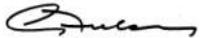
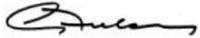
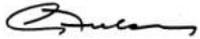


# Branxton Town Centre Masterplan

Adopted June 2016



## Report Revision History

Rev	Date	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Issued to:	Verified by
03	2.12.15	AW <i>Associate Director</i>	GF <i>Senior Consultant</i>	PCG for public exhibition	 <i>Senior Consultant</i>
04	1.6.16	AW <i>Associate Director</i>	GF <i>Senior Consultant</i>	PCG for Council consideration	 <i>Senior Consultant</i>
05	4.7.16	AW <i>Associate Director</i>	GF <i>Senior Consultant</i>	PCG for comment	 <i>Senior Consultant</i>

This document is preliminary unless approved by a Director of City Plan Strategy & Development

### CERTIFICATION

This report has been authorised by City Plan Strategy & Development, with input from a number of other expert consultants, on behalf of the Client. The accuracy of the information contained herein is to the best of our knowledge not false or misleading. The comments have been based upon information and facts that were correct at the time of writing this report.

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## Executive summary

Branxton is a small township with a distinctive heritage character and rural landscape setting. Its main street, which forms part of the New England Highway, offers a narrow and fine grain frontage of shops. This centre has traditionally been the focus of commercial and social activities for a broader subregion, and businesses have benefitted from passing trade associated with the highway.

The role of Branxton's Town Centre is set to change, with recent studies anticipating up to a 90 per cent reduction in traffic volumes through the township. This has already begun with the opening of the Hunter Expressway and will continue through the planned emergence of Huntlee's Town Centre.

This Report outlines a Masterplan for Branxton's Town Centre, to facilitate its long-term transition from a Highway centre to a local place. It addresses a range of challenges, including:

- Management considerations for traffic, parking, flooding and heritage.
- Existing movement and access limitations, including a constrained local street network, which forces vehicles to rely heavily on the Highway.
- Opportunities to enhance the 'core business area' by more efficiently use lands already zoned and/or used for commercial purposes;
- Opportunities to enhance the public domain along the main street, which has been progressively widened to cater for large traffic volumes.

The Masterplan outlined in this Report supports the following vision:

*Branxton is a vibrant village centre that continues to build upon its strength as an important heritage town in the Hunter Valley. It has developed an attractive and active main street that is encircled and supported by a compact urban form, respecting its unique heritage and rural setting.*

*It is a local place of commerce, innovation, history and recreation*

This will be achieved by a series of actions to:

1. Revitalise the main street (Maitland Street);
2. Increase connectivity to and within the Town Centre;
3. Improve approaches and gateways;
4. Strengthen relationships to recreation areas;
5. Rationalise parking;
6. Respond to unique heritage and rural setting; and
7. Enable and encourage future development.

This Report was commissioned by Cessnock and Singleton Councils, together with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, as part of the Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy project. The Masterplan supports the Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan 2016. Branxton's Town Centre is wholly located in the Cessnock Local Government Area.

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Appendices	Prepared by
APPENDIX A – PUBLIC DOMAIN AUDIT	Envisage
APPENDIX B – ALTERNATIVE INDICATIVE LAYOUTS	Envisage
APPENDIX C - PRELIMINARY TRANSPORT INVESTIGATIONS	Northrop

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The Hunter Region is changing. The opening of the Hunter Expressway in March 2014 and the staged development of Huntlee's New Town, in particular, are anticipated to dramatically influence growth and change within the Branxton Subregion (the Subregion). These regionally significant projects will attract more people to live in the Subregion, change how people move through and around the area, and heavily influence the future role of Branxton's Town Centre.

To prepare for this change, the NSW Department of Planning and Environment provided funding to Cessnock City Council and Singleton Council to jointly prepare a land use strategy and structure plan for the Subregion, supported by a masterplan for Branxton's Town Centre (this Project). City Plan Strategy and Development was appointed to deliver this Project on the Councils' behalf. This was the first Subregional Strategy in the Hunter Region to be prepared collaboratively between two Councils and the State government.

The Masterplan outlined in this Report for Branxton's Town Centre (the Masterplan) is the first place-specific plan for a local centre in the Subregion to be prepared under the Subregional strategy.

## 1.2 Structure of this Report and associated documents

The Masterplan details the planning and design guidelines for Branxton's Town Centre, directed by the strategic planning framework established in the *Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan* (2016).

This Report presents the Masterplan, providing:

- The vision and objectives that underpin the Masterplan and that will guide future planning and design (**Section 0**);
- An overview of the opportunities and challenges for planning and development in the Town Centre (**Section 0**); and
- The structural elements of the Masterplan, including the preferred indicative layout, recommended main street public domain improvements and recommended improvements to the Town Centre's surrounds (**Section 4**).

The Masterplan is supported by an implementation plan (**Section 5**), which will be used by Cessnock City Council to direct priorities in policy amendments, funding and key site investigations. The Masterplan will guide the preparation of detailed controls for future development. These controls will be prepared as an amendment to the Cessnock City-wide Development Control Plan and Cessnock Local Environmental Plan.

The Masterplan is based on a series of background studies completed between 2014-15. These were exhibited alongside the *draft Branxton Town Centre Masterplan*, and are available separately from Council.

## **Explanatory note for terminology used in this Report**

### **Centres**

The Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan recommend a settlement hierarchy for existing and emerging population centres in the Subregion. Development in Huntlee will include a new activity centre for the Town, which is expected to operate as the major service centre for the Subregion (and beyond).

Branxton and Greta are listed within this settlement hierarchy as "villages", and their activity centres are intended to cater for the daily needs of surrounding local communities and passing trade.

For the purposes of this Report, Branxton is described as a Town Centre. This is intended to be a place description, rather than a reference to the hierarchical ordering of the activity centres within the Subregion.

### **Main street / Maitland Street / New England Highway**

Branxton's Town Centre is situated along Maitland Street, which forms part of the New England Highway. This Report refers to Maitland Street as the Town Centre's main street.

## 2. Masterplan vision and objectives

The vision for the Masterplan is that, by 2041:

*Branxton is a vibrant village centre that continues to build upon its strength as an important heritage town in the Hunter Valley. It has developed an attractive and active main street that is encircled and supported by a compact urban form, respecting its unique heritage and rural setting.*

*It is a local place of commerce, innovation, history and recreation.*

Seven objectives for planning and urban design will assist in realising this vision. These are to:

1. Revitalise the main street (Maitland Street);
2. Increase connectivity to and within the Town Centre;
3. Improve approaches and gateways;
4. Strengthen relationships to recreation areas;
5. Rationalise parking;
6. Respond to unique heritage and rural setting; and
7. Enable and encourage future development.

The Indicative Layout, Public Domain Improvement Plan and Action Plan presented in the Masterplan support each of these objectives in various ways. Council will continue to consider these objectives when making decisions about land use and development within the Town Centre.

### 3. Opportunities and challenges

This section provides a context for the Town Centre Masterplan, including an overview of the various analyses that assisted in identifying the opportunities and challenges for change and improvements. Key outcomes and recommendations are considered in relation to the Town Centre's:

- Setting, including its role and relationship to other centres, and its existing physical environment and character;
- Planning Frameworks, considering the strategic frameworks and current planning controls influencing existing and future land use and development within the Town Centre; and
- Built form, considering the street and subdivision patterns as well as the current form and quality of the Town Centre's buildings and public domain.

#### 3.1 Setting

The broader Branxton Subregion (the Subregion) extends over the Cessnock and Singleton Local Government Areas (LGAs) (**Figure 1**). It includes the established and planned settlement areas of Huntlee and North Rothbury, Branxton and East Branxton, Greta, and Greta Migrant Camp, as well as diverse and productive rural lands.

Settlement of the area dates from the 1830s when the Hunter Valley was opened up beyond Maitland, yet the town's main growth started in the late 1800s with the development of the nearby Anvil Creek Coal Mine. Establishment of the Greta Migrant Camp in 1939 created accelerated growth in the village at that time.

The Subregion is well-serviced by interregional transport links, including the New England Highway, Hunter Expressway and Main North Rail Line. These routes generate a high volume of traffic through the Subregion every day, being situated between:

- Australia's seventh largest city and international transport hubs (Port and Airport) at Newcastle;
- Highly-productive mining and agricultural areas in the Upper Hunter and New England areas; and
- Popular national tourism destination at the Hunter Valley Vineyards.

Branxton has historically been the largest service centre between Singleton, Maitland and Cessnock, conveniently located at the convergence of main routes between these larger centres. Businesses and services located within Branxton's Town Centre have catered predominantly to the residents living within the Subregion, as well as passing trade. **Figure 2** illustrates the Town Centre in context with the village. The main commercial area fronts the New England Highway at Maitland Street, which operated as the main thoroughfare for passing freight and commuter traffic until the Hunter Expressway opened in 2014. The village is also serviced by a rail station, located approximately 1km southwest of the Town Centre, as well as a number of popular local recreational areas and community facilities.

The Subregional population was 8,215 people at the 2011 Census, and is currently forecasted to grow to more than 18,000 by 2041. A substantial proportion of this growth is expected to occur through the staged development of Huntlee New Town, which has an estimated capacity to ultimately accommodate up to 21,000 people. The opening of the Hunter Expressway has already changed the flow of traffic through Branxton's Town Centre. Huntlee will also accommodate a new Town Centre that has been planned to cater for a population catchment beyond the Subregion. These changes will influence the future role and function of Branxton's Town Centre.

