



# Civic Link Framework Plan

*A vibrant green heart for Australia's next great city*



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## Project

The Civic Link Framework Plan  
Parramatta CBD, NSW

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This Plan has been endorsed in-principle  
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Parramatta CBD Public Car Parking  
Strategy (2017).

# Contents

## Executive Summary

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### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project overview . . . . .	13
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### 2.0 Context

2.1 Growth and Development . . . . .	18
2.2 People . . . . .	20
2.3 Culture . . . . .	22
2.4 Urban Fabric . . . . .	24
2.5 Public Transport and Active Travel . . . . .	26
2.6 Public Domain . . . . .	28
2.7 Environment . . . . .	32
2.8 Water Management and Expression . . . . .	36
2.9 Utility and Infrastructure . . . . .	37
2.10 Summary of Opportunities . . . . .	38
2.11 Summary of Challenges . . . . .	39

### 3.0 Aspiration

3.1 Aspiration . . . . .	42
3.2 Place Qualities . . . . .	43
3.3 Place Qualities: Visualised . . . . .	44
3.4 Design Principles . . . . .	46
3.5 Concept Options . . . . .	48
3.6 The Concept . . . . .	50

### 4.0 Strategies

4.1 Defining the Public Domain . . . . .	52
4.2 Character . . . . .	54
4.3 Movement . . . . .	56
4.4 Access & Servicing . . . . .	58
4.5 Heritage . . . . .	60

4.6 Built Form . . . . .	62
4.7 Active Edges & Fine Grain . . . . .	64
4.8 Events & Programming . . . . .	66
4.9 Legibility . . . . .	68
4.10 Landscape . . . . .	70
4.11 Public Art . . . . .	72
4.12 Heritage Interpretation Strategy . . . . .	74
4.13 Solar Access . . . . .	75
4.14 Water and Flood Response . . . . .	76
4.15 Utility and Infrastructure . . . . .	77

### 5.0 Conceptual Master Plan

5.1 The Alignment Plan . . . . .	80
5.2 Unifying Elements . . . . .	82
5.3 Conceptual Master Plan - Future Character . . . . .	84
5.4 Square On: Civic Link at Parramatta Square . . . . .	85
5.5 Smart Hub . . . . .	86
5.6 The City Stage . . . . .	92
5.7 City Play . . . . .	98
5.8 River Link . . . . .	104

### 6.0 Public Exhibition

6.1 Public Exhibition Consultation Feedback . . . . .	108
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### 7.0 Recommendations + Next Steps

7.1 Recommendations and Next Steps . . . . .	112
7.2 Staging . . . . .	114

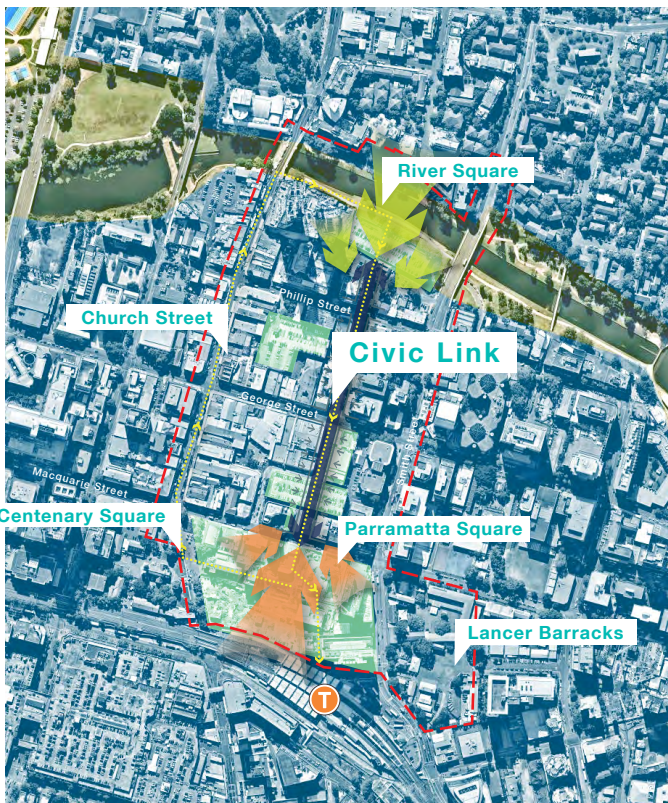


# Executive Summary

The Civic Link will play an important role in realising the vision for Sydney's Central City. The Civic Link will support liveability by connecting major CBD destinations to each other, to the Transport Interchange and to the River through a pedestrian and cycle-friendly avenue, fit for the growing population of Parramatta. The Civic Link will support sustainability by creating an open green corridor through the CBD for cooling, stormwater management, and infrastructure needs. The Civic Link will support productivity by guiding development of a new arts and culture precinct, with fine-grain spaces for local businesses, small bars, collaborative work spaces and creative industries.

