

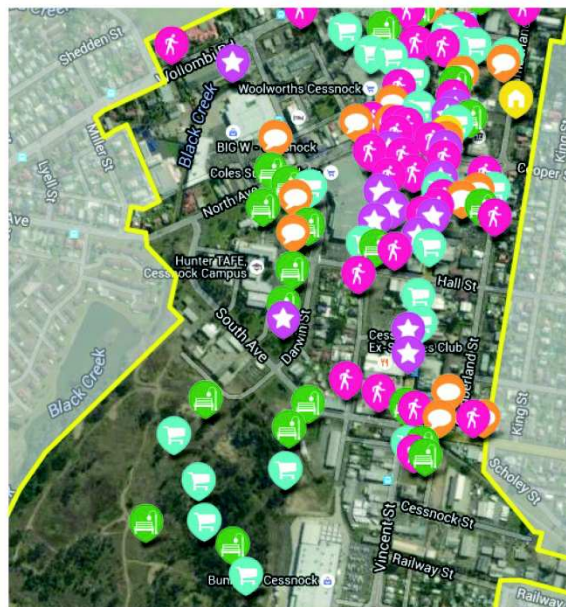
Appendix 3: Cessnock Commercial Precinct Public Domain Plan and DCP Engagement Outcomes Report



CESSNOCK CITY COUNCIL

Cessnock Commercial Precinct Public Domain Plan and DCP Engagement Outcomes Report

July 2016



Creating and building community

**Report Title: Public Domain Plan and DCP
Engagement Report**

Client: Cessnock City Council

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Executive summary

Background

Cessnock City Council was awarded funding from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment to develop a Public Domain Plan and Development Control Plan (DCP) for the Cessnock Commercial Precinct (CCP). Council engaged Architects and Urban Designers CM+ to deliver the plans. A central part of the design process was engagement with the Cessnock community. This report provides the outcomes of community engagement completed in June and July 2016.

Community engagement completed

Approximately 263 people participated in the engagement process which included: online and intercept surveys with local business and residents (87 completed); an online and interactive community mapping tool and large maps in Council's Customer Service Centre and Library (135 comments); community workshop (29 attendees); and a Cessnock Council staff workshop (12 attendees). Engagement was promoted through a dedicated webpage on Council's website, Council's Facebook page, a project postcard, notifications in Council's e-newsletter, and communications directly with key stakeholders.

Identified priorities

A number of priorities emerged across all consultation types and themes. These priorities are for:

- Improved and more connected parking
- Improved parks and playgrounds and places for children, families and young people to play and gather
- Improved safety at night
- A more active and vibrant town centre including increased tourist accommodation and services
- Improved pedestrian access and connectivity, and
- Improved and increased amenities including toilets and bins.

Key findings by theme

Land use

Priorities identified in relation to future land use include increased tourist and visitor accommodation and more diverse retail. In relation to housing the survey indicated a preference toward either no housing or medium density housing in the commercial precinct. However, the community map and community workshops indicated that some stakeholders consider there is a benefit to increased housing in the CCP.

A high proportion of business owners surveyed indicated that tourist and visitor accommodation and services would improve trade. A majority of residents surveyed thought there should be more retail, of the people who thought that there was sufficient retail, a concern was filling currently vacant shops. The

main suggested improvement to the overall shopping experience in the survey was more variety/more shops.

Building height

Across all consultation types, there were only a few comments regarding building height and the views of respondents differed. In the community workshop, "good current height" was given as a strength of the CCP, while "can't go high" was given as a weakness. "Keeping the country feel - not too high" but "increasing the height limit to 3 or 5 storeys" was also objectives suggested.

Character

Feedback regarding the character of the CCP focused on preserving the heritage character (particularly on Vincent St) and providing more activity and vibrancy at night including wine bars, outdoor eating, live music and events. In the staff workshop there was a recurring theme of preserving and promoting heritage, both mining and Indigenous.

Access and transport

Parking and pedestrian and cyclist access and connectivity were the main priorities identified in access and transport. Parking was identified as an issue across all consultation methods and resident and business stakeholders with the main priority more connected and upgraded carparking.

Improved pedestrian and cyclist access and connectivity was considered a priority particularly in relation to the layout of the shopping plaza (in particular Charlton Street Shopping Centre) and connectivity between shopping areas. While "walkability and pedestrian crossings" were identified as one of the strengths of the CCP, the need to improve walkability was a recurring issue in comments. Closing Cooper Street was a commonly suggested improvement.

Public domain

Key issues regarding the public domain were the provision of facilities (particularly bins and toilets); providing parks with recreation facilities including children's playgrounds; improving safety; providing something for young people to do; and improving the drainage channels. The staff workshop highlighted the need for more places for people to gather and "stay" in the CCP. Possible improvements to parks and plazas noted through the community map were: places for people to gather and sit and spend time (e.g. parklets); improvements/centralising of parks and promoting their use through infrastructure (chairs, tables, shade) and outdoor events as well as activating TAFE Park through outdoor events (performances/concerts).

Safety was a key concern identified through the survey, particularly at night in behind the mainstreet. Finally, the community workshops and staff workshop identified a need to improve the look and use of the drainage channels.

1.1. Background

Council engaged a team of consultants under Architects and Urban Designers, CM+, to develop a Public Domain Plan and DCP to revitalise the streets, parks, and public spaces within the Cessnock Commercial Precinct. The plans will address zoning, heights, character, and accessibility within the precinct. The public domain is defined as the publicly owned spaces, including streets and places such as parks, plazas, and squares. It can be thought of as the shared public spaces between buildings. The public domain is also considered to include publicly accessible privately owned spaces including arcades, building forecourts and other semi-public spaces.

1.2. Consultation approach

A broad range of consultation methods were used to facilitate engagement from a wide range of age groups, genders, services, resident and business representatives, and workers. This consultation built upon consultation completed to inform the Cessnock CBD Masterplan (2012). Engagement delivered included the Cessnock Commercial Precinct page on Council's website; a survey (completed online and through intercept surveys with residents and business); 2 community workshops; a staff workshop; and an online community map accessible through the project webpage (see image below).

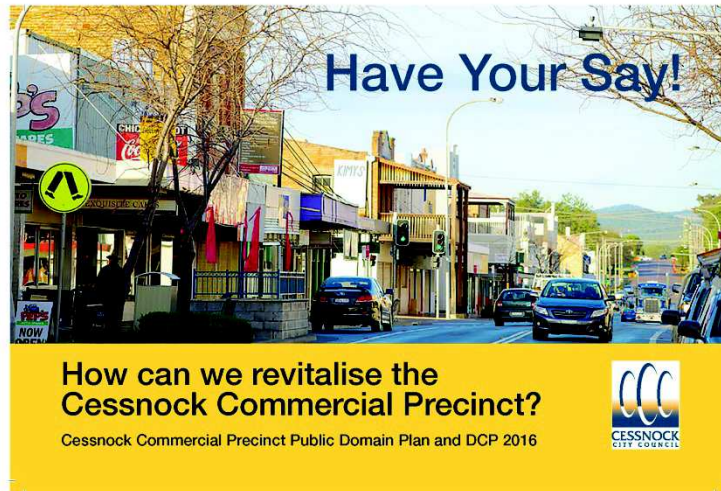
Figure 2 Image of interactive community map showing comments



Consultation opportunities were promoted widely through:

- The Cessnock Commercial Precinct webpage
- Council's Facebook page
- A Project Postcard (see image below)
- A letter to key stakeholders, and
- Notification in Council's business e-newsletter.

