

# North Parramatta Place Strategy

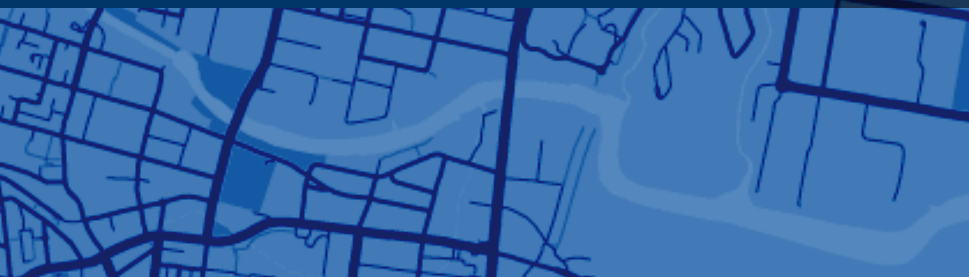
## Early Engagement

### Engagement Outcomes Report

Collaborative Community Visioning Workshops



*The business of sustainability*



February  
2023

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# 1 Executive Summary

The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) is leading the creation of the North Parramatta Place Strategy with the City of Parramatta Council as a key stakeholder. ERM Engagement was appointed by DPE to design and undertake early engagement for this strategy which will be finalised in late 2023.

This Outcomes Report details the inputs gathered from that early engagement process and will be used by DPE to help inform development of a vision and directions for North Parramatta's future. It forms a key input into the Place Strategy development process, along with previous studies undertaken in the area and additional new technical studies.

The North Parramatta study area extends north from the Parramatta River across from the Parramatta CBD. It was originally part of the City of Parramatta Council's recent Central Business District (CBD) Planning Proposal but was subsequently removed by DPE due to concerns regarding the potential impacts of proposed planning controls on the significant historic and amenity values of the area. The North Parramatta Place Strategy will assist in providing further analysis of the area and provide stakeholders with additional opportunities to guide decision making.

In December 2022, three collaborative community visioning workshops were undertaken to seek feedback about what the community wanted to see considered for inclusion in a vision and directions for North Parramatta. Two workshops were held for local community and other stakeholders and a third workshop was held with City of Parramatta Councillors.

These workshops were an opportunity for stakeholders with an interest in North Parramatta to work together to provide input on its future direction and growth.

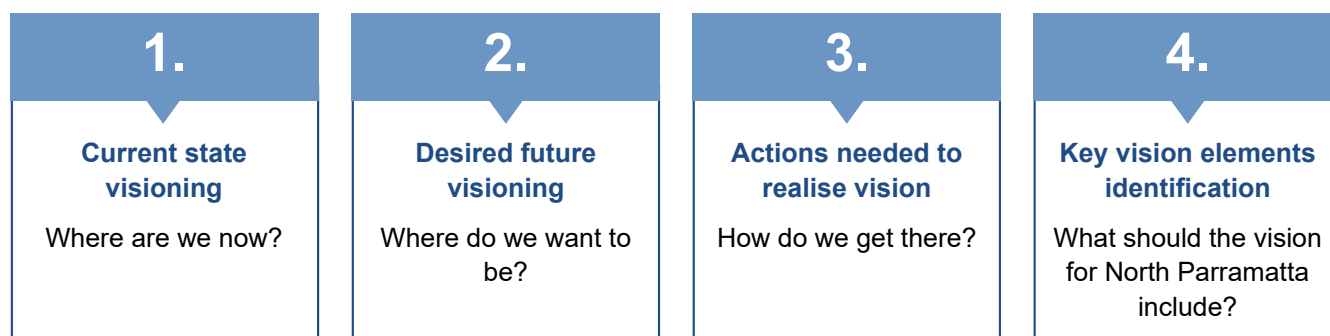


Stakeholder groups invited to participate in the local community workshops included:

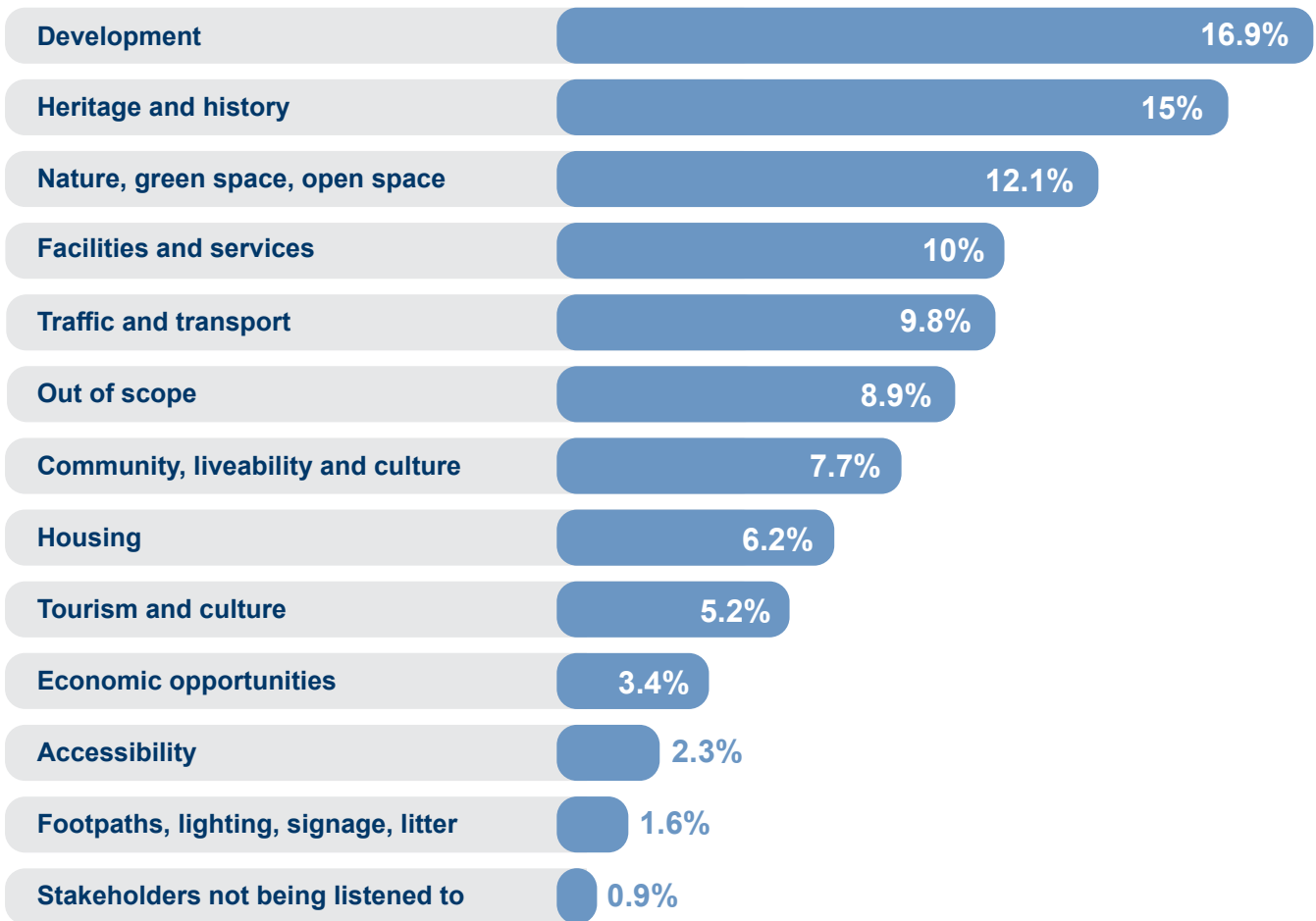
- Local Aboriginal Land Council representatives
- Local business and community groups
- Property and business industry representative groups
- Community members that had previously made representations to the City of Parramatta Council on the CBD Planning Proposal in relation to North Parramatta
- Businesses and developers with known development aspirations in the area
- School representatives (from within the study area)
- The National Trust of Australia

