Movement Network

For most, private vehicles are usually part of everyday life, allowing the ability to travel quickly and often for work, supermarket shopping, appointments or dropping the kids to school, leisure or recreation. The reliance on the private vehicle can be reduced by improved walkability to services, facilities and other social infrastructure.

Prioritising the road network can be beneficial for stimulating walking and cycling by providing alternative routes for commercial vehicles, diverting unnecessary traffic away from residential areas.

Connection to public transportation and its frequency also play a vital role in reducing private vehicle use by locating bus stops in short walking distances to homes.

Several households are solely reliant on public transport, community vehicles, family and friends, taxi services, and the ability to walk to services and facilities. The displacement of households not in short walking distances to a shop, park, or recreation facilities can significantly impact wellbeing.

The Structure Plan seeks to reduce private vehicles' use for short 10min trips by creating neighbourhoods conducive to walking, cycling, and encourages shared transport modes.

Low Head Road

Low Head Road is a linear road that services residents as well as visitors to Low Head and East Beach.

Public Transport

There is a single public transportation route to Launceston. The bus stops are not within convenient walking distance to all residents.

Macquarie Street

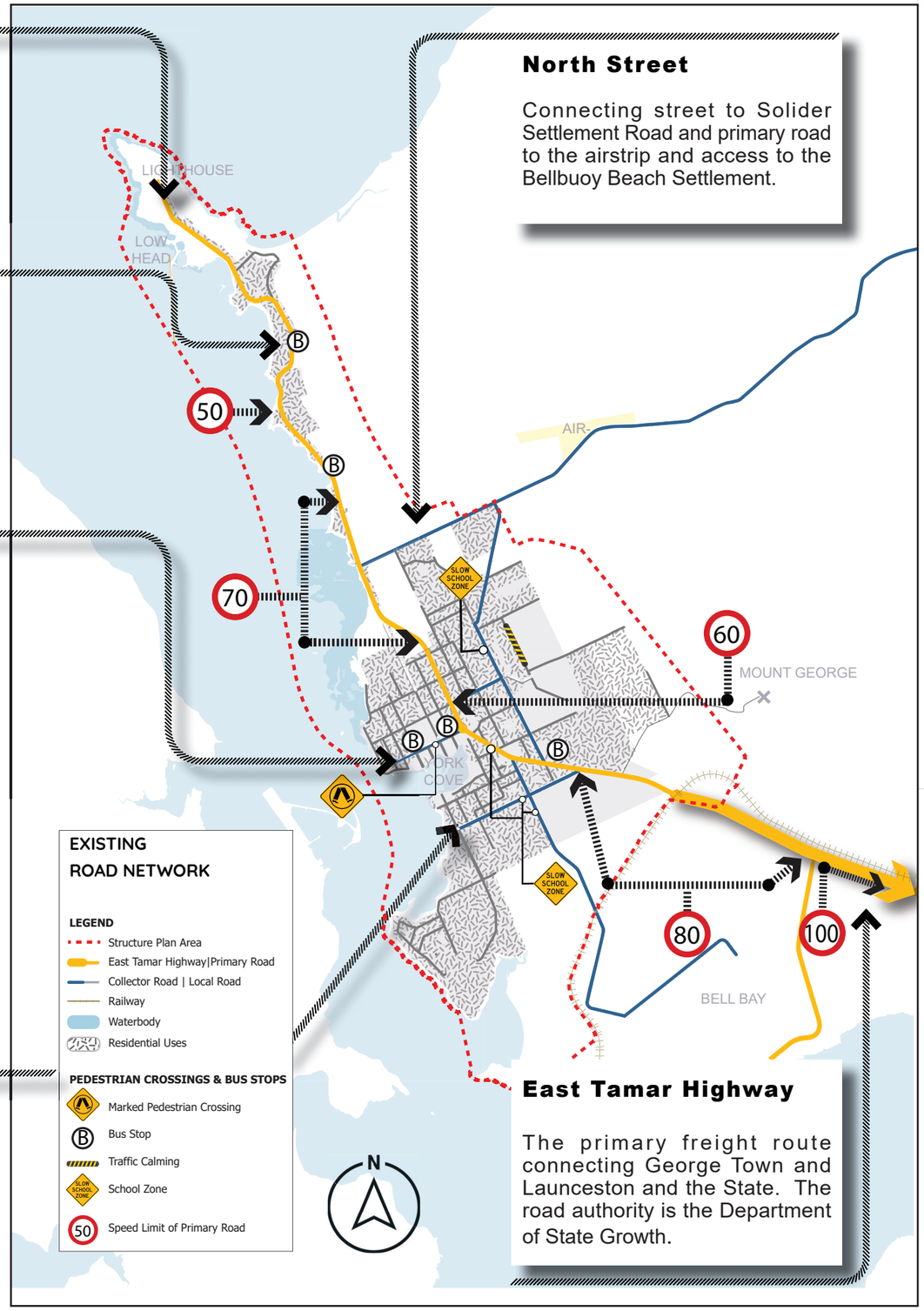
Macquarie Street is the main business centre. There is no sense of arrival at the roundabout on Main Road and Macquarie Street.

Pedestrian Crossings & School Zones

Pedestrian crossings along the primary arterial road are limited to locations adjacent to schools. Low Head Road, between Anne Street and North Street can be difficult for pedestrians to cross.

Victoria Street

Victoria Street is the primary route connecting the residential areas south of York Cove with the Main Road. Congestion often results at the junction of Victoria Street and Mary Street.

