

NEUTRAL BAY TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC DOMAIN PLAN



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PREPARED BY SPACKMAN MOSSOP MICHAELS FOR NORTH SYDNEY COUNCIL
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1 INTRODUCTION

THE STUDY AREA

The boundaries of the Neutral Bay Town Centre Public Domain concept are:

- Ben Boyd Road to the west
- Belgrave Street to the north
- Winnie Street and Murdoch Street to the east
- One block south of Yeo Street to the south.

While this study area is identical to that of the overarching *Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study*, the public domain concept focuses primarily on the two future public spaces at:

- Grosvenor Lane carpark, and
- 1-7 Rangers Road and 183-185 Military Road.

The study also examines other opportunities for public domain improvement within town centre, including: laneways, shared zones, street closures, footpaths and through site links.

BACKGROUND

Military Road Corridor Planning Study

The *Military Road Corridor Planning Study – Stage 1: Future Directions* report (adopted 2021; rescinded 2022) reviewed the current planning controls that apply along Military Road to deliver future housing and job growth to meet the needs of the current and future community. The key objectives of the study were to:

- Address the decline in employment floor space in the centre,
- Facilitate carefully planned development while maintaining the village atmosphere of the centre
- Leverage a range of community benefits from planned and managed growth.

The study found that while job demand is expected to increase by 40% by 2036, under the current planning controls supply would likely decrease by 2036 by approximately 47% – almost half. There is a clear need to revise the current planning controls to facilitate future local job growth and arrest the decline in commercial floor space within Neutral Bay town centre. Without change there would be a reduction in commercial activity within the town centre, and as a result residents would need to travel further for local work and services.

The study also found that there is demand for a new recreational facility, affordable childcare, a modernised community centre and improved open space. Changes to the planning controls brings the opportunity, through developer contributions, for significant



improvements to the amount of public open space and the quality of the public domain throughout the town centre.

The *Military Road Corridor Planning Study* identified the following public domain opportunities that could be associated with future developments within the town centre:

- Public domain improvements including two significant new public plazas:
 - a 1,000 square metre new Rangers Road Plaza
 - a 2,500 square metre new Grosvenor Lane Plaza
- Relocation of the Grosvenor Lane car park underground
- A new 1,000 square metre community centre with accessible public amenities and family room
- A 600 square metre creative makers art alley on the site of the existing community centre
- 28 secured regional commuter bicycle parking spaces.

In January 2022, Council rescinded the previously endorsed *Military Road Corridor Planning Study* in response to community concerns about the height and scale of redevelopment proposed by the planning



Figure 1-2: (left) The study area

Figure 1-3: (above) Military Road Corridor Planning Study

study. Moving forward, Council resolved to: *engage with the community and relevant stakeholders to prepare a revised recommendation that has a better balance between development height and the provision of additional public open space.*

This public domain concept design is developed in response to local community and stakeholder concerns. It forms part of the *Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study*, and informs and supports the revised planning recommendations therein.

2 PUBLIC DOMAIN ANALYSIS

2.1 COMMUNITY VALUES AND ASPIRATIONS

North Sydney Council has undertaken extensive community consultation for the *Military Road Corridor Planning Study – Stage 1: Future Directions* report (2021; rescinded 2022). This includes:

- Early engagement sessions (2018) – Council sought to understand community and stakeholder aspirations and values through:
 - Surveys
 - Online mapping tool
 - Submissions
 - Drop-in information kiosks
- Two discussion papers (2019) – based on the feedback from the early engagement, Council prepared and exhibited two discussion papers on the future of the Neutral Bay town centre:
 - Objectives and Ideas paper
 - Analysis paper

The papers explored a range of planning control changes to enable increased development and deliver public domain benefits.

The discussion papers were informed by additional stakeholder engagement, including:

- A business survey, which canvassed the Neutral Bay Chamber of Commerce, landowners and local businesses
- A transport questionnaire, which was conducted with 200 local workers and commuters

The discussion papers were placed on public exhibition in mid-2019 for further community feedback.

The Draft Future Directions report was subsequently prepared in-house by North Sydney Council. The planning strategies it put forward, including built form decisions and public benefit contributions, were underpinned by extensive research and consultation from the early community engagement sessions and two discussion papers. The draft report was placed on public exhibition between April and July 2020, from which a total of 433 responses was received.

The extensive consultation undertaken by Council thus far provides valuable insight into:

- The community's aspirations for the future of Neutral Bay Town Centre
- The values that the community want preserved and strengthened into the future, and
- The challenges to realising the community's aspirations and values.

The community's aspirations and values for Neutral Bay town centre remained consistent throughout the consultation process, providing clear directions for the development of the public domain concept.

COMMUNITY VALUES

The consultation process revealed that the attributes of Neutral Bay town centre that are most valued by the community are:

- The community feel and atmosphere
- The connectivity and proximity to Sydney and North Sydney CBDs
- The many restaurants, cafes and pubs for socialising
- The ease of access to shops and services.

The public domain concept plan is to ensure that these attributes are maintained and strengthened into the future of Neutral Bay town centre.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

The consultation process revealed that 'beautiful public spaces' is the community's single most important priority for the future of Neutral Bay town centre, with 70% of those surveyed in agreement. Public spaces are seen as important gathering places for the community and key contributors towards the character of the town centre. The importance of the town centre's public domain to the local community is evidenced by 85% of people surveyed supporting improved footpaths, parks and plazas in the area.

The consultation process also identified the following key public domain aspirations from the community:

- 77% of respondents want more trees and vegetation
- 61% of respondents want plazas for outdoor activities
- 56% of respondents want more outdoor dining
- 90% of respondents wish to see improvements to the Military Road environment, including better road crossing opportunities
- 78% of respondents support either a social facility such as a library or a community centre in Neutral Bay town centre.

The public domain strategies outlined in the Draft Future Directions report aimed to realise the community's aspirations through the creation of new public open spaces, new community facilities, and public domain upgrades such as footpath widening and streetscape improvements. The present public domain concept design further develops and extends these initial strategies.

2.2 MILITARY ROAD

Military Road is a key constraint to connectivity and community character in the Neutral Bay town centre. The busy six lane road physically bisects the town centre, presenting a significant barrier to pedestrian connectivity between north and south. Additionally, there is no north-south cross traffic within the town centre. Ben Boyd Road and Winnie Street/Murdoch Street, located respectively at the western and eastern extremities of the study area, are the closest vehicular cross streets to the town centre. While Rangers Road does cross Military Road to connect with Waters Road, traffic must turn onto Military Road at the intersection, as through traffic is not permitted. The result is that Military Road not only divides Neutral Bay physically, but perhaps more significantly, it divides the town centre experientially.

While Military Road functions as both a key part of the regional transport network as well as the focus of the local road network, the clear priority is swift passage for regional through traffic, which sit at odds with the connectivity needs of the local community. This is despite local circulation and connectivity being arguably the primary function of Military Road, or at least equal to its regional traffic role – as evidenced in a 2019 study by RMS, which found that the number of walking and bus journeys on the Neutral Bay section of Military Road during the AM peak was approximately double the number of car journeys.

Within the study area, the majority of Military Road is divided by central median barriers and fences, which visually reinforce the impression of a divided community, and are emblematic of the conflict between traffic and pedestrians. There are only two pedestrian crossings of Military Road within the middle of the town centre: one just west of Barry Street/Young Street, and the other at Wycombe Road. Two further pedestrian crossings are at either end of the town centre at Ben Boyd Road and Winnie Street. A pedestrian bridge provides an additional crossing opportunity at Hampden Avenue/Redlands School. The six lane carriageway on Military Road provides for two traffic lanes in each direction, while the two kerbside lanes accommodate bus stop zones, timed bus lanes and intermittent time restricted kerbside parking outside of peak hours. Consequently, there is minimal buffer between the footpaths and fast-moving traffic along Military Road, creating a main street environment that feels decidedly inhospitable to pedestrians.

The challenge is how to reconcile the regional traffic function of Military Road with the connectivity needs of the local community and the desire for local character and amenity within Neutral Bay town centre. Community consultation to date for the rescinded Military Road Corridor Planning Study has shown very strong (90%) community support for public domain improvements to Military Road, including:

- 71% of respondents supporting an improved Military Road environment
- 59% of respondents supporting better connections across Military Road
- 51% of respondents supporting improved footpaths along Military Road.



Figure 2-4: (above right) Military Road at Wycombe Road

Figure 2-5: (right) View to May Gibbs Place from Young Street Plaza. The two open spaces are separated by six lanes of traffic and a median fence

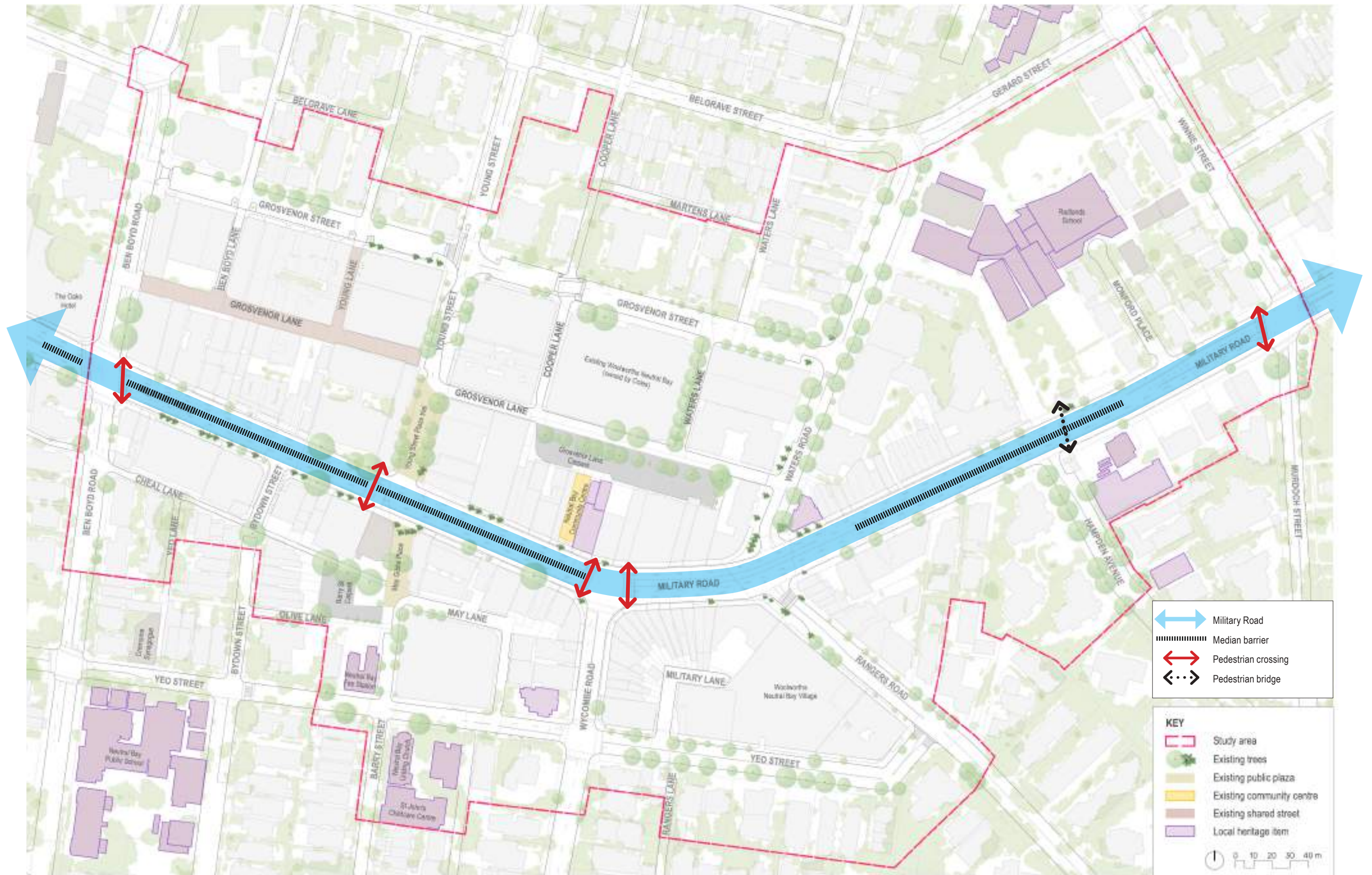


Figure 2-6: Military Road at Neutral Bay town centre

2.3 PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

North Sydney Council has less open space per person than every other northern Sydney council. Currently there are two small public open spaces within Neutral Bay town centre: May Gibbs Place and Young Street Plaza. Located opposite one another on Military Road, these two public open spaces were created from the closure, respectively, of Barry Street and Young Street at the intersection of Military Road.

May Gibbs Place is a small public open space on Military Road in the heart of Neutral Bay town centre. Formed by the closure of Barry Street between Military Road and May Lane, the approximately 380 square metre plaza celebrates the life of the renowned local artist May Gibbs, who lived and worked in Neutral Bay throughout her lifetime.

Young Street Plaza in its current form was implemented in November 2020 as an approximately 956 square metre temporary public open space for the community to trial. It is built from hired fixtures and elements that can be reused elsewhere. Community and stakeholder feedback on the trial plaza was sought between November 2020 and April 2021, with a total of 353 submissions received by Council, wherein:

- 56% of submissions supported the proposal
- 10% did not express support/opposition, or were neutral to the proposal
- 34% of submissions opposed the permanent plaza and road closure.

