NEUTRAL BAY TOWN CENTRE

MILITARY ROAD CORRIDOR PLANNING STUDY
STAGE 1

Future Directions

North Sydney Council
February 2021

Military Road Corridor Planning Study, Stage 1

Neutral Bay Town Centre

February 2021

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- HillPDA
- Aurecon
- NBRS Architecture
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Neutral Bay Town Centre
Sydney CBD
Milsons Point
Military Road
North Sydney CBD
St Leonards Park

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Military Road Corridor Planning Study is a review into the current planning controls that apply along Military Road to deliver future housing and job growth and meet the needs of the current and future community.

This Stage 1 report focuses on the Neutral Bay town centre. Stage 2 of the planning study will focus on adjoining parts of Military Road including Cremorne town centre to the east and Military Road Island to the west.

Neutral Bay town centre

Neutral Bay town centre is a vibrant local centre with a valued village atmosphere. The local community enjoy a variety of restaurants, cafes, shops and services. The centre is well connected to both Sydney and North Sydney CBD, as well as the Northern Beaches, and has become a popular area for people to live, work and visit.

A decline in local jobs and increasing pressures on public domain and community facilities, however, could threaten the vibrancy and diversity of the area.

Currently the centre supports 2,850 jobs. By 2036 demand is expected to increase to 4,000 jobs. However, under current planning controls, this number is estimated to drop to 1,500 jobs.

There is also demand for a new recreational facility, affordable child-care, a modernised community centre and improved public open space.

Development pressure

The Military Road corridor is experiencing significant development pressure. North Sydney Council has received several concept plans proposing to redevelop land along the corridor to heights that exceed the existing planning controls.

This report aims to guide this pressure and ensure any future development meets the needs and expectations of the community.

Military Road Corridor Planning Study

This report is the product of three community consultation periods.

An initial community survey was run in mid-2018.

Two discussion papers were exhibited in mid-2019:

- Objectives and Ideas paper
- Analysis paper

These papers explored a range of changes to planning controls and investigated the public benefits that are achievable through different built form options.

The last exhibition in mid-2020 provided input to the draft version of this report.

Community feedback has helped to shape the preferred planning control changes detailed in this report and the public benefits being sought by the Council through new development.

What is proposed?

Based on community feedback, this report proposes the following planning control changes.

For most new mixed-use buildings in Neutral Bay town centre, it is recommended that the planning controls be amended to:

- **Increase the non-residential floor space (FSR) control from 0.5:1 to 1.2:1**

This will effectively require retail uses on the ground level and commercial uses on the first floor of new buildings. Start-ups and other local businesses that require office space will be able to establish themselves in the centre, which in turn will support long term jobs growth.

- **Increase the maximum height limit from 5 storeys to 6 storeys**

With the additional level of commercial space, this height increase will maintain existing residential capacity in the centre and ensure redevelopment is economically viable.

- **Set new building setbacks at key locations along Military Road and near public open space**

This will create space to plant new street trees, widen footpaths to improve the amenity of Military Road and improve the public domain.

Planning proposal opportunities

On three key sites in the centre, a landowner initiated planning proposal (PP) and voluntary planning agreement (VPA) may be considered. These sites have been identified as being able to support taller mixed-use buildings whilst providing much needed new open space or community facilities:

- **Site 1 Grosvenor Lane North**

Increase building heights to a maximum of 8 storeys with a building mass that enables better solar access to the new Grosvenor Lane plaza created by sites 2 and 3. Redirect traffic away from the new plaza and provide a new community centre.

- **Site 2 Grosvenor Lane South**

Increase building heights to a maximum of 8 and 12 storeys in designated areas. Re-locate public parking underground and deliver a new Grosvenor Lane plaza, through-site-links and creative spaces.

- **Site 3 Rangers Road**

Increase building heights to a maximum of 6, 8 and 12 storeys. Deliver a new public plaza and through-site-link.

1.1 PLANNING PROCESS

Context

As the population of Greater Sydney is projected to grow to 8 million over the next 40 years, local government plays an important role in planning town centres to accommodate future jobs and housing growth.

North Sydney Council is committed to working with the community to ensure that growth is well located and managed, contributes to a strong sense of place and is supported by generous open space and community facilities.

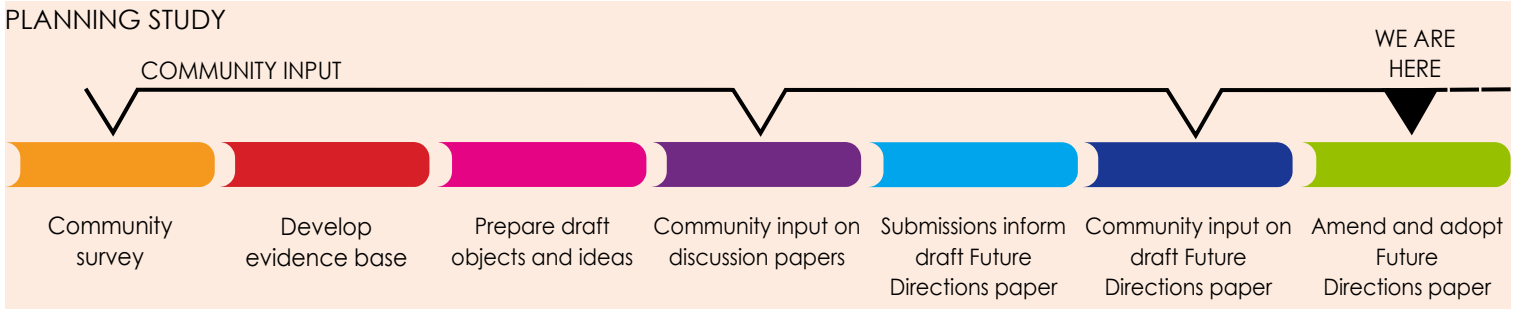
Council's vision

On 19 February 2018, North Sydney Council resolved to prepare a planning study in response to several redevelopment proposals challenging existing building height controls along the Military Road Corridor. This planning study details a way to manage this future development interest with the interests of the community.

This planning study aims to promote new development for future growth, while maintaining the much-loved village atmosphere of the Neutral Bay town centre.

Project tasks included:

- Inception work
- Community engagement
- Economic feasibility analysis
- Transport analysis
- Urban design & placemaking analysis
- Preparation of the Objective & Ideas and Analysis discussion papers and public exhibition
- Heritage analysis
- Valuation advice
- Preparation of the draft Future Directions Report and public exhibition
- Update on preliminary effects of Covid-19 on employment strategy
- Finalisation of the Future Directions Report



Purpose of this study

The purpose of this planning study is to create a framework for future development along the Military Road Corridor, specifically in Neutral Bay town centre, and to provide certainty to the community regarding any density increases in the area.

This report establishes:

- A future vision for Neutral Bay town centre as part of Military Road corridor
- A development framework against which any changes to the planning controls in the area will be managed and assessed
- A range of community benefits that will be delivered via voluntary planning agreements on selected sites within the town centre

Negotiating public benefits

A planning proposal (PP) is a submission to Council to modify existing planning controls, allowing a developer to achieve a more suitable outcome for a site. These modifications can include increases to a building's maximum floor space ratio (FSR) or building height.

When a planning proposal is submitted there is opportunity for the developer and Council to negotiate a voluntary planning agreement (VPA) whereby the developer delivers public benefits whilst considering changes to the planning controls. The public benefit offered could be a monetary contribution, dedication of land or an in-kind contribution (a provision of a material public benefit specified by the Council).

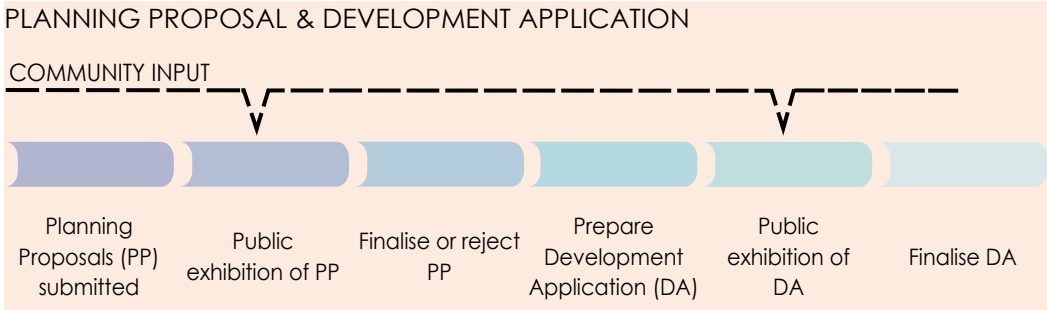
This report focuses on in-kind contributions on three key sites highlighted for planning proposals.

Under a VPA a developer agrees to provide or fund:

- public amenities and public services
- affordable housing
- transport or other public infrastructure

These contributions can be made through:

- dedication of land
- monetary contributions
- construction of infrastructure
- provision of materials for public benefit and/or use.



1.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community involvement and feedback is an important element of this project and has helped shape this report.

Three engagement sessions were run to inform and involve the community throughout this planning study:

- Early engagement survey (2018)
- Two discussion papers (2019)
- Draft Future Directions report (2020)

Figure 1 - Extensive community engagement included information brochures, surveys, letters, emails, Your Say North Sydney website, reply paid postcards, presentations and information kiosks.

Early engagement 2018

In mid-2018, North Sydney Council ran an early engagement survey on community values and aspirations for Neutral Bay town centre. Feedback received during this consultation highlighted opportunities and challenges in the town centre as well as key features that define the local character.

Consultation included:

- Surveys
- Online mapping tool
- Submissions
- Drop-in information kiosks

These opportunities were promoted via:

- Direct mail
- Emails to 'Keep Informed' database
- Notification to precinct committees
- Notification to local community groups
- Social media
- Posters on noticeboards
- Advertisements in the local newspaper
- Council website

Responses were received between 26 July and 22 August 2018.

The results of this public exhibition were presented to Council on 29 September 2018.

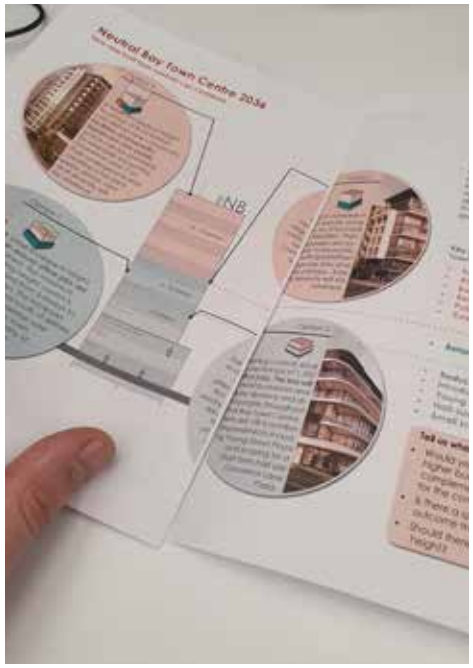


Figure 2 - As part of early community consultation brochures were mailed to residents in the area.

Early engagement feedback

Activity and environment

1. More trees and vegetation (77%)
2. Plazas for outdoor activities (61%)
3. More outdoor dining (56%)

There is a strong desire for more trees and vegetation in the area. Redevelopment and the B-Line project has accelerated canopy loss over the last few years.

Other opportunities include improved plazas for outdoor activities and more outdoor dining. Some submissions noted an earlier Council plan to place the Grosvenor Lane car park underground and supported public domain improvements similar to Young Lane and Grosvenor Street.

Access

1. Improved Military Rd environment (71%)
2. Connections across Military Rd (59%)
3. Improved footpaths (51%)

90% of survey respondents wish to see improvements to the Military Road environment including better road crossing opportunities.

The survey identified that people are being affected by the implementation of the B-Line project. Construction is still under way and while underground works have finished, footpaths are only patched temporarily. This will be resolved over time.

Community facilities

1. Library (learning/sharing) (54%)
2. Community centre upgrade (49%)
3. Community events (45%)

78% of the community supports either a social facility like a library or a community centre in Neutral Bay town centre.

45% of the community supports more public events, feeling it would contribute to the village atmosphere and a sense of community. This was just ahead of more public art (44%).

70% of those surveyed said that **'beautiful public spaces'** is the single most important issue for the future of the centre. Public spaces are important social gathering points for the community and contribute towards the character of an area.

What you said you value most

Community feel & village atmosphere

Connectivity and proximity to Sydney and North Sydney CBD

Restaurants, cafes and pubs for socialising

Ease of access to shops and services

Discussion papers 2019

Feedback from early community engagement sessions helped inform a set of discussion papers released in 2019. The intent of these papers was to engage the community in a discussion on the future of the Neutral Bay town centre by presenting a range of planning control changes that would allow increased development in the area and deliver a range of public domain benefits.

External consultants were engaged for the following:

- Employment Study by HillPDA
- Transport Study by Aurecon

Both consultants ran additional surveys to inform their strategies. A business survey was sent to the Neutral Bay Chamber of Commerce and landowners and a face-to-face survey was undertaken with local businesses. A transport questionnaire was conducted with 200 local workers/commuters.

The urban design and placemaking analysis for the papers was developed in-house. This process included workshops and ongoing Project Control Group (PCG) meetings.

The discussion papers were on public exhibition from Thursday 8 August 2019 until Monday 9 September 2019. Feedback was presented to Council in October 2019 and has influenced the strategies in this report.

Discussion papers feedback

Key issues

- Impact of increased building heights
- Achieving public benefits through planning agreements
- Maintaining a village atmosphere
- Balanced parking provisions
- Military Road pedestrian amenity

Building heights

There are mixed opinions about increased building heights in the area with 52% of people surveyed supporting modest height increases in the right locations

Concerns regarding increased building heights include the impact on solar access, existing views and community character

Half the community support Council negotiating public benefits via Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPAs). Of those that do not support VPAs, many suggest the process is not sufficiently transparent and may favour the developers' interests over the community's.

Access and amenity

Community members value the existing village feel in Neutral Bay and do not want to see this diminish.

Residents want to see improvements to the amenity of Military Road.

85% of people surveyed support efforts to improve footpaths, parks and plazas in the area.

There is support for more on-street parking options to cater to a future increase of workers in the area.

Employment

The community would like to see the current commercial and retail vacancies along Military Road utilised for future employment opportunities.

"Increased height limits need to be carefully managed to maintain the village atmosphere of the area."

- Survey response, 2019

"Expand the tree canopy along Military Road and laneways, optimise solar access and introduce some public art."

- Survey response, 2019

Draft Future Directions 2020

In April 2020, Council adopted the draft Future Directions Report for the Military Road Corridor for the purposes of public exhibition.

The draft Future Directions Report was placed on public exhibition from Thursday 26 April until Friday 31 July 2020. Council received a total of 433 responses from the engagement process.

In recognition of the Covid-19 pandemic, Council resolved to extend the usual exhibition period. Exhibition was supplemented with additional material and online forums.

The draft Future Directions report is underpinned by extensive research and consultation from the early community engagement sessions and two discussion papers.

Council prepared the strategies within this report in-house including any built form decisions and public benefit contributions. To understand the impacts of these preferred strategies Council commissioned the following consultation advice:

- Valuation Advice by BEM Property
- Heritage Review by NBRS Architecture

Draft Future Directions Report feedback and amendments

Key issues

- Building height on the character of Neutral Bay village
- Protecting public parking
- Access to local shops
- Achieving public benefits through planning agreements

Traffic and parking

Traffic and parking concerns often relate specifically to the Grosvenor Lane car park with many submissions seeking better access to local shops.

Building height

A smaller number of submissions support modest height increases in return for various proposed public benefits, however, believe that the proposed building height of 12 storeys is inappropriate for the area.

A number of submissions expressed concerns that the changes will impact the character of the area.

Public benefit support

There was also a significant degree of support for the proposed public domain and community facility improvements.

Amendments to the draft report

This report has been amended based on the feedback received.

Revisions include:

- Removal of site 4 as a strategically significant site. Site 4 comprised the Barry Street car park, neighboring residential cottages and the commercial building at 40 Yeo Street.
- Feedback and further assessment suggest there are issues with building height increases, solar impact, transition, financial feasibility and change of character.
- Remove identified location of a single court recreation facility.
- There was little support for the facility and the proposed height increase was not seen as a reasonable outcome. At this stage a larger facility elsewhere in North Sydney is preferred.
- Refinements to the placemaking strategy including the potential locations of a new community centre.
- An indicative staged delivery of the Grosvenor Lane plaza with greater clarification on public ownership, parking, loading, access and location of public improvements.

The Future Directions Report continues to:

- Recognise and address the ongoing loss of employment floor space.
- Adjust built form controls to improve the urban design and amenity of the centre.
- Identify large, strategically significant sites that can support some increases in height and deliver significant public domain and community facility improvements that would otherwise be beyond Council's capacity in the Neutral Bay town centre.

1.3 PROJECT - STAGE ONE

Study boundary

The Military Road Corridor planning study is being prepared in stages with the first stage focused on Neutral Bay town centre. The boundary for this stage of the study is surrounded by Ben Boyd Road to the west, Belgrave Street to the north, Winnie Street and Murdoch Street to the east, and Harrison and Yeo Street to the south (Figure 3). Whilst having regard to the surrounding context, changes are only proposed within the commercial/mixed use area.

Military Road is a major regional thoroughfare running through the study area, linking the Lower North Shore and Sydney CBD with Mosman and the Northern Beaches. Several laneways intersect the site, providing both pedestrian and vehicular access to Neutral Bay town centre.

The Neutral Bay town centre is a mixed-use commercial and residential area containing retail, hospitality and entertainment uses as well as commercial office spaces. The precinct includes a major supermarket, two small retail malls, a school, two Council owned car parks, a bus depot and a community centre. It generally comprises of large, consolidated sites intermixed with long, narrow sites with dual frontages.

The study area is well-serviced by buses with services to and from the Northern Beaches, North Sydney and Sydney CBD passing on Military Road. North Sydney Railway Station lies approximately 2km from the Neutral Bay town centre.

The study boundary for Stage two is on either side of Neutral Bay town centre and represents the remainder of the Military Road Corridor Planning Study.

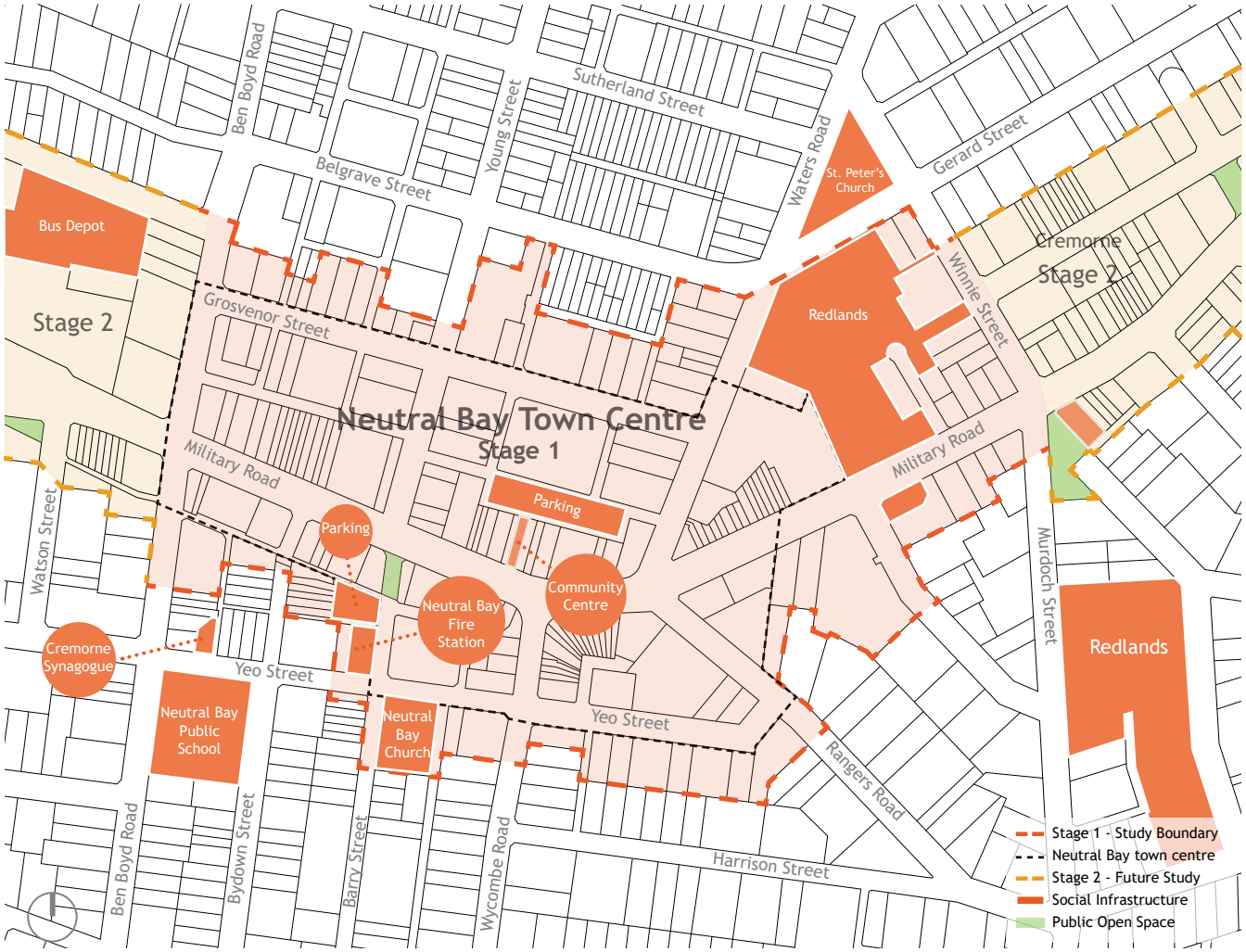


Figure 3 - Stage 1 boundary along Military Road corridor is outlined (orange) along with future Stage 2 study area (yellow). Existing social infrastructure and public open space in the area is also noted.

