

Workshop Report

Central Hobart Precincts Structure Plan

Prepared 2021



yoursay.hobartcity.com.au

Prepared by



City of **HOBART**

Workshops at a glance

Four workshops were held between 15 and 22 November 2021. The workshops were open to any member of the public and included two workshops for community members, one workshop for stakeholder organisations and one workshop for business operators and property owners. Promotion of the workshops were via Facebook, the Your Say Hobart newsletter, and targeted stakeholder emails.

A total of 88 people attend the workshops and represented a range of stakeholders including: individuals, residents, community associations, community sector organisation, advocacy groups, State Government departments, planners and architects, business owners and operators, property owners.

There were no prerequisites for attending the workshop, although participants were encouraged to read either the Central Hobart Precincts Plan Discussion Paper or the Summary Paper and complete the online survey prior to attending.

Purpose

The purpose of the four workshops was to seek feedback from the community on the ideas put forward in the Central Hobart Precincts Plan Discussion Paper, which will then be used to inform the development of the draft Central Hobart Precincts Plan.

Objectives

The objectives of the workshops were to:

- Seek community feedback on the five city shaping goals in the Discussion Paper
- Seek community feedback on the proposed precincts, in particular current issues or challenges and potential opportunities for the precincts in the future.
- Seek community feedback on any other aspect of the project

Workshop design and approach

The workshops were facilitated by an external facilitator.

The first half of the workshop included a presentation by the project team followed by a facilitated group discussion on the Goals and Potential Future Directions within the Discussion Paper. Workshop participants were also invited to ask questions of the project team about any of the goals and future directions.

In the second half, participants were invited to join small group discussions around one of the proposed precincts. In which participants considered the current state of the precincts, and their potential opportunities for growth or change. Feedback was recorded by members of the project team.

Each of the four workshops held the same format with minor changes to content depending on the audience. The business and property owner workshop, for example, focussed more on development contributions and possible planning scheme changes.

Participants were also able to provide feedback via a hardcopy survey or A5 message card.

Workshop results and analysis

The workshops responses were reviewed by the City's Community Engagement Team including a detailed analysis of the feedback and identification of key themes. This report summarises the most

frequently mentioned topics in the workshop discussions and represents the direction of the discussion and the key themes raised across each of the workshops.

City-shaping goals

What we asked

The first section of the workshop focussed on the five city shaping goals and associated potential future directions put forward in the discussion paper.

The discussion paper included over 200 potential future directions and while the workshop only gauged support on a selection of these, respondents were also given the opportunity to provide comment on any of the ideas and potential future directions via the A5 message card and were encouraged to complete the online survey.

Those potential future directions that were included in the workshop were chosen because they represented an idea or concept that the City may not have engaged on with the broader community; or that may be of high interest to the community.

Why we asked

The discussion paper was intended to present a number of ideas to the community and encourage discussion and feedback on these concepts. We wanted to gather community feedback and ideas around these goals and future directions and use this feedback to shape the outcomes of the precincts plan.

Group discussion - key themes

The key themes from the group discussions on the City Shaping Goals are represented below:

Transport

- Pedestrian infrastructure needs improving including the accessibility of footpaths and buildings.
- Concern around the impact of an increased residential population on traffic congestion and parking.
- Improvements to accommodate the increased use of active transport modes including wider footpaths, bike lanes and bike storage.
- Improvements for public transport system to ease congestion including consideration of a free CBD bus.
- Provision of infrastructure for electric vehicles.
- Provision of infrastructure for motorcycles particularly around parking provision.

Planning development and built form

Underutilised sites and developers

- Incentivise the development of underutilised sites
- Potential for shop tops to be considered as underutilised sites with greater potential for residential
- Provide clarity around how the City works with developers and property owners of underutilised sites
- A land banking policy would be beneficial to reduce underutilised sites in the study area
- There needs to be clarity in development contributions to ensure that public spaces are created to be inviting and safe for the community.
- Retain affordable housing in the area and encourage development contributions investing back into social and affordable housing

Zoning

- Consideration to be given to inclusionary zoning
- Consideration of residential amenity in zoning decisions. For example, the impacts on residential amenity in the study area, from the emergency helicopter at the Royal Hobart Hospital.