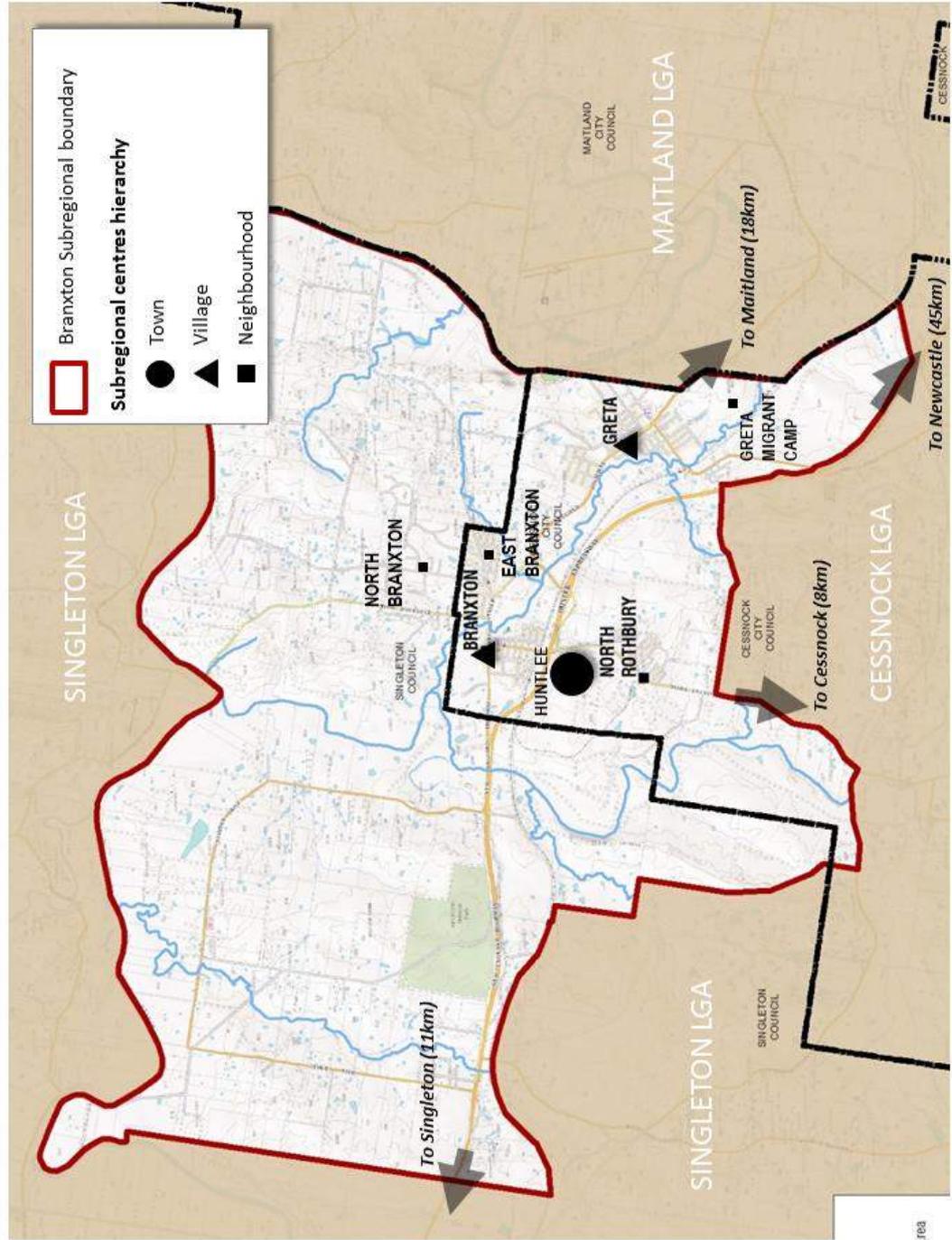


Figure 1: Subregional context

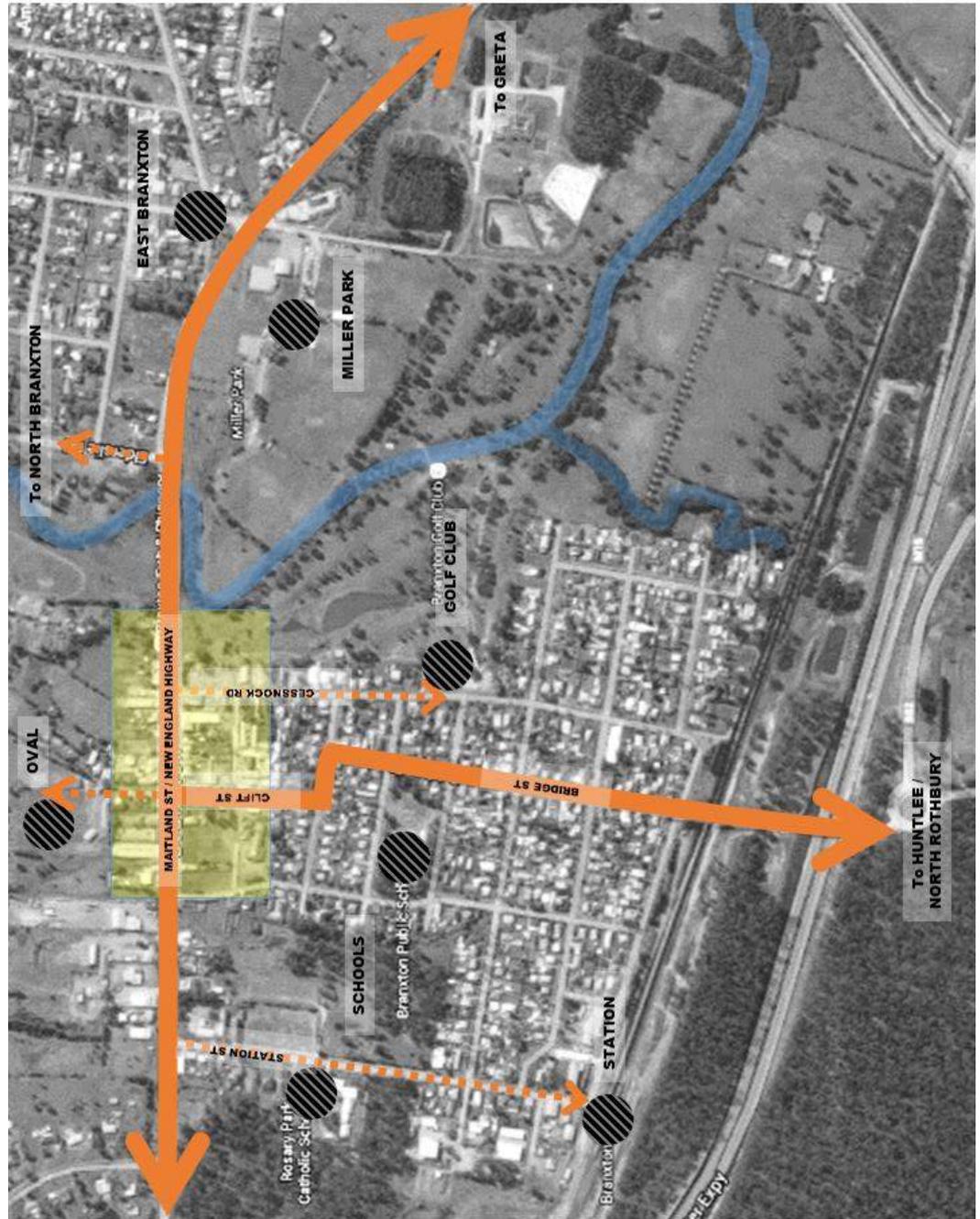


Figure 2: Town Centre context (Town Centre area indicated in yellow) (CPSD 2016)

### 3.1.1 Character and heritage

Branxton is a village with a visually dominant built heritage and rural setting. These attributes offer many positive characteristics that are highly valued by residents, attractive to visitors, and integral to the activity and quality of experience within the Town Centre.

The Town Centre can be approached from east, west and south, and is currently marked by two thresholds:

- At the eastern end of Maitland Street, two former heritage hotels on the northern frontage, and the Royal Federal Hotel on the southern frontage, provide a clear threshold to the Town Centre (**Photo 1**). These buildings first appear as one travels over the Anvil Creek Bridge, approaching the village along the New England Highway from the east. They are preceded by the green open space and landscaping features associated with Anvil Creek and Miller Park.
- Two heritage buildings at the Maitland Street intersection with Clift Avenue/John Rose Avenue also serve as a threshold to the Town Centre for visitors arriving from the west along the New England Highway or the south along Clift Street (**Photo 2**). This threshold is less well defined, with residential and industrial uses generally appearing first.

At 2016, commercial activities within the Town Centre are predominantly focused along Maitland Street (the New England Highway). This functions as a traditional main street, offering a strip of heritage and other buildings along the northern and southern frontages (**Photos 3 and 4**).

Several heritage items are located within the Branxton Town Centre, including fourteen properties fronting Maitland Street (indicated in **Figure 5**). The prominence of heritage buildings in the Town Centre establishes the well-loved character of Branxton that should be retained and supported.

The main street offers a range of small shops, including a small supermarket. Its dominant heritage buildings form a strong built edge, particularly on the southern side of Maitland Street (**Photo 5**). Heritage buildings are generally two storeys, in good condition, and offer verandah features that define the public domain (**Photos 6 and 7**).

Long views to the surrounding rural area are possible from Maitland Street and other locations within the Town Centre (**Photo 8**).

Future planning and development within the Town Centre should consider the following:

- The village's established character and heritage features provide an attractive environment, and may be utilised to attract and promote new business investments ranging from retail to tourism.
- Heritage listed buildings have limitations on re-development and must retain key elements of their significance. Any development in close proximity to heritage buildings must also consider the impact on the significance of heritage items.



Photo 1: Approach to Town Centre from east, crossing Anvil Creek bridge



Photo 2: Approach to town from south along Clift Street



Photo 3: Branxton main street, looking west



Photo 4: Branxton main street and Town Centre defined by two storey heritage buildings



Photo 5: Heritage buildings defining main street along southern side



Photo 6: Main street with verandas and other heritage paving features



Photo 7: Main street with mixed pavement materials and distinct cross-fall



Photo 8: View corridor along Cessnock Road to surrounding rural views

### 3.1.2 Flooding and stormwater management

Most of the lands fronting Maitland Street are flood-affected, and planning authorities must consider the specific flooding characteristics (e.g. depth, velocity, change on adjoining properties) when assessing a development application. This affects the re-development potential of existing properties and will continue to influence the built form, streetscape appearance and cost of new development.

Future planning and development within the Town Centre should consider the following:

- It is generally unacceptable to locate habitable floor space or site access below the flood planning level, which is generally around 2.5m above the natural ground level. Council will review and update flood planning levels for residential, commercial and industrial development as part of a future floodplain risk management study.
- Stormwater management is a related consideration. New developments may be subject to stormwater and infrastructure and management requirements to mitigate the impacts of overland flooding.

## 3.2 Built form

### 3.2.1 Street patterns and movement

How people access Branxton Town Centre, and how easily they can move around within it once they arrive, is an important consideration for its future success.

Approaches to the Town Centre, along the New England Highway and from the direction of Cessnock via Bridge Street, offer very distinct experiences. The entry from Cessnock along Bridge Street is particularly notable due to the need to travel in a 'dog-leg movement' around to Clift Street or Cessnock Road.

Branxton's traditional street network reflects the grid-like pattern that is typical of similar regional towns established around the same time. More recent changes to the network, such as the part one-way road that runs past the medical centre, and to a lesser extent the closure of John Street, have eroded this grid and led to reduced permeability.

Ample on-street parking is available along Maitland Street, providing convenient access to shops along the northern and southern frontages. Off-street parking is also available at the Town Centre's western edge, including:

- A public (Council-owned) car park on Cessnock Road offers off-street parking; and
- Behind the supermarket and Royal Federal Hotel, accessed via Maitland Street or Cessnock Road.

A summary of movement network considerations and challenges is presented in **Figure 3**, including:

- **Pedestrian crossings and safety.** There is currently one formalised pedestrian crossing at Clift Street, which is located at the western edge of the main street, away from the main commercial frontage.
- **Fragmented car parking.** The existing carpark behind the supermarket and hotel on the southern side are separately accessed and physically separated by a grade change and fencing which prevents rationalisation of parking spaces and interrupts permeability of the retail area.
- **Access to medical centre and seniors living.** The driveway access to these two sites is confusing and does not provide specific pedestrian access. The partial one-way system is also not ideal and the duplication of another driveway to a private residence, which runs along the south side, further exacerbates a currently poor outcome.
- **Driveways crossing footpaths.** There are a number of properties fronting Maitland Street with driveways crossing the main footpath. This damages the footpath, creates uneven surfaces, and creates hazards for pedestrians. It also lowers the amenity of the footpath as a place for outdoor dining or other gathering.

Improving public accessibility, wayfinding and facilities within the village more broadly, including facilities for school buses and public transport (i.e. bus interchange facilities and connected footpaths to safe road crossing points) will make it easier for existing and future residents to come to the Town Centre, further encouraging economic activity. This may also support opportunities for after-school activity businesses (tutoring, music lessons, sports training, child-care) to establish in the Town Centre.

## The influence of traffic reduction on trade

Traffic counts by the road authority before and after the opening of the Hunter Expressway indicate that there has been a 90 per cent reduction in the number of vehicles passing along the main street of Branxton. Whilst there has not been a quantification of the subsequent reduction in trade for the business owners in Branxton, it is a reasonable assumption supported by evidence from other by-passed towns, that there is a change in trade.

Research from Australia (BTCE, 1994; RMS, 2012) and the United States of America (Economic Development Research Group, 2000) indicated that there are consistent impacts on Town Centres arising from highway bypasses. The common themes in the research are:

- There will be turnover or relocation of existing businesses, especially traffic-servicing businesses.
- Communities and Town Centres with a strong identity as a destination or for local shopping are most likely to be economically stronger due to reduced traffic delays.
- Adequate signage to the by-passed Town Centre is needed to "remind" vehicle drivers.
- Tourism and visitor benefits are felt in the long term, after towns have had time to exploit new opportunities.
- Quality of life factors (i.e. better place to live, quieter, no traffic congestion) are commonly experienced.
- Investment and intervention by government can assist to soften the immediate impacts of the loss in through traffic.
- The effect of the impacts depends on the characteristics of the bypassed town (for example, tourism-based towns fare better than those focussed on freight services).

The most recent study commissioned by the RMS and published in 2012, concludes that:

*"in the longer term highway bypasses do not have adverse economic impacts on towns that are bypassed and that in most cases bypasses have resulted in economic development benefits for the towns which have been bypassed" (pg. v)*

This supports the potential for the initial constraint arising from the loss of passing and through traffic to become an opportunity for the longer term economic benefit of Branxton's Town Centre.

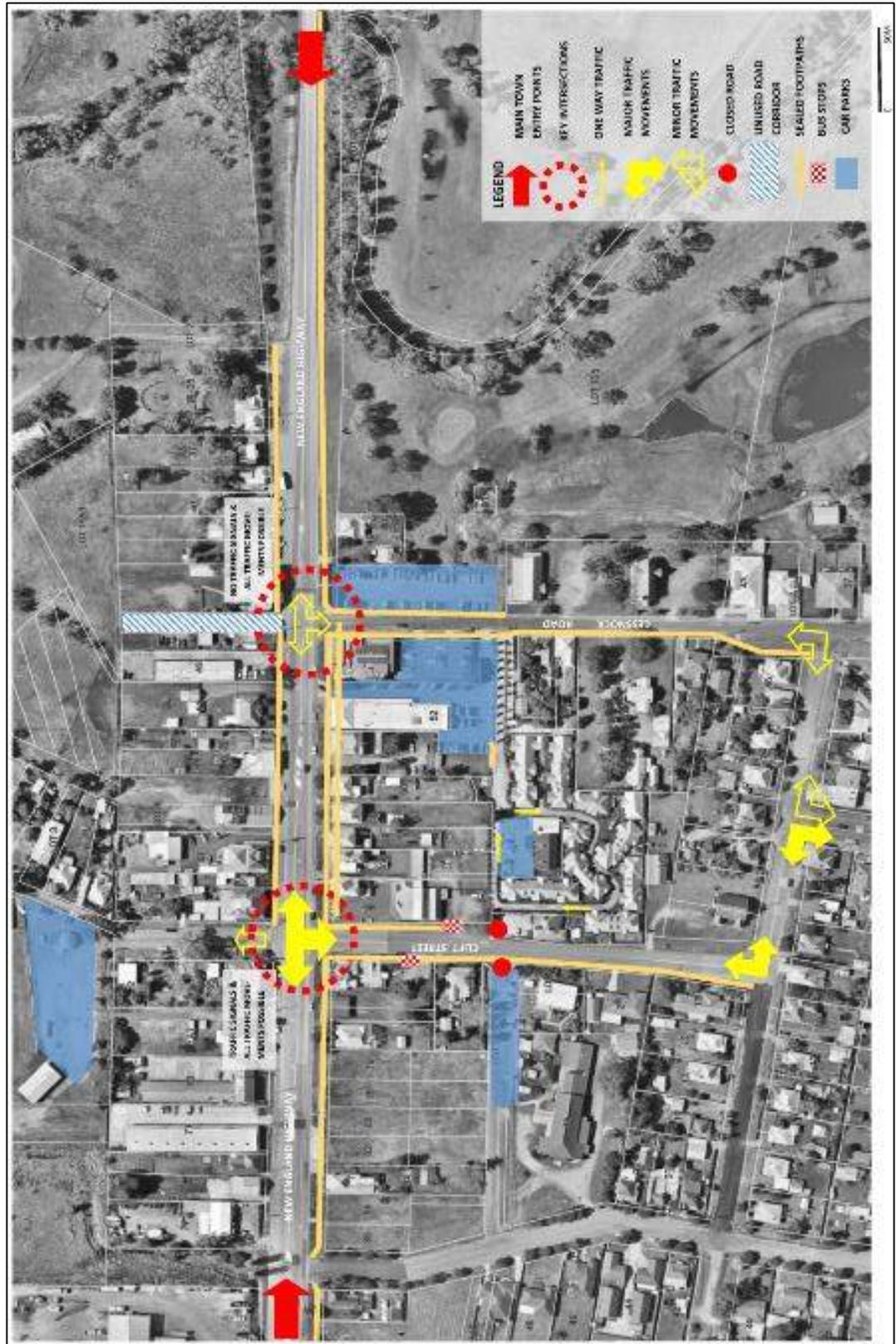


Figure 3: Summary of movement network considerations (Envisage 2015) From draft report page 27, previously not referenced

### 3.2.2 Subdivision and building form

Building form is important to Branxton due to its strong heritage and its visible extent exhibited in the existing buildings. The architectural period features cover the breadth of architectural styles from the mid to late 1800s through to the present day, dominated by elements from the Victorian (1850 -1890) and Edwardian or Federation (1890 – 1915) times.

Branxton retains a great many of its original or early shopfronts and hotel facades, with these substantially contributing to the town character. Heritage features include large shopfront windows, brick, stone and timber building materials, wrought iron lacework, verandahs and timber and iron verandah posts extending over the footpath.

**Photos 9-11** illustrate that the existing Town Centre is a mix of one and two storey buildings, with a dominant edge of character and heritage buildings along the mostly commercial area between Cessnock Road and Clift Street. It comprises a traditional main street of small shops that create a strong if not consistent built form, particularly on the northern side of the Maitland Street. There are some built form gaps in the Town Centre, including vacant or underutilised sites, plus buildings that are not contributory to the heritage character.

Street blocks in the Town Centre are around 150 to 160 metres wide and 90 metres deep. Street blocks are set in a grid pattern; however, a number of streets are not fully formed, or have been closed to through-connections.

