



# Open Space Precinct Plan

## Graysharps Road, Hurstbridge

### Discussion Paper

June 2017







**hansen**

Date	Version	Issue	For
18.05.2017	A	Preliminary Draft Discussion Paper	Client Review
25.07.2017	B	Draft Discussion Paper	Client Review
06.06.17	C	Discussion Paper	



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*wetlands*



*Ben Frilay Oval*





# Introduction

Nillumbik Shire Council is developing a Precinct Plan for an area of open space within the Hurstbridge Township commonly referred to as the Graysharps Road Precinct. This area is located between the town centre and Diamond Creek. It forms a critical part of the township's fabric, not only as a connective space but also through its contribution to the township's character and identity. It contains critical community assets such as the football, cricket and bowling clubs, a community hub, early years centres and the Hurst family graveyard. It also forms part of a highly valued public open space corridor, with Diamond Creek and surrounds providing habitat for diverse flora and fauna as well as flood risks.

This project commenced in early 2016 with an in-depth analysis of the existing conditions within the Precinct and initial identification of associated opportunities and constraints. These can be found in the 'Opportunities and Constraints' section of this document. This background work was then developed into a draft 'framework', tested with a range of key stakeholders through a series of workshops and walking tours in mid-2016. The Precinct Aspirations expressed through that framework will now form the basis for discussions with the broader community about their aspirations for the Precinct.

The project originally excluded a central area south of Ben Frilay Oval known as Lot 1 which was, at the time, envisaged as accommodating a medium density cluster of housing. In November 2016, Council determined that this area should also be retained as open space and, as such, it now forms part of the study area.

The study area is shown on the aerial (Page 5) and is bounded by Arthurs Creek Road in the north, the railway line to the east, and Diamond Creek to the south and west.

*creekside vegetation*



*Hurstbridge Community Hub*







- ① Ferguson Park Preschool
- ② Hurstbridge Preschool
- ③ Gordon and Sheila Ferguson Park
- ④ Hurstbridge Memorial Park
- ⑤ Ben Frilay Oval
- ⑥ Bowling Club
- ⑦ Hurstbridge Community Hub
- ⑧ Hurstbridge Stadium
- ⑨ Wetlands
- ⑩ Hurstbridge East Sportsground
- ⑪ Hurstbridge Train Station
- ⑫ Lot 1



Scale 1:4000 @A4  
Date: 18.05.17  
Revision: A





## Precinct context

The Graysharps Road Precinct forms part of a highly valued corridor of public open space within the centre of Hurstbridge. This corridor accommodates the majority of the township's sporting and recreation assets, as well as the primary school, preschools and other community uses. While the Graysharps Road Precinct, located at the southern end of this corridor, has an area of around 18ha, the broader green corridor equates to around 50ha of open space available to residents. This generosity of space is important to the township's identity, but planning for the Precinct must also acknowledge the uses which are already established in other parts of this green corridor.

Despite its location between residential areas on the western side of the Diamond Creek and the town centre, and the presence of key community assets within it, connectivity, particularly for pedestrians, is limited. This limited connectivity encourages vehicular access in favour of pedestrian or cycle access which places subsequent emphasis on Graysharps Road as the primary entry point to the precinct, as well as increasing demand for car parking within the Precinct.

The creek corridor which forms south and west boundaries of the site also requires careful consideration, not only in the protection of the flora and fauna associated with this key environmental feature, but also the risks associated with this asset in terms of access and flooding risk. Flooding primarily affects the lower portions of the site to the southern and western edges, with changes in ground level protecting much of the remainder of the Precinct from inundation.

If current plans for the extension of the popular Diamond Creek Trail into Hurstbridge are realised, the Precinct will form a key 'gateway' for visitors accessing the township along the trail. Connecting the trailhead through to the town centre to maximise the economic benefits to the town through increased visitation will be given due consideration through this Plan.

The land is primarily zoned for Public Use, with the exception of small portions of the Precinct in the Township, Rural Conservation and Road Zones. The area is also affected by a number of Overlay controls which reflect the environmental and flooding characteristics identified above. In addition to design controls which seek to ensure new development reflects the character of the broader Hurstbridge township.





## The journey so far

As Hurstbridge developed in the late 19th century, the Graysharps Road Precinct played a critical role in servicing the orchard industry with the area currently used for car parking housing giant coolrooms. The single dwelling adjacent to the bowling club, which was later used as a headmasters house, is the last remnant of this industry.

