



Clarence City Council
City Heart Community Consultation Report

November 2020

Contents

Executive Summary	3	Public toilets	20
Community Values	3	Holistic planning.....	20
Challenges & Issues	4	Barriers to development.....	21
What is Missing?.....	4	What is Missing?	22
Better Utilisation of Open Spaces	5	Connectivity	23
Retaining People in the City Heart	5	Safe, welcoming & functional community spaces	26
Overview.....	6	Arts & culture precinct	29
Introduction.....	7	Experiences	30
Methodology	8	Better Utilisation of Open Spaces	31
Key Themes and Insights	10	Multi-use parkland	32
Community Values	11	Disc golf.....	33
Public, wide open green spaces	13	Kangaroo Bay Rivulet.....	33
Environment & sustainability	14	Sheoak Point.....	34
Village vs CBD	14	Council lawns.....	34
Coastline & water views.....	15	Retaining People in the City Heart	35
Staying in Clarence	15	Clarence City Heart.....	36
Challenges & Issues	16	Night-time economy.....	36
Accessibility	17	Events	37
Public transport	17	Experiences	37
Traffic & congestion	18	Conclusion.....	38
Car parking	19		

Executive Summary

In January 2020, Timmins Ray was engaged to conduct community consultation for the Clarence City Heart Project, which aims to bring the Rosny, Kangaroo Bay and Bellerive areas together to develop the Clarence city centre into a thriving and vibrant place to live, work, learn and visit. As an independent consultancy, our approach sought to transparently gather the views of a diversity of community members using a variety of methods including face-to-face meetings, online platforms, written submissions, and focus group meetings. This approach aimed to ensure everyone who wished to, was given the opportunity to express their views.

During the initial ideas sharing stage, 189 electronic and eight written submissions were received, providing valuable information on what the community enjoys most about living in Clarence; concerns for the future; issues and challenges; and ideas for potential future development. Simultaneously, we conducted 16 individual face-to-face meetings with heads of local community action groups, sporting and recreation clubs and local Members of Parliament.

In Stage Three, focus groups comprising a diversity of stakeholders with equally diverse opinions and attitudes, provided the opportunity to discuss the broad parameters of the City Heart project and to put forward ideas and viewpoints. Forty-nine people participated in these sessions, which were conducted at the Rosny Library. Detailed notes and audio recordings were taken at each session,

which were subsequently analysed and cross-referenced with key themes from previous stages.

Throughout the consultative program, COVID-19 and resultant budget constraints presented a number of barriers and, as such, there were numerous alterations to the plan to comply with government restrictions. Earlier iterations included activities designed to assist in the quantification and prioritisation of the key ideas and themes which are detailed in this document. However, in July, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, council decided to modify the scope of consultation, confident sufficient insights and information had already been gathered and collated.

The following represent the most consistently shared values, suggestions, expectations and concerns of the majority of those community members who so willingly participated in the City Heart engagement and consultative program. We are grateful for the valued insights they provided.

COMMUNITY VALUES

- The most common theme throughout all stages of community consultation was the need to retain public, green open spaces for the enjoyment of the community, now and in the future.
- Existing public spaces are overwhelmingly considered the City Heart's most valued asset.
- There is a common community pride in the City of Clarence and residents are anxious to protect what they consider to be its unique identity.

Executive Summary (cont.)

- The 'village feel' of the City Heart precinct is also highly valued and the community wants it protected against any attempt to turn it into 'a concrete jungle', like other CBDs.
- The area's riverside and water views are similarly valued along with the diversity of available facilities and services.

CHALLENGES & ISSUES

- Because many are concerned about protecting the aesthetics of the area, participants want the council to commission a comprehensive master plan prior to any development taking place.
- The need to improve accessibility to the area – for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists – is a consistent key theme, which many suggest is a barrier to visiting the precinct.
- A similarly consistent view is the need to improve financial and social accessibility in the City Heart to ensure people of all socio-economic backgrounds have access to essential and non-essential services.
- Before any development is started, participants believe demand for safe and reliable public transport as well as adequate parking are issues that should be resolved.
- The business community believes restrictive barriers to development are preventing the City Heart from becoming a centre for food, drink and culture. This is particularly so in the case of small, local business development.

WHAT IS MISSING?

- There is a common view that while the City Heart district could be enhanced with appropriate additions, there is a clear preference to extend existing buildings over developing new footprints.
- Similarly, there is no appetite for development that might encroach on valued, green open spaces and views across the River Derwent.
- Participants believe the City Heart needs improved connectivity between Rosny, Kangaroo Bay and Bellerive as well as with outer suburbs.
- Enhanced safe and welcoming community spaces, an improved arts and cultural precinct and greater opportunity to experience cultural diversity are considered important objectives.
- The community wants to see:
 - » The staging of more events and destination experiences that draw people to the area.
 - » Better access and egress, with integrated public and private transport.
 - » Exercise and sporting facilities.
- Participants want the City Heart to be a reason for people to stop and visit, including those who at present simply pass through the municipality going to and from the airport.

BETTER UTILISATION OF OPEN SPACES

- Suggested ways to better utilise the open spaces in the City Heart included linking Rosny Golf Course and Charles Hand Park with a mix of active and passive open space.
- It was proposed that a number of active and passive spaces be identified and designated for such things as disc golf, children's nature play, picnic areas and walking tracks.
- Participants were adamant Kangaroo Bay Rivulet should be enhanced through native plantings to entice wildlife, butterflies and waterbirds. Accessible walking tracks for all abilities would open-up the area to the public.
- Council lawns were praised as an excellent example of green space within the CBD, but many believe they should be expanded to better link the surrounding services, as well as potentially used as an entrance to a re-purposed Rosny Golf Course.
- Given its significance to First Tasmanians, participants believe Sheoak Point should be retained in its original state with appropriate acknowledgement of the land's Traditional Owners.

RETAINING PEOPLE IN THE CITY HEART

Stakeholders believe there are four key elements to attracting and retaining people in the City Heart:

- Comfortable and accessible space for all—including elderly, families with young children and people with a disability—with a focus on amenities, including such things as accessible public toilets, water fountains, adequate lighting, covered seating and sheltered areas.
- The development of a night-time economy while ensuring the safety and amenity of visitors.
- The staging of events, particularly original events the city can 'own'.
- Creation of 'experiences', not only to attract visitors, but also to provide entertainment for the city's young people.

