

Draft Georgetown Local Centre Public Domain and Traffic Plan

Frequently Asked Questions – November 2023



Why is Georgetown Local Centre being upgraded?

On 29 June 2021 the elected Council resolved to initiate a public domain upgrade for Georgetown Local Centre, under the Local Centres Program. Like many of Newcastle's aging local centres, Georgetown is dominated by roadways and parking at the expense of pedestrian and cyclist safety, accessibility and connectivity. In its current form, Georgetown does not meet the needs of the community for a safe, connected and liveable city.

In late 2021 City of Newcastle (CN) carried out an engagement survey which had 190 responses from members of the local community. The top priorities identified by respondents were improving the look and feel of the area, pedestrian safety, access and connectivity, more street trees and street furniture and comfort.

Respondents overall were very supportive of beautifying the streetscape and shopfronts, including greenspace, street trees and gardens, and maintaining footpaths to increase accessibility and pedestrian safety. The survey results conveyed the need for a public space that sustains a small and connected community and village atmosphere.

Survey respondents were less concerned with improving traffic management and parking in the area, and more than half of respondents (56%) were supportive of removing parking spaces in order to upgrade the public space in Georgetown.

What does the draft Georgetown Local Centre Public Domain and Traffic Plan (draft PDP) cover?

The draft PDP covers road reserve and publicly owned infrastructure within the project boundary (red dashed line). Changes to adjoining privately owned property, including businesses and development sites are not included in the project scope.

Is the PDP an accurate representation of what will be built?

The layout shown on the draft PDP has been resolved to the best of our ability, however, it is a concept plan intended for communication purposes only.

Quantities of trees and parking have been estimated to facilitate a comparison between existing and proposed layouts, they do not represent precise eventual as-built figures.

The final layout including tree quantities and parking numbers is subject to adjustment when the PDP is finalised (based on community and stakeholder feedback) and at detailed design stage (to accommodate complex design requirements and latent site conditions).

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What are the main features of the proposed layout?

Through the draft PDP we propose:

- Making the Village area safer for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers by reinforcing the existing 40km/hr zone with upgraded traffic calming infrastructure.
- Prioritising pedestrian and cyclist safety, access and connectivity over vehicle parking, access and connectivity, through an upgraded road layout and the introduction of additional safe road crossings and shared zones.
- Creating more space for people by building wider footpaths and new plazas which can accommodate outdoor dining and promote activation of the streetscape.
- Improving the look and feel of the area, making it a more attractive and comfortable place to visit, by increasing trees and landscaping, and renewing drainage, kerbs, gutters, road surfaces, footpaths, lighting and street furniture.
- Reducing parking to free up space for improved pedestrian and cyclist amenity, whilst improving the distribution of parking directly outside existing businesses.

These upgrades will benefit both businesses and residents – delivering a safer, more attractive place to visit, that attracts customers and presents an alternative to large shopping centres.

Why does Georgetown Local Centre need to be made safer for pedestrians and cyclists?

The Georgetown community told us during earlier engagement that pedestrian safety, access and connectivity, is a high priority. Additionally, a key objective of the [Newcastle 2040 Community Strategic Plan](#) is to provide safe and connected networks, making active movement (pedestrian movement and cycling) a convenient, accessible way of getting around.

The Georgetown Local Centre is currently dominated by roadways and parking at the expense of pedestrian and cyclist safety, accessibility, and connectivity. Missing or sub-standard infrastructure and poor/fragmented road layout makes it difficult for pedestrians and cyclists to safely negotiate the centre.

The R4 regional cycle route, which forms an integral part of Newcastle's cycle network, runs north-south through Georgetown Local Centre ([Newcastle On Our Bikes Cycling Plan 2021-2030](#)). It runs north-south via Parkview Street and Asher Street and connects to Waratah Park and Waratah Train Station in the north and to Hunter Stadium in the south. The R4 currently lacks safe cyclist crossing infrastructure where it crosses Georgetown Road. This busy location has a 7-day average traffic volume of approximately 7,700 vehicles and multiple traffic movements associated with Georgetown Road's staggered intersections with Parkview Street and Asher Street.