This block layout allows a smaller retail form, either fine grain retail shops, or a large floorplate without sleeving<sup>1</sup>. The long and narrow lots predominantly provide small shops of around 330m<sup>2</sup> of gross floor area (refer to **Figure 6**), lending itself to smaller boutique retail uses. The exception to this is a large, consolidated parcel of land in the Town Centre's west. This site's previous consent for a supermarket has lapsed.

There are two locations within the Town Centre where there are clusters of underutilised business zoned land. The main street frontage gives these sites a higher profile and the reduction in traffic volumes may improve their access, street parking and amenity:

- The large, consolidated parcel in the Town Centre's west; and
- Properties between Clift Street and Cessnock Road with dual street frontage to Maitland Street and the existing vehicle laneway to the south.

Additional development in the Branxton Town Centre is likely to be either commercial or mixed use. Infill development needs to improve the built form and contribute to the heritage character of the Town Centre. When applied to the Branxton Town Centre, the following detailed outcomes should be pursued through development guidelines:

- Consolidate and intensify a diverse range of retail, commercial, residential and lifestyle activities, by renewing existing buildings and encouraging infill development.
- Connect the Town Centre with a high quality pedestrian environment that supports lively day and night public domain activities including sitting, socialising and eating places.
- Deliver buildings that offer fine-grain diversity, provide shelter, active retail and hospitality uses.
- Buildings should complement the rhythm of the existing built fabric of the centre through building form, proportions and materials.
- Ground floor residential development, other than seniors housing, is not permitted in the B2 Local Centre zone. Therefore, any residential development is limited to shop top housing above commercial floor space.
- New buildings should respect the existing two storey building height, and keep taller buildings to the main street corners, with a transitioning of building heights towards the rural and residential fringes.

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<sup>1</sup> From Edmondson Park Locality DCP template, Liverpool City Council

- Ensure that the potential major development site (between Clift Street and Bowen Street):
  - is integrated into the Town Centre through complementary and cohesive built form and enhanced pedestrian and public domain connectivity;
  - addresses the impact of scale, bulk and intensity of future development on the public domain;
  - has effective landscaping, deep soil planting and wide footpaths as a buffer to the adjoining residential areas; and
  - coordinates with the rest of the Town Centre to create a mixed village centre that will attract a range of business activities and local employment opportunities.



Photo 9: Main street at Clift St/John Rose Ave, looking west



Photo 10: Existing northern frontage



Photo 11: Eastern entrance to main street



Photo 12: Existing northern frontage

### 3.2.3 Public domain

A public domain audit was undertaken in May 2015 to review the quality, nature and location of public domain infrastructure in the Town Centre. It included general mapping of assets such as pathways, land uses and connections, within and around the Town Centre. Details of the Public Domain Audit are provided in **Appendix A**, with key considerations summarised below.

#### Pedestrian paving

- The predominant paving type is standard concrete pavement. Large expanses of concrete are also located outside of key buildings such as the hotels. Many sections of the concrete pavement, particularly the narrower concrete footpath sections, are in quite poor condition exhibiting cracking, raised sections and holes.
- A narrow bitumen pathway on the southern side of Maitland Street extends over the bridge to the entrance of Miller Park. This pathway is of fair but trafficable condition, yet quite narrow.
- Sections of the street kerb are in poor condition which may affect pedestrians, as well as other areas used by pedestrians such as the unformed area of Church Street which interrupts the main street and the bitumen car park at the corner of Cessnock Road.

#### Street furniture

- There is very limited street furniture in the Town Centre, principally being a number of mismatched seats and several pairs of 'wheelie' style bins. There are also a variety of planting containers such as full and half wine barrels and some concrete ones. In the past the barrels were a landscape feature that was a recognisable one in Branxton, yet many of the remaining barrels and plants are in fair to poor condition.

#### Way-finding and interpretative signage, public art

- Apart from a number of large road signs, including one very visually dominant sign placed within the footpath area of the main street, there is no specifically designed way-finding signage in terms of directions, or cultural and heritage information. There are a large number of signs related to parking, no stopping areas and a 'local traffic area zone' that may now be rationalised. Outside the Town Centre are small, standard entrance signs provided by Cessnock Council. There is no public art in the Town Centre.

#### Natural landscape

- Existing trees are limited to a few native Bottlebrushes scattered along the main street, mostly on the southern side. These trees are not particularly attractive and provide minimum visual amenity and shade.

#### Public amenities

- The nearest public amenities to the Town Centre are in Branxton Park which, although in fair condition, are not well located in terms of convenience and general surveillance.

## Heritage features

- There are a number of sections of sandstone kerb and guttering along some of the streets leading from the main street, including Cessnock Road and John Rose Avenue. There is also an historic horse trough along John Rose Avenue, leading towards Branxton Oval. A remnant section of sandstone paving is present in front of the bakery on the southern side.
- By far the strongest structural features of the public domain are the many heritage buildings that create a unique 'wall' along both sides of the main street, with the taller and greater number on the southern side leading to that side being the most visually dominant. The heritage buildings include a mix of hotels, small retail shops, food outlets and interspersed houses, with the condition of the buildings generally good, although there are a number that are vacant and in a poorer state. The verandahs of many of these buildings, and the supporting posts that extend over the footpath area, are a very noticeable element that serves to enhance the public domain through a physical and visual connection between the building edge and the street. This element is also one which distinguishes Branxton as a place with a history that is still valued and integral to its character.

## Recreation areas

- Branxton Oval lies behind the main street, accessed off John Rose Avenue, comprising a playing field, small grandstand, croquet club, public amenities and RV dump station. The park also has a brick bandstand and obelisk feature which together form a war memorial, rather unsympathetically placed on the side of the unsealed car park.
- The other main recreation areas are the Branxton Golf Course and Miller Park to the east of the golf club, of which parts of both can be seen from the eastern side of the main street.
- The more detailed components of the public realm, such as the street furniture, pathways and plantings display a lack of unity and quality, and in many cases are in poor condition. There are also many elements that relate to the previous highway role of the main street that can now be re-considered, such as the visual width of the roadway, the extensive number and dominance of signs and existing parking provisions.

Future planning and development within the Town Centre should consider the following:

- There is a cross-fall from the higher southern side of the highway to the northern, which has historically led to a slope from the kerb line up to the footpath in front of the buildings. In general, this slope has been addressed by the use of grass closer to the kerb, yet overall there is a lack of a consistent grade, and a mix of materials and widths of flatter pavement. Grade from the footpath to the main street affects the permeability of the main street and the functionality of on-street dining and pedestrian movement.
- There are many driveways which interrupt the street frontage and footpaths along both sides. These driveways further exacerbate the landform issues on the southern side by cutting through the slope and crossing over the footpath zone.
- Although the main highway function has been removed, the New England Highway still forms the main street, and related to that highway function are likely to be very specific requirements of the road authority for any possible changes in terms of street tree planting, parking, traffic movements and signage.
- The existing transmission lines along the northern side of the main street present some limitations on street tree planting.

The quality of the public domain of Branxton Town Centre is integral to the rejuvenation and reinvention of the township in response to the Hunter Expressway bypassing of the town, Huntlee development and the changing employment context.

## 3.3 Planning frameworks

### 3.3.1 Strategic planning framework

The strategic planning framework influencing land use and development in Branxton's Town Centre is set out in a range of State and Local government documents. At 2016, these include:

- The NSW Government's Lower Hunter Regional Strategy (2010), Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan (2012), and draft Hunter Regional Plan (2015); and
- Council's Cessnock City Wide Settlement Strategy (2010), Branxton Urban Design Framework (2010) and Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan (2016).

Collectively, these documents establish a range of considerations and targets to guide long-term planning. Notably, the NSW Government and Council are undertaking major reviews to update the overarching regional and local strategies influencing development in Branxton's Town Centre.

The Masterplan draws heavily on the strategic intentions and recommendations of the *Branxton Subregional Land Use Strategy and Structure Plan (2016)*, summarised below, as the most recent and locally-relevant document for the Town Centre:

- Branxton is classified as a Village within the subregion's settlement hierarchy. Its centre is intended to provide for basic services and the daily needs of residents in the Subregion, and continue catering for passing trade. It is envisaged to include a mix of small scale retail, community and health services, limited office space and a supermarket.
- Rezoning of additional lands to accommodate employment growth is not required in the Subregion in the short to medium term. However, Council will review the business zoning schemes in all centres, including Branxton's, to ensure planning controls are applied consistently. This review will recognise that there are opportunities to support existing and accommodate new businesses in Branxton by:
  - More efficiently using lands already zoned for commercial development in the Town Centre; and
  - Recognising the contribution of existing commercial premises on rural zoned lands adjoining business zoned land to activities and character of the Town Centre. Council may consider rezoning where existing or new commercial uses can help deliver the vision for the Town Centre and its main street.
- The distinct heritage character of Branxton's Town Centre is recognised as a unique advantage, and should be protected.
- The Town Centre can support broader regional and local strategies for housing growth and diversification by:
  - Facilitating shop top housing in centres; and
  - Encouraging seniors housing within 400 metres walking radius of centres.
- Floodplain risk management plans for Branxton will consider a commercial flood planning level as a separate level to a residential flood planning level.

### 3.3.2 Planning controls

The current statutory framework relevant to the Town Centre includes controls set out in the:

- Cessnock Local Environmental Plan 2011 (the LEP); and
- Cessnock City Wide Development Control Plan 2010 (the DCP).

The land use zonings within the Town Centre at November 2015 are illustrated in **Figure 4**, showing:

- The predominant land use zoning for the Town Centre is B2 Local Centre (7ha); and
- The Town Centre also includes smaller pockets of R3 Medium Density and RU2 Rural Landscape zonings.

This mix of zonings reflects the range of uses and rural setting that are typical of small regional activity centres. However, the underlying land use zones do not necessarily reflect current land uses within the Town Centre, which are indicated (as of May 2015) on **Figure 5**. Notably:

- A number of existing single dwellings have an underlying B2 Local Centre zoning. These would not be permitted under the current zone controls, but have existing use rights.
- A number of existing commercial premises have underlying RU2 Rural Landscape (takeaway shop and hotel) or R2 Medium Density Residential zonings (medical centre).

Council will consider the zoning regime in Branxton's Town Centre as part of its broader review of land use zonings for centres across the LGA.

Council is also currently considering future opportunities to repurpose some of the existing sporting fields at Branxton Oval, off John Rose Ave, on the edge of the Town Centre for other recreation or visitor functions, such as a recreational vehicle (RV) temporary stay place. This has the potential to attract more people to and through the Town Centre, and generate greater demands for businesses and services.

Future planning and development within the Town Centre should consider opportunities to improve existing planning controls to, in particular:

- Define the extent of and preferred zoning regime for the Town Centre's core business area.
- Identify how land uses and activities can meet relevant zoning objectives. The current objectives for B2 Local Centre are to:
  - To provide a range of retail, business, entertainment and community uses that serve the needs of people who live in, work in and visit the local area
  - To encourage employment opportunities in accessible locations
  - To maximise public transport patronage and encourage walking and cycling
- Consider site-specific provisions for minimum lot sizes, floor space ratios or maximum building heights. The *Cessnock Citywide Development Control Plan 2010* does not currently provide any specific controls for Branxton's Town Centre, though some provisions in relation to heritage conservation, car parking and subdivision guidelines would generally apply.





**Braxton Town Centre  
Land Use Inventory**

Scale: 1:3,301  
GDA 1994 MGA Zone 56

Notes:  
1. Land Use Inventory surveyed by City Plan Services (2/4/2015).

Sheet Size: A4

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Figure 5: Town Centre land use inventory (CPSD, May 2015)



Figure 6: Town Centre lot sizes (CPSD, Nov 2015)

## 4. The Masterplan

This section outlines the Masterplan for Branxton's Town Centre:

- Identifying the preferred Indicative Layout for future land use and development within the Town Centre boundary;
- Recommending detailed public domain improvements for the main street (Maitland Street); and
- Recommending broader public domain improvements to better integrate the Town Centre with the broader village.

The Masterplan is intended to provide a basis for discussions between Council, the State Government, stakeholders and the broader community when planning for the future of Branxton's Town Centre. It does not, in itself, have a statutory role, but may help to inform the preparation of new planning controls including land use zoning amendments made under the LEP, guidelines provided in the DCP, or Local Contributions Plans.

### 4.1 At a glance

#### 4.1.1 Town Centre indicative layout

The Indicative Layout for Branxton's Town Centre is illustrated in **Figure 7**, showing the Centre's preferred future

- Town centre boundary;
- mix and intensification of uses;
- placement of roads and other infrastructure; and
- location of open space and public areas.

This identifies a core business area, predominantly fronting onto Maitland Street, with public domain embellishments, as well as new opportunities for on-street dining and mixed-use buildings. It also identifies opportunities to create a new local street connecting Cessnock Road to Clift Street, through the extension of the existing laneway, which will provide new opportunities for development within rear-lots.

Three options for future development in the Town Centre were considered to establish this Indicative Layout. These considered alternative layouts to accommodate different management approaches, emphasising:

- Small commercial infill;
- Mixed use development; and
- Large floorplate developments.

These alternative layouts are provided in **Appendix B** for information.

#### 4.1.2 Main street public domain

Improving the public domain along Maitland Street will be critical to revitalising the main street, which is a key objective of the Masterplan. Recommended public domain improvements are illustrated in **Figure 8**, and supported by artist impressions showing the change in context.

These detail the preferred location along Maitland Street for new:

- Open/public spaces;
- Formalised pedestrian crossings;
- Street tree planting and landscaping;
- On-street parking;

- Cycling facilities; and
- Landmark and wayfinding features, such as public art, signage, and heritage interpretation.

#### **4.1.3 Wider Town Centre considerations**

Integrating the changes recommended for Branxton's Town Centre with the broader village will ensure investments benefit residents, visitors and business owners. Recommended improvements to areas outside the defined Town Centre boundary are illustrated on Error! Reference source not found.. These will help strengthen connections to places people visit most, as well as improve approaches to the Town Centre.

