

5.04. PRELODGE MENT ENQUIRY RESPONSE FOR THE PORT DOUGLAS WATERFRONT NORTH PRECINCT - WHARF STREET, PORT DOUGLAS

REPORT AUTHOR(S):
GENERAL MANAGER:
DEPARTMENT:

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Development and Environment

PROPOSAL

Port Douglas Waterfront North Precinct –
Prelodgement Enquiry

APPLICANT

The Reef Marina Pty Ltd
c/o Elizabeth Taylor Town Planner
23 Vallely Street
Freshwater QLD 4870

LOCATION OF SITE

Wharf Street, Port Douglas

PROPERTY

Lot 146 on SR861, Lot 103 on SR500, and part of
Lot 126 on SR868

LOCALITY PLAN



LOCALITY

Port Douglas and Environs

PLANNING AREA

Part Port Douglas Waterfront North

PLANNING SCHEME	Douglas Shire Planning Scheme 2008 (as amended in 2010)
REFERRAL AGENCIES	State Assessment and Referral Agency
NUMBER OF SUBMITTERS	Not Applicable
STATUTORY ASSESSMENT DEADLINE	Not Applicable
APPLICATION DATE	12 October 2015
RECOMMENDATION	

1. That with respect to the prelodgement enquiry lodged in relation to the redevelopment of the Port Douglas Waterfront North Precinct located at Wharf Street, Port Douglas, the proponent be advised that:
 - a. Council will not be in a position to support a development application that does not satisfactorily address and give certainty with respect to the commercial fishing operations currently undertaken within the precinct. This will require agreement to be reached among all relevant stakeholders sufficient to enable Council to provide written confirmation to the Department of Natural Resources that such development does not diminish the viability of marine based industrial uses that directly serve the Port Douglas tourist and fishing operators and private boat owners, in line with one of the overarching principles of the Port Douglas Waterfront Master Plan.
 - b. In accordance with A18.1 of the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning area code, “the Slipway is retained until such time as the capacity of the existing slipway is established in the Port Douglas South Waterfront Planning Area, or as otherwise approved by Council”.
 - c. With regard to the waterfront walkway, Council requires implementation of the boardwalk generally as depicted in the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area Code shown in Development Control Guideline 1 as opposed to a floating walkway. The concept of improving cruise ship tender transfers is supported. However, this could be delivered via a separate floating pontoon that is attached to the boardwalk. Formalised public spaces and pedestrian paths/areas are to be made accessible to the public within the waterfront areas via easements or The Reef Marina Pty Ltd providing written evidence from Council confirming that public access areas, as required by Council are provided for and evidenced in any development approval.
 - d. Staging of the proposed development is supported in principle. However, it is preferred that either:
 - i. Stage 1 be completed as one single stage; or alternatively
 - ii. To the extent possible, the publically accessible waterfront walkway proposed for all of Stage 1 is made available for public use with Stage 1a even if the mixed use residential / tourism and commercial development is not established in conjunction with Stage 1a.

Long-term stages of the development are to be designed to be landscaped and attractive interim spaces that provide connections across the precinct until such time that future stages are developed.

- e. Council is supportive of the principle of “management subdivisions” within the Waterfront North Planning Area where they assist in the staged development of the site into manageable sized land parcels and where they facilitate the comprehensive development of the precinct. However, Council is opposed to any small scale subdivisions that fragment the site into small land holdings for separate disposal, until developments are completed within each relevant precinct.**
 - f. Council supports in principle the design objectives of the Arbour Park, Public Plaza and the Stage 1a and 1b mix of land uses and acknowledges that the adaptive re-use of the existing Duck Pond quay line represents a more practical design solution when compared to the quay-line depicted in in the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area Code shown in Development Control Guideline 1.**
- 2. That the above information is offered in the context of providing open and frank without prejudice comment from Council in relation to the proposed uses. The determination of any future application is a matter for Council following detailed assessment of the application, including consideration of any properly made submissions (where applicable).**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council is in receipt of a formal prelodgement enquiry on behalf of The Reef Marina Pty Ltd with regard to a variety of strategically important concepts that relate to the redevelopment of the Port Douglas Waterfront Precinct at Wharf Street, Port Douglas. The design principles and plans that accompany the prelodgement enquiry show a vision for the waterfront that support many of the objectives of the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area Code. However proposals to relocate the commercial fishing operations outside the site conflict with the objectives of the Code. Furthermore, an alternative and equivalent capacity slipway facility will be required prior to the proposed relocation of the slipway outside the Waterfront North Planning Area.

General, in principle support can be provided to other design elements contained in the plan, including staging. However, it is recommended that the waterfront boardwalk walkway along Dickson Inlet as depicted in the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area Code be maintained, in favour of the alternative floating walkway proposal advocated by the proponent. Cruise ship tender transfers are likely to be better managed by a separate floating pontoon that attaches to the boardwalk.

Finally, proposals to subdivide the Port Douglas North Waterfront Planning Area into lots that fragment the site into small land holdings will not be supported until such time that developments within each precinct are complete. However, “management” subdivisions that facilitate the staged development of site into manageable-sized land parcels may be supported where they facilitate the comprehensive development of the Waterfront Precinct.

TOWN PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The Site

The site is known as the Port Douglas Waterfront and is located at the south western end of the Port Douglas Town Centre. The site is bounded by Dickson Inlet to the west, Wharf Street to the east, Reserve land to the north and Closehaven Marina and vacant Reserve land to the south.

Lot 146 SR861 has an area of 8.173 hectares and is improved by a marina development, which has recently undergone significant refurbishment, and a commercial complex, only part of which is operational. Lot 146 is currently in the process of being converted from leasehold to freehold tenure through an application made to State Government.

The Reef Marina Pty Ltd also has a lease over part of Lot 126 SR686, which is a Reserve for Local Government (Port and Harbour) Purposes, with Council as trustee.

The Reef Marina Pty Ltd also holds the Lease over Lot 103 SR500, being the slipway site.

Background

The future of the Port Douglas Waterfront has been the subject of a Master Planning exercise and significant consultation and debate. To understand the planning context in which the recommendations in this report have been made, the following summary is provided.

The Port Douglas Waterfront Master Plan ('The Master Plan') was adopted by Cairns Regional Council in November 2009 after extensive community consultation on the draft Master Plan. The Master Plan provides a clear strategic direction for the incremental transformation of the Port Douglas Waterfront, including the following objectives:

- To set out a vision for revitalisation of the waterfront;
- To protect and enhance the environmental attributes; and
- To provide a flexible framework, expressed through several key strategies that will assist the Council and community in managing change.

Subsequently, a Port Douglas Waterfront Master Plan Advisory Committee was established to provide advice to Council regarding community engagement, design, development and implementation of the Master Plan. A series of Master Plan Projects (lagoon, waterfront park, road upgrades, car parking concept designs, boat ramp relocation, a Landscape Design Guide) were developed. In March – April 2011, an extensive community engagement process on all these implementation project proposals was undertaken with Council adopting the outcomes of the community and stakeholder engagement as outlined within the Port Douglas Master Implementation Report, in August 2011.

