

Newcastle Voice Hunter Street Stage II



November 2010

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Executive Summary

The revitalisation of the iconic Hunter Street has been a high community and Council priority during 2010. This consultation adds to the comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement conducted over the past eight months to help prioritise areas of action for the short and long term. The four themes of the draft *Hunter Street Revitalisation Masterplan Strategic Framework* (HSRMSF) document were tested: transport, enterprise, people and place and greenways.

A total of 818 responses were received to the survey, 800 of which were Newcastle Voice members and 18 were received from the wider community. Respondents continue to provide extensive suggestions with 2,275 comments received, some of them very comprehensive - across the complete dimensions of the HSRMSF. At a community workshop, 88 community members discussed some of these suggestions and crafted more detailed, short-term potential projects for works to commence in 2011. They were also able to explore longer term priorities and gain progress updates about the 2010 consultation.

The top two options for each of the four themes which received the highest combined responses for 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact' in the survey – and supported in the workshop - are as follows:

Transport

1. Improve pedestrian connection between Hunter Street, Honeysuckle and The Foreshore (90.47% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
2. Upgrade bus stops with weather shelters and updated travel information (89.49% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')

Enterprise

1. Fill more empty shopfronts with start up businesses (91.44% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
2. Make the outdoor dining process easier and more flexible (91.08% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')

People and Place

1. Improve the cleanliness of the street (95.72% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
2. Create attractive shaded and comfortable seating areas (94.62% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')

Greenways

1. Create more public green spaces (91.44% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
2. Recycle water runoff to water street trees and landscaping (85.57% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')

It is apparent that civic pride is behind a large number of the comments received, with high sensitivity about the ugly appearance of Hunter Street – buildings, public transport access and streetscape. Respondents describe their reluctance to bring visitors to Hunter Street when preparing routes for tourists which showcase the best of the city. They describe the vibrant

Hunter Street they remember or - from more recent arrivals - a new creative vibrancy they envisage and remember from other cities of a similar scale and geography.

The wide frame of reference is evident, with respondents naming the following cities as exemplary or instructive to Newcastle's future: Wagga Wagga, Noosa, Townsville, Rockhampton, Canberra, Melbourne, Glenelg, Cairns, Tamworth, Wellington, Vancouver, Lisbon, New York City and Amsterdam.

The city's transport issue is of continuing intense community interest and presents complex challenges for many private and public sector organisations. The empty, untenanted or derelict buildings are the focus for community pressure in both the short and long term, with a variety of suggestions received about how this should best be achieved – including some well out of council's scope of operations.

In both the survey and the workshop, participants recognise there has been extensive consultation to inform Council decision-making, and that works should start now as the street's revitalisation is central to the pride residents feel for their city.

Community consultation outcomes arising from the Newcastle Voice consultation will ensure that the development of the HSRM incorporates a sound understanding of the values, aspirations and ideas of the Newcastle community at this time.

Introduction

Background

Council recognises the need to recast Hunter Street as a place of viable economic activity and renewed community spirit when it resolved on 30 July 2009 to nominate the revitalisation of Hunter Street as a sesquicentenary project and prepare a revitalisation masterplan.

The City of Newcastle endorsed a process for the development of the Hunter Street Revitalisation Masterplan (HSRM) in December 2009. Council acknowledges that effective and substantive revitalisation of Hunter Street can only occur when Council, the community and a range of state and federal stakeholders work together to bring about sustainable change and renewal.

The Hunter Street Revitalisation consultation program has two distinct stages:

Stage I	Community Consultation and Documentation (March 2010)
Stage II	Community Consultation and Documentation (November 2010)

During Stage I, Newcastle Voice members were asked to describe their current usage, priorities and visionary ideas for the revitalisation of Hunter Street. That information informed the creation of the draft HSRMSF. Please refer also to the March 2010 Newcastle Voice Hunter Street Revitalisation Stage I consultation report.

Stage 2 is intended to test the first draft of the HSRMSF document and commence a process of prioritisation of immediate works along Hunter Street.

Report Purpose

The Strategic Planning service unit has been tasked with the preparation of the Hunter Street Revitalisation Masterplan (HSRM). The purpose of this consultation is to build on the existing analysis and knowledge base provided by the draft Contextual Framework as well as the aspirations of the community identified through the extensive community engagement processes completed so far. It aims to test the principles in the framework, and gain more information about project priorities.

This consultation serves to complement the data previously gathered. Specific information gathered through this Newcastle Voice consultation included:

- Identifying the effectiveness and impact of community options generated around the four theme areas : Integrated Transportation, Enterprise, People and Place and Greenways
- Identify the support for specific additional night time services and facilities
- Identify where Council funding should be prioritised to revitalise Hunter Street in the short term, including specific parts of Hunter Street.
- Identify where Council funding should be prioritised to revitalise Hunter Street in the long term

Scope of Consultation

A number of communication tools and engagement methods were implemented as part of this consultation program. The purpose of this activity is to increase the awareness in the community of the consultation and to do so in a public, transparent way.

Information Distribution

A postcard was created and distributed to traders along the length of Hunter Street to encourage their participation in the survey and the community workshop session.

Throughout the consultation, local media was used to inform the public about the consultation and promote ways to contribute – either by completing the survey or attending the workshop. Specially, the following advertisements for the workshop were placed:

- Newcastle Herald: 13/11/2010 and 20/11/2010

Methodology

Data Collection

A survey using a structured questionnaire with a total of 13 questions was sent to all active, online Newcastle Voice members. Expressly for this survey, the Hunter Valley Research Foundation (HVRF) collaborated with Council to ensure that the survey questions were clear, unbiased, straight-forward and not open to misinterpretation. Where appropriate, questions were built with the option 'other, please specify,' 'unsure' or 'don't know.'

The survey was divided into six main sections, as follows:

- integrated transport
- enterprise
- people and place, including additional night-time economy options
- greenways
- short-term Improvements
- long-term Improvements

There were seven open-ended questions to record additional comments, to supplement quantitative with qualitative data. To control order bias, the Sparq system automatically rotated the presentation of items within certain questions on a random basis. A copy of the survey is provided in Appendix I.

The survey was in the field from 21 October to 5 November 2010, with two reminders sent – one on 29 October and the second on 3 November 2010.

A community workshop to allow for more deliberative consultation was held on 24 November. This was promoted with two email invitations to Newcastle Voice, media advertising on 13 and 20 November and a postcard distributed to all Hunter Street traders.

Although bookings were confirmed for 120 people, 88 attended on the evening. The workshop structure allowed for some contextual information to be provided and some time for participants' detailed discussion using aerial photography, maps and other materials to assist discussions.

Consultation Area

Residents and ratepayers from Newcastle and adjoining local government areas were consulted through the Newcastle Voice community reference panel. Full demographics are provided in Appendix II, which includes data for all those asked (the sample group) and all those responding to the survey (the respondent group).

It should be noted that being a Newcastle Voice member is voluntary, and therefore participation in its activities is also voluntary.

Sample Selection

A total of 1947 Newcastle Voice members were surveyed. This number represents active, on-line panel members. In addition, the survey was open to the wider community.

Representation

Although sampling 1947 panel members represents over 1% of the Newcastle local government area population, the sampling frame for this survey was not statistically representative of the population.

This is due to the fact that all online Newcastle Voice members were surveyed. With the exception of Inner City South and Inner City North, the other planning districts are underrepresented. Responses are over-represented from Ward 1 and 2, while they are under-represented in Wards 3 and 4. Furthermore, panel members in the 16-24 age bracket are also underrepresented. These details can be read in Appendix II – Demographics.

Furthermore, there is a possibility that anonymous community members completed the survey multiple times. The panel management system cannot detect duplicate entries from anonymous respondents.

Participants

Demographics are possible for survey participants due to the nature of Newcastle Voice. The breakdown of the demographics by gender, age and employment status is provided for the survey sample as well as for the respondents in Appendix II. In brief, results show that:

- 37% of respondents live in Ward 1, 28.5% live in Ward 2, 17.9% live in Ward 3 and 16.2% live in Ward 4, reflecting a wide range of geographic input across the city
- The age distribution of respondents is wide, with the age categories 25-39 years old, 40-54 years old or 55-69 years old at 26.5%, 34.5%, 31.4% respectively
- 73.5% of respondents are employed full or part-time
- 15% of respondents have lived in the Newcastle LGA for three years or fewer, representing new arrivals.
- The gender split was 49% male and 51% female

At the workshop, 88 participants from across the city and representing a wide age range, participated in group discussion.

- 59% were males and 41% were females
- Participants live in the following suburbs: Merewether Heights, Merewether, North Lambton, Cooks Hill, Islington, Hamilton, Newcastle, Broadmeadow, Adamstown, Waratah, Mayfield, New Lambton, Tighes Hill, Wallsend, and Kotara

Data Handling and Analysis

The data handling and analysis was carried out by staff in the Customer Service, Communication and Consultation service unit. The approach used during the consultation is designed to increase inclusiveness and generate data for analysis into themes. For this reason, the consultation included a survey and a workshop.

Trend analysis was conducted from the open-ended question responses. All responses are treated in confidence to ensure the anonymity of respondents, and edited only for grammar and spelling if inserted as comments into the body of the report. The complete record of all comments, as received, is included as Appendix IV.

Response Rate and Survey Design

The survey had a 42% completion rate from Newcastle Voice (800 responses out of 1947) with a further 18 received from the broad community. There was a 47% participation rate (908 out of 1947), which means that 47% of respondents started the survey but 5% did not complete it. Of those who chose not to complete it (5%) 52% dropped out before reaching the first question.

The Hunter Valley Research Foundation (HVRF) again collaborated with Council to ensure that the survey questions were clear, unbiased, straight-forward and not open to misinterpretation.

The workshop was well-attended, and all feedback received is included in full in the Appendix of this report.

Findings

The goal of the consultation program was to test some actionable options against community expectation. The survey was divided into four themes for revitalising Hunter Street arising from the community consultation completed to date and reflected in the draft HSRMSF, as follows:.

- integrated transport
- enterprise
- people and place
- greenways.

Integrated Transport

The theme of integrated transport seeks to foster the revitalisation of Hunter Street as a place that is well connected to other areas of the city centre, its surrounding neighbourhoods and across the city. It seeks to encourage increased use of public transport, cycling and walking to access Hunter Street.

Respondents were asked to indicate the effectiveness of sixteen integrated transport options to revitalise Hunter Street, from 'extremely negative impact' to 'extremely positive impact.' The list of options is not exhaustive, nor will it be acted on solely by the City of Newcastle. The options tested were:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transferable parking tickets along Hunter Street 2. Light rail or tramway circuit with stops along Hunter Street 3. Bus circuit with dedicated bus lane 4. Upgraded bus stops with weather shelters and updated travel information 5. A dedicated cycle lane 6. Widening and repaving of footpaths 7. Additional safe pedestrian crossings 8. Cycle hire kiosks 9. Bike lockers and cycle racks 10. Improved pedestrian connection between Hunter Street, Honeysuckle and The Foreshore | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Reduce traffic speeds in some sections along Hunter Street to 40km/hr 12. Extending the free city centre bus service hours (currently weekdays from 7am to 6pm) 13. Reducing the number of through-traffic lanes to permit angled parking in some sections 14. Reducing the number of through-traffic lanes to create more pedestrian access in some sections 15. Introduce 4 hour kerbside parking 16. Improve directional signage for pedestrians |
|---|--|

On balance, respondents indicated that all sixteen options would have a positive or extremely positive impact on the revitalisation of Hunter Street. This suggests that Council and the private sector should commence with transportation works, on any scale, subject to budget and stakeholder decision-making.

The top 5 options which received the highest combined responses for 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact.' are as follows:

1. Improved pedestrian connection between Hunter Street, Honeysuckle and The Foreshore (90.47% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
2. Upgraded bus stops with weather shelters and updated travel information (89.49% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
3. Extending the free city centre bus service hours (currently weekdays from 7am to 6pm (83.25% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
4. Bike lockers and cycle racks (82.28% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
5. Transferable parking tickets along Hunter Street (82.03% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')

The options to the bottom of the table below are those which reduce car access to the city: 'reducing the number of through-traffic lanes to permit angled parking in some sections' (28.85% state 'positive' or 'extremely positive' impact), and 'reduce traffic speeds in some sections along Hunter Street to 40km/hr' (22.74% state 'positive' or 'extremely positive' impact). Over 31% of respondents said that improving directional signage for pedestrians would have no impact on revitalising Hunter Street.