*The Civic Link will be a green, pedestrianised public space and cultural spine that connects public life from the heart of Parramatta CBD to the River.*

*It will respond to the environmental challenges of an urban, river city; as well to the City's rich and vibrant history, expressive of and welcoming to people and place, past, present and future.*



## About the 'Civic Link'

The Civic Link extends across four city blocks in the heart of the Parramatta CBD. The link is approximately 490 metres long, and 20 metres wide, extending from Parramatta Square to River Square and the broader foreshore precinct. Crossing over Macquarie, George and Phillip Streets, this new public open space runs along the existing Horwood Place alignment, and will be made possible by the redevelopment of the above-ground Council-owned Horwood Place car park.

## Objectives of the The Framework Plan

The Civic Link opportunity was originally identified in the *Parramatta Lanes Strategy 2010*. It was the subject of initial design proposals undertaken as part of the Design Parramatta Project, which suggested incorporating solar access, green and water elements, and future context.

In response to the scale and pace of change currently being undertaken in the CBD, stimulated by increased development, new public transport initiatives, and growth in both the commercial and residential markets, Council has prepared the **Civic Link Framework Plan** (the Framework), which provides a long term aspiration; strategies; design ideas; and recommendations for Parramatta's new public open space.

## The Framework Plan

The key objectives of the Framework Plan are to deliver the following:

- Be an identifiable place within the CBD with a memorable name and sense of place
- Create a fine grained and cultural place and experience
- Connect (physically and symbolically) Parramatta Square Transport Interchange to River Square and corridor
- Complement and extend the vibrant street life (day and night) of Church Street
- Create a second activated North-South spine through the heart of the commercial core, transitioning from the civic, built environment to the river foreshore environment
- Have a "civic" quality
- Recognise and respond to heritage along the Link, including interface with George Street
- Be addressed by buildings that have active façades and regular entries, with minimal back of house elements facing the Link
- Activate the commercial core beyond 9-5
- Catalyse the upgrade of adjoining commercial spaces, ground floor areas and the redevelopment and renewal of underutilised sites along the Link
- Respond to and incorporate Council's broader social, cultural, transport and environmental aspirations into it's development and future design

## Place Quality

To achieve the aspiration for the Civic Link, noted above, a series of four 'Place Qualities' have been identified, which will be used to guide all decisions relating to the design, character and attributes of the Civic Link. This includes all decisions relating to the overall look and feel, response to heritage, approach to landscape, prioritisation of pedestrians, commercial leasing, spatial layouts and the types of events that should occur along the Link.



### Green

Soft green spaces, with improved storm water management, and a future infrastructure corridor.



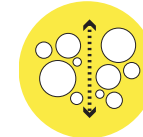
### Cultural

A new cultural corridor celebrating heritage. A mix of small event spaces, and public art that reflects the cultural history and diversity of Parramatta.



### Connected

Pedestrianised and cyclable. Linking key destinations and the rich network of laneways and small spaces through the precinct.