As a consequence, it is important that the objectives achieved in the Port Douglas Waterfront Master Plan are maintained and achieved as they represent the agreed position from all parties involved in the process.

In addition, the port activities at the waterfront are considered to be integral to the on-going prosperity of the Port Douglas local economy either from a tourism or recreational perspective and/or from a commercial fishing perspective. The Master Plan proposed that the port precinct remain as a 'working port', because without it, Port Douglas would lose a significant part of its vitality as a place and its tourism destination appeal. It follows that it is desirable from a planning perspective that the presence of the commercial fishing fleet is not diminished.

The land is part of the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area under the current planning scheme. The purpose of the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area Code is, amongst other things, to recognise the importance of the marine-based industries, to protect marine-based industries from incompatible uses and to establish marine infrastructure to service the tourism, fishing and private boating community.

There is nothing that prevents a development application from being lodged with Council while the land remains under its various leasehold titles. However it is important that any development proposal that is lodged is comprehensive and not piecemeal; demonstrates the viability and integrity of the on-going commercial fishing industries through the provision of appropriately located and accessible facilities, and provides appropriate pedestrian access along the foreshore.

This position is reinforced in a letter to Council from the Minister for Natural resources and Mines dated 27 July 2015 (see Attachment 1). In that letter, it is stated that the offer to freehold the land would be subject to:

"a number of stringent conditions, including that a development approval is in place for all areas subject to the applications, prior to any freehold deeds being issued.

In addition to TRM (The Reef Marina) providing evidence that a development approval is in place for the development of the application areas, TRM will be required to provide written confirmation from the council that such development does not diminish the viability of marine based industrial uses that directly serve the Port Douglas tourist and fishing operators and private boat owners, in line with one of the overarching principles of the Port Douglas Waterfront Masterplan.

TRM will also be required to provide written advice from council that formalized public spaces and pedestrian paths/areas are made accessible to the public within the waterfront areas via easements or TRM providing written evidence from the council confirming that any public access areas, as required by the council are provided for and evidenced in any development approval.

In respect to identified the (sic) council improvements located on part of Inlet Street, TRM will be required to provide written evidence from council that this matter has been resolved to council's satisfaction."

The proponents have sought early engagement with Council officers and have been advised to take a strategic approach to the entire waterfront redevelopment, culminating in a workshop presentation to Council on the 16 October 2015 and the submission of a formal prelodgement enquiry to obtain resolution of a number of strategic matters that affect the future development of the land and waterfront.

It is understood that The Reef Marina Pty Ltd has recently conducted some early engagement with representatives of the commercial fishing industry.

Proposal

The prelodgement enquiry is accompanied by the following supporting information prepared by Studio Tekton Pty Ltd, architects and urban designers (included in Attachment 1):

- A Vision Statement and Precinct Development Principles document;
- Precinct Plan - Context;
- Precinct Plan – Port Douglas Waterfront North;
- Precinct Plan – South Marina Basin; and
- Precinct Plan – Staging and Traffic.

The main points for Council's consideration in association with this prelodgement enquiry that can be extracted from the prelodgement enquiry are as follows:

- Preferred mix of land uses within the precinct, considering the importance of maintaining the commercial viability of the Port Douglas Town Centre and the existing Port Douglas tourism accommodation mix, so as to encourage viable investment in the precinct, in association with redevelopment;
- Staging of future development in the precinct;
- Subdivision within the precinct to facilitate future staging;
- Relocation of the commercial trawlers;
- Relocation/removal of the slipway to remove land use conflict between heavy industry and town centre land use activities;
- The form of pedestrian access to the waterfront, including improving cruise ship tender transfers with the precinct.

Each aspect is discussed in detail below (see Commentary):

Elements of the Plan

A series of strong connections between the marina and the town centre will be developed through the following mechanisms:

1) Arbour Park

The Arbour Park is proposed as the primary pedestrian spine that physically connects the marina entrance to the town centre via the northern Wharf Street alignment. The Arbour Park will also strengthen the line of sight between the town centre and the marina. The Arbour Park will also include low/limited vehicle access for the marina and the development adjoining the inlet. The unoccupied shopping centre wing will be demolished to create the Arbour Park.

2) Water Walk

The marina currently has a very active waterside pedestrian walkway overlooking the marina basin. This is proposed to be extended to Dickson Inlet with a widened view corridor to the west linking to the new Water Walk.

The new Water Walk will consist of two sections:

- (a) a boardwalk leading from the re-vitalised 'Duck Pond' adjacent to a proposed mixed use residential and dining precinct with views over the 'Duck Pond' and Dickson Inlet;
- (b) a Floating Walkway adjacent to the land, but positioned in the water along the southern three quarters of the length of the proposed Water Walk along Dickson Inlet.

The Floating Walkway will be adjacent to multi-unit / holiday accommodation development. The Floating Walkway component of the Water Walk is intended to allow:

- transfer-supporting marina businesses (e.g. conference groups transferring between boat tours and land based activities);
- growth in the cruise ship industry by facilitating/expediting multiple tender berthing with fit for purpose infrastructure;
- an events and arts space incorporating seating, shade and interpretation boards;
- an alternative pathway to the more direct Arbour Park route between the marina and the town centre.

The Water Walk would be completely accessible to the public from dawn to early evening and would be maintained in full by the marina owner as part of its normal operations.

3) Public Plaza

The waterfront Public Plaza is intended to act as a mid-point node between Macrossan Street and the marina. The Public Plaza will be a suitably shaded public gathering space oriented towards the water with cafes, dining and entertainment. A key component will be a view corridor from Wharf Street to Dickson Inlet creating a high quality community space. The Public Plaza is intended to be integrated and centred on a refurbished 'Duck Pond' quay-line.

4) The Duck Pond

The 'Duck Pond' is proposed to be developed as an 'experience' zone for low passenger volume water tours/experiences, as well as other suitable commercial activities such as sea-food sales direct from vessels. However, it is not proposed to continue with commercial trawler provisioning and off-loading due to the conflict between the pedestrian-friendly boardwalk and high quality public realm envisaged for the Public Plaza and the Duck Pond environment. The basin works would include upgrading rock walls, pile and boardwalk infrastructure.

The proposed Duck Pond will be reshaped using the existing basin rather than proposing an extensive relocation and reshaping of the basin as shown in Figure 1: Development Control Guideline contained in the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area Code (see further comment in Douglas Shire Planning Scheme assessment below) as the extent of works required would make the proposition financially unviable.

5) Wharf Street Precinct

The Wharf Street Precinct is proposed to be upgraded to provide a pedestrian friendly experience with active building edges, pathway awnings and road narrowings with appropriate surface treatments to facilitate pedestrian movement.

