

BANGALOW VILLAGE CENTRE

MASTER PLAN

JOHN SPARKS

MARCH 2017

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MASTER PLAN

OUR NATURAL HERITAGE



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SUMMARY

Bangalow is a rural centre servicing the surrounding hinterland and the village has a heritage theme which is central to the town's character.

There have been many reports in previous years on the village centre and this study draws on the experience gained to bring these ideas up to date with the current economic, political and social situation which has changed over the last 20 years.

This study looks at the potential Bangalow has to specialise in many things and become a focus for the creativity and initiative of the many people who are part of this village.

A village centre is a place where people eat, work, play and communicate and we have used the examples of the many individual and unique villages which have evolved over hundreds of years and the principles which make them so interesting, workable and viable today.

The concept of a village centre providing an experience to the resident is central to the enjoyment and success of the town centre and we remember our journey through the spaces, places and activities that we enjoyed so much.

Bangalow has many community, social, business, sporting and environmental groups who provide significant input to all village activities.

Surveys and workshops have outlined the many likes and dislikes and these have been used to establish planning principles which then form the basis for the concept Master plan. This plan shows a walkable town centre with long term carparks on the periphery and a pedestrian priority commercial core.

The town square and linked open spaces, landscaping, tree lined streets and outdoor cafes complete the experience of the total village centre where we gravitate to eat, shop, work, play, sit, relax, wander and communicate.

This centre is an integral part of the surrounding green open spaces and connects directly to the showgrounds, sport fields, creeks, wetlands and nature which has a value far beyond development.

It is possible to become totally self sufficient in energy, water, waste and food and zero carbon by capitalising on the existing structure of the centre and surrounding areas. Through co-operation we create our future and this study outlines a way we can achieve this today.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Bangalow is a rural village of about 2,000 people - and growing - within the Byron Shire and the Northern Rivers region.

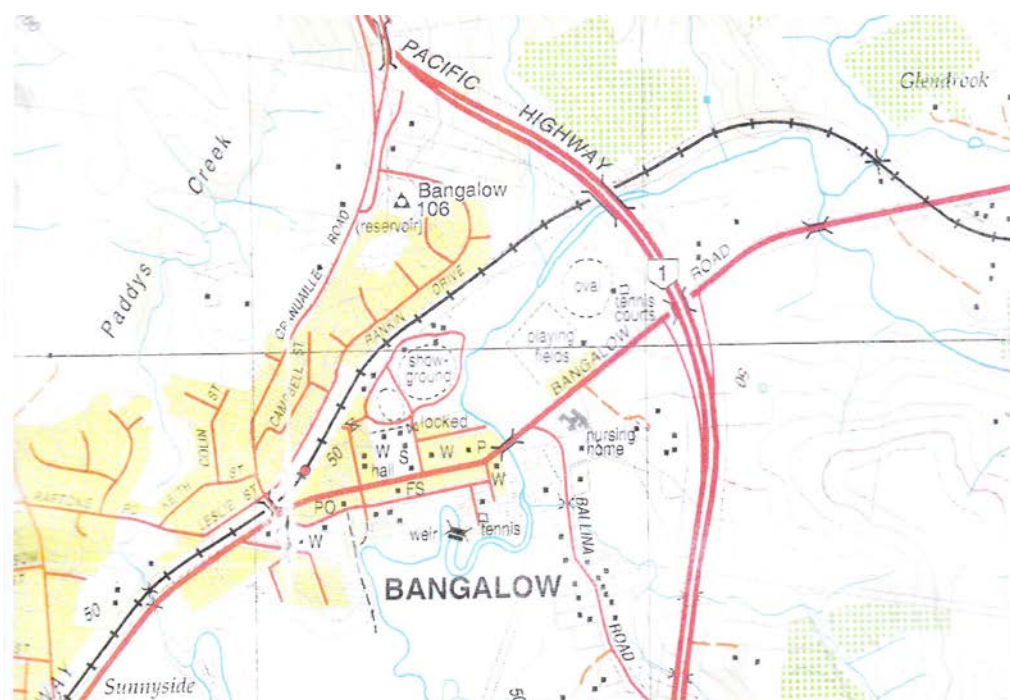
There is much community involvement in Bangalow with many ideas and initiatives implemented in previous years to make the vibrant town and village centre it is today.

This study looks at pulling together many of these ideas and capitalising on what Bangalow already offers and to integrate the results of many present day discussions, workshops and gatherings with our current feelings, economic potential and community needs.

There is no desire to re-invent the wheel but rather to simply use the many great ideas and visions already available as the basis for this study and to listen to what the community is saying, rather than superimpose city and urban development onto a village as unique and individual as Bangalow.

Present day Bangalow has many assets which surpass other towns because it is a rural village surrounded by the biodiversity of open green spaces with a vibrant economic and social community.

This study outlines a way to capitalise on the assets we already have and co-ordinates them into a Master Plan framework which allows us to realise our future community potential and growth.



2. BACKGROUND

There have been many proposals, discussions, ideas and reports put forward over many years for the compact village of Bangalow which have achieved some short term gains but they have been unable to move the township towards the comprehensive overall holistic direction that is needed to realise the full potential of such a vibrant community.

Among the many documents prepared initially were the Sanoff Report by the Department of Architecture, University of Sydney in 1994, The Heritage Study by Tim Shellshear and Planning Workshop in 1983 and the Heritage Colour study by Tim Shellshear in 1985.

Byron Council's DCP no.12 quantified the extent and value placed on the main street by zoning it as "Heritage" in the LEP 1988.

The Bangalow Settlement Strategy adopted by Council in 2003 incorporated the Northern Rivers Regional Strategy, the North Coast Urban Planning Strategy, the Planning NSW Urban Settlement Strategy guidelines for the North Coast and Byron Council's greenprint for a sustainable future and established residential growth areas on the periphery of the town.

Many submissions were made to the Bangalow chapter of the draft DCP under the new LEP 2014 including a Village Centre Master Plan from the Design Advisory Panel (DAP) which outlined a comprehensive concept for the greater village centre. A copy of part of their submission is included on the following pages for reference.

Studies by local community interest groups have initiated individual projects which have been positive but uncoordinated in the overall comprehensive planning needed for a small viable village.

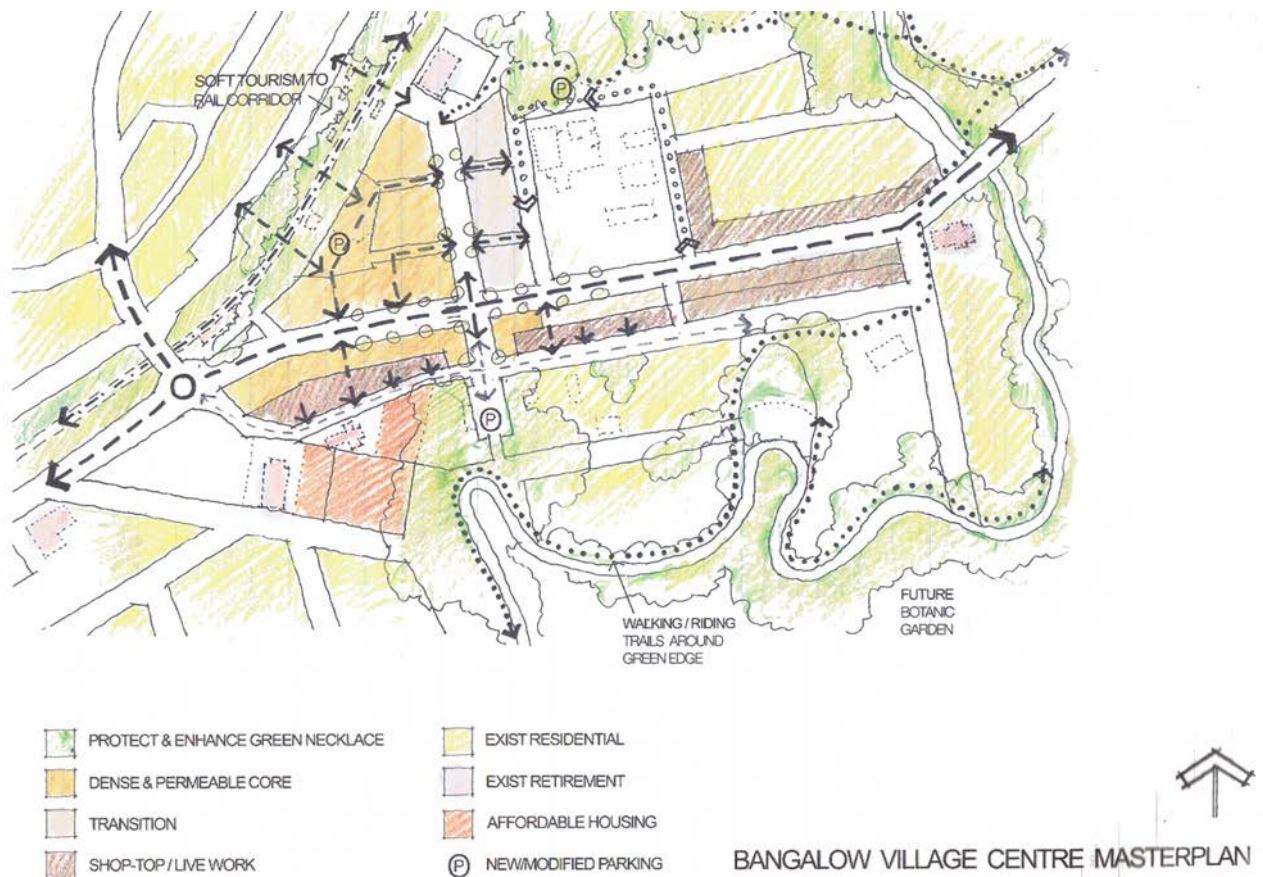
In recent times Council has initiated planning workshops to involve all community groups, landowners and residents to establish baseline requirements for future planning and a master plan for the town centre.

