

## 2.0 Neighbourhood Structure

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### 2.1 Setting

The setting of the study area is its greatest attribute with proximity:

- to the Port Macquarie Town Centre and Settlement City
- to Westport Park, the Hastings River Foreshore, Kooloonbung Creek, Mrs Vorks Garden, Town Beach and the Coastal Walk.

Easy access to these places makes the neighbourhoods in the study area an attractive place to live and will contribute to their success as areas of urban regeneration.

Key urban structure elements that define and organise the broader Port Macquarie context and contribute to the character of each neighbourhood include:

- open spaces and landform
- urban grid
- centres, and
- major movement network.

### Strategic Objectives

- To leverage the local attractions by improving access from each neighbourhood to the town centres and open spaces.



Figures 3 -11 (clockwise): Vista of Hastings River and hills to the west; Westport foreshore looking toward Buller Street; foreshore walk at Port Macquarie Town Centre; Town Beach; Westport Kooloonbung Creek corridor; Town Centre streetscapes; context aerial

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Figure 12: Open space and landform

Open spaces are predominantly located along the foreshore, beach, and creek corridors and define a linked network of spaces. Hills define the extent of the flatter foreshore spaces and creek valleys. The Westport and Aston Hill Neighbourhoods benefit from north facing hill sides with aspect over the river. The Town Beach Neighbourhood has outlook at the hill top to the beach and foreshore. The majority of the neighbourhood is sited on a south facing slope overlooking the parkland and neighbourhoods to the south. This south aspect may limit solar access for redevelopment on some lots.



Figure 13: Urban grid

There are 3 distinct street patterns within the area. The square 200m by 200m town centre grid extend east into the Town Beach Neighbourhood. Secondary streets divide the larger grid. These include Church Street and School Street. The Westport Neighbourhood grid is east-west aligned rectangular grid. The grid has a regular north-south dimension with the extent of east-west street varying in response to landform and the creek. The Aston Hill Neighbourhood is dominated by its landform. Streets are limited to its edges with a series of disconnected short street running up the hill.



Figure 14: Centres

Three centres serve the neighbourhoods. Port Macquarie Town Centre is the main town centre and located adjacent both the Town Beach and Westport Neighbourhoods. It is a regional shopping and tourist destination. It's sister centre, Settlement City, is located to the north adjacent the Aston Hill Neighbourhood. At present it is dominated by a shopping centre but is planned to transform into an more urban, walkable town centre. Gordon Street defines a local centre, which bisects the Westport Neighbourhood. Gordon Street is also an important arterial street. Many of the centre's patrons access the retail and commercial businesses by car. The existing Centres provide sufficient capacity for the retail and commercial demand in the area.



Figure 15: Major Roads

The main movement network is defined by a super grid across the Westport Neighbourhood, Port Macquarie Town Centre and Town Beach Neighbourhood. This grid is linked to a radial arterial road network. The street grids provide finer grain permeability and choice between and within the neighbourhoods. Within the Westport Neighbourhood, Gordon Street and Buller Street are barriers to north-south pedestrian connectivity and separate people from major attractions and assets in the area. The arterial, William Street, with its landscaped median and designated pedestrian crossings, is less of a perceived divider in the Town Beach Neighbourhood.

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### 2.2 Neighbourhoods

Three distinct neighbourhoods are identified within the study area:

**Westport Neighbourhood** is characterised by: a rectangular east-west street grid with: proximity to Port Macquarie Town Centre; a north facing slope with some higher level views to the river; Westport Park and Kooloonbung Creek frontage; and the Gordon Street local centre. The neighbourhood is cut in half by Gordon Street local centre and its role as an arterial road.

**Aston Hill Neighbourhood** is characterised by: it's hill landform; proximity to Settlement City; views from properties on the upper slopes of the hill toward the river and the Port Macquarie Town Centre; and Dixie Park to the west. While only the edge of the neighbourhood is part of this study, recommendations in this study are informed by a consideration of the whole neighbourhood. Hastings River Drive separates the neighbourhood from areas to the south.

**Town Beach West Neighbourhood** is characterised by: a square street grid extending from the Port Macquarie Town Centre with: a finer grain secondary street pattern; a hill landform topped by the Port Macquarie Public School; high level views along Clarence Street to the northern coast line; a south facing slope with district views to the south; and Church Street: and its view corridor to the St Thomas Anglican Church. William Street is the major vehicular street.



Figure 16: 3 distinctive neighbourhood structures

#### Strategic Objectives

- To reinforce the existing structural attributes of each neighbourhood, thereby enhancing each's distinctive character.