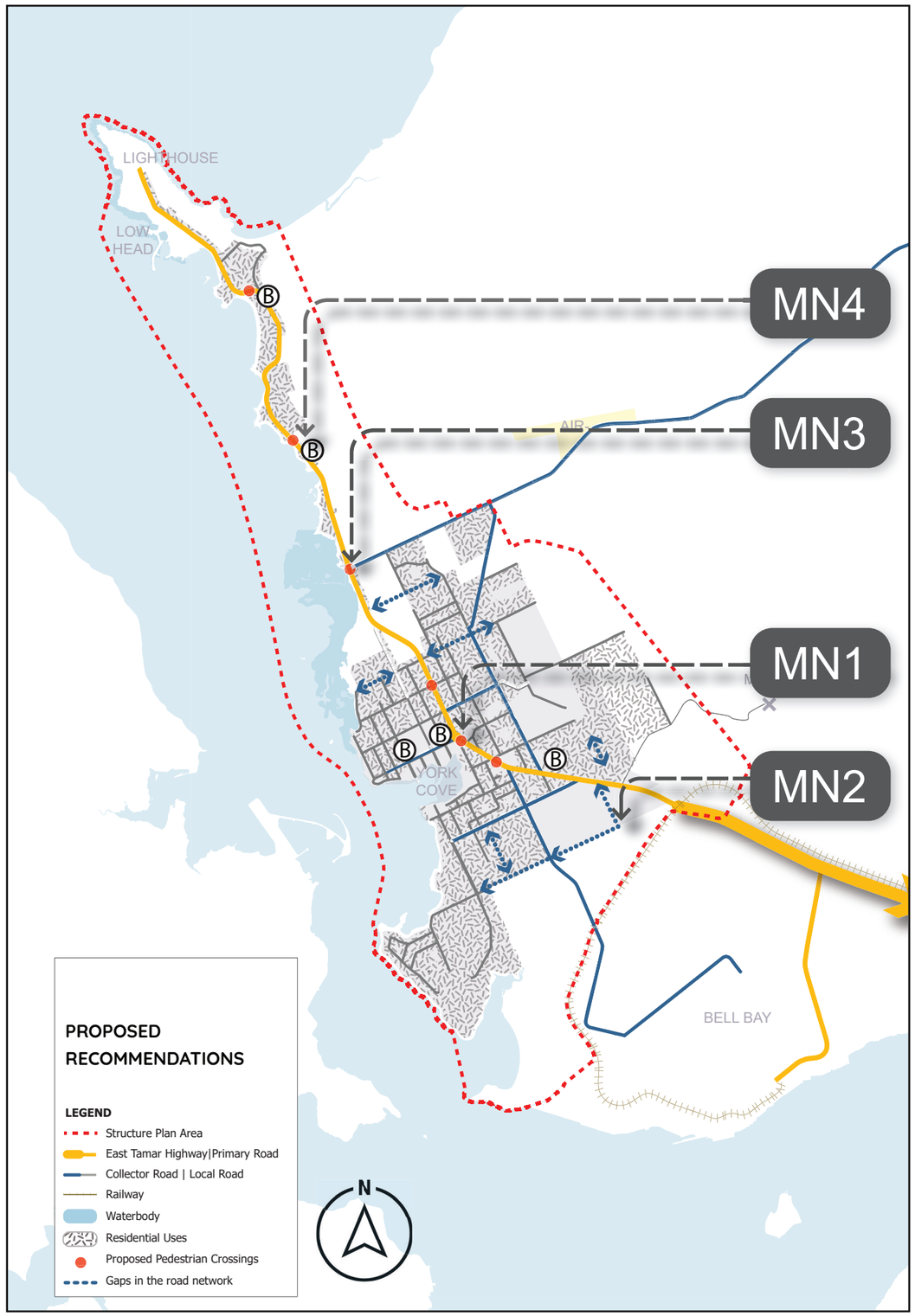


North Street

Connecting street to Solider Settlement Road and primary road to the airstrip and access to the Bellbuoy Beach Settlement.

East Tamar Highway

The primary freight route connecting George Town and Launceston and the State. The road authority is the Department of State Growth.



Recommended Actions

Macquarie Street Entrance

MN1. Devise a concept plan for Macquarie Street entrance from Main Road to improve wayfinding and entry to the town centre. The entry point should be easily identifiable through an art installation and landscaping.

Alternative Access

MN2. Investigate the construction of a new road south of Victoria Street to provide a secondary vehicle route for residential traffic and commercial vehicles from Franklin Street to travel to Main Road.

Pedestrian Crossings

MN3. Investigate and identify a minimum of six additional pedestrian crossings across Low Head Road, Goulburn Street and Main Road at locations that connect with street junctions and the pedestrian and cycling network. Pedestrian crossings are to be marked and signed.

Bicycle Lane

MN4. On the road, bicycle lanes to be marked where off-road paths are not possible to correspond with identified routes. Community consultation to determine the path to be marked.

Gaps in Road Network

MN5. Construct permeable streets addressing gaps in the movement network..

Street Trees

MN6. Continue street tree planting incrementally along the primary walking and cycling route (where the road reserve has capacity) of George Town to improve the greening of the SP Area.

MN7. Revise the road design standards to incorporate sufficient width to plant street trees as part of new development.

Bus Stops

MN8. Investigate where to locate additional bus stop locations adjacent to pedestrian and cycle linkages.

Planning Principles

P11. Main Road, Goulburn Street, Low Head Road remain the primary arterial road for vehicle movements to Bellbuoy Beach Road, Low Head, the East Tamar Highway and Bridport Road.

P12. Provide an alternative route for vehicle movements originating from industrial activities and residential uses via Victoria Street to reduce traffic volumes and improve safety adjacent to the school.

P13. New subdivision serviced to facilitate a grid road pattern and cul-de-sac not supported unless it furthers connection and linkages to the walking network.

P14. Provide pedestrian crossings over the primary arterial road, near public transport stops, school & linkages.

P15. Street Trees planted to green and define the streetscape.

P16. Improved convenience for residents to access public transportation by increasing the intervals of bus stops.

