

## Neutral Bay Alive Consultation Group Feedback to Strategic Planning – 24 October 2023

Item	Issues for consideration	Feedback
1. Local centre character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do the overall proposed directions of the draft study support the desired future character of the Neutral Bay Town Centre? (e.g. village atmosphere, retail vitality, walkability, accessibility, safety, community spaces, social connection)</li> <li>Does the proposed built form support a ‘village feel’? (e.g. podium and set back upper levels fine-grain retail and activation, heritage, improved walkability, solar protection, maximum height limits of 6-8 storeys) What’s missing?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Without the benefit of reviewing a draft of the Study Report, the Group cannot assess and comment on whether the Study Report achieves the objective of the retention and enhancement of a village character.</li> <li>The Neutral Bay Alive Community Consultation Group (Group) considers that the retention and enhancement of a village character for the Neutral Bay Town Centre is essential.</li> <li>The Grosvenor Lane car park site should become the future ‘Neutral Bay Town Square’. The name of the future square could be chosen following a public consultation process.</li> <li>Village Atmosphere/Retail Vitality: the importance of preserving the unique character of the centre and supporting small businesses to maintain a vibrant village atmosphere.</li> <li>Key elements to preserving the village atmosphere and projecting a village streetscape, include walkability, accessibility, local businesses (retail, commercial &amp; services), community spaces, shade trees (including canopy) and landscaping, seating opportunities, and unique heritage shopfronts.</li> <li>The existing LEP has a maximum height of 16m, which is equivalent to 4-5 storeys. A maximum height limit of 20.5m (6 storeys) would be considered acceptable. The group felt that additional height for specific properties would simply set a precedent for higher buildings throughout the town centre. There was also scepticism that adequate public benefits would result.</li> <li>Upper building floor levels should be setback above a street front podium to reduce visual impact and perceived bulk and provide a more human scale.</li> <li>The built form should not unacceptably overshadow the Neutral Bay Town Square, Rangers Road Plaza, May Gibbs Place, Barry Street and Young Street.</li> <li>The Neutral Bay Town Square should be pedestrian only, apart from limited time controlled service deliveries.</li> <li>Priority and safety of pedestrian access should be provided via the separation of pedestrian and vehicular access paths and not like Grosvenor Lane between Ben Boyd Road and Young Street.</li> <li>Neutral Bay Town Square public parking should be provided underground.</li> <li>A suitably sized public community centre should be retained within close proximity to the Neutral Bay Town Square. The preferred location of the community centre is on its existing location. To encourage activation, the community centre should be at plaza level.</li> </ul>

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<b>2. Employment and local economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proposed balance of business/services/land uses that should be facilitated in the centre</li> <li>Proposed increase to non-residential floor space (from 0.5:1 to 1.2-1.5:1 on most mixed-use land) to maintain the long term jobs and retail function of the centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The retention and provision of local office floor space was identified in the ‘case for change’ on p13 of the Military Road Corridor Planning Study Future Directions Report (2021).</li> <li>The majority of the Group supports the objective of retention of local office floor space in the Neutral Bay Town Centre. One member was concerned that the encouragement of additional floor space would result in additional traffic and would prefer to see residential space prioritised.</li> <li>The Group does not support an increase to the non-residential floor space (from 0.5:1 to 1.2-1.5:1), as this change is not expected to achieve the objective. An alternative ‘No Loss of Commercial Floor Space’ in the LEP should be considered.</li> <li>Restaurants and cafes should be encouraged on the south side of both the Neutral Bay Town Square and Rangers Road Plaza.</li> <li>The retention of a mix of small businesses within close proximity to the town centre is a priority.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Built form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum building height across the majority of the mixed-use zone capped at 6 storeys which provides no significant additional residential capacity</li> <li>Increased building heights on select opportunity sites (sites 1-3) that are large enough to provide identified public benefits up to a maximum of 8 storeys</li> <li>Proposed solar protection controls for Neutral Bay Town Square, May Gibbs Place, Rangers Road Plaza and Yeo St residential properties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are concerns about the recent mixed-use developments that include a large residential component and its potential adverse impact on the village character. The Group agreed that achieving a balance between housing and retail/commercial spaces is critical for a vibrant town centre.</li> <li>The challenges of having a commercial level on top of a retail level within the mixed-use development vertical circulation, servicing, and access, which may impact the usability, were raised.</li> <li>The existing LEP has a maximum height of 16m, which is equivalent to 4-5 storeys. A maximum height limit of 20.5m (six storeys) would be considered acceptable. A six storey height limit is likely to be more in keeping with surrounding developments.</li> <li>Upper building floor levels should be setback above a street front podium to reduce visual impact and perceived bulk and provide a more human scale.</li> <li>The built form should not unacceptably overshadow the planned plaza areas (i.e. Neutral Bay Town Square, Rangers Road Plaza and May Gibbs Place), Barry Street, Young Street and the Yeo Street properties.</li> <li>Ensure the feel of a village, village streetscape and heritage features are retained.</li> </ul>

