

# My Place: Avalon

**Spotlight on Avalon - Snapshot and  
community engagement summary**

Version 1 January 2019



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## 1. Introduction

Northern Beaches Council (Council) is pleased to share ‘Spotlight on Avalon’, the snapshot and community engagement summary document of My Place: Avalon.

‘Spotlight on Avalon’ documents the aspirations, vision, priorities and ideas generated by the community and stakeholders for the Avalon village. Over a four-month community consultation period, thousands of ideas were captured reflecting the value of this unique seaside village, its eclectic coastal character and active community culture.

The shared community vision, care factor values, priorities and future directions for Avalon will inform and guide the preparation of Avalon Place Plan. The plan will be an action-oriented strategy that focuses on the community’s connection to the place and it will articulate a clear and compelling vision for Avalon in the short and long term.

## 2. My Place Avalon

Northern Beaches Council is committed to creating great places that are safe, inclusive and accessible to all, where people want to spend time. It has initiated a place planning process called 'My Place' as an approach to planning, design and management of village and neighbourhood centres. Avalon is the first centre within Northern Beaches Council Local Government Area to undergo this planning process.

Between May and August 2018, the spotlight was on Avalon and the first phase of community engagement for My Place: Avalon commenced. During this phase, activity focused on inspiring ideas, researching and talking with the Avalon community about what they envisage the Avalon

of the future should look like from a social, natural environment, economic and cultural perspective.

My Place: Avalon focuses on the area within 400 metres of Avalon Village Centre, with a larger area of influence as illustrated in the Avalon Study Area Map.



Figure 1: **Avalon Study Area Map**

The main objective of the Avalon place planning process is to inspire and stimulate the community to work with Council to create great places for all people to enjoy, now and in the future.

Part of this involved identifying quick improvements, as well as priorities for long term investment. Both will result in making the village even better and a place that people love and connect with.

Preparing the Avalon place plan will involve a broad range of stakeholders with a focus

on solving local problems with local solutions. Existing information and knowledge from both the community and Council along with ideas and aspirations gathered during community engagement will form the framework and roadmap for the development of the plan.



Figure 2: **Community engagement as foundation of My Place: Avalon project**

### 3. Spotlights on Avalon

We have captured a range of data and information regarding Avalon from a variety of sources, including Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Profile ID and business audits.

#### The Place

Avalon is located 37 kilometres from Sydney CBD at the northern end of the Northern Beaches, a compact and vibrant village centre positioned on the western side of Barrenjoey Road, within 300 metres of the beachfront. Old Barrenjoey Road and Avalon Parade are the two major local streets activated by food, retail, beverage and commercial operation.

The beach is a major attraction to Avalon, the surfing break is highly regarded by local and visiting surfers, and there is a strong tradition of Surf Life Saving and

'Nippers' junior surf lifesaving. It is also infused with a robust arts scene and a strong environmental ethos. Summer is the busy season in Avalon with visitors,

holiday-home owners and residents utilising the village and beach.

#### The People

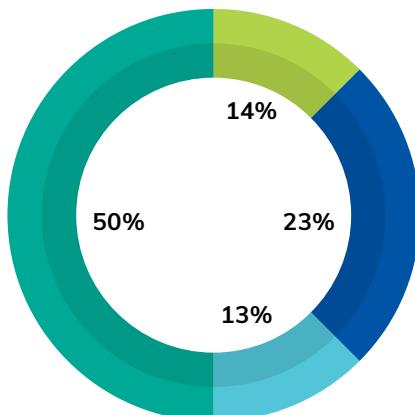
Avalon is a tight-knit community, with high rates of volunteering (24 per cent) a high number of active community groups, and a history of community-led arts and cultural programming.

In 2016, the dominant age structure for persons in Avalon Beach area were ages 35 to 69, which accounts for 50 per cent of total persons. The largest increase in persons between 2016 and 2026 is forecast to be in ages 75 to 79, which is expected to increase by 221 and account for 4.8 per cent of the total persons. Over the next 18 years, the overall population of Avalon is expected to fall by 128 people or minus 1.14 per cent (Source: ABS data 2016 and profile ID).



### Age Structure in the Avalon Beach area

- 0 - 17
- 18 - 34
- 35 - 69
- 70 - 85+



In 2016 an estimated 11,245 people lived in Avalon.