Planning Principles

P18. Strengthen connectivity, through improved walking and cycle routes,encouraging a healthy lifestyle through incidental exercise.

P19. A primary walking loop suited to all-abilities, linking the central neighbourhood, river and coastal environment, and other destinations.

P20. Walking and cycling loops provided with seating at frequent intervals, shade, shelter, lighting, a pathway width of 3m where possible.

P21. Incorporate street dining, recreation facilities and other free attractors as part of the walking loop.

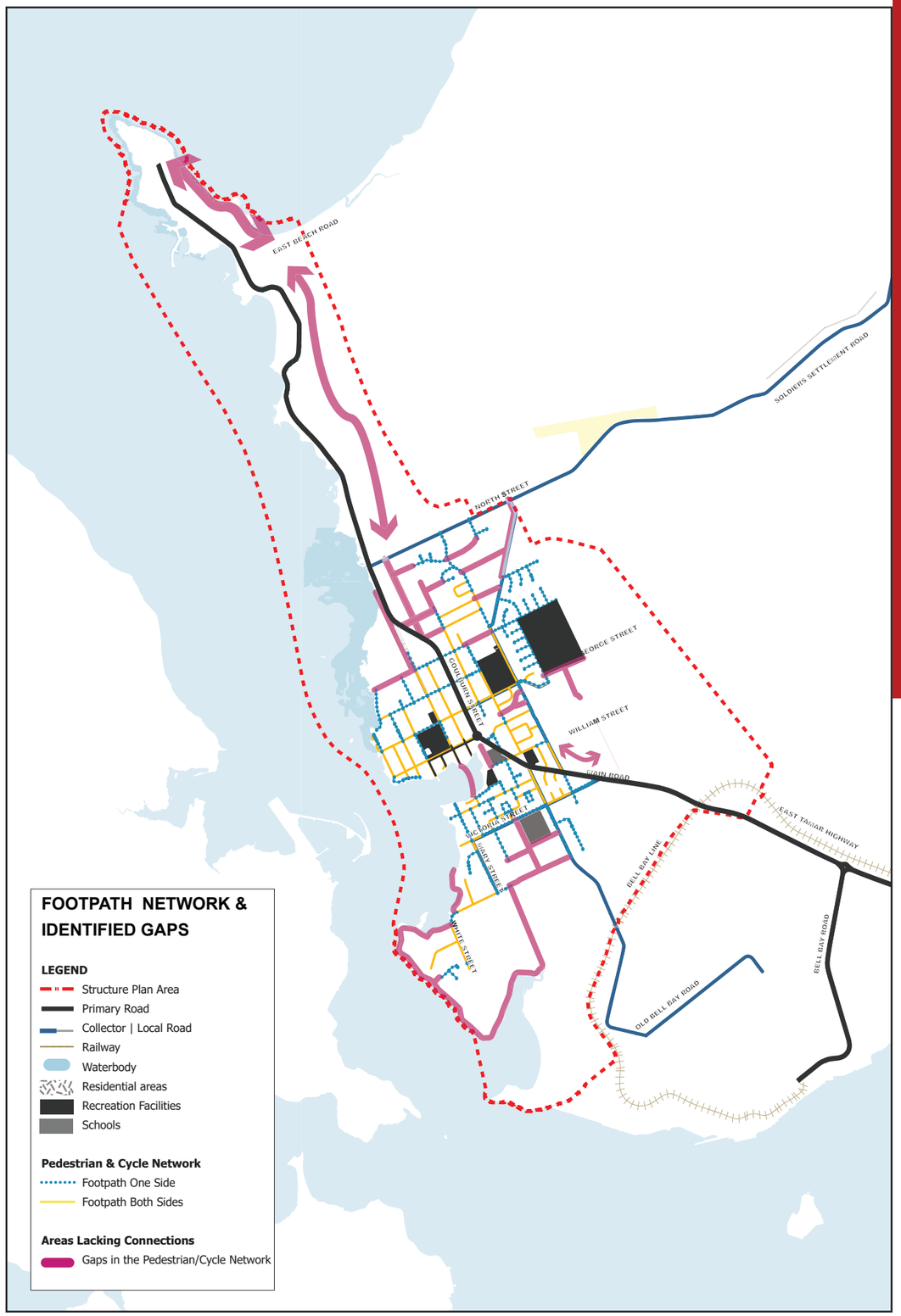
Improving walkability throughout the SP Area is a direction that can bring incidental social interaction, strengthening the community's relationship with place.

Whilst improved public transport may be a long-term goal, modifying a streetscape can encourage walking, whether for leisure, recreation, or shopping. Connected urban areas with quality open spaces or a corner shop close to home can reduce short car trips and have many benefits for health and the environment.

Improving connectivity for walking and cycling, however, is not without challenge. The established residential areas are constrained by narrow footpaths in the streetscape, making it difficult for persons with mobility concerns or a person pushing a pram to navigate the built environment. There are challenges for crossing primary roads, potentially excluding a proportion of the residential population from walking or cycling from across the Structure Plan Area.

Effective footpath design suited for all abilities, the introduction of wayfinding measures, and the installation of additional seating, shelter, and shade can have an immediate effect on the community's level of engagement with public space.

The improved provision of walking and cycling trails can substantially raise enjoyment from a place. The Structure Plan advocates planning principles that achieve increased participation by the community.



Open Space & Recreation

Open spaces within an urban area fulfills multiple roles. Green spaces provide a place to relax, to meet friends and family, but also provides opportunity for social interaction. Parks can also function as event spaces and host organised activities.

Quality, functional and pleasant open spaces are an essential ingredient to fostering wellbeing of a community, and can:

- form an extension to off-road walking and cycling network;
- protect public access to the coast and the river;
- provide incidental habitat for native species;
- improve air quality, and
- contribute to reducing air temperature in built up areas.

