RESIDENTIAL MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase the number of people living and staying in CBD to support greater, more diverse business activity and longer hours of operation
- Focus on mixed use development to offer a broad range of commercial, residential, cultural and entertainment activities
- Maintain high levels of accessibility to and within the CBD.
- Increase the availability of affordable unit/apartment living in the CBD
- Lone person households account for 34 per cent of Taree which could present demand for CBD housing (ABS 2016)
- Promote higher value residential accommodation, particularly along the foreshore
- Promote seniors living accommodation
- SEPP Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability 2004 supports the delivery of independent living options.
- SEPP Affordable Rental Housing supports the delivery of affordable rental and social housing in existing and residential areas that are accessible by public transport.

Residential Market Statistics 2018

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2.5. LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP

The land use map below highlights the relatively compact, nature of the Taree CBD, the majority of which lies within a 500m radius surrounded by low density residential uses.

Within the CBD there are four major land uses with single ownership parcels (hospital, schools, retail centres, Catholic Diocese), each of which occupy an entire or large portion of a city block.

These parcels have an overarching influence on the functioning and urban character of the CBD and the bulk and scale of associated built form.

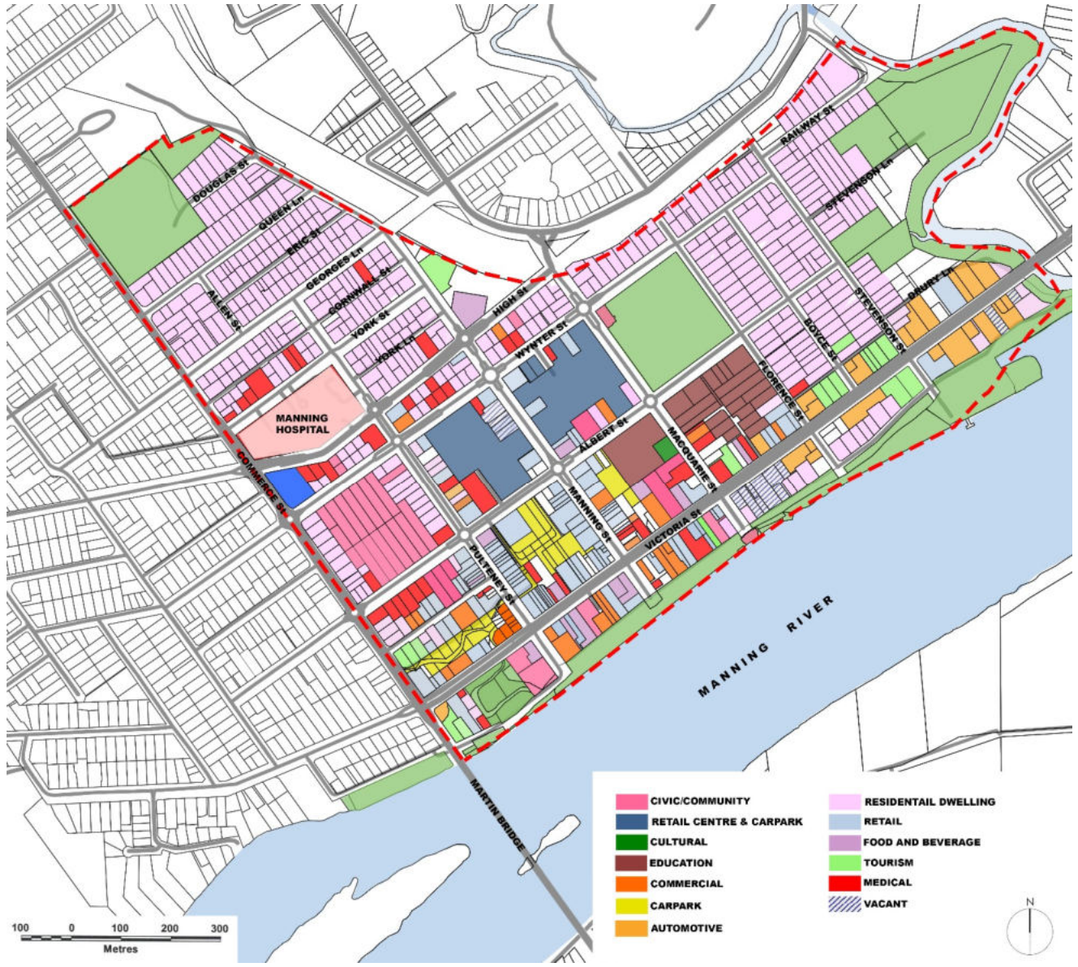
The scale, use and relationship of these to other land uses and to each other not only influence the activities within but around their perimeter and when these activities are most likely to occur. The retail centres for example attract a large number of people and traffic at particular times of day. Any change of use would have a dramatic effect.

The existing ownership of these parcels and any changes that may occur therefore has the potential to greatly influence the future outcomes of the CBD and the potential for realising the objectives of the Precinct Plan.

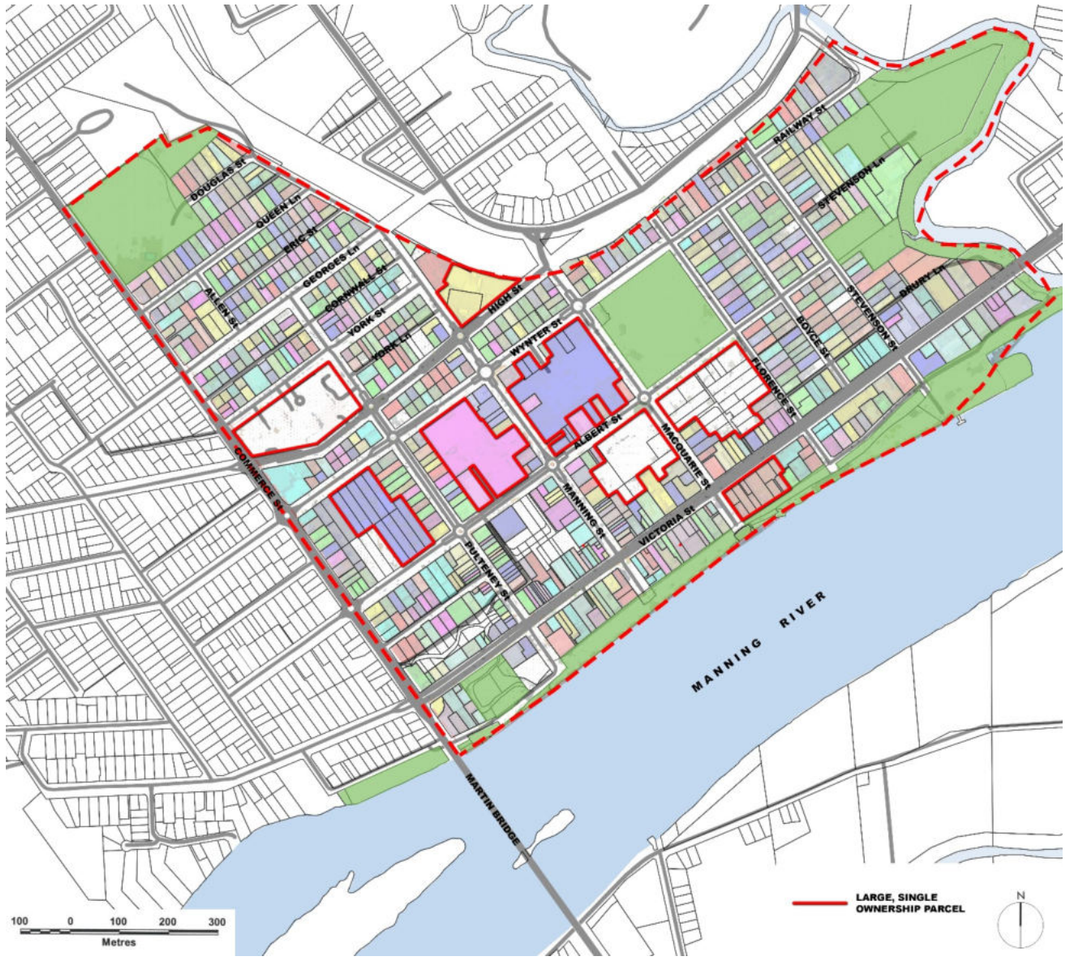
The correlation between ownership and parcel size also applies to the finer grain or small parcel development within the CBD, which in turn results in more fragmented land use, built form and urban character.

LAND USE AND OWNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- Capitalise on agglomeration of land use to create areas of distinction
- Explore options for larger single ownership sites to drive change
- Protect areas of fine grain with complimentary mixed use development to capitalise on visitor and tourist perception of uniqueness
- Capitalise on the compact nature of the CBD and ensure containment of the existing retail and commercial core



Existing Land Use



Land Ownership

2.6. OPEN SPACE NETWORK

A variety of open spaces are distributed within the urban area, and this ensures a range of recreational needs within close proximity to homes and workplaces. The walking distances required, the mix and positioning of current recreational activities within the Taree CBD currently allows for such accessibility.

Open space networks are often more useful for visual amenity and recreational use than isolated and unrelated landscape elements, as they can serve to create linkages to existing urban areas, other sites and the wider landscape. The Taree foreshore offers this opportunity.

2.7. THE FORESHORE

The river is an important part of the Taree experience in terms of identity, character and amenity, however this is not currently maximised.

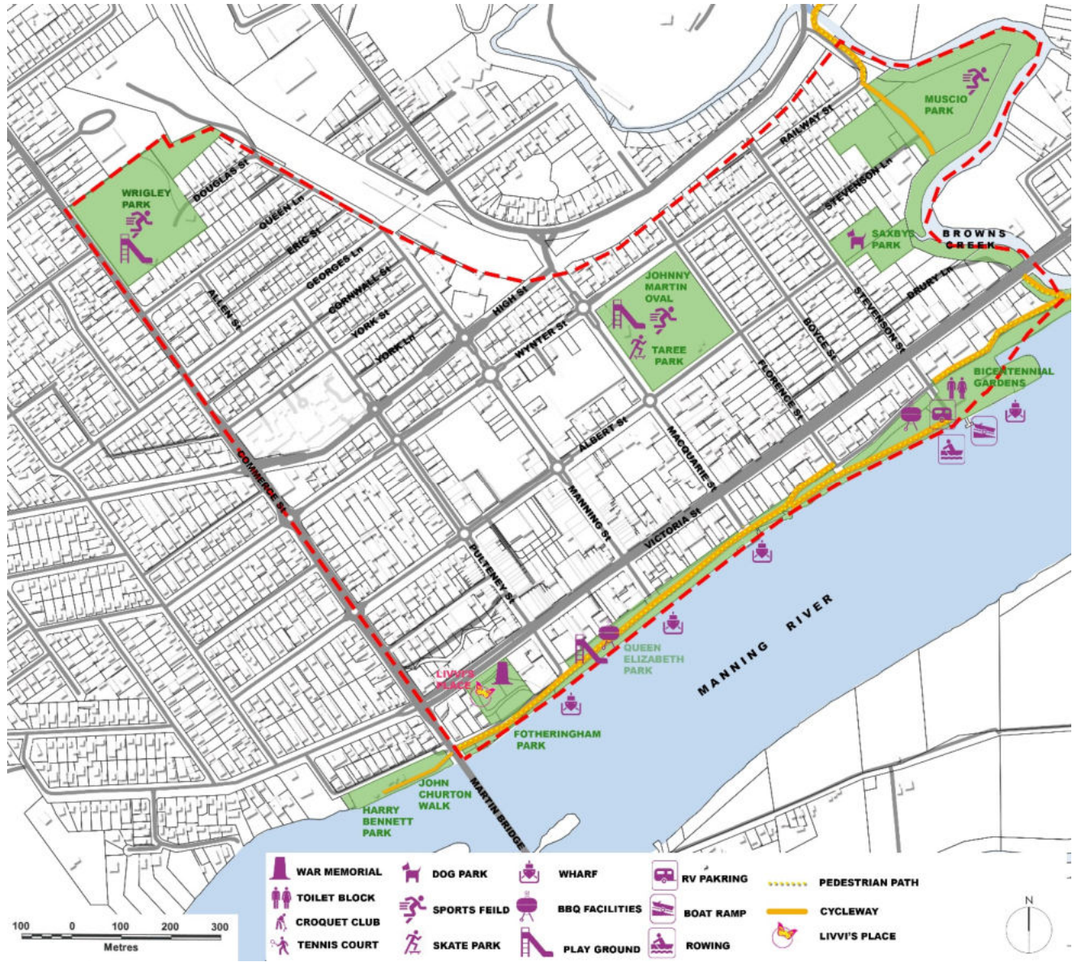
Fotheringham Park offers an iconic gateway to the CBD from Victoria Street with views and cues to the proximity of the river. Activities within the park are set to increase with the incorporation of Livvi's Place all abilities playground.

There is a general disconnect between the foreshore and the CBD.

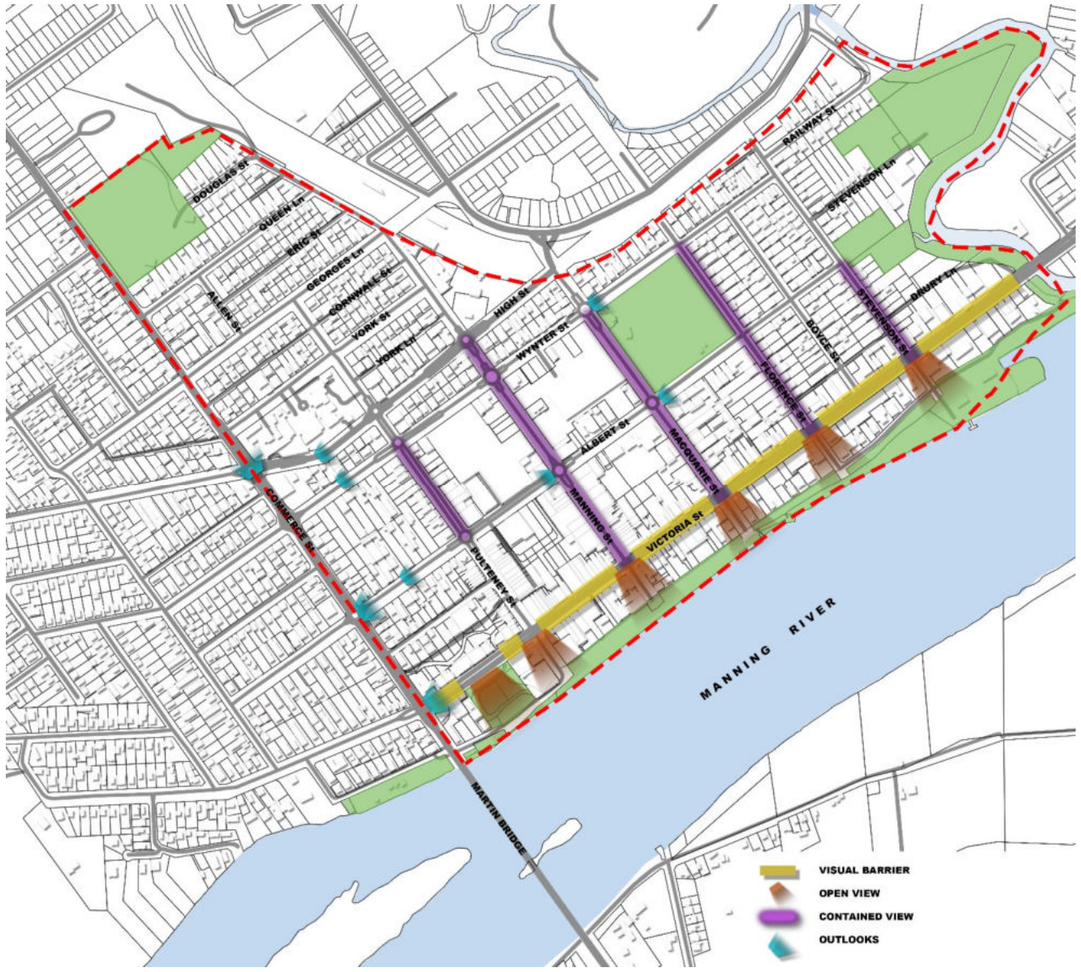
Visual and physical access to the river is generally limited to those streets running perpendicular, with development on Victoria Street forming a barrier.

While opportunities for greater visual connection to the foreshore exist along Victoria Street, the built form faces the street facing away from the river thus creating a perceivable visual and physical barrier.

Pulteney, Manning, Macquarie and Florence Streets all culminate at the foreshore and offer the potential to serve as green links connecting the CBD with the river, thus strengthening the foreshore as a destination and enabling a connected open space network underpinning the CBD.



Open Space Network



View Analysis

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Green links to the foreshore could offer visual cues which act to draw users along them. Along the way they may contain small passive spaces to rest in shade, allow businesses to interact with outdoor seating, street planting, wayfinding and public art. All hinting to a celebrated destination worth visiting. Currently, invitation to the foreshore and business activity potential is not maximised.

Lack of Invitation - Foreshore Interface at Manning Street

THE FORESHORE OPPORTUNITIES

- Strengthen and promote the foreshore as 'the' destination
- Strengthen the activation buildings at the ends of Pulteney, Manning, Macquarie and Florence Streets where they connect with foreshore to add destination and interaction
- Smaller passive spaces and green links/streets connecting back to the CBD and Taree Park
- Reorienting Victoria Street buildings address towards the river for activation and passive surveillance
- Upgrade the foreshore park layout, amenities and physical links with the river itself
- Security and lighting upgrades
- Encourage corridors through private lots from Victoria Street
- Strengthen and promote events and activities (nonphysical infrastructure)

2.8. PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT AND CYCLING

Pedestrian movements in the CBD mainly revolve around the key activities of Victoria Street and Manning Street, and activity nodes around the Taree City Centre, Manning Mall, Manning Street/Albert Street intersection and the Manning Rural Referral Hospital.

The location of car parking and the relationship of the car parks to desired destinations is a big factor in generating foot traffic and are primarily a result of movements to/from parking areas, schools and commercial land uses. In most cases parking is accessible within close proximity to destinations.

Pedestrian movements are generally highest during the middle of the day on weekdays, with residents visiting Taree from surrounding smaller towns. The two main shopping centres (Manning Mall and Taree City Centre) being located in the CBD play a significant role in pedestrian activity. Both offer ample car parking for customers. With an average stay of only twenty minutes, pedestrian movement is typically contained, with little spill to the adjoining streets. The proximity of these centres, being on opposite sides of Manning Street, does however generate foot traffic across the road between the two for reasons of convenience.

Pulteney and Manning Streets between Victoria and Albert Streets experience relatively high pedestrian movements, associated with retail activities and the volume of on-street parking. Both these roads are wide, measuring approximately 20m from footpath to footpath. There is however a general lack of pedestrian amenity and no mid-block pedestrian crossings.

Whilst the CBD is surrounded by a considerable residential catchment, pedestrian activity in and out of the CBD is not high, with the majority of pedestrians arriving by car. Pedestrian access from residential areas to the west of the CBD to the CBD (across Commerce Street) is problematic with the only real access being the traffic lights at the Victoria Street intersection, which itself has limited pedestrian crossings. While there is a long-term plan to convert the roundabout to traffic lights at intersection of Commerce Street and High Street (next to the hospital), this could be many years off.

Pedestrian linkages from the CBD to the foreshore are from Victoria Street and include Fotheringham Park, Pulteney Street, Manning Street, and Macquarie Street. These existing links should be capitalised upon and new additional linkages through new private foreshore developments, encouraged.

The existing foreshore footpath network is disconnected in places, poorly located and includes sections that are narrow or on-road. Improved continuity, amenity and safety to certain sections, should be considered, to fully encourage pedestrians and cyclists.

There is a planned future bridge (crossing Browns Creek) to link the Bicentennial Gardens to the proposed 'Figtrees on the Manning' at Chatham. This will provide approximately 5km of off-road cycleway, predominantly along the Manning River foreshore, linking key recreation areas back to the Taree CBD.

PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT AND CYCLING OPPORTUNITIES

- Capitalise on the compact walkable nature of CBD
- Clearer connections to existing routes and destinations
- Increased amenity, interest, comfort and safety to existing paths of travel
- Potential for more pedestrian crossings
- Removal of roundabouts and introduction of lights within CBD core
- Recognition of desire lines and footpath improvements
- Wayfinding opportunities
- Increased opportunities to foreshore access
- Improve pedestrian access from carparks to streets
- Provide CCTV to improve pedestrian safety

Entry to Chapman Place of Pulteney Street

The need for more pedestrian crossings

2.9. TRANSPORT AND CAR PARKING

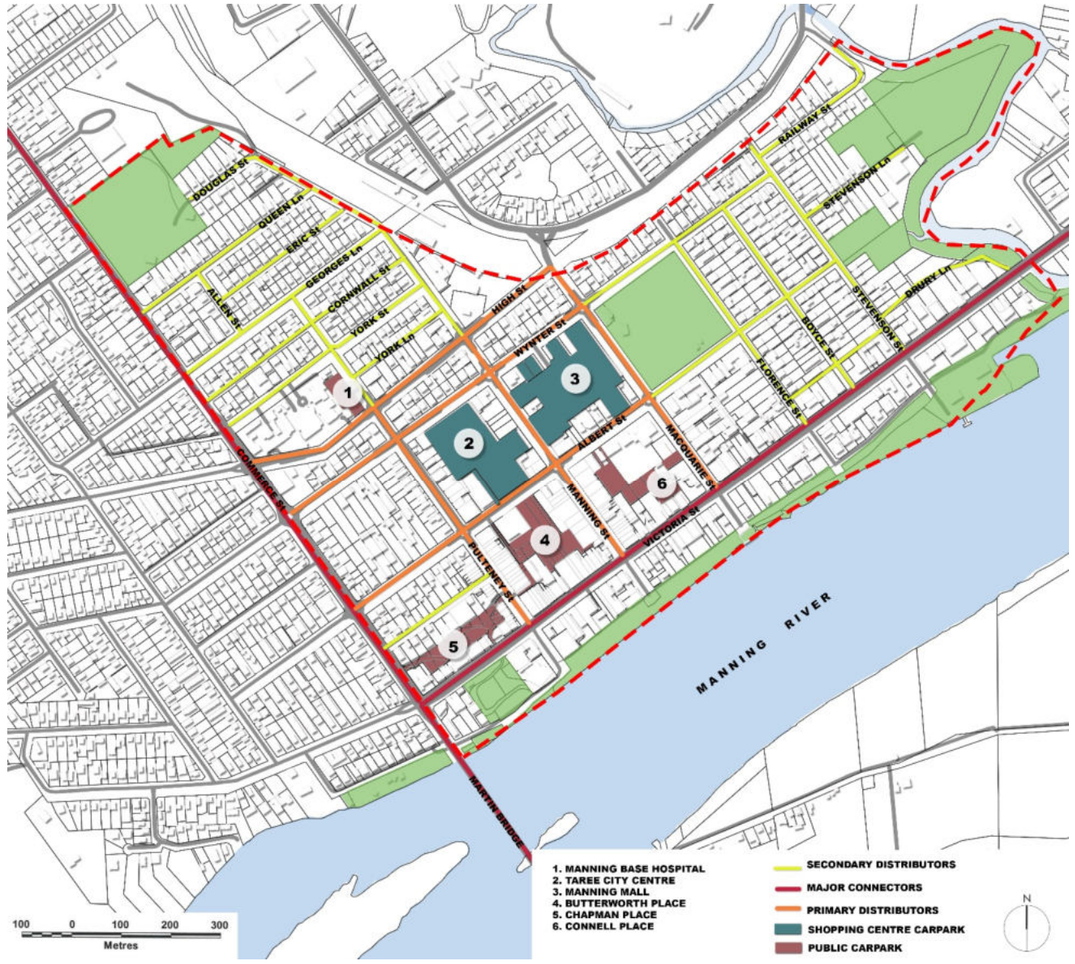
The existing CBD grid pattern benefits traffic operations by distributing traffic flows across numerous links. Land use, on-street parking and access to key attractors/generators such as car parking and shopping centres needs to complement the road network to function appropriately.

Manning Street and Albert Street experience conflicts between traffic flows, pedestrian movements, bus stops and taxi stands. The wide traffic lanes promote higher vehicle speeds as well as allowing vehicles to U-turn.

The section of Manning Street between Albert Street and Wynter Street includes multiple access driveways to Manning Mall and Taree City Centre which attracts vehicles to this section. This section includes a taxi rank, bus stops and a pedestrian crossing. The combination of these components along a relatively short section of road results in conflict and pedestrian safety concerns.

Victoria Street between Pulteney and Manning Streets has a single traffic lane in each direction and nose-in angled parking on the southern side of the street. While the narrow road width and kerb build-outs constrain the through capacity of Victoria Street and poses restrictions for larger vehicles, these measures reduce vehicle speeds, and improve amenity and pedestrian safety.

The single lane in each direction and slow speed environment across Martin Bridge is considered to be insufficient for the traffic demand during peak periods, with the Commerce Street/Victoria Street signalised intersection contributing to delays over the bridge, further constraining capacity for traffic entering Taree CBD from the south.



Existing Vehicular Network and Car Parking

Multiple Driveways, Taxi Rank, Bus Stops and Pedestrian Crossing

High Use of Long Duration on Street Parking

Access to Existing Off Street Car Parks

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PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Low frequency bus services are common for regional centres such as Taree, as the potential passenger catchment is low and travel distances are generally high.

Subsequently, the use of public transport is substituted with an increased dependence on private vehicles and taxis, which in turn impacts parking availability and traffic volumes around the CBD.

The Manning Street bus stop fronting Taree City Centre experiences the highest number of bus services and number of passengers. The bus stop on Manning Street is insufficient in length, poorly located in relation to the pedestrian crossing and provides just one shelter.

TRANSPORT OPPORTUNITIES

- Manning Street and Albert Street upgrades
- Commerce Street / Albert Street intersection upgrade
- Manning Street improvements for traffic including restricting movements to provide a safer pedestrian/vehicle intersection
- Commerce Street / Victoria Street intersection improvements with right turn restrictions during peak periods
- Upgrade the road link across Manning River to cater for future development and traffic growth

CBD CAR PARKING

Parking has a significant effect on the economic viability and competitiveness. At the micro level, the nature and supply of parking can influence the types of businesses in particular areas. At the macro level, insufficient parking supply can encourage potential visitors to shop elsewhere reducing the vibrancy of a CBD.

There is very high utilisation of on-street parking in the CBD, with long durations of stay. Low on-street parking availability and low parking turnover increases traffic circulation and customer accessibility issues.

The previously completed 'Taree CBD Transport Study' completed by Bitzios Consulting in 2012, found that the parking hierarchy does not provide a balance for all-day and short stay parking across the CBD. The causes of which:

- Force employees to park in fringe areas or on private land, impacting on residents and visitors in these areas
- Reduce the ease of access to businesses in the area and their ability to attract drop-in car trips thus placing a greater reliance on a relatively small pedestrian "pass-by" market
- Encourages workers to occupy short term parking areas, limiting their use by visitors / customers, who are forced to circulate the streets a number of times to find a parking space. This can discourage customers.

CBD CAR PARKING OPPORTUNITIES

- Improve on-street layouts and reduce parking duration
- Include additional all-day off-street parking
- Access improvements to Chapman Place and Connell Place off-street parking area
- Consideration of private carpark sharing schemes
- Wayfinding opportunities and / or dynamic guidance systems
- Consolidated holistic 'smart' parking scheme to manage and maximise the use of available spaces, avoid conflict and offer drivers real time information on available locations
- Shuttle bus from car parks to key destinations

MANNING RURAL REFERRAL HOSPITAL CAR PARKING

The Manning Rural Referral Hospital is the most capacity constrained parking area in Taree, with limited on-site parking and competing demands for those spaces between patients, visitors and staff working across a 24 hour shift rotation. As a result, high usage of on-street parking is experienced along surrounding residential streets and with the hospital being in close proximity to the CBD and retail centres of Manning Mall and Taree City Centre, there is added pressure on parking provision during the middle of the day.

While the hospital has recently completed the construction of a multi-storey carpark, it is understood that this is unlikely to alleviate the parking demand in the area.

The Manning Hospital's 24 hour operations requires staff at all times. As a result, shift workers who arrive during peak times are unable to find parking nearby and are required to park on-street. Staff are therefore required, after their shift, to walk considerable distance from the hospital during night periods, posing safety concerns.

Any increased parking demands by the hospital, or due to increased medical related commercial activities in the area, will further spread on-street parking and exacerbate current issues.

HOSPITAL PARKING OPPORTUNITIES

- Hunter New England Health should investigate the viability of relocating allied health or non-essential services from the Manning Base Hospital site to other locations within Taree CBD (While this may benefit parking it may reduce co location benefits)
- Liaison between HNE Health and Council to develop site specific parking hierarchy to provide for priority trips to the hospital. Both on-street and off-street.
- Time limited parking provided both internally and externally for visitors whilst maintaining sufficient amount of all day parking for staff
- Allocation for internal staff parking bays particularly for night shift workers
- Shuttle bus from other CBD car parks to the hospital

2.10.BUILT FORM AND HERITAGE

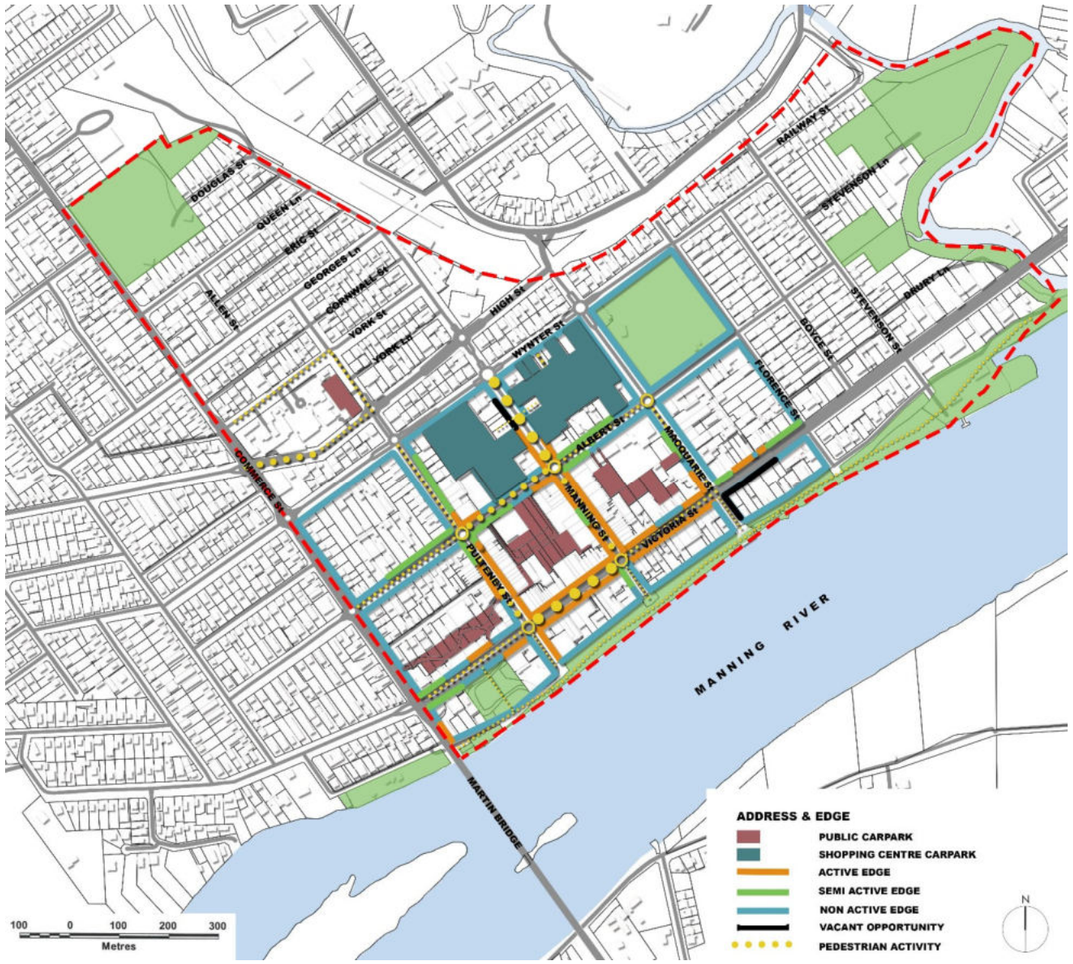
There is a mixture of building styles within the CBD dating back to the late 19th century up to late 20th century, generally ranging from between one to three storeys in height.

The bulk and scale of buildings tend to reflect their age. In recent decades, with the increase in large are retail outlets, ground floor design has suffered from larger units with closed facades, blind windows and a lack of detail. This is quite visible in the CBD, with newer buildings presenting larger frontages and less visual interest from the streetscape, emphasizing horizontality and enhancing perceptions of distance and a lack of permeability.

As can be seen on the map below there is a direct correlation between current pedestrian activity and how activated those edges are.

In many cases newer buildings have been set back from the street which interrupts the edge distinction. This is particularly the case with the two large shopping centres, which present large blank facades or open carpark areas to the street, thus reducing continuity, visual interest and activation

The distinction between new and old, coupled with and linked to land use is particularly distinctive in Taree as with most regional cities, where the zones of transition are much smaller.



Active Edges and Pedestrian Movement

Streets containing older, smaller and more fragmented buildings, maintain the street edge, add distinct character and increase street activity. There are several heritage buildings within the CBD, particularly at the junctions of Victoria Street with Pulteney and Manning Streets. These add quality, presence and prominence to these corners and result in a distinct sense of arrival when entering into this area.

BUILT FORM OPPORTUNITIES

- Identify and activate dead edges (large blank facades) and consolidate and enhance live edges
- Enhance corners at junctions, define the edge and increase the sense of arrival to the CBD core
- Guide new development to maintain 'street wall' i.e. 2 to 3 storey heritage character, with setback to upper floors
- Guide new development to adopt a finer grain façade break up and avoid large blank facades
- Guide new development to locate car parking at the rear or in the middle of buildings rather than on the street
- Promote new development to complement, incorporate and enhance existing heritage buildings and areas of distinction, rather than isolate and sterilise them

Large Blank Edge to the Rear of Manning Mall – non active

Fine Grain Development on Manning Street - active

MIDCOAST council

2.11.URBAN DESIGN AND PUBLIC REALM

Urban design is the starting point for how places ultimately function and perform in delivering value to its various users. The experience of the place, its streets and public spaces are essential in supporting a vibrant, safe, engaging and interesting urban environment.

The physical quality of the public realm can affect value in a number of ways:

- Visual cues, gateways and wayfinding all offer powerful tools to direct and manage the overall organisation of movement systems within the urban environment.
- A people-friendly public realm supports community development and social interaction and provides enhanced recreation opportunities and health benefits
- A people-friendly public realm supports businesses and economic performance through a 'critical mass' of local residents and opportunities for local small business to access local populations
- Higher amenity and more attractive streetscapes, supports business and economic performance, and increases land value and rents in surrounding areas

SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF GOOD URBAN DESIGN

- **Character** - a place with its own identity
- **Continuity and enclosure** - where public and private spaces are clearly distinguished
- **Quality of the public realm** - a place with attractive and well-used outdoor areas
- **Ease of movement** - a place that is easy to get to and move through
- **Legibility** - a place that is easy to navigate
- **Adaptability** - a place that can change easily
- **Diversity** - a place with variety and choice

Currently there is an overwhelming sense of pedestrians needing to seek permission to occupy streets that are car dominated. Streets are wide with few pedestrian crossings.

Apart from Victoria Street, there is very little visual interest and comfort, and a lack of sense of arrival at key CBD gateways.

There is a general lack of street hierarchy, visual cues and identity which make it difficult to orient oneself and get a sense of place as distinct from another.

URBAN DESIGN AND PUBLIC REALM OPPORTUNITIES

- Enhance Gateway to Taree Experience and Wayfinding

- Offer More Pedestrian Crossing Opportunities and Safety

- Improve Amenity, Pedestrian Comfort and Visual Interest

- Improve Wayfinding and Safety from Car Parks to the Streets

- Improve Amenity, Pedestrian Comfort and Visual Interest

- Taree's Busiest Pedestrian Crossing.

2.12.EMERGING TRENDS

Contemporary cities and regions have been shaped by cars and transport networks. The emergence of new digital technologies (disruptors) associated with online services, sensory systems, automated vehicles and augmented reality may have a similarly defining role on settlement patterns over the next century and beyond. These technologies have the potential to disrupt current land use patterns and create new opportunities in our cities and regions.

Not all current and predicted trends are however technologically based, but are defined by changes to traditional social, economic and environmental structures.

The following emerging trends are just a few that have been considered in developing the Manning Health and Taree CBD Precinct Plan, in order to guide the future development of the Taree CBD over the next 15 - 20 years.

THE FUTURE OF PRIVATE TRANSPORT

Predictions are, that by 2030, disruptors will lead to changes in vehicle fuels (increasingly, vehicles will be electrically driven), that vehicles will become autonomous (computer rather than human driven), and vehicle ownership will shift to car sharing, with considerable community benefits.

Even if these bold predictions only partially eventuate, it is clear that they will have a dramatic impact on transportation in Australia as we know it today.

Driverless Shuttle Bus

GREEN AND EDIBLE CITIES

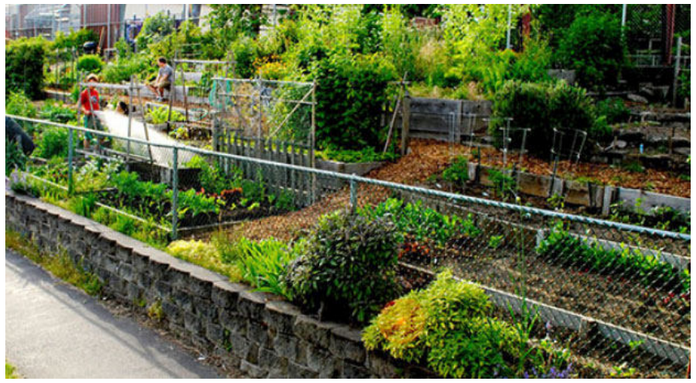
There is an increasing amount of evidence based research about nature being good for our mental and physical health.

Urban planners and designers are coming up with innovative ways to bring nature into the city and councils are implementing mandatory greening requirements. Incorporating nature into traditionally urban environments.

A smart edible city could sound like a futuristic hybrid fantasy and essentially it is. This is the correlation of smart city technology with successful edible and functional urban spaces exploring how smart tech can balance smart organics.

Self producing sustainable city precincts can help solve social issues such as social disconnection, depression, homelessness, an ageing population, housing affordability and the obesity epidemic.

Cities can become organic self sustaining organisms rather than homogenous constructed environments relying on development investment and constant capital investment to flourish, grow and prosper.



Community Edible Gardens

PLACE MAKING

Creating places that we love is now the key goal of progressive place-making, where improving local identity and national productivity are mutually attainable goals.

Not all urban change needs to occur from the implementation of hard infrastructure, but can rather come from place-making, which focuses on big, but accessible and actionable ideas to deliver quick wins and long term change.

We can create cities people love by concentrating on place based activities rather than the actual place itself.

Temporary Place Making Initiatives

NEW URBAN VILLAGES

A new trend is boldly emerging, known as ‘the collaborative economy’ or ‘the sharing economy’. This is a movement towards more cooperative and collaborative ways of living and working, enabling seamless resource sharing, substantial financial savings and cultivate community spirit.

Shared spaces, cars, gardens, equipment and services is naturally more efficient and creates connections with the wider community.

New housing models which combine long-term leasing, sustainable design and professional management are being released to the market. The perpetual leases provide similar benefits to home ownership, but without the need for a mortgage.

Residents are provided with resources and assets they can easily share, resulting in financial savings as well as a thriving vibrant community.

SMART BRANDING

In order to create the smart cities of the future, industry and community members need to work together to build a cohesive vision.

Clear branding in the early stages will substantially speed up the process of securing investment, creating social and economic benefits for decades to come. This is vital for engaging the community, industry members and the entire project team as well as creating project momentum.

Branding, when done correctly, is a reflection of the sprit or personality of a community and connects directly with existing residents, potential buyers, investors and businesses. It can help instil a sense of community pride, increase community cohesion and improve economic performance.

Although we can often understand the benefits of a smart city on an intellectual level, the real challenge is getting people to emotionally engage with a sometimes distant concept. Brands can ignite pride, confidence and energy in communities which allow ground-breaking smart urban innovation to take place.

DON'T IGNORE THE COMMUNITY

Community engagement in the urban policy setting and design process can be limited and tokenistic.

Often community involvement in planning and development outcomes only occurs at the assessment stage, which can create frustrations, disappointments and delays for both the developer and community.

The NSW government's 2013 white paper for a new planning system, proposes to seek, foster and encourage constructive community debate around policy and design at the policy setting stage and less community input at the development assessment stage.

The rationale for such an approach is that if the community focuses on the planning and design principles for an area and are happy with those, they will not be needing to have input and comment at the assessment stage on development that is consistent with those principles. This will reduce delays and appeals against planning authority decisions and provide greater overall certainty about development within an area.

RETAIL EXPERIENCE

From some perspectives digital technologies are set to break our age old dependency on geography or the need to be located in cities. We won't have to go into a shop to buy things.

This is set to increase with the recent launch of Amazon Australia which will enable us to purchase a large range of products, including groceries, clothing, electronics and takeaway food. This will no doubt challenge some existing retail sectors.

Retail centres and outlets will be under increasing pressure to focus on the retail experience and they will have to innovate ways to attract and retain customers.

WORK EXPERIENCE

We will increasingly no longer have to go into an office to undertake all of our work. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that 44% of the 11.7 million employed people aged 15 years and over, accessed the internet for home based work.

We are also seeing a rise in the popularity of co-working spaces which are used on a flexible basis by temporary workers.

HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Education and health care can also be increasingly undertaken online with, virtual and augmented reality reducing the need to visit a physical place for lectures or health care.

There are online alternatives which in some cases can be more effective than the real experience. Telehealth is also essential for reducing the cost of healthcare which is growing unsustainably in all Australian States and Territories.

Universities across Australia are using virtual classroom environments, podcasts, video conferencing and real-time chat rooms to assist in learning.

CO-WORKING

The co-working model has gained significant momentum as an emerging industry as it offers a self directed, flexible and collaborative work style. It provides both a physical work space, and participation in a social movement.

This involves providing a work space for a group of people most often working individually, offering a solution to the issue of isolation that is experienced by freelancers and smaller teams. In Deskmag's annual survey for the Coworking Forecast in 2013, those participating in a co-working environment reported that they feel happier, more creative, have better work-life balance and feel engaged and supported.

Additionally, co-working spaces also offer prime opportunity for retail development.

Co-Working Space

CO-LIVING

Co-living is a housing option that involves communal living. The most common model involves residents claiming ownership of a private bedroom space, whilst sharing communal areas such as the kitchen, living areas, bathrooms and laundry.

This type of communal livings exists most commonly in urban areas, and can involve an intergenerational living situation, in lieu of affordable housing options. Aside from affordability, this option is also popular due to the fact it offers a sense of community to those who share similar intentions, values and interests.