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How will pedestrian safety, access and connectivity be improved?

- The existing 40km/h zone will be reinforced with additional traffic calming infrastructure. The proposed road layout will target a 30km/h design speed, to create a self-explaining traffic environment which encourages safe and consistent behaviour among road users simply through its design. We will approach Transport for NSW (TfNSW) to undertake a speed zone review for the area to determine if a reduced speed limit of 30km/h is supported under the proposed changes.
- The road layout will be adjusted to prioritise safe pedestrian movement over vehicle movement. This includes the following proposals:
 - Retaining two existing pedestrian crossings on Georgetown Road between Parkview Street and Moate Street.
 - Providing a continuous path of travel for pedestrians across the Parkview Street and Turner Street intersections, making vehicle movement through these intersections one-way southbound only (continuous footpath treatments are suitable where traffic volumes are low).
 - Narrowing the roadway where Moate Street (east) meets Georgetown Road and where Bowker Street meets Georgetown Road to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians.
 - Providing pedestrian refuge medians at the intersection of Moate Street (east) and Georgetown Road and on Georgetown Road east of Turner Street.
 - Closing the intersection of Asher Street and Georgetown Road and removing the small section of Moate Street between Georgetown Road and Asher Street to create a shared pedestrian and cycle plaza. This will provide a continuous pedestrian connection along the southern side of Georgetown Road.
 - Creating a 10km/h shared zone linking the western section of Moate Street with Asher Street. One way southbound for vehicles will start at the 10km/h shared zone and extend into Asher Street.
 - Widening footpaths outside existing businesses and rectifying the steep cross fall/slope between 58 and 68 Georgetown Road.

3D visualisation of upgraded pedestrian crossings



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What is a raised continuous footpath treatment?

A continuous footpath treatment is the continuation of footpath at the same level as existing footpath across a road intersection. This treatment gives pedestrians priority and slows vehicles by making them ramp up and then ramp down when crossing the continuous footpath. This treatment can only be implemented at intersections where there is a low traffic volume.

Example of continuous footpath across laneway (Mitchell St Stockton Local Centre)



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How will cyclist safety, access and connectivity be improved?

- The existing 40km/h zone will be reinforced with additional traffic calming infrastructure with a view to potentially reducing traffic speed to 30km/h - pending the publication of Transport for NSW (TfNSW) guidelines for 30km/h zones.
- Turner Street will become one-way southbound for vehicles with cyclists permitted to travel both southbound and northbound.
- The road layout will be adjusted to formalise the R4 cycleway. This includes the following proposals:
 - Providing a continuous two-way path of travel for cyclists across the Parkview Street intersection and making vehicle movement one-way southbound only through the Parkview intersection (continuous footpath treatments are suitable where traffic volumes are low).
 - Vehicle traffic is to remain two-way on Parkview Street beyond the continuous footpath treatment and options for future cycle facilities on Parkview Street between Georgetown Road and Waratah Park will be explored as part of a Georgetown Precinct Transport Plan (PTP).
 - Upgrading the existing pedestrian crossing outside 57 Georgetown Road to include a dedicated cyclist crossing.
 - Closing the intersection of Asher Street and Georgetown Road to simplify vehicle movements near to the proposed cycle crossing on Georgetown Road.
 - Closing the intersection of Asher Street and Georgetown Road, and removing the small section of Moate Street between Georgetown Road and Asher Street to create a shared pedestrian and cyclist plaza.
 - Creating a 10km/h shared zone linking the western section of Moate Street with Asher Street. One way southbound for vehicles will start at the 10km/h shared zone and extend into Asher Street. Cyclists will be permitted to travel both southbound and northbound.

3D visualisation of combined pedestrian/cyclist crossing



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How will the existing 40km/h zone be reinforced and made safer for cyclists?

The existing 40km/h zone will be reinforced with upgraded entry infrastructure, with a view to potentially reducing traffic speed to 30km/h.

