

CIVIC PRECINCT PLANNING STUDY

North Sydney Council
November 2020





Acknowledgment of Country

North Sydney Council acknowledges the Guringai Tribe and Cammeraygal Clan as the Traditional Owners of this land. The authors of this report pay our respects to the Elders, past and present and recognise the inherent connection of the Indigenous people of Australia to Country.

Message of Appreciation

We gratefully acknowledge and appreciate the extensive input, feedback and support provided by key stakeholders, industry and community representatives as well as the staff and Councillors of North Sydney Council in the preparation of this planning study

We also thank Conybeare Morrison and their team of consultants for their extensive and thoughtful work that underpins this planning study, as well as their involvement and assistance with the community consultation workshops.

A full set of reports by the consultant team has been included as a background study to this document.

Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics	NSDCP	North Sydney Development Control Plan
AHO	Aboriginal Housing Office	NSITP	North Sydney Integrated Transport Program
CBD	Central Business District	NSLEP	North Sydney Local Environmental Plan
CSP	Community Strategic Plan	NSTS	North Sydney Transport Strategy
DCP	Development Control Plan	NSROC	Northern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils
DPIE	Department of Planning, Industry & Environment	NSW	New South Wales
EP&A	Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979	PDS	Public Domain Strategy
FACS	Family and Community Services	PPH	Persons per hectare
GFC	Global Financial Crisis	REIA	Real Estate Institute of Australia
GSC	Greater Sydney Commission	SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy
LALC	Local Aboriginal Land Council	TfNSW	Transport for New South Wales
LEP	Local Environmental Plan	WSMP	Ward Street Masterplan
LGA	Local Government Area		
LHS	Local Housing Strategy		
LSPS	Local Strategic Planning Statement		
NDP	North District Plan		
NSC	North Sydney Council		

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NORTH
SYDNEY
CBD

CIVIC PRECINCT

ST LEONARDS

Purpose

Intent

The Civic Precinct is located directly north of North Sydney CBD and is bounded by McLaren Street, Pacific Highway, Falcon Street and the Warringah Freeway with an additional area bounded by Walker Street and Berry Street at the southeast corner.

The Civic Precinct Planning Study focuses on this area and is a response to the construction of the Victoria Cross metro station northern portal, located at the intersection of McLaren and Miller Streets. This portal will provide greater access to public transport in the area. The metro portal has generated development interest (with several planning proposals already lodged within the study area) and prompted a closer look at any further implications of the new public transport infrastructure.

Additionally there has been significant transformation to the areas surrounding the Civic Precinct. The proposed St Leonards and Crows Nest Planned Precinct and the Ward Street Masterplan have both changed the urban structure around the study area and with it the potential role of the Civic Precinct within the LGA.

The study is part of a Council effort to align the statutory framework with the objectives and targets of the Greater Sydney Commission's Regional Plan and North District Plan as required by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE). The work has funded by a grant from the NSW Government.

Aim

The aim of the Civic Precinct Planning Study is to understand the impacts of new public transport infrastructure and transformations in surrounding areas and formalise an urban design framework for the future of the precinct.

The study aims to establish the role of the Civic Precinct within the wider LGA context and develop a future vision.

This vision and framework will then help determine any necessary changes to the area's built form and public domain and establish a criteria for any new developments.

The study would also ensure that the Civic Precinct is aligned with the objectives and targets of the Greater Sydney Commission's Regional plan for Sydney.

Background

The Metropolitan Plan by the Greater Sydney Commission, and in particular the North District Plan have set employment and residential targets for North Sydney. These targets include an increase of 21,000 jobs in the CBD and 16,000 jobs in St Leonards over the next 16 years. Residential targets estimate the need for 3,000 additional dwellings by 2020 and approximately another 10,250 additional dwellings by 2041 (DPIE revised figures from late 2019).

Alignment of Council's planning controls with the North District Plan

On October 2018 North Sydney Council accepted Accelerated LEP Review Grant Funding and subsequently agreed with the DPIE to prepare specific projects to bring North Sydney's Local Environmental Plan (LEP) and other planning instruments and policies into closer alignment with the Greater Sydney Commission's North District Plan. The Civic Precinct Planning Study is one of these projects.

The Proposed Metro Northern Entry Portal

The NSW Government announced the Sydney Metro City and South West station locations in late 2016 and initially proposed a single entry portal for the North Sydney Victoria Cross metro station located on the corner of Miller Street and Berry Street.

Following further investigation, a planning modification was exhibited in June 2017 proposing an additional station entry portal and the relocation of the northern portal from 194-196A Miller Street to 50 McLaren Street. The new entry is a 'lift only' portal and provides greater accessibility to the north of the CBD Precinct. Sydney Metro estimate that the new northern portal will increase patronage by 5%.

Both the North Sydney Transport Strategy and Sydney Metro prioritise walking and cycling above private vehicle traffic, and the Civic Precinct Planning Study will need to consider this in the study. One of the stated objectives of Sydney Metro is to 'serve and stimulate urban development' and this study seeks to provide a framework to guide, control and facilitate any development stimulated by the proposed northern metro station portal.

Development interest

Council has received Planning Proposals for several sites within the study area, and the significant individual increase in density and height has the potential to undermine the character of the area in the absence of a more holistic vision for the precinct. The Civic Precinct Planning Study is to provide that holistic vision and guide any development.

Planning Context

✔ Strategic Planning Context

The Greater Sydney Regional Plan: A Metropolis of Three Cities (2018)

A Metropolis of Three Cities establishes the aspirations for the Greater Sydney region for the next 40 years. It envisages the creation of three distinct cities that will be the focus of economic, social and cultural activity for Sydney's population through to 2056.

Among the three cities the Eastern Harbour City, where North Sydney is located, will include:

- Population increases leading to urban renewal including increased infrastructure and services as well as open space and public places
- Investments in transport and services, jobs growth and business activity
- Improved access to foreshores, waterways and the coast for recreation, tourism, cultural events and water-based transport
- Health and education collaboration areas

The North District Plan (2018)

The North District Plan guides the implementation of the Greater Sydney Regional Plan at a district level and provide a bridge between regional and local planning.

The plan emphasises important links between the economy of the North District and that of the Harbour CBD, with North Sydney providing half a million jobs - by far the largest office market in the North District.

There is significant transport and infrastructure investment underway and planned for the North District, including the Sydney Metro and the St Leonards Health and Education Precinct, to support this economic hub.

The focus of growth in the North District will be around well-connected places that build on local strengths and focus on the quality of the public domain. The 20 year housing target for the North District is 92,000 additional dwellings. The North District will be home to 13% of Greater Sydney's new growth.

The North District Plan also provides a framework and guidelines for more sustainable urban development anchored on The Greater Sydney Green Grid. The Green Grid is an effort by the regional and district plans to bring sustainable developments in various fronts, from more open spaces, to more energy efficient buildings, to smarter transport networks.

St. Leonards / Crows Nest 2036 Plan (2020)

The NSW Government adopted the "2036 Plan" in August 2020. This establishes a strategic framework for the precinct which sits just north of the study area, with a

small overlap with the block bounded by Pacific Highway and Falcon and Alexander Streets.

✔ Local Planning Context

North Sydney Council has developed a strategic planning framework based on 'place-based' planning studies for key areas within the local government area (LGA) that were subject to significant change.

This strategic planning framework is aligned with the goals and vision of the Local Community Strategic Plan, which is the overarching document for the North Sydney Council LGA, and is guided by the principles and priorities set out in the Local Strategic Planning Statement adopted in March 2020.

North Sydney Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)

North Sydney's LSPS seeks to maintain and enhance the role of the North Sydney CBD and St Leonards/Crows Nest precinct as key job attractors. It also encourages housing growth in areas with good access to transport, jobs, services and amenity, whilst maintaining the special attributes of individual areas and neighbourhoods outside intensification zones.

Building on the themes of Collaboration, Liveability, Productivity and Sustainability set out in the North District Plan, the LSPS also identifies a series of Planning Priorities and actions for the LGA including:

- **I1 'Provide infrastructure and assets that support growth and change'**
- **I2 'Collaborate with State Government Agencies and the community to deliver new housing, jobs, infrastructure and great places'**
- **L1 'Diverse housing options that meet the needs of the North Sydney community'**
- **L2 'Provide a range of community facilities and services to support a healthy, creative, diverse and socially connected North Sydney community'**
- **L3 'Create great places that recognise and preserve North Sydney's distinct local character and heritage' and P4 'Develop a smart, innovative and prosperous North Sydney economy'**
- **P6 'Support walkable centres and a connected, vibrant and sustainable North Sydney'**
- **S2 'Delivering a high quality, well-connected and integrated green space system'**
- **S3 'Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, energy, water and waste'**

✔ A more sustainable, green and connected North District

The Greater Sydney Green Grid is expected to build on existing natural features and park lands of the North District to create green links which support and encourage walking, cycling and community access to open space.

Landscape and scenic features including views from the Harbour and views to the Harbour and foreshores are to be preserved and enhanced.

Process

The Planning Study has been done in two stages, a preliminary consultation and research phase and a design phase carried out in collaboration with an extensive team of urban design, planning, heritage, transport, sustainability and landscape experts.

Stage 1

Council carried out a Stage 1 preliminary community consultation in mid-2019 to understand the community's aspirations for the Civic Precinct area. An internal analysis of public facilities was also conducted.

This stage yielded a set of community priorities that have informed the design brief for stage 2.

A report compiling community input and reflecting on the demographics and character of the area was reported to Council in October 2019.

Stage 2

In October 2019, Council appointed Conybeare Morrison (CM+) and a team of sub-consultants to assist with the development of stage 2.

Based on the brief, extensive analysis of the area and further public consultation workshops the team developed a vision for the Civic Precinct together with a series of urban design principles and objectives.

Their work has resulted in an extensive and thorough background report with a series of proposed actions and strategies to be implemented across the precinct in order to achieve the vision for the area, together with proposed changes to the planning controls in selected locations.

The ideas of the study were presented to the North Sydney Design Excellence Panel and Council's Project Control Group.

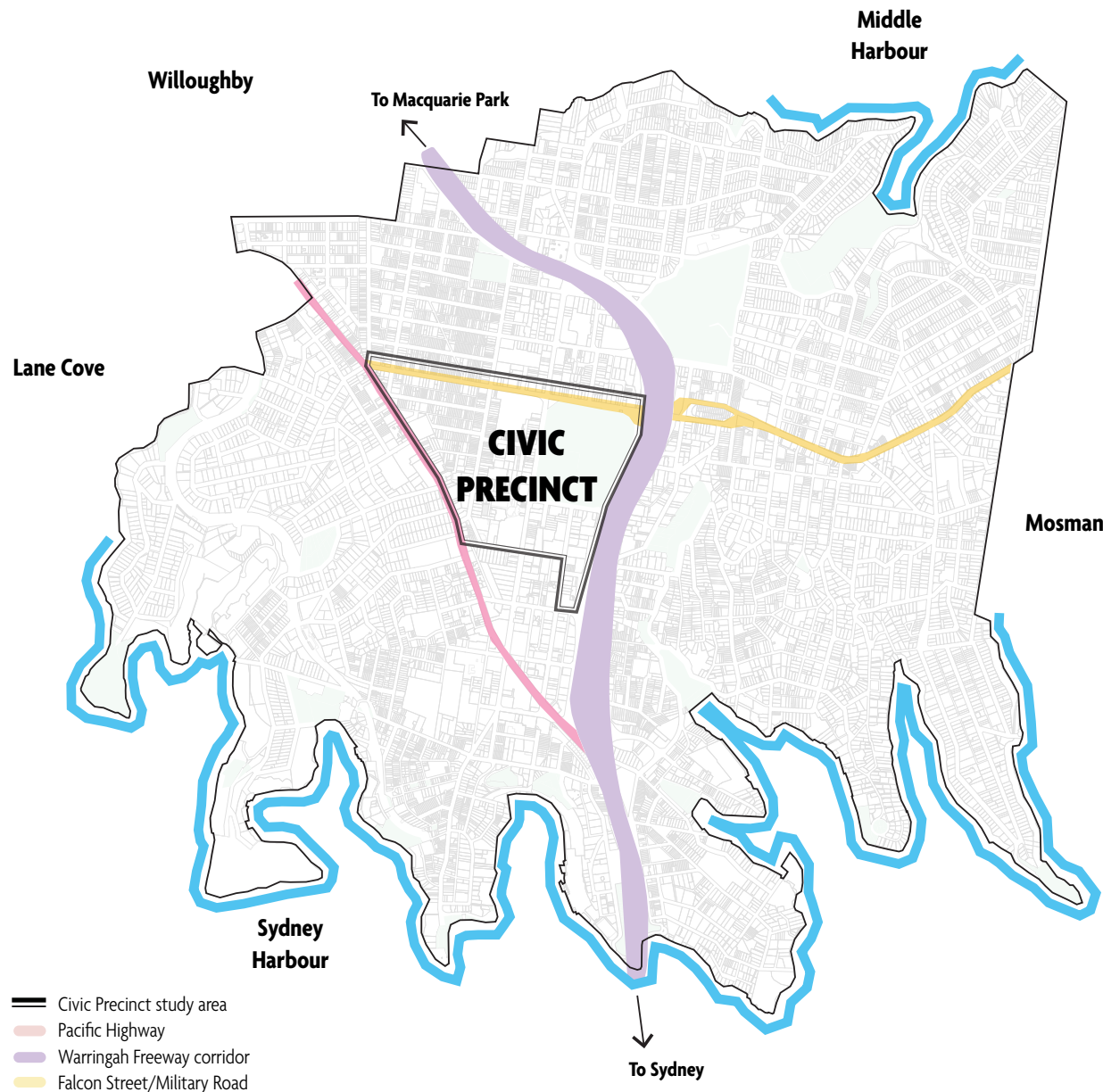
The full documentation developed by the consultant team has been added as an background study to this report. The consultant reports underpin the ideas put forward in this study.

Objectives

The objectives of the planning study are:

- To understand the community and stakeholders' visions and needs for future planning of the study area
- To develop a considered urban planning vision and strategy for the Civic Precinct, establishing a series of urban planning principles for the study area
- Achieve the objectives and actions identified in the GSC North District Plan
- Identify and retain the urban values of the precinct including its heritage, fine-grained structure and 'leafy' character
- Identify possible improvements in the public domain including pedestrian linkages, wayfinding, new public open space and improved amenity. These improvements will be consistent with the objectives and directions identified in the North Sydney CBD Public Domain Strategy (2020)
- Identify the existing and future 'high significance civic places' within the precinct and define their desired character
- Identify the appropriate density across the study area considering the existing opportunities and constraints, the location within the North Sydney LGA and current and future access to transport and public infrastructure
- Explore appropriate opportunities to review building heights and density within the precinct in light of the introduction of improved access to public transport
- Explore opportunities to deliver public benefit within, or on the periphery of, the study area as a result of redevelopment proposals

Location



North Sydney Local Government Area (LGA)

The Civic Precinct is located at the centre of the North Sydney LGA. It sits north of North Sydney CBD and is approximately 2km south-east of St Leonards. The precinct is also surrounded by the medium-density villages of Crows Nest, Cammeray and Neutral Bay and an educational zone to the south-west which contains the Australian Catholic University (ACU).

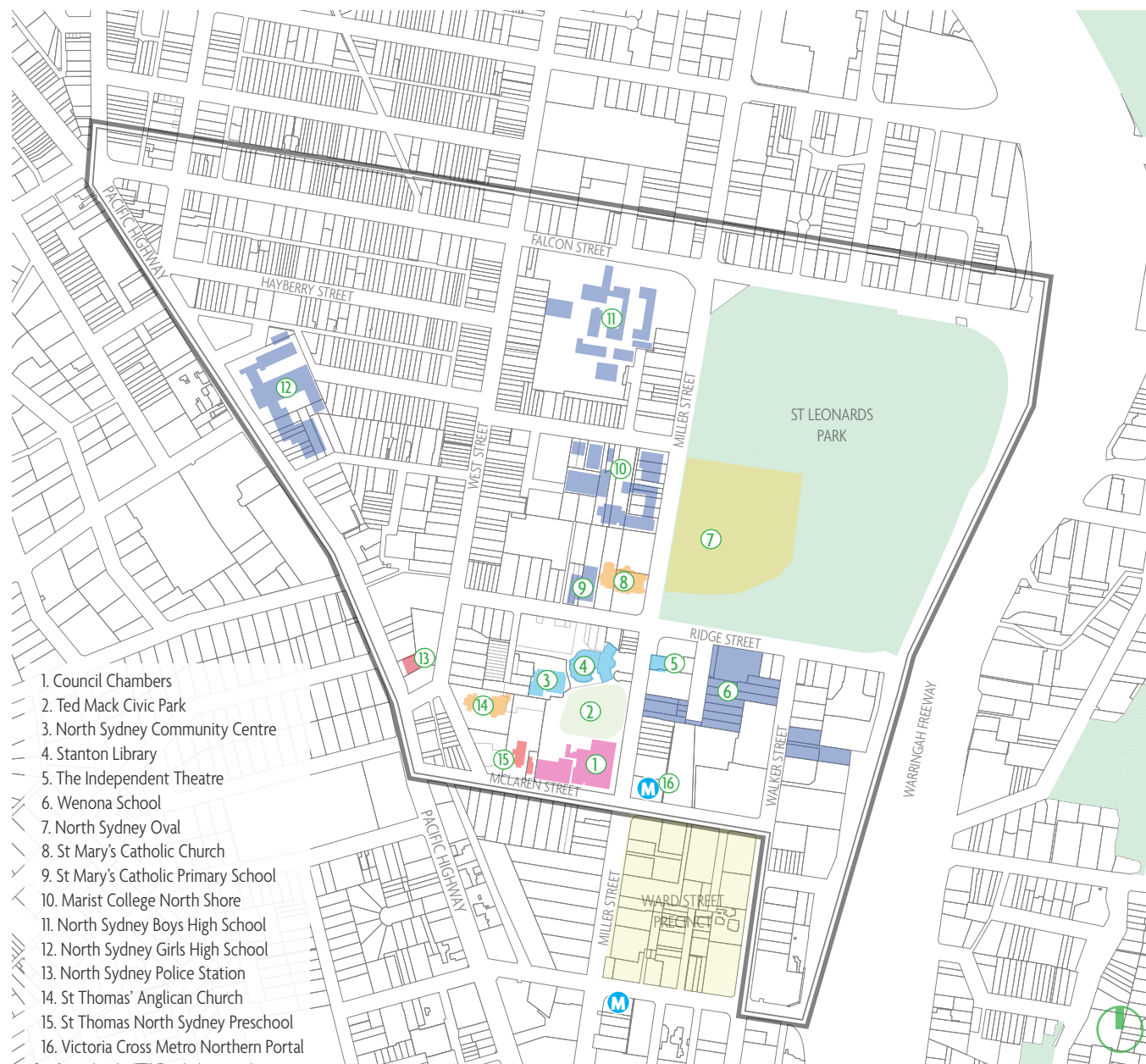
The Civic Precinct occupies approximately 65 hectares and is a mixed-use area providing retail, commercial, educational and residential opportunities. It also includes several community facilities and civic buildings including St Leonards Park, Ted Mack Civic Park, the North Sydney Council Chambers and Stanton Library.

The Civic Precinct is bounded by three major vehicular routes - the Pacific Highway, Falcon Street and the Warringah Freeway. The area is currently serviced by a range of buses and is in walking distance to the North Sydney train station. It is the site of the northern portal of the Victoria Cross metro station which is due to open in 2024. This portal is located at the south edge of the precinct across from Council Chambers.

The new metro station will link the Civic Precinct to employment centres to the north and south including Macquarie Park, Barangaroo and Sydney CBD. This connection could create employment and housing opportunities in the Civic Precinct.



Location



The Civic Precinct

The Civic Precinct is bounded by Falcon Street to the north, Pacific Highway to the west, the Warringah Freeway to the east and McLaren Street and Berry Street to the south.

The study area borders the north-east corner of North Sydney CBD creating a mixed-use transition area between McLaren Street and Ridge Street, and Miller Street and the Warringah Freeway.

Uses in this area currently include a hotel, some residential buildings, an old commercial tower soon to be replaced by a residential apartment building and educational facilities. It also includes several heritage items and a heritage conservation area along the southern side of Ridge Street.

St Leonards Park and North Sydney Oval are north of Ridge Street. The park is lined by older residential houses as well as schools and churches along Miller Street.

At the centre of the Civic Precinct is the North Sydney Council Chambers and other civic buildings and facilities including Stanton Library, a community centre, and early education centre, several schools and Ted Mac Civic Park.

In the north-west corner of the precinct, on the edge of Crows Nest village, is the Hayberry quarter, a low-rise, heritage-rich, leafy residential area characterised by terraced houses and local cafes or shops, usually located at quiet street corners.

Together these areas form a rich precinct with a range of building types and uses as well as varying building heights. In spite of the variation, the precinct presents as a cohesive environment with a clear urban structure.

The fringes of the precinct are denser and more active, creating soft transition zones towards the adjacent medium and high-density areas, while the core is characterised by a low-scale, leafy, and pedestrian friendly neighbourhood, filled with civic and educational facilities.

The new metro northern portal will be located within the Civic Precinct on the edge of the North Sydney CBD providing easier access to some of North Sydney's more significant public open spaces and civic buildings.

Site History - The Origins of North Sydney

The township of St Leonards was laid out by 1838 bounded by what is now Berry Street, Lavender Street, Miller Street and Walker Street.