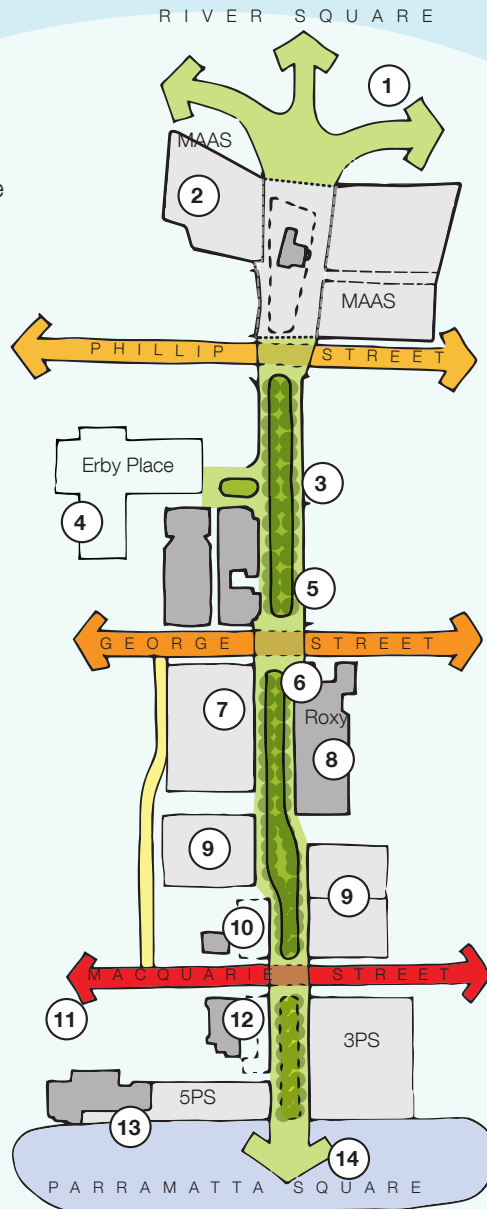
### Fine Grain

Activate street edges, with small ground floor tenancies and incubator spaces. High quality architecture and materiality that reflect the ambition of the Civic Link.

## The Concept

The strength of the design concept is the continuous green spine that runs between the River Square and Parramatta Square, and allows the character, activation and design of the spaces to reflect the changing nature of the city along its length. Pedestrian movements are prioritised and cyclists are welcome, as the Link connects into the existing hierarchy of streets, spaces and modes of public transport offered through the CBD.

- 1 Improve pedestrian and cycle connections along the river foreshore
- 2 Development of MAAS on Riverbank to align with Civic Link Connections
- 3 Civic Link features a continuous green space through the heart of the city
- 4 Future development opportunity at Erby Place Car Park
- 5 Continuous tree cover along the Link
- 6 Solar access to Roxy forecourt maintained throughout the year
- 7 Redevelopment of 55 George Street to continue the civic link alignment and to provide a north south connection between George and Macquarie Streets,
- 8 Adaptive reuse of the Roxy Theatre as a cultural destination
- 9 Redevelopment of the Horwood Place Car Park to facilitate the delivery of the Link.
- 10 Potential acquisition of 68 Macquarie Street to continue the alignment
- 11 Proposed Light Rail Corridor
- 12 Future Light Rail stop and alignment along Macquarie Street
- 13 3PS and 5PS to address the southern extent of the Civic Link
- 14 Integration of the Link with Parramatta Square concept.



### River Link

Critical connection between the Civic Link and River Precinct, incorporating Willow Grove and its landscape setting, and the forecourt and entrance of MAAS.

### City Play

A place of play and recreation for families and visitors alike.

### City Stage

A social and creative gathering place, the heart of the civic link designed to support cultural events and attractors

### Smart Hub

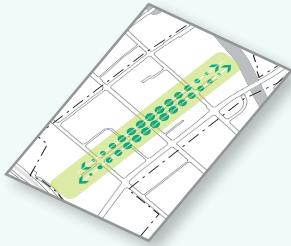
A flexible place to meet, work, share and learn

### Civic Place

A place of arrival and departure from the civic link. To be delivered in conjunction with Parramatta Square public domain works

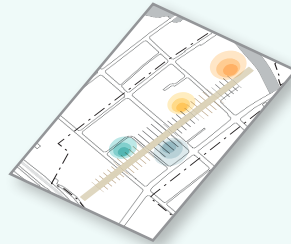
## Design Principles

The delivery of the Civic Link will be an iterative process that is facilitated by the redevelopment of key sites within the CBD. To ensure the aspiration and guiding principles are properly considered over an extended period a number of design principles, including strategies for their implementation, have been identified;



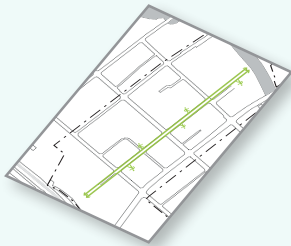
### Green Spine

Provide a generous green spine through the centre of the Link that can support large trees to create a cool, comfortable CBD.



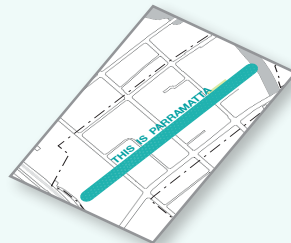
### Fine Grained and Active

Encourage a mix of day and night uses to activate the Link beyond business hours and deliver a vibrant, human scaled, fine grain and visually rich place. Deliver a range of flexible event spaces.