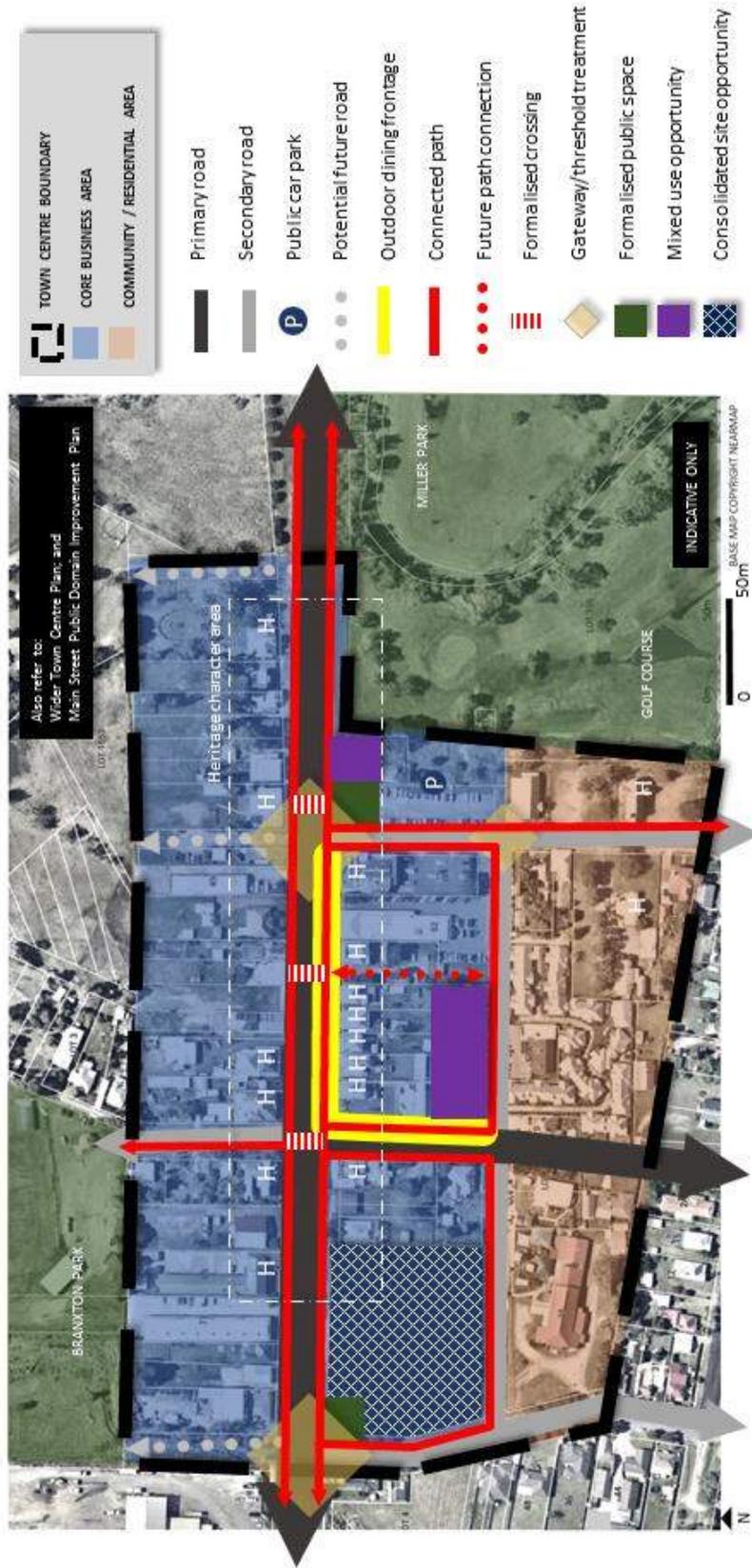


Figure 7: Preferred Town Centre Indicative Layout Plan (CPSD 2016)



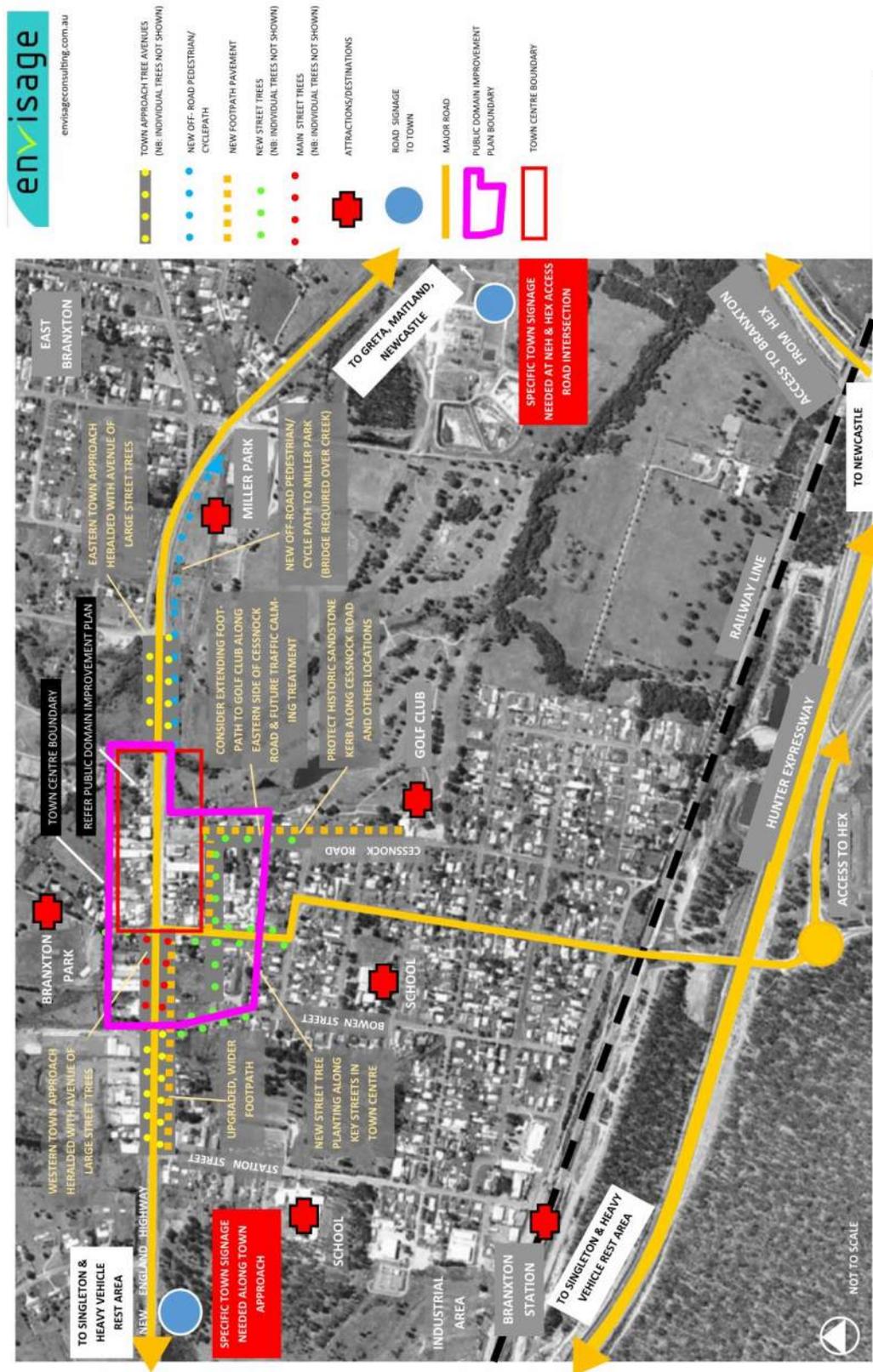


Figure 9: Wider town centre plan (Envisage 2016)

The key urban design outcomes, illustrated on **Figure 7**, **Figure 8**, and **Figure 9** align with the vision and objectives for Branxton’s Town Centre.

Objective 1: Revitalise the main street	
>	Building façades remain sympathetic to the heritage character.
>	A boulevard, including new street trees and a tree-lined median, offers shade in the summer, provides safe crossings and acts as a traffic calming measure.
>	Wider footpaths and public spaces provide opportunities for people to enjoy and interact.
>	Permit activities that animate the main street, including on-street dining and temporary events such as markets and festivals.
>	Building design and uses provide an active frontage, with commercial and retail activities occupying the ground floor.

Objective 2: Improve connectivity to and within the Town Centre	
>	A new street connection between Cessnock Road and Clift Street, extending the existing laneway, improves vehicle circulation.
>	A new laneway from Maitland Street southward provides direct pedestrian links between shops, services, and parking areas.
>	Wayfinding features and signage from the Town Centre to local destinations (for pedestrians) and the Hunter Expressway (for vehicles) provides a legible environment for all and raises awareness of what the Town Centre has to offer.
>	Shop-top and seniors housing as well as visitor accommodation offer more people a chance to live or stay within walking distance to where they work, shop or socialise.

Objective 3: Improve approaches and gateways to the Town Centre	
>	Statement features, such as public art, a marquee or embellished building façades at the intersection of Maitland Street and Bowen Street mark the Town Centre’s western threshold.
>	Landscape features, such as large trees, along Maitland Street at Anvil Creek and Miller Park enhance the eastern approach to the Town Centre.
>	A minor threshold along Cessnock Road calms traffic and marks the transition between commercial and residential areas.

#### Objective 4: Strengthen relationships to recreational areas

>	Continuous paths and signage to/from the Town Centre to nearby recreational areas make it easier and more attractive for people to walk.
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#### Objective 5: Rationalise car parking

>	Opportunities for large vehicles, such as trucks and caravans, to park within and close to the Town Centre are retained.
>	Parking restrictions along the main street are relaxed
>	The existing Council-owned public car park at Cessnock Road is re-configured and possibly expanded to provide more spaces.
>	Private car parks within the core business area are reconfigured to provide more spaces and improve circulation for vehicles and pedestrians, including by removing fences and improving grades between existing private car parks for the supermarket and Royal Federal Hotel.

#### Objective 6: Respond to the unique heritage and rural setting

>	The area's established rural and heritage characteristics are promoted to attract new businesses and visitors.
>	New or modified buildings, street furniture and landscaping respects existing heritage features.
>	Visual connections to surrounding areas from the Town Centre are maintained and, where possible, emphasised.

#### Objective 7: Enable and encourage future development

>	Provide sufficient space for businesses and services that conveniently meet the daily needs and expectations of local residents and cater for passing trade.
>	Establish and promote a niche business environment throughout the Town Centre that can attract visitors off the Hunter Expressway and encourage them to linger longer in Branxton.
>	Provide a zoning scheme that supports existing businesses to grow and diversify.
>	Permit and encourage subdivision and redevelopment of the rear portions of business-zoned lots.

## 4.2 Defining the Town Centre

The Town Centre is a distinct neighbourhood in Branxton. It has clearly defined boundaries to rural and recreational areas at the north and east, and residential areas to the west and south.

The boundary of the Masterplan encompasses the main cluster of current and future commercial activities and services for the village. It:

- Extends along Maitland Street from Anvil Creek to Bowen Street (the main street), encompassing northern and southern street frontage properties; and
- From Maitland Street, extends southward along Bowen Street, Clift Street and Cessnock Road to encompass the existing community hall, seniors living area, medical centre and church.

Strategies outlined in the Masterplan also consider connections between the Town Centre and other popular destinations within the village, including:

- To the north, Branxton Oval;
- To the east, the Golf Course, Miller Park, and onward to East Branxton; and
- To the south, Branxton rail station and onward to Huntlee.
- Gateway features at the corners of Bowen Street and Cessnock Road, together with public domain improvements, will reinforce the Town Centre as the most significant place in the Branxton locality.

## 4.3 Land uses and activities

The Indicative Layout shows the preferred mix of land uses in the Town Centre. It is intended to coordinate government and community actions to:

- Establish a niche business environment to attract visitors to get off the Hunter Expressway and linger longer in Branxton.
- Leverage off the established rural and heritage character of the area to attract new businesses and visitors.
- Renovate the façade of existing main street buildings, emphasising the area's heritage character.
- Open a new laneway from the main street, connecting to the aged care and Cessnock Rd.

Benchmarks provided in **Table 1** indicate the indicative area/yield for each of the different land use elements, which are further described in following sections. Neither the Indicative Layout Plan or the benchmarks are intended to reflect specific land use zonings, but will inform future changes to land use zonings to facilitate development in line with the Masterplan.

Table 1: Indicative Layout Plan land use elements benchmarks

Land use element	Benchmark
Mixed use	0.31 hectares
Business use	6.7 hectares
Residential use (other than seniors')	0.49 hectares
Seniors' living	0.67 hectares
Community services	0.69 hectares
Recreation/open space	0.28 hectares
Business floor space	24,060 m <sup>2</sup> (Existing: 8,260 m <sup>2</sup> )
Dwellings (not including seniors')	48 dwellings (Existing: 12 dwellings)
Car parking (public and on-street)	170 spaces (plus new development requirements) (Existing: 154 spaces)

### 4.3.1 Business uses

Business uses, including shops (retail, food and drink) and offices will remain the predominant use type in the Town Centre, comprising more than half of the land take. The location of business uses shown in the Indicative Layout generally reflects the current arrangement, with Maitland Street and Clift Street continuing to frame the core business area.

Business floor space in Branxton Town Centre has been estimated at around 8,250m<sup>2</sup>. There is potential to expand this over time to approximately 24,000m<sup>2</sup>, whilst maintaining the existing average site coverage (approximately 30 per cent). Subject to addressing design and site constraints (flooding, access and circulation, heritage):

- Vacant, but consolidated lands between Clift and Bowen Streets provide an opportunity to accommodate a larger floorplate development;
- The future widening of the laneway connecting Cessnock Road to Clift Street will create a new street frontage, enabling new business-related and mixed-use developments on the rear lots of existing properties; and
- The re-use or redevelopment of underutilised sites, including existing dwellings in the core business area provides opportunities for gradual, smaller scale infill.

All new development should reinforce the role of Branxton as a village centre, providing basic services and daily needs, with a focus on the day-to-day life within a community. Built form should be respectful of the heritage character, with active and attractive street frontages along all edges.

The use of existing buildings, and design of new buildings in the core business area, will assist in revitalising the main street, with:

- Retail shops, including food and drink premises, required to maintain a direct visual or physical connection to the street;
- Other commercial activities, such as offices or tourist and visitor accommodation, encouraged to locate on levels above the street; and
- Outdoor dining or other street-based activities encouraged along Maitland Street's southern frontage, between Cessnock Road and Clift Street, and along Clift Street's eastern frontage.

The separation of core business area from the quiet, residential areas to the south and west also offers potential advantages for evening trading for restaurants and pubs.

### 4.3.2 Residential uses

Lands dedicated solely to residential uses are a small component of the Indicative Layout. These generally relate to:

- Established residential areas to the south and west that are separate from the core business area; and
- The existing seniors living area, which provides a higher-density option for permanent residents that is directly connected to local businesses.

Existing dwellings located within the core business area will continue.