Overview

The engagement and consultation program clearly show the community members who participated are eager to see an overarching concept, or master plan, developed for the City Heart. They want development undertaken in a considered, cohesive manner which uses existing building footprints and not accomplished at the expense of public open space that should be left for future generations.

While community sentiment was predictably varied, the values, suggestions, expectations and concerns detailed in the key findings were consistent throughout the entire program.

This report was not produced by, nor influenced by Clarence City Council.



Introduction

In January 2020, Timmins Ray was engaged to conduct community consultation for the Clarence City Heart Project, which aims to bring the Rosny, Kangaroo Bay and Bellerive areas together to develop the Clarence city centre into a thriving and vibrant place to live, work, learn and visit.

Clarence City Council's online consultation platform, Your Say Clarence, was initiated in February, inviting all members of the community to contribute ideas and opinions to an open ideas-sharing forum and mapping tool. Concurrently, Timmins Ray began interviewing stakeholders from the Clarence municipality to garner initial ideas and key themes.

After a program pause due to COVID-19, focus groups were held to quantify key themes and findings from the previous stage, as well as determine the level of support for potential development and revitalisation within the City Heart.

The focus groups varyingly included residents and ratepayers, local business, community organisations, special interest groups (youth, aged care, disability, migrant and Aboriginal communities), as well as representatives of neighbourhood centres. As was expected from such diverse stakeholders, each focus group engendered spirited debate, though at the conclusion the key themes that arose from each were clearly identifiable.

Throughout all stages of consultation—including focus groups—Timmins Ray gave community members and stakeholders equal opportunity to present their ideas and opinions. During focus groups we aimed, as facilitators, to ensure no individual stakeholder monopolised the discussion and actively sought input from other attendees throughout the session. We also encouraged those who attended to follow up with us via email if there were any points they felt they were unable to make in the 90-minute session. These communications were included in our notes for analysis.

While none of the findings claim to have 100 per cent community support, the following document details the most commonly recurring findings that arose throughout the consultative program, focusing on five key themes:

- Community Values;
- Challenges and Issues;
- What is Missing in the City Heart;
- Better Utilisation of Open Spaces; and
- Retaining People in the City Heart.

Methodology

Community acceptance and ownership of any proposed, major development first requires a genuine understanding of people's perceptions, expectations, opinions and concerns. Application of that understanding then provides the collaborative framework for a successful project.

As an independent consultancy, our approach sought to transparently gather the views of a diversity of community members using a variety of methods, including face-to-face meetings, online platforms, written submissions, and focus group meetings. This approach aimed to ensure everyone who wished to, was given the opportunity to express their views.

The Clarence City Heart Community Consultation program was launched in February with extensive publicity on both mainstream, social and digital media – the purpose being to raise community awareness and to encourage participation.

Initial consultation, which began immediately following the launch, was multi-faceted. A publicly accessible mapping and ideas-sharing platform was established on the Your Say Clarence website to gauge attitudes and ideas, potential issues, and community values. It was also designed to provide

preliminary insights into what the community wanted to see in the City Heart. During this stage, 189 electronic and eight written submissions were received, providing valuable information on what the community enjoys most about living in Clarence; concerns for the future; issues and challenges; and ideas for potential future development.

Stage Two included 16 individual face-to-face meetings with heads of local community action groups, sporting and recreation clubs and local Members of Parliament, which were guided by the seven interdependent characteristics identified in the *Bellerive, Kangaroo Bay & Rosny Park City Heart Concept Report* (9 January 2020).

In Stage Three, focus groups comprising a diversity of stakeholders with equally diverse opinions and attitudes, provided the opportunity to discuss the broad parameters of the City Heart project and to put forward ideas and viewpoints.

In consultation with council, invitations were extended to businesses in the City Heart areas of Rosny and Bellerive, Your Say Clarence respondents, students from local schools, representatives from Neighbourhood Centres in the Clarence municipality and other community service organisations and special interest groups, the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and representatives from local sports clubs and arts groups.

Methodology (cont.)

The focus group meetings allowed for frank discussion and lively debate, especially when views and opinions differed. Detailed notes and audio recordings were taken at each session, which were subsequently analysed and cross-referenced with key themes from previous stages.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions focus groups did not exceed 10 participants, with an additional two facilitators. Forty-nine people participated in the sessions, which were conducted at the Rosny Library and all those in attendance complied with the venue's COVID-19 Safety Plan.

Each stage of consultation was planned in advance to be adaptable based on the previous. It was always anticipated that each phase of consultation would inform the conversation in the next; for example, the Stage Two ideas-sharing platform on Your Say Clarence gathered initial ideas and insights which were discussed at length throughout Stage Three focus groups. It was our intention that the information gathered in these discussions would then inform survey data in Stage Four, which would aim to narrow down, quantify and prioritise each key finding.

Throughout the consultative program, COVID-19 and resultant budget constraints presented a number of barriers and, as such, there were numerous alterations to the plan to comply with government restrictions. Earlier iterations included 'pop-up' consultation booths at Eastlands and the Rosny Library, engagement with Neighbourhood Centres and the aforementioned Your Say Clarence online community survey. These activities were designed to assist in the prioritisation of the key ideas and themes which are detailed in this document. However, in July, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, council decided to modify the scope of consultation, confident sufficient insights and information had already been gathered and collated.

Key Themes and Insights

The following pages contain more detail on the key themes and insights from the consultative program.

Also included are randomly selected, unattributed quotes (in italics) from individual participants. These are designed to reflect the general tenor of discussion around each key finding.



COMMUNITY VALUES

The following reflects the most commonly held community values from throughout this consultation:



Public, wide open green spaces

The most common theme which arose throughout all stages of community consultation was the need to retain public, green open spaces for the enjoyment of the community, now and in the future.

Further, suggestions were made as to how these spaces might be kept open yet revitalised to enhance their appeal to the community. The most common suggestion was to develop Charles Hand Park and Rosny Golf Course into a connected 'Central Park-style' multi-use space with an arboretum or botanical gardens with open spaces and ponds.

“It is very important that the green spaces are retained. No further incursions by any buildings. The green spaces are the heart of Clarence.”

“The lovely green area at the end of Kangaroo Bay (which surrounds Rosny College and includes the bowls club area, sport-recreation grounds and facilities, and the golf course) is one of the most important green areas in Clarence. Revamp and enhance what we've got with better landscaping and more planting.”

