

TOWN SQUARE

THE RATIONALE

*To provide a flexible, large town square centrally located that can accommodate different scaled community events ranging from day to day functions to special one off events. The establishment of a town square at this location relies on relocating the existing car parking and transit centre to another location and instead refocussing this location on pedestrian movement and community gatherings. Proposals for the town square seek to*

- create a space that has longevity and is robust;
- create a space that can accommodate a range of activities from small gatherings to large scale events such as performances and markets;
- utilise the space to link the public buildings and functions to the north such as the Council building and the art gallery with the Town Centre and foreshore to the south;
- add amenity to this part of Ballina and define it as a town centre;
- create a space that has surveillance and strong connections with the surrounds to maximise its potential to be a busy community hub;
- maintain current vehicular access along Tamar Street but with a focus on pedestrian movement and activity;
- include facilities that enable the space to be used in a range of weather conditions.

THE PROPOSALS

Create a robust and flexible space that is multi-functional

The foreshore park in Ballina is currently utilised for markets and community gatherings, however, the location can be exposed to the weather and its linear form is not always suitable for certain events. This new town square is close to, and well connected to, the town centre and public facilities. It reclaims what is currently a car park and transit centre as public green space in the town centre.

The space is to be multi-functional. It has the potential to be:

- a pedestrian link between town precincts;
- a shaded, well facilitated location for lunch time use by CBD workers;
- a place for performances and community presentations;
- a place for markets and stalls;
- a place for special events such as festivals and carnivals; and
- ‘green’ relief from the infrastructure of urban life.

To facilitate this range of activities, the town square could include:

- a hierarchy of paths/pavements within the space to provide access across the park as well as to the surrounds;

- an open grassed area are with a covered performance area;
- plenty of shade trees and shade structures;
- open areas for temporary structures such as stalls;
- locations for park kiosks with outdoor dining;
- a sculptural element or water feature that encompasses the surrounds with a variety of seating options;
- shaded grassed areas for lounging and picnicking; and
- easy access to car parking along Tamar Street.

Create a shared pedestrian/vehicular zone to Tamar Street

The proposal does rely on the relocation of the existing car park and transit centre. It maintains vehicular access along Tamar Street so the town square has good surveillance and has an active street edge. It is proposed that Tamar Street, where it is adjacent to the town square, is realigned to create a ‘go slow’ zone. The town square is extended across Tamar Street to attempt to engage all of its surrounds. Tamar Street, at the town square, could be repaved to create a zone that is shared by pedestrians and vehicles. The intention is to integrate Tamar Street into the town square layout.

Add visual amenity beyond the Town Centre

The town square provides an opportunity to link this part of Ballina with the Central Business District along River Street and the foreshore. It is proposed the vehicular pavement is narrowed, new nose in parking established and that the balance of the road reserve is redeveloped to create a pedestrian focused streetscape.