St Leonards Park opened in 1838 and the area bordering the park developed as an upper-middle-class neighbourhood. Surviving examples of Victorian and Federation houses still remain on Ridge Street as well as in the school grounds of Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College and Wenona.

Religious observance was assisted by the opening of an Anglican church in 1845 and a Catholic church in 1856. That the former was a stone structure and the latter a tent is evidence of the respective wealth of the two parishes. Both churches are still on their original locations on McLaren and Ridge Streets.

The move of Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College to a former grand residence in 1879 begins a pattern followed by Shore School, Wenona School, Loreto Convent and others. North Sydney is a prestigious education hub by 1910, with a strong educational presence already concentrating around St. Leonards Park.

North Sydney Girls and North Sydney Boys are established by 1930 to cater for the growing population, forming the current educational network in and around the Civic Precinct.

North Sydney Council was established on 29 July 1890 after ratepayers in three neighbouring Boroughs (East St Leonards, St Leonards and Victoria) voted for union. The name North Sydney was chosen explicitly to link the new Municipality to the metropolis on the south side of the Harbour.

North Sydney Council moved to a former doctor's surgery on the corner of Miller and McLaren Streets, then the medical heart of the lower north shore. Chambers opened in 1926 and were enlarged in 1938. The former Town Hall was at Milsons Point became a theatre, and no replacement town hall was built, despite plans to do so. In the 1940s North Sydney Council began acquiring land adjacent to its Chambers with a view to developing a civic centre that was never realised.

The opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1932 and consequent redevelopment of Lane Cove Road as the Pacific Highway created a major traffic corridor for the area. Crows Nest grew as a commercial hub. After the effects of the Great Depression and World War Two had subsided the fixed link to the south side facilitated the long-awaited development of a 'twin city'. The MLC Building completed in 1957 marks the beginning of that transformation.

High-rise residential and office development from the 1950s to the 1970s resulted in the election of councillors who favoured curtailing the unfettered development and protecting existing precincts. The NSW Heritage Act is passed in 1977 and the State's first Heritage Study completed in 1981. Mayor Ted Mack ensured that a Civic Park was created next to Council Chambers rather than the high-rise civic precinct planned in the 1970s; this remains the last major public intervention in the area until this day.



1854

First post office in North Sydney opened, trading under the name of St Leonards. The current North Sydney Post Office was opened in 1889

1879

Monte Sant'Angelo College moves to former grand residence 'Masalou'



1890

The Borough of North Sydney was formed through the amalgamation of three local borough councils - East St Leonards, St Leonards and Victoria

1926

North Sydney Council Chambers opens on the corner of Miller and McLaren Street



1957

MLC building opens in North Sydney CBD, the first high-rise office block in the area and Australia's largest office building

1982

Civic Park opens incorporating a number of existing buildings including the Council Chambers and the Stanton Library



1838

The township of St Leonards is gazetted and the grid pattern centred on Miller and Walker Streets proposed by 1828 is confirmed

1856

St Mary's Catholic Parish is established, a large district extending from Port Jackson to Pittwater. The original church was a tent placed at the corner of Miller and Ridge Street in 1856. The current church building dates from 1938



1888

Marist Brothers High School North Sydney opens on 2 July 1888, catering for boys in primary to intermediate years (Years 1-10). The school would go on to teach secondary years (Years 7-12) in 1965

1911

The population climbs 34,000, twice the figure of 1890 and nearly 20 times that in 1861

1932

Sydney Harbour Bridge opens on 19 March



1968

First stage of the Warringah Expressway is completed



2019

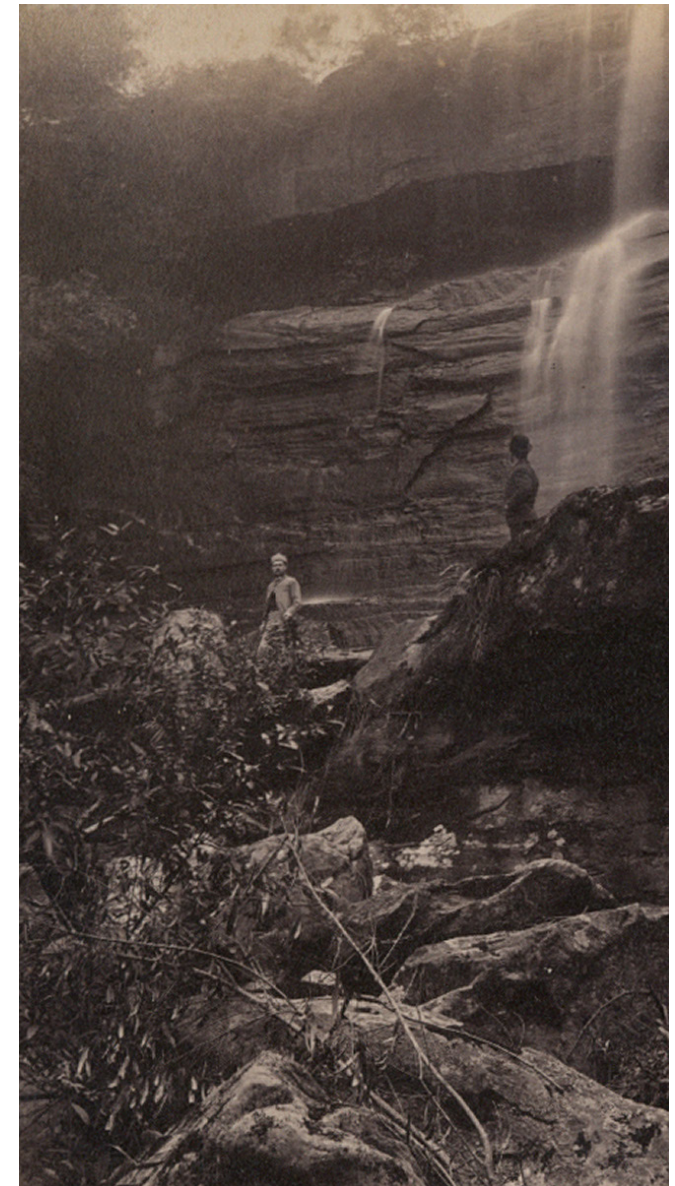
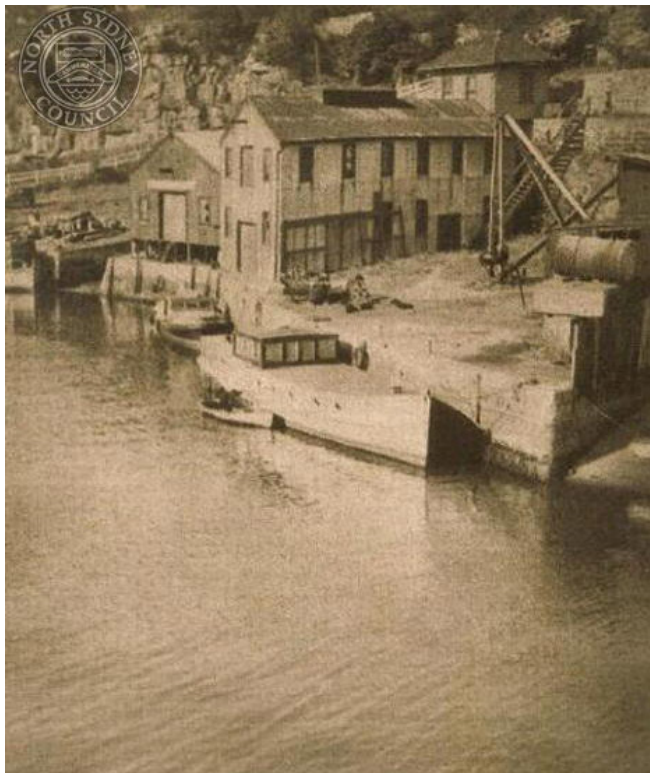
Civic park renamed the Ted Mack Civic Park in 2019 after the politician and former North Sydney mayor

Site History - North Sydney's Waterways

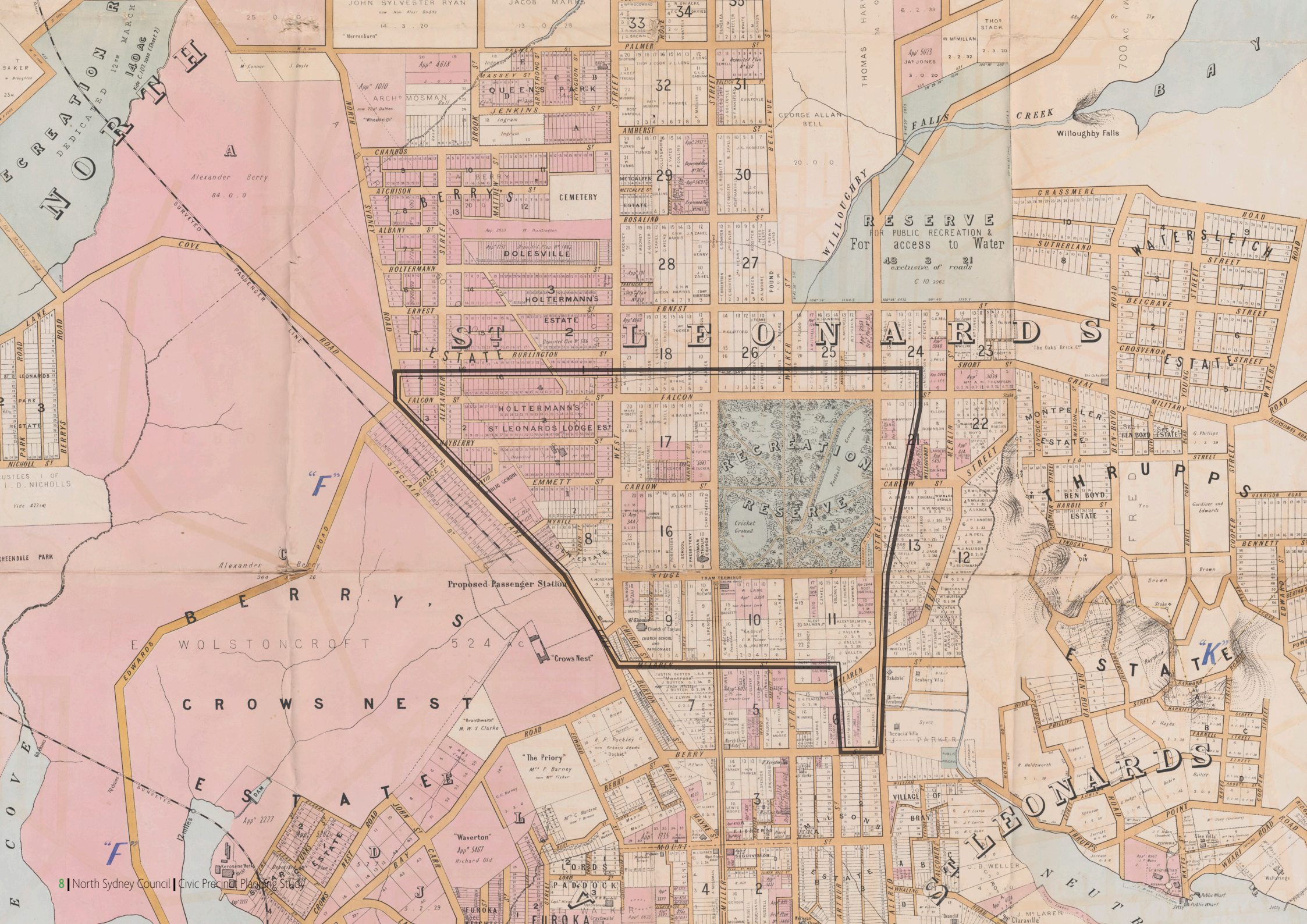
North Sydney LGA is bounded in equal parts by waterfront and land boundaries, yet its foreshore along Port Jackson, the main harbour, and Middle Harbour is the defining feature.

In turn bays, coves and headlands define the waterfront. Each bay and cove once had a freshwater creek feeding into it. These were still present in the late 19th century as indicated by maps but most were built over by the mid-20th century. The waterways rising on the ridges ran south to Port Jackson and north to Middle Harbour, along them, parks and recreational areas full of vegetation and trees were developed for the use of the growing population.

Tidal areas, such as Berrys Bay and Careening Cove were also 'reclaimed'.

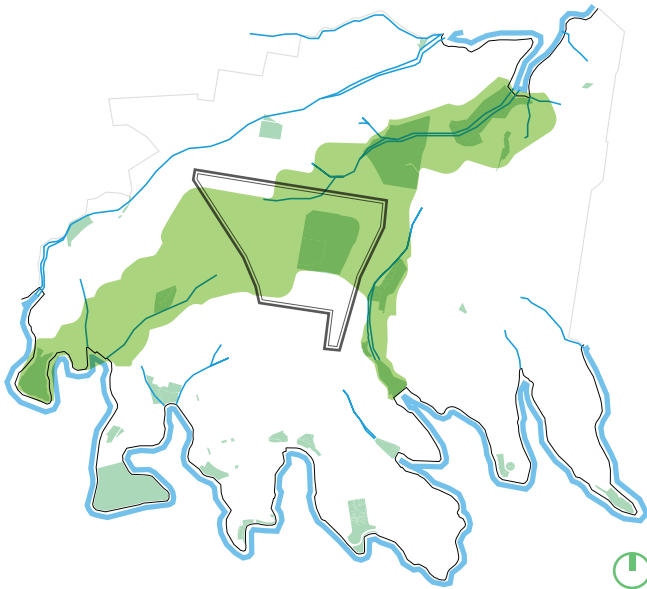


Top: Wharf at Berrys Bay (c.1910), Right: North Sydney [cartographic map], Parish of Willoughby (1890s), Far Right: Willoughby Falls (1886).



Site Context - A Layered Precinct

The urban structure of the North Sydney LGA is defined by 3 main overlapping urban elements - a green link, a strong civic and educational centre influenced by surrounding urban nodes, and a multi-layer metropolitan transport network. Together they generate a rich mosaic of distinct urban areas and environments. Located at the centre of these three urban elements is the Civic Precinct. Future development within the Civic Precinct should be able to combine the green link with a strong civic presence, protect and strengthen the heritage character of the area, and at the same time provide employment and educational opportunities that complement the high-density nodes of North Sydney and St Leonards.



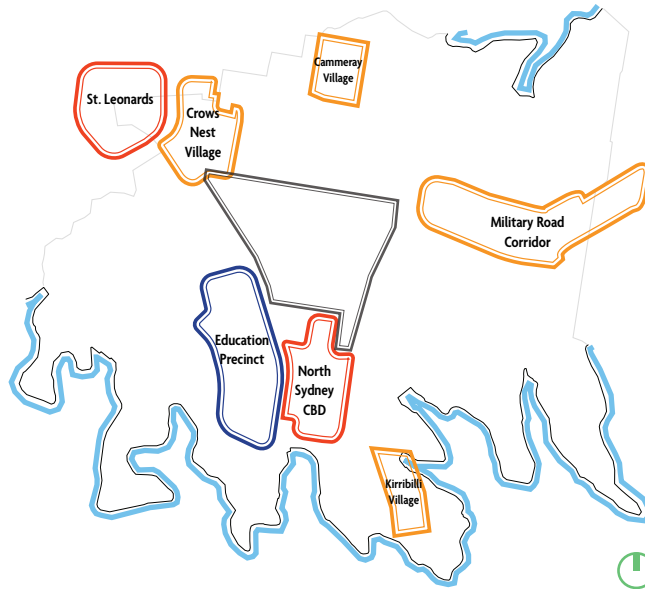
East-west green link

Following old creek lines within the LGA, North Sydney's green link connects Sydney Harbour to Middle Harbour by linking parks, reserves, heritage areas and civic buildings.

The Civic Precinct is located at the centre of this link and includes two key open spaces in the LGA - St Leonards Park and Ted Mack Civic Park.

The Civic Precinct also contains key civic buildings including Council Chambers, Stanton Library and the Independent Theatre, as well as several churches and schools.

The green link framework provides the area with an underlying character and an important social and civic role, as well as a distinctive leafy and green outlook.

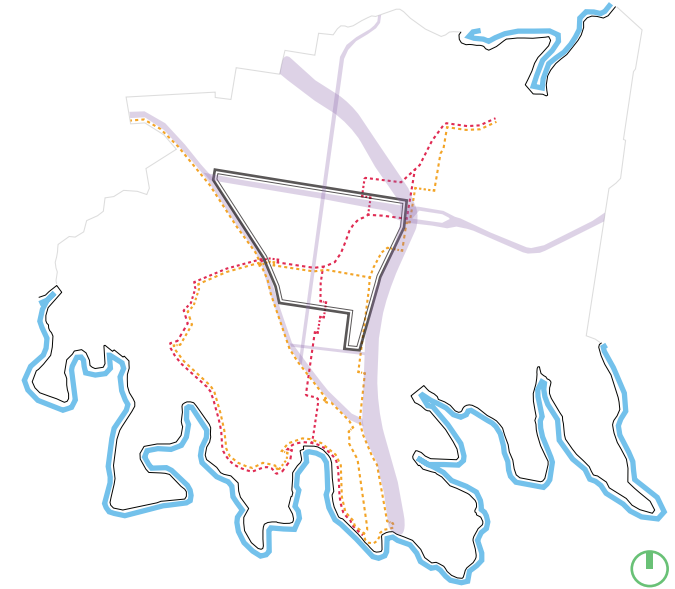


A modern 'traditional core'

Older European cities can consist of a traditional centre surrounded by more dense, modern areas, which reflects the evolution of the city over time. The centre is usually filled with civic and administrative institutions as well as plazas and social gathering spaces, with higher density residential and commercial environments on the outskirts.

North Sydney's Civic Precinct performs the same functions in present day and is located at the centre of the LGA with major commercial and high-density areas surrounding it.

The area retains a low-rise, human-scaled, heritage character and has become over time a true civic heart for the LGA with a strong presence of civic institutions and public open spaces.

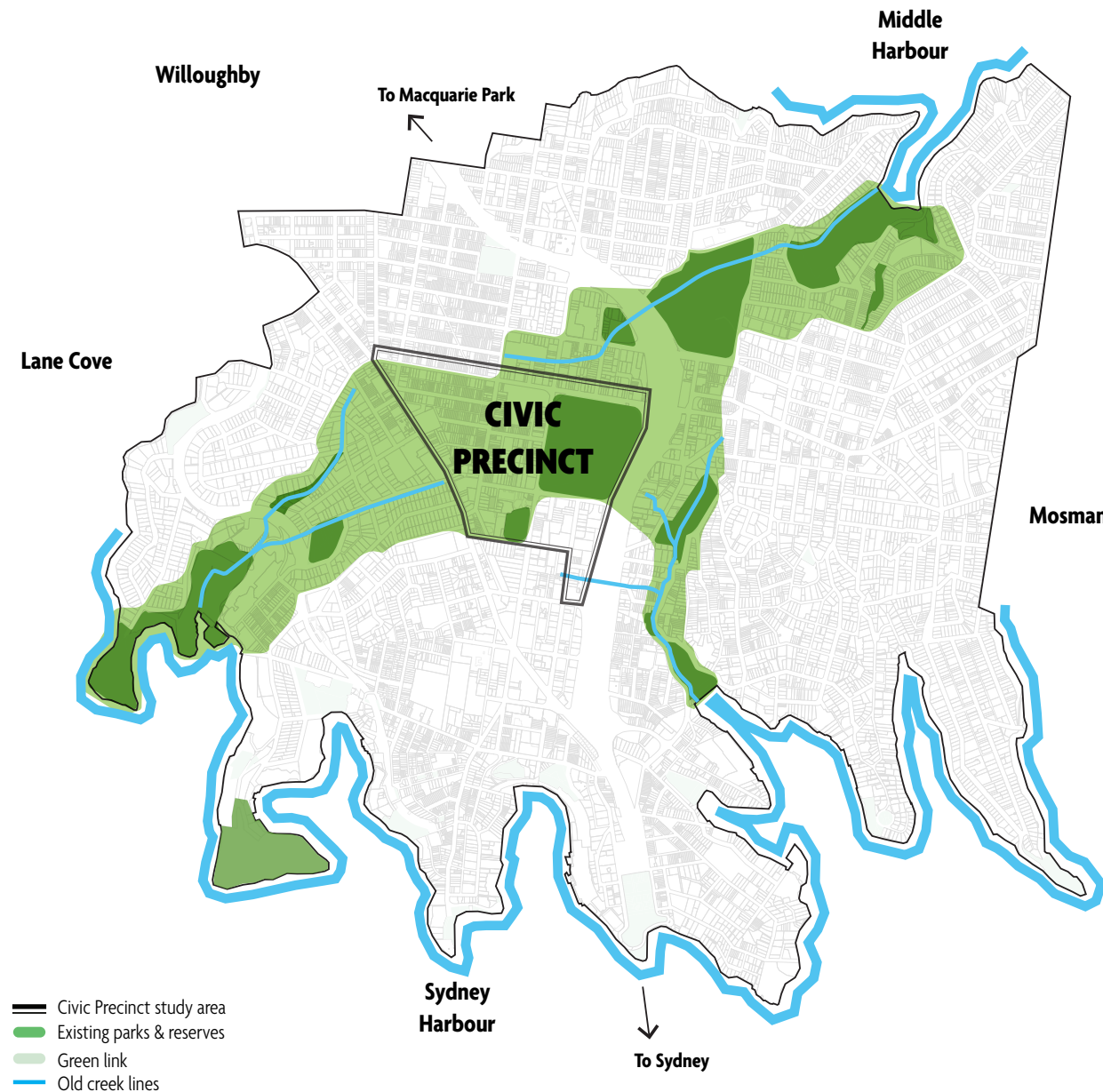


A multitude of existing and potential transport connections

Walking and cycling links, designed to improve local access and regional connectivity between North District and the Eastern Harbour City, are identified under the North Sydney CBD Transport Masterplan, the North Sydney Public Domain Strategy, and TfNSW's Greater Sydney Services & Infrastructure Strategy. Most of these links converge in or on the fringes of the Civic Precinct, which acts as a fulcrum for regional walking, cycling, bus and private vehicle travel.