Members of the Clarence community who participated in this consultation clearly see that the access residents have to wide-open, green spaces should be a core value of the City Heart precinct. Previous decisions to allow development of open spaces on Rosny Hill and Kangaroo Bay have triggered a level of distrust among some community members, who are concerned council may

plan to further develop open spaces within the City Heart. It was remarked that these open spaces are important to the physical and mental wellbeing of the Clarence community.

“I watch my grandchildren and see how much richer developmentally it is for them to play in rough terrain... all the rough spaces that they have to clamber over and balance, risky things, falling off rocks, all of those things. It is amazing for brain development.”

“The wide open, natural green spaces provide really rich food for brains and it would be a dreadful loss to not respect and take that into account.”

Environment & sustainability

Numerous participants articulated the need for a greater focus on the natural environment and sustainability – which came down to applying a more targeted approach to the reduction of single use plastics as well as waste management and recycling as part of the City Heart project.

During one focus group, the concept of Biophilic Cities was raised and discussed. Biophilic Cities is a global network of partner cities working together to pursue the vision of a 'natureful' city by conserving and celebrating nature in all its forms (Biophilic Cities 2020).

This concept attracted solid support, with many hopeful that Clarence City Council may consider joining the initiative to demonstrate its support for the environment and sustainability.



Heaps of research has been done in the field of biodiversity corridors over the past decade and there is scope for this in the CBD planning process. If done properly, it could lead to really great environmental and social outcomes. We need to connect all the green spaces through the use of native plants and incorporate habitat structures – woody debris, rocks, water bodies, etc.”



There is an opportunity to pivot – from the current emphasis on economic growth (business) to wellbeing (people), the local (place) and sustainability (preservation and survival).”

Village vs CBD

The Clarence community members who participated in this consultation are fiercely proud of their municipality and wish to maintain its uniqueness.

The notion of the 'City Heart' was widely debated, with some concerned the Clarence CBD would be developed into a 'concrete jungle'. Participants were quick to point out that with the Hobart CBD less than 5km away, they did not wish to see the Clarence City Heart turned into a replica, instead wishing to retain a more village feel – i.e. all the services one requires without high rise and high density buildings.



To me a CBD is the city's hub for business to grow and thrive and for the community to prosper and be served. It is not necessarily about big and shiny buildings.”



Despite the council's long commitment to deeming the municipality a 'city', this is not the general perception. Nor is it necessary. Most of the traditional signifiers of a 'city' such as major public and commercial buildings, a town hall, post office, government offices, banks, company head offices, etc. are missing from Rosny Park and are decreasingly important in established cities.”

Coastline & water views

Access to the shoreline and the unique views across the River Derwent to the Hobart CBD and Mt Wellington/kunanyi are considered assets of critical significance to the community.

Raised in every focus group, the community is keen to protect these assets, with many suggesting Kangaroo Bay foreshore is an ideal place to develop a café, restaurant and bar strip which takes full advantage of the waterfront views. Similarly, it was suggested the Bellerive Quay restaurant strip could be improved by being reconfigured to allow restaurants and cafes access to – and larger dining areas on – the waterfront as opposed to exclusive access from Cambridge Road.

“

A viewing platform from the City Heart which takes advantage of the views across the river to Mt Wellington/kunanyi would be a place you could bring visitors and tourists for a completely unique view of Hobart.”

“

I reckon a boardwalk with sheltered seating, play areas and cafes extending around from Sheoak Point to Bellerive Quay would be fantastic! Similar to the Seaport in Launceston.”

“

Build a roof on the boardwalk carpark so that the restaurants can have an outdoor dining area that faces the river instead of the road.”

Staying in Clarence

The Clarence community members who participated in this consultation are proud to live in the municipality and value the services available within the City Heart that allow residents to conduct their lives without the need to cross the river.

During focus groups, it was widely agreed that residents of Clarence do not wish to leave their municipality to shop, socialise or work, preferring instead to enjoy the services and facilities available in the City Heart area.

However, while many say they would prefer to eat, drink and socialise in the Clarence area, the lack of available culture and dining options is a barrier to doing so.

“

We’ve got – in the wider municipality – access to the pool, cinemas and Eastlands. There are quite a lot of facilities right here.”

“

I’d love to be able to go for a nice dinner and have a few drinks on this side of the river and have my friends come over here for a change, but there is just a lack of options in terms of high quality restaurants.”

An aerial photograph of a city street intersection, likely in Timmins, Ontario. The image shows a mix of commercial buildings, including a large warehouse-like structure with a flat roof and a smaller building with a distinctive hexagonal roof pattern. There are several parking lots filled with cars, and a road with multiple lanes and a roundabout. The area is surrounded by green trees and grass. A semi-transparent teal box with a white border is centered over the image, containing the text "CHALLENGES & ISSUES" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

CHALLENGES & ISSUES

Accessibility

When discussing accessibility, participants referred not just to physical barriers, but also of concerns that financial and social accessibility was significantly lacking in the Clarence City Heart.

It was suggested that for many in the municipality, there were financial barriers preventing them from accessing much of what the City Heart had to offer. Participants made clear that they wanted services and amenities that provided for all – regardless of physical ability or socio-economic position.

“

Accessibility is a major concern, especially for people with disabilities, parents with children, and the elderly because current infrastructure is lacking, and the shortage of parking is preventing many people in the community from visiting the area.”

“

There are a lot of reasons why people can't get around and there are some great things to see, but some people just can't get to them.”

Public transport

Concerns were raised throughout consultation that access to the City Heart and the services within the precinct (e.g. Service Tasmania, Rosny Library, Medicare, Centrelink) were difficult to access for those living in the outer suburbs of the municipality.

There is a shared view that public transport is unreliable and unsafe, with many commenting on the unsuitability of the Rosny Park Bus Interchange (bus mall). It was frequently suggested the bus mall is in the wrong place, resulting in anti-social behaviour in the centre of the CBD, which negatively impacts surrounding businesses.

Similarly, the issue of public safety in the bus mall was seen as a significant issue, with participants of all ages unwilling to use public transport in the City Heart, particularly after dark.

“

I would like to see bus routes and timetables optimised to allow more people access to the CBD via public transport. This would ease congestion around major intersections and free-up parking.”

“

I'd love to see some sort of shuttle bus service within Clarence.”