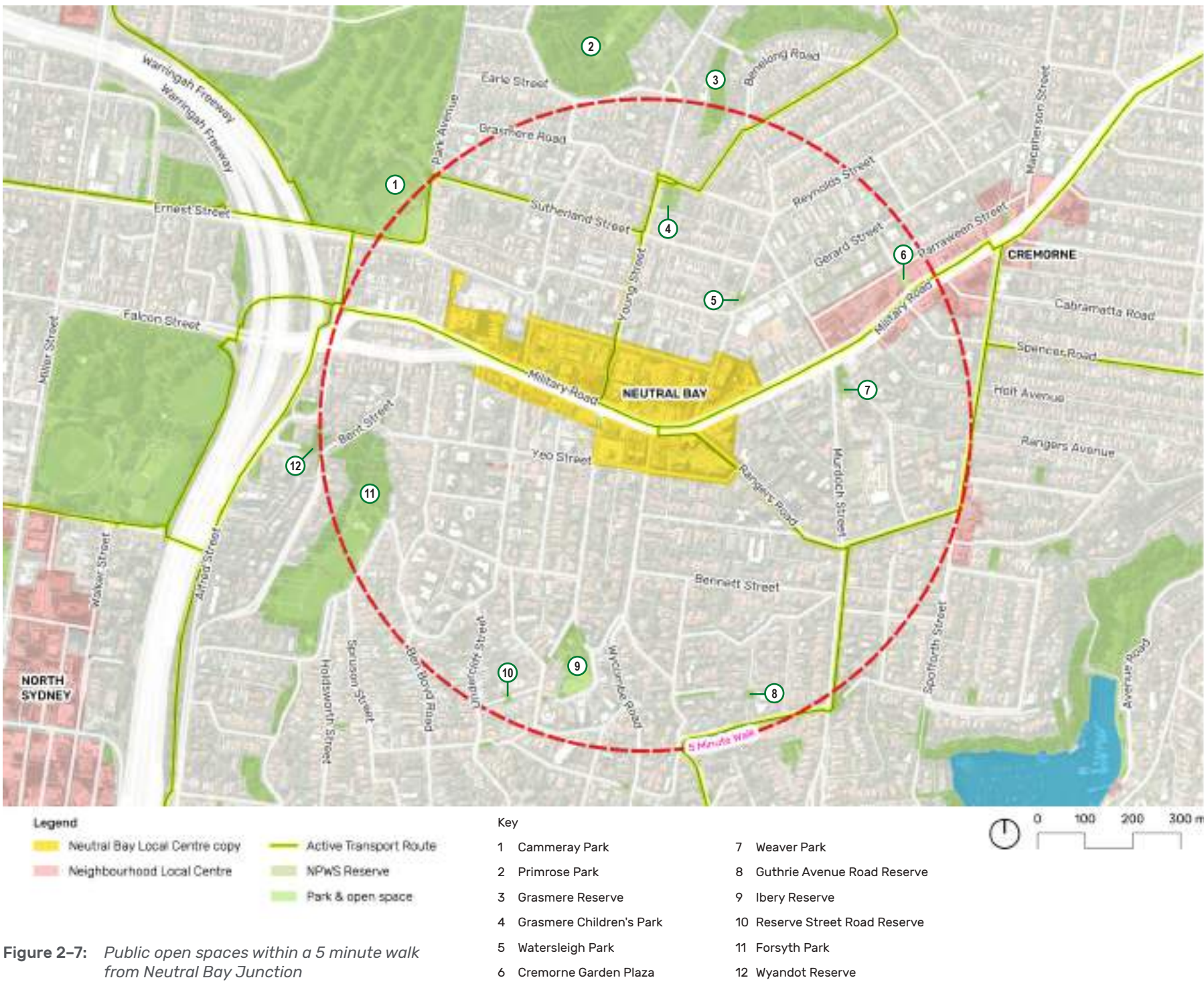
The Young Street Plaza trial also included a traffic impact assessment, which found that:

- Traffic has been wholly redistributed within the surrounding road network
- The network generally performs acceptably, with minor increases in overall time delays at some intersections in the immediate local network.

Additionally, a Human Movement Data Study (Heat Map) was undertaken to measure and analyse visitation to and from the plaza during the trial period. The Heat Map study found that:

- Visitation during the trial period was 27% higher than the prior 12 months
- Visitation levels were higher in the afternoons and evenings, and also on weekends.

Following the success of the trial, a design was developed in 2021 for a permanent Young Street Plaza that was informed by community feedback, traffic and pedestrian studies. Both the trial plaza and the permanent plaza are fully funded by Transport for NSW, as part of a funding agreement with Council for streetscape upgrades that complement the Northern Beaches B-Line Bus Service.



Construction of the permanent Young Street Plaza was intended to commence in late 2021. However, in May 2022, North Sydney Council reversed its position, voting to abandon Young Street Plaza and reopen the Young Street closure to traffic. This will drastically reduce amount of public open space available in Neutral Bay town centre in the near future, until new public open spaces are developed. May Gibbs Place will be the only public open space in Neutral Bay Town centre.

The *Military Road Corridor Planning Study – Stage 1: Future Directions* report (2021; rescinded 2022) recognised the need for more public open space in Neutral Bay town centre. It included a Public Domain Strategy that aims to deliver:

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



Figure 2-8: Public open spaces in Neutral Bay town centre



Figure 2-9: May Gibbs Place



Figure 2-10: Young Street plaza (trial)



Figure 2-11: Young Street plaza (trial)

2.4 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Bus services are the primary form of public transport access to Neutral Bay. The nearest railway station is located at North Sydney, approximately 1.6km from Neutral Bay town centre. Neutral Bay Wharf, which provides ferry connections to Sydney CBD via Circular Quay, is located 1.25km south of the town centre.

In 2019 Transport for NSW completed the B-Line bus program in Neutral Bay, which included corridor upgrades and bus priority measures along Military Road to improve the reliability of bus services between Mona Vale and Sydney CBD. Construction of the B-Line has created adverse public domain impacts along Military Road, particularly:

- Removal of kerbside parking, which previously provided a buffer between pedestrians along the footpaths and moving traffic on the road. This has created a less safe pedestrian environment and a perception of vulnerability along the footpaths
- Congestion at the B-Line bus stops, due to the conflict between people waiting at the bus stops and those moving along the footpaths.

The NSW State Government is providing additional funding for public domain improvements to help mitigate the B-Line impacts on pedestrian amenity, including:

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



Figure 2-12: Crowded footpath at B-Line bus stop

2.5 PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLIST CONNECTIVITY AND AMENITY

Neutral Bay town centre currently experiences significant connectivity issues throughout its public domain. The key problem is undoubtedly Military Road. As discussed above, the traffic network function of Military Road as a regional road conflicts with its location within a local town centre. The absolute prioritisation of the needs of through traffic has resulted in a street environment that is uncomfortable for pedestrians and a town centre that is physically and experientially severed by its main street.

Currently, the scarcity of through site connections exacerbates the barrier effect along Military Road. There are currently three through site pedestrian links along Military Road within Neutral Bay town centre, all of which connect to the Grosvenor Lane carpark. These are: The Grove shopping centre, Theo's Arcade and Neutral Bay Community Centre – none of which is immediately obvious as a pedestrian connection within the busy street environment of Military Road. All three lack a clear line of sight between Military Road and Grosvenor Lane, and none compensate by providing effective signage to indicate the presence of a pedestrian connection. Furthermore, none of the existing through site connections meet current accessibility standards, as the level differences between Military Road and Grosvenor Lane carpark have resulted in steep paths (in the case of the Community Centre link) or necessitated the use of escalators (in the case of Theo's Arcade).

Stakeholder consultation for the current *Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study* (NBTCPs) found that 53% of respondents travel to the town centre by walking. Similarly, *The Military Road Corridor Planning Study* (2021; rescinded 2022) reported that 66% of residents travel to Neutral Bay town centre by either walking or cycling. The current public domain does not reflect the importance of these modes of access, and there is a clear need to prioritise the experience of pedestrians and cyclists throughout the town centre. This can be done through improvements to the connectivity, coherence, comfort and attractiveness of the network of streets and public spaces that comprise the public domain of Neutral Bay town centre.

Pedestrian amenity within the northern half of Neutral Bay town centre has been improved by the creation of shared zones in some of the laneways behind Military Road. While the shared zone of Waters Lane still retains a conventional 'back lane' character, Grosvenor Lane (between Ben Boyd Road and Young Street) and Young Lane have benefited from recent public domain upgrades that have transformed the character of the laneway environment by:

- Prioritising pedestrian amenity – through paving, lighting and planting
- Promoting social activity through active ground floor frontages
- Maintaining vehicular access and on street parking for residents and businesses, as well as for loading and servicing.



Figure 2-13: Grosvenor Lane west of Young Street



Figure 2-14: Existing through site links and shared streets precinct

2.6 LOCAL VEHICULAR ACCESS

The success of the Grosvenor Lane laneway precinct demonstrates that the prioritisation of pedestrian amenity need not compromise vehicular access and circulation. The project serves as a model for how other laneways throughout Neutral Bay town centre can be upgraded to create a safe, connected and engaging public domain that promotes walking and cycling.

North Sydney Council is also undertaking projects to improve cycling access to Neutral Bay town centre. In March 2022 Council resolved to create a separated cycleway along Young Street between Sutherland Street and Grosvenor Street with funding support from the NSW State Government. Detailed design for construction of the project is currently underway. Additionally, a design concept for improvements to the intersection of Young Street and Grosvenor Street was placed on public exhibition in July 2023. The design connects the upcoming Young Street cycleway to Neutral Bay town centre via Young Street plaza and includes a protected pedestrian and cyclist crossing and streetscape improvements.

These Young Street cycleway projects complete extension of the existing North Sydney to Mosman cycleway to connect with Neutral Bay. Future extension of the cycle connection would be facilitated by the relocation of the existing pedestrian crossing at Military Road to align with Young Street Plaza and May Gibbs Place, which is provided as part of the B-Line public domain improvements. The cycleway would then continue along Barry Street to connect with a planned cycleway along Yeo Street.



Figure 2-16: Artist impression of Young Street Cycleway at the Grosvenor Street intersection

Due to the prioritisation of Military Road for regional through traffic, the local streets and laneways throughout Neutral Bay town centre must cater for the majority of local vehicular access and circulation needs – including parking, loading, and servicing. Combined, this has created a vehicle-dominated public domain throughout the town centre, one where pedestrian needs and comforts are largely marginalised. This condition is confirmed by feedback from the community consultation process thus far.

While on-street parking and access to shops are key community concerns, there is also a strong desire for public domain improvements throughout the town centre. Community and stakeholder consultation for the current *Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study* found:

- 80% of respondents considered more trees and landscaping to be important or very important
- 74% considered comfort for pedestrians to be important or very important

- 70% considered additional public spaces to be important or very important

The *Military Road Corridor Planning Study – Stage 1: Future Directions* report (2021; rescinded 2022) included a strategy for transport and public domain improvements to address the dominance of motorised vehicles throughout Neutral Bay town centre. The strategy includes:

- Improved pedestrian amenity, especially along Military Road
- Improved intersections to support pedestrian and cyclist connections
- More shared zones, including streetscape upgrades that improve the pedestrian and cyclist experience
- More public open spaces

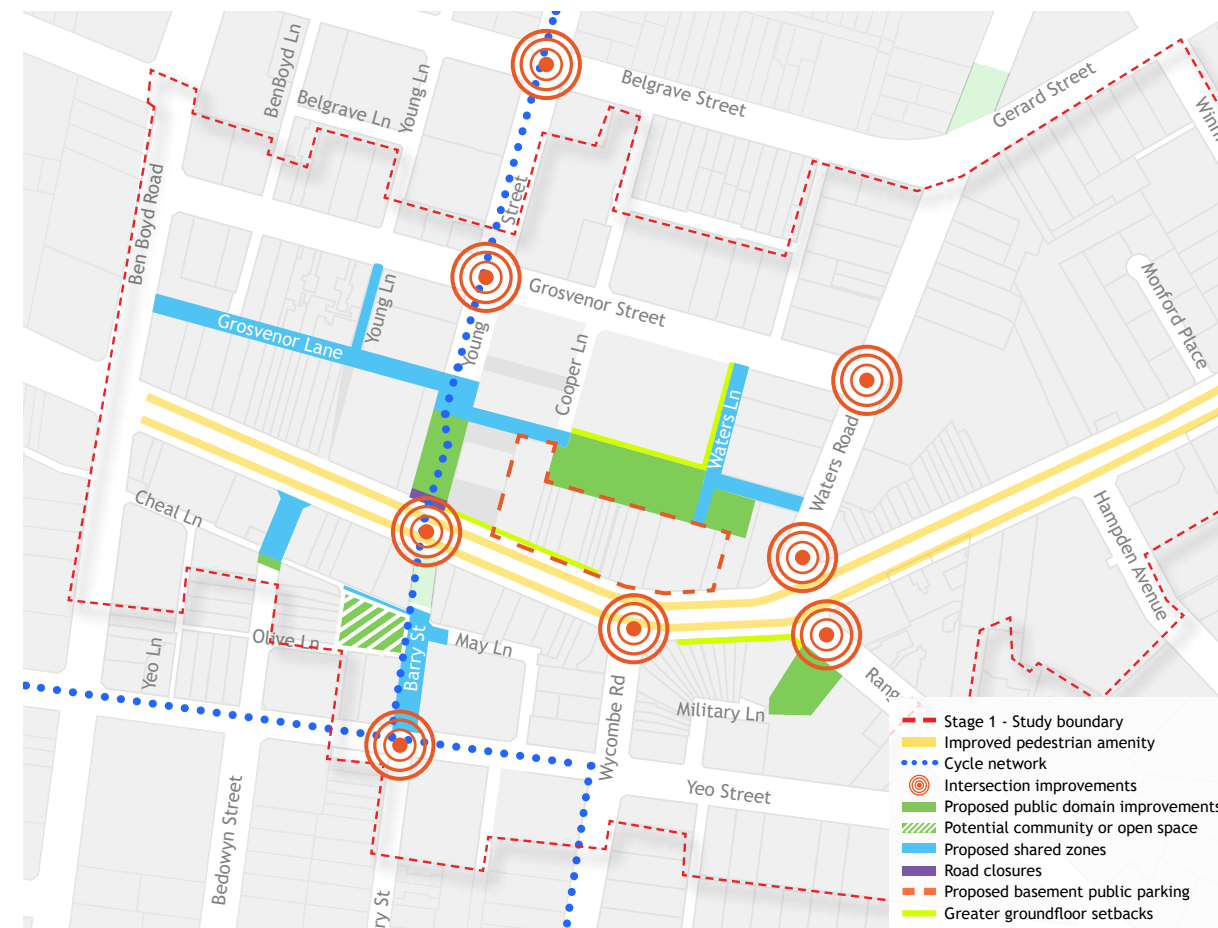


Figure 2-15: Future transport and public domain improvements for pedestrians and cyclists (MRCPS)