Figure 3 Project postcard promoting consultation opportunities



1.3. Summary of consultation completed

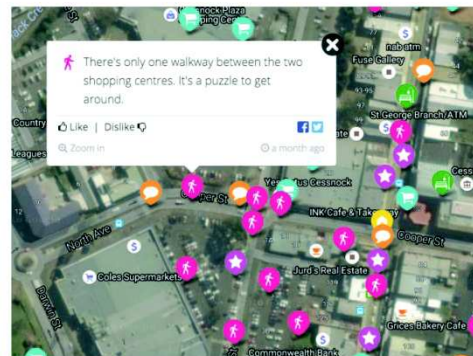
Consultation completed for this project is outlined below.

Consultation method	Details	Results
Online survey	The online survey was live from 10 June 2016 to 13 July 2016. It was promoted through the project page on Council's website, postcards delivered to Council facilities and businesses in the CCP, social media posts and an advertisement in the Cessnock Business e-newsletter. Hard copy surveys were available with the community map at Cessnock Library.	87 surveys completed. 46 respondents (52.9%) lived in the Cessnock LGA 37 respondents (42.5%) owned/managed a business in the CCP
Intercept surveys and business doorknocking	Intercept surveys with residents and visitors conducted at the Funky Junk markets on 18 June 2016. Business surveys conducted on 17 June and 28 June 2016.	

Consultation method	Details	Results
Community map	The interactive community mapping tool was used as an engagement tool to identify key places where improvement is required and to collect place based ideas. Comments on the Community Map were also collected through intercept surveying at the Funky Junk markets on 18 June 2016, and at the Hunter Valley Wine Country Business Networking Event on Tuesday 28 June. A floor map was displayed in Cessnock City Council administration building and Cessnock Library for public comments and these comments were added to the interactive community map.	135 comments and 46 'likes' received
Community workshops	2 community workshops were held to provide opportunities for residents and businesses to provide qualitative input into the development of the plans. The first workshop held in the evening (28 June 2016) had 1 participant and a 2nd business workshop held in the morning (12 July 2016) attracted 28 participants. The workshops were promoted through the project page on Council website, postcards delivered to Council facilities and businesses in the CCP, social media posts and advertisement in the Cessnock Business e-newsletter. A large floor map of the CCP was used as an engagement tool to identify issues and opportunities with the CCP (see image below).	29 attendees across both community workshops
Staff workshop	A workshop with Council staff from across Council's departments was held on 28 June 2016.	12 attendees



Our survey team at the Funky Junk Markets
surveying residents and visitors



A comment on the interactive community map on the project page

2. Summary of key findings

This section provides a summary of the key findings across all engagement types.

Land use

Priorities identified in relation to future land use include increased tourist and visitor accommodation and more diverse retail. The survey indicated a preference toward no housing (39.3%) or medium density housing (36.1%) in the commercial precinct. However, the community map and community workshops indicated that some stakeholders consider there is a benefit to increased housing in the CCP. When asked specifically about affordable housing, 50.8% of survey respondents indicated support for affordable housing in the CCP.

58.8% of business owners survey indicated that tourist and visitor accommodation and services would improve trade. 52.4% of residents surveyed thought there should be more retail (but 42.9% thought there was sufficient retail). Of the people who thought that there was sufficient retail, a concern was filling currently vacant shops (4 people, 14.8%). The main suggested improvement to the overall shopping experience in the survey was more variety/more shops (8 people, 34.8%).

Building height

Across all consultation types, there were only a few comments regarding building height and the views of respondents differed. In the community workshop, "good current height" was given as a strength of the CCP, while "can't go high" was given as a weakness. "Keeping the country feel - not too high" but "increasing the height limit to 3 or 5 storeys" were also objectives suggested.

Character

Feedback regarding the character of the CCP focused on preserving the heritage character (particularly on Vincent St) and providing more activity and vibrancy including at night. In the staff workshop there was a recurring theme of preserving and promoting heritage, both mining and Indigenous. *"More activity and vibrancy in the town centre with cafes, wine bars, outdoor eating, live music and events"* was seen as important with 42.5% of survey respondents identifying this as a priority.

Access and transport

Parking and pedestrian and cyclist access and connectivity were the main priorities identified in access and transport.

Parking was identified as an issue across all consultation methods. 44.8% of survey respondents indicated that *"upgraded carparks and improved links to them"* was a top priority. For business owners/managers,

upgraded carpark was the top priority (22 people, 59.5%), and “more parking” was the top improvement identified to improve trading (22 people, 64.7%).

Improved pedestrian and cyclist access and connectivity was considered a priority particularly in relation to the layout of the shopping plaza and connectivity between shopping areas. While “walkability and pedestrian crossings” were identified as one of the strengths of the CCP (41.5% of survey respondents thought this was working well), the need to improve walkability was a recurring issue in comments. Closing Cooper Street was an improvement suggested by 8 people (16.3%).

Public domain

Key issues regarding the public domain were the provision of facilities (particularly bins and toilets); providing parks with recreation facilities including children’s playgrounds; improving safety; providing something for young people to do; and improving the drainage channels.

34.5% of survey and 61.8% of business owners respondents identified “more facilities (bubblers, toilets, seats, shaded areas)” as a high priority. In the community map, “toilets” was the fifth most significant comment topic and the second most “liked” comment topic (5.2% of comments, 13% of likes).

The staff workshop highlighted the need for more places for people to gather and “stay” in the CCP. A lack of open space and a lack of tables and toilets was identified as an issue. Possible improvements to parks and plazas noted through the community map were: places for people to gather and sit and spend time (e.g. parklets); improvements/centralising of parks and promoting their use through infrastructure (chairs, tables, shade) and outdoor events as well as activating TAFE Park through outdoor events (performances/concerts).

Safety was a key concern identified through the survey. 29% of respondents stated that this was a priority to be addressed in the CCP. This included concerns about lighting at night (17 people, 27.4%). The needs for positive activities for young people to do was identified as a potential improvement for the public domain (6 people, 12.2%) and was the second most significant topic on the community map (7.4% +13% of likes).

Finally, the community workshops and staff workshop identified a need to improve the look and use of the drainage channels. 14.9% of survey respondents identified “covering the drainage channels and improving and greening the canals” as a top priority for improvement.