Traffic & congestion

Traffic management and congestion were flagged as major issues, particularly around Rosny Hill Road, Bligh Street, Gordons Hill Road and Tasman Highway. Many suggestions were made in response to these concerns, including:

- Moving the bus mall;
- Removing the presence of cars from the CBD;
- Creating a slip lane from Rosny Hill Road to Riawena Road;
- Developing a connection from Rosny Hill Road to the Tasman Highway (eastbound);
- Building an exit ramp from the Tasman Highway; and
- Establishing an alternative exit from Gordons Hill Road.

Participants suggested one of the main reasons people were unwilling to spend time in the Clarence City Heart was the inability to seamlessly enter and exit the precinct, particularly the areas surrounding Eastlands Shopping Centre and Rosny Farm.

During early stages of consultation, a representative from Tasmania Police advised that any concept plans for the City Heart area should be created in consultation with police to ensure they are workable from a public safety and traffic management point of view.

“

Traffic management and traffic flow in the Clarence City Heart area would need to be addressed before any development takes place.”

“

Add a slip lane on the left as you drive up Rosny Hill Road, to turn off and head toward Rosny College. This lane backs up to the United roundabout due to everyone wanting to be in the left lane on the bridge, making it time consuming for those just trying to drive to the College or Clarence Pool.”

“

Add an overpass or underpass from Rosny Hill Rd giving easier access to the Tasman Highway eastbound for quicker access to Sorell and the airport. This would ease congestion from traffic using Cambridge Rd and the Mornington Roundabout to gain access to the highway.”

Car parking

Car parking is seen as a significant issue in the Clarence City Heart. It was widely agreed throughout all stages of consultation that parking is already a challenge when events are held at Blundstone Arena (with people parking and then walking or using public transport) as well as during peak times, such as Christmas. Any development in the City Heart would only exacerbate the issue, so it was strongly agreed by focus group participants that car parking would need to be considered in any master plan for the area.

Numerous suggestions were made as to where council might consider placing multi-storey car parks to service the needs of the growing municipality. Those suggestions included adding extra floors to:

- The current Council Chambers, Department of Justice and Library carpark;
- The carpark between the bus mall and Integrated Care Centre; and
- The carpark behind Bellerive Quay.

An idea that was widely-accepted by participants was that any future car parks should feature environmentally friendly design.

“

Parking is a huge concern as this is a barrier preventing many people from visiting the Clarence City Heart – this will need rectifying as part of the concept plan.”

“

The council-owned carpark in Percy St near Fernwood is the ideal location for a multi-storey carpark, which could service not only the ferry terminal, but the City Heart more broadly, provided appropriate public transport links to the CBD area.”

“

The carpark adjacent to council and behind the Bellerive Police Station, Rosny Library and Department of Justice buildings offers an option for expansion—particularly if used as a multi-storey carpark or as an alternative site for council offices.”

Conversely, views were also expressed that car parks may in future decades become redundant, as communities begin prioritising more environmentally sustainable methods of transportation.

Public toilets

Raised during individual stakeholder meetings and focus groups, the community is concerned at the lack of publicly accessible toilets within the City Heart area and would like to see this addressed in any concept plan. Participants were adamant that easily-accessible public toilets would need to be available within the City Heart to ensure community members were able to comfortably spend more time in the area.

“

There are two elements to toilets. Having a toilet; and having a toilet that is well-maintained, well-kept and genuinely accessible. A toilet is great, but a well-maintained toilet is essential.”

“

Current amenities (i.e. toilets) on site [at the Rosny Farm] are substandard in terms of quantity and size. They do not meet contemporary requirements for accessibility.”

Holistic planning

It is widely hoped council will commission a comprehensive master plan prior to the beginning of any physical development. Participants acknowledged Clarence’s robust and well-developed Strategic Plan, but were concerned to know how the City Heart project fitted within the objectives of that Plan.

Similarly, there was a perception the Strategic Plan is not being executed in a timely manner, raising concerns the City Heart project may not progress as rapidly as it should.

“

To avoid the past mistakes, there is a need for an integrated master plan for the whole area extending from the Bellerive village to Gordon’s Hill Road and including the whole of Rosny Park.”

“

Thoughtful urban design planning is crucial to the successful re-imagining of the CBD of Clarence. The City Heart project represents the opportunity for Clarence to put itself on the map as a centre for cultural and community activity and not repeat the poor planning decisions of the past that have led to a CBD bisected by busy roads, and identified by its association with an unattractive shopping centre.”

“

A comprehensive master plan is needed to cover the whole area. It should include traffic and people movement through the site, retain open landscaped areas, and link Kangaroo Bay to Rosny Park.”

Barriers to development

It was widely agreed by participating business owners that Clarence is the most difficult municipality in which to start up a new business, especially when considering the Cash in Lieu of Car Parking fee, which is applied to businesses that don't have the physical space to incorporate car parking.

“

I know of countless people who have tried to open businesses in the Clarence area but were unable to do so largely because of the parking problem and the exorbitant fee council is putting on new businesses in lieu of parking.”

“

You can see, in the Bellerive Village area, shops that are vacant for months and months and months. That is a huge problem. I'm worried that even when we do all this work, we'll still have these barriers that don't allow people to actually open businesses in the area.”

Members of the business community who participated in this consultation want council to reconsider its policies to make it easier for local businesses (especially those in the hospitality and entertainment space) to open in the City Heart and drive cultural change.

The background image shows a waterfront boardwalk. In the foreground, two women are walking; one is pushing a stroller. They are on a paved path. To the right, there is a blue wall or railing with the text 'Public Boardwalk' and a logo. In the background, several sailboats are visible on the water under a clear sky.

WHAT IS MISSING?

Connectivity

Participants feel the City Heart area is divided, difficult to navigate, and lacks connectivity – especially because of the barrier created by Rosny Hill Road.

As previously mentioned, accessibility is seen as a major issue and the participating community members expressed the need for greater connectivity between the different areas within the City Heart. Suggested options include:

- A 'green bridge' spanning from Charles Hand Park to the Rosny Golf Course;
- A series of interconnected cycle/walking/running tracks throughout the City Heart and connecting through to nearby suburbs;
- An improved public transport system – including integrated trans-Derwent ferries; and
- An underpass to link the areas of Rosny, Kangaroo Bay and Bellerive.

