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Know where you stand

Coffs Harbour City Centre Master Plan 2031

Public exhibition findings

DATE

20 February 2013

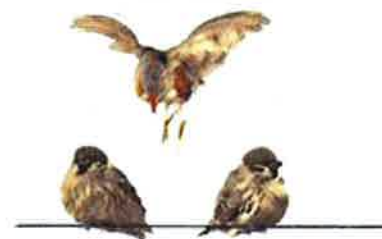
CONTACT

Dave Woolbank

0407 020 838

dave@straight-talk.com.au

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Dave Woolbank

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1 Executive Summary

The response to the exhibited Coffs Harbour City Centre Master Plan 2031 (also known as the City Centre Master Plan and Regional Skate Plaza/Youth Space Concept Plan proposal) has been significant. Over 90% of submissions support the master plan, with 195 formal submissions (emails and letters) yielding 960 unique comments (points, objections, supporting comments, and requests) plus 137 posts on the official exhibition website www.coffscity.com.au.

Since September 2012 Council has been working with the community, the master plan working group and urban design specialists to create a draft plan that aims to reposition the city centre as a 21st century city that attracts investment, new business, new residents and is also the centre of cultural life and events.

The Coffs Harbour City Centre Master Plan 2031 proposal went on public exhibition from 14 December 2012 to 28 January 2013. The timeframe has been set by State Government timelines in relation to making an application for the continuance of the CBD Special Rate that will provide the foundation funding for the improvements proposed in the Draft CBD Master Plan.

The City Centre Master Plan and Regional Skate Plaza/Youth Space Concept Plan proposals were made available for viewing at the Coffs Harbour City Council Chambers, the Coffs Harbour, Sawtell and Woolgoolga libraries and on the website at www.coffscity.com.au.

In addition, a community workshop in conjunction with the 'Coffs Harbour Think Tank' was held on Thursday, 17 January 2013 at 2.00pm in the Rainbow Room at Coffs C.ex Club.

The exhibited plans attracted over 960 submissions, with 78% supporting all or various components of the plan, 9% opposing all or various components of the plan; the remaining submissions made suggestions to the plan. In addition, the website attracted 137 posts, the majority of which were supporting.

In summary:

- Ten strategies and 12 projects were exhibited; items within projects attracted the most submissions
- The CBD strategies and projects attracted 822 unique comments (points) and web posts, these were made up of 625 supportive comments 88 objections and 109 requests
- Brelsford Park attracted 196 unique comments (points), these were made up of 148 supportive comments, 29 neutral comments or requests and 19 opposing comments, plus 75 web posts of which the majority were in support of the skate park or made design specific requests.

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Overall the master plan has been widely supported with 748 supporting comments in comparison with 86 opposing comments.

- Most of the submissions received supported all or various elements of the exhibited plan
- The majority of objections were directed to specific elements within the plans and are incorporated in the following sections of this report
- Often requests or comments neither supported nor rejected aspects of the exhibited plan
- Several submissions identified funding as a potential issue.

The most mentioned items within the exhibited plan (strategies and projects), were

- The Brelsford Park project (including the Skate Park Concept Plan)
- The City Square Cultural Building project was the second most popular exhibited item, with 172 unique comments, of which 139 supported, eight opposed and 25 made requests, and
- The City Square project was the third most popular item yielding 165 unique comments, made up of 139 supporting submissions, 25 requests and one opposing submission.

Objections centred on:

- Brelsford Park. Albeit small in comparison to the supporting submissions, concerns raised about Brelsford Park were consistently about safety issues with the Skate Plaza being planned too close to busy traffic and requests the youth destinations be located to the Jetty
- Parking issues focused on the inconveniences any reduction and / or relocations would cause, particularly for the ageing population.

Due to the significant response to Brelsford Park, the following community findings separate this exhibited project from the remaining exhibited 11 projects and 10 strategies.

The community engagement report will be considered at Coffs Harbour City Council Meeting on 28 February 2013. Should the plans be endorsed, an IPART Application for special rate variation (subject to council approval) will need to be made by 11 March 2013.

