

ITEM 3 HELENSBURGH TOWN CENTRE PLAN AND STREETScape MASTERPLAN

The Helensburgh Town Centre Plan 2020–2045 (the Plan) identifies priorities for change and renewal to achieve the community's vision for the Helensburgh Town Centre. The Plan is accompanied by the Helensburgh Town Centre Implementation Plan 2020–2045 (TCIP) and guides the principles and design objectives of the Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan. The Plan provides clear strategies and actions to meet the current and future needs of the local community. Supported by planning and urban design analysis, traffic studies and an accessibility audit, The Plan will guide change through actions related to infrastructure improvements, main street renewal and planning control amendments.

The Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan (HSMP) is a long-term, comprehensive concept design that is informed by the Plan. The HSMP expresses the Plan's vision for the Helensburgh Town Centre, articulating infrastructure improvements and renewal. The HSMP demonstrates how Walker Street can be designed to support its role as a vibrant main street, including enhancements to adjacent streets (Parkes Street and Short Street) to make the Town Centre safe and accessible with improved amenity.

The draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan was developed through comprehensive community consultation undertaken between March and June 2019. Staff worked with interested community members, representatives of the Northern Illawarra Chamber of Commerce, Neighbourhood Forum 1, and local school students to inform both the draft Plan and the development of the draft Streetscape Masterplan.

The Draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan and draft Streetscape Masterplan were exhibited between 11 May 2020 and 22 June 2020 to enable the community to inform the finalisation of both of these projects. This report is to inform Council of engagement feedback, to report on how the feedback has informed refinement of the final Plan and Streetscape Masterplan and to seek adoption of the Plan and Streetscape Masterplan.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1 The Helensburgh Town Centre Plan 2020–2045 be adopted (Attachment 3).
- 2 The Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan be adopted (Attachment 4).
- 3 The Helensburgh Town Centre Implementation Plan be noted (Attachment 5).

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Chris Stewart, Manager City Strategy

Authorised by: Linda Davis, Director Planning + Environment - Future City + Neighbourhoods

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Town Centre Engagement Report
- 2 Streetscape Masterplan Engagement Report
- 3 Draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan
- 4 Draft Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan
- 5 Draft Implementation Plan

BACKGROUND

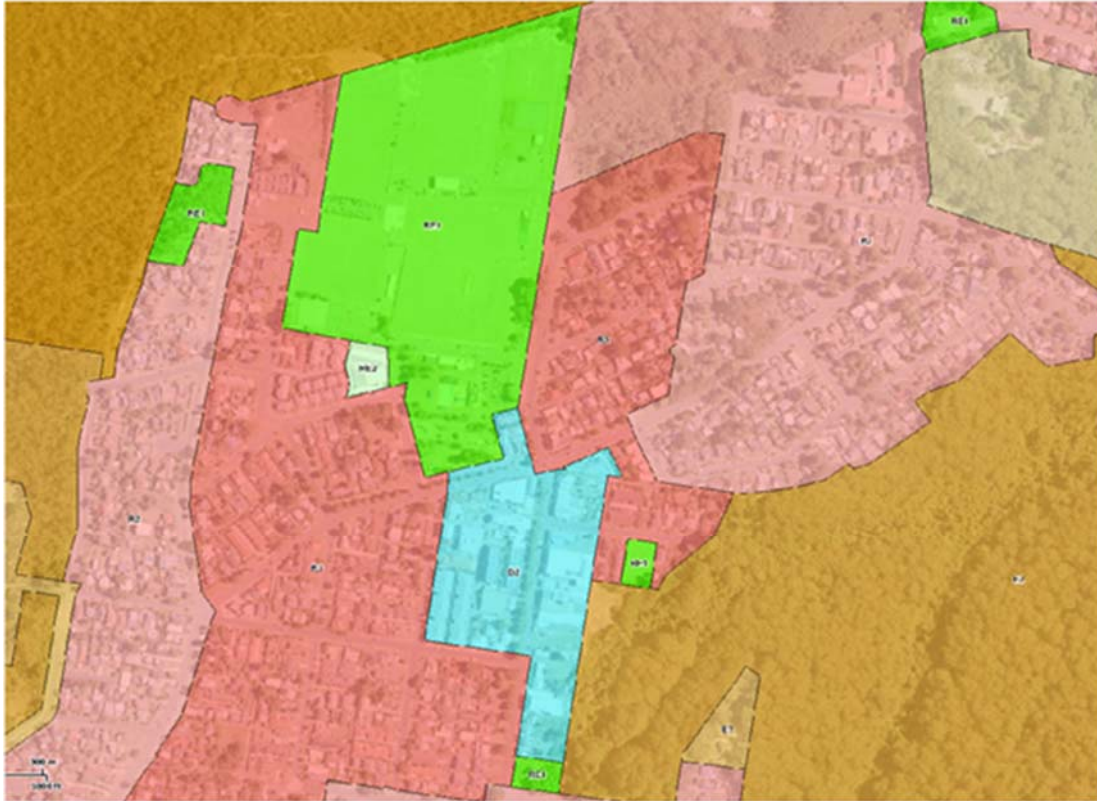
Location and Characteristics of Helensburgh Town Centre

The Helensburgh Town Centre is the northernmost commercial centre, located 34 km north of Wollongong and 45 km south of Sydney CBD, servicing Helensburgh and the surrounding suburbs of Coalcliff, Clifton, Stanwell Park Stanwell Tops, Otford and Lilyvale. Located in a bushland setting on the edge of the Royal National Park. Land to which the Helensburgh Town Centre relates is the land zoned B2 Local Centre.

The Town Centre is focussed around the intersection of Walker and Parkes Streets, extending between Whitty and Lilyvale Streets at the southern boundary to Charles Harper Park in the north. The western boundary is Stuart Street and the eastern boundary is Walker Lane.

Because of the remote location of Helensburgh, the Town Centre functions as an important hub for the local community, providing important community and recreational facilities, healthcare, childcare centre and a range of retail, professional and personal services.

Figure 1: Helensburgh Town Centre Planning Zones



Preparation of the draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan 2020–2045

In 2017, footpath renewal was planned for the eastern side of Walker Street (between Whitty and Parkes Street) as identified within the Capital Works Program. Concept designs were developed and presented to the community in September 2017. The community feedback received indicated that footpath renewal did not respond holistically to the need for improved amenity, accessibility and safety for the Town Centre. The community requested a Town Centre study that could inform the streetscape design.

Aligned with the Town and Village Planning Delivery program, Land Use Planning commenced the Town Centre study in late 2018. A range of planning, urban design and traffic analysis was undertaken, and data collected about how people move through and use the Town Centre.

The objective of the Town Centre study is to -

- Work with Community to create a shared Vision for Helensburgh Town Centre.
- Undertake and document an urban design analysis of the Town Centre – quality and amenity.
- Bring together the range of Helensburgh Projects under one Implementation Plan.

Extensive community consultation for the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan occurred between March and June of 2019 to inform the content of the draft Plan and the Streetscape Masterplan. A community forum, consultation with local school children and meetings with Neighbourhood Forum 1 and the Business Chamber informed the analysis and recommendations of the draft Plan. A draft Vision was developed and workshopped with a smaller group of community volunteers.

The draft Plan and Streetscape Masterplan were then shared with the broader community to test alignment with community opinion and gain feedback to inform refinement.

Consultation was conducted between 11 May to 22 June 2020. Details relating to all engagement activities and reporting on feedback received is documented in the accompanying Engagement reports (Attachments 1 and 2). Further detail is also provided in summary in the Consultation and Communication Section below.

Resources for Regions Grant

In early 2019, Council was awarded \$1.6 million under the NSW Government's Resources for Regions program towards investment in the renewal of the Helensburgh Town Centre. This grant funding will provide a significant contribution towards the upgrade of the Helensburgh Town Centre streetscape, improved pedestrian crossing points, a new north-south footpath for Charles Harper Park and an upgrade to northern car park at Rex Jackson Oval (near the netball courts).

The endorsement of the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan and Streetscape Masterplan will mean that the Streetscape Masterplan can move to detailed design to allow construction to progress aligned with the deliverables of the Grant.

Recent Council investment in Helensburgh

Over the past 15 months there has been investment in a range of project within the suburb of Helensburgh, including -

- Maidstone/The Ridge Roundabout – construction of a new roundabout at the intersection of The Ridge, Maidstone Street, Junction 2020.
- and Fletcher Street.
- Walker Street Culvert Upgrade – repair and upgrade of the major culvert running under Walker Street located on an unnamed tributary of Gills Gully, which flows into the Hacking River.
- Rex Jackson Storage Shed – improved storage of gear for the range of sporting user groups at Rex Jackson Oval.
- Charles Harper Playground – replacement of the existing playground in Charles Harper Park, including multi-use equipment, new entry point and connecting footpath, new tree planting and the installation of shade sails.

PROPOSAL

Helensburgh Town Centre Plan

The *Helensburgh Town Centre Plan 2020–2045* provides Council staff, developers and the community strategic guidance for the future of Helensburgh Town Centre. The Plan seeks to guide and facilitate change through planning control amendments and infrastructure improvements. The Plan aims to improve the lived experience of residents and visitors by increasing the safety and comfort of the public domain, whilst encouraging investment and enhancement in the private realm, to activate and enliven the main street. The Plan emphasises council's investment based on the priorities expressed by the community's Vision and supporting principles for the Town Centre.

The Vision is -

“Helensburgh is an inclusive and welcoming village of diverse communities and rich heritage set within an extraordinary natural landscape. At its heart is a thriving main street which is connected to world-class local destinations, and alive with people.”

The Plan Principles are -

- Unique, vibrant and community focussed.
- Thriving, sustainable and creative.

- Active, natural and healthy.
- Connected, accessible and pedestrian friendly.

The vision statements provide a framework to measure how development, infrastructure and community-led projects contribute to the achievement of the community’s aspirations for Helensburgh Town Centre.

A series of Strategies have been defined which seek to deliver change in the Town Centre aligned with the Community's vision.

Table 1: Summary of Strategies and Actions with the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan

Strategy	Actions
<p>Updates to Planning and Policy</p> <p>A renewed focus on character and identity to reflect Helensburgh's unique attributes will be reflected in planning policy, setting the tone for future development.</p> <p>Revision of the Development Control Plan will ensure building controls promote interesting shopfronts and high-quality designs at the right scale for Helensburgh.</p> <p>The boundary of the Town Centre is redefined to focus on Walker and Parkes Streets.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update Wollongong LEP 2009 to reflect changes to zoning boundaries. 2. Update Wollongong DCP 2009 Chapter B4 Development in Business Zones to set renewed planning controls for Helensburgh Town Centre, and progress the completion of the draft Helensburgh Character Statement for integration into the Wollongong DCP.
<p>Enhancing Connections</p> <p>Leverage and connect the Town Centre to surrounding destinations, making it accessible by foot, bicycle and car.</p> <p>Strengthen connection to the natural surroundings and natural areas.</p> <p>Wayfinding is clear and easy, and it is a comfortable place to walk around. Create an important sense of arrival into the Town Centre.</p> <p>Public space is celebrated and highly active.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Lodge a generic Events Development Application for Rex Jackson Park 4. Provide opportunities for Markets in Helensburgh Town Centre and surrounding open spaces. 5. Helensburgh Key Walking Connections Project – design concept for cycle/walking loop trail aligned with Urban Greening. 6. Develop and deliver a wayfinding Concept and Strategy including important links e.g. Temple to Station Trail Project. 7. Helensburgh Public Art Project
<p>Integrated Community Hub</p> <p>An integrated community centre and library facility will be at the heart of the community. This purpose-built facility will be a centrepiece of the town, delivering a high quality, welcoming place. Council is investigating several site options for the new community facility; however further investigations are required to ensure feasibility.</p> <p>Principles guiding the future of the Integrated Community Centre & Library include -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrates into the landscape to provide opportunities for generations to come. • Well-connected and accessible, with 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Site options investigation for an Integrated Community Facility (community centre/library) 9. Key site urban design masterplan

<p>integrated parking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community heart - integrating community meeting place. • Exceptional design, unique to Helensburgh. • Programmed to bring life to the Town Centre - day and night. 	
Strategy	Actions
<p>Mainstreet Renewal</p> <p>Walker Street is Helensburgh's vibrant main street which is accessible and convenient for all. It invites people to visit and spend time. Street renewal will enhance the daily lived experience of residents, create a unique destination for visitors, and provide a catalyst for activation and investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Undertake main street renewal detailed design + construction as per the endorsed Streetscape Masterplan (Attachment 4). 11. Deliver a heritage interpretation project aligned with streetscape upgrades. 12. Undertake a laneway Activation project to enhance safety and usability of laneways 13. Enhance bus stops with a focus to improve active transport.

Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan

Documented within the Mainstreet Renewal Strategy is a series of objectives, expressed in the Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan -

- Enhance connection both physical and visual to the natural environment and the unique character of Helensburgh.
- Embrace and celebrate town setting by the introduction of human scale landscaping features to create a greater sense of place.
- Establish equal access pathways and a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Create a low vehicle speed environment to increase pedestrian and cycle safety.
- Increase shade along key pathways by planting additional canopy trees.
- Enhance pedestrian connections and experience through the development of the existing laneways.
- Express the indigenous, natural, service and mining heritage of Helensburgh throughout the landscape and by incorporating public art and interpretive devices.
- Acknowledge the Memorial planting of Brush Box Trees on Walker and Parkes Streets through interpretive signage.
- Provide improved infrastructure like recycling bins, seating, bike racks and bubblers.

These principles underpin the integrity of the Streetscape Masterplan and provide clarity in how the design will uphold the vision and expectations of the community.

Clear priorities of the Streetscape Masterplan

During the consultation, a staging diagram accompanied the plans to outline the extent of works that will be completed between now and 2022. See pages 25 and 26 of the Town Centre Plan (Attachment 3).

Staging priorities have been considered having regard to -

- 1 Alignment with the streetscape master plan objectives: pedestrian accessibility, comfort and safety.

- 2 Value for money: ensuring that infrastructure delivery is coordinated. What infrastructure works will bring the highest impact to how the main street functions.
- 3 Design functionality: ensuring that infrastructure elements are delivered in a coordinated way. Sometimes there are partnering elements.
- 4 Relationship with future investment programs: ensuring that works don't become redundant.

The following summary of works will be undertaken between 2020 and 2022 -

Parkes Street

There is an urgent priority to create a safe environment for pedestrians to connect between the main street and the services and amenities to the north.

Design is intended to slow and calm traffic, ensure pedestrian safety, improve accessibility, and to instil within this intersection a sense of arrival and entry to the Town Centre.

Walker Street

The priorities for Walker Street are focussed around delivering high levels of accessibility and quality place outcomes.

- New continuous accessible pathway along the Western edge at street level.
- Traffic calming at southern entry with blisters narrowing the road and creating a pedestrian crossing point.
- Improved connections to western shops from Walker Street (road level) with two new accessible ramps and one new set of feature stairs.
- Improve safety with upgraded crossing facilities in Walker Street and Short Street.
- Two newly defined public meeting places - outside Coles with a widened footpath area, and at the top of the new stairs linking with the western bank shopping area.
- Tree canopy lifted and native landscaping featured along the western bank. Enhanced character through interpretation project for memorial trees, native landscaping, and expressing the heritage sandstone curb where possible.
- Include lighting conduits, seating and human scale elements.

Helensburgh Town Centre Implementation Plan 2020-2045

The Helensburgh Town Centre Implementation Plan (Attachment 5) has been developed to complement the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan and to clearly communicate priorities and target delivery dates. The purpose of the Implementation Plan is to guide the delivery of actions in a collaborative and coherent way to promote the best possible outcomes. As such, the Plan needs to be flexible and ongoing refinement will occur over time. The Implementation Plan includes a commitment to the ongoing monitoring to clearly communicate project status and staging, as well as ensure future opportunities aligned with the Plan objectives can be included in Council's annual planning process and delivery program.

The Implementation Plan provides a greater level of detail for each action identified in the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan, identifying performance measures, a project leader, project partners, estimated costs, priorities, targets for delivery and strategic alignment for each action. It is important to recognise that some actions will require leadership and funding outside of Council control. The deliverables of the Implementation Plan have been produced in collaboration with the responsible Council Divisions. It is recommended that the Implementation Plan be noted, as it will be implemented as resources are available.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

To help shape the draft Plan, Council undertook extensive community engagement from March 2019 to June 2019. Engagement included a series of community workshops, targeted stakeholder meetings,

workshops with school children and one-on-one conversations. A survey gathered data on what the community valued and their priorities for the Town Centre.

The themes emerging from these workshops, surveys, interviews and analysis formed a locally generated Vision and set of principles that developed into the Draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan.

The Draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan and draft Streetscape Masterplan were exhibited between 11 May 2020 and 22 June 2020. The objective was to check in with the community to ensure the Vision, Strategies and key priorities were aligned.