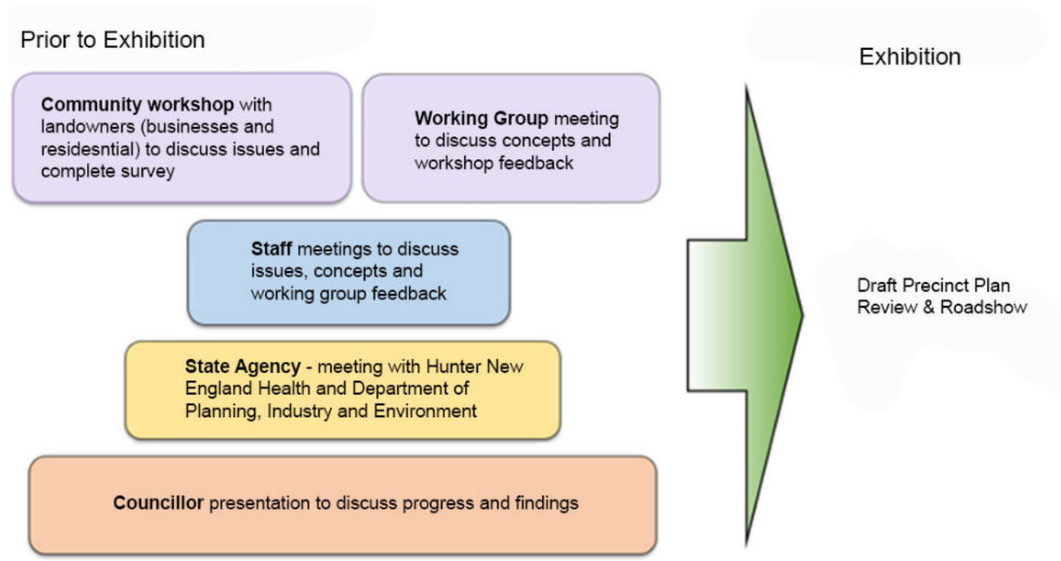
3 CONSULTATION

3.1 CONSULTATION PROCESS

Community and stakeholder involvement during the consultation process is fundamental to the development of a Precinct Plan.

The consultation process helped develop a shared vision and created a Precinct Plan that identifies key issues and enduring design principles for the future success and growth of the Manning Health and Taree CBD Precinct.

The process included consultation with Council staff from a variety of departments, Councillors, NSW Government agencies (including Hunter New England Health and DPIE) and the community. Community working group meetings and an online survey were also undertaken.



Consultation Process

Community Workshop Invitation

Community Workshop Process

MIDCOAST council

3.2 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

A community workshop held at the Taree Administration Building of MidCoast Council (MCC) - 18 October 2018. Landowners, business owners and health care providers were directly invited to the community workshop. MCC sent 1,002 invitations and received 66 RSVPs.

Approximately 50 people attended the workshop and sat at six tables. The tables were each facilitated by a Council staff member, with six themes discussed throughout the night at each table.

- Health and medical
- Business opportunities
- Living (public parks, streetscape, public art and urban design)
- Transport, parking and access
- Residential opportunities
- Visioning

Attendees were encouraged to write and draw on the study area maps provided.

Community Workshop Process

A report was prepared and provided to all workshop participants providing feedback on issues raised and themes emerging from the workshop.

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COMMUNITY WORKSHOP OUTCOMES

The following 'word maps' have been generated as derived from community responses to each theme, collated during consultation. The font size represents the frequency of particular responses

Health & Medical

Living

Business Opportunities

Transport, Parking & Access

Residential Opportunities

Visioning

3.3 ONLINE SURVEY

The survey covered the subjects discussed in the community workshop and provided stakeholders with the opportunity to reflect on the discussions and the views of other attendees, and provide further feedback.

The survey was open from 18 October (after the community workshop) and closed on Monday 5 November 2018 – 30 people responded.

The survey was designed to be completed in a short period of time and easily understood. It contained 6 questions.

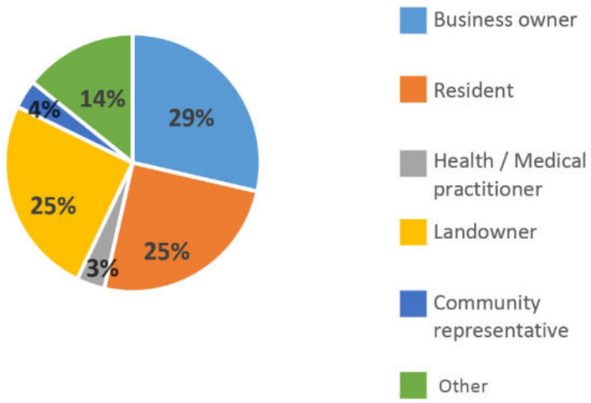
Participants also had the opportunity to nominate to be part of a Working Group to delve further into community suggestions and review how these relate to planning controls and the future of the Taree CBD.

Contact information was collected at the start of the survey to ensure that Council has the ability to contact the stakeholders during the project (if they elected to be kept informed).

ONLINE SURVEY OUTCOMES

QUESTION 1

"What is your main reason for interest in Taree's CBD?"



QUESTION 2

"Thinking about the precinct as a whole, please rank the following 5 key themes in order of importance (1 being the priority to 5 being least important)"

THEMES	RANKING
Business Opportunities – creating new business opportunities, supporting current businesses and attracting new services to the area	1
Health and Medical - supporting the growth of health and medical services in Taree	2
Liveability – public parks, streetscape (includes landscaping and public art) and urban design	3
Transport, parking and access – parking and transport within the CBD, and easy access to the CBD	4
Residential Opportunities - creating additional residential opportunities, particularly unit developments	5

QUESTION 3

"When thinking about the Taree CBD, what do you think will help improve the amenity, use and investment in the town centre? (Select all that apply)".

THEMES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
More employment opportunities	82%
Incentives for businesses	**75%**
Improved public spaces or "living" – particularly parks and streetscape	64%
More diverse housing choices, styles and opportunities	**60%**
Improved look and feel	57%
More parking	**53%**
Compact and mixed use developments	50%
More medical services	**46%**
Changes to planning controls	46%
More café / restaurant and entertainment options	**46%**
Improved safety and security	42%
Additional facilities in parks	**28%**
Improved public transport	28%
Improved architectural design	**17%**

QUESTION 4

"Imagine what Taree might look like in ten years' time... what would you like to see? What other areas might be a focus for the Taree CBD Precinct Plan?"

- A vibrant mix of high and medium density development focused around the river foreshore.
- Public spaces served by convenient and quality amenities.
- Improved pedestrian and public transport experience.
- Quality visitor accommodation options, key visitor infrastructure.
- Social hub that businesses can then operate from.
- Our CBD streets should be warm, inviting and engaging, utilising our historical and cultural strengths;
- An increase in higher education available - more job opportunities and facilities to attract families to the area.
- More people in the CBD by way of encouraging residential living and use of recreational areas.
- Focus on the river and improving associated activities, accommodation, food, entertainment.
- Regular night markets and entertainment;
- More use of the river and surroundings.
- Residential along the river with open links to the river from Victoria Street lined with restaurants and cafes.
- Greater use of the river area;
- Utilising our river outlook for hospitality and business opportunities.
- Better access to Queen Elizabeth Park from Victoria Street by encouraging design options and incentives;
- I would hope to see business development focusing on the river.
- Customers to the CBD able to get a car park.
- Medical precinct to have parking solution.
- Old derelict buildings (non heritage) such as the old shops at 35 Pulteney Street should be demolished immediately.
- Our river is our greatest asset, and this is the reason why the town was established. Development which focuses on this attribute is needed.
- A sportsman "walk" or "hall of fame".

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- Encourage development to enhance use of riverfront reserves.
- Extra bridge to the town.
- Provision for uses echoing past activities such as river cruises and timber boat building.
- A food producer's and fish co-op located centrally in the CBD giving permanent access to local food.
- Maintenance of the traditional town character with no high rise commercial or residential development.
- Educate visitors and remind residents that we have a lot to be proud of.
- Something to attract regular (return) visits from persons outside Taree City. Tourist destination for entertainment Not just occasional performances.

QUESTION 5

"*Thinking about the Taree CBD, please indicate if you would support the following options*".

OPTIONS	RANKING
Foreshore park improvements	1
Parking structures in appropriate locations	2
Public art and festivals	3
Commercial buildings encouraged to face the river in the CBD	4
3-4 storey buildings in medical precinct	5
More cycleways	6
More opportunities for people to live in the CBD	7
2 storey building limit where density increase not appropriate	8
3-4 storey buildings in areas outside immediate CBD where density should increase	9
Free CBD transport	10
5-6 storey buildings within lower CBD locations	11
6-8 storey buildings as "book ends" to the CBD	12
Increased business opening hours	13
Paid parking in appropriate locations to alleviate shortages / congestion	14

QUESTION 6

"Please share any additional comments you would like to make about the Taree CBD that may assist the development of the Precinct Plan".

- Business will invest if open spaces are well utilised, if visitors (local or out of area) are wanting to visit Taree and if there are exciting and varied opportunities for residential experiences.
- Consider current restrictions on types of business permitted in CBD precinct.
- Consider a Regional Park;
- Liven up Victoria Street. Less dependence on the Shopping Plazas. Retention of the original facades and more utilisation of the great river the Manning.
- Consideration be given to moving the public hospital facility to Taree South where there is greenfield sites capable of dealing with the parking requirements, thus leaving the existing facility to house doctors and allied health in one convenient area.
- We need to turn our Aboriginal heritage into a tourist feature.
- The CBD has a huge problem with business owners, staff, Council employee's parking most or all day in 2 & 3 hour spaces.
- Council must adopt an attitude of assistance to promote community events.
- reformat existing shopping malls (Manning Mall and Taree City Centre) to provide a range of multi-storied commercial, retail, residential and parking uses.
- Taree is the country living with city benefits. And that's a great tag-line.

3.4 WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

The aim of the Working Group meeting was to review the workshop and survey results, confirm the main issues and identify possible solutions.

The Working Group meeting was held on 13 November 2018 with 13 community members, Council staff members and the consultants (GHD) in attendance

Ten key issues (as identified from the Community workshop and online survey results) for discussion included (in no particular order):

- Foreshore and river
- Specialists and health services
- Parking
- Accommodation
- Public Transport
- Activation
- Safety
- Visual amenity
- Access and connectivity
- Future opportunities

MEETING 1 OUTCOMES

Foreshore and river:

- Provide and encourage music on the foreshore, and that this could be located in a pavilion/stage. It was noted that the local Rotary Club has funding for a stage on the foreshore (near Manning Quays), which is due for completion next year and that Harry Bennett Park also has a stage and amphitheatre seating.
- The Taree Business Chamber is looking at incentives for foreshore businesses to use their rear accesses to activate the river-side frontage to their buildings.
- Food carts and coffee vans have struggled to work on the foreshore in Queen Elizabeth Park – it was stated that there has been a lack of support from Council and that red-tape needs to be removed to facilitate these types of business activities in the park.
- Foreshore markets should be assisted/supported by Council, but should be community driven. There is a need for infrastructure like toilets on the foreshore to reduce the set-up cost for markets/events. Council should also be more flexible on what is required to gain approval. Extending the Vibrant Spaces concept to the park was raised.
- The community needs to also support community and local events, as a lot of work goes into organising and planning an event. The perception of a place also can go a long way to supporting events.
- Road access along the foreshore via a one-way road would allow businesses to turn around. It was noted that community objection in the past has stopped this from happening, but that this shouldn't be used as a reason not to consider it.
- Any foreshore development needs to be mindful of the flooding potential of the area.
- A boardwalk could be installed.
- Opportunities for physical interaction with the water, for example stairs or river beach.

Specialists and health services:

- There needs to be accommodation for patients to recover after being in hospital. They need a view (e.g. a river view) and they don't necessarily need activities/facilities while they recover.
- Need to provide attractive accommodation in the CBD that is low maintenance for medical/health practitioners/specialists and it needs a view (like a river view) to attract these professionals. This could be provided in medium-high rise buildings with penthouses.
- Need to encourage a specialist centre around the hospital (for multiple medical/health professionals to operate from which also has links down to the foreshore.
- Accommodation is required around the hospital.
- Council should change the zoning around the hospital to permit five storey accommodation, and also facilitate affordable accommodation. The zoning should not be a residential zone as this does not signify that the area is a health precinct.
- Need to upgrade the hospital facilities to make it attractive for doctors to work at.
- The mixed use zone is good zone (B4) to utilise for the health precinct as it enables greater flexibility than a residential zone and clearly suit medical/health and other businesses.

Parking:

- There is a behavioural problem with parking, as generally people want/rather than need, to park at the front door of a business.
- There is a shortage of all day employee parking (that is safe, well lit and within close walking distance to businesses). Employees parking in timed parking areas reduces the supply of customer parking. Better alternatives and enforcement of timed parking required.
- Parking areas need to clearly be identified for entrance/exits e.g. Connell Place Carpark is not clearly marked (difficult to find).
- Parking needs to be conveniently located.
- It needs to be clear to the public what the Developer Contributions collected to date will be spent on, and what happened to the historic funds.
- No paid parking in the precinct.
- Look at Developer Contributions as a mechanism to deliver parking, or an incentive system to provide parking.
- All day employee parking is needed.
- There is a division in the business community over business owners/employees that park in front of their business and others that are mindful of the community/customers and park away from businesses to free up spaces for customers to park.
- Need to look into the viability of in-ground sensors (can be used for time restriction enforcement as well as a tool to inform people where parking spaces are available).
- Need to make it clear where the CBD parking area starts and begins.
- People don't purchase goods from their car, they buy them as a pedestrian...so while they need a park to access a shop, they don't need to park directly in front of it.
- The previous traffic study noted that at the peak period for parking demand, 20% of the parking is not used or used appropriately. There is a need to educate people on how to park in the CBD. Could utilise real time information on parking places to let people know where parking spaces are available.
- Could look at having a parking area on the periphery (or outside) of the precinct and to introduce a shuttle bus service to get people from the carpark to various locations within the precinct.
- If Council moves to Biripi Way, a shuttle service to the CBD should be provided [to not adversely affect the viability of CBD businesses by removing trade], particularly for staff to access the CBD during their lunch time.
- Parking in the precinct is fragmented. There is a need for a couple of major carparks, rather than continuing with fragmented carparks. Council could then redevelop the smaller parking areas for other uses.
- We are spoilt in terms of parking, we have become used to easy parking and take it for granted. Need to have behavioural change, and the change doesn't happen overnight.
- Need to look at the whole parking area as a network, and need to stop looking at each carpark in isolation.
- Our parking situation is not currently a big problem, as compared to other places like Port Macquarie in the Christmas holidays.
- Need to have an audit of our parking areas and use it better.
- Need parking for RVs/caravans that is close to town – walking distance to shops.
- Chapman Place Carpark needs to be better maintained, sign posted and stop vehicles parking in the long vehicle parking bays.
- Chapman Place and Butterworth carparks could easily be turned into multi-deck carparks, without detracting from the visual amenity of adjoining streets.
- A new carpark (safe and well lit) catering for the hospital and other medical/health businesses is required, with 24 hour access for night shift workers.
- Ideally you would have a network of parking that is connected, with surrounding streets having visual displays indicating availability. All parking should feel safe.

Accommodation:

- There is a shortage of residential rental properties in the area, particularly units.

- Unit accommodation is becoming more favoured (for all ages and income) due to the low/no maintenance of open space areas and the simplicity of design. This form of accommodation also suits short-stay visitors.

Public Transport:

- Need to look at a reliable and regular shuttle service, or a 'park and ride' system.
- Community transport should be analysed as to how best meet the needs of people with low income and/or disabilities.
- Public transport will become more important, particularly as we experience an increase in development within the precinct.

Safety:

- Bring/attract people to the foreshore and this will likely lead to the area being perceived as safe due to the increased number of people in the area (safety in numbers and visual surveillance).
- Need to move away from the perceived image of Taree having a troubled community.

Activation:

- Taree Public (Infants and Primary) School is low on student numbers and the site is under utilised. The site could be better utilised - redevelopment should be investigated. This could include a town-park and/or more business/living opportunities.
- Make it attractive for people to swim in the river. The swimming area wouldn't need to extend further out then the current projections into the river like to T-wharf and Manning Quays. There needs to be pontoons and ladders in a netted area to facilitate safe swimming. The community could then get more funding to have water slides into the netted area. Currently river users can't get in and out of the river easily. The current access beaches near the rowing club are underutilised, though they should continue so as to avoid that conflict between aquatic craft users and swimmers is minimised. What is needed is a beach area in Queen Elizabeth Park adjacent to the CBD e.g. convert the Sailos boat ramp into a beach.
- Empty the old swimming pool along River Street and reinstate it as a pool (although it was noted that it would need to be completely rebuilt due to concrete cancer which closed it in the first place).
- Need to showcase our local culture and heritage on the foreshore.
- Need to ensure activities are centralised around the CBD and not spread too thin – relocate the markets from Taree Park to Queen Elizabeth Park and make more regular.
- There is a growing link between the rowing festival and Taste Festival. Need to have more coordinated use of the river and the foreshore.
- Encourage water sports like the rowing club and sailing club to have more 'come try' days…to showcase the opportunity and show the river as an asset to be used.
- Feedback from the development industry is that they cannot go high enough to make money to make a project viable – height limits need to be increased.
- The Development Control Plan (DCP) needs to be amended to make it attractive to develop. The DCP should address parking and connectivity. Overshadowing and view sharing needs to be considered. Incentives to develop to the new maximum permitted height could include not requiring visitor spaces for units, as visitors can park within existing parking areas in the CBD. Same could apply for an increase in business floorspace, though both are reliant on funding to provide additional spaces within existing carparks – developer contributions for parking concessions should be made realistic - $16k per space is too expensive.
- There is a link between height and lot size and it may not be possible for some sites to reach their height limit unless consolidated with adjoining lots. Council could look at incentives for developers for consolidating lots.
- The main business/clientele for cafes etc. is the workers/people that live in the CBD. With a lack of people living in the CBD area there is very little activity in the CBD outside of business hours.
- Livvi's Place will be an attractor to the precinct, providing an all abilities park. A new toilet block within Fotheringham Park will also be constructed next year.

Visual amenity:

- Make it attractive for people to swim in the river.
- Make the streets and buildings attractive.
- Need to move away from the perceived image of Taree having a troubled community.

Access and connectivity:

- Footpaths needs to be suitable for the demographic.
- Footpaths overpasses/underpasses should be looked at.
- Need good links between the foreshore living and the hospital. There are hills/rises in the precinct which make it difficult. Need to look at shuttle services, not just improved pedestrian access.
- Need to have our streets like Manning Street 'properly' link to the foreshore/river.
- The connections to the river need to be enticing. The connections need to be safe and well lit. The laneways also need to be inviting and safe.

Future opportunities:

- Consider preparing a masterplan for the foreshore as a separate component (or add-on) to this project. This can involve all of the foreshore stakeholders and provide 'shovel ready projects' for grant opportunities.
- Consider having the sporting hall of fame/cultural centre/Visitor Information Centre (VIC) in the CBD if Council moves to Biripi Way to ensure that CBD maintains a civic function. Important to have a VIC with personal contact for visitors and one that is well located and not out of town like the current one – RV parking nearby also needs to be provided.
- There needs to be recognition in the local community of our diverse community.
- Need to improve indigenous engagement and involve the youth to get/develop a 'sense of ownership' and 'sense of place'.

MEETING 2 OUTCOMES

Foreshore and river:

- Support for the idea of steps/beach to access the Manning River.
- Foreshore development needs to be predominantly residential. The issue with residential above shops in the CBD is the inability to provide space for the resident's cars.

Access and Connectivity:

- The laneway down the side of the old Commonwealth Bank building is a good example of a mid-block laneway providing access from Victoria Street to the Manning River
- Most CBD streets aren't pedestrian friendly. To cross the road you need to walk to the end and either cross at a roundabout or traffic lights and then walk back. This is somewhat a disincentive for pedestrian access.
- It was raised that the "dead edge" of the Manning Mall was a Council decision to stop kids coming in from the park and school, though current thinking recommends the opposite.
- Some streets need to be open for thoroughfares for vehicles, but then you also need streets that have place making to slow people down and get them out of their cars

Specialist and health services:

- It was noted that the economy is going to a health service function, and if this is not accommodated/catered for then it could have a detrimental impact on the community. You need continual population growth to keep services like the Manning Rural Referral Hospital and attract hospital funding, instead of improvements in Forster.
- Medical practitioners are not making much of a return due to the start-up costs. An opportunity is to have someone build a medical centre and lease rooms out, but someone needs to spend the capital upfront for this though. Wollongong Private Hospital is an example of a private hospital that accommodates leasable areas.
- The health sector is siloed – the Manning Rural Referral and Mayo Hospitals are very much separate.
- Aveo Aged Care Brisbane is a good example of high level aged care. The development has shops on the bottom floor, and lower levels are for high care. You move down from the penthouse and large apartments (self care), and go down to high care when you require it.

- A common trend is that the care giver dies or “burns out” before the person needing the care dies. But the government is trying to get people to stay and age in home, and not fund age care.

Public transport:

- A big problem is asking elderly people to walk from the railway up the hill to the hospital. A shuttle bus could be the solution to the walking issue – distance and steep rise from the river to the hospital. A shuttle bus could put Taree on the map, seeing our town as progressive.
- An example was given of the rental bikes that use a card to start/unlock the bikes. There are similar examples in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. There are also rental scooters (Lime Scooters) in Brisbane.

Parking:

- Hunter New England Health should have to provide the same parking like anyone else, but the State don’t have to follow council regulations.

Future opportunities:

- Florence Street and Boyce Street have had nice heritage houses destroyed over the years by lack of care from owners and investors. Investment opportunities in this area should hopefully reverse this trend.
- Taree has some fantastic bones for development, it has the foundation for a good CBD.
- The vacant land near Sailos is not a large enough land area for a big developer to touch. Need to get one of the larger developers from Port Macquarie, Ballina etc. to start developing in Taree. This might spur on others to join them. We need to ensure we set a good example for the first one of what can be achieved.
- Figtrees on the Manning could be the catalyst for Taree to start developing.
- Need to leverage off the federal government infrastructure funding.
- Need to look at a TAFE and University partnership, because they can access government funding. The Coffs Harbour campus is a good example.
- University of NSW should be approached to set up a new campus. They need another campus and have approx. 55,000 students.
- TAFE is no longer a thriving business model in this area.
- The vacant old Mazda/Manning Valley Motors is an ideal site for redevelopment.
- Support for the six storey development proposed, and particularly higher development on the vacant land near Sailos. Could consider six storey on the vacant land.