Figure 2-17: Mature avenue of Plane trees along Waters Lane

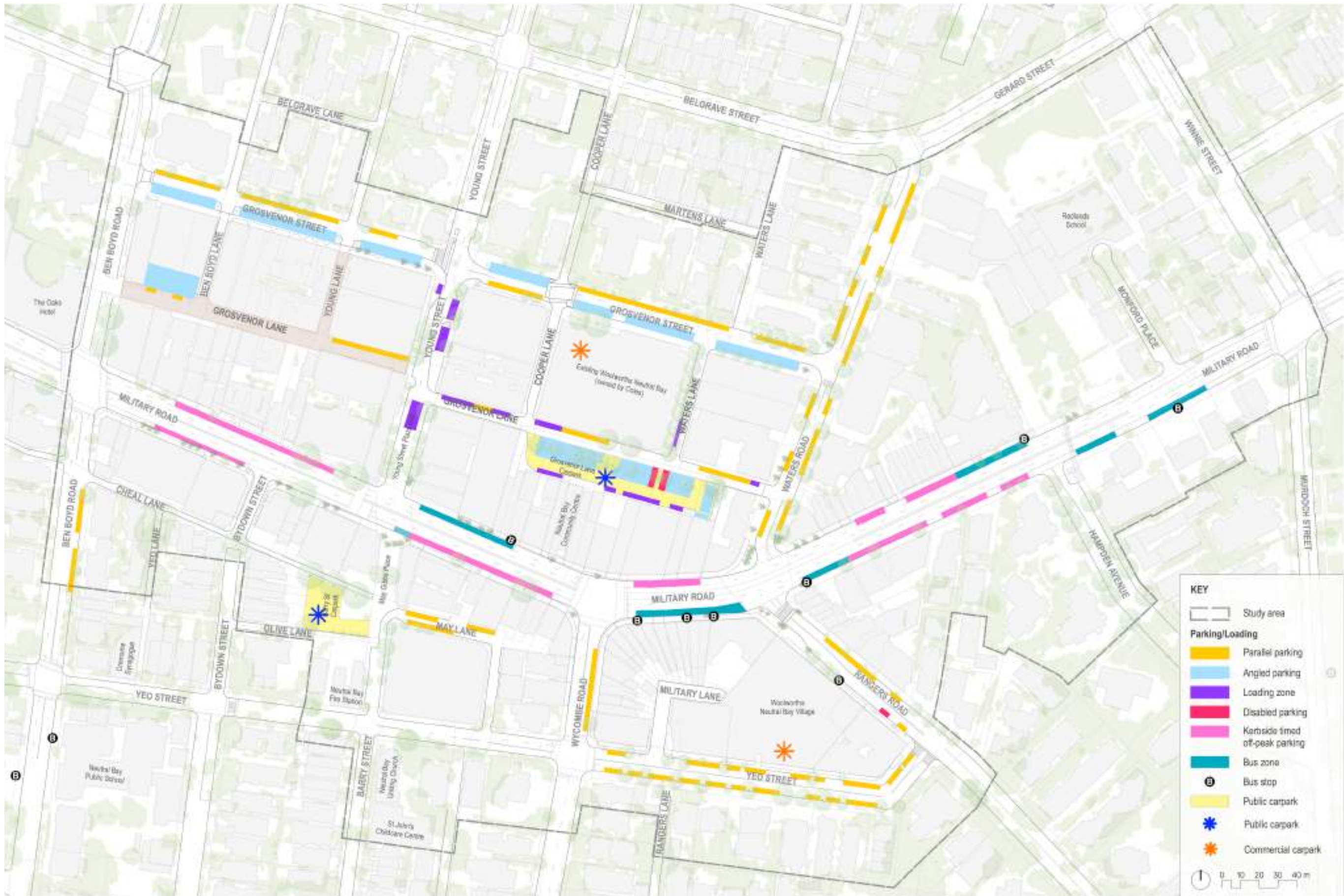


Figure 2-18: Parking, loading and servicing

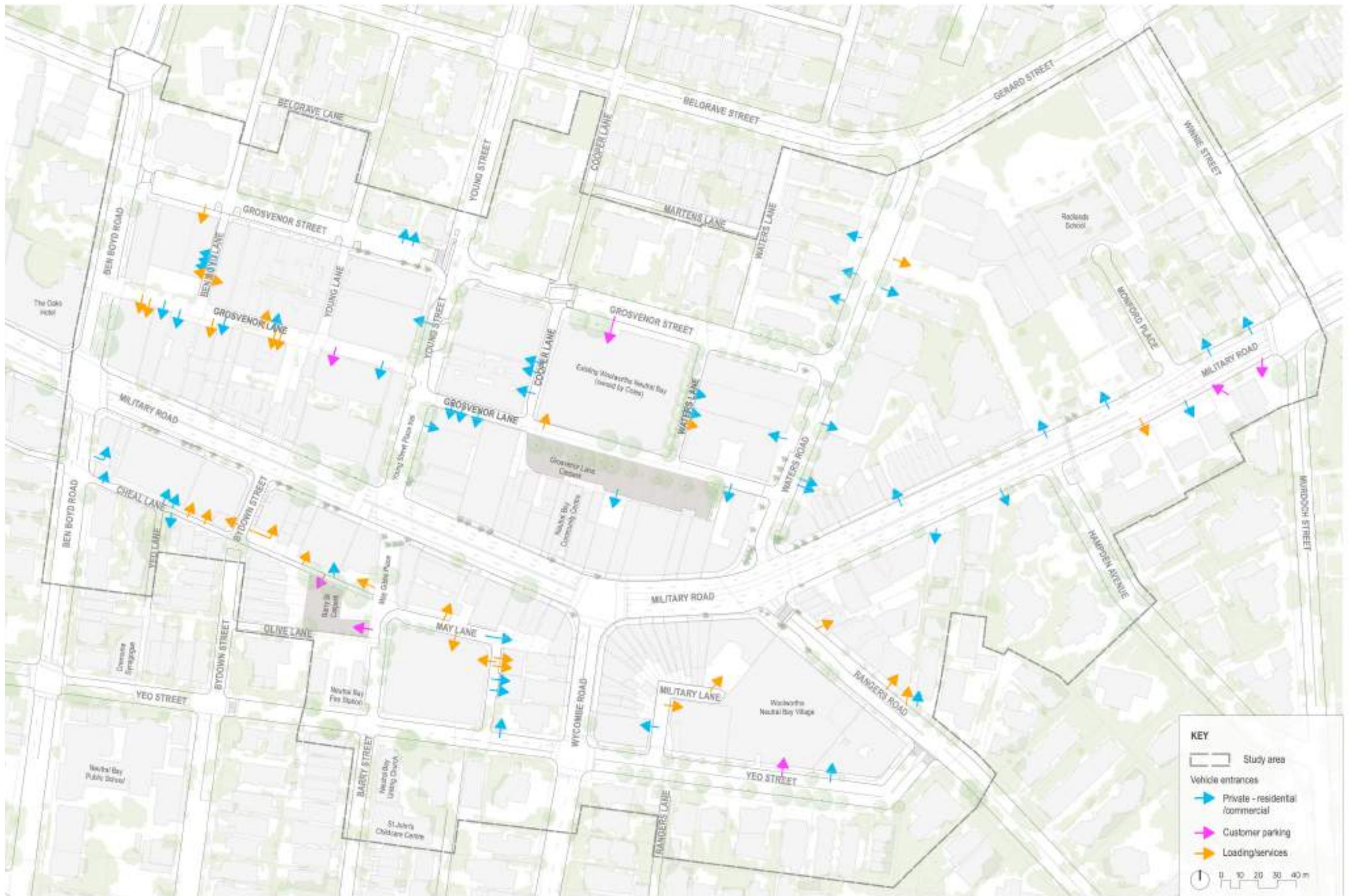


Figure 2-19: Vehicular access to properties

2.7 ENVIRONMENTAL COMFORT

Street trees and planting make a significant contribution to the visual character and sense of comfort within a streetscape. While there are substantial mature street trees and planting to be found in the local streets throughout Neutral Bay town centre, urban redevelopments and the Northern Beaches B-Line project have resulted in accelerating canopy loss in recent years. Community consultation for *Military Road Corridor Planning Study – Stage 1: Future Directions* report (2021; rescinded 2022) revealed that 77% of survey respondents wanted more trees and vegetation. Similarly, community and stakeholder consultation for the current *Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study* found that 80% of respondents considered more trees and landscaping to be important or very important.

Despite the presence of some large plane trees and palm trees, Military Road has significantly less canopy coverage than the surrounding local streets. The main instances of prominent 'green' within the Military Road streetscape occur at intersections, where the large canopies of existing trees within the local streets are visible. The paucity of street trees and planting along Military Road exacerbates the uncomfortable pedestrian environment created by the six lanes of regional through traffic. Not only are the footpaths directly adjacent to heavy moving traffic with little to no respite provided by roadside planting or parking, the scarcity of planting along Military Road has exacerbated the heat island effect – as temperatures experienced along the main street are higher than those experienced in the surrounding local streets.

Typically, the presence of building awnings restrict the planting of street trees. However, the presence of awning cut-outs along create the opportunity to easily reinstate tree canopy cover within the town centre, particularly along Military Road and Grosvenor Street, where trees had previously been removed.