Source: Avalon village center snapshot 2018

**Population 2018**

11,249



**Population 2036**

11,121



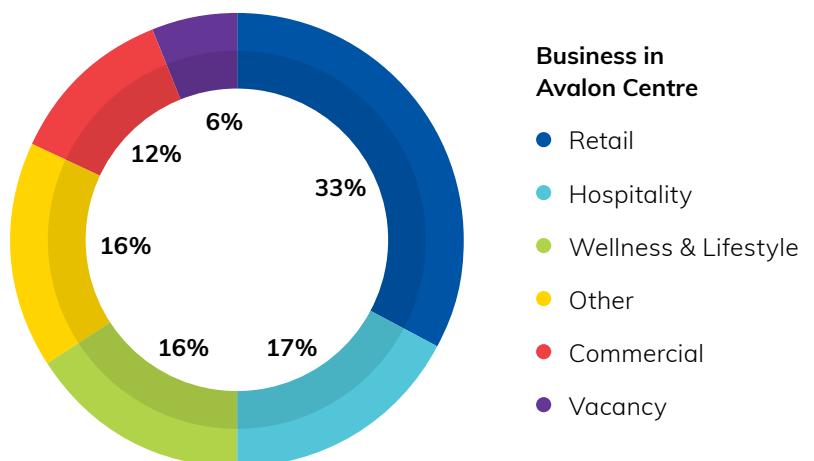
**Change 2018-36**

-1.14%

## Who Is Doing Business Here?

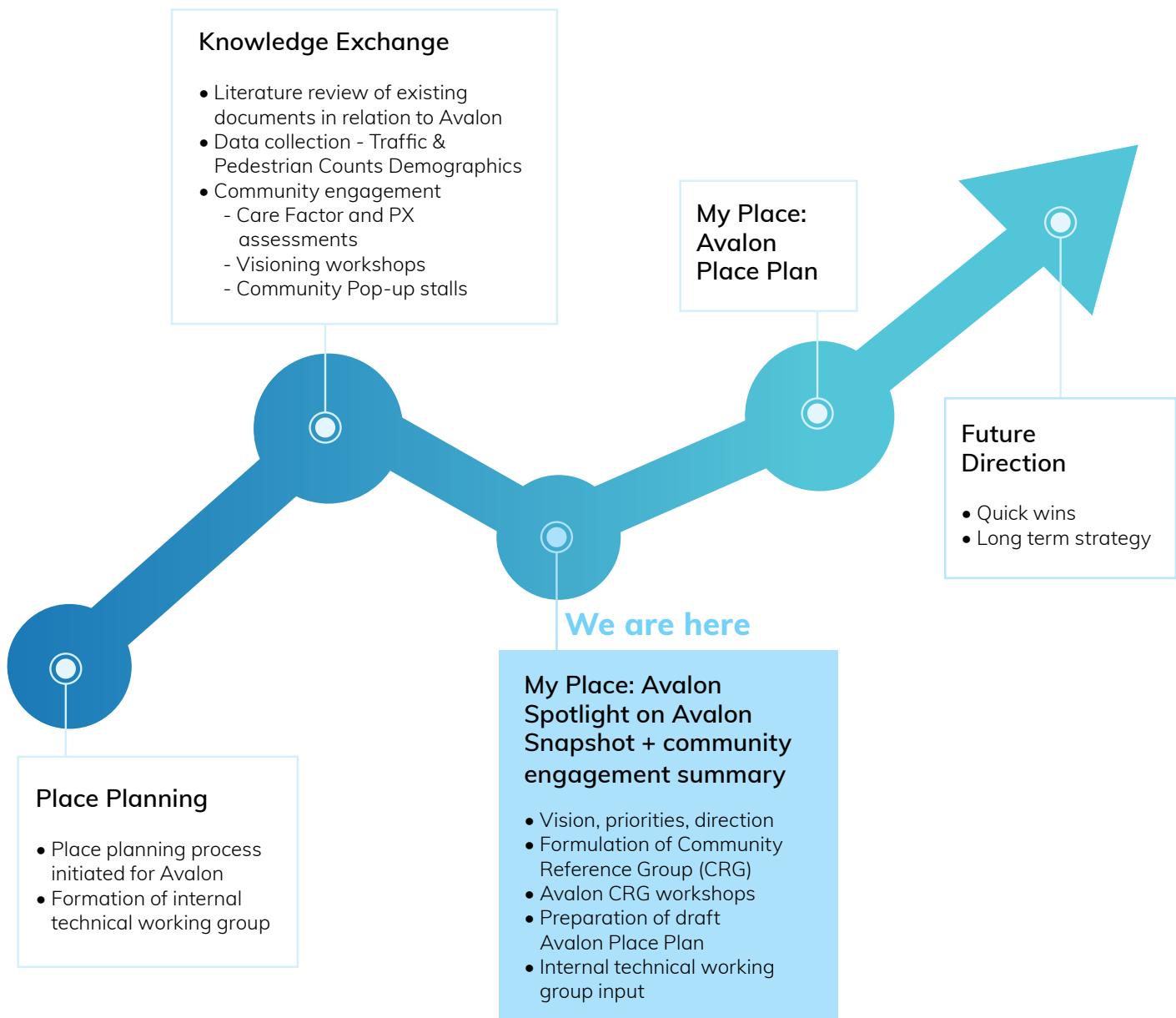
Businesses on the main streets largely provide services that cater to the local community with retail trade (33 per cent), food and beverage hospitality (17 per cent), and wellness and lifestyle services (15 per cent) being the dominant uses.<sup>3</sup>