Design and Heritage

- Design guidelines need to:
 - Be flexible enough to provide for creativity
 - Ensure footpaths and buildings don't create wind tunnels
 - Define what 'character' is
 - Ensure the quality of new architecture meets community expectations
- Heritage needs to be explicitly considered in the project and be protected with concerns that new developments can damage the heritage value and by extension, economy, of the City.
- Consider examples of precinct planning from elsewhere (City of Edinburgh's design guidelines, City of Sydney precinct planning)
- Diverse new developments need to address the lifetime of their use, through material choice and design.

Environment

- Desire for the plan to provide for additional green space within the study area rather than relying on surrounding spaces such as Queens Domains and Knocklofty.

Economic Development

- Concerns that business needs aren't explicitly represented in the Discussion Paper
- Acknowledgment of the benefits of an increased residential population on small businesses.

Other

- Concern that liveability in Hobart has reduced over time
- Concerns that Hobart, as a river city, isn't represented in the Discussion Paper
- Concerns raised over University of Tasmania's Melville St proposal
- Concern that the Discussion Paper mirrors the University of Tasmania's Southern Campus Transformation Urban Design Framework

Message card responses by theme

A total of 48 participants completed an A5 message card at the workshops with a prompt: ***"My one message to the Central Hobart Precincts Plan project team would be..."***

In total, 48 open text responses were received across the four workshops. These are summarised below.

Key theme	Number of comments
Pedestrian priority - The future should focus on a place for people rather than for vehicles and improve pedestrian amenity	10
Housing options - provide a variety of housing options (both dwelling type and cost)	7
Open space - Increase open space in the city	7
Diversity - Hobart should be diverse and inclusive in its community/ buildings/ economy	7
Accessibility - Improve accessibility outcomes	6
UTAS – Unsupportive of UTAS move into the City	6
Congestion - Congestion of vehicles in the City is a problem	6
Quality buildings - Buildings should be designed to a human scale in high quality materials	5
Reduce car use - Support the reduction of car use and/or cites a range of benefits	5

The Precincts

What we asked

The second section of the workshops focussed on the five precincts identified in the discussion paper. Workshop participants were asked to select one precinct of interest that they wished to provide feedback on. Participants considered any issues within the precincts and how the precincts had changed over the past years, before considering opportunities or how they wanted the precinct to be like into the future.

Feedback from participants was capture by members of the project team on butcher's paper. Workshop participants were then able to provide feedback on another precinct before the end of the workshop.

Why we asked

Each precinct within the study area will have its plan to guide its development and growth. Understanding what workshop participants consider to be the key issues and opportunities for each precinct will inform the draft Precincts Plan.

Central Precinct

When discussing the Central Precinct the current key themes were identified:

Transport

Parking – some participants identified that there was a lack of parking in this precinct, while others felt there were too many large car parks.

Footpaths – some concerns were raised about the accessibility of footpaths in the precinct and that footpath clutter, such as signage, scooters and skateboards affected safety.

Transit node – participants noted that the precinct is an important transit node, with many bus routes from airports and regional areas terminating in the central precinct. This raised questions about the future location of a central transit centre.

Car priority and active travel - some participants noted that the transport priority of cars over people felt wrong for this precinct and that there was a lack of cycle network and infrastructure. Some also noted that the intensity of traffic in Macquarie Street detracts from its heritage buildings.

The following transport opportunities for the Central Precinct were also identified:

- Improvements to public transport including a free shuttle bus within the precinct, shuttle busses from car parking areas into the city and a tram (or other form of public transport) from the waterfront to North Hobart.
- A review of the parking policy, privatisation of car parks, removing residential parking development requirements to reduce the amount of cars in this Precinct.
- Improved pedestrian connections by breaking up the blocks through additions such as laneways (between Watchorn Street and Harrington Lane and between Bathurst and Melville Streets) and/or by creating car exclusion zones in parts of the precinct to improve walkability.
- Providing options for intermodal transport and using transport technology for accessibility using multiple transport methods and to improve connectivity.