In response to the changing demands of face-to-face meetings brought about by the COVID19 pandemic, the communication strategy was adapted to ensure that the community could meaningfully connect and provide feedback. This was managed through the following approaches -

- All content was made available online.
- Feedback was encouraged via online surveys with the traditional means of making a submission in writing and email remaining available.
- An online Q&A was used to enable staff to answer questions on a weekly basis.
- Staff created videos to communicate the intent and detail of the projects.
- Copies of the plans were available at the local library for collection and were also individually distributed to all businesses in the Town Centre.
- Two double page advertisements were placed in the 2508 Magazine to reach the local residents.
- Outreach to contacts gathered over past consultation events included emails and phone calls to local community groups including the Historic Society, Neighbourhood Forum 1 and local schools.
- In place of face to face meetings, Skype and telephone discussions were made available. A number of these sessions were conducted where staff met with interested members of the community and local businesses including the Helensburgh Hotel, Northern Suburbs Chamber of Commerce/Post Office, Ray White Real Estate, Bensons Conveyancing Service, Premier Illawarra Bus Service and Metropolitan Mine.
- Community members were encouraged to contact staff directly with any questions, with staff contact details made available.

A total of 58 submissions for the Town Centre Plan were received, 38 via the online survey and 20 via email. Information was included in Neighbourhood Forum 1's newsletter, which resulted in some questions from Forum members. There were a high number of visits to the council engagement website.

The following table provides a summary of the online engagement through Council's website.

Table 2: Summary of participation through the engagement web site

Measure and Explanation	Usage
Unique Site Visits – Total number of visits to the project page	1,110
Aware – Total number of users who viewed the project page	927
Informed – Total number of users who clicked a hyperlink or opened a document	427
Engaged – Total number of users who actively contributed to the project via a tool, eg. submitted feedback via the survey or participated in the Q&A	41

Results of Exhibition and Common Themes

The community feedback received is summarised in Attachments 1 and 2.

The online survey asked respondents for their level of support for the plan's Vision and why. Results from this question found that the parameters of Strongly Support and Support were mostly chosen.

Also, the survey asked for their agreement with elements of the plan listed as Principles, Policy and Planning, Enhancing Connections, Integrated Community Hub and Main Street Renewal and why. Results from these questions found that the parameters of Strongly Agree and Agree were mostly chosen.

Most commonly, respondents in praise of the Vision said it captured the character of the town and that the Plan displayed great potential for improving the town. Many were in support of the Principles, Planning and Policy, and Enhancing Connections, for the direction and aspiration they offer. With this support were comments on parking and the number of empty shops.

Changes to Draft Plan following exhibition

A few minor changes were made to the draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan (the exhibited version of the Plan) to produce the final version of the Plan. These changes were mainly aesthetic, to improve the flow and clarity of the messages within the draft Plan and no major changes to the intent or direction of the Plan have been made. The main changes to the Plan are tabulated below.

Table 4: Main Differences between the Draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan 2020-2025 and the (final) Helensburgh Town Centre Plan 2020-2045

Pages	Change
3 & 4	The Section <i>Unique town with a point of difference</i> was expanded to integrate more detail around Aboriginal Heritage and recognise the role of First Nations People in the local area. Engagement summary from former consultation was removed, and reference made to the accompanying Engagement Report.
various	All maps have been updated to delete reference to a proposed lane linking Walker Street to Walker Lane (north of Short Street). This land is in private ownership and Council has resolved not to purchase this land.
15	Additional detail was added under the heading <i>Redefining the Town Centre boundary</i> to specify the building height and floor space ratio controls nominated for transition with boundary adjustments.
19 & 20	Adjustments made to the wording of the <i>Integrated Community Hub</i> Strategy to reflect current status/ consideration of site investigations on potential sites for an integrated community hub across the Town Centre.
22	Strategy <i>Main Street Renewal</i> has been updated to reflect the opportunity to integrate Aboriginal Heritage in the Main street design, and the importance of working in collaboration with the local Aboriginal community to understand connection with Country.
27	Conclusion added

It is recommended that the updated Helensburgh Town Plan 2020-2045 be adopted.

The Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan has also been updated to remove the proposed lane linking Walker Street to Walker Lane. The Streetscape Masterplan provides a long-term, comprehensive concept design that expresses the vision for the Helensburgh Town Centre. The Streetscape Masterplan demonstrates how Walker Street can be designed to support its role as a vibrant main street, including enhancements to adjacent streets (Parkes Street and Short Street) to make the Town Centre safe and accessible with improved amenity. It is recommended that the updated Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan be adopted.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2028 goal 5, “We have a healthy community in a liveable city”. It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan	Delivery Program 2018-2022	Operational Plan 2020-21
Strategy	4 Year Action	Operational Plan Actions
5.1.4 Urban areas are created to provide a healthy and safe living environment for our community.	1.3.1.2 Develop planning controls and Town Centre and Neighbourhood Plans with regard to the economic, social and environmental impacts	1.3.1.2.1 Complete Helensburgh Town Centre Study

The Helensburgh Town Centre Plan (Attachment 3) and Implementation Plan 2020–2045 (Attachment 5) are supporting documents under Council’s Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. Supporting documents include Council endorsed strategies, plans, masterplans, town and village plans, precinct plan and action plans that include short, medium and long-term outcomes to support the development of Our Wollongong 2028: Community Strategic Plan, Revised Delivery Program 2018-2022 and Operational Plan 2020-2021. The annual delivery program planning process includes operational and capital budget allocations of people, finances and assets through a vigorous prioritisation and decision-making process.

The role of the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan and Implementation Plan is to inform this process and set priorities for planning and delivery of projects within the Helensburgh Town Centre. The vision and objectives of the Plan serve an important strategic function and should be used as a prompt for designers, architects, engineers, strategic and assessment planners, community groups and decision-makers in planning, assessing and delivering projects in the Helensburgh Town Centre to deliver outcomes aligned to community aspirations and priorities.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The *Helensburgh Town Centre Plan 2020–2045* recognises that the town centre has some capacity for growth. However, smart growth in the Helensburgh Town Centre area could support active and more environmentally-sensitive lifestyles and reduce private vehicle dependency given the proximity of shops, services, public transport and recreation areas. Within the Plan, the following objectives promote ecological sustainable practices -

- Leverage and connect the Town Centre to surrounding destinations, making it accessible by foot, bicycle and car.
- Strengthen connection to the natural surroundings and natural areas.
- Wayfinding is clear and easy, and it is a comfortable place to walk around. Create an important sense of arrival into the Town Centre.
- Public space is celebrated and highly active.

Embracing ecologically sustainable design and practices requires a collective effort from Council, business, community groups and residents.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Plan provides a vision for the future of the Helensburgh Town Centre and sets direction for future planning and infrastructure priorities. The Helensburgh Town Centre Implementation Plan 2020–2045 provides more detail on actions, including staging; targeted delivery dates and estimated capital costs (Attachment 5). Future design work and investigations will inform more detailed costings. The Implementation Plan will be used to inform annual planning priorities and budgeting processes. Currently many actions have already been funded through the annual planning process – the role of the

Implementation Plan is to align actions to strategic aspirations, clarify priorities and give weight to funding proposals, including Council's internal budgeting processes and external grant funding proposals.

CONCLUSION

The *Helensburgh Town Centre Plan 2020–2045* has been prepared to offer strategic guidance on the future growth of Helensburgh and is accompanied by an Implementation Plan to coordinate the delivery of actions outlined within the Plan. The Draft *Helensburgh Town Centre Plan 2020–2045* seeks to build on Helensburgh strengths and focuses on enhancing the centre's appearance and connectivity and encouraging social connections through activating and improving public space. A variety of community engagement activities has highlighted community support for the direction of the Plan and future investment in the centre. It is recommended that the *Helensburgh Town Centre Plan 2020–2045* and Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan be adopted and the Implementation Plan be noted.



Draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

June 2020

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Background.....	4
Methods.....	6
Results.....	6

Executive Summary

Council presented the draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan to the community for comment, after it was developed through extensive engagement conducted in 2019. It sets out a shared community Vision and Strategies which form an action plan for the Town Centre. The community and stakeholder views and ideas highlighted in this report will help Council understand and plan for the needs of the community, informing the new Town Centre Plan for Helensburgh.

With multiple projects being planned for Helensburgh, the community engagement for the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan, Streetscape Masterplan and the Community Centre Options were run at the same time, allowing for a streamlined engagement process. The engagement for all three projects ran from 11 May to 22 June 2020.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the communication and engagement strategies were adapted to ensure the community could meaningfully connect and provide feedback, in the absence of face-to-face engagement.

A variety of communication and engagement methods were used to provide information and invite the community to comment. Information was made available on Council's engagement website with the opportunity to ask questions and provide comment and feedback. Respondents could also send in comments by mail, email or phone. Online videos replaced face-to-face presentations. The community also had access to technical staff via phone and email and could ask questions through an online Q&A tool.

The engagement campaign was promoted extensively through two advertisements in the Helensburgh 2508 Magazine, the Advertiser, social media posts, media releases, emails to key stakeholders and respondents from previous engagement on the Town Centre Plan. There were phone calls and follow-up emails to businesses in the Town Centre and conversations with Neighbourhood Forum 1.

There were 1,110 visits to the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan (Plan) webpage, resulting in 38 submissions through the online survey. In addition, 16 email submissions were received. Comments provided by email were mostly concerned with direct changes to the Town Centre and referred to the Streetscape Masterplan.

The online survey asked respondents for their level of support for the Plan's Vision and for comments on the Vision. Results from this question were that 'Strongly Support' and 'Support' were mostly chosen from the five options.

Also, the survey asked for level of agreement with elements of the Plan listed as Principles, Policy and Planning, Enhancing Connections, Integrated Community Hub and Main Street Renewal and why. Results from these questions showed that 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' were mostly chosen.

Most commonly, respondents in praise of the Vision said it captured the character of the town and the Plan displayed great potential for improving the town. Many were in support of the Principles, Planning and Policy, and Enhancing Connections, for the direction and aspiration they offer. Further comments on support were focussed on parking and addressing the number of empty shops.

Comments opposing elements of the Plan were mostly concerned with parking, the lack of public toilets and the need for a roundabout at Lilyvale Street. There were also comments on the number of empty shops, the poor quality and mismatched facades, and concern that businesses were failing.

Background

Extensive community engagement was undertaken from March 2019 to June 2019 to help shape the draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan (Plan). Engagement included a series of community workshops, targeted stakeholder meetings, workshops with children and one-on-one conversations. The themes emerging from these workshops, surveys, interviews and analysis form a locally generated Vision and set of principles for the Helensburgh Town Centre.

2019 Engagement Summary

Helensburgh community members have been advocating for a Plan for many years. This advocacy resulted in Walker Street Footpath improvement project that was presented to the community in 2016 being placed on hold pending the creation of an agreed Plan.

Council staff met with community representatives in December 2018 to discuss methods of engagement to develop the Plan. A variety of methods were then used to encourage community members to join the conversation for the Plan.

The community engagement objectives for this project were: to communicate broadly to the community and key stakeholders to inform them about the development of the draft Town Centre Plan throughout the life of the project; to build a strong partnership with the stakeholders that will enable support and effective implementation; ensure the diversity of community voices are reflected in the engagement process, and that diverse opportunities are created for the community to be informed about and have input into the implementation of the project.

'Help Shape Helensburgh Town Centre Plan' postcards promoting the engagement were delivered to every letterbox in the 2508 area. Postcards were given to early morning commuters at Helensburgh train station and information packs were available at the Helensburgh Library.

Presentations about the Plan were made to Neighbourhood Forum 1 and the Northern Illawarra Chamber of Commerce. The 2508 magazine printed several articles promoting the engagement and emails were sent to an extensive stakeholder list that community representatives and council staff had created.





An online survey opened from 1 to 18 March 2019 and reopened 30 March to 17 April 2019 following community requests. 315 people completed the survey. Council staff conducted a workshop with 43 Year three and year six students at Holy Cross College, asking them several of the survey questions.

A Vision workshop was held on 30 March 2019 and 43 people attended. 30 from the Vision Workshop then signed up for continued involvement in the creation of the Plan.

The data from the surveys and the Vision Workshop was reviewed and the top 10 themes emerged. These themes included: improve the public spaces (342 responses), find parking solutions (130), create a community hub/facilities (122), improve the variety of local shops (120), install traffic calming (95), create pedestrian friendly areas (83), improve the physical connections, shop fronts and control development (51 each), encourage culture/art/music/heritage and public seats (45 each), encourage sustainability (37) and provide public gathering spaces (30).

The themes above informed the development of draft vision statements, principles and plans. These were then presented to the twelve people who attended the Refining Workshop on 1 June 2019 to provide further feedback. Council staff then developed the draft Plan and Implementation Plan informed from community feedback throughout the engagement period.

Details of the number of participants for each engagement activity from December 2018 through to September 2019 are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Engagement Activities	Participation
Pre-exhibition – Co-Design Workshop 13 December 2018	8
Survey submissions received 1-18 March 2019 (287) Survey submissions received 1-18 April 2019 (28)	315
Holy Cross School visit 	43
Presentation to Neighbourhood Forum 1 meeting on 13 March 2019  <small>Wellongong City Council senior strategic project officer Bridget Jarvis details town centre plans to a March 13 meeting of the local Neighbourhood Forum.</small>	12
Vision Workshop 30 March 2019 	43
Attendance at the Northern Illawarra Chamber of Commerce 2 April 2019	12
Working Group 1- Refining Workshop June 2019 	12

Stakeholders

Stakeholders identified prior to the start of the engagement period included participants in the 2019 engagement, residents, community groups, businesses in the Helensburgh Town Centre and Neighbourhood Forum 1.

Methods

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the communication strategies were adapted to ensure that in the absence of face-to-face engagement, the community could meaningfully connect and provide feedback.

A variety of communication and engagement methods were used to invite the community to join the conversation:

- Two paid advertisements in the Helensburgh regional paper 2508 Magazine, one each in the May and June editions.
- Social media posts
- Media releases distributed to local media
- Phone calls and emails to all businesses in the Town Centre
- Emails to key stakeholders and participants in the 2019 engagement
- Notice listed in the Council column in The Advertiser on 20 May 2020
- Copies of the Plan were exhibited in the Helensburgh Library with hardcopies of the survey
- Council's engagement website, www.our.wollongong.nsw.gov.au

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, telephone calls and video conferences were conducted with interested parties as an alternative to face-to-face meetings. This allowed for detailed discussion to clarify any points raised and for Council staff to hear respondents' in-depth feedback.

Neighbourhood Forum 1 were contacted by phone and information was provided via email.

A landing page for Helensburgh projects was created on Council's engagement website directing the community to a project page for the Plan. This project page included a video that outlined the main features of the Plan and how it was developed. A Q&A tool was used for the community to ask questions which were then responded to by Council officers. An online survey was used for people to submit comments.

Results

A total of 58 submissions for the Plan were received, 38 via the online survey and 20 via email. Information was included in Neighbourhood Forum 1's newsletter, which resulted in some questions from Forum members.

An article published in the May edition of 2508 Magazine coincided with increased visitation to the project webpage.

Media stories were published in the Illawarra Mercury on 11 June 2020, the Helensburgh Blog on 31 May 2020 and the Bulli & Clifton Times on 29 May 2020.

Two social media posts, 14 May 2020 reaching 2,917 people with 132 engagements and 20 June 2020 reaching 3,989 people with 235 engagements

Shape the Future

Artist's Impression of a renewed Walker Street

Wollongong City Council is working on a series of strategic projects in your suburb as part of our future-focus for Helensburgh. Rather than looking at each of these projects independently, we're looking at them with the bigger picture in mind. That's why we're consulting these projects simultaneously. By taking this united approach we're able to get in place phased plans that can be ready to roll in early 2021. It also allows us to reflect upon what we've already achieved. We appreciate that Coronavirus, and measures to reduce the risk of its spread, might be considered a community engagement challenge. But we're responding and our website offers new ways to collate feedback and share information. Thanks for working with us on Helensburgh's bright future.

4 / 2508 / MAY

of Helensburgh

The draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan is based on community consultation carried out in early 2019. It focuses on building Helensburgh's individuality and sets a shared community Vision and Strategies, which form the Town Centre action plan.

Some of the key directions include:

- A renewed main street which is safe, accessible, and honours the local identity. We've developed a draft Streetscape Masterplan that expresses what Walker Street will look like in the future and prioritises a pedestrian-friendly environment and we're asking for your comments on a draft streetscape design for Walker Street.
- A key Strategy is to deliver an Integrated Community Hub, bringing together important community facilities in a centralised location. We're exploring options for an integrated community centre and library facility, and we're seeking your opinion on how best to meet the needs of the community.