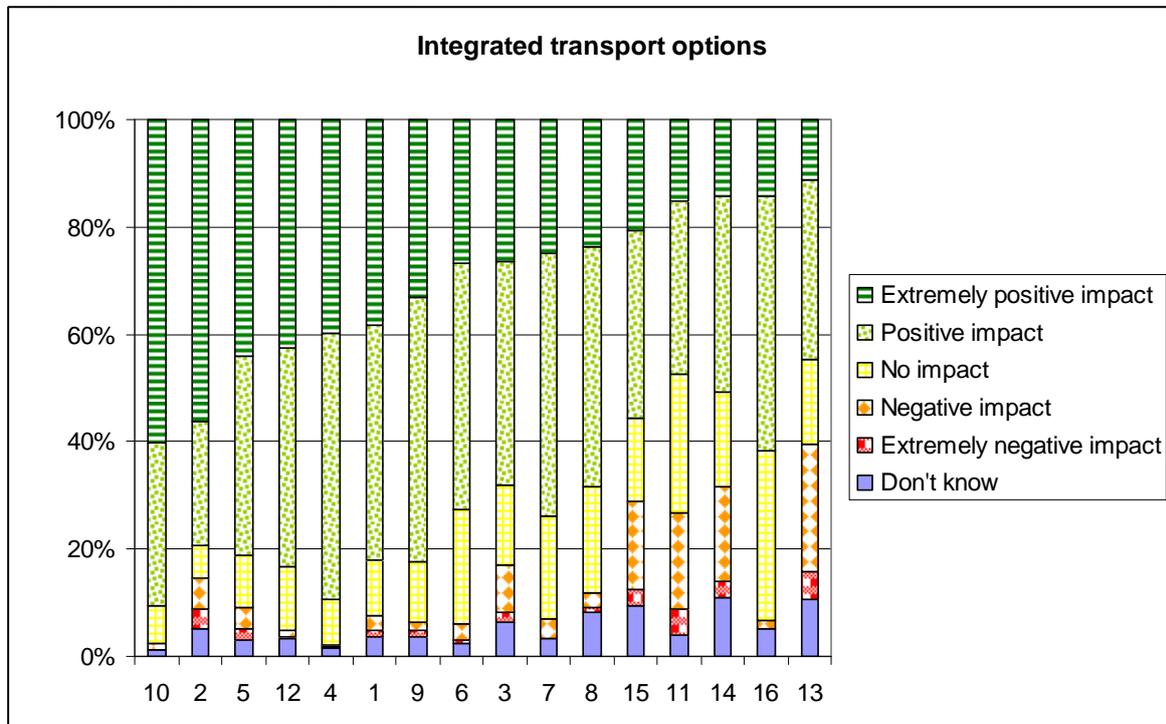
The table below shows the sixteen options in ranked order from highest combined responses for 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact.'

Table 1: Sixteen integrated transport options

Option	Combined Response: 'positive impact' & 'extremely positive impact.'
Improved pedestrian connection between Hunter Street, Honeysuckle and The Foreshore	90.47%
Upgraded bus stops with weather shelters and updated travel information	89.49%
Extending the free city centre bus service hours (currently weekdays from 7am to 6pm)	83.25%
Bike lockers and cycle racks	82.28%
Transferable parking tickets along Hunter Street	82.03%
A dedicated cycle lane	81.05%
Light rail or tramway circuit with stops along Hunter Street	79.47%
Additional safe pedestrian crossings	73.72%
Widening and repaving of footpaths	72.73%
Cycle hire kiosks	68.33%
Bus circuit with dedicated bus lane	67.97%
Improve directional signage for pedestrians	61.61%
Introduce 4 hour kerbside parking	55.50%
Reducing the number of through-traffic lanes to create more pedestrian access in some sections	50.86%
Reduce traffic speeds in some sections along Hunter Street to 40km/hr	47.55%
Reducing the number of through-traffic lanes to permit angled parking in some sections	44.62%

The graph below depicts respondents' responses to the effectiveness of community inspired integrated transport options, sorted by 'extremely positive impact', followed by 'positive impact' – for all options.

Graph 1: Integrated transport options



The comments received span all possible transport options within the city, with the rail debate continuing heatedly, and recognition of Newcastle as a car city.

There are noticeable support for a light rail network (beyond the Hunter Street stretch) and commuter cycleways as cost-effective transport options. The following comment from one respondent illustrates the depth of consideration given to this question – and is not the only one of its kind:

- “1. Install light rail as a matter of urgency.
- 2. A yo-yo light rail consisting of three sets of two cars with integrated timetabling with heavy rail.
- 3. Light rail termini to be the existing platforms at each current rail terminus
- 4. Light rail to have at least 8 stops from origin to Newcastle and use current heavy rail per way.
- 5. Replace heavy rail with the light rail from Broadmeadow or Hamilton
- 6. Remove or reduce free bus service
- 7. Removal of buses will reduce carbon output in CBD
- 8. Remove barriers to Foreshore from Hunter street
- 9. Free bus service could be re-routed to cover CBD to other beaches/Darby Street/Junction
- 10. Leave bus interchange at current location
- 11. Provide pedestrian friendly pathways to and from Foreshore to Hunter Street
- 12. Integrate footpaths to permit cyclists on shared arrangements
- 13. Eliminate timed parking outside business hours.”

Parking continues to be a cause for dissatisfaction, with calls for all of the following: meters to be removed; angle parking to increase the number of spaces, better signage to the city's parking stations, free parking on weekends, more spaces for city workers. The one-way pairing of King and Hunter Streets gains favour as a method to achieve better parking outcomes – and improve the city streetscape as landscaping would improve the appearance of both streets.

Pedestrian access between the Foreshore and the city understandably draws many comments as it is the most highly valued option in the chart and table above. Some respondents link this option to the removal of the heavy rail tracks, others seek more crossings over the line.

The Perth CAT system of free shuttle buses which service parking at the city fringe is mentioned as a desirable option for Newcastle – with a variety of suggestions about frequency, routes and locations of the carparks. A loop is suggested through Honeysuckle to service new office buildings and increase connectivity through the city for visitors.

The following comments illustrate the breadth of all 525 comments received regarding transport options:

- “Reducing lanes and increasing the number of bikes on the road will only make it less likely I will go in. Getting into town is a nightmare already.”
- “Mixture of transferable parking passes as mentioned and short duration stay eg 15min car parks for those that need to pop in and pop out of a store.”
- “The provision of park and ride facilities at places such as Broadmeadow and Mayfield West with the parking provided free of charge may entice people back into the CBD. The continued expansion of large shopping complexes such as Kotara and Charlestown (approved by Council) - I believe that the CBD is dead and buried.”
- “As an inner city resident we are unable to park outside our own house as office workers use the parks (Parry Street). We have been fined for leaving our car in the residential parking area more than two hours. Very annoying. I rang the Council car park who informed us that we are not eligible for a residential parking permit. “
- “Clearly the rail line needs to be cut. Wherever it terminates needs to be the start of a free (or cheap) city circuit transport link. With free parking available so that workers can drive to there and be transported to the city part to work.”
- “Examine the feasibility of one way street system - up Hunter St one way and down King St one way as well as the side streets (a grid system). Angle parking would work better that way and maybe traffic wouldn't be as congested. Push to have a decision made on the railway line one way or the other.”
- “More real cycleways - not ones that start and then just disappear into a merged car lane; defeats the whole purpose.”
- “Absolutely against cutting the rail link right into the end of town. Repeatedly this has been shown to be of value when there are foreshore events and children and commuters need the full line to get into the end of city.”
- “Regular transportation that doesn't mean you wait an hour if you miss a bus.”
- “There needs to be more cross-access between Honeysuckle, Hunter and King.”

When asked in the public workshop which of the high impact transport options should be pursued first, there is a sense that the rail decision does precede many other options being worthwhile. Strong support for dedicated cycle lanes and the extension of the free bus service was expressed – with a caution about the commuter parking taking over the residential suburbs at the end of the free bus route.

Enterprise

The Enterprise theme seeks to foster the revitalisation of Hunter Street by attracting the investment of public and private funds. This can be done by consolidating precinct functions, creating specialist destinations, increasing residential density and improving public domain.

Respondents were asked to indicate the effectiveness of ten enterprise options to revitalise Hunter Street, from 'extremely negative impact' to 'extremely positive impact.' The list of options is not exhaustive, nor will it be acted solely by the City of Newcastle.

1. Create funding partnerships between landowners and government to improve building facades
2. Fill more empty shopfronts with start up businesses
3. Make the development application process easier and more flexible
4. Encourage developers to create residential housing
5. Redevelop Council-owned properties
6. Government purchase of properties to enable their redevelopment
7. Create a series of functional precincts (i.e. legal, education, specialty retail)
8. Stronger sanctions to encourage building owners to secure and maintain their properties
9. Incorporate affordable housing projects
10. Make the outdoor dining process easier and more flexible

On balance, respondents indicated that all of the ten options would have a positive or extremely positive impact on the revitalisation of Hunter Street.

The top 5 options which received the highest combined responses for 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact.' are as follows:

1. Fill more empty shopfronts with start up businesses (91.44% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
2. Make the outdoor dining process easier and more flexible (91.08% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
3. Redevelop Council-owned properties (85.70% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
4. Create funding partnerships between landowners and government to improve building facades (84.47% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
5. Stronger sanctions to encourage building owners to secure and maintain their properties (81.66% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')

The option that received the highest negative or extremely negative impact response was 'incorporate affordable housing projects' with 24.21% of responses. Increased residential housing is seen as unfavourable by some, with a degree of unease about the mix of housing. Comments suggest that affordable housing is not uniformly supported.

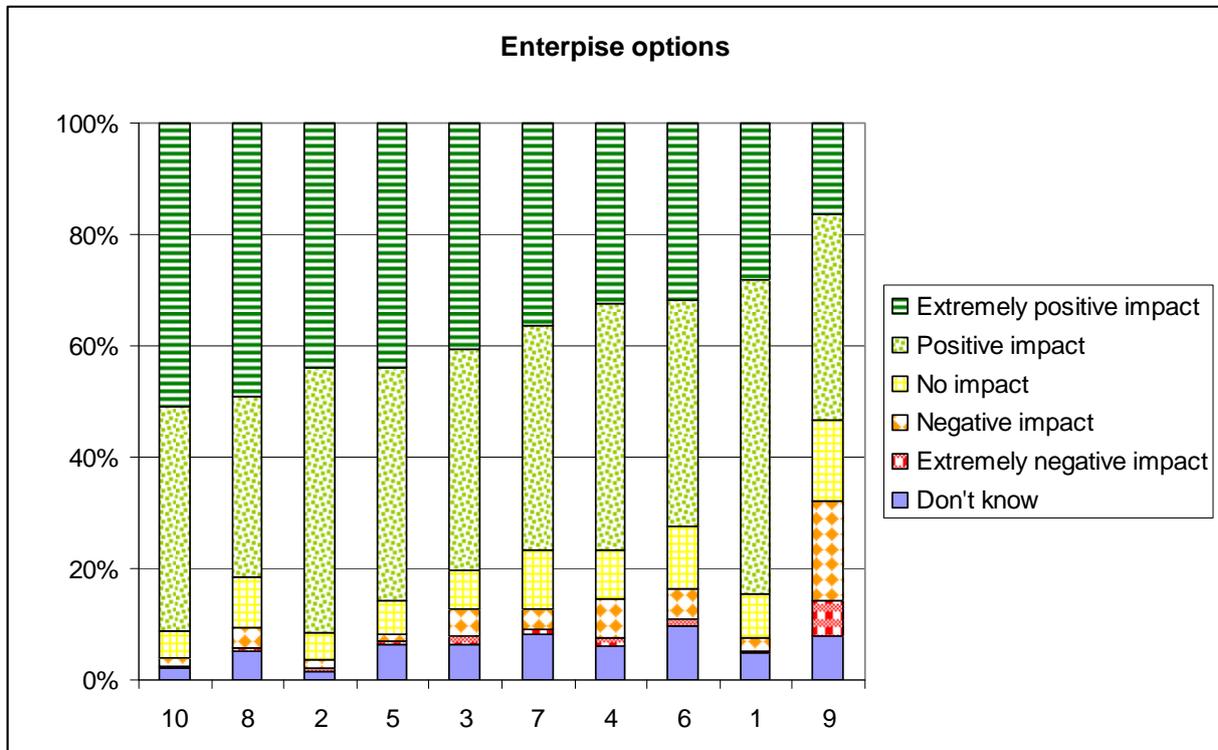
The table below shows the ten options, ranked from highest combined responses for 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact.'