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### 2.3 Views

Views to and from the Churches at Hay Street are identified within a number of planning policies and have a direct impact on existing building height controls in the Westport Neighbourhood. Analysis of these views concludes that views from Gordon Street to the churches will be obscured by the currently permissible building heights, both along Gordon Street, within Westport and within the Town Centre. Views between the foreshore/Hastings River and the churches are the most substantial and can be protected from future development as these views are over public land, the Hastings River, low scale development within Westport Park and appropriate height controls within the Town Centre.

The view corridor to St Thomas Anglican Church along Church Street is an important alignment that contributes to the character and history of Church Street and the locality.

View corridors along streets to the Hastings River, the foreshore, and Kooloonbung Creek corridor, and Town Beach headland connect neighbourhoods to the surroundings assets; contribute to the character of streets within the neighbourhoods; and assist in legibility and way finding.

Hillside slopes and hilltops provide elevated views from properties to the river and foreshore, to the beach and coastline and to district open spaces. View sharing across properties increases opportunities for private views and distributes benefits of views across more properties.

Properties with foreshore and parkland frontage have opportunities to maximise outlook to these assets.

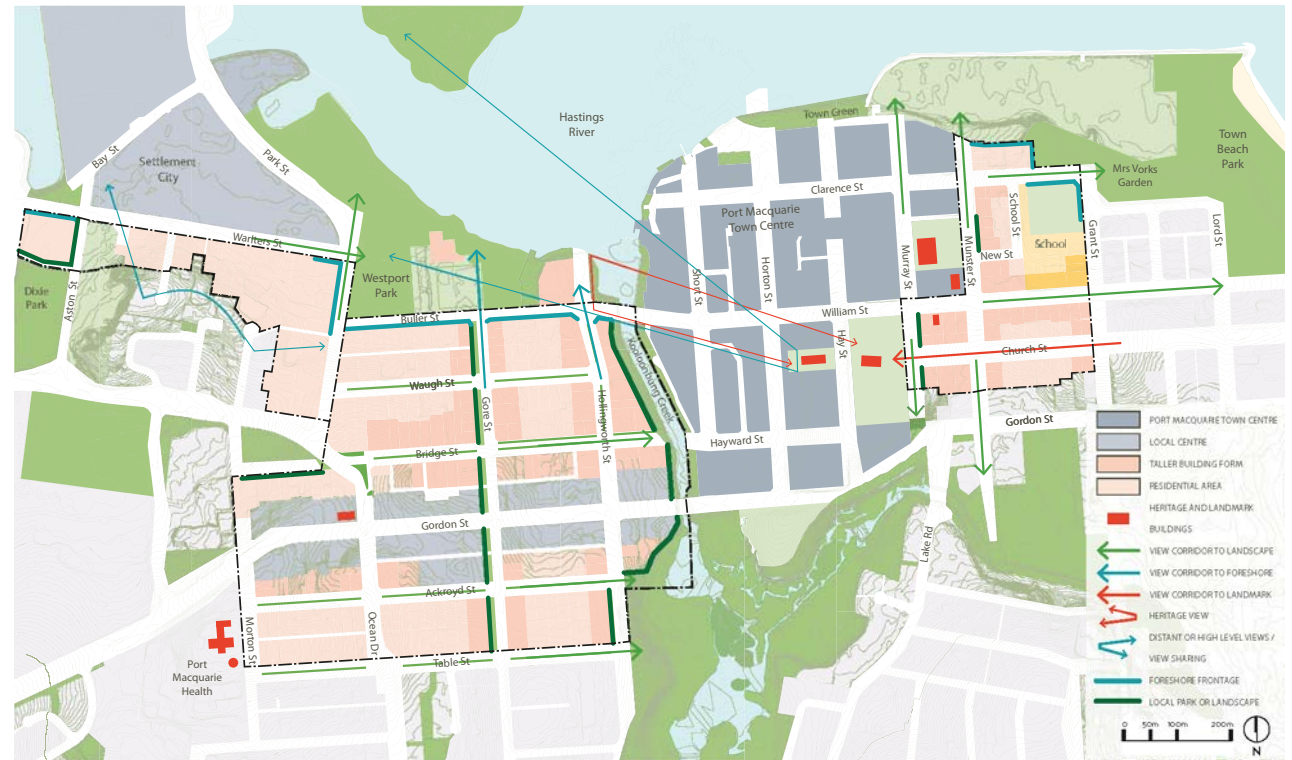


Figure 17: View opportunities

### Strategic Objectives

- To acknowledge views between the churches in the Port Macquarie town centre and Westport Park and the Hastings River and to the distant hills beyond. The development areas in this study are outside these view lines.
- To reinforce the Church Street view corridor to the St Thomas Anglican Church.
- To reinforce view corridors to the foreshore, river and parkland.
- To promote view sharing opportunities across properties.
- To maximise outlook to parkland for adjacent properties.