Visual amenity:

- If a whole block was to be redeveloped and no one else developed in another neighbouring area, it might not be attractive e.g. one large building sticking up
- You may find that one height limit across a large area might not be attractive to develop in. What about a system where a % of a development in one area can be of a maximum height? This may be an incentive for people to start developing – first in get higher height limits. Alternatively, draft good DCP controls to ensure good design.

Other:

- The purpose of proposing the higher development on the elevated parts of the area and avoid building too high near the Manning River is to allow development towards the hospital to look over the foreshore development, and allow for air circulation.
- The higher strata fees associated with taller buildings with lifts are what attracts people to three storey walk ups with substantially less strata fees.
- Six storey developments could cause overshadowing – depends upon location and solar orientation.
- The proposed three storey development area near Browns Creek may result in people seeking a view of Browns Creek rather than the Manning River, as the streets are orientated this way and they don’t currently have a view of the river.
- Height limits should be considered as at the current six storey height limit this will only attract local developers, however it was also noted that this may be a good thing.
- Catalyst site number four should be a community use and with another use like residential accommodation. One other option would be to get TAFE to move to the site.
- It is hard to find a large greenfield site in Taree for something like a University or TAFE.
- Taree needs to go up and develop, as there is a lot of areas that utilise its services and facilities.
- Richard explained that the proposed zones (particularly for business opportunities) permit similar uses to that currently permitted in the broad zones used in the Greater Taree LEP. What differs substantially is height (current 2 storey is proposed to increase to 6 in some locations). If someone wanted to come in after the document is exhibited and put in a DA (but before the zoning and height changes), they may be able to request a variation to the height as they would have justification, they may be able to request a variation to the height as they would have justification from the plan. If a zoning change was required to permit the proposed use, the developer would need to wait until the new MidCoast LEP is made.
- It was asked why the proposed change to the Aldi height is so high (6 storey)? Council staff explained that it is identified for increased development on the basis that is Aldi ever moves, it would be an ideal gateway development site to the CBD. It was then asked if the heights in the medical precinct could be varied (above 4 storeys) – Council staff said that all DAs are assessed on merit and that a variation can be requested but would need to be strongly justified.
- The issue is that development predominantly needs to be a knock down and rebuild, but the cost of buying the land, demolishing buildings and then rebuilding is so high.
- Taree has never been seen as a place for people without a job like retirees to live... we need to reinvent ourselves.
- The issue with infrastructure/development contributions is that the funds come after development and hence improvements are constructed well after they are needed.

3.5 STATE AGENCY MEETINGS HUNTER NEW ENGLAND HEALTH & DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

Consultation with NSW Government agencies, Hunter New England Health (HNEH) and the Department of Planning Industry and Environment (DPIE), has been conducted on two occasions.

Council met with HNEH and DPIE representatives in October 2017, prior to commencement of the project. The results of this were used to develop and inform the aims of the project, and the consultant briefing documentation.

Further consultation was held with HNEH and DPIE representatives in March 2019, following community consultation and development of the project. This meeting sought to gain feedback on items and issues raised during the process.

MEETING 1 OUTCOMES

General trends in the medical industry, together with some specific to Taree, as observed by Hunter-New England Health include:

- There will continue to be a shift away from people going to hospitals, to treatment at home instead;
- There will be an increase in 'telehealth' (e.g. the Manning Rural Referral Hospital currently has 12 virtual beds), including 'tele-rehab';
- There is a target of 50% renal dialysis being undertaken at home (the Manning Rural Referral Hospital has recently opened a new renal unit – future expansion may not be needed if this trend is realised);
- ED (Emergency Department) will continue to be a focus of public hospitals – acute care;
- Diagnostic services will continue to be a focus of public hospitals due to the expense involved and the benefit of having a single provider of this service to an area (the Manning Rural Referral Hospital will be opening a new diagnostic wing shortly, centralising diagnostics which are currently spread across the hospital and incorporating new equipment such as an MRI) – high-end care;
- Some allied health services such as physio will not be a focus of public hospitals, but are better suited to being located near a hospital for use of diagnostics;
- Other allied health services such as speech pathology do not need to be located near a hospital or within a medical precinct;
- GPs do not need to be housed near a hospital or medical precinct, nor do they usually seek accommodation in such locations;
- People currently look after their own health 85% of the time – self diagnosis (the internet is fast becoming an individual's first port of call when a health issue arises);
- Additional diagnostic services not provided by a public hospital should be located near a hospital within a medical precinct to take advantage of medical synergies;
- Accommodation for carers/family usually only required when a patient is receiving cancer treatments (a new chemotherapy unit has opened at the Manning Rural Referral Hospital and has stopped the flow of patients within the MidCoast LGA to the Port Macquarie Base Hospital);
- Public hospitals aim to reduce the length of stay in hospital beds and to increase home care e.g. rehab aim to reduce from 20 to 10 day stay with a corresponding increase in home care;
- There may be a need for short-term accommodation near the Manning Rural Referral Hospital for relief staffing including GPs, together with their partners, referred to as fly-in/fly-out staff. It should be noted however that there are more cleaners employed at hospitals than medical staff and these tend to live locally and not transfer between hospitals;
- Medical tourism (where people come from outside the LGA to access medical services) is unlikely to be a feature associated with the Manning Rural Referral Hospital. Regional hospitals do not generally attract highly trained specialists – more likely to occur at larger metropolitan hospitals such as John Hunter and RPA;
- The Manning Rural Referral Hospital is only likely to draw from within the LGA, with outlying areas such as Tea Gardens, Hawks Nest and Stroud more likely to utilise John Hunter Hospital for ED, diagnostics and general medical services. Hospital visitation tends to follow people's normal travel flow (i.e. the larger urban area they more regularly frequent);
- The trend among some rural hospitals is to specialise in some specialist (though not highly specialised) services e.g. Gloucester Soldiers' Memorial Hospital provides cataract surgery catering for the MidCoast LGA;
- The trend of early intervention when people first receive medical care (e.g. paramedics) is a factor in the life expectancy increase from 60 to 85 years in recent decades. The trend is to solve problems earlier but there is a corresponding increase in more on-going care needed, with this now trending away from hospitals and instead being provided at home;
- ED is providing increased services reducing the need for hospital beds (e.g. broken bones are now treated in ED, no longer requiring an overnight hospital stay);
- Medical precincts located near CBDs can be more efficient if 'avenues' of services are established between hospitals and the CBD;
- A comparable rural hospital to that of the Manning Rural Referral Hospital is Maitland Hospital, which currently services a population of 150,000. With the Manning Rural Referral Hospital servicing less than 90,000 people, it means that it has plenty of capacity to service an increasing population – there is no unmet demand;
- Car parking is always an issue around any public hospital. With a car space costing $27,000 to construct in a multi-deck carpark versus $3,000 per space at grade, we are unlikely to see a significant increase in parking spaces by the hospital in Taree;
- With the trend away from hospital care to home care (particularly for the elderly) the need to be in close proximity to a hospital is diminished. This is particularly the case in Taree where the adjoining CBD (with increased amenity – public open space, foreshore and river views) offers an attractive alternative for the establishment of seniors living, from independent and low care (nursing home) through to high-care (hostel). Vertical retirement villages not located in medical precincts are likely to become an increasing trend, particularly as the elderly are likely to either drive themselves to medical appointments or be transported by ambulance to hospital in the case of high-care patients;
- Trend for treatment in the home (outreach services) includes putting in drips, which has had a significant impact (reduction) on bed usage. Even the 20 bed Forster Private Hospital only has a 30% occupancy, despite having one of the highest older populations nationally;
- With NDIS being rolled out nationally we are likely to see a significant increase in hospital funding;
- Significant medical practitioner training is already provided in Taree with any increase unlikely;
- The average hospital bed occupancy nationally per person for life is 10.2 days;
- The medical industry works on a 10 year planning horizon, as trends are too difficult to predict any further into the future; and
- The medical industry (hospitals) is moving away from providing and reporting on bed numbers (this is becoming redundant) to the provision of a range of medical services to meet a local population's needs, with particular emphasis on ED and diagnostics, as well as renal and cancer treatment.

MEETING 2 OUTCOMES

- HNEH work with a Manning group called Primary Health Network. This network obtains feedback from doctors on health issues and HNEH is using it currently to encourage doctors to offer after-hours medical service to take the pressure off the public hospital and hence reduce wait times
- Attracting senior doctors continues to be a concern for regional areas such as the Manning.
- A pharmacy near the hospital is required – zoning to permit this use would assist
- Parking near the hospital is seen as an on-going problem. GHD advised that there is currently sufficient parking around the hospital but that knowing where parks are available (technology such as parking apps could assist) and catering for staff working night shifts in a way that addresses safety concerns is important (public/private partnerships for use of existing carparks and ensuring safety and ease of access is the key).

- Aboriginal healthcare and ‘closing the gap’ is an important program for the Manning.
- Accommodation (lack of) is a current concern for HNEH. HNEH typically need a three month lease with houses for doctors with families and units for single doctors – this is difficult to obtain due to the short leasing period.
- HNEH participate in a Joint Medical Program with UNE School of Rural Medicine and University of Newcastle. Taree’s Manning Rural Referral Hospital is one of six Clinical Schools. HNEH also work with the NSW Rural Doctors Network regarding providing clinical experience.
- HNEH explained that NGOs are also an important alternate to hospital services
- Tele-health is an important addition to hospital services – Manning Rural Referral Hospital provides support services in this regard to other hospitals such as Bulahdelah and Gloucester
- Manning Rural Referral Hospital has an important association with the Port Macquarie Base Hospital (under Mid North Coast Local Health District) in regard to referral of services not provided at Taree
- HNEH advised that the Manning Rural Referral Hospital may never be a ‘trauma hospital’, such as John Hunter.

3.6 PUBLIC EXHIBITION

Public Exhibition of the DRAFT Manning Health and Taree CBD Precinct Plan was held from xx/xx/2019 to xx/xx/2019.

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4 NEW VISION AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 THE VISION FOR TAREE CBD

"Taree, the thriving capital of the Barrington Coast"

The image below represents the 20 year plus vision for the Taree CBD; celebrating a rich history, unique beauty and ensuring a sustainable future as a great place to live, work and visit, including;

- Increasing development and residential opportunities to support a greater population
- Capitalising on riverfront access and amenity to encourage more activity and visitors
- Revitalising and maximising existing street and heritage character to boost the local economy
- Promoting a greener, safer, healthier and smarter pedestrian friendly environment

Potential 20 year vision for the Taree CBD

MIDCOAST council

buy
local

4.2 OBJECTIVES

The following objectives encompass key considerations to achieving the 20 year vision for the Taree CBD.

1 REINFORCE THE 'RIVER CITY' HERITAGE, IDENTITY AND CHARACTER

- Support and reinforce existing cultural, food and sporting festivals that celebrate and capitalise on Taree's unique location to attract further tourism and stimulate investment
- Improve the prominence and connection of the foreshore with the retail core, so it is more accessible and distinguishable for residents and visitors
- Create a strong identity for Taree through high quality built form, taking inspiration from the historical origins of Taree, as a key historical river port
- Establish sound design guidelines for future development, to protect and capitalise upon the prominence of built heritage within Taree
- Through new and improved urban design and landscape elements, create a distinguished focal point within the CBD emphasising the river location

2 ESTABLISH A DYNAMIC AND COLLABORATIVE REGIONAL HUB

- Reinforce Taree's role and importance as a regional hub for administration, commerce and industry, education, health, the arts, culture and tourism
- Build upon Taree's unique strengths and capitalise off the diverse range of opportunities available within the wider Hunter region, to promote the city centre and area as a place to live, work and visit
- Support existing industry and businesses within the CBD, to reinforce Taree's prominence as a key employment centre
- Examine the demand and potential for further community facilities and amenities, which cement Taree's identity as a dynamic and collaborative regional centre, with a broad offering of shopping and entertainment opportunities, community and recreational activities, attractions, and other services and amenities

3 STIMULATE INVESTMENT AND GROWTH

- Identify major development/re-development opportunities', to reinvigorate and contribute to economic prosperity of the CBD.
- Identify infrastructure and other capital works that would benefit the Taree CBD and stimulate further investment
- Encourage public and private partnerships and investment, through a range of strategies, to promote further growth and development

4 PROMOTE A CITY FOR PEOPLE

- Explore strategies to create a city which is people focused and promotes liveability and community wellbeing
- Establish sound traffic and parking strategies, to reduce the overall emphasis of vehicular traffic and parking within the city centre, making it a more attractive setting, accessible and walkable for visitors and the general community
- Make provision for enhanced open space, recreational and community facilities, walking and cycling connections, to promote an active and healthy lifestyle CBD
- Ensure that the CBD is equitable and inclusive, providing for a range of uses and activities, which appeals to all ages, cultures and interest groups
- Develop design guidelines established for the CBD, ensure active building frontages are established for new development
- Strengthen connections with, and the quality of, existing lanes and arcades and identify potential locations for sheltered walkways and connections within the CBD
- Prepare a planting strategy for potential new street trees and groundcover planting locations within the CBD, to nominate suitable locations and a species palette to reinforce local character and increase canopy cover and visual and physical comfort

5 FOSTER A VIBRANT, SMART AND CREATIVE CENTRE

- Promote greater street life and activity within the CBD through building design, street edge activation and an appropriate land use mix
- Support and enhance places for community gathering
- Support community life and a vibrant and active centre, through promoting existing and further sports, recreational, arts and cultural facilities and other attractions
- Foster a more vibrant setting, which is lively and welcoming outside of business hours, through the provision of higher density housing and mixed use developments
- Support and build upon opportunities for public activities and greater use of the CBD for the arts and cultural gatherings, recreation and entertainment
- Foster a progressive centre, making provision for arts and crafts workshops and local food production which reinforces Taree's local identity

6 ENCOURAGE A DIVERSIFIED AND INNOVATIVE LOCAL ECONOMY

- Promote new development that strengthens the economic position and sustainability of Taree
- Support existing business and industry enterprise within Taree, as well as, exploring strategic opportunities available in emerging market sectors
- Promote development which benefits tourism and independent businesses within the CBD
- Develop strategies and initiatives to attract and retain ongoing investment and employment growth, across a variety of industry sectors
- Promote Taree as a supportive, affordable place for young entrepreneurs to start a business

7 ENCOURAGE BOTH VARIED AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Explore opportunities to establish small and affordable housing options within the CBD, providing greater diversity in the existing housing stock.
- Provide for an innovative range of accommodation and housing to address the needs of the community, including a younger population
- Through the design guidelines, promote the conversion of upper floor levels of existing building stock within the CBD, for residential purposes.
- Promote sustainable forms of new development, architecture and landscaping which is responsive to the natural environment and achieves social, economic and environmental priorities
- Introduce sustainable design principles and building practices to new developments to achieve environmental objectives.

8 CREATE A WELL CONNECTED CENTRE

- Create stronger connections and movement between the CBD, entertainment and retail precincts, foreshore and adjacent areas
- Create a strong sense of arrival to the CBD for visitors entering Taree
- Promote stronger physical and perceived connection with residential areas located in the east and north of the precinct and surrounding areas through improving accessibility and transport connections
- Increase provision for safe and accessible pedestrian/cycle connections throughout the CBD
- Examine opportunities to improve the bus service within the CBD
- Examine opportunities to improve station access from within the CBD precinct and links to car parking and bus service
- Assess the location, supply and management of car parking areas and examine alternative solutions to reduce vehicle dominance and improve the character and amenity of the CBD
- Explore options for a CBD free shuttle bus service
- Promote and improve visual and physical connections between car parking areas and the CBD and foreshore

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 PLANNING

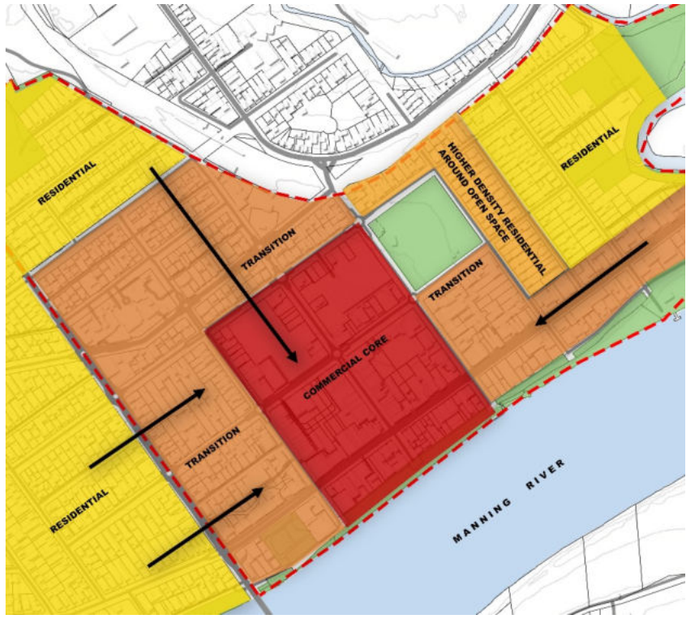
To achieve the objectives of the Precinct Plan, a wide range of functions and facilities are needed to ensure a vibrant centre. Over time the selection of zones and the permissible uses within each zone has the potential to encourage or discourage uses which will contribute to the life of the CBD.

In Taree, the areas of transition from predominantly residential uses to the retail and commercial core is small. The current zoning reflects this, with the trend for large areas of the CBD to have a single function.

Current Land Use Zoning

It is important that the areas of transition are emphasised and enlivened and that the edge of the commercial core is strengthened, so that there is a sense of arrival and the opportunity to concentrate the vitality and identity of the Taree centre.

To help stimulate an increase in the number of businesses in the CBD, the use of a commercial core zone in the centre of the CBD is recommended, to maintain and strengthen the retail and commercial precinct in its established location.



Areas of Transition Emphasise and Enliven the Commercial Core.

The commercial core should have a mix of uses including higher density residential, and promote:

- A compact walkable CBD
- A sense of destination
- A sense of character and identity
- Prominence to the river foreshore
- Positive synergies and agglomeration of like uses
- The retail and commercial core

The commercial core contains two large retail centre sites. Given the scale of these sites, zoning should support larger scale mixed use retail and residential/accommodation in these locations to continue to attract and retain a critical mass of visitors and increase residential opportunities in the commercial core

These sites are within close proximity to the hospital, and should also be encouraged to accommodate health service facilities, seniors housing and the deficiency of serviced apartments within the vicinity of the health precinct to accommodate visiting health staff.

Zoning should support smaller scale mixed use retail and residential/accommodation along the foreshore and finer grain areas of the commercial core for example Victoria Street.

These sites are within close proximity to the river and should be encouraged to attract and retain a critical mass of visitors and increase residential opportunities, seniors housing and serviced apartments.

The use of a mixed use zone in the transition areas surrounding the commercial core is recommended to activate and promote clustering of allied health around the hospital with a variety of retail, entertainment, recreational and residential uses.

Sites within close proximity to the hospital should be encouraged to accommodate health service facilities, seniors housing and serviced apartments. Larger sites should be encouraged to accommodate a specialist health campus style development.

At present, there is very limited diversity in housing options available within the Taree CBD itself and the broader area. To increase the number of people living in the study area, the transition areas surrounding the commercial core are intended to allow for a range of medium density housing options, not only centrally located, but along the foreshore and Harry Bennet Park perimeter.

Zoning in these areas should allow for larger and a greater variety of development types with potential higher density (boarding homes, hostels, residential flat buildings), that would benefit;

- Being closer to and supporting the commercial core
- More convenient access to facilities
- Minimising travel-to-work congestion
- Greater opportunities for social interaction
- Socially diverse communities
- Visual stimulation and delight of different buildings within close proximity
- A greater feeling of safety, with ‘eyes on streets’
- Greater energy efficiency and more efficient use of space and buildings
- More consumer choice of lifestyle, location and building type
- Urban vitality and street life

MIDCOAST council

PROPOSED LAND USE ZONES

SP2 - Special Purpose Infrastructure

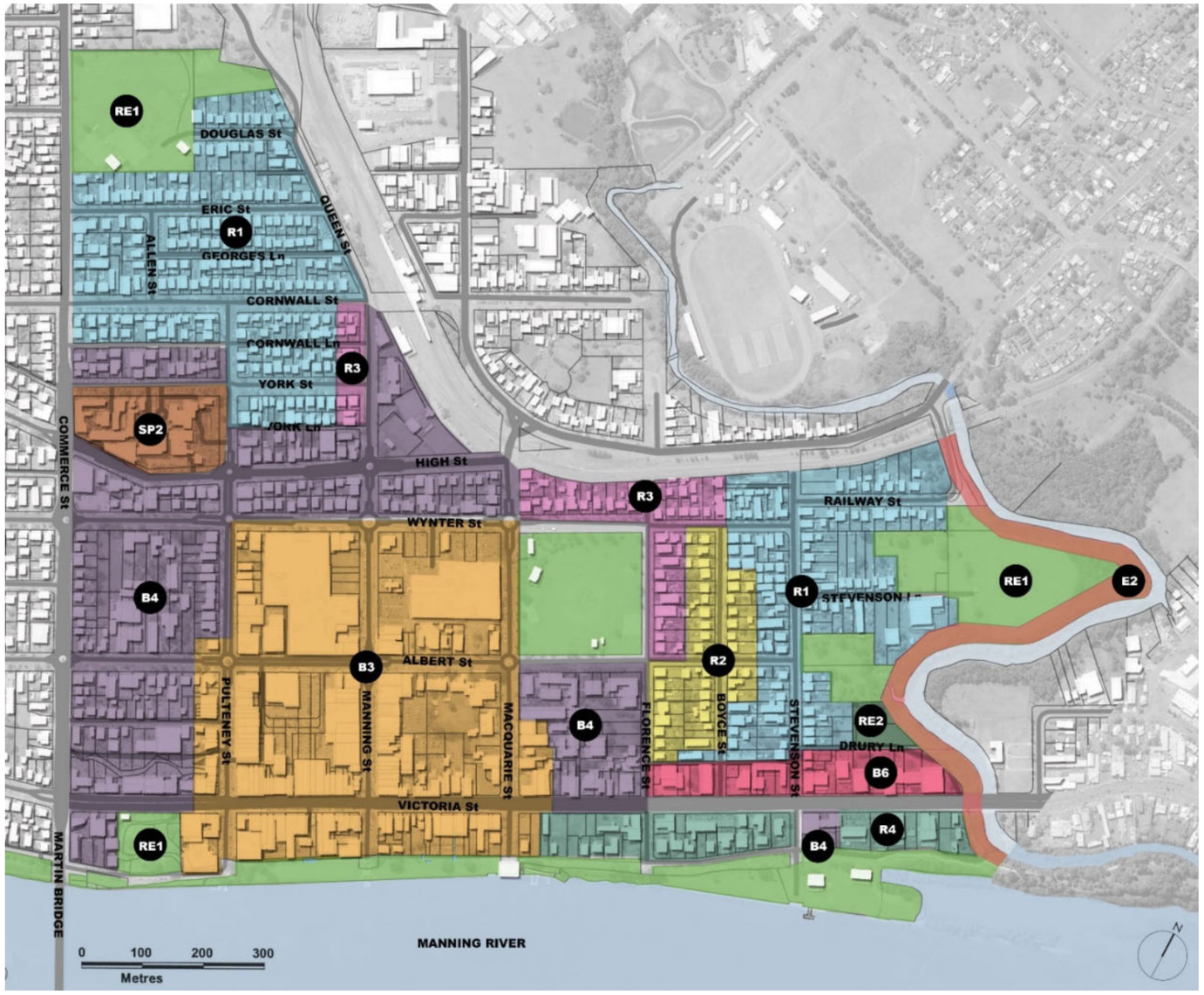
- This zone will remain unchanged, to provide for infrastructure (the hospital) and prevent incompatible development that may detract from its current use.