The president of Bangalow Progress Association (BPA) Tony Hart writes:

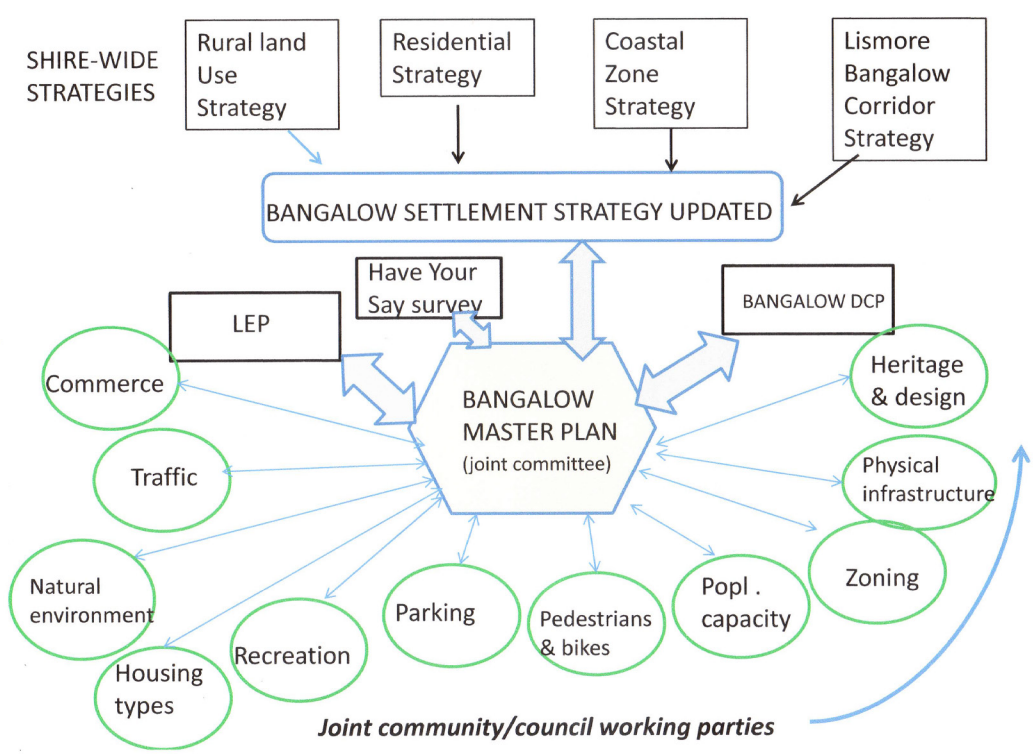
"Last years 'Have your say survey Bangalow' was the first stage in updating the Settlement Strategy (2003) - the foundation of a new Bangalow village plan.

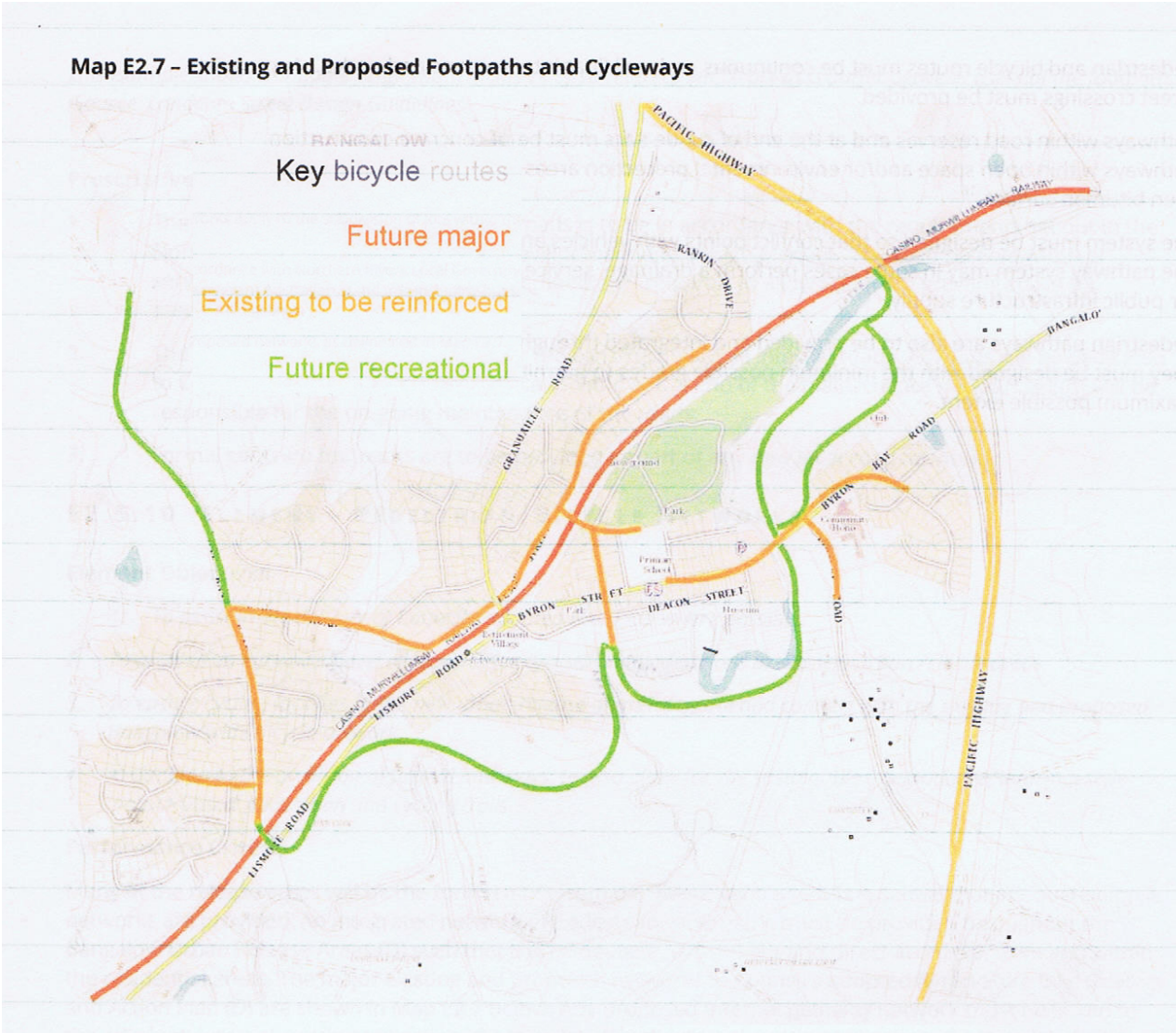
Respondents told us what they liked and disliked about our village. The village scale, the heritage look and feel, the rural atmosphere with surrounding green hills and our cafes, shops, markets and our green areas dominated the 'likes'. Through-traffic, parking, lack of proper well-placed internal walking and cycle networks were desired improvements."

BANGALOW VILLAGE CENTRE MASTER PLAN



DAP submission to draft DCP2014





DAP submission to draft DCP2014



3. AIM

The purpose of this study is not to re-invent the wheel but to bring together the plethora of information already available into a co-ordinated practical plan which will provide a positive framework for growth to satisfy the many diverse interests in a co-ordinated comprehensive strategy.

We look at some of the community submissions, the results of surveys and workshops, and more importantly, the present town structure, so that we can incorporate the community needs into the existing physical framework of our present day village.

There is much positive energy in the ongoing work of the many community groups and the purpose is to capitalise on what is available and move forward to the future environment we wish to create.



4. THE VILLAGE CENTRE

What is a village centre?

It is a place where locals connect with each other and visitors to experience the collective inputs from the surrounding areas that it serves.