How to share your thoughts
Submissions close 8 June 2020

Write to us:
The General Manager
Wollongong City Council
Locked Bag 8821
Wollongong DC NSW 2500

Email: engagement@wollongong.nsw.gov.au
Phone: 4227 7111

Online:
ourwollongong.nsw.gov.au
Complete the survey - Provide your opinion and feedback
Online Q & A - Where you can ask questions about the draft Plan. We will respond to questions once a week.

MAY / 2508 / 5

Article published in May edition of 2508 Magazine

Information about the exhibition was included in the Neighbourhood Forum 1 newsletter, which generated questions and submissions from their members.

This section of the report provides details of the online participation (Table 1), responses to the online survey (Table 2), and a summary of comments received.

Table 1: Summary of participation through the engagement web site

Measure and Explanation	Usage
Unique Site Visits – Total number of visits to the project page	1,110
Aware – Total number of users who viewed the project page	927
Informed – Total number of users who clicked a hyperlink or opened a document	427
Engaged – Total number of users who actively contributed to the project via a tool, e.g. submitted feedback via the survey or participated in the Q&A	41

The online survey asked the community for their level of support and reasoning on the Vision Statement, the level of agreement with the Principles, Planning and Policy, Enhancing Connections, Integrated Community Hub and Main Street Renewal strategies. The survey also included a general comments question.

Survey Results

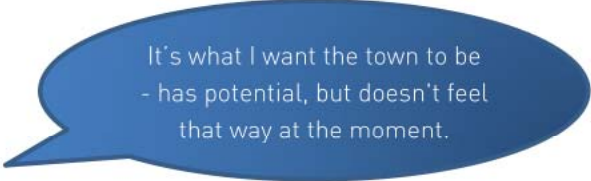
The online survey asked the community to indicate their level of support or agreement with each section of the Plan. Respondents were asked to provide comment for the level chosen. The responses are summarised as follows:

Vision Statement

Vision Online Survey Responses	
Strongly support	13
Support	15
Undecided	5
Somewhat oppose	4
Strongly oppose	1

Most were supportive of the Vision included in the Plan.

Many comments related to the character and village feel of Helensburgh. Some were supportive of the Vision and Plan's aspirations, its potential and that it honours the heritage and natural surroundings. There was some uncertainty as to how Council would progress the Plan. It was commented that the town was messy, but the Plan has potential to change this.

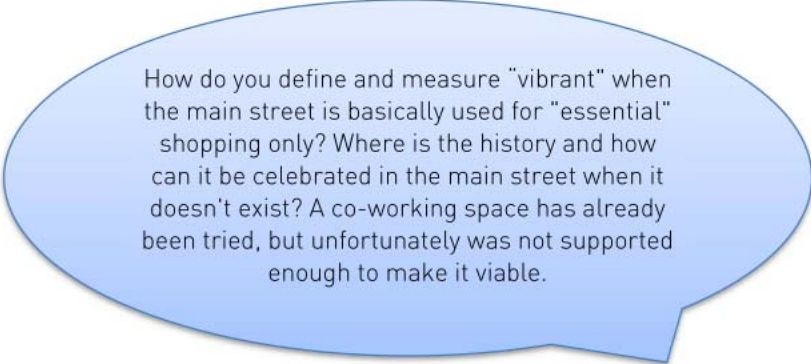


It's what I want the town to be
- has potential, but doesn't feel
that way at the moment.

There were comments about loving the town and residing in Helensburgh a long time. It was referred to as a beautiful village with character and heritage.

While there was much support for Helensburgh being a busy, thriving small town, there were also comments questioning the way it was described. Comments were made on the number of empty shops.

Some described Helensburgh as sleepy. It was referred to as the "sleeping town", as residents sleep in Helensburgh but work, shop, and play out of town. It was felt the main street businesses cannot survive because of this.



How do you define and measure "vibrant" when the main street is basically used for "essential" shopping only? Where is the history and how can it be celebrated in the main street when it doesn't exist? A co-working space has already been tried, but unfortunately was not supported enough to make it viable.

There were many comments that the destinations were world class, such as Darkes Forest, the temple and Sublime Point, but there were no connections from these to the Town Centre. Some said there was nothing unique or of interest in the Town Centre for tourists to consider it a "destination", resulting in it being bypassed. Others said using the term 'world class' was not meaningful and that 'rich heritage' was debatable. Some new residents objected to mentioning Helensburgh's mining heritage as they did not want to celebrate coal.

Comments were made that there needed to be residential development and limiting the plan to the main street was 'silly'. Better connection between suburban streets and the Town Centre was mentioned. This was highlighted in relation to active transport connections.

There was support for describing the Helensburgh community as welcoming and friendly. A small number mentioned racism and that Helensburgh does not host diverse communities.

Principles

Principles Online Survey Responses	
Strongly agree	15
Agree	19
Undecided	1
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	2

Most survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the Principles in the Plan.

There was positive feedback saying the Principles were a true and good summary and the statements would help bring the Town Centre into line with what the community should be like. They were described as 'all-inclusive' and 'what I would like to see'. Sustainable and creative elements were supported.

Active transport was popular, with walking and cycling connections within the CBD mentioned, as well as connecting the CBD to attractions such as the Temple.

I am a supporter of active communities where people spend time outdoors together and ideally walk and cycle instead of taking the car

Making Helensburgh 'more pedestrian friendly' was popular, with the current struggle of parents with prams mentioned. Accessibility was raised, with a view that Helensburgh is not accessible, or is only somewhat accessible.

Including additional meeting areas was supported and there were some comments saying that cafes are the main meeting places in the town.

There was concern that businesses were failing, with reference to the number of empty shops. Some stated the town doesn't have the population needed to retain the number of shops.

Comments were made on the need for a roundabout at Lilyvale Street and parking. There were requests for more toilets, with mention that there was only one public toilet for the whole town.

The few that disagreed with the Principles in the Plan stated there were 'lovely sentiments, but not all are achievable.' Comments stated that apart from 'connected, accessible and pedestrian friendly' the principles required a major shift in the behaviour of residents to actively 'shop local' and not just for 'the essentials'.

Planning and Policy

Planning and Policy Online Survey Responses	
Strongly agree	11
Agree	14
Undecided	10
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	3

Responses to the Planning and Policy statements were mixed. More people agreed or strongly agreed with them than disagreed or strongly disagreed, while some were undecided.

Respondents commented on the Town Centre boundary. Some asked why the Town Centre boundary needed to be defined and others commented that it needed to be expanded to include more of the town. There was a view that the Town Centre boundary should include the hotel, police station and courthouse. It was felt that the Plan ignores other parts of Helensburgh and that corner shops were needed in housing areas.

What would the plan be to transition away from the existing shops to create the diverse, open, sustainable and unique streetscape experience your vision implies?

While there was agreement about the need to create identity, there were some who asked Council not to promote the mining history. A resident asserted that the history outlined in the draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan was incorrect. Their description was that Helensburgh (Camp Creek) started as a railway camp for the development of the rail line down the South Coast and that the town centre with post office and police station was opposite the mine entrance, which explains the location of the primary school. The resident inferred from this history that the draft Town Centre Plan is an attempt to make the current CBD 'modern faux heritage' and it would be better to see patches of grass, tree roots, undefined borders and dense bushes, which is more appropriate for a rural setting.

Many felt that the current mismatch of paths, shops and buildings would be more cohesive with the implementation of the Town Centre Plan. Others questioned how the Plan would help transition the town from the current uninspiring shop fronts.

A comment that planning had failed to connect Helensburgh to the wider environment was made. The lack of signage showing the connection between major arterial roads and the Town Centre was mentioned. Parking, a roundabout for Lilyvale, better roads in the area and parking at the train station were raised in response to the Planning and Policy section of the Plan.

Comments on planning controls to limit building height made. One submission stated that building heights should be limited to two storeys.

An exit road for disasters such as bushfires was also requested.

Enhancing Connections

Enhancing Connections Online Survey Responses	
Strongly agree	16
Agree	13
Undecided	7
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	2

Most 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the Enhancing Connections section of the Plan. There were some who were 'undecided' and only a small number who 'strongly disagreed'.

Some said more footpaths and connections to the natural surrounds and attractions are needed. There was mention of connecting the bike path to Wollongong.

Many who strongly agreed commented that the connections were not visible in the design, and the park and pool were not in the Plan's scope. There was confusion about how the trees on Walker St were to be treated.

While some requested more open space, others said there was already vast public space. Charles Harper Park was mentioned as needing better connection to the CBD.

Some submissions said the town's standing as a gateway to the Illawarra needs to be more visually recognised. More of a sense of arrival at the station and at entrances to Lawrence Hargrave Drive and Princes Highway were mentioned. A request was made to make it obvious where the CBD starts. Many said the arrival at the Parkes Street roundabout and Princes Highway is an eyesore.

There was comment on jargon in the Plan such as 'leverage' and that it didn't entail much change except some tinkering at the edges.

Some said the Plan was 'pointless' and doesn't consider the needs of the townsfolk that live and work in the area.


Integrated Community Hub

Integrated Community Hub Online Survey Responses	
Strongly agree	20
Agree	12
Undecided	2
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	2

The concept of an integrated community hub was well supported, with most either 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' with this section of the Plan. A small number of people said they were 'undecided', 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with this part of the Plan.

There were comments about a lack of services in the area, with more desperately needed. Some people felt the community works well without a Town centre, that the one that exists is not used or fit for purpose. Others stated that a multipurpose centre would be a better use of space. There were requests for 'a big library with a community hall and indoor sports.'

The idea of a community hub was questioned, with a view that it won't be a community hub as it won't be in the heart of the CBD.



I would be disappointed if it had more commercial business space in it like Thirroul when we have so many empty shopfronts already in town

Main Street Renewal

Main Street Renewal Online Survey Responses	
Strongly agree	15
Agree	17
Undecided	4
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	2

There was much support for a renewal of the main street with many 'agreeing' or 'strongly agreeing' with this part of the Plan. Only a few were 'undecided' or 'strongly disagreed' with this section.

Some said that while it is a great vision for the street, it is also dependent on upgrading some of the existing shop fronts so that they are more attractive and become destinations for new business opportunities like cafes, bars and restaurants.

Parking was highlighted by many as an issue, with a view that parking needs to be considered as there is not enough. It was commented that there should be a maximum 15-minute parking on Walker St between Parkes Street and Lilyvale Street, both sides of road.

Requests included the consideration of lowering the speed limit to 10-30kph on Walker Street. The need for a roundabout at the Lilyvale/Walker Street intersection was highlighted.

Linking the different parts of the Town Centre to the main street and making it pedestrian and bike-friendly was seen as an important focus.

There was reference to the history of the area and how that relates to the renewal of the main street. It was commented that much of Walker Street's history has already been demolished and the existing historical buildings are the pub, post office and courthouse all on Parkes Street. The memorial trees and historical sandstone guttering are viewed as being important.

General comments about the Plan, including email submissions

A summary of general comments provided via email submissions and the online survey is included in this section of the report.

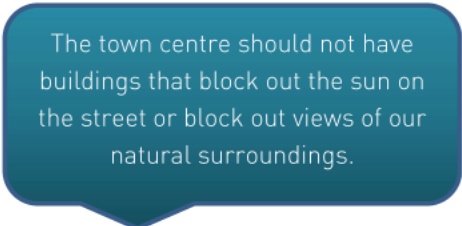
Submissions received via email did not address the various sections of the Plan and some broadly referred to both the Plan and the Streetscape Masterplan as the one plan. These submissions came from residents, businesses, Neighbourhood Forum 1 and the National Trust.

Praise for the Plan


The Plan received much praise, with comments saying it is a thoughtful and considered approach to creating a vision and that this program of rejuvenation is well overdue. Some appreciated the effort and purpose of the Plan, and mostly offered agreement. Comment regarding perceived issues concentrated on detail in the streetscape.

Character of Helensburgh

It was requested to review the Helensburgh Character Statement, locality-based precinct plan and to reduce the three-storey building height to two-stories in the controls to ensure the view of the National Park and State Conservation Area are maintained. It was suggested to add the memorial trees on the western side of Walker Street to the Heritage Schedule, with a succession plan created for their eventual replacement.



The town centre should not have buildings that block out the sun on the street or block out views of our natural surroundings.



Don't litter the street with old mining equipment and storyboards

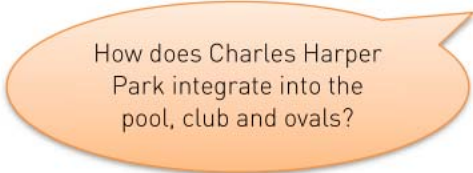
Signage

For the arrival, there were requests that Council should install more signage at critical points to direct tourists to the Town Centre. It was requested to reinstate the large directional sign that said "Shopping Centre 1km" on the corner of Old Princes Highway and Parkes St.



Town Centre Plan Boundary

Comments were made on the boundary and scope of the Plan. There was a view that the study area should include Charles Harper Park, Police station, Club and Hotel. Some expressed concern that 'it will do nothing for the northern end of Walker Street around the pool, Credit Union and Pub. The National Trust praised the boundary definition describing that the measures in the Plan will create a more compact and walkable Town centre.



Modernising the Town Centre

Concerns were expressed about modernising Helensburgh, stating it is 'really important to not modernise it too much, as it will risk losing its charm and character'. In contrast, it was remarked that 'Helensburgh is more like an old village currently'. There was a desire for it to become 'a big town similar to Wollongong, with high-rise buildings/apartments/townhouses, more residential development and fast-food outlets like a proper town'.

Businesses and Shopfronts

Many described the need to activate and improve shopfronts, with requests for Council to work with shop owners. There was a view that the whole main street of shops needs a complete facelift with a common design throughout, both the structure of the façade and colour choice. It was felt that owners of businesses in the main street should be held more accountable for the presentation of their shopfronts.

It was suggested to create a "character" shopfront facade program, with requests to provide grants to assist in its implementation. It was also suggested to reduce Council rates within the B2 zone to assist property owners to invest in upgrading/changing the properties, and to permit a more diverse mix usage of existing properties.

A renewed focus on nightlife, with cocktail bars/lounges, indoor/outdoor eateries and beer gardens was suggested for the Town Centre. There was a view that the design of the Town Centre should express the unique character, rich heritage and natural environment of Helensburgh. There was a desire to steer clear of unappealing generic-style buildings and inject vibrancy with street art/murals.

Sustainability

Consideration of environmental sustainability and climate change were mentioned by some. It was suggested that all businesses be required to use renewable energy. There was a view that Council should ensure infrastructure for electric cars and lighting in the Town Centre were environmentally sustainable. When updating streetscape spaces and infrastructure, it was suggested that recycled materials, such as park benches using recycled plastics should be included.

Parking and Roads

Additional parking was often raised as needed or critical. It was questioned why parking was being taken away from the shops, as the number of people moving into the area is increasing. Requests were made for public toilets and bicycle parking to be included in the Plan. It was reported that there is currently nowhere safe to park bikes. The need for roundabouts at the intersection of Walker and Short Streets and Walker and Lilyvale Street were mentioned.

There was an objection to the shared pedestrian zone on Short Lane from a landowner who outlined that the proposal was on private property.

Accessibility and Safety

Accessibility was described as not ideal for strollers, people with disability and older people. It was felt that accessibility needs to be considered in any planning.

More street lighting was considered as paramount to keep the Town Centre area safe and usable, with examples that Walker Lane has no streetlights and is littered with rubbish.

Online Q&A

The online Q&A tool on the website received 11 questions. Questions were asked about the number of empty shops in the Town Centre, the intention to construct a roundabout at Lillyvale Street, plans for cycleway links and enquiries as to why the car park at Charles Harper Park is being changed.

There were also requests for more parking for people with disabilities, a review of timed parking, angle parking on Walker Street and for bicycle parking to be installed.



OUR WOLLONGONG

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan

ENGAGEMENT REPORT

July 2020

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Background	5
Stakeholders	5
Methods	5
Results.....	6

Executive Summary

Council presented the draft Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan (the Plan) to the community for comment from 11 May to 22 June 2020. The Plan was informed by extensive community engagement conducted as part of the development of the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan in 2019. The Streetscape Masterplan is a long-term, comprehensive design that articulates the community's vision for the Helensburgh Town Centre by guiding infrastructure improvements and renewal.

The Plan demonstrates how Walker Street can be designed to support its role as a vibrant main street, including enhancements to adjacent streets (Parkes Street and Short Street) to make the Town Centre accessible and convenient for all. It outlines nine objectives focussed on enhancing the physical and visual connectivity of the Town Centre by embracing its village-like setting; expressing its indigenous, mining and natural heritage through public art and interpretive signage; improving the pedestrian experience by activating laneways, improving the street canopy, traffic calming and providing public amenities. The Plan also sets out 25 'key site opportunities' with the themes of accessibility; connectivity and parking; character; and, meeting places

Community engagement for the Plan was run at the same time as engagement for both the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan and Helensburgh Community Centre Options. The community was directed to a central landing page for Helensburgh projects on Council's engagement website which directed them to the three project pages.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the communication and engagement strategies were adapted to ensure that in the absence of face-to-face public meetings, the community could meaningfully connect and provide feedback. A variety of communication and engagement methods were used to invite the community to join the conversation.