More recently, the precinct accommodated the Hurstbridge High School, until its closure in 1998. While some assets, such as the East Oval and car park have been integrated with current uses, and a new community hub developed by Council on part of the land, much of the land associated with the high school remains unused. The community hub accommodates Maternal and Child Health, a preschool, meeting rooms and various other services, alongside the former school's Indoor Stadium.

Council, until November 2016, had been pursuing the 'Liveable Nillumbik' project which considered the use of part of the school land known as Lot 1 for housing. The Council resolution (November 2016) determined:

*"Council abandons any plans to sell Lot 1 Graysharps Road, Hurstbridge to developers and that the process to rezone Lot 1 Graysharps Road, Hurstbridge to Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) immediately commence"*

*"the Land is to be used for recreation and public open space purposes"*

*"Prepare a Recreational and Open Space Plan for the Graysharps Road Precinct."*

On 16 May 2017 Council resolved to defer the immediate rezoning of the Lot 1 parcel to a Public Park and Recreation Zone until the Precinct Plan has been finalised, ensuring the most appropriate zoning for the preferred land use.

This current project seeks to establish an agreed Plan to integrate the various activities occurring within the Precinct and to provide clear direction for investment in improvements in the coming years. The involvement of the broader Hurstbridge community in determining this future will be critical and a series of steps (shown in the illustration to the right) will guide planning for this Precinct beyond the preparation of this Discussion Paper. These are outlined further in the last section of this Discussion Paper.

historic apple packing room



Where we are now

Where do we want to be?

What should we do?

Have we got it right?

How will we do it?



# Opportunities & Constraints

The project team undertook detailed site inspections and photographic documentation and reviewed numerous background documents in mid 2016 to inform an understanding of this Precinct. This included considering the broader connections to the main street, as well as activity occurring in the other large areas of open space north of Arthur's Creek Road.

Following this, draft Opportunities & Constraints were presented to key stakeholders at a series of workshops held in August 2016. These key stakeholders included:

- Workshop 1: Hurstbridge Hub User Groups
- Workshop 2: Sporting Clubs and Hurstbridge Community Voice
- Workshop 3: Landcare Groups, Men's Shed, Historical Society and Bowling Club

These Opportunities & Constraints did not include consideration of the use of the large area of open space adjacent to the community hub (the Lot 1 site) which, at the time, was identified for housing.

The Opportunities & Constraints presented to key stakeholders in 2016 have since been updated to reflect both stakeholder feedback and the November 2016 Council resolution that all land within the Precinct be used for open space and recreation. Key concerns raised by stakeholders in 2016 included:

- The appropriateness of a housing development within the Precinct.
- The safety of pedestrians moving through the Precinct, mainly related to lack of lighting and conflicts with vehicles.
- The poor quality of the southern pedestrian rail crossing.
- The need for car parking within the Precinct to be resolved.
- Concerns over vehicle speeds and the safety of intersections.
- The importance of existing community and recreation activity and the need to ensure appropriate facilities provided.
- The need to ensure infrastructure such as new paths isn't too 'formal' or 'urban' and landscaping choices are carefully considered.
- The need for additional wayfinding and signage.

The following were identified as opportunities and constraints within the Precinct, noting that this is not an exhaustive list:

- A core activity area exists within the centre of the precinct, comprising the football and cricket clubs, bowling club, community hub and associated preschool, men's shed and indoor stadium.
- Close proximity of playground and the relatively busy Arthurs Creek Road creates potential conflict.
- Cluster of clearly childhood facilities in the northern portion of the site and recently upgraded playground focussing on 4-8 year olds..
- Ad-hoc car parking around northern preschools is an inefficient use of space and contributes to the poor presentation at the Precinct 'gateway'.
- Poor sightlines at the intersection at the Precinct entry.
- Historically significant tree at Precinct entry.
- Little legibility, wayfinding or presence with the key Precinct entry.





- Ad-hoc access arrangements from the town centre due to unsealed station car parks (VicTrack and PTV land).
- Lack of pedestrian pathways at key access points (i.e. connecting the main street with the Graysharps Road footpath).
- High wire fencing along the train line with little vegetation to soften this interface.
- Recent works have established a new wide and accessible footpath along Graysharps Road.
- Significant erosion and a notable absence of landscape along station car parking edge.
- Lack of crossing points from the accessible path to activity on the west side.
- Speed of vehicles along Graysharps Road create potential conflict with pedestrians, many of whom are young or elderly.
- Large areas of undefined space still exist within the Precinct.