3. Online survey outcomes

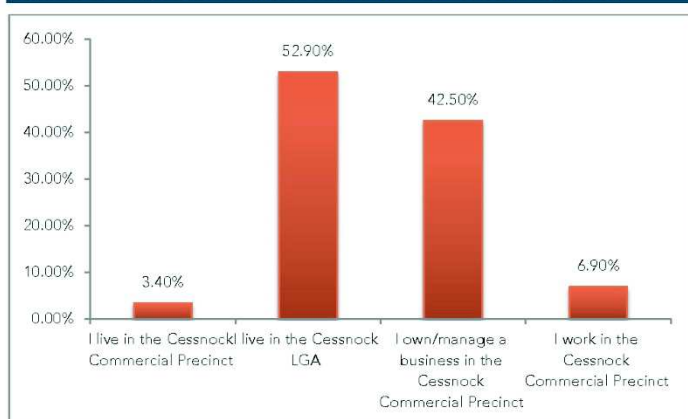
A total of 87 residents and businesses completed the online survey. This section provides a summary of the survey outcomes including comments.

3.1. Respondents' profile

There was a fairly even distribution between residents and business owners who completed the survey:

- 46 respondents (52.9%) lived in the Cessnock LGA
- 37 respondents (42.5%) owned/managed a business in the CCP, and
- 4 respondents (4.6%) were visitors to Cessnock

Figure 4 Survey respondent profile (source: CCP survey July 2016)



Place of residence

- 37 people or 50.7% of respondents lived in Cessnock
- 7 people or 9.6% lived in Bellbird, and
- People who did not live in the Cessnock LGA came from Sydney, Newcastle, the Central Coast and East Maitland.

Gender

- Slightly more females than males completed the survey (39 females, 52%; 36 males, 48%).

Age

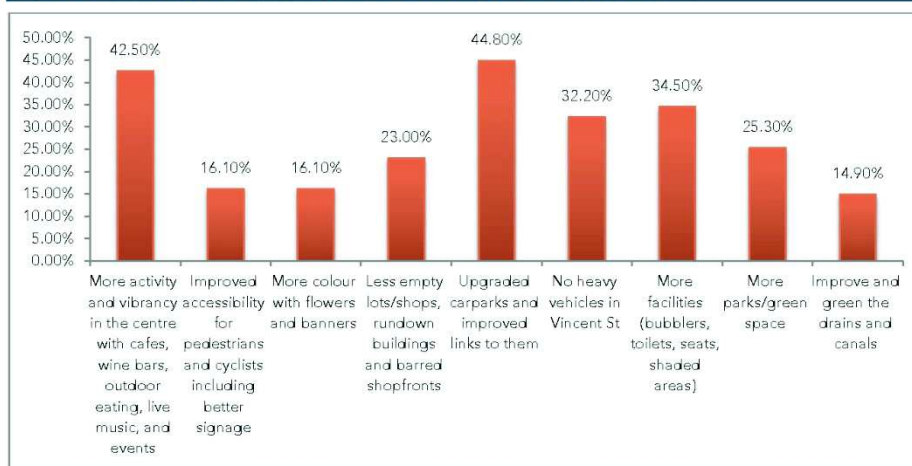
- The majority of respondents were aged 35 to 44 (21 people, 28.4%) and 45 to 54 (14 people, 18.9%)
- 12 young people completed the survey (3 people aged 17 or younger, 4%; 9 people aged 18 to 24, 12.2%) (compared to Cessnock LGA population: 9.6% aged 12 to 17, 8.5% aged 18 to 24)
- 9 older people completed the survey (8 people aged 65 to 74, 10.8%; 1 person aged 75+, 1.4%) (compared to Cessnock LGA population: 13.9% aged over 65), and
- Of male respondents, most were aged 35 to 44 (13 people, 37.1%). There was a more even spread of females across the age groups.

3.2. Priorities for the Cessnock commercial precinct

In 2012, Council engaged Arup to deliver a Masterplan for the Cessnock CBD. A number of priorities were identified as part of the Masterplanning process. As part of this 2016 survey, the previously identified priorities were tested for their continued relevance. The 2016 survey showed that all priorities identified through previous engagement are still well supported by respondents. The top priorities that respondents selected from the previous engagement were:

- Upgraded carparks and improved links to them (39 respondents, 44.8%)
- More activity and vibrancy in the town centre with cafes, wine bars, outdoor eating, live music and events (37 respondents, 42.5%)
- More facilities (bubblers, toilets, seats, shaded areas) (30 respondents, 34.5%), and
- No heavy vehicles in Vincent St (28 respondents, 32.2%).

Figure 5 Priorities for commercial precinct (source: CCP survey July 2016)



There were some differences between genders:

- More parks/green space was a higher priority for females (14 females, 35.9%) compared to males (5 males, 13.9%), as was more facilities (18 females, 46.2%) compared to 10 males, 27.8%), and
- More activity and vibrancy was a higher priority for males (18 males, 50%) compared to females (15 females, 38.5%), as was no heavy vehicles in Vincent St (13 males, 36.1%) compared to females (9 females, 23.1%).

Other priorities for improvements given by respondents were:

- Pedestrian access including closing Cooper St (8 people, 16.3%)
"Cooper St closure would be good"
- Lighting and security concerns including cameras in the CCP (8 people, 16.3%)
"Security cameras to prevent crime"
- Business type changes including attracting larger specialty retailers, and there being too many cafes and employment agencies (8 people, 16.3%)
"Employment agency, op shop, empty shop and repeat"
"A lot of the government buildings take up empty spaces - the first thing people see as they drive through Cessnock. It gives it a bad reputation"
"Different sorts of shops, instead of a new café or eatery opening up every week!"
- Improve location of retail including "one big shopping centre" or encouraging externally facing businesses (6 people, 12.2%)
"Outward facing shopping centres instead of inwards facing 1970's design like the new Coles!!!"
- Something for young people to do (6 people, 12.2%)
"Something different like a games arcade"
"Keep kids out of trouble"
- Provide activities which encourage people to stay including events, night time activations, community stages (5 people, 10.2%)
"Exciting night time lighting and explicit street life entertainment"
"Community spaces e.g. things like performance spaces, permanent staging"
"We need all-weather entertainment!"

3.3. What's working well in the commercial precinct?

Respondents thought that "walkability and pedestrian crossings" was working well in the CCP (22 people, 41.5%). Other things that respondents thought were working well were:

- Lighting at night (13 people, 24.5%)
- Parks and plazas (12 people, 22.6%) (however, respondents may have interpreted "plazas" as the three major shopping plazas rather than public spaces)
- Parking (8 people, 15.1%)
- Seating (8 people, 15.1%)
- Signage and wayfinding (8 people, 15.1%)
- Other (14 people, 26.4%)
 - Cafes (5 people, 9.4%)
 - Less heavy traffic on Vincent St (4 people, 7.5%)

Comments included:

"Festivals in main street are good, bring a lot of people in e.g. postie bike festival"