Environment and open space

Workshop participants identified that this precinct feels cold, hard and paved, with wind tunnels and access to day light identified as an issue.

The following open space opportunities were also identified:

- Develop an open space strategy to create more welcoming, well-designed public spaces, including additional open and greens spaces in the precinct, such as on rooftops
- Consideration of green and open space in the University's Masterplan for their properties in the study area
- Potential to swap parking and streets for parks and open space

Housing and population

Workshop participants noted the increased population and activity generated by the University during semesters.

Concerns were raised about the conflict between the noises of night time businesses on residential amenity.

The following opportunities were also identified:

- Increase residential population through shop-top living
- Ensure housing, safe spaces and health services for people experiencing homelessness

Land use, planning and development

Workshop participants felt that there was lack of quality building design and increased heights (greater than six stories) in some more recent developments impacted negatively on the precinct.

Workshop participants identified the following opportunities in the Central Precinct:

- Support for developer contribution to increase community benefit from new developments
- Potential for new uses of state government properties such as the Treasury building
- Use design to soften and warm streetscapes
- Determine and demonstrate examples of what good development is before issuing design guidelines
- Some workshop participants considered the public housing next to Best Western, the Commons, the Menzies Institute, to be examples of good design
- Need to have a diversity in buildings, designed by different architects
- Increased use of roof tops, for example for hospitality venues

Economy

Workshop participants identified recent changes in the precinct's economy including:

- The development of new hotels and more chain stores
- Larger stores like K&D and Spotlight closing down
- An increase in online shopping, exacerbated by people working from home

Some participants felt that the Elizabeth Street Mall has lost its character and some of its diversity while further up Elizabeth Street had become more boutique by comparison.

Participants also noted the following opportunities:

- What is the vision around diversity of commerce and what is appropriate?
- The opportunity to grow the number of small local shops
- More socially diverse people living in the city.

Other

Other changes that workshop participants identified include a greater feeling of safety because there are more students in the city and businesses staying open longer.

They identified the following opportunities:

- Delivery of more events and activation to bring people into the city
- Ensure there are spaces for creatives, young people
- Retain spaces for the delivery of community services
- Ensure the CBD is a welcoming place for all people

Elizabeth Midtown Precinct

When discussing the Elizabeth Midtown Precinct the following key themes were identified:

Transport

Some participants voiced concerns that a loss of parking, particularly along Elizabeth Street, has impacted access to local businesses and that the existing parking is not user friendly. Other participants commented that there is an oversupply of parking which means that the precinct is not attractive.

Participants identified that there is a tension between parking and the users of the street, with some noting that the parklets on Elizabeth Street have made the street too narrow creating a safety concern. There was also some concern that as a bus transit corridor, Elizabeth Street was subject to congestion.

Participants also identified the following transport opportunities for the precinct:

- Look at opportunities to improve parking through a parking booking system, angle parking and increasing awareness of off-street parking provision
- Improve active travel infrastructure on Elizabeth Street to connect the Waterfront to North Hobart
- Improve public transport through higher frequency and additional routes from the outer suburbs into the city. Consider tram up Elizabeth Street
- Improve pedestrian linkages and accessible footpaths to increase foot traffic through the precinct
- Potential to reduce the use of private vehicles

Environment and open space

Workshop participants noted that the precinct needs to be more pedestrian friendly, with the addition of wider footpaths, street trees, shade and seating. It was noted that any improvements to open space in this precinct should consider access and design for people living with a disability.

Participants also identified the following opportunities for the precinct:

- Increase the number of awnings to encourage people on to the street
- Increased pocket parks and green space, for example, at the former K&D site
- Improving street amenity by reducing hard surfaces

- Activate laneways and public spaces
- Provision of more courtyards

Housing

Workshop participants identified that there are opportunities to increased residential use in the precinct, and that this could be provided through a variety of dwellings such as “shop-top” living, additional affordable housing, and increased residences on internal blocks. Some participants noted that it is important to keep the diversity of housing, not just student accommodation. Some participants also raised the importance of controlling short stay rental accommodation is an important factor for the provision of housing in the precinct.

