FUTURE BLAXLAND

Blaxland Town Centre
MASTERPLAN

TERRACED LANDSCAPED EDGE TO HOPE ST, WITH PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS TO AN ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR & LANEWAY
Acknowledgement

The City of the Blue Mountains is located within the Country of the Darug and Gundungurra peoples. Blue Mountains City Council recognises that Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners have a continuous and deep connection to their Country and that this is of great cultural significance to Aboriginal people, both locally and in the region.

For Darug and Gundungurra People, Ngurra (Country) takes in everything within the physical, cultural and spiritual landscape - landforms, waters, air, trees, rocks, plants, animals, foods, medicines, minerals, stories and special places. It includes cultural practice, kinship, knowledge, songs, stories and art, as well as spiritual beings, and people: past, present and future.

The Council also pays respect to Elders past and present while recognising the strength, capacity and resilience of past and present Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Blue Mountains region.

Consultants

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# CONTENTS

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About Blaxland ............................................ 4
1.2 Need for a Masterplan ..................................... 5
1.3 Scope ...................................................... 5
1.4 Study Area ................................................ 6

## 2 PLANNING FRAMEWORK

2.1 Legislation & Statutory Plans ......................... 8
2.2 Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan ........ 10
2.3 The Western City District ............................ 11

## 3 ANALYSIS & KEY ISSUES

3.1 Darug and Gundungurra Ngurra (Country) ........ 15
3.2 Demographic Profile .................................... 16
3.3 Zoning ..................................................... 17
3.4 Land Use .................................................. 18
3.5 Heritage & Built Character ........................... 19
3.6 Landscape Setting & Natural Environment ....... 20
3.7 Public Domain ........................................... 22
3.8 Traffic & Pedestrian Circulation ..................... 23
3.9 Blaxland’s Economy ..................................... 25
3.10 Parking & Loading ...................................... 26
3.11 Public Transport & Cycling ........................... 27
3.12 Community Facilities ................................. 28

## 4 COMMUNITY VISION

4.1 November/December 2016 ............................ 30
4.2 April/May 2017 .......................................... 31
4.3 November/December 2017 ............................ 31
4.4 Community Vision ....................................... 34

## 5 MASTERPLAN STRATEGY

5.1 The Strategy ............................................. 36
5.2 Town Centre Structure Plan ......................... 38
5.3 Key Sites & Key Themes ............................... 40
  A. IGA Carpark & Western End ......................... 40
  B. State Government Infrastructure ................... 41
  C. Station Street Pedestrian Mall & Key Pedestrian Links 42
  D. Pilgrim Place ........................................... 44
  E. Pedestrian Network & Open Space ................. 46
  F. Medium Density Housing Investigation Areas .... 48
  G. Retail & Mixed Use Village ......................... 50
5.4 Building Heights & Floor Space Ratios ............. 52
5.5 Economic Strategy ..................................... 54
5.6 Traffic, Parking & Loading ............................ 56
5.7 Open Space ............................................. 57

## 6 IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Sequencing & Priorities ............................... 60
6.2 Funding Strategy ....................................... 62
6.3 Potential Partnerships ................................. 63
1.1 About Blaxland

Blaxland is located in the lower Blue Mountains midway between Penrith and Springwood, and about 57 kilometres west of Sydney. The town is the first “main street” that drivers encounter on the Great Western Highway (GWH) after leaving Parramatta Road in western Sydney.

While the presence of the shops on the GWH is of benefit for access and visibility, this also brings loss of amenity from noise and pollution. Blaxland is an express train stop and while the rail station is separated from the retail strip by the GWH, a substantial pedestrian bridge provides easy access between the two.

Blaxland consists of a population of approximately 7,700, with most households in the area couples with or without children. Most workers are professionals, work fulltime and drive to their workplace. Most commute to central or western Sydney for work.

The town is a significant service centre for the locals and outlying towns and villages and provides a diversity of services and retail.
1.2. Need for a Masterplan

Blaxland has been prioritised for Masterplanning because of:

- The need for revitalisation;
- A lack of adequate traffic & parking facilities;
- The need to improve public safety;
- Excellent access to public transport;
- Flexibility of land use and potential for development sites;
- Accessibility; and
- Time elapsed since an earlier study.

Due to the town's ability to accommodate a greater range of housing diversity, its proximity to public transport and its potential as an accessible centre, the rewards for growth and change are potentially significant.

1.3 Scope

This Masterplan process has included a review of the following:

- Physical structure of the town centre – land use type and locations, built form, topography and context;
- Planning controls – existing planning instruments that influence town form and function (statutory and non-statutory);
- Public infrastructure – provision, adequacy, capacity (immediate to long-term) and amenity;
- Community needs and aspirations – consultation and collaboration to develop joint objectives and concepts, both physical form and intangible elements that make a vibrant town centre;
- Transport facilities – road network, intersections, parking facilities, pedestrian accessibility and safety, cycle infrastructure and public transport usage; and
- Public domain – quantity, quality, usage, connections and maintenance.
1.4 Study Area

The study area is focussed on the core retail and commercial centre of Blaxland bounded by the GWH, Hope Street and View Street.

The community facilities located on Hope and Short Streets are also included as well as transitional residential and other properties along Hope Street, View Street and Wilson Way north of the GWH and rail line, as shown in Figure 1.

Central to the area is the rail station and commuter car park. Blaxland is a compact town centre with traditional Highway frontage shops and a secondary retail and frontage to Hope Street.

Figure 1: Study Area
2.1 Legislation & Statutory Plans

NSW State Government planning legislation and policies inform Council’s planning for Blaxland town centre. They include the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, the Local Government Act 1993 and a number of State Environmental Planning Policies. The Council’s principal instruments for managing development and use are the Local Environmental Plan 2015 (LEP 2015) and the Development Control Plan 2015 (DCP 2015).

Private development can also trigger certain State planning legislation and guidance. For example, State Environmental Planning Policy No. 65 is applicable to residential flat building, shop top housing or mixed use developments (with a residential component) and aims to improve apartment design by delivering a superior living environment for residents and enhancing streetscapes and neighbourhoods.

![Diagram of hierarchy of statutory planning legislation](image-url)

Figure 2: Hierarchy of statutory planning legislation that governs public and private development and Local Government activity
The Blue Mountains Local Environmental Plan (LEP 2015) is the principal planning policy for the Blue Mountains. LEP 2015 dictates land zoning, protected areas, primary building controls and permissible land uses within zones. All land within the Masterplan Study Area is controlled and zoned under LEP 2015.