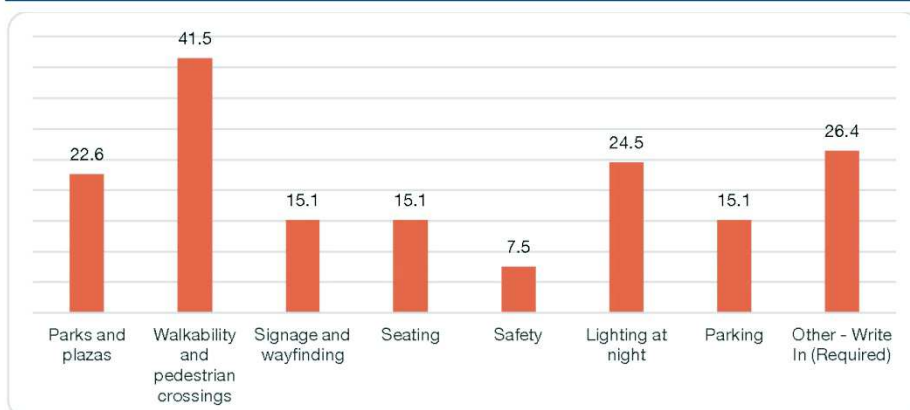
"It's pumping. Shopping plazas and parks are great"

"The snap fitness plaza is nice" "Yoghurtland has been good"

"Parks and walkways on Vincent St are well done. They are lacking everywhere else"

"Laneway projects creating appetite for street ambience may flower if quality increases sufficiently to give "the right" businesses confidence to enter the fray"

Figure 6 What is working well in the commercial precinct? (source: CCP survey July 2016)



3.4. What's not working well in the commercial precinct?

Parking was the key issue that people felt was not working well in the CCP (38 people, 61.3%).

"Parking at Woolworths and Coles/Target shopping centres is an absolute nightmare"

"No places for couriers"

"Parking is difficult to find for visitors due to lack of signage"

This was followed by:

- **Safety (18 people, 29%)**

"[After the store closes] we run from here to the car park. [People] used to sit along the strip for the free Wifi"

"At night we are the only place open. I'm needing to keep multiple workers in shop for safety. The carpark is really dangerous, because of no lighting, people staying and drinking and drugs"

"Gangs of scooter kids steal from store"

"Vandalism has gone down but still present. Kids hang out for free Wifi"

- **Lighting at night (17 people, 27.4%)**

"I'm the only store with a street light"

"We start at 4:30am, there's not enough lights"

- **Parks and plazas (16 people, 25.8%)**

"We need a central civic precinct in the TAFE grounds, outdoor gym, play equipment, bbqs and full picnic facilities"

Comments included:

"I get stopped in the streets and asked directions because visitors don't know where to go."

"Footpaths are too often used by hooligans on skateboards and bikes etc"

"The roads are bad to ride on a bicycle"

"There are no public bathrooms anywhere in Vincent St"

"Have to cross three major roads to go from Coles to Big W, it's hard with kids and prams"

"Too spread out for older people"

Figure 7 What's not working well in the commercial precinct? (source: CCP survey July 2016)

3.5. Housing in the commercial precinct

Types of housing in the CCP

In relation to the housing preferences for the CCP, the most common response was "No housing" (24 people or 39.3%), followed closely by "Medium density residential apartment buildings" (22 people or 36.1%).

Comments on this question provided more detail:

- There were concerns that housing in the CBD would attract social and security issues (7 people, 17.5%)

"No dodgy public housing/boarding houses that will only attract undesirables"

"You have to look at the quality of the people you're appealing to, e.g. that they're not selling drugs, ice"

- Some people didn't think that the CBD was the place for housing - that housing and commercial uses should be separate (6 people, 15%)

"Good to differentiate between commercial and housing, be able to go home and away from commerce"

- Others felt that there was just not a need for housing in the CCP (3 people, 7.5%)

"It depends whether people would live there. It's not that hard to just come in to the centre."

- Others felt that it was an opportunity for more affordable housing including housing for older people, smaller apartments for singles (3 people, 7.5%)

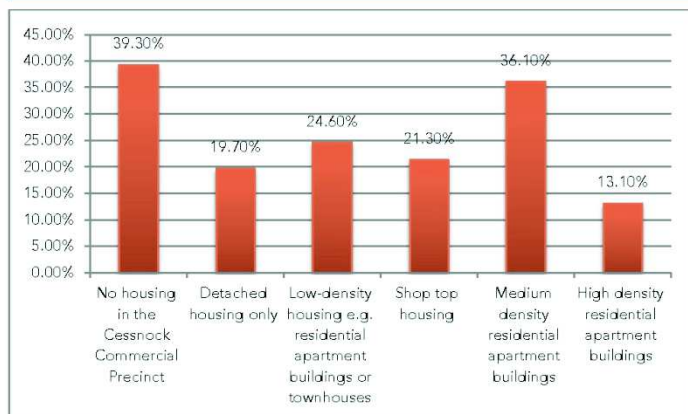
"More community housing for my family"

There were some differences between genders:

- Females in general did not want to see housing in the CCP (17 people, 54.8%)

- Males in general selected "medium density residential apartments (13 people, 46.4%)

Figure 8 What type of housing would you like to see in the commercial precinct? (source: CCP survey July 2016)?



Affordable housing in the commercial precinct

A similar number of people thought that there should/shouldn't be more affordable housing in the CCP (more affordable housing: 31 people, 49.2%; no more affordable housing: 32 people, 50.8%).

- Nine people (14.2%) were concerned about the "types of people" that affordable housing might bring to the CCP (a stigma associated with the notion of "affordable housing").

"Housing commission people don't care about their houses"

"Will create social problems out the front of businesses"

"You have to have employed people in the housing"

- Eight people (12.7%) said that there was a general need for affordable housing.

"Not enough decent affordable housing for people that need it"

"There is always a need for affordable housing"

"Difficult for young people to enter private rental market"

- Five people (7.9%) said that particular types of housing that would be affordable were needed e.g. townhouses, apartments for older single people.

"Townhouses and units will be relatively affordable"

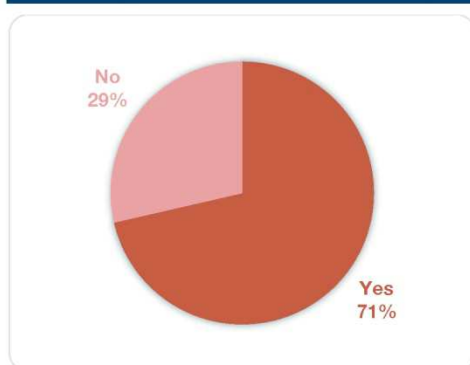
"Personal experience - I am currently homeless. There are no one bedroom flats. It's not the price but the type of place"

All respondents who work in the CCP (4 respondents, 100%), did not think that there was a need to increase the affordable housing in the CCP.

3.6. Tourist and visitor accommodation and services

Fifty people or 71.4% of respondents thought that there was a need for increased tourist and visitor accommodation and services in the CCP. 20 people or 28.6% disagreed.

Figure 9 Is there a need for increased tourist and visitor accommodation and services in the commercial precinct? (source: CCP survey July 2016)



- 13 people (18.6%) thought that there was a need for accommodation in the CCP in general.

"Don't have much here - little motels and stuff", "I get a lot of tourists asking where they can get accommodation"

- 10 people (14.3%) thought that there was a need for a tourist information centre in the CCP or on the approach to the town.

"Need for tourism info centre in the heart of town. We have to answer a lot of questions."

"The tourist info centre moved, it's outside of town now. We need one as an entry, direct people to coffee shops etc"

- 7 people (10%) thought that tourism could bring benefits to Cessnock including more jobs, economic benefits, and more people around.