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### 2.4 Vehicle Connectivity

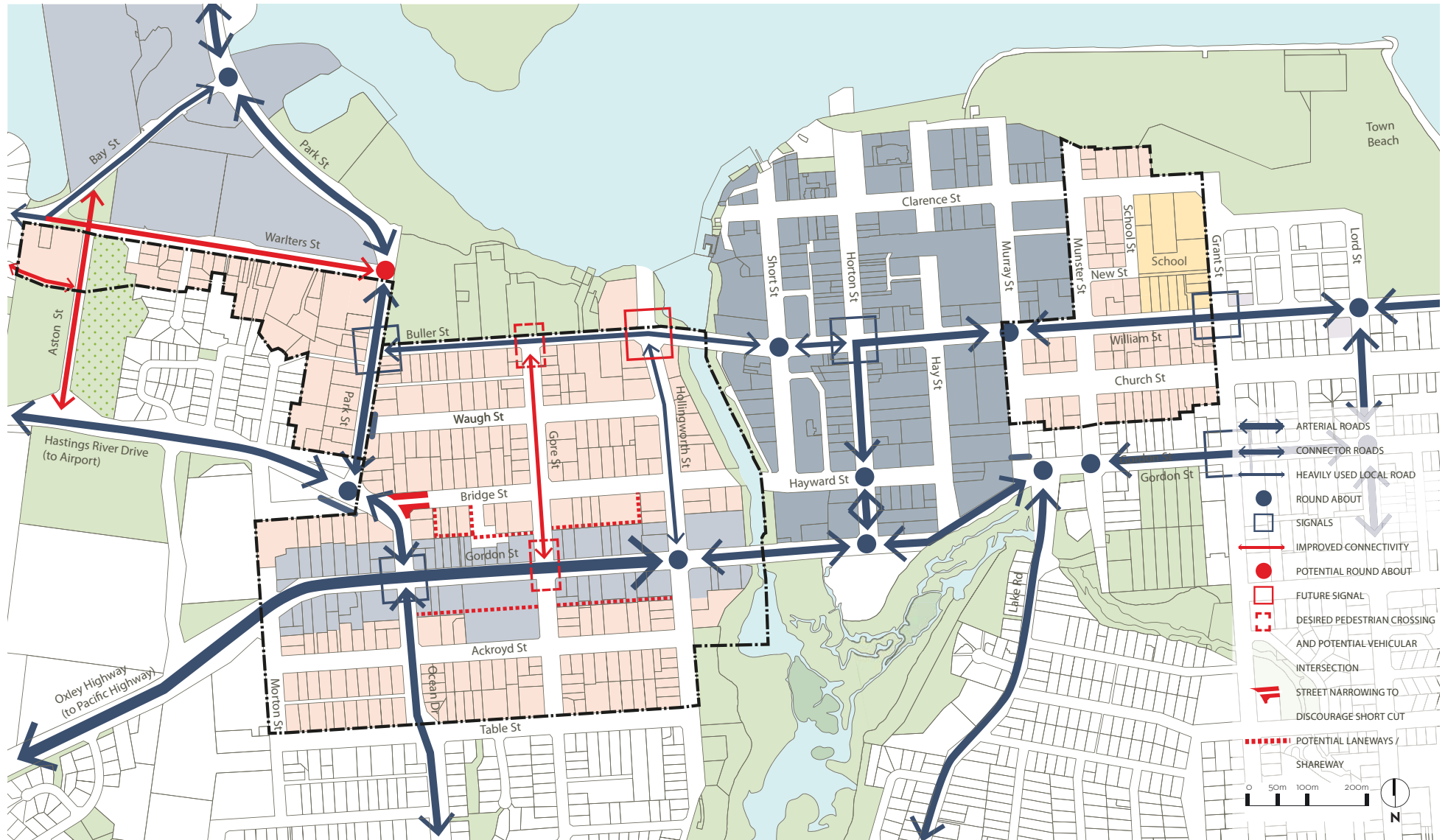


Figure 18: Vehicle connectivity

## 2.0 Neighbourhood Structure

Vehicular circulation is defined by a hierarchy of streets within the Westport Neighbourhoods, Port Macquarie Town Centre, Town Beach Neighbourhoods and connections to north and south arterials. This includes:

- parallel east-west streets at Buller /William Street and Gordon Street form the arterial super grid linking the neighbourhoods to the town centres. While Butler Street is not categorised as an arterial, it is a busy road connecting the Port Macquarie Town Centre to Settlement City.
- north south connectors at Horton Street, Park Street, and Lord Street define the super block structure with Buller/William and Gordon Streets
- a major connection to the north at Park Street links to Settlement City and Settlement Point
- Ocean Drive, Lake Road and Lord Street connect to settlements to the south
- finer grain permeability is provided through the urban street grid
- laneways serve properties on the northern side of Gordon Street and on the western half of Buller Street.