The project page on Council's engagement website included a Consultation Plan, Frequently Asked Questions, an online survey, Q&A tool and a video that explained the plan in detail. Hardcopies were provided in the Helensburgh Library. These were also delivered when requested.

The engagement was promoted extensively through notices in the Helensburgh 2508 Magazine and the Advertiser, social media posts and media releases. Emails were sent to key stakeholders including Neighbourhood Forum 1 (NF1), local businesses and participants of the 2019 Helensburgh Town Centre Plan engagement. Phone calls were made to key stakeholders. Key staff were available to speak to via phone and email.

The community was invited to provide feedback via the online survey, email or phone. The online Q&A tool was also used to capture feedback and provided an opportunity for further information and clarification. Meetings were conducted via video conferencing for interested members of the community.

79 submissions were received, including 63 online surveys and 16 emails. Feedback was received by residents, business owners and NF1. Some emailed submissions were very detailed and included sketches and photographs as well as feedback relating to the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan engagement. The webpage received a significant amount of interest, with 1,040 unique site visits.

In the online survey, the community was asked to rate their overall support for the Plan, the nine objectives and 25 'key site opportunities' and to provide comment. Approximately two thirds of the 63 respondents selected either 'strongly supporting' or 'supporting' the Streetscape Masterplan. Slightly less than one third of respondents selected 'undecided' and a few selected 'against' or 'strongly against'. Thirty-five agreed with all the objectives, 19 were unsure about one, some or all, and nine did not agree with them. Thirty-three agreed with the key site opportunities, 27 were unsure about one, some or all, and three did not agree at all.

The Plan elicited a diversity of views about the impact it would have on the functioning of the Town Centre, its visual appeal, parking, traffic flow and access, the pedestrian experience and on local businesses. The Plan was both welcomed as an overdue upgrade and opposed for not addressing underlying issues with the Town Centre. Some fully supported the Plan's objectives, others gave them qualified support, and some objected to the Plan, recommending that it have a broader footprint or focus on different objectives.

Positive comments included that the Plan was needed, well thought out and holistic. The Plan received support for making the Town Centre pedestrian friendly and accessible and for recognising the town's history.

The impact and cost to businesses of the changes that may occur to the day-to-day operations in the Town Centre were also raised. The loss of parking was a common concern.

Opinions on the meeting places were mixed, with some supporting them, others suggesting alternative locations or upgrades to existing meeting places, and some stating that the cafés and Hotel already provide this function.

Suggestions included having additional roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, speed reduction, shared zones, improved footpaths and connectivity, improved parking and parking for people with disability. There were also requests for more active transport options, the use of sustainable technologies and support for new and varied businesses in the Town Centre.

Community support for the Plan included some requests by respondents for specific parts of the Plan to be revisited in detail during the design development phase, as part of a collaborative design approach.

Background

Extensive community engagement for the draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan was undertaken from March to June 2019. This feedback shaped the Town Centre Plan and informed the development of the Helensburgh Streetscape Masterplan (the Plan). The Plan is a long-term, comprehensive design that articulates the community's vision for the Helensburgh Town Centre by guiding infrastructure improvements and renewal.

The priority of the Plan is to enhance the lived experience of everyone using the Town Centre, providing a great main street experience in a pedestrian friendly environment. It has nine objectives and 25 'key site opportunities' focused on accessibility, connections and parking, character and meeting places.

Key elements of the Plan include:

- Improving accessibility and safety, with a focus on delivering a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- Enhancing the quality and amenity of meeting places
- Expressing the local identity and heritage of Helensburgh

Engagement for the Plan ran at the same time as the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan and the Helensburgh Community Centre Options, from 11 May to 22 June 2020.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders identified prior to the engagement included participants in the 2019 engagement, residents, community groups, sporting clubs, schools, businesses in the Helensburgh Town Centre and Neighbourhood Forum 1 (NF1).

Methods

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the communication and engagement strategies were adapted to ensure that in the absence of face-to-face public meetings, the community could meaningfully connect and provide feedback. A variety of communication and engagement methods were used to invite the community to join the conversation:

- Two paid advertisements in the Helensburgh regional paper 2508 Magazine
- Social media posts
- Media releases to local media
- Phone calls and emails to all businesses in the Town Centre
- 171 emails to key stakeholders and respondents who provided comment during previous engagement.
- Notice listed in the Council column in The Advertiser
- Video conference or telephone calls with individuals on request
- For those who did not have computer access, hardcopies of the Town Centre Plan and the Plan were hand delivered as requested or made available at the local library for collection.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, telephone calls and video conferences were conducted with interested parties as an alternative to face-to-face meetings. This allowed for detailed

discussion to clarify any points raised and for Council staff to hear respondents' in-depth feedback.

NF1 were contacted by phone and information was provided via email. This information was then included in the NF1 newsletter, which generated questions and submissions from their members.

A landing page for Helensburgh projects was created on Council's engagement website directing the community to a project page for the Plan. This project page included a video that outlined the main features of the Plan and how it was developed. A Q&A tool was used for the community to ask questions which were then responded to by Council officers.

Results

79 submissions, including 63 online surveys and 16 emails were received from residents, businesses and NF1.

Two social media posts, 14 May reaching 2,917 people with 132 engagements and 20 June reaching 3,989 people with 235 engagements

An article published in the May edition of 2508 Magazine (pictured) coincided with increased visitation to the project webpage.

Shape the Future

Artist's Impression of a renewed Walker Street

Wollongong City Council is working on a series of strategic projects in your suburb as part of our future-focus for Helensburgh. Rather than looking at each of these projects independently, we're looking at them with the bigger picture in mind. That's why we're consulting these projects simultaneously. By taking this united approach we're able to get in place phased plans that can be ready to roll in early 2021. It also allows us to reflect upon what we've already achieved. We appreciate that Coronavirus, and measures to reduce the risk of its spread, might be considered a community engagement challenge. But we're responding and our website offers new ways to collate feedback and share information.

Thanks for working with us on Helensburgh's bright future.

4 / 2508 / MAY

of Helensburgh

The draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan is based on community consultation carried out in early 2019. It focuses on building Helensburgh's individuality and sets a shared community Vision and Strategies, which form the Town Centre action plan.

Some of the key directions include:

- A renewed main street which is safe, accessible, and honours the local identity. We've developed a draft Streetscape Masterplan that expresses what Walker Street will look like in the future and prioritises a pedestrian-friendly environment and we're asking for your comments on a draft streetscape design for Walker Street.
- A key Strategy is to deliver an Integrated Community Hub, bringing together important community facilities in a centralised location. We're exploring options for an integrated community centre and library facility, and we're seeking your opinion on how best to meet the needs of the community.

How to share your thoughts
Submissions close 8 June 2020

Write to us:
The General Manager
Wollongong City Council
Locked Bag 8821
Wollongong DC NSW 2500

Email: engagement@wollongong.nsw.gov.au
Phone: 4227 7111

Online:
ourwollongong.nsw.gov.au
Complete the survey - Provide your opinion and feedback
Online Q & A - Where you can ask questions about the draft Plan. We will respond to questions once a week.

MAY / 2508 / 5

Table 1 outlines visitor interaction on the engagement web site.

Table 1: Summary of online participation

Measure and Explanation	Number
Unique Site Visits – Total number of visits to the project page	1,040
Aware – Total number of users who viewed the project page	935
Informed – Total number of users who clicked a hyperlink or opened a document	402
Engaged – Total number of users who actively contributed to the project via a tool, e.g. submitted feedback via the survey or participated in the Q&A	65

Survey Results

The community was asked to rate their overall support for the Plan, their agreement with the objectives and key site opportunities and to provide comment. Table 2 provides a breakdown of responses.

Table 2: Online Survey Responses

Plan Support		Objectives		Key Site Opportunities	
Strongly support	18	Agree with all	35	Agree with all	33
Support	24	Unsure about one, some or all	19	Unsure about one, some or all	27
Undecided	17				
Against	2	No I don't agree with the objectives	9	No I don't agree with the objectives	3
Strongly Against	2				

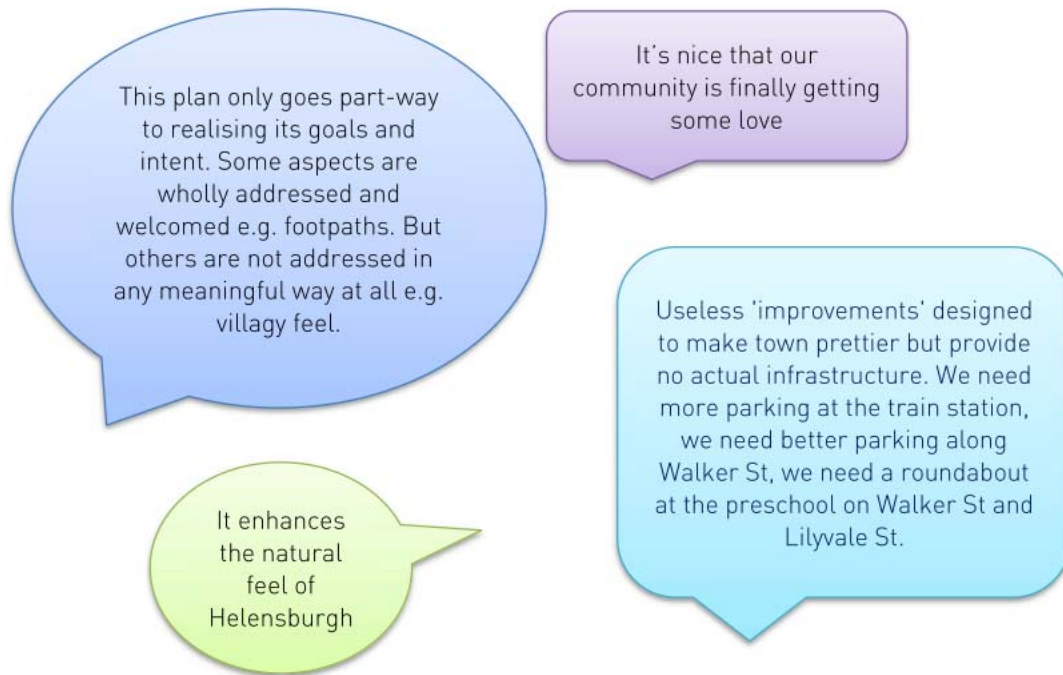
Comments

Comments were provided via the online survey and email from residents, businesses and NF1. Some emailed submissions were very detailed and included feedback on the Helensburgh Town Centre Plan, as well as sketches showing an alternative vision for the Town Centre. Common themes are reported below.

Level of Support for the Plan

Comments in support of the Plan included that it was: 'well thought out'; 'thorough'; 'good for the town'; 'enhanced the natural feel'; 'keeps the original look'; and 'badly needed to improve the mismatched environment'. There was also qualified support for the Plan, suggesting a holistic solution and that some elements required further refinement.

Metropolitan Coal confirmed their support for the Plan and stated agreement for the use of the funds contributed by the mine to achieve the Plan. Metropolitan had no concerns regarding the Plan given the road corridor design has been formulated with Metropolitan's trucks in mind. The mine is not trucking, or planning to truck, large quantities of material offsite, though there is always the possibility for a need to return to trucking, depending where the material needs to be delivered.



Business concerns

Perceived loss of business was raised as a concern by some business owners with comments that more understanding was needed about how the town currently functions. The concern was expressed that the Plan may negatively impact the town's day-to-day functioning. Feedback also questioned the cost-benefit-ratio of the upgrade.

Parking and traffic

Concerns about loss of parking was a common theme across those who 'supported', were 'undecided' or 'against' the Plan. Objections to proposed changes to the Charles Harper carpark on Parkes Street were also received.

Concerns were raised about the proposed removal of four 30-minute parking spaces for the creation of a meeting place, as some businesses said they relied on them.

There were suggestions for increased and improved parking on Walker Street including;

- Creating 12 to 14 perpendicular car parking spaces and angle parking on both sides of Walker Street.
- Angled parking on one -side only from Parkes Street to Lilyvale Street
- Rear to kerb parking
- 30-minute parking on one side and 15-minute parking and drop off on the other
- Increased accessible parking for people with disability on Walker Street opposite Short Street.

Where do people park their cars? Business is big in Helensburgh, coal trucks, Coles delivery trucks, general day to day operations for business, buses and everyone drives to the shops.....it's the shape of Helensburgh.

Removal of the four 30-minute car parking spaces currently outside the Helensburgh Post Office is totally unacceptable. Business relies heavily on those spaces to give our customers quick access. Delivery vans and couriers also use those spaces consistently to deliver to and pick up from businesses around the roundabout.

There were also comments about the difficulty of two-way traffic regarding the Charles Harper car park upgrade, vehicle turn around and impact on delivery vehicles.

Speed and Roundabouts

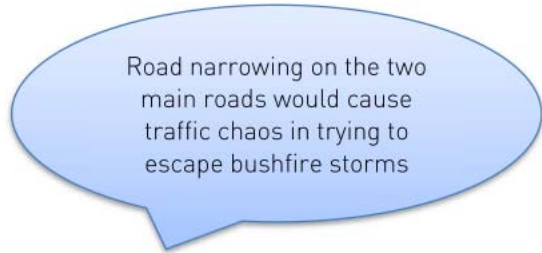
Slowing traffic and a pedestrian-friendly town was welcomed by many. Speed of vehicles and how this is managed was raised as a concern. There were comments about the road narrowing, speed bumps and that a roundabout at Lilyvale Street would slow traffic coming in through Walker Street. There was also suggestion that as roundabouts slow traffic, traffic calming was unnecessary. It was suggested to move the road narrowing blisters on Parkes Street further west to better define the Town Centre starting point and improve pedestrian safety.

The left turn from Walker Street to Parkes Street was described as a major issue as drivers were racing to beat traffic coming from the right. Drivers highlighted their concerns with looking right to find a break in the traffic, meaning they would not be watching for the pedestrian crossing on the left. Sightline concerns at the Short Street and Walker Street intersection were raised. It was suggested that a speed cushion be installed on Walker Street just before the roundabout.

Roundabouts at both the Short/Walker Streets intersection and the Lilyvale/Walker Streets intersection were requested. There was concern about the widening of the roundabout at the corner of Walker Street and Parkes Street as it will impact the turning of larger vehicles. It was suggested that slow traffic cushions be installed in Parkes Street near the intersection of Waratah Street.

Narrowing of the main roads of Parkes Street and Walker Street was raised as a concern in relation to bushfire and other emergencies.

Concerns were also raised about the closing of the exit of the Parkes Street car park.



Objectives of the Plan

Those that 'agreed' with the objectives of the Plan commented that they make sense and will help make Helensburgh a nicer place to visit. It was felt that people will want to spend time in a pleasant, leafy environment where they can move about easily and safely.

Those that were 'unsure' or 'disagreed' focussed on the need for a roundabout at Lilyvale Street; the impact on trucks and buses as a result of street narrowing; the lack of parking; the need for more public toilets; and that shared zones in laneways will cause anti-social behaviour.

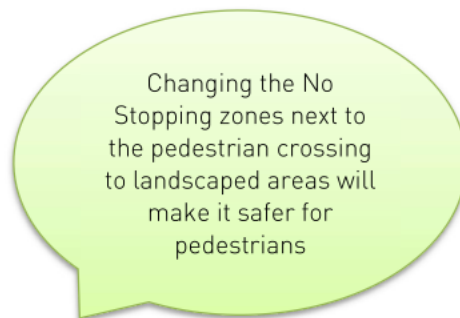
Key Site Opportunities

Those that 'agreed' with the key site opportunities supported the slowing of traffic and making the Town Centre pedestrian friendly. Respondents in agreement also expressed concerns that parking is a priority and an issue on Walker Street; the shops and slope on the west side need upgrading; and there was need for a roundabout at Lilyvale Street.

Those that were unsure or disagreed with the key site opportunities commented on the selection of Short and Walker Lanes as locations for shared use; the lack of necessity for traffic slowing devices as more pedestrian crossings and a roundabout at Lilyvale Street will slow traffic; and, disagreement with the reduced parking.

Pedestrian Crossings and Footpaths

The position of the pedestrian crossing on Parkes Street was questioned with the comment that all four arms of the roundabout need safe crossing points. There were suggestions for additional crossings and informal crossing points on several locations along Walker Street with blisters and trees on the east side. The need for a safer crossing on Walker Street, north of the roundabout, due to parked cars was raised.



The need for safe footpaths was highlighted due to existing uneven and hazardous paths. The footpath at street level on the west side of Walker Street was questioned as there is already a path in front of the shops. A footpath was requested to connect Short Street to the car park and to create more pathway links between the west side of Walker Street and the upper path. It was suggested to consider making the upper and lower paths on the west side on Walker Street shared paths.

There was a request to retain pedestrian access through the lane beside the community centre.