New residential development within the Town Centre can be achieved through the provision of shop top housing. This will address considerations for flood constraints and active street frontages. Subject to addressing design and site constraints (flooding, access and circulation, heritage), mixed use developments, offering commercial and residential uses within a single building, will be prioritised:

- Along the new street frontage created by the future widening of the laneway connecting Cessnock Road to Clift Street, with approximately 1,800m<sup>2</sup> space available in the rear lots of existing properties. This could also be an opportunity for new seniors housing, mirroring the adjoining land use, subject to addressing the flood planning level.
- Through the possible future development of the existing single dwelling site east of Cessnock Road. This may provide an active use such as a café, gallery or tourist information fronting onto Maitland Street to strengthen the relationship to Miller Park and support the creation of the new Town Park.
- By supporting the conversion of existing two storey buildings into ground floor commercial and upper storey residential uses, including visitor and tourist accommodation.

Through a combination of shop top housing and mixed use development sites, it is possible that the dwelling yield could increase from 12 dwellings to 48 dwellings in the core business area (this excludes existing seniors' dwellings).

### 4.3.3 Community facilities and open space

Community facilities are already distributed throughout the Town Centre, including halls, a pre-school, police station, and church. These provide a wide range of services for people of various ages and needs within the community.

No additional community facilities are planned, but utilisation of and access to the existing facilities will be improved through improvements to footpaths, vehicle circulation, car parking and increased population within the Town Centre.

The Town Centre already benefits from the large and well established open spaces and recreational areas within the village, including the adjoining Branxton Oval, Branxton Golf Course, and Miller Park. Providing additional public spaces within the Town Centre will assist in revitalising the main street by providing opportunities for people to meet and linger in and around businesses. Public spaces can also accommodate landmark features that draw attention to and demarcate the Town Centre as an important place.

The Indicative Layout proposes two pocket parks at the eastern and western Gateways to the Town Centre. These should include seating, shelters, public amenities, signage and public art to improve accessibility and quality experience for people living, working and visiting the Town Centre.

#### 4.4 Main street public domain

The preferred future public domain arrangements for Branxton's main street are illustrated in **Figure 8**.

Key improvements include:

- Widened footpaths on the southern side to support outdoor dining and retail opportunities.
- Street furniture, street tree planting and more attractive pavements to improve the amenity and create a more attractive environment for pedestrians.
- A central median, incorporating street tree planting and pedestrian refuge crossings to calm traffic and increase safety.
- Town gateway elements, such as public art work and/or signage, at eastern and western extents of the main street, incorporated into a public square at the corner of Cessnock Road, and a landscaped semi-public space at the corner of Clift Street.
- A future laneway, connecting the main street to the existing seniors living area and future commercial developments at the southern end of the core business area.

Artist impressions, provided in **Figure 10** assist in illustrating these proposed changes in context.

These improvements are intended to assist in revitalising the main street as a key objective of the Masterplan. The final alignments, design and delivery of these improvements will be subject to further investigation and identification of funding mechanisms. Improvements will be delivered in stages, in line with development and funding requirements.



Figure 10: Artist's impressions of main street public domain improvements (top) Corner of Cessnock Road, looking west (bottom) New laneway and extended road improve pedestrian and vehicle traffic connections



Figure 10 (continued): Artist's impressions of main street public domain improvements (top) On-street parking maintained to enable direct access to shopfronts (bottom) Widened footpaths provide opportunities for social interactions and activities, including on-street dining



Figure 10 (continued): Artist's impressions of main street public domain improvements (top) Median and street tree planting calm traffic and provide shade in summer (bottom) Tree spacing and canopy designed to maintain visual connectivity at street-level

## 4.5 Detailed design considerations

Proposed changes to roads, paths, and parking within and around the Town Centre arising from the preferred Indicative Layout and main street public domain improvements were subject to more detailed investigations to consider preliminary design issues.

The key outcomes and recommendations are summarised below. These are indicative considerations, only, and will be subject to further investigation through subsequent, detailed design stages.

### Roads

Road modifications will be required to deliver the changes proposed by the preferred Indicative Layout and the recommended main street public domain improvements. These broadly include:

- The creation of a boulevard along Maitland Street;
- The extension and re-configuration of an existing laneway to connect Cessnock Road to Clift Street; and
- Creation of two shared access driveways via the extended laneway and existing private car parks, servicing existing dwellings and businesses fronting Maitland Street.

Cross-sections for Maitland Street, Cessnock Road, and the extended laneway are provided in **Appendix C**, illustrating the proposed apportionments to accommodate relevant footpaths, landscaping, parking, cycling lanes and traffic lanes.

Maitland Street and Clift Street will continue to accommodate the highest volumes of through traffic and greatest diversity of road users, including general vehicles, heavy goods vehicles, caravans, buses and cyclists. These streets will also provide direct vehicle access, including on-street parking, to the main commercial frontages within the core business area.

The changes proposed by the preferred Indicative Layout and main street public domain improvements are expected to result in a slight narrowing of traffic lanes along Maitland Street to 4.5m. This is considered to be sufficient space to safely accommodate vehicle and cycle movements, with existing cycle lanes retained along the northern and southern extents.

At 3m, the proposed central median, incorporating street trees and pedestrian crossing refuges, will change access arrangements across Maitland Street. Notably,

- No changes are proposed for vehicle turnings to/from Bowen Street, Clift Street and Cessnock Road. The impacts to vehicle access to specific properties along Maitland Street will be investigated by Council through detailed design stages.
- Pedestrians will be afforded five formal crossing points, with no changes proposed to existing crossings at Bowen Street, Clift Street and Cessnock Road and the formalisation of two mid-street crossings opposite the proposed laneway and town park.

The median and incorporated street trees are also anticipated to create a more attractive and pedestrian-friendly environment along the main street by calming traffic and providing shade. The height and density of the street tree canopy will be considered through detailed design stages to ensure visual connectivity across the street, particularly to commercial properties, is maintained.

## Paths and signage

Modifications to footpaths in and around the Town Centre will also be required, as broadly summarised below.

- Provision of continuous paths, with improved paving materials, throughout the core business area, including through the proposed laneway extension.
- Along Maitland Street, between Clift Street and Cessnock Road, in particular:
  - Widened pathways along the southern extent to accommodate on-street dining.
  - A new through-block connection to the extended laneway at the rear of the core business area.
- Continuous pathways should also be provided to nearby destinations, including:
  - Eastward along Maitland Street to Miller Park and the school bus interchange.
  - Southward along Cessnock Road to the golf course.
  - Eastward from Clift Street to the villages pre-school / community facilities, including formalisation of the pedestrian crossing at the southern end of the core business area.

These modifications will predominantly address safety and mobility issues. They will also assist in creating a more attractive pedestrian environment to encourage more people to walk and cycle around the village. Specific elements such as paving materials, kerb treatments, tactile paving will be considered through detailed design stages.

Additional considerations for wayfinding elements, including signage, to improve legibility for visitors should demarcate routes from the Town Centre to, at minimum: Miller Park/East Branxton; Branxton Oval; Branxton Golf Course; and Branxton Rail Station.

## Car parking

The changes proposed by the preferred Indicative Layout and main street public domain improvements may affect up to 14 existing car parking spaces, but are expected to lead to an overall net gain of parking within the Town Centre. Key impacts are expected:

- Along Maitland Street, with 4 spaces potentially removed to construct a new pedestrian crossing. An additional five spaces could potentially be created through the removal of driveways along the northern frontage, resulting in a net gain of 1 space.
- Along Clift Street, with 5 spaces potentially removed through the widening of the footpath to provide space for on-street dining.
- Along the extended laneway at the rear of the core business area, with 5 existing spaces removed through the redevelopment of rear lots. An additional 6 spaces could be created through the incorporation of parking into the street design, resulting in a net gain of 1 space.

Further car parking gains may be possible through:

- The re-configuration and possible expansion of the Council-owned carpark at Cessnock Road, with a possible net gain of around 17 off-street spaces. This should be pursued in consultation with adjoining landowners.
- The re-configuration of private car parks associated with existing uses, such as the supermarket and Royal Federal Hotel, in the core business area. This should be pursued in consultation with existing landowners and occupiers.
- The delivery of new development, in line with Council's car parking requirements.

## 5. Delivering the Masterplan

Council regularly reviews and updates its strategies, policies and planning controls. The actions identified below in support of the vision and objectives for Branxton's Town Centre (Section 3) will be incorporated into this process. This will result in changes to planning controls to:

- Amend the LEP, including rezoning rural land northeast of Cessnock Road, recognising the contributions of existing commercial activities to the function of the Town Centre.
- Preparing Development Control Plans, including for the Masterplan Study Area and surrounds, addressing the following matters:
  - flooding and stormwater management;
  - provision of public transport facilities (seating, shelter, street lighting);
  - road layout and footpaths, including hierarchy and function;
  - site coverage, building heights;
  - location of parking and loading facilities;
  - integrated housing and subdivision provisions for mixed use development; and
  - Specific recommendations for the major development site (as outlined in **Section 2.5**)
- Identify the funding requirements and timing of public domain improvements, including the preparation a Local Contributions Plan for the Town Centre and surrounding urban area.

Council will also regularly review and update the Masterplan to ensure it remains relevant to the changing needs and expectations of the community.

### 5.1 Prioritised Actions

Council will prioritise a number of actions in the coming years to realise changes identified in the Masterplan. These actions are presented in **Table 2** to **Table 8** below, and are grouped according to the Planning and Urban Design Principles they predominantly support.

Each action has been assigned a priority level and timeframe to inform Council's annual business reporting, monitoring and budgeting processes.

Priority levels are:

- High – These actions are not anticipated to be dependent on external factors or the completion of other (medium or low priority) actions. They should be completed in the identified timeframe.
- Medium – These actions may be dependent on external factors, such as funding, or additional investigations. They are not anticipated to be dependent on low priority actions.
- Low – These actions are likely to be heavily dependent on external factors, such as funding, additional investigations, or owner motivation. They are not intended to impede progress toward other (medium to high priority) actions.

Timeframes are:

- Short term (0-2 years);
- Medium term (2 - 8 years);
- Long term (8 - 20 years); and
- Ongoing (continuous action and/or monitoring)

Table 2: Actions to revitalise the main street (Maitland Street) – Objective 1

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
MS01	Increase amenity and activity in main street with new development and business that provide for the convenience and day-to-day needs of residents and visitors, including tourism uses in the vicinity of the Town Centre.	Local business chamber, with assistance from Council with an Economic Development Strategy	Medium term & Long term	Medium
MS02	Permit shop top housing and mixed use development in the Town Centre.	Council - Maintain the existing zoning and land use tables	Ongoing	High
MS03	Implement streetscape improvements such as street trees, wider footpaths and street furniture as detailed in a Public Domain Plan.	Council - Public Domain Plan subject to funding	Medium term & Long term	Medium
MS04	Formalise pedestrian crossings to improve safety and connection.	Council - subject to funding	Long term	Medium
MS05	Rationalise driveway crossings along the southern side of the main street in longer term.	Council - To be identified in Town Centre DCP and subject to alternative access arrangements	Long term	Medium

Table 3: Actions to increase connectivity – Objective 2

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
C01	Improve existing vehicular and pedestrian/cyclist connections to and from the medical centre, particularly travelling west.	Council - To be identified in Town Centre DCP, and delivered in conjunction with new development	Medium term	High
C02	Plan for new connections at the rear of commercial properties on the northern side of Maitland Street to minimise vehicular reliance on the main street.	Council - To be identified in Town Centre DCP and subject to alternative access arrangements	Long term	Low
C03	Plan for new mid-block pedestrian laneway from Maitland Street to the existing / extended vehicle laneway.	Council - To be identified in Town Centre DCP	Long term	High
C04	Locate parking and loading facilities so that they operate efficiently and do not intrude on the public realm.	Council - To be addressed in Town Centre DCP, and applied to all new development.	Medium	High
C05	Integrate a Traffic and Transport Strategy for Branxton into a DCP (see explanatory box)	Council - to be addressed in Town Centre DCP, and applied to all new development	Medium	High

### **A traffic and transport strategy for Branxton**

A traffic and transport strategy will be required to coordinate planning and management of the new routes (vehicular and pedestrian), parking, passenger transport and public domain improvements in and around Branxton's Town Centre. This should be supported through guidelines that can be incorporated into Council's DCP.

This strategy, and associated guidelines, should:

- Identify the network of streets linking the Town Centre to adjoining areas;
- Establish a hierarchy of roads, to provide for growth in traffic volumes and cater for future diversion of heavy traffic;
- Establish a system of connected paths between the Town Centre and surrounding open space and recreation areas, public transport areas (school bus interchange, Branxton train station), community facilities (preschool and primary school, churches, community centres), residential areas;
- Identify the streets and lanes that will be shared spaces, providing for the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles;
- Support a street network that offers alternative routes to destinations, in order to increase permeability and to spread traffic; and
- Identify design requirements and opportunities to enhance the public domain.

Some preliminary considerations for roads and parking within the Town Centre are provided in **Appendix C**.

Table 4: Actions to improve approaches and gateways – Objective 3

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
AG01	Establish street trees to improve the look of key approaches along the New England Highway, Cessnock Road and Clift Street.	Council - Public Domain Plan subject to funding	Long term	High
AG02	Create subtle 'gateways' near the Maitland Street/Clift Street intersection and Maitland Street/Cessnock Road intersection, through the use of measures such as appropriate signage, public art and public spaces.	Council- Public Domain Plan subject to funding Also to be identified in Town Centre DCP and implemented with new development.	Medium term & Long term	Medium

Table 5: Actions to strengthen relationships to recreational areas – Objective 4

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
RE01	Improve pedestrian/cyclist connections to Miller Park.	Council - Public Domain Plan subject to funding	Medium term	Medium
RE02	Improve connections between main street and Branxton Park, and retain gathering space at Branxton Park in association with memorials.	Council - Public Domain Plan subject to funding	Medium term	Medium
RE03	Consult with Branxton Golf Club regarding potential to improve links with Town Centre.	Council	Short term	Low

Table 6: Actions to rationalise parking –Objective 5

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
PA01	Consult with Royal Federal Hotel and the IGA Supermarket over the potential to rationalise existing car parking for these businesses with a view to improve vehicular and pedestrian connection.	Council and landowners	Short term	Low
PA02	Remove parking time restrictions along Maitland Street.	Council	Short term	Medium
PA03	Consult with Golf Course and adjoining landowners to investigate opportunities to extend the public car park at the corner of Maitland Street and Cessnock Road.	Council	Short term	Medium
PA04	Replace part of the public car park on the corner of Maitland Street and Cessnock Road with a new public space.	Council - Public Domain Plan subject to funding.	Long term	Medium

Table 7: Actions to respond to the unique heritage and rural setting – Objective 6

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
HE01	Protect view corridors within Branxton Town Centre to the surrounding rural setting.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	High
HE02	Ensure future streetscape improvements acknowledge the existing heritage and do not incorporate inappropriate, more contemporary treatments such as raised thresholds, excessive use of 'blisters' along kerb lines and dominant signage and 'gateway' features.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	High
HE03	Establish appropriate guidelines to encourage future development to compliment the existing heritage character.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	High
HE04	Remove unnecessary and out of character signage, and other traffic management devices in Town Centre.	Council	Ongoing	Low
HE05	Promote heritage character with heritage appropriate signage.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	Medium

Table 8: Actions to enable and encourage future development – Objective 7

Ref	Action	Action by	Timing	Priority Level
FD01	Encourage infill mixed use and residential development to increase the population in the Town Centre, including seniors and smaller lot housing within 400 metres walking radius of the core business area.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	High
FD02	Review the business zoning scheme to retain commercial activities on land currently zoned R2.	Council - subject to Planning Proposal.	Medium term	Medium
FD03	Complete floodplain risk management plans, and consider a separate commercial flood planning level	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	High
FD04	Retain two-storey height limits along both sides of Maitland Street.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	Medium
FD05	Encourage commercial development by requiring commercial land uses are provided for all new development at ground level along either side of Maitland Street between Clift Street and Cessnock Road.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	Medium
FD06	Maintain a fine-grained urban form of facades along Maitland Street within the Town Centre to encourage local businesses to establish.	Council - to be identified in Town Centre DCP	Medium term	Medium



## APPENDIX A – PUBLIC DOMAIN AUDIT

**Table A.1** describes the main public domain features in the area of the town centre indicated in **Figure A.1**, with the identification numbers relating to that plan. It is to be noted that planting containers such as wine barrels and concrete planters have not been separately listed as there are many and most are in fair to poor condition. All of the existing Bottlebrush trees have not been listed separately as all appear generally healthy.

