have your say

City Heart Strategy & Master Plan

Engagement Report

December 2025 | Version 1.0



PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS COUNCIL

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The City Heart Strategy and Master Plan (CHS&MP) is a significant document informing the future development, lifestyle and growth of Port Macquarie. The purpose of the CHS&MP is to guide strategic direction, integrated planning and reflect community aspirations as the town develops over the coming decades.

The draft plan was informed by initial engagement undertaken early in 2025, data and population analysis and specialist land use consulting provided by:

- AJC
- Atlas
- Gyde Engagement Report April 2025.

The CHS&MP was on public exhibition for 55 days, from 27 October to 20 December 2025.

A range of engagement methods were utilised throughout this period, resulting in a high volume of contributions and feedback on the draft CHS&MP. While the subject matter evoked a range of public responses and commentary in the local community, only contributions received via specific PMHC engagement activities are collated in this report.

Most contributions during the public exhibition period were received via the PMHC 'Have Your Say' portal survey or written submissions. Participation in the CHS&MP engagement was communicated via PMHC print, online and social media as well as community pop-up events and a Facebook live Q&A.

The objective of the engagement was to provide clear and accessible information, actively seek community feedback, and involve stakeholders in shaping the project outcomes.

Throughout the exhibition period, the engagement process generated a strong level of participation and a high quality of input. The combination of digital and in-person engagement supported diverse participation and produced a robust and representative dataset. Feedback received throughout the engagement period has informed the understanding of community values, priorities, and concerns and will inform the PMHC Strategy team as the project progresses.

Engagement overview

The planned level of engagement for this project was ‘involve’, where the community had a participatory role in voicing their feedback and aspirations for the city heart precinct. Engagement for this project was extensive and received a substantial community response. There was significant interest in the draft CHS&MP prior to the public exhibition period, and over the eight-week exhibition period, the community was afforded various opportunities to review the proposal, understand its intent and contribute feedback.

The engagement program was designed to encourage broad participation and to support both qualitative and quantitative input, resulting in a strong and representative evidence base - implemented to reach a diverse cross-section of the community, including residents, businesses, and other stakeholders.

Engagement methods combined digital and face-to-face activities to maximise accessibility, awareness, and depth of input. Data collected provided both quantitative and spatial evidence base, while qualitative feedback driven from pop-ups, forums and online comments added important context and depth.

Engagement benefits

Engagement has informed the preparation of the CHS&MP by providing insight into local priorities, aspirations, and concerns. Feedback received on the draft CHS&MP has helped to test emerging ideas and inform local context and identified needs.

The engagement process has articulated community sentiment and key opportunities at this stage, informing the further development of the CHS&MP.

Spectrum of participation

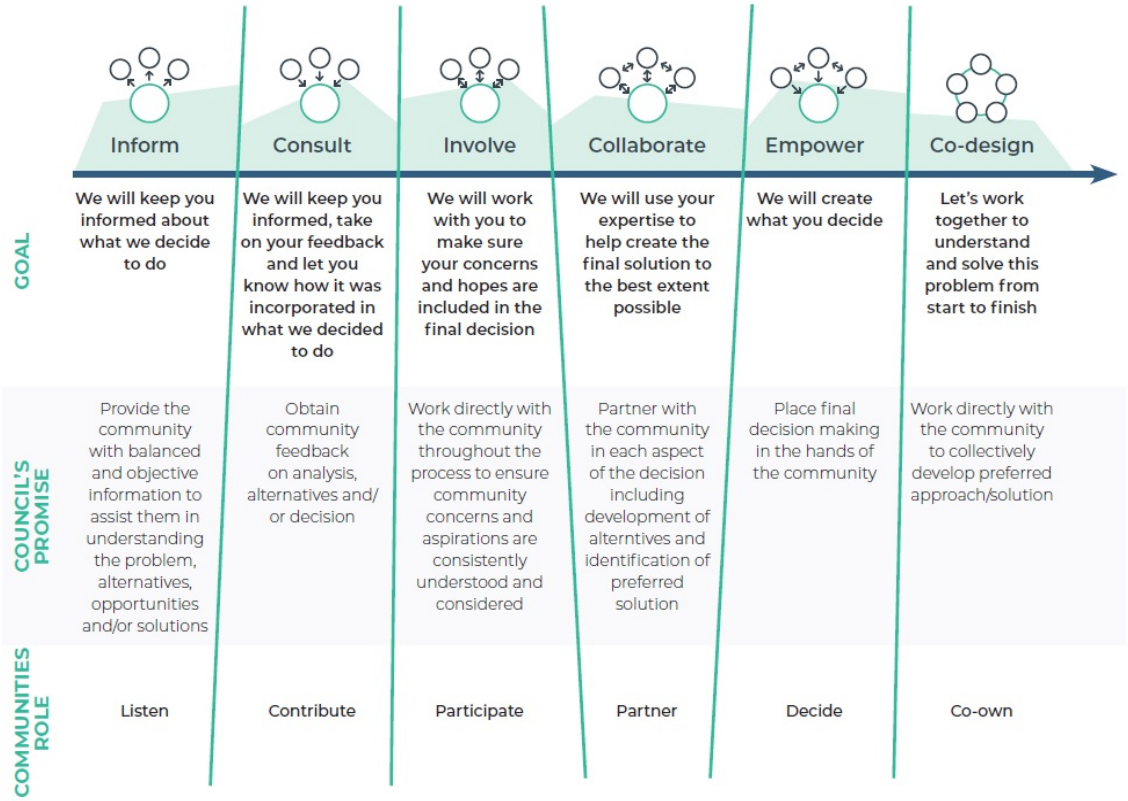
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council undertakes engagement using the industry standard IAP2 Spectrum of Participation which is designed to assist with the selection of the level of participation that defines Council's promise and the community's role in the decision-making process.

Following the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) matrix, the level of engagement ranged from inform to involve. This means we sought to:

- Provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the project.
- Obtain feedback on analysis, alternative and/or decisions.
- Work directly with the community to ensure community concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

Our commitment from this process is to:

- Keep the community informed.
- Listen and acknowledge concerns and aspirations.
- Let the community know how their input has influenced the final strategy and master plan.



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ENGAGEMENT BREAKDOWN

Summary of engagement activities

DATE	DESCRIPTION	NOTES
27 October - 20 December 2025	**PMHC 'Have Your Say' website** City Heart Strategy and Master Plan project page	HYS page provided - project overview and key messages - engagement timeline and updates - options to 'have your say' - documents - precinct maps
27 October - 20 December 2025	**Social Map**	Interactive map of the CHS&MP area and locations of proposed projects - participants could drop a 'pin', leave a comment or up/down vote other comments on the map
27 October - 20 December 2025	**Survey**	- Online survey available via HYS page - written paper form available at community pop ups
27 October - 20 December 2025	**Submissions**	Accepted via - HYS page open text - Upload document/photos via HYS page - Email PMHC directly
5 November - 5 December 2025	**Community Pop Ups** PMHC Library Port Central Shopping Centre Settlement City Shopping Centre Port Macquarie Town Square Market Port Macquarie Christmas Fair	5 local pop ups were hosted during the public exhibition period. Precinct maps, proposed projects and technical experts were available to discuss the CHS&MP in details. Participants could contribute by - completing a survey - using the online social map - lodging a submission - visiting PMHC Have Your Say page
2 December 2025	**Facebook Live Q&A Community Forum** Live facilitated discussion on the CHS&MP with a panel of subject matter experts answering live online audience questions	Facilitated discussion with subject matter experts covering the CHS&MP
26 November 2025	**Business Community Forum**	Presentation to Business Port Macquarie and Q&A panel with subject matter expert and engagement officer

Have Your Say page

All project information, associated documentation and project experts were made available via PMHCs community engagement portal - **Have Your Say Page: City Heart Strategy & Master Plan**.

The plan was presented in written and map formation with location markers citing proposed projects within each of the five project precincts:

- Port Macquarie CBD
- Westport
- Settlement City
- Civic Precinct
- Eastport

The engagement timeline, frequently asked questions and options to have your say were available at the same source, directing readers, listeners and participants via communication channels.

Summary of Have Your Say engagement

Total number of submissions via HYS	**43**
Total number of surveys completed	**259**
Total number social map contributions	**19**
Total email submissions received	**31**
Total number of page visits	**4,749**
Total number of downloads	**1,139**

Image below - PMHC Have Your Say CHS&MP page



Home / Draft City Heart Strategy and Masterplan

Council has adopted the draft City Heart Strategy & Master Plan to be placed on public exhibition seeking community feedback until **Saturday 20 December 2025**. The draft City Heart Strategy & Master Plan is setting a vision for living, working and belonging in the heart of our city. Initial Community Engagement undertaken from June - August 2025 has informed the draft City Heart Strategy and Master Plan.

City Heart Vision

"A vibrant, welcoming and connected City Heart, A place for people to live, work, gather and celebrate."

Purpose

The functions of the draft City Heart Strategy and Master Plan are to inform:

- **Strategic Direction**: articulate a long-term vision for how the City Heart can evolve socially, economically, environmentally, and physically.
- **Guiding Principles**: offering principles and frameworks to guide future decision making,

Stay in the loop! Click 'Follow' below to get updates on this project. For privacy reasons, only those who follow will receive ongoing updates.

+ Follow

Who's Listening



Alex Adkins
Strategic Landuse Planning Manager

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Image below - Have Your Say CHS&MP overview

Where is the City Heart?

The City Heart is the civic, cultural, and economic hubs of Port Macquarie-Hastings, nestled between the Hastings River and the coastline. It encompasses the central business district, key civic spaces, heritage streetscapes, and commercial and residential precincts. The area includes major landmarks, public spaces, and a growing mix of uses that define the character and identity of Port Macquarie.



City Heart Precincts

There are 5 precincts that make up the City Heart, each one with its own character, strengths, and opportunities. Explore the tabs below for details on the precincts and proposed projects.

Port Macquarie CBD | Westport | Settlement City | Civic Precinct | Eastport

Timeline

May - June 2025
Initial Community Engagement
Workshops, World Cafe event, community survey, insights and priorities developed to inform the first draft City Heart Master Plan.

October 2025
Draft City Heart Master Plan presented to Council for proposed Public Exhibition period.

Monday 27 October 2025
Community consultation opens

Tuesday 2 December 2025
Facebook Live Q&A 6 - 7pm
View the live recording with panelists discussing and answering community questions

November - December 2025
Community Pop-up Sessions

Image below - Precinct map on Have Your Say page



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Social Map

A social map tool was used via the PMHC Have Your Say page to provide an overview of the proposed projects across the City Heart Precinct, where participants could view and leave comments.

This tool was useful to:

- Understand the community's thoughts about specific locations in the City Heart precincts
- Gather ideas and issues on the draft strategy and master plan
- Categorise feedback and community sentiment on the proposed city heart projects.