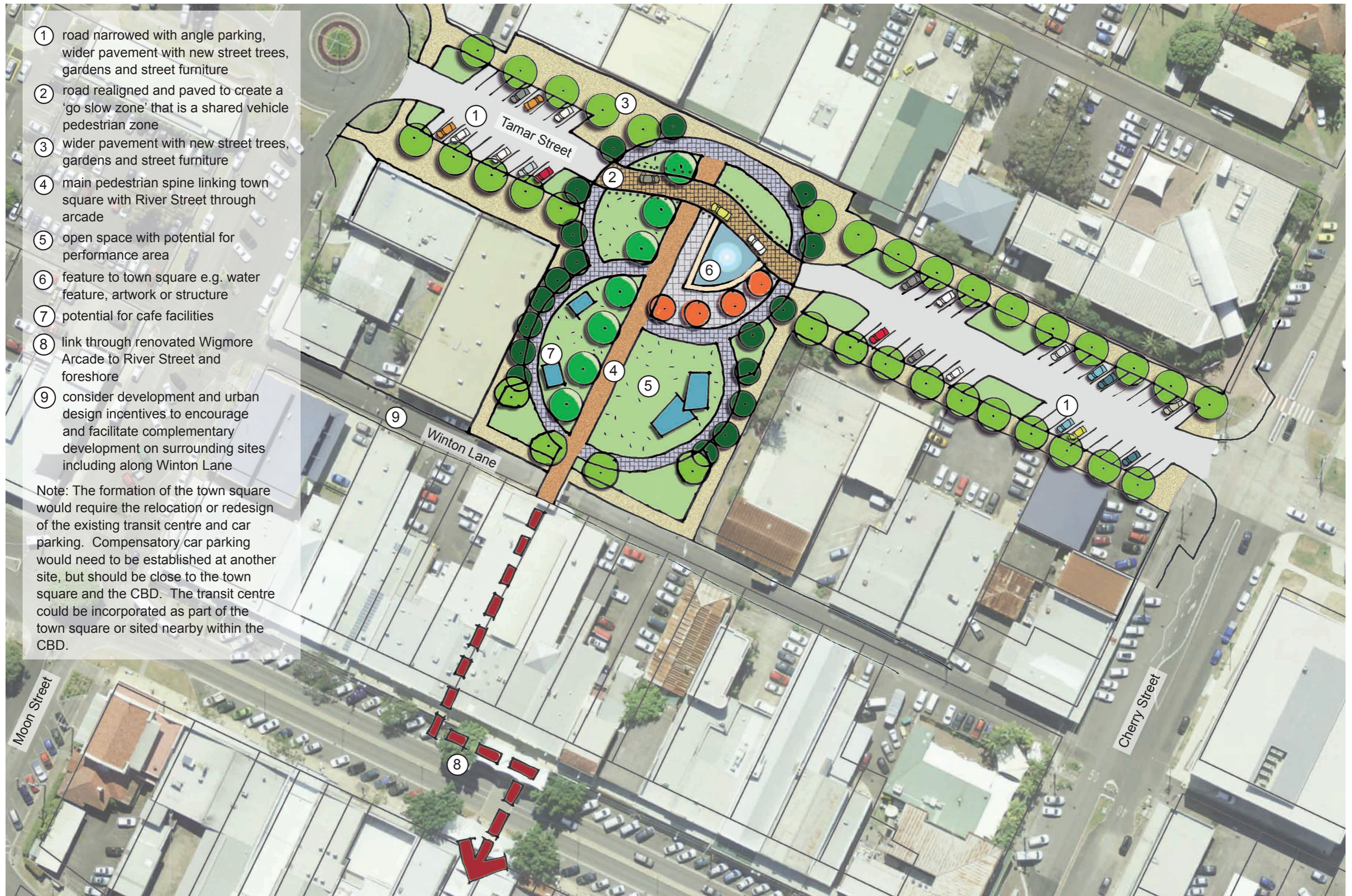
The existing fig trees are being heavily pruned to accommodate power lines. The existing trees are also lifting parts of the road pavement. In the long term these street trees are unlikely to be sustainable and it is proposed they be replaced with a more suitable species. The widened pavement could incorporate these new street trees, low gardens, new pavement and street furniture. The upgraded Tamar streetscape would provide links to the town square.

Challenges and Constraints

The siting of a town square at this location would require the relocation or redesign of the existing transit centre and car parking. The existing transit centre includes space to manoeuvre buses, parking, shade structures and seating. The establishment of a town square at this location would need to study in detail the feasibility and costs associated with relocating this centre and re-establishing its associated infrastructure. The transit centre should be located close to the town square and CBD area to encourage the use of public transport.

The loss of car parking could impact on the surrounding businesses. Detail design would also need to consider the nature of the surrounding land uses and the suitability of this location as a town square and meeting place.





- ① road narrowed with angle parking and new street trees to replace fig trees (existing fig trees are not likely to be sustainable due to power lines and lifting pavements)
- ② road realigned and paved to create a 'go slow zone' that is a shared vehicle pedestrian zone
- ③ wider pavement with new street trees, gardens and street furniture
- ④ main pedestrian spine linking town square through arcade to River Street
- ⑤ open space with potential for performance area and public art exhibitions. Broad shade trees and seating. Incorporate lighting to facilitate night time use of the square.
- ⑥ feature to town square e.g. water feature, artwork or structure. Surrounds to feature provide a range of seating/lounging opportunities
- ⑦ potential for cafe facilities with outdoor dining
- ⑧ pavements to provide connections to town square surrounds
- ⑨ link to renovated Wigmore Arcade, town centre and foreshore
- ⑩ appropriately designed seating and tables e.g. seats with backs and armrests, chess boards on table tops and ample shade. Provide infrastructure and utilities for a wide range of users e.g. power, water, scooter facilities etc.

Note: The formation of the town square would require the relocation or redesign of the existing transit centre and car parking. Compensatory car parking would need to be established at another site, but should be close to the town square and the CBD. The transit centre could be incorporated as part of the town square or sited nearby within the CBD.



