

FROM THE COAST

Navigating Esperance's Town Centre

Last week council decided to open The Esperance Town Centre Parking, Traffic and Pedestrian Strategy for public comment. This strategy came about after parking concerns were raised in the Esperance Town Centre Revitalisation Master Plan 2015 -2035. The intention of the strategy is to help with the flow of pedestrians and vehicle traffic.

Concerns were raised stating that there is nowhere to park in our town centre. We actually have the same amount of parking as Albany in their CBD and they have more than double our population.

Part of this strategy is making people more aware of where parking is, particularly the parking near the skate park or off the main street. We want to make sure parking is right for local businesses.

Just think in terms of if you park a little further away you get an extra hit of Vitamin D, an extra bit of exercise and you might meet some new people too. It gets people out of their cars and walking through town. Increased foot traffic will make our town more vibrant and encourage people to window shop or call in for a coffee. This is great for our local businesses. You might've just gone into town to pick up the newspaper, but then see something you like and you pop in and end up with a purchase.

This buying is great for our businesses and helps to keep them open. Choosing to walk a bit further rather than waiting for the spot right out the front might even save you a bit of time.

This strategy will also work well with our Activities in Thoroughfares and Public Places and Trading Local Law which has been finalised. One aspect of this will mean shops can apply for a permit for signage or to make changes out the front of their shop. This could mean personalising their shop entrance and encouraging customers in. Council now have more discretion on what can occur.

Another topic discussed in the strategy was our cross walks and making our town more pedestrian friendly. They are quite unique in that we are virtually the only town where people have to give way to cars. With this strategy we can look at ways to encourage foot traffic in the long term.

We want to be able to make changes to our town over the next 20 years that will encourage people to spend time here, help our local businesses and increase the vibrancy of our town centre.

The Esperance Town Centre Parking, Traffic and Pedestrian Strategy will be open for submissions until 24 March.