'Hot spot' locations were pre-populated on the map for context, and participants could drop a 'pin' (common to mapping location tools) and leave a comment in an open text box. All comments are viewed publicly and can be 'upvoted' with a 👍 in agreement or 'downvoted' with a 👎 in disagreement.

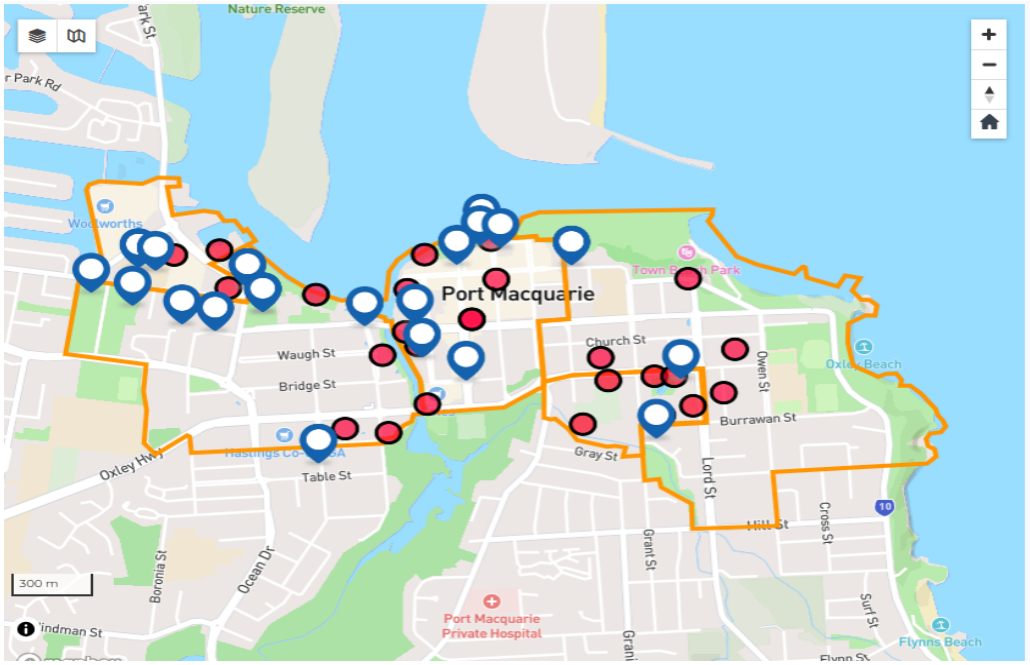


Image above - Interactive social map accessed via Have Your Say page

Social Map Results

Community sentiment was collated from the number of pins dropped (19) on the social map in relation to the proposed projects in the CHS&MP. The comments reflect a community not opposed to development, but invested in how, where, and at what scale growth occurs. Key points of consensus include the importance of character, views, infrastructure readiness and public benefit.

The main areas of disagreement relate to building height and the appropriate intensity of development, particularly near the foreshore. The views express the CHS&MP to have a considered planning approach that balances housing supply, urban design, infrastructure capacity, and community values and amenity.

The themes captured on the social map are presented below, verbatim comments and the up/down vote details are available in *Appendix C*.

KEY THEME	SUMMARY
Development and housing supply	Higher-density development away from foreshore and key intersection sites. Disagreement about the scale and intensity of development.
	Height increases that are carefully considered with further community consultation or voting.
Protect views, amenity and character	Concern for loss of iconic harbour and coastal views.
	Development should not dimmish existing vista and coastal amenity.
Location of density and land use	Suggestions of higher-density development directed to underutilised land or areas set back from the foreshore.
	Foreshore and open green spaces protected from development
	Minimise impacts on existing homes and public spaces.
Transport, traffic and infrastructure	Traffic congestion and road safety concerns at already busy intersections.
	Concern for the capacity of current road infrastructure to support new developments.
	Consideration for long-term transport solutions, including improved public transport and rail connections to reduce car dependence and support future population growth.
Community facilities and public benefit	Need for additional sporting and recreation facilities (athletics track in Westport precinct).
	Relocation of civic or service buildings to unlock land for public use or parking.
	Concerns for public expenditure (new council facilities) and whether they deliver community benefit.
Planning rational and process	Request for transparent decision-making and further community consultation regarding planning controls and informed development.

Survey Results

The online survey was designed to:

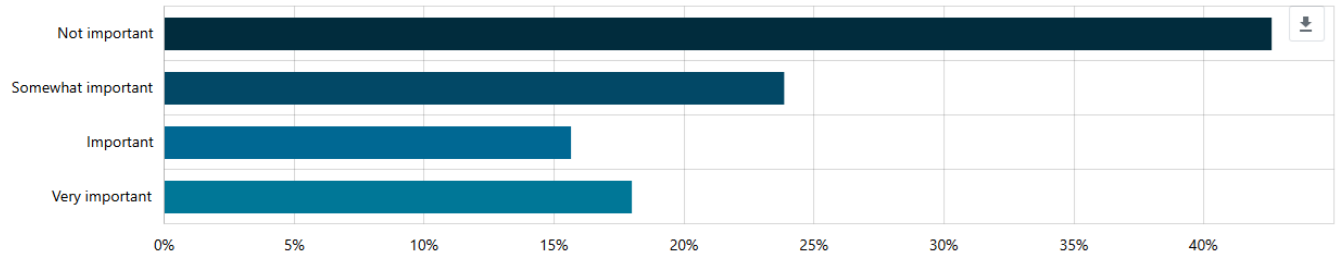
- Listen to what the community currently values about Port Macquarie's city heart
- Understand community priorities for the Port Macquarie city heart now and into the future
- Take feedback on community sentiment of the draft City Heart Strategy and Master Plan.

Ranking question results below display the level of importance of key principles in the CHS&MP.

11 More diverse and affordable housing

Multi Choice | Skipped: 3 | Answered: 256 (98.84%)

Hide Question

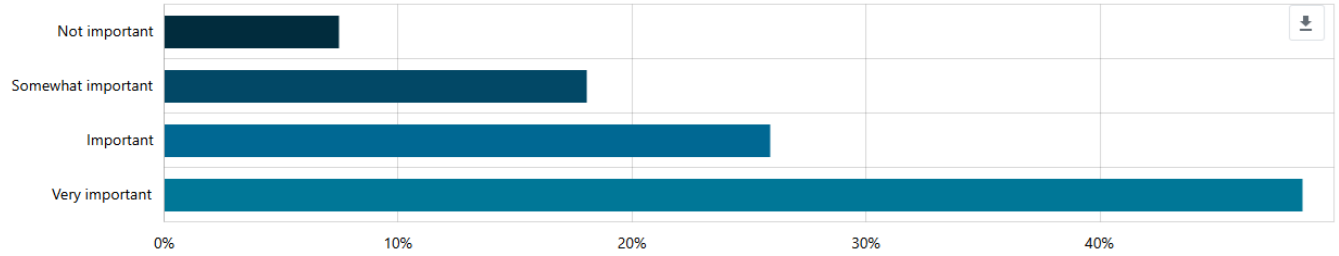


View contribution data

12 Better walking and cycling connections

Multi Choice | Skipped: 4 | Answered: 255 (98.46%)

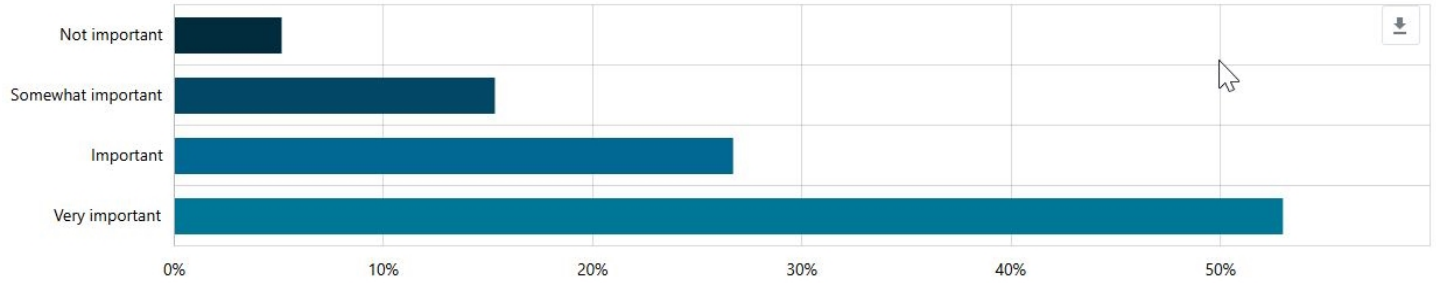
Hide Question



13 More trees, landscaping and green spaces

Multi Choice | Skipped: 4 | Answered: 255 (98.46%)

Hide Question

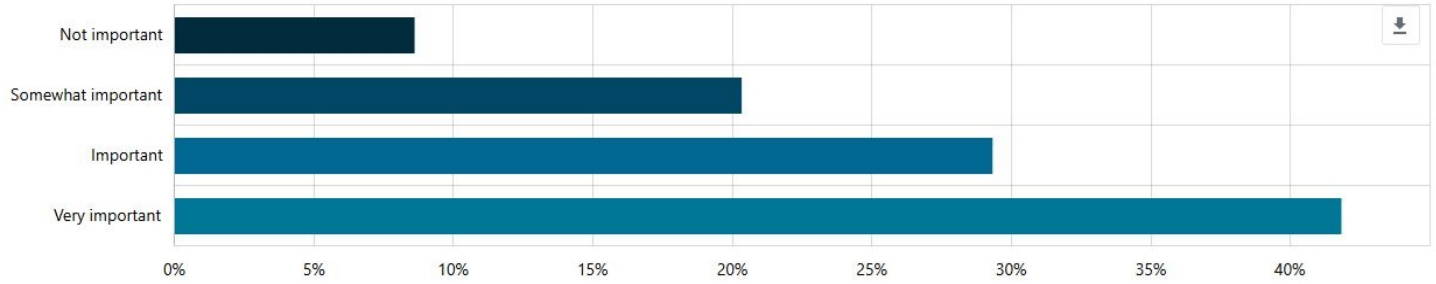


View contribution data

14 Improved public spaces and gathering areas

Multi Choice | Skipped: 3 | Answered: 256 (98.84%)