Green bridge

One of the most popular ideas throughout consultation was to redesign the overpass between Rosny Golf Course and Charles Hand Park to better link the two areas for pedestrians and cyclists.

The concept of a 'green bridge' was widely celebrated, provided it was wide enough for bikes and pedestrians, not too steep for people with mobility issues, and landscaped to allow wildlife to easily transverse from the Rosny Golf Course to Charles Hand Park. This idea seeks to improve connectivity, whilst also providing a more 'seamless' urban design, incorporating landscaping to give the illusion the road travels underneath the connected parklands.



Connect the golf course area and Charles Hand Park with a wide arch structure over Rosny Hill Road – wide enough to landscape. Use the natural grade of the land so that the approaches over the structure are relatively flat. Make it look like Rosny Hill Road goes under a continuous park area."



Connect people and landscape from the north to the south over Rosny Hill Road with wide bridge structures that allow continuity of landscape, cycle and pedestrian movement and events."



There is a definite divide between the Rosny, Kangaroo Bay and Bellerive areas due to Rosny Hill Road which needs to be connected in a much better way."

Interconnected cycle/walking/running tracks

Many participants expressed the desire to see better pathways for walking, running and cycling throughout the City Heart, similar to the concept of Central Park in New York and The Tan in Melbourne.



The existing paths, tracks and trails around the City Heart encourage people to get out and enjoy nature. These should not be diminished."



We strongly advocate for the creation of a City Heart that puts people first over vehicles, prioritising walking, riding and taking public transport."

Bicycle infrastructure

The participating community members want to see improved bicycle infrastructure throughout the Clarence City Heart, especially in the interest of safety. Similarly, participants would also like to see scenic bike trails available for those who use bikes as a leisure activity, rather than a mode of transport.

Further, it is believed the future success of a Derwent River ferry service would be enhanced with feeder bike lanes and footpaths. It is suggested this would help future proof the ferry-based commute to Hobart.

E-bikes are also changing how people travel, appealing to many who are attracted to the ability to cover large distances with increased ease. The cost of e-bikes has reduced significantly over the past 10 years as the activity has evolved from a sport or health pursuit into basic transport. Community members argued that cycling is only going to get more popular as e-bikes become cheaper still and more prevalent. Participants felt that in any concept plan for the City Heart, infrastructure should be put in place to support, promote, and benefit from this change.

Scenic bike trails (such as the Rose Bay foreshore trail) are also important to the community as they support health, wellbeing, and relaxation. Participants are

eager to see a mixture of improved infrastructure for all bicycle users throughout the City Heart, including hire facilities and charging stations for e-bikes.



Cycling is exponentially becoming a very popular mode of transport – in particular since the rise of e-bikes, which has opened up cycling to people of all ages and abilities. Council should think very hard about how to make this City Heart plan cyclist-friendly."



Install heaps of bike racks, good bike signage – even charging stations for electric bikes. This theme could even extend to kayaks – install kayak lockers at Kangaroo Bay so people could paddle over to Kangaroo Bay then walk to the Clarence CBD."

Public transport

As previously mentioned, participants feel the lack of adequate, reliable public transport within the City Heart is a major issue. It was suggested on numerous occasions that the City Heart should be designed with public transport and accessibility front of mind – whether this means moving the bus mall to a different, 'more suitable' location, introducing shuttle buses within the City Heart to link Bellerive, Kangaroo Bay and Rosny, or working with Metro to increase services from outer suburbs.

Participants feel Clarence City Council needs to place more focus on getting public transport right, in order to incentivise its use and disincentivise driving cars to the CBD.

A popular suggestion included developing an off ramp from the Tasman Highway to the bottom of Gordons Hill Road, and relocating the bus mall to the current carpark behind the Council Chambers, Rosny Library and Tasmania Police carpark. In the event the Rosny Golf Course became public open space, this would locate the bus mall at the entrance of the park, with easy access to Eastlands, removing anti-social behaviour from Bligh Street.

If council offices were ever to be repurposed into a community hub, bus services could deliver people to a space that provides relevant and easy access to key services. This location would also allow for more seamless access to and from Rosny Park for all road users.

“

A well-designed bus mall is essential. If we have a nicely designed bus mall, we might be able to have less carparks and nicer green spaces as people will actually use the public transport.”

“

The bus mall just kills the vibe of the CBD.”

“

I, and many of my friends, don't feel safe in the bus mall, especially once the surrounding shops and businesses are closed.”

Ferries

Further to the discussion about public transport, many participants expressed their support for a ferry service operating out of Bellerive, although this often led to a conversation around parking and accessibility.

It was widely agreed that a ferry service from Bellerive should not only encompass the trip across the Derwent to the Hobart CBD but also be incorporated within a Greater Hobart ferry system, servicing other suburbs, including Tranmere, Blackmans Bay, Claremont, and Bridgewater.

It was also agreed there would need to be a seamless public transport system to and from ferry terminals, or sufficient car parking to allow people to park and catch ferries.

“

Create a ferry service that will maximise the efficiency of our waterway as a public transport option, reduce traffic, integrate with existing public transport, provide an efficient and timely mode of transport, use sustainable materials and designs, and have the least impact on the natural environment.”

“

I would like to see more utilisation of public transport, including ferries from Bellerive. In order to do this, an area should be earmarked for parking and include shuttle buses to and from the ferry terminal.”

Underpass

While most stakeholders and participating community members concluded the overpass between Charles Hand Park and the Rosny Golf Course urgently needed redesigning, many were of the opinion that an underpass linking Rosny Park to Kangaroo Bay – under Rosny Hill Road – was also a sensible option, given this is where the majority of Rosny College students cross the intersection.

It was proposed that linking Charles Hand Park and Rosny Golf Course with a green bridge may entice Rosny College students to use this as their safe passage to Eastlands and the bus mall, negating the need for crossing at the lights.

“

While the overpass between Rosny Farm and Charles Hand Park is used at times, the more frequented intersection is at the Bligh Street lights. This intersection desperately needs an overpass or underpass to improve accessibility.”

“

Rosny Hill Road is a major divider of the Rosny and Kangaroo Bay areas – an overpass or underpass is desperately needed to assist cyclists and pedestrians to safely cross at the Bligh Street traffic lights.”

Safe, welcoming & functional community spaces

Participants in this consultation agreed that the Clarence City Heart lacks safe, welcoming and functional community spaces for all members of the community. Inclusive planning was suggested to ensure the interests of all ages, socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities and abilities were catered for.