Land use, planning and development

Workshop participants identified that recent developments have resulted in large buildings that have contributed to a loss of open sky and heritage quality. Some participants also noted that there have been out-of-character development proposals exceeding the height limits in this precinct that have been approved but not yet built, and that there is a risk of too much scale and bulk from new developments. Concerns were also raised that recent University of Tasmania developments have not delivered active street frontages.

Participants identified the changes in land use over the past decade, with an increase in restaurants, bars, cafes and hairdressers. For some participants the new businesses made the area more attractive, while others noted that there were too many types of the same business and not enough diversity in retail (for example, limited access to grocers). The change in tenancies has also resulted in an increased after hours and night economy. Workshop participants noted that there was a need to protect existing small businesses.

Participants identified the following opportunities for land use in the precinct:

- Encourage more active street frontages, and smaller frontages on Elizabeth St
- Opportunity for well-designed apartments and buildings
- Any design guidelines need to clearly communicate their intent
- Retain views to the mountain and access to open sky
- Opportunity to negotiate with the University on their long term plan
- Zoning and other planning changes to facilitate the move of car yards out of the city (participant views differed on this)
- Increased residential potential in shop tops
- Ensuring development contributions to public infrastructure is provided
- Any planning changes should have legislative “teeth”

Other

Workshop participants identified opportunities to build on the unique character of Midtown by having more diverse retail including small, interesting and special local businesses. Some participants, including a selection of Midtown traders, want the City of Hobart to communicate and

negotiate with, and respond to, landowners and businesses in this precinct to help build the City's relationship with local businesses.

Some workshop participants want the precinct to be busy and interesting (similar to North Hobart) with increased provision for the arts and entertainment industries in this precinct.

Some participants wanted to let the city evolve organically, while others saw potential in researching successes from other cities.

Trinity Campbell Precinct

When discussing the Trinity Campbell Precinct the following key themes were identified:

Transport

Workshop participants noted that there is more walking on Argyle St, but that the bike lanes on Argyle St are under-utilised. The one-way street systems of Argyle and Campbell Streets were identified as contributing to congestion, particularly on Argyle Street outside the Royal Hobart Hospital. Additionally, the Brooker Highway was noted contributing noise, vibrations and exhaust fumes.

Workshop participants identified a number of opportunities to improve transport in the precinct including:

- Shuttle bus
- Improved active travel network through protected bike lanes, overpasses for pedestrians and bikes, improved footpaths and public access through developments.
- Underground parking and increased accessible parking
- Traffic calming solutions such as converting the one-way streets to two-way.
- Additional laneways and improved access to the Domain

Environment and open space

Workshop participants identified the precinct as a "heat island" and would like to see:

- Additional parks to support an increased residential population (as well as the needs of their dogs)
- More street trees and plantings
- The allocation of open space prior to further development
- Open space to be provided on the edges of larger blocks, with developments in the centre.

Housing

Workshop participants identified that the existing social housing fits well in this area, and noted that there is increased housing in the precinct, particularly on Warwick Street. It was also noted that residential amenity, particularly around noise and cleansing, is an issue - especially where hospitality venues are located close to residences.

Participants also identified the need for more housing – particularly affordable housing and that 6-storey developments were identified as an opportunity for this precinct, as long as housing amenity was considered.

Planning, development, land use and built form

Workshop participants noted that the planning scheme is insufficient for this area at the moment and that careful consideration should be given to land use to limit ad hoc development and reduce the number of car yards.