It is where local residents eat, sleep, relax, play, live and communicate and where visitors can enjoy the uniqueness of a place that is different to their home.

Villages and towns have been around for thousands of years from ancient Roman times to medieval villages and the many quaint and distinctive English and European villages that we love to visit today.

The experience of walking from different open spaces connected by narrow streets, leads us through a journey of discovery that we remember and enjoy.

The buildings all have their own character but it is the open spaces that form the village structure and are the public domain where all the activities interconnect. This is where we all eat, work and play and connect with each other.

We bump into a friend, we discover a cafe, we find a unique item in a shop or studio, we see an artist at work, we listen to music, chat to a stranger or learn about what makes this place special.

The experience and feeling of being compressed by narrow paths then opening to the enclosed open spaces to enjoy before moving on is the journey we experience and remember when we look at the photos and souvenirs we brought back home.

Examples of some villages recently visited at Carcassonne, Sarlat and Saint Maximin in southern France showing suggested walks around and through the villages are included in the following pages and these are symptomatic of many such villages throughout Europe and the UK.



BANGALOW VILLAGE CENTRE MASTER PLAN



SARLAT Mediaeval Village Centre showing points of interest. FRANCE



St. MAXIMIN Village Centre showing walking trail. FRANCE

5. THE BANGALOW POTENTIAL

The present structure of Bangalow Village Centre is defined by a main street which carries all levels of traffic with shops opening directly onto narrow footpaths and conflicting activities.

The experience of walking down one side of the street and up the other side is all it has to offer. This may be convenient for a one stop shop but does not offer the true potential of Bangalow as a vibrant town centre.

In Bangalow there is no sense of arrival, there is no central meeting place, even with the 20 cafes, the main street is dominated by cars and Station street is a backwater which doesn't lead to a local destination.

The village is surrounded by significant open spaces which separate the residential areas from the Town Centre. The Showgrounds, sportfields, Heritage Park and wetlands, river rehabilitation and the rail corridor are all components of the town core and need to be integrated within the built environment of the Village Centre.

The most logical and efficient way to establish a vibrant and stable economic centre is to capitalise on the existing assets and co-ordinate the village activities into a cohesive structure which will give full access and use of all available active and passive spaces.

Open green spaces are where people eat, work, play and socialise in the enjoyment of their daily routine.

In addition to the existing facilities and open spaces and themes created by enterprising groups and individuals there is future potential for Bangalow to capitalise on some of the following ideas and themes.

1) AN ORGANIC AND SUSTAINABLE FOODIES CENTRE

- The Sample festival shows there is much interest in this concept
- Direct access to organic local produce, the Saturday farmers markets and zero food miles are all available.
- We already have some good cafes and world class chefs
- Gourmet food is enjoyed by the whole community



2) AN ARTS + CRAFT CENTRE

- Bangalow featured on the recent mud trail for ceramics and pottery
- Local art and craft is featured in the Moller Pavillion at the monthly market
- The C.W.A. and art shops are already in town
- Many talented artists live in the township
- Artwork can be extended into the streetscape, urban planning and building designs
- The many trails can feature sculptures and works of art



3) A NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY HUB

- Establish an environmental discovery centre
- We already have land care restoration projects established
- Learning centres would use the natural biodiversity that surrounds us
- There is more value in nature than buildings
- Rehabilitation projects to reinforce our green open space
- Potential to learn from flora and fauna studies
- We have a unique river and wetland to enjoy and study
- There are many volunteers who assist and enjoy our rain forests, wetland and creeks
- Surrounded by nature and open space makes Bangalow a village where people want to live and should never be compromised by urban sprawl



4) A HEALTH HUB

- We already have a healthy green natural environment
- Healthy food is available locally
- Some health resorts already exist
- Emphasis and programs for relaxation, recreation and play are beneficial to everyone
- The town centre is surrounded by walking trails
- There is potential for more health food outlets
- We have established areas for active and passive recreation



Visitors won't come to look at buildings but they will return if they enjoyed an interesting and pleasant experience while wandering in and around the village.

Bangalow has enormous potential to expand the many activities now available within the local community.

The ideas outlined above should start the discussion.



6. ISSUES FOR BANGALOW VILLAGE

Community interest and involvement is desirable and healthy and there is much good work that needs to be protected.

Some of these groups have agendas which are divergent and in some cases, mutually exclusive. These issues need to be rationalised and co-ordinated so that consensus can be reached on the future direction that will be of overall benefit to the whole community.

SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED ARE OUTLINED AS FOLLOWS:

- Land care projects are not protected from future development
- Biodiversity mapping is not used in planning assessments
- Wildlife corridors have not been established
- Co-ordination of all planning and development issues - political, social, economic, environmental, sustainable, ethical and spiritual.
- The diversity of interest groups with some listed as follows:
 - Walking and recreation groups
 - Cyclists, bike ways and walkways
 - Railway and crown land
 - Chamber of Commerce and business owners
 - Festivals, tourism, markets and market committees
 - Landowners, developers, landlords
 - Residents and action groups
 - Childcare needs and community children's centre
 - Schools and education programs
 - Parents and citizens association
 - Social, health and home care services
 - Church groups and retirement villages
 - Access for people with disabilities
 - Showground management committee
 - A and I hall management committee
 - Roads and Maritime
 - Heritage and adaptive re-use
 - Lion's club, Rotary club, Men's Shed
 - Progress association
 - Bangalow planning network



- Northern rivers design advisory panel
- Permaculture, landscaping and environmental groups
- Bangalow land and river care
- Historical society
- Country womens association
- Sport associations and clubs
- Youth clubs
- Bangalow on foot
- Parklands trust
- Council services and planning

These are also many issues, both positive and negative which have been recognised and discussed in the planning workshops and community surveys and these are outlined in the following section.



7. COMMUNITY SURVEY

Discussions and feedback from local people gave positive feedback on the way they saw and experienced the village centre and what they wanted for Bangalow.

The priorities outlined are generally as follows:

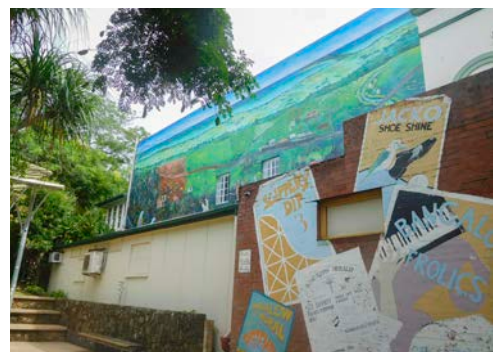
- A walkable town centre
- Pedestrian priority - less cars in the core
- Bring nature into the town - integrate green spaces
- Link the core with the village surrounds - connection
- Street trees, greenery and landscaping
- Open spaces - design with nature
- Peripheral parking areas
- A vibrant village character
- A place to meet - meeting places
- Outdoor eating areas
- Sense of arrival
- Walkways and bike ways
- Art and Sculpture trail
- Nature trails - adventure, history, heritage



In addition to this the Community Workshops “Have your say” survey reinforced many of the residents likes and dislikes and a copy of the results summary is included in the following pages.

IN SUMMARY THE MAJOR LIKES AND PREFERENCES FOR FUTURE PLANNING INCLUDED:

- The community and village feel
- Heritage architecture and characteristics
- Cafes, pubs and retail
- Markets, festivals and events
- Rural setting
- Village centre character
- Public spaces and open spaces
- Street trees and green areas
- Natural environment