Lifestyle and work-life balance are highly valued with 12.8 per cent of employed residents working from home compared to the Greater Sydney average of 4.4 percent. With over 3,000 Australian Business Numbers (ABNs) registered to Avalon, economic activity extends well beyond the main street. These businesses feature a markedly different industry mix to the town center, favouring professional services and creative industries.



3. Source: Profile ID 2018

## 4. Process to Date / Engagement Timeline

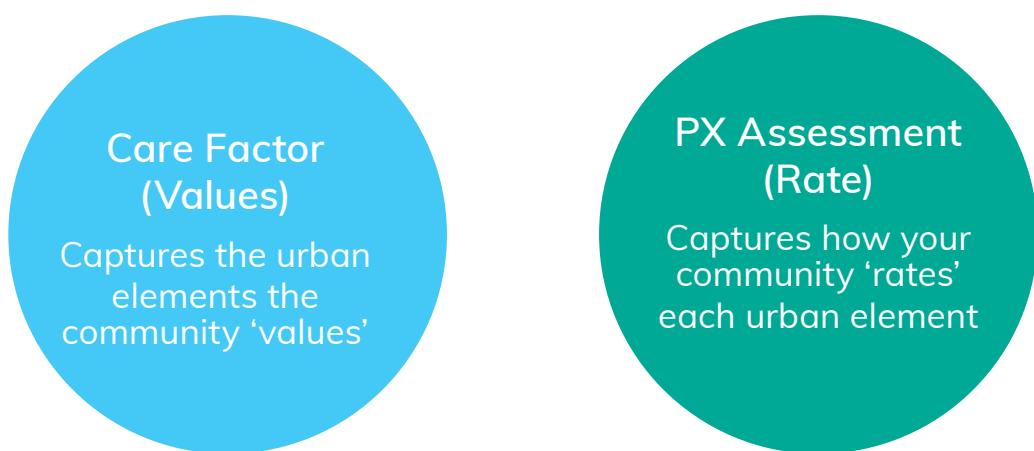


## 5. What did people say?

Community consultation is the heart of the My Place: Avalon project. On 11 May 2018, Council formally commenced the first phase of community engagement of My Place: Avalon with the start of an online “Care Factor” survey and on ground Place Experience (PX) assessment surveys within the Avalon village.

The surveys allow the community to share what they most care about and how they rate the places they live, work and unwind. The surveys provide real data to define community priorities for urban environments. Priorities are set by combining the elements we value (love) with the urban elements that rated poor.

This work was followed with a series of community engagement activities, including Avalon visioning workshops, community pop-ups and online commentary form.



## Community Engagement Activities

During the community engagement period, more than 1,512 contributions were collated and are being used as the foundation for My Place: Avalon project.



The community engagement activities captured feedback from a broad range of people that live, work and/or play in Avalon with 1,512 people engaged (14 per cent of Avalon's local population).