East Beach

East Beach is a popular coastal reserve by locals and visitors. It is a great place for a swim in summer.

Low Head Lighthouse and Golf Course

The Lighthouse is a historical attraction in the SP Area. There is no coastal walking trail between the Lighthouse and East Beach.

Public Access to the Coast

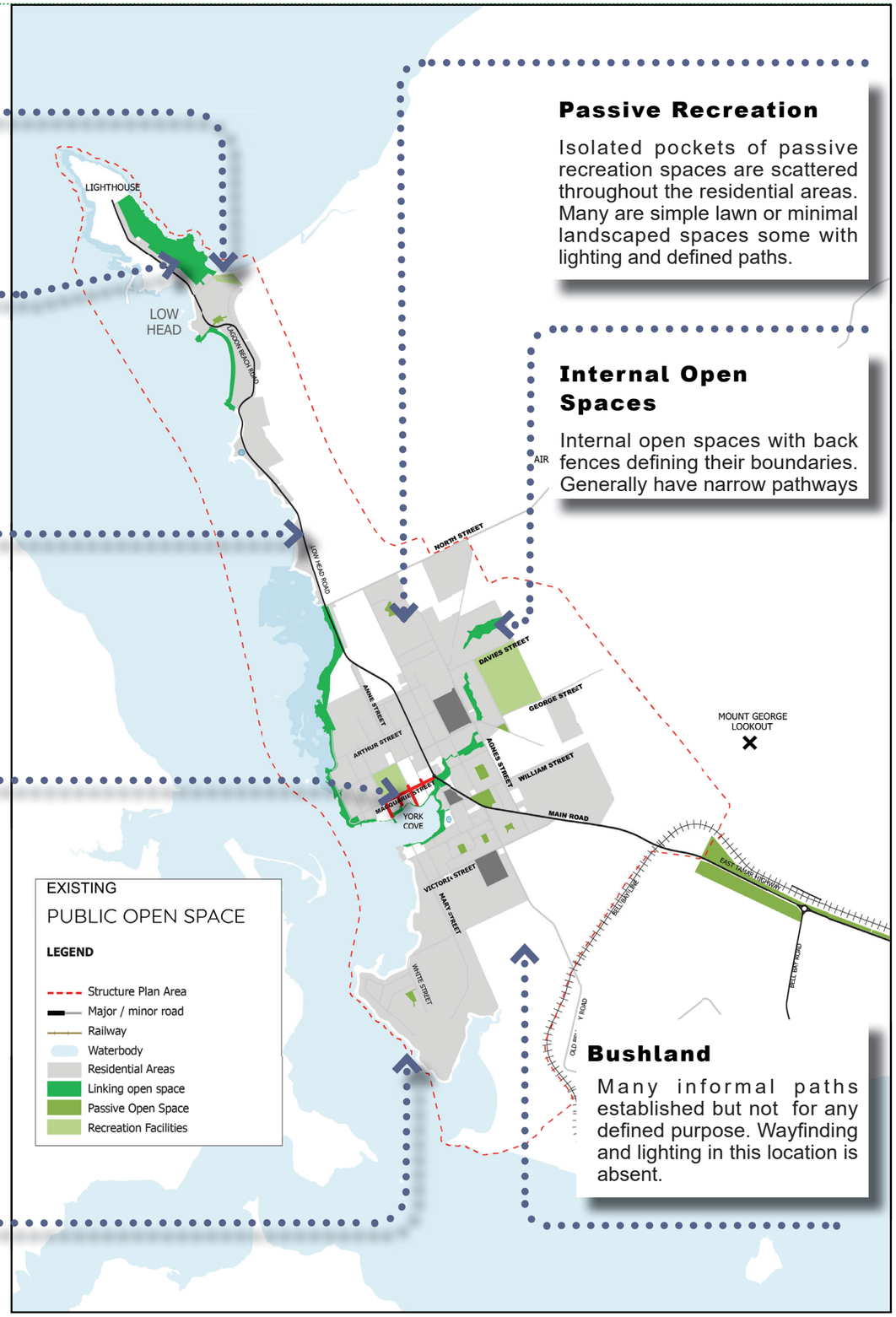
Linear residential development is constructed along Low Head Road and has limited public access to the coastline in some locations. Coastal access south of York Cove is also limited and lacks formal walking and cycling paths.

Regent Square

Centralised open space adjacent to Macquarie Street, a diverse space providing community facilities, playground, amenities and event spaces.

River & Coastline

Pathways around the coastline are fragmented and disconnected in sections. Opportunity to create an off-road cycle loop through use of Crown land.