Workshop design centred on community visioning, a collaborative process giving the people who live, work and enjoy North Parramatta the opportunity to have a say on the future of their community. All workshops held used the same engagement process and format, with the Councillor workshop using an accelerated approach to fit within the time available. A total of 45 stakeholders participated across the three workshops. Additional feedback from some City of Parramatta Councillors was received following the workshops and incorporated into this report. This feedback was provided using the same DPE format that was utilised during the workshops.

Feedback was gathered using collaborative group exercises to answer the following questions:



Across all workshops, all feedback received (**including positive, neutral and negative comments**) can be categorised under the following themes:



In categorising each comment received, the most dominant theme identified was utilised.

Development was the most discussed theme across all workshops, followed closely by the heritage and history of North Parramatta, then its nature, green space and open space.

Participants felt North Parramatta is a charming residential area with a great community of mixed demographics and densities and would like to see opportunities to promote and and celebrate these positive aspects.

Most of the feedback received (88 per cent) about what stakeholders do not currently like about North Parramatta fell under three main categories, being development, lack of facilities and amenities, and traffic and transport pressures.

Views around development were consistently expressed throughout all workshops and these views differed significantly across stakeholder groups. While some expressed opposition to all development in the area, several participants felt that North Parramatta was under-developed, with a lack of facilities. Overwhelmingly, participants were more concerned about the **type of development** proposed and particularly about how further development would potentially influence the **heritage and history** of North Parramatta.

When asked where development should occur, nearly two-thirds of stakeholders agreed that development should be confined to the Church Street spine, along the new light rail line and at transport hubs, with building heights reducing as development moved further away from Church Street.

Many of the comments made by participants indicated some degree of acceptance that further development in the area will occur, however, some stakeholders were very vocal and passionate that development should support and enhance the heritage of the area and not detract from it.

Stakeholders felt the most important elements that must be retained and enhanced in North Parramatta through the Place Strategy process included its heritage and history, natural elements (including green and open spaces) as well as its liveability and accessibility.

Key issues and challenges identified for the future of North Parramatta centred on discussions about preserving its heritage and history, ensuring appropriate development and infrastructure, as well as improving traffic and transport.

Elements that workshop participants wanted to see changed or enhanced about North Parramatta as part of the vision for the future included again discussions about the area's heritage and history, development and infrastructure, facilities and amenities, as well as its natural elements.

Discussions around the actions required to realise a vision for North Parramatta included that better controls were needed for development approval processes and there was also a desire from some stakeholders for clarity on future planning controls for the area to be resolved quickly. It was argued that development controls need to retain and protect heritage, provide more green space, better connectivity, and active transport links. Comments from workshop participants included that while heritage is important, there needs to be a discussion about what constitutes 'true heritage' in the area.

Comments were also received around the need for transparent and authentic consultation moving forward to ensure community support for a vision for North Parramatta, with collaboration and communication needed between different stakeholder groups. Some stakeholders also noted that there is strong resistance to change in the area and that this is a challenge to be overcome.

When asked for feedback on the main opportunities to be considered in the vision for North Parramatta, participants discussed urban renewal and development, as well as tourism and economic opportunities.

In final discussions reflecting on all prior workshop activities to identify the most important vision priorities, feedback was consistent with many earlier comments made and can be summarised into the following key themes:



Participants felt heritage needs to be the focus of any strategy or planning work for North Parramatta. The protection of heritage, including Aboriginal heritage, was widely acknowledged to be a priority in all workshops and across different stakeholder groups.



It was acknowledged that the development of better infrastructure, services and facilities is required to meet the future needs of the local community in North Parramatta. However participants felt better planning controls were needed to ensure that all development considers the environment and heritage of the area. Development should be high quality and sustainable, and should incorporate affordable housing options, but also include strategies for managing the resulting increased pressure on local schools, as well as transport and traffic in the area.



Positioning North Parramatta as a destination was a popular idea as a vision priority. There was a strong desire to make the area investment ready (globally and locally), to increase tourism and promote the area as a world-class city which celebrates its cultural landscape and rich history.

It was clear from this early engagement process that the local community and other stakeholders need to see North Parramatta's heritage and history appropriately reflected in the Place Strategy. Enhancing infrastructure and services to meet future community needs must also strike a suitable balance between development priorities and protecting heritage. Stakeholders see an opportunity to harness and enhance North Parramatta's unique attributes to drive future economic activity but again, this must not come at the expense of its history. Beautifying and greening the river foreshore, protecting biodiversity and both preserving and using green space effectively to combat rising urban heat are also key community priorities for the future of North Parramatta.



Image credit: NSW Department of Planning and Environment / Don Fuchs

## 2 Background

***A place strategy is a strategic plan for a precinct. It establishes a vision for how a precinct will look in the future and provides a high-level plan with actions detailing how that vision will be achieved. As a strategic document, it does not rezone land or change any planning controls. These changes happen later, after the place strategy is finalised.***

The North Parramatta study area extends north from the Parramatta River, across from the Parramatta CBD. The Parramatta Light Rail Stage 1 route proceeds north-south through the precinct along Church Street, connecting to Westmead to the west, the Parramatta CBD to the south, and on to Camellia and Carlingford to the east. It contains numerous sites of local and state heritage significance. A map of the study area for North Parramatta is included as [Appendix A](#).

There have been several previous strategic planning projects in the North Parramatta area. These include the Parramatta CBD Planning Proposal (which ran from 2016 to 2022), the North-East Planning Investigation Area (which ran from 2019 to 2022), and the Northern and Eastern Planning Investigation Areas.

Originally, a section of the North Parramatta study area was included in the City of Parramatta Council's CBD Planning Proposal. The proposed changes in relation to North Parramatta attracted a large number of submissions and mixed sentiment when this proposal was placed on public exhibition in 2020.

When the CBD Planning Proposal was submitted to DPE for final assessment in 2021, some controls for North Parramatta were not found to be appropriate and as a result the precinct was removed from the finalisation of this proposal.

Following this process, DPE discussed with the City of Parramatta Council how to best approach strategic planning for North Parramatta. In October 2022, it was decided that a Place Strategy would be prepared for the precinct, led and funded by DPE. The boundary for the Place Strategy includes all of the area removed from the CBD Planning Proposal, the area covered by the North-East Planning Investigation Area, and parts of the Northern and Eastern Planning Investigation Areas. Planning for the parts of the Northern and Eastern Planning Investigation Areas not included in the Place Strategy may be progressed through other strategies in the future led by Council. The City of Parramatta Council remains a key stakeholder, as are a range of state government agencies, including Transport for NSW, Heritage NSW, and the Government Architect NSW.