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<b>4. Public domain</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neutral Bay Town Square options – key principles or design considerations that should inform the design</li> <li>Rangers Road Plaza options - key principles or design considerations that should inform the design</li> <li>Increased building setbacks (e.g to provide for footpath widening along Military Road and Waters Lane)</li> <li>New through site link and existing through site links upgrade – key principles or design considerations that should inform the design</li> <li>Community centres/space – need for an upgraded and expanded community centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The previous public community consultation has established that additional open space, providing more trees and landscaping were crucial, particularly given the increasing density of the area.</li> <li>To create a Neutral Bay Town Square, the plaza needs to be a fully pedestrianised plaza, apart from limited time controlled provision for service delivery vehicles.</li> <li>A ground floor colonnade setback should be included on the northern side of the Neutral Bay Town Square.</li> <li>There should be no reduction in the number of existing pedestrian links from the Neutral Bay Town Square to Military Road. The group noted the existing buildings protect Grosvenor Lane carpark from strong winds and wind and rain events which are predominantly from the south and noted Military Road is on the ridge with Wycombe Road leading directly towards the harbour. Link design should avoid the creation of wind tunnels, protect the Neutral Bay Town Square from southerly winds and provide disabled access with dignity (walkways, not ramps with handrails).</li> <li>Council's 1-7 Rangers Road / 183-185 Military Road Plaza Submission Scheme is preferred to the Woolworths proposal due to its higher visual connection, larger plaza and open to the sky through-site link to Yeo Street.</li> <li>Crossing of Military Road remains a significant concern and challenge, and as a result, it divides the town centre into two parts (North and South). The majority of the Group considered that the provision of a footbridge or tunnel would allow Transport for NSW to further prioritise Military Road traffic, to the detriment of the Neutral Bay Town Centre. A minority view supported the investigation of a grade separated pedestrian link that would connect both the northern and southern sections of the Neutral Bay Town Centre.</li> <li>There is potential to provide more area for public open space including adjoining the proposed Rangers Road Plaza by widening the Rangers Road footpath, between Military Road and Yeo Street.</li> <li>Ensure mature trees are planted or retained to create a leafy outlook, which is already present.</li> <li>Ensure that the public domain feels like an inviting public space not an extension of a commercial use or restaurant, should maximise sunlight and have no unacceptable overshadowing.</li> </ul>

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<b>5. Traffic and transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pedestrian connectivity upgrades that focus on at grade improvements to the centre</li> <li>Traffic management directions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns were expressed about cumulative additional traffic congestion and parking demands resulting from increased density.</li> <li>Priority and safety of pedestrian access should be provided via the separation of pedestrian and vehicular access paths and not like Grosvenor Lane between Ben Boyd Road and Young Street.</li> <li>The existing Council Grosvenor Lane public parking spaces should be relocated to an underground integrated public and retail carpark.</li> <li>Access to the proposed Coles site underground public carpark and loading dock should be from Grosvenor Street.</li> <li>The operation of the public car park should support all Neutral Bay Town Square businesses and not just the supermarket.</li> <li>2-3 hours of free parking should be provided (e.g. 2 hour parking on the upper level and 3 hour parking on the lower level), and more generous parking limits in the evening to support local restaurants.</li> <li>The ownership of Council's Grosvenor Lane Carpark land should be retained by Council with the provision of any stratum for car parks to be by way of a long term lease.</li> <li>Grosvenor Lane between Cooper Lane and Waters Lane should be closed to allow for a fully pedestrianised Neutral Bay Town Square.</li> <li>A small number of disabled access car spaces and delivery spaces can be provided at grade in Grosvenor Lane between Waters Lane and Waters Road.</li> <li>Members reiterated the challenges caused by Military Road's heavy traffic movements. There was a need to address pedestrian safety and the division of the Town Centre by the busy Military Road.</li> <li>Right hand turn movements from Wycombe Road and Ben Boyd Road are a problem.</li> <li>The Group raised concerns about significant traffic congestion in Yeo Street, especially due to the proposed vehicle access location in the Woolworths proposal.</li> <li>To maintain pedestrian safety, car park and loading dock accesses to adjoining properties to the Neutral Bay Town Square and to the 1-7 Rangers Road development need careful consideration.</li> <li>Loading dock restrictions should include a condition that delivery vehicles be required to enter and exit loading docks in a forward direction.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Public Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A public community centre should be retained within close proximity to the Neutral Bay Town Square. The preferred location of the community centre is on its existing location, including accessible at ground level.</li> <li>Council needs to closely assess the value of any deemed public benefits. There was scepticism that offering additional height would result in adequate public benefits.</li> <li>The importance of May Gibbs Place was noted and any future development around the place should protect the existing character and encourage community activities.</li> <li>The provision of extra open space is a priority, especially with the expected increase in population density.</li> </ul>