Hollingsworth Street is used as an alternative route to the Port Macquarie Town Centre. Bridge Street is used as a short cut to Gordon Street.

A future traffic study by Council is planned later in the year and will consider the following design principles and recommendations.

### Strategic Objectives

- To promote improved and managed access to the

Port Macquarie Town Centre.

- To promote improved permeability between neighbourhoods and with destinations.
- To minimise high-speed through traffic in neighbourhoods.
- To facilitate secondary service access to properties along busy roads, where land ownership patterns will allow.
- To ensure easy access to public parks and promote future building address and surveillance.

### Recommendations

- Formalise Hollingsworth Street as a secondary access route to the Port Macquarie Town Centre. This may include a new signal at the intersection with Buller Street.
- Consider improved north-south access into the Westport Neighbourhood by reconfiguring the intersections of Gore Street with Buller Street and with Gordon Street. In particular, a through intersection at Gordon Street would improve connections between the neighbourhood to the south of Gordon Street with the neighbourhood and foreshore to the north.
- Reconfigure the intersection of Bridge Street at Park Street by narrowing the carriageway of Bridge Street. This would reduce its use as a bypass of the Gordon Street and Ocean Drive signalised intersection, while still providing neighbourhood access. (refer to 4.0 Westport Neighbourhood)
- Provide new laneways serving properties along

Gordon Street. These would occur incrementally with redevelopment. Redevelopment of larger landholdings can assist in laneway delivery.

- Provide new park edge street connecting Aston Street and Melaleuca Crescent. This can be linked to the future development of this site.
- Require right of way access for corner sites at Bridge and Park Street. This would minimise vehicle crossing in proximity to the busy intersection.

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### 2.5 Pedestrian and Cycle Connectivity