RE1 - Public Recreation

- This zone will remain relatively unchanged, to provide a range of recreational settings, community activities and cultural uses for the benefit of the community and protect and enhance the natural environment

R1 - General Residential

- This zone will provide for a variety of housing types and densities, as well as medical facilities near the hospital, such as currently exists within these areas.



Proposed Land Use Zones

R2 - Low Density Residential

- R2 zone reflects a potential heritage conservation area and will maintain the current low density nature of this area.

R3 - Medium Density Residential

- This zone will provide for a medium density residential environment and increased housing choice, with good proximity to the commercial core and public recreation areas.
- This zone will encourage revitalisation, redevelopment and a greater population to support the vibrancy of the CBD.

B3 - Commercial Core

- This zone will be used to reinforce the role of the Taree CBD as the major regional centre and allow provision a wide range of retail, business, office, entertainment, community and other suitable land uses which serve the needs of the local and wider community.
- This zone will encourage upper level residential accommodation while maintaining ground level retail, business and office uses.
- This zone will allow for a greater population and vibrancy to the centre, for longer periods of the day and at weekends.
- Residential development in the form of shop top housing is encouraged throughout the entire zone.
- Are all new buildings to have an active street frontage clause applied in the new MidCoast LEP

B4 - Mixed Use

- This zone will provide for a mixture of compatible, integrated land uses such as business, office, residential and retail.
- This will act as the transition zone from outer lying residential areas, thus surrounding and bolstering the commercial core, sense of arrival and place.
- This zone will allow for higher density residential, socially diverse communities, diverse buildings within close proximity and ease of access to a multitude of services and employment opportunities.
- This zone will allow serviced apartments around the health precinct to accommodate for visiting health staff.
- More allied health services and support in cluster
- This zone, particularly around the hospital, better reflects the current use of the area, not being a mix of health businesses and residential, and hence recognises these uses as the main function for this area.

B6 – Enterprise Corridor

- This zone recognises the current use of this area for motels, caryards and other vehicle related uses. These uses are still needed to support the township of Taree and are unlikely to relocate in the short-medium term.

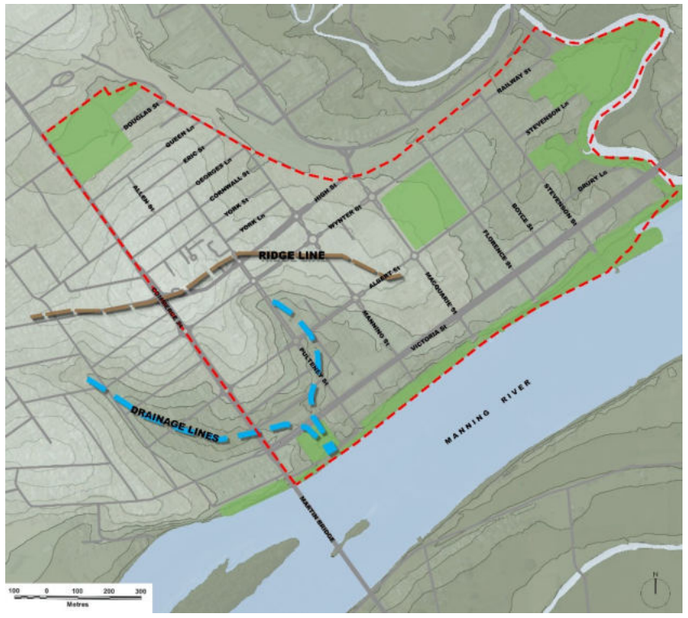
5.1.1 BUILDING FORM AND HEIGHT

The relationship between the form of a buildings and the street is critical to the character of a place.

The height of buildings can play a positive role in signifying and defining certain urban activities and focal points within the urban landscape and in defining the Taree CBD. Building height can be used to define strong edges and enclosure within the urban user experience.

Medium-rise buildings (four storeys) provide an optimum form because of their ability to accommodate a range of uses, higher densities, lower construction costs and lower energy demands. These benefits tend to decrease beyond this height.

In Taree, where two or three storeys are the norm, it is desirable to place higher buildings in key locations such as on corners, along principal routes, the end of vistas or around parks.



Existing Topography

Locating Buildings to Accentuate the Natural Topography

Locating taller buildings where they accentuate the natural topography, rather than a uniform height limit also assists to create a legible place.

The height of buildings needs to be carefully considered in relation to the possible negative effects of overshadowing, view interruption and street definition – maintaining the existing city scale and proportion.

Significant Vistas from Taree

The current height of buildings map for Taree below, specifies the majority of land use within the study area (green) as having an allowable maximum height of 8.5m (equivalent to 2 storeys), with pockets of 11.5m (equivalent to 3 storeys - yellow) and one pocket of 5 storeys.

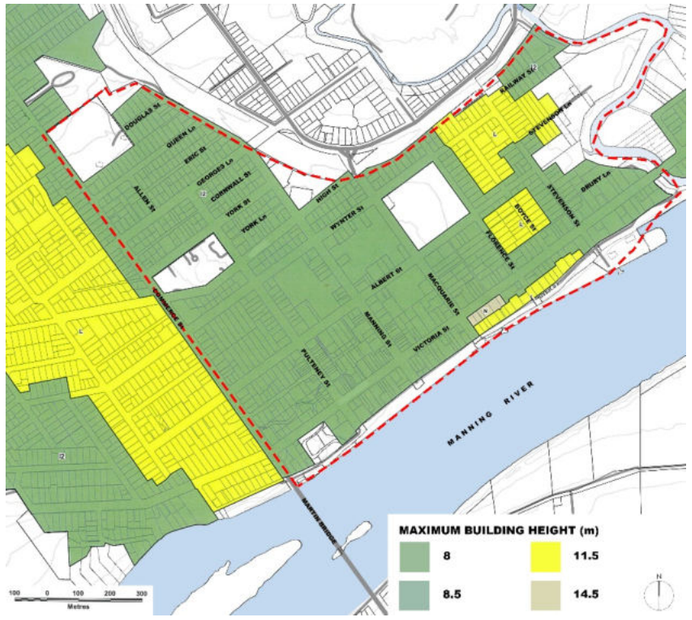
While these limits are sensitive to and consistent with existing built form within the area, there is limited scope for achieving the objectives of the masterplan.

In developing new height controls, the tallest buildings should be located to reinforce the Taree CBD.

It is however, important that building heights are set as a way to increase development feasibility of the area while avoiding the chance that a single development will soak up future demand and sterilise the area for years to come.

Other considerations include that fact that taller buildings require larger foot prints and therefore lot area. The CBD core area generally contains larger lots and therefore is more conducive to additional height.

In areas that currently contain predominantly smaller lots, to enable additional height will require consolidation of lots to achieve larger sites to accommodate it. Therefore careful consideration needs to be given to the location of additional height, so as not to destroy the streetscape character of finer grain/smaller lot areas.



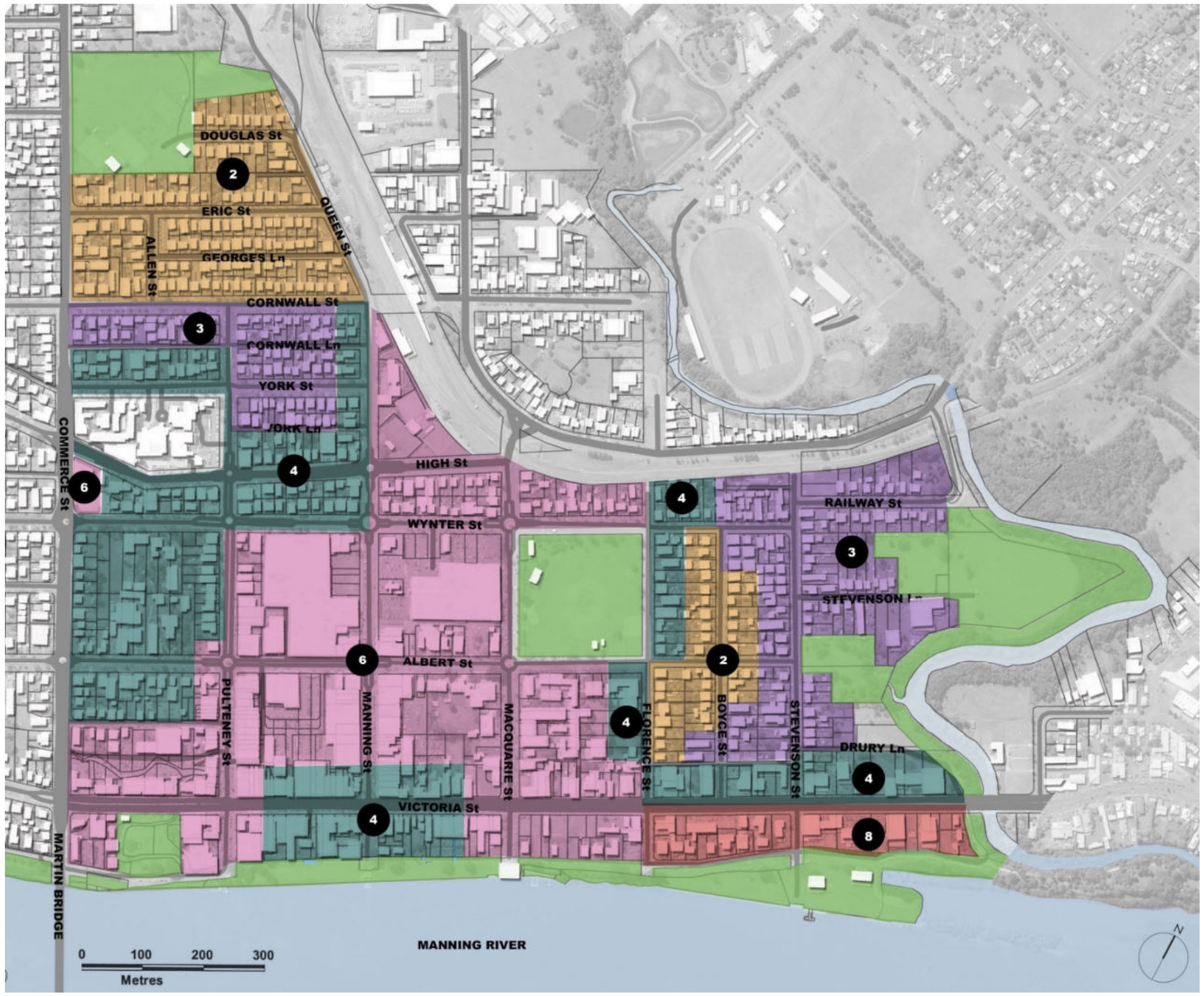
Current Height of Buildings Map

5.1.2 PROPOSED BUILDING HEIGHTS

The proposed building heights map below represents recommended heights and corresponding number of storeys.

In setting the proposed building heights, it is important that the development control plan (DCP) for the area be established in order to;

- Minimise the impact of building height on the visual curtilage of heritage buildings
- Ensure building heights do not reduce sun access particularly to key street and public spaces or create unacceptable wind effects by setting back higher levels of the building.
- Generally, in the CBD, buildings should be built to the street alignment to reinforce the urban character and improve pedestrian amenity and activity at street level.



Proposed Building Heights

The proposed building heights in meters are as follows;

- **2 storey – 8.5m**
- **3 storey – 12m**
- **4 storey – 17m**
- **6 storey – 21m**
- **8 storey – 30m**

5.1.3 FLOOR SPACE RATIO

When a FSR is established it is reasonable for property owners to expect it can be achieved. For example with a 4 – 6 storey building height limit, development should achieve approximately 2:1.

FSR is however, less effective in determining the actual bulk and scale of development and detailed site testing is required to determine the impact of other urban design controls including parking requirements, site setbacks, heritage, overshadowing, site coverage and building height on this “calculated potential”.

The result is that in many cases when detailed testing is conducted, the FSR can often be found to impose undue restrictions on a site that could in fact achieve better yields for developers, while maintaining a positive development outcome for the area.

RECOMMENDATION

In order to encourage development within the Taree CBD, it is recommended that FSR controls should no longer apply. This will allow development to be determined on merit, thus offering investors further incentive to develop, provided that proposals adhere to development controls set to achieve the appropriate and intended outcomes.

5.1.4 MINIMUM LOT SIZE

Different lot sizes are set for different areas and uses, to protect and establish the character and pattern of development in a locality, particularly for residential zones. Setting a minimum lot size ensures that there is sufficient area to accommodate built development and ancillary uses, including landscaping and car parking. The minimum lot is currently set at 450m² for the majority of the study area, however under the new NSW legislation set out in the Medium Density Design Code, the minimum lot size is set at 400m².

RECOMMENDATION

In order to encourage development within the Taree CBD, it is generally recommended that minimum lot size controls should no longer apply, as there is no need to restrict development, provided that proposals adhere to development controls set to achieve the appropriate and intended outcomes.

It is recommended that DCP controls be prepared for the study area.

5.1.5 ACTIVE EDGES, CORNERS AND STREET FRONTAGE

Creating active streets will help to add life and vitality to the Taree CBD, thereby stimulating further commercial activity and promoting safety and community wellbeing.

Accentuating corner sites will help to create a sense of arrival to the Taree CBD as well as draw people along streets and assist with wayfinding.

Existing dead edges fronting public spaces such as the waterfront could be transformed with activity to support safe and vibrant parks.

Active Edges, Corners and Street Frontage

INITIATIVES

Include 'Active street frontages' clause (currently used in the Great Lakes LEP) over all street edges of the Taree B3 zone. For the purposes of this clause, a building has an active street frontage if:

- They apply to the area shown on map below with the red line
- All premises on the ground floor of the building facing the street are used for the purposes of business premises or retail premises;
- Its' street frontage enables direct visual and physical contact between the street and the interior of the building;
- All premises on the ground floor are built to the street or public place boundary line or create a continuous building edge with adjoining commercial premises;
- There is no continuous frontage of a single premises beyond 20m; and,
- All car parking, loading and unloading areas are provided behind buildings

Include provisions within the Development Control Plan to ensure specific treatments of key corner sites.

Gateway Corner
- Ensure lots on this corner are developed to maximum development height, especially at the intersection

Town Centre Corner
- Allow lots on this corner to include an additional 2 storeys (6 storey at Manning/Victoria Streets intersection and 8 storey at Manning/Albert intersection) applied to an area of 1,500m^2 at the intersection (so as to emphasise the corner)
- Ensure lots on these corners include major public art installations that are incorporated into the architecture and reflect an approved theme

Heritage Gateway Corner
- Ensure lots on this corner are responsive to the four existing heritage buildings at this intersection which signify the entry to the Taree CBD

Foreshore Corners
- Ensure lots on these corners are designed to physically and visually open up access to the Manning River foreshore.

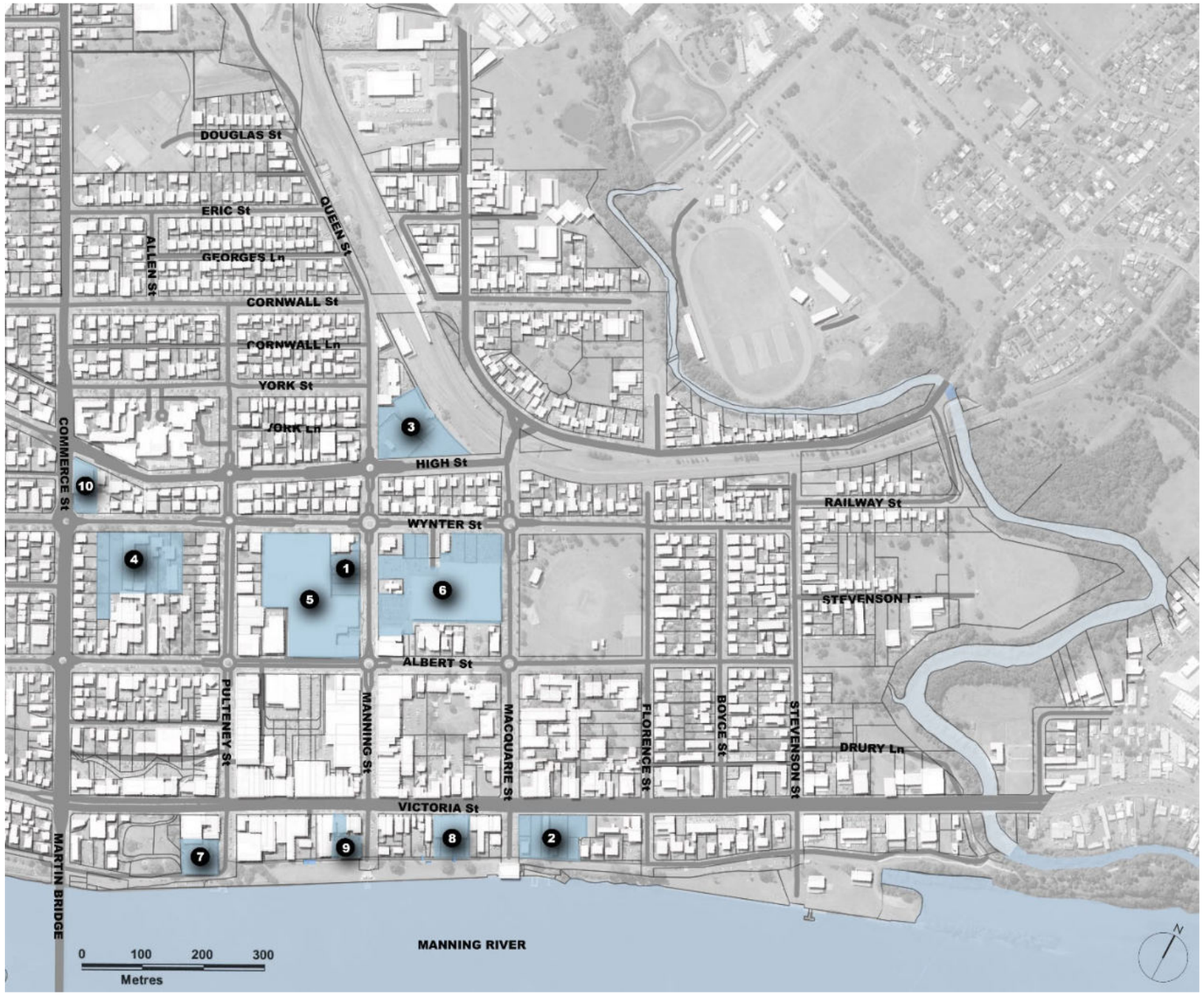
5.2 KEY CATALYST SITES

A number of strategic catalyst sites have been identified. These sites have particular potential to effect and influence the overall objectives of the precinct plan and the functioning and urban character of the CBD and act as a catalyst and precedent to positive change.

The scale, use and relationship of these to other sites has the potential to create key synergies in the future and influence the activities within and around their perimeter and when these activities are most likely to occur.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that DCP controls be prepared and provide specific controls for these sites to elicit the built form desired



Catalyst Sites

CATALYST SITES		
• Single ownership • Large enough to contain major influencer development • Strategically located to create positive synergies with adjacent uses		
SITE	**CURRENT**	**POTENTIAL**
1	Vacant	• 6 storey mixed use residential
2	Vacant	• 4 storey mixed use residential/retail/dining • Showcase optimum development typology for fore shore development
3	Bowling Club	• 6 storey mixed use residential • Car parking
4	Community Uses	• Specialist health campus
5	Major retail centre	• 6 storey mixed use residential/retail • Showcase optimum development typology for major mixed use residential/retail/commercial
6	Major retail centre	• 6 storey mixed use residential/retail • Showcase optimum development typology for major mixed use residential/retail/commercial
7	Council chambers and administration building	• Cultural hub
8	Commercial	• 4 storey mixed use residential/retail/dining • Showcase optimum development typology for fore shore development
9	Commercial	• 4 storey mixed use residential/retail/dining • Showcase optimum development typology for foreshore development • Commence mid-block public laneway concept
10	Commercial	• 6 storey mixed use • Entry way to CBD

5.3 PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT AND ACCESS

Movement and access in Taree is currently dominated by the requirements of the private car, with relatively few journeys undertaken by public transport or by bicycle.