There was a range of suggestions from participants aimed at enticing the community to meet, engage in conversation, participate in activities, socialise with peers, watch a performance and get involved with civic events. Suggestions included a civic centre (or town hall), community hub, town square, and multicultural space as well as the potential redevelopment of Council Chambers.

Civic centre/town hall

There is strong support for creation of a civic centre or town hall – i.e. a place for community events that is owned and maintained by council, but is able to be utilised by all community groups for performances, theatre, music, dance and various events.

The Clarence community members who participated in this consultation are eager to make use of a mid-sized venue large enough to seat at least 300 people, which could also be used for meetings, conferences, wedding receptions, fairs, concerts, conventions and formal dinners. Facilities should include a public address system, kitchen, seating and accessible toilets.

“

Until now, the city with its population of 55,000 has overlooked the need for a suitable cultural centre with a 300-400 seating capacity.”

“

The Clarence City Heart desperately needs a theatre, civic centre, or town hall that can be used by choirs and other performing arts for concerts and performances.”

“

The Eastern Shore is desperately missing a quality, indoor performance venue that can attract national and international artists. Furthermore, the venue would be ideal for local organisations to stage performance events such as the Clarence Eisteddfods, school productions, community events and more.”

Community hub

A community hub was suggested by a number of participants and widely accepted as a necessary addition to the Clarence City Heart. It was proposed this venue would be a multi-use space with the capacity to facilitate community events and would be available to community groups to hire at reasonable rates. Ideally, the hub should be a multi-generational space to meet and connect with others in the community, and a safe and inviting space for migrant communities to participate in community activities.

It was also suggested and widely agreed that this space could also include a 'library of things', 'repair café' or community garden. It was proposed the community hub would serve as a gateway to connect families with each other and existing services.

“I'd really like to see a community hub, similar to Kingborough Community Hub, which is a space that is council owned where community groups can run workshops etc.”

“We have so many really good volunteer-run groups in Clarence, so having a space they can access would serve the community well.”

Town or village square

Focus groups discussed the idea of a 'town square' for the Clarence City Heart, with many in favour of having a communal open, green space, similar to Hobart's Franklin Square, that can be used for meeting family and friends, enjoying night markets, outdoor dining and general socialising. The most popular location for such a facility was Bligh Street, between the front entrance to Eastlands and where the current bus mall is situated.

“We need to bring village squares back if we want to have a sense of community.”

“

I think having a big open space in the middle of the city, where people can play music and busk as well as just congregate, sit and enjoy themselves is ideal—those kinds of spaces never get old.”

Council Chambers

Most stakeholders and participating community members concede the current Council Chambers building is no longer fit-for-purpose and understand council's need for increased accommodation to allow for a growing municipality.

However, there are varying views about where and how council should seek to increase its office footprint. The majority believe council should remain in the same location, extending either towards the Rosny Golf Course, over the current carpark or towards Eastlands. Others suggest council could consolidate with other government agencies into one purpose-built facility. Some participants suggested Council Chambers should be relocated and the building itself repurposed into a civic centre, community hub or similar.

While participants could not reach common ground on this issue, it was widely agreed that any redevelopment of the space was not a high priority – especially given the financial implications of COVID-19. Council should therefore not prioritise any development of Chambers over the future needs of the community.

“

The Council Chambers building is bursting at the seams but will be retained due to its significance as an excellent example of 70s architecture. A second, 21st Century building could be built adjacent to it, on the western side of Kangaroo Creek and linked to the original building with a sky bridge.”

“

Council Chambers is not fit for purpose anymore, therefore extending on top is logical and not taking up any more open green areas.”



Council offices should not move, and any proposed office development should go upwards or northeast into the existing parking area behind the Police offices.”

Multicultural spaces

Given the growing number of multicultural communities within the Clarence municipality, it was suggested a multicultural hub could be developed to allow space for community groups to gather. This may, or may not, be developed in conjunction with a community hub or arts and culture precinct in the City Heart.

The Clarence community members who participated in this consultation value the diversity of their municipality and propose more services be made available to those families and communities who are new to Australia and may have first languages other than English. It was suggested migrant communities tend to settle on the western shore due to the proximity to services like the Migrant Resource Centre and the Multicultural Hub. Therefore, participants believe the City Heart should incorporate those services that will provide a sense of belonging to all communities in the municipality.



It would be great to have a space for multicultural communities to hold events – somewhere accessible and visible, where the general community can be attracted to visit and explore the different communities within the Clarence City Heart.”



A festival area, potentially in Kangaroo Bay, or as part of a cultural precinct or amphitheatre at Rosny Farm, could allow multicultural communities to gather for performances and special events.”

Arts & culture precinct

There is consensus among stakeholders and the general community members who participated in consultation that the Rosny Farm area could be extended and developed into an arts and culture precinct. This could include a rated gallery, workshop and wet spaces for community groups, an outdoor area, a large civic or entertainment centre, spaces for events, and potentially an outdoor amphitheatre.

Rosny Farm is a much-loved and well-utilised space, however, many believe an extension is required to accommodate travelling exhibitions, workshops and other art and cultural activities that exceed the limitations of the current space.

“ I strongly endorse surrendering notions of CBD to Hobart and focusing on developing Clarence into a Central Cultural District.”

“ Perhaps a theatre or even an outdoor amphitheatre. Glenorchy has Mona and Hobart is full of culture, but Clarence is slow in moving into the new direction that the Greater Hobart area has taken in recent years. If we want to attract business, we need to buy into the same 'brand'.”

The community members who participated in this consultation are in agreement that current accessibility to Rosny Farm is inadequate. It was suggested any extension of this space would require accompanying improvements to access.

“

The access point to Rosny Farm is very difficult to navigate – it is not obvious from the slip lane from Rosny Hill Road that you are approaching the entrance to a major community art hub.”

“

I think there are a few accessibility issues when it comes to Rosny Farm – physical accessibility is one element, but there is also a social barrier where a lot of people don't feel comfortable visiting Rosny Farm as they are not 'part of' the art scene.”

The need for public art and sculptures within the Clarence City Heart was raised by numerous stakeholders and community members as these serve to enhance the appeal of an area, engaging people and families to spend more time and giving the area a sense of place and identity.

“

A sculpture trail and light park with projections onto trees and buildings would get activity happening in the CBD after dark.”