In December 2022, three collaborative community visioning workshops were delivered using an independent facilitator to seek feedback about what the community wanted to see considered for inclusion in a vision for North Parramatta.

These workshops are the first step in DPE's community engagement process for the North Parramatta Place Strategy. Additional community consultation will occur to allow the community further opportunities to provide feedback as the strategy progresses.

***Community visioning is a collaborative process giving the people who live, work, and play in a place the opportunity to have a say about what they want their community to be like in the future.***

Two workshops were held for local community and other stakeholders and a third workshop was held with City of Parramatta Councillors to formally seek their input.

These workshops were an opportunity for stakeholders with an interest in the future of North Parramatta to work together to help shape its direction and growth. They provided a chance for stakeholders to help develop a common vision, building shared ambition and determination, pride and ownership in the precinct. Workshop design sought to understand what people valued most about place and to define, protect and enhance this.

This report details the outcomes of this community visioning process which will be carried through into the development of the North Parramatta Place Strategy to be undertaken by DPE in 2023.

## 3 Engagement Approach

### 3.1 Workshop objectives

The objectives identified for the community visioning workshops included:

- Gather early engagement inputs to develop a vision for North Parramatta, including directions for the future growth of the precinct
- Facilitate open discussion and engagement that enables a range of voices to be heard and to involve stakeholders to help develop a vision for the precinct
- Enable shared understanding amongst stakeholders and if necessary, compromise, in order to identify the highest priority concerns.

### 3.2 Key considerations

Key considerations identified to guide the overarching engagement approach included:



Previous consultation undertaken as part of the Parramatta CBD Planning Proposal resulted in many stakeholder submissions regarding the North Parramatta area. These concerns are likely to be front of mind for stakeholders and generate passionate conversations and perspectives at the workshops.



Involvement of the City of Parramatta Council as a key stakeholder is critical. They have vested interest in ensuring the Place Strategy development takes a holistic approach, is supported by stakeholders and is feasible.



Involvement of the yet-to-be-engaged Community Commissioner for North Parramatta needs to be carefully considered. This will be an important opportunity to profile the role the Commissioner plays in advocating for the resolution of issues and assisting communities to understand planning process/changes.



Whilst highly involved and engaged stakeholders are likely to present well considered points of view, it will also be important to involve less visible participants with quieter voices to ensure the most representative process possible.






Engagement activities need to be well documented in the Outcomes Report arising from the collaborative community visioning workshops, to provide an effective basis to inform the Place Strategy.



### 3.3 Workshop design and delivery plan

A planning session was held with DPE and the City of Parramatta Council in November 2022 to inform workshop design and the proposed engagement approach. An overview of the success factors and resulting approaches identified are shown below:

Success factors	Approach
 <p><b>Enabling all voices to be heard</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building trust in the process will be key to the success of the consultation. Expectations/objectives will be clearly articulated so that stakeholders understand the process, how they can influence and the need to respect all views.</li> <li>A range of activities and channels for engagement within the workshop will be established to enable stakeholders to contribute in the manner that best suits them.</li> <li>Design of the workshop, providing smaller group opportunities as well as broader group discussions to help ensure all views are heard and recorded.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Setting clear objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting workshop expectations will include stating that all stakeholders need to work together to achieve inputs, which may require compromise and prioritisation of outcomes by stakeholders. Though challenging, ultimately, this will result in all participants feeling a sense of ownership in the workshop process.</li> <li>Preparation for the consultation will clearly define aspects that are non-negotiable, and those areas where stakeholders and the community can influence decision-making. These aspects will be communicated to stakeholders at the start of the workshop to enable expectations to be set early and avoid disappointment.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Inclusive and supportive engagement</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given the diverse and multicultural community of North Parramatta, ensuring the workshop involves a broad range of voices and is presented in a clearly articulated way, with easy-to-understand language and process will be key.</li> <li>Design of collateral and the consultation process will clearly explain the reasoning behind the engagement opportunity to increase buy-in with its outcomes.</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Stakeholders

During the planning session, the following stakeholder groups were identified to invite to participate in the workshop:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Aboriginal Land Council representatives</li> <li>Local business and community groups</li> <li>Property and business industry representative groups</li> <li>Community members that had previously made representations to the City of Parramatta Council on the CBD Planning Proposal in relation to North Parramatta</li> <li>Businesses and developers with known development aspirations in the area</li> <li>School representatives (from within the study area)</li> <li>The National Trust of Australia</li> </ul>
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It was agreed to hold one community workshop during business hours, as well as another on the weekend, to provide the greatest opportunity for different groups of stakeholders to participate. The City of Parramatta Councillor workshop was held after business hours, based on Councillor availability.

## 4 Community Visioning Workshops

### 4.1 Overview

Three workshops were held in December 2022 to seek feedback about what stakeholders wanted to see considered for inclusion in a vision and directions for North Parramatta's future. A total of 45 stakeholders participated across these workshops. Additional feedback from some City of Parramatta Councillors received following the workshops was also considered and incorporated in this report. This feedback was provided using the same format that was utilised during the workshops.

Two community workshops were held in the Active Wellness studio at PHIVE, the City of Parramatta Council's new community, cultural and civic hub, located in the heart of Parramatta's CBD at 5 Parramatta Square. A further workshop with City of Parramatta Councillors was held at Council's corporate office located at 126 Church Street, Parramatta. Workshops were held on the following dates:

- Community stakeholder workshop 1 – Friday, 2 December, 10am-1pm
- Community stakeholder workshop 2 – Saturday, 3 December, 10am-1pm
- City of Parramatta Councillor workshop – Tuesday, 13 December, 6-7.30pm (based on available Councillor time).

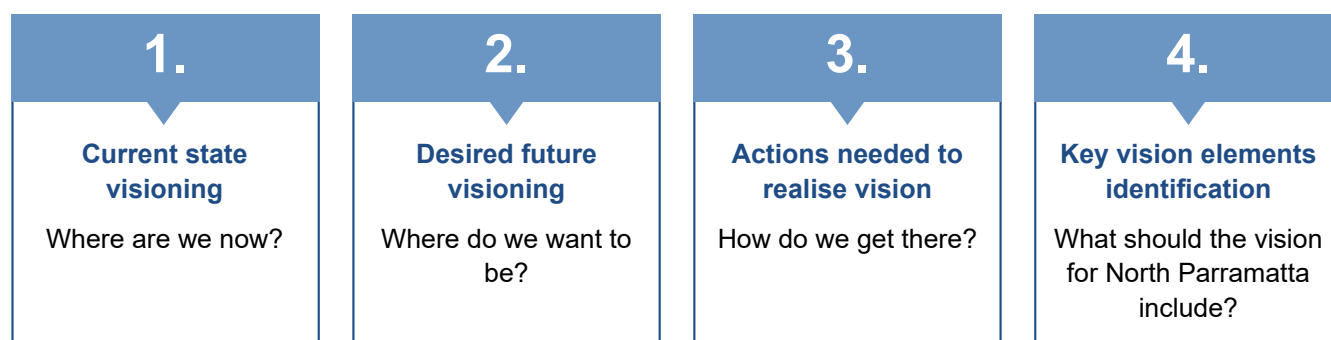
All workshops used the same engagement process and format, with the Councillor workshop using an accelerated approach to seek feedback on the same topics in a shorter period of time.