### Pedestrianised

Improve access for all by creating a pedestrianised and cyclable link between Parramatta Station and the River.



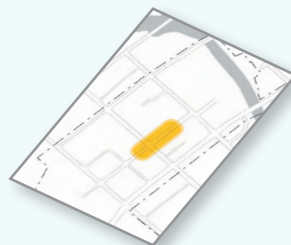
### Uniquely Parramatta

Provide a high quality public space that has a distinct identity and welcomes all people through clever and inclusive design and activation.



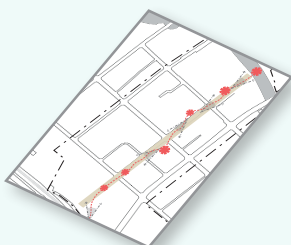
### Block character

Adopt a place based approach, that utilises the existing context of the site as drivers for character, program and activity.



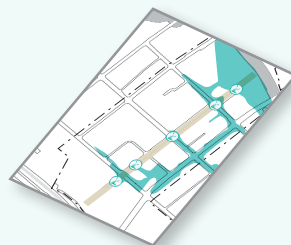
### Access to Sun

Minimise cumulative overshadowing to the Link during 11-1pm.



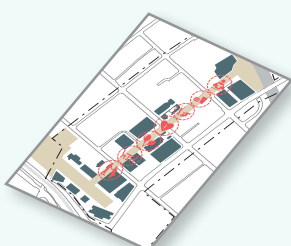
### A Compelling Journey

Recognise the role of heritage buildings along the Link as focal points, wayfinding markers, places of celebration and points of interest that draw people along the Link.



### Respond to Water

Embrace the city's location on the River, and associated opportunities to improve emergency flood access, water quality and stormwater management.



### A Place for Public Life

Incorporate a range of space types, activities and cultural uses along the Link that will attract a diversity of people, ages, abilities and interests.



### Smart & Sustainable Future

Integrate smart digital and physical infrastructure into the Civic Link in a way that demonstrates the City's desire to embrace new technology and build resilience in addressing tomorrow's opportunities and challenges today.



## Strategies

The Framework Plan consists of the key strategies required to deliver the Civic Link, and ensure the aspiration and principles are properly considered throughout the delivery. The implementation of these strategies is the responsibility of the Council and all land-owners along the Civic Link.

1. Alignment Strategy
2. Unifying Elements Strategy
3. Block Character Strategy
4. Movement Strategy
5. Access & Servicing Strategy
6. Legibility Strategy
7. Heritage Strategy
8. Built Form Strategy
9. Active Edges & Fine Grain Strategy
10. Events & Programming Strategy
11. Public Art Strategy
12. Solar Access Strategy
13. Landscape Strategy
14. Water Strategy
15. Utility and Infrastructure Strategy



Biofiltration at Adelaide Botanic Gardens



Flexible hard stand areas to cater for markets, performances or food trucks



Shared zone with quality paving and no raised kerbs



'River Bend' Mosaic artwork by Julie Sperling



Avenue tree planting can define and unify a linear space



Bleacher seating for everyday and events



Movement paths past shopfronts



Creation of park 'rooms'