The Development Control Plan (DCP 2015) acts as a companion document to provide guidance on compliance with the LEP. Where required, Development Applications for new buildings or additions and alterations need to demonstrate compliance with the DCP objectives and standards, or justification for departure from those standards.

LEP 2015 applies to most land within the Local Government Area however other LEPs and DCPs still apply on some sites.

Other plans and policies relevant to the Blaxland Town Centre Masterplan include:

- Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP);
- Draft Integrated Transport Strategy;
- Draft Open Space Strategic Plan;
- Draft Citywide Parking Strategic Plan;
- Aging Strategy; and
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

These plans and policies can influence or contribute to this Masterplan.
2.2 Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan

The Blue Mountains Community Strategic Plan (CSP) identifies the community’s priorities and aspirations for the future of the Blue Mountains and determines strategies for achieving that shared vision, based on the following key themes: Lead, Protect, Care, Live, Move and Thrive. The key community aspiration identified in the CSP is that the liveability, vibrancy and safety of towns and villages is strengthened (Objective 2.1).

Strategies central to achieving this aim are:

- Implement innovative and sustainable urban design that creates inspiring places where people want to be;
- Enhance the distinctive qualities of towns and villages to strengthen local identity, sense of place and pride;
- Provide opportunities for people to live and work in town centres;
- Provide a range of housing choices to meet diverse needs, including adaptable and well-designed medium density and infill development to facilitate housing affordability and ‘ageing in place’; and
- Facilitate vibrant, safe, accessible, well maintained town centres through holistic place management and partnerships between Council, community and business.
2.3 The Western City District

The Western City District Plan (Greater Sydney Commission) sets out aspirations and proposals for Greater Sydney’s Western City District, which includes the Blue Mountains, Penrith, Hawkesbury, Campbelltown, Camden, Fairfield, Liverpool and Wollondilly Local Government Areas for the next 20 years. Council’s plans need to be consistent with this document.

The Western City District Plan cites Masterplanning as a key means to identify areas for investigation for additional housing capacity in the Blue Mountains.
ANALYSIS & KEY ISSUES
3.1 Darug and Gundungurra Ngurra (Country)

The ridgetop currently occupied by the Blaxland Town Centre is within the Country (Ngurra) of the Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners. For Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners, Ngurra encompasses everything within the physical, cultural and spiritual landscape.

Ngurra has nurtured and been nurtured by, countless generations of the Traditional Owners since the creation time, and it is essential that this is acknowledged in the Blaxland Town Centre Masterplan, and provides a guiding principle for future aspirations for this site.

As a result of colonisation, the part of Ngurra which now forms the town centre site has been extensively modified, and its physical landscape forever changed. However, it always remains part of Ngurra and the cultural and spiritual landscape in which it sits. It is important to remember that much of the relationship to Ngurra is invisible and intangible, existing within the living memory and culture of the Traditional Owners.

Acknowledgement of the tangible and intangible aspects of Ngurra will be included in the town centre wherever possible, as embodied reminders of these layers of Country.

Significant places near the town centre should also be recognised for their particular importance to the Traditional Owners, such as Glenbrook Lagoon, an important feature in Ngurra, providing water, and abundant other resources such as fish, crustaceans and wildfowl.

The whole of the eastern escarpment is interwoven with ancient physical and spiritual pathways, connecting the river below with the ridgetops, such as the one on which the town centre now sits.

These important places in Ngurra should be acknowledged in future urban design development for the Masterplan site.
3.2 Demographic Profile

Current and future demographic characteristics of Blaxland are a key consideration in the development of initiatives for the town centre.

The 2016 Census indicates Blaxland’s current demographic attributes include:

- A population of 7,645 persons (Estimated Resident);
- There are 2,839 dwellings, with an average household size of 2.76 persons;
- 40% of households were made up of couples with children, with 28% of households made up of couples without children;
- Compared to the whole of Blue Mountains’ population, a larger percentage of persons in the 25-39 years age group and a smaller percentage of persons aged 70-74. Figure 4 illustrates the age profile of Blaxland to Blue Mountains populations;
- 62.1% of the population (over 15 years) held formal qualifications, 2.1% higher than the whole Blue Mountains population; and
- 62% of people in the labour force work full-time and 37% part-time. Most people drive to work (76%) or catch a train (15%).

Current forecast changes to Blaxland’s demographic characteristics include:

- Between now and 2026, the population is forecast to increase by around 80 people;
- Between 2016 and 2026, the age structure forecasts indicate a 0.8% increase in population under working age, a 36.2% increase in population of retirement age, and a 7.3% decrease in population of working age as indicated in Figure 5; and
- In 2016, the dominant household type was couples with children, and by 2026 the largest forecast increase is expected in couples without dependants.

Figure 4: Five year age groups as a percentage of total population – Blaxland and Blue Mountains

Figure 5: Forecast change in age structure 2016 to 2036 by 5 year age groups
3.3 Zoning

LEP 2015 establishes the current land use zoning within the town centre - shaping the types of land use and characteristics. Figure 6 shows the zoning of Blaxland town centre is a mix common in other Blue Mountains towns.

Current land uses include retail shops, commercial businesses and professional practice rooms, medical centres, community services, cafes and restaurants, medium and low density housing and the major transport corridors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Local Centre Retail/commercial core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE1</td>
<td>Public Recreation Community facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R3</td>
<td>Medium Density Residential Higher density and professional rooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R2</td>
<td>Low Density Residential Transition areas from retail to single residential dwellings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN1</td>
<td>Light Industrial Petrol station site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4</td>
<td>Environmental Living Boundary of bushland interface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2</td>
<td>Environmental Conservation Captures the edge of the bushland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Special Purpose NSW Government managed road and rail transport corridors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: LEP 2015 land use zones in Blaxland Town Centre Masterplan study area.
3.4 Land Use

The location and types of land use heavily influence the development, sustainability, vitality, security, accessibility and economy of a town centre. The pattern of the centre’s land uses, for example, retail shops, cafes, supermarkets and personal or professional services impact the volume and location of pedestrian and vehicle activity.

A general categorisation of current land uses within the town centre is indicated in Figure 7 (right).

**The supermarket and medical centre** act as anchors and are both located at the western edge of the town centre. They draw a significant volume of pedestrian activity, whereas the eastern end of town sees higher shop vacancy rates.

This plan also highlights the minimal amount of dedicated public open space in the town centre, and its fragmented nature.
3.5 Heritage & Built Character

The Blue Mountains Local Government Area lies within the country of the Darug and Gundungurra Peoples, for whom Country means everything within the physical, cultural and spiritual landscape. The Blaxland Town Centre is part of this Country and is linked to the peoples’ relationship with land.