Workshop design centred on community visioning, a collaborative process giving the people who live, work, and play in a place the opportunity to have a say on the future of their community.

An ERM Partner facilitated the workshops and a representative from DPE was present at the beginning of each session to present and provide context to introduce the engagement opportunity.

### 4.2 Workshop format

Participant feedback was gathered using collaborative group exercises to answer the following questions:



EventBrite was used to register stakeholder attendance at the Community workshops (<https://NorthParramattaWorkshop.eventbrite.com>). The invitation issued to stakeholders by DPE and the City of Parramatta Council is provided as [Appendix B](#).

RSVPs to the City of Parramatta Councillor workshop were managed internally by City of Parramatta Council.

## 4.3 Negotiables vs non-negotiables

A set of negotiables and non-negotiables were outlined at each workshop to clearly set expectations for participants up front.

### What's negotiable?

- Where are we now? (what's working, what must be retained, the key challenges?)
- Where do we want to be? (what should be changed/enhanced, what are the key opportunities?)
- Where and what development could occur? (subject to relevant studies)
- How do we get there? (key actions/controls)
- What needs to be included in the vision?

### What's not negotiable?

- The boundaries of the study area
- The development controls in North Parramatta that are already in place
- Identified heritage areas and items
- Protecting solar access to key public areas
- Change will happen in the precinct (the current planning controls already allow for this).

Some topics raised during the workshop were removed from discussion as 'non-negotiables' as they fell outside the scope of this consultation activity. These topics were however captured in a 'parking lot' for further consideration by DPE as appropriate. This information is included as [Appendix C](#).



Image credit: NSW Department of Planning and Environment / Salty Dingo

## 5 What we heard

This section summarises the feedback gathered from stakeholders during the workshops.

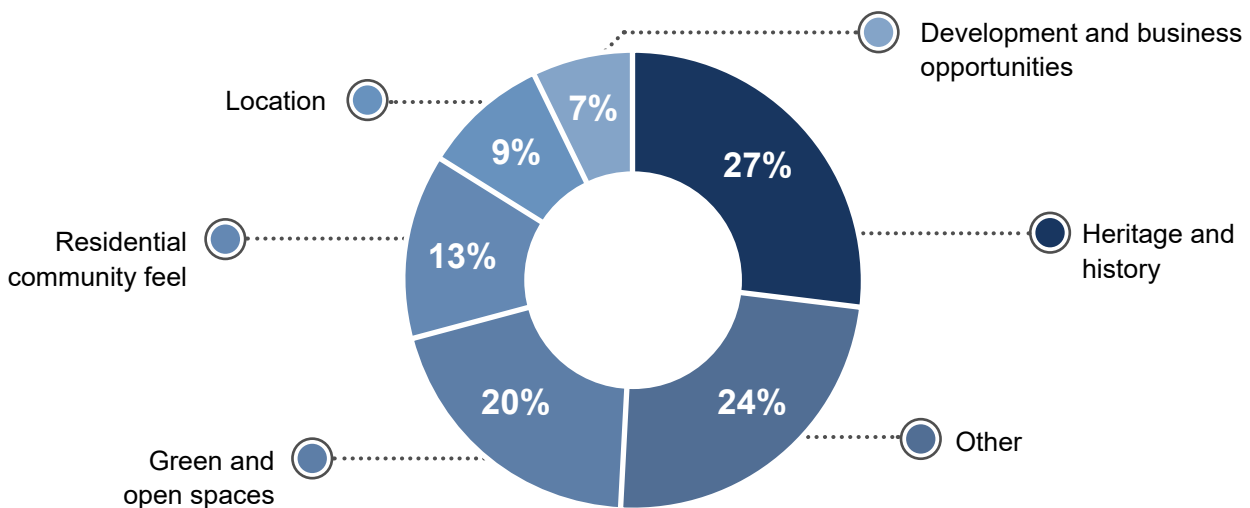
### 5.1 Current state visioning: where are we now?

Workshop participants were split into groups and asked about the current state of North Parramatta, responding and providing feedback to five questions.

1. What do people currently like about North Parramatta and why?
2. What do people not like about North Parramatta and why?
3. What things must be retained and why?
4. What are the key issues and challenges for our community?
5. What will happen in North Parramatta if nothing changes from our current state?

#### 5.1.1 What do people currently like about North Parramatta and why?

Across all three workshops, the majority of the feedback about what people currently like about North Parramatta fell into five key themes identified below:



The top two themes identified were heritage and history (27 per cent) and green and open spaces (20 per cent) with other (24 per cent) comprising a wide range of unrelated feedback areas.

Participants felt North Parramatta is a charming residential area with easy access to the Parramatta CBD.

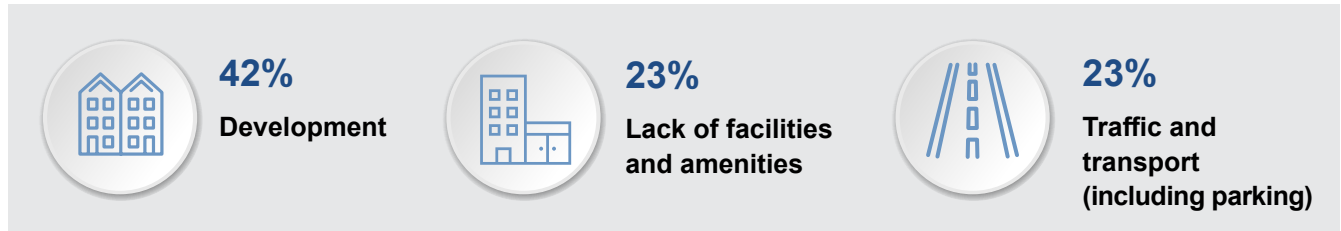
Residents in particular believe it is a great community, with mixed demographics and mixed densities, and would like to see opportunities to promote and celebrate these positive aspects.

The word cloud below amplifies these themes further, noting that comments from workshop participants were often lengthy and complex, given the nature of the engagement opportunity provided.



### 5.1.2 What do people not like about North Parramatta and why?

The majority of feedback (88 per cent) about what stakeholders did not like about North Parramatta fell under three main categories:



The remaining 12 per cent included comments about lighting and signage in the area, helicopter noise, fireworks, and lack of sustainability.

Views around development differed significantly across stakeholder groups. While some expressed opposition to all development in the area, a number of participants felt the area was under-developed, with a lack of facilities including shops.

Overwhelmingly, participants were more concerned about the **type of development** proposed and particularly about how further development would potentially influence the heritage and history of the precinct.



Key comments about **development** included:

- “High-rises will suffocate heritage buildings”
- “Heritage homes are being overshadowed by (high-rise) apartments”
- “New buildings are not in sympathy with the older aspects.”



Key comments about lack of **facilities and amenities** included:

- “It feels like the area is on pause”
- “There is a lack of retail/high street options”
- “We have lost shops and cultural facilities.”