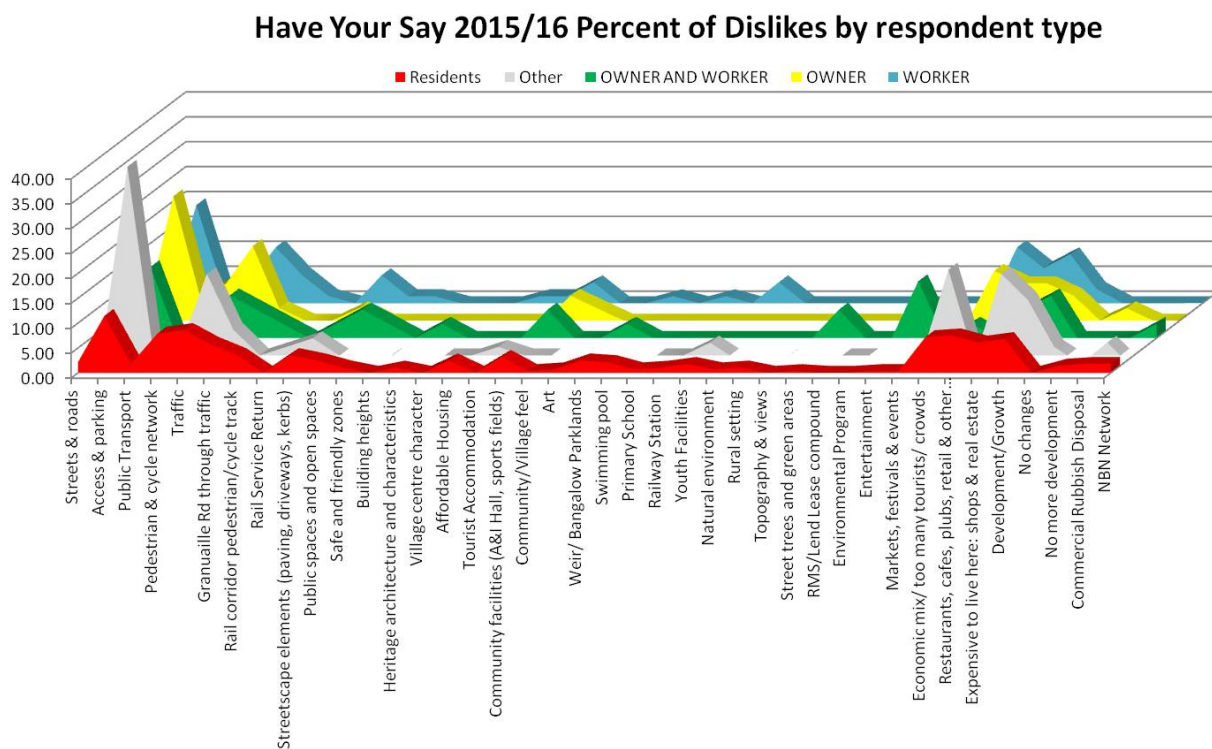
- Community facilities
- Tourism and entertainment
- Building heights
- Topography and views

IN CONTRAST THE DISLIKES FOCUSED ON:

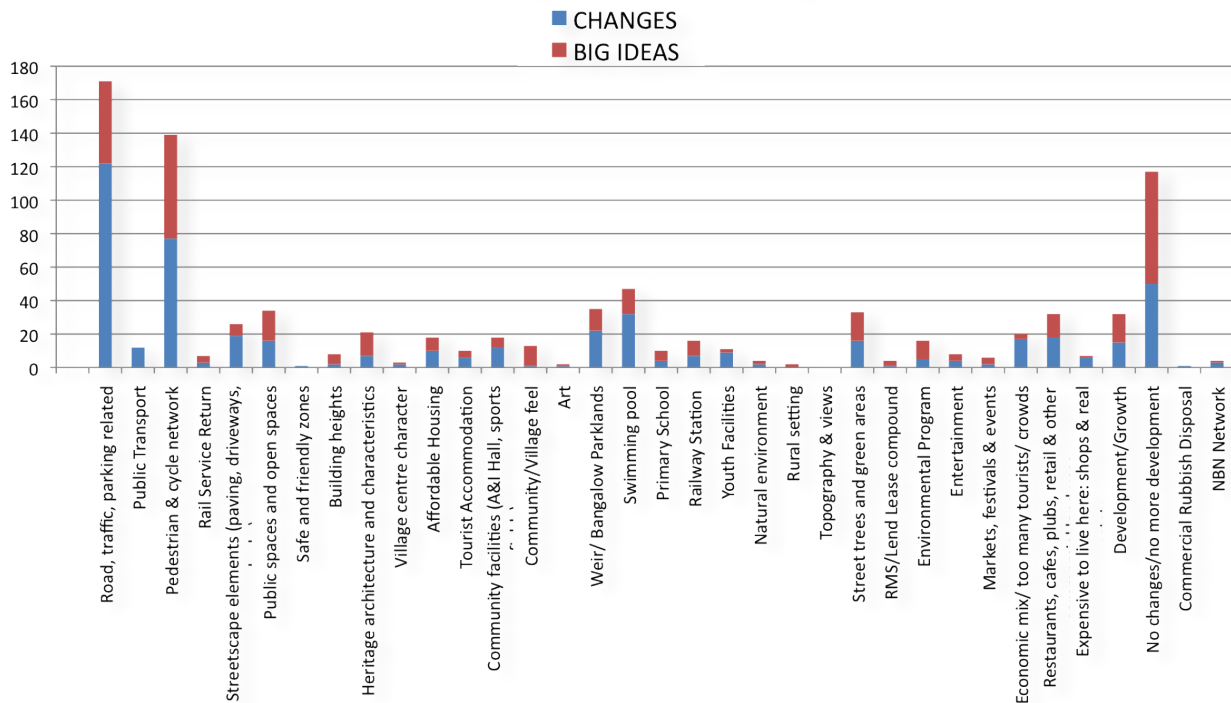
- Access and parking
- Traffic and lack of pedestrian network
- Tourist crowds
- Unsympathetic development and growth
- Cost of shopping and real estate

From the general observations, priorities and community feedback, these have been used to collate a series of planning principles as a framework for the master plan design of both the central core area and the direct connection with village surrounds.

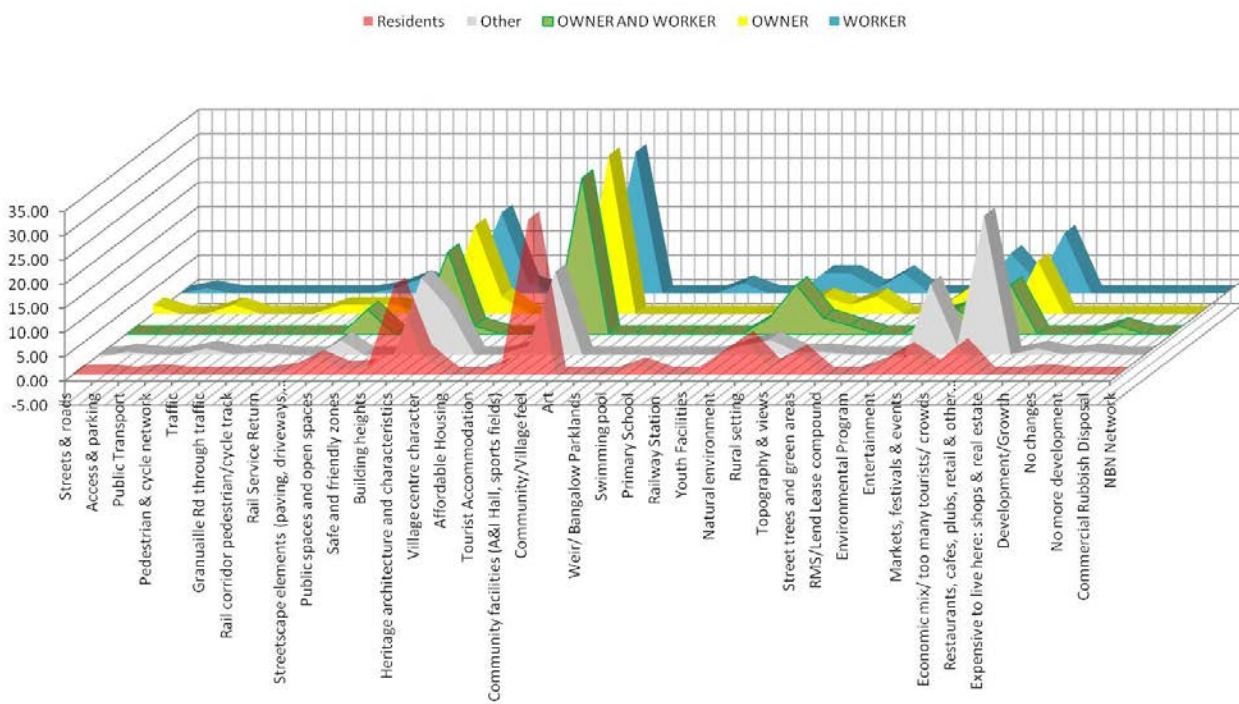
These principles are outlined in the following section and a summary of the community survey results is included below.