## 5.1 Our Care Factor - What we value and care about

In order to capture what the community cares and values most about Avalon, Council initiated an online Care Factor survey with 847 responses collected. The values that the majority of the community care about fall within the following six Care Factor themes.

### Nature, Environment and Sustainability

75% of people care about elements of the natural environment (vegetation, views, topography, water etc).

One of Avalon's biggest assets involves natural features and the environment, green open space, native trees and plants.

### Economic Vibrancy

58% of people care about the outdoor dining at restaurants, cafés and/or bars and local business.

The community believes that the local businesses reflect the local community and values.

### Cleanliness and Maintenance

57% of people care about the cleanliness and maintenance of Avalon village centre. Shared values include more care related to the recycling/ waste, and more frequent cleaning to keep streets tidy.

The maintenance of the streets is an important part of your respondents' ideal village centre.

### Community Connections and Culture

48% of people care about the interaction with locals/other people in the area.

People aligned with the same values that a smile and customer service are valued by the community.

### Street Design, Safety and Walkability

46% of people care about the ease to walk around and the look and function of the main streets within Avalon.

This includes crossing streets safely and moving between different destinations with ease.

### Transport

181 people care about more active public transport options within Avalon, including facilitating active transport, improving roads and traffic conditions and increasing public transport options.

## What the community said

"Better landscaping, paving and planting around the village centre"

The intersection of Barrenjoey Road and Avalon Parade needs to be much safer for pedestrians and vehicles.

"Many more walkways & cycle way linking waterways and surrounding suburbs to get people out of their cars & on foot or bikes"

"More recycling - promoting it and implementing with bins and supporting locals"

Greater diversity of shops, less empty shop fronts

"Beautifications of entrances and footpaths"

"More art shows and music events"

## What values does the community share ?

Across all the Avalon community engagement activities, three key values are shared by the majority of the community.

### Value 1: Creating a great place for youth and families:

Youth and families have been drawn out of Avalon due to the lack of access to educational facilities and work opportunities. Youth and families are important demographics in Avalon as they generate activation for the community.

### Value 2: Maintaining Avalon's distinct character:

Avalon has its own unique village character. It is important to maintain and enhance this uniqueness across recreational, residential, social, economic and cultural development in the area.

### Value 3: Integration and care of nature and landscapes:

The community agrees that among Avalon's biggest assets are its natural features and environment (views, topography, open space, native trees, etc.). The community is keen to continue to build a sustainable and natural Avalon, by designing street gardens and retaining/enhancing existing natural elements.



## What areas of concern does the community share?

### Inclusiveness:

Younger people in Avalon feel excluded from the decision-making process and community event participation. Sense of community in Avalon is strong but not within different generation groups.

### Connectivity and linkage:

The community is interested in having more direct public transport options to and from major centers, including Sydney CBD, and improved active transport connectivity locally.

### Retail and vacancy rate:

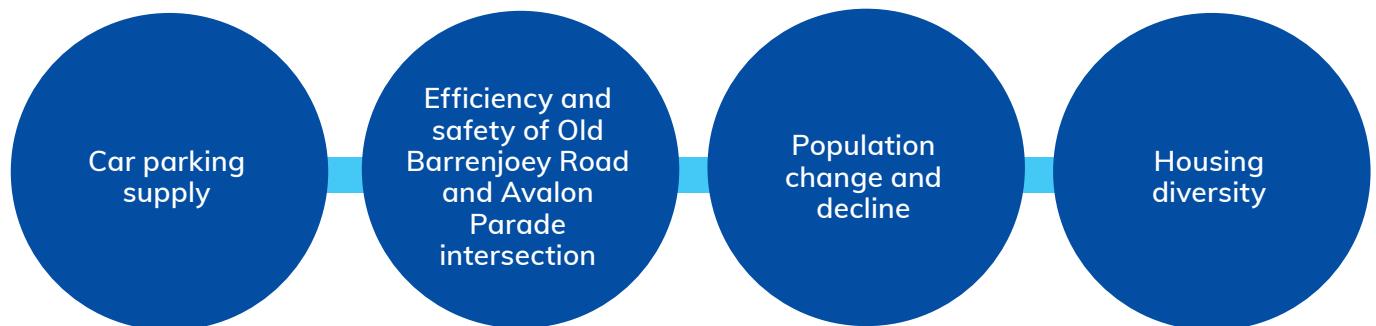
Although Avalon village has lower vacancy rates when compared to the surrounding Northern Beaches suburbs, the properties that are vacant are in some of the most prominent locations and vary significantly seasonally.