Table 2: Ten enterprise options

Option	Combined Response: 'positive impact' & 'extremely positive impact.'
Fill more empty shopfronts with start up businesses	91.44%
Make the outdoor dining process easier and more flexible	91.08%
Redevelop Council-owned properties	85.70%
Create funding partnerships between landowners and government to improve building facades	84.47%
Stronger sanctions to encourage building owners to secure and maintain their properties	81.66%
Make the development application process easier and more flexible	80.32%
Create a series of functional precincts (i.e. legal, education, specialty retail)	76.77%
Encourage developers to create residential housing	76.65%
Government purchase of properties to enable their redevelopment	72.37%
Incorporate affordable housing projects	53.30%

The graph below presents responses from the chart above in a more comprehensive way - enterprise options, sorted by 'extremely positive impact', followed by 'positive impact.'

Graph 2: Enterprise options



When asked to comment about enterprise options, a large number of comments were received (396 comments), with some very comprehensive suggestions. Central to the tone of responses is that work must start - towards plans already completed such as the *Lower Hunter Regional Strategy*. The vacant and derelict buildings are the focus of many comments, and a paradox is reflected in comments about how to address them: some favour Council conducting or co-ordinating works to repair and paint the buildings while they are vacant; others support heavy penalties for the buildings' owners to ensure they do not become as dilapidated as they are at present. The old Court House has been identified as a site which needs planning now 'to avoid another Post Office', as the new legal precinct is being planned near the Clarendon Hotel.

The mall area is of particular interest for Council works, as recent private investment has begun to revive this section of the street.

Renew Newcastle garners highly favourable comments, with calls to extend the scheme further along Hunter Street into vacant buildings. Small-scale, consumer-driven change gains extensive support as a way to drive enterprise development – with extensive calls for the city to be a centre for niche retail, arts, creative industries and interesting café and dining experiences. It appears from comments received that Council rules about outdoor dining are difficult or costly to comply with.

Support has grown for redevelopment in a co-ordinated way. This would require public acquisition of land and large-scale redevelopment, in the way that Hunter Development Corporation preceded on the harbour front over the past decade. Recent state government acquisitions of the Post Office and Empire Hotel sites may be influencing public opinion at this time.

Less costly to ratepayers are the suggestions for Council to change its requirements to encourage private sector investment. The conditions imposed on development from Council are addressed in comments, with calls for a more flexible Development Control Plan (DCP) in relation to outdoor dining, building setbacks, numbers of parking spaces required by various types of developments and height restrictions.

The following comments illustrate the span of comments received:

- “The focus must broaden beyond residential and lower order retail and commercial outcomes. This stuff is on the right track but the pressure for filling buildings is vital to make it all work. The *Lower Hunter Regional Strategy* is supposing growth of employment of 10,000 people by 2030. This many people will have the capacity to almost double the current commercial floor space in the CBD but we see little evidence of this happening.”
- “Allow cafes and restaurants more freedom to do what ever they like. In the end they are improving the city and not Newcastle City Council!”
- “To garner investor support it will need to include government money to purchase property so as to realise the planners' vision. If NCC could acquire whole city blocks then enterprise options might be viable.”
- “Let's not have another Old Newcastle Post Office, all levels of government, should certainly facilitate, but do **not** buy old sites for redevelopment.”
- “The creation of an atmosphere that Newcastle is a good place to invest is vital. So far NCC has been an abject failure. Some conditions imposed upon developers are draconian to say the least, and act to send them to other Local Government Areas.”
- “I'm a new local business owner and have been looking at options for cheap offices in Hunter St. But outside of Renew Newcastle, it's still quiet an outlay or no guarantee that you will get value from the location, it's definitely quite a big risk for start-ups to take on.”
- “Could Council maintain seemingly derelict properties and charge owners for the work plus heavy fines for not keeping them in reasonable condition?”
- “I am unaware of any proposed development in recent times in Newcastle that has not been stymied by some pip squeak who thinks that any thing a developer puts up must be opposed because the developer is a BAD PERSON or does not fit in to some vague heritage issue. Government staff seem to be obstructionists to any future development.”
- “I would suggest that the Planning process is far too difficult in Newcastle City and particularly the inner City. I suggest all DA's in the City be referred to a specific group of experienced people who can make decisions rapidly.”
- “Make a positive start to establishing an educational precinct by using the DJs building as a faculty of the University - it has ample parking, convertible spaces for lecture theatres and tutorial rooms, it's close to the Conservatorium and the Law School and the influx of students will revitalise the town.”

In the public workshop, participants were asked which of the high impact enterprise options would be most important to start first. The priority at this time is cleanliness and upkeep of derelict buildings, with support for subsidies and incentives to building owners if needed, as well as support for Council easing the rules around some developments such as outdoor dining.

People and Place

The theme of People and Place seeks to foster the revitalisation of Hunter Street as an attractive place with distinctive character and culture, broad community appeal and safe spaces.

Respondents were asked to indicate the effectiveness of nine enterprise options to revitalise Hunter Street, from 'extremely negative impact' to 'extremely positive impact.' The list of options is not exhaustive, nor will it be acted solely by the City of Newcastle.

1. Create different character precincts (i.e. multicultural, heritage, maritime)
2. Creating attractive shaded and comfortable seating areas
3. Hold events and cultural activities along the street
4. Improve the cleanliness of the street
5. Additional lighting to increase public safety
6. Improve signage to public toilets, public transport and key destinations
7. Promote history and heritage with interpretive signage and lighting
8. Provide new public toilets
9. Seasonal colour through flexible planters and hanging baskets

On balance, respondents indicated that all of the nine options would have a positive or extremely positive impact on the revitalisation of Hunter Street.

Over 21% of respondents said that creating different character precincts would have no impact on revitalising Hunter Street and similarly over 21% of respondents said that incorporating seasonal colour through flexible planters and hanging baskets would have no impact on revitalising Hunter Street.

The top 5 options which received the highest combined responses for 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact.' are as follows:

1. Improve the cleanliness of the street (95.72% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
2. Creating attractive shaded and comfortable seating areas (94.62% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
3. Additional lighting to increase public safety (92.91% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
4. Hold events and cultural activities along the street (89.00% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')
5. Provide new public toilets (87.65% 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact')

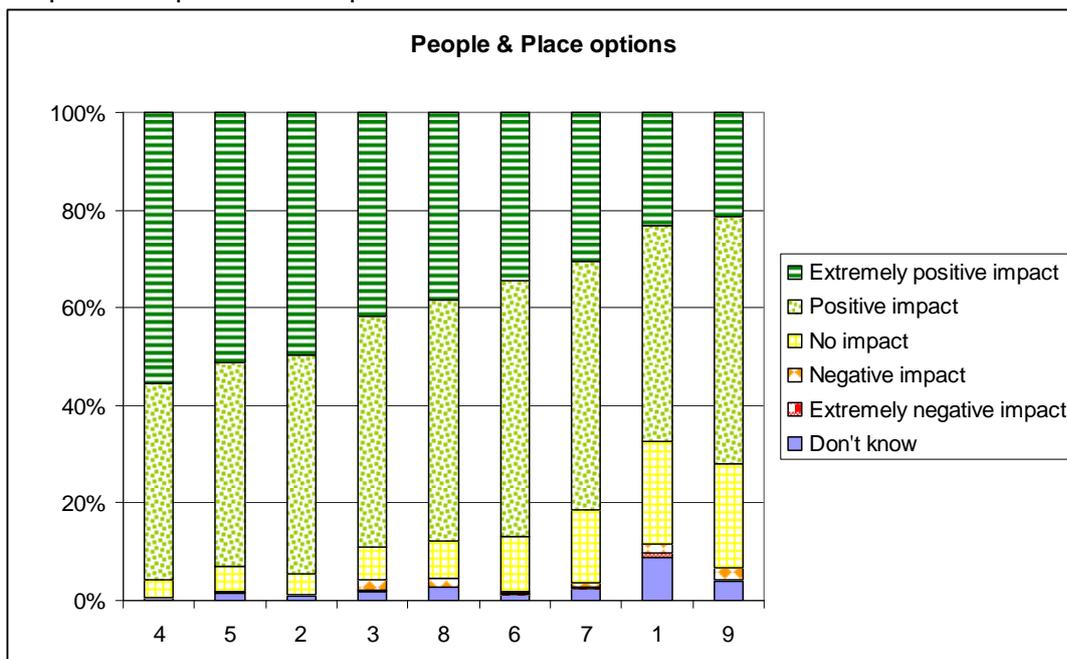
The table below shows the ten options, ranked from highest combined responses for 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact.'

Table 3: Nine People and Place options

Option	Combined Response: 'positive impact' & 'extremely positive impact.'
Improve the cleanliness of the street	95.72%
Creating attractive shaded and comfortable seating areas	94.62%
Additional lighting to increase public safety	92.91%
Hold events and cultural activities along the street	89.00%
Provide new public toilets	87.65%
Improve signage to public toilets, public transport and key destination	86.79%
Promote history and heritage with interpretive signage and lighting	81.54%
Seasonal colour through flexible planters and hanging baskets	71.88%
Create different character precincts (i.e. multicultural, heritage, maritime)	67.36%

The graph below depicts responses to the effectiveness of community inspired people and place options, sorted by 'extremely positive impact', followed by 'positive impact.'

Graph 3: People & Place options



The focus for people and place activities which are most supported in community views at present is about aesthetics of the streetscape – cleaner, safer, more attractive public spaces. An approach which concentrates on a few activities or areas is favoured over attempts to address all issues at once. There are suggestions about specific teams of experts to be assembled – within Council and from external sources.

Safety at present is a mixture of cleanliness, lighting and well-managed public spaces – and of the perceptions about the current patronage of the street. More effective policing is sought by some respondents – in the form of actual police officers and enforcement of other regulations. Others take a more liberal view that more development will increase the numbers and types of patrons in the city, and that this in itself will increase the perception of safety in the city.

People seek more venues to attend, whether they are cinema, food or other retail options – which will require extensive private investment. The focus from respondents is on a range of activities for all ages, young, family-friendly, and others – but more inviting than what is currently available in the inner city. The continuing debate between inner-city residents seeking a quiet life and others seeking more activity in the city centre again emerges from the open-ended questions.

Live Sites and the Red Lantern Market are well-received, and reflective of the type of family-friendly, diverse night-time events sought by respondents. This is reflected in the chart above. During the workshop, it was apparent that participants seek even more of these types of activities than are already provided to the city.

In terms of streetscaping, the need for more appealing street furniture, places to sit and walk, public toilets and shade are self-evident, hence rate highly in the graph above – and are reflected in comments. Respondents comment that one of the first areas that should be focused on is the physical integration of the mall area from Pacific Park to Brown Street (a length of five city blocks), thereby creating a visual link between the beaches and the shops.

The following is a sample from the span of 326 comments received to this question:

- “Cleaning things is the most important. So many places just look plain dirty. Paint and clean would be a very important first step. I think look at successful areas in other cities such as Fremantle in West Australia, or Balmain in Sydney. Previously areas that were falling apart then, rebirth.”
- “An alternative cinema should be a priority - as well as deli, butcher, baker - this would also mean less cars along Hunter St having to go to the west end to shop.”
- “Activities in the city centre need to be appropriately managed so that residents aren't bombarded with noise and possibly bad behaviour as a result of running big events in the city. There needs to be strict alcohol management, closing hours for venues etc.”
- “The kids use the train so don't cut it as it's easy to meet up in town due to it. Return the small cinemas. Have dining near the cinemas and civic. Banners look good.”
- “There is also a threat of vandalism and aggressive behaviour. Active businesses and having people around would be a preventative but no one wants to go where they don't feel safe.”
- “Perhaps relocate all shopping from the mall to Union and convert all the other spaces to housing and demolish all the shops and daggy old buildings replacing them with a mix of housing options.”
- “I think we must build on the existing positives. Our family has enjoyed Live Sites activities in Pacific Park; we coffee in Scott St most Sundays, and love the mix of cyclists and visitors. The whole east end of Hunter and Scott buzzes on a Sunday morning.”