Hide Question

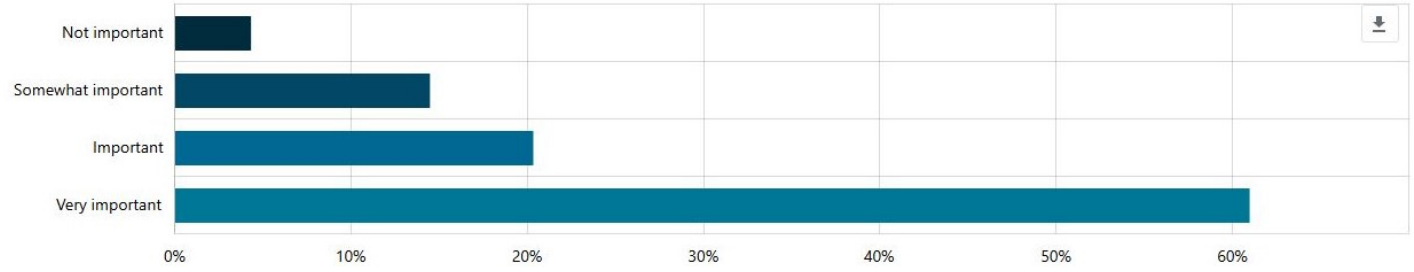


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15 Better car parking and accessibility

Multi Choice | Skipped: 3 | Answered: 256 (98.84%)

Hide Question

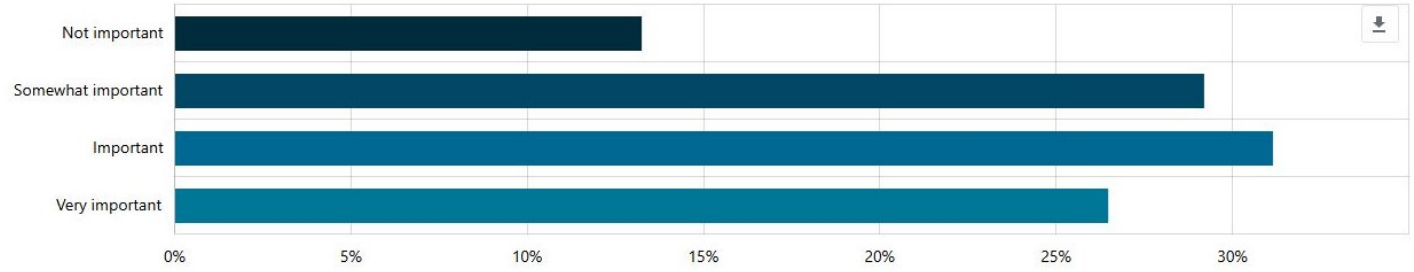


View contribution data

16 New business, retail and dining opportunities

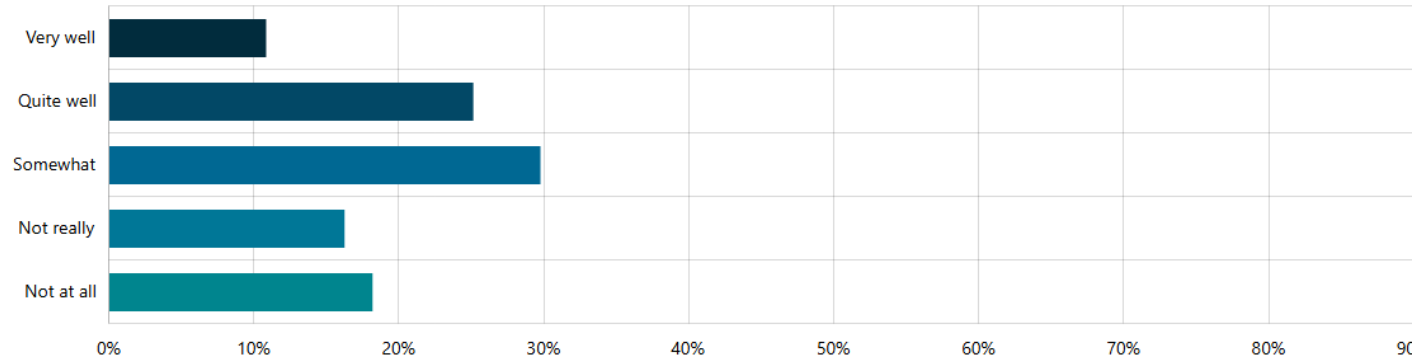
Multi Choice | Skipped: 2 | Answered: 257 (99.23%)

Hide Question



10 How well do you think this vision reflects what you'd like to see for the City Heart? Required

Select Box | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 259 (100%)



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Qualitative survey questions

The survey included four optional open text questions for additional questions, comments, ideas and considerations.

1. “You can add anything not listed that you value in the City Heart here”
2. “In your own words, what makes the City Heart a special place for you”
3. “What would make you visit the City Heart more often?”
4. “Are there any additional ideas you would like to share about the draft plan?”

Below is a summary of the community sentiment of the collated findings and key themes summarising 790 contributions. The sentiment has been recorded and summarised as ‘support’, ‘concern’ or opposition towards the draft CHS&MP.

SENTIMENT	KEY THEME	SUMMARY
Support	Natural environment and foreshore	Strong value on protecting waterfront access, green space, trees, views and natural beauty of Port Macquarie
	Community spaces and social connection	Support for the CBD as a central gathering place with parks, Town Green, events, markets and family-friendly public spaces.
	Character, heritage and identity	Retain small-town coastal character, heritage buildings and local identity rather than generic urban development.
	Walking and cycling	Supportive of walking and cycling infrastructure that is safe, connected and separated from pedestrians.
	Retail, dining and vibrancy	More local, speciality retail, alfresco dining, nightlife and cultural activity to create a lively city centre.
	Liveability and amenity	Support for shade, seating, lighting, cleanliness, comfort and overall amenity of the CBD
	Ocean pool	Support for ocean pool (at Oxley Beach) as a community, health and tourism asset.
Concern	Park availability and traffic	Significant concern about parking shortages, traffic congestion and the impact on access, businesses, families and tourists.
	Safety and antisocial behaviour	Concerns about night-time safety, lighting, noise, antisocial behaviour and overall comfort in public spaces.
	Housing affordability outcomes	CBD based housing affordability; concern about exclusivity.
	Walking and cycling conflicts	Safety concerns where pedestrians, cyclists and joggers share paths without separation.
	Growth and infrastructure capacity	Concern that population growth is impacting roads, parking, services and public infrastructure.
	Consultation, transparency and trust	Concerns about inadequate engagement, lack of clarity, limited access to information and trust in decision making.

Opposition	High-risk development	Opposition to 6-9 storey buildings, especially near the waterfront, due to impacts on character, views and amenity.
	Foreshore overdevelopment	Building on or near the foreshore, with a strong desire to keep the waterfront areas public and open.
	Removal of existing parking	Rejection of removing key parking areas such as Short Street without equivalent nearby replacement.
	CBD-focussed affordable housing	Opposition to using prime CBD land to address housing affordability; preference for surrounding precincts.
	Big city planning models	Rejection of “big city-style” planning approaches seen as inappropriate for Port Macquarie.
	Development focus	Opposition to perceived prioritisation of developer interests over community needs and lifestyle.
	Loss of lifestyle	Opposition to rapid population concentration in the CBD leading to overcrowding and loss of lifestyle.

Summary of Have Your Say submissions

Forty-three (43) open text submissions were received via PMHC Have Your Say page.
Verbatim submissions are listed available in A*ppendix A* with personal and identifying data removed for public publication.

SENTIMENT	KEY THEME	SUMMARY
Support	Parking, traffic management and accessibility	Replacing CBD parking with green/open space if parking is provided elsewhere is supported.
	Future planning and use	Supportive of long-term planning for future generations and population growth.
	Building height and density	Varied building heights with controlled land use planning. Supportive of a built-form analysis before development.
	Walking and cycling connections	Improved access to walking, cycling and active transport infrastructure that is well designed and considered is encouraged.
	Open space, waterfront access and recreation	Support increased public open space, greening, and waterfront activation. Boardwalk links and new parks for public use.
	Economic development, retail and land use	Supportive of waterfront commercial links, improved accessibility and overwater boardwalk activation.
Concern	Parking, traffic and accessibility	Concerns raised for congestion at current busy intersections. Loss of parking to host visitors, workers and residents.
	Building height and density	Concerns on additional height impact on reduced airflow, heat retention and impact on local amenity.
	Current infrastructure capacity	Current infrastructure ability (water, drainage, sewerage, waste) to accommodate redevelopment and increased use
	Council performance and governance	Ability of Council to implement and deliver on CHS&MP. Clarity on how the CHS&MP implementation will be funded.
	Walking, cycling and public transport	Lack of public transport hub to support a reduced-traffic design. Pedestrian/cyclist conflict in active transport planning.
	Town character and community values	Risk of losing small-town, coastal identity

Opposition	Parking, traffic and accessibility	Opposition for removal of parking without proposed alternatives, Inaccessibility to foreshore for visitors, workers, elderly and residents.
	Building height and density	High-rise development along waterfront. Focus on luxury apartments in local housing market.
	Current infrastructure capacity	Opposition for development sequence without current infrastructure upgrades
	Town character and community values	Creation of exclusive precincts and altering the rural coastal town character
	Environmental sustainability and climate	Lack of implementation detail to manager increased heat retention, increased hard surfaces and tall buildings, or removal of vegetation without climate mitigation planning
	Housing affordability and social equity	Housing focused on high-income and luxury apartments over inclusive, affordable housing.
	Economic development, retail and land use	Opposition to proposals that disrupt existing retail, remove parking or replace currently functional infrastructure/retail precincts.

Summary of email/written submissions

Thirty-one (31) written submissions were received via email, PMHC's Customer Service Centres or uploaded files via the Have Your Say page. Submissions received via the PMHC Have Your Say as file documents and images have been included and accounted for in the written submissions of the engagement report only.

Below is a summary of the content of the submissions, all of these have been received by the CHS&MP project team for review and consideration, with consideration of the nature of some submissions with accompanying images, technical and policy reference.
Verbatim email/written submissions are available in *Appendix C* with personal identifying details omitted (name, address, property details).