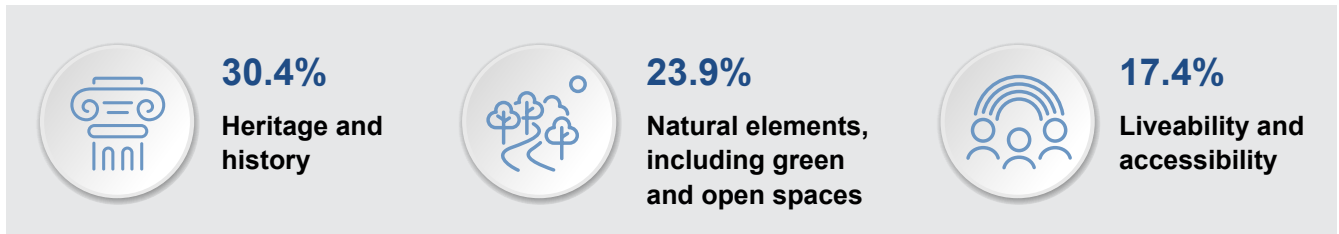


Key comments about **traffic and transport** included:

- “There are increased rat runs due to the light rail”
- “There is a lack of parking”
- “Traffic and congestion is increasing.”

### 5.1.3 What things must be retained and why?

Consistent with the feedback from the first two questions, stakeholders felt the most important elements to be retained in North Parramatta fell under the following categories:



The remaining 28.3 per cent of comments focused on retaining amenities, affordable housing, and maintaining low density.



Stakeholders want to see the unique **heritage and history** of the area protected and retained, including:

“Small cottages that tell the story of workers”

“Heritage corridors, such as Sorrell and Villiers Streets”

“Heritage that is part of the identity of North Parramatta, such as the cemeteries, heritage buildings, conservation areas.”



Stakeholders want to ensure that **natural elements** are retained, including:

“Parks and open space”

“Wide streets with old trees”

“Sunlight and solar access.”



Stakeholders want to ensure **liveability and accessibility** is retained, including:

“Sense of community”

“North Parramatta is like a village”

“A liveable environment for all residents”

“Diversity of people.”

### 5.1.4 What are the key issues and challenges for our community?

Workshop participants were asked to list the key issues and challenges for North Parramatta. While feedback covered multiple topics, common themes emerged, including:



Comments on **heritage and history** focussed on the need to recognise and retain the history of the area, to protect and utilise it effectively, including seeking promotional and tourism opportunities.



Many comments on **development** and infrastructure fell into these broad themes:

- **Development and infrastructure:** improving infrastructure, such as schools capacity, communications (e.g., NBN), lack of sport and recreation facilities, and ensuring a balance between growth and overdevelopment
- **Revitalisation:** revitalising the 'tired' and 'neglected' areas, urban renewal, the impact of Parramatta Light Rail on Church Street, as well as bringing back restaurants and services
- **Housing:** need to increase housing supply and housing affordability, and different types of housing (e.g., apartments, townhouses, and houses).



**Traffic and transport** was identified by stakeholders as a major issue for North Parramatta, with most participants agreeing that traffic in the area has become increasingly congested. Comments around the current lack of public transport options also emerged, with participants wanting the light rail to start sooner. Several stakeholders identified that parking options in the area are limited and want to see more public carparks for commuters.

### 5.1.5 What will happen in North Parramatta if nothing changes from our current state?

Workshop participants were asked what they believe will happen in North Parramatta if nothing changes from the current state. While there were some dissenting views, many comments focussed on the following key themes:



Many comments focussed on the **long-term opportunities** that would be lost if nothing changed. Concerns were raised that with dilapidation of properties, lack of services and facilities, and the departure of residents and businesses.



Comments on **development** were mixed between those wanting more development and those concerned about over-development.

- Some stakeholders felt that the area needs greater density to support future growth of the area, saying an increased population would provide customers for the light rail, shops and restaurants, and the lack of housing supply would continue to put upwards pressure on house prices which are already pricing people out of the market.
- By contrast, some stakeholders were concerned about overdevelopment, or the ad-hoc development that would likely occur without a proper master plan. They were also concerned that development would see a loss of amenity and heritage, and that the character of the area would be lost.



## 5.2 Desired future visioning: Where do we want to be?

Workshop participants were asked about their desired vision for the future of North Parramatta, providing feedback to the following five questions.

1. What do people want to see changed or enhanced about North Parramatta?
2. Where are the right places for development to occur?
3. How can we protect the heritage aspects that people love in a sustainable way?
4. What are the opportunities for North Parramatta?
5. What's good elsewhere that we'd like to see here?

### 5.2.1 What do people want to see changed or enhanced about North Parramatta?

Workshop participants were asked what they wanted to see changed or enhanced about North Parramatta as part of the vision for the future. Many of the comments received were consistent with the feedback already identified and fell into the following key themes:



A number of participants wanted to see the redevelopment of some of the buildings in the area, with comments such as *'knock down the dilapidated 60s and 70s three-storey walk-ups', 'replace old units with modern urban design'*. Stakeholders want to ensure development occurs in the *'right places'*, is done in a *'sustainable manner that incorporates heritage for future generations'*, and includes *'better, more affordable disabled residential dwellings'*.



A number of comments highlighted the need for better facilities and services, including a desire for more restaurants, more shops, retail and businesses, better amenities, community spaces, museums, galleries and public art facilities.



The recurrent theme of heritage and history again featured in the feedback received, with stakeholders wanting to see an *'enhanced focus on the history of the area', 'incorporating heritage into new development', 'enhancing heritage settings and character areas',* and maintaining *'sight lines to heritage'*.