### Population growth:

The community raised the need for local business survival throughout the winter season and to have longer trading hours. However, the density of housing whilst integral to the character of the area, potentially limits local business growth and sustainability.

## What are the contested issues for the community?

Like most communities, the Avalon community has conflicting interest and concerns around a number of key issues. These issues remain divided and unresolved and are described as 'contested'.



## 5.2 Our Rating - How the community rated Avalon

Place Experience (PX) surveys at four village locations were carried out on 11 and 19 May 2018 by Place Score. 188 local residents, workers and visitors completed a PX assessment. The PX score rated by Avalon community is summarised in the below table.

Location	Number of PX	Community rated PX Score
Avalon Parade (between Bellevue Ave and Old Barrenjoey Rd)	46	74
Old Barrenjoey Rd (between Avalon Parade and 61 Old Barrenjoey Rd)	48	75
Avalon Parade (between Old Barrenjoey Rd and Barrenjoey Rd)	46	70
Old Barrenjoey Rd (between the Crescent and Avalon Parade)	48	70

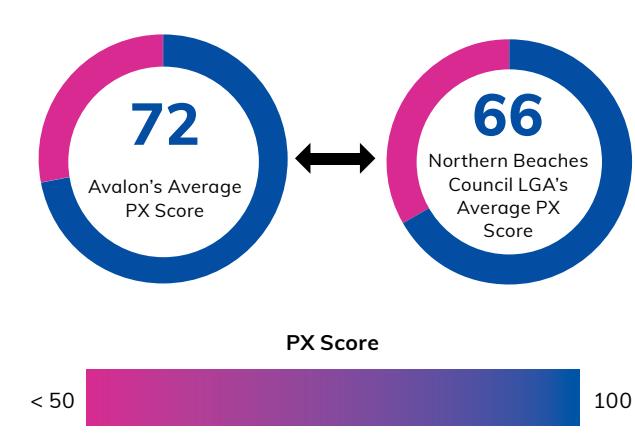


Figure 3: Avalon key locations PX score

### What does this PX Score mean?

The PX Assessment score is rated out of 100. It reveals what urban elements are contributing positively or negatively to the communities experience of places. Avalon's average PX Score (72) is higher than the average for other town and village centres in the Northern Beaches local government area (PX Score (66)). Overall Avalon scored well, with the community highly rating/ or being essentially satisfied with the current streetscape and village environment.

While the PX scores are high, Avalon has the opportunity for improvement.

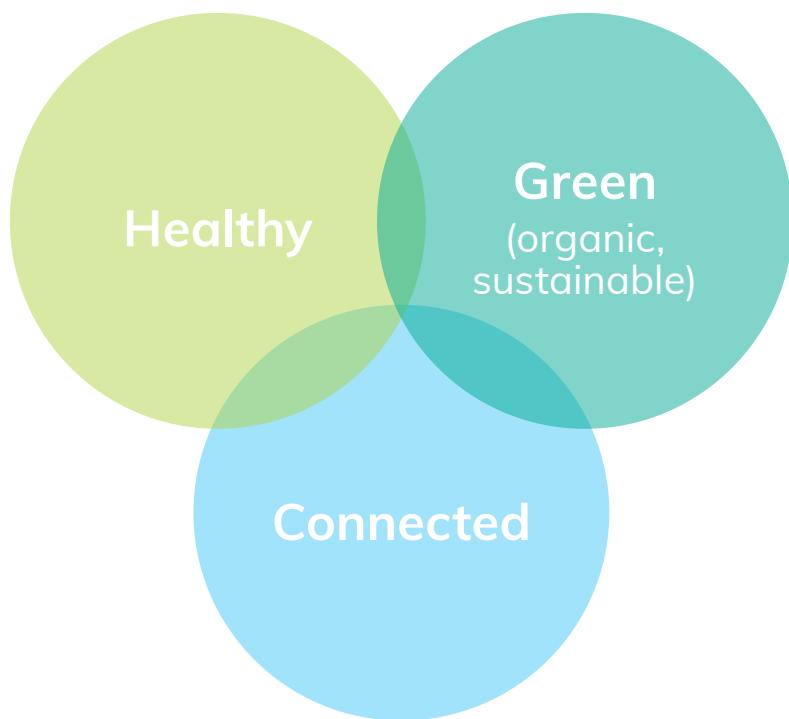
The place attributes that the community care about but rated lower due to poor performance were: (1) Ease of walking around; (2) Cleanliness of public spaces; (3) General condition of vegetation/street trees and other planting and (4) Outdoor restaurant, café and/or bar seating. These four place attributes were identified as the priorities across all four key village survey locations.