The current situation is sustained by an ample supply of car parking and a road network that generally gives priority to vehicular traffic over non-motorised traffic.

Feedback received through consultation suggests driver frustration with increased traffic and a perceived lack of car parking.

A transport strategy based around the provision of additional road capacity to accommodate increased population, would lead to congestion, damage the environment and reduce urban amenity and undermine the objectives for the future vitality of Taree.

The movement and access strategy for the Taree CBD, should therefore be based on a hierarchy of movement that assumes priority will be given to non-motorised forms of transport – walking and cycling, in addition to public transport.

The hierarchy recognises that walking is the primary mode of transport within well populated centres and that even car trips include a walking component.

5.3.1 PEDESTRIAN

Facilitating the movement of pedestrians is crucial to the long term success of towns and cities. In Taree, the car is the primary mode of transport and often takes priority where vehicles and pedestrians share the space.

By shifting the priority away from vehicular transport to other modes of movement, the streetscape will become an environment for people, which will in turn improve the liveability, connectivity, economic viability and sustainability of the centre. It should also be noted that in the likely future event of driverless cars (as discussed previously), emphasis on pedestrian comfort will be further increased.

Improving pedestrian safety, mobility and access across the study area can be achieved by giving pedestrians higher priority within the CBD precinct; from the CBD to surrounding residential areas; from carparks to street; and crucially from CBD to foreshore.

Currently the Taree CBD block size is considered too big for easy pedestrian walkability (205x205m generally). Mid-block connections should be clearly defined, to ensure future development improves permeability of the town centre from the foreshore.

A pedestrian crossing plaza running between the two major shopping centres on Manning St, should emphasize the green street/foreshore connection. It should also include small passive green spaces with water bubblers, public art, water sensitive urban design features, shade and seating.

PEDESTRIAN ACCESS INITIATIVES

- Create a low speed/low traffic volume environment within the central core and identify streets which have the potential to become 40 km/h high pedestrian activity zones
- Identify locations with poor pavement, and upgrade pavement quality and connectivity to maximise access for less mobile people
- Capitalise on existing wide footpaths, with pedestrian priority over street furniture, driveways, and infrastructure
- Provide formalised pedestrian crossings at least every 50m
- Introduce visible blister treatments (pavement protrusions into the parking lanes) and/or refuge islands at unsignalised pedestrian crossing locations to reduce traffic speed and improve pedestrian visibility and safety
- Review existing roundabouts, which are often hazardous for pedestrians, with the possibility of installing traffic signals and opportunities for scramble crossings (where pedestrians can cross in all directions) at signalised intersections
- Increase amenity, safety and wayfinding to existing paths between carparks and street and explore options for additional paths (including through private property)
- Increase amenity, safety and wayfinding to existing paths between Victoria Street and the foreshore, and explore options for additional paths (including through private property)
- Introduce continuous awnings above footpaths within the commercial core for pedestrian comfort

5.3.2 BICYCLE

Cycling promotes a healthy and active community, improves sustainability, reduces car parking requirements and provides increased mobility and independence for those without cars.

Cycling levels in Taree are currently low due to a number of factors including a lack of safe on-road conditions, and off-road cycling infrastructure.

This strategy does not propose a dense network of dedicated cycle lanes on existing roads within the Taree CBD due to competing demands for available space within the road reserve and the variety of origins and destinations of trips. Instead it recommends that existing networks to and from the CBD to surrounding residential areas and recreational destinations are enhanced.

Five kilometres is considered is a viable commute and it is these trips that therefore need to be promoted as a viable means of travel.

BICYCLE ACCESS INITIATIVES

- Develop a greater Taree/CBD Bike Plan. A bike plan coordinates investment in a network of safe and coherent bicycle routes, in conjunction with the development and implementation of programs to encourage higher levels of cycling.
- Provide basic secure bicycle lock up rings across the CBD and install highly visible bike parking at key locations. Consider the provision of bike lockers at some locations.
- Introduce bike lanes and network signage to key roads leading to the CBD and safe crossing into the CBD area to create a coherent network, including:
    1. Dedicated bike lane on River Street west of Commerce Street to link with foreshore shared path
    2. New cycle/pedestrian bridge to connect east to Pitt Street and Cundletown
    3. Dedicated bike lane on High Street from west of Commerce Street to link with and continue east along Kanangra Drive
    4. Dedicated bike lane on Macquarie Street from High Street to foreshore shared path
    5. Complete link from foreshore shared path to Kanangra Drive through Muscio and Saxby Parks
- Create traffic light crossings at key intersections along bicycle network
- Encourage employers to provide end of trip facilities and secure bike parking to promote cycling

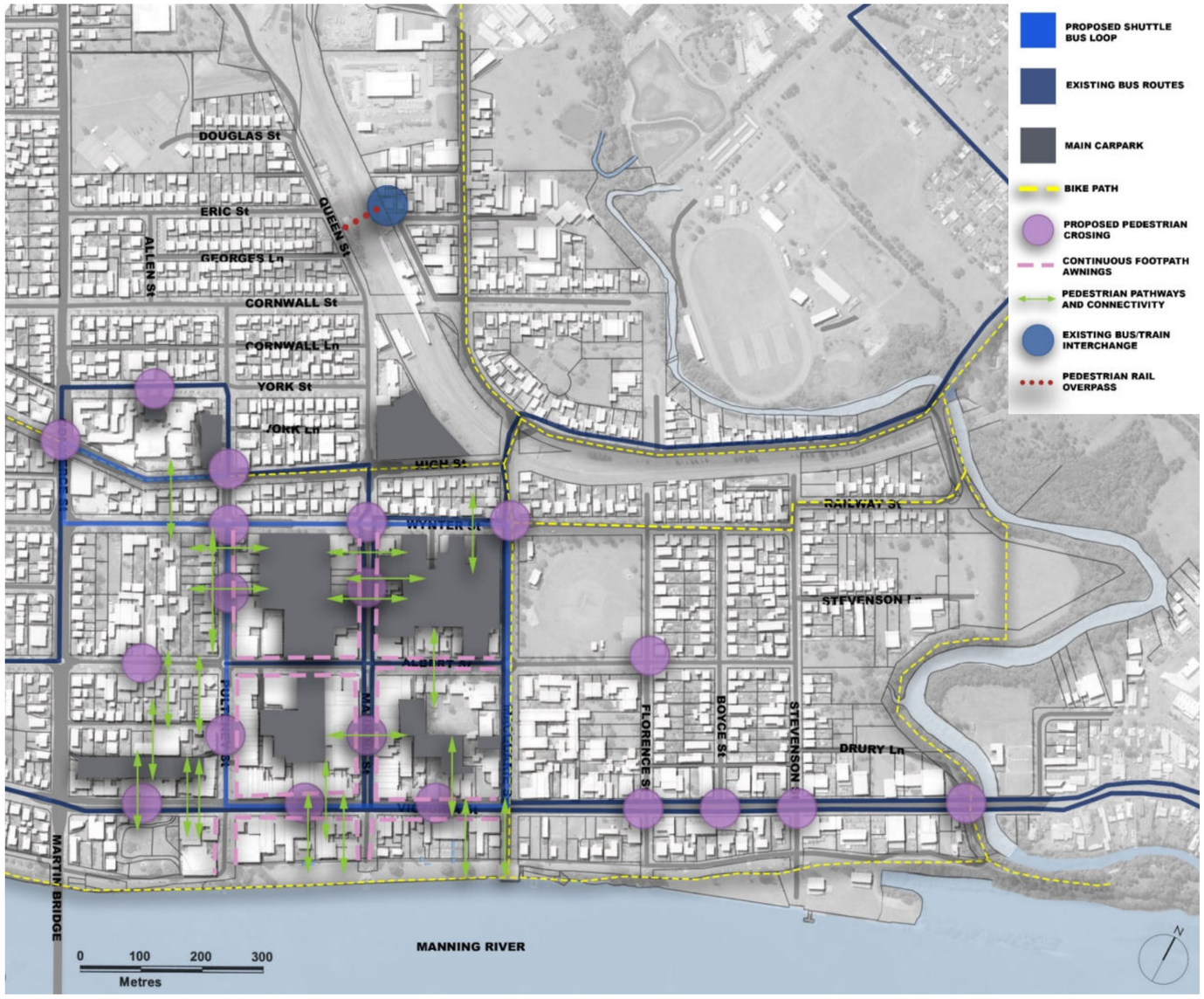
5.3.3 BUS

Low frequency bus services are inevitably common for regional centres such as Taree as the potential passenger catchment is low and travel distance is generally high. This subsequently limits the attractiveness of using public transport and increases the dependence on private vehicles, which in turn impacts parking availability and traffic volumes around the CBD.

The Manning Street Bus Stop fronting Taree City Centre experiences the highest number of bus services and number of passengers.

The volumes of passengers boarding and alighting at the Manning Street bus stop warrants the need for:

- High quality shelter
- Improved lighting
- Improved timetable information
- Raised and paved carriageway to create shared area for pedestrians and buses
- Removal of conflicts with cars within bus drop off and pick up zone
- Explore and promote increased patronage and gaps within existing bus routes



Pedestrian Movement and Access

BUS INTERCHANGE AND RAILWAY STATION CONNECTIVITY

A bus/rail interchange currently exists as part of the railway station outside the precinct. This interchange may need to be expanded/further developed as most people reside within the precinct.

Further exploration should be given to include a pedestrian rail overpass from the train station to the CBD side of the rail line.

SHUTTLE BUS LOOP

In addition to existing bus services, it is proposed that a regular small shuttle bus service be introduced.

This service would include one or two small shuttle buses, connecting the interchange, major carparks, key destinations including the hospital, train station and potential park and ride facilities outside the CBD area, such as the showground.

The shuttlebus service should be linked to smart information signage and/or a smart phone application, detailing wait times.

The shuttle service would alleviate conflict between long and short term car parking at key locations such as the hospital and allow users to utilise long term parking areas elsewhere within the CBD, with safe travel between the two after daylight hours.

This service would also appeal to tourists.

The shuttle bus service could be a joint initiative between HNEH, Council, State transport authority and private enterprise.

5.2 VEHICULAR ACCESS AND CAR PARKING

In order to strengthen sustainable access and movement, improve the vitality of the CBD, upgrade the quality of the public domain and streetscape character, it is necessary to avoid movement mode conflicts.

The strategies outlined in this section are aimed at strengthening the link between traffic generation and destination.

They also aim to ensure that final trips made on foot are safe, enjoyable and well connected to surrounding streets.

People entering the CBD by car, are given clearer indication as to the appropriate path of travel to the most appropriate destination for their particular needs.

The overarching strategy involves taking an integrated approach to carpaking management and user information, with the underlying structure being to encourage, restrict and enforce long term parking to the major off-street parking facilities, with on street parking restricted to cater for short term parking.

People may be prepared to walk 500m from a car park to place of employment, but only 250m from a car park to a shop.

It is recommended that integrated carparking management also include private off-street facilities, in particular those associated with the two large shopping centres and explore and encourage others to get involved with 'carpark sharing'. This can be achieved through negotiation initiated by Council, incentives and integrate the shuttle bus (see previous section). The reality is that avoiding carparking conflicts will benefit all business operators and service providers within the CBD.

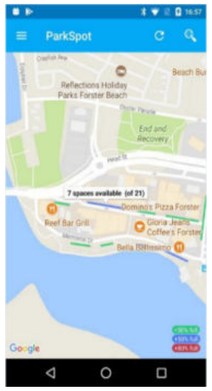
VEHICULAR ACCESS INITIATIVES

- Restrict right turn into Victoria Street from Commerce Street at peak periods
- Promote and strengthen vehicular traffic to enter the CBD along Albert and Wynter Streets and restrict major off street carpark entries to these streets
- Modify Manning and Pulteney Streets by lower speed limits, better/more pedestrian crossings, kerb blisters and medians
- Investigate introducing signalised intersections instead of roundabouts, prioritised as follows;

    1. Manning/Albert Streets (including a 'pedestrian scramble')
    2. Commerce/High Streets

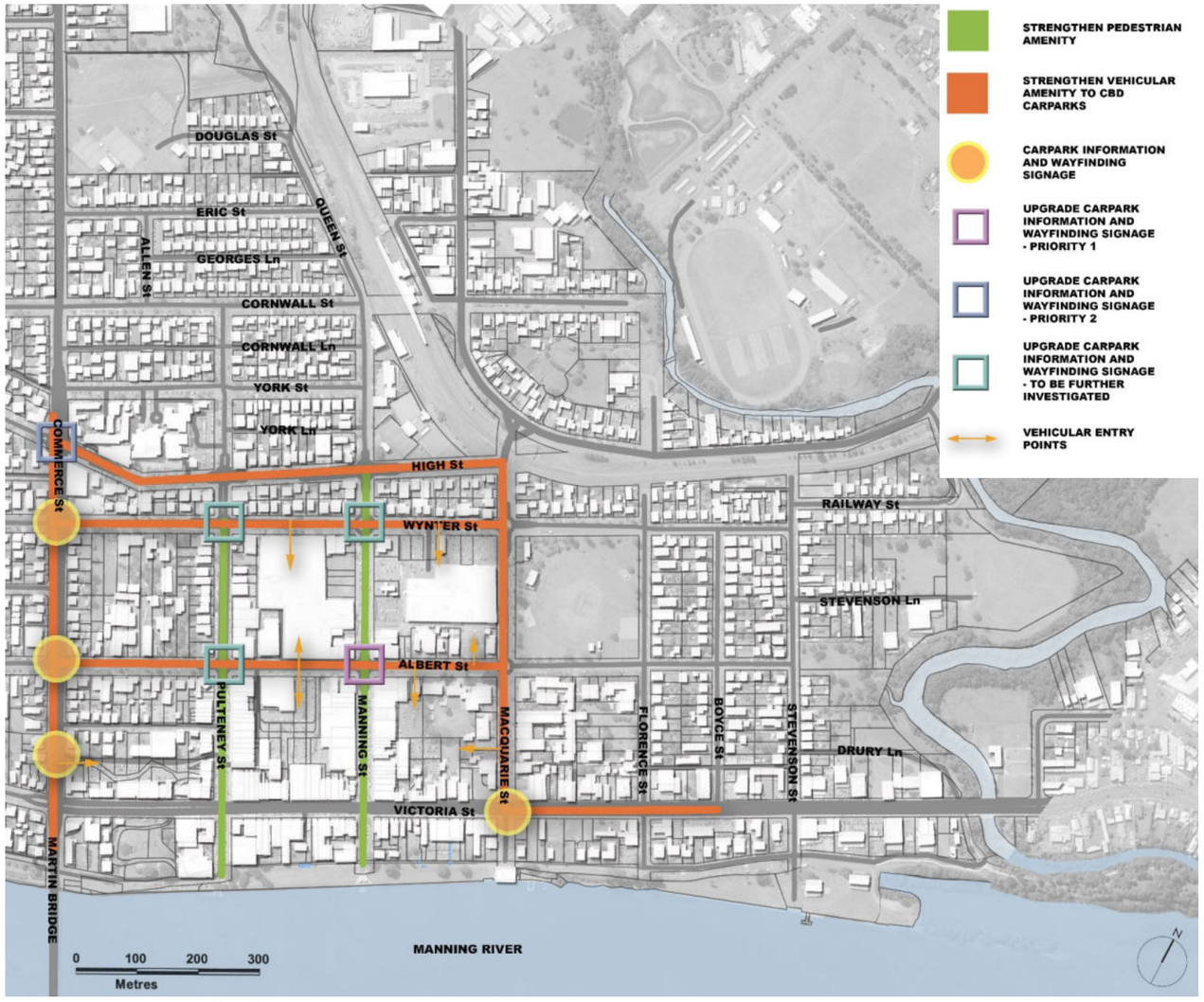
CAR PARKING INITIATIVES

- Explore introducing CBD wide integrated 'smart parking' technology to monitor and give users real time information via phone apps and signage and to availability and integrate shuttle bus
- Explore time restricted on street parking to Pulteney, Manning and Victoria Streets to encourage customers and business activity
- Increase and improve paths of travel to and from off street carparks
- Educate users about the benefits of the integrated strategy



Smart Phone App

Real Time Car Park Signage



Vehicular Access and Car Parking

MIDCOAST council

5.3 OPEN SPACE NETWORK AND FORESHORE

The foreshore is the backdrop to the CBD and gives Taree its unique identity. It is important to strengthen it as an iconic anchor destination for the city and a green link off which the city relies, with a mix of passive and active places and activities.

All north/south streets terminate at the foreshore. This connection should be emphasised in a positive manner and act to draw people towards it. This can be achieved with the use of green streets and wayfinding, and the promise of reward. Those terminating sections of Macquarie, Manning and Pulteney Streets should become extensions of the foreshore park themselves through paving, planting and water features.

A pedestrian crossing plaza running between the two major shopping centres on Manning St, should emphasize the green street/foreshore connection. It should also include small passive green spaces with water bubblers, public art, water sensitive urban design features, shade and seating. These elements should be incorporated into the green street scapes toward the river.

Permanent foreshore improvements and temporary activities should be concentrated between Macquarie and Pulteney Streets, thus drawing residents and visitors to it from the east, west and north from the CBD.

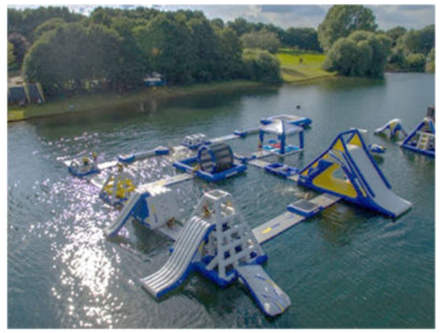
Intimate pathways, pocket parks and terracing should be incorporated through private foreshore developments, to draw people through from Victoria Street, thus encouraging development to interact with the foreshore and increase activity.

The legibility of the foreshore as a link, should emphasise the types of activities intended. For example water sports focused to the east at the existing rowing and sailing clubs. Nature adventure activities and kayaking to the east linking to Browns Creek up to Saxby Park.

Central foreshore development should include improved amenities, interactive heritage sculptures, improved planting strategies and opportunities to interact with the river itself. Increased water based activities should be encouraged, for example temporary water playgrounds and netted areas for swimming.

Temptation to incorporate vehicular access along the foreshore should be avoided. This would only act to further separate the CBD and future waterfront development from the foreshore. The overarching strategy should aim to pull and infiltrate the foreshore back toward the CBD, rather than push the built environment further towards the river.

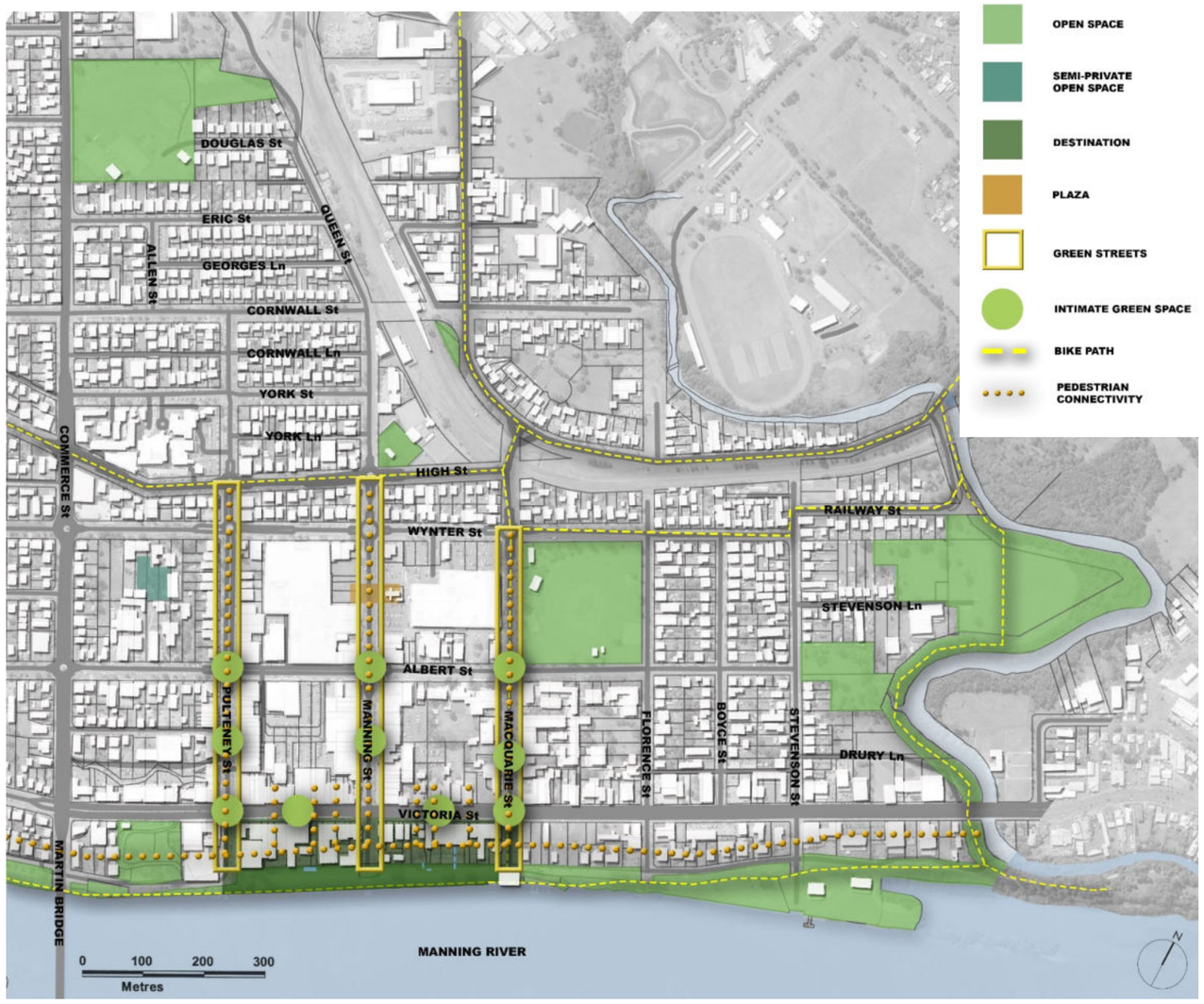
A Foreshore specific masterplan between Victoria and Macquarie Streets is recommended.