The Newcastle Cycling Working Party has endorsed cyclists commanding the lane (using the middle of the traffic lane) in reduced speed environments. Upgraded entries to the traffic calmed zone are proposed to assist cyclists to safely command the lane. These include pairing narrowed thresholds which do not accommodate a vehicle and cyclist side by side (required under TfNSW guidelines), with advance signage and infrastructure to alert on-road cyclists to move into position to command the lane.

What are the proposed safe road crossings?

The draft PDP proposes a total of 6 safe road crossings as follows:

- Renewing the existing pedestrian crossing at the corner of Moate Street and Georgetown Road.
- Upgrading the existing pedestrian crossing at the corner of Parkview Street and Georgetown Road to include a dedicated cycle crossing.
- Proposed raised continuous footpath treatment at the intersection of Parkview Street and Georgetown Road, to give pedestrians and cyclists priority over cars. Vehicle access across the continuous footpath treatment to be one-way southbound only.
- Proposed raised continuous footpath treatment at the intersection of Turner Street and Georgetown Road, to give pedestrians priority over cars. Vehicle access across the continuous footpath treatment to be one-way southbound only.
- Proposed pedestrian refuge on Georgetown Road east of Turner Street.
- Proposed pedestrian refuge at the intersection of Moate Street and Georgetown Road.

Why has the eastbound bus stop on Georgetown Road been relocated?

The eastbound bus stop has been relocated westward from outside existing businesses at 51-47 Georgetown Road to adjacent the side elevation of a private residence at the intersection of Parkview Street. The proposed bus stop location is a more appropriate distance from the next bus stop, and frees up valuable space for parking outside existing businesses.

Why has the mail zone been relocated?

The mail zone has been relocated from the northern side of Georgetown Road to the southern side. This frees up valuable space for parking outside existing businesses on the northern side of Georgetown Road, and co-locates the mail zone with a loading zone making it easy for drivers to pull in and quickly post letters.

Why has the accessible parking space been relocated?

The accessible parking space has been co-located with the new pedestrian plaza at the intersection of Georgetown Road, Moate Street and Asher Street. This central location accommodates a wider parking lane which meets appropriate design requirements for accessible parking.

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Why is the loading zone located with the new pedestrian plaza?

The loading zone has been co-located with the new pedestrian plaza at the intersection of Georgetown Road, Moate Street and Asher Street. This central location allows the loading zone to service the whole local centre, including blocks of land which are subject to future development. This location accommodates a wider parking lane which provides more space for delivery trucks to pull in safely.

Why is the motorcycle parking located with the new pedestrian plaza?

The motorcycle parking has been located in an area with good passive surveillance (e.g. from potential future outdoor dining) to reduce the risk of theft. Motorcycles are lower than vehicles and do not block sight lines next to the pedestrian/cyclist crossing.

Why is an accessible electric vehicle charger proposed?

An accessible electric vehicle charging point has been proposed to provide environmental benefits and encourage visitation to Georgetown Local Centre. This location is subject to an assessment of feasibility.

What are the benefits of planting more trees and increasing landscaping?

The draft plan proposes vastly increasing the number of trees from one existing tree to thirty-nine in total, accompanied by increased ground cover landscaping. Trees and landscaping are important for improving the look and feel of the area, and to create places that are comfortable for people to spend time in by providing shade and cooling. In addition to reducing extreme summer temperatures, trees bring environmental benefits such as cleaner air and water, and increased biodiversity.

How will more space be provided for people and why is this important?

A well activated, occupied streetscape is important for making people feel safe. An inclusive environment helps to deter crime and antisocial behaviour and encourages more people to visit. Georgetown's existing footpaths are narrow and disconnected, and the available space is dominated by roadways and parking, with limited opportunities for people to stay in the street. We propose promoting activation by widening footpaths, providing shade and landscaping, installing new street furniture and by creating a new central plaza area where people can socialise and enjoy outdoor dining.

3D visualisation of proposed plaza



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Why is closing the intersection of Asher Street and Georgetown Road being proposed?