SENTIMENT	KEY THEMES	SUMMARY
SUPPORT	Traffic management Pedestrian access	Welcomes the proposed widening of the riverside walkway. Suggest consolidating the town's dispersed shops into a central precinct to make shopping trips more convenient. Additional recommendations on traffic management, pedestrian access and public amenity improvements
	Town infrastructure improvements Community and business engagement	Upkeep of current landscaping and CBD amenity. Pathway improvements and repairs to the township.
	Housing Social equity Long term planning	Supportive of the overall vision of the plan with a call to action for consideration of affordability, social cohesion and measurable commitments for the plan's implementation.
	Active transport and public spaces Planning frameworks Health and wellbeing	Supportive of the plans approach to active living, social connection and public spaces. Considerations for aligning the plan with existing strategic frameworks for public health and wellbeing.
	Housing Current infrastructure Building height increase Further consultation	Commendation for the CHS&MP vision, objectives and proposed building height increases. Requested clarity on infrastructure diagrams.
	Parking Technical information request Building height increase Housing	Supportive of the plan with additional height consideration. Request for technical considerations for parking

	Existing infrastructure capacity	management and current infrastructure capacity - technical study data requested for transparency.
	Building height increase Site-specific engagement Collaborative implementation	Supportive and encouraging of the CHS&MP vision and for collaborative technical planning and implementation.
	Heritage preservation Strategic alignment Ongoing engagement	Supports the vision and requests heritage and cultural value considerations.
	Active transport Cycling infrastructure Traffic and parking management	Commends the vision and support of active transport infrastructure. Technical implementation details on planning, traffic management and urban design - focused on long term usability, safety and liveability.
CONCERN	Foreshore proposal Building height increase	General support for the plan and particularly the foreshore area. Specifically opposes 9 storey buildings and loss of community character.
	Road infrastructure Pedestrian safety and accessibility Parking	Recommend intersection redesigns, traffic-calming measures, improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, and additional parking to enhance safety and accessibility. Consideration to shift from car-centric planning that better serves residents, visitors, and all road users.
	Parks and open spaces Building height increase Traffic and parking	Supportive of open green spaces and community friendly public places. Strong opposition to increased building height to 9 storey and consideration for negative impact on traffic, parking and community amenity.
	Parking Building height Ongoing engagement Current infrastructure capacity Public and active transport	Parking and accessibility concerns for future use and consideration for planned active and public transport. Ability of current infrastructure to manage development. Considerations for Council implementing the long term with co design and ongoing community involvement.

	Building height increase Walkability and access Ongoing collaboration	Consideration for greater building increases than the plan describes and detailed technical amendments in the plan. Proposed additional recommendations to align the CHS&MP with long-term population growth and community needs.
	Implementation and infrastructure gaps Transport and accessibility Regulatory and practical implementation	Supportive of the CHS&MP concept but questions the practicality, implementation, and potential negative impacts. Planning approach inconsistent with Port Macquarie's regional community sentiment.
	Parking Transport infrastructure Public transport Future implementation	Generally supportive of the vision, modest high increases and green public spaces. Concerns for costs, flood risks, parking and consideration for careful planning.
OPPOSITION	Protection of natural amenity Parking and access Mixed use and residential development in CBD Retail and dining additions unnecessary	Opposes the proposed projects, questions their necessity, highlights negative impacts on natural amenity, parking, accessibility, and community use, and urges Council to reconsider its approach based on past planning mistakes rather than endorsing the strategy.

Summary of communications

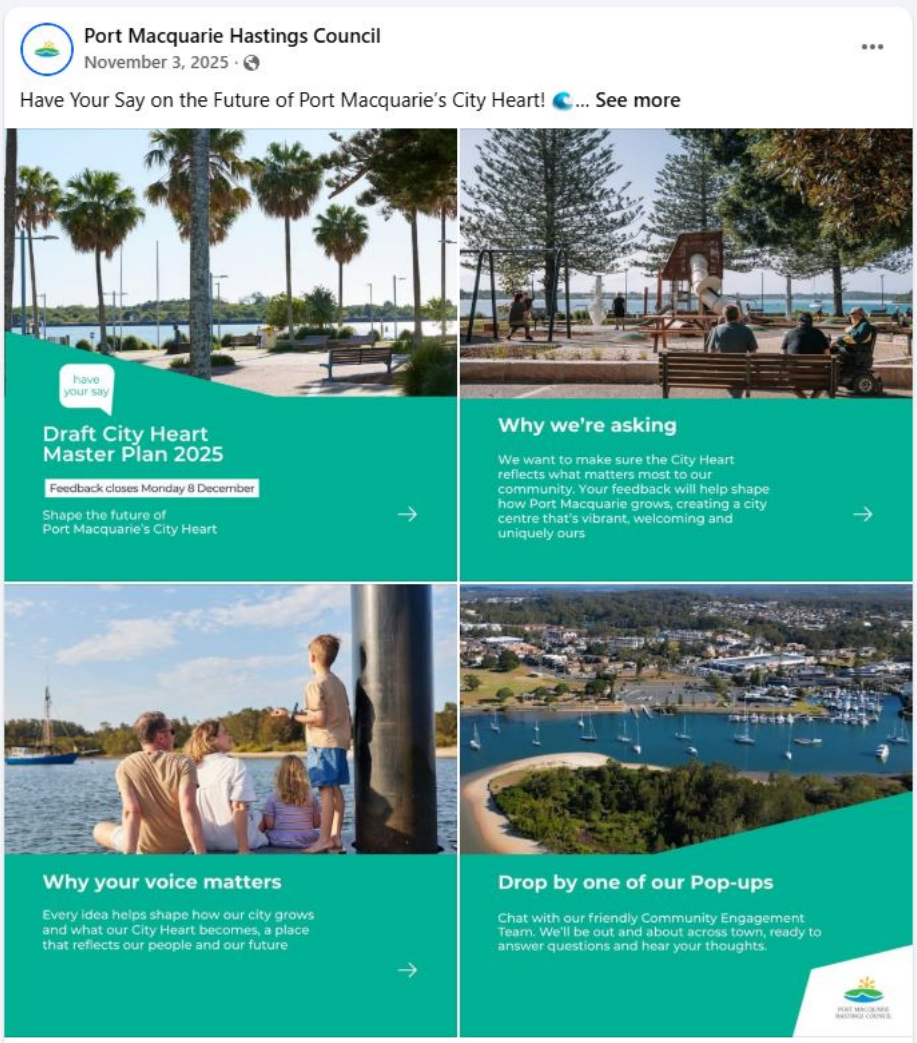
DATE	CHANNEL
24 October	Print media **City Heart Master Plan - public exhibition**
27 October - 20 December	PMHC Have Your Say page
3 November 28 November 18 December	Facebook posts
3 November	Facebook Event - City Heart Pop Ups
2 December	Facebook Event Live Q&A
October November December	HYS monthly newsletter
October	Stakeholder email
October November December	Economic Development monthly newsletter
4 November 2025	Business Port Macquarie Newsletter

Social media posts





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Community Pop-ups

Five (5) Community Pop-up sessions were conducted over the course of the public exhibition period -

- 5 November 11am - 1pm PMHC Library (16 participants)
- 10 November 11am - 1pm Port Central Shopping Centre (5 participants)
- 11 November 11am - 1pm Settlement City Shopping Centre (12 participants)
- 23 November 10am - 2pm - Town Square Market (45 participants)
- 5 December 5 - 9pm - Port Macquarie Christmas Fair (38 participants).









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Facebook Live Community Forum

Council hosted a Facebook Live Q&A forum from 7pm to 9pm on 2 December 2025.

Facilitated discussion covered:

- The purpose and function of the strategic document
- Council's vision for the city heart
- Proposed projects across the project footprint
- Housing, parking and community liveability
- Council's role in future planning.

The live online event was publicised and shared via social media, and questions for the panel could be submitted up to the day before the event. Live questions were answered throughout the event. At the conclusion of the Q&A forum participants were directed to the Have Your Say page to lodge their feedback.

Twelve (12) 0questions were submitted prior to the event, and 53 participants attended the online event.

Subject matter expert panellists included:

- Mayor Adam Roberts
- Director, Mel Watkins
- Group Manager, Lucilla Marshall
- Executive Manager, Duncan Coulton
- Economic Development Manager, Alex Henley

The event recording was also published on Council's Have Your Say page.



RESULTS SUMMARY

Feedback provided a strong strategic framework for accommodating growth, improving liveability and enhancing community amenity. With careful refinement, staged delivery and environmentally responsible implementation, it has the potential to create a more vibrant, inclusive, and people-focused city centre.

Community feedback demonstrated high engagement in the CHS&MP project and the desire for effective planning. Opinions are divided on how development will influence lifestyle and community, as there is a strong attachment to Port Macquarie's city centre as a low-rise, coastal, community-focused place defined by its natural setting, accessibility and local character.
While many respondents support improvements that enhance liveability and vibrancy, there is significant concern, and in some cases strong opposition, to proposals perceived to increase density, reduce parking and replicate large city planning models.

The data showed agreement in prioritising:

- Current infrastructure upgrades first
- Parking access in the CBD
- Detailed, transparent and credible planning
- Clear articulation of projects to be implemented.

Residents strongly support protecting the natural environment and foreshore, with public access to the river, waterfront and green spaces viewed as the city's most valuable assets. The CBD is widely seen as a community heart, valued for its role as a gathering place for events, markets, recreation and social connection.

There is support for:

- Retaining the small-town coastal character and heritage of Port Macquarie
- Improving walkability and cycling, provided infrastructure is safe, well-designed and connected
- Enhancing local retail, dining, alfresco spaces and nightlife to improve vibrancy
- Increasing shade, seating, lighting, cleanliness and overall amenity.

Parking and traffic were the most frequently raised concerns. Removing or reducing parking without viable alternatives and public transport solutions were viewed as insufficient to support a car-lite city heart.

There is concern, and in some responses, direct opposition for:

- Scale and location of development, particularly near the foreshore
- Capacity of current transport and road infrastructure to support development, particularly regarding parking, public transport and traffic congestion
- Housing and social equity with planning consideration for inclusive housing solutions rather than waterfront and CBD luxury style accommodation

The community supports careful, locally appropriate improvements that strengthen what already works. There is a strong call to protect character, nature and access, address parking and infrastructure first, ensure future development is community-led, transparent and scaled to Port Macquarie's identity. The feedback suggests that carefully phased implementation, and ongoing engagement will be critical to ensuring the CHS&MP achieves a vision that represents community sentiment.

NEXT STEPS

The public exhibition closed on 20 December 2025, and submissions have been compiled in this report for consideration by the project team. The Engagement Report, and updated City Heart Strategy and Master Plan, will be tabled at the February 2026 Ordinary Council meeting.

Information on Council meeting dates, agendas and public forum speaking opportunities can be found at: **https://www.pmhc.nsw.gov.au/Your-Council/Council-meetings**

DISCLAIMERS

Feedback collected across all engagement activities is presented below in summary form - key themes have been identified across all submissions and de-identified, verbatim feedback has been appended.

About verbatim feedback
Deidentified, verbatim feedback is appended in some instances. Feedback that is not appended is summarised in this report and shared with the PMHC Strategy team.
The summary and published verbatim feedback is included with the Council Report for this project.
In addition to the length of some submissions, reasons for not appending these include:

- Personal information
- Detailed property locations
- Requests for submission to remain confidential for PMHC internal use only

Data analysis and generative AI
Key themes throughout this report have been identified using generative artificial intelligence (AI). For the purposes of this report, generative AI refers to a system that can create content based on the data that we provide.