6) A new Fisherman's Wharf Location

The proponents have examined a variety of options with respect to accommodating the commercial trawler fleet and are of the view that a purpose-built facility with good vehicular access catering for expansion and individual identity and visibility represents the most viable solution.

The Reef Marina Pty Ltd's vision features a 'fishing and commercial precinct' in the south east corner of the marina, as part of a working port strategy. The proposal includes the construction of a mooring facility that attaches to land at Lot 96 on SP134234. However Lot 96 is not land that is under control of the proponent and is not part of the land described in the prelodgement enquiry. There is nothing in the prelodgement documentation that suggests any works will be carried out on Lot 96 to cater for the commercial fishing fleet (i.e.- buildings, access, parking etc.)

7) Existing Slipway

The Reef Marina Pty Ltd's vision allows for closure of the existing commercial slipway operations. The proponent sees the slipway site as being strategically important to connect the town centre to the marina allowing the creation of the new Public Plaza, which will consist of a mixed use recreation, dining, entertainment and multi-unit residential development. The current slipway is old and currently a marginal operation, unviable without heavy servicing facilities (such as cleaning, anti-fouling, fibre-glass works, painting and mechanical repairs, including grinding / welding). Such heavy servicing facilities are seen to be inconsistent with the proponent's vision for the Waterfront North Precinct.

8) Staging

Stage 1 will involve the creation of the Arbour Park to Inlet Street, construction of the Water Walk, multi-unit housing starting from the existing marina connecting to the multi-unit housing, restaurants, bars and cafes fronting the northern section of Dickson Inlet and along part of the Duck Pond, rehabilitation of the Duck Pond, and the Public Plaza connecting to Wharf Street.

While this is considered to be a single stage, the Duck Pond will be developed once existing leases have expired within the next two years.

The mixed use commercial development will occur as part of Stage 1b. The proponent is acutely aware of the existing vacancies in the marina shopping centre (over 40% vacancy with the intention to demolish over 1/3 of the building). Therefore, the proponent proposes a commercially sustainable approach which minimises potential impacts on the existing commercial operations at the marina and Macrossan Street.

Stage 2 allows for the continuation of the Slipway activities, but will involve transitioning to more appropriate uses. It is important for stage 2 to consolidate this area as part of the Town centre to draw people to the Water Walk and contribute to the Public Plaza vitality.

Stage 3a is intended to consolidate active frontages along Wharf Street, improve pedestrian amenity and access as well as provide parking for the various commercial activities within the Precinct.

Stage 4 will be developed in response to market demand in the longer term.

Douglas Shire Planning Scheme Assessment

Under the 2008 Douglas Shire Planning Scheme, the land is included within the Port Douglas and Environs Locality and is part of the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area. The Port Douglas and Environs Locality Table of Assessment shows that the majority of the proposed uses contemplated as part of the pre-lodgement enquiry are Code assessable use (and in many cases, where uses are being changed within an existing building, they are self-assessable).

The Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area Code divides the Port Douglas North Planning area into a series of smaller precincts where different planning controls apply relating to building heights, setbacks, pedestrian connections and view corridors within Figure 1: Development Control Guideline (see Figure 1 below).

Figure1: Development Control Guideline

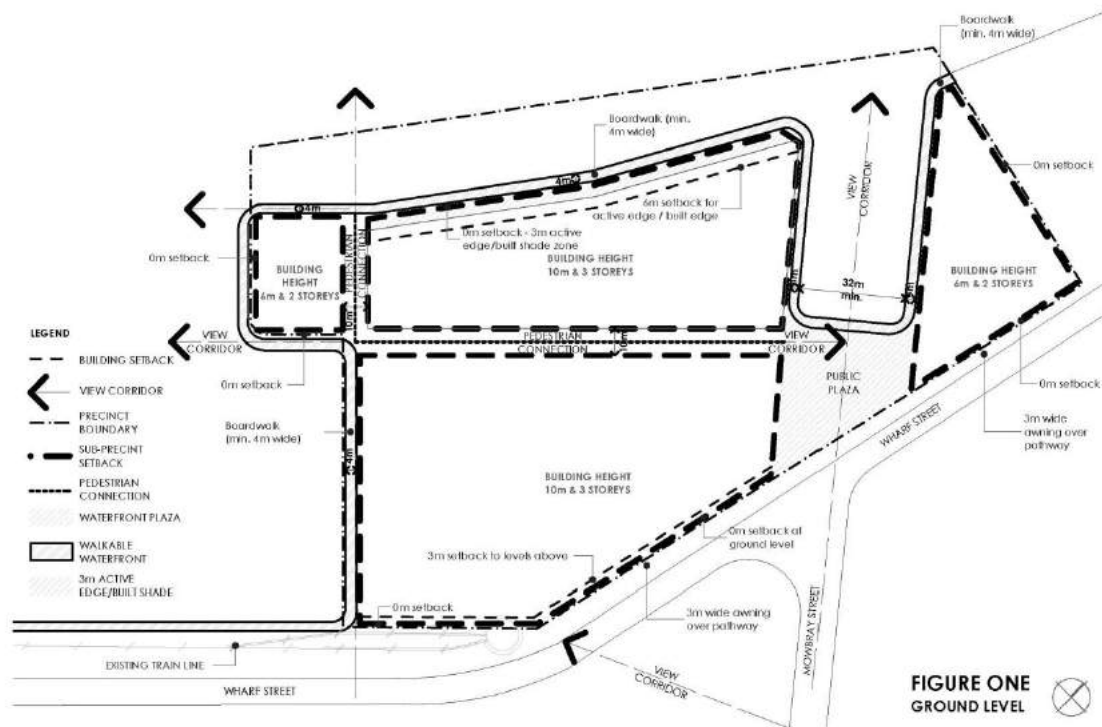


Figure 1: Development Control Guideline

The northern half of the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area is also part of the Tourist centre (High Scale Tourist Centre) under the Port Douglas and Environs Locality Plan and the site is affected by a Future Principal Pedestrian Route. Dickson Inlet is listed in Schedule 1 Valuable Conservation Features and valuable Sites within Planning Scheme Policy No 4 – Cultural Heritage and Valuable Sites.

Commentary

The strategic approach adopted by the proponent is supported and is consistent with earlier advice from Council to ensure that any development proposal that is lodged is comprehensive and not piece-meal.

The redesign of the Port Douglas Waterfront precinct has had regard in varying degrees to the following purpose statements identified under the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area Code:

- The Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area evolves as a revitalised open space and waterside precinct;
- Development within the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area is designed to be sympathetic to the environmentally sensitive Dickson Inlet and mitigates any adverse impacts;

- The establishment of mixed-use development is facilitated to promote activity and vitality;
- Development contributes to a high quality public realm;
- Pedestrian connectivity is safe, efficient and provides for the needs of all users of the Port Douglas Waterfront;
- A sense of place is created through aesthetic streetscapes and innovative public and private open space;
- The functionality of the Balley Hooley Railway is retained;
- Uses identified as inconsistent uses in the Assessment Table dealing with material change of use for the Port Douglas and Environs Locality are not established in the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area.