Figure 2-20: Urban heat island effect

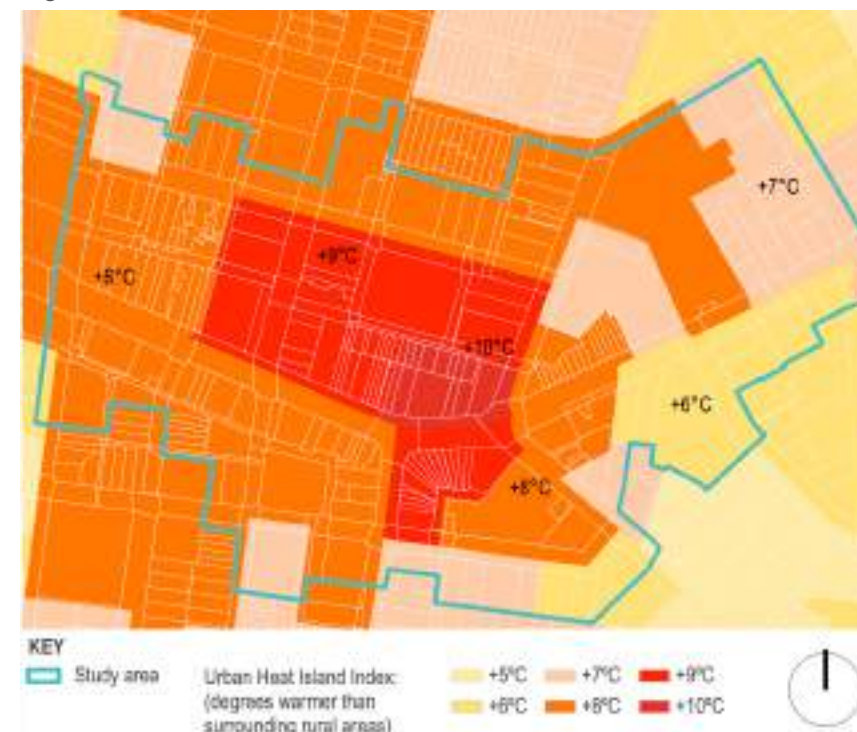


Figure 2-21: Existing tree cover

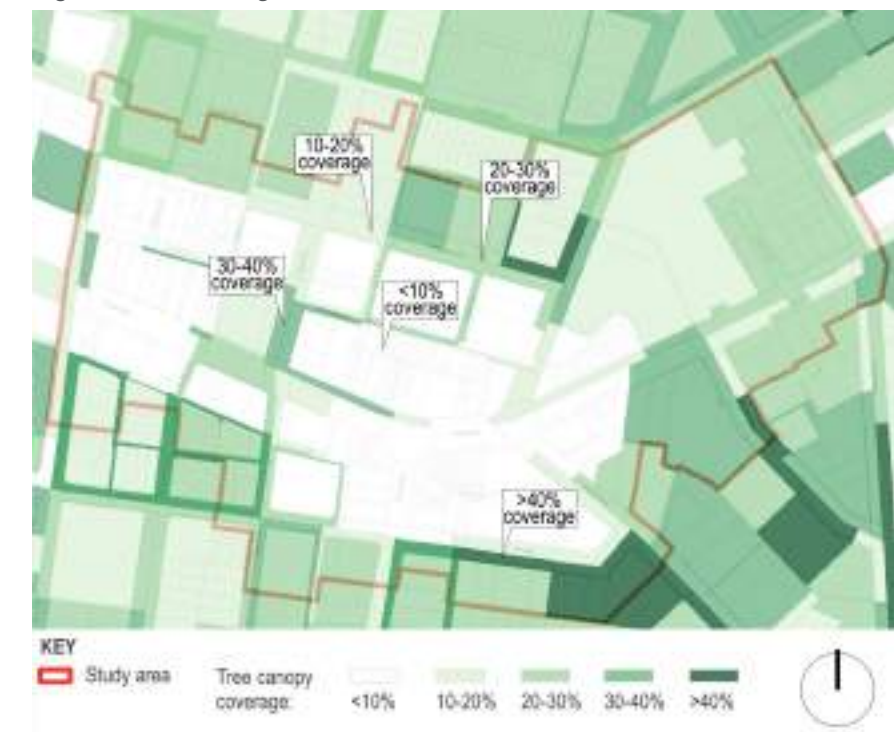


Figure 2-22: View of Young Street from Military Road

Figure 2-24: [right] Plane trees provide shade along Military Road

Figure 2-25: [centre] Palm tree at awning cutout on Military Road

Figure 2-26: [far right] awning cutout with no street tree on Military Road

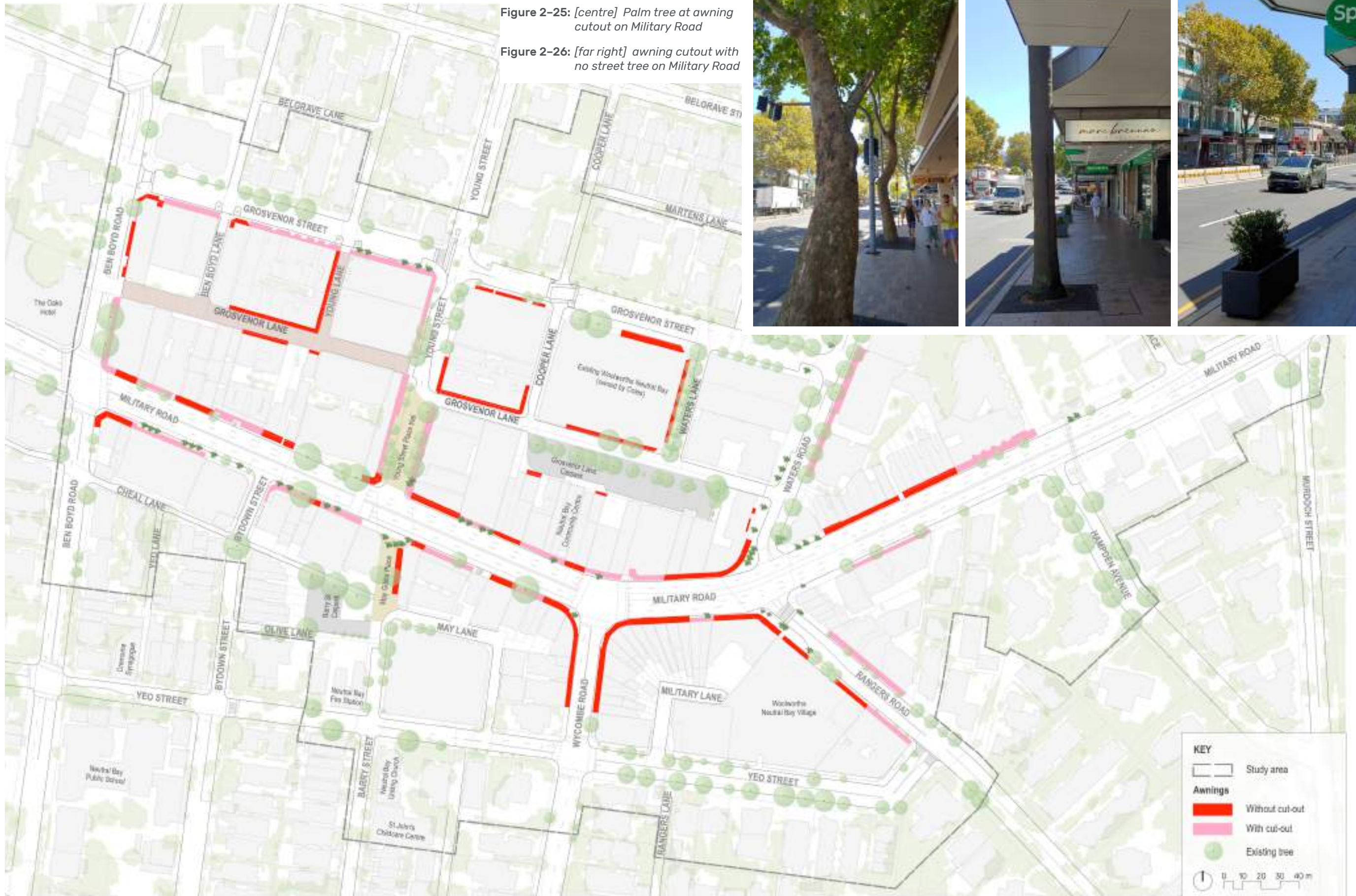


Figure 2-23: Existing street trees and awnings

2.8 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Neutral Bay Community Centre is a busy centre that plays an important role in the lives of many residents through the provision of:

- Valuable space for community activities, accommodating a regular weekly schedule of community dance classes, indoor sports, health discussions and self-help groups
- Initiatives and services for a range of groups including:
 - The Neutral Bay Senior Citizens Centre
 - The Daisy Centre for women's wellbeing

The community centre is located at 190-192 Military Road, which includes small retail tenancies at ground level and a narrow public pathway connecting Military Road to the Grosvenor Lane carpark. The laneway does not meet current accessibility standards. Access issues have also reduced the inclusiveness of Neutral Bay Community Centre, as some areas of the centre are inaccessible to wheelchair users and can be difficult to access for others. There is a clear need for an upgraded community centre to cater for the needs of the local community.

The community centre has minimal urban presence within the town centre, which does not reflect its civic and social importance within the local community. While prominent awning signage announces the location of the centre, this is only visible from the opposite (southern) side of Military Road across six lanes of heavy traffic. From along the northern footpath on Military Road, the community centre and laneway link have minimal visual presence within the busy streetscape. Similarly, the community centre has an unassuming presence facing the Grosvenor Street carpark. There is a clear need for improved wayfinding and a strong urban presence for the community centre within Neutral Bay's busy town centre.

The 'Community Centre for Neutral Bay Survey' conducted in May 2023 for the current *Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study* (NBTCPS) found that:

- 86% of respondents felt that a community centre in Neutral Bay is important or very important
- 86% of respondents felt that having the community centre situated on the Military Road to be important or very important
- The respondents' top three priorities for the community centre were:
 - Community rooms for activities such as special interest groups (e.g. arts, crafts, hobbies and educational)
 - Art and culture exhibition and workshop spaces
 - Outdoor space for wide range of events and activities

Furthermore, the North Sydney Council *North Sydney Council Arts & Cultural Strategic Plan 2019-2022* identified a need for more studio and

exhibition spaces to support local artists. The survey that underpinned the plan found that:

- 80% of participants identified the need for a dedicated art gallery or exhibition space in the area
- 70% recognised the need for local art studios.

Similarly, community feedback placed art, culture and creative event spaces as the second highest priority out of 25 strategic outcomes for the North Sydney Council *Community Strategic Plan 2018-2028*.

In support of the community's aspirations, the *Military Road Corridor Planning Study – Stage 1: Future Directions* report included a public domain strategy that proposed:

- Relocation of Neutral Bay community centre to a nearby location with larger floorspace for improved services. The planning study identified 185 Military Road as a potential site for a new 1,000 square metre Neutral Bay Community Centre, to be delivered as part of the site's redevelopment.
- A new creative makers art alley to be developed at 190-192 Military Road after the existing community centre is relocated. The art alley is intended to provide a mix of studio, exhibition and retail spaces for local artists, along with an improved public pedestrian connection between Military Road and the proposed new public square on the site of the existing Grosvenor Lane carpark.

Further planning investigations undertaken as part of the development of the NBTCPS have determined an alternative location for the new community centre. The new location would be on the southern side of Grosvenor Lane, as part of the redevelopment of properties along the northern side of Military Road. The new 1,000 square metre Neutral Bay Community Centre would have a prominent frontage to the new public plaza to be developed on the site of the Grosvenor Lane carpark. A supplementary community facility would be developed on the site of the existing community centre. The laneway connection between Military Road and Grosvenor Lane would be retained and upgraded to meet accessibility requirements.



Figure 2-27: Existing and proposed community centre sites



Figure 2-28: Community centre signage at Military Road entry



Figure 2-29: Community centre entry and public laneway



Figure 2-30: View of community centre from the southern side of Military Road

2.9 URBAN REDEVELOPMENT

Neutral Bay town centre is experiencing significant development pressure, with North Sydney Council receiving in recent years several proposals to redevelop land to heights that exceed the existing planning controls. In response to this pressure, Council initiated a planning study to examine how the redevelopment interest could be managed in the best interests of the local community.

The *Military Road Corridor Planning Study – Stage 1: Future Directions* report (adopted 2021; rescinded 2022) put forward planning strategies that aimed to :

- Promote new development for future growth
- Facilitate public domain upgrades, new community facilities and public open spaces for the benefit of the local community
- Maintain and strengthen the highly valued village atmosphere of the Neutral Bay town centre.

To achieve these aims, the following planning control changes were proposed:

- An increase to the non-residential floor space (FSR) control from 0.5:1 to 1.2:1, which would effectively require retail uses on the ground level and commercial uses on the first floor of new buildings.
- An increase to the maximum height limit from 5 storeys to 6 storeys, to accommodate the additional commercial floor space while

maintaining existing residential capacity in the town centre, and to ensure redevelopment is economically viable

- New building setbacks at key locations along Military Road and near public open space to create room for new street trees, widen footpaths and improve the public domain.

The planning study also proposed to leverage additional density increases (via increased FSRs or building heights) to derive public benefits through voluntary planning agreements (VPAs) . These can take the form of a monetary contribution, dedication of land or an in-kind contribution. The study focussed on three key redevelopment sites for in-kind VPA contributions – whereby maximum building heights and non-residential FSRs could be increased through owner-initiated planning proposals for the subject sites in exchange for public domain improvements, new public open spaces and new community facilities. The three key sites identified were:

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

Further planning investigations undertaken as part of the development of the *Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study* have identified additional redevelopment opportunities that have expanded the proposed key redevelopment sites. Additionally, the proposed built form controls have been updated as part of the planning study revisions. The proposed key development sites are summarised below.

Site 1: Grosvenor Lane North

Site 1 is located at 43–51 Grosvenor Street and is currently occupied by a large supermarket with entrances on both Grosvenor Street and Grosvenor Lane. The planning strategy allows for Council to consider planning proposals that seek to:

- Increase the height limit on this site to a maximum of 8 storeys along Grosvenor Street, stepping down to 2 storeys along Grosvenor Lane
- Improve solar access to Grosvenor Lane through the combination of a 1.5 metre whole of building setback and a 10 metre above podium setback along the southern edge of the site.
- Facilitate the creation of a major new public square on the site of the existing Grosvenor Street Carpark, with a 1.5 metre building setback increasing the available space for the new square and the stepped building envelope enabling more solar access to the new square
- Upgrade Waters Lane with an additional 4 metre building setback to facilitate traffic movement changes and improve the pedestrian experience



Figure 2–32: Heritage building at 194–196 Military Road, adjacent to the existing community centre

- Includes a new 1000 square metre community centre and contribution towards Grosvenor Plaza public domain improvements.

Site 2: Grosvenor Lane south

Site 2 is an amalgamation of multiple lots located along the northern side of Military Road between Young Street and Waters Road. The site currently supports multiple local shops and businesses, and includes the through site links at: the existing Neutral Bay Community Centre, Theo's Arcade and The Grove shopping centre. The building at 194–196 Military Road is a local heritage item and will be retained, splitting Site 2 into two portions. The planning strategy allows for Council to consider planning proposals that seek to:

- Increase building heights to a maximum of 8 and 12 storeys in designated areas within the subject site
- Relocate the Grosvenor Lane public parking underground, and deliver:
 - A new Grosvenor Lane public plaza
 - Through site links that provide generous pedestrian connections between the new Grosvenor Lane square and Military Road
 - A new creative makers art alley, including a mix of studio, exhibition and retail spaces, on the Neutral Bay Community Centre site after the existing centre is relocated
 - Public parking for cars and bicycles



Figure 2–31: Key redevelopment sites

- Increase footpath space along the northern side of Military Road with the following building setbacks:
 - 2.5 metre whole of building setback along Military Road between Young Street and the heritage building at 194-196 Military Road, to create additional space alongside the B-Line bus stop
 - 1.5 metre whole of building setback along Military Road between the heritage building at 194-196 Military Road and Waters Road.

Site 3: Rangers Road

Site 3 is an amalgamation of multiple lots located along the southern side of Military Road between Wycombe Road and Rangers Road, excluding: 155 Wycombe Road and 9 Rangers Road. The site has frontages on Military Road, Rangers Road and Yeo Street. The planning strategy allows for Council to consider planning proposals that seek to:

- Increase building heights to a maximum of: 12 storeys fronting Military Road, 8 storeys at Rangers Road and 6 storeys at Yeo Street
- Relocate the existing supermarket on Rangers Road underground and deliver a new 1000 square metre public plaza fronting Rangers Road, including a through site pedestrian link between the plaza and Yeo Street
- Increase footpath space along the southern side of Military road alongside the B-Line bus stop with a 2.5 metre whole of building setback between Wycombe Road and Rangers Road.

The planning control changes proposed in the *Military Road Corridor Planning Study* are currently under review, due to Council's decision to rescind its previous endorsement of the study and its recommendations. The rescission was in response to community concerns over the height and scale of redevelopment that would be allowable under the proposed planning control changes. Nonetheless, the public domain upgrades proposed in the study—including the creation of new public open spaces, improvements to pedestrian amenity and connectivity, and improvements to the Military Road environment—were strongly supported by the community. It is the potential public domain improvements that would be made possible by planning control changes that the present public domain concept seeks to develop.



Figure 2-35: Proposed building setbacks

3 PUBLIC DOMAIN VISION & DESIGN PRINCIPLES

PUBLIC DOMAIN VISION

The vision that guides the development of the public domain concept for Neutral Bay town centre is:

A pedestrian friendly town centre with a lively local village atmosphere, inviting and green public open spaces, and comfortable access to shopping, dining and community services.