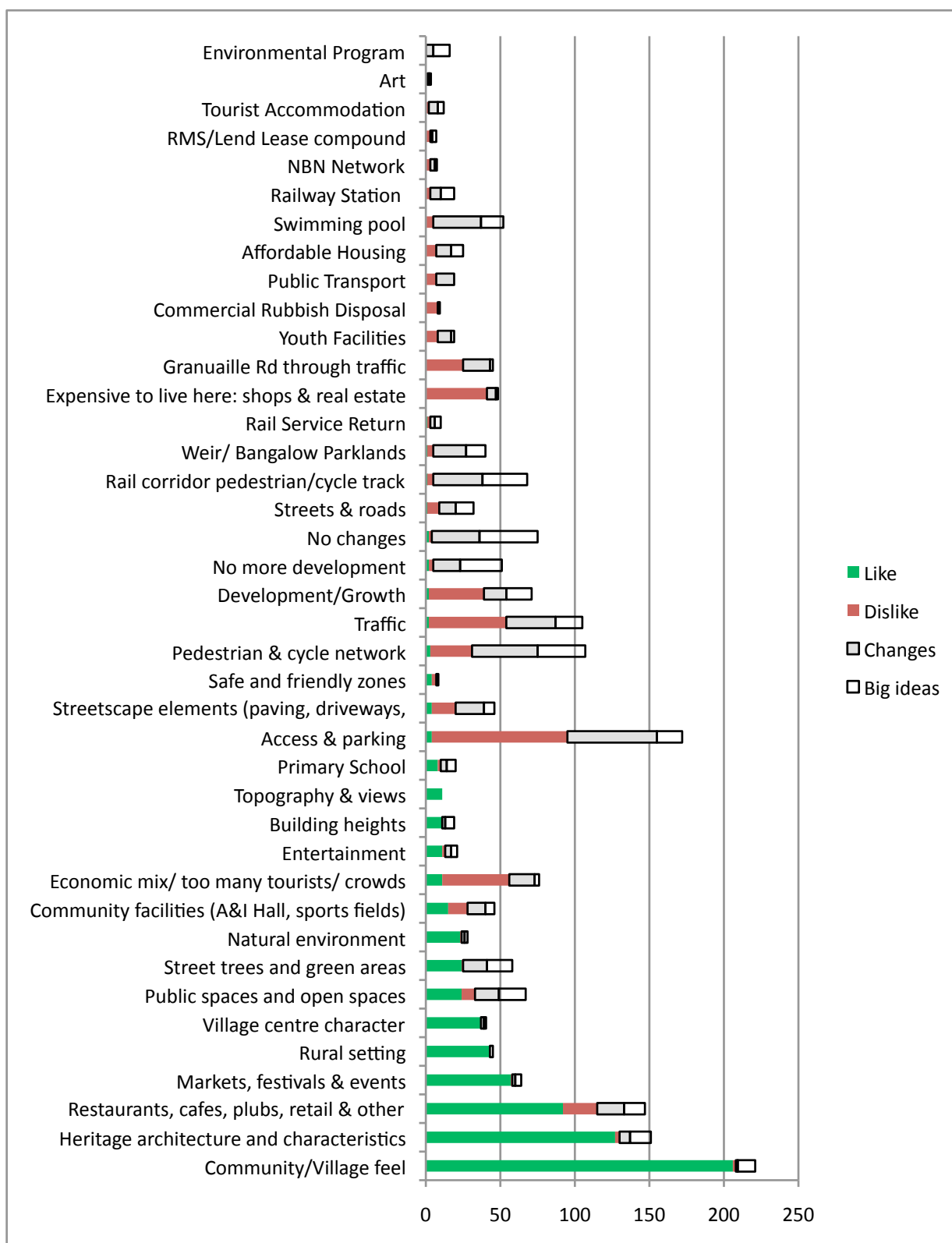


Have Your Say - Big Ideas and Changes proposed



Have Your Say 2015/16 percent of Likes by respondent type





BANGALOW LAND AND RIVERCARE

"Bangalow Land and Rivercare is a volunteer, not-for-profit organization formed in 1998 by group of locals who were concerned about the degradation of Byron Creek and its tributaries as well as the decline in the remaining areas of the 'Big Scrub'."

The aim of the group is to restore a native vegetation buffer zone along approximately 6km of Byron Creek from the old highway to Binna Burra including Paddy's Creek and Maori Creek.

This community group has already achieved an amazing amount of regeneration and rehabilitation of significant green areas around the Bangalow township and the village centre. They summarise their work as follows:

"Our first undertaking was to repair the eroded creek bank opposite Bangalow Creek Pool. Followed by the planing of 3500 trees at the Potter's site and over 3000 trees at the Hermann's sites. After receiving an Olympic grant in 1998 work began on the regeneration of the Byron Creek bank bordering the Bangalow Sportfields. This massive undertaking was achieved with help from the Bangalow community and a successful Envirofund Grant of \$36,000.

In 2010 in partnership with the first Indigenous Regeneration Team, Rous Water and Byron Shire Council work commenced on the Bangalow Park Wetland in Deacon Street which opened in 2012. Markers throughout the Park provide a history of the site, its flora and fauna. Work has now commenced on either side of Byron Creek from Snow's Bridge to the Sikh Temple. Also at the rear of All Souls Church with a community planting day in 2014 that resulted in excess of 1000 trees being planted."

A plan showing their significant regeneration sites in and around Bangalow is included on the following page.





BANGALOW PARKLANDS

Bangalow Parklands is a community group that works in collaboration with Byron Shire Council and other community groups to restore rehabilitate and manage the Bangalow parklands in Deacon street.

This area contains Heritage House, the restored weir and significant areas of biodiversity with the wetlands, creek and community open space recreation areas forming an integral part of the town centre.

In their three year management plan they outline their mission statement, aim and objectives as follows with views of the wetlands and their proposed master plan on the following pages.

"MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance the beauty of the park by introducing improvements reflecting our heritage, acknowledging its past as Bangalow's Waterfront, and to provide the community with contemporary resources in a beautiful and peaceful natural setting on Byron Creek."

AIM

The aim of the Bangalow Parklands team is to work with Byron Shire Council, the community and community groups to improve existing facilities, and to build new infrastructure to ensure that the park is accessible, welcoming and attractive.

OBJECTIVES TO ACHIEVE THIS

- 1. Weir wall repair*
- 2. Convert old dip-site to carpark*
- 3. Managing and maintaining The Waterfront bandstand*
- 4. Upgrade existing amenities building*
- 5. Decommission existing carpark*
- 6. Planning and maintaining park landscaping, including Wetlands*
- 7. Signage, lighting and park furniture*
- 8. Maintenance, repairs, usage and promotion*
- 9. Upgrading pathways; creating the Rainforest Walk*
- 10. Development of western end of Parklands; new barbecue shelter*
- 11. Developing the western end of the parklands to create a Natural Adventure Playground"*



View of the Waterfront Bandstand, built by Bangalow Parklands with grant funding in 2015-2016.



View of the wetlands created in 2013 by Bangalow Land & Rivercare, showing one of the two rock circles.

Proposed BANGALOW PARKLANDS Masterplan

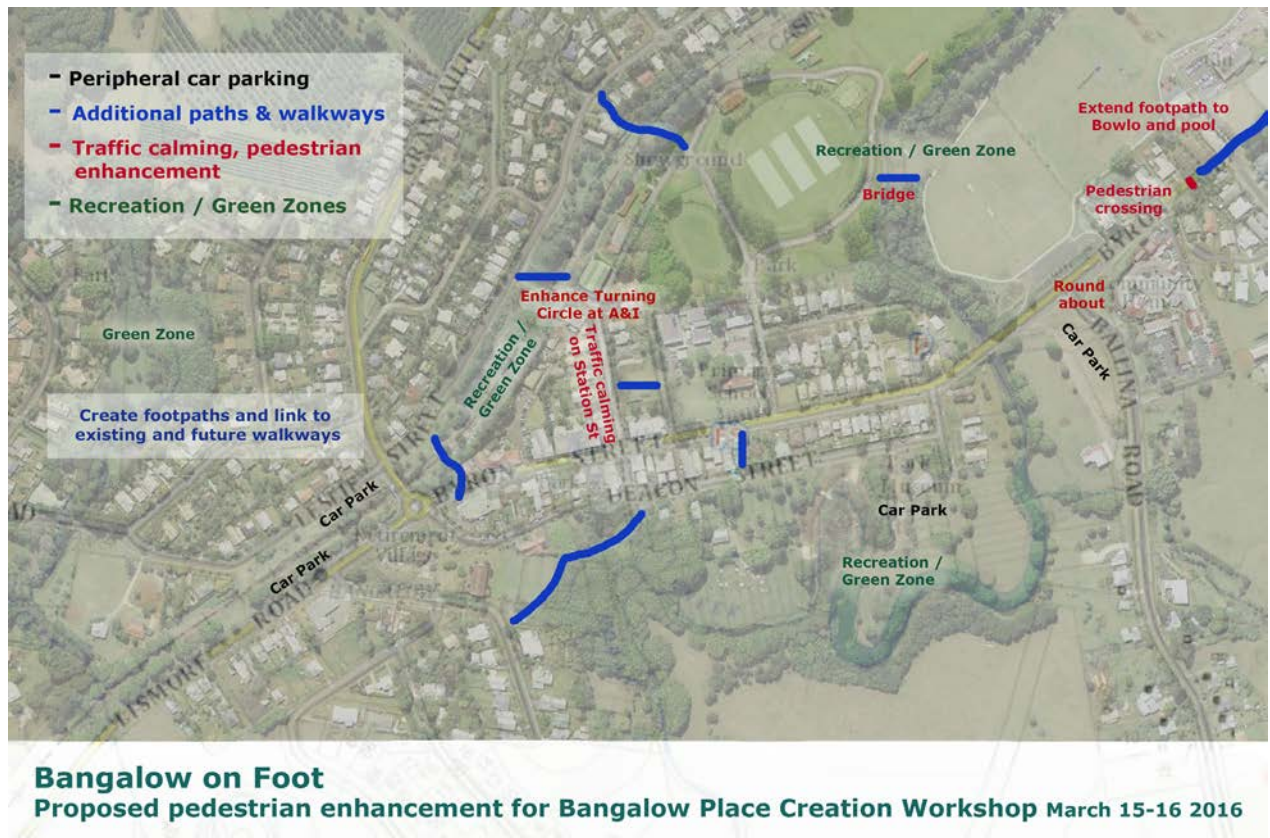


Bangalow Parklands team design, evolving since 2012

Relates to Proposed Plan of Management July 2016

BANGALOW ON FOOT

A copy of the workshop submission plan for pedestrian enhancement by the community group Bangalow on foot showing connections in and around the town centre is included below.