Passive Recreation

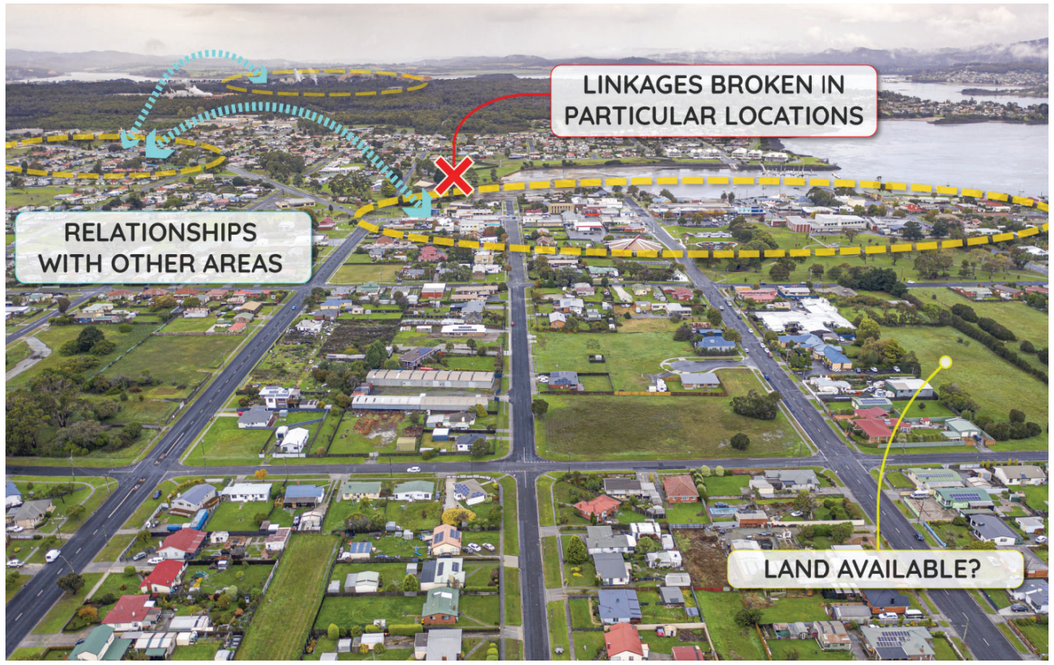
Isolated pockets of passive recreation spaces are scattered throughout the residential areas. Many are simple lawn or minimal landscaped spaces some with lighting and defined paths.

Internal Open Spaces

Internal open spaces with back fences defining their boundaries. Generally have narrow pathways

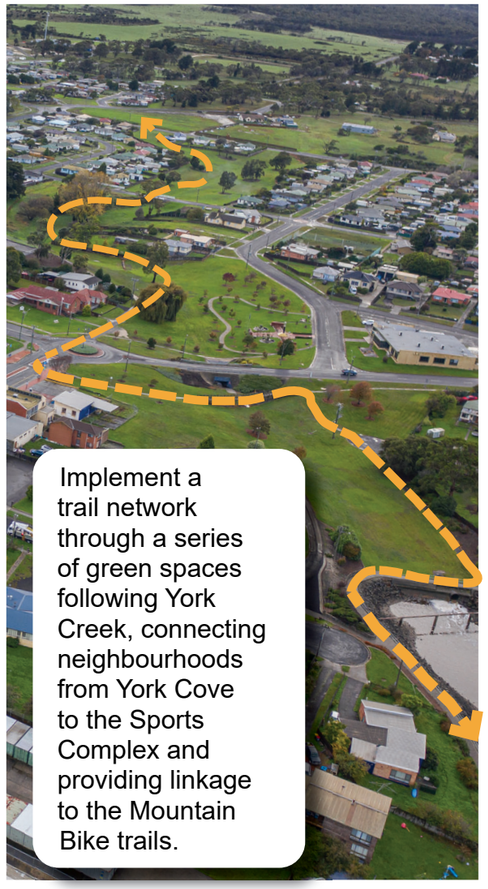
Bushland

Many informal paths established but not for any defined purpose. Wayfinding and lighting in this location is absent.