A parent whose child is a wheelchair user stated that the Plan shows steps and limited footpaths making it difficult for wheelchairs. Access to the upper footpath and concern with the stairs from the pedestrian crossing on Walker Street was also raised. It was suggested to connect the ramp directly to the crossing. Widening the Parkes Street footpath and installing fixed seating for outdoor dining was raised as having no benefit to the Hotel or the Town Centre.

There was a request not to plant more trees outside Coles or put more cement pots on the footpath as these were described as a hazard. It was suggested Walker Street become one way and for it to be covered with a street canopy.

Shared Zones

There was a range of feedback related to shared zones with support for a 10kph vehicle and pedestrian shared zone around Walker Street and Parkes Street roundabout and extended to the surrounding streets. It was suggested that Engadine and Sutherland have good examples. To maximise pedestrian safety, maintain a village feel and still allow vehicle access through the Town Centre, 10 kph vehicle and pedestrian shared zones were suggested for Parkes Street, from Stuart Street through to Hume Drive and Walker Street, from Lilyvale Street to Cowper Street.

There were also concerns raised that the proposed shared zone activating Walker Lane for pedestrians would not be used. It was requested to be retained as a service lane only. Zoning anomalies were highlighted.

Potential shared zone down Walker Lane will simply not work. The only traffic generally using the lane are the Coles semi-trailers and other trucks servicing businesses. There is basically no pedestrian access to businesses from Walker Lane so it simply won't be utilised by pedestrians. The lane isn't wide enough to safely cater for pedestrians, semi-trailers and large trucks.

Active Transport

There were suggestions for bike paths, including a shared bike path in front of the car parking area in Charles Harper Park, shared bike path from the Community centre to the Temple and from the Town Centre through residential links to residential areas. An extension of bike paths to Darkes Forest was also mentioned and the encouragement of non-vehicle transport across the village with active transport from the station to the top of Parkes Street.

Requests were made for U-rail bike racks outside the Post office and café on the south east side of the Parkes/Walker Streets roundabout, near the ramp at Coles and upper path on the west side of Walker St.

Meeting Places

The proposal for creating meeting places received varied responses with many welcoming the idea and others stating that they won't be used, as the cafes and the Hotel already provide this space.

There was a request to consider the position of all meeting places and to choose sites that were north facing, as these would be warm, sunny and well used compared to sites with southerly and easterly aspects which would be colder and less used. There was a suggestion to create seating areas on the upper path on the west side Walker Street and allow shops to use them, as they wouldn't affect people's paths of travel or impede safety.

It is unlikely that the Parkes St Footway seating will be able to be properly activated by the Hotel. If this does not happen then the footway seating would be largely unused and end up working against the objective of creating on street activity.

Other Suggestions

Other suggestions included improving the Town Centre entrances; allowing events at the plaza on the north west end of Walker Street, including markets and professional/community performances.

There were requests to encourage new and varied businesses to fill empty shops and have clear style guidelines for shopfronts. The use of sustainable technologies and recycled materials in infrastructure works was suggested. Requests were also made for large-scale artworks, more bins, toilets and bubblers.

Draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan

2020 - 2045



Acknowledgements

Wollongong City Council would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the Traditional Custodians of the Land to which this Strategy applies. We pay respect to Elders past, present and those emerging and extend our acknowledgement and respect to all Aboriginal people who call our town home.

We recognise Aboriginal people as the first people to live in the area. We respect their living cultures and recognise the positive contribution their voices, traditions and histories make to our region.

In celebration of unity, culture, both traditional and contemporary, we acknowledge the rich history of our local Aboriginal heritage.

The draft Helensburgh Town Centre Plan was developed in partnership with interested community members, representatives of the Northern Illawarra Chamber of Commerce, Neighbourhood Forum 1, and local school children.

Wollongong City Council would like to thank everybody who contributed to shaping this draft Plan by providing feedback in engagement activities throughout 2019 - 2020.

Contents

Understanding Helensburgh	1
<i>Unique Village With a Point of Difference</i>	3
<i>Character to Inform Planning Controls</i>	7
<i>A Compromised Main Street Experience</i>	9
<i>A Difficult Place to Walk Around</i>	11
Town Centre Vision	13
Strategies to deliver the Vision	14
<i>Updates to Planning and Policy</i>	15
<i>Enhancing Connections</i>	17
<i>Integrated Community Hub</i>	19
<i>Main Street Renewal</i>	21
Streetscape Masterplan	23
<i>Priority Staging</i>	25
Conclusion	27

How to read this document

Community vision

This document reflects the community's Vision for the Helensburgh Town Centre. It identifies priorities for change and renewal to achieve this vision.

Its purpose is to outline clear strategies and actions to meet the current and future needs of the people who live, work, visit, play and belong here.

The draft Plan will guide change through actions related to infrastructure improvements, main street renewal and planning control amendments.

Future projects for the Helensburgh Town Centre, whether driven by Council, the State Government, businesses, or community groups, should align with the Vision and Strategies within this draft Plan.

Technical analysis

This draft Plan is supported by planning, urban design and traffic analysis.

To inform the analysis, a lot of data was collected about how people walk around and use the town centre. A quality assessment of streets and public places has also been carried out. An accessibility audit was carried out and safety observations made.

Community Feedback

Valuable input from the local community has shaped this document. Comments have been gathered from community workshops, student workshops, previous consultation processes and discussions with the Neighbourhood Forum and the local Business Chamber.

This draft Plan has been finalised following consultation with the community during May and June 2020. Refer to the accompanying Helensburgh Town Centre Plan Engagement Report and Streetscape Masterplan Engagement Report for detailed information regarding what we heard through this engagement process.

Understanding Helensburgh

This Plan has been prepared by bringing together technical analysis and community aspirations to create a Vision and Strategies for guiding the future of the Helensburgh Town Centre.

Helensburgh Town centre

Helensburgh is the northern-most settlement of the Wollongong local government area and a gateway to the region.

The Town Centre supports the northern suburbs, servicing the local population of more than 7,000 local people and has a 'trade area' defined by Otford, Lilyvale, Stanwell Tops, Stanwell Park, Coalcliff, Clifton and Helensburgh.

People come to the town centre to shop for food, visit the doctor and dentist, go to the butcher and the bottle shop. It's a place to meet friends, go to the library or the pool, have a coffee or enjoy a bite to eat in a local café or restaurant.

Town centres generally have a primary focus on the provision of weekly and daily convenience goods and services but also provide a limited range of non-retail professional and personal services.

Resilience

Helensburgh's seclusion within a bush setting means that the town centre performs many important functions for the community in a changing future climate.

Safety, the protection of land and water resources, and preparedness for emergency and natural disasters - particularly fires - are important to consider in parallel with this Plan.

Helensburgh is anchored by a Coles supermarket, and supports a successful hub of community services including the community centre, library, childcare and baby health care centre.

Helensburgh is a place that attracts many visitors, with regional destinations including Symbio Wildlife Park, the Sri Venkateswara Hindu Temple, Bald Hill, recreational and sporting facilities, and extensive nature adventure trails and coast on its doorstep.

Visitors come by car, train, foot and by bike.

Successful town centres put people, and public life, at the forefront of planning

Housing

Helensburgh's proximity to Sydney, lifestyle and relative affordability contributes to strong forecast median house price growth in the coming years.

There is a trend emerging of reduction in the number of single dwellings, and an increase in the number of flats and apartments within the town centre.

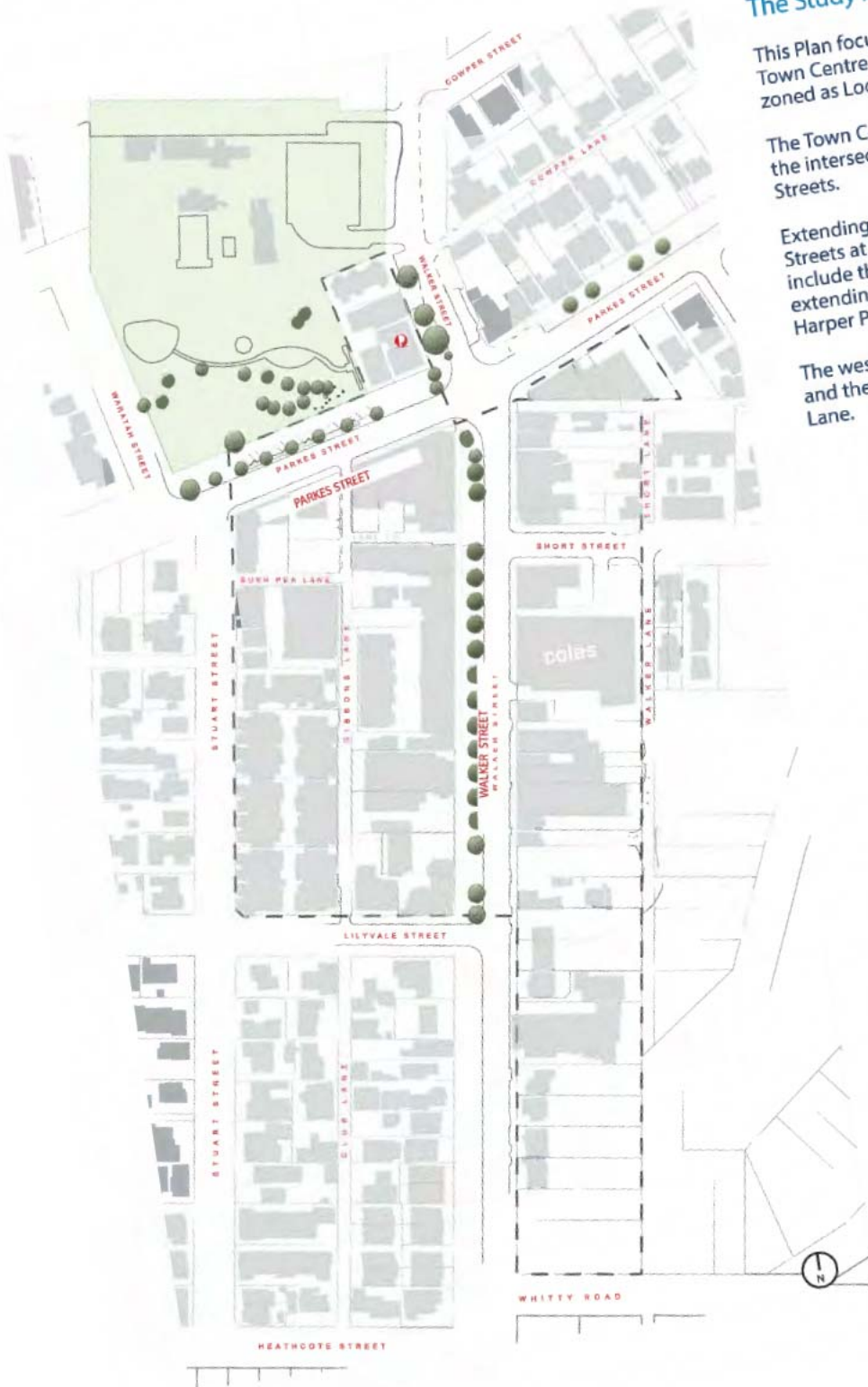
Future development driven by housing demand must meet the needs of a changing population whilst balancing protection of the area's ecology, character and unique setting.



Context map - Helensburgh within Wollongong LGA

Key:

- Wollongong LGA
- Helensburgh - Suburb Boundary
- Study Area Boundary - Town Centre
- Train Line
- Surrounding LGAs



The Study Area

This Plan focuses on the Helensburgh Town Centre as defined as the land zoned as Local Centre (B2 Zone).

The Town Centre is focussed around the intersection of Walker and Parkes Streets.

Extending from Whitty and Lilyvale Streets at the southern boundary, to include the Parkes Street intersection, extending north toward Charles Harper Park.

The western boundary is Stuart Street and the eastern boundary is Walker Lane.

- Key:
- - Study Area Boundary
 - Charles Harper Park
 - Building Footprints
 - Trees

Unique Village With a Point of Difference

Character is what makes a place special and unique. Every place has a physical and visual reflection of its history, natural environment and community.

Preserving and enhancing Helensburgh's character will bring richness and authenticity to the town centre for future generations. It will set it apart as a place and make it a desirable place to visit and spend time.

Celebrating a rich history

Helensburgh is a place of many diverse stories which reflect its history and communities. It is a place of significant natural resources sustained by a network of creeks through a diverse landscape of tall eucalypts, heaths, waterfalls and rockpools.

The local Aboriginal community left lasting physical imprints on the local landscape. Recording of these imprints are documented in a range of archaeological records and Management Plans for both the Metropolitan Coal Mine and Helensburgh Public School. Evidence of First Nations people in Helensburgh exists in the form of shell middens, stone tools, the residue from the manufacture of stone tools, scarred trees, decoratively carved trees (that define ceremonial sites and burial sites), painted art in rock

shelters, symbolic engravings on sandstone outcrops and grinding groves on sandstone from sharpening stone tools and the hardwood tips, or stone tips, of spears.

There is an opportunity to connect with Country and tell the story of First Nations People in Helensburgh.

Coal was discovered in Helensburgh by Charles Harper in 1884 which triggered significant change. Helensburgh's bushland had been undisturbed by colonists but for occasional grazing and the passing of travelers and settlers on the tracks from the west and to Bulli on the coast. The Metropolitan Coal Co. opened a mine in 1888, bringing miners and their families to the temporary, frontier camp town above the mine site before the current town centre was developed on the plateau.

By the late 1880's, the Parkes and Walker Street junction comprised a shopping centre with a draper, butcher, baker and general store. As people moved to the land surrounding the town, the iconic double fronted timber Miners Cottages began to replace temporary tents and shacks.

Buildings from this period are important links to the past and some, like the Post Office and Police Station, are still in use today. As the settlement grew, so did its cultural life with the arrival of churches, the development of clubs and societies, bands, pubs, and one of Australia's first workman's clubs which remains one of the town's main institutions.



Dreaming Tracks at Bald Hill. Artist: Chris Edwards-Clarke

Today, the Metropolitan mine still produces coal, the forests are protected and regenerating, and the township is transforming.

Helensburgh is the village-like home of Sydney commuters, a focus of Hindu cultural celebrations, a great base for bushwalking and mountain biking, a place of seclusion to be restful, retire, a place to breath, raise a family.

Understanding local community

The demographics of Helensburgh help us to understand and plan for the current and future needs of the community by age, occupation, income and lifestyle factors.

Helensburgh, Otford and Stanwell Park has a combined population of 7072 people (Census ERP 2018)

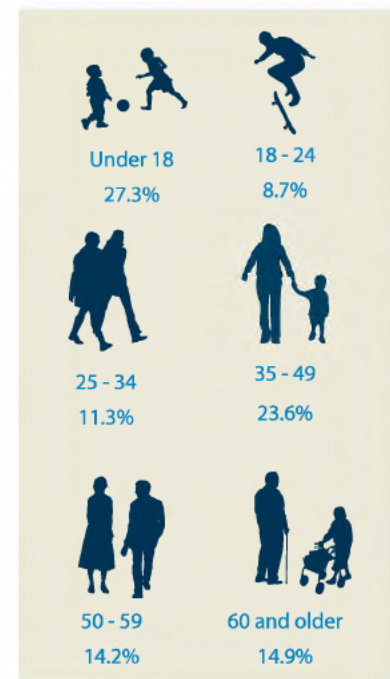
Helensburgh has a relatively high proportion of children (under 18) and a lower proportion of older people aged 60 or over than the rest of Wollongong.

The period 2011-16 has seen significant growth in the age groups of primary school aged children and older workers, retirees, and seniors. The majority of people currently live in a detached dwelling (separate house), with 15% of people living in

medium and high-density housing. There is a small trend away from the number of single dwellings, and an increase in the number of apartments. Population forecasts indicate that the population is anticipated to increase by 7.57% in the period 2020-36 (7,319), driven by the town's strong appeal to families and commuters.



Subdivision Plan 1969 showing Town Centre layout



Demographic profile of Helensburgh 2016 Census

Unique Village With a Point of Difference

We're a village

There is a strong view within the community that, regardless of its formal classification as a town centre, Helensburgh's character is that of a village. This is reflected in community feedback that they most value Helensburgh's sense of community.

It is important to ensure that the way buildings and streets are designed respect this value. A village is typically defined as being smaller than a town centre and located within a rural setting.

People are connected, the place is laid back and the character is rustic and draws from its surrounding countryside.

A sense of a village character is evident across the town centre through a number of building styles and materials and streetscape landscaping, however, there is significant scope to build on this desired future character for the town centre.



Charming frontages welcome people to stop and spend time



Helensburgh Centenary - the community has always been connected

Hidden heritage needs to be revealed

The community told us that 'our heritage and history are not celebrated enough'.

Lasting physical imprints of the Traditional Custodian's use of the land and culture survive in the landscape, yet this ancient heritage is not celebrated or reflected in the town centre.