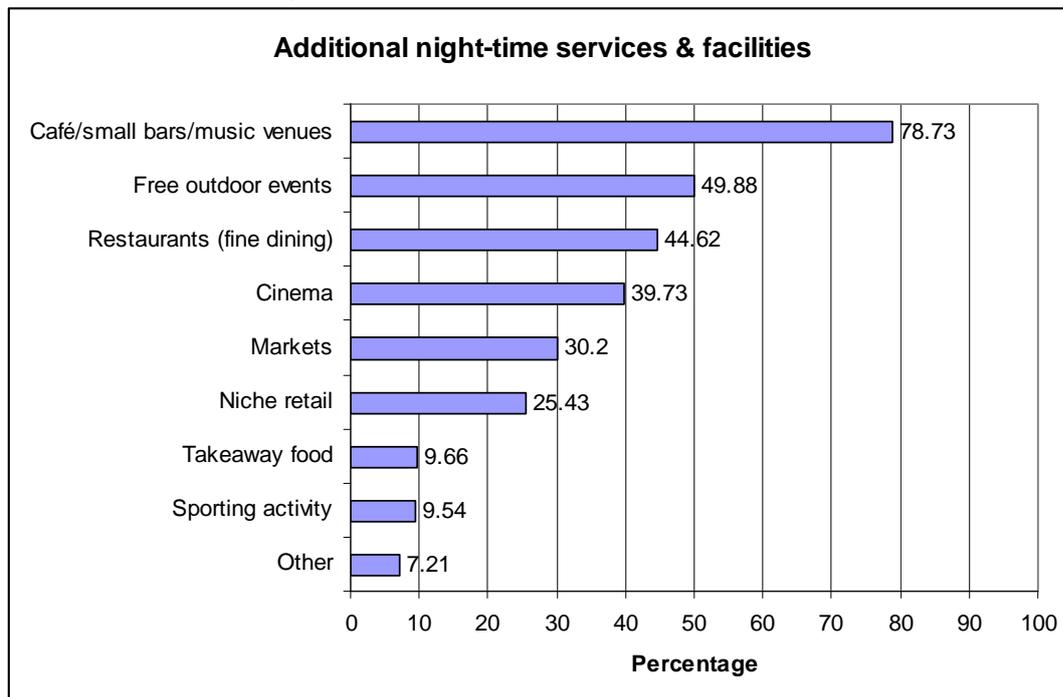
- “Encourage buskers and street performance: it adds a sense of heartbeat to the city and doesn't cost anything from the ratepayers. It is also a great way to showcase local talent.”
- “Put in place a team who are enthusiastic, have the skills in planning and building and can negotiate outcomes that are sure to be followed through by the organisation. I have seen this done at other Councils and would be very confident it could occur in Newcastle.”
- “I think that Hunter Street mall should be extended up to Pacific Park, and made to be more pedestrian accessible, like the existing part of the mall is. This would allow a unity to form between Newcastle's beaches and parks, and our shops/restaurants. There also needs to be more things for teenagers to do. If David Jones is indeed leaving the area, that would be a great location for a games arcade like Timezone, a bowling alley, or even a new location for Newcastle Greater Union Cinemas.”
- “A really good food hall somewhere where families can go after being at the beach.”

Participants at the community workshop discussed cleanliness and maintenance to improve the attractiveness for people in the short term – as well as a continuing interest in more events. This focus may be seasonally-based, with summer weather increasing the appeal of markets, music events and other inexpensive family-friendly activities. Public safety would be increased with improved lighting and cleanliness.

Night-time economy

Respondents were asked to identify the top three night time services or facilities that they would most support along Hunter Street. The overwhelming majority of respondents (78.73%) support the addition of cafés, small bars and music venues, followed by 49.88% indicating that they would support free outdoor events and 44.62% supporting more fine dining restaurants. In the graph below, the overall results add up to more than 100% as survey respondents were able to select three options. This finding supports the addition of a different type of development into the city, rather than the progressive reduction of evening options.

Graph 4: Additional night-time services & facilities



Respondents are interested in smaller venues than many on offer in the city – some of which is reflected in the comments received.

In addition, the quality or nature of evening activity is addressed – with people seeking a greater variety of evening activities, inexpensive, easily accessible and safe. A reflection of the 57 comments received illustrates the community’s current preferences:

- “We need to encourage people into the city ‘after hours; rather than exclude them by marginalising night life. By marginalising we are attracting destructive elements. More people means more security.”
- “Town square available for use over a variety of current activities i.e. watching Australia in world soccer, Australia Day celebrations, live shows.”
- “Art gallery/exhibition/performance space.”
- “Night clubs and modest dining.”
- “Under 18yr old activities, supervised for safety. Give them something to do so less chance of undesirable behaviour.”
- “Premises for a shop-front police station near Civic until 11pm.”

Greenways

The Greenways theme seeks to foster the revitalisation of Hunter Street with increased plantings, resource-friendly material use, and water-sensitive and energy-efficient design.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the effectiveness of nine greenway options to revitalise Hunter Street, from 'extremely negative impact' to 'extremely positive impact.' The list of options is not exhaustive, nor will it be acted on solely by the City of Newcastle.

1. Increase the amount of tree plantings
2. Widen footpath areas to allow for trees
3. Plant trees down the centre of the street
4. Create more public green spaces
5. Plant different types of street trees in different sections
6. Reconstruct Cottage Creek as a landscape feature
7. Encourage the use of recycled materials in new construction projects
8. Recycle water runoff to water street trees and landscaping
9. Encourage the construction of energy efficient buildings

Respondents indicated through comments that the options included in the enterprise and transport themes are more important to the city's future than focusing on greenways to revitalise Hunter Street. On balance, respondents indicated that the eight of the nine options would have a positive or extremely positive impact on the revitalisation of Hunter Street.

The top 5 options which received the highest combined responses for 'positive' and 'extremely positive impact.' are as follows:

1. Create more public green spaces (91.44% 'positive' and 'extremely positive impact')
2. Recycle water runoff to water street trees and landscaping (85.57% 'positive' and 'extremely positive impact')
3. Increase the amount of tree plantings (84.59% 'positive' and 'extremely positive impact')
4. Encourage the construction of energy efficient buildings (77.26% 'positive' and 'extremely positive impact')
5. Reconstruct Cottage Creek as a landscape feature (75.31% 'positive' and 'extremely positive impact')

The option that received the highest negative or extremely negative impact response was 'plant trees down the centre of the street' with 25.80%, with 11.12% responding 'don't know.'

Over 25% of respondents said that encouraging the use of recycled materials in new construction projects would have no impact on revitalising Hunter Street and similarly over 24% of respondents said that planting different types of street trees in different sections would have no impact on revitalising Hunter Street.

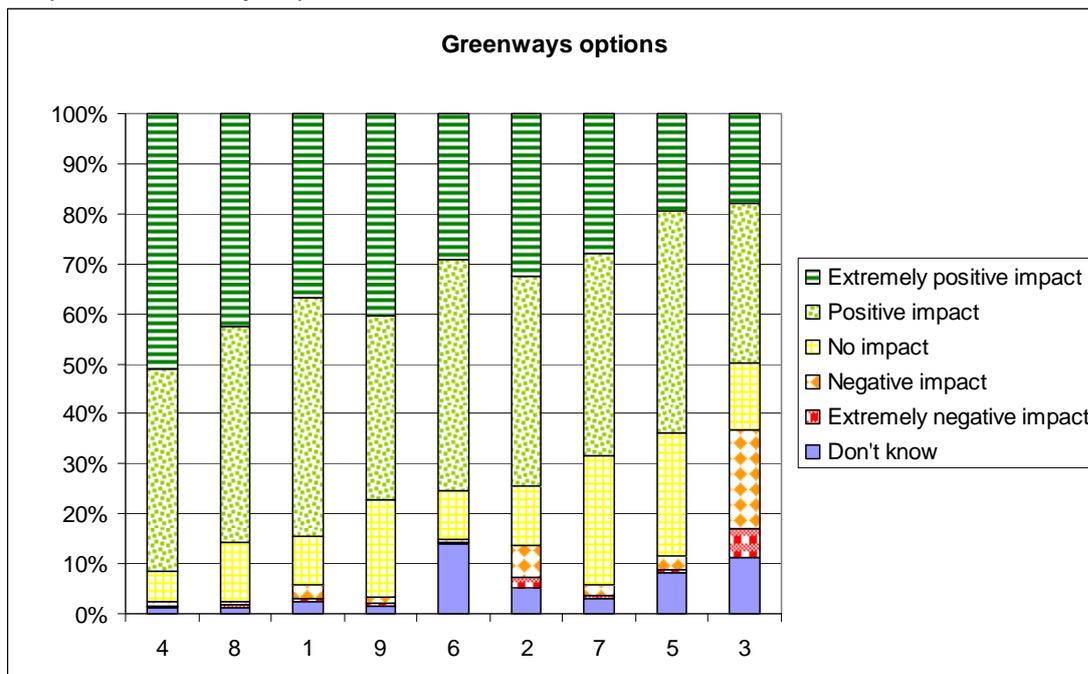
The table below shows the nine options, ranked from highest combined responses for 'positive impact' and 'extremely positive impact.'

Table 4: Nine Greenways Options

Option	Combined Response: 'positive impact' & 'extremely positive impact.'
Create more public green spaces	91.44%
Recycle water runoff to water street trees and landscaping	85.57%
Increase the amount of tree plantings	84.59%
Encourage the construction of energy efficient buildings	77.26%
Reconstruct Cottage Creek as a landscape feature	75.31%
Widen footpath areas to allow for trees	74.45%
Encourage the use of recycled materials in new construction projects	68.34%
Plant different types of street trees in different sections	63.81%
Plant trees down the centre of the street	49.76%

The graph below depicts respondents' responses to the effectiveness of community inspired greenway options, sorted by 'extremely positive impact', followed by 'positive impact.'

Graph 5: Greenways options



Several mutually exclusive options relating to street tree plantings were tested with the use of the survey. Most support was received for the widening of footpaths to allow for more street trees and for more tree plantings along the street, which appears to contradict respondents who indicated the need to retain all traffic lanes along Hunter Street. Respondents commented on the need for adequate maintenance budgets citing the figs on Laman Street.

Encouraging energy-efficient buildings and the use of recycled materials are well-received, although of lower priority than an increase in green spaces in the city centre – and tempered by the awareness of imposing additional costs of development. The suggestion to re-create Cottage Creek as a pedestrian thoroughfare and landscape feature is well-received.

The following comments reflect the range of suggestions made by survey respondents towards the greenways theme:

- “Council provides sufficient alternate areas of greenway. A decision has to be made - do you want a revitalised shopping precinct or do you want an abundance of trees that will do nothing to attract shoppers and eventually look worse than it does now.”
- “The use of street trees and integration of greenery into the streetscape is a more effective solution.”
- “Green spaces could be a good interim solution for what to do with the land resulting from demolishing some of the derelict buildings - between their demolition (sic) to their redevelopment.”
- “Don’t get too excited planting without good planning...”
- “All new and renovated building of all kinds should be up to latest technical methods of sustainability. It should be mandatory.”
- “Hunter Street would look great filled with trees and a small creek, but it will depend on where they are located in Hunter Street and the type of trees.”
- “Encouraging green development is essential; however I am not sure it will necessarily contribute to a revitalising of the area. Increased development costs may even discourage them. And it does not fit with reducing Council red tape to encourage development.”
- “A greener Hunter Street would be so refreshing.”
- “All the 'green' options need to be in moderation. Most of the water tanks recently installed at public schools are for show only....total waste of money because the existing plumbing systems in the schools are not geared to use grey water. Trying to adapt and change older buildings would cost a fortune and discourage development.”
- “Be careful with tree plantings. Eventually trees become a nuisance. Roots damage roads and footpaths. Bird droppings and deciduous matter from the trees damages vehicles and produces a health and visual problem. It is easy to install the plethora of trees. But to remove them, which eventually becomes necessary, engenders the Laman St waste of costly management resources!”

In the community workshop, the role of greenery to make a city more attractive was discussed. This was tempered with the acknowledgement that Hunter Street is the city’s main urban built-up area and that the city does have open parklands and other recreational spaces.

Short Term Improvements

The draft HSRM identifies 4 distinctive functional and character precincts: West End; Civic Central (mall) and the East End.