- There are some notable weed infestations.
- A secluded and peaceful paddock space (sometimes referred to as the Memorial Park).
- Significant erosion at points along the creekline primarily where informall crossings and drainage outfalls are present.
- Informal log crossing are dangerous and exacerbate erosion.
- Outfall area associated with oval drainage undergoing replanting.
- Wide undefined spaces encourage dominance of vehicular movements.
- Well utilised oval with key community role, and associated movement patterns / car parking issues.
- Bushfire risk due to surrounding vegetation and the presence within the Precinct of Hurstbridge's 'Neighbourhood Safer Place'.
- Clearly distinct zones based on use and topography.

## inefficient car parking



## poor connectivity





- Flooding constraints to the west and south.
- Poor connections into the Precinct from eastern residential areas.
- Large areas of underutilised land along the train line and 'scrappy' fencing, shipping containers etc.
- Significant investment in the public realm around the new community hub.
- Uninviting southern rail crossing with a 'back of house' interface.
- No pedestrian connection to the south, resultant conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians particularly when the East Oval is used.
- Lack of lighting around core activity area despite frequent night time use.
- Uncoordinated provision of car parking with inefficient layout adjoining Ben Frilay Oval and community hub.
- Wetland facility to manage flooding and increase amenity.
- Proposed northern termination of the Diamond Creek Trail between wetlands and East Oval.
- Former high school outdoor courts provide a flat sealed surface within the broader precinct.
- Indoor stadium presents blank frontages, particularly obvious to the west and south with little other built form to mitigate scale.

These Opportunities and Constraints are identified on the adjoining plan.