"Definitely would help out businesses", "I think it will make the area more lively, more people around"

- 6 people (8.6%) thought that there was a need for activities and services that attract tourists, such as restaurants and cafes opening on weekends, events like the Stomp! festival, and facilities like toilets.

"Restaurants in town keeps people wanting to come back to the area after they go to events. Toilets are good for if buses stop."

"Should have "crazy days" again, as it worked really well for us There was a really good food and wine festival which helped business Let's have a few days like that"

"Information centre, markets, using vacant spot for interesting fun events that bring tourism. Making Cessnock a stop along the way"

- 5 people (7.1%) thought that there was a need for accommodation in the CCP to cater to the major festivals and events.

"More concerts and not enough accommodation for the people"

- 3 people (4.3%) thought that there was a need for more signage in Cessnock e.g. to cafes, toilets and parking.

"Talking to many tourists, they comment that due to lack of signage they have no idea what cafes, restaurants and shops are in Cessnock & can't see easy parking so they keep driving."

However:

- 6 people (8.6%) thought that there was enough accommodation in the CCP
- 5 people (7.1%) thought that there would not be demand for accommodation in Cessnock (and that people would rather stay out in the vineyards)

"Everyone comes for the vineyards so stay there"

"Tourists want a view of grass and kangaroos and that's not here"

- 3 people (4.3%) thought there was a need for improved quality of existing accommodation.

"Need a much better hotel, have the Hunter nearby though. Maybe just spruce up the ones that are here"

"Use procedures to keep people accountable e.g. inspections"

All respondents who work in the CCP (5 respondents, 100%), and all respondents who live in the CCP (2 respondents, 100%) thought that there is a need for increased visitor and tourist accommodation and services in the CCP.

3.7. Retail businesses in the commercial precinct

52.4% of respondents (or 33 people) thought that there should be more retail in the CCP and 42.9% (27 people) thought that there was sufficient retail.

Of the people who thought that there was sufficient retail, a key concern was filling currently vacant shops (4 people, 14.8%). Across all respondents, common concerns and wishes were:

- Fill empty shops (10 people, 15.9%)
- White goods/furniture/electrical store (6 people, 9.5%)

- Too many cafes (4 people, 6.3%)
- Need more variety, speciality stores (4 people, 6.3%)
- Rents are too high so it is hard for new retail to survive (3 people, 4.8%), and
- The layout of existing retail is poor (3 people, 4.8%).

3.8. Business survey

Through door knocking, local businesses were asked questions relating to their business activities and priorities for the CCP. 37 respondents owned/managed a business in the CCP including

- 9 specialty retail businesses (28.1%)
- 8 service retail businesses (25%)
- 7 clubs/cafes/restaurants (21.9%)
- 4 charity stores/pawn shops/variety stores/small personal loan services (12.5%)
- 2 food stores (6.3%)
- 1 accommodation service (3.1%), and
- 1 church (3.1%).

While 13 businesses preferred not to answer, there were:

- 8 respondents with an annual turnover of over \$500,000
- 4 respondents with an annual turnover of \$200,000 to \$500,000
- 2 respondents with an annual turnover of \$150,000 to \$200,000
- 3 respondents with an annual turnover of \$100,000 to \$150,000, and
- 3 respondents with an annual turnover of \$50,000 to \$100,000.

Most businesses had 1-2 full time employees:

- 12 respondents (32.4%) had 2 full time employees, and
- 10 respondents (27%) had 1 full time employee.

There was a number of long term business operators (11 businesses or 31.4% operating in the CCP for more than 20 years) as well as more recent businesses (10 businesses or 28.6% operating in the CCP for 1 to 5 years).

Most businesses planned to continue operating as currently (29 businesses, 82.9%).

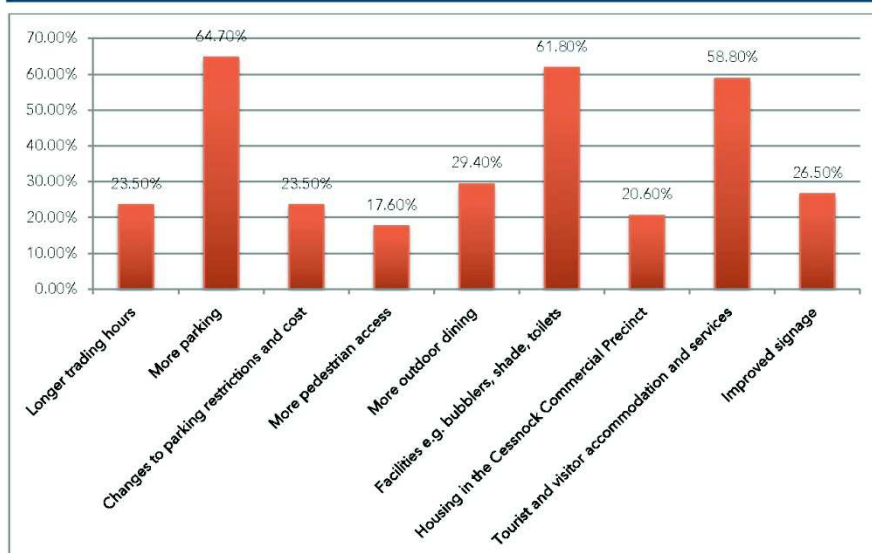
Most businesses rated their current trading as better/improving compared to the past two years (14 businesses, 48.3%). However, 10 businesses (34.5%) rated their current trading as worse/down on the past two years. 4 businesses (13.8%) rated their current trading as the same as the past two years.

3.8.1. Improvements to the commercial precinct

The top things that business owners/managers thought would improve trading were:

- More parking (22 people, 64.7%)
 - 3 comments talked about more parking spaces
"Elderly people need parking", "An hour restriction is fine but need more"
- Facilities such as bubblers, shade, toilets (21 people, 61.8%)
 - 5 comments suggested having toilets
"People come in and ask to use ours", "Put toilets next to the gallery", "Public toilets and bins in the car park"
 - 3 comments suggested bins
- Tourist and visitor accommodation and services (20 people, 58.8%)
 - 3 comments suggested a tourism information service in the CCP.
"Share the tourism more. Promote Cessnock CBD, tourist information centre, buses"

Figure 10 What activities could improve trading? (source: CCP survey July 2016)



3.8.2. Businesses/services missing from the commercial precinct

Business owners thought that the businesses/services missing from the CCP were:

- Fashion stores including plus size stores and small fashion retailers (7 people, 31.8%)
- Electrical/white goods/furniture stores (6 people, 27.3%)
- Food options including fine dining, sushi (5 people, 22.5%)
- Businesses to attract tourists e.g. markets, boutiques (5 people, 22.7%)
- Kmart (3 people, 13.6%), and
- Activities for young people (2 people, 9.1%).

Comments included:

"Hospitality services e.g. wine bars. Anything that can link vineyard industry to local industry."

3.8.3. Businesses with turnover over \$500,000

Eight businesses reported annual turnover over \$500,000. Three of these businesses (60%) were specialty retail businesses e.g. pharmacies, one was a club/café/restaurant, and one was a service retail business.