Benefits of using AI
Using AI to analyse large amounts of free text feedback in community engagement reporting offers significant benefits, including:

- Efficiency and speed: AI can process and analyse vast amounts of text data much faster than manual methods.
- Scalability: AI tools can handle large datasets without a loss in performance, making it feasible to analyse feedback from extensive community engagement activities like the Draft City Heart Strategy and Master Plan.
- Consistency and objectivity: AI provides consistent analysis, reducing the biases that can occur with human interpretation and ensuring uniformity in data evaluation.

Considerations in the use of AI
Perception of bias: AI models only work on the data that is inputted, and this may be perceived as under-representing marginalised groups or minority views.
Relying solely on AI for community engagement may overlook the importance of human interaction, empathy, and relationship-building in fostering trust and understanding within the community.
Attempts to address this are made through additional instructions. Further analysis of the AI-generated data provided is also undertaken to combat potential bias.

Human-centred engagement
AI is a tool that can assist the engagement reporting process. We are committed to human-centred engagement throughout our community across a range of engagement methods.
All themes generated using AI have been reviewed and interrogated to ensure that the sentiment represents the feedback received.

Privacy
No identifying information was included when using AI to analyse feedback.
Council staff work to a Code of Conduct and in accordance with our legislative requirements. This includes the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (NSW), the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW) and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW). Further details are outlined in Council's Privacy Statement and Privacy Management Plan Policy.

These are available on Council's website, along with the Legislative Compliance Policy.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Verbatim Have Your Say submissions

Topic	Comments
Community value **Parking** **Housing affordability** **Not reflective of community needs**	While the concept is very pretty, it is way off the mark of what this town needs. Money spent where it is not needed. You are going to obliterate the majority of free parking in the CBD and replace with high rise buildings that no one will be able to afford, and turn our beautiful CBD into something akin to the gold coast where you cant see the water when walking along the streets. Why create high density living right in the heart of the town? Its not wanted or needed. Where are all the visitors suppose to park? Where are locals, elderly, disabled suppose to park. While the idea to create more cycle paths and walkways is welcomed, expecting people to start riding bikes is not practical. Having hired E-Bikes is just going to create an eyesore as other cities have found. E-bikes abandoned when they run out of power, thrown into the river/canals by vandals etc. It reeks of a vanity project.
Town amenity **Upkeep of garden beds and greenery**	There are a LOT of words in the draft masterplan and lots of good ideas however, the present council is unable to maintain the streets, parks and buildings that we have now let alone creating more parks which will fall into disrepair. Yes, we need lots more shade trees and I believe new home owners should be provided with at least one street tree, it happens in other councils why not this one? I have been trying to get the council to light up the trees in the CBD, some success there although the lights are only up some trunks of palm trees - plenty more trees that could be full of lights. Unkempt garden beds along Gordon Street after substantial upgrading to the road - I have reported this to council previously. Overall maintenance is appalling, there has been a flickering light above the council car park in Short Street for many months. I am sorry to be so negative but the general feeling amongst rate payers I know is that so much needs to be maintained and kept in good repair and isn't - why is this?
Parking	The biggest concern I have with this proposal is the loss of premium parking spots from an already limited supply of parking zones when accessing the cbd or even attending special events in and around the community. Many business owners and workers rely on these parking places to conduct business or attend work. Many of these people come from outer regions from the cbd and relying on a sub standard public transport system is just not feasible. Another concern would be the road infrastructure to service these areas. In peak times and key tourist holiday seasons these roads are stretched beyond capacity, the inclusion of additional housing by way of tower buildings would impact this already inadequate infrastructure in the cbd. I question the $funding for the additonal parkland space on the river connected to short street at the expense of premium parking. A lot of $funds went to providing the amphitheatre area near town beach, yet I don’t see it being used. I also see development on the Macquarie Park soccer fields. During the last soccer season, this field was used more than ever due to other local fields with poor drainage being closed on game day/nights. (May this also be a point to make that all fields require research and funding to improve drainage - a pertinent funding issue the council should be addressing). In my opinion after seeing this draft proposal, I would say it’s time to go back to the drawing board.

Parking **Funding**	The draft City Heart Master Plan has not addressed how connections will be made to the rest of the city. Not everyone will be interested in city apartment style living. If arterial roads and parking are not addressed the outer areas of Port Macquarie will continue to have impediments to accessing all that is planned for. There are some 'big ticket' items in this plan including a revamped library, council offices and aquatic centre. How will these be funded? The council is responsible for the entire Port Macquarie area, so this plan needs to sit within wider priorities of the region.
Parking	Is it possible to change all of the parallel parking on Horton street to 45° parking? The road looks wide enough to accomodate, and it will double the parking spaces
Parking	I am all for these changes however you must improve the parking for every parking space we lose we need it to be replaced or increased. council has been collecting parking levies off development's forever and do not increase parking
Parking	I am happy with the general concept and understand the need to improve our city heart, however there appears to be no consideration for increased parking capacity. There is not enough parking currently in the CBD let alone when you are trying to increase the number of people visiting. Parking and easy road access needs to be a priority in any future plans
Building height **Building material and design**	Feedback. Buildings to be built in city centre to incorporate aesthetics, liveability & sustainability. No building to be over 8 story & preferably no more than 3 story. We do not want another Gold Coast. Port Macquarie has a lovely & unique blend of country vibe & city quality services. Lets keep it rhat way please! Eg *Not made of concrete which is suseptible to mould & poor on temperature control. Brick or wood instead. * Buildings to have big windows which can open wide to let in fresh air & sunshine which is healthy & provides non electrical temperature control. * All building units to have a balcony for fresh air, enjoyment & drying clothes naturally. * All building blocks to have clotheslines & some green areas.
Tree canopy	More trees in Westport Park and the foreshore. When its summer there aren't any trees to sit under. We like to go and picnic near the Police station but don't anymore because no shade.
Traffic management	Hollingworth and Buller Streets intersection is an accident hotspot for cars and pedestrians and requires traffic management by way of a roundabout or traffic lights - sooner than the adoption of any Masterplan.
Building height restriction **Traffic management and parking** **Flood risk**	My wife and I own a unit at XXX, we strongly object to the proposed nine-storey development on the current waterfront car-park site. The plan will significantly impact the existing community by blocking water views, reducing property values, creating traffic and parking issues, and contributing to over-development on flood-prone land. We urge Council to reconsider the height and scale of this proposal, or even better to preserve the open, accessible waterfront character of Port Macquarie by the area being converted to a green open space with parking and recreation for the local community and visitors alike to enjoy.

Town amenity	I am literally ashamed of so much here in Port Macquarie. Its beautiful beaches and other natural features have been sadly let down by Council performance to date. When Council says they dont have funding to keep the edges of the road clear and provide pathways ... how can they possibly manage a concept of this magnitude ! I do like to think that Port Macquarie should be left as the small time holiday and retirement destination that it is. We do not need it to be another Gold Coast. But it would be lovely if funds were spent on keeping the streets and roadways better maintained, and things were made to look clean and tidy rather than the upgrade here proposed, I think this would appeal more to locals and visitors.
Road maintenance	How about fixing wrights rd roundabout and lake rd roundabout first!!!
Traffic management	We don't need more parks or holiday places, wrights road and Oxley highway fixed to make easy commute to port for work , waiting 15 minutes to get to work is a joke , we live in the 2025 and council can not come up with better ideas, it's Imbarrassing when holiday makers come and have to wait to get into town, the amount of accidents are council waiting for someone to die before they make changes, just like out on the highway we have a beautiful riverfront now , does not need changing
Traffic management **Town amenity**	Downloaded via HYS *included in email submissions verbatim contributions
Building height restriction **Parking**	As an owner at XXXX for the past 13/14 years. Re the proposed Development on William St Port Macquarie for a 9 story development is unbelievable. I submit our objections as a rate payers for the last 14 years on several past and present properties. 1. All of XXXX building will lose water views and this will suffer reduction in value and income! 2.Where are all the proposed parking plans for this and the traffic flow will become impossibly blocked. 3.This plan proposal is on a flood plain. 4.If you loose 350-450 car park spaces reducing accessibility and foreshore usage. 5.This plan will significantly raise noise levels in the town centre. 6.Where is the Council Plan for road flow? 7.Better use of this land proposal could bring something good for Port Macquarie particularly for Tourism and therefor more local jobs. Please look for better future proposals to benefit Port Macquarie. I would be pleased to receive acknowledgment of this email.
Building height restriction **Parking**	As an owner at Mantra Quayside for the last 13/14 years Re the proposed Development on William St Port Macquarie for a 9-story development is unbelievable! I submit my objections as a rate payer for the last 14 years of several past and present properties. 1.All of Manrta building will lose water views and this will suffer reduction in value and in rental income. 2.Where are all the proposed parking plans for this area as traffic flow will become logistical and impossibly blocked. 3.This plan proposal is on a flood plain. 4 You will lose 350-450 car park spaces reducing accessibility of foreshore usage. 5.This plan will significantly raise noise levels in the town centre. 6.What is Council plan for road flow? 7.Better use of this land proposal could bring something good for Port Macquarie

	particularly for tourism and therefore more local jobs. Please look for better future proposals to benefit Port Macquarie. I would be pleased to receive acknowledge of this email.
Green public spaces **Housing** **Building height restrictions** **Natural environment and town amenity** **Community amenity**	The heart of Port city is fine how it is, except there is not enough green space to wander through near town apart from the shrunken Town Green area, which is more of a car park these days. There's a bit of green space a Mrs York's Garden which is pleasant and green space up at St Thomas's church, which I sometimes spend time sitting up there and remembering what the town used to be like when the population fitted the town centre. There's a bit of green space at Westport, however there's not much shade and some trees and bbqs would be good there. It would be nice to hand the NRMA caravan park over to the community as a green space for the future and our grandchildren. The council should buy it for the community to enjoy. Port is not designed to be a future city it's a large country town and it should remain that way. Port is losing it's beauty and becoming dirty and tarnished now days. With overcrowded main streets, too many cars downtown and too many people. High-rise creep happening. The tallest thing in Port should be St Thomas's church and the rest of the town built around this as was intended. This means no more high rise in Port centre. A city centre needs to be built west of Port between Port and Wauchope for future living. Build as many highrise appartments there if you wish. I am not opposed to high density living, just not right in the centre of the town. Developers are just going to keep competing for views of the water and there will be no end to the amount of high rise on top of each other. In the end there will only be a select few who can actually afford the unit with the views anyway. The rest of the people will just have views of other balconies and windows. This is a recipe for disaster and creating ghettos of the future. Housing is unaffordable in Port now. It makes me sad how much land banking is going on here around east Port especially. Many older homes sit empty and unused when there is a housing crisis happening. For the future it would be better to set up amenities and services where the housing suburbs are and the suburban families live. I grew up in Hill street and Bridge street and the swimming pool serviced the people in the town, but people lived in the town then, that was suburbia. Only a few people lived out at Lighthouse Beach then or Crestwood wasn't a thing. I've noticed the high rise apartments near Town Beach block the cooling sea breezes that blow through the streets there. This heat is only going to increase in years to come and if the town is not able to access its natural cooling elements it will be a horrible place to live. I guess if you're lucky enough to live up high in the apartment with the sea views you won't even notice how others below you are sweltering. The use of air conditioning and electricity will increase and the burning of more coal to produce electricity adding to climate change. The heart of Port can be a great place to be as long as it is done with low impact to the environment and the community. The answer is to keep things simple and natural and not to privatise community spaces and parks. High density living can be achieved if thoughtfully planned on a smaller low impact scale. The natural beauty needs to considered as the most precious thing we have here. It's important to keep the environment as wild as possible. It concerns me when Koala's are crossing Pacific drive its so busy along there with so many cars. Public transport, walking and cycling are all great additions to the town.