European heritage is evident in a small cluster of heritage listed buildings at the intersection of Parkes and Walker including the Helensburgh Hotel, the Post office as well as landscape features in Charles Harper Park and the old Police Station.

As these are the few remaining historical buildings, they need to be celebrated and protected as they offer an opportunity to influence future character.



Interesting historical artefacts are scattered about the town



The Helensburgh Hotel - an important heritage building and landmark in the town centre

Connecting to the natural setting

Nestled in one of the most extraordinary natural landscapes, Helensburgh town centre sits on the cusp of the Garrawarra State Conservation Area and the Royal National Park. Connection to this amazing landscape setting is critical to defining the unique offer and character of place.

The physical connections linking people between the centre and nature are also very important. However, these are weak and not easy to navigate.

There is an opportunity to bring the local native landscape into the town centre, to bring character to the town centre itself. Interesting historic items are scattered in the main street, however, they lack context and not supported with interpretation.

Views across the town centre to natural areas are also important. These are not defined in local planning policy, and need to be identified to ensure their protection.



Iconic Angophoras, Gynea lilies and flannel flowers in surrounding bushland



View to the east to protect



A Memorial to fallen soldiers

The magnificent Brush Box trees lining the western side of Walker Street offer beauty, shade and character to the main street.

However, the importance of these trees extends beyond their beauty. The trees were planted as a memorial to those lost in WWI.

The story is told in the book 2508 Anzac, that on Arbor Day in 1934, 12 Sugar Gums were planted to honor fallen soldiers. Over time, the original trees that died were replaced with the Brush Box we enjoy today. This likely to have occurred during the 1940s/50s.

The intent to honour the lost friends of Helensburgh through these memorial plantings is a powerful story to tell. It is important that these memorial trees are protected and their story told to honour the past.



Helensburgh's memorial trees, Parkes St c.1950

Today the Brush Box trees make a statement in the mainstreet. Their story needs to be told.

Character to Inform Planning Controls

Guidelines for how buildings are designed are outlined in planning controls. Building heights, setbacks and design character are defined in the Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009 and Development Control Plan 2009. Helensburgh Town Centre has sound planning policy controls, however they lack clear guidance on the desired future character of the place.

Planning Controls need to better promote character

The town centre is zoned Local Centre (B2 Zone). Across the town centre, a mix of uses (retail, commercial, residential) are allowed. Residential development is only permitted above ground level.

More recent development across the town centre are predominantly residential, which is particularly evident along Stuart Street which has transitioned to residential.

Across the town centre, there is a generous supply of retail floor space available for development. This capacity (57,834m² SGS) will more than meet forecast demand (9,000m²).

Consideration should be given to how the vibrancy of the town centre can be better managed through defining a concentrated main street/ town centre area. This would be achieved through adjustments to the town centre boundary to better guide investment.

Design quality needs to be improved

Building character and quality in Helensburgh town centre is varied.

Buildings should be designed to respond to their context, whether that be the scale of the building, materials and colours used, the way the building interacts with the street or how it is designed to ensure views to the surrounds are captured.

Buildings are currently a comfortable scale as they present as one and two storey buildings along Walker and Parkes Streets.

Recent development throughout the town centre is observed to be fairly generic. This means that the design does not have a clear relationship to the identity of Helensburgh as a place, but are simply a building that could be anywhere.

WDCP Chapter D1 – Character Statements is intended to guide the desired future character for Helensburgh. However, the look and feel of the town centre is not defined by the character statement.

“a well maintained, historic streetscape”

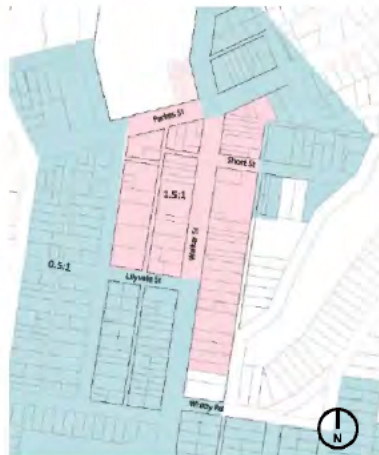
“our heritage and history is not celebrated enough”

Quotes from community engagement



Building Heights defined in Wollongong LEP 2009

7



Floor Space Ratio defined in Wollongong LEP 2009



Heritage listings defined in Wollongong LEP 2009

Celebrating our point of difference

Helensburgh supports a wide diversity of businesses in and around the town centre.

There is a real opportunity to leverage from these commercial and natural offers to build the economic diversity of the town centre.



Old Railway Tunnel home to Glow Worms



Link to Nature



Helensburgh Pool



Rex Jackson and Helensburgh skate park



Sri Venkateswara Hindu Temple



Heritage Buildings such as the Post Office on Parkes Street



Connection to nature - rural/country charm



Connection to a coal history



Helensburgh Hotel



Symbio Wildlife Park

A Compromised Main Street Experience

The experience of a main street is critical to its success. A successful main street attracts people day and night with interesting things to do and see. It needs to offer more than a great retail mix to be successful. Mainstreets need to be a place people want to spend time, meet their friends and be part of the local community.

Public spaces are not attracting public life

The town centre has a great structure, with the main street (Walker Street) supported by a laneway network and a series of public spaces.

However, public spaces are poorly activated and are not designed with a clear purpose. Analysis identified that many public spaces are not 'comfortable'. A lack of sunlight, exposure to a windy southerly or poor seating means it is not a nice place to spend time.

Aligned with the town centre, Charles Harper Park offers an important play and recreation space for the community. However, this land is disconnected from the town centre by a car park area and Parkes Street itself.

Public spaces in and around the town centre brings an opportunity to support public life. Historically, markets have activated some of the town centre public spaces. Consideration needs to be given to how these types of activities can be encouraged and facilitated.



Highly valued recreation areas, including the new playground, pool and sportsfields



Memorial Brush Box trees line the western bank of Walker Street

Business offerings are limited, but could be diversified

There is strong support throughout the community to welcome continued diversity in the retail and business offer in the Walker Street.

Significant proportions of the community commute to Sydney. There is scope to explore the opportunity of expanding the commercial offer within the town centre to support changing work patterns of the commuting population. Co-working spaces and live-work opportunities should be explored and promoted.



Inactive and vacant shopfronts detract from the main street experience



Poor interface public space and adjacent shops

The town centre lacks energy day and night

Pedestrian audits undertaken in 2019 provided information about how the town centre was used. The data gathered tells us that few people are walking around the town centre, and there are only a few pockets along Walker Street that are 'active'.

The most successful places are where there is outdoor dining associated with cafes. Further consideration needs to be given to how retail uses can provide a high quality street experience, including an interesting and engaging shop front, and outdoor dining during the day and into the evening.

A large number of vacant or inactive shopfronts mean that the street lacks interest, and people were not recorded spending time in the town centre. Generally it was simple trips to undertake day to day shopping needs.

The town centre is much busier on weekends with people being home and families coming in to play sport.



Buildings do not bring life to laneways

Quality Community Facilities, but they are disconnected

The town centre is home to a range of community facilities and services. The Community Centre, Library, a pre school and health clinic are clustered near the Lilyvale and Walker Street intersection.

Although sitting close to each other, these important community buildings feel quite disconnected.

The community centre and library are separated by Walker Street. A combination of steep topography, lack of a pedestrian crossing and no accessible path of travel mean it is hard to move between these two important facilities.

While community facilities are located on the main street, they are not designed to interact with the street or integrate into the public space. Additionally the 'aged' facade and design makes these facilities less visible and less inviting.

Council is committed to upgrading the Library and Community Centre.



Cluster of community facilities sit at the southern end of the town centre across State Government and Council land

Key:

- Charles Harper Park
- Council Land
- Operational Land
- Community Land
- Crown Land - Appointed

The community told us that they wanted a combined Community Centre and Library facility with adequate parking

Functionality of the Community Centre is currently compromised by the flow of water running beneath the community hall's subfloor, limiting usage of this area.



The existing Community Centre, whilst purpose built at the time, is difficult to access due to land topography and doesn't meet the current community needs



Helensburgh Library is a demountable building. While it is small and not purpose built, it is well utilised and brings many people to the town centre



A new library building presents a significant opportunity to create a community hub



The existing library has a lovely garden to the street



An addition at the front of the community centre does not address Walker Street

A Difficult Place to Walk Around

Helensburgh's success as a town centre is compromised by the dominance of traffic, and a lack of well-designed and accessible pedestrian connections. This makes it hard for people to get around, and discourages staying to explore and enliven the main street.

It's hard to be a pedestrian

Core services and amenities like the Post Office and Charles Harper Park are within easy walking distance, yet separated by Parkes Street.

An accessibility audit revealed that crossings and kerb ramps often fail to meet appropriate standards. Steep cross falls, stepped entrances and awkward paths of travel hinder access to many of the shops and services.

Observations of pedestrian activity revealed that there are more people criss-crossing Walker St to and from their cars than there are walking down it during the week. Around half of people crossing Walker Street are not accessing the pedestrian crossing.

This contributes to additional vehicle movements, as people try to park as close as possible to their destination to avoid the hazards and inconvenience of moving around town.

Great laneway structure that needs to be protected

Walker Street has 'great bones': wide proportions, a leafy aspect and north-south orientation. However at 500m, it is too long for a vibrant and active main street.

There is a great network of laneways, but they are not formed or activated. Large blocks limit pedestrian movement, particularly the east-west connections.

Parkes Street is acting as a pedestrian barrier, effectively bisecting the town centre. The current pedestrian crossing facilities fail to provide adequate safety and comfort for pedestrians from frequent traffic movements including heavy vehicles carrying coal from the Metropolitan mine.

Lots of cars, issues with parking

The town centre is filled with more cars than people. There are conflicts between the people who are walking, and the speed and number of vehicles.

The relative convenience of travelling by car between nearby destinations is contributing to congestion on the main street. This creates a perception that there is inadequate parking in the town centre, however monitoring has shown that there is ample capacity off street and in the Coles carpark.

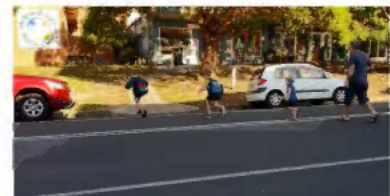
Cycling infrastructure in the town centre is lacking, despite its popularity with local children, and Helensburgh's attraction as a road and mountain biking destination.



Access for people with limited mobility is poor.



Bush Pea Lane is a key pedestrian connection which is uninviting and underutilised



50% of people don't use the Walker St pedestrian crossing



Walker St pedestrian crossing lacks accessible connections on the west.



Pedestrian access between Club Lane and Walker St, adjacent to the community centre

350
car parking
spaces within
400m of the
town centre

It's not easy to connect to where you want to go

Helensburgh is surrounded by regional attractors and destinations but the town centre feels physically isolated and disconnected.

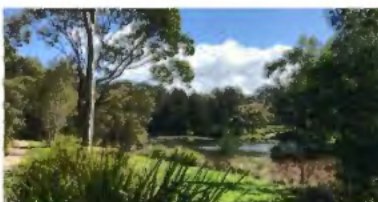
The sense of arrival is not defined and there is no cue to drivers that you have entered the town centre.

The area lacks signage connecting the town centre to key destinations including the train station.

The temple welcomes thousands of people every year. While some arrive by vehicle, many arrive by train and take the pilgrimage to the Temple via the town centre. This is a unique experience for Helensburgh. There is not sufficient signage to mark the way to the Temple.



Children on bikes crossing Parkes St



Complete footpath connections between the town centre and the Quarry Duck Ponds



Helensburgh supports many amazing attractions | Illustration by artist Lara McCabe www.thestudiocoledale.com.au | Extract from The South Coaster Magazine <http://thesouthcoaster.com.au>

"a shared zone or traffic calming between Lilyvale and Parkes Street"

Quotes from community engagement

"the pedestrian crossing is dangerous to use when cars, delivery vans are parked in the no stopping zone"

Town Centre Vision

Helensburgh is an inclusive and welcoming village of diverse communities and rich heritage set within an extraordinary natural landscape.

At its heart is a thriving main street which is connected to world-class local destinations, and alive with people and possibilities.

Unique, vibrant and community focussed

The town centre is safe and welcoming, embracing people from all walks of life. There is a strong sense of community with connections to a range of amazing natural assets and local attractions.

Our Indigenous, natural, service and mining heritage is celebrated. This heritage is interpreted and expressed in buildings, materials, landscaping, events and activities.

The historic village streetscape has a unique character which is preserved, and important views to surrounding areas are enhanced.

Thriving, sustainable and creative

The town centre is alive with people, offering a diversity of options for work, play, recreation, shopping, education, entertainment and community life.

Leveraging off the surrounding attractions and destinations, a diverse offer provides services for visitors and opportunities for growth.

A community hub supports the daily needs of the wider community, as it grows and changes. Our town celebrates its diversity and embraces the opportunities of a village-like setting.

An emerging gig and entrepreneurial economy is thriving. Sensitivity to the unique natural environment is reflected in sustainable technology and design features.

Active, natural and healthy

There are quality, active connections between the welcoming, pedestrian-friendly town centre and the parks, natural areas, sports fields, playgrounds, schools, transport nodes and other community places.

Recreation, sporting, natural and play spaces support a healthy active community. There is pride in being able to lose yourself in nature, and in sharing these experiences with visitors.

Appropriate infrastructure such as water bubblers, canopy trees for shade along key pathways, and bike racks support a healthy lifestyle.

Connected, accessible and pedestrian-friendly

People of all ages and abilities can move freely and easily around Helensburgh, accessing everything that this unique area has to offer.

Walking and cycling between places is easy. There are well developed pedestrian, cycling and public transport connections.

Traffic in the town centre is calm, and it is easy to park and walk where you need to go via a defined network of accessible paths of travel.

Strategies to deliver the Vision

A series of Strategies have been defined which seek to deliver change in the Town Centre aligned with the Community's vision. These strategies, as listed below are outlined in the next section.

- Updates to Planning and Policy
- Enhancing Connections
- Integrated Community Hub
- Mainstreet Renewal

Updates to Planning and Policy

A renewed focus on character and identity to reflect Helensburgh's unique attributes will be reflected in planning policy, setting the tone for future development. Through the Development Control Plan, ensure building controls promote interesting shopfronts and high quality designs at the right scale for

A redefined the town centre boundary

The boundary of the town centre is redefined to focus on Walker and Parkes Streets. Stuart Street is transitioned to residential development in recognition of its established land use character.

The southern end of the Town Centre is contracted, transitioned to medium density residential. This will reduce the extent of the mainstreet to a more walkable catchment.

Building height and floor space controls transition to that of the surrounding R3 lands (0.5:1 and 11m height). To the north, the boundary is extended to include the Helensburgh Hotel (previously Centennial Hotel). The existing height and floor space should remain unchanged.

A renewed focus on character

Planning controls promote high quality design outcomes that contribute to what makes Helensburgh unique.

A revised Character Statement outlines how unique elements of Helensburgh's character should be retained including key views, how the natural and cultural heritage will be celebrated and the Architectural styles, materials and colours that reflect local place.

Heritage buildings and places are clearly identified and documented to inform the look and feel of Helensburgh town centre.

Improved building interface with the street

All buildings along Walker Street and Parkes Street within the Town Centre boundary are required to have well maintained and attractive shopfronts that connect with, and activate the street.

The lands owned by State and local governments are identified as an opportunity precinct. These lands require planning controls to be reviewed as part of built form review.

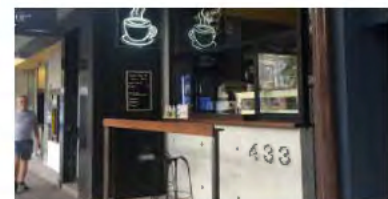
Promote diversity in land uses with the introduction of co-working spaces to engage the local workforce within the town centre.