The proposal to close the intersection of Asher Street and Georgetown Road will improve safety, accessibility and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists, and facilitate the creation of a shared plaza space. Traffic counts show that existing vehicle movements at this intersection are low.

What are the benefits of rebuilding Georgetown's infrastructure?

The draft Plan proposes the complete renewal of Georgetown's public infrastructure. The renewal provides the opportunity to upgrade infrastructure to current safety and design standards. Building to current standards means footpaths, roadways and kerb ramps, etc will be appropriately sized and have appropriate cross falls/slopes.

In addition, new infrastructure and extensive landscaping will dramatically improve the environmental function and look and feel of Georgetown Local Centre. For example, replacing the roadway provides the opportunity to upgrade drainage to accommodate increased rainfall intensity and to implement water sensitive urban design solutions which promote infiltration rather than runoff, and remove pollutants from stormwater.

Where is one-way vehicle movement proposed and why?

Asher Street and Turner Street are proposed to become one-way southbound for vehicles, whilst maintaining two-way flow for cyclists. This will improve safety for cyclists on the R4 cycleway on Asher Street and improve safety for pedestrians moving east-west along Georgetown Road. Neighbouring streets including Cowper Street, Sparke Street and Palmer Street will remain two-way for vehicles to accommodate northerly traffic flows.

It is proposed to make the intersection of Parkview Street one-way southbound for vehicles, whilst maintaining two-way flow for cyclists. This will improve safety for pedestrians travelling east-west between the relocated eastbound bus stop and shops. It will also improve safety for cyclists transitioning from the new shared plaza and cycle crossing on Georgetown Road back into an on-road cycling environment on Parkview Street. Two-way vehicle flow will be maintained on Parkview Street north of the Georgetown Road intersection, and vehicles will be able to enter Parkview Street via Young Street, Wentworth Street and Mabel Street.

Why is a one-way 10km/h shared zone proposed between Moate Street (west) and Asher Street?

The intersection of Moate Street and Asher Street is currently a confusing area where it is unclear who has right of way. Simplifying the road layout to create a 10km/h shared zone provides a safer environment for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. The 10km/h zone will be one-way for vehicles, but two-way for cyclists and it will improve safety for cyclists transitioning from the shared plaza back into an on-road cycling environment on Asher Street.

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What impact do the proposed changes have on parking?

The quantity of parking within the project boundary (red dashed line on the draft PDP) will be reduced by 16 parking spaces in total. However, the net loss of parking spaces next to existing businesses will only be 5. In addition, the distribution of parking spaces has been improved with the provision of extra parking spaces outside the businesses between Moate Street and Parkview Street, through the relocation of the mail zone and eastbound bus stop.

Timed parking will remain consistent with existing timed parking restrictions, however, will be reviewed in future to ensure that parking meets the needs of local businesses and the community. Any proposed changes to parking restrictions would be subject to community consultation.

Why is the amount of parking being reduced?

Georgetown is currently dominated by roadways and parking at the expense of pedestrian and cyclist safety, accessibility, and connectivity. It is not possible to upgrade the public domain to better meet community needs, including safety and amenity for pedestrians and cyclists without re-allocating some of the space currently used by vehicles.

A key objective of the [Newcastle 2040 Community Strategic Plan](#) is to manage parking to improve the amenity of our streets, support accessibility of our centres and to encourage mode shift to public transport and active transport (pedestrian movement and cycling).

Respondents to the 2021 Georgetown engagement survey prioritised pedestrian and cyclist needs ahead of improving traffic management and parking in the area, and more than half of respondents (56%) were supportive of removing parking spaces in order to upgrade the public space in Georgetown.

What is the current status of the project?

The draft public domain plan is on public exhibition for 4 weeks from 10 November to 8 December 2023 and feedback will be collected via an online survey on our Have Your Say web page at <https://newcastle.nsw.gov.au/yoursay>.

What are the next steps?

We will use the results of community feedback from the public exhibition to finalise the PDP. The final PDP will then go before Newcastle Traffic Committee for endorsement and to the elected Council for adoption. Commencement of staged construction is planned to occur in 2024.