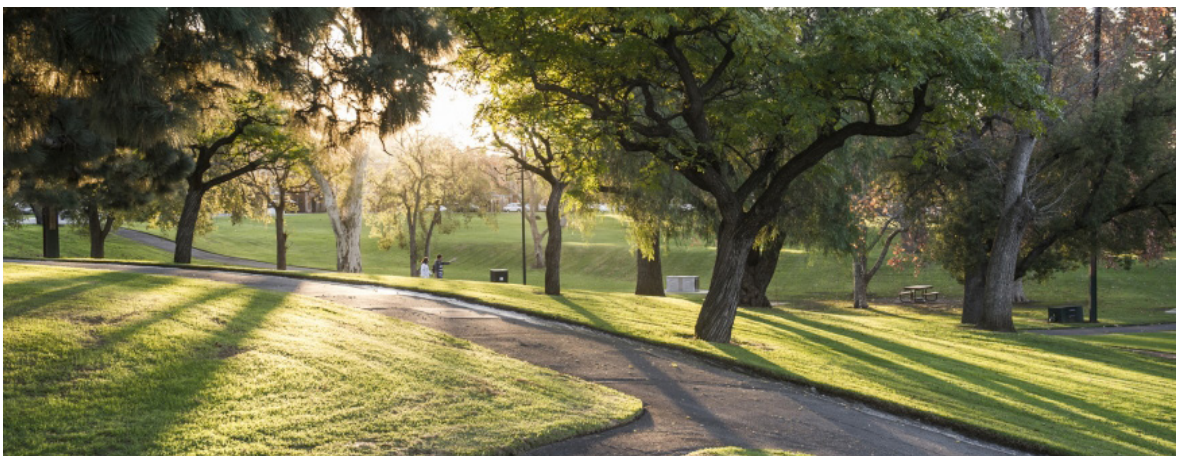
8. PLANNING PRINCIPLES

From the community feedback the following planning principles were established as a basis for a comprehensive master plan.

- A walkable village centre
- Pedestrian priority core area
- Direct links and connections to surrounding areas of interest
- A walking experience for locals and tourists



- Accessible public and private pathways to all areas
- Outdoor eating and meeting places
- Overlap public and private domains
- Community involvement and inclusion in all activities
- Retain and enhance all natural vegetation
- Design with nature



- Incorporate green landscaping throughout the town centre
- Significant street planning
- Design around large meeting places and connections
- Public activity nodes and links
- Car parking around the centre with direct pedestrian links
- Reduced short term parking in the core
- Peripheral long term carparks with direct walkways
- Combine retail, service, commercial and residential areas
- New building setbacks to give open public areas



- Low scale streetscape with taller areas behind
- Core buildings in scale with Byron street
- East side of Station street low scale transition buildings
- Co-operation and integration of all interests to avoid conflict in planning
- Economic use of all community and private assets
- Enhance the visitor experience with wider areas of interest
- Business and community support networks
- Zero carbon town centre
- Theme areas for activity nodes and links
- Respect all aboriginal values - the land, spiritual and the people
- Sustainable natural environment and local economy
- Inclusion and access for people with disabilities

9. MASTER PLAN CONCEPT

A. THE TOWN CORE

Based on community feedback and the planning principles established the master plan outlined presents concepts for the village core area and the immediate surrounds which form an integral part of the total village centre.

A walkable town core is created by the use of open space areas linked with walking paths to provide an interesting journey as the walker is led to experience the full extent of the village centre beyond the main street. Some car parking is taken out of the core area and relocated in periphery car parking areas to allow pedestrian priority in the concentrated central area.

In Byron street, parking along the northern side outside the shops, has been replaced by a wider walkway, street trees and landscaping to provide people space, shade trees and extended outdoor eating areas.

On the southern side, blisters around the existing tree groups provide shaded areas and outdoor sitting and eating areas connecting to the existing post office park space.

Loading bays, bus stops and some short term parking has been retained

TOWN SQUARE

The town square provides a meeting place for locals and a sense of arrival for visitors. The square is an inviting place to sit, a safe place for kids to enjoy, a place for buskers, casual happenings, a pop up stage for events, and a central place for the well established farmers market.

The square would also retain a central focus for any sensitive, low scale future development of surrounding sites and the sloping ground could provide underground car parking under the square.

The central square is accessible to and from all directions and connects the main street with the railway land and Station area, as well as the lane behind the Byron street shops and also leads through to the existing open space of the Arts precinct in Station street.

Existing established tree planting around the square and along the connecting walkways should be retained as much as possible and supplementary, tree planting should be incorporated into any future building proposals.

STATION STREET

The footpath has been widened and continuous street tree planting and landscaping replace the car parking lane along the western side of Station street.

The eastern side retains the existing trees and supplements these with blisters widening the footpath in some areas to allow more trees and create a natural green canopy for the full length of the street.

Some short term parking and loading bays have been retained with a central carriage way allowing two way traffic.

It is suggested that future buildings in Station street be setback 6m to allow fully landscaped areas to complement the street planting and provide open people spaces which can be used for cafes or display areas where people can wander and enjoy.

These simple works would give Station street a delightful and inviting natural open walkway leading to a ceremonial square outside the A and I hall with the walkway continuing through the railway land to the Leslie street residential area.

The area outside the A and I hall is defined by different paving and can be used for ceremonies, pageants, displays and as an overflow area to exhibitions and events in the Hall. It is important to retain a vehicle turning area at the end of Station street for everyday use and removable bollards can be use to define this area.



RAILWAY LAND

The railway land is a significant open space and should be retained as a valuable community asset.

The existing park west of the hotel is well established with a memorial and public amenities conveniently located.

A connecting walkway across the railway line to Leslie street allows an open picnic and play area for family gatherings, a safe play area or a quiet retreat.

The pond provides a natural solution to the drainage outlet with rocks and reed beds providing filtration before discharging to the council drainage system. This would be more economic, environmentally friendly and sustainable than an engineering and pipe solution which would not allow overland flow in extreme storm events.

The station platform and derelict building is noted as a cafe which has much local support and would provide a delightful space to eat and is an economically viable use for this area.

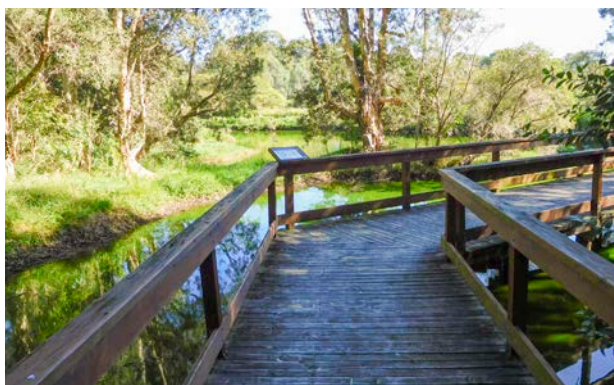
The area between the railway tracks and Leslie street already contains substantial tree planting which has been retained and supplemented with a bush tucker garden servicing the town shops and cafes.

This open green space extends north along the rail corridor into an urban forest which is a critical link to the extensive green areas surrounding the town core.

This area is noted as an urban forest and can be used as an example of the big scrub rainforest that once covered the Byron shire.

The nature Information and Discovery centre which is located within this area will provide a focus for research and education for locals and visitors and is an ideal starting point for access to the wider context of the township.

Bangalow Land and Rivercare have referred to this area as part of the green necklace surrounding the town and have provided the following outline for this significant area which is a valuable part of the town centre.