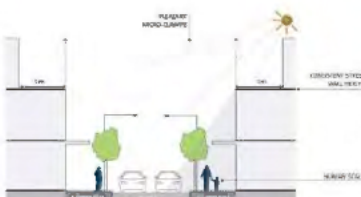
Well designed and proportioned medium density residential supports town centre



Views along Short Street to nature are preserved



Interesting facades open up and activate Walker Street



Shop top housing is well proportioned and set back to let sun into the street



Outdoor dining and an evening economy is encouraged



Buildings in the mainstreet reflect Helensburgh's preferred scale and character



A redefined town centre and opportunity site

Key:

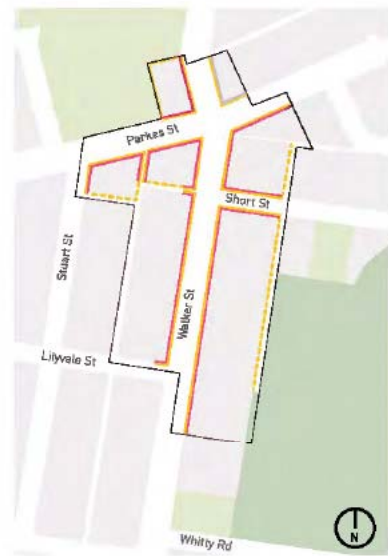
- Transition to Residential (R3 Medium Density Residential)
- Key opportunity site
- Include Helensburgh Pub in town centre (B2 Local Centre)



Key views protected

Key:

- A View east along Parkes Street to bushland
- B View east down Lane 10 and Short Street to surrounding bushland
- C View east through pedestrian link to surrounding bushland
- D View north to historic Helensburgh Hotel



Active Frontages and defined street wall

Key:

- Active frontage - 2 storey street wall with 4m setback above
- Active laneways

Recommendations

- Update Wollongong LEP 2009 to reflect changes to zoning boundaries
- Update Wollongong DCP 2009 Chapter B4 Development in Business Zones to set renewed planning controls for Helensburgh Town Centre, and progress the completion of the draft Helensburgh Character Statement for integration into the Wollongong DCP

Enhancing Connections

Helensburgh town centre is connected to its natural surroundings, linking to natural areas, surrounding destinations and is accessible by foot, bicycle and car. Wayfinding is clear and easy and it is a comfortable place to walk around.

Leverage and connect to surrounding destinations

The town centre remains at the heart of local destinations, connected via walk/ cycle loop trail.

The pilgrimage trail from the train station to the Temple is defined and celebrated as a point of cultural difference.

The pedestrian environment between key destinations is upgraded with renewed lighting, greening, wayfinding and seating to invite people to experience all of what Helensburgh has to offer as a whole destination.

Major roads, including Parkes Street, integrate purpose designed pedestrian crossings to offer safe pedestrian connections.



Wayfinding signage helps people get around and link the town centre with key destinations



A series of open spaces link people through the town centre

Creating an important sense of arrival

Vehicle entry points are defined on Parkes Street and Walker Street. These entry points are narrowed to slow vehicle and provide a sense of arrival.

Native vegetation is characteristic of the town centre and denotes entry points.

Accessible paths of travel link Charles Harper Park and town centre parking areas to Walker and Parkes Streets, making it easier to move around and connect within the town centre.

An active laneway network connect people with safe pedestrian links through the town centre to surrounding residential streets. Long term, Walker Lane and Gibbons Lane are constructed as shared zones and building facades are activated.



Landscaped blisters signal town centre entry points



Renewed lighting invites evening activity

Public space is celebrated and highly active

Artistic, playful and enterprising strategies program the use of public spaces, including the formalisation of a generic Development Application for markets and events in Charles Harper Park.

The town centre will connect via linked public spaces to regional sporting and recreational facilities in Rex Jackson Park. Connected visually with improved sight lines from the town centre, and an enhanced interface of Charles Harper Park to Parkes Street.

Public art is visible in the Town Centre. Existing public art is appreciated and new art introduced to represent the local community and history of the area.



Charles Harper Park continues to support community events and markets

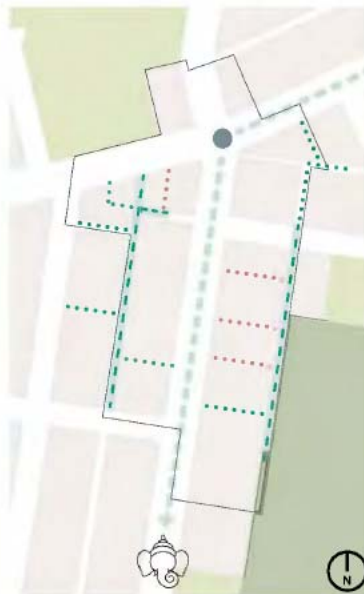


Laneways are active and are pleasant places to walk

Acknowledgement of Country

Helensburgh and its surrounding lands are the northern gateway of the Illawarra. This presents an opportunity work in partnership with First Nations people to understand how they would like to represent an Acknowledgement of Country.

The role of the project would be to acknowledge, and pay respect, to the Traditional Owners of the land, and the ongoing custodians of the land - the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Laneways are active and new pedestrian links make it easier to connect within the Town Centre, to Station and to the Temple.

Key:

- Potential shared zones
- - Retain existing pedestrian connections
- - Proposed pedestrian connections
- Connection from Station to Temple



Open spaces connect through the town centre with pockets of space to stop and spend time

Key:

- Trees
- Green Spaces

Recommendations

- Lodge a generic Events Development Application for Rex Jackson Park
- Provide opportunities for Markets in Helensburgh Town Centre and surrounding open spaces.
- Helensburgh Key Walking Connections Project - Design concept for cycle/walking loop trail aligned with Urban Greening
- Develop and deliver a wayfinding Concept and Strategy including important links e.g. Temple to Station Trail Project
- Helensburgh Public Art Project

Integrated Community Hub

An integrated community centre and library facility will be at the heart of the community. This purpose built facility will be a centrepiece of the town, delivering a high quality, welcoming place. Council is investigating several site options for the new community facility; however further investigations are required to ensure feasibility.

A centrepiece of design

The integrated community centre and library will contribute to the quality and character of the town centre by showcasing design excellence.

The building will activate the town with a strong interface and interesting facade. The design will respond to the natural setting, connect to views and will integrate landscaping.

With a range of formal and informal meeting spaces to cater for a range of services and activities and a state of the art library, the new facility will be the heart of the community where people will come to meet, create, learn and spend time.

The facility will be multi-purpose and accessible, showcasing sustainable technologies.

Programming is community-focused, and engaging for all.



Example of an historic shopfront presented to the street: Junee Library

An integrated approach

A major investment in the town, the design of the integrated facility will extend to the surrounding pedestrian and road network.

A focal point for enhancing connections. Inclusive, inviting and accessible to provide a diverse range of experiences for all of the community.

Integrated into the landscape, strategically planned to enhance the functional relationships and character of the site's surrounding features.



Opportunity for community space extending from the library/community centre

Key site opportunity

Once retired, the current community centre will be decommissioned.

A master plan will be undertaken to test appropriate development opportunities for the site and adjacent lands owned by State and local government.

The master plan will test development capacity and public domain needs of the lands to provide direction for appropriate planning controls, and public space outcomes.

This work would be subject to ongoing consultation with the community.



Community facilities connecting with nature



Example of a library in a native setting: Fitzgibbon Library, QLD

Guiding Principles for a new facility

Artist sketch above shows an integrated Community Centre & Library.

An integrated Community Centre & Library will provide a hub which attracts and connects people to this place and each other. Reflecting the community and environment providing opportunities for socialising, learning, exploring and relaxing.

Principles guiding the future of the Integrated Community Centre & Library include:

1. Integrates into the landscape to provide opportunities for generations to come
2. Well-connected and accessible, with integrated parking
3. Community heart - integrating community meeting place
4. Exceptional design, unique to Helensburgh
5. Programmed to bring life to the town centre - day and night



Sketch : An integrated community facility to service diverse community needs

Recommendations

- Site options investigation for an Integrated Community Facility (community centre/ library)
- Key site urban design masterplan

Main Street Renewal

Walker Street is Helensburgh's vibrant main street which is accessible and convenient for all. It invites people to visit and spend time. Street renewal will enhance the daily lived experience of residents, create a unique destination for visitors, and provide a catalyst for activation and investment.

A vibrant main street experience

Helensburgh delivers a welcoming, vibrant town centre experience.

Encourage land owners to activate vacant tenancies and invest in the upgrade of shopfronts to reflect the character of the local area. Shops are filled with interesting businesses, shops and community uses.

Outdoor dining is encouraged, and interesting ways to open up facades to better interact with the street is evident.

Evening ambiance is enhanced with curated lighting of the town centre. Deliver a lighting strategy that considers street lighting (including lanes), lighting of historic trees.

Connection with Charles Harper Park

Charles Harper Park continues to be an important place of recreation and leisure for the community, with the playground and the community pool continuing to be important meeting places.

Charles Harper Park supports community events and markets which brings diversity in what happens locally.

All edges of the park will be enhanced to improve visual and physical connections. Buildings facing onto the Park add visual interest and interface with the Park.

The interface of Charles Harper Park to Parkes Street is improved with the car parking edge transitioning to a place for people. In the meantime, car parking will be retained, realigned to improve pedestrian access and views into the Park itself.

Enhanced meeting places

Dispersed along the main street are a series of formal and informal spaces which invite people to relax, take in the ambiance, or meet friends.

Walker Street (west-bank) transforms to a lively, natural place where landscaping responds to the natural setting in species and materials palette. An interactive landscape to sit and eat lunch, or to capture the imagination of young children as they walk north to the playground in the Park.

Lighting is used to create atmosphere and increase visual prominence of public spaces and heritage buildings like the Helensburgh Pub.



Sketch : Artists impression of a renewed Walker Street

Accessible and pedestrian friendly main street

Accessible paths of travel link the east and west side of Walker Street, and connect people to important community services.

A lower footpath is introduced along the western side of Walker Street to provide an accessible and safe walking path.

Parkes Street has new pedestrian crossing points to allow people to comfortably cross the road.

Walker and Parkes Streets are narrowed, and traffic calming elements introduced will create a low vehicle speed to enhance pedestrian and cycle safety.

History is celebrated in the mainstreet

The design of the mainstreet renewal is an opportunity to connect with Country, and to develop ways to share knowledge about local Aboriginal culture. Working in partnership with the Traditional Custodians of the Land, determine how Aboriginal Heritage is identified and represented.

The story of the Memorial Trees along Walker Street are celebrated through heritage interpretive art and signage.

The street is designed and renewed around the opportunity and character the trees bring to place.

Conserve and celebrate the historic main street character, with Helensburgh Hotel and the post office remaining significant historic buildings.



A place for co-working space

Helensburgh is a place of innovation and business.

Co-working spaces are evident along the main street, bringing more energy and innovation to Helensburgh.

This new innovation in the main street provides an opportunity for people to stay local, and spend time immersed in their community rather than commuting to Sydney.

Recommendations

- Undertake main street renewal detailed design + construction as per the endorsed Streetscape Masterplan
- Deliver a heritage interpretation project aligned with streetscape upgrades
- Undertake a laneway activation project to enhance safety and usability of laneways
- Enhance bus stops with a focus to improve active transport

Streetscape Masterplan

The Streetscape Masterplan is a more detailed design response to demonstrate how Walker Street can be designed to support its role as a vibrant main street which is accessible and convenient for all.

Objectives of the Masterplan

- Enhance connection both physical and visual to the natural environment and the unique character of Helensburgh
- Embrace and celebrate village-like setting by the introduction of human scale landscaping features to create a greater sense of place
- Establish equal access pathways and a pedestrian friendly environment
- Create a low vehicle speed environment to increase pedestrian and cycle safety
- Increase shade along key pathways by planting additional canopy trees
- Enhance pedestrian connections and experience through the development of the existing laneways
- Express the indigenous, natural, service and mining heritage of Helensburgh throughout the landscape and by incorporating public art and interpretive devices
- Acknowledge the Memorial planting of Brush Box on Walker and Parkes Streets through interpretive signage
- Provide improved infrastructure like recycling bins, seating, bike racks and bubblers



Street furniture to reflect village charm



Native planting brings in surrounding nature and connects with Country



Improved public transport facilities (bus)



Walker and Gibbons Lanes formalised, with active edges and shared



Wayfinding connects us to place and Country



Heritage interpretation - Aboriginal and European history is celebrated



Create a series of town squares; places to spend time and enjoy the Town Centre



Wide footpaths have high quality paving and allow space for outdoor dining



Lighting is a feature and creates ambience

Draft Streetscape Masterplan

Parkes / Walker intersection is upgraded to allow safe pedestrian crossing points

Upgraded pedestrian crossing point

Improved interface with Charles Harper Park

Parkes Street narrows to signal entry to town centre

Accessible ramp connects street level footpath to shop level

Pedestrian crossing retained with new access stairs and seating area

Lanes upgraded as shared zones

Trees retained - canopy lifted and native planting introduced

Parking lanes retained

New footpath at street level

Road narrows to signal entry to town centre and upgraded pedestrian crossing point



LEGEND	
	UPGRADED PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS
	OUTDOOR COMMUNITY SPACES
	EXISTING TREES TO BE RETAINED
	PROPOSED ACCENT AND SHADE TREE PLANTING
	UNDERSTOREY OF FLOWERING SHRUBS
	POTENTIAL SHARED ZONE



Priority Staging

Delivering the streetscape masterplan will be staged. There is an initial budget set aside (\$1.8M), through Council budget and the State Government's Resources for Regions Grant.

A staging plan has been developed, based on clear objectives to ensure best outcomes can be delivered aligned with the community's Vision. Priorities have been identified and mapped for transparency. Over time, and as funding is made available, ongoing investment can be managed in a cohesive way, in accordance with the streetscape design.

Staging objectives

Staging priorities have been considered having regard to:

1. Alignment with the streetscape master plan objectives: pedestrian accessibility, comfort and safety
2. Value for money: ensuring that infrastructure delivery is coordinated. What infrastructure works will bring the highest impact to how the main street functions.
3. Design functionality: ensuring that infrastructure elements are delivered in a coordinated way. Sometimes there are partnering elements.
4. Relationship with future investment programs: ensuring that works don't become redundant.

Parkes Street



Stage 1 construction priorities for Parkes Street

Prioritise safe crossing opportunities on Parkes Street

The urgent priority here is to create a safe environment for pedestrians to connect between the main street and the services and amenities to the north.

Design is intended to slow and calm traffic, ensure pedestrian safety, improve accessibility, and to instil within this intersection a sense of arrival and entry to the town centre.

Key elements:

- Upgraded accessible crossings at all four edges of the roundabout with kerb ramps, wider refuge islands and footpaths at each corner
- Pedestrian accessibility and safety achieved through upgraded pedestrian crossing on Parkes Street to link to Charles Harper Park and shops to the north
- Road narrowing to create a slower speed environment and improved safety with blisters introduced at the western entry/exit
- Improved bus stop safety and upgraded shelter

Walker Street



Stage 2 construction priorities for Walker Street

Prioritise accessibility and main street experience along Walker Street

The overall intention for stage one works is to achieve maximum advantage from the beautifully proportioned main street by strategically investing in high impact changes.

New pathways and crossings will focus on improving the overall structure and functionality of the streetscape, with a focus on accessibility and safety. Existing footpaths will be maintained and repaired as required.

Upgrading the Lilyvale and Walker Street intersection and connections to pathways will be considered as part of the integrated design investigation for the new library and community centre.

Key elements:

- New continuous accessible pathway along the Western edge at street level
- Traffic calming at southern entry with blisters narrowing the road, and creating a pedestrian crossing point
- Improved connections to western shops from Walker Street (road level) with two new accessible ramps and one new set of feature stairs
- Improve safety with upgraded crossing facilities in Walker Street and Short Street
- Two newly defined public meeting places - outside Coles with a widened footpath area, and at the top of the new stairs linking with the western bank shopping area
- Tree canopy lifted and native landscaping featured along the western bank. Enhanced character through an interpretation project for the memorial trees, native landscaping, and expressing the heritage sandstone curb where possible
- Include lighting conduits, seating and human scale elements

Conclusion

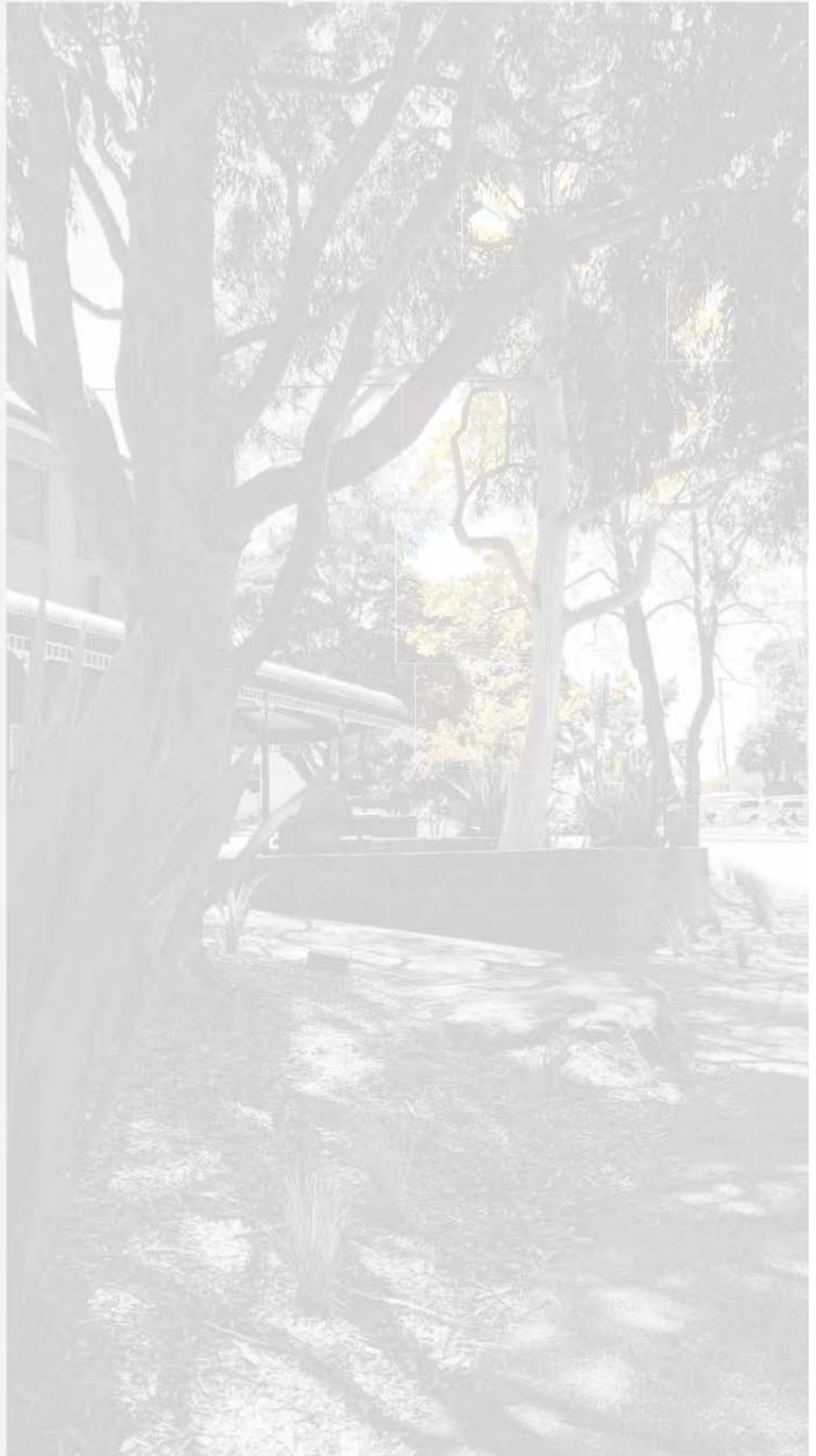
Helensburgh Town Centre is a beautiful place, set in a tranquil setting, and supported by a committed and passionate community.