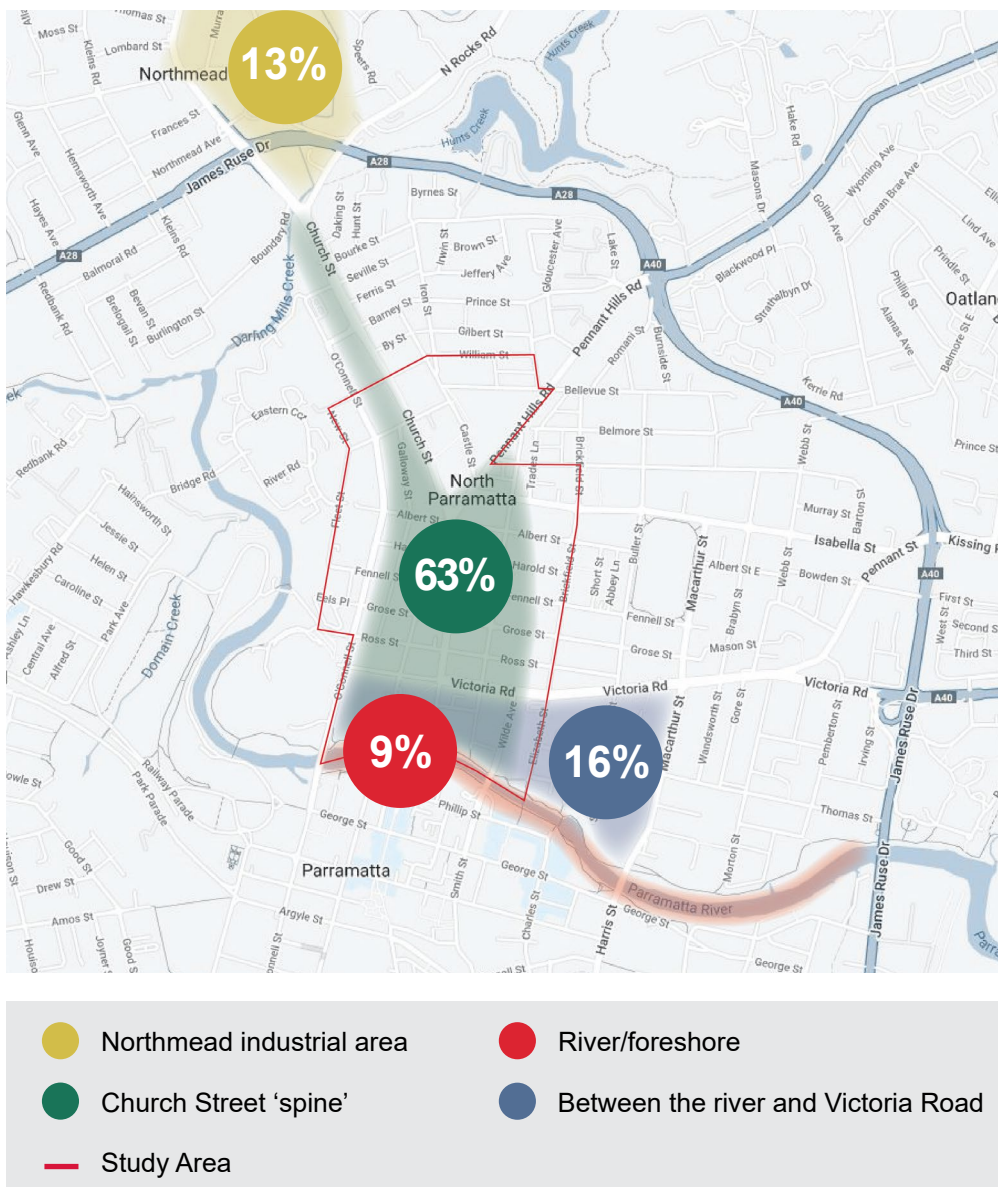


Stakeholders in general agree that the green and open spaces in North Parramatta are highly desirable, as highlighted in Sections [5.1.1](#) and [5.1.3](#). They want to see these aspects enhanced, with the desire for *'more trees for urban heat reduction', 'more trees and open space', 'more parks',* and enhanced *'solar access'*.

### 5.2.2 Where are the right places for development to occur?

Workshop participants were given a map of the North Parramatta study area (depicted by the red line on the graphic below) and asked where development should occur by highlighting their views on the map.

Some workshop participants chose to identify potential development areas that are outside of the North Parramatta study area and these are shown accordingly. It is noted that development beyond the study area is outside of scope for this Place Strategy.



Nearly **two-thirds** of stakeholders agreed that development should be confined to the *'Church Street spine'*, *'along the light rail and at transport hubs'*, with heights *'reducing as it moves further away from Church Street'*.

A further **25 per cent** of stakeholders want to see development contained to the river and foreshore, or between the river and Victoria Road. Around **13 per cent** believe the Northmead industrial area, north of the Precinct, is under-utilised and requires further development. The Northmead area is currently outside the scope of the North Parramatta precinct and outside the scope of this Report, however, it may be considered by the City of Parramatta Council and/or DPE via a separate process.

Only **one stakeholder** identified a large portion of the precinct for development covering an area from Villiers Street (west of Church Street) to the precinct boundary at Brickfield Street (east of Church Street), as well as south of Victoria Road.

Many of the comments made by participants indicate some degree of acceptance that development would occur, however, were very vocal and passionate that development should support and enhance the heritage of the area, and not detract from it. Comments included:

#### Where are the right places for development to occur?



Participants also indicated that development should not *'overshadow park or streets'*, and not impact *'sunlight and solar access'*.

Some participants stated that development should be *'capped at an appropriate height'*, but there was no clear consensus on what those heights should be, with comments including *'4-5 storey height limit'*, *'8 or 9 storeys'*, and *'at least 6 storeys'*. Only one stakeholder commented that there should be *'no high-rises north of the river'*.

### 5.2.3 How can we protect the heritage aspects that people love in a sustainable way?

For this question, participants were asked to suggest ways the heritage of the area could be protected for the long term. Participants provided many comments which have been grouped into the following key themes:



**Financial:** Just over 20 per cent of comments felt that heritage protection should be financially incentivised, with different *'carrot and stick'* financial approaches to achieve the best results, from providing rewards to heritage property owners, i.e. *'grants to heritage owners'*, *'rewards and funding for heritage'*, and *'grants and funding from local, state and federal governments'*; to forcing developers to make heritage contributions, i.e., *'heritage contribution fund mandatory for large developments'*. While these approaches appear opposite, they both support some type of financial approach to heritage protection.



**Planning and regulatory controls:** Almost 40 per cent of the feedback related to having better planning controls, governance structures and legislative protection. Among the feedback, there was a desire for more efficient decision-making, for example, having *'singular custodianship and management by one agency, not multiple agencies'*. Others felt that for heritage to be protected long term, regulatory and legislative controls needed to be in place and enforced, with better planning rules, ie, *'one integrated planning and place strategy'*, *'clear set of planning controls'*, to *'ensure heritage areas are kept and respected'*. One stakeholder opposed the use of State Significant Development projects, as they overrule the Heritage Act, while others argued that authorities need to take a whole-of-precinct approach to development applications, *'not just individual sites'*.



The remaining 40 per cent of feedback related to the use and utilisation of heritage that would support and enhance the long term viability of heritage items and add value to the local precinct. Comments largely fell into the following categories:

- **Community use:** there is a desire for heritage to be *'turned into community precincts'*, *'re-used as a community asset'*, and not *'locked up in private ownership'*. Suggestions included holding *'interpretative exhibitions'*, *'adaptive reuse'*, *'utilising as gallery spaces'*, *'community and vege gardens'*, and *'co-designing opportunities with traditional owners'*.
- **Education:** several stakeholders suggested heritage buildings be used for *'education and training'*, *'create virtual tours for future education purposes'*, *'interaction and engagement with local schools'*, and to *'use it as a learning opportunity to create a sense of ownership within the community'*.
- **Tourism:** repurposing heritage to promote the North Parramatta precinct as a destination was a popular theme during the workshops, with many stakeholders agreeing that *'Parramatta has a lot to offer for visitors'* and that heritage items are, or could be, a draw-card for tourism. Suggested ideas included *'create a heritage tourism strategy'*, *'a heritage events program'*, *'showcase the heritage items'*, and *'interpretative exhibitions to draw tourism'*, and drafting a *'cultural strategy to identify visitor economy'*.

### 5.2.4 What are the opportunities for North Parramatta?

Workshop participants were asked about the opportunities for North Parramatta. The feedback was generally consistent with previous responses, including the following main themes:



The majority of participants see opportunities for development and urban renewal throughout the area. They want to see sympathetic development that recognises the heritage and story of the area, and provides mixed and affordable housing options that would allow essential service workers to live in the area, and the construction of new shops and services, enabling North Parramatta to become a 'lively, liveable precinct'.