Proposed treatments for major bus and traffic corridors on the fringes of the precinct are also identified in the North Sydney CBD Transport Masterplan, with the Falcon Street and Warringah Freeway corridors continuing to perform the major regional traffic function while the layout of the Pacific Highway, south of Falcon Street, has the potential to be amended to deliver more of a local distributor role.

North Sydney's East-West Green Link



Highlighting the underlying natural structure of the LGA

North Sydney LSPS, Priority S2: 'Delivering a high quality, well-connected and integrated green space system'

North Sydney, like the rest of metropolitan Sydney, has been developed and defined over time by its topography.

Main roads throughout Sydney including Parramatta Road and the Pacific Highway were designed along ridges to avoid having to cross the multitude of existing small creeks and wetlands, where reserves and green spaces developed instead.

Over time these creeks and valleys receded due to urban growth, with some drying up, being filled in or turning into stormwater drainage canals. Despite this topography being less prevalent today, its imprint is still there. Three main creek lines shaped the centre of what is today North Sydney LGA, and their presence can be seen on the network of parks and reserves that were created along them. Furthermore, many residential, civic and cultural buildings were developed along these three paths in the past, creating areas rich in heritage and culture.

The Civic Precinct Planning Study is an opportunity to bring this latent topography to the foreground as an influence for future development in the area. This green link will provide higher density areas with a breathing zone while at the same time weaving together the different urban centres of the LGA, creating a cohesive and integrated city.

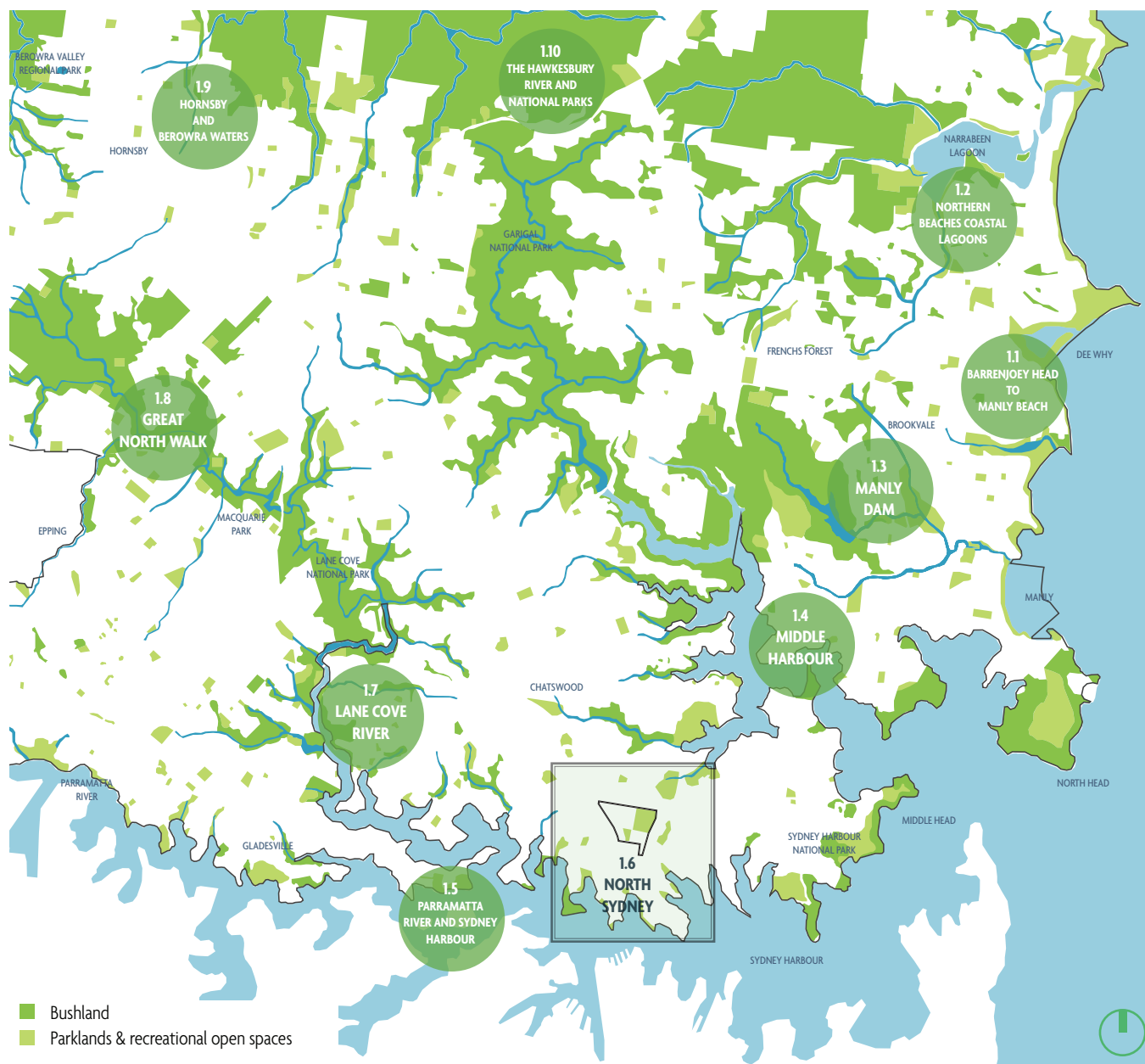
As shown on the transport diagram, the identified creeks and reserves corridor also provides an opportunity to improve local walking and cycling connections along the new east-west green link, providing a route between Middle Harbour and Berry's Bay with a potential future connection to Bradfield Park and the Harbour Bridge via the proposed North Sydney Highline.

From Port Jackson to the Middle Harbour

The green link is based on Willoughby Creek, an unnamed Neutral Bay Creek and an unnamed Bandagi Reserve Creek. These three streams create a strip of reserves that connect Sydney Harbour at Oyster Cove with the Middle Harbour at Willoughby Bay.

The corridor crosses the Pacific Highway and creates a well-needed break along the different town centres. Whilst Pacific Highway can be seen as a corridor of regional commercial centres, the green link is a locally and socially focused piece of urban infrastructure with the Civic Precinct at its centre.

The Sydney Green Grid - Government Architect NSW



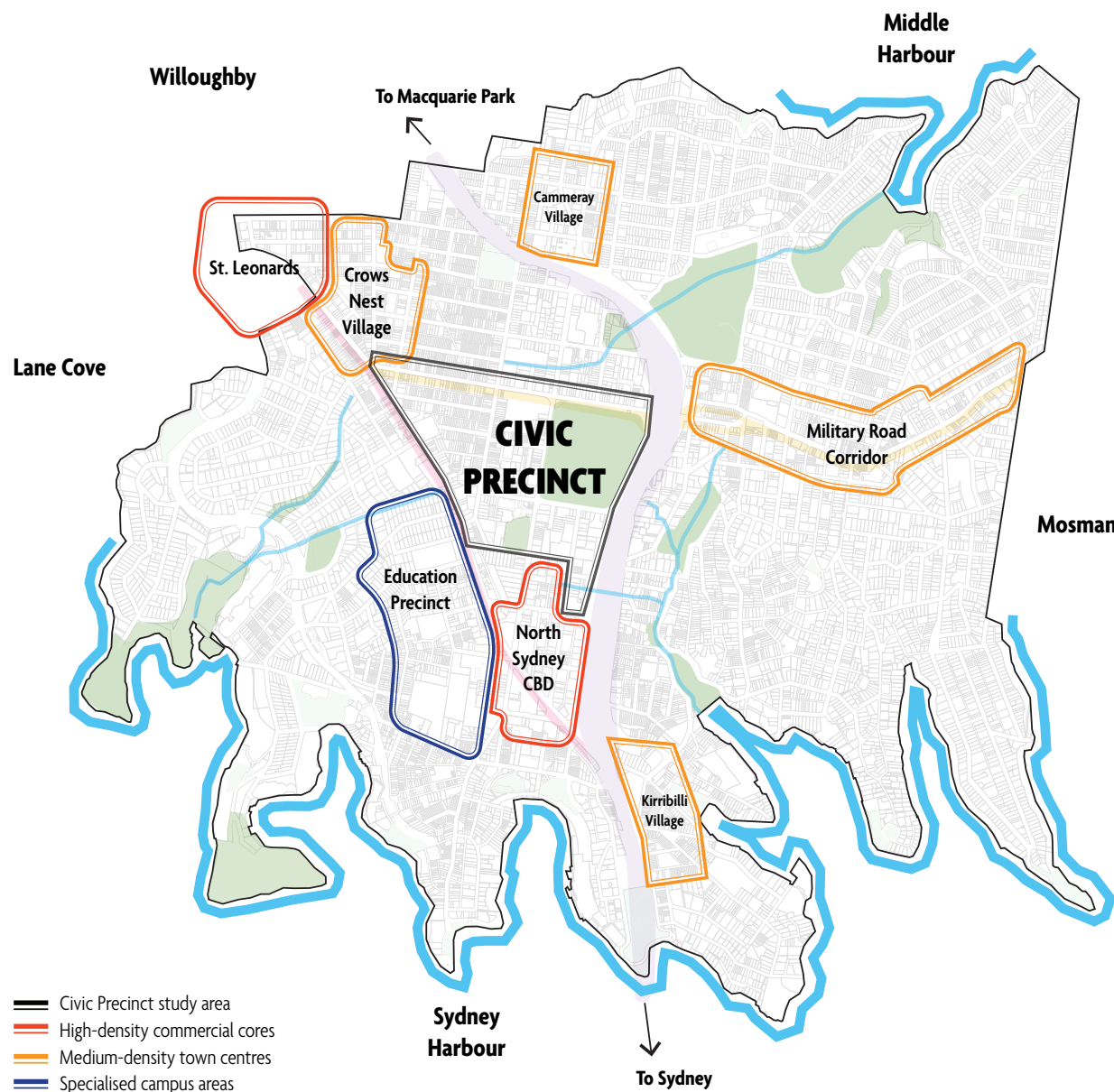
Sydney Green Grid - Government Architect NSW

The Sydney Green Grid by the Government Architect NSW (GANSW) identifies a network of high-quality spaces throughout Greater Sydney that connects town centres, public transport hubs and major residential areas. Currently lacking an overall schema, these hydrological, recreational and ecological fragments of the city have been mapped into a proposition for a cohesive blue-green infrastructure network.

The North District Sydney Green Grid also highlights regional open space opportunities in ten project clusters. These clusters are formed around key landscape features and act as a starting point for ensuring more generalised district strategies and future project delivery responds to the local strategic context and landscape conditions.

Some of the key principles of the Sydney Green Grid that apply to the Civic Precinct Planning Study include:

THE RECREATIONAL GRID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve connectivity to key regional destinations, foreshores, beaches and bays and continue to invest in the improvements of major parks and infrastructure Promote and improve the pedestrian environment to increase the enjoyment of traveling on foot and by bike Align the open space network with longer term transport plans
THE ECOLOGICAL GRID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect priority green corridors and create a network of walking trails, cycle paths and open spaces along the river and creek corridors Integrate key civic spaces or destinations with public transport opportunities and existing development Create green corridors that provide habitat and biodiversity connections along major and minor watercourses
THE HYDROLOGICAL GRID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Sydney's water systems as an interconnected network by linking public open space, active transport and pathway systems along waterways Enhance the particular character of Sydney's waterways to define the landscape character and urban structure of the districts of the city



North Sydney's civic and social centre

North Sydney's Civic Precinct is at the centre of the LGA and it is surrounded by major urban nodes in the area.

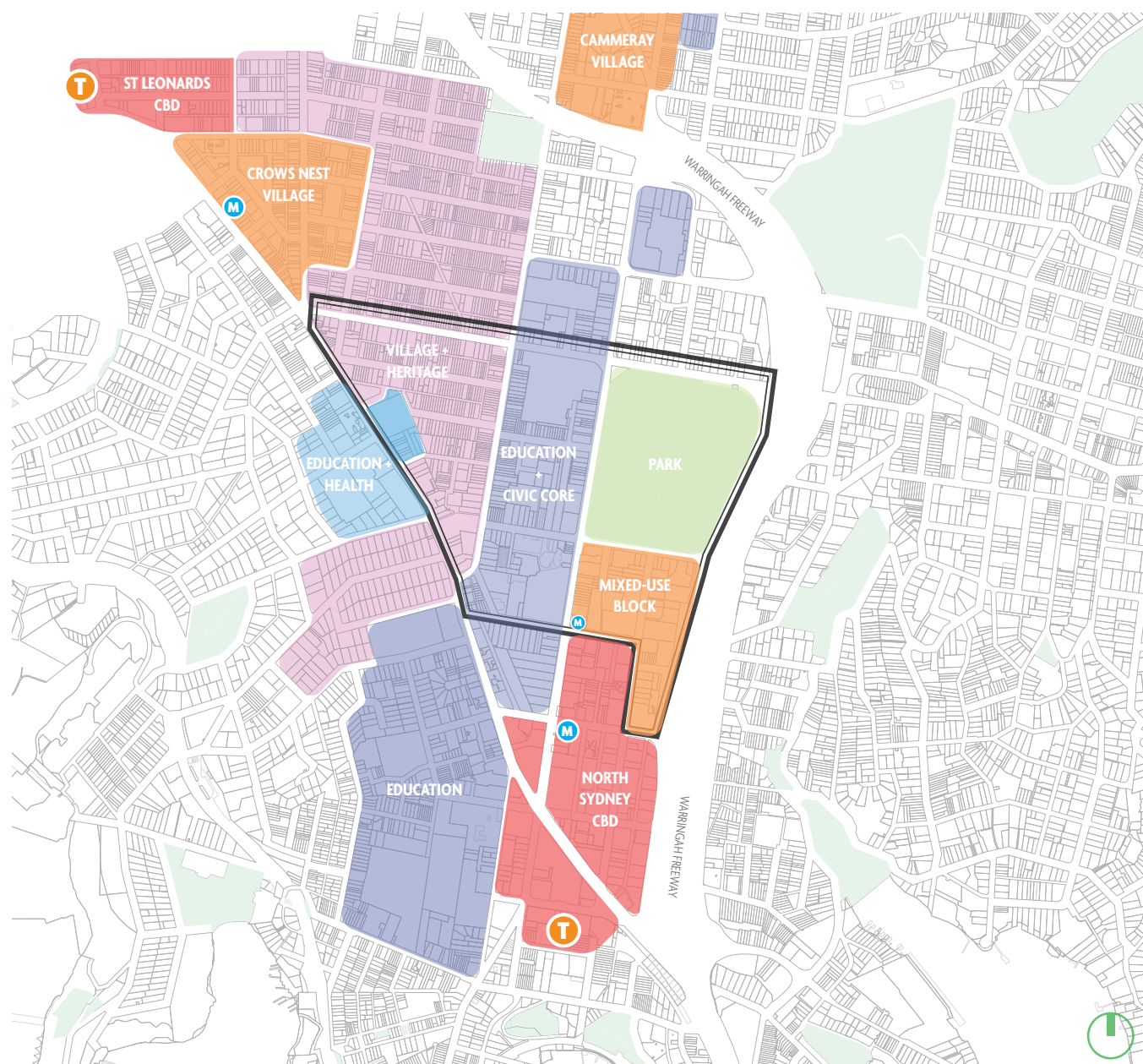
These nodes include two major high-density commercial cores (St. Leonards and North Sydney CBD), four medium-density villages (Crows Nest, Neutral Bay, Cammeray and Kirribilli) and one educational and health zone which contains the Australia Catholic University and the Mater Hospital.

The Civic Precinct is the central element among these cores promoting a social, community-focused and heritage-rich precinct that celebrates the history of the LGA and its strong sense of community.

Addressing its surroundings, each edge of the precinct should have a different character and interface, and then transition into a common core. This core should be defined by its open spaces and civic buildings

As well as providing green space and civic facilities to complement the high-rise areas of North Sydney LGA, the Civic Precinct also provides complementary development typologies and spaces to support the surrounding major commercial areas.

From small scale local shops, to a wider range of housing options and commercial opportunities, the area can provide interesting spaces at affordable prices and in well-connected locations.



North-South Land Use banding

The land uses and urban character of the Civic Precinct and surrounding areas can be grouped in 3 main categories - a CBD core between the freeway and Miller Street, an Education and Civic band between Miller and West Streets, and a heritage and “village” band to the west of West Street.

Together they form three distinctive north to south bands, aligned from the freeway towards the west edge of the Civic Precinct, each with a distinct urban environment.

A heritage rich area

There is a strong heritage presence in the precinct with a number of heritage listed items and heritage conservation areas. These areas are characterised by their leafy outlook, quiet streets, pedestrian-friendly environment and local cafes and shops located mostly at social street intersections.

One and two-storey buildings form a low-scale streetscape of mostly terraced houses with fenced front gardens, generous footpaths and abundant street trees.

A Strong civic & education core

The precinct’s civic and education buildings are largely concentrated along Miller Street. These include Council Chambers, Stanton Library, a theatre, a community centre, a youth centre, several churches and schools, North Sydney Oval and St Leonards Park.

These civic spaces strengthen the Civic Spine along Miller Street and help enhance the connection between the Civic Precinct and North Sydney CBD. The study provides a series of urban design guidelines that should be put in place to manage future interventions in the area and create a well-defined civic and educational campus that supports schools and addresses future growth.

A mixed use CBD fringe

McLaren and Walker Streets adjoin the fringe of the North Sydney CBD. Along these streets, and also along Pacific Highway, a medium to high-density, mixed-used environment has developed over the years providing a mix of residential apartments, office buildings, hospitality venues, a hotel and other typologies.

This study aims to consolidate and regularise these areas to create a vibrant mixed-use transition zone between the CBD and the centre of the Civic Precinct. This transition zone could increase commercial offerings and job opportunities to support both the CBD and nearby educational and medical sectors.



▼ A keystone for North District transport

The Civic Precinct is the area where active transport regional routes, east-west walking and cycling routes and CBD routes converge. It is also the centrepiece that connects many of the cycling and pedestrian routes within the LGA and the wider North District. Additionally, major traffic routes also cross the precinct or run along its edges.

East-west active transport connections

In order to strengthen and consolidate the green link and formalise its presence within the North Sydney LGA, a series of walking and cycling routes are proposed to facilitate the connection between the different parks and reserves, and ultimately between Sydney Harbour and Middle Harbour.

These routes cross the Civic Precinct along Ridge Street, which becomes an important cycling and pedestrian street, and through St Leonards Park. The intersection of these routes with the Civic Spine and the pedestrian north-south CBD link becomes a key node of the wider active transport network.

Completing the north-south pedestrian route across the CBD

Following the strategies and projects put forward by the North Sydney CBD Public Domain Strategy (endorsed by Council in April 2020), the completion of the proposed north-south pedestrian route from North Sydney train station to St Leonards park is a critical intervention for the wider CBD strategy. This requires a pedestrian link between McLaren Street and Ridge Street via Elliott Street. The junction of Elliott and Ridge Streets will become an important node for the LGA as it connects the north-south CBD pedestrian route with the green link.

Implementing the regional cycle network

All cycling access between the Harbour Bridge and the North District is channeled through North Sydney's Civic Precinct. The North Sydney CBD Transport Masterplan identified the provision of cycling facilities along Pacific Highway, West Street, Ridge Street and the eastern edge of the Warringah Freeway as key elements of the North District cycle network and one of the final stretches yet to be completed.

Regional traffic routes

The study area is bounded by the Warringah Freeway, Falcon Street, Pacific Highway and a short stretch of Berry Street, all of which maintain a high volume of traffic. The study will work in alignment with other traffic endorsed policies to minimise the impact of these regional routes on the Civic Precinct.



Transport

Overview

Based on the key transport priorities established in the North Sydney Transport Strategy (NSTS) and the objectives of the CBD Transport Masterplan, the focus within the Civic Precinct will continue to be prioritising walking and cycling and encouraging regional traffic to use Falcon Street and Warringah Freeway.

Victoria Cross Northern Portal

The arrival of the northern Metro portal on the corner of McLaren and Miller Streets presents a unique opportunity to promote sustainable transport options instead of using the car. The new metro portal will provide mass transit access to the precinct, and to major educational facilities and sporting grounds.

Walking

An overlap of an 800m radius circumference with the actual 800m walking catchment from the metro northern portal shows several areas within the precinct that are outside walking reach of the station. These areas could get into the walking catchment if additional pedestrian routes and links were created to maximise the reach and impact of the metro. The strategies and actions proposed by the study focus on identifying opportunities to create these additional routes and connections and increase the walkability of the Precinct.