Case for change

Neutral Bay is in a period of transformation with current planning controls becoming increasingly outdated as demand for commercial, residential and community facilities intensifies.

This planning study puts forward a development control framework that will ensure that future development is considerate of the existing character of the area and facilitates the delivery of infrastructure and services to meet the needs and aspirations of the Neutral Bay community.

This Future Directions report proposes a preferred direction for Neutral Bay that ensures growth in the Military Road corridor results in a more attractive place for workers, residents and visitors. This is proposed through:

- Increased employment capacity across the Neutral Bay town centre through an increase in the Non-Residential floor space ratio (FSR) and maximum building heights in the North Sydney Council Local Environment Plan 2013 (NSLEP 2013)
- In-kind contributions by increasing maximum building height on specific sites through planning proposals to increase public domain and community facilities

Without changes to the current planning controls there will be a decline in local office floor space in Neutral Bay town centre and a reduction in local jobs. This will affect businesses and residents, with commercial activity declining and residents being forced to travel further for local work and services.

The current development trend from commercial single ownership into mixed-use strata ownership has significant long-term impacts.

The development decisions made in the next few years will have great influence on the character and amenity of the area.

This study, as well as ongoing feedback from residents and businesses, will ensure that future development respects and benefits the local community.

Figure 4 - The study area suffers from a distinct lack of public open space. Opportunities for respite within the study area come chiefly from private café/dining spaces or informal internal mall seating. May Gibbs Place and the adjacent pocket park is the only public plaza/green space provided within Neutral Bay town centre.

Report structure

The report focuses on five major areas that are key drivers of the revitalisation of Neutral Bay town centre:

- Community facilities - Identifies the social infrastructure that is needed to support future growth and the changes to planning controls necessary to deliver these facilities
- Public domain - Outlines public domain upgrades that are currently underway and identifies future, larger projects subject to further investigation and funding
- Employment - Considers the forecast for jobs growth in the area and proposes planning control changes to address this need
- Access - Identifies projects that encourage walking, cycling and public transport use and major opportunities that arise from the B-Line and Western Harbour Tunnel projects
- Built form – Outlines changes to existing development controls to support the future mixed-use function of Neutral Bay town centre

These five areas are addressed in chapters 2 and 3 of this report.

2.1 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Community views

The 2018 early engagement survey identified Neutral Bay's village atmosphere as its most valuable quality.

There is also a strong desire for a range of new and improved community facilities within Neutral Bay. Suggestions included art spaces, sports facilities, green spaces, and other community event spaces.

Demand

Following community feedback this study has identified demand for the following facilities and infrastructure within the locality of Neutral Bay town centre:

- An improved community centre
- Artist studios and exhibition spaces
- Commuter bicycle parking
- A new, affordable childcare space
- An indoor recreational facility that caters to a variety of sports and activities

This study identifies potential locations for the first three facilities within the town centre as shown in Figure 4. Other facilities are recommended to be delivered preferably in walking distance from the centre.

Implementation

As the need for community facilities increases, it is important to look at how these facilities are funded. One approach is through voluntary planning agreements (VPAs), where council negotiates with developers to deliver community benefits as part of a planning proposal.

In-kind contributions not only provide funding and construction for new public facilities and infrastructure but also deliver a tangible community outcome in an area that is limited by space.

Further information on in-kind contributions, planning proposals and planning agreements can be found in chapter 3.4.

A variety of community facilities will cater to a **diversity of users** in Neutral Bay town centre.

Elderly | Working professionals | Students | Families | Children | Groups

Context

Previous Council studies identify the redevelopment or upgrade of several Council owned assets, those being:

- Barry Street car park
- Neutral Bay community centre
- Grosvenor Lane car park

This planning study opens up new opportunities for these Council assets.

The *Community Uses on Council Land Study* (NSC 2016) identifies redevelopment options for Barry Street car park. Option 1 includes community space, retail and residential. Options 2 includes community and recreation space and retail. Both include open space and relocate the public car park underground. This planning study leaves these options open and notes a third option is for Council to deliver public domain improvements on the site with the potential future undergrounding or relocation of the existing car park.

The community uses study also identifies the need to upgrade the existing Neutral Bay community centre. This planning study proposes to relocate the community centre to a nearby location with larger floorspace. Once relocated, the through site link can be widened and transformed into a creative makers art alley.

The Grosvenor Lane Planning Study (NSC 2015) aims to transform the Grosvenor Lane Car Park into a plaza by placing the car park underground. A similar outcome is adopted in this study.

Implementation of an adaptive re-use strategy for the Neutral Bay fire station could further contribute to this area, creating additional indoor and outdoor community space. This strategy would require dialogue with the current owner, Fire and Rescue NSW.

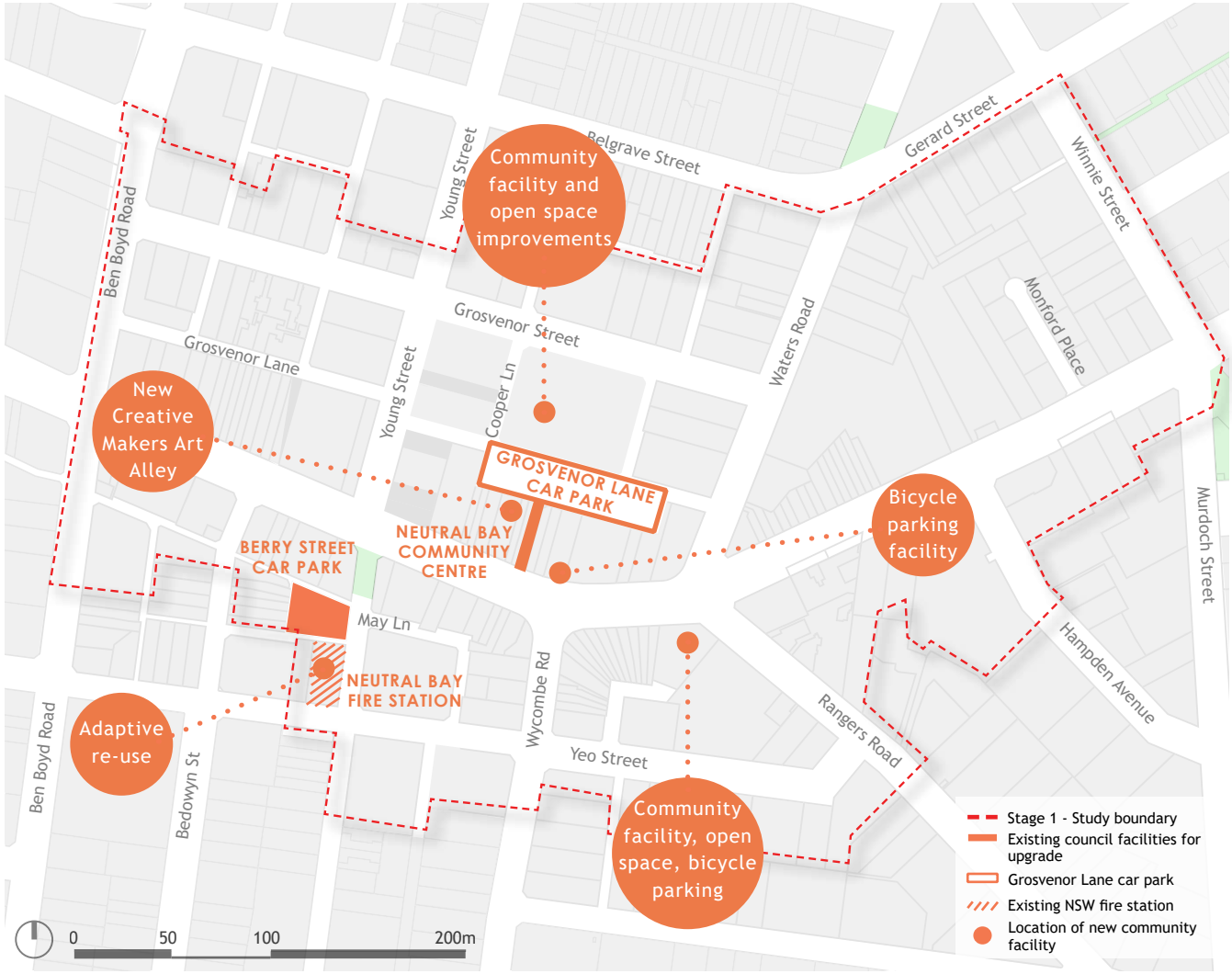


Figure 5 - Council owned assets and proposed locations of new facilities in Neutral Bay town centre.

Improved community centre

The existing Neutral Bay community centre plays an important role in the lives of many residents. It is a busy centre providing valuable space for community activities, initiatives and services for a range of groups including:

- The Neutral Bay Senior Citizens Centre
- The Daisy Centre: Women's Wellbeing

Activities include community dance classes, indoor sports, health discussions and self-help groups and are regularly scheduled throughout the week.

Some areas of the community centre are inaccessible to wheelchair users and can be difficult to access for others.

Objective

Provide larger Neutral Bay community centre for improved services.

- Deliver a new 1,000m2 (GFA) community centre in Neutral Bay town centre
- Include accessible public toilets and family room facilities on ground floor level
- Include access for loading with a service lift from the basement car park
- Provide a variety of flexible spaces for a range of activities and gatherings
- Create a responsive and appropriately scaled community centre that fits within the existing Neutral Bay town centre and contributes to the public domain
- Include ground floor storage space of 20m^2 to service community markets and events
- Ensure available space for community groups during construction and relocation
- Ideally situated to include a balcony overlooking a public plaza
- Supports convenient access to visitors parking
- Secure entry and exit for key community services

Figure 6 - A new community centre can be used for a variety of purposes including courses and community programs.

Secured bicycle parking facilities

Forecast future growth of Neutral Bay's residents and workers could potentially put further demand on an already busy Military Road. Alternative modes of transport to private vehicle use should be encouraged including public transport, walking and cycling.

In North Sydney Council's *Integrated Cycling Strategy (2014)* the target percentage for cycling as a key mode of transport is 2%. To cater to these commuters Neutral Bay town centre needs mid-trip/end-of-trip commuter cycle parking that is secured, easy to access and in close proximity to the B-Line bus stop to allow for mixed modes of travel.

Objective

Provide public and secured commuter bicycle parking facilities to accommodate workers and residents.

- Provide 28 public and secured commuter bicycle parking spaces located to the north (14 spaces) and south (14 spaces) of Military Road
- Continue to provide bicycle parking spaces required under Council's Development Control Plan
- Locate distinct entry to the facility in close proximity to the B-Line bus stop
- Communicate the facilities availability and wayfinding in a clear and noticeable way at the entry and in signage throughout Neutral Bay town centre

Figure 7 - A future end-of-trip bicycle facility would be able to accommodate the cycling targets detailed in North Sydney Council's *Integrated Cycling Strategy* (2014).

Creative makers art alley

There is opportunity in the town centre to create a designated art alley containing flexible, creative spaces for artist studios and shops. This would align with the North Sydney Council *Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028*, which encourages a diverse mix of businesses, after-hour and weekend activity and laneway activation. The alley would also be a needed provision for the nearby Primrose Park Art and Craft Centre, whose artists currently lack opportunities to sell and exhibit works.

While Council has delivered creative spaces in the area (a second studio at Primrose Park, a studio at the Coal Loader and the Ridge Street Pop-up space) there has also been the closure of several commercial galleries over the last 10 years affecting opportunities for local artists. In the survey underpinning the North Sydney Council *Arts & Cultural Strategic Plan 2019-2022*, 80% of participants identified the need for a dedicated art gallery or exhibition space in the area and 70% recognised the need for local art studios. Similarly, community feedback for the *Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028* ranked art, culture and creative event spaces as the second highest priority out of 25 strategic outcomes.

A designated art alley in Neutral Bay town centre would echo current creative trends elsewhere in Sydney and deliver an innovative and inspired space for local artists and the community. Developed on the existing community centre site, the art alley will also deliver better pedestrian through-site-links between Military Road and Grosvenor Street. The art alley would require the relocation of the existing community centre before proposals or submissions.

Objective

Deliver a mix of studio, exhibition and retail spaces for local artists.

- Deliver artist studios and exhibition spaces that can sell a diverse medium of arts and crafts
- Develop the art alley at the existing Neutral Bay community centre site after relocation of the community centre to a larger premises
- Provide a continuous funding mechanism for maintenance and management through rental return and consideration for a small retail space
- Create flexible floor plans allowing for a variety of space sizes and a range of uses

Figure 8 - Artist studios can activate a street as well as contribute to the local community and economy.

Figure 9 - Carnaby Street, London is a good example of an activated and creative laneway. This approach would be adopted for Neutral Bay town centre's art alley, promoting street activation through ground floor artist studios, exhibition spaces and shops. Catenary lighting allows the laneway to transition from day to night use and improves the safety and amenity for pedestrians.

Indoor recreation facility

In Neutral Bay and Cremorne, over 85% of residents live in medium or high-density housing. The highest concentration of residents are young professionals (aged 25-34) and parents (35-49) with young, school-aged children (0-11).

There is an existing demand for open space and recreational facilities for these residents and currently a lack of public facilities in the area to meet this demand. Existing playing fields at Forsyth Park, Cammeray Park and Anderson Park are operating at capacity. Nearby indoor sports facilities are limited, with many provided by private educational establishments within the precinct and not accessible to the public.

Objective

Provide an indoor, accessible recreation facility for a variety of sports and activities.

- A new indoor recreational facility should include a minimum of two multi-purpose courts, adequate storage and change rooms within walking distance from the town centre
- The facility should have natural light, natural ventilation and easy access from the street
- Encourage recreation facilities within private education establishments to open to the public

This planning study does not identify a location for a recreation facility. Council will continue to investigate options.

Figure 10 - A new indoor recreation facility should be flexible to allow for a range of sports and activities. The facility should include adequate storage and accessible change rooms.

Affordable childcare centre

Early public feedback revealed an increased demand for more affordable childcare spaces.

The North Sydney Council *Family and Children's Service Strategy (2018)* found 82% of people surveyed did not consider current childcare options in the area to be affordable. It also found that many existing daycare facilities only offer places for children aged 3-5 years, resulting in a lack of options for families with younger children.

Objective

Provide a community-based, affordable childcare. This could include pre-school, occasional care, afterschool care or long day care services.

- The childcare space should be within walking distance from Neutral Bay town centre
- The facility should have natural light, natural ventilation and easy access from the street

This planning study does not identify a location for an affordable childcare facility. Council will continue to investigate options.

Figure 11 - Examples of mixed-use buildings that incorporate childcare facilities. A new childcare facility should include indoor and outdoor areas and be accessible and well-connected to Neutral Bay town centre.

2.2 PUBLIC DOMAIN

Community views

During early engagement in 2018, 70% of the community identified improvements to the public domain as the single most important requirement for Neutral Bay town centre. 85% of survey submissions received as ongoing feedback in 2019 support Council's effort to improve footpaths, parks and plazas.

The built form can significantly contribute to an improved pedestrian experience. Changes to North Sydney Council's *Development Control Plan 2013 (NSDCP 2013)* regarding through-site links, setbacks, public domain and solar access can improve the current public domain and create new open space opportunities.

Key priorities include:

- new plazas and public spaces
- implementation of shared zones
- widening of footpaths at B-Line bus stops
- additional tree cover and vegetation
- improving pedestrian amenity and experience along Military Road
- increase opportunities for outdoor dining

Aims

Improvements to the existing public domain in Neutral Bay town centre will be achieved by:

- Improving the environment for walking, cycling and bus stops to enhance the Neutral Bay village atmosphere, a priority identified in during early engagement in 2018
- Dedicating space for pedestrian amenity along Military Road, to relieve some of the impacts of increased traffic
- Prioritising walking and cycling to limit road congestion, a key direction of the North Sydney Council Transport Strategy (2016)
- Allowing space to walk, rest and socialise which will increase pedestrian amenity, accessibility and safety in Neutral Bay

New open space opportunities have been identified in this study.

- Grosvenor Lane Plaza - a major new public open space in the heart of Neutral Bay village
- Rangers Road Plaza - another significant opportunity for new open space on the southern side of Military Road
- Ground floor setbacks on Military Road will provide more room for pedestrians and landscaping
- Four through-site-links will create a more permeable, village atmosphere

A vibrant plaza creates opportunities to socialise, play, and rest.

Context

The *Grosvenor Lane Planning Study* (NSC 2015) explores opportunities to revitalise the area and create further open space in Neutral Bay town centre.

This planning study builds on that work. It aims to deliver:

- A major new public plaza on the existing Grosvenor Lane car park by relocating the majority of public parking underground
- Shared zones on Waters Lane and Grosvenor Lane to improve existing public domain
- An underground supermarket at Rangers Road with pedestrian plaza above
- Through-site-links and ground floor setbacks throughout the town centre
- Shared zone along Barry Street, with links to May Gibbs Place and Young Street across Military Road

The potential adaptive re-use of the Neutral Bay fire station could also provide further outdoor space.

Through a staged relocation of the existing Grosvenor Lane car park and loading dock, sections of Grosvenor Lane could close over time. The final Grosvenor Lane plaza will be new, high-quality public domain located in the heart of the Neutral Bay town centre.

These interventions and strategies are summarised in Figure 12.