Stakeholders believe that North Parramatta has an opportunity to celebrate and share its heritage, history and culture through the promotion of the area as a destination for local and international tourism. Utilising heritage places by installing museums and galleries, heritage interpretation signage, adding supporting industries - such as cafes, and holding events - would position the area as a tourism hub.






In addition to the benefits from tourism, participants feel that there are significant economic opportunities to be realised in North Parramatta, with economic growth, job creation, and more local businesses in the area, including shops and restaurants.



### 5.2.5 What's good elsewhere that we'd like to see here?

Workshop participants were asked to nominate places, both in Australia and overseas, that they like and would like to see replicated in North Parramatta. Locations suggested included:

 <b>New South Wales</b> Surry Hills Newtown The Rocks Darlinghurst Leichhardt Mudgee	 <b>Australia</b> West End, Brisbane Abbotsford Convent, Melbourne North Carlton, Melbourne Fitzroy, Melbourne Cascades, Port Arthur, Tasmania	 <b>International</b> Amsterdam Back Bay, Boston New York urban villages
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While many reasons were provided about their choices, some key themes emerged about why these areas were good, including:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Village with heritage – kept in sympathy</b></li><li><b>Places that respect and celebrate their unique character</b></li><li><b>Interactivity of village feel and street activation with more people</b></li><li><b>Transport and bicycle links</b></li><li><b>Development of riverfront</b></li><li><b>Mix of old, new, social and private housing</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Streetscape preservation and community pride</b></li><li><b>Sense of community</b></li><li><b>Combining new building designs with heritage</b></li><li><b>Green communities</b></li><li><b>Urban village</b></li></ul>
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## 5.3 Actions needed to realise vision: How do we get there?

Workshop participants were asked what actions were needed to achieve the vision of North Parramatta. To help guide the discussion, some prompt questions were suggested:

1. What needs to change?
2. What actions are required to do this?
3. What controls are needed to support this?
4. Is other support needed?
5. Are there other challenges?

This question generated much discussion among the participants, with varying opinions covering a wide range of issues.

Many stakeholders felt that better controls were needed in the development approval processes, such as controls on building height and density. It was argued that development controls need to retain and protect heritage, provide more green space, better connectivity and active transport. On the other hand, some participants felt that, while heritage is important, there needs to be a discussion about what constitutes 'true heritage', as not all older buildings are of value, and this should not be a barrier to affordable living or development.

***There were a number of comments around the need for transparent and authentic consultation to ensure community support, with collaboration and communication between groups. Stakeholders also noted that there is strong resistance to change and this is a challenge to be overcome.***

For a list of all responses provided by participants, please see [Appendix D](#).



## 5.4 What should the Vision for North Parramatta include?

In the final workshop activity, participants were asked:

- Using all the inputs already identified, what should the Vision for North Parramatta include?

Participants were asked to reflect on all the feedback and discussion throughout the workshop and identify the most important priorities for the North Parramatta vision. This activity was conducted in plenary, with a scribe listing all ideas on butcher's paper along the wall of the room. The question was designed to be open, but a number of prompt questions were suggested to help prompt thinking:

1. What do we value about who we are now?
2. What do we want to be in the future?
3. What is needed to support change?
4. Which changes are most important?
5. Are there other key elements or considerations?

Much of the feedback was consistent with the comments made throughout the workshops, with a focus on the following key themes:



Participants felt heritage needs to be the focus of any strategy or planning. The protection of heritage, including Aboriginal heritage, was widely acknowledged to be a priority across all workshops and across different stakeholder groups.



The development of infrastructure, services and facilities is required to meet the future needs of the community, however, better planning controls are needed to ensure that development considers the environment and heritage of the area. Development should be high quality and sustainable, and should include affordable housing options, but also include strategies for managing the increased pressure on schools and transport/traffic.



Positioning 'North Parramatta as a destination' was a popular idea across the different stakeholders groups who attended the workshops. There was a strong desire to make 'North Parramatta investment ready (globally and locally)', to increase tourism and promote the area as a 'World-class city' which celebrates 'our cultural landscape and history'.

For a list of all responses provided by participants, please see [Appendix E](#).



## 6 Next steps

The outcomes of this early engagement opportunity will now be considered by DPE, with the Outcomes Report forming a key input into the Place Strategy development process, along with previous studies undertaken and additional new technical studies.

A high-level timeline of the key milestones in the development of the North Parramatta Place Strategy is included as [Appendix F](#).

Consultation with the City of Parramatta Council and State Government agencies about the Place Strategy will continue through a DPE-led Project Working Group and Project Reference Group in 2023. The workshops held were the first step in DPE's community engagement process for the Place Strategy. Additional community consultation will occur in North Parramatta in 2023 to allow the community further opportunities to provide feedback as the strategy progresses.

A graphic depicting the key inputs to be included in the Place Strategy is shown in [Appendix G](#).

An Independent Community Commissioner for North Parramatta will be also appointed by DPE in early 2023. The Commissioner will help answer questions on the Place Strategy and listen to stakeholders to understand their positions and thoughts.

The Commissioner will also review all material from previous strategic planning projects in the local area and provide advice to DPE on the draft studies and Place Strategy during their development.

Following public exhibition of the draft North Parramatta Place Strategy, the Commissioner will review all submissions received. They will deliver an independent report providing advice on addressing matters raised in submissions, and any other considerations which they recommend to be addressed in the finalisation of the Place Strategy. The Commissioner's report will be made publicly available.

### To keep in touch with DPE about the North Parramatta Place Strategy:

Visit: <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/north-parramatta>

Email: [northparramatta@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:northparramatta@planning.nsw.gov.au)

# APPENDIX A NORTH PARRAMATTA STUDY AREA



## APPENDIX B

# INVITATION TO COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS



The Department of Planning and Environment invite you to a collaborative workshop to help inform development of a Place Strategy for North Parramatta.

This early engagement opportunity will gather inputs to develop a Vision for North Parramatta, including directions for the future growth of the Precinct.

Please join us at one of two sessions:

**Date:** Friday, 2 December 2022 or Saturday, 3 December 2022

**Time:** 10am - 1pm

**Where:** The Active Wellness Studio  
PHIVE, Level 3, 5 Parramatta Square  
Parramatta NSW 2150

**Register:** Via QR code or <https://NorthParramattaWorkshop.eventbrite.com>  
by Wednesday 30 November 2022



### Registrations are essential.

Please note that places are strictly limited, so register quickly to secure your attendance at a workshop. Morning tea and refreshments will be provided.

These workshops are being facilitated by an independent engagement specialist. Participation is sought from a diverse range of stakeholders with interests in the future of North Parramatta, including community representatives, residents, landowners, and local industry to drive considered and inclusive outcomes. The City of Parramatta is also a key stakeholder.

For further information, please email: [NorthParramatta@planning.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NorthParramatta@planning.nsw.gov.au)

# APPENDIX C PARKING LOT

## Parking Lot - Community 1

Boundary areas

Where will the Independent  
Commission commissioner  
be located?

Audit of community facilities?

## Parking Lot - Community 2

Population projections (and  
how are these relative to  
other areas of Sydney and  
why?)