Cycling

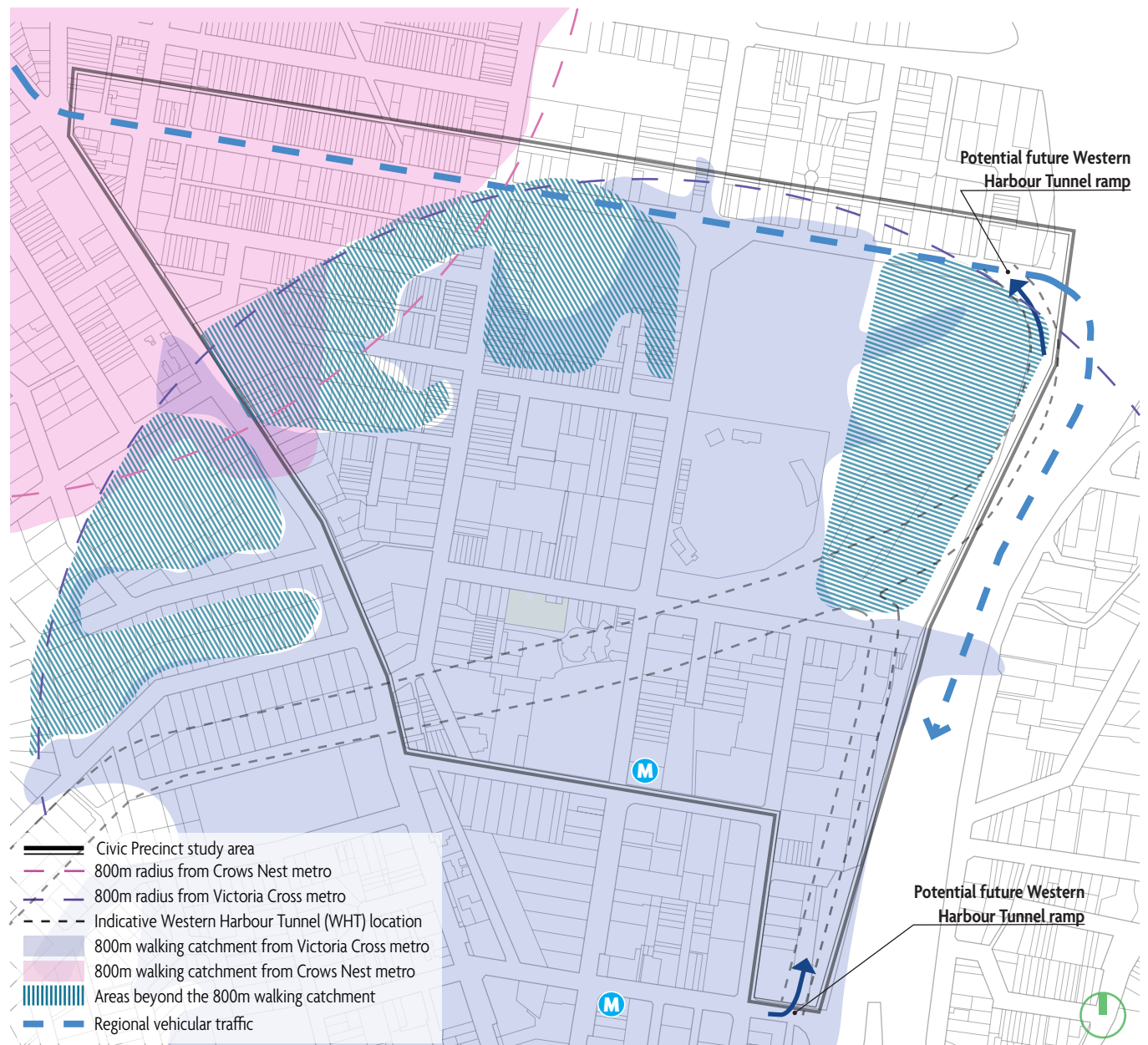
There are several interventions within the precinct that have already been identified in the North Sydney CBD Transport Masterplan and in the Sydney Services and Infrastructure Strategy (TfNSW). These interventions include the completion of the Ridge Street cycleway and the implementation of new cycleways along West Street and Pacific Highway.

Vehicular traffic

The main traffic priority is to keep regional traffic limited to Falcon Street and the Warringah Freeway, thus allowing the rest of the precinct to be a low speed (40Km/h maximum), low volume (local traffic only) environment.

Western Harbour Tunnel

If it proceeds, the proposed Western Harbour Tunnel (WHT) will attract more vehicular traffic to the study area and will increase conflicts between walking, cycling and local traffic, in particular along Miller Street. The WHT will undermine the positive impacts of the metro arrival. The proposed off-ramp on Falcon Street will channel all northbound Pacific Highway traffic through the CBD and Civic Precinct, and will take over a the north eastern corner of St Leonards Park, substantially reducing the amenity and usability of this vital State Heritage listed green space.



Community Input

Stage 1 Consultation

Preliminary community consultation was undertaken in Stage 1 following the Community Engagement Plan. This first stage of consultation aimed to promote awareness of the planning study and understand what the community values in the study area.

A short survey and interactive map gave the community an opportunity to define what they value. Interviews were held with key stakeholders. Community awareness was promoted in the area using posters as well as online and through social media.

Council received 217 submissions via the online survey plus an additional 23 written submissions. A total of 5 submissions outlining development aspirations were received from landowners.

Community's Valued Places

The community were asked to locate on an online map, their 'top-three' most valued geographic locations. A total of 73 pins were located by 27 contributors.

The majority of the respondents voted Ted Mack Civic Park and St Leonards Park as the most valued places.

Community Priorities

Community Priority #1 The precinct's heritage value is conserved

Community Priority #2 The village feel and civic character of the precinct is respected

Community Priority #3 Parks and public spaces are highly valued for both active and passive recreation and should be protected

Community Priority #4 The access, safety and amenity of local streets is improved

Community Priority #5 The scale and design of new development is carefully managed

Community Priority #6 More opportunities for social interaction and activity are created.



Community Input

Stage 2 Consultation

Two community workshops were held in late November 2019. The workshops were advertised through the Your Say website. Council also invited key stakeholders, initial consultation participants and representatives from each of the Precinct Committees to attend the workshops.

Objectives of the workshop included to confirm the purpose of the study, build on consultation from Stage 1, get new input to the planning principles for the study area, look at potential locations that might be acceptable for density, determine the types of public benefits needed in the community and to provide information on future steps for the project.

During the workshops, participants were asked to take part in 4 activities.

Activity 1 - Identify 'Considerations' and 'Initiatives' under 'Community Priority' areas identified in Stage 1 consultation

Comments raised by participants:

- Controlling development type including height, location and character
- Traffic congestion (now and in the future)
- Protection and management of existing parkland and the need for more smaller parks

Activity 2 - Comment on the preliminary Urban Design Principles

Comments raised by participants:

- Controlling development type including height, location and character
- Desire for the promotion of housing diversity
- Ensuring any future development provides public benefits

Activity 3 - Discuss and identify the types of development that might be acceptable based on precedent images provided

The consolidated dots (see map) indicate the locations, types and scales of development that might be acceptable to attendees in the study area.

Activity 4 - Identify the three most desired public benefits

Comments raised by participants related to:

- Increased and improved community facilities (childcare, theatre)
- Upgrades to the public domain (footpaths, trees, streetscapes, parks)
- The need for more affordable housing

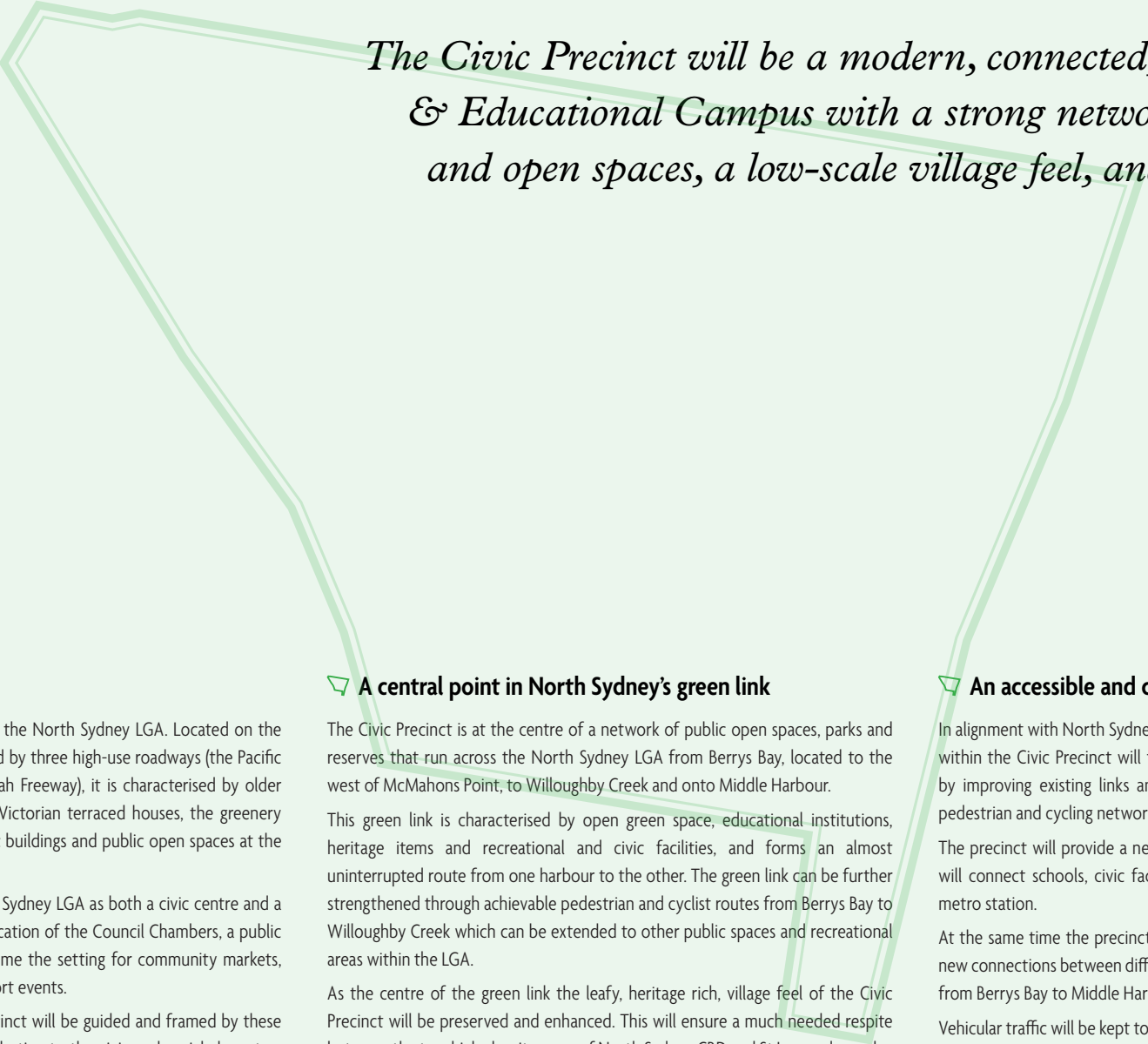
A detailed description and outcomes of the workshops can be found in the appendixes as a separate report.







PROPOSED URBAN FRAMEWORK



The Civic Precinct will be a modern, connected, and attractive Civic & Educational Campus with a strong network of pedestrian links and open spaces, a low-scale village feel, and a leafy appearance.

A unique civic centre

The Civic Precinct is a unique pocket of the North Sydney LGA. Located on the northern fringe of the CBD and bordered by three high-use roadways (the Pacific Highway, Falcon Street and the Warringah Freeway), it is characterised by older educational institutions, heritage-listed Victorian terraced houses, the greenery of St Leonards Park and a cluster of civic buildings and public open spaces at the centre of the precinct.

The area holds a dual role for the North Sydney LGA as both a civic centre and a social and recreational node. It is the location of the Council Chambers, a public library and a theatre and at the same time the setting for community markets, exercise classes, social gatherings and sport events.

Any future interventions within the precinct will be guided and framed by these local conditions and will focus on contributing to the civic and social characters of the precinct.

A central point in North Sydney's green link

The Civic Precinct is at the centre of a network of public open spaces, parks and reserves that run across the North Sydney LGA from Berrys Bay, located to the west of McMahon's Point, to Willoughby Creek and onto Middle Harbour.

This green link is characterised by open green space, educational institutions, heritage items and recreational and civic facilities, and forms an almost uninterrupted route from one harbour to the other. The green link can be further strengthened through achievable pedestrian and cyclist routes from Berrys Bay to Willoughby Creek which can be extended to other public spaces and recreational areas within the LGA.

As the centre of the green link the leafy, heritage rich, village feel of the Civic Precinct will be preserved and enhanced. This will ensure a much needed respite between the two high-density areas of North Sydney CBD and St Leonards nearby. The Precinct's open spaces and civic facilities will also strengthen the offerings of the green link.

An accessible and connected precinct

In alignment with North Sydney Council's overall approach to transport, initiatives within the Civic Precinct will focus on prioritising pedestrian and cycling modes by improving existing links and creating new ones, specifically connecting the pedestrian and cycling networks to the new metro station portal.

The precinct will provide a network of pedestrian and cycle friendly routes that will connect schools, civic facilities and open spaces to each other and to the metro station.

At the same time the precinct will link to routes along the green link, facilitating new connections between different open spaces and public facilities along the link from Berrys Bay to Middle Harbour.

Vehicular traffic will be kept to local traffic only through the precinct with regional traffic located along Falcon Street and the Warringah Freeway.

Principles

Based on community consultation, analysis of the planning study area and the defined vision for the Civic Precinct, a series of principles have been developed to guide the future planning of the precinct.

These principles have informed and guided the proposed structure for the precinct as well as the implementation strategies and proposed interventions.

1. Preserve, enhance and strengthen the rich heritage of the precinct

Heritage buildings, Heritage Conservation Areas, streetscapes and contributory buildings will be protected and enhanced by restoration, adaptive reuse or, where appropriate, contemporary additions or infill development that respects the heritage character and scale.

2. Maintain the small scale character and village feel of the precinct's core

The Civic Precinct's low-scale urbanity and leafy streets will be retained. North Sydney Council Chambers and Offices, Ted Mack Civic Park, Stanton Library and nearby community facilities will remain at the precinct's core.

3. Define the edges of Crows Nest Village and North Sydney CBD

Clearly define the limits of the CBD and Crows Nest and provide a transition zone between the Precinct's core and the adjacent areas. Develop a mixed-used higher-density area around the new Victoria Cross metro station northern portal and limit any future growth and development to a very clearly defined area.

4. Manage growth and ensure development is of an appropriate scale and character

Limit any potential significant development to the transport corridors and the transition zones (if and where appropriate) and ensure built form and scale transitions are sympathetic to the heritage items and conservation areas.

5. Encourage an education campus

Educational institutions are encouraged to work together and share knowledge, facilities and resources. Each educational institution should be designed to integrate with their surroundings, to be welcoming and outward looking, contributing to the urban streetscapes along their frontages.

6. Increase public amenity within the precinct

Public amenity within the precinct should be maximised. Existing trees and landscaped areas should be protected and additional landscaping and tree canopy promoted where possible.

Capitalise on any potential public domain improvements and opportunities arising from the Victoria Cross metro station or any other future development.

7. Integrate open spaces into the Green link network

Develop a network of connected open spaces within the green link. Maximise the potential of existing open space and explore the potential for new, attractive and high-quality public and community places

8. Encourage active transport and improved connectivity across the precinct

Walking and cycling will be prioritised, placing residential and employment areas, recreational and entertainment destinations, and community and social hubs, within an easy walk or cycle of each other.

9. Promote a varied network of small business next to the CBD

Attract smaller scale businesses and employment to complement the North Sydney CBD by providing opportunities for innovative small-to-medium scale businesses, shops and cafes in predominantly mixed-use developments.

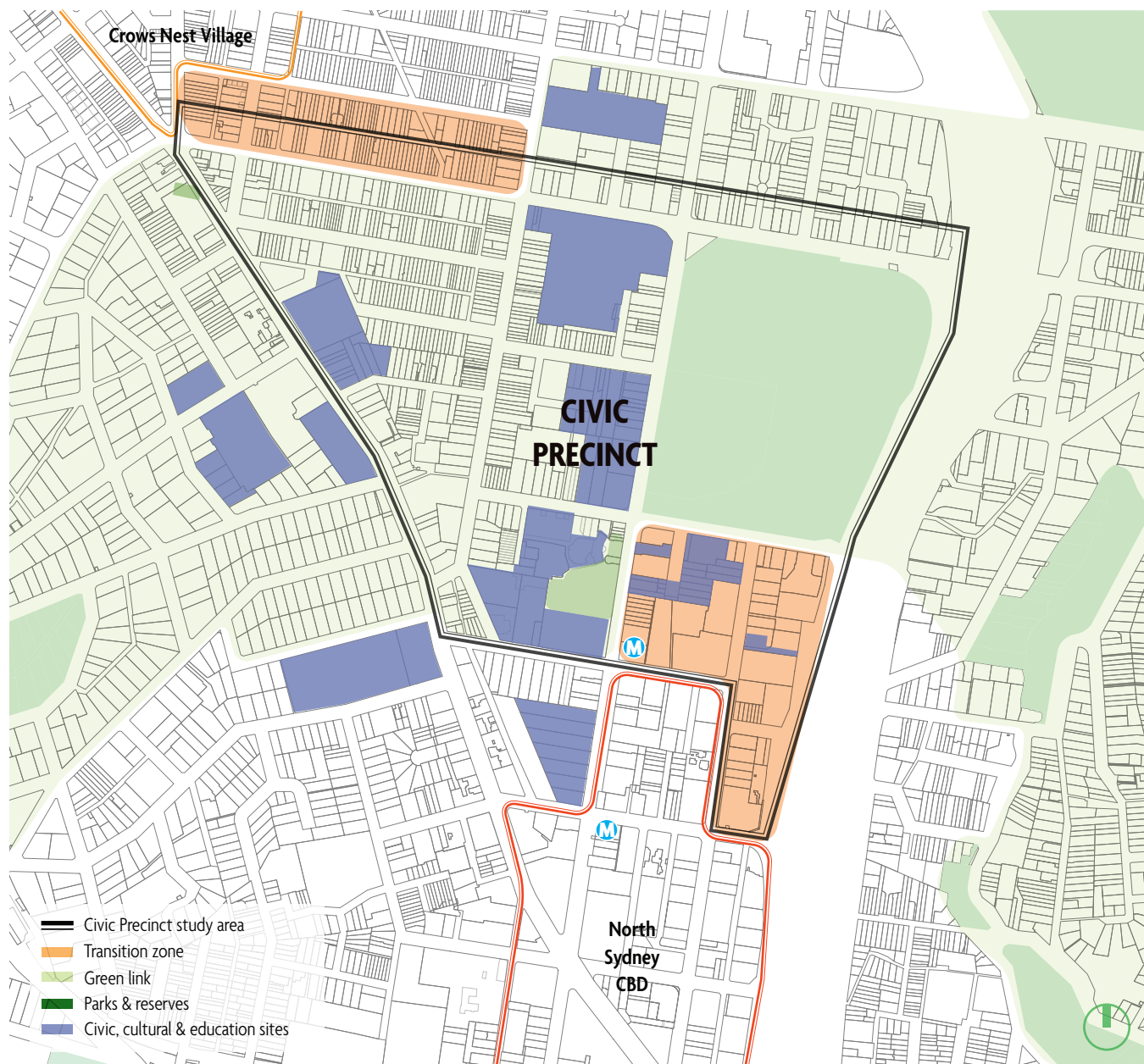
10. Promote housing diversity and affordability

Encourage different residential typologies appropriate to each of the different areas within the precinct that can complement the existing offering.

11. Advocate design excellence and sustainability in new buildings and the public domain

Ensure that future development and public open spaces are of high quality, offer good amenity to the final user and provide a sustainable environment.

Design Concept



📍 A distinct Civic Precinct

The Civic Precinct is the main social and civic gathering place for the community of North Sydney. The area will continue to evolve with a civic and education campus at its core and two mixed-use transition zones towards the CBD and Crows Nest.

This civic and education precinct will continue to be defined by low-scale, tree-lined streets and as part of a rich network of connected public open spaces. New pedestrian and cycling routes through the precinct will link these spaces to the new metro station.

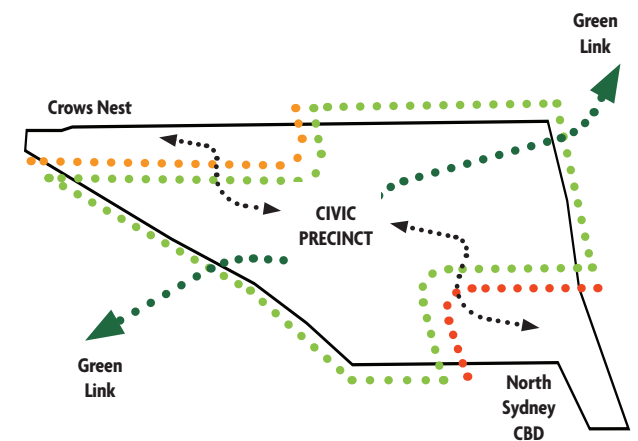
At the edges of the precinct, mixed-used areas will create transition zones between the CBD and the precinct, particularly along Walker and McLaren Streets, and at Crows Nest around the Five Ways intersection.