Temporary Water Play Ground

Stairs to the Water

High Quality Amenities



Open Space Network and Foreshore

6 IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 IMPLEMENTATION AND FUTURE WORK PLANS

Achieving the full vision and level of revitalisation outlined in the Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct Plan, is estimated to take up until 2040 and beyond.

It is recommended that Council develop a comprehensive implementation plan, considering the following:

- Action by, or the key contributors to the implementation of this plan
- The level of priority or timing for the project or initiative as contained within the Precinct plan
- An estimate of public cost
- An estimate of public benefit

Future work should be undertaken by Council to update DCP controls and develop further detailed masterplans for the study area to manage the built form outcomes, including:

- Streetscape and Public Realm Plan
- Smart City Initiatives
- Foreshore Masterplan
- Taree Park Masterplan

Refer to Appendix A - Future Work Plans

6.2 STAGING & FUNDING

Projects and activities identified in the Precinct Plan range from those which achieve maximum civic benefit with little economic outlay through to larger infrastructure improvements. Implementation of the Precinct Plan is to be realised by the following potential funding sources and activities:

- Grants
- Developer Contributions
- Council led projects
- Redevelopment of Council owned or managed sites
- Council's existing budget
- State funding, and
- Market investment.

The staging of projects is expected to be subject to adjustment owing to grants and investment opportunities, the MidCoast Council budget, as well as changes which result from subsequent companion documents (i.e. new Local Environment Plan, Development Control Plan for the CBD and Contributions Plan for the CBD).

6.3 GOVERNANCE

In terms of project governance and decision making, there is a real need to establish a core group responsible for implementing the Precinct Plan.

It is recommended that governance arrangements are set up through the establishment of a Precinct Plan Implementation Group which is accountable to MidCoast Council. In the first instance, the implementation group would be responsible for approving projects and designs for Council funding and agreeing upon the priority of catalyst projects. Membership should include the following stakeholders:

- MidCoast Council (including the Director of Liveable Communities, the Economic Development Manager and Development Contribution Coordinator and the manager responsible for road reserves and parks)
- Taree Business Chamber
- Local community and business representatives (potentially put forward from the Community Working Group established for the preparation of this plan)
- Landowners of key catalyst sites identified within the plan

It is further recommended that Council establish a Design Review Panel to provide recommendations for support/re-design/refusal for Development Applications involving construction works within a defined area within the Manning Health/CBD Precinct. The Panel would be formed from 'experts' in urban planning and architecture.

7 CONCLUSION

The Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct Plan is one of six key projects currently being undertaken by MidCoast Council, aimed at developing a clear, consistent planning framework to guide land use management across the LGA and inform the new Local Environmental Plan (LEP).

The NSW Government's Hunter Regional Plan 2036 included two key priority actions for MidCoast Council:

- Maintain the retail and commercial role of the Taree CBD, centred on Victoria Street; and
- Support the Manning Rural Referral Hospital by developing a health precinct cluster.

The Precinct Plan combines these actions and also includes consideration to:

- Medium to high density residential opportunities;
- Pedestrian/traffic movement & parking; and
- Public realm, open space & urban design.

The Precinct Plan has been prepared, using a highly collaborative approach. The investigation and analysis conducted as part of the initial phase of work and the community and stakeholder consultation provides a strong foundation upon which the Precinct Plan was developed.

Community and stakeholder involvement during the consultation process was fundamental in developing a shared vision and in identifying key issues and enduring design principles for the future success and growth of the Manning Health and Taree CBD Precinct.

Following consultation, it was clear that there is overwhelming community support for positive change within the CBD including opportunities for increased residential density and intensification, and diversification of the local economy.

There is a desire and willingness to maintain, strengthen and promote the existing city character and assets, particularly the river front location.

While there are a number of cultural, food and sporting events and festivals that utilise the river front, there are opportunities to further celebrate and capitalise on Taree's unique location to attract further tourism and stimulate investment.

There are currently both perceived and physical barriers between the CBD and the river foreshore, and very little waterfront residential and recreational development.

The Precinct Plan identifies a number of initiatives, aimed at improving the prominence and connection of the foreshore with the retail core, so it is more accessible and distinguishable for residents and visitors.

These initiatives aim to capitalise on the compact nature of the CBD and emphasise walkability. There are currently impediments to pedestrian comfort and amenity.

There is a similar disconnect between the retail core of the CBD, the Manning Rural Referral Hospital and the two large retail centres, with conflicts resulting from competition for car parking opportunities and very little pedestrian movement between them.

The Precinct Plan supports the introduction of a holistic, CBD wide approach to an integrated pedestrian, car parking and public transport scheme, to emphasise the compact walkable nature of the CBD, rather than maintaining the current disconnect.

Strategies could include a 'smart' parking scheme to manage and maximise the use of available spaces, avoid conflict and offer drivers real time information on available locations, supported by a shuttle bus service from car parks to key destinations.

To achieve the objectives of the Precinct Plan, a wide range of functions and facilities are needed to ensure a vibrant centre. Over time the selection of zones and the permissible uses within each zone has the potential to encourage or discourage uses which will contribute to the life of the CBD.

The CBD needs to have a mix of uses including higher density residential, to promote:

- A compact walkable CBD
- A sense of destination
- A sense of character and identity
- Prominence to the river foreshore
- Positive synergies and agglomeration of like uses
- The retail and commercial core

The commercial core contains two large retail centre sites. Given the scale of these sites, zoning should support larger scale mixed use retail and residential/accommodation in these locations to continue to attract and retain a critical mass of visitors and increase residential opportunities in the commercial core.

These sites are within close proximity to the hospital, and should also be encouraged to accommodate health service facilities, seniors housing and the deficiency of serviced apartments within the vicinity of the health precinct to accommodate visiting health staff.

Zoning should also support smaller scale mixed use retail and residential/accommodation along the foreshore and finer grain areas of the commercial core for example Victoria Street. These sites are within close proximity to the river and should be encouraged to attract and retain a critical mass of visitors and increase residential opportunities, seniors housing and serviced apartments.

The use of a mixed use zone areas surrounding the commercial core is recommended to activate and promote clustering of allied health around the hospital with a variety of retail, entertainment, recreational and residential uses.

Sites within close proximity to the hospital should be encouraged to accommodate health service facilities, seniors housing and serviced apartments. Larger sites should be encouraged to accommodate a specialist health campus style development.

At present, there is very limited diversity in housing options available within the Taree CBD itself and the broader area. To increase the number of people living in the study area, the areas surrounding the commercial core are intended to allow for a range of medium density housing options, not only centrally located, but along the foreshore and Harry Bennet Park perimeter.

Zoning in these areas should allow for larger and a greater variety of development types with potential higher density (boarding homes, hostels, residential flat buildings), that would benefit;

- Being closer to and supporting the commercial core
- More convenient access to facilities
- Minimising travel-to-work congestion
- Greater opportunities for social interaction
- Socially diverse communities
- Visual stimulation and delight of different buildings within close proximity
- A greater feeling of safety, with 'eyes on streets'
- Greater energy efficiency and more efficient use of space and buildings
- More consumer choice of lifestyle, location and building type
- Urban vitality and street life

A number of strategic catalyst sites have been identified. These sites have particular potential to effect and influence the overall objectives of the precinct plan and the functioning and urban character of the CBD and act as a catalyst and precedent to positive change.

It is well understood and supported through community and stakeholder consultation, that an increase in the population base within the CBD area can positively affect the amenity, vibrancy and sustainability of the economy.

A mix of market, community and government initiatives is required to achieve the outcomes of the Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct Plan and the vision for

"Taree, the thriving capital of the Barrington Coast"

APPENDIX A - FUTURE WORKS PLANS

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PRECINCTS

1 WATERFRONT EAST

Waterfront East precinct will include a mix of residential, larger retail and commercial activities along Victoria Street with an emphasis of residential uses facing the foreshore.

2 WATERFRONT WEST

Waterfront West precinct will include a mix of residential, tourist accomodation, retail and dining activities along Victoria Street with an emphasis of residential and dining activities facing the foreshore. Carparking will be contained to the centre of development lots.

New developments will be encouraged to terrace down towards the foreshore and incorporate public pathways between Victoria Street and the foreshore.

3 VILLAGE NORTH

The Villiage East precinct will emphasise the current larger lot, single dwelling residential character.

4 VILLAGE EAST

The Villiage North precinct will emphasise the current residential character. This precinct presents opportunities to create a higher densities through subdivision of larger lots and by consolidation of lots for 3 to 4 storey townhouse developments. Future developments will be sensitive to the current character and maximise the amenity of existing parks.

5 HEALTH

The Health Precinct is adjacent to the hospital and north of Taree's retail/commercial core. Opportunities exist to develop a mix of uses combining both modern medical related services and higher density residential living.

6 CBD RETAIL

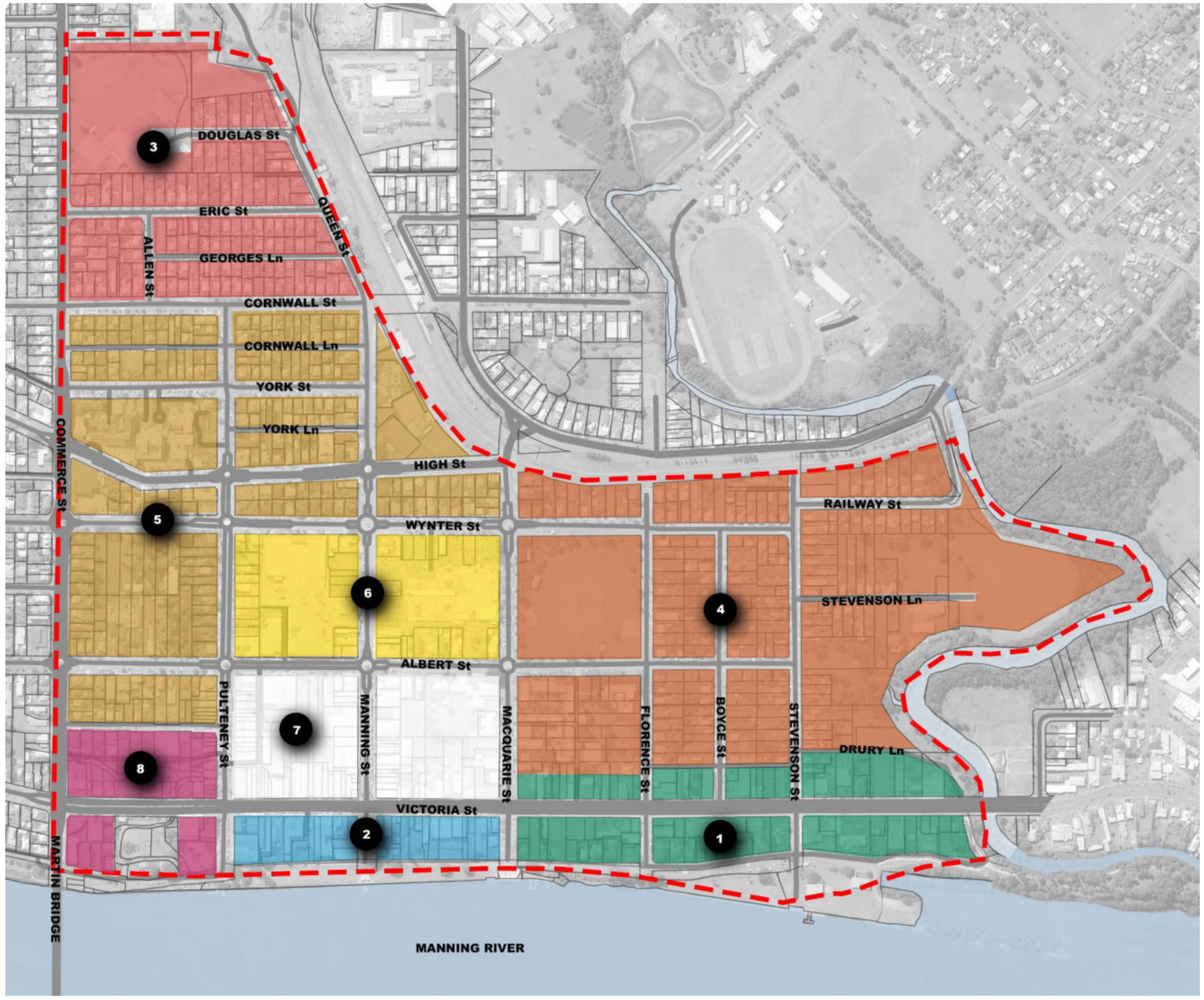
The CBD Retail precinct will capitalise on existing retail and services by bringing people into the CBD through a mix of residential apartment offering. Future development will laminate/wrap podium car parking thus activating the street frontage with shops and dwellings allowing for parking behind. These opportunities create a more attractive place for pedestrians during the day and night, and facilitates a leisure based lifestyle within the city CBD. There is a benefit to the existing centres, as parking can also be increased with multi storey options, and day and night vibrancy ensured.

7 CBD CORE

The CBD Core Precinct will build on the character of finer grain historic buildings with wide diversity of retail, commercial, speciality shops with leisure attractions like restaurants and cafes. Future development will maximise opportunities for infill development both at a single lot and amalgamated lot level. Development will help define the street edge and activate corners, which will help maximise commercial and retail value along the high street. It is important to maintain the human scale of buildings in this precinct by encouraging a set back from ground to upper floors.

7 CIVIC GATEWAY

The Civic Gateway Precinct will be composed of commercial, medical, civic and residential uses that flank the Gateway of Taree. Future development will maximise opportunities for infill development both at a single lot and amalgamated lot level into low rise apartments and shop top housing typologies This type development will cater well to single occupant dwellings and its location providing good access to the local retail, commercial and medical services and employment opportunities.



Precinct plan

SMART CITY INITIATIVES

SMART PARKING AND TRAFFIC SENSORS

Sensors in the street and carparks can detect available parking and send data to nearby drivers. Intelligent traffic systems provide information about traffic congestion and provide information on alternative routes.

Sensors provide continuous metrics to a Smart parking App which gives drivers access to the best available data on parking sports near them. Further information can be provided like hours of parking and payment options if required.

SMART BINS

Sensors collect data on everyday utilities that people interact with. Bins could detect when the rubbish is full and send alerts for waste collection. These sensors can be used to optimise collection routes and frequency.

SMART LIGHTING

Smart poles provide energy efficient lighting and house Wi-Fi points and additional sensors. Automatic detection of external lighting conditions will allow the pole lighting to increase, decrease or turn off its lights to create a responsive illumination for the city.

Smart lights in sporting fields allow users to turn the sportsfield lights on by mobile and automatically bills the user depending on how long they operate. Improving the cities usability, accessibility and safety.

SMART SCREENS

Smart screens are interactive and when placed around the CBD core they can provide additional information to pedestrians. These screens can be used to highlight the latest in what's going on in the city, mapping for improved wayfinding, information on public transport timetables and car parking availability.

COMMUNITY SPACES AND LEARNING HUBS

A common approach to Smart Cities is the encouragement of community spaces to facilitate education, community engagement and the exchange of ideas. This could cover computer literacy and coding, general technology, sustainable gardening, literature, arts and culture, and the establishment of makers places for 3D printing, art and fabrication.

INTERNET OF THINGS

A new 'internet of things' (IoT) platform that connects the cities sensors and apps. It could generate data on the city which can be used to improve health, response to environmental conditions, transport, safety, events and community cohesion.

IoT Alliance Australia is the peak industry body representing the IoT and its adoption across the Australian economy and society. IoTAA identifies smart city initiatives as one of the key enablers in delivering the internet of things.

IOT DIGITAL HEALTHCARE

Stable and fast internet helps attract high skilled roles into the city and attract targeted investment to develop Taree's health and speciality precincts. Application of the IoT technologies in healthcare include monitoring of availability of blood, locating of ambulances, and remote monitoring of patient's health.

PUBLIC WI FI

Free Wi-Fi points in popular public spaces provide access to the internet no matter where you are located in the CBD.

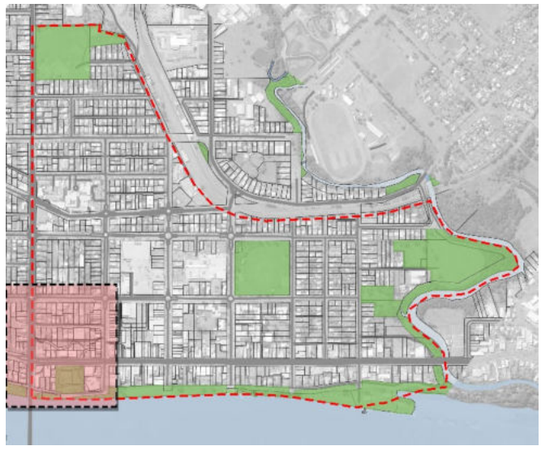
SOLAR PANEL SHADES

Solar panel shades in carparks near council facilities; that allow the power to be harvested which offsets adjacent council facility energy use (e.g. swimming pools, office buildings).

CHARGING STATIONS FOR ELECTRIC CARS

Charging stations located within car parks that would allow for use of harvested power

MAP AREA A



New development illustrated on the following plans are indicative only

1 City gateway signage and landscape improvements

2 Street plantings & footpath improvements to signify arrival

3 Wayfinding & dynamic parking information display

4 Gateway development & hotel

5 Improved footpath, plantings & carpark entry

6 Time restricted right hand turn & pedestrian crossing

7 Wayfinding & dynamic parking information display

8 Pedestrian access right of way

9 Continued 90 degree car parking & new foreshore edge improvements

10 Livvi's place Fotheringham Park & new park furniture

11 New park amenities

12 Median landscaping upgrades

13 Chapman parking upgrades with water sensitive urban design

14 Infill development incorporating pedestrian through path

15 Potential carpark expansion

16 Private carpark sharing arrangement

17 Improved pedestrian access & signage to carpark

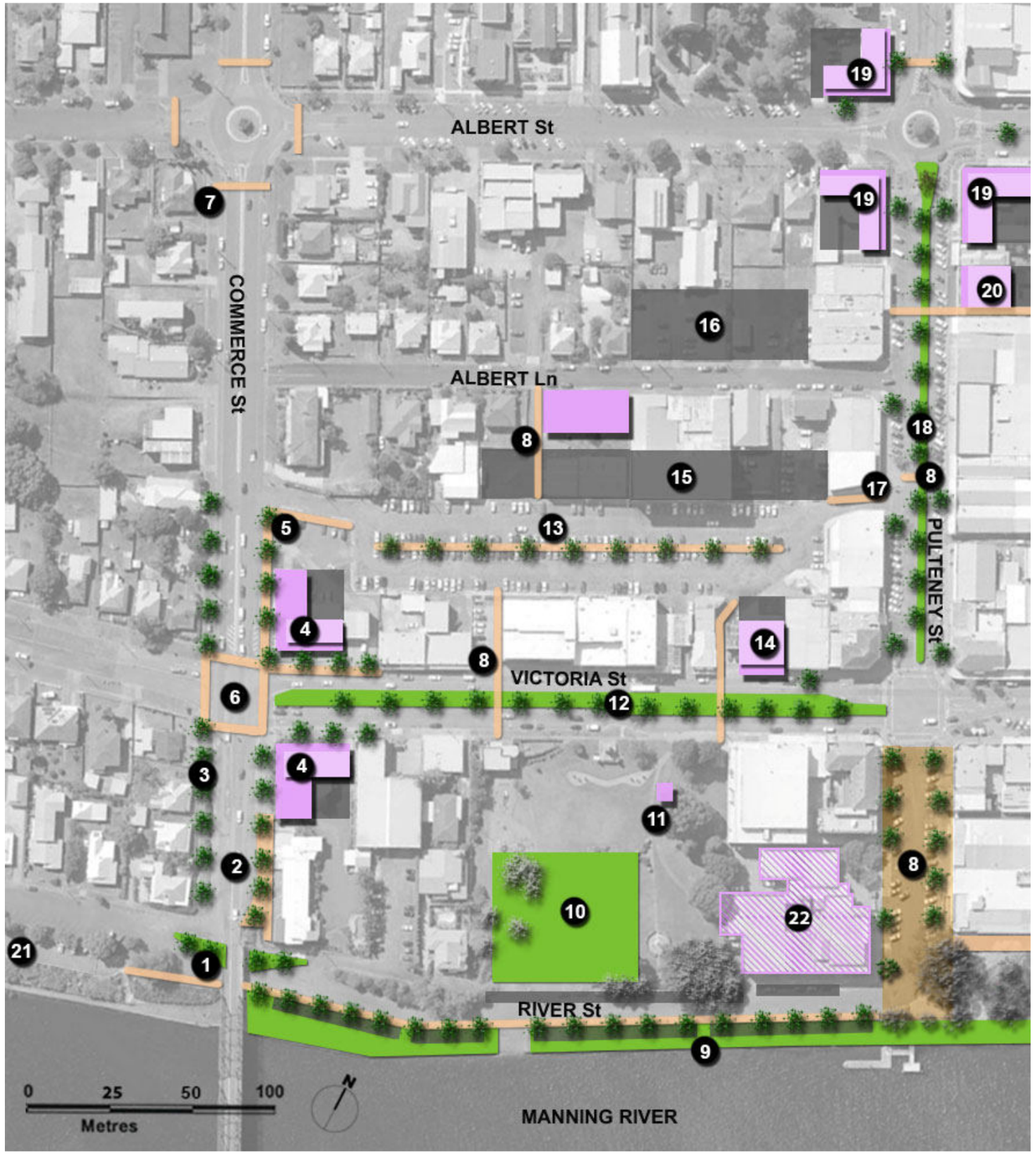
18 Green streets and new planted median

19 New development, activate corner with parking to rear

20 New development & incorporate pedestrian access

21 Enhance Harry Bennet Park

22 Potential repurposing of Council building into Taree cultural centre



MIDCOAST council

1 City gateway signage and landscape improvements

2 Street plantings & footpath to signify arrival

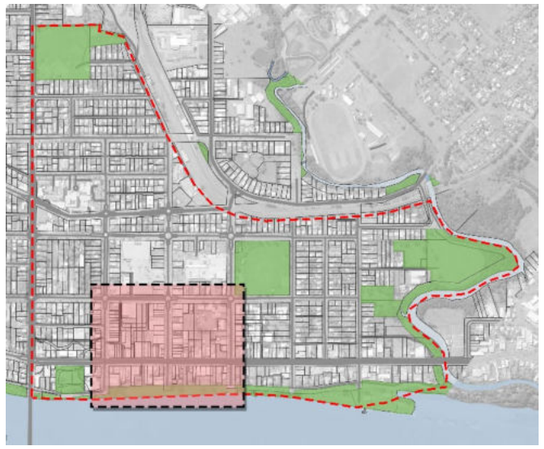
3 Wayfinding & dynamic parking information display