Example of adaptively re-used and activated heritage building

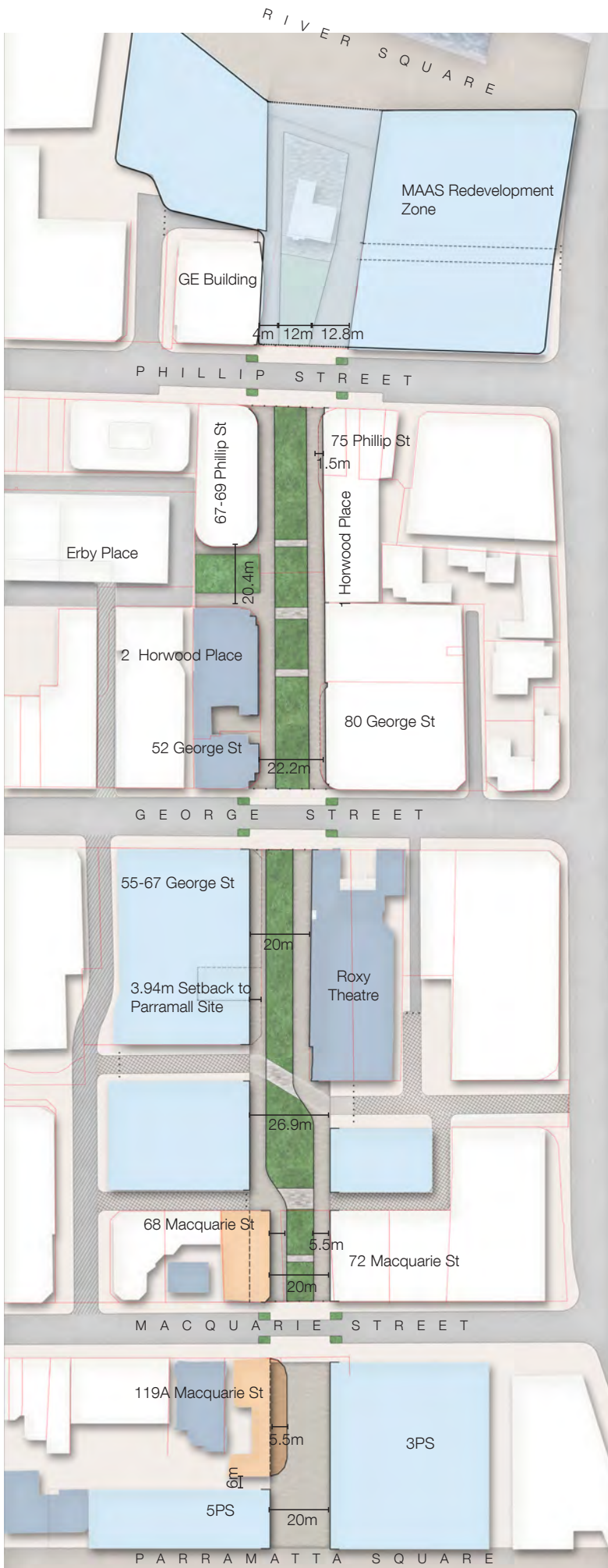


Passeig de Sant Joan, Barcelona



Rittenhouse Row, Philadelphia





Alignment Plan

### The Alignment Plan

The Civic Link will be defined by a strong physical and visual green link through the heart of the city, that maximizes space for significant landscape and public space areas within the constraints of a narrow corridor, while still allowing flexibility for pedestrian movement, activity and outdoor dining on either side of the central spine.

The Alignment Plan (opposite) sets the spatial framework for the key urban and landscape components to be achieved by the Civic Link. It can be read as a summary of the key moves arising from the strategies section.

- The critical aspects of the Alignment Plan are:
- Movement paths: Provide a minimum 5.5m pathway on either side of the Link to allow for estimated pedestrian and cycle volumes, as well as emergency vehicle access to the Link
  - Green Spine: Create a permanent landscape element in the centre of the public domain corridor that maximises space for planting and flexible community and cultural uses
  - Building Alignment: Achieve a consistent building alignment and a minimum width of 20m along the length of the Link. This alignment allows for continuous view corridors through the Link and improves legibility and wayfinding.
  - Circulation and connections: Limit east-west service vehicle movement across the Link. Facilitate pedestrian movement at street intersections with signalisation and planted blisters. Allow for pedestrian movement across green spine at laneway intersection

Legend	
	Green spine
	Potential for future change
	Under consideration for redevelopment. Footprints indicative only
	Heritage building
	Existing building line where future setback is proposed
	Building over
	Kerb line under
	Existing and proposed servicing zone
	Proposed shared zone
	Cadastral Boundary
	Possible removable bollards (indicative)







Artist impression

## Recommendations

Delivering a significant piece of public infrastructure, such as the Civic Link, through the heart of a CBD is a complex undertaking and requires city wide coordination.

This Framework Plan clearly articulates the project aspiration and potential for the Civic Link to transform the city, however a number of issues have emerged that are beyond the scope of this piece of work.

The following pages identify recommendations regarding future work required to inform the delivery of the Civic Link project.

### Planning and Design

- Review and update the Parramatta LEP and DCP to reflect the intent and principles of the movement, built form, public domain and infrastructure guidelines, including;
  - Solar access controls
  - Building alignments
  - Pedestrian movement corridors and their location
- Prepare public domain palette including design of unifying elements. This should include; materials and finishes, planting palette, furniture etc.
- Engage a lighting consultant to develop a lighting strategy that creates a safe night time environment as well as adds to the experience and interest of the place
- Undertake detailed design of each segment of the Link
- Undertake options for reconfiguring Erby Place (Eat Street) Car Park to support service access to adjacent properties and enable construction of the City Play section of the Link.