**Civic & education precinct
with a leafy & green character**



Mixed-use transition zones

This framework strengthens the east-west green link through the precinct as a central element within the LGA, connecting the precinct to other open spaces along the link. It also creates two clear mixed-use transition zones between the centre of the precinct and nearby, higher-density nodes. These transition zones will complement both the core of the Civic Precinct and the surrounding nodes.



Design Concept

📌 A complementary approach

The Pacific Highway is one of Sydney's key economic corridors, connecting a series of town centres and urban nodes from North Sydney, through St Leonards and Chatswood, all the way to Gordon and Hornsby.

In between these nodes are lower-density areas that provide breathing space between the larger centres. North Sydney and St Leonards are comparatively close to each other, however they still benefit from a clear break in between them. The Civic Precinct provides that break.

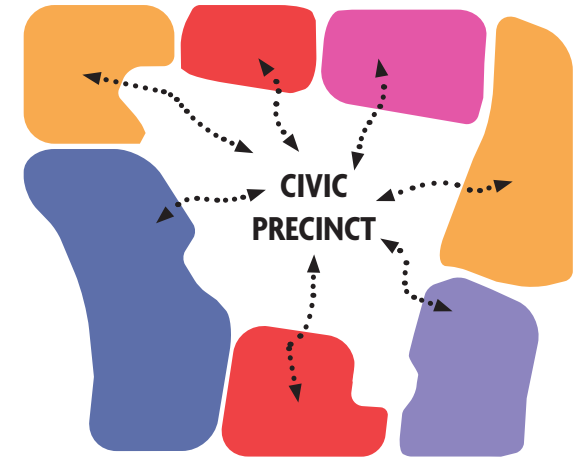
In addition to a lower built form and a greener environment, the Civic Precinct also provides a contrast in uses and activity.

Beyond the main civic and education functions at the core of the precinct, the mixed-use transition zones of the study area have the potential to provide development typologies and spaces that are complementary to those of the surrounding major commercial cores.

The proposed urban framework for the Civic Precinct provides the opportunity for uses and typologies that will support, and benefit from, the adjacent North Sydney CBD, St Leonards and nearby medical precincts.

These opportunities include:

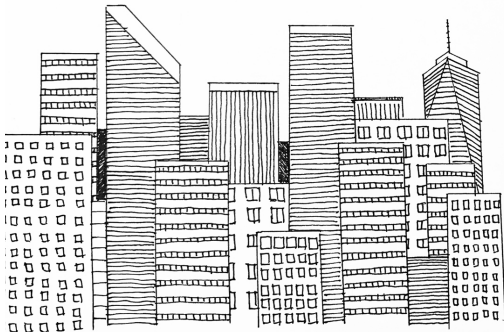
- Promoting housing diversity and affordability
- Providing smaller commercial spaces and tenancies for small to medium scale businesses that can complement the nearby major commercial entities
- Providing spaces and facilities to support nearby educational and medical facilities
- Facilitating the adaptive reuse of underutilised heritage items to provide for new creative contemporary spaces



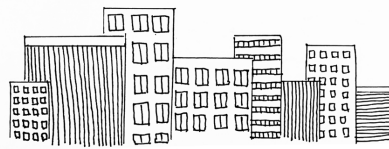
📌 A leafy break in the journey

St. Leonards

+ 16,000 jobs in 2036
tall environment



Crows Nest



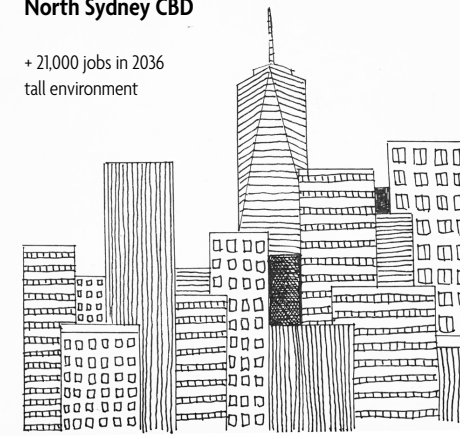
Civic Precinct



LEAFY HERITAGE CULTURAL CIVIC
EDUCATIONAL REFLECTIVE SOCIAL

North Sydney CBD

+ 21,000 jobs in 2036
tall environment

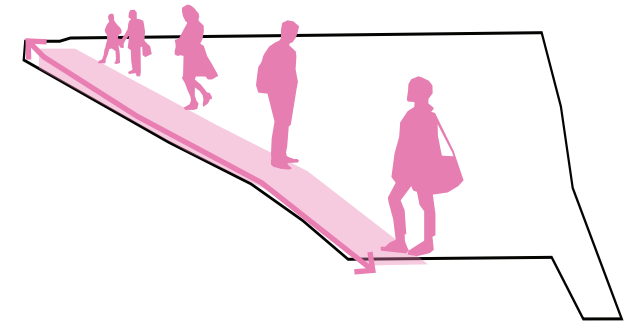


Skyline is diagrammatic only and does not reflect actual heights or tower distribution

Actions overview

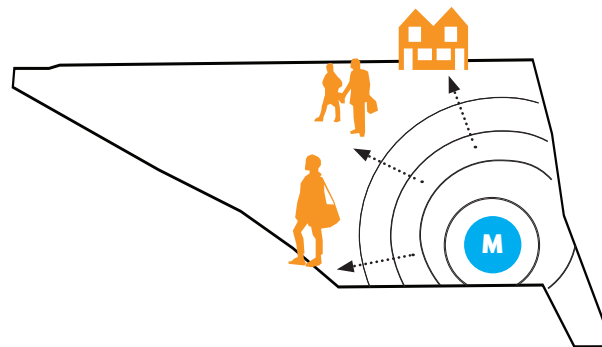
Key actions

The study has identified 9 actions to develop the vision and the design concept for the Civic Precinct. Some of these actions are specific for a certain area, whereas others are more general and apply to the whole of the study area. Some propose concise changes to the existing built form or transport network, while others provide broader guidelines for future interventions.



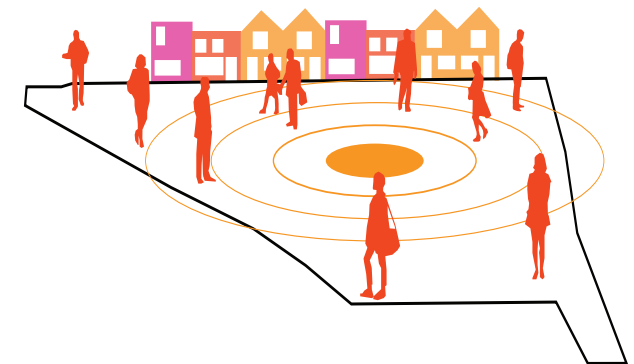
2. Increase amenity and activation along Pacific Highway

Create a medium-scale streetscape area between North Sydney CBD and St Leonards that provides alternative employment opportunities and a pedestrian friendly environment. This area would transition into the higher-density areas on Crows Nest / St Leonards and the CBD



1. Create more jobs and housing opportunities near the metro

Develop the northern end of the CBD into a mixed-use zone near the Metro Northern Portal with transitioning building heights from the CBD towards the low-rise, heritage conservation area and increased public amenity through the completion of the N-S link from North Sydney train station to St Leonards Park.



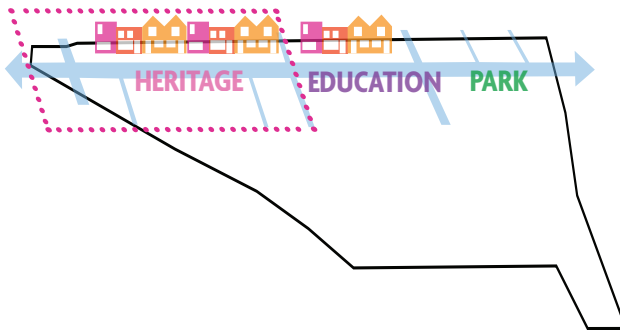
3. Support small to medium sized business growth

Increase the non-residential FSR in the area to provide for smaller commercial tenancy spaces predominantly within mixed-use buildings, encouraging retail and commercial tenancies on the ground floor to improve street activation and increase foot traffic in the area.



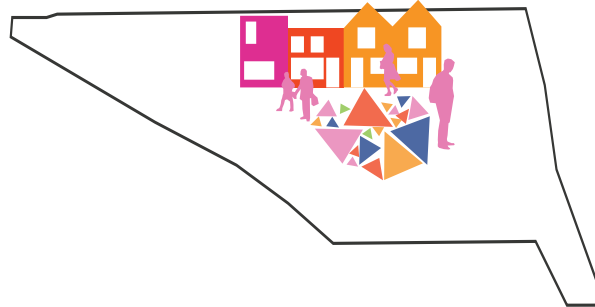
4. Preserve heritage; add value

It is important to protect and respect the heritage buildings and conservation areas of the Precinct for future generations as they define the local identity and unique character of the area. At the same time we must ensure that the area is well maintained, remains relevant, activated and used.



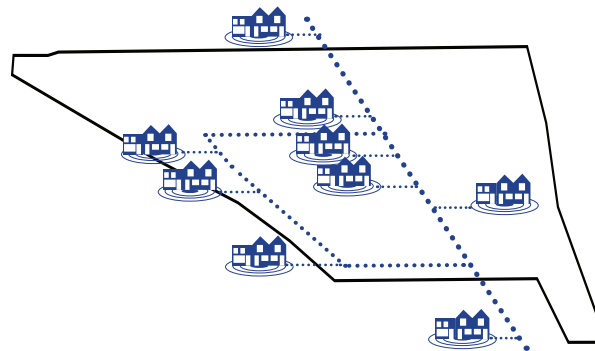
5. Undertake further review of Falcon Street

After the outcome of state government infrastructure projects (including the Western Harbour Tunnel) are known, a detailed Urban Design Study of Falcon Street should be undertaken, with specific focus on the area between Five Ways and West Street



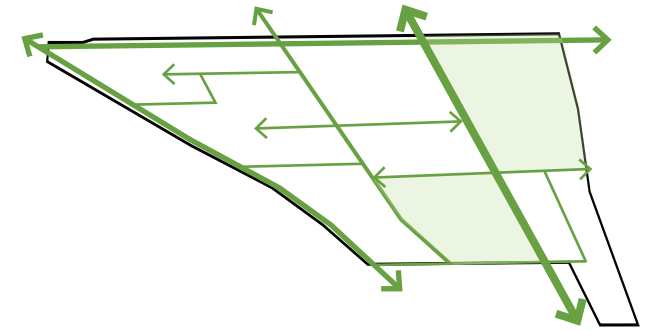
6. Undertake further review of Civic Core

The Civic Core is central to the Civic Precinct and includes a number of publicly owned assets. The current overall layout is not cohesive. Further work on this layout and public space within the core would allow for greater connectivity and legibility and a more attractive and pleasant civic environment.



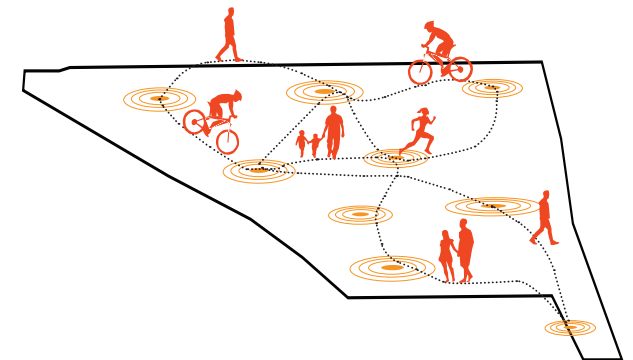
7. Provide guidelines for education facilities

A series of guidelines promoting integration and openness between the many educational facilities in the area and the Civic Precinct has been developed. Recommendations include staggered building heights, pedestrian amenity, street activation and the exploration of pedestrian through-site-links.



8. Improve public open space

Four key public domain opportunities have been identified for the Civic Precinct, those being the implementation of the St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan and the Civic Spine/Miller Walk, additional open spaces and improved pedestrian amenity on major urban corridors.



9. Identify access and active transport network improvements

To maximise the impact and reach of the new metro station a number of new pedestrian connections have been identified throughout the precinct. These connections would improve walkability to both the Victoria Cross metro station and the nearby Crows Nest metro station.

Action 1: Create more jobs and housing opportunities near the Metro



📍 A vibrant mixed-use CBD fringe

Desired character

The arrival of the Victoria Cross metro station northern portal and the implementation of the Ward Street Precinct Masterplan will transform the character of the area surrounding McLaren, Miller and Walker Streets. This area will be an activated fringe of the CBD with a variety of commercial, community and residential uses. Building heights will transition down from the CBD and Ward Street Precinct to the lower-scale, residential Ridge Street.

There will be different building typologies encouraged in the area including medium-scale commercial buildings (8 storeys) to taller residential towers (between 20 and 28 storeys). Breaks between these buildings will create public open spaces, gardens and provide filtered views towards the harbour.

There are two significant sites within this area:

- 52 McLaren Street - a large, currently vacant site adjacent to the metro northern portal entry, and
- 173-179 Walker Street and 11-17 Hampden Street - a consolidated site adjoining the CBD.

Land along 191-199 Walker Street and 16-18 Hampden Street has also been identified for modest uplift.

Objectives

- Deliver jobs and housing growth on the fringe of the CBD in areas with additional transport infrastructure
- Provide a height transition between the commercial core of the CBD and the low-scale conservation area to the north
- Protect the amenity and sunlight of existing and proposed public open spaces identified in this study and in the Ward Street Masterplan
- Adopt view sharing principles to retain Harbour views for occupants of existing residential towers where possible
- Complete the North-South pedestrian laneway link from North Sydney train station to St Leonards Park
- Preserve the Heritage Conservation Area (HCA) along Ridge Street
- Deliver new open space identified under Action 8

Action 1: Create more jobs and housing opportunities near the Metro

Implementation

- 52 McLaren Street*: Allow a maximum building height of 24 storeys on the southern half of the site and maintain the current maximum building height of 14 storeys on the northern half of the site (see map)
- 191-199 Walker Street & 16-18 Hampden Street: Allow a maximum building height of 8 storeys (see map)
- East Walker*: Allow a maximum building height of 20-storeys at the southeast corner of Walker and Hampden Streets. Allow a maximum mid-block building height of 8-storeys along the eastern side of Walker Street and fronting the Warringah Freeway (see map)
- The above maximum building heights (including plant) are subject to no net increase in overshadowing of planned public spaces identified in the Ward Street Masterplan and Doris Fitton Park
- New residential and commercial towers are to be located in such a way as to limit view loss from residential towers along the western side of Walker Street
- Provide a 6-metre wide through-site link along the eastern boundary of 52 McLaren Street
- Develop the eastern end of Hampden Street into a pocket park
- Develop a public park along the Freeway edge

* Refer to pages 28-31, site guidelines for further detail



Action 1: Create more jobs and housing opportunities near the Metro

50 & 52 McLaren Street | The metro sites

The northern portal of the Victoria Cross metro station will be located at 50 McLaren Street, on the north-east corner of McLaren and Miller Streets. It is understood it will be lift only access to the station and will take the shape of a 5-6 storey structure. Pedestrian entry will be at ground level with bicycle parking below ground and technical plant and service rooms above.

52 McLaren Street, adjacent to the metro site, is currently vacant. There is an opportunity to create a mixed-used or commercial development next to the metro that includes ground floor activation with retail, community and public uses at the lower levels. The development will transition in height according to the surrounding context, with the building height stepping down from the Ward Street Precinct towards the low-scale residential and educational uses to the north.

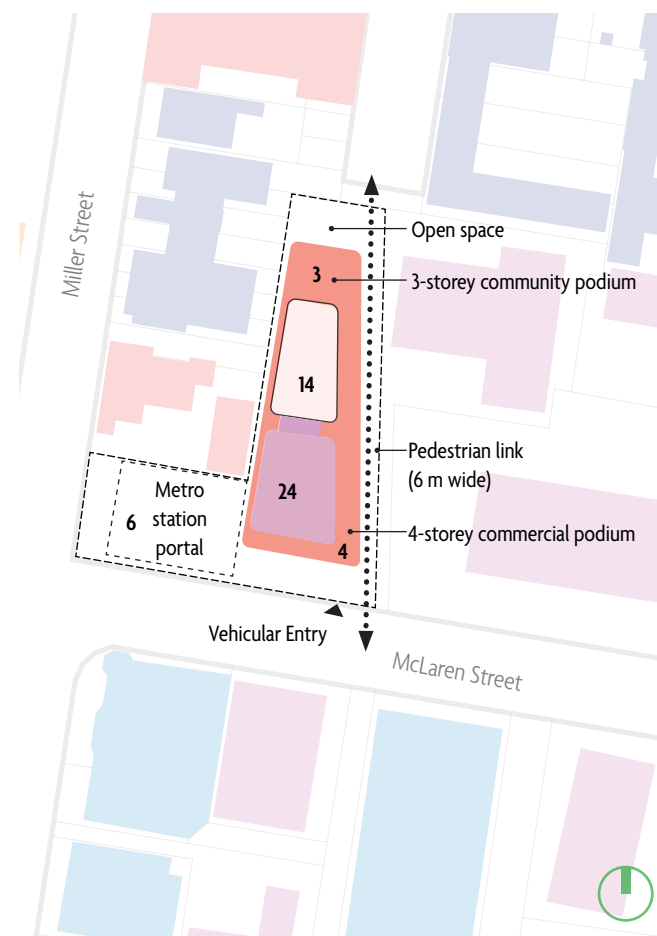
Design guidelines

- Maximum building heights transitioning down from 24 to 14 storeys as per the map to respond to the approved development at 168 Walker Street and the existing Rydges Hotel
- Building heights (including plant) are subject to no net increase in overshadowing of planned public spaces identified in the Ward Street Masterplan and Doris Fitton Park
- Provide a commercial podium fronting McLaren Street that appropriately responds to the scale of the northern metro portal and approved development at 168 Walker Street (maximum 4-storeys)

- Provide a minimum 6-metre whole of building setback along the eastern boundary to deliver the pedestrian link between McLaren and Elliot Streets
- Provide a whole of building setback to McLaren Street to align the future building with the adjacent development at 168 Walker Street, facilitate a more level public access to the pedestrian link and achieve greater built form separation to residential towers south of McLaren Street
- Provide adequate separation to the properties to the west, both at podium at tower levels
- Comply with the ADG building separation recommendations to all 4 boundaries
- Minimise overshadowing impacts to existing buildings on the southern side of McLaren Street by locating any future tower towards the western side of the site
- Ensure surrounding apartments receive at least 2 hours of direct sunlight in mid-winter as per the ADG recommendations
- Include a visual impact study with any future planning proposal
- Provide vehicular access to the site from McLaren Street

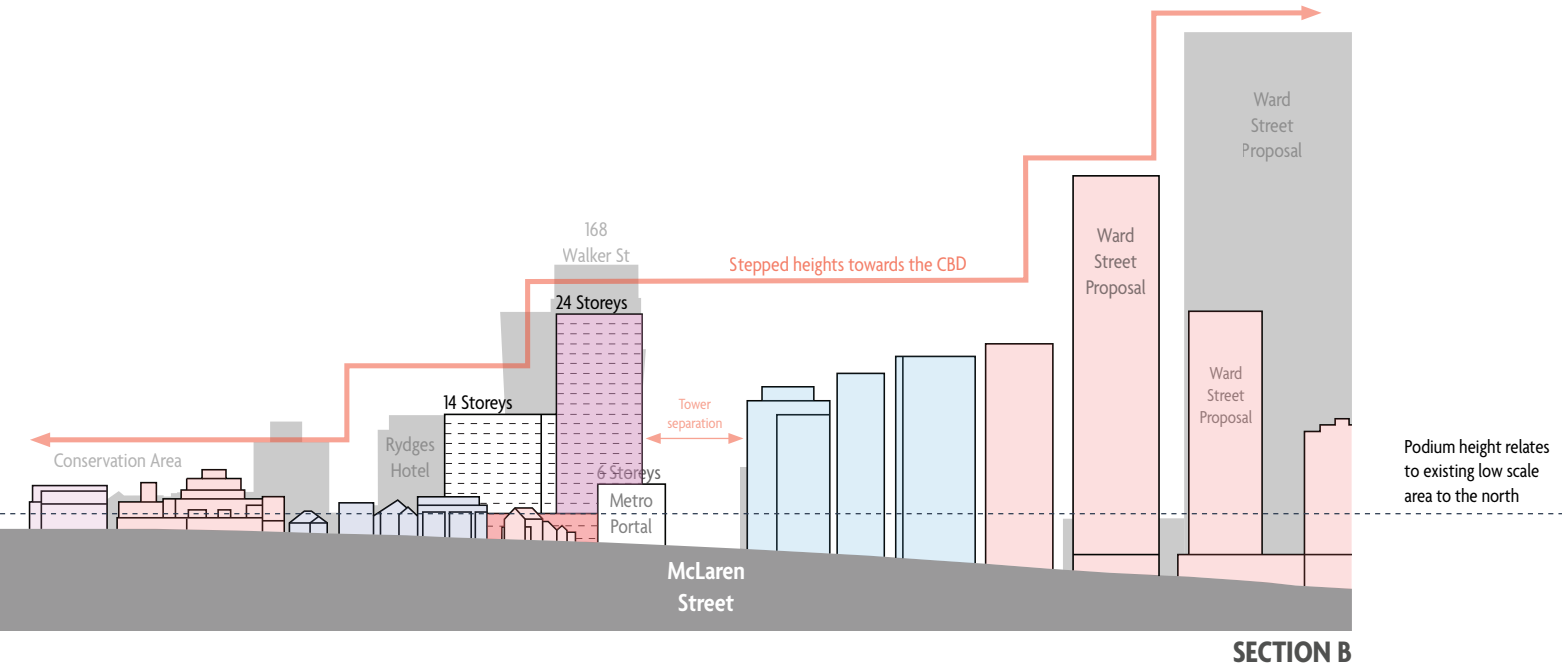
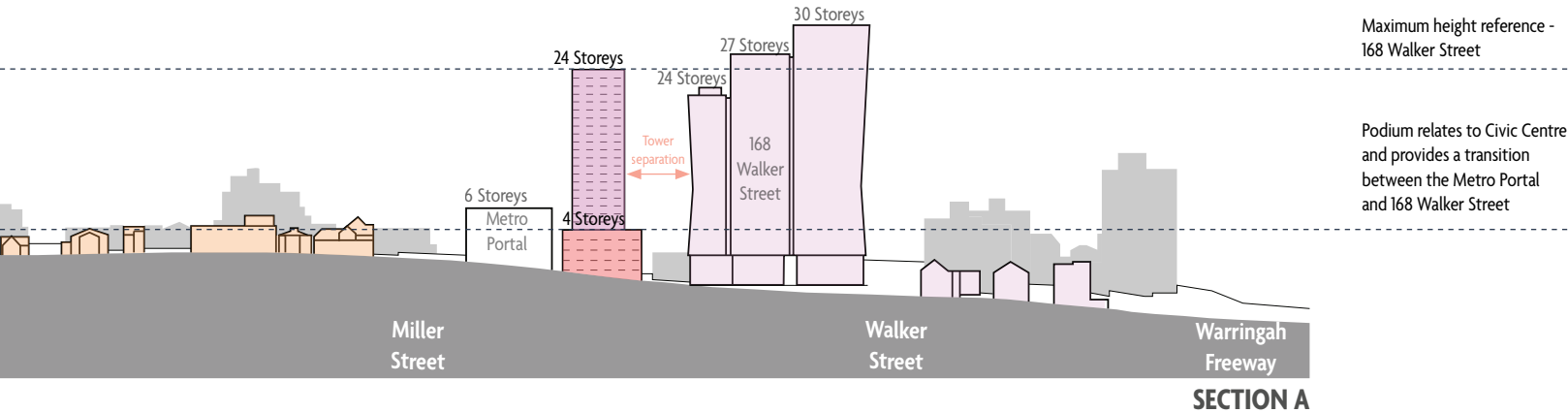
Potential public benefits

