

Stakeholder input

Shape Lake Mac

Council sought community feedback on shaping the future of Charlestown and Gateshead between 17 November 2020 and 15 January 2021. We asked the community to comment on the places they love most within these centres, ideas for changes or places that feel unsafe or unpleasant. Forty-seven individual comments were posted to the social pinpoint map relating to Charlestown, and these are summarised below:

Theme	Comments	Staff comment
Accessibility	<p>Ideas for the future or something I'd change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of active transport with the green grid and services. • Dedicated share-ways connecting with other paths. • Direct access to the Tellara Street car park. • Reduce traffic lanes in Smart Street to improve pedestrian and cycling environment. • Better access to parks with a dedicated crossing near Lincoln Street. • Upgrade existing roundabouts to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists. • Improved pedestrian paths and a cycleway to the Pacific Highway. • Reconfigure the intersection of Pacific Highway and Charlestown Road to improve the pedestrian environment and create an urban square. • More footpaths. <p>Something I don't like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of footpaths to and within Charlestown. 	<p>The Charlestown Transport Management Plan includes a range of actions that align with Council's overarching strategies, as well as future transport and mobility trends. The plan includes actions to improve customer experiences associated with travelling to and within Charlestown, whether by bus, taxi/ride share, walking, cycling or private vehicle.</p>
Transport	<p>Ideas for the future or something I'd change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated and prioritised public transport infrastructure. • Replace the roundabout at Charlestown Road and Chapman Street with traffic lights. • Introduce on-street timed parking with resident parking permits in Milson, Smart, Dickinson and Frederick Streets. 	<p>The Transport Management Plan will work together with the Local Environmental Plan and the Area Plan to support the sustainable development of Charlestown.</p>

Theme	Comments	Staff comment
Places and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the lane configuration on Warners Bay Road approach to the traffic signals by having the right lane split into a left and right turn. <p>Something I don't like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of weather protection, CCTV and lighting at the Frederick Street bus stops. <p>Ideas for the future or something I'd change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An urban park on the site of the old TAFE. An enclosed dog park. Improved plantings and public art for the Hakodate – Lake Macquarie Friendship garden. Protect remnant vegetation and increase canopy cover. More places that meet the needs of youth, and youth services at the skate park. A mural on the toilet block at Charlestown Oval to prevent graffiti. Include a pavilion, BBQ facilities, a playground or community garden beds in Mahrahkah Park to increase use. Provide better access to Mahrahkah Park. Open the library for a range of uses late into the night. <p>Something I don't like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intimidating behaviour and language from youths visiting the skate park, Charlestown Square ramp and Hilltop Plaza. Lack of street trees and removal of trees from Attunga Park and Pearson Street Mall. <p>Something I like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excited for the future closure of Carl Close and the new Lions Park. The skate park. Pearson Street Mall redevelopment. 	<p>The revised Charlestown Town Centre Area Plan identifies an opportunity for a new public square adjacent to the existing Charlestown library. This location provides an opportunity to leverage existing Council assets to create a vibrant, accessible community space. A new public square in the heart of Charlestown would provide an event space that can support Council's actions in other plans and complement other parks and spaces located in the south and west of the centre. Further investigation of an appropriate public square design, costs and funding mechanisms is needed. However, potential funding opportunities include the redevelopment of the Smith Street car park and library site to accommodate the public square, library, commercial and</p>
Buildings	<p>Ideas for the future or something I'd change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Redevelop the car park and library site for a mixed-use development with underground parking, library and community centre. Include public art and tree plantings. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More medium density public housing. • Encourage commercial growth on the east side of the Pacific Highway. • Redevelop Hilltop Plaza into a higher density mixed use precinct including an indoor market space. • Construct a vertical high school. • Redevelop parts of Charlestown Square to include active uses on street level and other uses such as residential, office space and late-night hospitality. Modernise the library to a well-designed multi-use space to attract more patrons. • More medium and high-density development around the Highpoint building. • Redevelop the former TAFE site for parkland or housing. <p>Something I don't like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appearance of the new apartment block. • Graffiti on private property. • Vacant land within the centre. <p>Something I like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing high-density housing in the centre. • Continued redevelopment along the Pacific Highway corridor. • The Corner Precinct and the Southern end of Charlestown Square. • Love the outdoor pool but would like to see improvements. 	<p>residential floor space together with a new public car park.</p> <p>The proposed amendments to the Local Environmental Plan and the Charlestown Town Centre Area Plan aim to support more high-quality private development throughout the centre.</p>

Development industry

Council staff met with Dantia and various landowners and property developers to understand developer perspectives on development in Charlestown. Developers expressed interest in undertaking development within Charlestown and identified the following barriers and market conditions affecting development opportunities:

Theme	Comments	Staff comment
Uncertainty created by mine subsidence issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty undertaking thorough feasibility assessments because Subsidence Advisory NSW (SANSW) can only provide advice on grouting and structural building requirements when a specific development is proposed and a site geotechnical assessment undertaken. • In some cases, SANSW place onerous conditions on a development so that it becomes unviable. • Uncertainty as to final grouting costs means developers choose sites where these costs can be clearly identified, such as where mine subsidence is not an issue or where the Newcastle mine grouting fund applies. 	<p>Uncertainty resulting from historic mine workings beneath Charlestown and the current Subsidence Advisory NSW assessment process creates a significant barrier to the envisioned growth of Charlestown.</p> <p>Commencement of a Charlestown Mine Grouting Fund (or extension of the Newcastle Mine Grouting Fund) would reduce uncertainty created by the mine subsidence and give developers confidence to take up redevelopment opportunities in Charlestown.</p>
Development costs and feasibility	<p>Some developers indicated that development feasibility is difficult to achieve in Charlestown because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building costs are the same or higher than other areas but sales prices are lower • additional structural works and consultant costs apply (maybe due to professional indemnity insurance and clauses in contracts that make them prohibitive) due to mine subsidence 	<p>Council's Economic Strategist undertook feasibility modelling for five different development scenarios within the Charlestown strategic economic centre using current planning controls and legislative requirements. This process</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some land owners have too high an expectation on the price they should receive for their land • local infrastructure contributions are significantly higher than in Newcastle • additional compliance costs apply, such as new fire safety requirements and strata bonds. 	identified that feasible development opportunities within Charlestown strategic economic centre are available.
Car parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market demand for residential car parking is high and there is no concern with the prescribed residential rates. • All developers suggest the visitor car parking rate is too high. • In some cases, the building height/unit numbers result in car parking extending beyond a whole level. Extra car parking is provided to complete the level, adding to building costs. • One developer considered the commercial car parking rate to be too high. 	A new table of car parking rates is proposed within the Charlestown Town Centre Area Plan (Section 10.1 LMDCP 2014) to better reflect the accessibility of this area to shops, services and public transport.
Retail demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online shopping is continuing to increase in popularity and this is affecting the retail floorspace needs. • Retailers are transitioning to smaller tenancies that focus on the brand experience rather than the act of purchasing. • Enabling a diversity of uses in the future will be important. 	The planning proposal and the revised Town Centre Area Plan aim to support a diverse range of uses to grow Charlestown as a vibrant mixed use centre.

Young people

Council staff held a workshop with year 10 students from St Mary's High School (Gateshead) to identify the places they love most within Charlestown, ideas for changes or places that feel unsafe or unpleasant. Similar discussions were also held with the Youth Council. Key issues identified by young people include:

Theme	Comments	Staff comment
Places and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safe local public spaces with live music and games so travel to Newcastle is not required.• Hold outdoor community events to make it more inviting.• More seating at Charlestown Oval.	Refer to previous comments on places and activities.
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong perception of the oval and skate park and South Piazza being unsafe. Consider community events for young children, skating lessons.	Noted.
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bus services are not frequent enough, and the Pacific Highway could be better used for transport connections.• Connection to Fernleigh Track to enable access to wider region.• Introduce electric scooters.• Better walking and cycling connections between the pool and Charlestown Square.	The Charlestown Transport Management Plan includes a range of actions to support better walking and cycling opportunities with improved public transport facilities.
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More green spaces and trees.	The Charlestown Town Centre Area Plan contains new built form guidelines to support the retention of existing trees and planting of additional trees within the front setback and road reserve.

Ageing and Disability Advisory Panel

Council staff attended a meeting of the Ageing and Disability Advisory Panel to talk about places they love most within Charlestown, ideas for changes or places that feel unsafe or unpleasant. Key issues identified include:

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Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topography makes it difficult to get around.• People often use the Charlestown Square car park and use Smart Street to cross to medical appointments on the eastern side of the highway as it is the flattest part.• A need for more accessible parking on the eastern side of the Pacific Highway or more drop-off zones.• Parking locations need to better consider topography.• A number of places in Charlestown have steep gutter ramps and the grade of the road make it difficult to cross (for example, lights outside of Centrelink).	The Charlestown Transport Management Plan includes a range of actions that align with Council's overarching strategies, as well as future transport and mobility trends. The plan includes actions to improve customer experiences associated with travelling to and within Charlestown, whether by bus, taxi/ride share, walking, cycling or private vehicle.