### 5.3 Creating a vision

The Avalon visioning workshops held on 30 June 2018 and 4 July 2018 captured opinions from a broad representation of the Avalon community, including local residents, businesses, the education sector, arts and cultural groups, youth and school children and sporting organisations. Avalon visions were identified by the community during Avalon Visioning workshops, and aligned with the community feedback received during the eight sessions of community ‘pop-ups’.

**From this extensive engagement, the vision is that Avalon will be:**

**“A relaxed and peaceful coastal village, embracing and nurturing the natural environment, celebrating creativity and community connection”**



## 5.4 Our Priorities

The priorities for Avalon were identified when the six care factor values resulting from the community care factor survey were compared with how they are performing in the PX Score. These identified priorities were then further examined during the visioning workshops and community ‘pop-up’ sessions.

### Nature, Environment and Sustainability

Community Strategic Plan Outcomes:

- Protection of the Environment
- Environmental Sustainability

Priority 1	Maintain, improve and increase green spaces, general conditions of vegetation, street trees, other planting and improving creek / storm water channel
Priority 2	Environmental sustainability by limiting pollution and improving sustainable practices
Priority 3	Retain village form / identity

### Transport

Community Strategic Plan Outcome:

- Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity

Priority 1	Improve intersection of Old Barrenjoey Road and Avalon Parade
Priority 2	Facilitate active transport mode and footpath connectivity

### Community Connection and Culture

Community Strategic Plan Outcomes:

- Community and Belonging
- Places for People
- Vibrant Local Economy

Priority 1	Things to do in the evening
Priority 2	Creative art space, public art, community art, water and light features
Priority 3	Opportunities / activities for youth
Priority 4	More and/or better places to play, gather and relax

## Economic Vibrancy

### Community Strategic Plan Outcomes:

- Vibrant Local Economy
- Partnership and Participation

Priority 1      Outdoor restaurant, café and/or bar seating

Priority 2      Active Avalon village centre during winter

Priority 3      More and/or better commercial diversity and local shops

Priority 4      Active and improve laneways

## Cleanliness and Maintenance

### Community Strategic Plan Outcomes:

- Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity
- Good Governance
- Places for People

Priority 1      Cleanliness of public space

Priority 2      Improve/update condition of footpaths

## Street Design, safety and walkability

### Community Strategic Plan Outcomes:

- Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity
- Places for People

Priority 1      Ease of walking around - with better accessibility, safety and linkage for pedestrians

Priority 2      Streetscape design and beautification, more trees, footpath improvement, informal seating

## 5.5 Our Directions for Avalon

During the engagement activities, the community were asked about their ideas for changes for Avalon:



Active Modes of Transportation and Improved Connectivity



Redesigned Intersection of Old Barrenjoey Rd and Avalon Parade



Enhanced Streetscape



Reduced Shop Vacancy, Increased Shop Diversity and unique local shops



Activated Avalon Village Centre during Winter Period and Night Economy



Increased Public Community Activities, Arts and Culture



More and better activities for youth



More Vibrant Outdoor Dining



Green Spaces with more planting and improved stormwater channel/creek



Increased Activation and Maintenance of Laneways



Increased Public Spaces to play, gather and relax



Improved / Updated footpaths and pavement



Improved Connectivity with Visual links / ease of walking

## 6. What's next?/Future Directions

The My Place: Avalon Community Reference Group (Avalon CRG) will be working with Council in the next phases of the project to prepare an Avalon Place Plan, with technical support from a range of experts, to identify 'quick wins', activations, and a longer term strategy for Avalon's future. This draft plan will then be placed on exhibition for community engagement and consultation.