This vision responds to:

- Existing site conditions
- An understanding, gained through prior community and stakeholder consultation outcomes, of:
 - The community's issues with the existing public domain
 - The qualities of the town centre that are highly valued by the community
 - The community's needs and aspirations for the future public domain throughout Neutral Bay town centre
- Opportunities for public domain improvements enabled by urban redevelopment, as identified through prior planning studies documented in the *Military Road Corridor Planning Study – Stage 1: Future Directions* report (2021; rescinded 2022).

PUBLIC DOMAIN AIMS

To achieve the public domain vision for Neutral Bay town centre, the following public domain aims have been identified:

- To retain and enhance the much valued village atmosphere of Neutral Bay town centre
- To increase pedestrian amenity, accessibility and safety throughout the town centre
- To increase the quantity, and improve the quality, of public spaces throughout the town centre – including footpaths, shared zones, through site links, and open spaces
- To improve pedestrian amenity along Military Road to help mitigate the impacts of heavy traffic on the street environment
- To encourage more walking and cycling for the associated public health benefits, and to reduce road congestion throughout the town centre
- To enhance the social and cultural life of Neutral Bay with more spaces to gather, rest, socialise and participate in community events.

PUBLIC DOMAIN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following design principles have been developed to support the public domain vision and aims:

- Prioritise pedestrian needs, connectivity and comfort throughout the Neutral Bay town centre
- Increase the amount of space for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the public domain – via footpath expansions, more shared zones, and through site links
- Retain existing canopy trees wherever possible
- Increase the amount of canopy trees throughout the town centre, particularly along Military Road
- Increase the amount of landscape planting throughout the public domain
- Maintain and create physical connections between public spaces to facilitate a pedestrian friendly local town centre
- Ensure clear visual connections between public spaces, and to local landmarks within Neutral Bay town centre, to maximise the legibility of the public domain and to assist with intuitive wayfinding
- Celebrate local history and culture in the design of new public spaces and public domain upgrades.

4 CONCEPT DESIGN

The Neutral Bay town centre public domain concept design has been guided by the public domain vision, aims and principles identified above. The public domain concept includes and expands upon the recommendations of the public domain strategy put forward in the *Military Road Corridor Planning Study – Stage 1: Future Directions* report (MRCPS) (2021; rescinded 2022), namely:

- A new 2,500 square metre public square situated in the heart of Neutral Bay town centre, on the existing Grosvenor Lane carpark site
- A new 1,000 square metre public plaza on Rangers Road, situated on the site of the existing supermarket and 183-185 Military Road
- A new Neutral Bay community centre with increased space for community services and improved accessibility for all members of the community
- Enhanced through site pedestrian links, including:
 - three existing links that connect Grosvenor Lane and Military Road with potential relocation and upgrade, and
 - a new pedestrian laneway (Yeo Lane) to connect Rangers Road and Yeo Street via the new Rangers Road plaza
- Footpath widening on Military Road near B-Line bus stops, enabled by increased building setbacks at redevelopment sites, to allow more space for pedestrian activity and public domain enhancements – particularly street trees
- New shared zones and associated public domain upgrades on Grosvenor Lane, Waters Lane, Barry Street and Bydown Street.

The public domain concept also explores additional interventions and strategies to further enhance the public domain experience throughout Neutral Bay town centre, including:

- Military Road streetscape upgrades to improve pedestrian amenity, landscape quality and overall village character
- Improved pedestrian crossings on Military Road
- A network of public open spaces

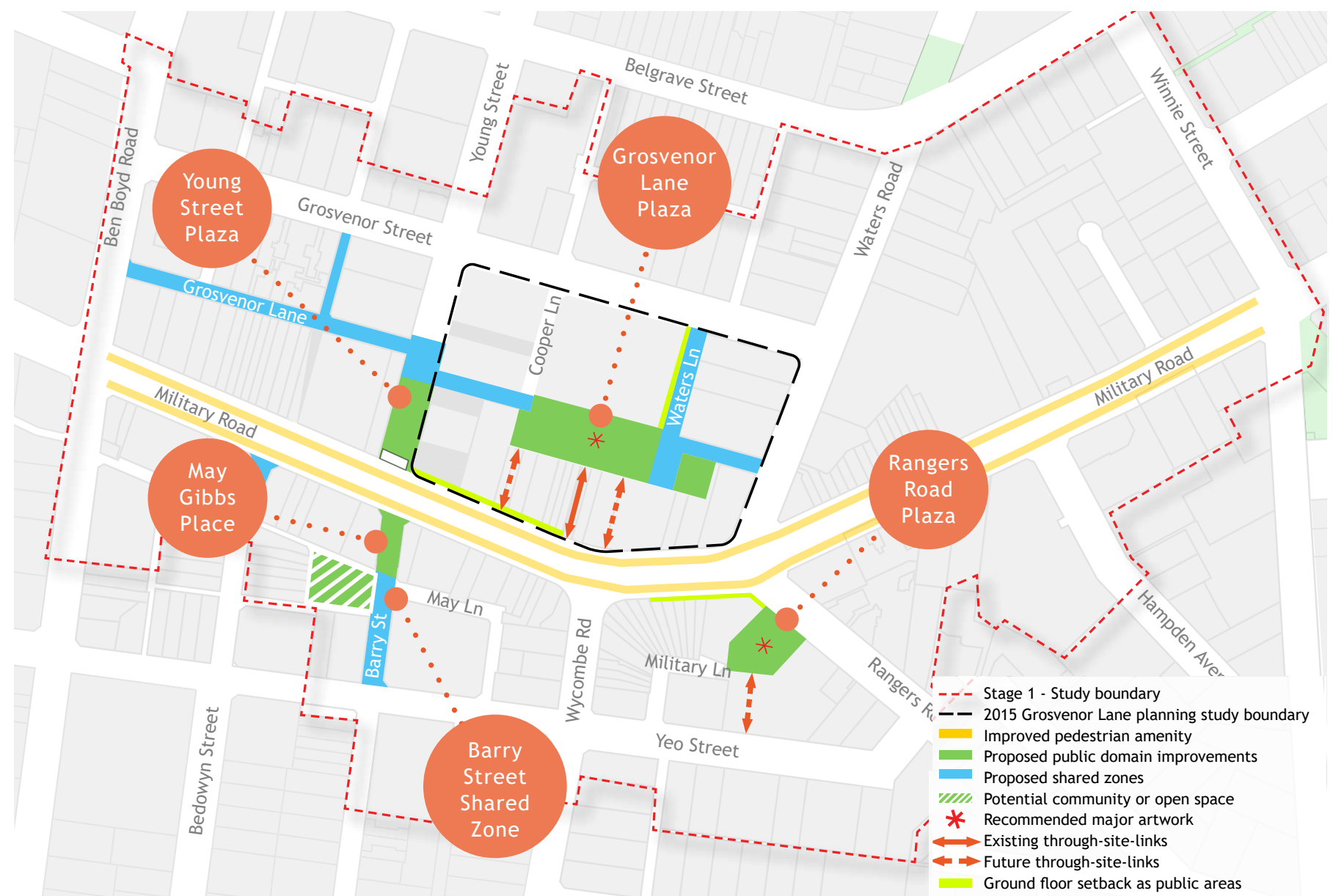


Figure 4-36: Public domain strategy – Military Road Corridor Planning Study

4.1 NEUTRAL BAY TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC DOMAIN PLAN



4.2 MILITARY ROAD STREETSCAPE UPGRADES

The regional traffic function of Military Road has created a street environment that is inhospitable to pedestrians, characterised by:

- Six lanes of heavy through traffic
- Footpaths located directly adjacent to the constant flow of traffic in the kerbside lanes, with no measures to mitigate the impact of the traffic on the pedestrian environment
- Median barriers and fences that visually and physically reinforce the prioritisation of regional through traffic over local pedestrian amenity
- Limited opportunities for pedestrians to cross Military Road
- Intermittent street trees and no landscape planting along the footpaths.

There is a critical need to improve the street environment along Military Road to:

- Cater for pedestrian comfort and connectivity along and across Neutral Bay's main street
- Create an inviting public domain that supports local businesses and community experience
- Expresses a distinctive local village character along the Neutral Bay section of Military Road, for both pedestrians within the town centre and motorists who are passing through.

The following interventions are recommended to achieve a radically improved street environment along Military Road that focuses on pedestrian comfort, amenity and connectivity and expresses the local village character of Neutral Bay:

Street tree planting

Additional street tree planting along both sides of Military Road to infill gaps where street trees have previously been removed. As the new street trees would need to meet the clearance requirements of the double-decker B-Line buses, there are two possible approaches to species selection:

- Mature transplant of Plane trees to reinforce existing plantings. The trees would need to be specially grown and pre-pruned to achieve the required shape for bus clearance.
- Mature transplant of another tree species with a high spreading canopy to maximise the visual impact of tree cover within the streetscape. An ideal option would be Spotted Gum (*Corymbia maculata*), which would create a more native landscape character along Military Road.

Consideration should be given to replacing the existing palm trees with larger canopy trees, as they currently provide limited shade or visual prominence along Military Road.

The new street trees could be an immediate intervention, utilising infrastructure that already exists within the street – such as empty tree pits and awning cutouts. As redevelopments occur, additional street trees should be planted as infill to further enhance the avenue effect along Military Road.

Kerbside planting

Substantial continuous kerbside planting should be implemented along both sides of Military Road, to physically and experientially separate the footpaths from the fast-moving roadway, creating a sense of safety and respite within the pedestrian environment.

The Cleveland Street hedging project is a highly successful example of this approach. Completed in 2015, the project introduced kerbside hedges along both sides of a 2.3 kilometre stretch of Cleveland Street to create a continuous green corridor that links Victoria Park to Moore Park. The thick hedges have transformed the pedestrian experience along Cleveland Street, offering a sense of separation and respite from the busy roadway. The hedges have not impacted the functionality of the street; they are set back from the kerb with regular breaks for access to bus stops, pedestrian crossings, and parked cars outside of clearway restrictions. The hedges occupy the kerbside zone of the footpaths, which is rarely used for pedestrian movement and is typically occupied by street furniture and tree planting.

The kerbside planting could be implemented in the immediate to short term, as it is not dependent on other developments or projects.

Removal of median barriers and fences

The median barriers and fences on Military Road within Neutral Bay town centre should be removed to reduce the impression of urban and community severance created by heavy traffic on the town centre's main street.

The median barriers and fences could be implemented in the short term, following the introduction of kerbside planting. As demonstrated by the transformation of Cleveland Street, kerbside hedging can discourage pedestrians from crossing the road outside of designated crossing points. In contrast to median barriers and fences, the hedging can simultaneously provide pedestrian safety and, along with other streetscape improvements, create an inviting 'local village' atmosphere within the main street.

Footpath widening

The built form controls proposed by the *Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study* (NBTCPS) allow for the footpaths along Military Road to be widened to provide more space for pedestrian activity and public

domain enhancements. Creation of the widened footpaths would be enabled by:

- 1.5 metre whole of building setbacks at redevelopment sites
- 2.5 metre whole of building setback at redevelopment sites adjacent to the B-Line bus stops to facilitate the coexistence of waiting passengers with pedestrian through movement

The widened footpaths would be achieved incrementally over time as redevelopments occur.

Paving, street furniture and lighting

To achieve a unified visual expression to the streetscape, all new paving and street furniture shall be consistent with North Sydney Council's *Public Domain Style Manual and Design Codes* (2022).

Street lighting shall also comply with the style guide and design codes.. Consideration should also be given to the implementation of under awning atmospheric lighting to create an inviting village atmosphere that supports the local night-time economy.



Figure 4–37: Kerbside hedging along Cleveland Street, Surry Hills

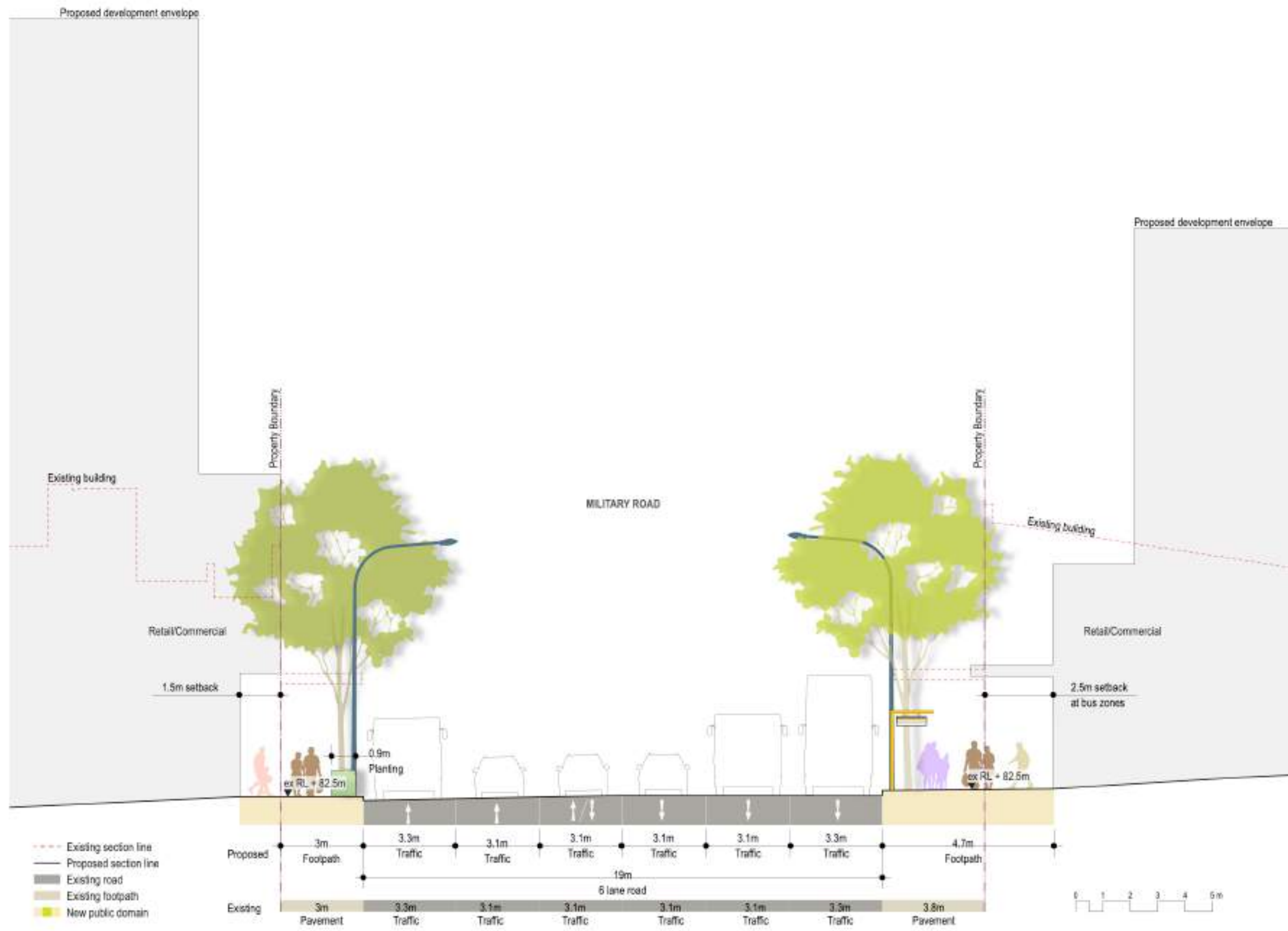


Figure 4-38: Proposed typical section through Military Road



Figure 4-39: Artist's impression of Military Road proposed improvements

4.3 IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING OPPORTUNITIES ON MILITARY ROAD

Improved pedestrian crossing opportunities will help to reduce the urban barrier effect of Military Road.