Key trends from this group

- The top priorities were:
 - Upgraded carparks and improved links to them (6 businesses, 75%)
 - Improved accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists including better signage (3 businesses, 37.5%)
 - More facilities e.g. bubblers, toilets, seats, shaded areas (3 businesses, 37.5%)
- Things that these business owners/managers thought were not working well in the Cessnock precinct were:
 - Parking (4 businesses, 80%)
 - Walkability and pedestrian crossings (3 businesses, 60%)
 - Parks and plazas (3 businesses, 60%)
- 4 of these businesses (66.7%) thought that there should be no housing in the CCP, each for different reasons (concerns about the "type of people" in the housing, there is enough housing nearby, commercial and residential should be separate)
- 5 of these businesses (71.4%) thought that there should not be increased affordable housing in the CCP
- 6 of these businesses (75%) thought that there should be increased tourist and visitor and accommodation services in the CCP
- 5 of these businesses (71.4%) thought that there should be more retail in the CCP
- Things that could be improved in the CCP to improve trading were:
 - More parking (7 businesses, 87.5%)

- Tourist and visitor accommodation and services (6 businesses, 75%)
- Facilities (e.g. bubblers, shade, toilets) (5 businesses, 62.5%)
- 3 businesses thought that clothes retailers were missing in the CCP (42.9%)

3.9. Non-business survey

This section looks at the responses to survey questions for people who live in, work in or are visitors to the Cessnock, but do not own businesses.

3.9.1. Visiting patterns

The majority of respondents visit the CCP two to three times per week (19 people, 55.9%). Ten people (29.4%) visit the CCP every day.

People stay one to two hours (15 people, 45.5%) or thirty minutes to an hour (10 people, 30.3%) (25 people, 75.8% staying less than two hours).

In terms of how much people spent in a single visit to the CCP:

- 11 people (28.9%) spent \$100 to \$199
- 8 people (21.2%) spent \$50 to \$99
- 8 people (21.1%) spent \$20 to \$49
- 6 people (15.8%) spent \$0 to \$19, and
- 4 people (10.5%) spent \$200 to \$499.

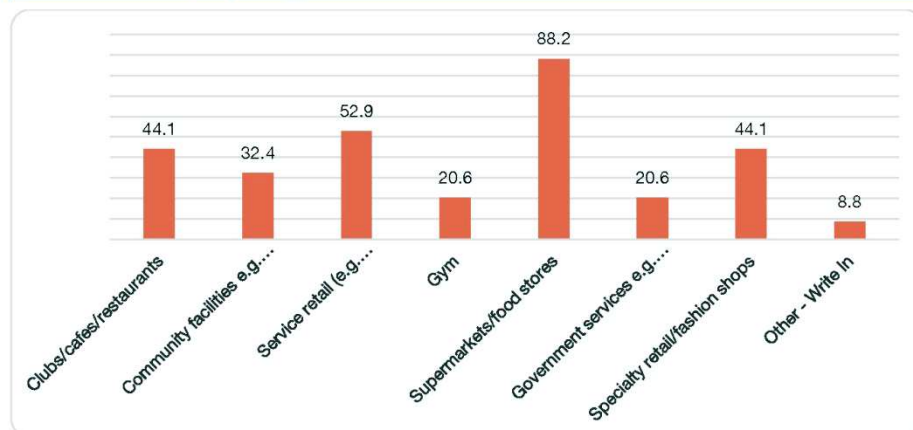
Young people spent less money in the CCP, with all young respondents spending \$0 to \$49 on an average visit.

3.9.2. Shops and services used

The most popular shops and services used were:

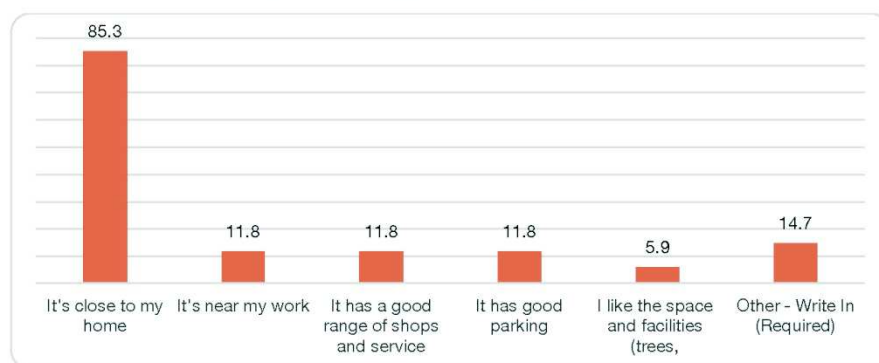
- Supermarkets/food stores (30 people, 88.2%)
- Service retail (e.g. hairdresser, banks, pharmacy) (18 people, 52.9%)
- Specialty retail/fashion shops (15 people, 44.1%), and
- Clubs/cafes/restaurants (15 people, 44.1%).

Figure 11 When you visit the commercial precinct, which shops and services do you generally use?
(source: CCP survey July 2016)



3.9.3. Reasons for choosing the commercial precinct

The main reason that respondents chose the CCP for shopping and to access services over other town centres was because it is the closest centre to their home (30 people, 85.3%).



3.9.4. Satisfaction with shopping

The majority of people were neutral or satisfied with the overall shopping experience in the CCP:

- 42.1% (16 people) were satisfied
- 23.7% (9 people) were neither satisfied or dissatisfied

Only 2 people (5.3%) were very satisfied, and 10 people (26.3%) were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

Reasons for dissatisfaction included:

- Lack of variety (5 comments)

"There's not much of a range compared to Maitland."

- Layout (3 comments)

"The two separate plazas is a pain. Particularly when you have kids with you."

"Way too spread out. Can't get what you want in one area."

- Parking (2 comments)

"Very dissatisfied with their parking available to the public"

- Accessibility (2 comments)

"More pedestrian access to be able to walk between shops easier"

3.10. What could be improved?

The main suggested improvements were:

- More variety/more shops (8 people, 34.8%)
- Parking (7 people, 30.4%)

Other suggestions were:

- Bigger name shops (3 people, 13%)
- Toilets (3 people, 13%)
- Pedestrian access (3 people, 13%)
- Activities other than shopping (2 people, 8.7%)
- Playground (2 people, 8.7%)
- Outdoor dining (2 people, 8.7%), and
- Parks and green space (2 people, 8.7%)

3.11. Missing employment/shops

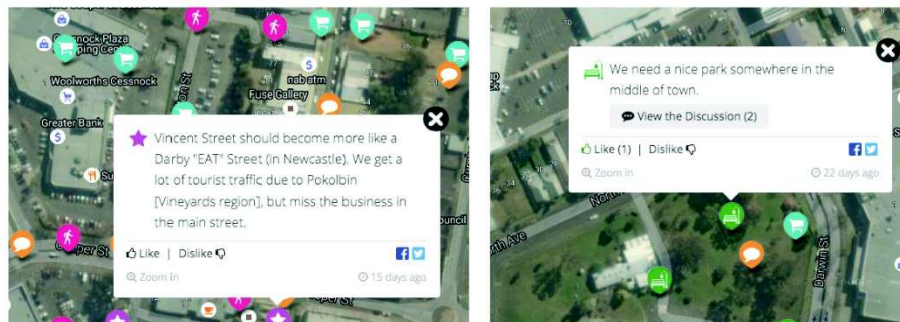
The most common thing that people said was missing in the CCP was particular types of cafes/restaurants/fast food options, and variety in the food options (8 people, 32%), followed by:

- Furniture/Electrical/White goods stores e.g. Harvey Norman (7 people, 28%)
- Kmart (4 people, 16%)
- JB HiFi (4 people, 16%)

- Fresh food stores (3 people, 12%)
- Music store/venues (3 people, 12%)
- Cinema (3 people, 12%), and
- Homewares (3 people, 12%).