The condition of each element was based on a visual inspection, with three categories of condition considered, those being from highest to lowest – Good, Fair and Poor. Images of typical elements and condition are provided overleaf.

**Table A.1: Public domain infrastructure audit condition report (refer to Figure A.1 for asset locations)**

Ref	Description	Condition
S1	Seat - timber bench	Poor
S2	Seat – timber seat	Poor
S3	Seat – white metal seat	Good
CF1	Concrete footpath	Fair to poor
CF2	Concrete footpath	Fair to poor, poorest areas east of Branxton Hotel
CF3	Concrete footpath	Good to fair (section from Royal Federal Hotel to near pharmacy). Poor - remainder
CF4	Concrete footpath	Good
CF5	Concrete footpath	Good to fair
CF6	Concrete footpath	Fair to poor
CF7	Concrete footpath	Good
CF8	Concrete footpath	Good
BF1	Bitumen footpath	Fair, becomes poor further east
CP1	Concrete square pavers	Fair
CP2	Concrete square pavers	Fair
SF1	Sandstone flagstones - historic feature	Fair
B1	Rubbish bin – large ‘wheelie’ bin	Good
B2	Rubbish bin – large ‘wheelie’ bin	Good
B3	2 x rubbish bins – large ‘wheelie’ bins	Good
B4	Rubbish bin – large ‘wheelie’ bin	Good
B5	Metal rubbish bin	Good
RW1	Concrete block retaining wall	Fair
RW2	Concrete block retaining wall	Fair
RW3	Concrete block retaining wall	Fair
RW4	Concrete block retaining wall	Fair in general, damaged in some areas
PF1	Pedestrian fence – green ‘pool style’ 1.2m high fence	Fair
PF2	Pedestrian fence – green ‘pool style’ 1.2m high fence	Fair

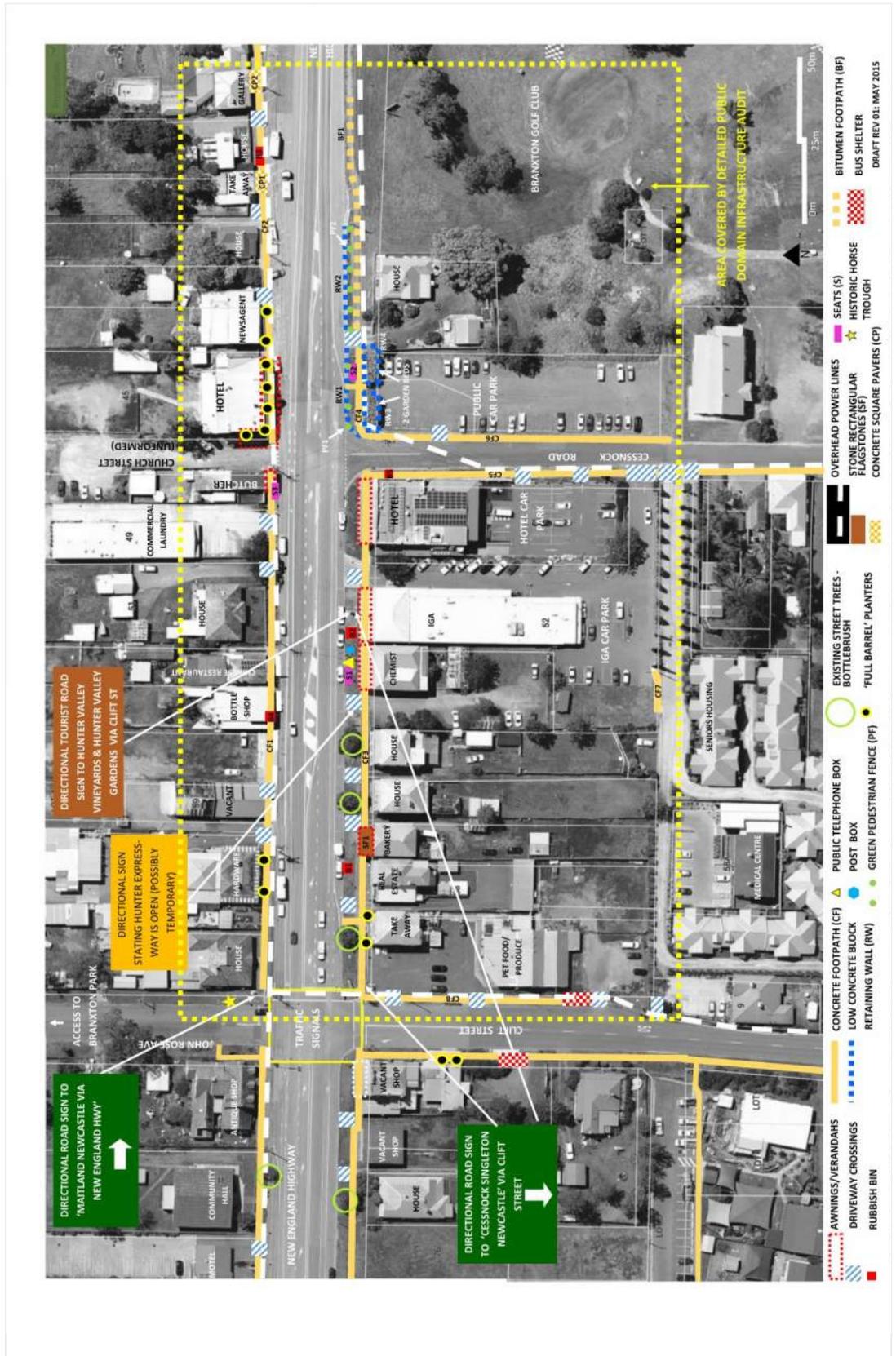


Figure A.1: Public domain audit plan (refer to Table A.1 for condition report)



Figure A.2: Public domain infrastructure audit - example photos



## APPENDIX B – ALTERNATIVE INDICATIVE LAYOUTS

Considering how land use, street and subdivision patterns are influenced by and influence future alternative growth scenarios is important to establishing strategic parameters for planning and development.

Three alternative indicative layouts were considered for Branxton's Town Centre, emphasising:

- Small scale commercial infill outcomes (Figure B.1);
- Mixed use and tourism outcomes (Figure B.2); and
- Large floorplate outcomes (Figure B.3).

Considerations presented herein were used to inform the preferred Indicative Layout identified in the Masterplan.

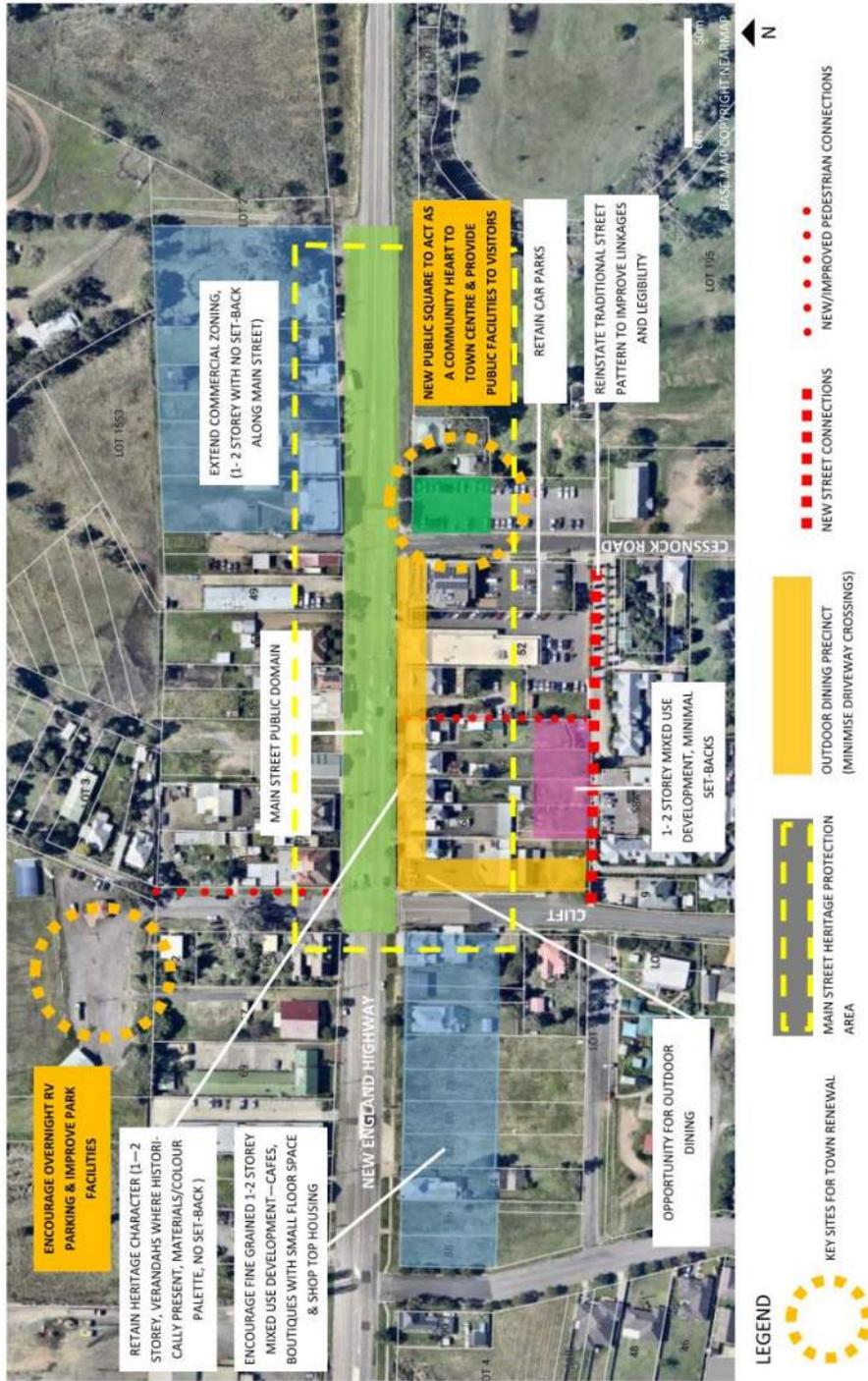


Figure B.1 - Alternative indicative layout option 1: small commercial infill emphasis

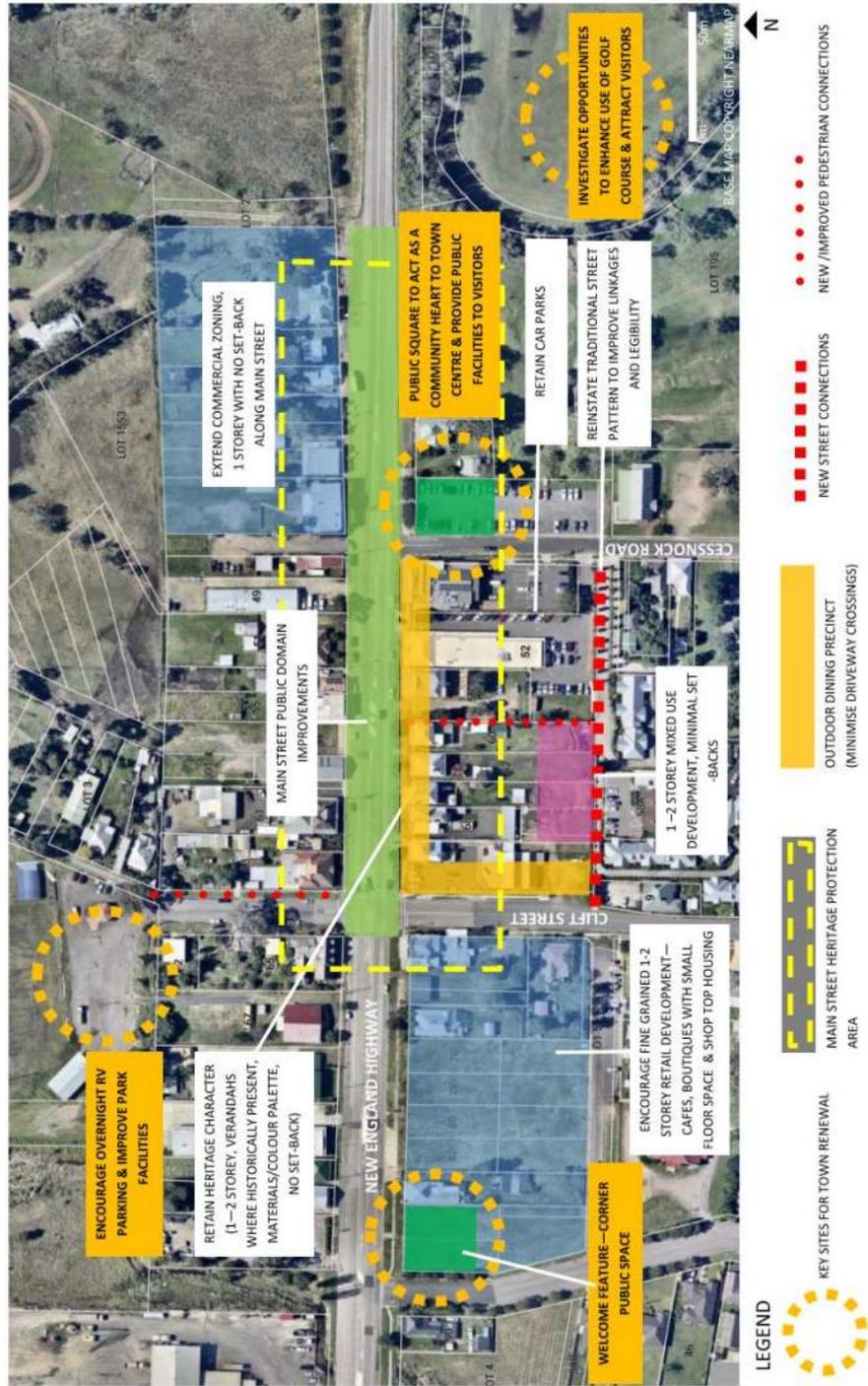


FIGURE 10  
BRANXTON TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN : OPTION 2 (MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM)