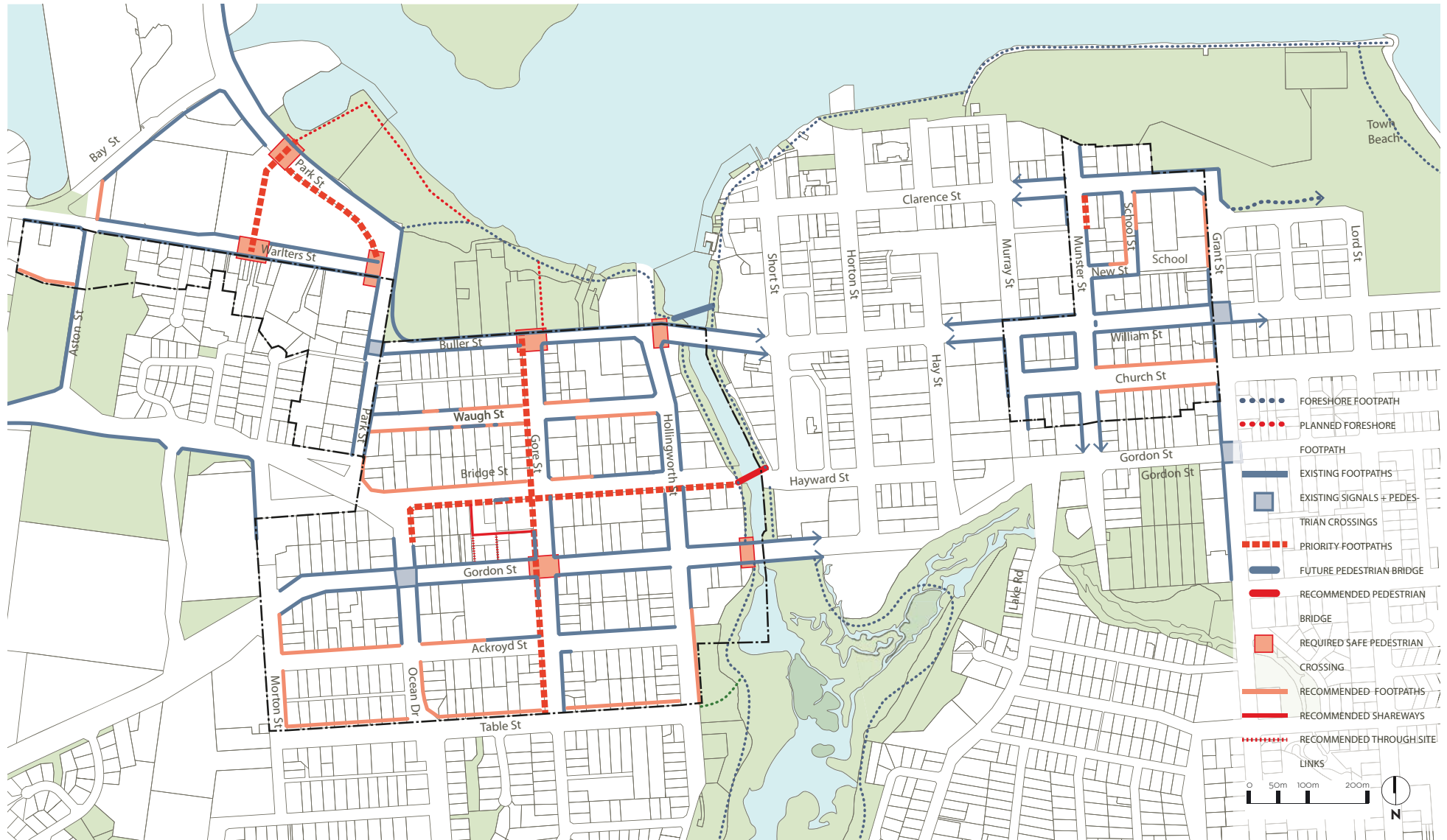


Figure 19: Pedestrian connectivity

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Easy pedestrian access to centres, recreation and public spaces and between neighbourhoods is a key element to encouraging urban regeneration. The study areas close proximity to major assets such as the foreshore pedestrian/cycleway, Westport Park, Town Beach and the Port Macquarie Town Centre make it a desirable place to live. However the limited easy and safe pedestrian access to these areas from the adjacent neighbourhoods limit the use of these places and promotes car use for short trips. Access for mobility scooters was identified in the consultation as a growing need as the population of Port Macquarie ages.

Cycleways are incorporated along the foreshore at Westport Park and Kooloonbung Creek and into the Town Centre to Town Beach. Future streetscape improvements provide opportunities for cycleways within neighbourhoods to improve linkages to the foreshore network.

Within the Westport Neighbourhood pedestrian north-south connectivity is constrained by Gordon Street and Butler Street. These streets lack safe pedestrian crossings east of Ocean Drive and Park Street. This limits access to the town centres and to the foreshore parklands. Footpaths within the precinct are sporadically located with many being provided incrementally with redevelopment. The result is that pedestrian connectivity is further limited. The use of the Kooloonbung Creek pedestrian/cycleway is potentially constrained by safety concerns as adjacent development does not overlook it.

The Aston Hill Neighbourhood has footpaths along Warlters Street. Improved connectivity to the town centre and the foreshore is addressed in the Settlement City Structure Plan.

The Town Beach Neighbourhood has direct access to the coastal walk and better footpath connectivity. Minor gaps in the footpath network on Munster Street limit easy access to the town centre. Church Street east of Munster Street lacks footpaths and while the verges are generous, the carriageway is often used by pedestrians.

The following design principles and recommendation aim to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity within the study area:

### Strategic Objectives

- To maximise pedestrian, mobility scooter and cycle access from each neighbourhood to the Port Macquarie and Settlement City town centres and to the foreshore network and its public spaces.
- To improve easy access within neighbourhoods and to destinations.
- To focus Council's expenditure on key pedestrian links.

### Recommendations

- Provide safe pedestrian crossings at Gore Street and Gordon Street linking the neighbourhoods to the south and north of Gordon Street. This should be a signalised intersection.
- Provide safe pedestrian crossings at Gore Street and Buller Street to provide safe, access to the foreshore and future Bridge Link to the town centre.
- Explore an opportunity for a safe pedestrian crossing at Gordon Street and Kooloonbung Creek to facilitate access from the south to the town centre.

- Create Gore Street as a linear park with an continuous footpath network from Table Street in the south to Buller Street in the north. This would provide a focus for safe, accessible, pedestrian connectivity in the Westport Neighbourhood.
- Create Bridge Street as a secondary pedestrian priority link in the Westport Neighbourhood. A future pedestrian bridge at Kooloonbung Creek would provide a direct link to the Port Macquarie Town Centre. This would also facilitate Bridge Street as a location for potential town centre parking.
- Ensure pedestrian crossing across Warlters Street in alignment with the proposed Main Street for Settlement City. This will improve pedestrian access to both Settlement City and to the foreshore.
- Fill in missing footpaths along Munster Street north of William Street. This would assist in providing a continuous link from the Town Beach Neighbourhood to the Port Macquarie Town Centre and Town Beach foreshore.
- Prioritise future footpath provisions by street rather than by individual development proposal.