Representatives of the Darug and Gundungurra Peoples consider that it is essential that Country and its cultural significance is acknowledged in the Blaxland Town Centre Masterplan and embedded as a fundamental element in the future aspirations for this site.

Blaxland’s European settlement heritage is particularly related to the history of transport, from the first route found over the Blue Mountains range in 1813 by Gregory Blaxland, William Charles Wentworth and William Lawson. A road across the mountains was surveyed and built soon after. Numerous routes navigating the eastern escarpment were built until the route of the Great Western Highway was established in 1926. The route of the rail line was established in 1914, although the rail station was built in 1902. The Station buildings are heritage listed, and one of the few visible indicators of the true age of the settlement.

Blaxland town centre, like a lot of Blue Mountains towns, is dominated by the road and rail corridor. The close proximity of the GWH and railway serves a positive purpose in many ways including accessibility, economic benefits and vitality but also negatively impacts the form, function and amenity of the town centre.

Unlike many other Mountains towns, there are few heritage listed buildings and Blaxland is unremarkable in built character. Sporadic, largely infill development from the 1970s has resulted in an assortment of built scale, form, facades and set-backs. However, infill development, by its nature has provided most of the centre with individual shop fronts, creating a ‘fine-grain’ texture, generally appealing to users. The relatively unbroken line of strip shops along the Great Western Highway at the eastern end generally presents a cohesive building line, and a clear “Main Street” setting.

It is clear from the community consultation that many residents think that renewal of the town centre is desirable, provided that amenity is improved and design quality of the built form can be achieved.
3.6 Landscape Setting & Natural Environment

The character of the town centre and its orientation to the major transport corridor does not reflect the landscape setting of the wider town which occupies the major ridge and is bordered by bushland on north and south sides.

This landscape setting evoked comments during the community workshops and is considered an important – albeit not readily apparent – quality of the town. This setting can be seen from elevated locations such as the pedestrian bridge over the GWH, and on the borders of the town centre and its adjacent residential areas.

It is important to reference this broader landscape setting within the town centre. Throughout the Mountains, the “Cultural landscape” of exotic street trees is used to landmark the urban setting of the town centres, with indigenous vegetation used to signify land between towns.

In the case of Blaxland, indigenous street trees should be brought into Hope Street to reference the bushland setting, and the small bushland remnants at the GWH entry points to the town centre could be consolidated.

Water Sensitive Urban Design will be used in the town centre to help manage flood mitigation and help grow street trees.
Figure 8: Blaxland town centre: landscape setting
3.7 Public Domain

The public spaces in Blaxland are disjointed, isolated, of low-quality and as a result, underutilised. Events such as markets enliven these places from time to time, however generally they are quiet and used as thoroughfares rather than places to linger.

Pedestrian activity largely occurs east-west with the exception of the Blaxland Arcade which draws pedestrians north-south from the GWH to the public car park. There are internal public pedestrian laneway connections through the main retail strip, some through car parks. This creates conflicts with vehicles reducing pedestrian safety, and restricting movements.

The 1990s GWH upgrade resulted in some pedestrian footpaths adjacent to the Highway becoming residual land that is neither functional nor efficiently used.

**Station Street Mall** is the main public space in the town centre and is centrally located. Dominated by the pedestrian ramp and steps that provide access to the bridge to the railway station and Wilson Way over the Highway, The Mall’s usability is constrained by its steep slope. Traffic noise from the Highway also constrains the use of the space. The public toilets located at the southern end of the mall detract from its amenity and block potential view lines to the bushland beyond.

**Outrim Park** adjacent to the IGA car park was created in 2013 to introduce a town centre park with play equipment. However the park currently experiences much lower use than originally expected.

Landscaping throughout the centre is unremarkable, lacks quality, consistency and is underserviced. Planting is sporadic and irregular, apart from the Canary Island Date Palms on the GWH. These are contentious, although robust and do provide functional town centre landmarks.

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**Public domain considerations:**

- Review potential to increase public domain and enhance linkages that allow it to be cohesive, extensive, and functional with improved amenity that leads to increased public use;
- Provide pedestrian links with universal access that allow safe and extensive access on foot;
- Review Station Street Mall and identify improvements to its function and amenity; and
- Review best location for Outrim Park / play setting.
3.8 Traffic & Pedestrian Circulation

The Great Western Highway, controlled by the NSW Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) provides the major vehicle access for Blaxland. It connects the Sydney metropolitan area to Katoomba and destinations to the west. Access to the town centre is also gained via a local road network including Layton Avenue, Hope Street, View Street and Wilson Way. Figure 9 (next page) illustrates existing vehicle and pedestrian circulation.

Layton Avenue, Hope Street and View Street are key roads for the town centre – each with constraints that impact their functioning.

A review of traffic function indicates that the Highway west of View Street operates at a poor level on weekdays and the unsignalised intersection between View Street and the Highway operates at a poor level of service and is less than optimal for right turning movements into and out of the GWH.

The pedestrian overbridge is a key piece of infrastructure as it connects Wilson Way to the town centre and railway station. There are also phased pedestrian crossings at Layton Avenue and Hope Streets, and pedestrian refuges in the median of the Highway. Hope Street functions as a local road and allows access to the back of the retail strip for residents on the south side of the street.

It should be noted that the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) does not include any high priority works in or near the Blaxland Town Centre. All pedestrian areas within the town centre require review for inclusion in a public domain plan to achieve a level of universal access and to enable the Masterplan Strategy.
3 ANALYSIS & KEY ISSUES

Figure 9: Traffic and Pedestrian circulation within Blaxland Town Centre
### 3.9 Blaxland’s Economy

**Blaxland’s role**

The town centre currently fulfils a local employment role, with jobs and services for the population of Blaxland and surrounding villages. Given its Highway location, Blaxland also provides a convenient service centre for both visitors and residents, particularly those traveling west.

Whilst often considered a “village” within the hierarchy of towns and centres in the Blue Mountains, Blaxland has the opportunity to expand its role within the Blue Mountains economy, in part due to:

- Its location close to Penrith and other centres in Western Sydney, and as a convenient ‘stopping off’ point on the GWH;
- Its location close to the proposed Western Sydney Airport and associated employment land;
- Good transport connections (particularly road and rail) to Penrith, Parramatta, the City, the upper Mountains and further west;
- A relatively unconstrained town centre, i.e. Blaxland Town Centre has few heritage items/buildings and existing aging buildings, often of poor quality; and
- Its high proportion of small businesses registered to local addresses who may require access to facilities.