Survey respondents were asked to identify where they think Council funding should be prioritised to revitalise Hunter Street in the short term. On balance, respondents indicated that all four precincts should be focused on in the short term with the west-end receiving the most responses (31.20%) from respondents - in order, as follows:

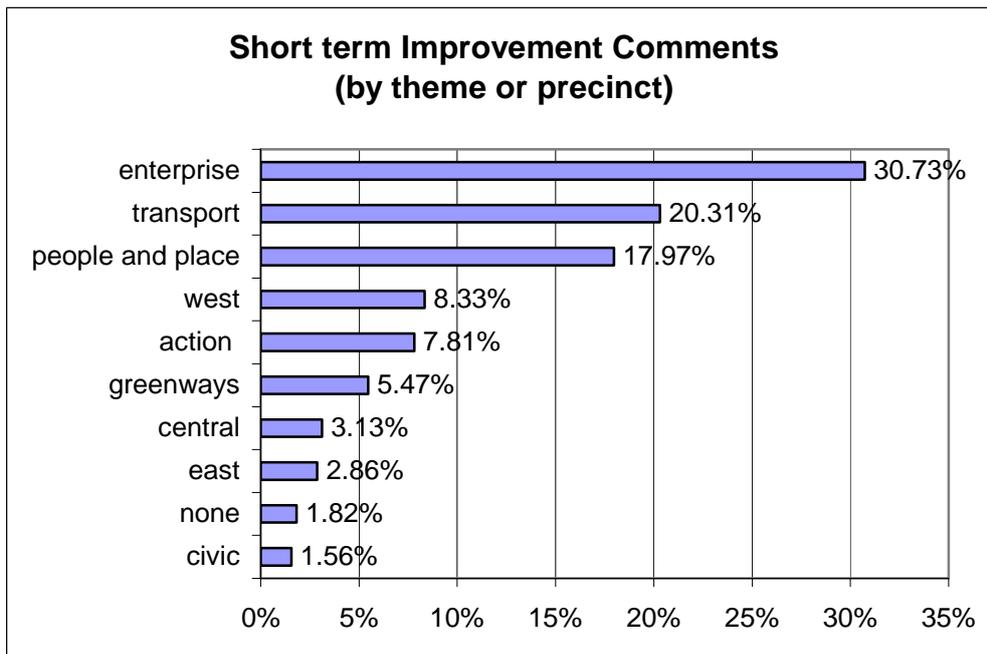
1. West End (Stewart Avenue to Union St) (31.20%)
2. Civic - (Union St to Perkins St) (27.09%)
3. Central - (Perkins St to Newcomen St) (23.72%)
4. East End - (Newcomen St to Pacific St) (17.99%)

When it comes to the types of activity which would begin to revitalise the street, there is continued confusion between public and private sector activities, and between levels of government responsibility – local, state and federal. For example, there are comments to bulldoze buildings which are in private ownership and requests for land-owners to restore their buildings.

There is a paradox in community expectation between investing where there are currently people and activity and investing in the areas with the least current appeal. Respondents argue for investment in the east end and the west end of Hunter Street using these arguments. Recent place-making consultants visiting Newcastle would support the notion of improving those places which are already well-patronised as a way to stimulate further investment.

The range of suggestions for short term improvements is illustrated by the following graph:

Graph 6: Short-term Suggestions by Theme



It is clear from the chart above that there is sufficient community support for works to start at the western end of Hunter Street, as it is currently in worst condition compared to the remainder of Hunter Street. This view was supported during the community workshop, when the most support was gained by specific project suggestions located at the western end of Hunter Street.

Enterprise

The focus of short-term enterprise improvements is resolutely on the appearance and state of vacant and derelict buildings along the street – using both private and public sector investment. Some of the suggestions seek harsher penalties for building owners; others call for more cleaning of the streetscape from Council. In some cases, building ownership is not understood – such as the old museum site which was sold by Council in 2008, allowing the proceeds to be used for the new museum’s construction. In others, there is pressure for Council to lead by example with new development and occupancy of the corner of Auckland and Hunter Streets.

Simplifying Council rules appears high on the list, with suggestions about short-term uses for empty buildings, including the soon-to-be-vacant David Jones building. This would require simplification of Council rules about the use of vacant buildings. Others require concerted retail strategy across many private building owners, for example to increase the niche retailers trading on Hunter Street.

Many of the suggestions are of a smaller, immediately actionable nature requiring the co-operation between different organisations in the city. Both Renew Newcastle and Live Sites are frequently named models for place activation and city improvement, and it is clear that both these organisations have educated the community about what may be possible.

The following is a cross-section of comments received:

- “Think about where people already come and why and try to widen that. The Civic Theatre has some great nights where they are full. I’m sure Darby Street restaurants benefit from these: where in Hunter Street could be promoted in the ticketing? Special deals for Civic Theatre-goers. Arts festival - painting Newcastle linked with Live Sites, The Loft, TAFE, Watt Space, NRAG and those artists who have moved in. Use colourful fabric/flags to mark the crossover points into Hunter St from Honeysuckle up. Place signage at these points.”
- “All derelict building should be made to clean up or be sold (not sure how you do that). More incentives for people to look after and maintain buildings.”
- “Encourage Renew Newcastle businesses - it’s one of the few things the city has going for it at the moment.”
- “An immediate scheme is required to bring in heaps more start-up businesses into the area. Try to establish a funding deal very, very quickly where you could make it super attractive to new businesses to set up shop in the area. I for one would be interested. This will on doubt carry a huge cost in the beginning, i.e. government having to subsidise rents. From there, you will have more fully occupied buildings and the tenants will actually take some pride in their office, maybe put their own pot plants out the front, re-paint/renovate their offices. The buildings need to be fully occupied so that the area is busy with more normal people and less junkies/thugs.”
- “Street surfaces/unused buildings need to be cleaned. A run with the pressure washer up the west end’s surfaces would give an almost instant freshen-up to the area at a very low cost.”
- “Encourage DFO stores into Hunter Street, to revitalise the CBD with a unique shopping opportunity, then encourage residential development.”

Transport

The focus of the short-term transportation improvements options reflect that respondents wish to see easier parking access; better pedestrian and cycle access; more public transport – that is, no preference for one type of transport over another.

Comments reveal that respondents are aware of the importance of the rail decision to the city's future.

Many comments address the accessibility of the Foreshore from Hunter Street, which reflects the transport option with the highest impact – as seen in the charts above.

Parking and car access are of continuing interest, as is the one-way pairing of King and Hunter Streets. This suggestion is made by many respondents for different reasons: to improve the appearance of the street, to improve traffic flow, to create space for cycle lanes, angle parking and wider pedestrian spaces. Parking spaces, meters and rangers are much decried, with suggestions about how to create more urban parking spaces.

Pedestrian and cycle access are supported to increase low-carbon transport options – and to ease access to public transport nodes.

The following comments reflect the span of short-term transport suggestions:

- “I am sorry but I feel it is useless answering this question because nothing will happen unless the rail line goes.”
- “A strong focus on integrated public transport to reduce traffic volume. Park and ride.”
- “Change traffic activity to encourage bus transport, train and bicycles. Perhaps free all day parking near Hannell Street.”
- “Consider traffic flows - one way into the city, and King Street out of the city.”
- “Trees, parking, reduced through traffic and decent bike paths.”
- “Get rid of vehicles from Mall. More frequent street cleaning in Mall.”
- “Get rid of the parking metres.”
- “Relax dimensions for proximity to corners and property entries to increase places particularly in low speed areas. For example in Wolfe St opposite DJ's - why can't there be more angle parking places - shift bollards a bit? I think there are many wasted parking spots by bad practise and inappropriate signage.”
- “Liaise with City Rail to install level crossing across railway line like they have in other cities eg San Francisco - one near Queens Wharf, and underneath other existing overpasses. Or at least improve overpasses so they are accessible - look at what Perth and Melbourne do with round bike/walking paths to get over freeways.”
- “Reprogram traffic lights to allow for better pedestrian crossing over Hunter Street - the waits can be prohibitively long. Allow 15 minute free parking for people who just want to drop into a shop briefly. Provide more bike parking possibilities. Provide bike lanes.”

People and Place

The suggestions which improve accessibility, aesthetics and the safety of the street fall in part to the private sector building owners along Hunter Street and in part to Council to conduct public works to the streetscape.

From responses, it could be suggested that a cleaner streetscape would contribute more to perceptions of public safety than the installation of CCTVs. Public safety and anti-social behaviour remain of concern, with calls for more police, better lighting, CCTV, improved signage and public toilets in the suggestions received in the survey.

The following comments illustrate respondents' concerns with cleanliness and safety – or the people-friendliness - of Hunter Street at present:

- “Stop drawing businesses away from Hunter Street and revive them by linking Hunter Street with Honeysuckle. How many workers in Honeysuckle would like to cross the rail into Hunter Street and Marketown? Many, I reckon. Hunter Street languishes because the HDC seems intent on making it so. Let us cross the rail at many places and you'll soon see Hunter Street revive.”
- “The way you'd keep your own home or business offices looking clean, fresh, tidy. Places can still be 'old' or 'lived in' and be well cared for and well loved. Take older public buildings or churches, you see they are old or used, etc they are still maintained with dignity and cared for.”
- “Better lighting and especially security cameras and police or security patrols regularly.”
- “Put in solar panel street lights EVERYWHERE so that it isn't so blinking creepy to walk down Hunter Street at night.”
- “Clean it up, remove graffiti and scrub it clean, restore civic pride immediately, use resources to clean or bulldoze buildings, encourage people to move into the CBD and create an infrastructure: use contractors to do this, work for the dole projects for greening areas.”
- “Clearly identified and clean public toilets every 1500 metres or so. I am aware of some of the cost and vandal downsides, but they appear to work well in many cities, including Paris.”
- “I think the Lonely Planet people are smart thinkers - Newcastle has the ‘bones’ to make an interesting ‘alternative’ type of artistic-looking city - we have the Conservatorium and Uni buildings in town and a good musical and artistic population. Keep Live Sites going. Maybe have a look at Wellington in NZ for ideas.”
- “Use some of the \$600,000 City Centre budget to clean up signage, by signage grants to businesses as is done in other successful main street programmes. An audit of why shops are not being leased.”
- “Renew footpaths, plant trees and shrubs, encourage more Renew Newcastle projects until EVERY vacant space is filled.”
- “Outside seats should be kept clean, more bus shelters, toilet facilities, more outdoor seating towards Darby and to the end of Hunter.”
- “Hose the footpaths down and then sweep the gutters each morning. Demolish the old Empire it is an absolute eyesore and a haven for the idiots who pervade our streets throughout the night.”

Greenways

The short-term greenways improvements comments focused on increasing greenery in the city and are often combined with enterprise suggestions. Greenways is the least-commented on theme at short-term suggestions, which is in keeping with its overall priority in the current results. However, there are numerous greenways suggestions, all of which will improve the appearance of the street, making it more attractive to people passing through, or to spend longer in the city.

Respondents suggest organisations which could be drawn in to assist, such as the Greening Centre, Landcare, and Work for the Dole projects.

The following direct comments illustrate the span of suggestions received:

- “Greening is the quickest option and it takes time to make its contribution so we need to start. Planting in the Railcorp space at the end of Darby Street would get rid of a horrid view corridor. Smart poles with banners and flower baskets would be a good strategy at key corners.”
- “Hunter Street seems to look a bit better. I think it is the trees and there seems to be less junk around.”



- “Reduce it to one lane in parts and plant some trees in strategic locations e.g. corner Auckland, Merewether and Darby Sts.”
- “I would like to see a major tree planting, widening, repaving and landscaping footpaths as a first step.”

Short-term Improvements by area

Many comments were received with specific suggestions for a particular *part* of Hunter Street, with particular focus at this time on the western end including the Empire Hotel site at Steel Street. Others prefer public investment to support recent private investment in the mall and east end areas. Some comments received resist Council investment in the creation of precincts when it is seen as the natural result of private, organic change in some people's views.

The comments have been summarised into desired improvements in the table below; all comments are found in the appendixes, as received.

Table 5: Comments received addressing an area of Hunter Street

<p>West (32 comments)</p> <p>Bulldoze Empire site; keep as temporary open green space until development commences.</p> <p>New development. Fill vacant buildings.</p> <p>Clean-up so that visitors may be brought along this strip.</p> <p>Landscaping, greening.</p> <p>Remove methadone clinic to reduce intimidation caused by users.</p> <p>Connect to Honeysuckle; introduce housing.</p>	<p>Central (12 comments)</p> <p>Cleanliness, smoother paving, less cluttered streetscape.</p> <p>Extension of Renew Newcastle scheme for vacant buildings.</p> <p>New lead tenant for David Jones building.</p> <p>Considered overall design and improvement works for mall section.</p> <p>Increased outdoor dining opportunities on the mall.</p> <p>Bus shelters for mall-access bus stops on Scott Street.</p> <p>Multi-precinct use of parking tickets.</p>
<p>Civic (6 comments)</p> <p>Civic Arcade/Auckland Street corner to be improved/rebuilt.</p> <p>Shade on Wheeler Place; greening.</p> <p>More parking for access to Civic Precinct buildings and activities.</p>	<p>East (11 comments)</p> <p>Ongoing maintenance to support recent and current private investment.</p> <p>Ease outdoor dining conditions to increase activity.</p> <p>Improved transport and infrastructure to support new housing developments.</p> <p>Events to entice people in – markets, festivals.</p>

Place-Making Options

The short-term improvements were further explored at the community workshop, with 13 places along Hunter Street discussed in depth in table groupings. Below is the complete list - from west to east - of 20 place making projects identified in an earlier consultation conducted by Place Partners.