GREEN NECKLACE PLAN FOR BANGALOW

"In 1998 Bangalow Land and Rivercare set out to plant 6km of Byron Creek through Bangalow to improve water quality, provide habitat and stabilize the banks from erosion caused by camphor laurel invasion. The work to date has achieved a buffer of sub-tropical rainforest along approx 2km of Byron Creek from the old highway around to Bangalow Parkland creating what could be seen as a green necklace for the town.

The unused land opposite the old railway station has been suggested as area to possibly extend the rainforest planting into the town area by way of a small botanic type garden to give a snapshot of the Big Scrub. The southern end already contains a good selection of local native trees as does the northern bank. A continuation of these plantings along the disused railway siding could create a lovely cool parkland for locals and visitors alike.

Suggest planting in islands with pathways running through and interpretive signage along the way. Tree labels and information on indigenous usage of the plants. Park bench seating could also be incorporated. Species to include the iconic Big Scrub local to this area such as but not limited to

White Booyong - Aegirodendron trifoliolatum

Flame Tree - Brachychiton acerifolius

Rosewood - Dysoxylum fraserianum

Red Cedar - Toona ciliata

Teak - Flindersia australis

Hoop Pine - Araucaria cunninghamii

Black Apple - Pouteria australis

Brush Cherry - Syzygium australe

Red Apple - Syzygium ingens

Black Bean - Castanospermum australe



Follow up planting of understory and shrubs once a canopy has been created.

A small information rotunda could be established within the precinct to give out information about the area doubling as a tourist information booth which the town currently does not have.

There is potential to create a walking path from the existing Bangalow Riverwalk at the sports fields crossing the creek and the causeway (currently in disrepair) to the back of the show ground and up to Rankin Drive linking to the railway siding land."



B. THE WIDER VILLAGE CONTEXT

There is a lot happening in the open space green area which surrounds the Bangalow township and it is of much higher value than the commercial core.

This is what defines Bangalow as a delightful open rural village and its value is shared by the whole community as distinct from the commerce that is concentrated into the pockets of a few individuals.

The open space is sustainable and the value of nature will give back to us every year for all to enjoy in the longterm as distinct from people and commercial interests which come and go.

The green surround is both an active and passive open space where we can exercise our bodies and nurture our souls, we can play and sit, we can run and meditate and it is free for all to enjoy.

Many community groups already enjoy and use the many open areas for activities that make our community richer and allow us to be who we are.

The showground hosts our monthly market, exhibitions, agricultural shows, entertainment, gatherings and many events each year.

The sport grounds are used for many games by all ages of families and sporting teams as well as for individual exercise and the skate park is a social hub for the younger generations.

The Heritage House tells us who we were and the history of how far we have progressed to become who we are today.

We can enjoy Devonshire teas looking over the parklands that have our pool and river restoration works and the unique wetlands which are part of our village.

Byron Creek joins all these areas together as it winds its way through the countryside connecting us to the outside world.

Balgallow landcare has achieved amazing results in rehabilitating substantial areas of the creek and wetland where we can now wander and enjoy the results of many years of voluntary work by our community.

The larger master plan outlines how we can integrate all of these surrounding areas with the town centre core and capitalize on the assets we already have.

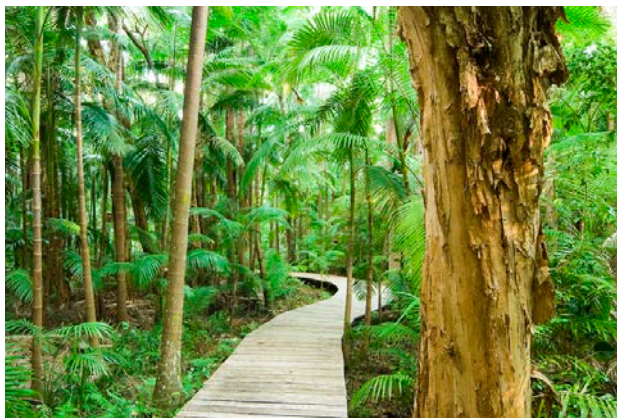
Walkways within the centre connect directly to the wider expanse of walking and riding trails along the railway reserve, through the showground across the creek,

around the sportgrounds to Heritage house, the wetlands, following the creek past the mens shed to wind up the Robinson street hill past the church and back into town where we can enjoy a good cup of local coffee and reminisce on our experience in nature.

These trails are accessible to all. They can be wheelchair friendly, cycleways and walkways with exercise areas or quiet places to sit and meditate.

Along the trails are information nodes which can explain the uniqueness of the location, the nature to observe and directions for new comers.

The advantage of all these trails is that they are available free to everyone, all year round and they already exist. We only have to upgrade and formalise these paths and links as an essential park of an action plan and program for the future viability of Bangalow village.



10. MASTER PLAN COMPONENTS

Within the overall master plan there are many component plans which need to be rationalised and used as the basis for action plans in the implementation of the overall concept. These plans include the following with a brief overview of some of the areas needed for specialised input.

1) INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

- Power generation, supply and distribution
- Sewer and stormwater
- Water supply and drainage
- Communications network

2) CIRCULATION AND TRAFFIC

VEHICLES

- Local and through traffic
- Destinations and origins
- Service, private, public
- Emergency and security
- Road network
- Connections and priorities

PEDESTRAINS

- Safe access for walking
- Access for people with disabilities
- Movement desire lines
- Wheelchairs and scooters



PARKING

- Short term, long term, local, visitor, resident
- Private and public

BICYCLES

- Integrated cycleway network
- Child strollers and skateboards



3) LANDSCAPING

- Design with nature and capitalise on the existing biodiversity
- Integrate the centre with surrounding, vegetation
- Capitalise on existing open space green areas
- Street planting location, design, maintenance
- Hard and soft landscape components
- The value of landscaping, vegetation and biodiversity



The following ideas are included as a suggestion of the possibilities available for the Bangalow town centre and within the wider context outlined

- Healing garden
- Sensory garden
- Water garden including wetlands, and boardwalks
- Garden for teaching and learning
- Food, permaculture, community and herb gardens



- Urban forests and nature trails
- Crystal garden
- Geomancy, energy lines, stone circles and sacred geometry
- Adventure and discovery gardens
- Meditation and yoga garden
- Starseed and propagation gardens
- Sculpture and artistic garden
- Youth garden and skateboard ramps

Some of these already exist in Bangalow and only need to be integrated within the overall plans.



4) LAND USE

- Public domain
- The built environment
- Private land
- Open space
- Civic design
- Integration of public and private uses
- Public amenities
- Community facilities
- Information and tourism
- Zoning and planning



5) SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

- Local resident needs
- Community services
- Visitors and tourists
- Meeting places
- Entertainment - active and passive
- Involvement
- Community initiatives
- Economic opportunities
- Local economy



11. VILLAGE POTENTIAL

There is great potential for Bangalow village over and above the planning initiatives outlined to be an efficient and integrated self sufficient town with minimal reliance on the outside services and systems, and even to become an exporter of some the initiatives and services produced locally.

This potential is summarised in the following areas.

ENERGY

- Self sufficient
- Community owned
- Generation and distribution
- Sale of excess to local needs



FOOD

- Local
- Organic
- Gourmet centre



WATER

- Collect
- Use - local demand
- Recycle
- Treatment
- Return to nature



WASTE

- A resource
- Local treatment
- Collection
- Recycle
- Economic potential



ZERO CARBON

- Passive and active potential
- Economic advantages
- Offset initiatives - sequestration
- Education and learning
- Building design and retrofit
- Integration with agriculture
- Transportation and travel offsets



Byron Shire already has a program to make the whole of the shire zero carbon within 10 years.

The current initiative of ZEB is to make the whole Byron Shire zero carbon within 10 years. This program has been running for almost 2 years with the support of BZE which is a not for profit independent educational and research Australia wide organization with international connections who share resources and were part of a submission to the Paris Climate Change talks last year representing over 190 countries.

ZEB has current working groups with programs researching energy, agriculture, buildings, transport and waste.

ZEB is also connected to over 1000 local councils throughout the world who share ideas and initiative in their local areas on projects using current proven technology to make their neighborhoods more economic and reduce carbon.

Bangalow could easily be part of this global movement as an example of what can be achieved through local initiatives and economic common sense decisions as we implement our ideas as a community.

12. IMPLEMENTATION

This Master Plan can only be achieved through the co-operation of the three major stakeholders by agreement within each group and with each other.

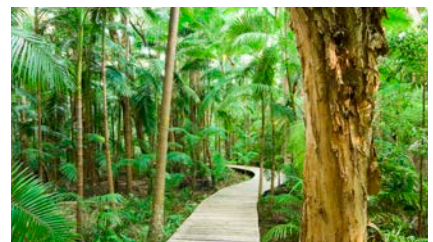
Specifically, they are the community groups, the property owners and the Byron Shire Council which are outlined as follows:

1) COMMUNITY GROUPS

Bangalow is privileged to have the interest of so many community groups but they each represent a particular aspect of the town and do not always see the positive connection within all the diverse groups for the common good of the overall community.