The above factors provide opportunity associated with its redevelopment and renewal.

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**Preconditions to attract employers to locate in Blaxland, and that should be considered in the Masterplan are likely to include:**

- **Digital connectivity** – access to high speed broadband and internet is essential for business as well as the provision of public wi-fi and charging stations;
- **Higher amenity** – An increase in amenity and safety (especially in public spaces);
- **Services and facilities** – The provision of additional shopping and food/dining venues; and
- **Transport and access** – whilst good transport options currently exist, there is an opportunity to improve access in the centre, including for those with disabilities.
3.10 Parking & Loading

Parking

A 2016 survey of parking indicated a weekday peak parking occupancy in the town centre of 66% and weekend rates of around 26%. There is some community dissatisfaction with the size of parking spaces and circulation in the council-owned IGA carpark. There is also anecdotal evidence that commuter parking is overflowing into town centre spaces during business hours. The survey also confirms commuter parking running at 98%.

Key conclusions are:

- All on-street restricted spaces have considerably higher utilisation on Thursday (69%) and Friday (63%) than on Sunday (37%);
- Spaces in Council’s carparks experience an average occupancy over 68% and 64% on Thursday and Friday respectively, considerably more than on Saturday (35%) and they operate with ample spare capacity;
- The parking spaces of the IGA carpark and the Medical Centre operated at near peak capacity at the time of the survey with this situation expected to occur every weekday; and
- The commuter carpark is used at capacity during the whole day on the Thursday. On Saturday, the occupancy of the commuter carpark peaked at about 30%. The occupancy of the on-street spaces north of the railway line experienced a similar pattern indicating that most spaces are used by commuters.

Key issues for loading and parking need to:

1. Review all town centre parking to identify optimum time restrictions.
2. Review IGA car parking for compliance with standards and enhanced circulation.
3. Pilgrim Place is used to access loading facilities for retail premises fronting the GWH. These facilities must remain and be factored in when Pilgrim Place proposal is designed and constructed.
4. Loading facilities at the rear of the IGA can conflict with customer parking and circulation, and pedestrian access. Council would like to consult business and landowners in this location to identify and implement improvements that would make this area safer and more effective.

The functioning of Hope Street as both a local road and access to key parking for the town centre retail should be recognised in any improvements.
### 3.11 Public Transport & Cycling

**Public Transport**

Blaxland is a “skip stop” (express train stop) on the Blue Mountains rail line, servicing the significant resident commuter population. It also has upgraded access enabling full access for people with a disability.

As the pedestrian overbridge enables pedestrian access on both sides of the GWH, it also enables commuter parking in the town centre.

The functioning of Hope Street as both local road and access to key parking for the town centre retail should be recognised in any improvements.

**Cycling**

The GWH incorporates a bike lane each way, and there is a shared footpath from the eastern end of the Blaxland retail centre. Note that the map (at left) indicates extended bicycle routes northwards from Wilson Way, using Old Bathurst Road and Mitchell Pass, both scenic routes.

Enabling of cycling in the Blaxland town centre utilising lengths of shared pedestrian paths and dismount areas will be included in planning for the town centre. Bike racks will also be included in public domain furniture.

Extension of both bicycle lockers and bike racks may be required for Wilson Way adjacent to the rail station as these currently show evidence of high use.

Council will lobby Infrastructure for NSW Transport to identify and implement capacity for extended commuter car parking.
3.12 Community Facilities

The Blaxland community centre has a library, Neighbourhood Centre, several meeting rooms, commercial kitchen and community hall. It is well utilised, particularly by community organisations and is regarded as an invaluable community asset. It is located below Hope Street on a bushland site and has a number of constraints:

- Universal access to the facilities is compromised due to the steep gradient and aging building infrastructure;
- The setback of the building away from the street frontage and downslope behind bushland reduces the facility’s visibility and profile in the community;
- The setback of the building from the street frontage also regularly leads to anti-social behaviour after hours, and occasional theft and vandalism;
- The site has a high bushfire risk rating due to its proximity to bushland. It cannot be used as a safe haven during bad bushfire weather, and has sometimes been evacuated in high fire danger periods;
- The site is also prone to flooding, as the GWH drains into the around the north and western sides of the building which has suffered damage from termites and rot in these locations; and
- While currently safe, the building has some asbestos which may require removal in the longer term.

A proposal to relocate the entire community facilities into the town centre came from the community in the initial consultation workshop, and was identified as an opportunity to help revitalise the town centre.
The community consultation strategy has used an iterative design process including Analysis, Concepts Planning and Design stages. At each of the first three stages, a community workshop was held, followed by a six week on-line and hard copy exhibition. Stakeholder briefings for local businesses and some major landholders followed. This process has allowed community voices to directly influence the Masterplan development. This has been particularly important in the case of Blaxland as it allowed Council staff to test community responses to the extent of proposed structural changes to the town centre as they were developed.

4.1 November/December 2016

The initial “Analysis, Opportunities and Vision” workshop was held at the Lower Mountains Neighbourhood centre at Blaxland on 4 November 2016 followed by a six week exhibition period online to gather community views on problems and opportunities, and to understand which existing town centre qualities were valued. The wordle below reflects the frequency that individual words occurred in the visioning activity.
4.2 April/May 2017

In April 2017 Council took several concepts to a second consultation. Two key drivers had emerged from the first workshop: the relocation of existing community facilities into the centre of town, and an activated town centre that avoided the negative impacts of the Great Western Highway. These would require significant changes to the existing town structure. It also became clear that there was a degree of support for “shop-top” housing, as part of the identified critical issue of housing shortfall for an aging population.

These concepts generally received a very positive response, with a qualified acceptance of an increase in allowable building heights if other outcomes could be met, including high design quality.

4.3 November/December 2017

Council commissioned further design development for the town centre and an architectural feasibility study for the Council owned land in Pilgrim Place and took these to Stakeholder briefings and a further workshop and exhibition. These proposals have received largely positive responses and indicate a broad community support for structural change in the town centre.
The results of the consultation are summarised below:

Community facilities: Strong support for their relocation into the town centre

Street appearance: The provision of a “shared” laneway between the proposed community facilities and the rear of existing shops was strongly supported. Whilst mostly on Council land, this would require dedication of two strips of land at its western end, adjacent to Station Street and the Mall.

Traditional Owners: Support for continuing references to Darug and Gundungurra Traditional Owners and their ongoing relationship to Country within the town centre.

Parking: The provision of two levels of underground parking with at-grade access from Hope Street was strongly supported.