“

A sculpture or series of sculptures through the new heart of the city, maybe on a trail of discovery, would be an incredible addition to the heart of the city project.”

A number of events are already held in the Rosny Farm space, and participants were hopeful that with some development of the precinct, more (and larger) events could be held in the future. There were suggestions of markets, night markets, outdoor cinemas, and an outdoor amphitheatre and stage for summer concerts, workshops, and school groups. Participants believe adding an outdoor element to the art and culture precinct, with public art and moveable seating, would encourage the public to spend time in the City Heart and make the most of the historic Rosny Farm area.

“

The most outstanding and inspiring part of the CBD is the Rosny Farm Arts Precinct. Despite its physical limitations, it is always evolving. It is dynamic, in tune with contemporary trends whilst always cognisant of its historical importance to the city. It highlights Clarence as an integral part of the fast-growing and unique Tasmanian Arts culture.”

Experiences

Community members of all ages raised concerns about the lack of experiential activities currently available and saw great potential for the City Heart to offer these activities to residents and the Greater Hobart community. Suggestions included ten pin bowling, ice skating, kayak hire, e-bike hire, a marine centre, disc golf, a Tasmanian Devil enclosure and annual events for all ages.

Participants agreed the City Heart could be better utilised, and that people would spend more time in the area, if there were things to do besides walking, cycling, shopping at Eastlands or using the services available in the CBD.

Young people, in particular, were adamant that inclusion of more 'experience-based' activities would alleviate the need to cross the river to Hobart or Glenorchy CBD, where many of these offerings are readily available.

Many stakeholders, including those from Vicinity Group, were in favour of Eastlands diversifying its offerings and expanding the centre to include more experiential and dining options.



I think we need to have more active things to do, coffee places down at Kangaroo Bay, bike hire places, rollerblade hire, let's have someone running paddle boats out in the water – we just need more things to do."

Most people who participated in this consultation want to see a waterfront dining precinct developed along Kangaroo Bay and Bellerive Quay. This again highlights the claimed need to remove, what are considered, the barriers and 'red tape' faced by businesses keen to develop in Clarence.

Most participants were in favour of activating the night-time economy with members of the local business community strongly supportive.



A modern yet tasteful waterfront precinct spanning Kangaroo Bay and Bellerive Quay, incorporating indoor/outdoor bars and restaurants with water views and vibrant night life with year-round scheduled events."



It would be great to see more cafes and restaurants open in the Bellerive village. It has the opportunity to become a 'go-to' strip for the Eastern Shore, encouraging locals to support local enterprise and stick to this side of the river for shopping, dining etc."



BETTER UTILISATION OF OPEN SPACES

Multi-use parkland

A clear majority of participants believe the golf course should be re-purposed as a multi-use parkland, with a mixture of active and passive open spaces. Participants were adamant this land should be open and available for the whole community to enjoy.

As already discussed, stakeholders are eager to see Charles Hand Park joined to Rosny Golf Course with a wide-spanning green bridge and the area treated as one, connected multi-use space.

Accessibility to the space is a top priority for participants, so any concept plan developed for this area needs to carefully assess how the community will gain access to this space and how access points will encourage the community to spend more time in the area.

Most participants were empathetic of those who currently use the golf course and were open to the idea of repurposing a small portion to create a three-hole course, or driving range, that avid golfers can continue to use.

The idea of having a variety of active and passive spaces throughout the parkland was widely agreed among all participants, with the most common suggestions for active spaces being a smaller golf course, a driving range, a disc golf course, a children's nature play area, flat grassed areas for yoga and tai chi, a giant chess board, a dog park and an ice skating rink.

The community members who participated in this consultation are hoping to make use of a number of passive open spaces such as planted areas with public art and picnic spaces available for families to meet, relax and enjoy spending time together. Concept plans will need to strike the right balance between active and passive open space, while being careful to avoid over-development.

Current operator of the Rosny Golf Course, the YMCA, says it is focused on developing and maintaining happy, healthy communities and in improving outcomes for the next generation. It wants to retain a presence in the Clarence City Heart to encourage activity and social connection. The YMCA sees ample opportunity to use the golf course land as a multi-purpose space, if not utilised as a traditional golf course.

“

We see plenty of opportunity to use the golf course land as a multi-purpose space, potentially incorporating other activities such as disc golf or a driving range. This is a perfect opportunity to satisfy the needs of the community without using the golf course in its current capacity.”

“

The proposed Botanic Parkland could be accessed by pathways from the Arts Centre, council buildings, Library and arts precinct. Playground and picnic areas could be located through the park and imaginative play activities would be great fun for youngsters.

Disc golf

Members of Hobart's disc golf community were vocal and enthusiastic about the benefits of incorporating a beginner or amateur disc golf course in the land which currently houses the Rosny Golf Course. This idea garnered a high level of community support, based on its smaller footprint, minimal maintenance, inclusive practices and ability to share multi-use space.

Disc golf is a low impact, lightly aerobic form of exercise that people can play at their own pace.

“

A disc golf course would be a great way to integrate an accessible recreational activity into a multi-use open greenspace across the existing golf course.”

“

It can co-exist with other park users with clever course design as players will 'give way' to other park users like cyclists, runners and walkers.”

Kangaroo Bay Rivulet

Numerous people suggested ways to enhance the natural wetlands in the Clarence City Heart by revitalising the area surrounding Kangaroo Bay Rivulet.

Many participants spoke fondly of the Kangaroo Bay Rivulet area and indicated they use the space as a walking track. However, concerns were raised about accessibility and design, with many suggesting the space could be enhanced by designing the track on the other side of the rivulet, further away from the Eastlands carpark, as this is known to be an 'eyesore' to those who currently use the space.

Participants were adamant there needed to be better access to the Kangaroo Bay Rivulet from both sides, particularly where people can park their cars behind Council Chambers and the Rosny Library, as the entrance to this area is not easily visible or accessible.

“

Restore the Kangaroo Bay Rivulet ecosystem with indigenous plantings and wetland design as well as native grasslands.”

“

I would love to see the Kangaroo Bay Rivulet restored to enhance the natural environment, drawing inspiration from the 'Nature that Nurtures' concept that was developed for Victoria Park.”

“

Improve the water quality of the rivulet near the library carpark with riparian vegetation. Provide better habitat for the waterbirds.”