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2 Methodology

The draft City Centre Master Plan and Regional Skate Plaza/Youth Space Concept Plan proposal was developed in consultation with stakeholders and the community in 2012. The draft plans went on public exhibition from 14 December 2012 to 28 January 2013. The timeframe has been set by State Government timelines in relation to making an application for the continuance of the CBD Special Rate variation that will provide the foundation funding for the improvements proposed in the Draft CBD Master Plan.

The City Centre Master Plan and Regional Skate Plaza/Youth Space Concept Plan proposals were made available for viewing at the Coffs Harbour City Council Chambers, the Coffs Harbour, Sawtell and Woolgoolga libraries and on the website at www.coffscity.com.au.

Community submissions could be made to:

- POST: Coffs City Master Plan, 66a Dalhousie Street, Haberfield, 2045
- EMAIL: talk@straight-talk.com.au
- WEB: www.coffscity.com.au

In addition, a community workshop in conjunction with the 'Coffs Harbour Think Tank' was held on Thursday, 17 January 2013 at 2.00pm in the Rainbow Room at Coffs C.ex Club.

The majority of submissions received were via email, only a handful was received by mail. In addition, the website www.coffscity.com.au received Y posts.

Website

A dedicated website, featuring key content from the full prosperity plan was established and key project information was made available to support the public exhibition. In addition, discussion forums for each of the ten strategies and 12 projects were established to provide opportunity for people to make considered comment in their own time.

The website featured:

- The vision of Coffs City Centre
- Who's involved (in the master plan process)
- Overview to the implementation
- Your say - facility for formal submissions
- Timing
- Supporting documentation
- 10 Strategies and 12 Projects details



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Exhibition display boards

The exhibition boards were made available for viewing at the Coffs Harbour City Council Chambers, the Coffs Harbour, Sawtell and Woolgoolga libraries.



Figure 3 pages one and two of the exhibition display boards

Promotion

The exhibition has been particularly well supported by the Coffs Harbour Advocate from the initial workshop in September 2012 through to the commencement of public exhibition.

This publicity, complemented with radio coverage on 2HC, has optimised community awareness of the City Centre Master Plan and Regional Skate Plaza/Youth Space Concept Plan proposal.



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Workshops

Consultation was undertaken in multiple stages to feed into the iterative planning process. The three community engagement workshops for the City Centre master planning process were held on 17 September, 10 October and 15 November 2012. Engagement techniques ranged from independently facilitated workshop that involved a combination of individual and large group visioning and exploration sessions, to charrettes and small group work with urban designers

The workshops were attended by approximately 150 Coffs residents and their contribution has delivered outputs that have steadily informed the master planning design team. The community feedback throughout the process has been consistent. All agreed the master plan objective is about revitalising the Coffs City Centre to stimulate economic activity. Participants told us they want to see a change in how people live, work and move through the City Centre in order to create a more vibrant hub for the region.

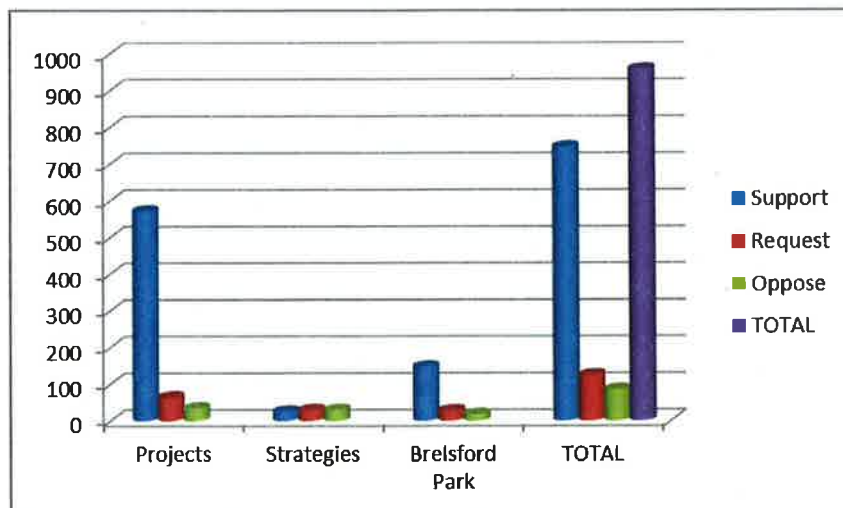
The master plan urban design team identified, with the consent of the workshop participants, a vision that Coffs City Centre can be the beating heart of the Coffs Coast. The heart of Coffs City Centre will remain as Harbour Drive and the City Square whilst growing towards its natural assets to become a vibrant, connected and green City Centre.