Shop top housing: The provision of this form of housing was well supported, with a few objectors. Comments were often qualified by a statement emphasizing the importance of design quality, management of overshadowing, and strategies to manage the appearance of building bulk and scale.

Office & retail: The provision of some floorspace was strongly supported.

Building heights: The Concept proposed a total of five storeys, including two underground parking levels. These were well supported, with a few objectors.

Lawson precedent: A number of workshop participants cited the rebuilding of Lawson town centre (opposite) after the GWH widening saw the demolition of the entire stretch of main street premises. In that instance Council acquired two significant properties and gained DA approval to set a design precedent which allowed additional shops and a high amenity pedestrian area to the rear and down slope of the GWH frontage. This topography is very similar to Blaxland. Lawson development was designed to include one level of shop-top housing.
Lawson: Staples Crescent frontage

Proposed shared laneway

Lawson: GWH frontage
4.4 Community Vision

This vision has been developed from the community consultation and analysis work and has guided the development of the Blaxland Town Centre Masterplan concept. The key principles are:

1. Enhance Blaxland’s role as a service town of considerable convenience.
2. Enhance Blaxland’s identity and visible character as a Blue Mountains village/town.
3. Add value to the town’s function through town centre living, village atmosphere and providing town centre housing and improvements to village amenity, atmosphere and encouraging people to linger.
4. Design the new Centre to promote a strong sense of community.
5. Enable the progress of the town centre as an employment hub.
6. Recognise and enhance the bushland setting of the town and connections to Darug and Gundungurra Country.
7. Improve pedestrian connectivity, traffic flow and parking.
5.1 The Strategy

Seven principles have been recognised as a basis for the strategy:

1. **Convenience**
   - Enhance Blaxland’s current status as a service town of considerable convenience

2. **Character**
   - Enhance Blaxland’s identity and visible character as a Blue Mountains village/town

3. **Town centre living**
   - Add value to the town’s function through providing town centre housing and improvements to village atmosphere and amenity

4. **Community**
   - Design the new centre to promote a strong sense of community

5. **Employment**
   - Enable the progress of the town centre as an employment hub

6. **Bushland setting**
   - Recognise and enhance the bushland setting of the town and connections to Darug and Gundungurra Country

7. **Connectivity**
   - Improve pedestrian connectivity, traffic flow and parking
A TERRACED GARDEN EDGE TO HOPE ST
basement carpark entry off Hope St, pedestrian connections up to the ground floor community centre/retail/offices

H O P E  S T

5 MASTERPLAN STRATEGY
5.2 Town Centre Structure Plan

The Structure Plan at right sets the essential framework for the town centre and lists a number of key focus areas and critical links. The relationship of the framework with the principles is indicated below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Focus Area</th>
<th>Convenience</th>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Town centre living</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Employment</th>
<th>Bushland Setting</th>
<th>Connectivity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. IGA Carpark and western end of town. Note that this section may be the focus of further study</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Infrastructure owned and managed by NSW State Government agencies (subject to negotiation with relevant agencies)</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Station Street Mall and key pedestrian links through the centre</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Pilgrim Place proposal</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Open space and pedestrian network</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>F. Medium density housing investigation areas within and immediately adjacent to the town centre</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>G. Retail and Mixed Use in the town centre</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>✔</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 MASTERPLAN STRATEGY

- Investigate Medium Density Housing
- Open Space and Pedestrian Network
- Retail & Mixed Use Village

TOWN CENTRE STRUCTURE PLAN

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F
- G
5.3 Key Sites & Key Themes

A. IGA Carpark & Western End

There is considerable room for improvement to the amenity of the carpark area and both frontages of the IGA complex. Improvements to the Council owned carpark will include:

- Review of circulation and car parking to identify improvements;
- Review compliance with current standards for both standard and accessible car parking spaces;
- Review and improve pedestrian & cycle links through carpark and connections to View, Hope and Station Streets;
- Provide shade and landscaping;
- Work with building owners and businesses to improve delivery and loading arrangements;
- Work with building owners and businesses to improve presentation of building to both GWH frontage and the carpark on the southern side;
- Work with building owners to improve activation to the GWH; and
- Consider potential for additional multi-deck parking in medium-longer term (reducing the need for parking in Pilgrim Place – Key Site D).

Note that the carpark and western end may be the subject of further, future study.
B. State Government Infrastructure

The town centre is impacted by infrastructure owned and managed by State Government agencies:

- Inadequate commuter parking provision results in overflow into the residential streets and town centre commercial areas; and

- The highly intrusive pedestrian ramp which overshadows the Station Street Pedestrian Mall, limits its potential as a pedestrian space and inhibits activity in the mall area.

Council has commenced discussions and lobbying to resolve these issues through an increase in commuter parking, the replacement of the pedestrian ramp in Station Street with an elevator, and re-alignment of the stairs to minimise footprint and visual impact on the Station Street Pedestrian Mall – considered a key site for town centre improvements.
C. Station Street Pedestrian Mall & Key Pedestrian Links

The amenity, safety and function of the Station Street Mall is compromised by a number of factors that cannot easily be changed without amendments to its structure. The Concept (opposite) and section (below) propose:

- Installation of a level platform to the mall area, allowing higher functionality and activation particularly to the eastern side – depends on replacement of the access ramp with an elevator at the southern end of the pedestrian bridge;
- Edging of the platform with sitting steps;
- Demolition/relocation of the toilet block, opening up views to bushland to the south;
- Establishment of a major pedestrian footpath along the western side as the at-grade north/south access for the length of Station Street;
- Upgrade of the key pedestrian links with Pilgrim Place and the IGA carpark and shops; and
- The establishment of a strong materials palette especially paving to enhance the whole town centre pedestrian network with Station Street Mall at its centre.

- Incorporate references to Darug and Gundungurra Peoples’ connection to Country in materials and/or artwork.
D. Pilgrim Place

The medium-longer term proposal to relocate community facilities into the town centre came from the community in the initial consultation workshop. The current community centre located below Hope Street on a bushland site that has a number of significant constraints as detailed in Section 3.9.

The opportunity to resolve these issues and provide a central space in the town centre has been strongly supported in the community consultation. This proposal seeks to use the Council owned car parking (4500m²) to the east of Station Street Mall and at the rear of the shops facing the GWH between Station Street and Hope Street/Layton Street traffic lights, making the most of the topography to provide:

- All community services & facilities (including the library) relocated;
- Two levels of car parking partly underground, entry at grade from Hope Street (alternatively one level with parking provided elsewhere) in the centre;
- Retail and commercial space;
- Shared laneway between old and new shopfronts (mostly Council land, but requiring dedication of a strip of land adjoining 2-4 Station Street & 14 Hope Street); and
- Two levels of “shop-top” housing.