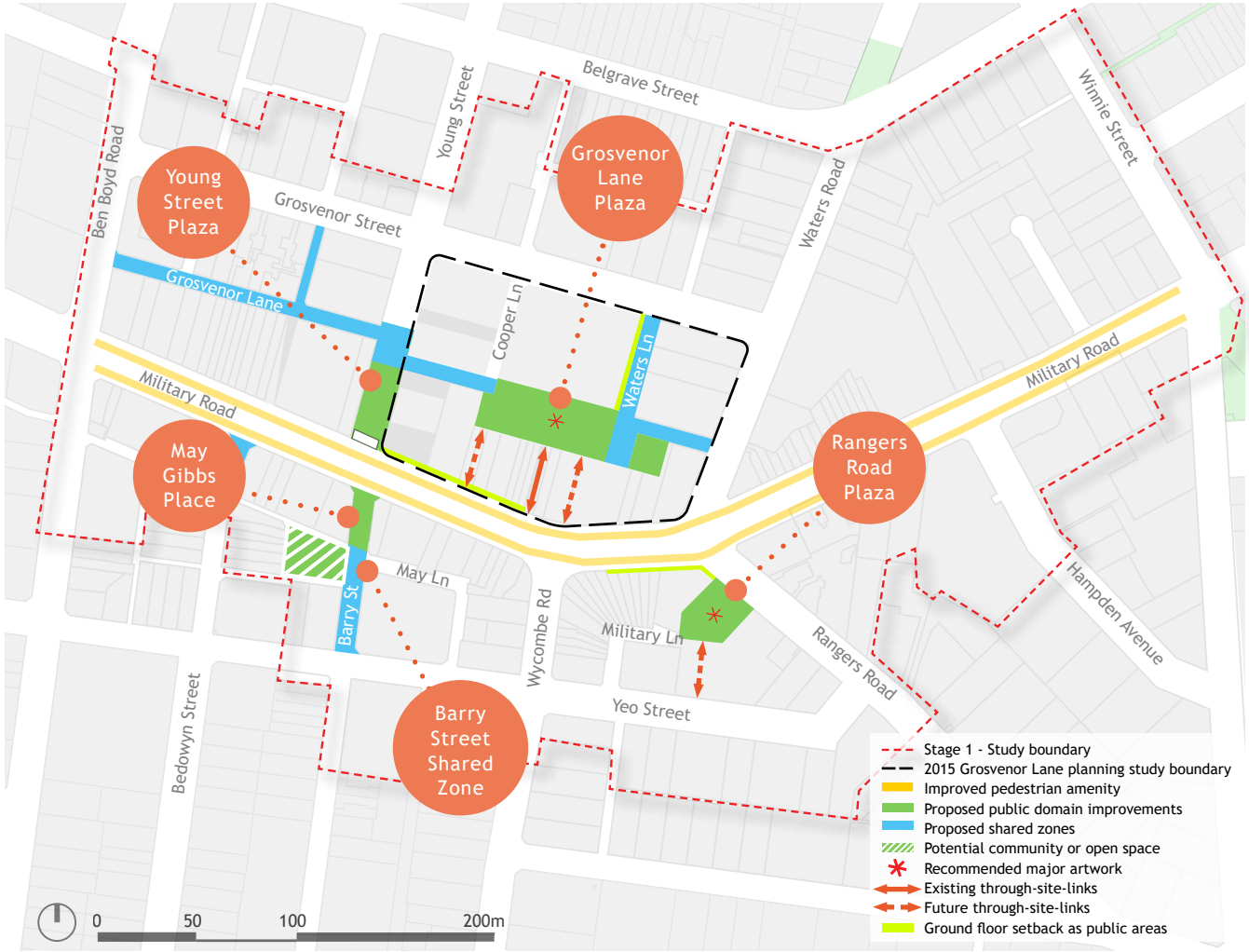


Figure 12 - Proposed public domain strategy for Neutral Bay town centre. This strategy focuses on pedestrian and public domain improvements throughout the town centre including the provision of new open space.

Grosvenor Lane Plaza

The existing Grosvenor Lane car park on Council-owned land currently provides an important public function supporting local shops and enabling loading/ unloading to the surrounding local businesses.

The *Grosvenor Lane Planning Study (2015)* encourages the amalgamation of several smaller lots around the Grosvenor Street car park. This amalgamation, coupled with height incentives delivered through the VPA process, would allow for the public car park to be conveniently relocated nearby, within private development sites so that a plaza can be developed on public land.

The Grosvenor Lane Plaza would be a major new public space in the heart of Neutral Bay. It would enjoy year -round sunlight and large enough to support weekend markets.

Several schemes to deliver the plaza have been proposed by surrounding landowners since the initial planning study. It is important for these development proposals to work towards a common masterplan so that the design can be achieved in stages.

By staging the delivery, remaining local businesses can continue trading with their existing parking and loading in place while sections of the plaza are being delivered.

Grosvenor Lane plaza and convenient public parking will support local businesses and enhance the village atmosphere of Neutral Bay.

Further detail is provided in chapter 3.4.

Figure 13 - Artist's impression of the long-term transformation of Grosvenor Lane. By relocating the existing Grosvenor Lane car park there is potential for a large new plaza in the middle of Neutral Bay town centre.

Objective

Create a new public plaza in the heart of the Neutral Bay town centre

1. Relocate existing public parking in the Grosvenor Lane car park into parking facility in Site 2 as amalgamated landholdings redevelop along Military Road (further detail in chapter 3.4)
2. Add landscaping, paving, major artwork, on-street bicycle parking and street furniture
3. Redirect traffic through Waters Lane and Coopers Lane with sufficient maneuvering space to turn large vehicles
4. Maintain good solar access to the plaza locating the maximum built form height to the north of Site1 and a 5m ground floor setback to the south
5. Car park access to be located on private land. Pedestrian access to the car park to be located on the edges of the plaza
6. Maintain the natural slope of the land and avoid stairs where possible to allow seamless connections between existing and future development. This also allows for deep soil opportunities
7. Encourage fine grain active retail frontages around the plaza and encourage outdoor dining
8. Design to enable host events, markets, food trucks
9. Staged delivery progressively delivers the final scheme for Grosvenor Lane Plaza (further detail in chapter 3.4)
10. During the interim stages of redevelopment of sites surrounding the Grosvenor Lane car park, Grosvenor Lane will remain open for parking and loading to existing businesses.

Figure 14 - Indicative ultimate masterplan of the Grosvenor Lane Plaza. Several other interim stages need to be considered when preparing a planning proposal for this area for all sites to work towards the principles of the Grosvenor Lane Plaza masterplan.

Rangers Road Plaza

A new public plaza on the southern side of Military Road can be delivered by relocating the current supermarket underground. This would provide much needed open space and expanded retail opportunities to support population growth.

There is currently a high volume of pedestrian movement in the area from the supermarket making it an ideal location for more public domain space. The plaza would be activated by shops, restaurants, and cafes along the edges, creating a vibrant and safe open space for the community.

Objective

Create a new public plaza along Rangers Road

1. Underground the existing supermarket to support a 1,000m² plaza that has good year-round solar access
2. Create a through-site-link from the new plaza to Yeo Street
3. Promote active edges around the plaza such as retail, cafes and outdoor dining. This includes a continuous line of fine-grain retail flowing into the space from Military Road
4. Encourage alfresco dining and other late-night trading opportunities in the plaza
5. Entries into the supermarket or underground parking should be integrated along the edges of the plaza to ensure the plaza is not encumbered by built form structures
6. Add landscaping, paving, major artwork, on-street bicycle parking and street furniture

Further detail is provided in chapter 3.4.

Figure 15 - Artist's impression of the future Ranger Road Plaza. The space will be activated by retail, cafes and restaurants along the edges and a continuous, open plaza which can host a variety of community events.

Young Street Plaza

The closure of Young Street was identified as part of the State Government funded B-Line project.

Young Street plaza is located adjacent to key pedestrian routes including Military Road, the B-Line bus stop and May Gibbs Place. The plaza improves wayfinding across Military Road and strengthens the connection between the north and south side of Neutral Bay town centre.

In August 2019, Council considered the consultation outcomes from an initial draft for the proposed Young Street plaza. It was determined to trial a temporary closure of the street. The temporary closure commenced in November 2020 and will continue until March 2021. The trial will allow Council to make an informed decision about the future of the plaza.

Objective

Investigate the delivery of a new public plaza on Young Street

1. Should the temporary closure be a success, investigate the permanent closure of Young Street between Military Road and Grosvenor Lane
2. Maximise space for pedestrians while retaining loading and driveway access requirements
3. Include high quality finishes with new street trees, garden beds, public seating and paving materials
4. Improve access for people walking and cycling to B-line bus stops
5. Liaise with TfNSW to investigate the realignment of existing traffic signals over Military Road to provide a more direct link between May Gibbs Place and Young Street

Figure 16 - Artist's impression of Young Street Plaza from the July 2019 exhibition. The closure of Young Street as a thoroughfare to vehicles provides necessary open space in Neutral Bay town centre and strengthens the connection between the north and south side of Neutral Bay.

Barry Street shared zone

The Barry Street shared zone will improve accessibility in a north-south direction through the town centre and link existing public domain sites including May Gibbs Place and Young Street plaza. It will also connect with key services including St. John's Church, Neutral Bay fire station, Neutral Bay Public School, public parking and a re-aligned pedestrian crossing at Military Road.

The future redevelopment of the Barry Street car park will complement these improvements. Options include undergrounding or relocating the public car park, future community facilities and improved public domain.

Objective

Investigate converting Barry Street into a shared zone

1. Provide street furniture and paving to visually connect May Gibbs Place south to the shared zone as well as to the new Young Street Plaza
2. The potential adaptive re-use of the Neutral Bay fire station could also provide further outdoor space along Barry Street. This will require engagement with Fire and Rescue NSW
3. Improve pedestrian connectivity across Yeo Street

Figure 17 - Artist's impression of the future Barry Street Shared Zone. This promenade will improve pedestrian connection in Neutral Bay town centre and provide new open space for the community.

Through-site-links

Neutral Bay town centre has three unique pedestrian connections from Military Road into Grosvenor Lane car park. The midpoint connection is on public land, open to the sky and adjacent to the existing Neutral Bay community centre. The other two connections are enclosed arcades situated at both ends of the Grosvenor Lane car park. All three link the car park with important public uses on Military Road such as the B-Line bus stops and the pedestrian crossing at Wycombe Road. A similar opportunity exists at Yeo Street with the creation of the proposed Rangers Road Plaza.

Objective

Retain and optimise permeability between Military Road and Grosvenor Lane car park and towards Yeo Street through existing and new pedestrian connections.

1. Pedestrian through-site links should be provided between Military Road and parallel laneways/ streets to the north and south of Military Road to enhance pedestrian connectivity
2. Create through-site-links that are open to the sky and lined by 3 storey podium buildings. This will allow light in and give the space a human scale appropriate to the village atmosphere of the area
3. Encourage accessibility along the through-site-links by using the natural grade of the land
4. Create through-site links that have active facades to promote street activation and to create safer, accessible spaces for pedestrians

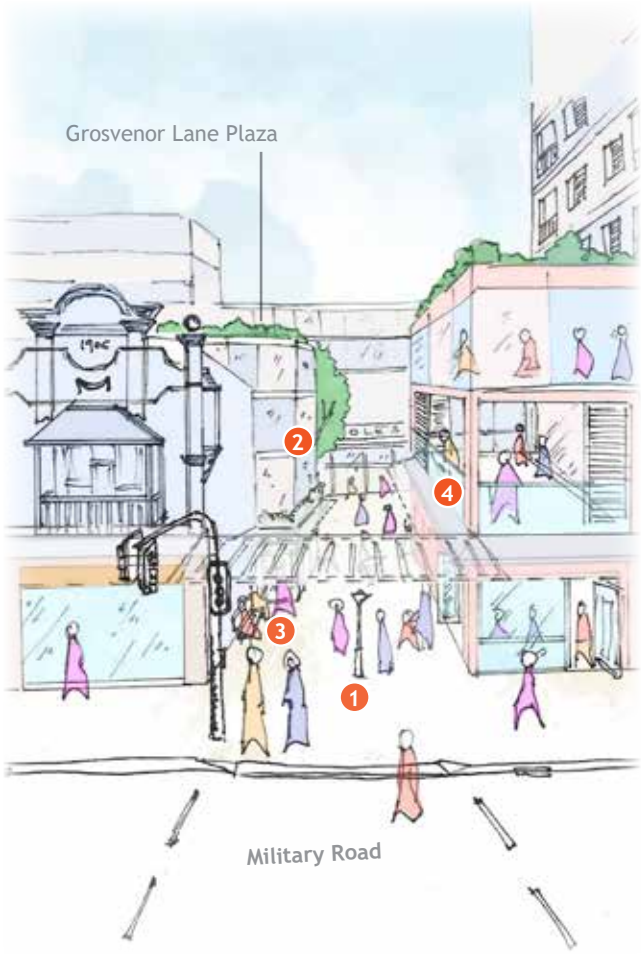


Figure 18 - Artist's impression of a through-site-link at Wycombe Road. The link is open to the sky and seamlessly connects to Grosvenor Lane. Also pictured is the proposed new community centre and art alley.

Figure 19 - Spice Alley in Kensington Street, Chippendale, is a good example of an active laneway housing a variety of uses. The laneway is vibrant after-hours and on weekends and has become a key tourism spot in Sydney. It utilises active street edges, vegetation, lighting, and solar access to draw people in.

3.1 EMPLOYMENT

Community views

Over 70% of survey participants identified the restaurants, cafes and bars in and around Grosvenor Lane, Grosvenor Street and Young Street as their favourite and most valued spots in the study area.

Businesses identified the following needs:

- Ease of access to a wide variety of shops and services
- Well planned, mixed-use spaces with the additional provision of commercial, retail and residential floorspace
- Increases in the residential and business sectors in the immediate catchment
- Enhanced opportunity for outdoor dining and rooftop bars
- Maintain loading zones and servicing capabilities
- Improved public domain, community facilities, public spaces and shared zones
- Accessible town centre with adequate customer parking

Landowners and residents questioned the forecast of employment floorspace demand due to Covid-19. A preliminary review of the long-term effects has been taken into consideration in the finalisation of this study.

Context

The North Sydney Council's *Economic Development Strategy (ESD) (2016)* informs Council policies, procedures and projects to stimulate and facilitate economic growth across the Local Government Area (LGA). The ESD outlines weaknesses and opportunities for economic growth in the Neutral Bay town centre.

Neutral Bay currently supports around 2,850 jobs. An economic study commissioned by Council suggests this could fall to 1,500 jobs by 2036 if there are no changes to current planning controls. Critically, to support the predicted growth of existing industries in Neutral Bay, the study recommends the planning controls be amended to support capacity for a total of 4,000 jobs by 2036.

This planning study proposes to support anticipated job growth in the area by allowing small increases in building heights in selected areas to allow for more office space on upper floors.

Aims

This chapter provides the policy basis to:

- Retain existing employment character that supports local businesses
- Increase local employment capacity to meet future retail and office demand by 2036
- Support start-ups and other local businesses
- Develop a high level of local street activity and amenity
- Support greater diversity and amenity of retail uses

Current planning controls may result in a **loss of 27,500m² employment space in Neutral Bay town centre.**

Increase employment capacity

Current planning controls within North Sydney Council's *Local Environmental Plan 2013 (NSLEP 2013)*, specifically the non-residential floor space ratio (FSR), could result in a reduction of 1,500 jobs in the Neutral Bay area far below the expected demand by 2036.

Under the current controls, sites can convert commercial buildings into residential development with half the ground floor being provided as retail. A non-residential FSR of 0.5:1 applies.

By increasing the non-residential FSR in the mixed use zone, this reduction can be reversed.

If the FSR is changed to 1.2:1 it would require future buildings not only to build non-residential floorspace on ground floor but also above. Expanded opportunities should be explored on larger sites.

Objective

Maintain the existing level of shops and services in the centre.

Ensure new development supports long-term local jobs growth.

- Increase the non-residential floor space ratio (FSR) in accordance with Figure 20

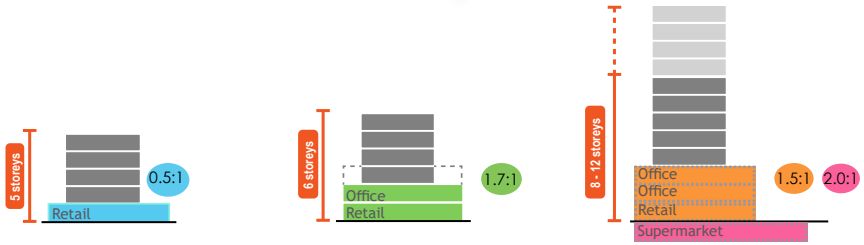


Figure 20 - (Top right) Proposed minimum increases to non-residential FSR in the NSLEP 2013 and further increases through planning proposals. (Bottom right) Indicative diagram showing increase as floor storeys.

Encouraging small businesses

There is demand for flexible office space over traditional offices. This includes short-term rentals and coworking spaces.

Flexible workspaces encourage a highly diversified workforce that can include small businesses, start-up companies, freelancers, and entrepreneurs. There has been an emergence of tech-related industries in Neutral Bay and surrounding areas that could benefit from these flexible office options.

These businesses are generally attracted to smaller office spaces (<200m^2) at more affordable rental prices. Creating small but flexible spaces, which can be altered or increased with demand, would appeal to both start-up businesses and freelancers as well as more traditional industries including doctors, lawyers and service agencies.

Diversifying retail uses

The quality and diversity of tenancy mix helps define the identity of Neutral Bay town centre by creating an attractive and interesting place to conduct business and visit.

Currently the town centre attracts small-to-medium size businesses with less than twenty employees. There are several banks, financial institutions, and medical services in the centre which reflect the large residential population of the area. The centre also has a high number of specialist and consulting services relating to property, business and other industries. Existing office and business premises generally range between 100-250m^2 in size.

Along Military Road, a major transport corridor, floorplates are larger in size and beneficial for companies seeking higher exposure. Smaller, fine-grain retail is favoured within the town centre to enhance the existing village atmosphere. In instances where there is an opportunity for double frontage, both sides of the premise should be activated where possible.

To create a diversity of retail uses, it is important to have flexibility and diversity in floorspace provisions. An allotment of smaller retail and office floorplates in any future development (50-100m^2) will help diversify retail in the centre, help support smaller, local businesses and appeal to new start-ups and freelancers.

Enhancing street activity

Retail located along street edges can increase the vibrancy of a centre, especially after hours or on weekends, and improve passive surveillance and safety for pedestrians.

Initiatives like outdoor dining can activate a space and encourage community interaction. It also invites and attracts passing trade into an area, benefiting not only the restaurant but the surrounding retail precinct. Fine-grain retail, cafes and restaurants should be encouraged in the town centre with more passive services such as banks, real estate agencies, showrooms, etc. located along secondary pedestrian thoroughfares or on Military Road.

Figure 21 - Outdoor dining along Young Lane greatly increases the pedestrian safety and amenity of a service laneway by activating otherwise latent street edges.

Objectives

Encourage a mix of retail tenancy sizes for a diverse range of users.

Support uses that activate the centre during the day, night, and on weekends to make it a more attractive location for commercial operations and additional residential development.

Support a mix of small local offices and start-up businesses.

- Allow for a variety of retail, restaurants, cafes and outdoor dining at ground level. Office and business space will be provided on the first and second floor and residential above
- Specialty shops that provide active trade should each have shop-front entries that open to a laneway or street

To meet the new, non-residential FSR requirements development proposals could consider:

- Smaller floorplates tailored to the town centre with retail spaces at 51-100m^2 and offices at 101-250m^2
- Adaptable, flexible spaces
- Inclusion of incubator hubs and coworking spaces
- The 'pop-up shop' application on existing and future vacant commercial space to support entrepreneurs and start-up businesses and minimise negative amenity impacts during a redevelopment process

Figure 22 - Outdoor dining along Rangers Road helps activate the street and draws people in.

Figure 23 - Double Bay has an active through-block connection, framed by a number of retail shops, cafes and a large supermarket. This area is well activated at night and on the weekends as well as during standard work hours.

3.2 TRANSPORT

Community views

A Council authorised transport study identified community views on transport in the area.

Key transport insights from this study are:

- Military Road creates a barrier between the north and south of Neutral Bay town centre
- People have a sense of vulnerability when it comes to their safety on and around Military Road
- Two thirds of respondents usually access the town centre by walking or cycling
- People value access to parking in or near the town centre

Public feedback to this study identified traffic and parking concerns often related specifically to the Grosvenor Lane car park. Many submissions highlighted the importance of convenient access to local shops and businesses.

Context

The Neutral Bay town centre is dominated by commuter traffic on Military Road which has created a major barrier between the northern and southern sides of the centre.

The B-Line bus service has resulted in reduced safety and amenity for pedestrians.

Military Road's role as a key transport corridor has had adverse impacts on the surrounding urban form and amenity for all transport users. It has resulted in a lack of public open space and greenery, poor local walking conditions (particularly for more vulnerable members of the community), limited on-street activity outside of business hours and, more generally, a change in how Military Road is perceived by the community.

Council is managing traffic and access in the area through the North Sydney Council *Local Access and Traffic Management Plan (2019) (LATM)*. Actions in the LATM include shared zone upgrades in Young Lane and Grosvenor Lane (west).

There is also a focus on intersection improvements and redistributing parking to gain public domain space and shared zones. These changes will prioritise and improve pedestrian amenity above other modes of transport throughout the centre.

Aims

Designing for pedestrians and increasing the amount of public space to walk, rest and socialise, makes streets accessible and safe for all people. It also makes the town centre more attractive for businesses and residents due to increased pedestrian activity.

The streetscape should be visually interesting and include engaging building frontages with continuous awnings to provide shelter. Materials for shared zones will continue across intersections to slow down traffic and enhance perceptions of pedestrian safety.

This chapter provides the policy basis to:

- Support cycling and walking as key modes of transport
- Enhance the connectivity and amenity across and along Military Road
- Support loading needs of local businesses
- Maintain access to parking and loading for existing local shops

B-Line projects

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) completed the B-Line program in Neutral Bay in 2019. This involved upgrades to the road corridor and implementation of bus priority measures to improve reliability of bus services affected by congestion at several bottlenecks between Mona Vale and Sydney CBD.