Figure B.2 - Alternative indicative layout option 2: mixed use & tourism emphasis

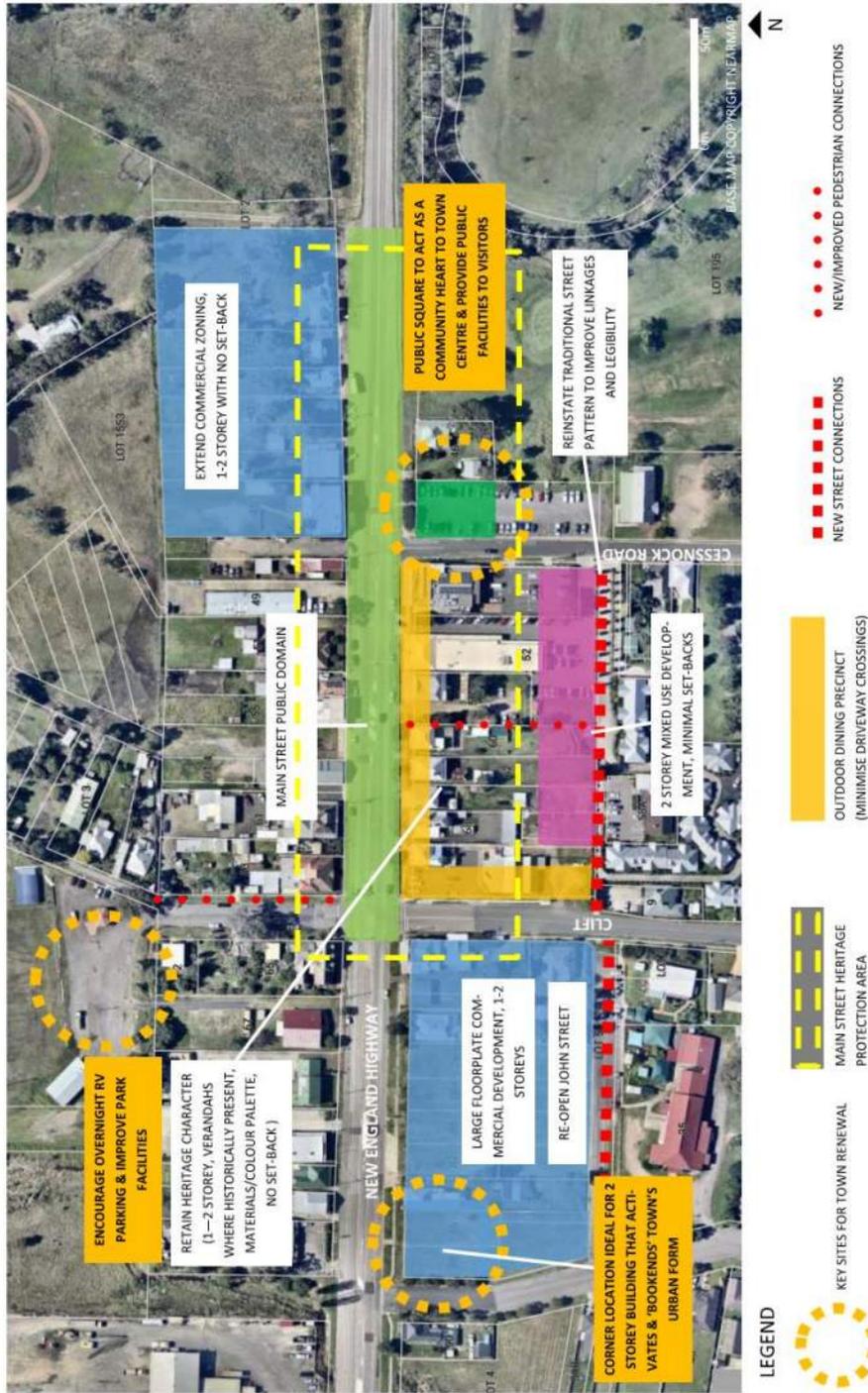


FIGURE 11  
BRANXTON TOWN CENTRE MASTER PLAN : OPTION 3 (LARGE FLOORPLATE DEVELOPMENT)

Figure B.3 - Alternative indicative layout option 3: large floorplate emphasis



APPENDIX C - PRELIMINARY TRANSPORT  
INVESTIGATIONS

More detailed preliminary investigations were undertaken to begin considering the impact of the Masterplan on accessibility and movement in the Town Centre. This included preparing and testing high-level design concepts to establish future planning parameters and detailed design considerations.

The following drawings illustrate how the preferred Indicative Layout and recommended main street public domain improvements could be accommodated:

- Identifying modification areas (Drawing C0.10);
- Providing indicative road and path modifications (Drawing C0.11 – C0.13)
- Illustrating cross-sections of indicative new road layouts (Drawing C0.20); and
- Illustrating the possible impacts of road and path modifications on existing car parking in the Town Centre (Drawings C0.25-C0.26)



 DENOTES PROPOSED AREAS FOR FUTURE MODIFICATIONS. REFER TO DRAWINGS C0.11 - C0.13

IMAGE OBTAINED FROM GOOGLE EARTH AND SIX MAPS.

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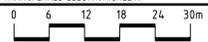
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DESIGNED: J KIDD  
JOB MANAGER: A BROWN  
VERIFIER:

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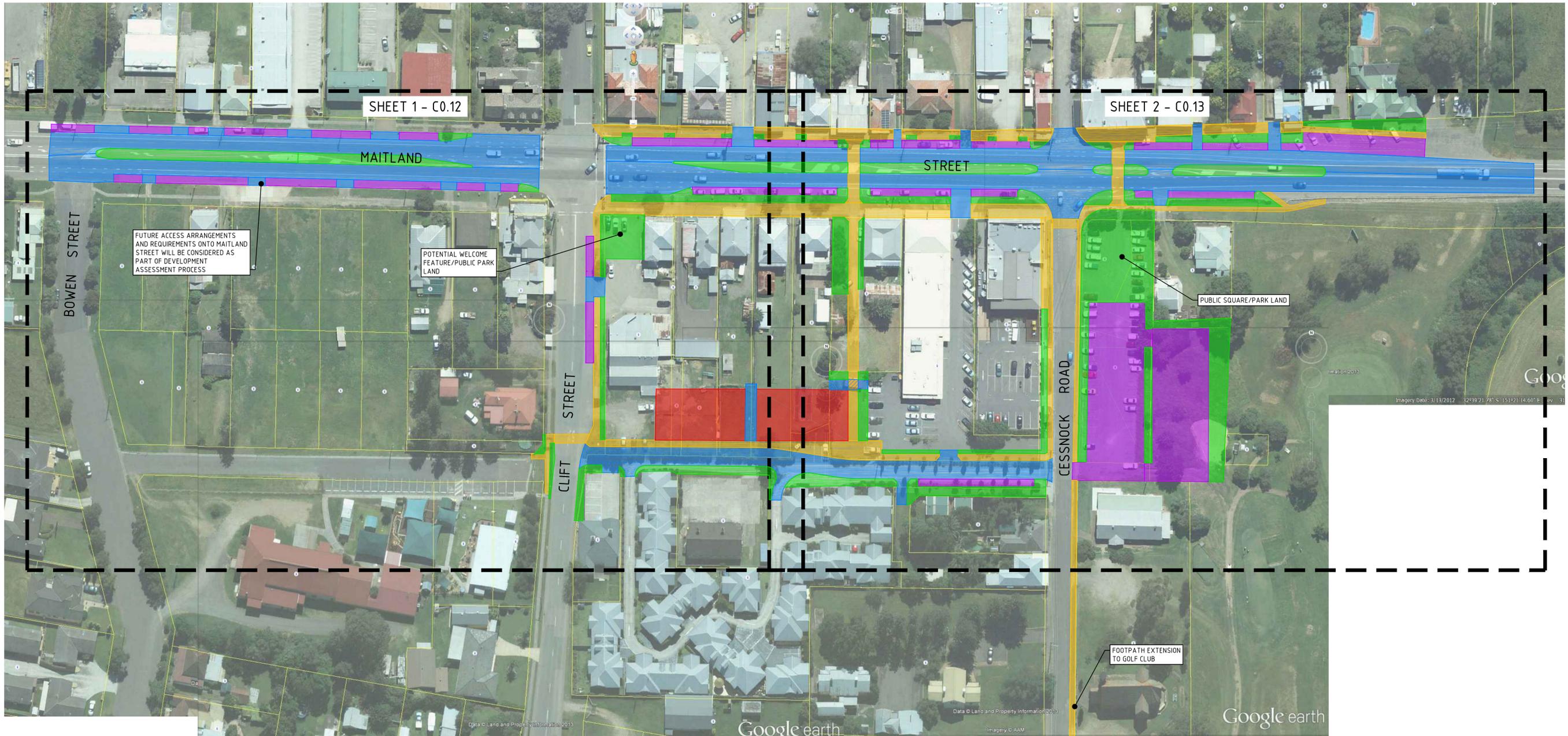


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PROJECT	<b>BRANXTON TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC DOMAIN MASTER PLAN</b>
---------	---

DRAWING TITLE	<b>TRAFFIC AND STREET-SCAPE STRATEGY PLAN PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS</b>
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JOB NUMBER	<b>NL151468</b>
DRAWING NUMBER	<b>C0.10</b>
REVISION	<b>5</b>
DRAWING SHEET SIZE = A1	



**LEGEND**

- DENOTES VEHICLE CORRIDORS AND ACCESS DRIVEWAYS (INCLUDES ON-ROAD CYCLE WAYS)
- DENOTES PEDESTRIAN CORRIDORS AND FOOTPATHS
- DENOTES CAR PARKING (ON-STREET AND OFF-STREET)
- DENOTES POTENTIAL LANDSCAPED FEATURES AND PUBLIC 'GREEN' SPACE
- DENOTES POTENTIAL 'MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT ZONING'
- DENOTES 'SHARED ZONE'

VERIFIER: J. KIDD  
 JOB MANAGER: A. BROWN  
 DESIGNED: J. KIDD  
 DRAWN: J. KIDD

IMAGE OBTAINED FROM GOOGLE EARTH AND SIX MAPS.

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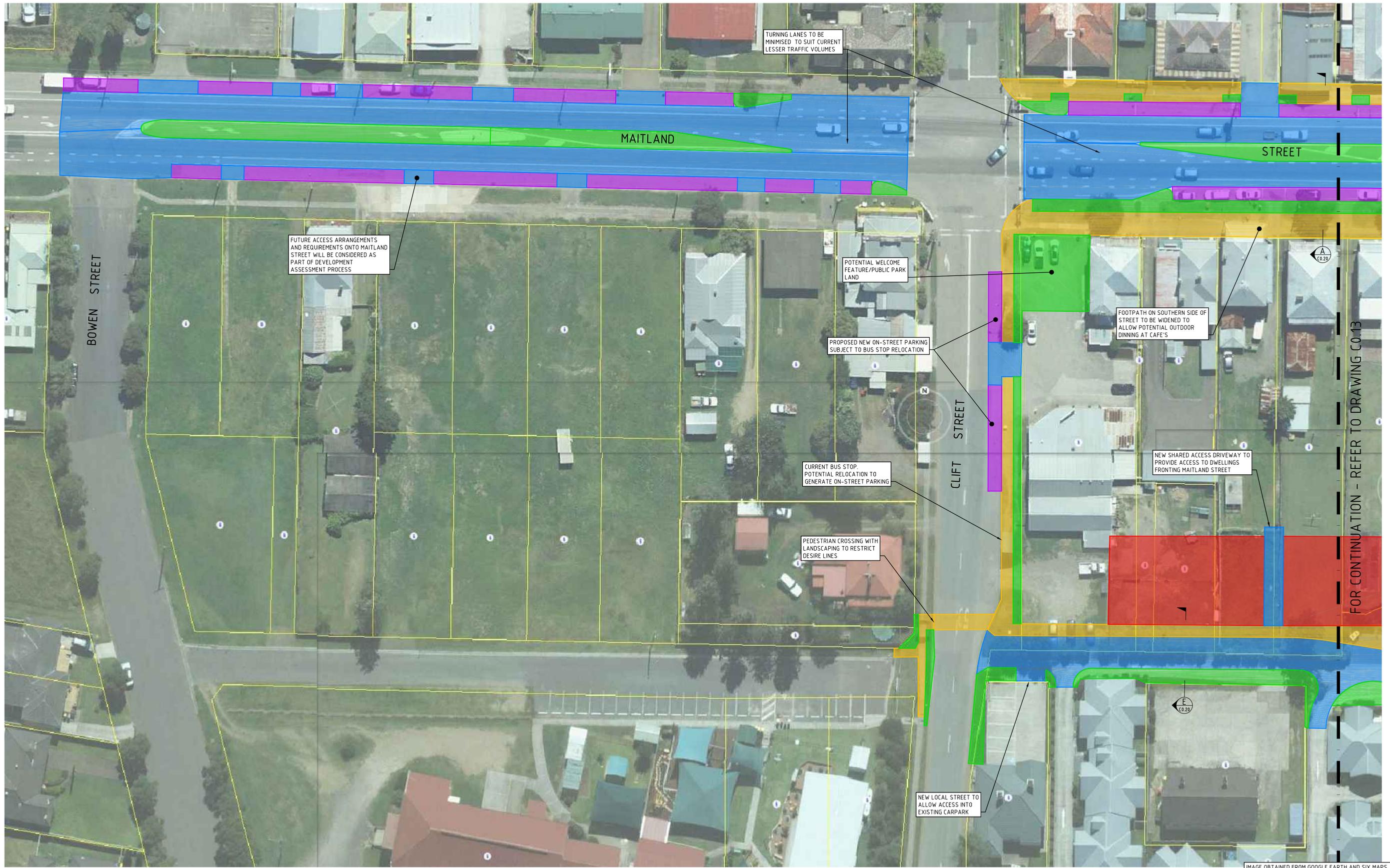
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---