4. Community map outcomes

This section provides a summary of the outcomes from the interactive community map. The interactive community map was accessible through the Cessnock Commercial Precinct webpage on Council's website. It enabled the community to leave comments that are location based on an interactive map, and for other community members to indicate their support or otherwise for the proposed idea.



Comments by community members added to the community map suggesting improvements to the commercial precinct

4.1. Summary of comments received

Respondents were invited to contribute their ideas for the CCP, choosing from six different comment types (Land Use, Building Height, Access and Transport, Character, Public Domain, Other Comments).

In total, 135 comments and 46 likes were received. The most popular comment types were:

- Access and Transport (39 comments, 17 likes)
- Land Use (30 comments, 9 likes)
- Public Domain (28 comments, 13 likes)
- Other Comments (19 comments, 7 likes)
- Character (17 comments, 0 likes), and
- Building Height (2 comments, 0 likes).

4.2. Comment topics

These comments were analysed and categorised into 19 topic areas based on common themes throughout the responses. Each topic was ranked based on the number of comments and likes it received and the top five topics of interest were identified, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Key comment topics from community map (source: CCP interactive commercial map July 2016)

Rank	Topic	Percentage of Total Comments	Percentage of Total Likes	Significance Score ¹
1	Parks and playgrounds	11.9	15.2	27.1
2	Activities for young people	7.4	13.0	20.4
3	Pedestrian and cyclist safety and connectivity	10.4	8.7	19.1
4	More shops	9.6	8.7	18.3
5	Toilets	5.2	13.0	18.2

The most comments received for any one topic were those relating to Parks and Playgrounds (using the Public Domain and Other Comments comment types). An example of such a comment is: *"We need a nice park somewhere in the middle of town."* This comment was located at TAFE Park and received two comments in agreement and one like.

Requests for more Activities for Young People were the second most popular and came from the comment types of Land Use, Public Domain or Other Comments, an example being: *"We need things for the youth to do that aren't going to cost families an arm and a leg."* This comment was tagged at the corner of Cooper St and Charlton St regarding the suggestion of a new cinema and received one like.

The topic of Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety and Connectivity received the third most comments, from the Access and Transport type. An example is: *"There is poor pedestrian and cycling connectivity,"* which was

¹ The significance score was calculated from the sum of the percentage of total comments and the percentage of total likes in order to rank the topics of most importance.

referring to the area near the corner of Charlton St and Cooper St and received one supporting comment and one like.

The fourth most popular topic was requesting More Shops, from the Land Use, Character and Other Comments comment types. One example is: "More shops, more cafes, more restaurants on Vincent St with extended opening hours. I work 9-5, Mon- Fri so everything is shut when I need to go shopping," which was posted on Vincent St near the Hall St intersection.

The topic with the fifth most interest was Toilets, which fell under Public Domain. One comment asked for "Toilets in the park if people want to have concerts and stuff" and this was tagged at TAFE Park, receiving 2 comments in agreement and likes.

4.3. Key locations

Clusters of comments were also identified on the interactive community map and the key topics at these specific locations were identified.

Vincent St

Vincent St was identified as the most popular site, having received 32.6% of the total number of comments (43 comments). The key issue here was to Preserve and Develop the Character of Vincent St, making up 18.6% of the comments at this site (9 comments). This was a complex topic as there were nine comments in total and seven of these called for some form of development of the street, while two suggested preserving its heritage. One commenter suggested: "Vincent Street should become more like a Darby 'EAT' Street (in Newcastle). We get a lot of tourist traffic due to Pokolbin [Vineyards region], but miss the business in the main street." Other topics on Vincent St, in order of popularity, were:

- More Shops, with 11.6% of comments for this site (5 comments)
- Toilets (4 comments, 9.3%), and
- Traffic and Road Maintenance (4 comments, 9.3%).

Charlton St shopping centres

The area around Charlton St shopping centres was the second most important site, with 23.7% of total comments (32 comments). Here the key issues were, in order of significance:

- Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety and Connectivity (8 comments, 25.0%)
- Improve and Centralise Parking (5 comments, 15.6%)
- More shops (4 comments, 12.5%)
- Activities for Young People (4 comments, 12.5%).

There were links between comments calling to improve parking, unify the shopping centres, and pedestrian safety and access:

"Fix up the crazy illogical shopping & parking & create a Town Square."

"There's only one walkway between the two shopping centres. It's a puzzle to get around."

TAFE Park

TAFE Park was the third most significant site, with 10.4% of the overall comments (14 comments). The key issues here were:

- Parks and Playgrounds (9 comments, 64.3%)

"We need more green spaces throughout the city."

- Toilets (2 comments, 14.3%)

Bunnings site

The fourth most significant identified cluster was in the large open park area behind Bunnings, which made up 7.4% of overall comments. Here the key topics were:

- Activities for Young People/Families (4 comments, 40%)
- Parks and Playgrounds (3 comments, 30%), and
- More Shops (2 comments, 20.0%).

This site is seen as having significant potential for development, with one comment proposing: "Skating rink / Trampoline Park / Cinema / Family stuff that is not expensive so families in the area don't have to travel."

Cumberland St

Cumberland St had eight comments (5.9% of all comments). The key issues were (all with 2 comments, 25%):

- Improve and Centralise Parking
- Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety and Connectivity
- Housing with Views

"Cumberland Street is a good street for housing. It has nice views."

IGA carpark

The IGA carpark also had eight comments (5.9% of all comments). The major topics were (all with 2 comments, 25%):

- Improve and Centralise Parking
- Traffic and Road Maintenance

"Road markings not great & there is a mini raised roundabout which isn't clearly marked & I scraped the under part of my car."

5. Staff workshop outcomes

A workshop was conducted with Council staff on Tuesday 28 June. Workshop outcomes are provided below.



5.1. What are areas for potential improvements or rejuvenation?

Staff identified areas of the CCP with potential for improvement. Comments are categorised here by land use, building height, character, access and transport, and public domain.

Land use

A major theme for improving utilisation of the CBD was creating a connection between the supermarkets and Big W for a more centralised shopping centre, potentially by closing traffic on Cooper St to create a pedestrian mall between Darwin and Vincent St. It was also suggested that improved housing quality and affordability would encourage development and visitors. It was suggested that use of Bridges Hill for recreation and fitness trails could be promoted through improved connection to the CBD. The creation of a community and cultural centre for tourists on the corner of Vincent and Snape St was also suggested.