20. Hannell x Hunter
19. National Park x Hunter - Spotlight Corner
18. Hannell to Bellevue
16. Cottage Creek
15. Steel x Hunter – Empire site
13. Devonshire Street - Star Hotel site
12. TAFE
11. Worth Place to Union
8. Wheeler Place
7. Darby Street corner
5. Darby to Crown
4. Brown/Scott/Hunter – bus stop, opposite David Jones corner
3. City Centre -mall
2. Post Office corner
1. East End (end of Hunter at Pacific, and Pacific Park

Thirteen of these place-making projects were discussed in detail in round-table format, resulting in the following tables.



(Above: East End: Pacific Park and historic buildings)

Place: East End – Pacific Park to Hunter St

<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i></p> <p>Historical village, cultural beach, strong residential presence. Unique cafes, mini Martin Place, Pacific Park is under-utilised. Changes character as you move west – has a ‘grand’ feeling with heritage buildings including old Post Office. Corner Watt and Hunter was the original admin building for Council.</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i></p> <p>Capitalise on the historical value – regular tourist tours. Well-defined and signposted heritage walk.</p> <p>Events in Pacific Park: Live Sites street performance, noodle night markets, café de Wheels, ‘Sunday arvo in the park’ music event, busking festival.</p> <p>Wi-fi in Pacific Park.</p> <p>Shade around solar fountain.</p> <p>Pavement chalk artists</p> <p>Moving chess set, chairs, boules</p> <p>Community garden</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i></p> <p>More backpacker accommodation</p> <p>Playground development</p> <p>East/west cycle access</p> <p>Street art – permanent eg sculpture, video boards</p> <p>Marketing Newcastle online</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i></p> <p>University/TAFE</p> <p>State government agencies – Post Office site activation</p> <p>Arts Council and community artists</p> <p>Live Sites, Renew Newcastle, The Loft</p> <p>State Rail – accommodation upstairs at station</p>



(Above: Hunter St mall)

Place: Hunter Street Mall

<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i></p> <p>Threatening after dark. Nights and weekends it's a ghost town</p> <p>General streetscape – architecture, trees etc is beautiful, but needs to be CLEANED!</p> <p>Renew Newcastle taking ownership of the public spaces.</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i></p> <p>Clean the streets!!! High pressure hose, remove beer bottles Sunday morning</p> <p>Increase activities and events on a <u>regular</u> basis, eg Red Lantern markets, Spanish open air socialising</p> <p>Increase signage to public toilets at The Loft</p> <p>Increase support for Renew Newcastle</p> <p>Install security phones (like on uni campus) with immediate response – this can be extended to all of Hunter Street</p> <p>Bus transport into town finishes at 5.30/6pm – these hours need to be extended.</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i></p> <p>Encourage employment in the mall – employment will bring the need and consumers for retail.</p> <p>Retail can remain small and target the people living and working in town.</p> <p>Can NCC Admin/Council Chambers move into the mall</p> <p>Continue support for Renew Newcastle and the quirky use of public space</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i></p> <p>Police - increase presence on the mall</p> <p>Renew Newcastle</p>



(Above: Brown/Scott/Hunter – DJ's in background)

Place: Brown/Scott/Hunter (DJ's corner)

<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i></p> <p>Bus stop, odd people, not colourful, not interesting, dominated by railway, brutal appearance, very busy, unattractive, boring</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i></p> <p>Clean the footpaths, make it green eg flower garden, shrubs, and trees.</p> <p>Railway line can be hidden by shrubs, colourful plants.</p> <p>Encourage the owners to start café-type or jazz clubs right next to bus stop (subsidies or relaxing of rules)</p> <p>Extending the mall through to Brown Street.</p> <p>Encourage owners to have roof gardens.</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i></p> <p>Decision on the removal of the railway</p> <p>Pedestrian access across the railway</p> <p>Slow the trains down</p> <p>One way traffic system – King and Scott Streets, slow the traffic</p> <p>Free parking</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i></p> <p>Community-based groups</p> <p>State government – bus and rail providers</p> <p>Centrelink – start-up business funding</p> <p>Hunter Business Chamber</p>



(Above: Crown to Darby)

Place: Darby to Crown

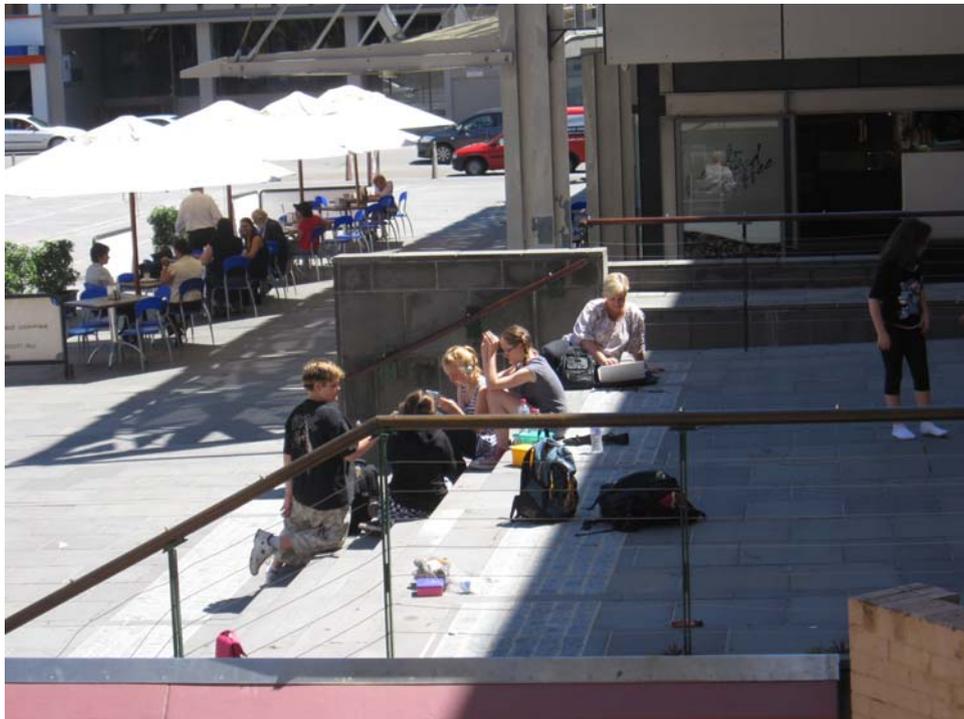
<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i></p> <p>Shops on one side, train line the other</p> <p>Tired-looking, but has appeal as all shops are tenanted</p> <p>lacks character</p> <p>Run-down, doesn't make people want to visit</p> <p>Art deco</p> <p>Low turnover of businesses</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i></p> <p>Upgrade bus stop, electronic signage, improve seating</p> <p>Revamp shopfronts, painting and small grants to assist</p> <p>Encourage pride of place of businesses</p> <p>Retain awnings – all street is under-cover now</p> <p>Make Hunter Street one-way – additional area for outdoor dining</p> <p>More rear-to-kerb parking, short-term angle parking</p> <p>More street trees – grouping of trees making more shade.</p> <p>Public domain on Crown Street: encourage outdoor dining in conjunction with the cinema, more sunlight – prune trees; possibility of closing Crown Street</p> <p>Increase outdoor dining for cafes</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i></p> <p>Review Hunter Street traffic – eg one-way more angle parking</p> <p>Encourage shop-top housing, but not at the expense of current commercial tenants</p> <p>Close off car access to Crown Street.</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i></p> <p>Property owners, business people, community</p>



(Above: Darby St corner, Railcorp land at centre)

Place: Darby/Hunter

<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i></p> <p>Bland, the rest of Darby is interesting</p> <p>Lack of signage</p> <p>Shops/cafes</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i></p> <p>Mural references to art gallery and other Darby Street features</p> <p>Promotional banners to link to Darby, changed regularly</p> <p>Landscaping, sculpture/art displays with uni, and explanatory signs – extend up Darby Street, through Civic Park</p> <p>Changed crossing pattern – as at the Junction – all four cross at once.</p> <p>Designated signage board for event promotion</p> <p>Hanging baskets</p> <p>Maintenance</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i></p> <p>Crossing to Honeysuckle – improved visual and physical connections</p> <p>Keep heritage buildings</p> <p>Redevelop enhance the facades, strengthen the corners – buildings to address the corners</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i></p> <p>Uni and TAFE</p> <p>Business owners and property owners</p> <p>Railcorp</p>



(Above: Wheeler Place)

Place: Wheeler Place

<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i></p> <p>Social space, well-used, a success</p> <p>Multi-purpose meeting place</p> <p>Leads through to other places</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i></p> <p>More seating, especially near theatre, around trees</p> <p>Moveable seating and shade sails</p> <p>More activity around periphery</p> <p>Soften podium at Council building</p> <p>Encourage installations; art classes</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i></p> <p>Softer lighting at night</p> <p>Infrastructure to support events</p> <p>Water feature to create reference to harbour</p> <p>Mobile kiosks selling flowers, fruit, ice cream</p> <p>Bicycle hire across the road at train station</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i></p> <p>Retailers</p> <p>TAFE Art School – installations!</p> <p>Art Gallery</p>



(Above: Worth Place to Union Street – Rock Shop and residential development)

Place: Worth Place to Union Street (Rock Shop)

<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i> Disconnected from residential</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i> Renew Newcastle style – art gallery that changes regularly; poetry nights Incentives to owners to clean up buildings Destination: grass area for story time – upgrade the grass area, vacant land to be coffee cart and outdoor dining History interpretation – what shops were there etc. Restore Federation colour theme. Shops on their own won't work there.</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i> Look at parking – bus stop Use of vacant area for some outdoor usage – like a beer garden, but could be coffee/tea Small bar area – single music bar.</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i> TAFE</p>



(Above: Devonshire Street, Star Hotel site at right)

Place: Devonshire (alongside Star Hotel site)

<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i></p> <p>Enclosed, European, like back lanes in Melbourne, eateries, iconic At the moment, quite bleak.</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i></p> <p>Eateries, use Octapod – Watt Space use of empty buildings. Bring back, restore, keep old lighting Clean up streetscape – make it inviting. Maybe signage for brothel made more discreet. Work with building owners currently in the street to keep it clean and use gardens – clean up first. Needs to be made safe at night. Coffee shop night time Wheeler Place</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i></p> <p>Reopen Star site to cafes, restaurants, late night coffee coming from Workers' Club. Advertising. Encourage new developers to retain European feel. Maybe have redevelopment open to the end of the lane up further, or narrow the distance to the lane from the street. Enliven the space first.</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i></p> <p>Star Hotel developers, TAFE, Wood Street Open Café.</p>



(Above: TAFE and Kuwami Place)

Place: TAFE, Art School

<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i></p> <p>Seating area Park site to be locked Optimise Devonshire Lane – opposite, connect to TAFE Arts precinct; medical precinct Indigenous activity, midden activity</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i></p> <p>Bus stop not sheltered Place light boxes, display cases – good management of displays Better commercial experiences for users Extend Renew Newcastle to the West End Pedestrian walkway crossing to the other side – Devonshire lane</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i></p> <p>Pedestrian access to the harbour Kuwumi Place needs upgrading Plans for uni expansion to link both physically and in place and function with TAFE Link to other cultural institutions Ferry stop on old Lee Wharf</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i></p> <p>Live Sites, TAFE, Uni of Newcastle Renew Newcastle (light boxes)</p>



(Above: Steel x Hunter, Empire Hotel site behind)

Place: Steel/Hunter (Empire Hotel site)

<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i></p> <p>People services</p> <p>A place for people's well-being, health, promotes walking, bicycles, public transport.</p> <p>Community greening and maintenance of green space</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i></p> <p>Corporate volunteering for greening, trees and gardens 'adopted' by TAFE, Housing, HNEA Health, Ageing and Disability, etc</p> <p>Bicycles facilities, shade, shelter, seating</p> <p>High pressure hose cleaning</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i></p> <p>Pedestrian/bicycle flow across Steel Street connection to Hunter Street</p> <p>Increase bicycle connection along Hunter Street</p> <p>Soften paving</p> <p>Improve/soften Kuwami Place; it is a concrete jungle</p> <p>Bus shelters</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i></p> <p>Govt agencies that lease buildings – tenants</p> <p>Corporate volunteering – govt agencies to support staff to improve the area: Housing, TAFE, HNEAH, Ageing and Disability</p>



(Above: Spotlight corner, Hunter x National Park St)

Place: National Park/ Hunter St (Spotlight corner)