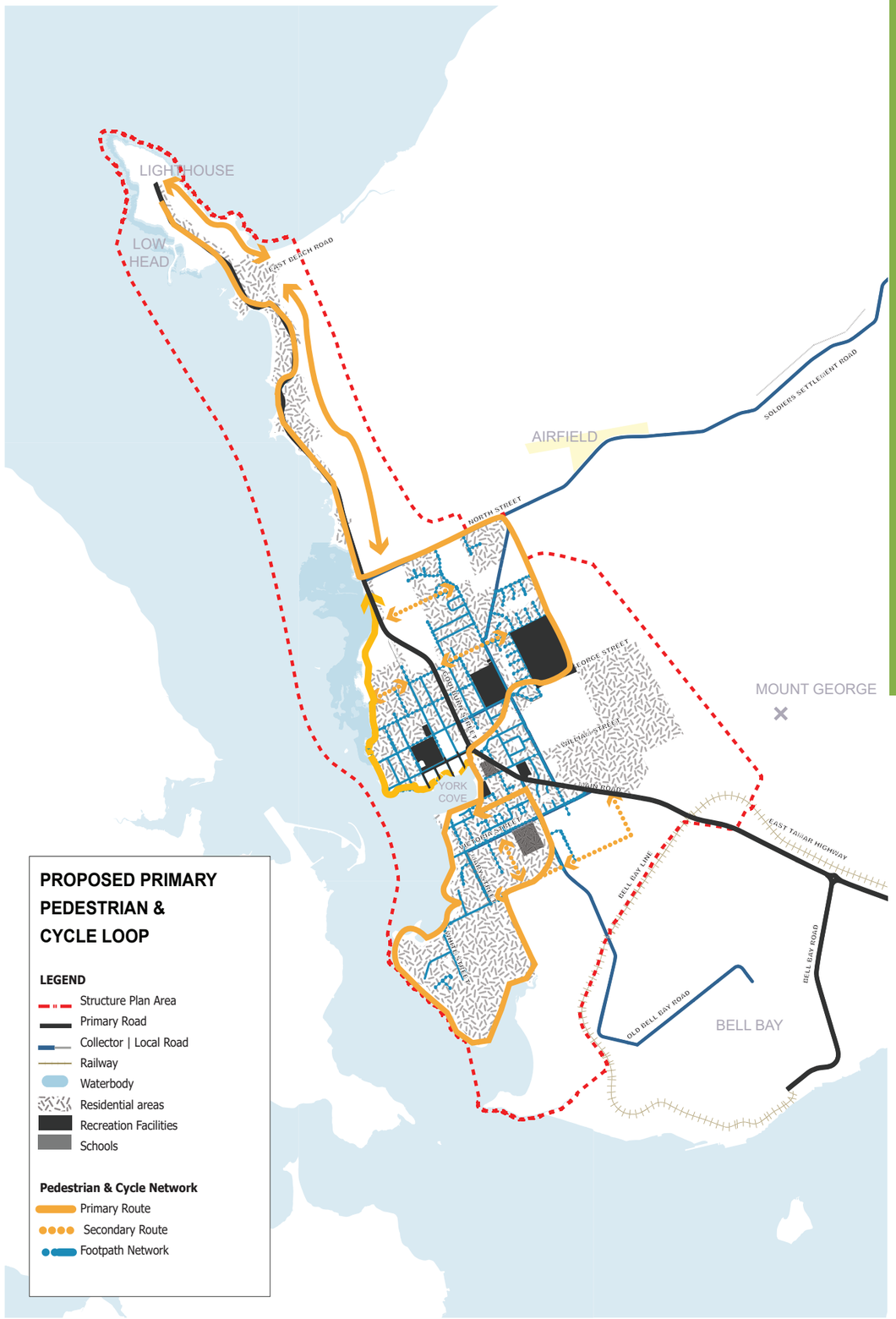


George Town Sport & Recreation Strategy recommendations are integrated into the Structure Plan. The recommendations most relevant are:

- Build on and extend existing off-road trails extend existing to provide at least half an hour walk and connect them to community facilities such as school and sports facilities to increase their use.
- Make trails into circuits and provide one in every locality. Each key locality should have a circuit that encourages people to exercise more often and at their own pace, away from traffic.
- Create at least one circuit that is accessible to people pushing prams and using a mobility device, in every locality. There may be other loops or sections of the trail that provide additional challenge or take people to vantage points, for example, or in surfaces suitable for running.



Implement a trail network through a series of green spaces following York Creek, connecting neighbourhoods from York Cove to the Sports Complex and providing linkage to the Mountain Bike trails.



Cash in Lieu

Tasmanian legislation has historically provided for the Council to require either the inclusion of public open space or parkland as part of a subdivision or the payment of cash in lieu as an alternative under the *Local Government (Building and Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993* (LGBMP).

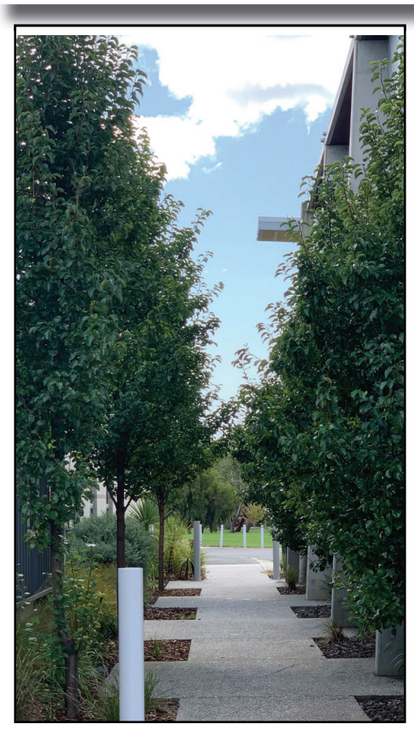
Cash in lieu has gradually replaced the provision of public space as the preferred option, allowing Councils to prioritise and invest in a coordinated open space network across the Municipal area. The preference for cash in lieu has assisted with the reduction of small unnecessary spaces that adds increased maintenance costs to Council's operation. However, the flip side of this policy is the lost opportunity to provide linking open spaces in each of the neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, the Structure Plan Area contains open space reserves, courtesy of this historical evolution of the application of LGBMP.

Recognising the sometimes failings of this policy, a revision of Council's position is required to accept land for the future open space provision as per the recommendations of the Structure Plan.

Cash in lieu, in some instances, will be appropriate where there is sufficient land area for open space set aside in a neighbourhood. The policy should also guide the spending of cash in lieu according to priority. A further detailed assessment of open space is required to allocate a purpose and function to each space and the infrastructure investment needed to place them within walking distance to homes.