### Universal Access and Safety

- Undertake a specialist Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) review of the design plans to ensure the design is supportive of safety
- Undertake a specialist universal design review of the Civic Link to ensure the design is inclusive for people of all abilities
- Embed recommendations into future design work.

### Stakeholder & Community Engagement

- Undertake consultation to better understand the impacts, challenges and opportunities of realising the Civic Link from local business, stakeholders and landowners perspectives
- Undertake more focused engagement with local business and landowners prior to the detailed design of each of the blocks
- Work together with landowners for resolution of servicing and access.

### Place Making

- Consider pilot place making projects which begin to activate parts of the Link prior to delivery
- Develop a long term social and cultural events calendar that will draw people to the Link and activate it throughout different times of day and throughout the year
- Develop a night time culture and events activation program.

### Economy and Leasing

- Undertake a retail strategy for the Parramatta CBD to identify the character and hierarchy of shopping precincts, as well as the projected capacity for retail floorspace
- Embrace the opportunity that Council has to drive the brand and success of the Smart Hub by attracting and securing key anchor tenants in new buildings at Horwood Place
- Undertake research to better understand the range of requirements for incubator and creative spaces, ensuring that a certain percent of floor space (including ground floor) is allocated to these uses within the Smart Hub precinct.

### Utilities

- Engage a specialist environmental engineer and / or landscape architect to develop a cutting edge design strategy for stormwater planning and management in the Civic Link public realm, which tests new methods and technologies
- Further investigate the opportunity and logistics of delivering new energy and waste infrastructure, including a dedicated services corridor, along the alignment of the Link at the time of its construction.

### Heritage

- Investigate the potential for the Roxy Theatre to be adaptively re-used and activated, forming the heart of the Civic Link.

### Emergency Vehicle Access

- Undertake an emergency service review of the Civic Link project and embed recommendation into design.

### Public Realm

- Undertake a naming process which aligns with the aspiration of a continuous green pedestrian public space
- Consider a brand strategy for the Civic Link, with a particular focus on the design and delivery of a wayfinding signage suite
- Develop an art and heritage interpretation plan for the Civic Link, that complements existing artworks in the city's existing and planned spaces, with a particular focus on environment, multiculturalism and Aboriginal culture.



## Flooding

- Consider role of the Civic Link landscape and built form in flood emergency evacuation and implications of this (e.g. lighting, signage) for design of public domain.
- Consider WSUD opportunities in design and planning

## Micro Climate

- Undertake a microclimate study to develop a better understanding of the micro climatic conditions and design responses that will assist to deliver human thermal comfort requirements for users within the Civic Link.

## Servicing and Access

- Consider the impact of road closures and traffic changes related to the light rail on the Civic Link
- Further investigate garbage collection requirements and solutions to be undertaken
- Ensure basement levels of new developments are coordinated and consider shared basement provisions where appropriate
- Undertake further detailed work to resolve traffic and transport issues. .

## Report Structure

The report structure is organised as follows;

- **Chapter 1** Provides an introduction to the project
- **Chapter 2** Provides an understanding of the subject area's regional context, planning, city and future context and existing site conditions.
- **Chapter 3** Establishes a project aspiration and series of project principles that guide the Civic Link.
- **Chapter 4** Develops a set of strategies supported through plans and precedent images that guide the future development of the Civic Link.
- **Chapter 5** Translates the framework plan into a conceptual master plan, in order to test and demonstrate potential project outcomes.
- **Chapter 6** Captures the feedback from the public exhibition.
- **Chapter 7** Provides key recommendations, next steps and potential staging scenarios to be considered in the future design and delivery of the Civic Link.

## Appendix:

- Appendix provides an international review of exemplar projects as well as supporting technical reports.



## Next Steps

The public consultation highlighted the importance of ongoing collaboration with the key stakeholders and the community throughout future design development of the Civic Link. As a result of public exhibition, several recommendations have been included in this Framework Plan including:

- Work together with local landowners and key stakeholders to achieve integrated outcomes for the Civic Link;
- Further investigation into the role of the Civic Link in the city's night time economy, and how existing cultural activities can be retained and expanded over time;
- Undertake further detailed work to resolve traffic and transport issues in consultation with landowners;
- Undertake further community engagement to rename the Civic Link and to test proposed public domain elements in order to inform future design; and
- Undertake a research and engagement project to better understand stakeholder requirements for incubator and creative spaces, and how to implement and embed these into the development of the Civic Link.

Artist impression