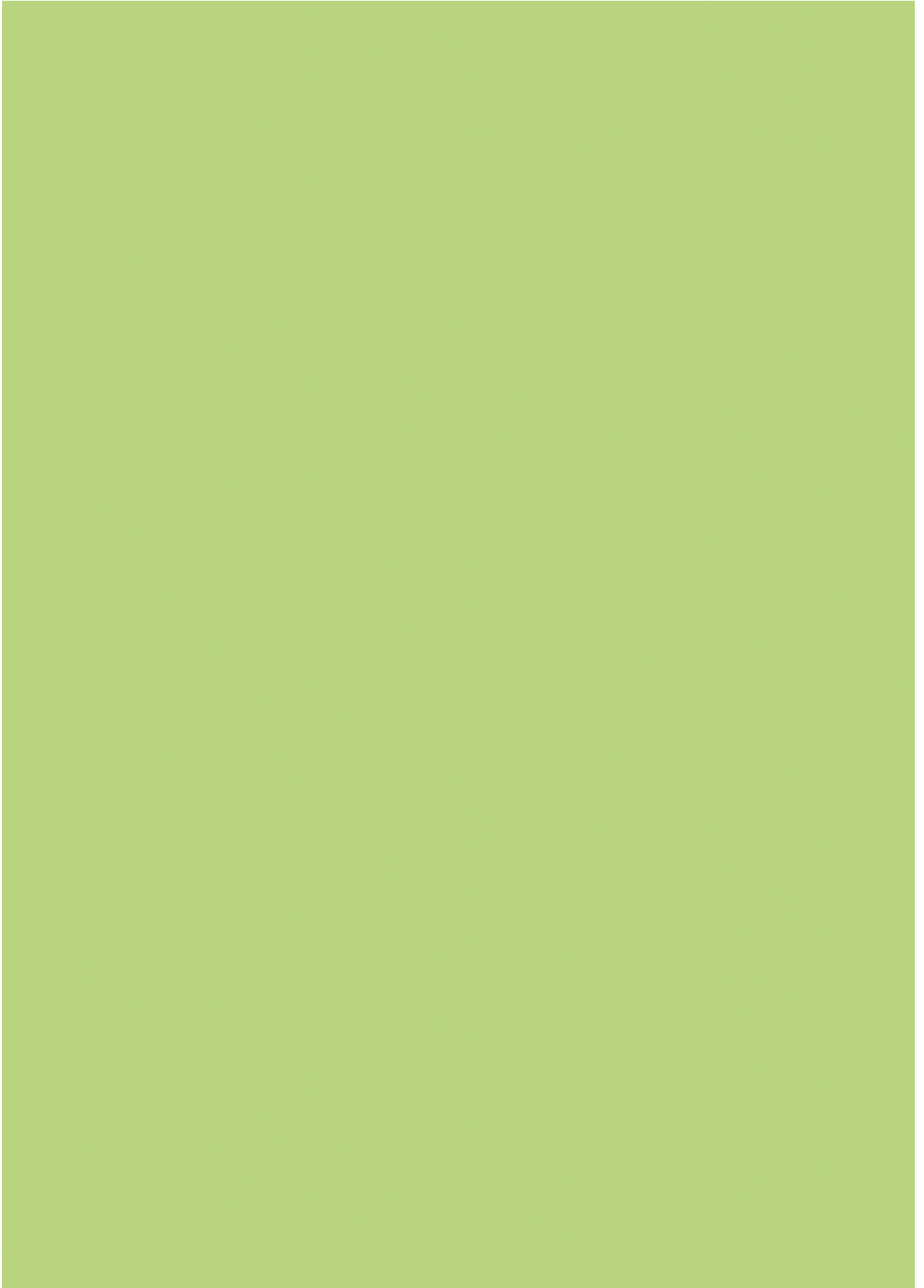
This Plan sets the Community's Vision for Helensburgh Town Centre, defining a series of Strategies and Actions to deliver the Vision.

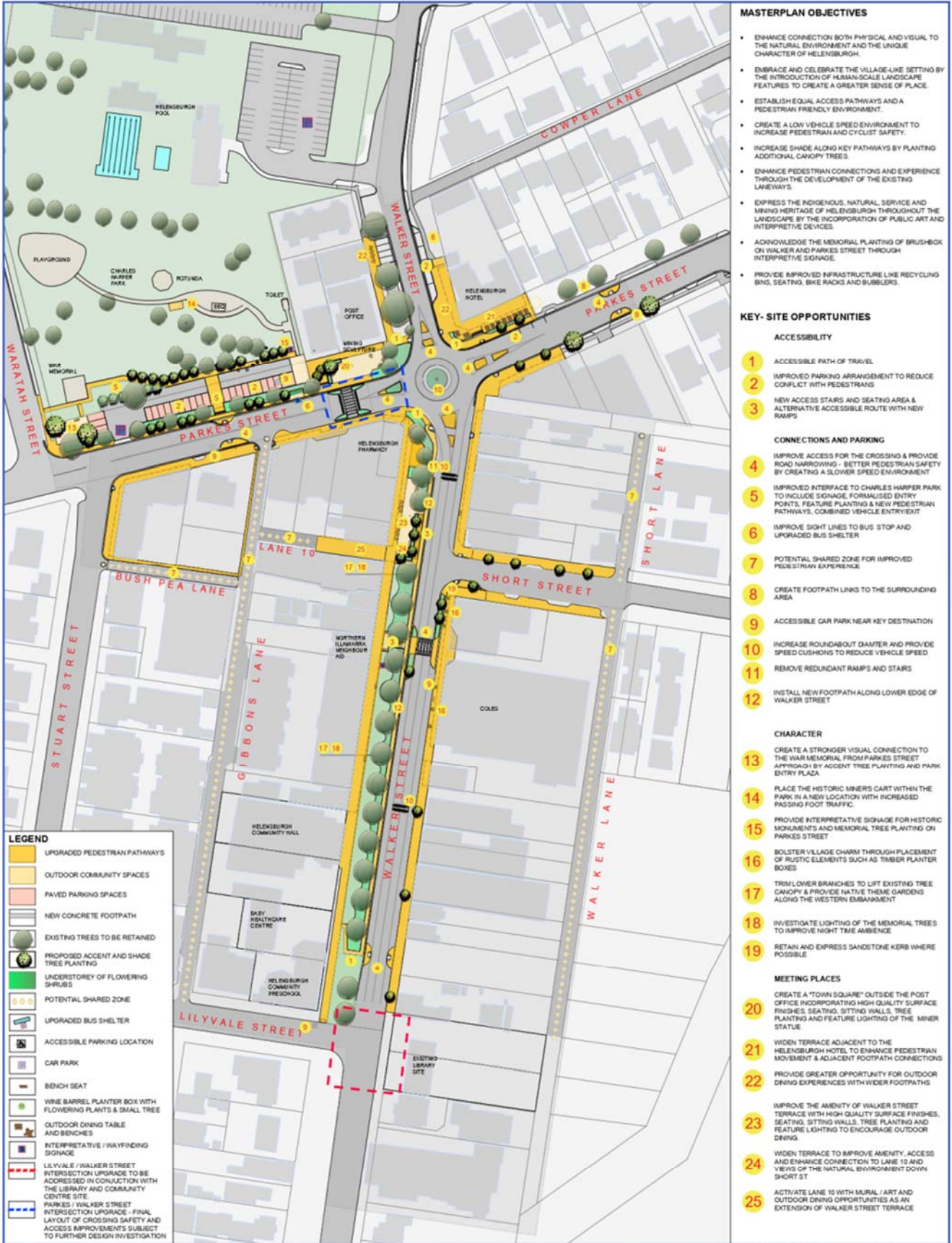
Turning ideas into action requires collaboration and partnership between Council, the community, local business and Government Agencies. The accompanying Implementation Plan sets out the key actions for delivery against timeframes and budget needs.

Council would like to thank everyone who has contributed to informing this Plan. From early analysis through to the wording of the Vision and setting of priority actions. Only together can we successfully deliver change.









- ### MASTERPLAN OBJECTIVES
- ENHANCE CONNECTION BOTH PHYSICAL AND VISUAL TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE UNIQUE CHARACTER OF HELENSBURGH.
 - EMBRACE AND CELEBRATE THE VILLAGE-LIKE SETTING BY THE INTRODUCTION OF HUMAN-SCALE LANDSCAPE FEATURES TO CREATE A GREATER SENSE OF PLACE.
 - ESTABLISH EQUAL ACCESS PATHWAYS AND A PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT.
 - CREATE A LOW VEHICLE SPEED ENVIRONMENT TO INCREASE PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST SAFETY.
 - INCREASE SHADE ALONG KEY PATHWAYS BY PLANTING ADDITIONAL CANOPY TREES.
 - ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS AND EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EXISTING LANEWAYS.
 - EXPRESS THE INDIGENOUS, NATURAL SERVICE AND MINING HERITAGE OF HELENSBURGH THROUGHOUT THE LANDSCAPE BY THE INCORPORATION OF PUBLIC ART AND INTERPRETIVE DEVICES.
 - ACKNOWLEDGE THE MEMORIAL PLANTING OF BRUSHBOX ON WALKER AND PARKES STREET THROUGH INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE.
 - PROVIDE IMPROVED INFRASTRUCTURE LIKE RECYCLING BINS, SEATING, BIKE RACKS AND BUSHELTERS.
- ### KEY-SITE OPPORTUNITIES
- #### ACCESSIBILITY
- ACCESSIBLE PATH OF TRAVEL
 - IMPROVED PARKING ARRANGEMENT TO REDUCE CONFLICT WITH PEDESTRIANS
 - NEW ACCESS STAIRS AND SEATING AREA & ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE ROUTE WITH NEW RAMPS
- #### CONNECTIONS AND PARKING
- IMPROVE ACCESS FOR THE CROSSING & PROVIDE ROAD NARROWING - BETTER PEDESTRIAN SAFETY BY CREATING A SLOWER SPEED ENVIRONMENT
 - IMPROVED INTERFACE TO CHARLES HARPER PARK TO INCLUDE SIGNAGE, FORMALISED ENTRY POINTS, FEATURE PLANTING & NEW PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS, COMBINED VEHICLE ENTRY/EXIT
 - IMPROVE SIGHT LINES TO BUS STOP AND UPGRADED BUS SHELTER
 - POTENTIAL SHARED ZONE FOR IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE
 - CREATE FOOTPATH LINKS TO THE SURROUNDING AREA
 - ACCESSIBLE CAR PARK NEAR KEY DESTINATION
 - INCREASE ROUNDABOUT DIAMETER AND PROVIDE SPEED CUSHIONS TO REDUCE VEHICLE SPEED
 - REMOVE REDUNDANT RAMPS AND STAIRS
 - INSTALL NEW FOOTPATH ALONG LOWER EDGE OF WALKER STREET
- #### CHARACTER
- CREATE A STRONGER VISUAL CONNECTION TO THE WAR MEMORIAL FROM PARKES STREET APPROACH BY ACCENT TREE PLANTING AND PARK ENTRY PLAZA
 - PLACE THE HISTORIC MINERS CART WITHIN THE PARK IN A NEW LOCATION WITH INCREASED PASSING FOOT TRAFFIC.
 - PROVIDE INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE FOR HISTORIC MONUMENTS AND MEMORIAL TREE PLANTING ON PARKES STREET
 - BOLSTER VILLAGE CHARM THROUGH PLACEMENT OF RUSTIC ELEMENTS SUCH AS TIMBER PLANTER BOXES
 - TRIM LOWER BRANCHES TO LIFT EXISTING TREE CANOPY & PROVIDE NATIVE THEME GARDENS ALONG THE WESTERN EMBANKMENT
 - INVESTIGATE LIGHTING OF THE MEMORIAL TREES TO IMPROVE NIGHT TIME AMBIENCE
 - RETAIN AND EXPRESS SANDSTONE KERBS WHERE POSSIBLE
- #### MEETING PLACES
- CREATE A "TOWN SQUARE" OUTSIDE THE POST OFFICE INCORPORATING HIGH QUALITY SURFACE FINISHES, SEATING, SITTING WALLS, TREE PLANTING AND FEATURE LIGHTING OF THE MINER STATUE
 - WIDEN TERRACE ADJACENT TO THE HELENSBURGH HOTEL TO ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT & ADJACENT FOOTPATH CONNECTIONS
 - PROVIDE GREATER OPPORTUNITY FOR OUTDOOR DINING EXPERIENCES WITH WIDER FOOTPATHS
 - IMPROVE THE AMENITY OF WALKER STREET TERRACE WITH HIGH QUALITY SURFACE FINISHES, SEATING, SITTING WALLS, TREE PLANTING AND FEATURE LIGHTING TO ENCOURAGE OUTDOOR DINING
 - WIDEN TERRACE TO IMPROVE AMENITY, ACCESS AND ENHANCE CONNECTION TO LANE 10 AND VIEWS OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT DOWN SHORT ST
 - ACTIVATE LANE 10 WITH MURAL / ART AND OUTDOOR DINING OPPORTUNITIES AS AN EXTENSION OF WALKER STREET TERRACE

- ### LEGEND
- UPGRADED PEDESTRIAN PATHWAYS
 - OUTDOOR COMMUNITY SPACES
 - PAVED PARKING SPACES
 - NEW CONCRETE FOOTPATH
 - EXISTING TREES TO BE RETAINED
 - PROPOSED ACCENT AND SHADE TREE PLANTING
 - UNDERSTOREY OF FLOWERING SHRUBS
 - POTENTIAL SHARED ZONE
 - UPGRADED BUS SHELTER
 - ACCESSIBLE PARKING LOCATION
 - CAR PARK
 - BENCH SEAT
 - WINE BARREL PLANTER BOX WITH FLOWERING PLANTS & SMALL TREE
 - OUTDOOR DINING TABLE AND BENCHES
 - INTERPRETIVE / WAYFINDING SIGNAGE
 - LILLYVALE / WALKER STREET INTERSECTION UPGRADE TO BE ADDRESSED IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY CENTRE SITE.
 - PARKES / WALKER STREET INTERSECTION UPGRADE - FINAL LAYOUT OF CROSSING SAFETY AND ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS SUBJECT TO FURTHER DESIGN INVESTIGATION



RAIN GARDENS AND FEATURE TREES



NEUTRAL TONE SEGMENTAL PAVING



PUBLIC ART FOR HERITAGE INTERPRETATION



TIMBER TREE PLANTERS



PUBLIC ART, SEATING AND
FLOWERING PLANTS



COUNTRY CHARM



SANDSTONE SITTING WALLS - EXAMPLE FOR OUTDOOR
COMMUNITY SPACES



NATIVE GARDENS



GYMEA LILLIES AS ACCENT PLANTING



NATIVE FLOWERS



UPGRADED BUS SHELTER



WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