	Obviously the town needs to grow, but future planning needs to be really well thought out and not just by developers, 'stakeholders' (whoever they are) and business owners. They shouldn't speak for the majority of ordinary people who call Port home.
Building height increase	I support Council's long term vision for Port Macquarie CBD to become a major city. I am an owner of residential land in the vicinity of XXXX block and support the vision for this area, including the increased building heights.
Development and planning considerations Future vision	We are in favour of the draft City Heart Master Plan. It has many featrures that reflects a progressive and dynamic area. Development and Planning done well creates a better environment for all. A city is like a tree, if its not growing, it's dying. As stewards for the next generation it is our rpepsonsibility to carve out a time in history to enure we get this right. That time is now. A whole town plan is the answer. Increase building heights, positively engage our foreshore, incoprorate green spaces, retail and commercial. Yes, car parking, serage, water, waste, flooding will all merge into the plan, and be funded - it's not difficult to accomodate these mandatory functions of planning. Build a city for generations to come, more than just now. Be brave, make it happen.
Development and planning considerations Business Parking	I'm all for increased density and height in appropriate locations however some recent developments in the Eastport area, (ie the PCYC, Cnr of Gordon and Owen St area) appear to be very bulky with minimal landscaping and a mono height that does not look great. Cities with built form need appropriate skyline studies or built form analysis that should contribute to the overall character of the city we would like to live in. These studies should form the basis of a city heart masterplan. I also don't like the way that we have a tall building edge along the coastline (eg town beach) and lower rise behind, which is again being proposed in the CBD it should be the other way around where low rise is on the edge and builds up to higher rise toward the centre so that view sharing is possible and there is incentive for developers to build to achieve ROI. Variety of heights should be incorporated up to 15/16 stories but its imperative we have the built form analysis before anything else. We need to ensure that we also don't exclude CBD activities from these areas, Ie live music venues receiving noise complaints because residential is in the wrong location, Businesses having to curtail delivery times etc but we also need appropriate land set aside for business to expand, why designate the land where the current council chambers is to residential? We need to attract business so that all these new residents have some where to work. I love the fact that some of the current carparking areas are proposed to be public parks, these areas are too precious to have as carparking however we need to ensure we do replace these facilities.
Connection to foreshore Future vision and planning	Overall, a great plan. While I can see a lot of focus on connection & celebration of public spaces on the waterfront, I don't think the focus of encouraging a greater connection of commercial spaces to the waterfront goes nearly far enough. Like many coastal cities, PM has evolved, historically, without a particular focus on the waterfront and thus very 'inward' looking. So much so, the waterfront is not currently the focus of the commercial CBD or even the focus of the other zones of the city. Of course, these days there is a much greater awareness of the benefits of capitalising on a city's significant waterfront asset. There are plenty of examples where Australian coastal cities have, over time, repositioned their primary commercial focal point to their waterfront. Examples include the Cairns Esplanade, Mackay Harbour, Darwin Waterfront Precinct, Hastings St Noosa and there would be many other good examples. The PM waterways are no less significant than the examples listed above. I just think the City Heart Master Plan needs a much greater vision of the future in this respect.

Amenity **Parking** **Traffic management** **Future vision and planning**	1. I endorse the principles of improving the appearance, accessibility, and user friendliness of the City Heart and appreciate your inclusion of the areas of the town outside of the city centre. 2. I believe that a modernisation and beautification of the City Heart is timely and necessary. 3. However, it is critical that we get the basic infrastructure right before we look to enhancing areas for entertainment, relaxation and beautification and tourism. For example - a) I can see no mention of improving the parking in the City Heart. This is an issue of high priority in all areas but, in particular, in the city centre. Given the town's demographic and geographical size, it is imperative that there are a range of parking options dispersed across the town so that people can park close to their chosen shopping, eating, or entertainment venues. As a simple example, access to suitable parking for those attending the Glasshouse at night is abominable and unsafe, especially for senior citizens or those with mobility issues. b) Council must place a higher priority on maintenance and upkeep of facilities and infrastructure. As a simple example, the planted median strips in town are a total embarrassment often weedy, overgrown and unsightly. Other examples include uneven footpaths, total lack of maintained footpaths along major road corridors, road surface deterioration, lack of adequate marking on pedestrian crossings (except for the one where a fatality occurred - there are many equally dangerous crossings with no signage) c) Major drainage issues at several playing fields rendering them unplayable after heavy rain. d) Finding and implementing an interim solution to the disaster which exists at Wrights Rd and Lake Rd intersections with the Oxley Highway - I know this is a federal issue, but Council must take responsibility for the safety and welfare of its citizens while a permanent solution is being negotiated. This issue is, in part, due to Council decisions to approve additional housing, retail, educational and health services developments which feed into and significantly increase the traffic congestion at these roundabouts. These are only a few examples of where I believe Council is lagging in addressing existing issues with infrastructure in the town. Other examples include water, sewerage, waste and road expansion and maintenance. Further developments and population growth, as outlined in the plan, will dramatically increase the maintenance budget. How will Council meet those costs if it can't manage the current infrastructure? I have said often that a MAJOR PRIOTITY AND RESPONSIBILITY of Council is town planning and future proofing the town's infrastructure against the inevitable population growth. This plan is a step in the right direction as long as it is not prioritised over fixing what needs fixing now in terms of existing facilities and infrastructure.
Traffic management **Parking** **Building height restrictions** **Amenity** **Character**	The draft City Heart Master Plan appears to heavily prioritise those living within a very small radius of the Town Green, while overlooking the needs of the broader community who travel into town to access the breakwall, riverfront, and foreshore areas. Parking provision in the plan is nearly nonexistent and does not reflect current demand, let alone future needs. Many residents from surrounding suburbs rely on car access due to limited public transport options. The plan does not acknowledge or propose solutions for this ongoing issue, despite strong population growth in Port Macquarie. The proposal to increase the allowable height of residential buildings raises

	significant concerns about the long-term visual amenity of the area. High-rise towers will fundamentally change the character of the CBD and risk creating a high-cost, exclusive precinct accessible only to those who can afford premium apartments. This contradicts the inclusive community identity Port Macquarie has always valued. There is also no clear indication that adequate parking will be available for future residents of these developments, let alone for residents living only a few kilometres away who regularly use the Town Green precinct. Overall, the plan feels heavily weighted towards attracting new high-value development rather than supporting the needs of existing residents. Without improvements to transport, realistic parking solutions, and protection of the visual and social character of the foreshore, the community will be left with reduced access to the very areas that make Port Macquarie unique. I encourage Council to reconsider these elements to ensure the final plan reflects the needs and expectations of all residents, not just those directly adjoining the Town GreeN
Ocean pool **Cycling paths** **Parking**	I am disappointed that the Ocean Pool does not form part of the plan. Why not? It is not even mentioned as a proposal. Very strange. Who decided that was not to be included in these proposals? There is insufficient planning around dedicated cycle paths. You are creating conflict with pedestrians and other road users by not implementing cycle paths. More people would ride bikes if it was safe to do so. The recently created path beside Ocean Drive is a good start but it just ends abruptly and you are back amongst the traffic. NOT GOOD. This is indicative of the situation with the cycle paths in general in Port. Very poorly thought out. Also, council seems to forget the simple stuff, like.... footpaths. There are far too many 'missing links' making it hard to walk around if you are able bodied, let alone for those with mobility issues. Grand plans are great, but first get the basics right. The artist impression shows the car-park in town becoming open space. That's good but where do you park in town for major events or shows? Port Central car park is closed when these events finish at night. NO mention of alternate parking in the plan. Also, it shows the land next to the car-park which belongs to Woolworths becoming part of the open space. Have Woolies agreed to this use of the land or a sale of this land? NO mention of that either.
Better By Bicycle	Downloaded via HYS *included in email submissions verbatim contributions
Cycling and walking paths	More bicycle and walking trails to enable a safer, healthier and more environmentally friendly means of getting around Port Macquarie and surrounding towns, including a path linking Lake Cathie to Port Macquarie.
Housing **Cycling and walking paths** **Amenity**	We keep building high rise units for the top end of the population and have forgotten about the whole town. Foot paths starting nowhere snd going nowhere or none at all, token bike lanes starting nowhere and going nowhere or none ! A once tidy town which is now littered with rubbish and unkept . Our native area along the eastern side of pacific drive being destroyed for houses and units to have views ! I am all for building and progression but not at the loss of everything else that is important in a town.
Cycling and walking paths **Parking**	With removal of CBD parking areas, there needs to be safer, continuous cycle lanes and pedestrian routes across town. Currently there are limited cycle paths and bike parking, and without better cycling and pedestrian connections and safe routes, people are going to have to keep driving and increasing parking demand. More consideration needs to be given to making cycling accessible for everybody across town.
Public transport hub **Parking**	There are, to my mind, two glaring omissions in these visionary plans: 1. There is no space set aside for a public transport hub or interchange, at the center of a smooth flowing bus system and where people may easily join and