There is no objection to the concept of the Arbour Park, Public Plaza and Stage 1a and 1b mix of land uses. It is also acknowledged that the reuse of the existing quay-line for the Duck Pond represents a more practical solution as opposed to the significant quay-line intervention depicted in Figure 1: Development Control Guideline of the Port Douglas Waterfront Master Plan. However, it should be noted that the reuse of the existing quay-line will not facilitate the view corridor from a future extension of Mowbray Street, as shown in Figure 1.

It is considered that the redesign does not adequately address with the following key purpose statements in the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area Code:

- “Marine-based industries are protected from incompatible uses”. The plans propose to remove them;
- “Marine infrastructure is established to service the tourism, fishing and private boating community”. The plans propose to cater for the tourism community, at the potential expense of the fishing and private boating community.

While the design recognises the importance of the marine-based industries, it proposes to relocate the fishing and private boating community outside the Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Area and into the Port Douglas Waterfront South Planning Area.

The Reef Marina Pty Ltd’s proposal seeks to provide a solution to these aspects by relocating the commercial Fisherman’s Wharf to Lot 96 on SP134234. This particular allotment is not in the control of the proponent, so it is unclear how this relocation will actually be achieved and what would be proposed as part of the relocation. The plans accompanying the prelodgement enquiry show a mooring facility in the south western corner of the marina that is attached to Lot 96. However Lot 96 is not part of the prelodgement enquiry.

Lot 96 is a 3727m² in area and is a Park and Recreation Reserve (R1274) with Douglas Shire Council acting as Trustee for the Crown. Lot 96 is currently vacant and as such is a strategic site on the waterfront. While the proposal to relocate the commercial Fisherman’s Wharf may better align with the Port Douglas Waterfront South Planning Area, the use of the land for this purpose is incompatible with the purpose of the land as a Park and Recreation Reserve. Furthermore, it is not clear whether there is adequate space to accommodate the fishing fleet in this location and access is made difficult due to the Balley Hooley rail line.

Similarly, the proponent's proposal to relocate the slipway to another site remains without any specific detail as to how, or where, this is to occur. The Port Douglas Waterfront South Planning Area Code seeks to relocate the slipway farther to the south at Lot 1 on SP262338 (off Port Street). However, it is a planning scheme requirement that the slipway remain in its current location until such time that an alternative and equivalent capacity slipway is established elsewhere.

While the practical complications of a commercial fishing fleet operating in proximity to a publicly accessible waterfront are understood, an alternative use of the northern side of the Duck Pond for the fishing fleet may be necessary. This need not compromise the achievement of the public Arbour Park, Public Plaza and the precincts on the southern side of the Duck Pond. However it would complicate the realignment of the quay-line and will still present difficulties in accommodating the commercial fishing fleet during construction.

As a consequence, Council is not in a position to support the relocation of the commercial fishing fleet or the slipway until such time that alternative facilities are operational. In addition, if any proposal to relocate the commercial fishing operations is to have any degree of support from Council, the proponents will need to comprehensively engage with the fishing industry and clearly articulate the benefits of any such relocation to the broader community. This is likely to involve a comprehensive project management plan that commits to time-lines that will deliver on outcomes and expectations.

In addition, the planning scheme contemplates a boardwalk along the entire length of Dickson Inlet as opposed to a floating pontoon walkway. Appendix C in Attachment 1, the "Vision Statement and Precinct Development Principles" document prepared by Studio Tekton shows a solution where public access is directly in-front of residential development (all-be-it, a non-tropical solution). The proposed floating pontoon will face to the west and will be sun-exposed during the summer months. It is preferable that a boardwalk be utilised that incorporates tropical shading along its edge generally as depicted in Figure 1: Development Control Guideline. The privacy of adjoining residential / tourist accommodation can be achieved through the use of a level changes to define territory.

General support is provided to the concept of improving cruise ship tender transfers within the precinct. However this could be via a separate floating pontoon that is attached to the boardwalk that is contemplated in the planning scheme.

With regard to staging of the precinct, it is Council's preference that Stage 1 be completed as one single stage rather than two sub-stages. Council acknowledges the complications that may arise associated with the realignment of the quay-line along the southern side of the Duck Pond. However completion of Stage 1 will allow for the full completion of a publicly accessible waterfront along the entire length of Dickson Inlet on the southern side of the Duck Pond. Alternatively, the same amount of publicly accessible waterfront walkway should be provided regardless of whether the adjoining mixed use residential / tourist accommodation and commercial precinct is constructed as part of Stage 1a.

Later stages of the development (e.g. Stage 3) should also be appropriately provided with interim landscaping and pedestrian connection improvements in order to provide an attractive interim appearance to the development as these stages are likely to be a long term proposition.

Finally, with respect to subdivision of land within the precinct, Council would support 'management subdivisions' that would assist in the staged development of the site into manageable sized land parcels. However any small scale subdivision proposals that fragment the site into small land holdings for separate sale are not supported until developments are completed within each precinct.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Council can play a number of different roles in certain circumstances and it is important to be clear about which role is appropriate for a specific purpose or circumstance. The implementation of actions will be a collective effort and Council's involvement will vary from information only through to full responsibility for delivery.

The following area outlines where Council has a clear responsibility to act:

Regulator: Meeting the responsibilities associated with regulating activities through legislation or local law.

Under the *Sustainable Planning Act* 2009 and the *Sustainable Planning Regulation* 2009, Council is the assessment manager for the application.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Vision Statement and Precinct Development Principles document prepared by Studio Tekton

Version 06– 12 October 2015

ATTACHMENT 2

Port Douglas Waterfront – North

Vision and Precinct Development Principles



Figure 1: Southern Boardwalk from Wharf Street.

THE VISION

Regeneration of the Port Douglas Waterfront North precinct is a unique opportunity to create a world-class (yet distinctively North Queensland) tourist, residential and entertainment destination. Our vision is to transform our sleepy waterfront into a vibrant marine precinct incorporating public amenity, and providing strong connections between the marina, a working fisherman's wharf and the Town Centre while

celebrating the Shire's character and heritage that make Port Douglas so special.

The principle strategies to achieve our vision include:

- An iconic Arbour Park providing the primary pedestrian connection between the Marina and Port Douglas Town Centre.
- A continuous Water Walk giving visitors and the community an appreciation of the water and a unique over-water experience.
- A waterfront Public Plaza serving as an entertainment and lifestyle hub.
- An integrated public art strategy to engage visitors and the community in the rich Port Douglas historical narrative.
- Promoting Wharf Street as the logical “main point of arrival” as the most direct route, providing extensive water/hinterland views, and placing Port Douglas firmly on the water for the first time visitor.
- Create and facilitate legible and walkable connections to Macrossan Street from both Wharf and Grant Streets.
- Open up views and links to the water.
- Develop active street edges to reinforce key elements.
- Encourage a range of uses within the precinct that complement existing activities in the Town Centre rather than compete for a limited market.
- Consolidation of the commercial trawlers within a purpose built “fisherman's wharf” with improved mooring facilities and connectivity so that berthing, provisioning and catch transfer can occur in one location (a catalyst joint project with Council).
- Ongoing renovation and expansion of the existing Marina to meet changing markets and increasing demand.