The following opportunities for land use and development were identified:

- The precinct has the most capacity to almost start from scratch with an opportunity to become a new dynamic neighbourhood
- The precinct could be an exemplar for sustainable development because of size of blocks
- Mixed use development could be considered to provide housing, services, open space and employment
- Developer contributions need boundaries
- Some participants noted that changes to the planning scheme should be considered to take each site on its merits, rather than a blanket approach, while others identified that there was too much discretion in the planning scheme
- When developing design guidelines there is a need to consider the difference in what is considered “good” design
- Development could both consolidate the space and create opportunities for people to do things in-area
- Opportunity to decrease industrial and commercial uses and increase small retail to support an increased residential population.
- Residential buildings could be of varied heights that respect the natural ridgeline and increase density without blocking views or solar access.
- 3-4 storey intelligent housing could be developed in this precinct, and buildings could be recycled and/or kept to scale in new developments.
- Larger lots should be identified and protected from being divided during development
- Taller building heights could be supported, particularly if the buildings are located in the centre of the site rather than on the street scape. This approach could also help to avoid wind tunnels
- This precinct may require a lengthier planning process (50 years)

Other

Participants wanted the precinct to transition in an interesting way. The character of the area was also discussed at the workshops, with some participants identifying the industrial character and gritty edge as an opportunity. Other participants saw the need for a heritage review of the larger blocks in the area, given the heritage examples spanning many different periods. Edinburgh was offered as an example of how to incorporate different heritage styles.

Some workshop participants suggested that artists should be given cheap rents to support this industry. It was noted that businesses would be aided by more people living in the area.

Wapping Quarter Precinct

When discussing the Wapping Precinct the following key themes were identified:

Transport

Workshop participants noted that the footpaths in this precinct are narrow and the area is surrounded by major arterial roads. Participants noted there is a lot of pedestrian traffic around the hospital and other areas. Important connections that were identified by workshop participants include the two new bridges providing connection to the Domain, and that the relationship with Macquarie Point will become increasingly important into the future.

Workshop participants identified the following opportunities for transport in this precinct:

- Upgrading buses to be more accessible and/or providing a free bus around the city
- Consideration of how to improve pedestrian access between the Waterfront and the Precinct (across Macquarie and Davey streets)
- Consideration of pedestrianising parts of the precinct
- Removing cars from the Dunn Street Carpark to turn it into a green open space
- Consideration of the connections from Macquarie Point, to Wapping, and to the CBD.

Environment and open space

Workshop participants noted that flooding is an issue and that the Hobart Rivulet itself is “unloved” in this precinct. Participants also raised concern around the lack of rubbish bins or wayfinding signs in this precinct.

Workshop participants noted that for a cultural area, there is no expression of culture in this precinct, very little going on, and that it feels “people-less”. The functions of the buildings in this precinct, such as the Theatre Royal and City Hall, aren’t reflected in the streetscape. The area doesn’t feel safe at night as there is very little after hour activation.

Workshop participants identified the following opportunities to improve open space and the environment in this area:

- Pedestrian amenity improvements such as public art, seating, native species greening, increased crossings over the Hobart Rivulet
- Beautification of the Rivulet area near the hospital to provide a nicer space
- Increased shared space and footpath improvements (such as outside the Theatre Royal)
- Retain and improve laneways
- Provide better historical interpretation and appreciation through signage and wayfinding
- Beautification of the car park/building near the old Roberts Store.

Planning, development, land use and built form

Workshop participants noted that there is no ground-level activation in the residential area of this precinct, and very few people on the street. The key uses in this precinct were identified as the Royal Hobart Hospital and the University of Tasmania’s Menzies Centre and The Hedberg.

Participants noted a lack of activation within the City Hall and that there is some historical interpretation missing (for example about the Wapping Ragged School).

Workshop participants identified the following built form and land use opportunities for the precinct:

- Extending the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery precinct to better connect to City Hall.
- Providing more services to support the cultural precinct
- Developer contributions to provide community benefits, or to support new enterprises
- City Hall provides an opportunity for activation, such as a marketplace
- Opportunity for a theatre pub
- The narrative of the precinct could be incorporated into its design.
- The Old Roberts site on lower end of Collins St is a very quiet part of town that could be re-activated

Other

Workshop participants identified that undertaking a mental health audit for health workers around their interaction with the street would be useful in identifying other possible improvements. Participants also expressed a desire for Wapping to be a more edgy part of the city.