Building height

There was limited mention of building height. There was one positive comment about the CCP as it is currently: *"Open, not closed in buildings and height."*

Character

A major desire was to improve outdoor spaces and encourage people to stay in the CBD. There was also a desire to increase night activity in a similar way to Newcastle by attracting visitors and promoting outdoor trading, small businesses and food trucks. Preserving and promoting heritage, both mining and

indigenous, was also important. A suggested improvement was recuperating the past heritage listing. But there was also mention of the benefits that might result from relocating the pool site.

Access and transport

Parking was a significant theme, with calls for covered parking, more vegetation to make parked cars less visible and encouraging a more practical and safer layout. There were calls for development of parking at the cinema on Cumberland Carpark and redevelopment of the IGA Carpark on Charlton St. Pedestrian access was also an important theme, with suggestions to reduce street parking, widen footpaths, reduce traffic and create greener spaces to increase foot traffic and make it safer and more pleasant for pedestrians. Improving accessibility was seen as important for seniors and vulnerable individuals was also seen as well as improving cycling infrastructure and promoting access to mountain bike trails.

Public domain

Possible improvements identified were:

- Improve/centralise parks and promote use through infrastructure (chairs, tables, shade) and outdoor events
- Activating TAFE Park with outdoor events (Performances/concerts)
- Cover and redevelop the drainage canals
- Improve laneways and promote usage

5.2. What should be included in the DCP?

In groups, participants discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the CCP and what should be included in the DCP around each theme.

Access and transport

The CCP was seen as a positive space for pedestrians but there were issues with safety at crossings, public transport and cycling infrastructure. It was suggested that promoting laneway networks, improving cycling infrastructure, reducing parking visibility, reducing traffic and promoting shared access to the CCP were important focus areas.

Character and public domain

The CCP was seen as open with lots of parking but some of this was seen as unsafe. There was a lack of spaces to “stay” rather than “in and out” services, as well as no open space and a lack of tables and toilets. Suggestions were made to encourage outdoor trading by making allowances for outdoor activities in public places to encourage activity. It was also suggested that the project team should focus on places for people to gather and sit and spend time (e.g. parklets), focus on pedestrian activities and more “staying activities”.

6. Community workshop outcomes

6.1. Community workshop 1

While the first community workshop was promoted widely (see section 1), only one resident attended. Feedback included that the Creative Arts Centre was seen as a positive cultural centre, and that the increased prison population was leading to unemployment in the area. Lions Park was seen as an area for improvement through infrastructure such as tables and chairs and the Council was seen as restricting night events and limiting potential for innovative events.

6.2. Community workshop 2

6.2.1. Key issues and opportunities

27 business representatives attended the second workshop. Each group of 5 or 6 participants identified their key issues and top opportunities.

Key issues

- Three of four groups identified “separate sub-precincts” as a key issue
- Three of four groups identified “significant on-grade parking preventing good urban amenity and active streets” as a key issue
- Two of four groups identified “drainage channels” as a key issue
- Other issues generated in the groups and identified as key issues were:
 - Pedestrian access/safety from car parks to retail spaces; and
 - Multi-level car parking.

Top opportunities

Three groups identified top opportunities:

- The top opportunity for all three groups was “create new urban streets, parks and plazas”
- “extend urban character of Vincent St west towards potential TAFE redevelopment and supermarkets” and “capitalise on opportunities arising from CBD bypass” were each identified by two groups as a second or third top opportunity
- Other opportunities generated in the groups and identified as top opportunities were:
 - Create unique character/perceptions - West End etc
 - Regional park hub TAFE park

- Entertainment precinct North end Vincent St

6.2.2. Areas and ideas for improvements

Ideas for improvement to arcades, buildings and semi-public spaces included:

- Four comments regarding character/design improvements

"Improved design standards" and "Council subsidy for improvements"

- Two comments regarding blank walls

"Get rid of blank walls Wollombi Rd/Vincent St"

- Two comments regarding supermarkets

"Woolies carpark interface"

Ideas for improvements to streets, parks, plazas and squares included:

- Three groups suggests trees and beautification measures

"Roundabouts - beautify, plants, signage", "More artwork, quirky fixtures", "Entries to City precinct - use trees liquid amber, Jacaranda"

- Two groups suggested improvements to traffic flow

"Direction of traffic flow" and "Vincent St northbound only between Paul to Edward St. Control traffic to parking areas."

- Two groups suggested a need for a central park

"No town hall or central park - major public facility" and "Have a central place to build the CBD around (like a park in the TAFE grounds)"

- Two groups suggested improvements to signage and wayfinding

"Better signage, more uniform" and "Better defined walkways"

Areas with potential for improvement or rejuvenation were:

- Carparks in general (four groups)

"Cumberland St carparks behind PAC" and "Carpark/connections between shopping areas"

- IGA/Northern car park (three groups)

"Clean up, better access, undercover parking"

"Public space with rest/café etc - open up entertainment precinct"

- Wollombi Rd/Vincent St area (two groups)

- TAFE Park (three groups)

"TAFE site (with regional park)"

"Civic Park @ TAFE precinct: duck pond? Green space? Art space? Redevelopment? Hotel/Motel?"

- Signage and wayfindings (three groups)

"More signage and direction"

- Green space with recreation facilities e.g. free exercise equipment, toilets, skate park, children's playground (three groups)

"Play area for children", "Walking paths, multi use trail, outdoor gym, create multi access points, skate park"

"More green space/parks/public toilets"

6.2.3. Strengths, weaknesses and actions

Each group identified the strengths and weaknesses of the CCP in the areas of land use, building height, character and public domain, and access and transport, and suggested objectives for the DCP in these areas (Table 2).

Table 2 Community workshop (business) strengths, weaknesses and actions

Topic	Strengths	Weaknesses	Objectives/Actions
Land Use		Lack of connection to wine country Carparking Accessibility Wasted space Business park undermines city	Concentrate city Signage/wayfinding Lower Council rates if buildings renovated
Building Height	Good current height	Can't go high	Increase height limit above 2 storeys (to 3 or 5 storeys) (2 groups) Keep the country feel - not too high Put residential behind the main street/above shops on main street
Character and Public Domain	Space to improve and beautify Heritage	Needs more charm, a theme Not very attractive Inconsistent standards Precincts and offerings not defined	Making Cessnock a unique and desirable destination Interactive facades Coal mining and pub theme Need country town feel but needs rejuvenating - green/colour → vibrancy

Topic	Strengths	Weaknesses	Objectives/Actions
Access and Transport	We have space to use We have infrastructure Pedestrian crossing @ Vincent and Cooper	Parking Traffic flow Trucks (too many) Connectivity and safety for pedestrians and cycling Need green space between main street and back of shops Need a loop transport e.g. Newcastle Tram No night time public transport Poor disabled access and access for prams	Need covered walkways between shops More parking and multistorey Block parts of Cooper St Subsidy at appropriate strategically located parking areas One-way Vincent Northbound - Directs traffic through town and to parking Free shuttle or hop on/hop off