B-Line construction has removed the parking buffer between pedestrians and the road, creating a less safe environment for pedestrians and a public perception of vulnerability. The concentration of people waiting at the bus-stop has led to conflicting movement on the footpath. Additional funding from State Government is being provided to help mitigate the impact of the B-Line on pedestrian amenity.

Objectives

Mitigate impacts of the B-Line on pedestrian amenity.

- Investigate the permanent closure of Young Street to deliver more public domain along Military Road
- Relocate the existing pedestrian crossing in line with May Gibbs Place and the proposed Young Street Plaza
- Repave Military Road footpaths

Additionally, as part of the B-Line program, Council is:

- Preparing an Urban Branding Strategy for Neutral Bay and Cremorne along Military Road to refresh commercial areas after two years of construction
- Implementing the Neutral Bay and Cremorne Public Domain Upgrade plans
- Implementing the B-Line Public Art Strategy for bus stops in Neutral Bay and Cremorne town centres

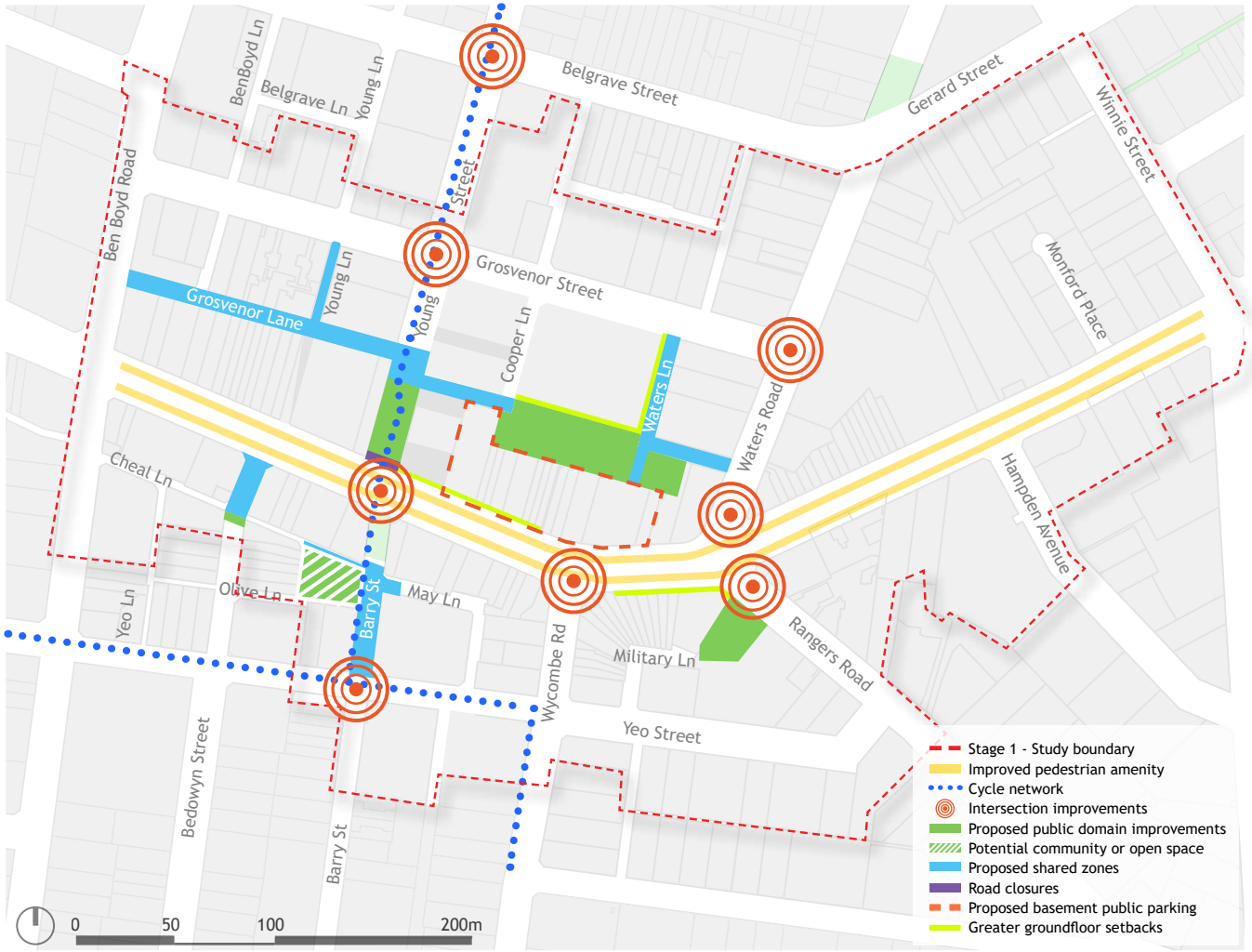


Figure 24 - Future transport improvements and public car park opportunities that address the increasing detrimental effects of motorised vehicles in Neutral Bay town centre over the last decades.

Beaches Link

In 2016, the NSW Government announced the Beaches Link (BL) project, a motorway tunnel connecting the Northern Beaches to the Warringah Freeway. The intent was to relieve congestion on existing routes to and from the Northern Beaches, including on Military Road. However, project updates released in 2018 suggest that there will only be a 15% reduction in traffic on Military Road as a result of the Beaches Link.

The release of the *Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrades Environmental Impact Statement* show the retention of the Ernest Street ramps. However, the proposed 'simplification' of the Warringah Freeway results in:

- The Ernest Street ramps only providing access to the Sydney Harbour Tunnel
- The Military Road ramps only providing access to the Sydney Harbour Bridge

While some Military Road traffic will re-assign to the Ourimbah Road corridor to access the city's eastern suburbs, this is likely to be outweighed by the majority of trips that drive over the bridge to access destinations in Sydney CBD.

This suggests that there will be limited reductions in Military Road traffic as a result of the revised Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrades proposal.

Military Road

Military Road plays an important role in Sydney's strategic transport network as well as being the focus for Neutral Bay's local road network.

Military Road has a carriageway that is 6 traffic lanes wide, accommodating temporal bus lanes, bus stop zones, some time-restricted on-street parking as well as two traffic lanes in each direction.

In 2019, RMS analysis showed that, in the AM peak hour, approximately twice as many walking and bus journeys were made on the Neutral Bay section of Military Road than car journeys. Analysis of historic traffic data shows that traffic volumes have remained static and, in some cases declined on Military Road since 2010; this may be linked to generally static populations in both the Northern Beaches and Mosman over the same period. With limited on-street parking outside peak hours providing minimal buffer between pedestrians on footpaths and fast moving traffic on the carriageway, community perception is that the Neutral Bay section of Military Road has become increasingly dangerous over the last few decades.

Despite this, the RMS's recent B-line project resulted in significant increases in Military Road traffic capacity. Extension of traffic tidal flow systems and provision of additional signal phase time for regional through-traffic coming at the expense of additional pedestrian crossing priority, Military Road cycling improvements or additional road-space re-allocation to bus infrastructure. It also resulted in reduced priority for local traffic movements.

Limited efforts to address the community's safety and amenity concerns have included the introduction of a temporal school speed limit zone between Rangers Road and Cremorne. This speed limit zone demonstrates that speed limits can be reduced to improve the safety and amenity of pedestrian and other transport modes. In 2016, Council adopted recommendations to introduce 40km/h "High Pedestrian Activity Area" speed limit zones to improve the safety and amenity in all North Sydney centres. Advocacy for reduced speed limits on Military is part of Council's on-going advocacy program.

Objectives

Improve the safety and amenity of Military Road by lobbying the NSW Government to:

- Pursue projects that will achieve more significant traffic reduction on Military Road and encourage existing traffic to by-pass the Neutral Bay Centre, thereby encouraging even more walking, cycling and public transport use in the area
- Introduce a 40km/h High Pedestrian Activity Area speed limits to improve safety and amenity
- Widen footpaths and allow longer crossing times for pedestrians
- Introduce separated cycle lanes on Military Road
- Increase road space allocation for buses on Military Road
- Allocate additional space for deliveries in growing local centres
- Re-introduce on-street parking on Military Road
- Increase priority for local traffic movements entering/crossing the Military Road corridor

Support pedestrians & cyclists

To create a more engaging, pleasant and attractive town centre, there is a need to support cycling and walking. 66% of residents use cycling or walking as one of their modes of transportation to access the Neutral Bay town centre. Prioritising the experience for pedestrians and cyclists will improve amenity throughout the Neutral Bay town centre.

Supporting walking and cycling as preferred modes of transport provides wider public benefits including:

- Improved environment sustainability
- Healthy lifestyle
- Affordable transport
- Increased business activity
- Social interaction and well-being
- Less traffic congestion

Several public domain upgrades that support this strategy include a shared zone in Grosvenor Lane, Barry Street and the Young Street closure.

Figure 25 - A shared zone can restrict vehicle access to a space at specific times, allowing the space to be fully pedestrianised periodically.

Figure 26 - The recent completion of the Grosvenor Lane shared includes new paving, furniture, landscaping and night-time safety improvements including new lighting. A shared zone enhances the pedestrian amenity significantly as drivers must give way to pedestrians at all times.

Balance transport priorities

Slowing down motorised vehicles around the town centre will help enhance the existing village atmosphere and increase pedestrian safety.

This study advocates for:

- Enforced slower speed limits across Neutral Bay town centre and Military Road
- New innovative ways to slow down cars, especially at intersections
- Supports the roll-out of shared zones in Waters Lane, Barry Street and Grosvenor Lane

Needs of local businesses

Servicing and delivery are imperative to the daily operation of local businesses. Ensuring the efficiency of services and deliveries is retained and is in a location that reduces impacts to the public realm is important.

Both public domain and access opportunities will improve the shopping experience of Neutral Bay town centre and along Military Road but will require innovative management of loading and deliveries.

Future development proposals have an opportunity to relocate some of the public parking and loading. The relocation of some of those functions within the development opens up valuable space in front of the building for pedestrians. Meanwhile at neighbouring locations, existing local shops and businesses should be able to continue trading with their existing parking and loading in place and relocated if their site redevelops at a later stage.

Figure 27 - This table top junction in Port Macquarie, NSW, slows down vehicles and prioritises pedestrians. Intersection improvements within Neutral Bay should consider a similar approach.

Figure 28 - The Grosvenor Lane car park includes a variety of uses including outdoor dining and a pocket park. Parking and loading are essential for the local shops but also take up the majority of this great space.

Parking

The balance between parking and other uses needs to be carefully managed. Creating more public and private parking spaces in the centre increases traffic congestion. This is not sustainable in the long term and does not support Council's overarching objective of enabling cycling and walking as the key modes of transport.

Notwithstanding, on-street parking is recognised as a valuable public asset that not only facilitates access to the Neutral Bay town centre, particularly for less mobile members of the community, but can also act as a buffer between higher speed carriageway traffic and the footpath.

The total number of on-street parking spaces in Neutral Bay will be maintained unless no alternative parking arrangements are feasible. Any loss of parking will be offset through improvements to Neutral Bay's public domain, walking, cycling and public transport safety and amenity.

Council accommodates public parking as a service to the community and will continue to do so. It is recognised that access to public parking will need to support all members of the community, including the less mobile, and support existing and future local shops. This is particularly relevant for the proposed relocation of the public parking from the Grosvenor Lane car park.

Objectives

- Improve amenity for alternative modes of transport including walking and cycling.
- Provide public parking to support local shops.
- Replace on-street parking with off-street public car parking to free up public domain.
- Maintain adequate space for loading and services in high pedestrian activity areas.
- Deliver public domain and local access benefits as described in Chapter 2.2 - Public Domain
- Incorporate site access requirements as described in Chapter 3.4
- For significant development sites, any private redevelopment proposal will need to demonstrate that satisfactory arrangements have been made to ensure that there is no net increase in traffic generation as a result of the development

Transport works

- Major redevelopment sites will require an internalised loading dock

As well as delivering site specific improvements there is an opportunity to update Council's *Local Access and Traffic Management Action Plan (2018)* and *Parking Management Plan*. This update may consider:

- Delivering a cycle path along Young Street from Yeo Street to Sutherland Street including associated intersection improvements
- Improving intersections for pedestrians on Yeo Street, Waters Road and Military Road and adding a pedestrian crossing with build-outs on Yeo Street at Barry Street
- Delivering new shared zones in Bydown Street, Cheal Lane and Grosvenor Lane
- Investigating opportunities for footpath widening and kerb build-outs (parklets) that can be used for outdoor dining, street furniture and landscaping
- Introducing a reduced speed limit across the whole of the study area
- Maximising pedestrian amenity by providing time-shared, ground-level loading and parking. Loading may occur within set times, for example in the early morning and evening

Improvements on Military Road are subject to NSW State Government approval.

3.3 BUILT FORM

Community views

This Future Direction report has been shaped by community feedback received from mid-2018 to 2020.

Early engagement encouraged comments on values and issues from residents and workers. This feedback provided valuable insights in Neutral Bay with the suburb's 'village atmosphere' rating as one of its greatest attributes.

Feedback from Discussion papers that examined a range of urban design options were on exhibition in mid-2019.

There were mixed opinions regarding building height increases in the area. 52% of survey responses supported moderate increases in building height from 5 storeys to 6-8 storeys to help deliver necessary infrastructure. A few were strongly opposed to high rise buildings in the area advising it would be out of scale with Neutral Bay's village atmosphere. The need for more public domain in the area was also acknowledged and submissions were received by larger site owners that propose to deliver on this need.

The report was placed on public exhibition for an extended period of 14 weeks during the pandemic in 2020. Most frequently raised issues were concerns relating to building height, traffic and parking.

This final report addresses these concerns by removing the draft proposed height increases on one of the most difficult sites in terms of built form, streetscape and impact context.

Context

In recent years there has been significant development pressure along the Military Road Corridor. These interests vary in scale and intent, but they commonly seek to challenge North Sydney Council's current planning controls, particularly in terms of building height and zoning. This Future Direction report provides a framework that new planning proposals can be evaluated against which will help contribute to the desired future character of the area and make a tangible contribution to the public domain.

Received feedback from stakeholder engagement identified a need to meet community demand on various issues including the lack of good community facilities and shortage of public domain. The Discussion papers utilised a building height increase across the town centre to leverage public benefits delivered through contributions over time.

Similarly, as proposed in this final report, permitting a height increase on specific sites through planning proposals can result in direct, tangible benefits for the community and contribute to the vibrancy and diversity of the town centre.

Aim

This chapter examines existing planning controls in Neutral Bay town centre with consideration of the increased need for jobs growth in the area and community feedback on previous design strategies from several public engagements.

Strategies outlined in this report take into account the above considerations while acknowledging the existing 'village atmosphere' context of Neutral Bay town centre.

These strategies aim to:

- Improve the existing built form controls in both the North Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2013 (NSLEP 2013) and the North Sydney Development Control Plan 2013 (NSDCP 2013)
- Incorporate non-residential floor space ratio (FSR) controls into the NSLEP 2013
- Provide guidelines for planning proposals (PP) that outline the outcomes of in-kind public benefit contributions (voluntary planning agreements/VPA). These outcomes and their benefits to Neutral Bay town centre have been discussed in previous chapters

Land Use zoning

The majority of the study area is zoned B4 - Mixed Use under NSLEP 2013. The objective of the B4 zone is to create interesting and vibrant centres with a mix of business, retail, office, residential and other compatible development in accessible locations that maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling.

The study area transitions to R3 – Medium Density Residential and R4 - High Density Residential on the periphery. The R3 and R4 zones provide a variety of housing types that complement the amenity of the surrounding area.

There are also pockets of land zoned SP2 - Special Uses (Infrastructure). The SP2 zone provides for classified roads, car parks, emergency services facilities, educational establishments, places of public worship.

All proposed changes in this report are related to the B4 - Mixed Use zoning and remain appropriate in this context. This includes changes to the height of building, non-residential FSR and other changes to the DCP. Advocacy regarding improvements to the Military Road and potential adaptive re-use of the NSW Fire Station are related to SP2 - Special Uses but does not require a change of land-use.

It is recommended to investigate changes to the land use zoning when new public domain is being delivered as part of a planning proposal.

Objective

Retain existing characteristics of the land-uses.

- The zoning of new public domain to public recreation (RE1) will be investigated once firm proposals are tabled
- No other changes are proposed to the zoning

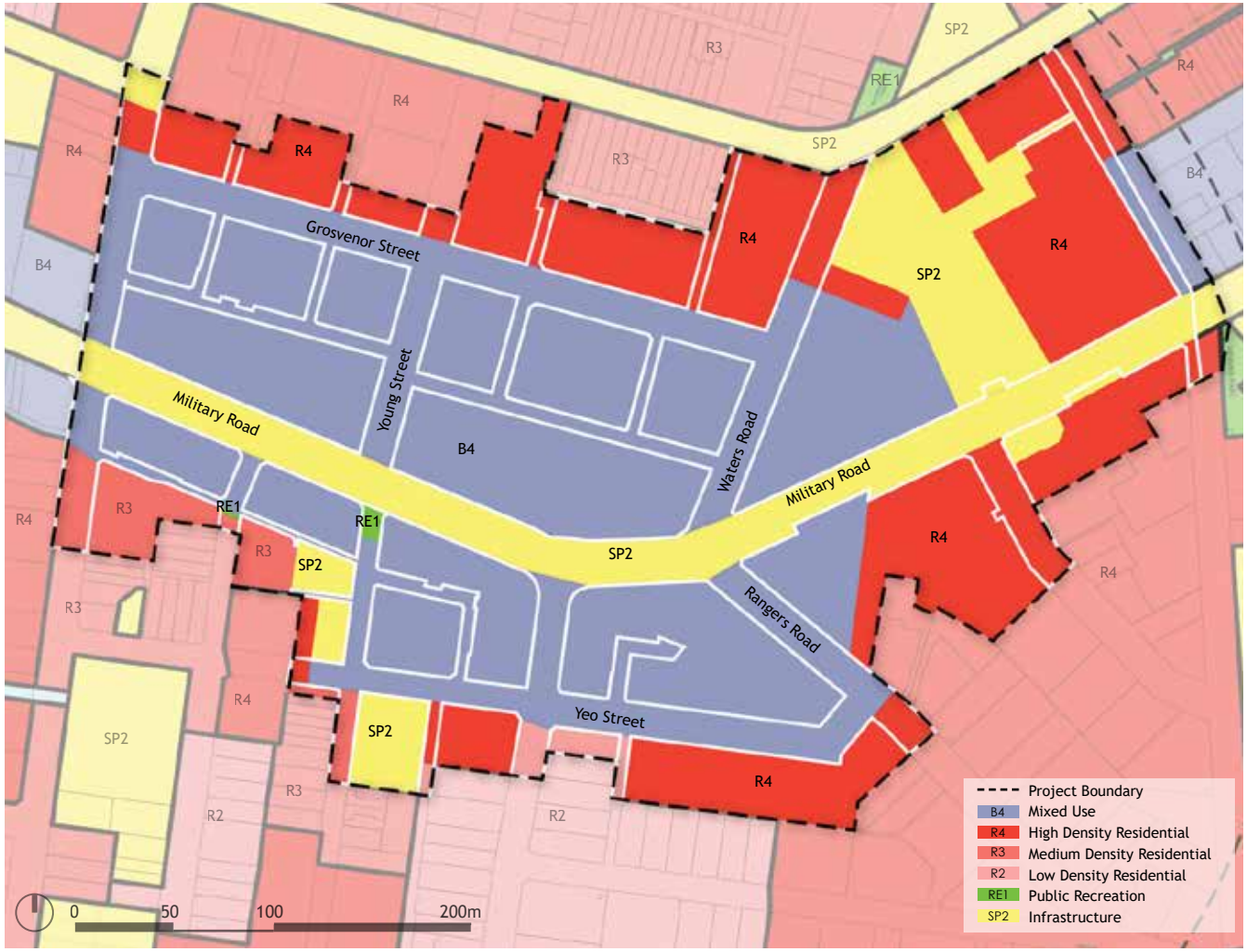


Figure 29 - NSLEP 2013 - Existing Land Use Zoning. There are no direct changes to the existing land zoning controls at this stage. Future changes could be considered if they allow for the better delivery of public domain benefits.