	change routes in and out of the town center, linking to suburbs and satellites. 2. There is no space set aside, on the outskirts of the center, for mass car parking, linked by shuttles into the central precincts.
Business Port Macquarie	Downloaded via HYS *included in email submissions verbatim contributions
Public consultation process	I STRONGLY OBJECT THIS PLAN WE ARE GROWING TOO FAST AND IT IS UNESSESARY - WHY WASNT THERE MORE PUBLIC CONSULTATION - WHY BECAUSE IT WAS RIGGED IN YOUR FAVOUR - YOU REALY ARE SNEAKY PEOPLE AND THEREFORE YOU HAVE MANY ANGRY RATEPAYERS - I REALLY HATE THIS PROPOSAL AS DO MANY OTHERS SO I HAVE HAD MY SAY NOT THAT IT WILL MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE - AS I ASUME IT IS A DONE DEAL SO I HOPE YOU HAVE BAD LUCK WITH THIS POPOSAL ! ! !
Foreshore activation **Cycling and walking paths** **Traffic management** **Ocean pool**	I appreciate the vision Council has for the future and I would like to commend the following proposals: Waterfront activation is a brilliant idea for many reasons stated Safer intersections are critical for all forms of traffic, including electric wheelchairs Refurbished streets and planning for active transport including shared paths such as cycleways and additional footpaths are much needed in our community I am not clear on what is meant by Active pavilions so that will need to be plain-languaged as that wording appears independent of the artists' impressions of the proposed changes I do have some queries however and they include: What is happening to the shared pathway on the newly opened Ocean Drive road heading into town as suddenly it stops and one must continue travelling on the road? I would like to see this extended or directional signage installed to suggest alternative routes. Cycleways need to be dedicated laneways on roads as it's not safe to ride beside traffic despite the guidelines for motorists. Currently owned by Woolworths (cnr Short & Buller Sts), it is misleading as your plan claims to make that space green; how is that possible when that land is not owned by Council? In the precinct of East Port, I am MOST disappointed that there is no inclusion of the Ocean Pool at Oxley Beach. I appreciate that the yet to be budgeted for Aquatic Centre is Council's priority however I cannot comprehend WHY it continues to be dismissed by Council when the funding is already secured by both the State and Federal governments? The locals of Port Macquarie deserve to have an ocean pool and some of us (volunteers) are prepared to manage its ongoing maintenance. Perhaps a call to those Councils who currently successfully manage ocean pools along our eastern coastline to ascertain the precise funds needed for ongoing maintenance plans to help budget for this from 2029 onwards? I look forward to acknowledgement of this submission. Sincerely XXXX
Foreshore access **Parking** **Green public spaces**	The new waterfront park at the end of Hollingworth Street is genius. The extension of the park on the other side of the river is also fabulous. That cars currently have some of the best views in Port Macquarie is absurd! Multi level car parks and underground carparks should be developed in the middle of the city and NOT near the water. Views should be for everyone. The greening of these areas is brilliant. Not only will it facilitate walking and using push bikes, but it will also enable tourists to picnic and accommodation providers such as Sails Resort to commence water taxi shuttles to the city centre. Local grocery shoppers and their families (who need cars) do not use the CBD; they prefer the large supermarkets located at Settlement city (etc). Keep the areas around Port Macquarie's precious inner harbour green and traffic free as possible. Lets uphold the beauty and tranquility of our city by greening it and providing more eco

	friendly solutions. The bleating drivers who are the biggest complainers don't even glance at the river as they park in Short and Hollingworth Streets then stomp toward Horton Street.
Sustainability **Business and retail spaces** **Community amenity and value** **Climate impacts** **Parking** **Funding and resourcing** **Housing** **Land use planning** **Transparent civic process** **Traffic management** **Road infrastructure**	There is a strong emphasis on sustainability language throughout the plan, but very little clarity on how this will be achieved in practice. I would like to see more detailed information about renewable energy opportunities and how they would be implemented across the city, rather than vague references. Rain gardens are presented as a positive initiative, however it is unclear where these would actually be placed and how they would function within existing streetscapes. Without this detail, it feels more like a token gesture than a meaningful climate response. The plan repeatedly refers to “affordable housing” without defining what this actually means. What is the upper limit of affordability? Current unit prices in Port Macquarie, particularly on streets such as Waugh Street and Hollingsworth Street, start at around $1.4 million and increase from there. Without clear benchmarks, the claim of affordability feels misleading. Settlement City There is no clear justification for the need for a new shopping precinct. Walking through Port Central and Settlement City now, there are already numerous empty retail spaces. Retail rents are unaffordable as it is, so flooding the market with additional retail space is unlikely to improve the city and may instead worsen vacancy rates. It is unclear what is happening to the existing Burger Urge and Zambrero buildings. Demolishing relatively new structures to create a plaza feels wasteful, both economically and environmentally. Placing a plaza and community space on land already earmarked for new apartments would be a better use of existing space and vegetation. Creating large cement plazas will only increase temperatures in the area. There is no need to intensify heat when the town is already experiencing the impacts of climate change. These spaces risk becoming hot, unusable areas rather than genuine community assets. The proposed apartments feel like a money grab rather than a response to community need. While the council frequently references climate considerations, there are few clearly articulated, climate-based changes that would meaningfully benefit the town. The image of the town centre featuring water sprouts raises more questions than answers. Is this intended to be a children’s play area or a water feature? Does it use recycled water? These details matter and have not been addressed. The proposed overwater boardwalk link would improve accessibility in the area and is one of the few aspects that appears genuinely beneficial. Westport The existing carpark is consistently used and therefore cannot be considered underutilised. If the goal is to improve access to the city, it would make more sense to upgrade existing pathways and add gardens rather than remove functional infrastructure. There is no clear plan for where people will park to access this space. Hollingsworth Street is already overrun with cars, and Bridge Street is not a safe place to park. The logistics of parking have not been adequately addressed. It is unclear how the proposed wide pathway will be constructed. Will it encroach on the Waters Edge property, or will it be widened into the river? This lack of clarity is concerning. There is also no acknowledgement of the homeless population currently living in these spaces, nor any explanation of what will

	happen to them as redevelopment occurs. The map is unclear as to whether Garden Village is being redeveloped. Taller apartment buildings in this area are more likely to drive prices up rather than make housing more affordable. The new "parks" feel as though they have been added to the plan simply to appear beneficial, without actually responding to public need or how people currently use these spaces. Flooding on Short Street has not been explicitly addressed, despite being a known and ongoing issue. Additionally, previous tree plantings, such as those at Town Green and the Westport waterfront, have failed to provide adequate shade. Many do not grow tall enough to be useful, or they fall over in strong winds. Repeating this approach will not improve usability or comfort. CBD The removal of existing retail spaces and carparks to create shop-top housing and parks risks creating areas that are not actually accessible to people. Public transport and road infrastructure are already struggling and are not capable of coping with the increased demand these changes would generate. Port Macquarie risks losing its small-town feel, which is a significant part of what attracts people to live here and visit. Increasing density without adequate infrastructure undermines this character. Drawing more people into the city centre when current infrastructure is already over capacity will place further strain on systems that are not coping with existing demand. Overall, the plan appears to prioritise profit and prestige, benefiting wealthier residents while excluding others. Claims of climate concern are contradicted by proposals for nine-storey buildings, which will increase heat, reduce airflow, and make the town feel claustrophobic. Civic Precinct There is no clear explanation as to what is wrong with the existing buildings. Are they no longer fit for purpose? From both an economic and climate perspective, demolishing large numbers of buildings and rebuilding them is wasteful. Refurbishment and renovation would be a more responsible and cost-effective approach. The removal of open space raises concerns about where children will play sports such as soccer. These areas are also used for community events like the LASSU, which currently rely on this space. It is unclear where the funding for this redevelopment is coming from. At the same time, roads are crumbling and pathways are broken or inaccessible, yet the council is proposing a major aesthetic overhaul of the town. A town dominated by high-rise buildings will increase heat, increase car numbers, and place additional pressure on road infrastructure. There has been no explanation of how water supply will meet the demands of a growing population. It is also unclear why existing spaces such as Hennessy Park are not being better utilised, instead of demolishing buildings and carparks to create new parks. As natural disasters become more frequent, the council should be focusing on preparedness and resilience. Instead, this plan appears to prioritise capitalist-driven redevelopment and visual "upgrades" at the expense of liveability. Finally, there is no transparency about what will happen to people who currently own buildings or land in these areas. How much will it cost to acquire these properties, and what impact will this have on their livelihoods and wellbeing?
Sustainability **Business and retail spaces** **Community amenity and value** **Climate impacts**	The plan relies heavily on sustainability language without providing enough detail to demonstrate meaningful outcomes. References to renewable energy, climate resilience and environmental initiatives are broad and underdeveloped, making it difficult to assess their real impact. While rain gardens are presented as a positive feature, there is no clarity around where they would be located, how they would function, or how they would integrate with existing infrastructure.

Parking **Funding and resourcing** **Housing** **Land use planning** **Transparent civic process** **Traffic management** **Road infrastructure**	The repeated use of the term “affordable housing” is particularly concerning due to the lack of a clear definition. There is no explanation of price caps or income thresholds, making it unclear who this housing is intended to serve. Current unit prices in Port Macquarie, particularly in the town centre around Waugh and Hollingsworth Streets, already start at approximately $1.5 million and increase significantly from there. Without firm benchmarks, the claim that this plan will deliver affordability feels disconnected from the local market reality. Settlement City The proposal for a new shopping precinct is not supported by existing conditions on the ground. Both Port Central and Settlement City already contain a high number of vacant retail spaces, largely due to unaffordable rents. Introducing additional retail supply into an oversaturated market is unlikely to revitalise the area and may instead exacerbate vacancy and financial pressure on small businesses. The plan does not address how increasing retail space will solve these underlying economic issues. The demolition of relatively new buildings, such as the existing Burger Urge and Zambrero premises, to create a plaza raises serious concerns about waste and poor land-use decisions. Replacing functioning structures with large hard-surfaced public spaces risks increasing local temperatures and reducing comfort, particularly during summer. In the context of climate change, creating expansive cement plazas is counterproductive. The proposed apartments surrounding this area appear driven more by financial return than community need, and despite frequent references to climate responsibility, the plan lacks tangible climate-positive outcomes. Visual concepts such as water features in the town centre also lack clarity. It is unclear whether these are intended as play spaces or decorative elements, and there is no information on water sourcing or reuse. While the overwater boardwalk link is a genuinely positive initiative that would improve accessibility, it stands out as an exception in an area otherwise dominated by poorly justified redevelopment. Westport The Westport carpark is consistently used and cannot reasonably be described as underutilised. Removing or repurposing this space without providing viable alternatives will only increase congestion in surrounding streets, which are already over capacity. Hollingsworth Street regularly struggles with traffic and parking demand, and Bridge Street is not a safe or practical option for additional parking. The plan does not adequately explain how people are expected to access this area once existing parking is removed. There is also a lack of clarity around the construction of the proposed widened pathway. It is unclear whether this would encroach on private property, such as the Waters Edge development, or extend further into the river. These uncertainties raise concerns about environmental impact, feasibility, and transparency. The plan is also silent on what will happen to the homeless population currently living in these spaces, suggesting a disregard for the social consequences of redevelopment. Proposed new parks in this area feel tokenistic, included to give the appearance of community benefit without responding to how people actually use the space. Questions around Garden Village redevelopment and the introduction of taller apartment buildings further undermine claims of affordability, as increased height and density in this location are far more likely to push prices higher. Ongoing flooding issues, particularly on Short Street, have not been meaningfully addressed, despite being a known problem. Past failures