Young Street – Barry Street

The existing pedestrian crossing west of Young Street should be relocated to align with Young Street Plaza and May Gibbs Place. This opportunity was identified in the *Military Road Corridor Planning Study – Stage 1: Future Directions* study (MRCPS) (2021; rescinded 2022) and is funded by the NSW State Government as part of the B-Line impact mitigation measures.

The realignment of the Young Street crossing would also enable cyclists on the upcoming Young Street Cycleway to continue along Barry Street to connect with the planned cycleway extension along Yeo Street.

Rangers Road – Waters Road

An additional pedestrian crossing of Military Road is recommended on the western side of the Rangers Road/Waters Road intersection. The additional crossing would improve north-south pedestrian connectivity within the town centre, and create an easily accessible pedestrian connection between the new Rangers Road plaza and the new public square at Grosvenor Lane via both Waters Road and the nearby through site link on Military Road.

The new pedestrian crossing should strongly align with the new Rangers Road plaza, both physically and visually. This can be achieved by increasing the depth, and slightly modifying the orientation, of the ground level building setback at the redevelopment of 183–185 Military Road to create a clear line of sight from the northern side of Military Road, along the new pedestrian crossing to the new Rangers Road plaza.

As the proposed Rangers Road crossing is situated closer to the existing crossing at Wycombe Road than is typical, additional study is required to resolve the implications for traffic signalling on Military Road.



Figure 4-40: Pedestrian crossings on Military Road



Figure 4-41: View across Military Road from Rangers Road



Figure 4-42: View across Military Road from Waters Road

4.4 A NETWORK OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

There is a clear need for more public open spaces within Neutral Bay town centre. At present, there are only two: May Gibbs Place and Young Street Plaza.

Community engagement for the MRCPS found that:

- 70% of those surveyed identified 'beautiful public spaces' as the single most important issue for the future of the town centre
- 77% of respondents wanted more trees and vegetation
- 61% of respondents wanted improved plazas for outdoor activities

Additional community and stakeholder consultation for the current *Neutral Bay Town Centre Planning Study* (NBTCPs) found:

- 80% of respondents considered more trees and landscaping to be important or very important
- 70% considered additional public spaces to be important or very important

In response to this indisputable demand, a network of connected public open spaces is proposed to significantly increase the amount, variety, amenity and accessibility of public spaces within Neutral Bay town centre. The network consists of: public open spaces, shared streets and public through site links that are also coordinated with the upcoming and planned cycle connections.

Public open spaces

A series of public open spaces is proposed for Neutral Bay town centre, comprising a mix of existing, new and potential spaces including:

1. May Gibbs Place – currently the sole permanent public open space in Neutral Bay town centre
2. Young Street Plaza – a potential public plaza opportunity, with the current trial plaza upgraded to a permanent design with high quality finishes
3. Grosvenor Plaza – a new public plaza on the site of the existing Grosvenor Lane carpark
4. Rangers Road Plaza – a new public plaza created primarily on the site of the existing supermarket fronting Rangers Road
5. Bydown Street shared street – streetscape upgrade and conversion to a shared street environment between Cheal Lane and Military Road. This space was identified in the MRCPS
6. Barry Street Park – a potential new public open space and small community facility on the site of the existing Barry Street Carpark. This project was identified in the MRCPS and requires further investigation
7. Wycombe Road Plaza – a potential future public plaza on Military Road, created by the closure of Wycombe Road at Military Road. This would result in changes to vehicular access and circulation within Neutral Bay town centre, which would require further traffic planning investigations.



Figure 4-43: Public open space network and connections



Figure 4-44: View to Barry Street through May Gibbs Place at Military Road



Figure 4-45: Bydown Street at Military Road

Shared streets

A series of existing and new shared streets is proposed to link the public open spaces to each other and to the surrounding streets. Both shared streets and shared zones allow pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles to mix in a low speed (10km/h limit) environment. However, streets further prioritise the pedestrian experience through streetscape improvements such as continuous paving (with no separate road space), landscape planting, street tree planting and street furniture. The recent upgrade of Grosvenor Lane between Ben Boyd Road and Young Street, as well as Young Lane, is a good example of a successful shared street precinct.

In addition to the recently completed Grosvenor Lane shared street precinct, the following shared streets are proposed for Neutral Bay town centre:

- Grosvenor Lane between Young Street and Waters Road, an existing shared zone adjacent to the Grosvenor Lane public carpark. The section of Grosvenor Lane between Cooper Lane and Waters Lane would be accessible to emergency vehicles only, to maximise the amount of public space available for the new Grosvenor Square
- Waters Lane, an existing shared zone with an avenue of mature Plane trees along the western side of the laneway
- Barry Street between May Lane and Yeo Street, an existing shared zone that connects to May Gibbs Place
- Military Lane, a service lane that connects Yeo Street to the proposed Rangers Road Plaza

Consideration should also be given to creating shared streets at Ben Boyd Lane and Copper Lane to fully realise a pedestrian priority precinct between Grosvenor Street and Military Road.

Public through site links

There are currently three through site links that provide valuable public connections between the northern side of Military Road and Grosvenor Lane carpark, the proposed site of Grosvenor Plaza. Redevelopment of the properties between Military Road and the proposed Grosvenor Plaza provide the opportunity to upgrade these links to improve pedestrian amenity, make stronger connections between the main street and the new public square, and provide universal access for people with limited mobility, in accordance with current standards and best practice.

Through site links, as either laneways (open to the sky) or arcades (covered) also have the added benefit of providing more frontages for retail or other small businesses within the town centre. Consideration should also be given to providing additional through site links either end



Figure 4-46: Shared streets at the corner of Grosvenor Lane and Young Lane



Figure 4-47: Mature Plane tree avenue on Waters Lane



Figure 4-48: Narrow and steep laneway at Community Centre



Figure 4-49: Entrance to Theo's Arcade at Grosvenor Lane

of the new Grosvenor Plaza, to enhance activation through increased connectivity with the surrounding streets and public spaces, including:

- A link at the western end of Grosvenor Plaza that would connect with Young Street Plaza
- A link at the eastern end of the square that would connect with the corner of Military Road and Waters Road, aligning with the potential pedestrian crossing to Rangers Road and the proposed Rangers Road Plaza. This link is identified as a future opportunity that requires further investigation.

On the southern side of Neutral Bay town centre, a new through site link, in the form of a laneway, is proposed to connect the proposed Rangers Road Plaza to Yeo Street. Consideration should also be given to an additional through site links between Rangers Road Plaza and:

- The B-Line bus stop on Military Road, via Military Lane
- The potential future Wycombe Road Plaza, via Military Lane. This link is identified as a future opportunity that requires further investigation.

The case for a permanent Young Street Plaza

The temporary road closure and trial public plaza at Young Street should be made permanent, with a public domain upgrade that includes high quality finishes and new plantings as originally intended. The creation of a permanent Young Street plaza provides much needed additional public open space within Neutral Bay town centre, consistent with the community's expressed needs and aspirations for the town centre's public domain.

Young Street Plaza is an ideally located addition to the expanding network of public spaces within Neutral Bay town centre. The plaza has a strong visual presence on Military Road, courtesy of the large existing street trees (Plane trees) that provide much needed shade and a voluminous 'green' presence within the streetscape. The plaza is located directly opposite May Gibbs Place, which is currently the only public open space within Neutral Bay town centre. The two spaces are connected across Military Road by the existing pedestrian crossing on the western side of Young Street, which is proposed to be relocated and realigned to directly connect the two public spaces.

Furthermore, Young Street Plaza could become an integral part of a new pedestrian and cyclist spine that is developing along Young Street and Barry Street, with plans for a shared zone and streetscape upgrade on Barry Street and a cycleway that is under development on Young Street.



Figure 4-51: Current (temporary) Young Street Plaza



Figure 4-52: Artist impression of the original design for a permanent Young Street Plaza



Figure 4-50: Original design for a permanent Young Street Plaza

4.5 GROSVENOR PLAZA

The public domain strategy in the *Military Road Corridor Planning Study – Stage 1: Future Directions* report (MRCPS) (2021; rescinded 2022) recommended the development of a major new public space in the heart of Neutral Bay, on the site of the current Grosvenor Lane carpark. Key features of the proposed public square outlined in the MRCPS included:

- Relocation of the existing public parking in the Grosvenor Lane carpark into a parking facility in an adjacent redevelopment site. Access to the carpark is to be located on private land, with pedestrian access to be located at the edges of the square
- New landscape planting, paving, major artwork, on-street bicycle parking and street furniture
- Redirection of traffic through Waters Lane and Coopers Lane with sufficient manoeuvring space to turn large vehicles
- Preservation of good solar access to the public space through appropriate built form controls for the surrounding redevelopment sites
- Preservation of the natural slope of the land, avoiding stairs where possible to allow seamless connections between existing and future development. This also allows for deep soil opportunities
- Encouragement of fine grain active retail frontages and outdoor dining around the square
- The ability to host events, markets, food trucks within the public square.

Additional detailed design parameters and principles have been developed as part of the current public domain study to shape the proposed design for the square. These include:

- Retention of the existing trees wherever possible, to preserve the landscape character and provide shade within the new square. This requires preservation of the existing ground levels within the root/canopy zone of the existing trees and limiting any building works, especially excavation, to outside of this zone
- Provision of loading access to properties on the southern side of the new square. This access would be time limited (typically early morning) to allow for uninterrupted pedestrian activity during trading hours
- Provision of a small surface level carpark at the eastern end of Grosvenor Plaza, including 4 disable parking spaces and 6 parking spaces suitable for loading
- Provision of a 600 square metre Creative Hub
- Provision of 28 regional secured commuter bicycle parking spaces within the square.

The design proposal for Grosvenor Plaza delivers the above requirements and is also guided by the design principles established from the public domain vision and aims. Key features of the proposal include:

- Closure of **Grosvenor Lane** between Cooper Lane and Waters Lane, to maximise the amount of space available to for the public square. Vehicular access to this section of Grosvenor Lane would be limited to emergency vehicles only
- Relocation of the existing Grosvenor Lane **public parking** into an underground parking facility as part of the redevelopment of Site 1. Vehicular access to the underground parking would be located on Grosvenor Street. Pedestrian access would be located on the northern side of Grosvenor Plaza, combined with the customer parking access for the proposed ground floor supermarket in the Site 1 redevelopment, to create a **public lobby** to both the supermarket and the public square. The public lobby would be generously sized, have a clear frontage to the square, and be fully accessible to the public at all times
- Creation of a **shared street precinct** at Grosvenor Lane, Cooper Lane and Waters Lane to improve the pedestrian amenity of the laneways around Grosvenor Plaza. The laneway upgrades would include new paving, landscape planting, street tree planting and

street furniture. In the case of Waters Lane, the existing avenue of mature Plane trees is to be preserved

- Upgrade of the **three through site links** from Military Road to Grosvenor Plaza:
 - The central alleyway associated with the current community centre would be retained and upgraded as a 3 metre wide laneway (open air) connection that meets accessibility standards
 - The link to the west would be upgraded as part of the redevelopment of Site 2 (west). This link would be a 6 metre wide laneway (open air) connection aligned with Cooper Lane. Due to the significant level difference between Military Road and Grosvenor Plaza in this location, a public lift would be required to provide access for people with limited mobility
 - The link to the east would be upgraded as part of the redevelopment of Site 2 (east). This link would be a 6 metre wide laneway (open air) connection aligned with Waters Lane and upgraded to meet accessibility standards
- Potential **additional through site links** to further improve connections between Grosvenor Plaza and the surrounding streets and public spaces:



Figure 4-53: Example of a shared street at Wulaba Park, Waterloo



Figure 4-54: Shared street at Hatbox Place, Wulaba Park, Waterloo

Figure 4-55: Grosvenor Plaza plan



- An additional laneway connection could be developed between Grosvenor Plaza and Young Street Plaza as part of the redevelopment of Site 2 (west)
- An additional arcade connection could be developed at the eastern end of Grosvenor Plaza as part of the redevelopment of Site 2 (east). The arcade would connect to the corner of Military Road and Waters Road, in line with the potential new pedestrian crossing to Rangers Road and the proposed Rangers Road Plaza. This connection is identified as a future opportunity that requires further investigation
- A new **Neutral Bay Community Centre** located adjacent to the new Waters Lane through site link. The community centre would be a 1,000 square metre space located on the first floor of the new development at Site 2 (east), with a lobby on the ground floor facing Grosvenor Plaza.
The new community centre is to be designed with a strong visual presence to Military Road and Grosvenor Plaza, as befits its civic and community importance to the local community. Located prominently at the corner of the building and facing both Grosvenor Plaza and the new laneway, the lobby is designed to be visually transparent and inviting.
The lobby would include access to the library on the first floor, as well as accessible public toilets for community use
- A new secondary community facility developed as a '**Creative Hub**' on the site of the existing community centre. The new facility would provide a mix of studio, exhibition and retail spaces for local artists, as identified in the MRCPS. Additionally, it would also include spaces for tech-related short courses.