Strengthen existing local character

Neutral Bay was named by Governor Arthur Phillip, when he decreed in 1789 that all non-British 'neutral' ships visiting Port Jackson were to anchor there. A track running along the ridge from North Sydney to supply the newly-installed fortifications at Middle Head was formed in the early 1870s. Shops and businesses gradually opened up around this Military Road.

Neutral Bay contains some heritage listed items and other iconic facades along Military Road that contribute to the local character of the Neutral Bay town centre. The early 20th century buildings, or 'period buildings' that are considered iconic facades are located at:

- 165-169 Wycombe Road & 175-177 Military Road
- 246-260 Military Road

Objectives

Protect heritage items and initiate adaptive re-use strategies where appropriate in consultation with a heritage specialist.

Retain the local, vibrant, outdoor character of the Neutral Bay town centre retail experience.

1. Retain heritage items listed in the NSLEP 2013 and State Heritage Register
2. Retain the form and external fabric of the original front building at 194 Military Road and front facade of 196 Military Road. Alterations should treat the heritage components as the prominent feature of any future development proposal.
3. Retain iconic facades of 'period buildings' that contribute to the local character of Neutral Bay town centre (Figures 31 & 32)
4. Investigate the adaptive re-use of the Neutral Bay fire station for community uses with Fire and Rescue NSW

Figure 30 - Existing conservation items and conservation areas from NSLEP 2013. Buildings of character that have been identified through this report have also been highlighted.

Figure 31 - Local listed heritage items such as the Neutral Bay fire station and 194 and 196 Military Road, contribute to the local character and value of Neutral Bay Town Centre. These items have been thoughtfully incorporated into the suggested site proposals documented in this chapter.

Figure 32 - Besides the listed heritage items additional iconic facades are encouraged to be retained as part of any redevelopment to contribute to the local character and value of Neutral Bay Town Centre. These facades have architectural and historical merit and contribute positively to the area.

Building height

The current maximum height of buildings in the mixed-use zone of Neutral Bay town centre is 16 metres which equates to 5 storey buildings. There are some taller residential buildings of up to 16 storeys in the area, built along the high-density residential edge of the mixed-use zone. These buildings were constructed in the 1960s and 70s and significantly exceed the current residential height limit of, generally, 12 metres or 4 storeys.

Military Road runs along a ridgeline with the centre of Neutral Bay also located in this elevated position. Subsequently, the area is the backdrop of the skyline from many distant vantage points, as well as, offering magnificent views from the existing taller residential apartments within the area.

Increasing the maximum building height with a single storey to accommodate the proposed increases to non-residential FSR (Chapter 3.1) should sustain the ongoing demand for residential and office space.

A further increase in maximum building height is recommended where new community facilities and public domain projects can be delivered through voluntary planning agreements (VPAs) or in-kind contributions (Chapter 1.1). These may occur on larger, amalgamated sites that can accommodate taller buildings. The proposed height would not exceed existing tall towers in the surrounding R4-residential zone, thereby keeping within the existing character of the Neutral Bay. The height increases will transition down from Military Road to ensure there is minimal impact on surrounding residential areas.

Proposed heights are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.4.

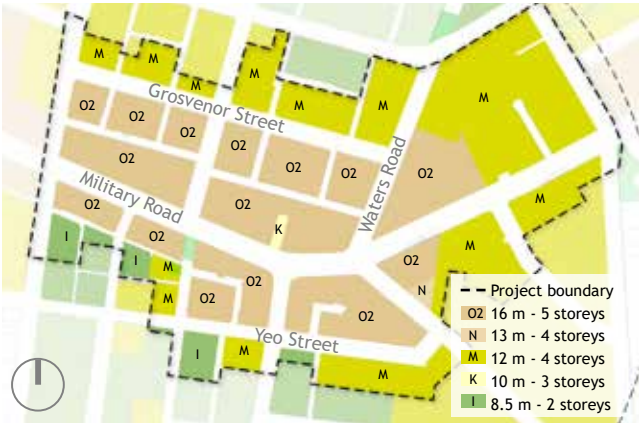


Figure 33 - NSLEP 2013 - Existing Maximum Building Height controls.

Section location

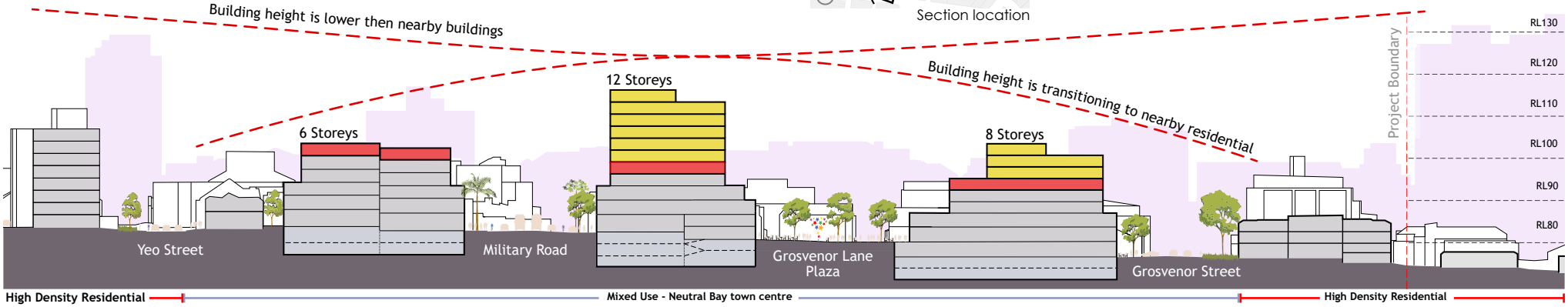


Figure 34 - North-south section through Neutral Bay town centre looking west. New height limits will meet the demand for non-residential floorspace (pink) with a few taller residential towers (yellow) to help provide much needed public benefits. Details on Planning Proposal and VPAs can be found in Chapter 3.4.

Objectives

Carefully manage increases in building height on a limited number of locations:

- to maintain a viable level of employment and residential capacity
- in a manner that does not detract from the village character of the centre
- that can deliver public benefits identified in this report

1. Increase the maximum building height from 5 storeys to 6 storeys for sites identified in Figure 35 to deliver increased employment floor space
2. Council will consider planning proposals that seek to increase the maximum height limit that applies to sites 1-3, to enable a development up to the maximum number of storeys shown on Figure 35
3. Retain current height controls for residential areas
4. Proposed height is subject to solar and setback controls described in this report, the NSDCP and SEPP65
5. Residential towers should appear slender, maximise above podium habitable facades to all sides and with tower breaks to avoid a continuous wall along Military Road

More information regarding solar requirements are provided on the next pages.

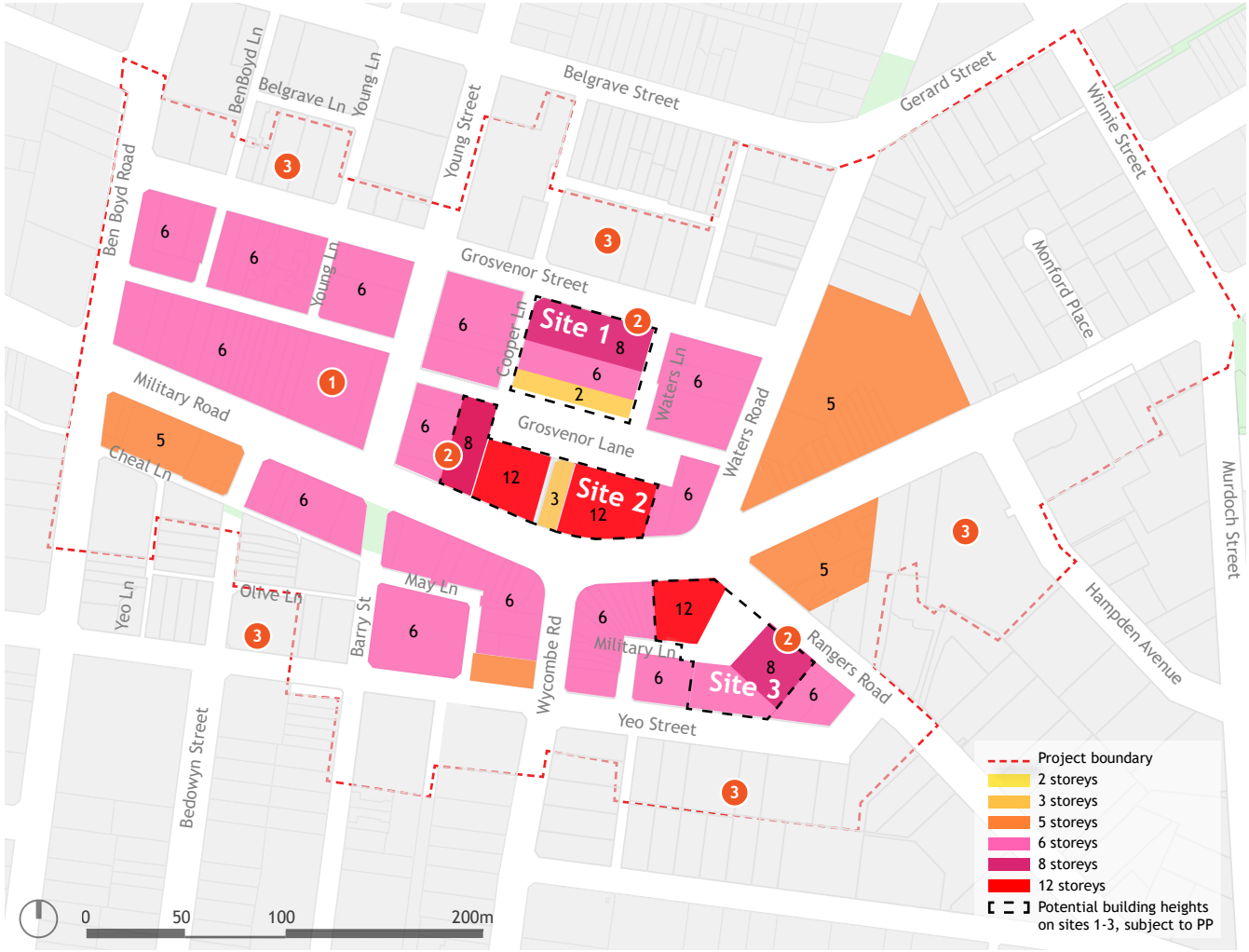


Figure 35 - Proposed new building heights controls (in storeys) in Neutral Bay town centre. A slight increase in the maximum building heights will cater to future jobs growth. The potential heights within the three outlined sites will first require detailed planning proposals and negotiations for VPAs or in-kind contributions before changes to the NSLEP 2013 are considered.

Protect sunlight to public domain

New development has the potential to impact solar access to the public domain. Current controls allow a maximum height of 5 storeys in Neutral Bay town centre. Any increases to this maximum building height should avoid further solar access impacts to key public domain sites including May Gibbs Place.

Redevelopment at sites 1-3 (Chapter 3.4) will optimise solar access to existing and future public domain by incorporating significant setbacks and staggered building heights to any buildings that exceed the NSLEP 2013 height controls through planning proposals.

Objectives

Protect existing solar access to public open space to maintain Neutral Bay's village atmosphere.

Prevent overshadowing of important existing and future public spaces.

1. Proposals for sites 1-3 should demonstrate that there is a significant increase in solar access to the surrounding public domain compared to existing controls
2. Buildings above 5 storeys should not create additional shadows on May Gibbs Place and the future Barry Street shared zone during winter solstice
3. For other sites within the mixed-use zone, development proposals must demonstrate that satisfactory measures have been proposed to protect solar amenity to the following existing and future spaces - Grosvenor Lane Plaza, Rangers Road Plaza & Young Street Plaza
4. Maintain a minimum of 2 hours of sunlight to 70% of residential dwellings consistent with the solar provisions of NSDCP 2013 and SEPP65 (ADG)

Figure 36 - Existing and future overshadowing and solar access gains. Under the proposed schemes there is noticable solar gain in public domain areas and minimal new overshadowing.

Solar access study sites - Winter Solstice - 21 June - 10am

GROSVENOR LANE

Existing controls

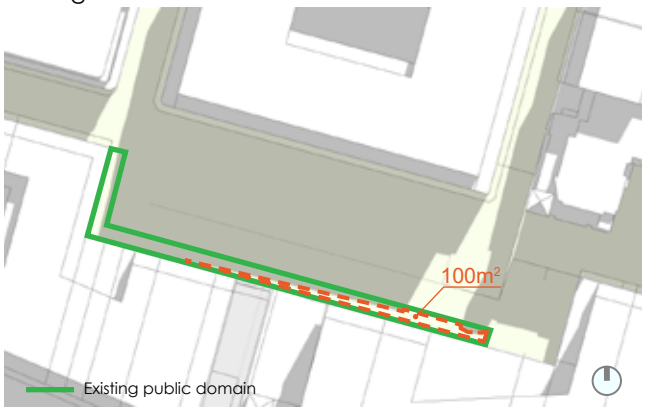


Figure 37 - 100m² of sunlight in public domain areas at Grosvenor Lane on 21 June at 10am

Proposed controls

Figure 38 - 1,300m² of sunlight in existing and new public domain areas at Grosvenor Lane under proposed controls on 21 June at 10am

BARRY STREET

Existing controls

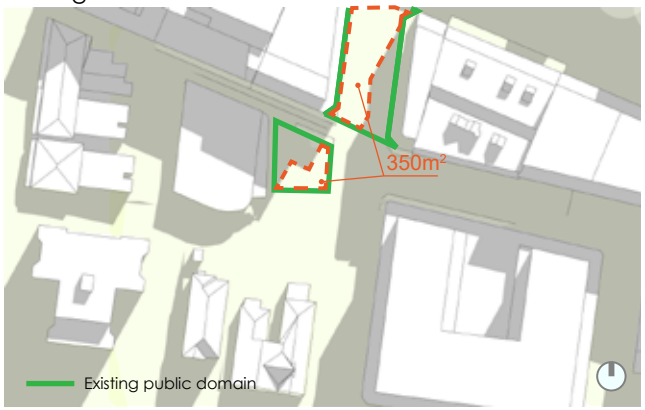


Figure 39 - 350m² of sunlight in public domain areas including May Gibbs Place under existing controls on 21 June at 10am

Proposed controls

Figure 40 - 1,500m² of sunlight in existing and potential public domain areas at Barry Street (for further investigation) on 21 June at 10am

RANGERS ROAD

Existing controls

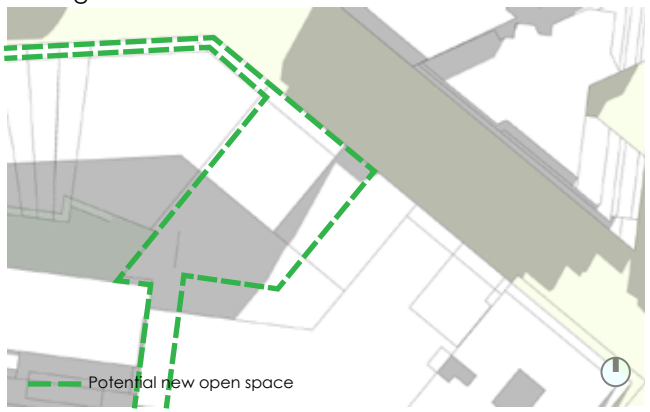


Figure 41 - Existing solar impact on Rangers Road on 21 June at 10am

Proposed controls

Figure 42 - 800m² of sunlight in new public domain areas at Rangers Road under proposed controls on 21 June at 10am

Whole of building setbacks

Current planning controls require whole of building setbacks along laneways and parts of Military Road to create more space for pedestrian amenity and infrastructure. Due to site constraints these setbacks are often interrupted and restricted.

New setback requirements will further improve pedestrian amenity. Reverse setbacks are not an acceptable built form outcome. The setbacks should relate to the whole of the building (including upper floors and basement areas) to allow for deep soil zones and large tree canopies. Paving used in these setbacks should match the material of existing footpaths.

2.5m whole of building setbacks along B-Line bus-stops will improve pedestrian safety and amenity.

Objective

Refine whole of building setbacks to improve pedestrian amenity.

1. Amend setback requirements in the NSDCP 2013 as per Figure 43
2. Whole of building setbacks apply to basement structures and upper levels to improve solar/light access and allow for deep soil zones and large tree canopies
3. Ground floor treatment should match the existing public paving according the NSC Style Guide
4. Retain existing trees in the setback where possible
5. Rangers Road plaza setbacks are subject to further design to deliver a new 1,000m² public space (see Chapter 3.4)

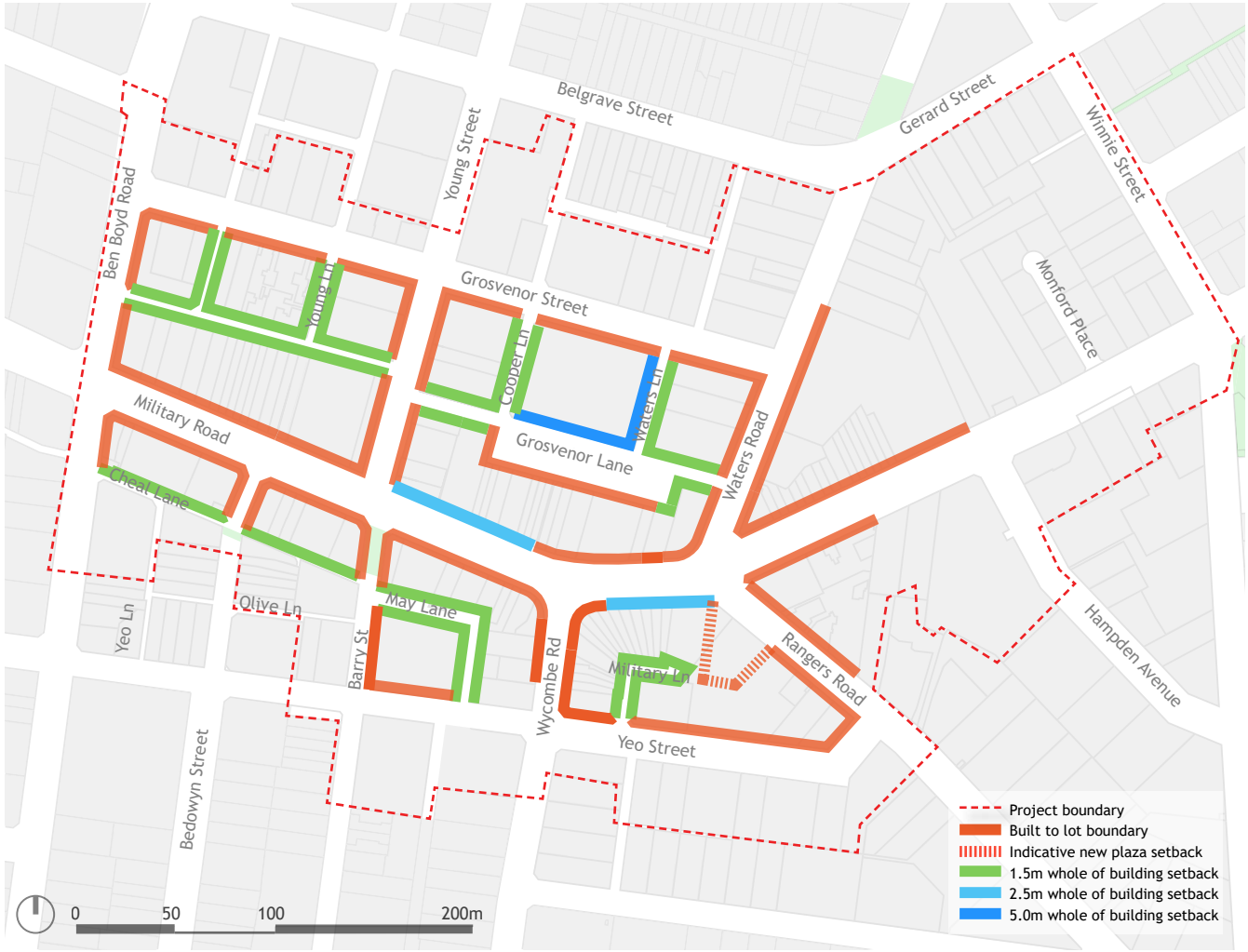


Figure 43 - Proposed minimum whole of building setback requirements. These setbacks will allow for the widening of footpaths and allow for deep soil zones to help rebuild Neutral Bay's tree canopies. At Grosvenor Lane it will provide a larger future plaza space and allow redirection of vehicles.