Are these projections falling  
short of predictions and why  
(pre-Covid)

## Parking Lot - Councillors

DPE must decide one or two  
sides of Elizabeth Street be  
clear, plus Thomas Street  
(high-rises)

Evidence-based planning

# APPENDIX D

## ACTIONS TO REALISE THE VISION FEEDBACK

Be considered about context and placemaking

Respecting open spaces - be constrained with development

Set maximum building heights that complement heritage

Excellent collaboration and communication between all groups with decision-making responsibilities

Transparent process for decisions

Genuine and meaningful consultation

Heritage controls need to change

FSR, height, density

2011 Local EP plus CBD PP should be enforced

Enforce heritage controls in CBD DCP

Council and Department need to streamline the process

Planning controls resolved by mid-2023

Clear planning guidelines

Merit-based assessments or complying schemes approved

All completed by accredited professionals

Use of heritage items - as per Council's own use

Incentivise developers to contribute to heritage protection

Existing infrastructure needs to change to deal with population and demographics

Get rid of red tape/faster processes

Too many layers of bureaucracy

Open and equal Local and State government partnership on vision

Single dedicated authority (with onsite office) for all placemaking precincts in Parramatta - too many agencies currently

Increase study site to include east of the river - Move Cumberland

Implement plans/ protocols - not just plan indefinitely

Remove barriers to development

Other support: design/ precinct planning at large scale (LendLease do a lot in the social planning with construction space)

Challenges - changing minds, bringing all to the table, (though it's getting there), needs a big ambitious, clear, impressive vision

Be more selective around heritage - not everything is REALLY heritage. Or, the sun on a heritage house doesn't really need to limit development for people trying to live today, that balance is wrong

Heritage should not be a barrier to quality of live for those living and coming

Not a barrier to development moving forward - there is actually more diversity to heritage identification than usually perceived - i.e. - not just 'colonial'

Attitudes and resistance to change needs to be addressed

Stop calling Parramatta North a 'CBD'

## Actions to realise the vision

Community support, open-minded, future generations

Support for population growth to live here

Planning from Council, consultation, brainstorming

Infrastructure organisation between council and corporations. Cohesive government departments to make it happen

Challenges: Anti-developers, anti-change

Hospital precinct out of Westmead precinct

Tourism heritage/Cultural strategy to identify visitor economy outside of stadium events

Deadlines and commitment from Government

Public transport - more access in areas of the main drag

Traffic planning (strategic), special arrestors, one way/ closures, pedestrian areas/thoroughfare, speed limits

Prevent 'demolition by neglect' (rack and ruin) through legislation

Require restoration as part of development plans, which must incorporate into development plans

Include local and state heritage listings

Increase fines for vandalism of heritage

CBD is high-rise, North Parramatta is the transition from CBD to world heritage park. Elements of both in North Parramatta

Create story-telling about the past and the heritage items we want to protect

Ensure we have social infrastructure and transport in place before further development

Doing the studies and analysis

Planning system that reflects needs of people, communities and sustainability

Any development to the western side must be sympathetic to world heritage park

More linkages north/south - e.g. extending civic link across to Parramatta precinct

Actions - Stronger local heritage controls

Setbacks, transition, streetscape character

Take people who may be opposed on the journey of how it has worked elsewhere

Note issues with Fennel Street use and proposed car park

Propose State acquisition of three Georgian buildings opposite Fennel Street

Economic development strategy and noting uses plus impacts of trading on residential character

Late night trading

Mix-use

Transition - uses and built form

More creative than shop-top housing

Variety of uses/services - not just along Church Street

Church Street to have attractors/cultural experiences to get people off light rail

Prince Alfred Park and edges

Encourage movement and connections to other attractors - particularly North as congested from CBD via Eat Street North

More connections like Civic Link

Green ring around Parramatta Park canopy cover - offset CBD

Extension of west and east (cemetery / park)

Active transport and pedestrian links, especially Victoria Street

Cycleways into CBD - dedicated lanes/ infrastructure

## Actions to realise the vision

Talk to parents whose kids go to school in the area and leagues club, plus Eels and OLMC

Enhance walkability/ convenience

More amenity/green space

Diversity

More governance that respects sustainability and value of heritage

Role of State-owned land

Vision - What do we call it? 'North Parramatta' is its own suburb, area near Elizabeth Street is more Parramatta

Proximity to rest of Parramatta - enhance connections

Affordable housing

Bridges over river – underpasses

# APPENDIX E

## WHAT SHOULD THE VISION INCLUDE? FEEDBACK

Heritage is the overarching context for the strategy

Protect heritage and activate streets, increase density in key locations

Community facilities (e.g. parks, schools, services) to adequately reflect growing population

World-class city, uniquely Parramatta and incorporates our cultural landscape, history and sustainability

Community health and well-being

Consider Aboriginal heritage and care for Country

Flood mitigation

Planning controls with resolved details

International tourism

Transit-oriented development

Incentivise development that considers the environment and heritage

One comprehensive heritage strategy for Greater North Parramatta

Integrated, complementary and collaborative

Increase the focus on tourism through integration and collaboration

Making North Parramatta investment ready (global and local)

Beautifying and greening the river foreshore for the community

Respecting biodiversity within and surrounding (at river) riparian zone

A destination that attracts people within and outside

Lifestyle improved - business, food, vibe (the current planning restrictions have stopped growth of this) PP

Preserve or replenish heritage/enhance district identity and open spaces, green (move forward while holding)

Respect and enhance, welcome diversity,

research and register of native wildlife

Smart, sustainable, inclusive and accessible

Trees with colour (not Jacarandas!)

Highlight and celebrate our heritage (don't hide it away with development)

Quality developments and architecture

Infrastructure that meets the growing needs of our community

Pedestrian/bike/rail linkages to the west and south and to the CBD and river

Promote North Parramatta as a "destination"

The North Sydney of Sydney

Vibrant river foreshore, safe at night (lighting) a place for night time events

Better connectivity to the CBD and also our world heritage-listed park

Alternative community spaces, affordable and in proximity) e.g. to the Female Factory and Willowgrove)

Attractive and enjoyable to live in

Provides excellent community facilities

Promotes heritage values

## What should the vision include?

the area, including heritage

Traffic management - Strategic, pedestrians, cycles, through/around, safety, links to surrounds

Population growth (needs to increase), nice places to live, however commensurate with scale of this specific district

Infrastructure - utilities, support population growth traffic, lifestyle, schools, affordable housing, transport

Maintain amenity with growth

Services to grow, in advance of growth PP

cultural, linguistic, socio-economic

A place that encourages artistic endeavour

All development must contribute to lessening impact of climate change (planning, design and physical materials being used)

Greening (tree cover) to manage "heat sink" problem

Physical respect for Indigenous, environmental and cultural heritage, including - land as well as artefacts

Biodiversity to be protected / continuous

# APPENDIX F

## TIMELINE FOR THE NORTH PARRAMATTA PLACE STRATEGY





# APPENDIX G

## KEY INPUTS TO THE PLACE STRATEGY

### Independent Community Commissioner

– Provides Review of Existing and New Studies and Submissions, Advocacy and Recommendations



**Draft North Parramatta Place Strategy**



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