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### 2.6 Public Spaces and Streets



Figures 20: Open space network and streetscapes

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The location and extent of public spaces, as noted in Settings, is one of the greatest assets in the study area. Public spaces are located adjacent the study area and provide a high level of passive and some recreational use for residents and visitors within each neighbourhood. Opportunities to improve the amenity and use of these public spaces is addressed in a number of Council policies and is outside the scope of this study. However within this study opportunities exist to improve access to these spaces and to supplement them with a new space in the Westport Precinct at Gore Street.

Streetscapes within both precincts are generally characterised by wide carriageways and verges. Streets are typically 30m wide and undulate with the topography. Variations tend to be secondary streets within the Town Centre/Beach and Westport grids and include: Church Street which is 40m; and Warlters Street, Parks Street, School Street and New Street which are narrower. Some streets have median planting or median parking. Many lack consistent street tree planting. Planting on private land often contributes to the streetscapes. Many streets lack connected footpath and some have above ground power lines. Significant opportunities existing to improve both the appeal of neighbourhoods and the amenity of neighbourhoods by increasing street tree planting. This would assist in promoting regeneration of these areas.

A number of key street improvements are identified in this study and include:

- **Gore Street** - has the potential to be the focus of the Westport Neighbourhood linking across Gordon Street and to Westport Park. The wide street reserve with a wide verge along the western side provides an opportunity for a linear park.

- **Bridge Street** - is a secondary opportunity within the Westport Neighbourhood. The wide reserve has potential to incorporate footpaths, street tree plantings and a significant amount of on-street parking. A potential future pedestrian bridge across Kooloonbung Creek could provide improved access to Port Macquarie Town Centre.
- **Buller Street** - is a major access route into the Port Macquarie Town Centre and is located along the edge of Westport Park. The current configuration of the street provided limited or no opportunities to improve the visual appeal of the street. Street tree planting is limited by power lines and narrow verges. Opportunities for improving Buller Street are directly impacted by its hierarchy as a sub-arterial road. Further consideration outside this study is required. Additional planting within Westport Park could also assist in improving the visual character of Buller Street.
- **Warlters Street** - is addressed in the Settlement City Structure Plan separate to this study. Improvements include street widening, additional carriageways, pedestrian refuges, and median planting.
- **Church Street** - is addressed by Council in plans separate to this study. Improvements include new street tree planting, footpaths and formalised on-street parking.

Refer to each neighbourhood for more detailed design recommendations.

### Strategic Objectives

- To reinforce the neighbourhoods as desirable places

to live.

- To maximise the use of existing open spaces.
- To target public domain improvements to enhance the identity of each neighbourhood.
- To optimise Council's investment by concentrating improvements on key streets and open spaces.
- To improve the visual appeal and amenity of neighbourhood by increasing street tree planting.

### Recommendations

- Prioritise improvements to Gore Street within the Westport Precinct. Bridge Street is identified as a second priority.
- Prioritise improvements to Church Street within the Town Beach West Neighbourhood.
- Promote Warlters Street improvements as identified in the Settlement City Structure Plan and through negotiations with Settlement City development applications.
- Review Buller Street traffic capacity and explore opportunities to improve the streetscape and to introduce some street tree planting.
- Promote street tree planting with new development.
- Support community groups to assist in planting street trees.

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### 2.7 Built Form and Housing Types



Figures 21: Built form structure

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### Built Form

The existing built form is characterised largely by lower scale residential uses and some supporting retail/commercial uses. The future form identified within the current DCP proposes distributing height as follows:

- Westport Neighbourhood - the tallest heights are located in the eastern half in closest proximity to the Port Macquarie Town Centre. Lower height are located along the slope of the hill to the west and the lowest heights south of Gordon Street in proximity to low scale neighbourhoods.
- Aston Hill Neighbourhood - a consistent height is proposed for the majority of the neighbourhood to promote view sharing with slightly taller buildings defining the eastern edge of the neighbourhood along Park Street and on the western most site at Dixie Park.
- Town Beach West Neighbourhood - taller heights are distributed along the predominant 200 x 200 grid reinforcing connectivity to the Port Macquarie Town Centre and partially to the foreshore to the north.