Figure 44 - Artist's impression of Military Road with proposed setbacks. The footpath is widened to give added pedestrian space at the bus stop. This widening of the footpath, along with the ability to increase the tree canopy along Military Road will increase pedestrian amenity in the area.

Above podium setbacks

The NSDCP 2013 currently requires a 2 storey podium be provided along street frontages with setback requirements above the podium to encourage a human scale.

The majority of buildings in Neutral Bay town centre however are 3 storeys. The NSDCP 2013 should be updated to reflect this. Above podium setbacks are used to maintain a human scale, protect the village atmosphere and provides building separation. For Neutral Bay town centre a 3m above podium setback is recommended.

Objective

Manage the scale and bulk of buildings to reinforce the existing village atmosphere and maintain a human scale.

1. Amend the podium height and above podium setback requirements in the NSDCP 2103 as shown in Figure 45
2. Upper level setbacks should result in:
   - improved solar access
   - building separation that meets SEPP65 guidelines
   - a strong relationship to the surrounding context
   - a scale that is appropriate to the village atmosphere
3. The groundfloor setback is outlined on the previous pages and relate to all floors of the podium (no reverse setbacks). The upper level setback is calculated from the edge of the podium and is in addition to a ground floor setback.

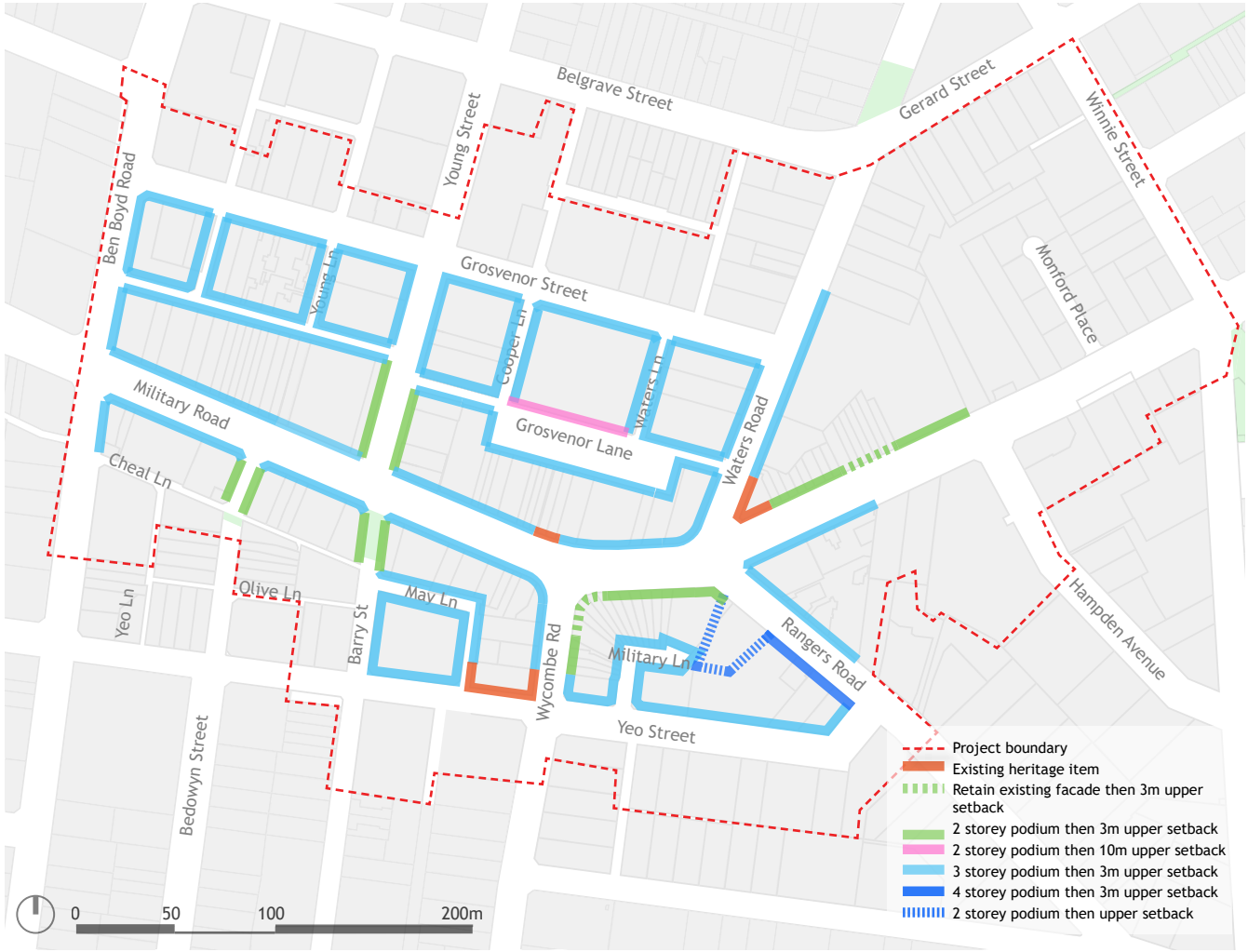


Figure 45 - Proposed above podium setback requirements. These proposed setbacks will reduce the scale and bulk of buildings and maintain a human scale for pedestrians in the town centre and on Military Road.

Active frontages and outdoor dining

Continuous active street frontages can increase the vibrancy of a centre, optimise surveillance and improve pedestrian amenity.

Encouraging outdoor dining along street frontages can increase activation of streets and encourage community interaction. The visibility of outdoor dining invites and attracts passing trade, benefiting not only restaurants but the surrounding retail precinct.

Objectives

Provide active retail frontages along main pedestrian thoroughfares.

Expand outdoor dining in new public domain.

1. Increase active retail frontages as indicated in Figure 46
2. Through-block connections should have active frontages where possible and enhance sight lines to additional commercial uses to create an activated and accessible centre
3. Activate Grosvenor Lane by providing dual retail frontages where possible as shown in Figure 46
4. Maximise potential outdoor dining spaces on new and improved public domain
5. Encourage a level of activation and passive surveillance in all laneways
6. Provide and replace fine-grain architectural articulation in new facades through careful choice of materials and providing entries every 4-8m

Figure 46 - Proposed requirements for active frontages. Increasing the active frontages in the town centre will increase amenity and safety for pedestrians. It will also provide new opportunities for retail, restaurants and cafes in the area.

3.4 KEY SITES AND REQUIREMENTS

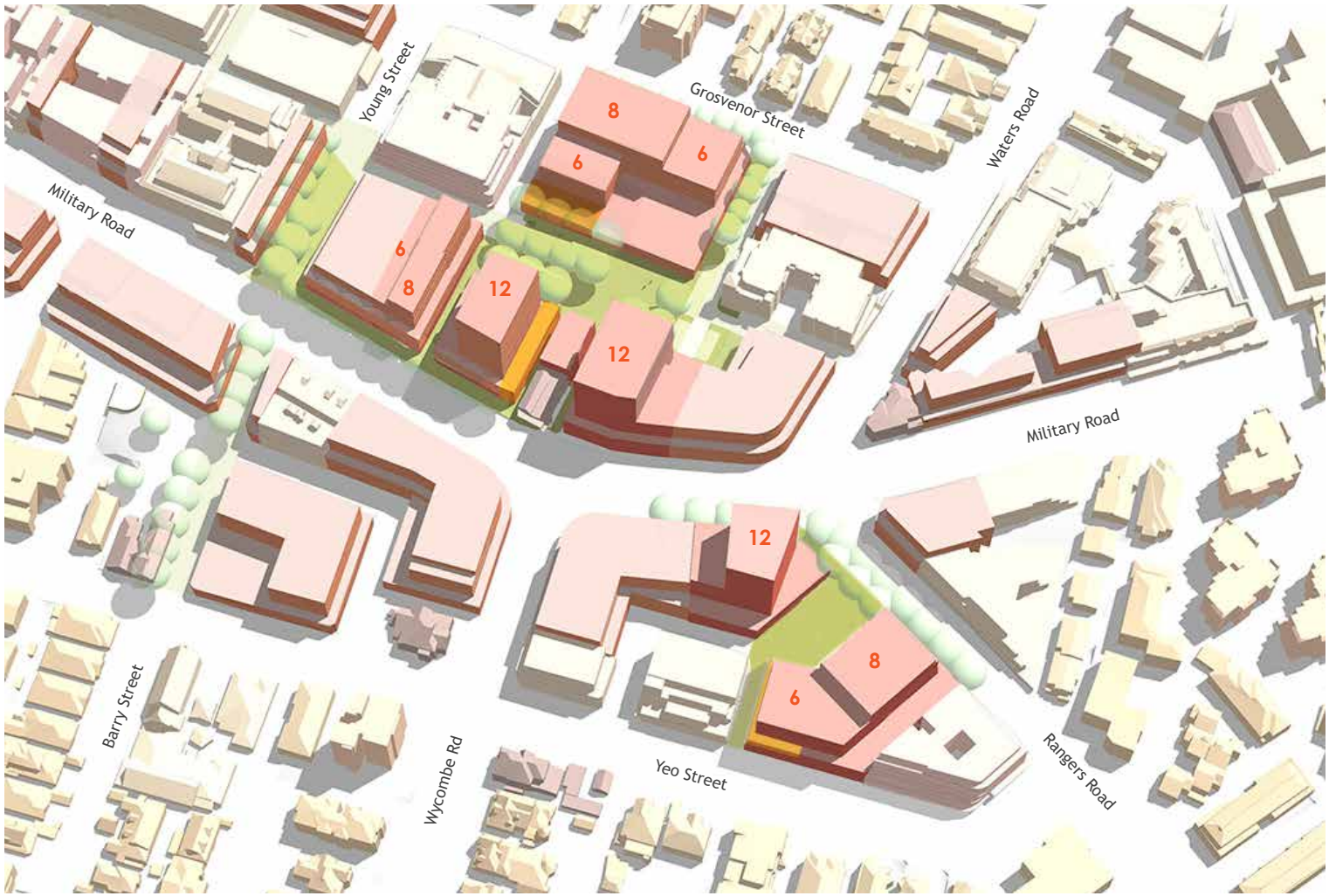


Figure 47 - Aerial of indicative proposed development envelope. The built form maximum heights (in storeys) will be achieved through planning proposals that are subject to further public exhibition processes. An increase of one storey is proposed across the town centre which would be through an amendment to the NSLEP 2013.

Locations

Feedback during initial community engagement highlighted a need to deliver additional public open space and community facilities.

Three sites have been identified to support additional residential and employment capacity and deliver these public benefits:

- **Site 1** - Grosvenor Lane North
- **Site 2** - Grosvenor Lane South
- **Site 3 -** Rangers Road

Planning control changes on these sites would include increases to the maximum building heights and non-residential FSR. Public benefits will be negotiated via a planning agreement to support each planning proposal.

Urban design objectives and requirements for each site are described in this chapter and should be referred to when a planning proposal is prepared.

Figure 48 - Proposed sites in Neutral Bay town centre for VPAs through planning proposals. Increases to maximum building heights within these sites would be approved in exchange for in-kind contributions to deliver public benefits to the community.

Site 1 - Grosvenor Lane North

Figure 49 - Location of site 1

Site 1 is located at 43-51 Grosvenor Street and currently supports a large supermarket. The site fronts the Council-owned Grosvenor Lane car park and is enclosed by Cooper Lane, Waters Lane and Grosvenor Street.

There is potential to relocate the Grosvenor Lane car park into adjacent buildings on Site 2 and create a fully pedestrianised public plaza.

A 5m whole of building setback and 10m above podium setback on the southern side of Site 1 will widen the plaza and allow more sunlight into the space compared to the 5-storey controls that currently apply to the site.

An additional 5m whole of building setback to Waters Lane, particuarly to the south, is necessary to accommodate the traffic changes needed to redirect traffic away from the plaza

By locating the proposed 8-storey building to the north, along Grosvenor Street, and staggering heights down to 2 storeys to Grosvenor Lane, more sunlight will reach the plaza.

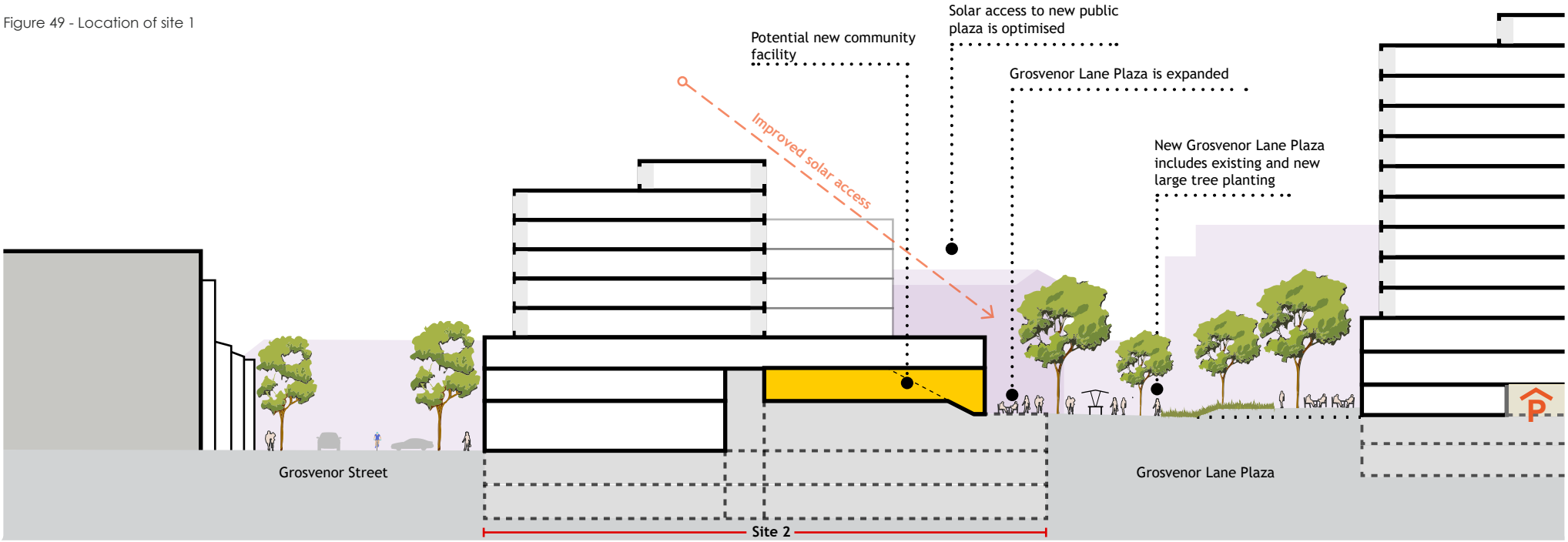


Figure 50 - Section of indicative scheme for site 1 - Grosvenor Lane North

Objectives

Enable the redevelopment of Site 1 to:

- Support local jobs, local shops and housing opportunities
- Transform the Grosvenor Lane car park into a new, sunny public plaza
- Improve pedestrian amenity and access between Grosvenor Street and Grosvenor Lane
- Potentially deliver a new community facility
- Support the village atmosphere

1. Provide additional employment floor space with a minimum 2.0:1 non-residential FSR
2. Provide a whole of building setback of approx. 5.0m along Waters Lane and Grosvenor Lane and 1.5m along Cooper Lane (as per DCP)
3. There is potential to deliver a new community facility on Site 1 (see Chapter 2.1). This will be examined as part of any future planning proposal and planning agreement for the site
4. Provide multiple fine-grain retail shops along Grosvenor Street, Waters Lane and Grosvenor Lane to support a variety of new on-street shops
5. Maintain and add more trees in Waters Lane and Grosvenor Street where possible and provide deep soil large tree planting along the new Grosvenor Lane Plaza
6. Protect solar access with staggered building heights as shown in Figure 51
7. Minimise impact of loading and parking access by providing vehicular access through Cooper Lane

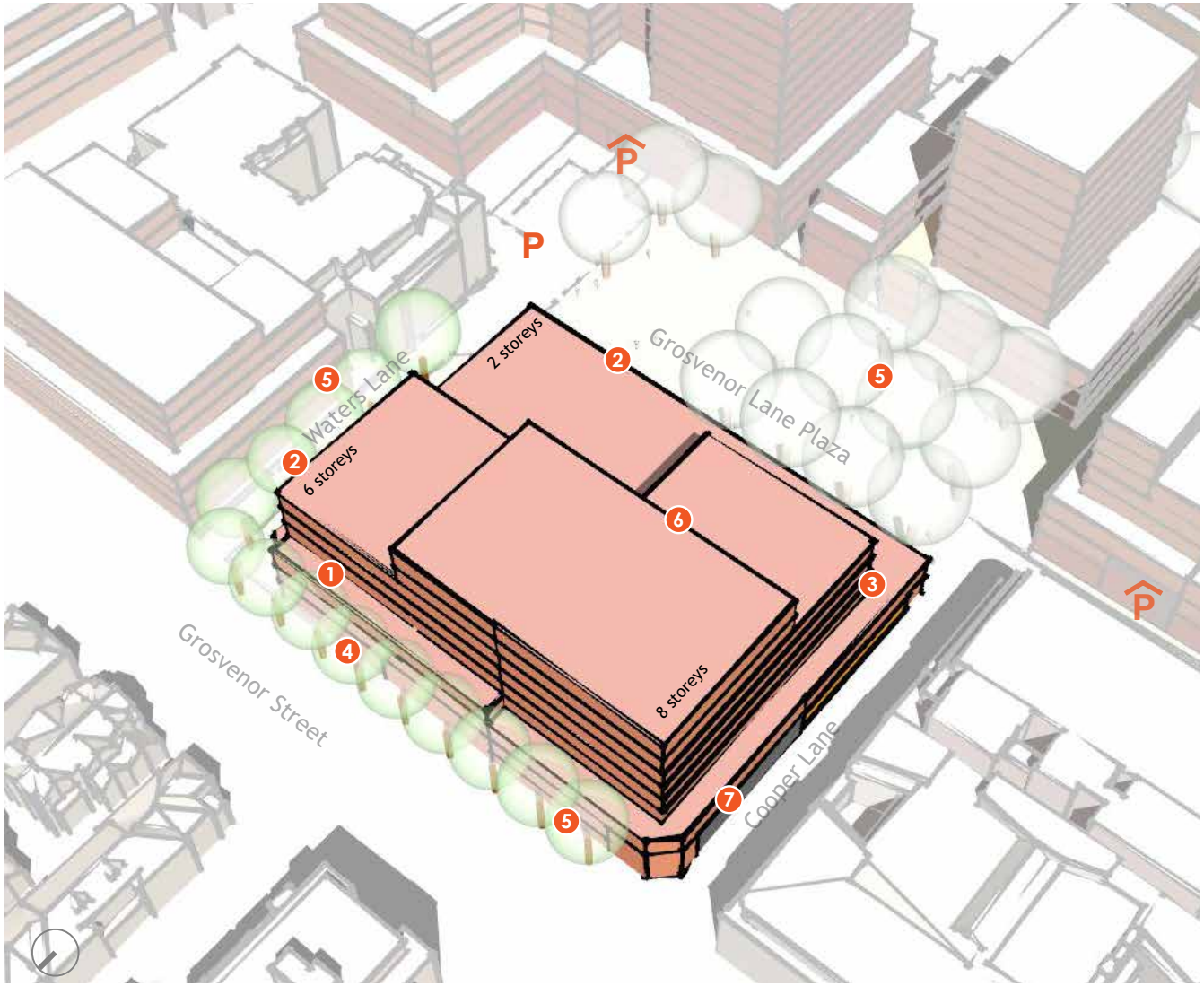
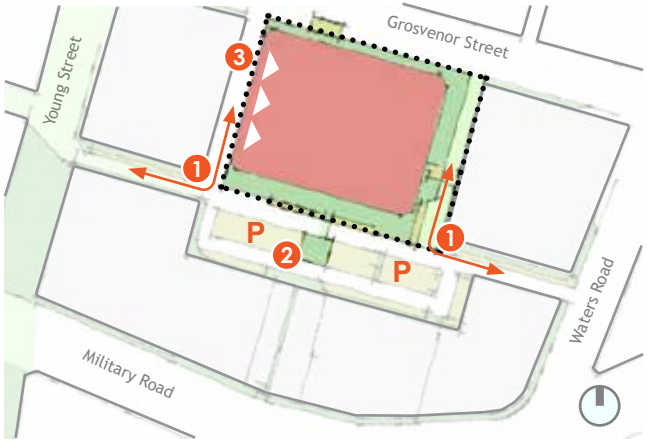


Figure 51 - Illustrative building envelope looking south-east. Building height increases transition with the surrounding residential area and are in keeping with the character of Grosvenor Street. Additional tree planting along Grosvenor Street and upper level setbacks further limit the visual impact.