Rivulet Precinct

When discussing the Rivulet Precinct the following key themes were identified:

Transport

Workshop participants noted dangerous intersections in the precinct for pedestrians and cyclists (such as across Molle St and the intersection of Bathurst and Barrack) and that speed is a concern on some of the roads. Participants noted that foot traffic has increased and that there is a better connection from the precinct to the Hobart Rivulet Park. It was also noted that bus stops in the precinct aren't located near community services and that commuter and visitor parking impacts on residents being able to access parking close to home.

Workshop participants identified that an advantage of this area is the low volume of traffic and wide streets, which would allow for significant improvements in active transport. Participants suggested the following opportunities for improving access between the Hobart Rivulet Park/West Hobart and the CBD, and to support a potential increase residential population in the precinct:

- 30km speed limit could be introduced to enhance the comfort for users
- High quality pedestrian infrastructure such as wider footpaths using higher quality materials, street furniture, street trees, more laneways and pedestrian linkages
- Cycling improvements including a bike lane up Forest Rd to connect to Knocklofty Reserve
- Extending the Hobart Rivulet Park along Collins St
- Improvements to bus infrastructure
- Consideration of Collins St becoming a designated safe active transport single one-way street to allow cyclists to safely get into town, while prohibiting bikes on other roads.
- Consideration of properties on the fringe of the precinct to be used for car parking to service the CBD

Environment and open space

Workshop participants noted that the Hobart Rivulet Park is an important asset that links South Hobart to the City, but not necessarily celebrated. It was noted that the laneway alongside the Ibis Hotel (between Macquarie and Collins St) is essentially privatised and not welcoming to the public. Comments were made about pedestrian infrastructure, in particular the quality of and materials used in the footpaths in the Rivulet precinct, and that trees planted in footpaths aren't thriving. Participants also noted that there is not enough street furniture provided for people to rest, which is particularly needed due to the terrain of the precinct.

Workshop participants identified the following opportunities for improving open space in the precinct:

- For the precinct to be creative and quirky to allow a sense of discovery
- Improved streetscapes with better lighting and seating, particularly along Collins St
- Development contributions provide increased green space
- Increased open space that provide activity and purpose (for example, the Linear Park)
- Continued open space and planting throughout the precinct and a visual connection to the Hobart Rivulet
- Increased green space for residents and provisions to make it easier to make rooftop gardens

Housing

Workshop participants noted the impact of short-stay accommodation on the feel of the precinct. They also noted the potential for the precinct to house more residents, particularly on larger blocs in West Hobart. Workshop participants suggested that the area could be prioritised for housing, with a diversity of housing to support a diverse community.

Planning, development, land use and built form

Workshop participants noted that the area is very underdeveloped that is not active because of a lack of ground floor frontages and uses such as car yards. The underutilised sites are not attractive and at times don't feel safe.

Some participants noted that there has been a loss of recreational amenities and a lack of community/family amenities. That said, participants commented that it was good to have more apartments being built in the area, there were more cafes in Collins and Elizabeth St, and developments like The Hanging Garden provided much needed open space, as well as a destination.

Workshop participants identified the following land use and built form opportunities:

- Development of underutilised sites, such as through medium density /mixed use development, would increase activation.
- A diversity of land uses to support an increased residential population – such as community gardens, small-scale retail and other services

- Some participants considered that the Anglesea Barracks and palliative care hospital on Davey Street are key development sites that could form part of this precinct.
- Berea St is a good example of land use
- Heritage buildings need to be protected to ensure we maintain what is special.
- Consideration of how community services, such as the PCYC, can be better developed for local use.

Other

Some workshop participants found the name of the precinct confusing, particularly given the Hobart Rivulet extends through the study area. Some participants noted that the precinct was divided into singular uses that aren't quite connected or linked together, while they valued local businesses that contribute to the area.