<b>TRAFFIC AND STREET-SCAPE STRATEGY PLAN PROPOSED LAYOUT</b>
---

<b>JOB NUMBER NL151468</b>	
<b>DRAWING NUMBER C0.11</b>	<b>REVISION 6</b>
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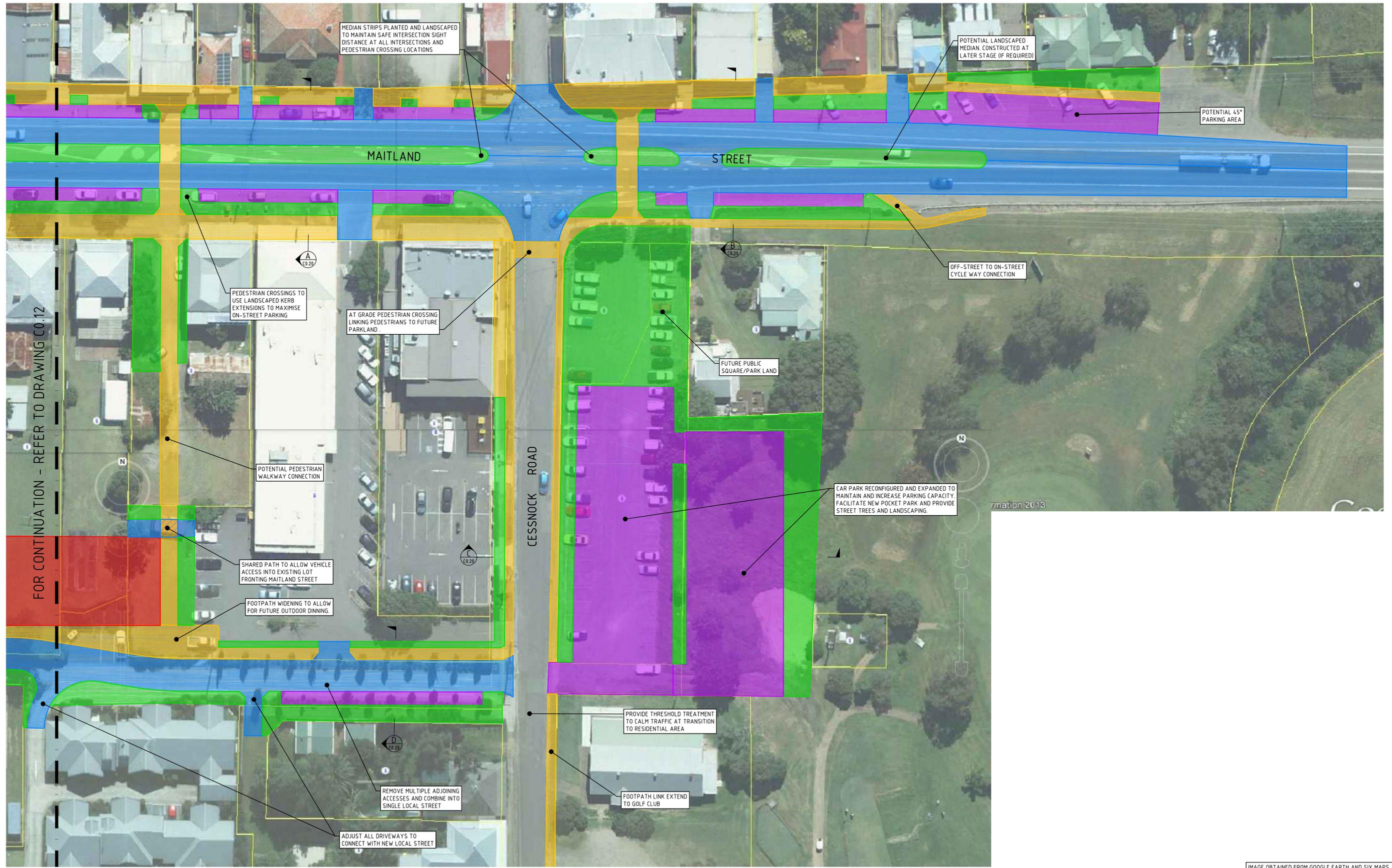
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PROJECT  
**BRANXTON TOWN CENTRE  
PUBLIC DOMAIN  
MASTER PLAN**

DRAWING TITLE  
**TRAFFIC AND STREE-SCAPE  
STRATEGY PLAN  
SHEET 01**

JOB NUMBER <b>NL151468</b>	
DRAWING NUMBER <b>C0.12</b>	REVISION <b>6</b>
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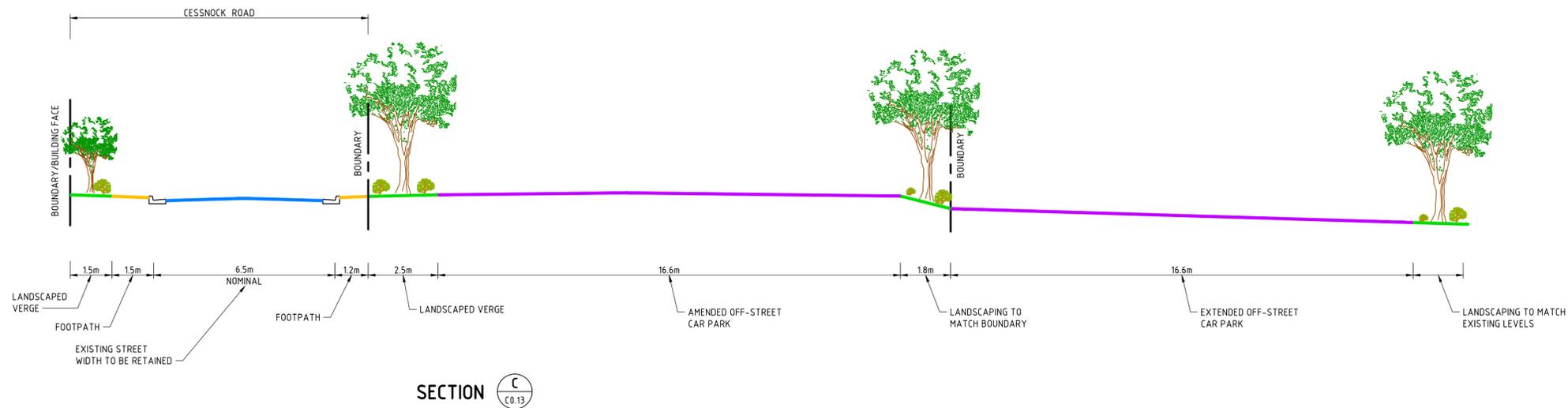
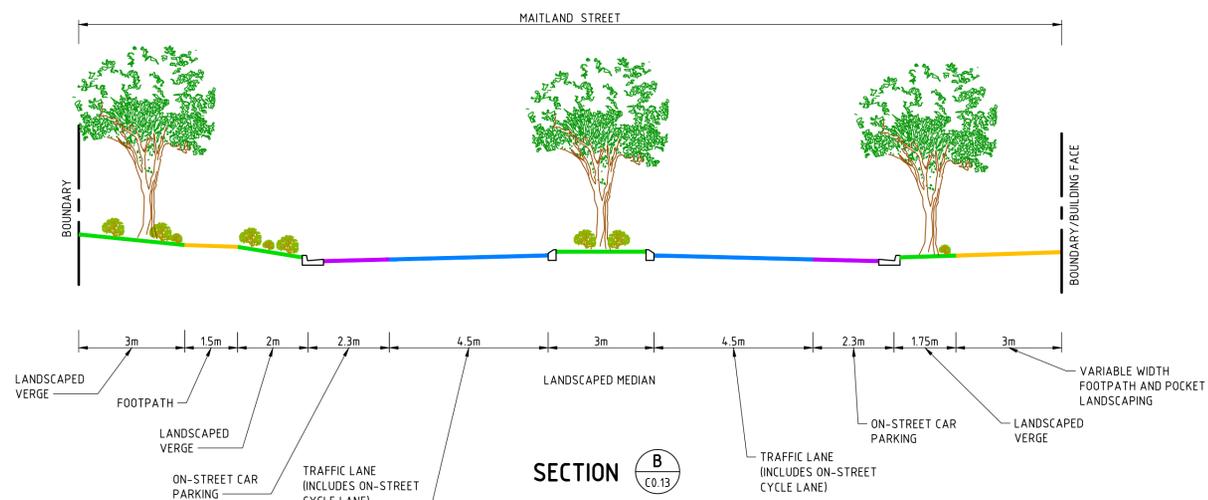
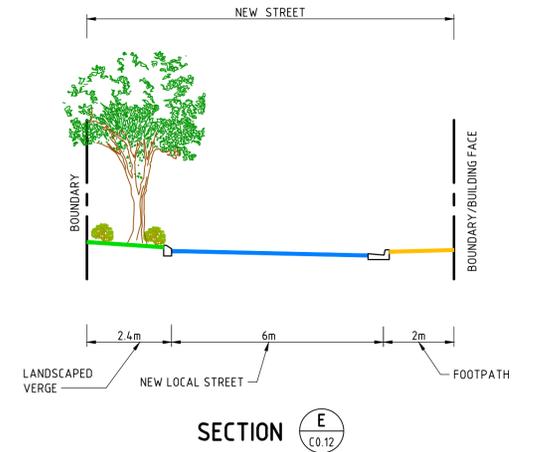
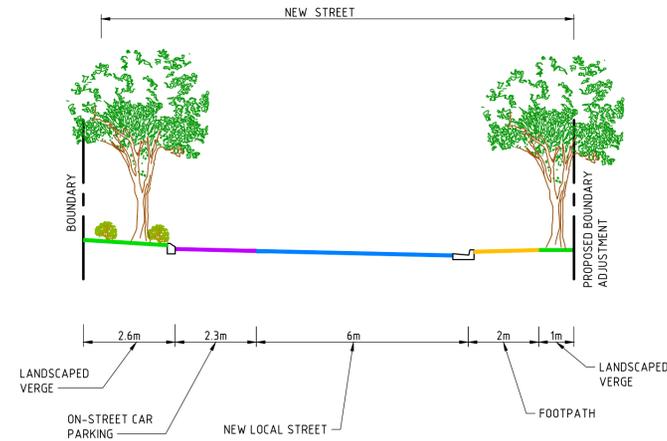
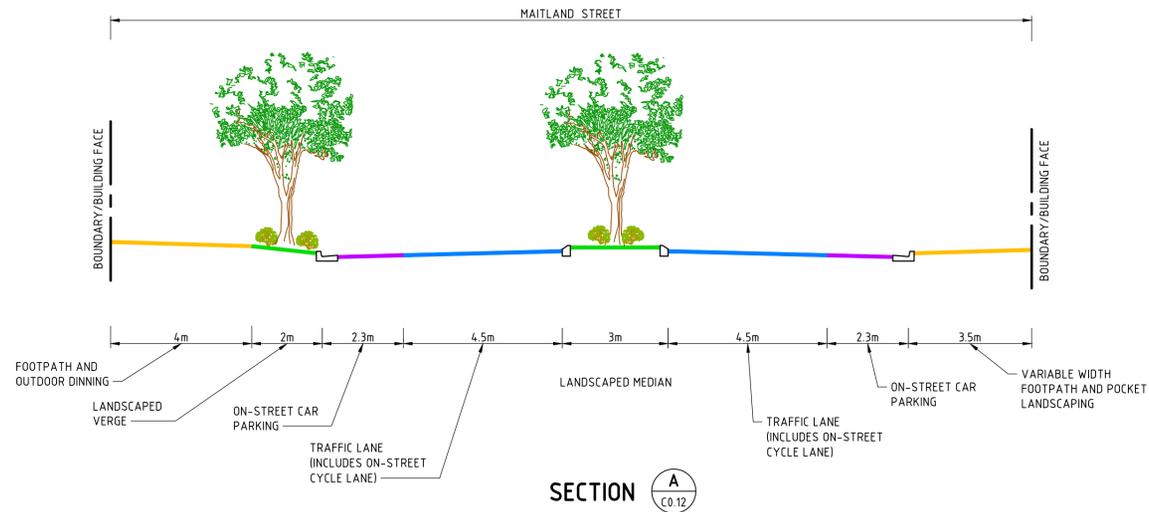
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PROJECT  
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PUBLIC DOMAIN  
MASTER PLAN**

DRAWING TITLE  
**TRAFFIC AND STREET-SCAPE  
STRATEGY PLAN  
SHEET 02**

JOB NUMBER <b>NL151468</b>	
DRAWING NUMBER <b>C0.13</b>	REVISION <b>6</b>
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PROJECT
BRANXTON TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC DOMAIN MASTER PLAN

DRAWING TITLE
TRAFFIC AND STREET-SCAPE STRATEGY PLAN TYPICAL SECTIONS

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PROJECT  
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DRAWING TITLE  
**PARKING MODIFICATIONS  
PLAN  
SHEET 01**

JOB NUMBER  
**NL151468**

DRAWING NUMBER <b>C0.25</b>	REVISION <b>2</b>
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DESIGNED: J KIDD  
JOB MANAGER: A BROWN  
VERIFIER:



EXISTING SPACES = 23  
PROPOSED SPACES = 19

MAITLAND STREET

EXISTING SPACES = 21  
PROPOSED SPACES = 26

STREET

RECONFIGURATION OF PRIVATE CAR PARKING TO BE INVESTIGATED

CESSNOCK ROAD

EXISTING SPACES = 56  
PROPOSED SPACES = 73

EXISTING SPACES = 5  
PROPOSED SPACES = 0

EXISTING SPACES = 0  
PROPOSED SPACES = 6

**PARKING NUMBERS**

EXISTING - 154  
PROPOSED - 170

NOTE:  
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PROJECT  
**BRANXTON TOWN CENTRE  
PUBLIC DOMAIN  
MASTER PLAN**

DRAWING TITLE  
**PARKING MODIFICATIONS  
PLAN  
SHEET 02**

JOB NUMBER <b>NL151468</b>	
DRAWING NUMBER <b>C0.26</b>	REVISION <b>2</b>
DRAWING SHEET SIZE = A1	

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JOB MANAGER - A. BROWN

DESIGNED - J. KIDD

DRAWN - J. KIDD