4 Gateway development & hotel

13 Chapman parking upgrades with water sensitive urban design

14 Infill development and pedestrian through path

MAP AREA B



New development illustrated on the following plans are indicative only

1 Emphasise corners with new development

2 Terrace dining

3 Emphasise & upgrade pathway from parking to street

4 Formal pedestrian crossing along Victoria St

5 Explore & incorporate pathways to foreshore

6 Waterfront development to emphasise corners as destinations

7 Key development site to address Victoria St & foreshore

8 Connell Place carpark upgrades and planting

9 New traffic lights & pedestrian scramble crossing

10 Green streets beautification and new planted median

11 Explore new pathway options

12 Enhance existing pedestrian pathways

13 New development to include paths from carpark to street

14 Streetscape & wayfinding to encourage foreshore access

15 Parking to the centre of new developments

16 Terracing down to the foreshore

17 Performance stage

18 River Beach

19 Steps to river

20 Toilets, exercise equipment, BBQ facilities

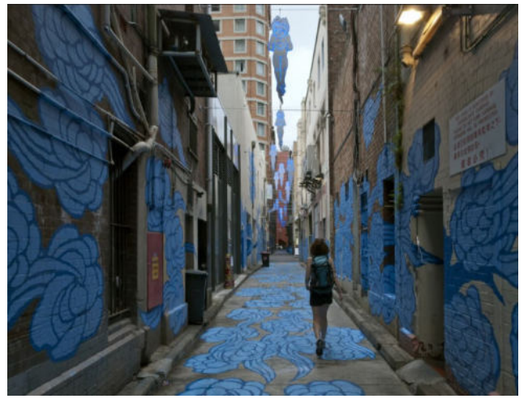
21 New infill development with parking to rear

22 Heritage Indigenous & European interactive sculptures

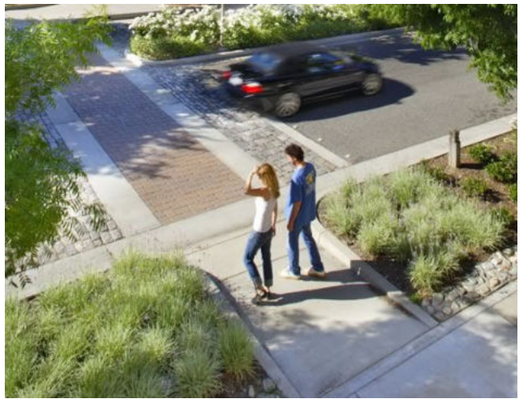
MIDCOAST council

1 Emphasise corners with new development

2 Terrace dining



3 Emphasise & upgrade pathway from parking to street

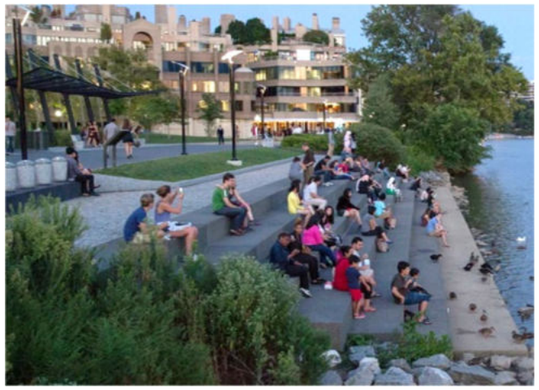


4 Pedestrian crossing along Victoria St

6 Waterfront development to emphasise corners as destinations

16 Terracing down to the foreshore

18 River Beach



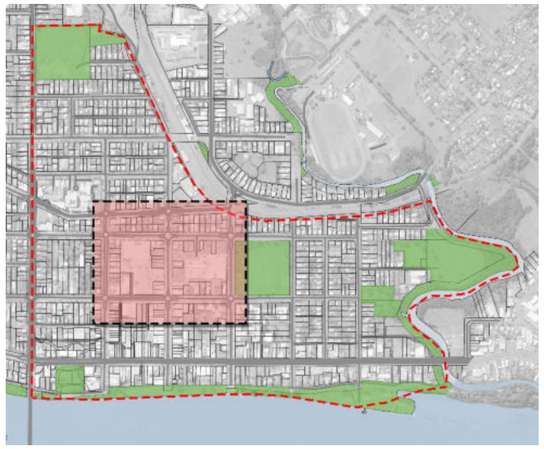
19 Steps to river

20 Toilets, exercise equipment, BBQ facilities

21 New infill development with parking to rear

22 Indigenous & European interpretive sculptures

MAP AREA C



New development illustrated on the following plans are indicative only

1 Mixed use residential development to retail centre edges and roof/podium top

2 Retail centre with roof/podium top gardens and residential

3 Pedestrian right of way 'plaza' incorporating heritage building

4 Emphasise corners with new development

5 90 degree parking along wide verge

6 Heritage information centre

7 Infill development with car parking to rear

8 4-6 storey medium density residential development

9 Mixed use development and car parking

MIDCOAST council

1 Retail edge and podium/roof top development

2 Retail centre with roof/podium top gardens and residential

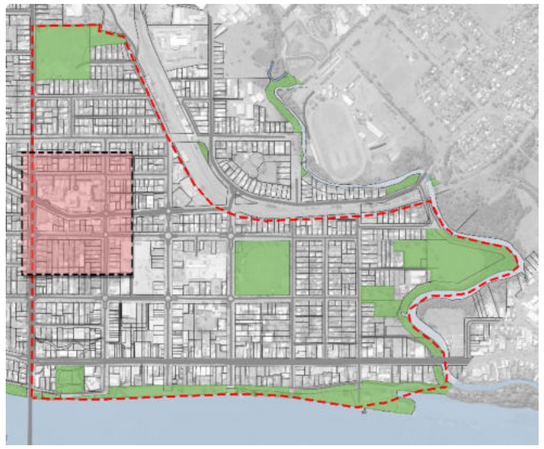
3 Pedestrian right of way 'plaza' between retail centres incorporating heritage building

5 90 degree parking along wide verge

8 4-6 storey medium density residential development

9 Bus interchange with mixed use development and car parking

MAP AREA D



New development illustrated on the following plans are indicative only

1 Medical specialist and Allied Health campus

2 Pedestrian crossings

3 City gateway signage

4 Infill development with rear parking

5 Emphasise corners with new development

6 Enhanced pedestrian link

7 Enhanced pedestrian footpath and landscaping

8 Enhanced pedestrian footpath

MIDCOAST council

1 Medical specialist and Allied Health campus

2 Pedestrian crossings

3 Wayfinding & dynamic parking information display

4 Infill development with rear parking

6 Enhanced pedestrian link

7 Enhanced pedestrian footpath and landscaping

6.1 STREETSCAPE AND PUBLIC REALM

The public realm and streetscape is the primary space for exchange, interaction and is critical in shaping the character and identity of cities and towns. While the public realm comprises a variety of spaces, the precinct plan seeks to integrate these elements, to create a strong, vibrant and memorable character.

This strategy aims to capitalise on, define and enhance the existing character of the public realm and streetscape within Taree CBD, including:

- Definitive gateway entry statement pieces and wayfinding signage at key entry points to the CBD
- Utilising and enhancing existing pathways, creating new pathways and linkages between key destinations
- Creating a network of more pedestrian focused streets, and create a less car dominant feel in the CBD
- Streetscape planting and enhancement (through lighting fixtures, site furniture and public art) along major thoroughfares to improve overall amenity, define specific character, style and 'brand' in the CBD, reducing visual clutter, and improving Taree's overall presentation
- Creating small, intimate, green spaces along existing thoroughfares, to encourage a wide range of people to linger in the CBD
- Incorporate water sensitive urban design measures (such as 'rain gardens') into priority streetscape improvement areas and public domain priority areas.
- High-quality green links to assist in wayfinding by signalling that a route is important and may lead somewhere interesting. Green links encourage a "journey of discovery" and an active lifestyle encouraging pedestrian activity.
- Emphasize pathways to carparks and foreshore
- Emphasize intersections and corners

A Streetscape specific masterplan is recommended.

KEY STREET SPECIFIC CHARACTER INITIATIVES

Commerce Street – 'Gateway to Taree'

- Gateway statement pieces, wayfinding and signage at intersections with Victoria and High Streets
- Improved wayfinding and signage at intersections with Wynter and Albert Streets, and the Chapman Place carpark entry

Victoria Street – 'Eat Street'

- Gateway statement pieces, branding, wayfinding and signage at Macquarie Street intersection
- Foreshore signage at Macquarie, Manning and Pulteney Streets
- Add shade structures to existing seating spaces
- Add raised pedestrian crossings

Albert Street – 'Heritage Street'

- Gateway statement pieces, branding, wayfinding and signage at Macquarie and Commerce Street intersections
- Uniform higher quality footpaths, heritage lighting and street planting

Pulteney Street south of Albert – 'Green Street'

- Gateway statement pieces, branding, wayfinding and signage at Albert and Victoria Street intersections
- Foreshore signage at Albert and Victoria Streets
- Add green spaces, shade structures and seating spaces that are small and intimate
- Add mid block raised pedestrian crossings and planting
- Add planted medians and water sensitive urban design features
- Uniform lighting and street furniture

Macquarie Street south of Albert – 'Heritage Street'

- Gateway statement pieces, branding, wayfinding and signage at Victoria and Albert Street intersections
- Uniform higher quality footpaths, heritage lighting and street planting
- Add planted medians and water sensitive urban design features

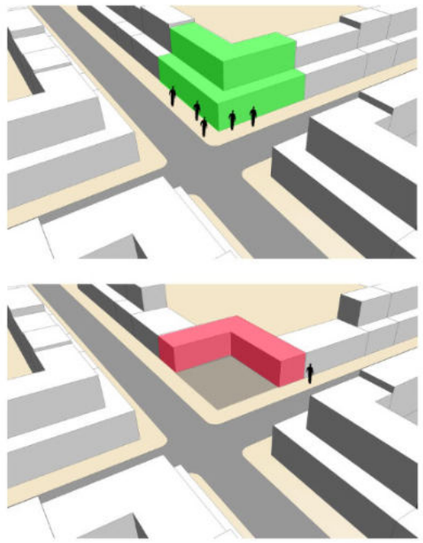
Manning Street – 'Green Street'

- Gateway statement pieces, branding, wayfinding and signage at Wynter, Albert and Victoria Street intersections
- Foreshore signage at Albert and Victoria Streets
- Add green spaces, shade structures and seating spaces that are small and intimate
- Add mid block raised pedestrian crossings and planting
- Add planted medians and water sensitive urban design features
- Uniform lighting and street furniture
- Retain and emphasise views and sightlines to river

GUIDELINES

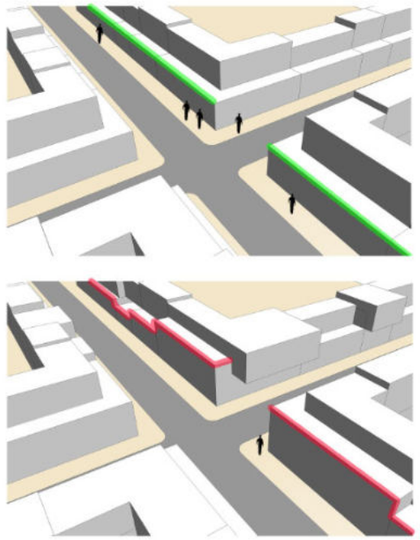
KEY PRINCIPLES

CORNERS



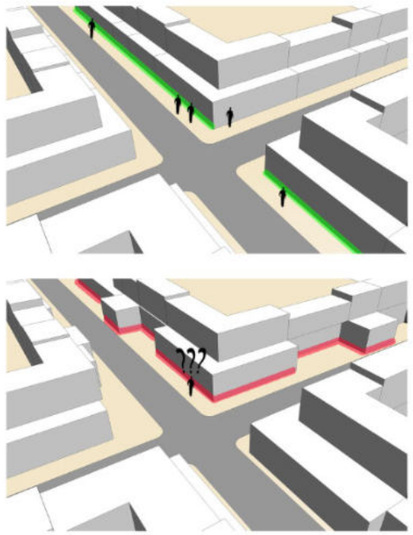
- Avoid car parks and negative spaces on corners
- Encourage positive building presence on corners
- Enhance sense of arrival and place at nodes
- Encourage open façade treatments and out door dining at corner locations

STREET WALL



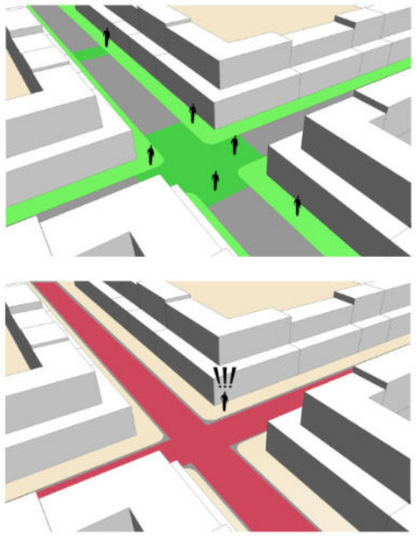
- Encourage maintaining a regular street wall
- Ensure adequate set backs from the street wall on upper levels of infill development
- Maintain existing street scale, character and intimacy of streets
- Avoid overbearing façade elements from a human scale

DESIRE LINES



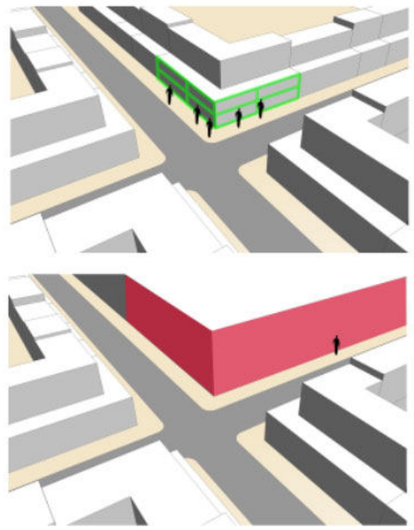
- Encourage maintaining pedestrian desire lines
- Encourage maintaining pedestrian sight lines
- Avoid negative spaces and discontinuous facades
- Avoid 'pinch points' that impair pedestrian movement

SHARED STREETS



- Avoid car dominated streets – 'people don't shop from their cars'
- Encourage positive pedestrian experiences and places to linger
- Encourage pedestrian safety, comfort and shade

BUILDING FORM



- Avoid large, blank, dead facades
- Encourage detail, rhythm, sensitivity to existing character and interest
- Encourage diversity of use and vibrancy

GENERAL GUIDELINES

OVERVIEW

The following design guidelines have been prepared to ensure that the master plan and design strategies can be achieved.

These preliminary guidelines set out the minimum design standards which are expected within the Manning Health/CBD Precinct. It is recommended that a more detailed built and landscape character assessment is completed to include further guidance in respect of preferred materials, treatments, colour schemes.

BUILDING LAYOUT

- The layout of any new buildings or re-development of existing buildings should ensure that the building addresses the street frontage
- Within the core retail zone, buildings must promote a consistent active retail edge.
- The building and site layout for any new development or re-development should address the following:
    - Access and internal circulation, must be logical and efficient and must not impact negatively upon the overall streetscape amenity;
    - Buildings and structures must be oriented to maximise natural sunlight and ventilation;
    - Buildings and structures must not interfere or block significant views; and
    - The site layout should be responsive to the surrounding context.
- New development must maintain a strong relationship with the nearby public realm and circulation paths.
- The site layout and design of any new buildings and structures located on corner sites, must suitably address both street frontages. Buildings should be articulated in a manner which defines the corner, such as vertical elements, entries and openings.

VEHICLE ACCESS

- Vehicle access points must be safe, efficient and easily accessible for vehicular traffic from the main road network within the town centre.
- Sight lines must be maintained for all vehicle access and egress points within the town centre, to maintain road safety and efficiency.

FLOODING

New development will have to consider potential flood impacts to ensure that it is compatible with MidCoast Councils Floodplain Risk Management Plan.

LOCATION OF PARKING AND SERVICE AREAS

- Car parking and servicing areas should generally be located at the rear or side of buildings whenever possible. Landscaping and/or other methods of screening should be used around parking and servicing areas, so that they are less visually prominent from the street frontage.
- Long straight driveways exceeding 10 metres should be avoided wherever possible. Variations in the alignment of the driveway and/or landscaping should be used to reduce the visual impact of driveways and avoid misuse of such areas.
- Parking should be avoided within corner site locations which are visually prominent, wherever possible. Where such conditions cannot be satisfied, suitable landscape treatments should be used along both street frontages to add to the overall streetscape amenity and screen parking areas.

STREETSCAPE DESIGN

- The design of buildings and landscape elements along the street frontage should reinforce the streetscape character and create a high level of amenity.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

- The architectural character of Taree is defined and enhanced by small fragmented buildings typologies. There are several heritage buildings within the CBD, particularly at the junctions of Victoria Street and Pulteney and Manning Streets. These add quality, presence and prominence to these corners and result in a distinct sense of arrival when entering into this area. The architectural language should reinforce and draw inspiration from the existing character and its origins and maintain facades where possible.
- Iconic and artistic design gestures are encouraged, particularly for buildings and uses with a civic purpose, to showcase Taree as an innovative and dynamic community.

BUILDING FORM AND MASSING

- The form and design of buildings should be suitably varied and articulated, to reduce its overall dominance within the streetscape and integrate with the surrounding setting.
- Long blank facades exceeding 7 metres in length without some form of opening or articulation shall not be permitted.
- To create a lively and vibrant setting along the street frontage, facades shall be composed of a variety of elements, planes or materials.
- Where a site adjoins a public area, the form, massing and appearance must be of a high quality and address the transition from private to public space.
- For retail uses, the design of buildings must create an active and inviting retail edge. The use of temporary outdoor site furniture and other elements are permitted, to create a lively and engaging place for users.
- High quality facades and appearance must be maintained for all development within the town centre, in accordance with specific guidance provided in the Precincts section of this plan.

BUILDING HEIGHT

- The building height limitations that apply within the town centre shall vary according to the site location and are defined within the Precincts section of this plan.

ENTRANCES

- Primary building entrances for retail shops and businesses must be oriented towards the street and be easily distinguishable.

LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES

Streetscape design should be adequately addressed as requirement of any new or re-development proposal within the Manning Health/Taree CBD Precinct.

The following guidelines suggest a certain approach and style for Taree's streetscape that reflects key themes that are characteristic of Taree, particularly the microclimate, Indigenous and European histories and of course the Manning River.

It is recommended that a more detailed study is undertaken that focuses solely on the streetscape, individual products and details. Landscaping themes for precincts needs to be developed.

STREETSCAPE PAVING

Existing Brick pavement & cost effective concrete emulation

- A reduction in the variation of different paver types within the study boundary and an increase in consistent and unifying pavers/pavement types should be sought over time.

STREET FURNITURE

- Street furniture includes benches, bollards, wind shields, bins, water bubblers, lighting, edging, signage and bus stop shelters. Like the paving, the overall look of the streetscape presents better and can be used to positively reinforce the identity of the city if the palette of the street furniture is consistent and of the same suite.
- Develop a measured phasing out and replacement of the existing street furniture over time. Potential to identify existing furniture elements that are consistent in tone and finish.
- The design, character and finish of the proposed furniture should reinforce the riverside history and raw materiality of Taree.

Resilient furniture with raw material expression

STREET TREES AND PLANTING

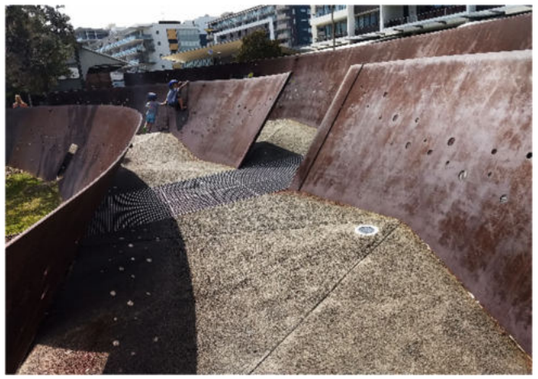
- Consistent avenues of street trees are rare in the study area. The overall recommendation is to therefore increase the amount of street trees in Taree while balancing the need for on street parking.
- Planted medians along Pulteney and Manning Streets.
- Feature groundcover and flower beds should be strategically located in key areas with high pedestrian frequency and where people will sit and spend the most time, such as outdoor café seating areas or a bus interchange.
- Areas of low planting are to be relatively small in size and few in number to help ensure that regular maintenance is achievable. Preference is for in situ, in ground planting with a robust and solid edging raised enough above pavement level to discourage pedestrian through traffic.

Water sensitive edge plantings

URBAN ART

- The incorporation of urban artworks, sculptures and installations is highly encouraged in suitable locations, particularly within the public realm.
- Priority to develop artwork that celebrates the Taree identity for prominent 'city gateway' locations.

Signage to capitalise on Taree's riverside character



Interpretive Aboriginal European and Sculptural Art

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