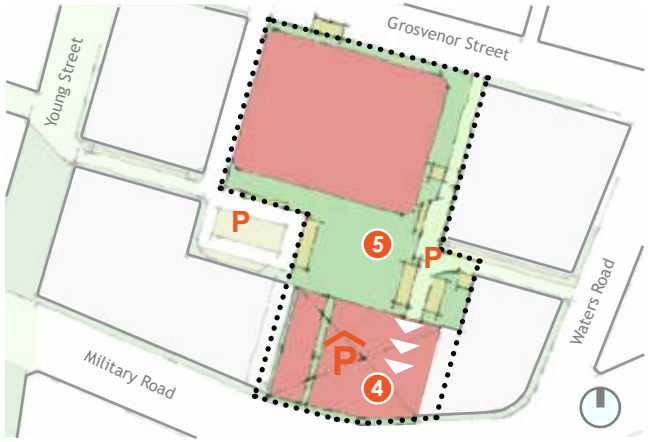
Indicative staged implementation of the Grosvenor Lane Plaza if Site 1 develops first

Stage1: Site 1 develops first



Stage 2(a): Followed by Site 2 (east)

Stage 2(b): Followed by Site 2 (west)



Stage 3: Complete scheme

Figure 52 - Indicative diagrams

This series of diagrams show how the Grosvenor Lane Plaza could be staged if Site 1 develops first.

1. A 5m setback to Waters Lane provides space for trucks to turn at the intersection with Grosvenor Lane, thereby redirecting traffic away from the initial stages of the plaza. Trees are retained to the laneway.
2. At grade parking is still provided with a pocket park.
3. Access for loading and parking is from Cooper Lane with an internalised loading dock.
4. Site 2 can be subsequently developed in stages. Stage 2(a) and 2(b) show the partial relocation of public parking into a redevelopment site fronting Military Road. Existing local shops retain parking and loading.
5. This delivers another portion of the new plaza with some at grade parking retained.

The above image shows the completed scheme with Sites 1 and 2 redeveloped.

6. Full Grosvenor Lane Plaza
7. Retain some at-grade parking including disability parking, drop-off and community bus stop to improve accessibility

Detailed design considerations for Site 1

Public benefits

Figure 53 - Public benefits

Potential new community facility (1,000m²)

Contribution towards Grosvenor Lane Plaza public domain improvements

Accommodate Waters Lane and Cooper Lane turning circles

Increased pedestrian amenity along Waters Lane including retention of trees where possible

Maximum building height

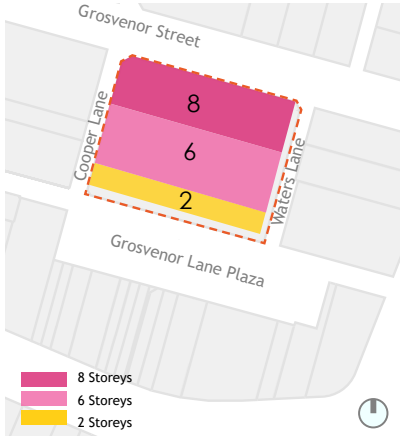


Figure 54 - Proposed maximum building heights

Cap maximum building heights at 2, 6 and 8 storeys

Articulate building through separate built form volumes stepped with the topography and urban fabric

Solar access

Figure 55 - Solar access requirements

Maintain minimum 2 hours sunlight to 70% of dwellings consistent with NSDCP 2013 and SEPP65

Proposed built form should demonstrate a significant increase in solar access to the surrounding public domain compared to existing controls

Parking and loading

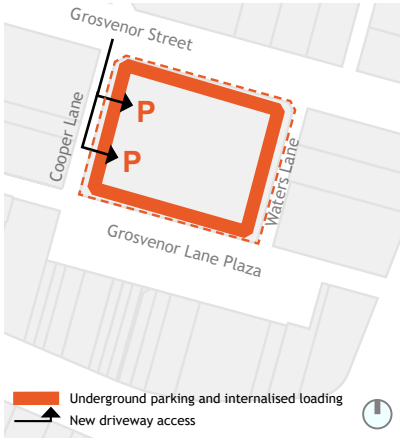


Figure 56 - Access changes to Cooper Lane and Waters Lane

Provide access into parking and loading from Cooper Lane.

Internalise loading

Redirecting traffic through Cooper Lane and Waters Lane will eliminate the need for vehicles to cross the future Grosvenor Plaza (subject to detailed traffic assessment)

Whole of building setbacks

Figure 57 - Whole of building setbacks

Provide setbacks from Waters Lane and Cooper Lane to allow for turning circles of vehicles

Ultimately this would allow no vehicles to cross over the future Grosvenor Plaza (subject to detailed traffic assessment)

Provide setback from Grosvenor Lane to expand the Grosvenor Lane Plaza

Above podium setbacks

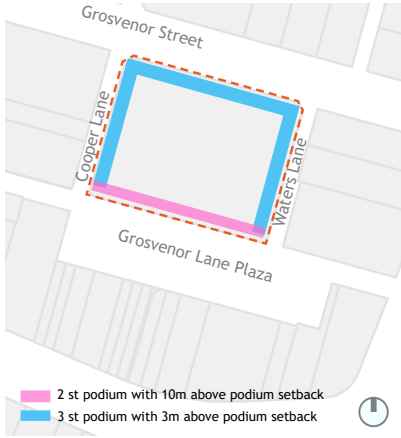


Figure 58 - Above podium setbacks

3 storey podium with 3m above podium setback along Grosvenor Street

Other upper level setbacks should result in:

- improved solar access
- building separation according SEPP65
- related to the surrounding context
- reinforce the village atmosphere
- subject to height controls

Site 2 - Grosvenor Lane South

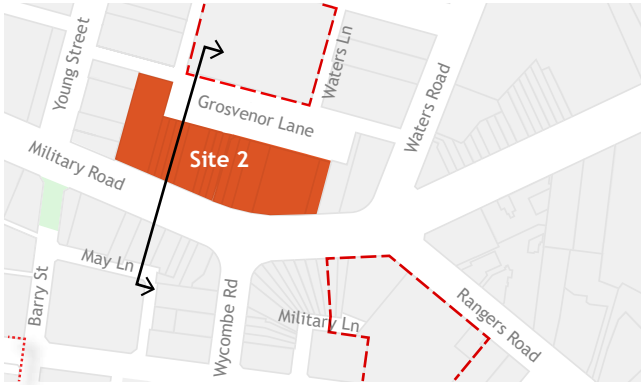


Figure 59 - Site 2 location

Site 2 is located at 176-214 Military Road and supports multiple local shops and businesses. The site also fronts the Council-owned Grosvenor Lane car park and is bounded by Military Road and Grosvenor Lane.

There is potential to relocate the Grosvenor Lane car park into the redevelopment of Site 2 and create a fully pedestrianised public plaza. The plaza will be at grade to avoid privatising the space.

The public car park will be conveniently located to service the local shops.

Two residential towers will be capped at 12 storeys.

Objective

Enable the staged redevelopment of Site 2 to:

- Support local jobs, local shops and housing opportunities
- Transform the Grosvenor Lane car park into a new, sunny public plaza
- Improve pedestrian amenity and access between Military Road and the new plaza
- Deliver a new art alley, bicycle parking and public parking
- Support the village atmosphere

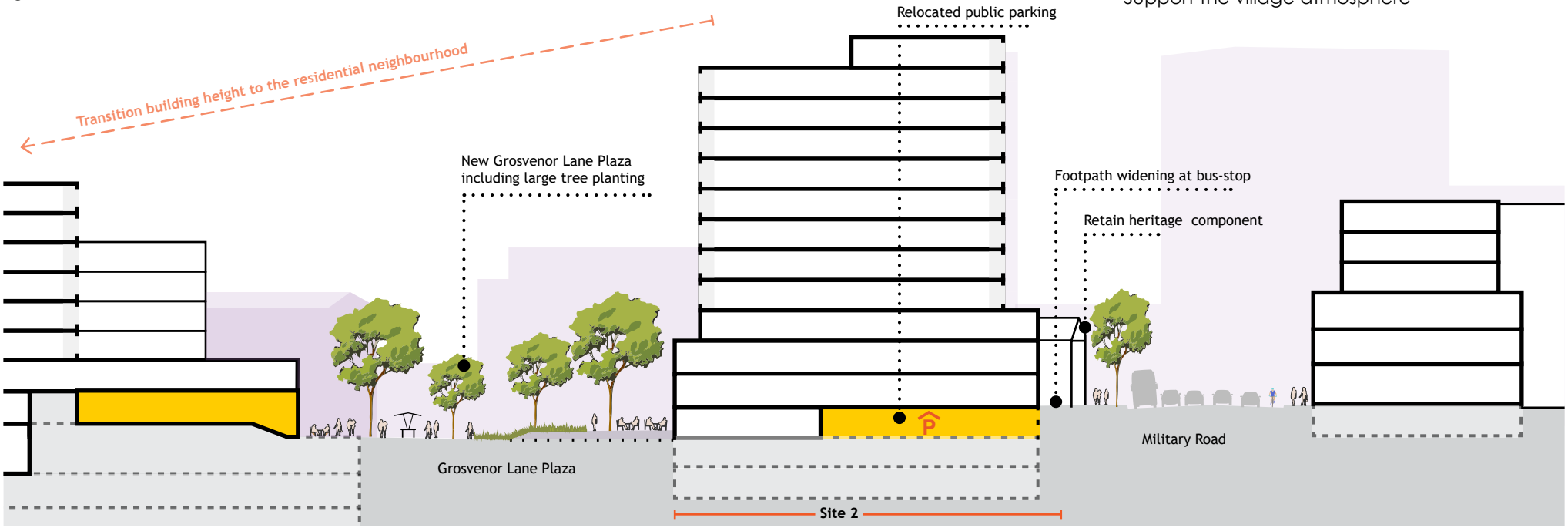


Figure 60 - Section of site 2 - Grosvenor Lane South

Requirements

1. Provide additional employment floor space with a minimum 1.5:1 non-residential FSR
2. Residential towers should appear slender, maximise above podium habitable facades to all sides and provide generous tower breaks to avoid a continuous 'wall effect' along Military Road
3. Protect solar amenity to existing and future public domain when increasing building heights (refer to Chapter 3.3)
4. Improve streetscape amenity by delivering the through-site-links and a 2.5m whole of building setback along Military Road as per the detailed design considerations on the following pages
5. Enable the Grosvenor Lane plaza by relocating the public parking and loading function into the new development. Utilise existing grade and topography of the land to connect existing and future development to the plaza
6. Provided a new facility has been established, redevelop the existing community centre site into a creative makers art alley with 600m² GFA
7. Provide 14 secured commuter bicycle parking spots as part of the creative makers art alley
8. Expand tree canopy on Military Road and in new open space on Grosvenor Lane Plaza
9. Sensitively incorporate existing heritage item into the development site

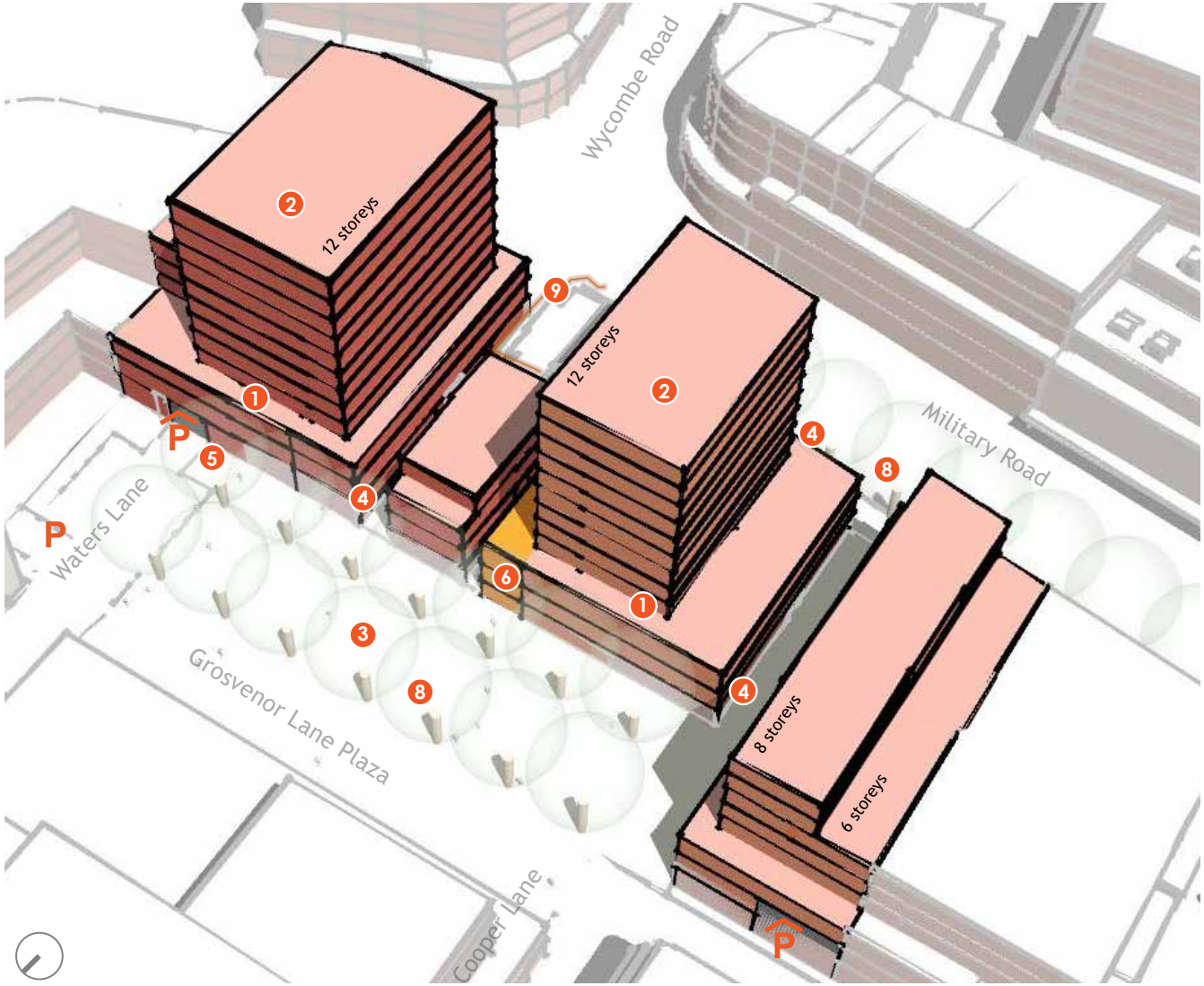
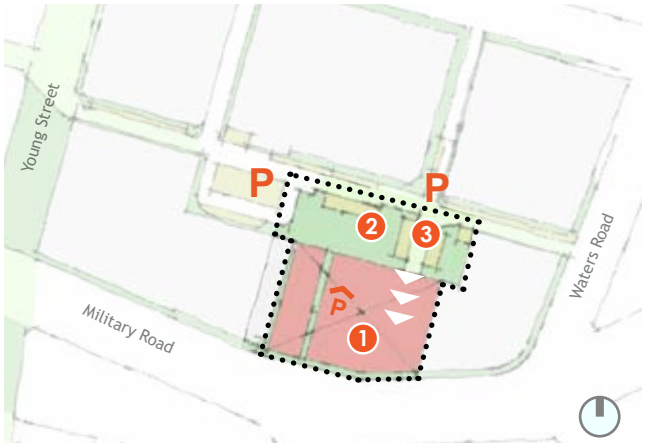


Figure 61 - Illustrative building envelope looking south-east. An increase in maximum building height would allow a range of opportunities for the public including a new creative makers art alley, new through-site-links, relocated public parking and open space.

Indicative staged implementation of the Grosvenor Lane Plaza if Site 2 develops first

Stage 1(a): Site 2 (west) develops first



Stage 2: Site 2 complete

Stage 3: Complete scheme

Stage 1(a): Site 2 (east) develops first

Figure 62 - Indicative diagrams of the various stages a development is established and the context it needs to tie into.

This series of diagrams show how the Grosvenor Lane Plaza could be staged if Site 2 develops first.

1. Site 2 can be developed in stages, with the eastern or western side redeveloped and public parking and loading incorporated into the building.
2. Each side delivers a a portion of the Grosvenor Lane Plaza (~900m^2).
3. Each side retains some at grade parking.
4. Stage 2 shows Site 2 completed. The majority of the plaza is complete. Existing trees are retained, where possible.
5. Essential parking and loading functions are retained until traffic can be redirected following the redevelopment of Site 1.

The above image shows the completed scheme with Sites 1 and 2 redeveloped.

6. Full Grosvenor Lane Plaza
7. Retain some at-grade parking including disability parking, drop-off and community bus stop to improve accessibility

Detailed design considerations for Site 2

Public benefits

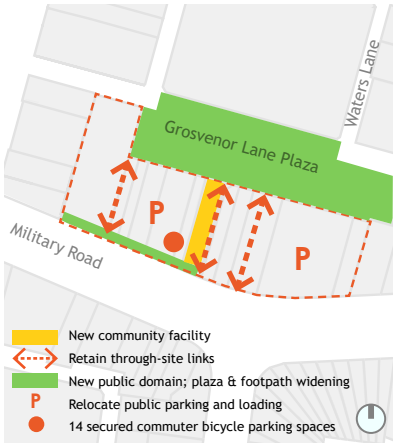


Figure 63 - Public benefits

Relocate existing Grosvenor Lane car park into new public parking facilities and contribute towards the creation of a new Grosvenor Lane Plaza

Secured public commuter bicycle parking (14 spots)

New creative makers space (600m²)

Maximum building height, lotsize and FSR

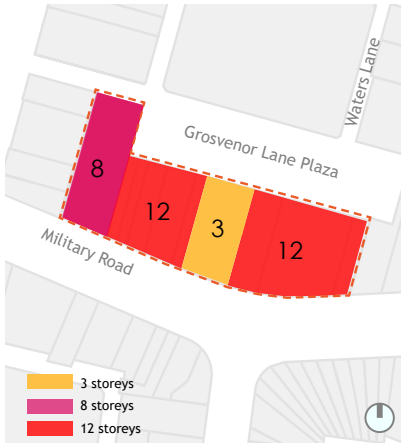


Figure 64 - Proposed maximum building heights

Maximum building height of 12 storeys

Building height above 6 storeys should:

- appear slender
- maximise above podium habitable facades to all sides
- have breaks to avoid a continuous 'wall effect' along Military Road

Solar access

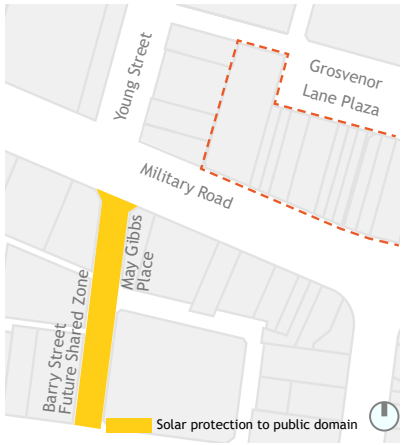


Figure 65 - Solar access requirements

No additional overshadowing on May Gibbs Place and Barry Street as a result of the redevelopment of Site 2 during winter solstice

Aim to maintain minimum of 2 hours of sunlight to 70% of residential dwellings within a building consistent with the solar provisions of NSDCP 2013 and SEPP65

Underground parking

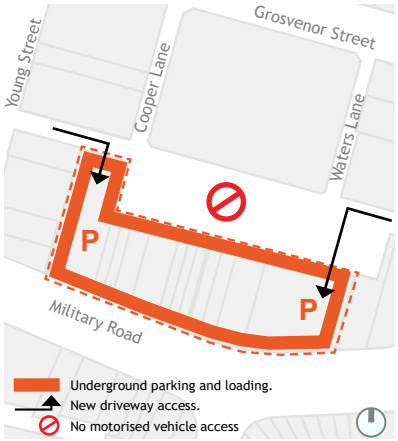


Figure 66 - Underground parking

Underground car park with loading access from the western and eastern side of Grosvenor Lane.