Figure 2: Marina Aerial image prior to southern expansion.

While the Marina and associated commercial buildings have existed since 1988, they have been isolated and disconnected from the Port Douglas Town Centre. The aerial image in Figure 2 graphically illustrates the problem of the stand alone shopping centre typology which is at odds with a walkable pedestrian friendly Town Centre. The vision involves integrating the Marina into the life of Port Douglas and fostering physical connectivity to the water. Like Port Douglas itself, the vision is designed to be achieved incrementally over time.

CONNECTING NETWORKS

The key to strong connections between the Marina and Town Centre is the creation of a series of pedestrian networks across the Precinct and the Waterfront Plaza. The major components are:



Figure 3: As an example, South Bank's iconic Arbour which provides a unifying link, shade and colour.

i) Arbour Park.

The Arbour Park is proposed as the primary pedestrian spine physically connecting a new Marina entrance to the Town Centre via the northern Wharf Street alignment. This facilitates a line of sight from the Town Centre to the Marina. Shading would be provided with both physical structures at high level and through planting creating a semi-covered pedestrian route featuring quintessential North Queensland flora with seating areas and outdoor art to communicate narratives of Port Douglas. There would be some active frontages (eg ice creamery, bicycle vendor, etc) to ensure a lively and safe public space.

The Arbour Park would include low/limited vehicle access for the Marina and development adjoining Dickson Inlet.

The unoccupied shopping centre wing will be demolished to create the Arbour Park. However, consideration will be given to repurposing the steel structure to provide a framework for vegetation, trellises and shading elements and to help guide pedestrians along the route (refer to figure 3). This will primarily be a pedestrian space but will include limited vehicular circulation to allow servicing of the Marina and sites fronting Dickson Inlet. This shared approach can be managed with Williams Esplanade at Palm Cove, a good example of a calmed traffic environment (although this example caters for much higher traffic levels than would eventuate at the Marina).



Figure 4 - An example of shared space – Williams Esplanade, Palm Cove.

ii) The Water Walk.

The Marina currently has a very active water walk overlooking the Marina Basin. This will be extended to Dickson Inlet with a widened view corridor to the west linking to the new Water Walk.

The Water Walk will consist of two components – a boardwalk leading from the Duck Pond past a more cosmopolitan residential and dining precinct with views over the Duck Pond and Dickson Inlet transitioning to an iconic floating walkway.



Figure 5 - As an example; River Quay, Brisbane.

On the Inlet developed a little piece of theatre by the water with “George the Groper” and repurposing marine infrastructure as part of the dining experience. Historical elements will be incorporated into the new boardwalk with suitable information plaques to help communicate the underlying stories.

The Duck Pond infrastructure will be upgraded and include berthing opportunities to capitalize on the location adjacent to the Public Plaza.



Figure 6 - As an example: River Walk Plaque & thematic seating, Brisbane

The vision offers an opportunity to create a unique public Water Walk on the waterfront, by taking what is normally restricted to commercial marinas and making it a key public feature and tourist attraction in its own right. The Water Walk allows the public to get physically close to the water and is intended to create a new water gateway arrival point for Port Douglas.

The floating walkway component of the Water Walk is envisaged as a multi-faceted public asset allowing:

- Transfers supporting marina businesses eg conference groups transferring between boat tours and land based activities.
- Growth in the cruise ship industry by facilitating/expediting multiple tender berthing with fit for purpose infrastructure (the marina currently can only accommodate one tender at a time located well within the Marina with no sense of arrival).
- A unique events & arts space incorporating seating, shade, interpretation boards (both Indigenous and European). The location warrants an annual curated art competition similar to Bondi's Sculptures by the Sea.
- An alternative pathway to the more direct and landscaped Arbour Park route and adding to the variety of experiences in the Town Centre.

- The proposed public boardwalk would be constructed entirely within the existing Marina lease areas



Figure 7: A floating walkway creates an intimate/close experience with water. <https://brisbaneandbeyond.wordpress.com/2011/03/14/brisbanes-riverwalk/>



Figure 8: A Long queue of international and interstate visitors waiting in the heat to return via tender to their cruise ship. September 2015.

It should be emphasized that the Water Walk will improve the cruise ship experience and capacity by catering for multiple tenders, reducing transfer time and providing a safe and comfortable transfer experience for the significant number of visitors that pass through Port Douglas.

The Water Walk would be completely accessible to the public from dawn to early evening and would be maintained in full by the marina owner as part of its normal operations.



Figure 9: Artist's impression of the Port Douglas floating Water Walk.

iii) Public Plaza.

The waterfront Public Plaza acts as a mid-point node between Macrossan Street and the Marina. This would be a suitably shaded public gathering area oriented towards the water with cafes, dining and entertainment. Key components include the view corridor from Wharf Street to Dickson Inlet, creating a high quality community space featuring viewing places, cultural and historic interpretive opportunities and utilizing the Plaza as an

engaging outdoor artspace. The Plaza would be integrated and centred on the refurbished Duck Pond to ensure a strong water/plaza interface including the connection with Wharf Street, the Town Centre and provides highly desirable water views from the under-developed Council land to the east.



Figure 10: Artist's impression of the Port Douglas Duck Pond.

The Duck Pond would be developed as an 'experience zone' for low passenger volume water tours/experiences as well as other suitable commercial activities such as fresh sea food sales direct from vessels. However, no commercial trawler provisioning and off-loading would be possible due to the high quality public realm and boardwalk activity envisaged for the Plaza and Duck Pond. The basin works would include upgrading the rock walls, pile and boardwalk infrastructure.

The proposed vision takes the degraded existing Duck Pond and makes it a part of the new Port Douglas Waterfront heart and Public Plaza without relying on costly road realignments or extensive and expensive basin reconfigurations, with the associated land loss making the proposition financially unviable.

The advantage of this approach is that it is independent of any road realignment, minimizes potential environmental impacts and retains the historical shoreline intact.



Figure 11: The Duck Pond is intended to celebrate all things nautical.

It should be noted that the Council's existing Port Douglas Waterfront North Planning Code acknowledges the dilemma raised by the invasive

quayline realignment imaged in the 2009 Port Douglas Waterfront Master Plan in Performance Requirement P20. This states that there must be no "adverse impacts to the environmentally sensitive Dickson Inlet" with the acceptable solution requiring any changes to the "quayline are only established where an Ecological Assessment Report provides support to the changes." The more appropriate response works with the "inherited" quayline.

iv) Wharf Street Improvement.