Council has been working hard with the community, the master plan working group and urban design specialists to create a recommendation that aims to reposition the City Centre as a 21st century city which attracts investment, new business, new residents and is the centre of cultural life and events. This current public exhibition, 14th December 2012 to 28th January 2013, has been controlled by the State Government time lines which Council has been required to work within.

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3 Overall community response to the exhibition

The response to the exhibited Coffs Harbour City Centre Master Plan 2031 proposal has been significant. Over 90% of submissions support the master plan, with 195 formal submissions (emails and letters) yielding 960 unique comments (points) plus 139 posts on the official exhibition website www.coffscity.com.au.



Graph 1 shows mix of responses for the reported exhibited categories

Ten strategies and 12 projects (includes Brelsford Park) were exhibited; items within projects attracted the most submissions:

- 674 comments were received for the 11 exhibited projects, yielding 573 supportive comments, 36 objections and 65 requests
- Brelsford Park attracted 196 comments, 148 supportive comments, 29 neutral comments or request and 19 opposing comments
- 89 submissions were received for the exhibited 10 strategies, yielding 27 supportive comments, 31 requests and 31 opposing comments.

A dedicated website, featuring key content from the full prosperity plan, attracted 1,319 unique visitors during the exhibition period. The PDF Prosperity Plan was downloaded over 300 times. 137 posts were made online, the majority for the Brelsford Park Skate Park proposal.

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General feedback: common comments

Most of the submissions received supported all or various elements of the exhibited plan. Typical supportive submissions about the overall exhibition content and process included:

- 133 form based submissions supported all 10 master plan strategies and 12 master plan projects subject to several comments incorporated in table 1
- The process was often complimented and never criticised:
 - "The community is supportive of the process"
 - "I have viewed the CBD Master Plan and congratulate those concerned with putting out a great vision for the city for future years"
 - "... it will bring an enormous array of business opportunities and of course residents wishing to relocate...from larger cities and offshore."

Most objections were directed to specific elements within the plans and are incorporated in the following sections of this report. The more general concerns included:

- "The plan has failed to adequately recognise and respond to critical contextual issues that have confronted the CBD in the past and continue to challenge its future"
- "Senior citizens, which could be in the vicinity of 35% of the population, have been completely ignored in the master plan. This number will only increase."
- "There is no traffic management plan which is essential to inform other key master plan strategies"
- "The Master Plan focuses the majority of the benefits of the special rate to the owners on the eastern side of Pacific Highway, while the western side will see very little of the collected proposed special rate despite representing something like 23% of the CBD rate payers by property numbers."

Often requests or comments were made that neither supported nor rejected aspects of the exhibited plan, such examples follow:

- The community is supportive of the process, however, believed the Draft Prosperity Plan exhibited required further community input
- The Plan does not yet articulate a compelling vision and clear path for implementation to guide future development and strategic investment in Coffs Harbour CBD for the long term
- There is insufficient time to properly complete this plan to meet IPART requirements
- A need for an overall master plan that incorporates all strategies and demonstrates how they work together in an integrated way for mutual benefit.

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Several submissions identified funding as a potential issue:

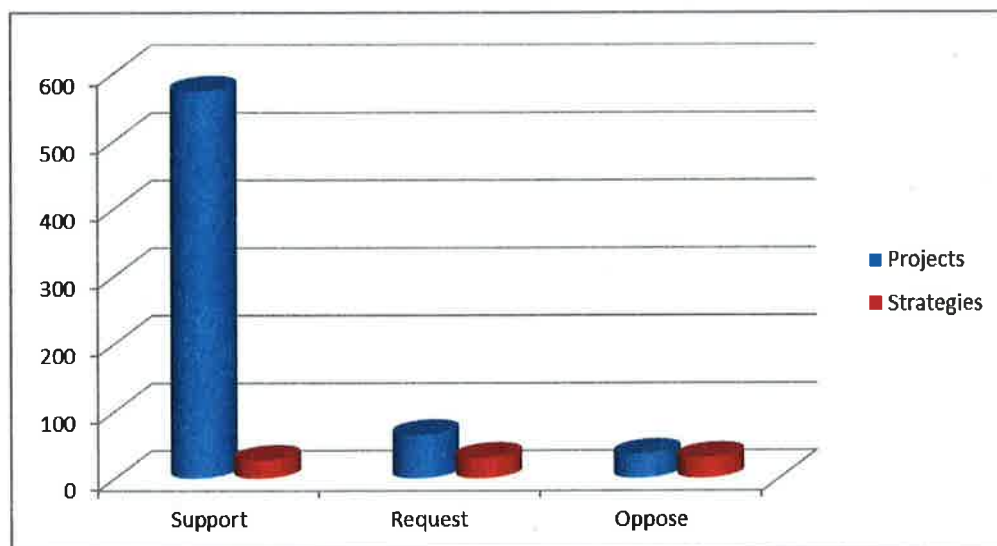
- "Financing of the master plan special levy needs to be clear to avoid a perception of compromised essential services"
- "Has any consideration ever been given to a "poll" tax, so that in order to obtain what Coffs needs, ALL residents pay, renters as well as rate payers? A User pays system"
- "I object to 10 million dollars of rate-payers money to be spent on this project."

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4 Summary of CBD submissions (projects and strategies)

The significant majority of community feedback, 822 comments from the 195 formal submissions (letter and emails), were for projects (note Brelsford Park data is excluded and addressed in Chapter 5 of this report).

625 comments supported CBD projects and strategies, 109 made neutral comments or requests and 88 comments opposed the exhibited CBD projects and strategies.



Graph 2 shows the mix of submission types for all ten strategies and all 11 projects (excludes Brelsford Park) exhibited.

The most mentioned exhibited CBD items were:

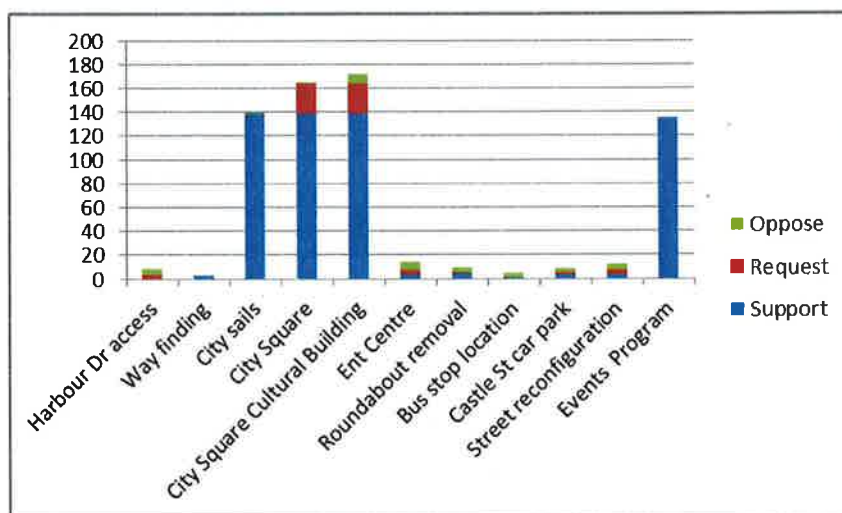
- 1** The City Square Cultural Building project was the second most popular exhibited item, with 172 submissions, of which 139 supported, eight opposed and 25 made requests
- 2** The City Square yielded 165 submissions, made up of 139 submissions, 25 requests and one opposing submission
- 3** City Sails yielded 140 submissions, with one opposition and
- 4** The Events Program attracted 135 supportive submissions.

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Project submissions (excludes Brelsford Park)

674 submissions were received for the exhibited projects, and of these, 573 supported, 36 opposed and 65 made requests.

Graph 3 below shows the mix of submissions that supported, opposed and made requests for the exhibited projects.



The following table lists each strategy exhibited and the most mentioned comment or objection for Council consideration.

Given the overall support received for the plan, the following comments or objections represent the exception to the volume of supporting submissions. The purpose of featuring the following is to avoid duplicating what has been supported and therefore featured in the draft proposal and highlight what are the most common objections or requests for Council to consider.