The five metre cross fall on the site allows for a number of levels while minimising visual impact, particularly in relation to the proposed two car parking levels. The set out as shown in the plan (opposite) also allows for deep soil and substantial landscaping to the Hope Street frontage.

Additional research will be required to ensure feasibility of this project, as the high cost of providing basement car parking levels may need to be offset with additional commercial or residential levels. Alternatively, other locations for cheaper parking could be considered (multi-deck parking at IGA or the existing Community Centre).
5 MASTERPLAN STRATEGY

Pilgrim Place proposal: cross section 1

- Basement carpark entry
- Existing ground line
- Proposed shared laneway
- L2 Residential
- L1 Residential
- G Community centre
- B2 Parking
- B1 Basement carpark entry

Existing retail
Potential future development
Proposed shared laneway
Existing retail
Existing retail
Potential future development
Existing retail
Potential future development
E. Pedestrian Network & Open Space

The existing pedestrian network through the town centre suffers from a number of inadequacies and the Masterplan proposes:

1. A legible and universally accessible pedestrian network enabling and encouraging foot traffic through the full length of the town.
2. Key pedestrian focus points at the current Station Street pedestrian mall and a new shared central laneway frontage to the proposed community facilities in Pilgrim Place.
3. Enhanced and clearly legible pedestrian links between Station Street Mall and Pilgrim Place, and Station Street Mall and IGA carpark.
4. Explore and include references to Traditional Owners relationship to and respect for this part of Country before and during colonisation – possibly as artwork and hard landscaping in the urban design of the town centre.
5. An at-grade north/south access in Station Street enabling universal access from Hope Street to the GWH via the proposed Station Street Mall area.
6. Shared bike path on the northern side of Hope Street, as southern edge to the town centre.
7. Identify location of interim toilet facilities until they can be integrated with Community facilities relocation.
8. Consider re-location of Outrim Park to achieve higher patronage rates – possibly associated with proposed Community facilities or the Station Street Mall.
While Blaxland’s broader landscape setting can be seen from higher points of view such as the pedestrian bridge over the GWH, it is not so evident at ground level. To the south of the town centre there are extensive areas of *Eucalyptus piperita / Angophora costata* open forest. Ridges to the north beyond the residential areas bear significant stands of *W. eximia / E. gummifera* woodland and open forest.

The Masterplan seeks to re-establish this lost connection between the town centre and its indigenous landscape setting through the selective use of appropriate street tree planting such as Grey Gum (*E. punctata*), particularly in Hope Street and in the IGA carpark.

Other remnant bushland in the town centre will be extended and consolidated where possible, and Water Sensitive Urban Design should be used in conjunction with street tree planting.

1. Extensive tree planting – using species identified in the Street Tree Masterplan such as Grey Gum (*E. punctata*) to acknowledge and enhance Blaxland’s Bushland setting.

2. Identify opportunities to extend and consolidate remnant bushland at the eastern end of the town centre as a gateway for the GWH.

3. Identify and develop Water Sensitive Urban Design technology for use in conjunction with street and parking lot tree planting.
F. Medium Density Housing Investigation Areas

While there has been some uptake of medium density housing in Blaxland, it is timely to investigate the zoning and building heights of land in and adjacent to the town centre to provide greater housing diversity and provide access to services and transport – especially for an aging population.

This matter will be considered and further investigated during the preparation of BMCC’s Local Housing Strategy.

Recent research and analysis of the 2016 Census results indicates four clear areas of need:

1. **Diverse housing choice** – provision of a range of dwelling sizes and types to extend choice and the opportunity to select dwellings better suited to need;
2. **Affordability** – so that households are not forced to pay for housing in excess of their need;
3. **Opportunities to ‘age in place’** - for an aging population, suitable housing needs to be appropriately sized, designed and located near services and transport;
4. **Design quality** – high quality design is necessary to protect amenity and character, and ensure sustainability and liveability for occupants.

The diagram below illustrates the need for housing diversity in the Blue Mountains, where:

A. Single dwellings comprise the dominant housing stock at 92%.
B. There is increasing demand for “hidden density” such as dual occupancies and granny flats, which BMCC encourages where appropriate.
C. Fine grained Medium Density: a typology being investigated in the Local Housing Strategy. This category should be tailored to conditions in individual town centres and should incorporate high design quality.
The extent of medium density housing may be limited by the presence of Bushfire Constrained Land adjacent to the town centre where vegetation and topography result in a high bushfire risk.

Map: Bushfire Prone Land Blaxland. Orange: Category 1 (highest risk). Yellow: Category 2 (lower risk). Red: Bushfire Buffer (100 metres)
G. Retail & Mixed Use Village

In the context of a town centre with little architecture of either heritage significance or design merit, the Masterplan seeks to facilitate renewal of the built form to meet the community vision developed during the consultation process. The proposed changes will require increases in allowable building height within the current retail precinct, allowing basement car parking and provision of shop top housing. Provided the allowable height increases are economically feasible, these changes have potential to deliver positive outcomes for this town centre, including:

- Renewal of existing building stock to a higher design standard;
- Incorporation of higher levels of public domain amenity – such as outdoor dining with shelter from GWH noise impacts;
- Provision of higher levels of car parking;
- Floorspace better suited to commercial and retail activities;
- Shop-top housing;
- Location of more resident footfall and a decrease in need for car use in town centre; and
- Reduction of anti-social activity in the town centre by increasing casual surveillance.

**Shop top housing** – a traditional format which had become unfashionable – is now experiencing a renaissance in modern planning, and has particular usefulness in the Blue Mountains due to a lack of greenfield housing sites and an aging population. Like Medium Density, this format has a lot to offer if a level of design quality can be achieved and is factored into the feasibility assessment.

Increased building heights would only be permitted if a high level of design quality and amenity is provided, and clear public benefit is provided. (e.g. dedication of public space or contribution to the public domain).
Pilgrim Place Proposal viewed from eastern end of Hope Street – artist’s impression
5.4 Building Heights & Floor Space Ratios

To encourage and facilitate redevelopment and renewal in the town centre, this Masterplan proposes an increase on the development standards that dictate the height and density of buildings.

Mixed use developments including shop top housing are largely supplied by the private market. A challenge to providing these types of developments in the Blaxland town centre is that the financial investment required is likely to exceed the gains given the current LEP. Under Council's previous LEP 2005, a height to eaves of 9 metres (with a maximum of 12 metres) was translated in LEP2015 as a height of 9 metres.