Opportunities for refining the built form include:

- improving the legibility by giving spatial hierarchy to proposed pedestrian connections and reinforcing special places within each neighbourhood (i.e. Gore Street, Munster Street)
- co-locating increased height where the greatest public benefits in the public domain can be achieved (i.e. Gore Street, Church Street)
- promoting increased housing capacity in locations with the greatest redevelopment potential and proximity to centres (i.e. Bridge Street)

### Housing Types

Housing types within the study area include houses, duplexes, villas, walk-up apartments and newer perimeter block apartments. The high land values in proximity to town centres and the foreshore support increased development.

There is some desire for limited commercial uses, such as home office, small business or professional suites, corner shops, and cafes within each neighbourhood. Housing types, which provide flexibility in use at ground level and possibly the first floor are ideal for these areas.

There is a demand for adaptable and accessible housing as Port Macquarie's future population is predicted to have a growing percentage of older people. While villas serve this demographic well with ground level accessed, single storey dwellings, most sites that would easily accommodate this form of housing are developed (20m wide frontages south of Gordon Street). Future villas within the study area would have limited benefits for urban regeneration and increased housing capacity. Villas results in low number of dwellings to site area, and have limited redevelopment potential due to common ownership. Apartments have greater potential to increase housing capacity. To meet the future demand, apartments need to include lifts and have ground floor units which are accessible and have direct access from the street, where topography permits.

The current DCP promotes perimeter block buildings that shape and activate the street. The diversity of lot sizes and shapes within the study area, requires a range of building types to effectively achieve the allowable floor space. A range of built types can assist in respond to different site shapes and orientation, while reinforcing

the alignment of streets. (Refer to next page.)

### Strategic Objectives

- To reinforce the legibility of the predominant street grid and define a hierarchy of places within each neighbourhood.
- To increase development where the greatest public domain benefits can be achieved.
- To reinforce the public domain with buildings which shape and engage streets.
- To promote some commercial ground floor uses in strategic location within neighbourhoods.
- To support aging in place through accessible and adaptable housing.
- To facilitate a diversity of apartment types that respond to lot sizes, orientations and ground floor use.

### Recommendations

- Refer to Section O6: Planning Provisions

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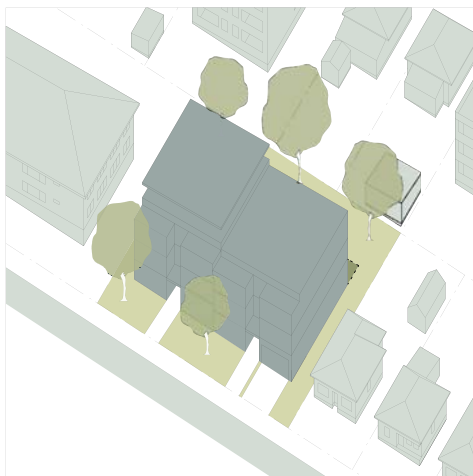


Figure 22: Row apartment align to the street with a landscape zone at the rear.



Figure 23: An infill apartment building on a narrow and deep site.

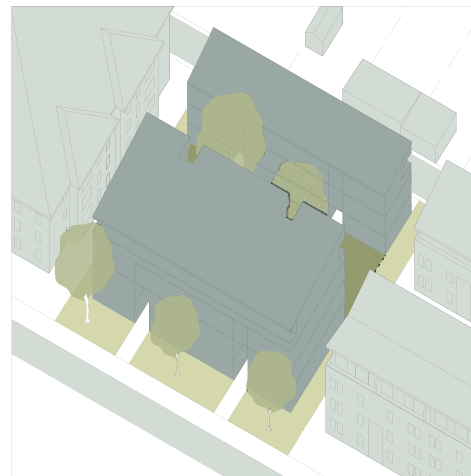


Figure 24: A courtyard apartment with a central linear communal space.

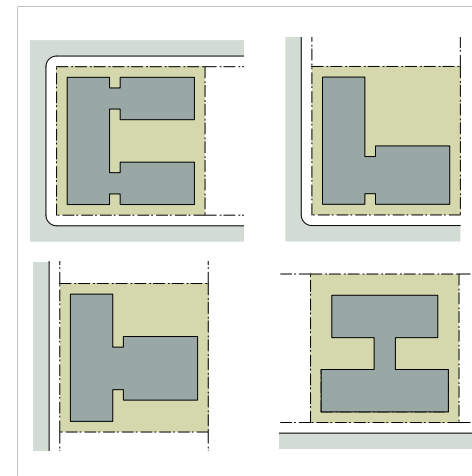


Figure 25: Building types can be adapted to site conditions; Courtyard building types can have a range of forms.