*underutilised open space*



**Are there other constraints that you think need to be considered in planning for the future of this Precinct?**

**Are there parts of the Precinct that you think represent opportunities for improving the area?**






































**If there are - let us know! We're interested in hearing your thoughts about the Precinct...**

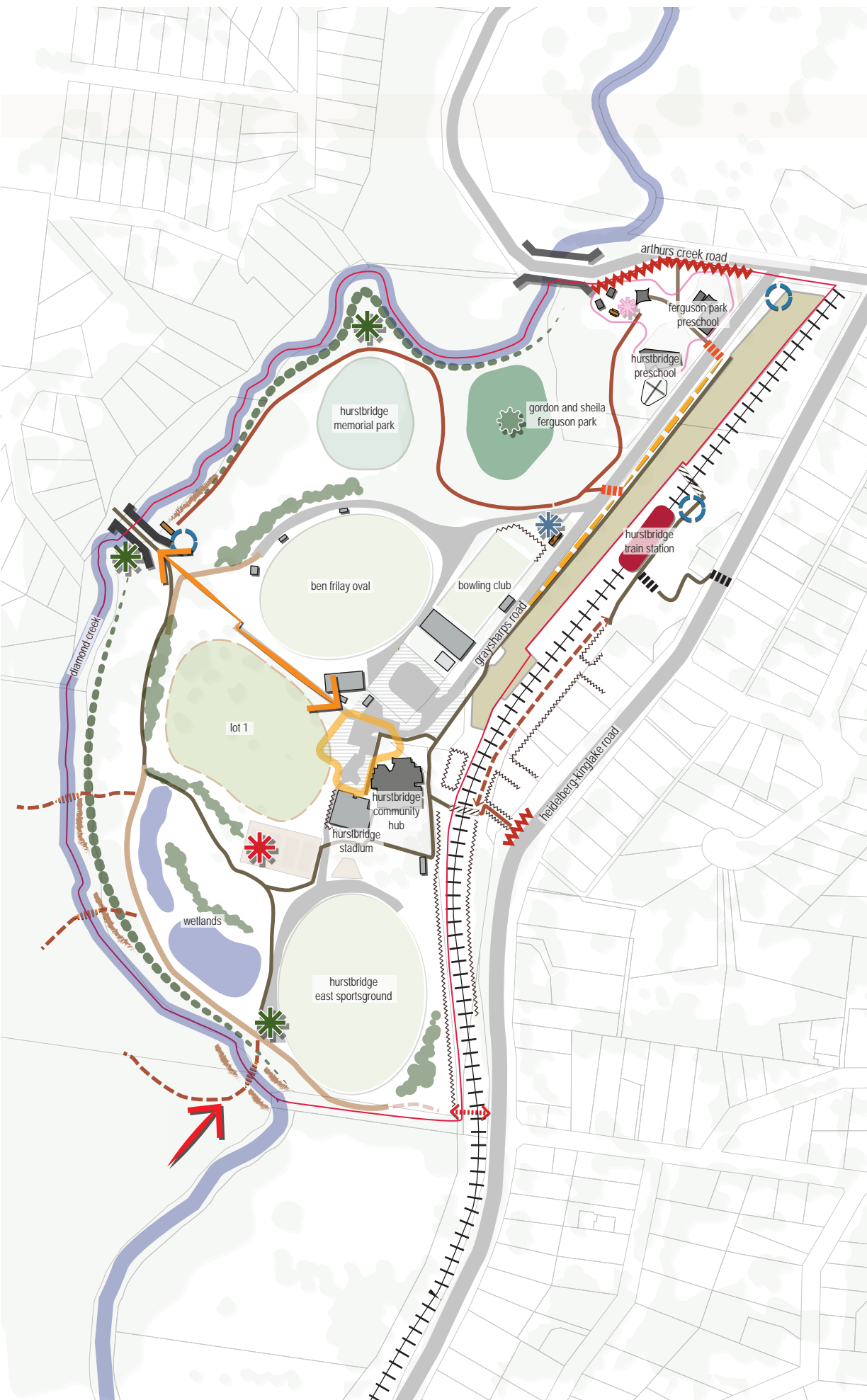




## Graysharps Road Open Space Precinct Plan Opportunities and Constraints

### legend

- subject site 
- erosion areas 
- proximity to traffic 
- hostile back of house fencing/walls 
- barrier fencing 
- pedestrian crossings 
- potential for new pedestrian crossings 
- potential to strengthen and formalise connections 
- extension of diamond creek trail 
- potential for public plaza 
- childrens play area and early childhood precinct 
- existing sealed outdoor sport court area 
- opportunity site for recreation or open space 
- memorial park/grassed area 
- revegetation opportunity 
- stop and stay opportunities 
- lack of wayfinding signage 
- existing at-grade rail crossing 
- inefficient car parking arrangements 
- recognise headstones 
- isolated anzac memorial 
- opportunity to improve riverine environs 
- landscape opportunities 
- residence 
- sporting facility buildings 
- community facility 
- public seating/tables 
- sealed pathway 
- unsealed pathway 
- desire lines/goat tracks 
- informal creek crossing 
- unsealed access road 
- road 
- railway 
- informal rail crossing 
- ad hoc carparking 
- oval 



Project Ref: 15.732  
Dwg No.: UDD-001  
Scale: 1:0000@A3  
Date: 06.06.17  
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# Precinct aspirations

Based on the opportunities and constraints outlined in the previous section of this Discussion Paper and the discussions held with the community, a series of nine overarching Precinct Aspirations were identified. These aspirations reflect the 'big picture' outcomes sought for the Precinct.

The way these aspirations are achieved in the Precinct could vary and their implementation might include a number of different actions or ideas. These actions and ideas will be determined in collaboration with the community and key stakeholders through the later stages of this planning process.

There are nine proposed Precinct Aspirations are as follows:

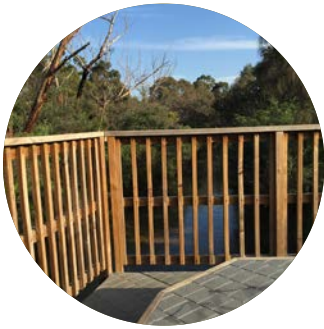
## 1. Improved access and arrival

The lack of a safe connection to the southern parts of the Precinct and the potential for an east / west link are identified but perhaps the priority in this area is improving access from the east, utilising the southern rail crossing. This is currently very uninviting and there is no footpath or road crossing proximate to the crossing on Hurstbridge – Kinglake Road. Access from the south where the proposed Diamond Creek Trail will enter the Precinct and continue on to the main street will also need to be improved.



## 2. Creekline rehabilitation and appreciation

There is not only additional scope for rehabilitation of the creekline, continuing the significant work already undertaken by community members, but also to set in place a structure which seeks to direct access to key points to reduce the current levels of erosion. Key to this may be the identification of a series of key sites for more managed access to the creek corridor, where contemplation and appreciation of the corridor can be maximised.



## 3. Integration of train station environs































The unsealed car parking is identified as undergoing significant improvements. This relates not only to the presentation, which is important given its strong influence on the appearance at key entry points, but also to the safety of movement and the efficiency of the use of this very large area within the Precinct. The southern portion of this train station area is very underutilised and offer clear opportunities to consider complementary uses for the community hub. Poorly presented tenancies also 'block' the southern rail crossing from the remainder of the Precinct.