Figure 4-56: Village green at The Canopy, Lane Cove

- A **public terrace** along the southern side of the square, which supports outdoor dining, accessibility for people with limited mobility, and timed loading to the adjacent retail frontages
- An **urban terrace** along the northern side of the square, within the Grosvenor Lane road reserve and adjacent to the proposed supermarket on the ground floor of the Site 1 redevelopment. The urban terrace would include paving, planting and seating to create a welcoming public interface between Grosvenor Plaza and the adjacent public lobby to the underground carpark
- An expansive **village green** with existing trees and lawn areas to provide flexible spaces for passive recreation, markets and community events
- A **children's playground** with interactive sculptural play elements that cater for a wide range of ages. The play elements offer an opportunity for collaborative design with public artists
- A **community hub**, including parking for notionally 28 bicycles and a small cafe located under architecturally designed weather canopies. The community hub is prominently located adjacent to the new community centre, in the paved space between Waters Lane and the new through site link. Designed as beautiful park structures, the cafe and canopies provide an architectural landmark and flexible under cover space for outdoor dining, public gatherings and community events
- A major new **public artwork** to be commissioned by Council. The artwork would be prominently located near the new community centre.



Figure 4-57: Terrace adjacent to village green at The Canopy, Lane Cove



Figure 4-58: (top) Centennial Park cafe and bike hub

Figure 4-59: (above) Surry Hills Library and adjacent park

Figure 4-60: Grosvenor Plaza detailed plan

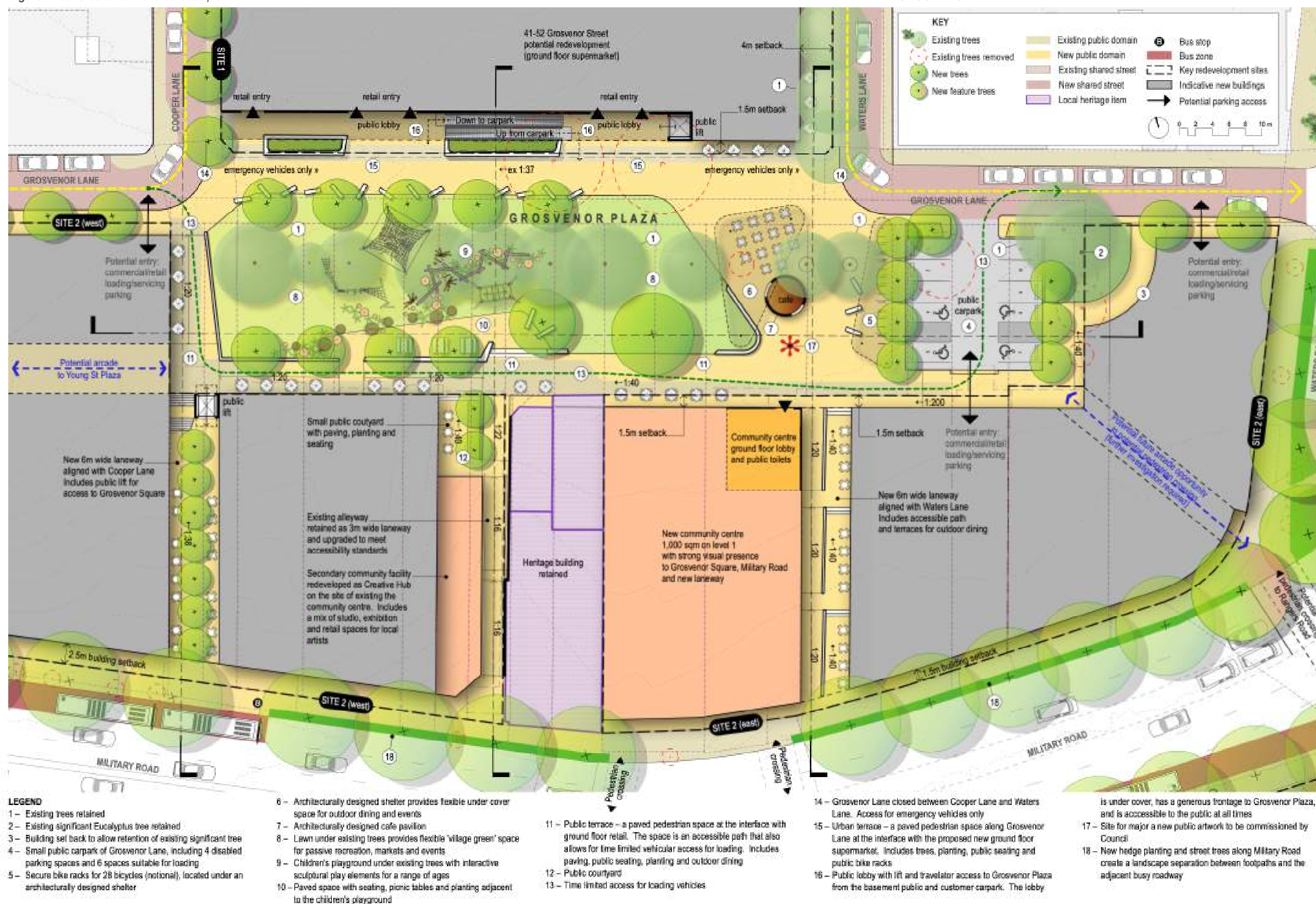




Figure 4-63: Long section-elevation through Grosvenor Plaza



Figure 4-64: Playground at The Canopy, Lane Cove



Figure 4-65: Playground at Jubilee Park, Glebe



Figure 4-66: Playground at Braithwaite Park, WA



Figure 4-67: Artist's impression of proposed Grosvenor Plaza, looking west along Grosvenor Lane urban terrace towards Cooper Lane



Figure 4-68: Little Hay Street, Sydney



Figure 4-69: Hardware Lane, Melbourne

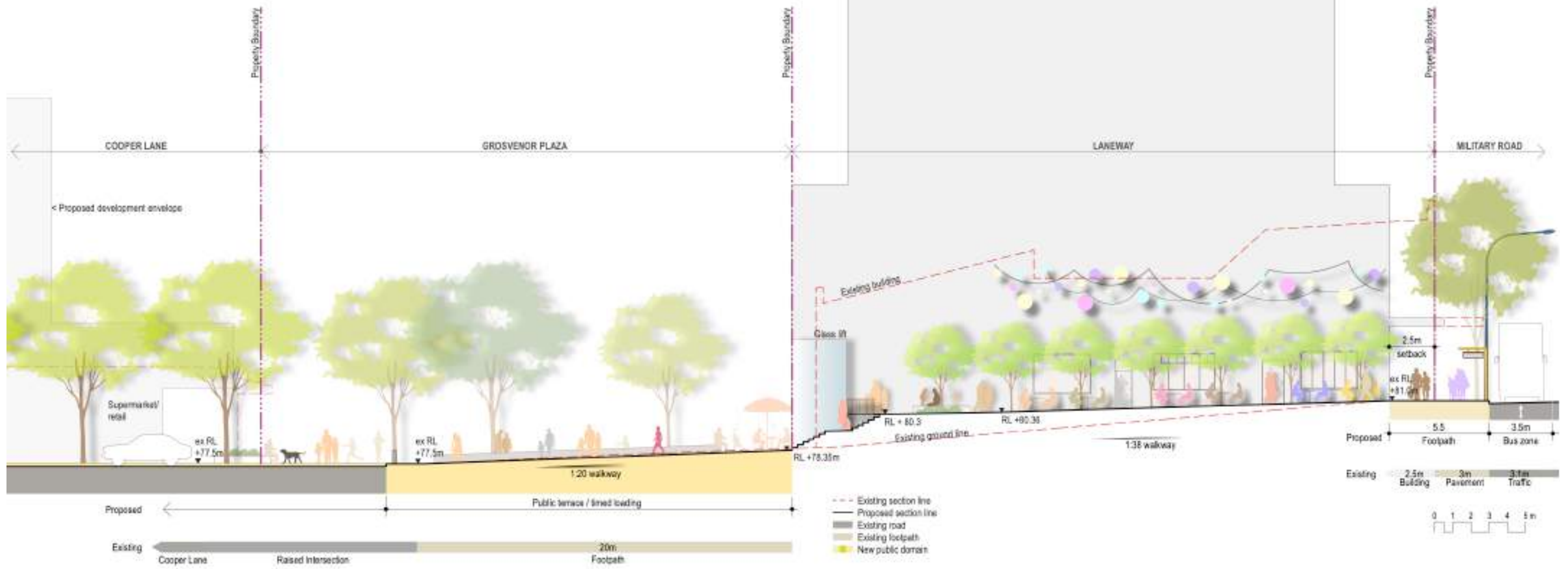


Figure 4-70: Long section-elevation of Cooper Lane through site link



Figure 4-71: 'Between two worlds' public artwork by Jason Wing, Kimber Lane, Sydney



Figure 4-72: Long section-elevation of Creative Hub laneway – through site link upgrade at the former community centre site



Figure 4-73: Steam Mill Lane, Sydney



Figure 4-74: Long section-elevation of Waters Lane through site link



Figure 4-75: Artist's impression of proposed Grosvenor Plaza, looking south from public carpark lobby towards new community centre and through site link aligned with Waters Lane

4.6 RANGERS ROAD PLAZA

The public domain strategy in the *Military Road Corridor Planning Study – Stage 1: Future Directions* report (MRCPS) (2021; rescinded 2022) made recommendations for a new public open space on Rangers Road near the corner of Military Road – primarily on the site of the existing supermarket, which would be relocated underground.

Key features of the proposed public plaza outlined in the MRCPS included:

- Relocation of the existing supermarket underground, to enable the creation of a 1,000 square metre public plaza that has good year-round solar access
- A through site link, in the form of a laneway (open air) from the new plaza to Yeo Street
- Active edges around the plaza for retail, cafes and outdoor dining. This includes a continuous line of fine-grain retail flowing into the space from Military Road
- Encouragement of alfresco dining and other late-night trading opportunities in the plaza
- Entries into the supermarket or underground parking integrated along the edges of the plaza to ensure the plaza is not encumbered by built form structures
- Landscaping planting, paving, major artwork, on-street bicycle parking and street furniture

The design proposal for Grosvenor Plaza delivers the above requirements and is also guided by the design principles established from the public domain vision and aims. Key features of the proposal include:

- Modification of the building setback at the corner of Rangers Road and Military Road to align with the proposed new pedestrian crossing of Military Road. The increased setback would be at the ground level only and would create a clear line of sight from the new Rangers Road plaza, along the new pedestrian crossing, to Waters Road on the northern side of Military Road
- Inclusion of an interactive playground catering primarily for young children. The playground set back from the street and well serviced by surrounding cafes and retail. It would include a decorative shade canopy and interactive sculptural play elements, including water

play elements, which offer an opportunity for collaborative design with public artists

- Creation of a shared zone and laneway upgrade at Military Lane to provide an additional pedestrian friendly connection to Rangers Road plaza. While Military Lane would retain its service and loading function, the creation of a shared street would also encourage the development of small ground floor tenancies that would further activate space while also offering greater diversity of retail and commercial space available within Neutral Bay town centre
- Potential for arcade through site links to Rangers Road Plaza via Military Lane as part of the redevelopment of Site 3. The arcades could connect to the B-Line bus stop on Military Road and the potential public plaza on Wycombe Road, providing further support for the activation of Military Lane. The latter connection is identified as a future opportunity that requires further investigation.