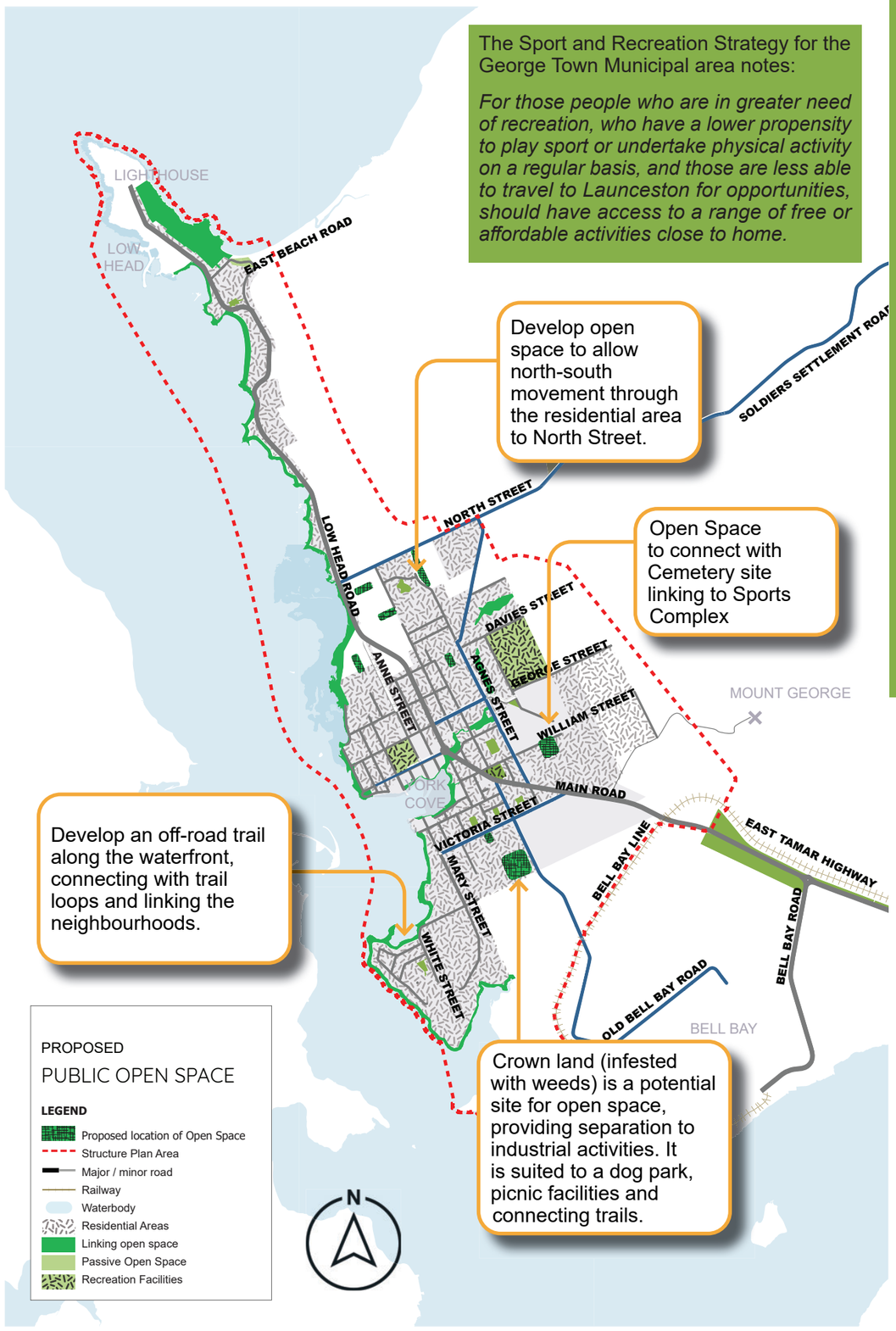
Without this assessment, the Council will lack the finer grain detail to guide the provision of land in a neighbourhood over a monetary contribution. A policy referring to this detailed assessment is necessary as land is not an infinite resource, and once developed, the opportunity for open space provision will no longer be available.

The implementation plan to determine where investment should occur must consider the established green areas and parks, the recommended primary and secondary pedestrian and cycle linkages and future open space requirement for land areas yet to be developed as per the recommendations of the Structure Plan.



The Sport and Recreation Strategy for the George Town Municipal area notes:

For those people who are in greater need of recreation, who have a lower propensity to play sport or undertake physical activity on a regular basis, and those are less able to travel to Launceston for opportunities, should have access to a range of free or affordable activities close to home.



Recommended Actions

Connectivity

OSC1. Implement and construct a primary walking/ cycling loops as identified in the Structure Plan.

OSC2. The primary pedestrian/cycle route supported by a grid network of footpaths to create shorter 20minute walking loops within a neighbourhood. Consider widening footpaths to 2.5m (where possible).

OSC3. The primary pedestrian/cycle route connects the kanamaluka trail with the Sports Complex, schools and other important community infrastructure.

OSC4. The primary pedestrian/cycle route connects the George Town Mountain Bike Trails and Macquarie Street. The pump track planned at the entrance of Macquarie Street will support this connection.

OSC5. Investigate and prepare a plan detailing a single primary walking loop, that maximises an off-road network and links neighbourhoods. The plan must apply urban design principles to define pathways, lighting, shelter, shade, seating and defines pathway width and materials.

OSC6. Refine the primary pedestrian and cycle loop to be suitable for Park Run and Mountain Bike Trail to connect.

OSC7. Prepare a footpath plan for the SP Area across the neighbourhoods:

- analysing the network, identifying the gaps;
- the location of seating and rest stops; footpath widening;
- landscaping and tree planting.

OSC8. Prepare a tree planting plan for the SP Area, prioritising the primary pedestrian route as a starting point.

OSC9. Prepare a shelter, rest points and public amenities plan for the Structure Plan Area along with the primary walking and cycling route.

OSC10. Prepare an investment strategy to construct the primary walking network, addressing gaps to improve connection to each neighbourhood and foster reduction in the use of private vehicles.

OSC11. On completion of OSC 7 to OSC 10, review Council's budget allocation for tree planting and pedestrian/cycling infrastructure. Consider an implementation plan through the budget process.

Open Space

OSC12. Maximise existing open space reserves through a coordinated reserves, identifying the purpose and function of each established and future public open space as identified in the Structure Plan.

OSC13. Adopt a coordinated open space plan to guide the policy of cash in lieu. Cash in lieu should only be accepted at the subdivision stage if there is no requirement for land for open space. Where the latter occurs, the cash-in-lieu be invested in the neighbourhood the subdivision is within.

OSC14. Plan for public open spaces in each neighbourhood to encourage incidental activity in daily life.

OSC15. Develop an open space network that will link with off-road loop trails.

Public Access to the Coastline & River Bank

OSC16. Future use and development proposed within 100m of the mean high water mark must maintain continued public access to beaches, coastal and river reserves.

OSC17. Prohibit the subdivision of land adjoining the coastal and river reserves.

OSC18. Activate and improve beach and foreshore access supported with infrastructure such as picnic facilities, public amenities, shelter.

OSC19. Investigate opportunity to negotiate right of way over private land to facilitate trails.

Planning Principles

P22. Strengthen connectivity, through improved walking and cycle routes,encouraging healthy lifestyle through incidental exercise.

P23. A primary walking loop suited to all-abilities, linking the central neighbourhood, river and coastal environment, and other destinations.

P24. Walking and cycling loops provided with seating at frequent intervals, shade, shelter, lighting, a pathway width of a 1.5m.

P25. Incorporate street dining, recreation facilities and other free attractors as part of the walking loop.