Key to generating new mixed use developments across the town centre are changes to the standards on building heights and Floor Space Ratio (FSR). The impression of Pilgrim Place below indicates a three storey building around 15 metres in height from ground level. Two basement levels accommodate the car parking but sit partly above the existing ground level in Hope Street.

As shown in the table at right, LEP 2015 currently allows a maximum building height limit of 9 metres and an FSR of 1:1 throughout most of the core commercial centre. This translates to 2-3 storey buildings. This limits the overall development yield that can be achieved as indicated by initial feasibility testing – and is a disincentive for renewal of buildings and provision of shop-top housing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Height from Ground Approx.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current standards under LEP 2015</td>
<td>9 metres (2-3 storeys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous standards under previous LEP 2005</td>
<td>12 metres (3-4 storeys)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential future standards to be further investigated</td>
<td>12-15 meters (3-5 storeys) – subject to design quality and community benefits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cross section of proposal for development on Pilgrim Place. The diagram shows 3 storeys of mixed use (9-10m high) and 2 levels of basement car parking (around 5.5m high).
Any increase to development controls must consider the impact on the town character and streetscape. Analysis of the potential building scale, bulk, articulation and overshadowing will be undertaken as part of the process to amend LEP 2015. Space for landscaping on major frontages also needs to be considered to maximise amenity and positively contribute to the immediate streetscape and wider bushland setting.

An LEP is amended through a process called a Planning Proposal. The stages in developing a Planning Proposal are detailed further in Section 6 of this Masterplan.

**Community Benefit**

For additional heights at the scale proposed, developers would need to be able to demonstrate substantive community benefits. This may include dedication of land to enable the central shared laneway. Other benefits might include provision of community facilities. This requirement would be written into the planning controls.
5.5 Economic Strategy

The Masterplan envisages that Blaxland will play a stronger role in the local economy – the town centre will have a role in supporting key existing and emerging industries in the Blue Mountains – services, creative industries, the arts, niche industries and start-ups, whilst continuing its current role as a convenient service centre.

A number of key concepts within the Masterplan will drive this economic renewal:

- Town centre living;
- Opportunities for new and redeveloped retail;
- Opportunities for new commercial/office space;
- A new community centre/ hub; and
- An arts and events strategy

Town Centre Living

Increasing the population of residents in the town centre will provide a more vital and safer public domain, whilst creating increased demand for local goods and services. The Masterplan investigates the potential for increased height and density to help facilitate shop top housing in the town centre.

Opportunities for new and redeveloped retail

Currently retail expenditure from the lower Blue Mountains is escaping to Penrith and Emu Plains. In the long term there is an opportunity to recoup some of this by providing additional retail floorspace, particularly for fresh food and dining.

For Blaxland additional floorspace can be provided in a range of locations – but particularly at the rear of properties on the GWH – including possible expansion of the existing IGA/shopping centre. There is also opportunity for a smaller amount of new retail space in the Pilgrim Place precinct, alongside the proposed community centre.

Whilst it is acknowledged there is some current vacant floorspace, a revitalised town centre is likely to create new demand which will increase over time. Reducing escape expenditure through providing more floor space will provide community benefits by providing new jobs, reducing travel times to meet retail needs and increasing competition.
Opportunities for new commercial/office space

A retail and commercial floorspace study undertaken by SGS Consulting predicted that, based on current population growth alone, there would be a limited need for new office floorspace in Blaxland town centre over the next 20 years.

However the nature of employment and requirements for employment floorspace are changing rapidly. More people are setting up home businesses, and the demand for managed workspace hubs is increasing across the wider region. An increase in the need for flexible, affordable and diverse spaces is likely. As with retail, the revitalisation of the town centre will encourage renewal and further commercial investment.

A new community centre/hub

The proposed relocation of a new community centre and the wider redevelopment of Pilgrim Place will provide a central community hub – a place for people to collaborate and socialise. It is also intended to act as a catalyst for economic renewal of the town centre. With a modern library and neighbourhood centre at its core, it would also seek to provide a public hall and meeting rooms.

Arts and events strategy

Blaxland town centre has few public events compared with other towns in the Mountains. An Annual Explorers day is held in May and until recently, a small regular market was held in the town centre. The new central laneway and revitalised mall in conjunction with an active role by the LMNC will provide opportunities to develop a public events strategy as well as opportunities for permanent and temporary public art. In the interim period, a strategy could be developed to encourage temporary activations.

Flexibility

Maintaining flexibility in land uses is important to delivering economic development outcomes in the town centre. The current town centre land use zoning B2 Local Centre provides flexibility to enable a range of retail, business and housing, allowing landowners and developers to respond to market needs.
5.6 Traffic, Parking & Loading

While current town centre parking has generally adequate numbers any increase in retail, commercial or residential floorspace will require additional parking spaces. This will be considered in future planning studies for Pilgrim Place and development will be required to meet the development standards for parking provision. As noted earlier, excavation of basements to accommodate parking may require greater building heights to make them feasible for development, and this balance will require further study or an alternative location for car parking.

The Draft Citywide Parking Strategic Plan identifies the value of managing existing parking. In Blaxland a review of time restricted spaces is recommended to better align with demand.

Increases in traffic due to intensification of land use in the town centre will require review of the intersection function. Downgrading of the efficiency of View Street/GWH intersection (already identified as having a poor level of function) and GWH/Layton Avenue/Hope Street is anticipated. The impacts to carriageway and intersection function will be assessed for any future development in the town centre. Where the impacts substantially affect traffic function, negotiation on modifications with Transport for NSW, Roads and Maritime Service will be required due to the interface with the GWH.

Loading and servicing facilities for any new development in the town centre will be assessed as part of a Development Application. In Pilgrim Place, these functions will need to be factored in to the detailed design of the shared laneway. Subject to the rate and scale of development, additional loading facilities may also need to be accommodated on the GWH, Station Street and Hope Street.

As part of implementing this Masterplan, Council will liaise with local businesses and landowners to identify improvements to loading facilities for the Blaxland Arcade/IGA shopping centre to reduce the conflict between heavy vehicles, cars and pedestrians.
5.7 Open Space

The dedicated open space within the town centre area is small and fragmented, and the Masterplan has identified a number of opportunities.

Outrim Park

The location of this underused facility will be reviewed with a view to identifying a better site that would optimise its use. The playground could be located in the Mall as a softfall area using similar play equipment, or associated with the relocated community facilities at the eastern end. This relocation would present an opportunity to rationalise the disjointed Council operational land associated with the IGA carpark with flow on benefits for access and safety.