# Graysharps Road Open Space Precinct Plan Precinct Aspirations

## legend

- subject site 
- improved access and arrival 
- creek line rehabilitation and appreciation 
- integration of train station environs 
- retain and strengthen landscape character 
- community hub integration and appreciation 
- utilise existing hard-stand area to activate southern precinct 
- retain child focus in northern precinct 
- resolve central car parking area 
- ensure materials and finishes reflect precinct's character 
- central community node 
- gateways into graysharps precinct 
- formalise and re-inforce connections 
- establish connection between early years facilities 
- retain open views 
- landscape integration opportunities 
- resolve central car parking area 
- improve train station environs 
- revegetate neglected scrub area 
- opportunity site for recreation or open space 
- continued weed removal and native planting 
- potential for low key entry to memorial park 
- activate southern precinct 
- 'stop and stay' opportunities 
- new wayfinding signage 
- recognise headstones 
- recognize isolated hurstbridge anzac memorial 
- surrounding canopy cover 
- oval 
- railway 



Project Ref: 15.732  
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## 4. Retain and strengthen landscape character

The framework identifies a number of key moves to support the existing character. Directions are provided around the integration of the Lot 1 site through the blending of public and private space (noting much of this is addressed under relevant planning controls) but also opportunities for the further integration of landscape improvement throughout the precincts.



## 5. Community hub integration and appreciation

The development of the community hub enhances the services available to the Hurstbridge community but the relatively isolated position, and the difficulty of accessing it, particularly for pedestrians, needs to be addressed. The Plan also needs to address the visibility of this facility and consider wayfinding from key precinct entry points.



## 6. Utilise hard stand area to activate southern precinct

The southern portion of the Precinct feels isolated and difficult to access, particularly due to the location of the indoor stadium. As such, it is considered that built form should be minimised on the eastern side of the access road, to avoid a sense of enclosure within such an 'open' space. The existing hard stand area could be used to activate this area through community events such as outdoor cinemas or workshops. The space should remain flexible, without permanent structures to enable it to be programmed by the community across the calendar year.





## 7. Retain child focus in northern precinct

With the current provision of early years programs within the precinct and a playground there is opportunity to further develop the northern parts of the Precinct into a more child focussed area. By undertaking landscape improvements and improving interfaces to Arthurs Creek Road, there is potential to increase the level of engagement by families with young children to the area and provide an opportunity to extend the formal early years educational programs into the bush environment.



## 8. Resolve the central car parking area

Following consultation it was identified that the resolution of car parking within the core activity area should also be a key consideration of the Precinct Plan. Remnant car carparking from the high school is inefficient and there are opportunities to improve the integration between this area and community hub car parking, as well as improving the presentation of these car parking areas.



## 9. Ensure materials and finishes reflect the precinct's character

As an overarching aspiration, any works in either the private or public realm within this Precinct should, as a first priority, consider the very special landscape setting in determining appropriate materials and finishes. The development of the community hub sets a good benchmark for built form and landscaping but works on roadways, paths, lighting improvement etc should all reflect the informal 'bush' character of the Precinct.



## Other ideas to consider...

community garden



bike workshop



bigger mens shed



integrated artworks



bird hides



outdoor courts



nature-based play



indoor stadium expansion



What are your thoughts on these aspirations? Do they reflect what you want from this space?

Do these aspirations represent a good starting point for developing a 'vision' for the Precinct?

Let us know! We're interested in hearing your thoughts about the Precinct...







# Next steps

Planning for this Precinct is in its early stages. The following steps will follow the preparation of this Discussion Paper.

## ① Where are we now?

*(June 2017)*

This Discussion Paper will be considered by the community and key stakeholders.

## ② A Project Reference Group will be established to provide Council with advice on the project throughout the process.

## ③ Where do we want to go?

*(August - September 2017)*

A series of consultation events will be held to establish the community vision for this Precinct and to gather ideas about how it might evolve.

## ④ What will we do?

*(October 2017)*

The ideas and feedback generated by the community will be assessed, and their feasibility investigated before recommendations are made.

## ⑤ Once these recommendations have been confirmed a draft Open Space Precinct Plan will be prepared.

## ⑥ Have we got it right?

*(February - March 2018)*

The draft Plan will be exhibited and feedback sought from the community as to the recommended directions for the Precinct.

## ⑦ Council will then make a resolution on whether to adopt the Plan.

## ⑧ How will we do it?

*(May 2018)*

A detailed Implementation Plan will be prepared to ensure the Plan leads to concrete outcomes.