Shallow lots are common along north-south streets within the study area, in the northern half of the Town Beach West Neighbourhood and along Warlters Street. These lots have limited depth and usually can only support a single bar building aligned with the street.

Narrow, deep lots are typical within the Westport Neighbourhood. To achieve the permissible floor space, a building sited along the depth of the lot is required. Many older apartment buildings are also sited this way and have poor adjacencies with neighbours as a result of habitable rooms and/or balconies facing to the side boundary with little separation. The narrow infill apartment building can be designed with better urban and amenity outcomes. More emphasis can be given to the street with the front component of the building incorporating units facing the street with ground floor entries. A higher element to the front also reinforces the street edge. The rear building component is narrower and lower with units facing to the rear or a side boundary with sufficient separation.

Amalgamated or wider lots, with or without rear laneway access generally have two components. A front building element addressing and aligning with the street and a rear building element. The building element to the rear of the lot can be a separate building or a wing of the front buildings, depending of the depth of the lot. The shape and height of the rear buildings can be designed to respond to the adjacent building; its habitable room windows and setbacks; site slope; existing trees; deep soil provisions; communal open space; and car parking footprint.

Building types can be adapted to respond to multiple street frontages, such as end blocks or corners. Courtyard types can be adapted to respond to orientation to sun, with “L” or “H” forms.

Building types can also be adapted to ground floor use. Where the ground floor is residential and street setback may be appropriate. Where the ground floor is commercial use or flexible supporting residential in the short term while retaining future potential for commercial uses, no street setback may be appropriate.

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### 2.8 Parking

The capacity of existing streets to support additional on-street parking is significant. Streets within the Westport Neighbourhood have wide street reserves and are largely underutilised for on-street parking. Similarly, Church Street within the Town Beach West Neighbourhood has a 40m street reserve, which is dominated by an excessively wide carriageway. In most cases, on-street car parking can be formalised and increased within the existing kerb alignments.

Council's parking strategy has identified opportunities for increased parking on the fringe of centres to support the Port Macquarie Town Centre and the Gordon Street shops. Within the Westport Neighbourhood existing on-street parking at Hollingsworth Street and future on-street parking at Bridge Streets are identified in Council's strategy. A potential multi-deck public parking facility near Gordon, Gore and/or Bridge Streets is also identified.

Within the Town Beach West Neighbourhood, Church Street's wide street reserve has capacity to support additional parking. An existing Tree Management Strategy for Church Street incorporates formalising on-street parking and footpath along both sides. Their may be additional on-street parking capacity if a central parking median with low height planting were considered. Planting could assist in screening cars at the low level and retaining the view corridor to the Church.

Council has questioned whether on-street parking could improve the delivery of housing in proximity to centre by relocating some on-site parking requirements to the street. Parking, particularly underground parking, is a significant cost for redevelopment. To promote redevelopment to the recommended floor space ratios, amalgamation of narrow lots is often needed to support

an efficient basement car park layout. Amalgamation adds additional cost and risk to a development proposal. There is the potential to support some on-street parking in lieu of on-site parking, particularly to assist with visitor and commercial use parking requirements and for small lots in lieu of a second basement (where additional ramping can not be accommodated).

There is an opportunity to trial variations to on-site car parking requirements. A limited trial period could be used to test whether this approach assist in increasing housing provision and as a framework to monitor, review and amend the variations.

#### Strategic Objectives

- To provide opportunities for town centre parking within walking distance, particularly for the Port Macquarie town centre and the Gordon Street local centre.
- To assist in making redevelopment more viable and attractive by providing opportunities to reduce on-site parking.

#### Recommendations

- Consider varying car parking requirements for a limited trial period to promote redevelopment within proximity to centres and services. These may include:
  - reducing on-site visitor parking by permitting provision on-street
  - reducing requirements for non-residential parking by permitting provision on street along Gore Street and Bridge Street
  - permitting on-street parking in lieu of an

additional basement on small lots.

- Ensure parking controls are expressed as maximums.
- Prepare a public domain plan for Bridge Street that formalises on-street parking. Refer to Westport Neighbourhood.
- Prepare a public domain plan Gore Street, that formalises on-street parking. Refer to Westport Neighbourhood.
- Consider opportunities for locating additional public parking either in the form of a multi-deck public car park facility or increased on-grade parking adjacent rear laneways. Suitable locations to review could include to the rear of Gordon Street shops, along Bridge Street or at the corner of Gore Street. This could support Council's strategic parking objectives.
- Review and implement Church Street Tree Management Strategy and formalise increased on-street parking.

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Figures 26: On-street parking and laneways