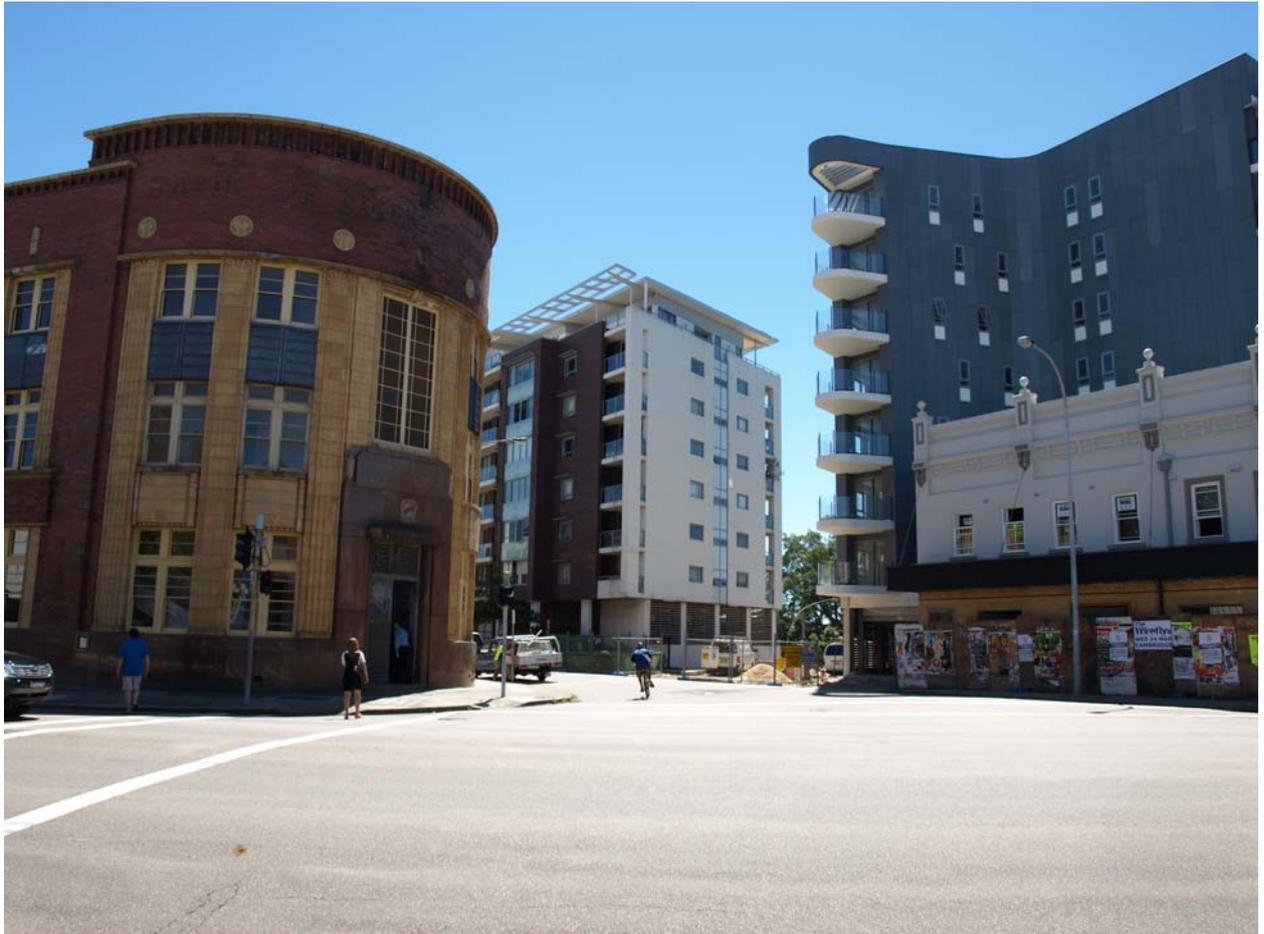
<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i></p> <p>Hard, coarse, authentic</p> <p>Elements of old city, harbour</p> <p>Backpacker cluster, new residential; low budget accommodation – school kids.</p> <p>Lots of personal services; busy because of Spotlight</p> <p>Car congestion, bottleneck near bus stop, no bus refuge lane</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i></p> <p>Soften and clean</p> <p>Bike lane – encourage more bike-related business, bike racks; cycle lane</p> <p>More seats at bus stop</p> <p>Apply place-making principles</p> <p>Planter boxes into shade; park benches</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i></p> <p>Improve Bank Corner building</p> <p>Create pedestrian activity; encourage better pedestrian access</p> <p>Poster bollards</p> <p>Four-way pedestrian crossing – National Park, Bellevue, Hunter.</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i></p> <p>Spotlight, private businesses, City Centre Committee</p>



(Above: Cottage Creek, north side at top, south side below)

Place: Cottage Creek

<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i></p> <p>Looks like a drain (no-one knew it was a creek) Looks like an open sewer; no-one knows it's there</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i></p> <p>Make it look more like a creek, eg landscape, edges, rocks, plants Make deeper, so more effective as a drain Seating and pathways alongside and nighttime lighting; opportunities for fishing If opened up for public access need safety addressed, if someone falls in Fountains, make features along the length of the creek History plaques, trail, pictures – research history of Cottage Creek Proper signage and access to creek</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i></p> <p>Obtaining ownership of buildings owned by Hunter Water, remove building to open up access, eg café over the creek Fitness trail; rapids for canoeing; small boating events Improving drainage around Cottage Creek to minimise flooding and over-flowing drains Mosaic the creek, walking bridges Art trail, ?indigenous, sculptures, murals</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i></p> <p>Hunter Water; TAFE for art and environment Local businesses, residents, schools Lands councils Community groups; adopt a park</p>



(Above: Bellevue St, to Hannell at left)

Place: Hannell to Bellevue (northern side of Hunter)

<p>1. Essential Nature</p>	<p><i>What is the character or nature of this place?</i></p> <p>Older established area, 1950's, obsolete, tatty, depressing, outdated. Spotlight building itself is ugly Can see newer developments No interaction, visual surveillance between shops and streets Trees enhance aesthetics Latec House has shown the area CAN be improved</p>
<p>2. Short-term: complete by 30 June 2012</p>	<p><i>What activity would have the greatest impact to increase the use and enjoyment of this place – right away, with little cost?</i></p> <p>Awnings Re-design or remove Spotlight sign Tree plantings down middle of the street, different sizes, hedges Lighting Change perception of Hunter Street, promote pride Have Council place pressure or influence on buildings where scaffolding is in place, to effect repairs, remove scaffolding Audit of area to identify boarded up buildings Incentives to fix up buildings, link to Work for the Dole</p>
<p>3. Long-term, high impact</p>	<p><i>What changes would you make in the long term to have the highest impact?</i></p> <p>Bulldoze vacant, derelict, empty buildings Attract right businesses – incentives, professional suites, residential Active windows in shops</p>
<p>4. Partnerships</p>	<p><i>Which organisations or people could Council partner with to assist with the implementation of these ideas?</i></p> <p>Marketeers Professional urban designers, architects, i.e. GPT</p>

Action

There is a view that there has already been sufficient consultation for works to commence. Community members seek action from Council to improve and revitalise Hunter Street.

The dilapidation has visibly progressed during many of the respondents’ lifetimes. Some are reluctant to nominate short-term fixes as these are not valued as highly as a considered long-term plan. The following comments illustrate the nature of those received:

- “Don't try and spread the limited resources too thinly by taking on too much. Do an excellent job in 1 or 2 areas rather than half a job in 4 areas.”
- “Stop living in fear. Stop supporting the communities fear and show some real leadership. Stop ad hoc wasteful spending in an attempt to assuage community anxiety and do something REAL.”
- “No amount of survey filling in is going to remedy the place - the Council need to act immediately to show they are genuine. I await evidence that the Council are doing something in the short term and not just making money.”
- “There are always more jaw bones than back bones.”
- “The problem with all levels of government and their employees is that they have no long term aim. The short term fixes will always end up costing \$ms more that implementing an effective long term strategy.”

During the community workshop, fourteen short-term project options were presented to and voted on by most participants. The list below summarises those votes, as received during the workshop, and could act as a guideline for detailed project planning. It supports the view gained during the survey that at present, community expectation is to improve some of the most derelict parts of the street, rather than bettering the *average* sections where there has been recent private sector investment. It is noteworthy that there was no table discussion about the Hunter/Hannell Street crossing, yet it still gained the most votes. Participants added a further option, ‘Save Our Rail’, which gained 6 votes.

Place	Do This First (number of votes)
● Hunter/Hannell/Stewart.....	11
● Mall.....	9
● Union St to Worth.....	8
● Cottage Creek.....	8
● East End.....	7
● Darby Street Corner.....	7
● Spotlight Corner.....	5
● Darby to Crown.....	5
● Brown/Scott/Hunter.....	5
● Wheeler Place.....	4
● Devonshire (Star Hotel site).....	3
● Hannell to Bellevue.....	3
● TAFE.....	2
● Steel/Hunter.....	0

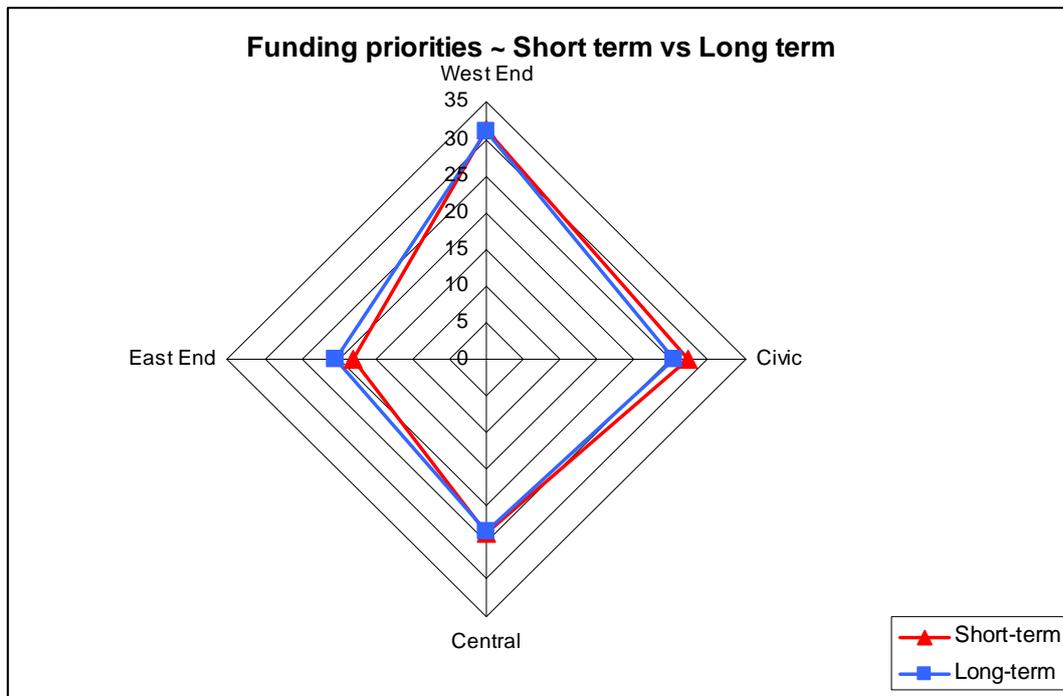
Long Term Improvements

Respondents were asked to identify where they think Council funding should be prioritised to revitalise Hunter Street in the long term. On balance, respondents indicated that all four precincts should be focused on in the long term with the west-end again receiving the most support (31.02%). The ranked areas are as follows:

1. West End (31.02%)
2. Civic (25.38%)
3. Central (23.33%)
4. East End (20.27%)

Of note there is no marked difference between the responses for short and long-term. While this preserves equity along the street, it may serve as challenging when allocating limited resources.