- Refer to potential public benefits at page 47
- Incorporate community uses within the podium at the northern end of the site
- Provide a dedicated pedestrian through-site-link from McLaren Street to Elliott Street along the eastern boundary of the site. This link should be a minimum width of 6 metres
- Activate the pedestrian through-site link with commercial, retail and public uses



- Commercial
- Residential
- Mixed-use
- Council/community facilities
- Educational
- Future use as residential or commercial TBC

Action 1: Create more jobs and housing opportunities near the Metro



Action 1: Create more jobs and housing opportunities near the Metro

East Walker Street

The consolidated landholding along the eastern side of Walker Street, between Berry and Hampden Streets presents an opportunity for urban renewal with additional residential and employment opportunities near the CBD. The built form must ensure appropriate view sharing, tower separation and a contextual response to nearby heritage buildings with a mix of medium scale commercial buildings (6-8 storeys) and residential towers (up to 20 storeys). Visual breaks within the new buildings and also to existing development will be encouraged to allow filtered views of gardens and trees from the street and harbour views from existing residential towers along the western side of Walker Street.

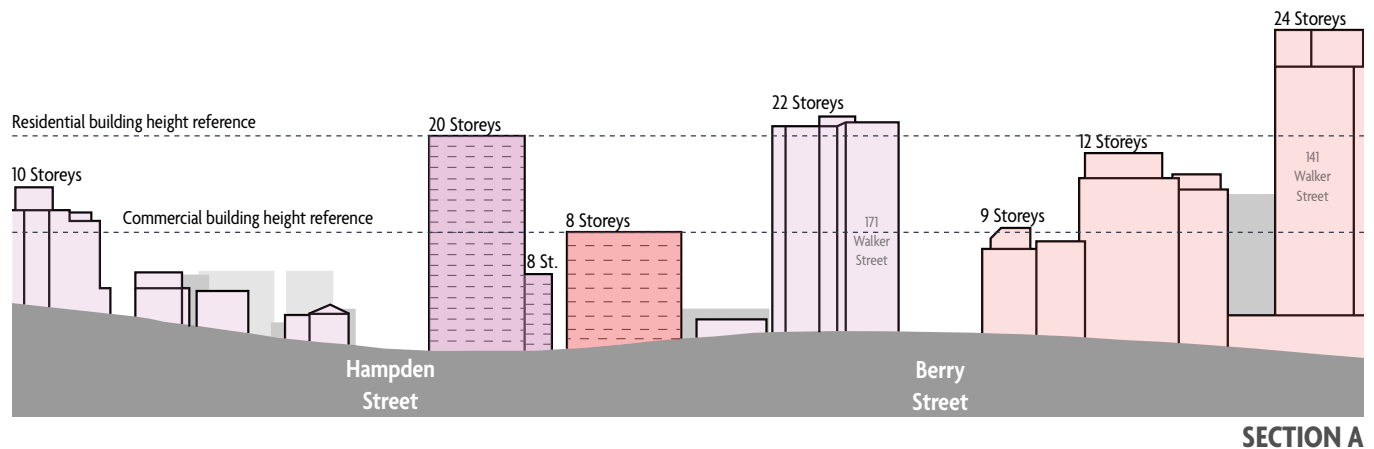
Design guidelines

- Adjust the zoning of the area to allow commercial floorspace within the site
- A maximum built form height of 20-storeys for the residential tower and 8-storeys for the commercial building, as per the map
- Building heights (including plant) are subject to no net increase in overshadowing of planned public spaces identified in the Ward Street Masterplan and Doris Fitton Park
- The residential tower should reinforce the Walker/Hampden Street corner and provide additional residential capacity in close proximity to the CBD. A slender, well-located tower will enable harbour view sharing from existing residential towers along the western side of Walker Street
- The 8-storey commercial building will support small to medium-sized businesses establish near major commercial tenants in the CBD. It will form a mid-block, medium-scale built form that steps down from the Ward Street Precinct and 138 Walker Street (Belvedere) to the east. It will also provide greater separation between residential towers on the northern and southern end (Century Plaza) of the block and reinforce the leafy, sunlit character of the street
- The 'step down' approach from Ward Street to the Warringah Freeway will:
 - ◊ reinforce the skyline of the North Sydney CBD from across the freeway
 - ◊ allow for view sharing principles to be adopted that protect existing harbour views from the CBD
 - ◊ allow for greater morning sunlight and sky views along Walker Street

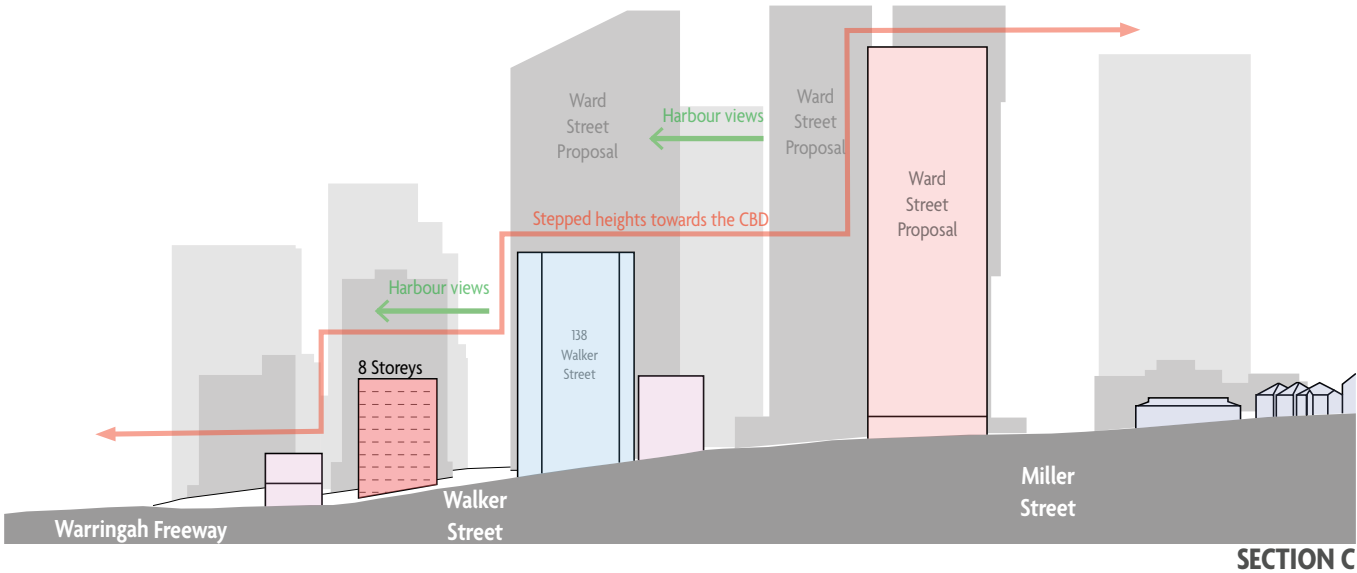
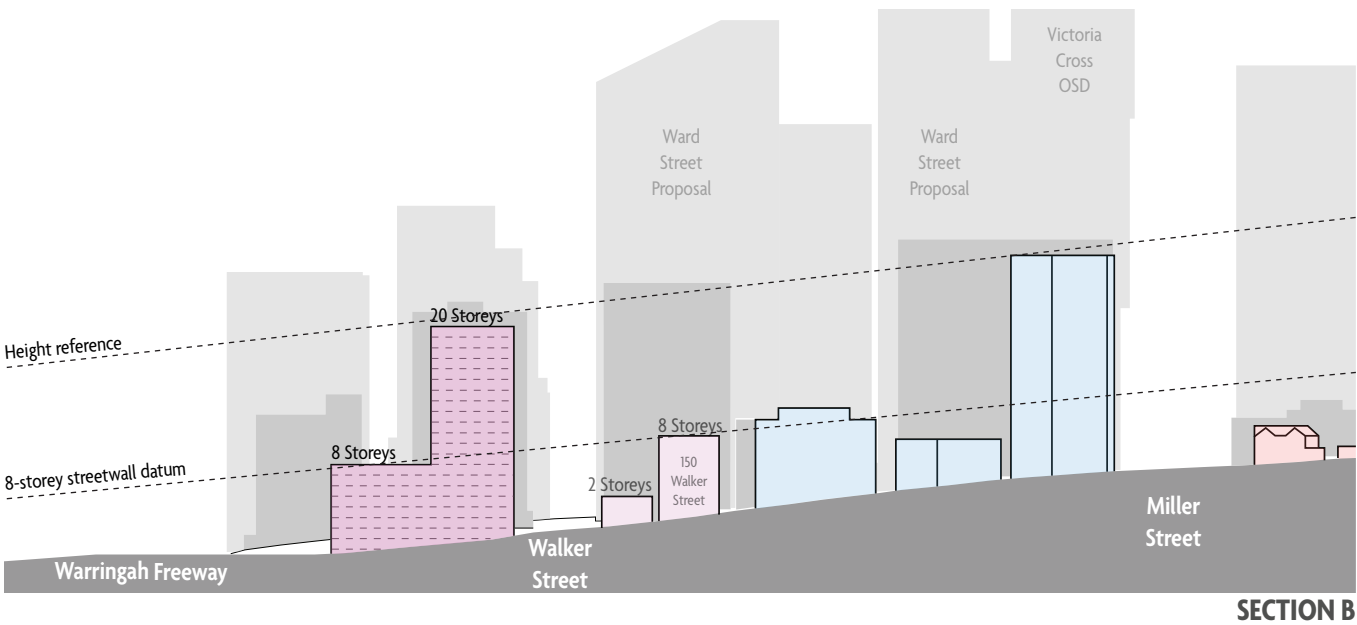
- Development above 8-storeys should not exceed 25m in facade length along the street to minimise visual and solar impact to the surroundings and reduce the bulk and scale of the development
- Developments should provide a break between buildings to allow filtered views from the street of landscaped areas and the harbour
- Include a visual impact study with any future planning proposal
- New buildings should have a contextual response to heritage items, residential buildings and HCAs in regard to bulk, scale and aesthetics
- New development within or adjacent to a heritage item or HCA should contribute positively to the heritage value and character of the area

Potential public benefits

- Refer to Potential Public Benefits at page 47
- Public domain upgrades
- Affordable housing



Action 1: Create more jobs and housing opportunities near the Metro



Action 2: Develop the Pacific Highway frontage into a medium-scale environment with increased amenity

Increased amenity and friendly streetscapes

Desired character

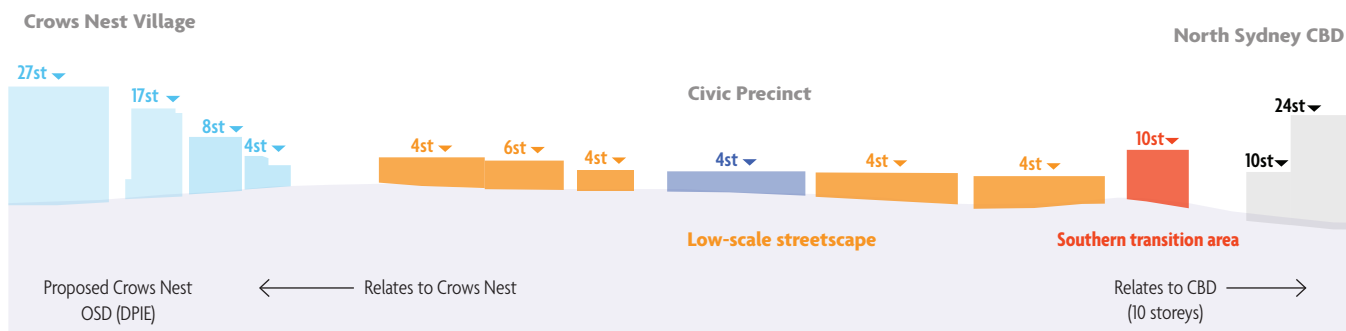
The Pacific Highway is a metropolitan corridor that connects a series of suburbs and town centres along the North Shore. Some of these centres are significantly dense such as North Sydney CBD or St Leonards.

Between these high-density areas there is a need for well-defined, low-scale streetscapes that provide safe, activated and human-scale spaces for pedestrians.

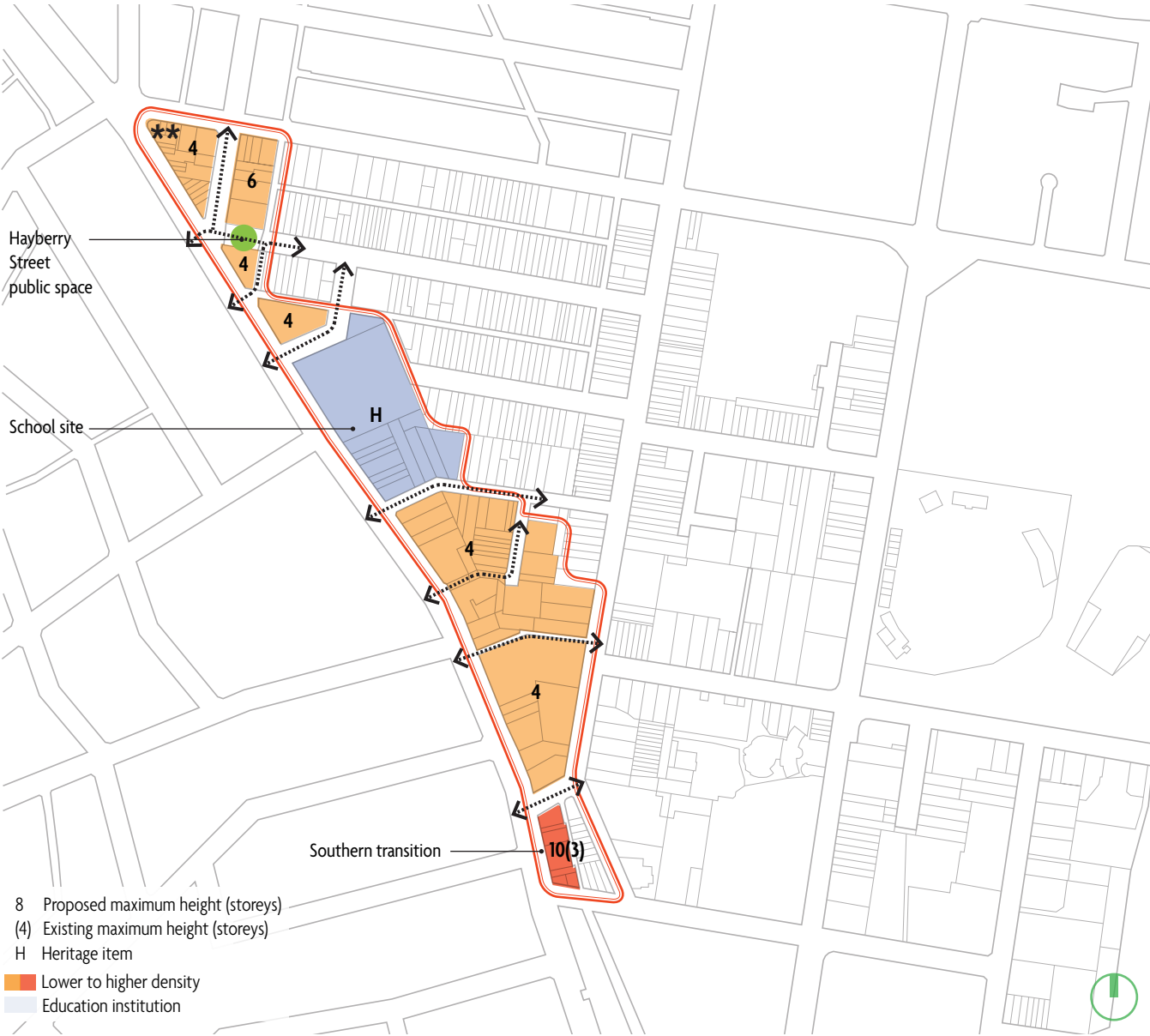
The stretch of Pacific Highway along the Civic Precinct sits between North Sydney CBD and St Leonards and is at the core of North Sydney's green link. It should be medium-scale in density, with a maximum building height of 4 storeys to be in keeping with the rest of the precinct. A slight increase in height is proposed on the southernmost block of the stretch to provide for a better transition towards the North Sydney CBD. This transition site is detailed further over the next pages.

Objectives

- Create a medium-scale streetscape area between North Sydney CBD and St Leonards that promotes human-scale and is pedestrian focused
- Slightly increase building heights at the southern end of this streetscape along the Pacific Highway to allow for greater employment and housing opportunities with a better transition into the CBD high-density area
- Increase amenity and activation along the Pacific Highway for pedestrians



*Building storeys are indicative and not to scale



Implementation

- Maintain a maximum building height of 4 storeys along the Pacific Highway between Hayberry Street to West Street within the Civic Precinct. Provide a 3-storey streetwall and a recessed 4th storey
- Provide a taller building on the southernmost block to transition between the Civic Precinct and the CBD high-density area*
- Provide a 1.5 metre whole building street setback along Pacific Highway to improve pedestrian amenity and street tree planting. (Exceptions would be considered when there is an existing heritage item built to the boundary)
- Provide active frontages to the Pacific Highway where possible
- Continue the implementation of cycleways along Pacific Highway (see Action 9)
- Investigate ways to improve the Five Ways intersection through diverting traffic (see Action 5)

** Refer to pages 34-35 site guidelines for further detail*

Note

**** The NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment's St. Leonards/ Crows Nest 2036 Plan assigns this site a maximum height of 16-storeys. A Planning Proposal is required to consider amending the height limit change under the North Sydney LEP to enable the lodgment of a Development Application thereafter.**

Action 2: Develop the Pacific Highway frontage into a medium-scale environment with increased amenity

📍 Southern transition area

The Civic Precinct southern transition site along Pacific Highway is constrained, with a limited footprint, two heritage items within the block and immediately adjacent to a conservation area. However, as it is a consolidated site near the northern metro station, it has potential to provide additional dwellings that contribute towards Council's dwelling target. By providing a stepped form, it can transition from the North Sydney CBD towards the Civic Precinct through the development of a medium-scale building that bridges the gap between the mid-rise residential buildings south along Pacific Highway to the low-scale environment of the Civic Precinct to the north.