Wharf Street adjoining the Waterfront North Precinct would be upgraded to provide a pedestrian friendly experience with active building edges, pathway awnings and road narrowings with improved surface treatments to facilitate pedestrian crossing and calm traffic movement.

While the attached Precinct Development Principles advocate upgrading the pedestrian amenity along Wharf and Grant Streets as part of the connecting strategy, it should be noted that these works are outside the Precinct and not within the control of the proponent.

Consideration should also be given to upgrading Wharf Street as the "main point of arrival" for the Town Centre as the water, marina and hinterland views are much more extensive than would be achieved with the realignments proposed in the current Planning Scheme. Utilizing Wharf Street as the "main point of arrival" for the Town Centre would also relieve traffic congestion in Macrossan Street and provide direct access to public parking with clear pedestrian routes linking to the Town Centre.



Figure 12: Wharf Street is a more appropriate point of arrival with suitable upgrading.

THE FISHERMAN'S WHARF.

A detailed assessment of various options to accommodate the trawler fleet lead to the solution proposed in this submission - a purpose built facility with good vehicular access catering for expansion and maximizing opportunities for individual identity and visibility, in addition to fostering broader Port Douglas Waterfront Master Plan aims. These issues are summarized in Table 1.

The vision features a 'fishing and commercial precinct' in the south east corner of the Marina as part of the working port strategy. This location creates a new node encouraging pedestrian connectivity between the Marina and Yacht Club; consolidates the fishing fleet in an area that has sufficient capacity; and allows the development of operational facilities to service the vessels (including close proximity to road access) without compromising the vision for a publicly accessible walkable waterfront. While the Marina can provide the berths, this is a collaborative project but

has the potential to be a catalyst for underutilized land and provide a strong link from the Yacht Club and Closehaven Marina to the Town Centre. This vacant land could become the southern entry point to the Port Douglas Waterfront.

EXISTING SLIPWAY

The vision allows for a staged closure of the existing commercial slipway operations. The slipway site is strategically important to connect the Town Centre with the Marina, and allowing the creation of the new public Plaza. The slipway facility is old and currently a commercially marginal operation, unviable without the heavy servicing facilities (such as cleaning, antifouling, fiberglass works, painting and mechanical repairs including welding/grinding) which are inconsistent with the location and precinct vision. Due to the age and condition of the slipway, it is not operationally viable in the medium term without major investment. This investment is not commercially justifiable particularly given the Port Douglas Waterfront Master Plan intent to relocate major slipway income generating activities elsewhere.

The redevelopment of the slipway site allows for the expansion of the mixed use area with recreational uses, dining, entertainment and multi-residential development to complement the adjacent plaza. It should be noted that a staged closure is consistent with the Port Douglas Waterfront Master Plan including cessation of 'heavy industrial' activities.

STAGING

Stage 1 will involve the creation of the Arbour Park to Inlet Street; construction of the accessible Water Walk; multi-unit housing starting from the existing Marina with multi-unit housing, restaurants, bars and cafes fronting the Duck Pond and along part of Dickson Inlet; rehabilitation of the Duck Pond; and the Public Plaza connecting to Wharf Street. While this is considered a single stage, the area around the Duck

Pond will be developed once existing leases have expired within the next two years.

New commercial development will occur as part of Stage 1b. The proponent is acutely aware of the existing vacancies in the Marina Shopping Centre (over 40% vacancy with the intention to demolish over 1/3 of the building). A commercially sustainable approach also dictates that limiting the new waterfront commercial floor space in this manner minimizes the potential impacts on the Town Centre and reduces any possible detrimental impact to Macrossan Street which currently has significant floor space and a number of vacancies.

Stage 2 allows for the continuation of Slipway activities but will involve transitioning to more appropriate uses. It is important for Stage 2 to consolidate this area as part of the Town Centre, draw people to the Water Walk and contribute to the Public Plaza vitality with uses that encourage pedestrian interaction including recreation, restaurant, café and residential uses.

Stage 3 a) and b) are intended to consolidate active frontages along Wharf Street, improve pedestrian amenity and access, as well as provide parking for the various commercial activities within the Precinct. The ultimate lot configuration will depend on the road alignment which will respond to development and market requirements. Stage 3 b) will also provide temporary commercial parking areas as staging proceeds (residential parking will be contained within individual lots).

Stage 4 will be developed in response to market demand at the time.

CONCLUSION

The Port Douglas Waterfront North Precinct vision outlined in this document represents:

- A series of significant projects and significant investment in Port Douglas.
- An opportunity to work collaboratively with Council and the community.
- A series of connected and carefully considered design responses to closely integrate the Precinct with the Town Centre, taking a holistic approach to development of the Precinct and other relevant waterfront issues.

Description		Current - adjacent to <i>On the Inlet.</i>	Duck Pond	Fisherman's Wharf (South eastern corner of Marina. See Note 1)
1.	Number of vessels	4 in 2 abreast formation.	6 – 8	16 (but also available to other users).
2.	Direct catch Transfer & Provisioning	No. Incompatible with new use. These operations at Public Wharf or Marano's	No. Incompatible with new use. These operations at Public Wharf or Marano's	Yes. Subject to collaborative development approach.
3.	Depth Constraints	No – Dickson Inlet.	Yes – requires remediation.	No – Marina Basin recently dredged
4.	Seafood Market	No.	Yes – as part of public plaza.	Yes – in an identifiably separate facility.
5.	Vehicle Access	No – conflict with accessible waterfront.	No	Yes – in conjunction with adjoining land and owner.
6.	Industry Identity	No – part of overall development.	No – part of overall development	Yes – high visibility to Wharf Street with possibility of developing recognizable identity. Empowers the users to shape their industry direction and growth.
7.	Public Exposure	Very limited – restricted to passing pedestrians.	Limited, mainly pedestrians with some exposure to Wharf Street but controlled environment.	High existing exposure to vehicular traffic. Potentially prime frontage location if Wharf Street upgraded to “main point of arrival” with suitable intersection re-design at Wharf/Davidson Streets.
8.	Timing	NA	As part of precinct redevelopment.	Berthing Immediate with land development subject Note 1.
9.	Long term growth	No	No	Up to 16 berths.
10.	Level of Investment	Nil	Moderate – redevelopment part of overall project.	High.
11.	Relationship to the Port Douglas Waterfront Master Plan	Makes no significant contribution – PDWMP happens around this option.	Identified in PDWMP but has limitations as noted above.	Ability to act as a catalyst project to drive 1) the expansion of pedestrian network to Closehaven Marina & the Yacht Club and 2) initial investigations looking at opportunities for Port Douglas Waterfront South Planning Area.
12.	Other Benefits			This is potentially a prime Port Douglas site with a portion developed as a separate tourist attraction featuring a working trawler port, fresh seafood sales and a seafood restaurant/takeaway with ample Wharf Street parking
	Note 1	While the Marina can provide berthing for the Fisherman's Wharf, this solution requires a collaborative approach with the land owner/ lease holder providing the area for the land based infrastructure. DNRM has indicated that they would not oppose the use of the land as a Fisherman's Wharf.		