Graph7: Funding priorities ~ Short term vs. Long term



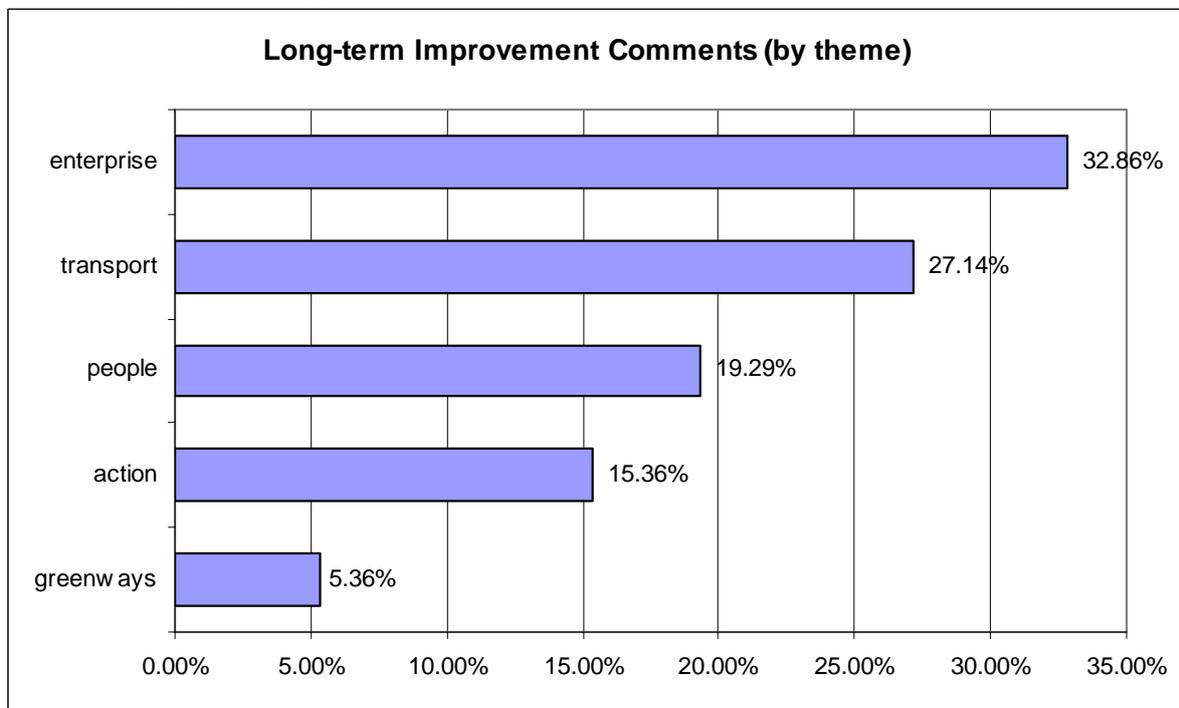
When asked for long term improvements, the comments received mostly address the need for enterprise solutions – both public and private sector activity. The transport options received the second-most important ranking in the long term, followed by people and place and greenways suggestions.

The emergence of light rail options as a community preference was reflected through comments, with multiple suggestions for a wider tram network rather than the Wickham to Watt Street stretch only.

It is apparent that the focus of community expectation is on substantial change and timely action (as evidenced in the 15.36% of comments seeking integrated action).

The following graph illustrates the balance of community interest in relation to long term improvements for Hunter Street.

Graph 8: Long-term Suggestions by Theme



Enterprise

The enterprise suggestions reflect the need for infrastructure improvements in the city – whether to parking, buildings or street-scape. Some of the calls for developer incentives are already in place, such as simpler requirements for adaptive reuse of heritage buildings.

Many call for public and private investment, not always in ways that are possible; some are still enthusiastic for radical reconstruction of the city – with some of the current commercial footprint replaced with residential development.

It is apparent that the Honeysuckle Development Corporation’s plans have gained traction in the public, with some of their concepts reflecting in stated community expectation. The following comments reflect the spectrum of comments:

- “1. Building a multi story inner city car park, not under civic park! 2. Supporting public development with easier processes of approval, without jeopardising heritage buildings. 3. Clean and safe public toilets in convenient locations. 4. Clean, safe and sheltered bus stops. 5. Bike lanes in Hunter St. 6. Lighting the streets well at night. 7. Crackdown on graffiti, drugs and anti social behaviour. By focusing on the above you’re providing enterprise with the tools they need to do the rest!”
- “Bulldoze the lot and create an open green haven with shops, restaurants and open corridors to Honeysuckle and King Street.”
- “I notice that the Council knocked back the nightclub at the Kensington, help introduce a clamp down on drinking times. The Government declined the opportunity of turning the post office into a licensed premise and summarily at Nobbys. The Council has become a hindrance to enterprise.”

- “Concentrate on redevelopment of West End as believe that this will evolve as Newcastle's "new" CBD, especially if rail-line is cut at Wickham and transport interchange built there.”
- “No development higher than the Cathedral and bringing the Foreshore and City Centre together.
- “Newcastle has a wonderful backbone: the old police station and across the road the facade above the Rock Shop and neighbouring shops, the turret above the pawn broker at 557 Hunter, the TAFE building (same architect?), the Water Board building, the Royal, Bank corner and the cute little place squished between Fat Ink and Foleys at the crossing in the west end...These buildings should be highlighted and embraced.”
- “Keep the design "cool". I have seen plans for the area presented by Newcastle Uni. architects and other international architects and developers. The last presentation in the Conservatorium was stunning. We can do it.”
- “The existing multiple small holding sites don't work. It would be better to conglomerate smaller sites for larger projects.”
- “Incentives to developers to recycle old buildings e.g., lower fees and rates. A height limit of eight stories on new structures in Hunter Street. No more sales of heritage buildings in the CBD by any tier of government.”

Integrated Transport

The long unresolved transport difficulties in the city centre are high up the list for long term improvements. Respondents have indicated having an understanding that many of the decisions come from state, and not at the local government level. This has resulted in more calls to increase commuter cycleways and improve parking in the city, as well as the more realistic consideration of trams.

There is support for the reduction of car traffic lanes, with many suggestions for reallocation of road space to allow for the new transport options in the same space, as follows:

- “Cycle and light rail along current rail corridor and additional cycle lanes in King Street west of Darby if required. Allow crossing for traffic and pedestrians virtually anywhere along light rail route to open up to waterfront.”
- “One way, widen footpath, parking, street trees. Very large impact but something needs to be done as it's really only a thoroughfare and that's what's causing the problem. This will make it a feature of the city and a complete single precinct rather than many. Traffic needs to be diverted onto King St or Honeysuckle Drive, this would require redevelopments around Stewart Ave to work correctly. Buses/cyclists/tram can use the railway line when cut at Broadmeadow/Hamilton not Civic: waste of time cutting at Civic.”
- “More parking around the library and for residents. Have angle parking along the street; especially near NIB and the Civic theatre.”
- Hunter to have 1 lane for traffic (plus turning lanes) going in and 2 coming out. King to have 2 lanes for traffic going in (plus turning lanes) and 1 coming out. Reduce speed to 50 kms or even 40 along both Hunter and King Streets at all times, east of Stewart Avenue. Extra lanes from such changes to be utilized by parking and landscaping. Wider footpaths wherever possible.”
- “Width reduction of Hunter Street; Hide/underground rail line-Greener Newcastle; Fix rundown buildings; Embrace heritage; Fix Greater Union: please don't remove it.”

The major daily traffic congestion at Hannell Street/rail line which was identified in Newcastle Voice's *Road Safety* report in August 2010 is again identified here. The following comments illustrate these points:

- "Improve car access and parking and after hours transport options from outlying suburbs. I avoid going into town but have to recently as dentist located in Hunter St. I left New Lambton half hour before the first time, soon realised my mistake, needs much longer than that to drive in. Once there basically I fed the meter enough to cover appointment and then left as the whole thing is so frustrating."
- "Opening up access to Honeysuckle is high priority, whilst maintaining public transport options. I believe the trains could be replaced with light rail wonderfully, but Council should only commit to this if the light rail access (all the way out to Warabrook/University along Maitland Road in the long-term) is guaranteed a public service before the rail is terminated."
- "Improve traffic flow, especially Stewart Ave Railway impediment."
- "Keeping heavy rail to allow people from outlier areas access."
- "More parking around the library and for residents. Have angle parking along the street; especially near NIB and the Civic theatre."
- "Safe, clean, healthy, active transport with fully separated push-bike lanes."

People and Place

Long term suggestions to improve the appeal of the street are similar to those made earlier for short term suggestions, and centre around the attractiveness, cleanliness and the human, pedestrian scale of Hunter Street. A clear point of difference is sought between the city and the city's large shopping centres at Kotara and Charlestown. The following comments illustrate the span of comments received:

- "Relax the conditions for footpath dining with tables returned to locations adjacent to the shop windows. Better lighting and improved policing of the area."
- "Colour, public art, innovative lighting - but most of all a coherence of concept so the city assumes a character that is fun, quirky, respectful of our heritage and maritime history but at the same time youth and family-focused so people will want to spend time in here."
- "Public transport that is attractive to everyone not just the lower income locals. A public transport system we would be proud of showcasing to international visitors as well as use ourselves. Cleaning the facades of the buildings and the street. Smaller cafes and bars (like those in Melbourne) that discourage the binging mentality currently linked to larger pubs and clubs in Newcastle. Encourage beautification through more street art."
- "Hire some cutting edge designers to design great bins, planters, street signage, so it's all got a design theme that works together. Then start applying for the funding to see the vision of the designers. Install attractive curbing and footpaths. The paving in the mall and bitumen elsewhere is pretty ugly."
- "Celebrate the heritage that is still left in the city - for example: the Convict Lumberyard site, the Paymaster's Cottage, Railway Station, East End. Try to give Hunter St some uniqueness - encourage small businesses and craftspeople, new markets, easy access and reasonable parking & public transport. The CBD has one thing that Charlestown and Garden City don't have - location, location, location."
- "BRIGHTEN UP IMAGE; PAINT AND GOOD LIGHT; SAFETY AT NIGHT"
- "Encourage use by families - provide comfortable seating, play areas, water play or fountains, performance space for concerts, keep it clean!!!!!! Provide more short term and free parking so people use the shops."

- “I have been in the mall when the passengers have come off the ship. I must say I felt terribly embarrassed by what the Council must have thought was lovely town to visit. I often walk to the Civic so let’s make it more inviting for people to walk along these areas, especially at lunch time. I go to the lunch time concerts at the Con - walk from the East End, sit for 30 mins and then walk back to work. I am in my 60s.”
- “Narrowing areas of Hunter St in the west and central sections to promote more pedestrian/cafe areas, with lots of trees and squares.”

Greenways

Long term greenways suggestions are similar to the short term greenways suggestions, strengthening the view that there is much public education to be done around this theme, as many of the principles of this theme are aimed at developers and architects when designing buildings and public spaces.

Respondents discuss greenways suggestions in amongst transport and enterprise activities, almost as a function of improving transport and other public enjoyment of Hunter Street - requesting more green spaces, either in the form of parks or in the form of plantings along the urban streetscape. The following comments reflect the span of comments received:

- “Remove road and rail between Hunter Street Mall and Foreshore. Introduce light rail. Paved and green area currently taken up by rail. More outdoor eating.”
- “Every idea that is pedestrian/cyclist/tourist/neighbourhood friendly, ecologically and aesthetically sound should be considered.”
- “Raised green garden crossing the railway line with shops on either side, and same leading up the hill to highlight the Cathedral.”
- “More parks with lots more trees - one thing I find unbelievable (having small children) is the lack of shaded children's play areas in town - given our ‘sunburnt country’ status.”
- “Firstly get rid of the parking meters make a greener more enticing area - look at Glenelg in South Australia cafes, trams and no bloody parking meters, enjoyable relaxing and a good day out; St Kilda cafes, trams plenty of free parking.”
- “Improved greenways with plantings of small trees. Finding an anchor tenant to replace David Jones. Improved parking - more spaces and no weekend meter fees.”
- “Attractive parks or small seating areas to encourage people to sit under trees and other natural foliage.”

Action

The integration of all activities and commencement of works are the focus of the comments received to this theme, with a caveat of good planning in advance. There is a continuing concern at the lack of leadership demonstrated by Council and the need for private and public investment. The following substantial comments illustrate the extent of community opinion at this time:

- “A concerted effort to have all buildings along Hunter St occupied in one way or another. Ensure buildings are well maintained and cared for.
An integrated transport system and a good thorough overhaul of the traffic system in the inner city, plan for increases in traffic – let’s not end up with grid lock, no Sydney style traffic please. Stewart Avenue and Hunter St intersection is already a nightmare. Good signage, more public toilets, good paths, roads and cycleway Improve our clean and green image along Hunter St incorporating open spaces with seating, artworks, sculpture and restaurants. Aim for a clean vibrant city centre that is easy to move around in and a pleasure to visit.”
- “An overall PLAN for the Hunter Street area and assistance to property owners to refurbish their land by removing all the hindrances and delays that stop all progress in the City. This is not difficult to achieve but will not occur without sound leadership in which the City is totally lacking.”
- “Make a start. There have been too many discussion groups and consultants involved.”
- “Have a vision, facilitate and implement supportive strategies for business and services to come. Nothing thrives on its own: have a few anchor establishments.”
- “If the top end of town develops well I think the rest will follow. A progressive improvement maintained down Hunter Street in the long term is the key to success.”
- “The Newcastle Council continues to tell its rate payers how financially troubled they are. For this reason the Council should have little to do with the redevelopment. Leave it to the private sector.”