PROJECTS	Most mentioned submissions for Council consideration
Harbour Drive Access 9 submissions (5 opposed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve safety at pedestrian crossings: Park Avenue at Woolworths; Gordon Avenue near NRMA; Harbour Drive and Hogbin Drive North Harbour Drive, between the Highway and Gordon Street - should be four lanes, with no parking The highway frontage along the existing court house and police station presents a fantastic opportunity to expand the public

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PROJECTS	Most mentioned submissions for Council consideration
	<p>domain for pedestrians and create a focal point as part of site redevelopment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ring road system is more important - this proposal encourages more traffic where it is least wanted • Would rather see the effort and money put towards the right turn off the highway at the Albany Street lights and Coffs Street with strong signposting to the centre and parking
Way finding 3 submissions (3 support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategy should identify clearer and more specific objectives associated with a comprehensive signage system for two distinct users: pedestrians and drivers. This should include signs for different purposes such as directional (way-finding), information (including maps), interpretation and identification (street name, city centre entry etc...)
City Sails 140 submissions (139 support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continuous line of large street trees would provide a far more attractive and memorable streetscape element • The sails are a high cost item. It would be better to fund other more worthy streetscape enhancements
City Square 165 submissions (139 support 25 made request 8 oppose)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The highest priority project in the short term is 'City Square' • City Square should be strongly promoted for evening dining and light outdoors entertainment • The proposal needs a well-considered parking strategy to counter objections • City Square as an effective city square is too small. It needs to be extended to the southeast and northwest
City Square Cultural Building 172 submissions (139 support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Square Cultural Building and the Gordon Street Entertainment building can be co-located or the individual locations swapped • The Park Avenue car park is central to Woolworth's business and many others in the CBD and its removal is opposed • People will not combine shopping trips with cultural activities. Cultural buildings will not increase business in the CBD

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PROJECTS	Most mentioned submissions for Council consideration
Entertainment Centre 14 submissions (6 oppose)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City Hill is the ideal site for an Entertainment Centre & Cultural Complex The site offers potential for other multi-use purposes and these must also be considered for the site Our entertainment centre could be sited at the present court house/ police station
Roundabout Removal 10 submissions (5 support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roundabout to stay. Move the one pedestrian crossing on this intersection north midway to Vernon Street. Also consider some control of pedestrians on the crossing in the mall just outside the main entrances to Coffs Central, possibly with some lights Supported in combination with a ring road system Agree with Gordon Street/Harbour Drive. Disagree with removal of other roundabout Let traffic circumvent the CBD and due to calming of traffic not even traffic lights are needed, another \$6 million saved
Bus Stop Location 5 submissions (4 oppose)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compromises the need to enhance movement systems along Vernon Street. It is also in a high risk public space with poor passive surveillance A review of public transport and current bus operations need to be undertaken with a view to improving services and encouraging more use
Castle Street Car-park 9 submissions (4 support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council car-park in Castle Street should be redeveloped to provide our Cultural / Entertainment Centre from Castle Street to Gordon Street inclusive and car parking at the northern end up to at least 6 levels This proposal seems at odds with the Entertainment Centre strategy which targets the same site Castle Street car-park needs to be developed into a multi-use site - parking, cultural, residential with more levels and requires beautification
Street Reconfiguration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address and protect safety around bike lanes and pedestrian access points Park Avenue proposed option 2 is preferred as a more sustainable and commercially viable plan to improve Park Avenue as a civic