THE INTEREST GROUPS REPRESENTING BANGALOW ARE GENERALLY SUMMARISED AS FOLLOWS:

- The Progress Association
- A and I Hall Management Committee
- Bangalow Historical Society
- Bangalow Public School
- School Parents and Citizens Association
- Bangalow Lions Club
- Bangalow Rotary
- Bangalow Community Children's Centre
- Northern Rivers Design Advisory Panel
- Bangalow Planning Network
- Sports Associations and Clubs
- Parks (showground) Management Committee
- Bangalow Land and Rivercare
- Bangalow on Foot
- Bangalow Chamber of Commerce



These groups have all been part of the workshops and consultation process initiated by the Council and their views are represented in the results of the "Have your say" community survey.

Even though the specific needs of each group may have to be adjusted there must be a consensus for the positive changes outlined in the Master Plan.

2) PROPERTY OWNERS

The land and building owners have a direct financial interest and represent the tenants, entrepreneurs, developers, financiers and generally those companies with an economic involvement in the town.

It is important to recognise the difference between maximum development which exploits and destroys the amenity of the town and optimum development which considers all aspects with multiple bottom lines to any feasibility analysis.

The optimum answer is always more economic because it is faster to be approved, costs less to build and sells quicker with efficient holding costs and higher returns. Generally this will take into account the social, political, economic, environmental, sustainable, ethical and spiritual aspects of the community it serves and who will be the end users of the project.

The property owners will gain much more through co-operating with each other and working together than they will by acting individually to try and exploit their own property or business.

The results of co-operative ventures also results in a more cohesive and empathetic development rather than piecemeal and disjointed groups of buildings or projects by individuals with no communication.



3) COUNCIL

The Byron Shire Council is generally the approving authority although this role is compromised by state involvement in joint regional planning panels, ministerial edicts and state planning regulations.

Under our current NSW statutory negative planning system Master Plans are not allowable and if the Council tries to convert a master plan into a DCP with many controls, regulations and statements - it will fail to achieve the best outcome. You cannot regulate for good design.

The Council will have to be inventive and use much initiative to produce a positive strategic plan with action plans of the components contained within the framework of the overall master plan.

In doing this the Council will need to provide guidance vision, work programs, co-ordination and opportunities for growth as distinct from ticking boxes and enforcing regulations.

The Council has shown they have the ability to do this in the workshops, discussions, community surveys and the involvement they have already initiated.

Once the community and property owners have agreed the Council must then allow this to happen through identifying and encouraging positive planning opportunities with viable action plans and programs.



13. THE NEW PARADIGM

As Buckminster Fuller once said:
*"You never change things by fighting the existing reality.
 To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete".*

The existing reality of the old paradigm is all about control through a Development Control plan under the current LEP which is based on restrictive regulations. Property owners will then compete with their neighbours to maximise their personal returns which then leads to conflict with each other, the authorities, the environment and the community.

The new paradigm is to have a positive cohesive vision as the basis of a Development Co-operation plan which encourages growth within agreed parameters to capitalise on the natural and community assets that we already have and to co-create with nature in a plan that exemplifies the environmental sustainable, ethical and spiritual values and aspirations of the community it serves within an efficient zero carbon framework.

IN SUMMARY:

THE OLD PARADIGM	THE NEW PARADIGM
Negative	Positive
Development control plan	Development co-operation plan
Competition	Capitalise
Conflict	Co-create

In respecting the land and fulfilling people needs we can then move forward as a viable and economic community.

This plan will not happen by demanding that some government or corporation will somehow magically do it for us - it will only happen through us working together with a focus towards a common goal.

Shopkeepers will create interesting spaces within and outside their shops. Funding sources of the community groups can now focus on co-ordinated projects, we can all be involved in the landscaping and beautification of the town and nature will do the rest.

You cannot legislate for good design. Beautiful buildings and environment come from the heart through a love and understanding of nature and the people who will interact with the environment you create. We already have many business and volunteer groups who willingly contribute to our community.

With guidance and leadership we can all make it happen and we will because this is the village where we have chosen to live and this is our future.



14. CONCLUSION

Town centres are where people in the surrounding village meet, work, play, interact and exchange goods and services. For this, commerce needs floor space and people need open space.

Successful villages in many countries, have open spaces of interest and activity joined by a network of walkable paths to provide an exciting and memorable journey in our experience of that village.

Bangalow has one main through street dominated by cars and a secondary cross street. People park their car, walk up and down the main street, get in their car and drive away. There is no sense of arrival, meeting place or interest on their journey. The present structure of the town core allows much more than this and there is potential to capitalise on what we have to meet our future needs.

Bangalow has a long history of active community involvement with many groups contributing to their various activities and diverse interests.

Many community initiatives have been implemented over the years resulting in our current village centre which now needs to be updated to reflect our present political, social and economic needs. This provides an enormous opportunity to not just meet our current needs but to progress beyond these needs to create a unique centre by capitalising on the assets available to us.

The “Have your say” workshop involving the community groups, landholders and council has focused on the likes and dislikes that allow us to establish planning principles as a basis for an overall master plan which simply co-ordinates the visions and activities of all involved.

The dominant principles incorporated within the Master plan provide a fully landscaped, pedestrian priority, sustainable environment to allow and encourage full interaction of all community needs. Long term car parking areas are provided within a 400m walking distance and the short term carpark spaces in the centre allow for convenient resident access.

The rehabilitated green areas, creeks and wetlands around the town centre can be fully integrated with simple paths, nature trails and walkways giving enhanced living and learning opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy in a pleasant natural landscaped environment.

The creation of outdoor cafes and meeting places, a sense of arrival, play areas, a town square, active and passive recreation areas all provide local points of interest and are connected by inviting walkways to discover and enhance our daily routine or the visitor experience.

All this is possible through the co-operation and agreement of the community groups, the landholders and the council within the town structure now available to us.

The opportunity to make Bangalow village centre fully sustainable in energy, water, waste and food and zero carbon is economically feasible and can easily be realised through current proven technology with the will and vision of the people.

With this new vision, meeting all our social , economic, educational and environmental needs is possible within our village centre through co-operation, understanding and respecting each others needs.

This is new paradigm. It is the future we now choose. This is the potential of the unique village centre of Bangalow.



John Sparks

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PHOTO CREDITS

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JOHN W SPARKS ASTC (Arch) Dip CD, MPIA, ARAIA, FAPI

Managing Director of John Sparks and Associates (now JSA Architects Pty Ltd) from 1975

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Diploma of Architecture University of NSW
- Chartered Architect NSW
- Post-Graduate Diploma of Civic Design
- Certified Practising Planner NSW

AFFILIATIONS

- Associate of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects
- Corporate Member of the Planning Institute of Australia
- Fellow of the Australian Property Institute
- Former member of the International Federation for Housing and Planning, the Hague, Netherlands
- Member of the Retirement Village Association of NSW
- Representative on former Ku-ring-gai Education Group, assisting the NSW Premier on Educational issues

John is an architect and town planner, with 35 years experience in architectural design, documentation and administration, urban planning, master planning, land use assessment and the design of new and expanded towns. He established his own private practice with responsibility for retail, commercial, industrial, houses, medium density residential, child care centres, clubs, ski lodges, rural subdivisions, motels, taverns, retirement villages, health care, recreational, resort, interior commercial fit-outs, civic and urban planning for government, corporate and private clients, sustainable eco-village master planning and resort projects.

Additionally, John

- Was a part-time Lecturer and Tutor, School of Town Planning, University of NSW from 1969-1977.
- Australian delegate to the 30th World Congress of the International Federation for Housing and Planning at Barcelona in 1970 and the Congress at Adelaide in 1986.
- Guest Lecturer at UTS Post Graduate Urban Estates Management course and tutorials in 1998-99.

- Founding member of the Retirement Village Association, he has published features on design for retirement villages, presented seminars on planning for disabled access and the Master Planning of Retirement Villages for the RAlA and Australian Property Institute.
- Represented the API on the preparation of Standards for accessible purpose made buildings for Standards Australia.

He has initiated and contributed to Mobility maps, Development Control Plans on Access and Mobility and Adaptable Housing, access awards and other issues through involvement in the Willoughby Council Environmental Policy and Planning reviews.

Since retiring John has published a Master Plan for the Byron Bay Town Centre, instigated the involvement of Beyond Zero Emissions to the Zero Emissions Byron initiative which seeks to make Byron Shire zero carbon in 10 years, made submissions to Council and authorities on planning issues, prepared concept plans for planning precincts, presented on radio and to community groups, launched a website with Facebook connections, and prepared a Master Plan for West Byron, always based on working with nature to connect us with our priceless natural environment as an integral part of our lives and who we are.

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