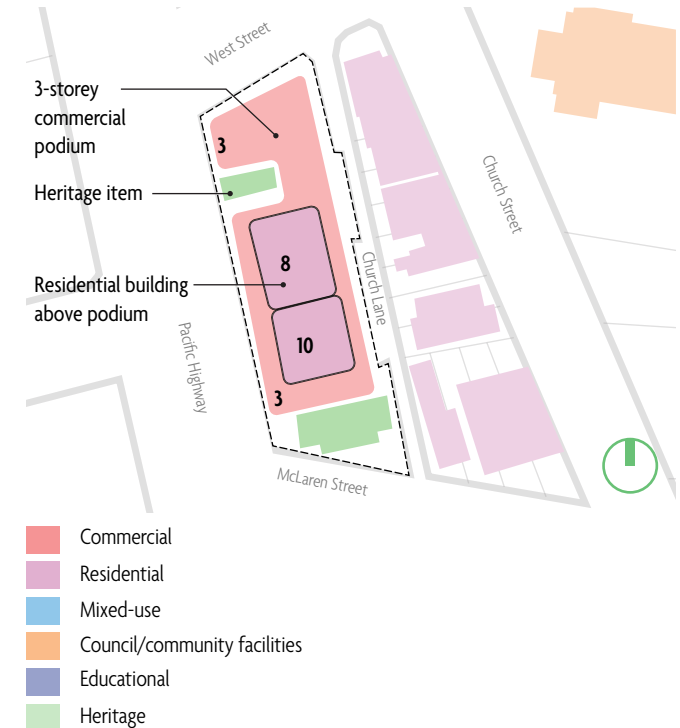
Design guidelines

- A maximum built form height of 10 storeys stepping down to 8 further north towards the Civic Precinct, as per the map
- The site should be developed as one single, mixed use building with a commercial podium and a residential component above
- The podium should be 3-storeys in height to align with the streetscape to the north and the mid-block heritage item
- The podium is to be aligned with the existing heritage item and present no setback to Pacific Highway. The built form above the podium is to be set back a minimum of 3 metres

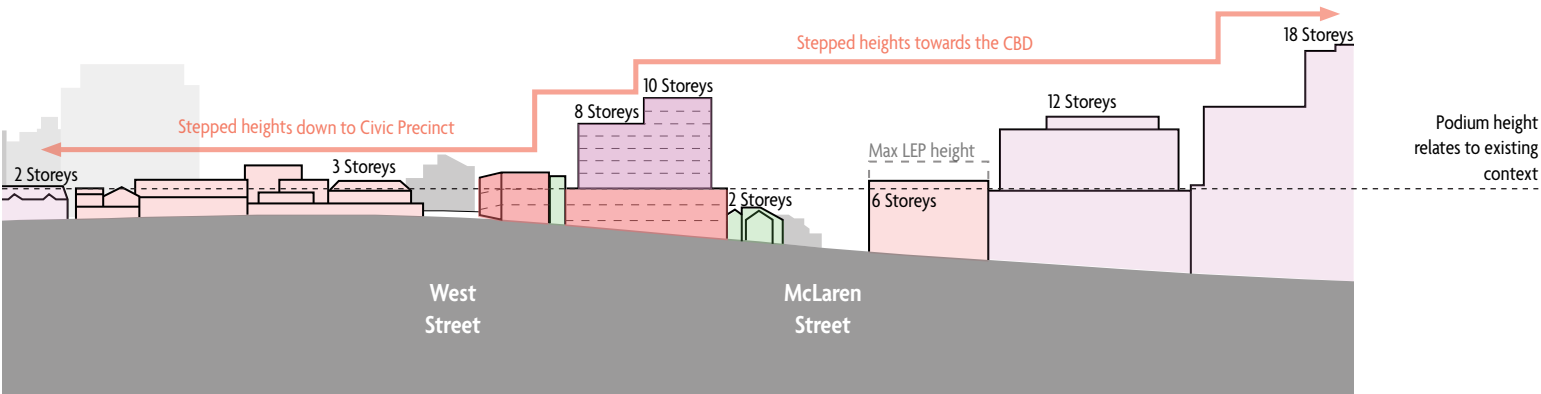
- The building footprint above podium is to be located south of the heritage item. A minimum 4 metre separation between new development and the heritage item is required. Overhanging elements over the heritage item are not supported.
- The heritage item will be preserved and integrated into the future podium. Adequate legibility and articulation is to be provided at podium level to highlight the heritage item. Adaptive reuse of the heritage item is encouraged
- Future development is to not reduce or affect the amenity of education facilities located on the western side of Pacific Highway (overshadowing and visual privacy)
- An adequate transition to the conservation area to the east should be provided in the form of a podium with significant above podium setbacks

Potential public benefits

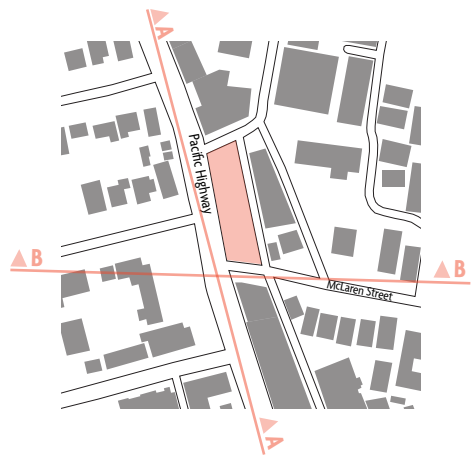
- Refer to potential public benefits at page 47
- Public domain upgrades
- Affordable housing



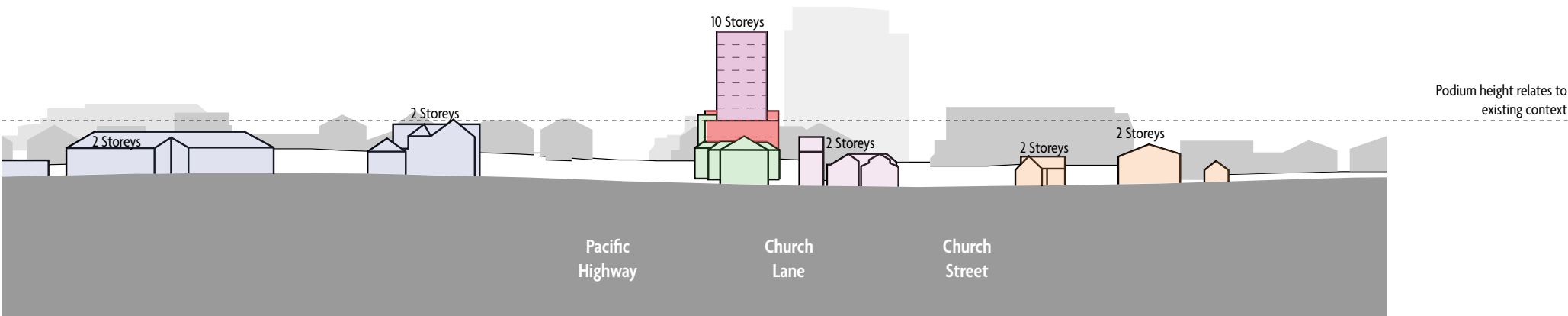
Action 2: Develop the Pacific Highway frontage into a medium-scale environment with increased amenity



SECTION A

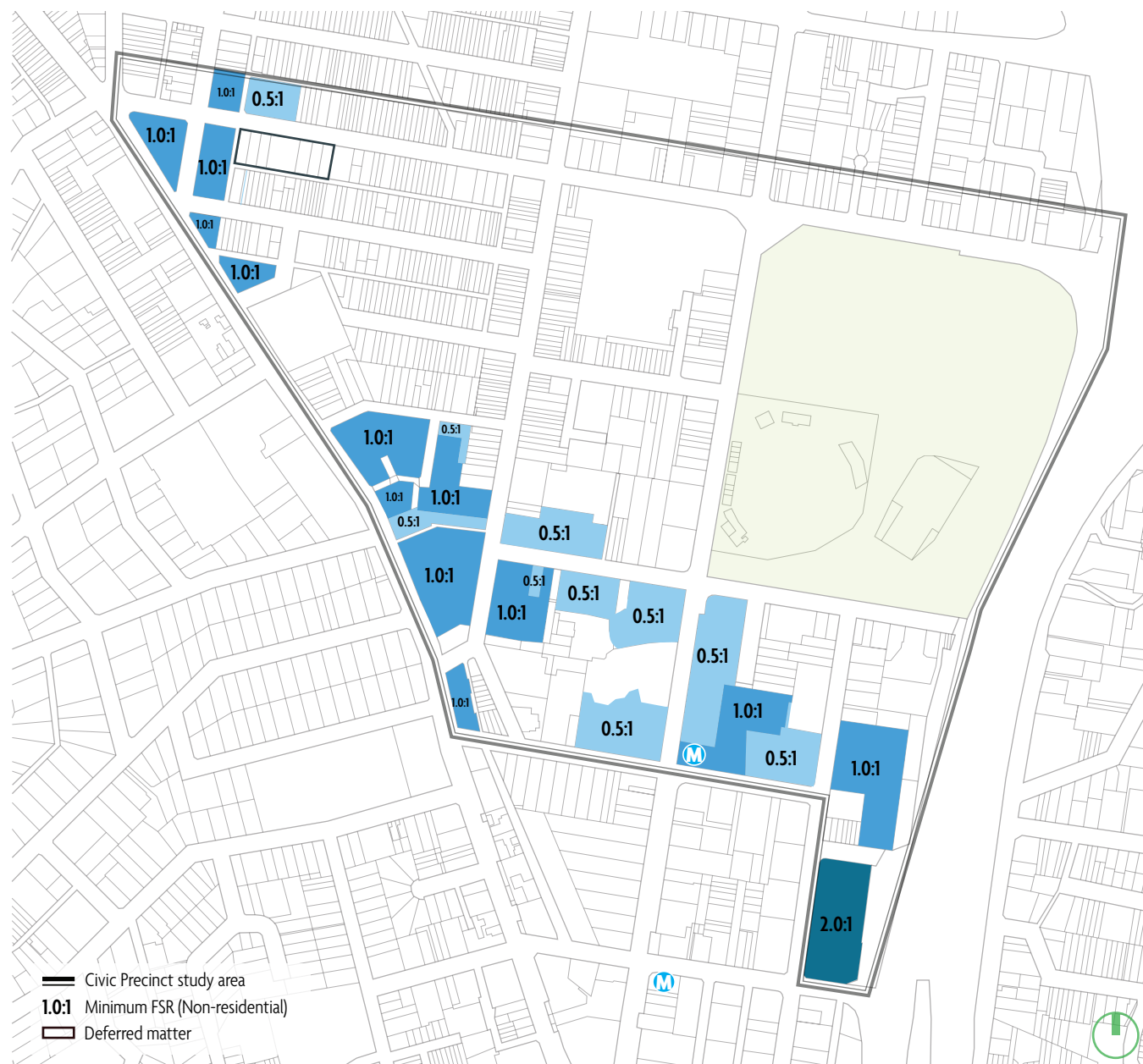


⌚ SITE PLAN



SECTION B

Action 3: Support small to medium sized business growth



Supporting North Sydney's business ecosystem

The Civic Precinct is an attractive location for both the residential and commercial market. It is an alternative for companies who want to be close to the CBD and not pay the premium rents charged. Both residential and commercial demand is high.

In order to achieve the regional job targets set for North Sydney by the Greater Sydney Commission and support the employment growth of the CBD, it is important to maintain and increase commercial floorspace within the Civic Precinct.

Surrounding established development within the North Sydney CBD and pipeline stock are aimed at providing large amounts of floor space, particularly offices. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the precinct to provide smaller commercial tenancy space to accommodate businesses that service the area such as medical consultation or accounting. Employment projections identify that the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services industries, which already total 40% of the area's employment, will increase by 33% in 2036, continuing as the highest employer category.

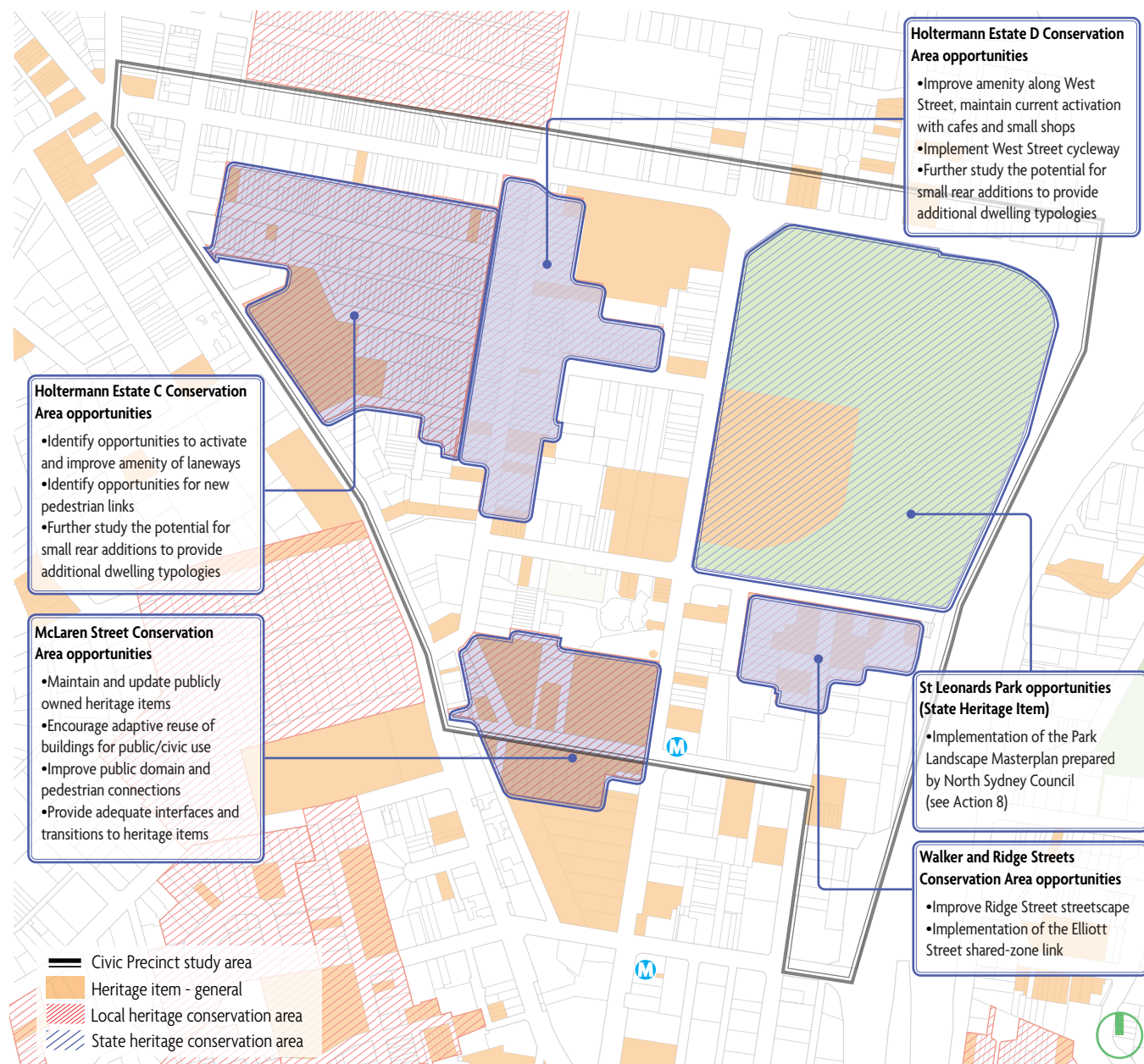
Objectives

- Provide over 3,000 additional jobs within the precinct (estimated as 1 job per 15m² of commercial area)
- Build on the existing presence of education and medical facilities in the area encourage companies and initiatives that support and complement these sectors to settle in the area
- Develop unique and distinct employment opportunities that capitalise on the metro station and benefit being located adjacent to the CBD
- Provide a range of smaller commercial tenancy spaces to accommodate businesses that service the CBD and surrounding areas such as accounting, medical consultation, information technology or conferences and seminars

Implementation

- Increase the non-residential FSR across the precinct as shown on the map
- Maintain B4 mixed-use zone to provide for smaller commercial tenancies within mixed use buildings.
- Require full commercial podiums (2 to 3 storeys) along Pacific Highway
- Encourage ground floor retail and commercial tenancies to increase foot traffic and improve street activation along the main thoroughfares and nodes
- Require fully dedicated, small to mid-size commercial buildings along the southern end of Walker Street to complement the CBD's premium office towers.

Action 4: Preserve Heritage, add value



📌 Maintaining, updating & adding value to our heritage

The Civic Precinct has 93 Local and State Heritage Listed Items and four Heritage Conservation Areas (HCA). Of these items, ninety-one are locally significant, and two are State significant.

It is important to protect these heritage buildings and conservation areas for future generations as they define the local identity and unique character of the area.

At the same time, we must ensure that the area is well maintained, remains relevant, activated and used, so it is equally important to allow for careful and considered additions that add value to the area and provide updated spaces for modern needs.

Adaptive reuse of buildings

Adaptive reuse of a building can help to conserve and celebrate the heritage significance of a place while allowing it to have a new use and an extended lifespan. Adaptation of a building to allow for a new use should be underpinned by an understanding of its significance and should result in a design which creates a relationship between existing and new work.

Alterations and additions to heritage items

The North Sydney DCP outlines several provisions for altering and adding to listed heritage items. Underpinning these provisions is the objective that any changes to the fabric should be based on an understanding of the heritage significance of the specific item.

Development within Heritage Conservation Areas

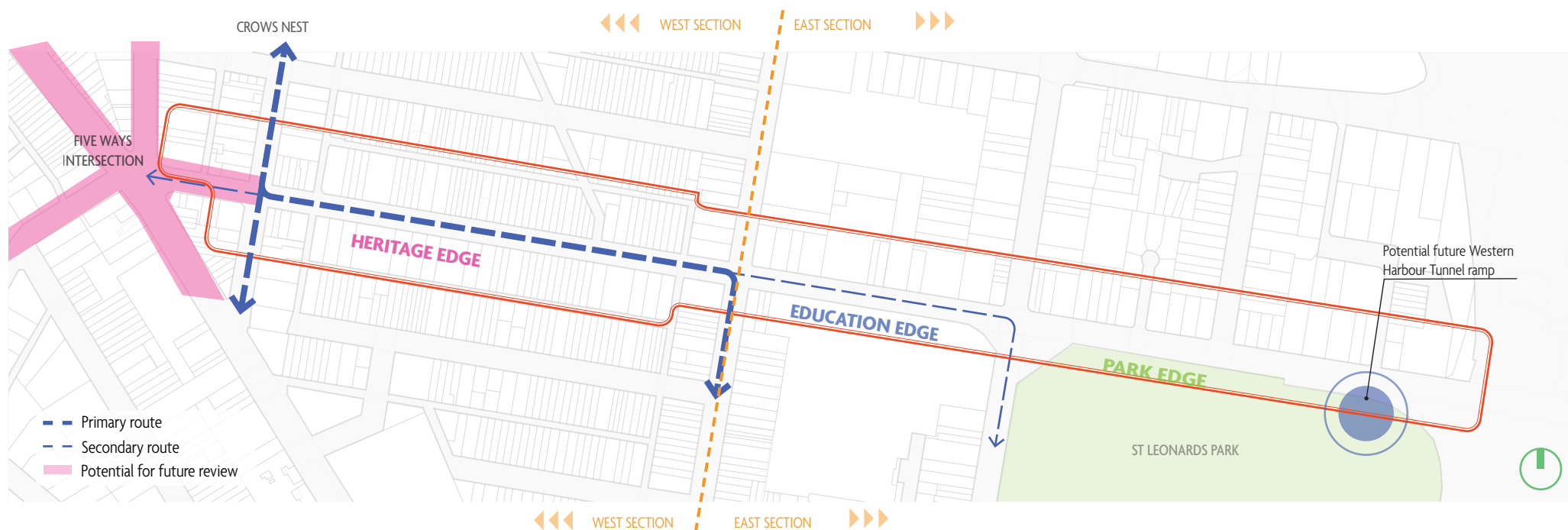
The following general principles apply for any work done within a Heritage Conservation Area.

- New development will complement and retain the significance and character of the place
- Development in these areas should recognise and complement the predominant architectural scale, form, bulk, setbacks and materiality of the HCA to create a unified character.
- Development of new buildings within a HCA (known as 'infill development') will need to positively respond to the setting and character of the area

Further study the potential for additional secondary dwelling types

As a response to the need for more affordable housing options and to liven up the heritage conservation areas and maintain their character, further studies should be carried out to explore the potential for additional secondary dwellings facing the laneways in the form of granny flats and over garage studios.

Action 5: Undertake further review of Falcon Street



The current development controls for Falcon Street are retained, whilst there is uncertainty around the corridor due to the different state government infrastructure projects currently ongoing, in particular the DPIE's Planned Precinct Investigation Area and the Western Harbour Tunnel.

It is recommended that once the outcomes of these two projects are known, a detailed Urban Design Study is undertaken of Falcon Street, focusing on the area between Pacific Highway and West Street.