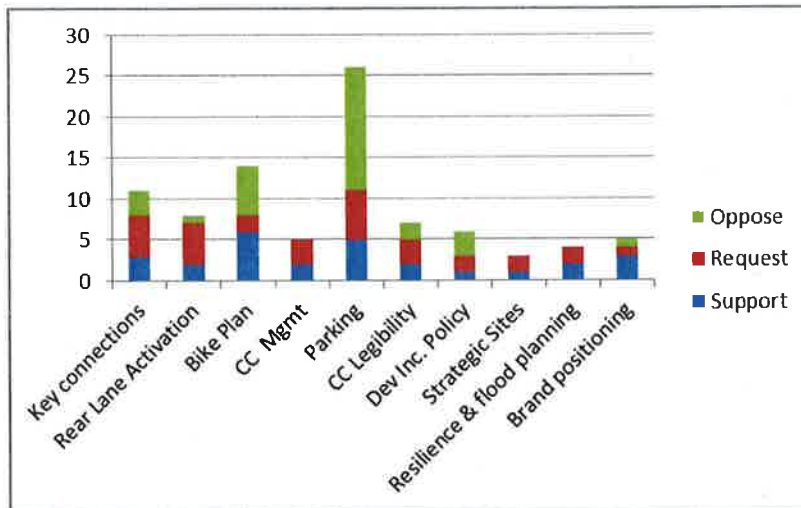
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PROJECTS	Most mentioned submissions for Council consideration
12 submissions (4 support 4 made request 4 opposed)	space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to evaluate - 1. Accessibility of street parking, particularly exiting into a traffic lane with visual limitation. 2. The degree of traffic delays caused by parking entry and exits. 3. The effect on delivery vehicles (in roads and lanes) and 4. Movement of buses and taxis
Events program 135 submissions (135 support)	The highest priority project in the short term

Strategy submissions

The exhibited strategies attracted 89 comments compared with 674 project submissions.

Graph 4 below shows the number of submissions that supported, opposed and made requests for the exhibited strategies. The mix includes 27 supported submissions, 31 opposed submissions and 31 requests.



Graph 4 Mix of strategy submissions

The following table lists each strategy exhibited and the most mentioned comment or objection for Council consideration.

Given the overall support received for the plan, the following comments or objections represent the exception to the volume of supporting submissions. The purpose of featuring

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the following is to avoid duplicating what has been supported and therefore featured in the draft proposal and highlight what are the most common objections or requests for Council to consider.

STRATEGIES	Most mentioned submissions for Council consideration
About all 10 master plan strategies 136 submissions (135 support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommend preparing a 10 year spending plan for rates for submission to IPART to increase rates in order to achieve plan The strategies and projects in the prosperity plan do not show synergy, coordination, cohesion. CHCC should be pro-active and explore Public Private Partnerships, being a proven method to stimulate new developments on key locations in urban development
Key Connections 13 submissions (5 oppose 5 made request)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring Albany Street through to the Pacific Highway to become the main right-hand turn for the Pacific Highway traffic to turn to the Jetty area, while all southbound traffic should be directed along Orlands street Key connections missing from the plan include: the pedestrian route to the new Justice Precinct, bike access from Hogbin Drive to Brelsford Park, and the vehicle route along Vernon Street A plan needs to be prepared implementing a ring road strategy More emphasis on safe and visible pedestrian linkages is required East-west Coffs Street and highway should be added as a key connection Do not support a right turn off the Pacific Highway onto Harbour Drive
Rear Lane Activation 8 submissions (5 made request)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consideration should be given to selling some laneways to adjoining owners There is not enough pedestrian or commercial activity in the CBD at present for this idea to succeed Encouraging people to use laneways, particularly over long distances with no side escape and little passive surveillance will create a serious safety risk Need further stakeholder involvement such as local police Lanes could be activated as one-way cycleways
Bike Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a strong case that supports the bike plan, consider a

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STRATEGIES	Most mentioned submissions for Council consideration
14 submissions (6 support 6 oppose)	trial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the high percentage of aging residents and disabled persons using mobility scooters, enhance the footpaths to cater for this growing usage • The plan should consider a more ambitious range of path routes and include missing links such as the connection between Hogbin Drive and Brelsford Park • The plan should be developed in context with the parking and traffic study • A NW connection has been missed from Coffs Creek Bridge to West High Street
City Centre Management 5 submissions (3 made request)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good maintenance policy should become a major policy for the Council
Parking 26 submissions (15 opposed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider parking for the many 'grey nomads' that travel and stay • Recommend cross checking CHCC management plans and the Open Space Strategy • Communicate how the proposed parking areas are going to be replaced, operated and situated • Any parking loss / inconvenience may direct people to the Plaza • Future building in the CBD should centre round the existing car parking stations • Should introduce parking metres without delay at least in Park Avenue, Harbour Drive and Vernon Street • Consider more multi-level car-parks at the edge of the CBD not far beyond it like the showground
City Centre Legibility 7 submissions (3 made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that the strategy will result in fussy, small scale ideas that will have the opposite effect and add to visual clutter and further weaken legibility. • Proposals for turning right from the highway onto Harbour Drive should be strongly rejected. It will just cause worse traffic jams