Pedestrian Network

The key links between the focus areas of Pilgrim Place, Station Street and the major pedestrian entry to the IGA shopping centre are currently narrow, illegible and badly in need of renewal. The link between Pilgrim Place and Station Street – currently a minimal 1.2 metres wide, requires further research and liaison with adjoining landowners, identifying mechanisms which would allow a significant widening. Key links require paving utilising a clear materials palette that indicates their importance in the network.

The Council owned laneways between Station Street and the IGA carpark need to be paved for maximum pedestrian access, using the selected materials to increase legibility. While views for the length of the block from the rear of IGA to Pilgrim Place are not possible, the use of a clear materials palette which “signals” this primary pedestrian route is of key importance.

Station Street

The Concept plan for the Station Street mall highlights the importance of a universally accessible north/south pedestrian access between Hope Street and the GWH. The Mall itself will have a central, social focus and the major path running on the western side of Station Street, will continue current access for existing retail premises to the street.

Hope Street

The importance of Hope Street as both a local road, but also for vehicular access to the current retail and future Pilgrim Place proposal indicates the need for a shared footpath (for pedestrian and cycle access) to the northern side of Hope Street.
6 IMPLEMENTATION

The Blaxland Masterplan is a high level strategic document with a 20 year timeframe. Successful implementation will depend on a range of factors, including the availability of funding, community support and the involvement of State Government (Infrastructure for NSW, Roads and Maritime Services and NSW Department of Planning & Environment). The feasibility of planning controls and a range of market conditions will influence the timing of renewal and redevelopment on private and public land in the town centre.

The following chapter outlines briefly the key implementation issues and includes a broad timeline, subject to detailed planning.

6.1 Sequencing & Priorities

Priority projects for work in 2018 are:

State Government Agencies

Continue to advocate Transport for NSW (TfNSW) for an extension to commuter car parking at Blaxland rail station and wider solutions to commuter parking in the lower Blue Mountains.

Also advocate for the GWH pedestrian ramp to be replaced with elevator and stairs under the TfNSW government Transport Access Program.

Planning Proposal

BMCC will prepare a draft Planning Proposal for the town centre that seeks to amend building height and density controls. Once supported by Council it will be submitted to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE). This would be followed by Community consultation, and subject to a review of submissions, a draft amending LEP.

Pedestrian and Cycle Network

Develop detailed pedestrian & cycle network plan including liaison with adjoining landowners to identify potential for widening key links. The network plan will consider the universal access requirements identified in the town centre accessibility audit (completed February 2017).

Public Domain Guidelines

Develop guidelines for paving hierarchy, street furniture, tree planting and public art including a strategy to encourage temporary artworks and events.

Parking

Implement key actions from the Citywide Parking Strategy including a review of timed parking.
Projects which are deemed less urgent, or have longer or more complex processes, will require further review to identify longer term programming:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicative Timeline</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Review IGA carpark &amp; GWH frontage</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve safety, maximise parking spaces and ensure compliance with current standards</td>
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<td>Review IGA GWH frontage to identify improvements and activation</td>
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<td><strong>Station Street Pedestrian Mall &amp; Key Links</strong></td>
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<td>Design improvements to pedestrian circulation through entire town centre</td>
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<td>Install level platform to Mall (dependent on replacement of stairs and ramp)</td>
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<td>Demolish &amp; relocate toilets</td>
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<td>Extend tree planting throughout town centre &amp; consolidate existing bushland</td>
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<td>Install north/south major footpath along western side of Station Street</td>
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<td>Upgrade pedestrian links on west side</td>
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<td><strong>Medium Density Housing Investigation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete housing investigation process for Blaxland as part of BMCC Housing Strategy</td>
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<td><strong>Pilgrim Place Proposal</strong></td>
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<td>Investigate funding mechanisms, design, access and tenure (e.g. strata arrangement)</td>
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<td>Design development &amp; documentation</td>
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6.2 Funding Strategy

Council has a number of options for funding the projects identified in the Masterplan and a funding strategy will be developed as part of the implementation of the Masterplan.

Asset Works Program

Council manages and plans for its Assets Works in 4 and 10 year cycles and its current cycle is 2017-2021. A number of the projects proposed in the Masterplan for the public domain (Council-owned property) may be funded through the Asset Works Program.

Section 94 Plan & Voluntary Planning Agreements

A Section 94 plan authorises the Council to collect contributions of money, land or both from developers to provide for local infrastructure needed by new development. Blue Mountains currently has a Citywide s94a Plan, which collects a 1 percent levy on development over a certain size.

Due to the level of public domain works provided and the redevelopment potential of Blaxland, Council will be investigating a Section 94 plan specifically to fund works in the Blaxland Town Centre. This would help to fund the new central laneway, upgrade of the Mall Public Domain, the community centre and new public parking. This will be investigated further in the implementation stages of the Masterplan, once more information is available regarding the public cost of these renewal works.

In some cases Council may seek to enter into a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) with a developer, whereby contributors can include the dedication of land, monetary contributions, the construction of infrastructure or provision of public benefit. This may be required for some private properties in Pilgrim Place, where private land is required to complete the new central laneway.

Public/Private Partnerships

For significant projects, the Council sometimes enters into partnerships, and these may take many forms. For example, the Katoomba Cultural Centre was delivered through a partnership with The NSW State Government (as the original landowner) and a major supermarket, Coles. As the owner of the land in Pilgrim Place Council may seek to enter a public/private partnership to facilitate the future renewal of the site.
6.3 Potential Partnerships

There are a range of potential partnership opportunities for the Council to consider in implementing the Masterplan, and the involvement of the local community will be a key to its success. Examples include:

Maintenance Agreements

Council has a number of agreements with community groups for the maintenance of certain aspects of a number of town centres. Council supports these groups through managing risks, providing equipment, materials and training. Examples include Blackheath, Katoomba and Hazelbrook gardening/streetscape groups, and graffiti management throughout the area.

Community Events

Council provides event support to groups that organise community events. A number of towns in the Mountains run multiple festivals or events using spaces owned and managed by Council – e.g. Katoomba’s Winter Magic, Leura’s Garden Festival in October and Australia Day in Glenbrook. Improvements to key pedestrian areas in Blaxland present new opportunities to develop a calendar of events and Council is currently preparing a city-wide events strategy, which will provide further guidance.
PROPOSED SHARED LANEWAY WITH AN ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR:
COMMUNITY CENTRE, RETAIL & OFFICES
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