Table 1 Advantages/Disadvantages of 3 Berthing Options
Port Douglas Commercial Vessels

Appendix A: As an example – Fishing Boat Harbour, Fremantle.

Historical fishing port with continuing operations. Public access and Fishing Fleet operations carefully separated. Other uses include Little Creatures Brewery, and Westcoast Jet open ocean adventure tours. Sculpture is used to communicate Fremantle's rich fishing history.



Colour & human scale.



Fish Markets.



Relaxed Fish & Chips boardwalk area.



Interpretive Artwork.



Fishing Fleet part of precinct.



Other uses – Brewery.

Appendix B: As an example – Port Coogee W.A.

A completely man-made marina with private waterfront canal lots, an artificial public beach and a high level of design and public amenity. Includes completely private canal type lots with no waterfront public access.



Quality public realm.



Limited commercial.



Patron Comfort – wind screen.



Integrated service/waste management.



Integrated security & waste management.



Integrated furniture design – seating.

Appendix C: As an Example – Mandurah Marina, W.A.

A completely man-made marina and vessel servicing port. Development includes a large commercial/restaurant component (including internal mall), hotel, and quasi Venetian canal residential component. Internalized commercial seems problematic with a number of vacancies. Boardwalks in commercial areas at ground level for adjacency relationship. Boardwalks past residential units lowered to address privacy. Setbacks minimal to both public streets (lanes) and waterfront.



Commercial Centre.



Casual dining with sails.



Shelter and shade.



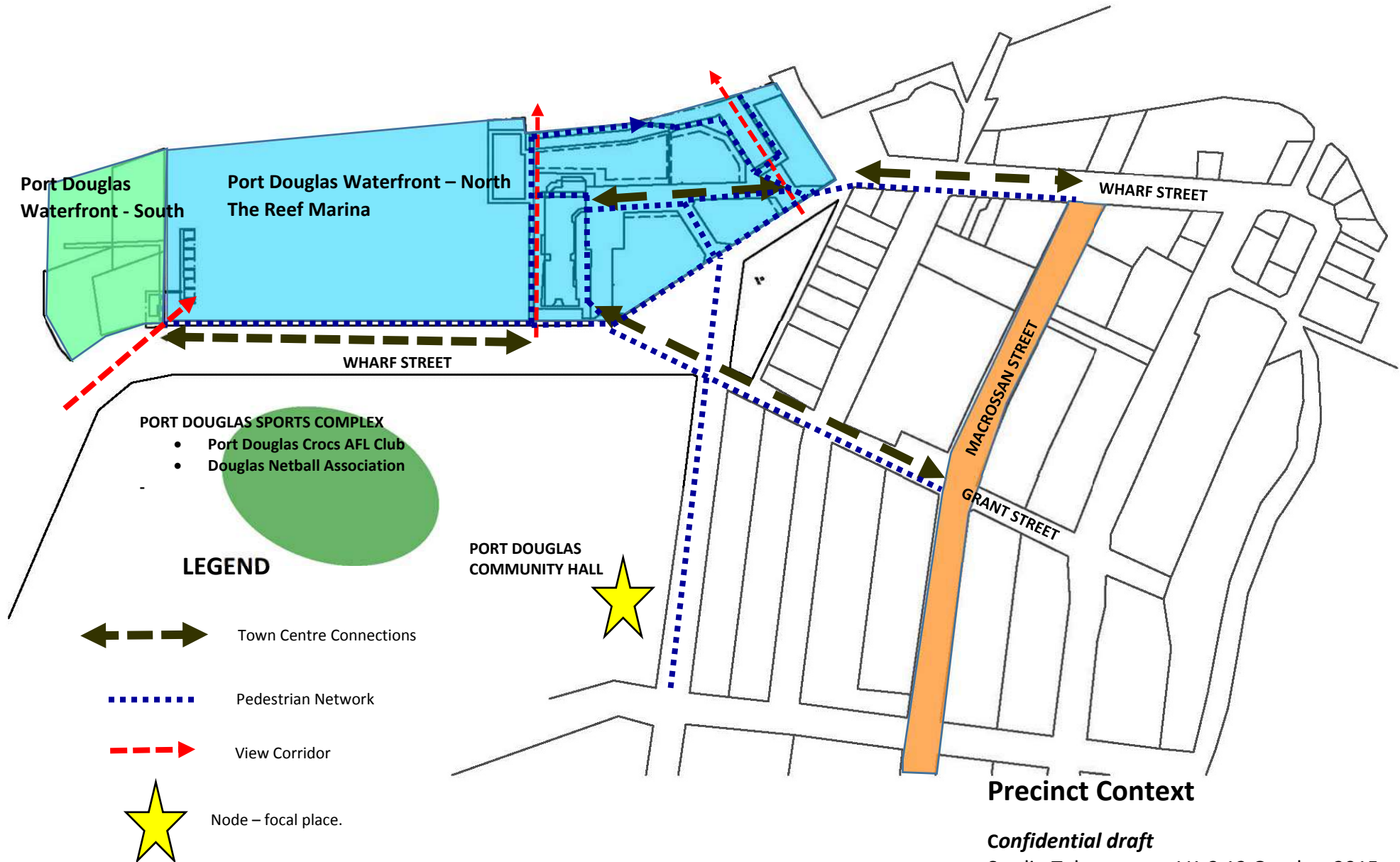
Commercial Centre – market.



Marina access & service building.



Public access to Canal network.