Completion of Site 1 will ultimately enable no vehicles into the future Grosvenor Plaza (subject to detailed traffic assessment)

Whole of building setbacks

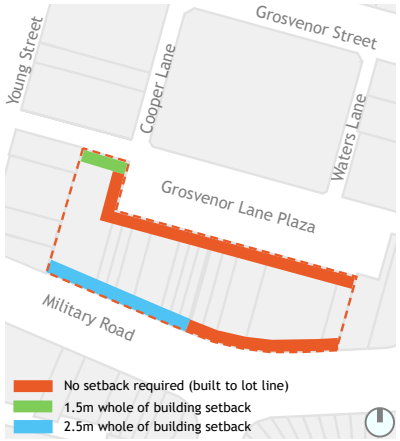


Figure 67 - Whole of building setbacks

Provide a 2.5m whole of building setback from Military Road for a portion of Site 2, as shown on the map, to allow for widened footpaths

Above podium setbacks

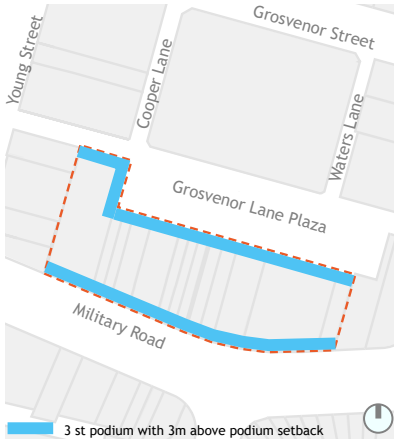


Figure 68 - Above podium setbacks

Provide a 3 storey podium along Military Road

Provide a 3 storey podium along the new Grosvenor Lane Plaza

Provide at least a 3m above podium setback

Site 3 - Rangers Road

Figure 69 - Site 3 location - Rangers Road

Site 3 is located at 183-185 Military Road and 1-7 Rangers Road. The site fronts Military Road, Rangers Road and Yeo Street.

By relocating the supermarket underground, a new public plaza can be delivered fronting Rangers Road. Access to the plaza can also be achieved from Yeo Street.

Residential buildings with be capped at 12 storeys fronting Military Road, 8 storeys to Rangers Road and 6 storeys to Yeo Street.

The podium will support a new 1,000m² community facility.

Objective

Enable the redevelopment of Site 3 to:

- Support local jobs, local shops and housing opportunities
- Create a new public plaza fronting Rangers Road
- Improve pedestrian amenity and access between Rangers Road and Yeo Street
- Deliver a new community facility, bicycle parking and public parking
- Support the village atmosphere

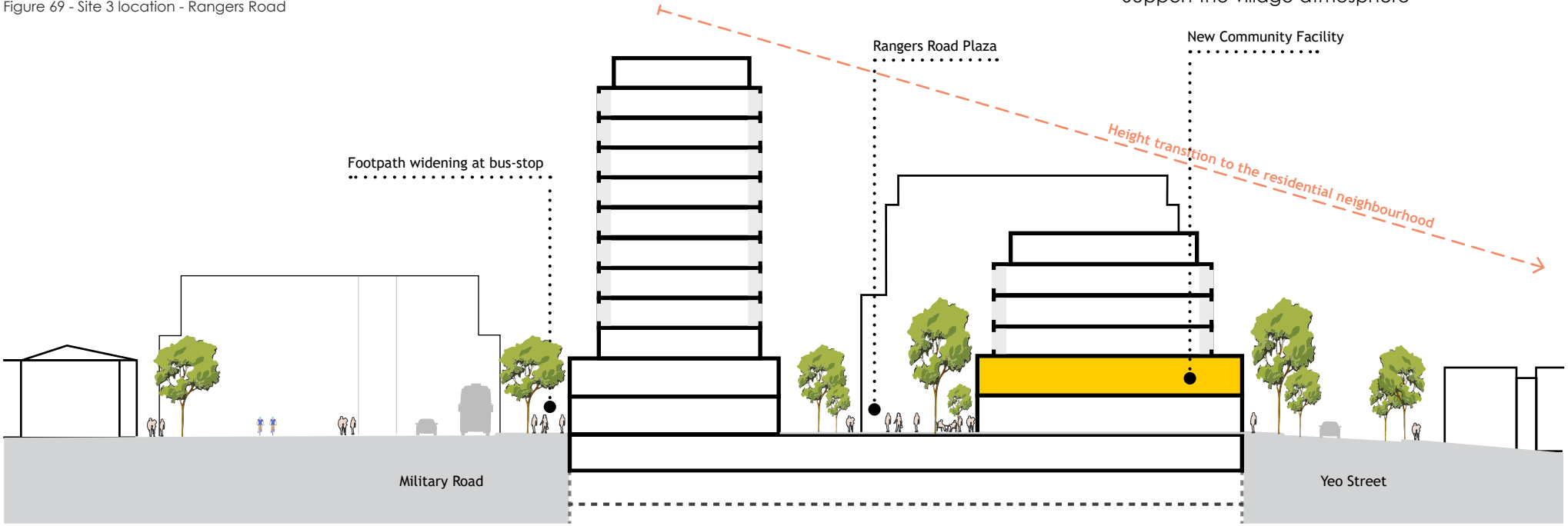


Figure 70 - Section of Site 3 - Rangers Road

Requirements

1. Provide additional non-residential floor space with a minimum 2.0:1 FSR
2. Residential towers should appear slender, maximise above podium habitable facades to all sides
3. Provide a new community facility (1,000m^2) (see Chapter 2.1)
4. Deliver 1,250m^2 new public domain including:
   - A 1,000m^2 new public plaza with an underground supermarket
   - A through-site-link to Yeo Street
   - A 2.5m whole of building setback that expands the tree canopy along Rangers Road and Military Road
5. Deliver a 14-space public commuter bicycle parking facility
6. Activate street edges along Rangers Road, Military Road, the new plaza, through-site-link and part of Yeo Street
7. Deliver loading and basement access through Military Lane or potentially along Yeo Street, subject to a transport study
8. Mitigate wind impacts to the public plaza
9. Provide access to underground uses within a building facade to limit structures on the plaza

Figure 71 - Illustrative building envelope for Site 3 looking south and showing the new public plaza and pedestrian through-site-link from Military Road to Yeo Street. Above podium setbacks need to be tested along the plaza including a wind assessment.

Visual assessment

The boundary of Site 3 runs along Yeo Street, a leafy local street on the edge of the Neutral Bay town centre. Building heights along this street are to be kept at an appropriate scale with the surrounds With the right finegrain architectectural detailing, the proposed height of 6 storeys may reinforce the character of the street. Any future planning proposal will need to demonstrate that the visual impact of the taller building volumes of 8 storeys at Rangers Road and 12 storeys at Military Road is minimal from Yeo Street.

Objective

Buildings along Yeo Street will be limited to 6 storeys in height to support the local character of the streetscape and limit overshadowing impacts to residential properties to the south

Taller elements along Rangers Road and Military Road are to be located away from Yeo Street to limit the visual impact

Figure 72 - View analysis location along Yeo Street

Figure 73 - Illustration demonstrating the moderate building heights and leafy local street characteristics along Yeo Street

Detailed design considerations for Site 3

Public benefits

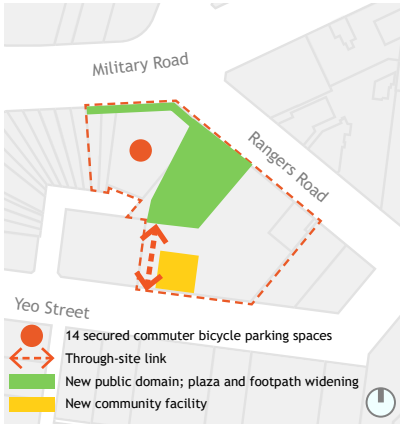


Figure 74 - Public benefits

New community facility (1,000m²)

Public plaza (1,000m²)

Through-site-link

2.5m whole of building setback along Military Road that includes deep soil zones for large trees

Secured public commuter bicycle parking (14 spots)

Maximum building height

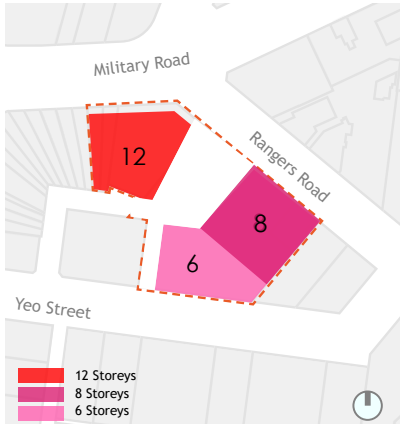


Figure 75 - Proposed maximum building heights

Maximum building heights at 6, 8 and 12 storeys

Solar access

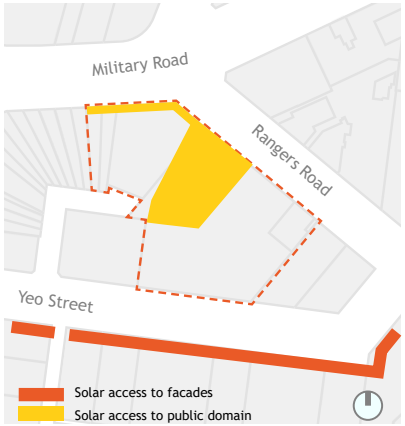


Figure 76 - Solar access requirements

Aim to maintain minimum of 2 hours of sunlight to 70% of residential dwellings within a building consistent with the solar provisions of NSDCP 2013 and SEPP65

Built form should demonstrate improvements to solar access to the surrounding public domain compared to existing controls

Underground parking

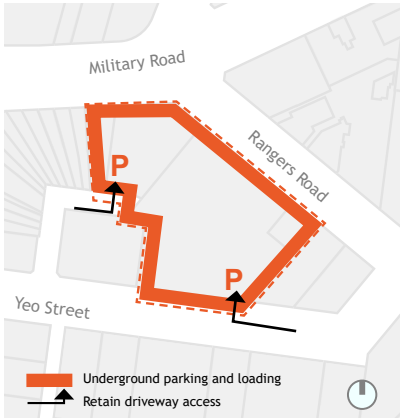


Figure 77 - Underground parking

Underground basement including parking and loading with minimum impacts to the local streets

Whole of building setbacks

Figure 78 - Whole of building setbacks

Provide 2.5m whole of building setback from Military Road to widen footpath and provide better amenity

Above podium setbacks

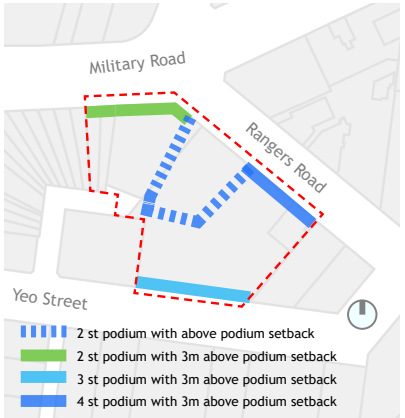


Figure 79 - Above podium setbacks

Provide podium height that responds to the context

Provide a podium level around the new plaza that reinforce the village atmosphere

Side setbacks according SEPP65

3

3.5 IMPLEMENTATION

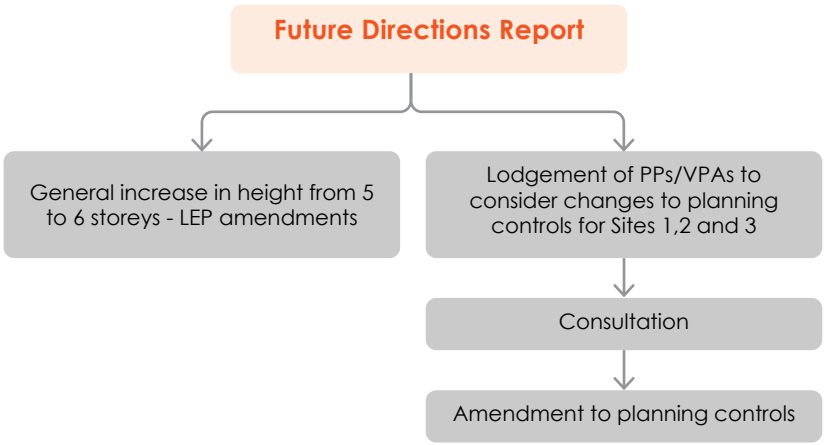
This Future Direction Report represents the culmination of a series of public consultation processes including the latest public exhibition as well as further internal and external expert feedback. The Future Direction Report represents Council's strategic framework for Neutral Bay town centre which will guide any requests for amended planning controls through the Planning Proposal process.

The Future Directions Report is the long-term strategic plan for Neutral Bay. It identifies a vision for the centre and presents a framework for future built form and public domain outcomes.

Next Steps

In the first instance, it is proposed that Council will amend the NSLEP, to reflect the proposed changes to non-residential FSR and building height from 5 storeys to 6. Other statutory changes will also be made to the DCP in particular, the adjustment of setback controls.

The more significant changes mooted for the 3 strategically significant sites identified, will not be pursued as holistic changes to the planning controls. These directions will simply act as principles to guide landowners seeking changes to the planning controls through the Planning Proposal process.



Pre-lodgement of a Planning Proposal

A Planning Proposal, inclusive of built form, general architectural treatment, detailed landscape design and traffic+transport planning should be developed consistent with Council's strategic objectives for North Sydney and this Future Directions Report.

To inform the scheme, the proponent is to consult Council staff, the Precinct Committee, local landowners and the Design Excellence Panel prior to lodgement.

Council will review those proposals to ensure they align with the objectives and recommendations of the Future Directions Report. That process would be the subject of more detailed community consultation. These are time consuming and deliberative processes and would be ultimately followed by development applications which would include detailed design and supporting documentation for construction.

Planning Proposal

For development to achieve the proposed height, zone and non residential floor space ratios envisaged within the preferred option, a landowner initiated planning proposal is required to amend the North Sydney LEP 2013.

There are opportunities to further refine outcomes as part of the planning proposal consideration and negotiation process.

The following page provides an indicative list of the studies that are generally required to accompany the planning proposal.

A driving principle of this study is that development opportunities beyond those available under existing controls should only be pursued if public benefit is provided in parallel to meet community needs. A planning proposal seeking to amend the North Sydney LEP 2013 will be accompanied by a draft voluntary planning agreement (VPA), which sets out any public benefits proposed to be delivered in accordance with Council's "Voluntary Planning Agreements Policy".

Consultation to inform the Planning Proposal

Draft Community Consultation Plan	An indication of any proposed community consultation is required with the planning proposal. The planning proposal should outline the community consultation to be undertaken in respect of the proposal, having regard to the requirements set out in 'A guide to preparing local environmental plans' as well as Council's Community Engagement Strategy. The Gateway determination will then confirm the public consultation that must be undertaken in respect of the planning proposal. This part of the proposal must be revised to reflect any change to the consultation requirements specified in the Gateway determination prior to the proposal being publicly exhibited. Additional information or studies may be required to be included in the planning proposal before consultation is undertaken with the public or Government agencies. This is to ensure interested parties / persons can make an informed opinion regarding the proposed LEP amendment. The requirement for this additional information or studies will be outlined in the Gateway determination document.
Council Staff	Preliminary discussion with Council staff is encouraged to provide broad feedback on the Proposal prior to lodgment.
Stakeholder Engagement	To ensure the proposal has regard to the needs and aspirations of the local community, the proponent is to present the scheme and seek feedback from the Precinct Committees and local landowners.
Design Excellence Panel	The scheme will be put to the Design Excellence Panel for comment. A meeting with Council staff will then be held to discuss any amendments that should be made before proceeding with a formal planning proposal.

Studies to inform the planning proposal

Architectural Plans **Urban Design Report** **Landscape Design Report**	Having regard to the design principles in the Future Direction Report of the Military Road Corridor Planning Study Stage 1, the Urban Design and Landscape Design report should provide: • a justification of the built form massing and public domain design with an explanation of the proposed amendments to the NSLEP2013 • detailed landscape design of all public domain, new through site links, ground floor setbacks and road reserves including high quality renders • an assessment against the Apartment Design Guide (DPE 2015) • shadow impact analysis • visual assessment of key views demonstrating the impact of the built form from all surrounding streets • economic impact assessment • wind assessment • heritage assessment (if relevant)
Transport and Access Study	The Transport and Access Study should inform the public domain design extending across the full site, including the future open space. A traffic impact assessment report is required detailing the impact on traffic flow and generation, vehicular access, loading and unloading of service deliveries, parking provisions, walking and cycling amenities. An additional traffic management plan is required if the proposal results in any of the envisioned road closures and changes to the existing traffic flow direction. A meeting with relevant Council staff should be arranged to discuss the scope of the study in detail and should include consultation with Roads and Maritime Services staff.
Draft Travel Plan	The draft Travel Plan is to be informed by the Transport and Access Study. It is to demonstrate how the development can minimise car parking requirements and traffic generation and promote sustainable travel behaviour by residents, staff and guests travelling to and from the site.
Draft Voluntary Planning Agreement	Draft Voluntary Planning Agreement or letter of offer that proposes public benefits as a part of the proposal to amend the NSLEP 2013.

References

Council documents - all available at https://northsydney.nsw.gov.au

- NSC Community Strategic Plan
- NSC Delivery Plan
- NSC Operational Plan
- NSC Community Engagement Policy 2013
- NSC Local Environmental Plan 2013
- NSC Development Control Plan (as amended March 2018) (NSDCP 2013)

- NSC Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement 2019
- NSC Draft Local Housing Strategy 2019

- NSC Neutral Bay Shopping Centre Urban Design Study and Masterplan
- NSC Grosvenor Lane Planning Study 2015
- NSC Recreational Needs Study & Implementation Plan 2015/2016
- NSC Open Space Provision Strategy 2009
- NSC Street Tree Strategy 2016
- NSC Urban Forest Strategy 2011
- NSC Economic Development Strategy 2016
- NSC Infrastructure Manual
- NSC Transport Strategy
- NSC Neutral Bay Traffic Study 2015
- NSC Integrated Cycling Strategy
- NSC Local Area Traffic Management Action Plans 2017
- NSC Public Domain Upgrade Neutral Bay Cremorne (draft)
- NSC Neutral Bay Streetscape Upgrade and NSC Cremorne Streetscape Upgrade
- NSC Public Domain Style Manual & Design codes
- NSC Playgrounds Plan of Management and Playground Methodology
- NSC Public Amenities Strategy & Action Plan 2016
- NSC Community Uses on Council Land 2016
- NSC Outdoor Dining and Goods display policy
- NSC Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2016-2019
- NSC Floodplain Risk Management Study and Flood Management Plan

Australian Bureau of Statistics
Censusdata.abs.gov.au, (2016). - available at: http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au

.id The Population Experts.
Profile.id.com.au. - available at: http://profile.id.com.au/north-sydney

State Government documents -

available at https://www.greater.sydney/
- DPIE GSC – Greater Sydney Regional Plan
- DPIE GSC – North District Plan

available at https://future.transport.nsw.gov.au/
- TfNSW – Future Transport Strategy 2056

Expert Consultant Advice

- Economic Baseline Report - Stage 1 Economic Strategy - HillPDA Pty Ltd
- Transport Study - Aurecon International Pty Ltd
- Financial Feasibility Assessment on Discussion Paper Options - HillPDA Pty Ltd
- Heritage Review - NBRSArchitecture Pty Ltd
- Financial Feasibility Testing of Draft and Preferred Option - BEM Pty Ltd
- Memorandum on impacts of Covid-19 - HillPDA Pty Ltd

Abbreviations

LEP - Local Environment Plan

LGA - Local Government Area

NSDCP 2013 - North Sydney Development Control Plan 2013

NSLEP 2013 - North Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2013

SEPP65 - State Environmental Planning Policy No.65 sets design quality principles for residential flat buildings

VPA - Voluntary Planning Agreement

FSR - Floor Space Ratio

Glossary

Affordable housing - community housing for key workers that could otherwise not afford to live in the area

Floor space ratio - the ratio of the gross floor area of all buildings within the site to the site area

Masterplan - provides a planning and design framework to guide the incremental development of large or complex areas with multiple buildings, new laneways or parks

Podium - the base of a building upon which taller (tower) elements are positioned

Voluntary Planning Agreements - financial or in-kind development contribution to support the increased demand for public amenities and public services in an area

Setback - the space between the lot boundary and the building, or the edge of the podium and the tower element of a building

Finegrain built form - Small scale architectural detailing and promoting multiple entries in ground floor facades to provide variety, interest & activity.

Military Road Corridor Planning Study, Stage 1

Neutral Bay Town Centre
February 2021

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