Figure 4-76: Duralya Square, Waterloo



Figure 4-77: Playground at Westfield Plenty Valley, Mill Park



Figure 4-78: Water play at Yagan Park, WA

Figure 4-79: Rangers Road Plaza plan



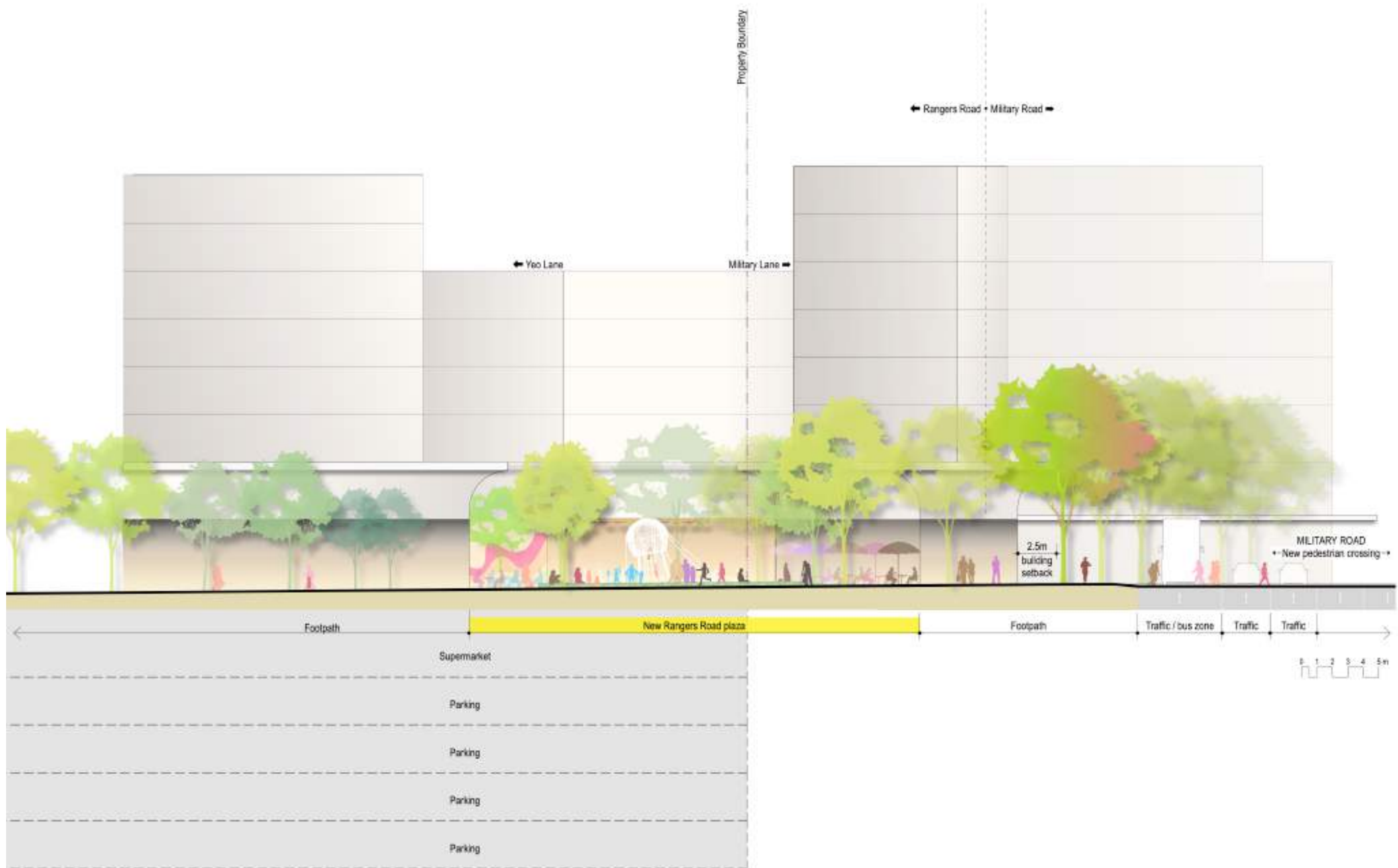


Figure 4-80: Elevation of Rangers Road Plaza from Rangers Road

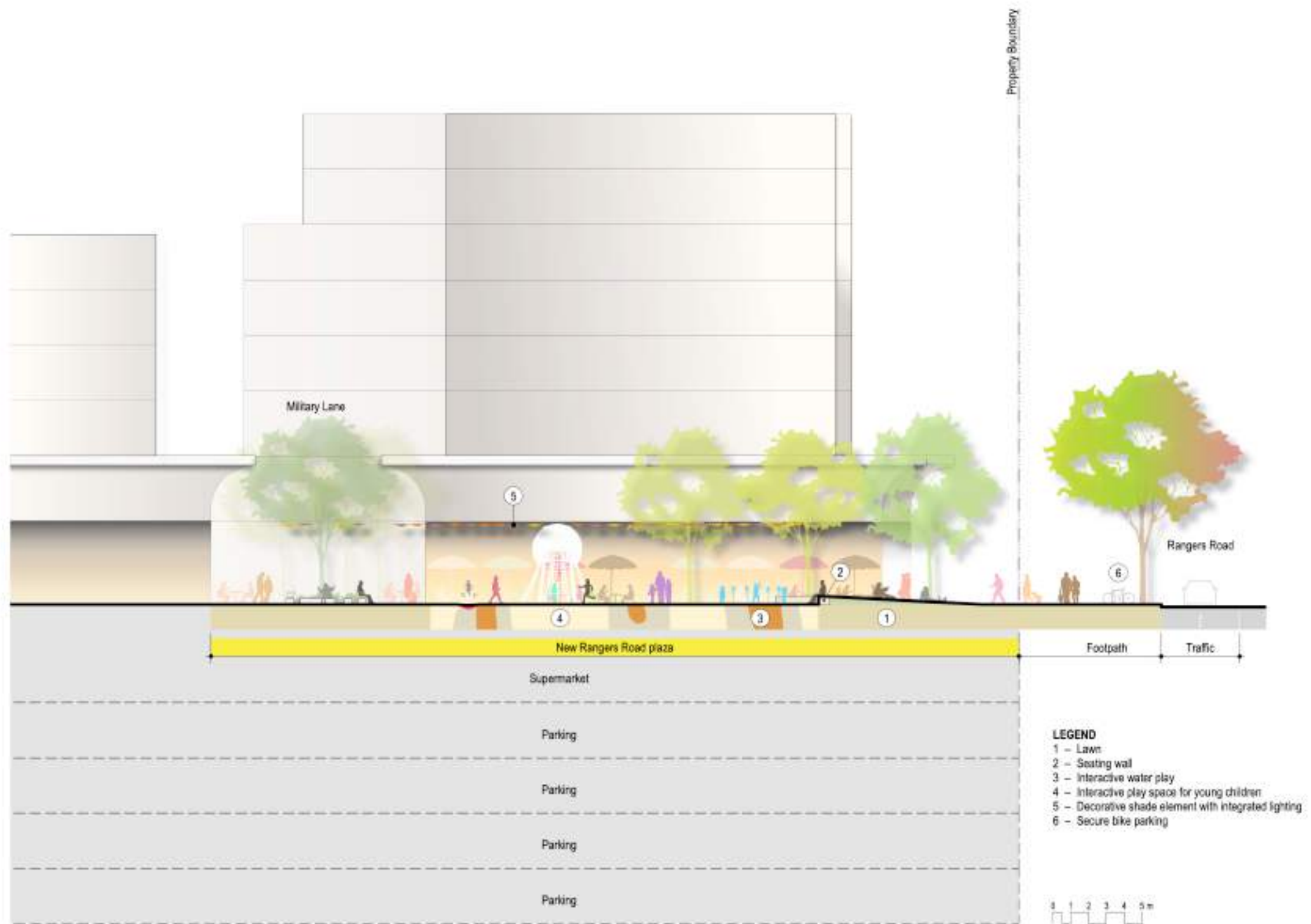


Figure 4-81: Cross section-elevation of Rangers Road Plaza

Figure 4-82: Rangers Road Plaza detail plan





- RANGERS ROAD PLAZA**
1. Flexible lawn space for passive recreation and community events
 2. Seating wall
 3. Water play space
 4. Interactive play
 5. Decorative shade element with integrated lighting
 6. Active retail frontage with outdoor dining
 7. Yeo Lane
 8. Military Lane
 9. Proposed development envelope

Figure 4-83: Artist's impression of Rangers Road Plaza, looking towards Yeo Lane and Military Lane







4.7 MATERIALS PALETTE

Neutral Bay town centre has a cohesive material palette in consistence with *North Sydney Public Domain Style Manual & Design Codes (NSPDSM&DC) (July 2022)*. The material palette proposed within this section of the Master Plan largely conforms with those assigned to village centres and open spaces in the *NSPDSM&DC*.

New materials and street furniture proposed will complement the existing ground plane, celebrate the local character of Neutral Bay and enhance the romance of the town centre perceived and cherished by the community.

Item		Material & Finishes
1	Kerb and gutter	Material: concrete Finish: finished with a steel trowel
2	Paving & kerb ramps - Footpath	North Sydney Standard Category 1 Paving Material: Precast concrete unit paver Finish: Honed
3	Paving & kerb ramps - Plaza	Material: Granite equal or equivalent to "Bruce" Rock (Austral Juperana) Finish: Exfoliated Pattern: Stretcher bond
4	Paving - Shared zone	Material: Precast concrete unit paver in charcoal colour Finish: Honed Pattern: Butt jointed, stretcher bond
5	Tree pit - Footpath	Material: Filtapave porous paving in cinnamon colour Edge treatment: Steel
6	Tree pit - Plaza	Material: City Green Invisigrade™ Tree Grate
7	Seating - Footpath	Material: Street Furniture Australia Bench Seat with back-ing
8	Seating - Plaza	Material: Precast concrete seating sub-construction mounted with Streetlife Wood Top System Finish: Reused hardwood
9	Rubbish bin	North Sydney Standard Bin Finish: Stainless steel
10	Bollard - retractable	Material: Leda Slimline Range automatic bollard Finish: Stainless steel
11	Bollard - fixed	Public art opportunity to design bollard in sculptural forms (example image only)
12	Bicycle rack	North Sydney Standard Bike Rack Material: Stainless steel
13	Handrail	Material: Stainless steel handrail tube shop welded to rods posts Finish: Satin/matt



14	Play equipment – Grosvenor Plaza	Material: - Natural materials: timber log, twig, rock, natural fibre rope, and mulch - Sculptural climbing tower: public art opportunity in design (example image only) - Rope Swing - Misting	
15	Play equipment – Rangers Road Plaza	Material: - Sculptural climbing tower: public art opportunity in design (example image only) - Trampoline - Springers - Carousel - Ground sprays	
16	Shading	Material: Shade structure mounted on cable system – public art opportunity to design pattern and finish (example image only)	
17	Bush-tucker garden	Material: corten steel round garden edging	
18	Cafe / pavilion	Material: - Timber Cladding - Perforated canopy	
19	Bike hub	Material: - Precast concrete	
20	Lighting	Material: - Pole top lighting - Linear lighting - Uplight - Solar fairy light - Catenary light - Lighting sculpture (public art opportunity)	
21	Car park	Material: Permeable paver	

4.8 PLANTING PALETTE

The proposed planting palette consists of a balanced mix of native and exotic species that contribute to increased canopy cover, climate resilience and well-shaded public spaces. Most of the native species chosen reinstate the remnants of Angophora Foreshore Forest and Disclimax Sandstone Scrub communities in Neutral Bay, as identified in *North Sydney Council Natural Area Survey 2010*.

Large native canopy trees, for example *Ficus rubiginosa*, are proposed to address urban heat island effect and the new climate futures. Meanwhile, the introduction of exotic canopy trees not only provide seasonal features, but also ensure the solar access of public spaces in winter time. Selected small shrubs and ground covers provide attractive visual amenity and enhances the 'village' feeling of Neutral Bay town centre.

Below is a representative planting palette for the concept master plan:

Common Name		Botanical Name	Height x Spread (m)
TREES			
1	Sydney Red Gum	<i>Angophora costata</i>	10 x 8
2	Golden Wattle	<i>Acacia longifolia</i>	4 x 3
3	Coachwood	<i>Ceratopetalum apetalum</i>	5 x 3
4	Red Bloodwood	<i>Corymbia gummifera</i>	8 x 5
5	Blueberry Ash	<i>Elaeocarpus reticulatus</i>	6 x 3
6	Maidenhair Tree	<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	15 x 8
7	Port Jackson Fig	<i>Ficus rubiginosa</i>	15 x 15
8	Jacaranda	<i>Jacaranda mimosifolia</i>	12 x 8
9	'Mt Fuji' Ornamental Cherry	<i>Prunus serrulata 'Shirotae'</i>	6 x 4
SMALL SHRUBS AND GROUND COVERS			
10	Flannel Flower	<i>Actinotus helianthi</i>	0.5 x 0.3
11	Dwarf She-oak	<i>Allocasuarina nana</i>	1 x 1
12	Sydney Boronia	<i>Boronia ledifolia</i>	0.8 x 0.8
13	Butterfly Bush	<i>Gaura lindheimeri</i>	1 x 1
14	Tick Bush	<i>Kunzea ambigua</i>	1.5 x 1.2
15	Lavender Avonview	<i>Lavandula stoechas Avonview'</i>	0.6 x 0.8
16	Crinkle Bush	<i>Lomatia silaifolia</i>	0.5 x 0.7
17	Carrot Top	<i>Platysace linearifolia</i>	1 x 1
18	Mexican bush sage	<i>Salvia leucantha</i>	1.2 x 1.2
19	Lavender Cotton	<i>Santolina chamaecyparissus</i>	0.5 x 0.6
20	Fan Flower	<i>Scaevola aemula</i>	0.1 x 0.4



A OPINION OF PROBABLE COST

Please note that SMM is not responsible for cost risks. We provide opinion of cost that is indicative of the scope in Draft Stage 2 Master Plan and is for planning purpose only. For more detailed and comprehensive cost estimates we advise our clients to plan and conduct their own market testing or engage the services of a Quantity Surveyor. Our opinions of cost do not claim to accurately reflect the impact of material pricing, salary increases and non-competitive tendering conditions.

PROJECT NAME		TOTAL AREA (sqm)	RATE per sqm	TOTAL (excl.GST)	CONTINGENCY [15% Design & Construction] (excl.GST)	TOTAL ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COST (excl.GST)	NOTES AND EXCLUSIONS
1	Grosvenor Lane Plaza	3410	\$3,500	\$11,935,000	\$1,790,250	\$13,725,250	<p>The indicative rates include all demolition, paving, minor service diversions raising/lowering pit lids, kerb modifications where required, all supply and install items such as furniture, planting and other features. Site grading drainage and walling included standard maintenance period included (6 months).</p> <p>Exclusions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any building works Waterproof treatment for underground car park Relocation of major services Modification or introduction of traffic signal Nightworks
1b	3 x Through site links	597	\$3,500	\$2,089,500	\$313,425	\$2,402,925	
1c	Cooper Lane	634	\$1,200	\$760,800	\$114,120	\$874,920	
1d	Waters Lane	596	\$1,200	\$715,200	\$107,280	\$822,480	
1e	Grosvenor Lane	966	\$1,200	\$1,159,200	\$173,880	\$1,333,080	
2a	Rangers Road Plaza, including Yeo Lane	1294	\$3,500	\$4,529,000	\$679,350	\$5,208,350	
2b	Rangers Road public domain	550	\$2,000	\$1,100,000	\$165,000	\$1,265,000	
2c	Military Lane public domain	876	\$1,200	\$1,051,200	\$157,680	\$1,208,880	
3	Military Road public domain	4800	\$2,000	\$9,600,000	\$1,440,000	\$11,040,000	