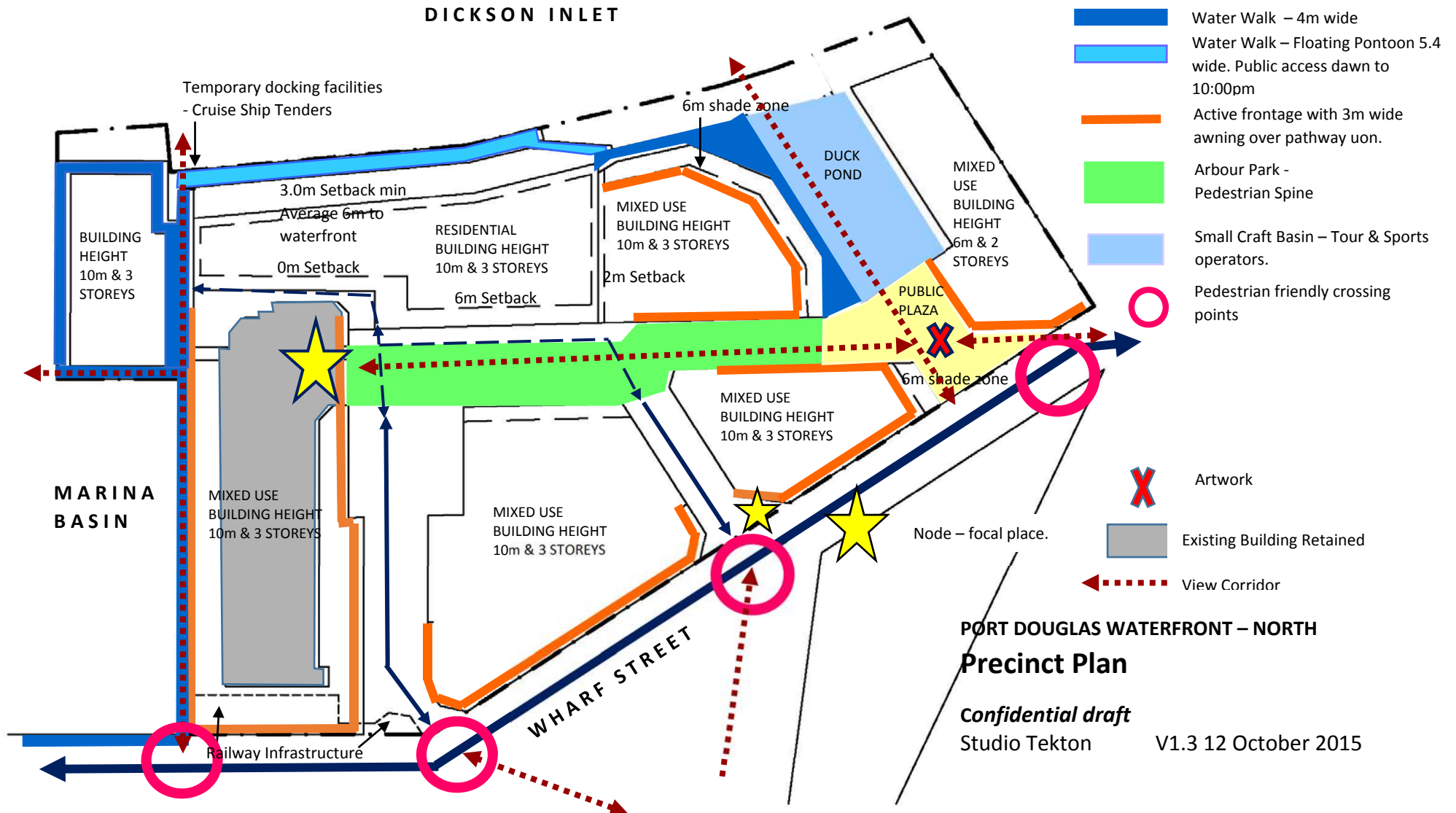
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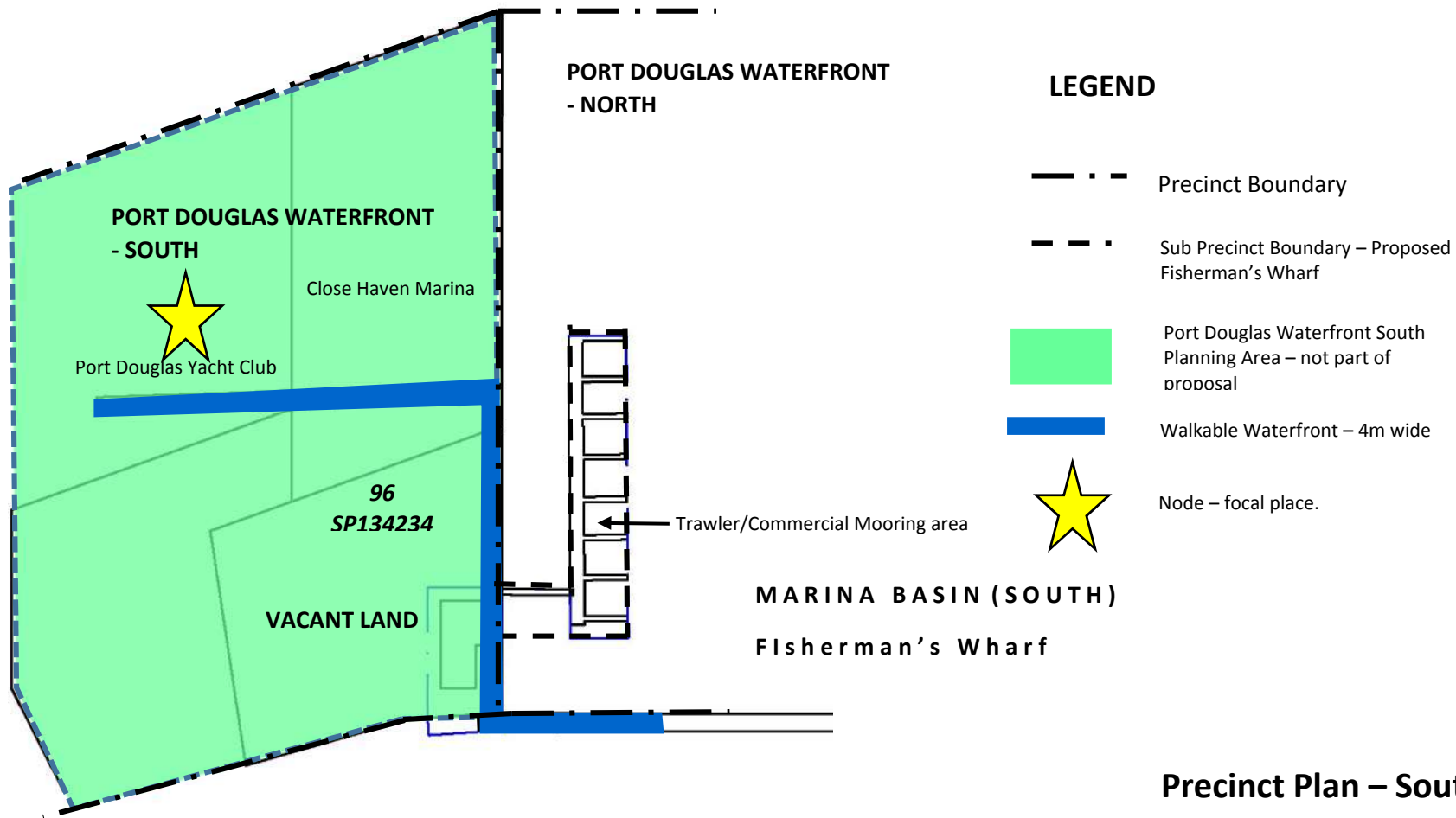
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LEGEND

-  Precinct Boundary
-  Major Road
-  Minor Road
-  Low use shared Street /Service Lane
-  Water Walk – 4m wide
-  Water Walk – Floating Pontoon 5.4 wide. Public access down to 10:00pm
-  Active frontage with 3m wide awning over pathway uon.
-  Arbour Park - Pedestrian Spine
-  Small Craft Basin – Tour & Sports operators.
-  Pedestrian friendly crossing points
-  Artwork
-  Existing Building Retained
-  View Corridor





Precinct Plan – South Marina Basin

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