Natural Values

The natural environment within the SP Area provides significant value to the community. The coastline and scenic hinterlands are the elements of the natural environment and the attributes that characterise the SP Area. The natural and scenic values are interlinked with future investment decisions. Retaining these valuable assets is a significant factor for future land use decisions. Sensitivity to the natural environment and recognition of the existing values will be critical to combat climate change and sustainability success within the Structure Plan Area.

Natural hazards for the SP Area are limited. Bushfire are a reality of the area, with most of the residential land lying within the bushfire overlay. York Creek requires management for flood risk. Landslip risk is minimal and mostly contained on vegetated land outside of the SP Area.

Coastal inundation and erosion hazards are a lower risk for George Town than other coastal settlements due to the geography, geology and coastal processes in this location.

The retention of natural values becomes a critical mechanism to minimise the risk of natural hazards. But it goes beyond just managing risk; biodiversity protection and retaining natural landscapes is equally essential in Council's charter to address climate change and attributes that define the place for the people who live, work, and visit SP Area.

It is paramount that remnant native is protected; retention of open space around waterways is also critical for natural processes to continue.

Recommended Actions

Scenic Values

NVS1. Conduct a detailed scenic values assessment for the SP Area to define an overlay that can be integrated into the planning scheme.

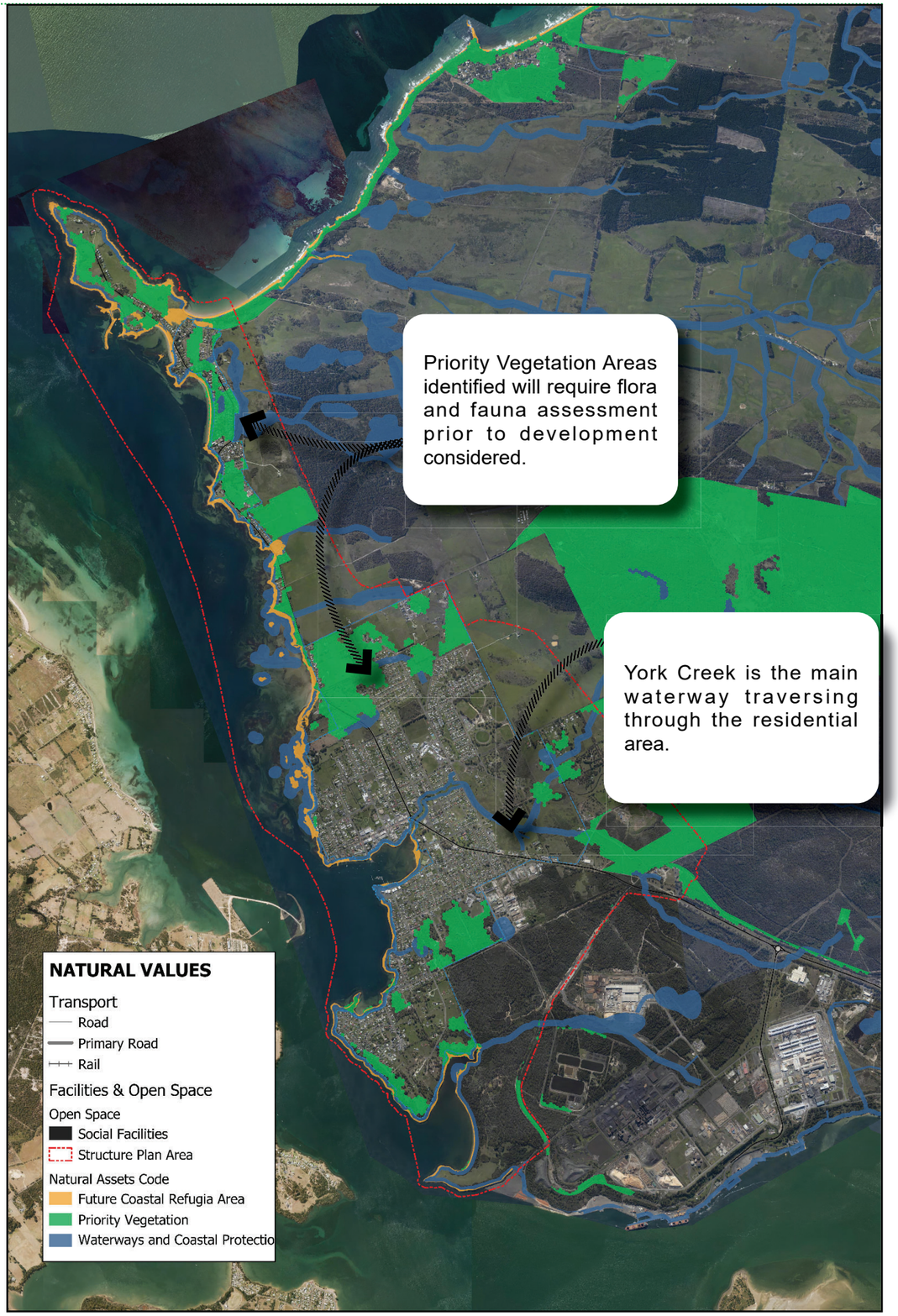
Waterways

NVS2. Consider purchasing private land adjoining York Creek to maximise retention of open space.

NVS3. New development must have regard to the natural processes and values associated with a site particularly if it involves subdivision. Subdivision design irrespective of natural values present must apply water sensitive design principles.

NVS4. Investigate and prepare a standard or policy requiring water sensitive design principles to be applied in subdivision design.

Native Vegetation

NVS5. Work in conjunction with private property owners to explore the possibility of using conservation covenants over land containing residual vegetation.

NVS6. Ground truth flora and fauna within the SP Area within the Growth Areas. Threatened flora or fauna habitat must adapt the subdivision design to maximise retention.