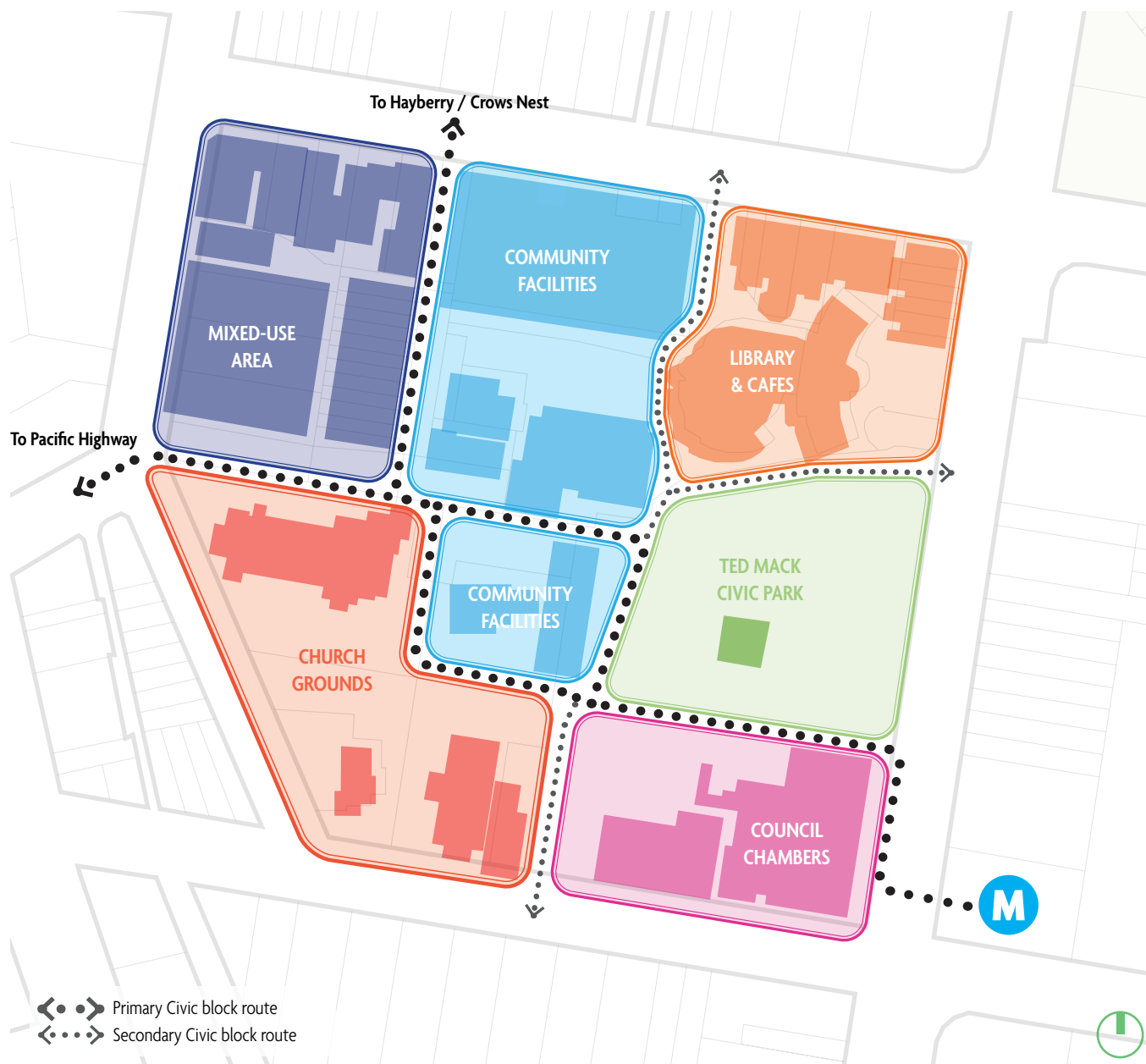
The corridor is a major traffic thoroughfare connecting the Military Road Corridor with Pacific Highway. It is also the transition between the Civic Precinct and Crows Nest Village.

Being able to combine both locational functions will be key in order to achieve a successful outcome.

Proposed objectives of the future urban design study

- Manage and mitigate the future traffic conditions
- Explore potential reconfiguration of the Five Ways intersection to increase pedestrian amenity and quality and quantity of open space
- Explore the potential of diverting regional traffic from Pacific Highway to Falcon Street/ Warringah Freeway to reduce traffic volumes in the CBD and increase the amenity of Pacific Highway
- Provide a more pleasant pedestrian environment
- Protect existing trees
- Study the potential for additional landscape and planting buffers
- Explore opportunities to upgrade the footpaths
- Capitalise on the proximity to Crows Nest Village and the Health Precinct
- Successfully connect Crows Nest to the Civic Precinct
- Consider employment and activation opportunities along the spine

Action 6: Undertake further review of Civic Core



🚩 A revamp of the Civic Core

The Civic Core is bounded by McLaren, Ridge, Miller and West Streets and includes a high amount of publicly owned assets.

There is an opportunity to improve pedestrian connections through the block and to examine the relationship between the different buildings to make them more open, collaborative and efficient. At the same time, the potential for future expansion of community uses as the population of the area grows should be explored.

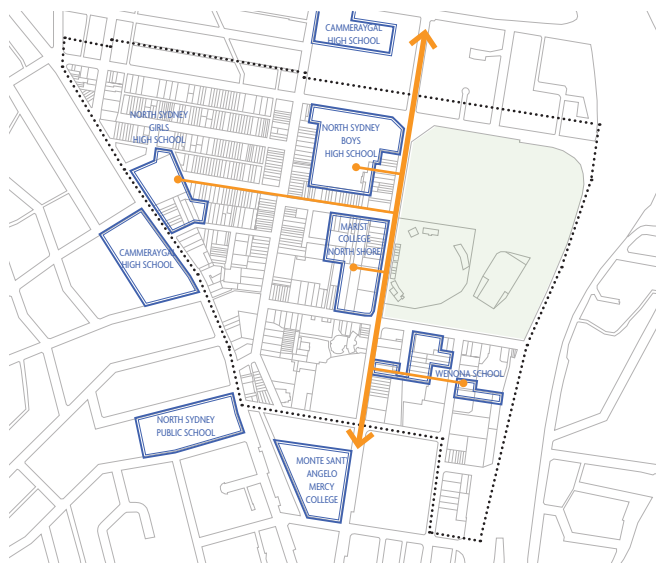
The area should be guided by a masterplan able to connect all the existing public buildings and civic institutions within the block. This will create a seamless environment that fosters collaboration, sharing of resources and a welcoming space for visitors and workers alike. Further work to the existing layout and public space within the core would allow for greater connectivity and legibility between the different buildings.

The core is currently separated into 6 different areas, each of them with its own land use. Between these areas are a series of pathways, some formally defined others more informal. Developing and formalising these pathways will help with connections through the Civic core. It will also improve the existing public domain and the relationship between the different buildings.

Proposed objectives of the future urban design study

- Formalise and improve pedestrian connections through the block
- Study the potential redesign and redistribution of the child early education centre, the community centre, the basketball courts and the library.
- Facilitate the sharing of resources and spaces between the different public and civic institutions
- Explore potential improvements to the edges and surroundings of Ted Mack Civic Park and implement Miller Walk along Miller Street
- Integrate the church's open space into the public domain
- Consideration of underground public car parking
- Rationalise the vehicular circulation within the block, and consolidate and redesign the existing car parks.

Action 7: Urban design guidelines for education facilities



Overview

Schools in the Civic Precinct are generally walled and isolated and do not interact with the surrounding environment. Students are largely driven to and from school. There are few comfortable pedestrian connections or areas to gather and play.

The Civic Precinct could evolve into an civic and education campus with a strong relationship between school grounds and the wider precinct area.

Schools have the opportunity to open up (within reason and maintaining the required safety and privacy) and activate the streets. To be more efficient, facilities could be shared between the community and the schools. A network of pedestrian links should be implemented between the schools and the public transport nodes, in particular the new metro station, to further these opportunities.

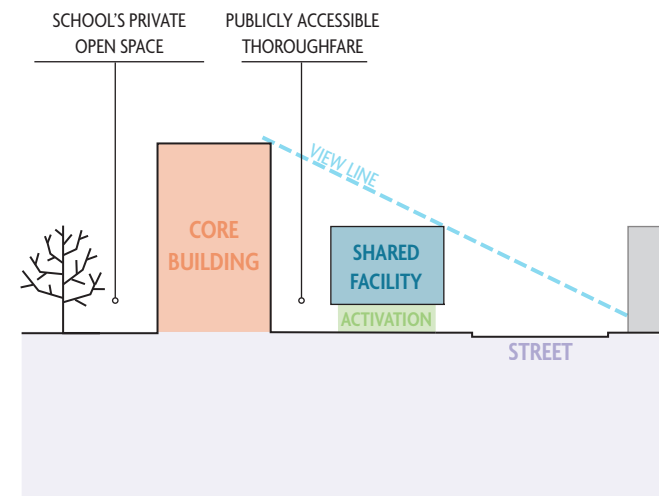
A precinct-wide civic and education campus

Similar to other metropolitan areas that have been earmarked for education and health collaboration areas, like St Leonards or Randwick, North Sydney's Civic Precinct should be seen as a local, more intimate version of such collaboration areas.

The precinct already has the institutions, the open spaces and the civic infrastructure in place. There is the opportunity to develop a strong, singular education identity and an environment that encourages and fosters interaction, knowledge sharing and community interaction.

Currently lacking, is a solid public domain presence, the legibility and connectivity of a campus, the ancillary supporting uses and businesses, and above all a shared approach.

The first step is to improve the public domain in a way that promotes students' presence in the area. Facilities for study groups, places for after school activities and play time, lunchtime offerings, a library space for students and residents to interact, are all initiatives that would help to improve the educational identity of the area.



Design principles

Additional building height may be requested on education campuses in the long term to accommodate growth in student population. This should be subject to a case by-case detailed masterplan that addresses the following principles:

- Reinforce the area's education function
- Any additional height should, in principle, be located at the centre of the school's ground with a lower scale perimeter so that the character and feel of the streetscape are maintained
- New development should not alter the presentation of the school to the street
- Amenity impacts to the public domain should be minimised. Above all, no additional overshadowing of open spaces and plazas will be allowed
- Privacy and visual amenity of surrounding properties should not be affected by any new development
- Integrate education facilities into the neighbourhood by improving their interfaces with adjoining streets and the public domain
- Improve the area's permeability by encouraging pedestrian through-site-links. These links will be negotiated on a case by case basis when the education institutions are redeveloped.

Action 8: Improve public open space



Main public domain opportunities within the study area are centered around 5 main elements.

1. Implementation of the St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan

- Improve and enhance the park landscape
- Improve and enhance recreation opportunities for a range of park users
- Develop a range of options for additional facilities that could appropriately be provided in the park to meet community needs
- Ensure the park is accessible and appealing to all members of the community
- Resolve existing circulation and access issues for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles

2. Implementation of the Civic Spine/ Miller Walk up to Falcon Street

- Developed as part of the CBD Public Domain Strategy
- Improve link between civic and public buildings and areas along Miller Street from Blue Street to Falcon Street
- Consider widening pedestrian footpath along Miller Street to create “Miller Walk” with areas for landscaping, seating and a wide range of activities.

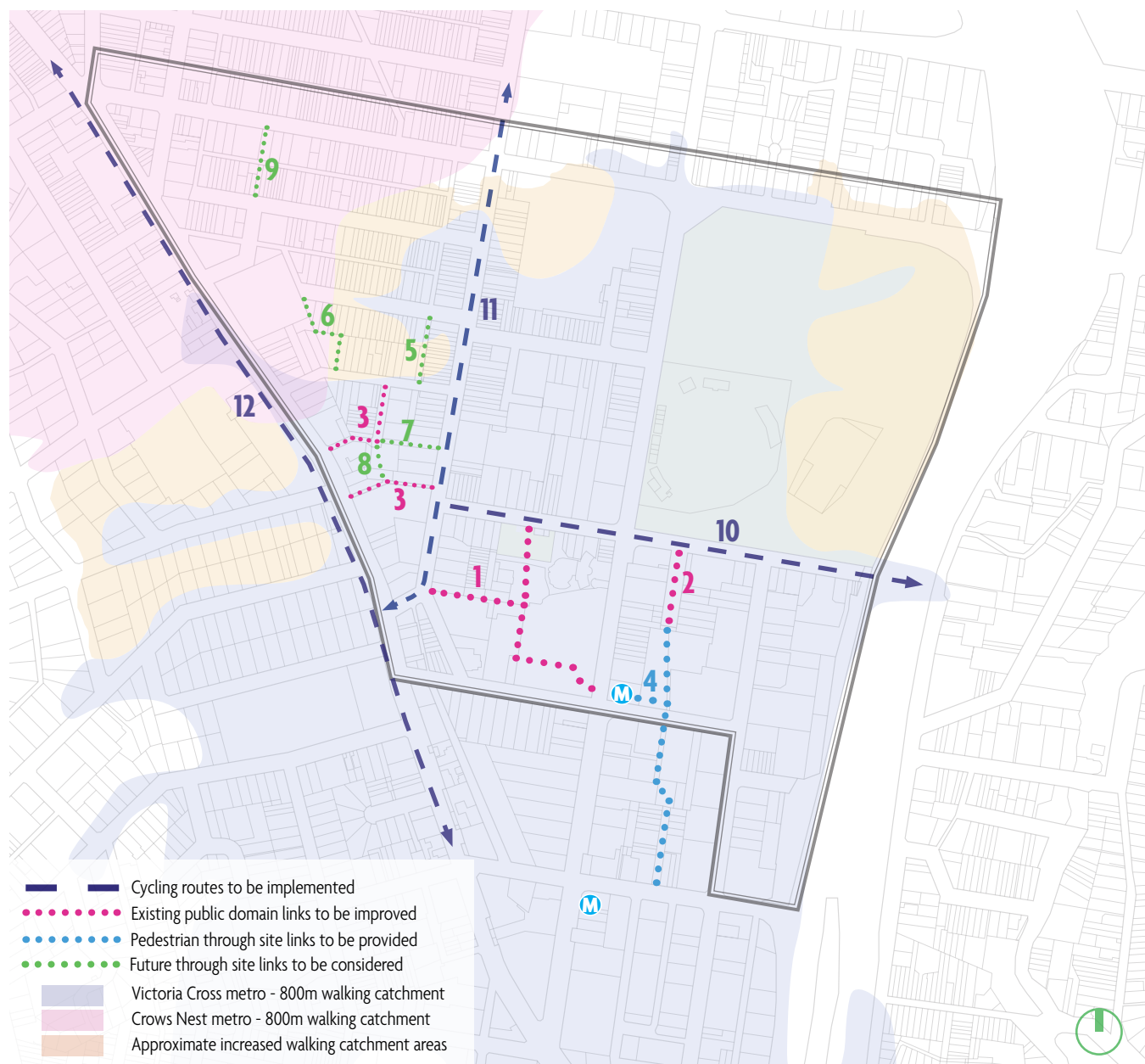
3. Provide additional open spaces

- Provide smaller, more localised open spaces that would improve the local amenity for residents and workers
 - A. New pocket park at the eastern end of Hampden Street
 - B. Upgrade to public open space at the western end of Hayberry Street
 - C. New entry plaza to the future metro station entry portal.
 - D. Explore options to turn on grade carparks into public open spaces along Miller Street (St. Mary's Church)
 - E. Investigate opportunity to develop a green edge to the Warringah Freeway

4. Improve walking, cycling and public transport safety and amenity on major urban corridors

- Improve the amenity of Falcon Street and Pacific Highway through improvements to the tree canopy, footpath width, setbacks, and increasing building setbacks
- Implement cycleways along Pacific Highway

Action 9: Identify access and active transport network improvements



The arrival of the metro portal on the corner of Miller and McLaren Streets is an opportunity to improve access in the precinct and strengthen the connection to the wider metropolitan context.

It is critical to connect cycle and walking routes to the new metro station, complete the North-South CBD pedestrian link from the Ward Street Precinct, through Elliott Street to St Leonards Park, and implement further East-West links that will connect to walking and cycling networks within the green link.

The following key improvements have been identified to maximise the impact and reach of the metro station.

Existing Public Domain links to be improved

1. Better E-W routes through Council's civic block to increase accessibility from the metro portal to the Pacific Highway and Mater Hospital (see Action 6)
2. Elliot Street to become a shared zone
3. Improved E-W permeability between Pacific Highway and the heritage conservation areas to the east. In particular, upgrade Hazelbank Place and Edén Street/Edén Lane

Pedestrian through site links to be provided

4. Connect the metro portal to Elliott Street through 52 McLaren Street (Action 1)

Future pedestrian through site links to be considered*

5. Completion of Bernard Lane up to Myrtle Street as a pedestrian only link
6. A connection between Myrtle and Emmett Street through the back of North Sydney Girls High School
7. A connection between Edén Street and West Street
8. A connection between Hazelbank Place and Edén Lane
9. A through-site link between Hayberry and Falcon Streets

*Future consideration based on further, case-by-case study of the sites.

Cycling routes to be implemented

10. Completion of the Ridge Street cycleway
11. Implementation of the West Street cycleway
12. Implementation of the Pacific Highway cycleway

These connections are possible through a collaborative approach between council, the state government, private owners and educational and religious institutions in the area. They could create a network of pedestrian routes serving the schools, the community facilities and the public in general. The result would be a safe, attractive and rich pedestrian environment connected to the new metro portal.



St. Leonards Park. Miller Street Entry. Artist impression.

Source. St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan



Public benefits and the VPA process

A driving principle of the study is that development opportunities beyond those available under existing controls should only be pursued if much needed public benefits are provided to meet the community's needs. These benefits are in addition to what would normally be required by a new development, such as design excellence and section 7.11 developer contributions.

Accordingly, for the Civic Precinct a planning proposal seeking to amend the NSLEP 2013 should be accompanied by a draft voluntary planning agreement (VPA) which sets out any public benefits proposed to be delivered in accordance with Council's 'Voluntary Planning Agreements Policy'.

A planning proposal (PP) is a submission to Council to modify existing planning controls, allowing a developer to achieve increases to a building's maximum floor space ratio (FSR), building height or other planning controls.

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

Under a VPA, a developer agrees to provide or fund:

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

These contributions can be made through:

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

Planning Proposal process

Council's City Strategy Team will hold a pre-lodgement meeting with property owners and their advisors to discuss specific requirements for a planning proposal.

This will generally include discussion on:

- Existing planning controls
- Specific requirements for the site identified in this study
- Potential public benefits the scheme may offer, and
- Planning process, including information to be submitted with a planning proposal

A draft planning proposal and any draft voluntary planning agreement will then be accepted by the City Strategy Team for comment.

To ensure agreed design outcomes are identified early in the process, the draft planning proposal may be referred to the North Sydney Design Excellence Panel for comment.

Once agreed, a planning proposal should be formally lodged with Council.

For further details on how to prepare and lodge a planning proposal, please refer to the Department of Planning & Environment's 'Guide to Preparing Planning Proposals'.

Civic Precinct Public Benefits List

Civic Precinct - Potential public benefits List

The study has identified a series of potential public benefits that address the community's aspirations as well as existing needs for the area. Some of these benefits could be delivered via agreements with private landowners to redevelop opportunity sites. Others may be delivered through the existing Council's Section 7.11 Contributions Plan.

It is worth noting that there are not many sites expected to undergo significant changes under this planning study. This limits the capacity to deliver on the desired public benefits through the VPA process.

Notwithstanding, the list of identified public benefits for the precinct are:

- **Long day care centre**
- **Community centre & meeting rooms**
- **Public domain upgrades**
- **Affordable housing provision**

Long day care centre

Kelly's Place Children's Centre is a not-for-profit, community-based, long day care centre currently located on Council-owned land in Hume Street Park, Crows Nest.

The Centre may need to relocate to accommodate the anticipated high pedestrian volume of the Crows Nest metro station when it opens in 2024. The Civic Precinct could potentially be a good location as it is within the Centre's catchment, is serviced by an excellent public transport network and has strong associations with the local community.

Kelly's Place requirements are as follows:

- Single-storey with preference for a ground floor location
- 450m² of outdoor space with sunlight and landscaping (preferably deep soil)
- 450m² of indoor space
- Not located on a main road but with an easy drop off / pick up area
- To maintain the relationship with Crows Nest and its community

Further investigations will be carried out in consultation with the Centre to ensure that any future location is able to provide the necessary requirements.

Should an alternative solution be found for Kelly's Place, there is still an acute demand for affordable long day care centres in North Sydney. Accordingly, a long day care is identified as a public benefit that may be delivered under this Planning Study.

Community centre & community meeting rooms

There is a need for additional meetings rooms and associated outdoor spaces for community purposes. The North Sydney Community Centre and the adjoining EarlyEd facility located near Ted Mack Civic Park, both need to expand.

The North Sydney Community Centre is a not-for-profit community organisation whose programs and services aim to foster social connection and wellbeing. The Centre needs additional space to meet the increasing demand for workshops and adult education classes. Easing the pressure on this service could address the additional indoor and outdoor space requirements of Early Ed.

EarlyEd is a highly regarded, well established, early intervention service for children with disabilities and their families in the Sydney area. There is a need for more indoor and outdoor spaces which has become particularly acute in recent times.

Therefore, a new location for either a community centre and/or community meeting rooms would allow for the North Sydney Community Centre to grow and at the same time allow for the Early Education facility to also expand.

Public domain upgrades

Improving the public domain within the Civic Precinct is one of the main priorities for Council and the community.

The public domain opportunities (described in Action 8) include the implementation of the St Leonards Park Landscape Masterplan and the North Sydney Oval improvements, the development of cycleways along West and Ridge Streets as well as Pacific Highway and further advancement of Miller Walk.

Opportunities for new public space are also identified in the Ward Street Masterplan that adjoins the Civic Precinct and may be considered if the above public domain opportunities are able to be funded by alternate means.

Affordable housing provision

North Sydney's Local Housing Strategy has identified a gap in the provision of affordable housing across the LGA. Affordable social housing currently accounts for only 1.8% of the total dwellings in North Sydney, below the 5.5% average across Greater Sydney. Council is committed to find ways to add more affordable housing across the LGA





North Sydney
Civic Precinct Planning Study

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