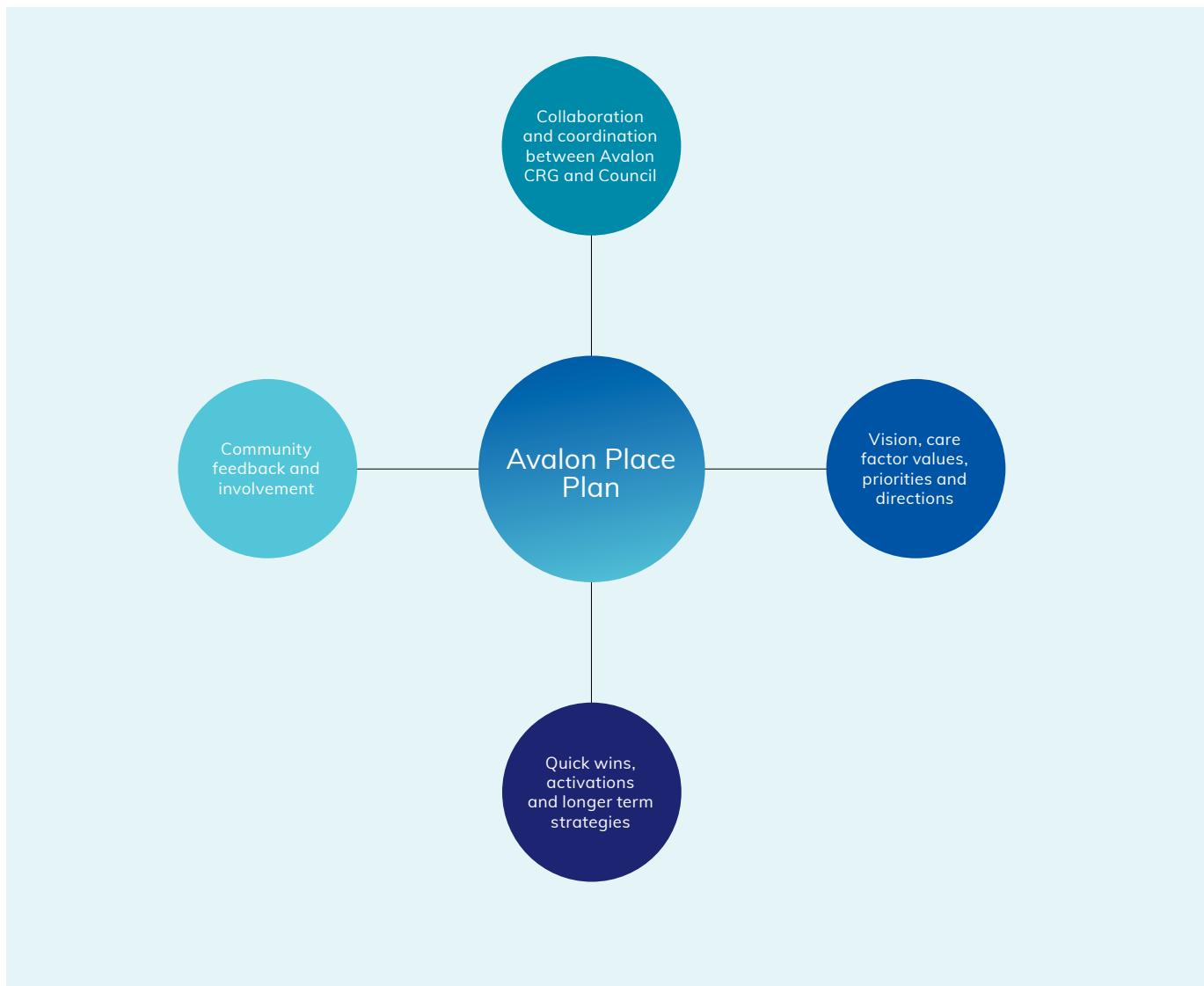


Figure 3: Key components of Avalon Place Plan

## **Attachment 1: Place Score and Assessment Survey**

## **Attachment 2: Avalon Visioning Workshop Results**

## **Attachment 3: Avalon Pop-Ups and online summary**



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