“

I think it could be made-up with beautiful gardens around it, plants and things to attract butterflies, as well as walkways for the elderly and people with disabilities.”

Sheoak Point

Those consulted were adamant that Sheoak Point should be retained in its original form, without development, and with more acknowledgement of its Traditional Owners.

Given the area's significant Aboriginal heritage, including two ancient middens, it was suggested it should be up to the Tasmanian Aboriginal communities to decide what, if anything, happens with the area.

The bulk of ideas on Your Say Clarence revealed a clear desire within the community to increase acknowledgement of Aboriginal heritage and traditional ownership of the area.

It was also suggested by a member of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre (TAC) that Clarence could pave the way by including more *palawa kani* language on signs across the municipality.

Stakeholders and focus groups were resolved in their belief no plans should be made to change or update this area without further consultation with local Aboriginal communities.

“*Sheoak Point is a significant Aboriginal site and it would be really good to see more Aboriginal history referenced and connections to country throughout the CBD.*”

“*Sheoak Park which is a modest and respectful attempt at recognition of Aboriginal history, should be retained as a walkway, but could be improved with a broader concept of plantings and interpretation.*”

“*I would love to see more acknowledgment of our First Nation's people. Perhaps the area should be named accordingly as a sign of respect in the same way that we now refer to the mountain as kunanyi.*”

Council lawns

Most people consulted believe the green space that encompasses the council lawns are a credit to council and should be retained and expanded for future use. Participants often commented on the manicured gardens and green lawns, though it is believed they are at times underutilised.

Should the Rosny Golf Course be re-purposed, it was suggested the council lawns could be extended to link with the multi-use green space and serve as an entrance from the CBD. Further, many participants hope this space could be extended along Bligh Street to better link the areas encompassing the Bellerive Police Station, Service Tasmania and Rosny Library.

“

The garden area in front of the Council Chambers is integral to the design and heritage values of the building and should be preserved as a key element of the municipality's commitment to open spaces, parks, gardens and reserves.

“

The beautiful garden area adjacent to the Library and Council Chambers could be further developed as a place to meet and relax.”

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Timmins, Ontario. The foreground features a large marina filled with numerous sailboats and yachts. To the right of the marina is a curved promenade and a parking lot. The middle ground shows a residential area with houses and trees. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a cloudy sky. A semi-transparent olive-green rectangle with a white border is centered over the image, containing the text "RETAINING PEOPLE IN THE CITY HEART".

RETAINING PEOPLE IN THE CITY HEART

Clarence City Heart

Participants highlighted the need for concept maps of the City Heart to include amenities that make the space comfortable and accessible for all members of the community, including public toilets, water fountains, adequate lighting for public safety and covered seating with protection from the weather. Community members pointed out that people won't stay and spend time in a space that doesn't have basic amenities—especially those with mobility issues or families with young children.

To future-proof the Clarence City Heart, council must look to actively foster inclusion and provide services and amenities for all who use the space – noting some community members have limited mobility, but would still enjoy and utilise the space if appropriate facilities existed.

“

Regularly placed seating which is covered for protection from sun and rain is important.”

“

Street art and pop-up exhibitions should be introduced, as well as additional shaded seating, to encourage people to just sit and observe.”

“

We need water fountains at intervals throughout the walking and cycle paths that connect the City Heart.”

Night-time economy

The community members who participated in this consultation are supportive of activating the night-time economy in the Clarence City Heart, especially local business owners and community members who prefer not to cross the river to Hobart City when planning a night out.

Incorporating a restaurant and café precinct into the City Heart would provide the culture that those consulted feel is lacking, as well as enticing people to spend more time and money in the area. The community has voiced some concern about the public safety implications of activating the night-time economy, such as anti-social behaviour. However, a representative from Tasmania Police advised that having more people 'out and about' may actually increase public safety. That is because there would be increased activity in the area, which studies show deters and discourages anti-social behaviour and crime.

“

A lot of people who are purchasing houses in this area would like to have more culture, more cafes, restaurants, wine and cheese bars.”

“

Clarence needs a vibrant night life with a year-round schedule of events - e.g. markets, entertainment, music.”

“

As long as there are well-lit spaces, sufficient public transport options, numerous spaces for uber and taxi ranks, help points and disability access, the night-time economy would be largely beneficial to the municipality.”

Events

There was strong support among participants for securing a major 'go-to' event that Clarence could call its own.

A mixture of large scale (like the Jazz Festival) and smaller scale (like night markets) would help cement the Clarence City Heart as the place to be for entertainment and experiences.

Participants also believed that forming partnerships with large events like Dark Mofo, Festival of Voices and Ten Days on the Island would also help encourage future growth and entice potential events to the City Heart.

“ Having more events and spaces for people to just 'hang out' would encourage more people to visit the area and actually spend time enjoying it.”

“ We need to be partnering with large Tasmanian festivals like Dark Mofo and Festival of Voices, giving Clarence the opportunity to show off the amenities available for future events in the municipality.”

Experiences

Similar to events, those consulted want the Clarence City Heart to offer more experiences and activities, believing they are the key to attracting visitors and locals to spend more time in the area.

Young people were of a view that to properly plan for future generations, there needs to be more to do than simply shop at Eastlands.

Eastlands was a polarising topic for many participants, as some spoke of it as a deterrent for people to visit the CBD, referring to the structure as a 'concrete monolith', whereas others spoke of Eastlands as an asset and the main drawcard to the area. However, there was consensus that Eastlands could be revitalised and made more aesthetically appealing, perhaps if integrated with a 'green city' plan, given its positioning next to the green spaces of Charles Hand Park and the Rosny Golf Course.

“ There is nothing unique about shopping at Eastlands, so if we're going to encourage more people to visit and spend time in the City Heart, there needs to be more things for them to do and unique experiences to enjoy.”

“ Something that Clarence has, which no other municipality in the world can claim, is the unique view of Hobart and kunanyi – there could be a designated space for viewing and taking photos which would attract visitors and locals to spend more time in the area.”

Conclusion

The Clarence community members who participated in this consultation are eager to see an overarching concept for the City Heart. They do not necessarily oppose development of the City Heart – as many of the suggestions above indicate – provided it is done in a considered, cohesive way, using or extending on existing building footprints and not accomplished at the expense of future generations' use of public open space.

While community sentiment was varied on a number of matters, the values, suggestions and concerns detailed in this report were shared by the majority of participants throughout the comprehensive consultation program.



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