	in tree planting, such as at Town Green and along the Westport waterfront, also suggest that shade and usability are not being seriously considered. CBD The removal of existing retail spaces and carparks to introduce shop-top housing and new parks risks creating environments that are theoretically attractive but practically inaccessible. Public transport and road infrastructure are already stretched beyond capacity, and the plan does not demonstrate how increased density will be supported. Drawing more people into the CBD without first resolving these issues will place further strain on systems that are already failing. In pursuing higher density and large-scale redevelopment, Port Macquarie risks losing the small-town character that makes it desirable to residents and visitors alike. The introduction of nine-storey buildings contradicts the stated concern for climate impacts, as taller, denser developments increase heat retention, reduce airflow, and create a more claustrophobic urban environment. Overall, the plan appears to prioritise profit and prestige development over genuine community benefit, reinforcing spaces of wealth while excluding others. Civic Precinct There is no clear justification for the large-scale demolition of existing civic buildings. It has not been demonstrated that these structures are no longer fit for purpose, and from both an economic and environmental perspective, demolition and rebuild is an inefficient approach. Refurbishment and adaptive reuse would achieve functional improvements while significantly reducing waste and embodied carbon. The loss of open space raises serious concerns for community use. Areas currently used for children's sport, such as soccer, and for major events like the LASSU, are essential to the social fabric of the town. The plan does not explain where these activities will be relocated. At the same time, the source of funding for this redevelopment remains unclear, particularly when basic infrastructure such as roads and footpaths are deteriorating and inaccessible. A future dominated by high-rise development will increase heat, car dependency, and pressure on already strained road networks. There is little discussion of how water supply and other essential services will support a growing population. The failure to better utilise existing green spaces, such as Hennessy Park, instead of demolishing buildings to create new parks, reflects poor planning priorities. As climate-driven natural disasters become more frequent, council resources should be focused on resilience, preparedness, and liveability. Instead, this plan appears driven by aesthetic upgrades and capital growth, with insufficient consideration of social impact. There is also a lack of transparency around what will happen to current landowners and business operators, including the financial and personal consequences of compulsory acquisition and displacement.
Sustainability **Business and retail spaces** **Community amenity and value** **Climate impacts** **Parking** **Funding and resourcing** **Housing** **Land use planning**	While the plan repeatedly references sustainability, climate awareness and liveability, these concepts are not supported by enough practical detail to demonstrate real outcomes. Renewable energy opportunities are mentioned but not explained, and it remains unclear how climate-responsive design will be embedded across the town rather than applied selectively. Initiatives such as rain gardens and green infrastructure are described positively, yet there is little information on their placement, maintenance, or effectiveness, making them feel more symbolic than functional. Claims around affordability are undermined by the absence of clear definitions. "Affordable housing" is repeatedly referenced without stating price caps, income targets, or how affordability will be protected long term. Given that apartment prices in central Port Macquarie already exceed $2.5 million in many areas, this

Transparent civic process **Traffic management** **Road infrastructure**	lack of clarity raises serious concerns about who this housing is actually intended for. Settlement City The proposal to introduce a new shopping precinct does not reflect current economic conditions. Existing centres such as Port Central and Settlement City already contain a significant number of vacant retail tenancies, largely driven by high rents. Adding further retail space into an already saturated market is unlikely to revitalise the area and instead risks increasing vacancy and financial pressure on small businesses. The plan offers no explanation as to how this additional supply will improve outcomes for retailers or the broader community. The decision to demolish relatively new buildings, including those around the Kmart precinct, in order to create a plaza appears both wasteful and poorly justified. Replacing functional buildings with hard-surfaced open space will increase heat and reduce comfort, particularly during warmer months. In the context of climate change, large concrete plazas are difficult to justify. The surrounding apartment developments feel driven primarily by financial return, and despite repeated references to climate responsibility, there is little evidence of climate-positive design outcomes. Westport The characterisation of the Westport carpark as underutilised does not align with everyday use. The carpark is consistently full, and its removal would place additional strain on surrounding streets that already struggle with congestion. Surrounding streets cannot cope with the current amount of traffic and the lack of long term and all-day parking reduces the ability for people to get to work, let along use the spaces proposed int he plan. The plan does not provide a realistic solution for how people will access this area once parking capacity is reduced. The absence of discussion around the homeless population currently occupying these spaces is also troubling, suggesting that social impacts are being overlooked.The introduction of new parks in this area feels more like a box-ticking exercise than a response to community need. Taller apartment buildings in this location are far more likely to increase property values and rents. Flooding issues on Short Street remain unresolved, despite being a longstanding problem, and previous tree plantings along the waterfront and at Town Green have failed to provide adequate shade or resilience, indicating that lessons from past projects have not been applied. CBD Significant changes to the CBD, including the removal of existing retail spaces and carparks, risk creating environments that look appealing in concept but are difficult to use in practice. Transport infrastructure is already under strain, and the plan does not demonstrate how increased density will be supported. Encouraging more people into the city centre without addressing these limitations will only worsen congestion and accessibility issues. As density increases, there is a real risk that Port Macquarie will lose the small-town character that attracts residents and visitors. The construction of nine-storey buildings directly contradicts stated climate concerns, as taller developments contribute to heat retention, reduced airflow, and a more oppressive urban environment. The overall direction of the plan suggests a focus on high-value development and prestige outcomes rather than inclusivity or long-term liveability. Civic Precinct The scale of demolition proposed within the civic precinct is difficult to justify.

	There has been no clear explanation as to why existing buildings are no longer fit for purpose, and from both an economic and environmental perspective, widespread demolition represents a significant waste of resources. The loss of open space has serious implications for community activities. Areas currently used for children's sport and major events are essential to community life, yet there is no clear plan for their relocation. Funding sources for the redevelopment also remain unclear, particularly when basic infrastructure such as roads and footpaths are visibly deteriorating. An increase in high-rise development will inevitably place additional pressure on roads, parking, water supply and other essential services, yet these impacts are not meaningfully addressed. As climate-related disasters become more frequent, council focus should be on resilience, preparedness and everyday liveability. Instead, this strategy appears driven by visual transformation and capital growth, with insufficient consideration of social impact. There is also little transparency regarding the consequences for current landowners and business operators, including the financial and personal costs of acquisition and displacement.

Appendix B: Verbatim Social Map Comments

PRECINCT LOCATION	COMMENT	UP VOTE/ DOWN VOTE	DATE RECEIVED
Settlement City	When the school moves this is another ideal place for dense residential. It doesnt encroach on the 100's of us that are located eastward along warlters and up the ridge. Put new accomodation here!	None received	5 December 2025
Settlement City	There is a pin for a new shopping area on the other map but this is still a primary school.	None received	28 November 2025
Settlement City	A huge building there should NEVER be built. The planners say it's like a "gateway icon" location, but it's an irrelevant idea putting a really tall bloated apartment or commercial complex there..what does it "say" for the community? Surely they can make something that is significant there but not some money pit that will only add to certain pockets and cause massive added confusion to our roads and other residents in this area. It also obliterates 100's of resident's ICONIC VIEWS of the harbour that live along Warlters street and above it on the hill. The previous "Mega-Plex" DA at 19 mts high is way too high anyway and does the same thing for ALL the 100's of people living behind it, destroying very important ICONIC VIEWS. The taller buildings should be HIGHER up the hill and lower buildings LOWER down!! Also that corner is already really squeezed by 2 roads and is always very busy. Current road infrastructure is currently just handling it most of the time, adding a monstrosity full of people needing vehicular access is a really dumb idea, causing more dangerous conditions and confusion.	None received	2 December 2025
Westport	This green field site on the end of Dixie Park is perfect for a dense residential building.doesn't encroach on any or many at all.	None received	5 December 2025
Westport	I believe that this sight has had an attempted development put on it, but didn't take off..Once again, it's well located as it doesn't encroach on existing prime located homes...do something there!	None received	5 December 2025
Westport	The map is very deceiving. There is an east/west oriented ridge along here where Hilltop Cresc., Mort street and Hastings Avenue end at the top. This creates a		4 December 2025

	north facing slope running all along here where 100's of people live and enjoy the ICONIC VIEWS northward and eastward toward town (and westward toward the mountains!)..Totally unique aspect in all of town. We must preserve this amenity rather than obliterate it by ugly towers along the flat areas adjacent to the open green spaces of the water front. Low buildings stepped up the hillside is the only way to add residences without destroying the value of what 100's of rate paying residents already share...along with the visual amenity making Westport/Settlement crossover area unique! Please don't wipe it out it!		
Westport	No to 9 storey buildings in this area.	None received	9 December 2025
Westport	Athletics track and facilities for the huge running community	1 up vote 1 down vote	28 October 2025
Westport	Making this intersection "colourful" and "calming" won't solve anything.	1 up vote	1 November 2025
Westport	These back from the foreshore streets are perfect for intensive residential buildings. Ackroyd, Table, Gore, Kooyong..Leave the foreshore alone please and develop back from the the amenity of the foreshore!	None received	5 December 2025
Port Macquarie CBD	Advocate for a train line connecting Wauchope to the Port Macquarie CBD with stops along the way. It will reduce traffic and connect other centres like Kempsey and Taree to our CBD, bringing economic activity and tourism.	None received	29 November 2025
Port Macquarie CBD	What is happening with this underutilised space, why isn't it marked for redevelopment?	2 upvotes	29 October 2025
Port Macquarie CBD	Increase the height limit, and build more multi use developments, I do not see why this would be discouraged. I think the plan is great, as long as character is kept.	2 upvotes 1 downvote	31 October 2025
Port Macquarie CBD	no height increase ever.. we voted on this years ago, and if anyone want to increase it again, it should be put to a vote!	2 upvotes 1 downvote	29 October 2025
Port Macquarie CBD	It was agreed that PortMacquarie would not have high rises higher than 7 Stories, I think we are unique, we don't want to be the Gold Coast. There is affordable housing close the the CBD now. I don' believe we should be crowding our CBD with High Rise	1 upvote	17 November 2025
Port Macquarie CBD	Please move the police station as this would offer up many new parking spaces in Town. The Town Green plan was amazing with the lovely BBQ areas etc.	None received	17 December 2025

	Would be great for town, Highway Patrol should be closer to the highway not in the CBD		
Civic Precinct	WHY DPES COUCIL NEED A NEW HEAD QUARETERS	1 upvote 1 downvote	29 October 2025
Eastport	The plan appears to specify 9 stories either side of Clarence St in this area ie North and South of Clarence St. The Zoning height should remain as per the current DCP on the Northern Side. This would enable a layered building height towards the water. That is, lower building heights the closer to the water. This would help preserve the character of Port Macquarie. and stop the impact of the built environment nearer to the water	1 upvote	27 November 2025

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