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STRATEGIES	Most mentioned submissions for Council consideration
request)	along Harbour Drive
Development Incentive Policy 6 submissions (3 opposed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amalgamation of properties is good but incentives are needed
Strategic Sites 3 submissions (2 made request)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are a number of other under-developed sites that have not been considered in the plan including the Scaba Street car park, Coffs Harbour Community Village, War Memorial Pool, and Museum site This plan cannot be adequately considered in isolation to other related strategies including Key Connections and Parking strategies
Resilience and flood planning 4 submissions (2 support 2 made request)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coffs Creek should be dredged and internal elevation to 800mm is not practical because at 1 in 14 this makes the ramp 11.2m long
Brand Positioning 5 submissions (3 support)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest branding whole city "City of Sails". Suggest branding CBD "Top Town"

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5 Summary of Brelsford Park submissions

Brelsford Park (The Skate Park Concept Plan) yielded strong youth representation with 196 comments: 148 were supportive, 19 opposed and 29 made requests, mostly about the skate park design elements.

The strong youth support was reflected in the volume of web posts on www.coffscity.com.au. Of the 135 web posts for the entire exhibition (strategies and projects), 75 were for Brelsford Park. The significant majority supported the Skate Park plan; most requests were for specific design treatment (see appendix for details).

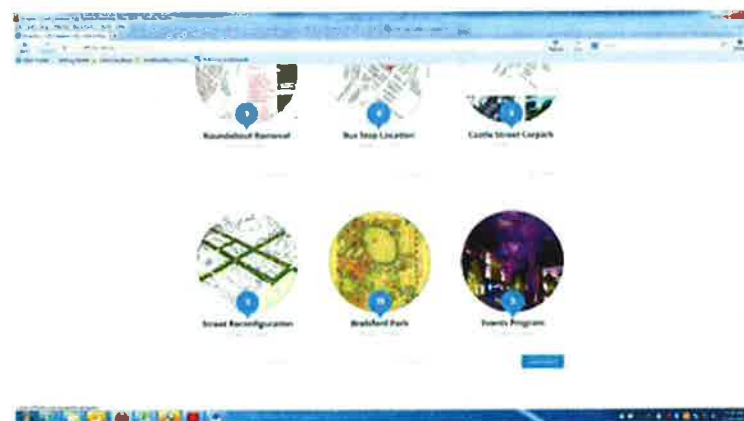
Graph 5 shows mix of Brelsford Park submissions



Brelsford Park	Most mentioned submissions for Council consideration
Brelsford Park 196 submissions (148 support 29 made request)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most mentioned item within the exhibited plan, yielding strong youth representation. Several requests on design treatments including all inclusive playground facilities (see appendices for details) A better site for the skate park may be on land east of the children's playground in Brelsford Park or preferably a site at the Jetty Foreshores, which would be a far more pleasant place to skate and

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Brelsford Park	Most mentioned submissions for Council consideration
	<p>one which could become a tourist attraction for this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lowest priority is Brelsford Park • Locating the Skate Park on the NW corner effectively puts a full stop on any future opportunities for innovative use of what could be the beating heart of Coffs Harbour City • Brelsford Park should be retained as open space to maintain green space in CBD • Support a new skatepark with modern facilities, but its siting raises a number of issues that must be resolved. These issues related to the impact such a construction would have on the cricket pitch and spectator stand, in addition to the tennis courts.



The above image demonstrates the online support Brelsford Park received on www.coffscity.com.au with 75 posts: the City Square Cultural Building attracted 11 posts. All other items on the website each attracted either no posts or less than five.

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6 Recommendations

- Council, with Roberts Day, to review and consider all submissions and, where submissions are unable to be progressed, develop a response to be used upon further community enquiry
- Straight Talk to publish a Council approved community engagement report via the website www.coffscity.com.au
- Council to develop a media release detailing exhibition participation levels, key findings and next steps
- The community engagement report should be made available to the public, via the master plan website, in early February.

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7 Next Steps

- The community engagement report will be considered at Coffs Harbour City Council Meeting on 28 February 2013. Should the plans be endorsed, an IPART Application for special rate variation (subject to council approval) will need to be made by 11 March 2013.