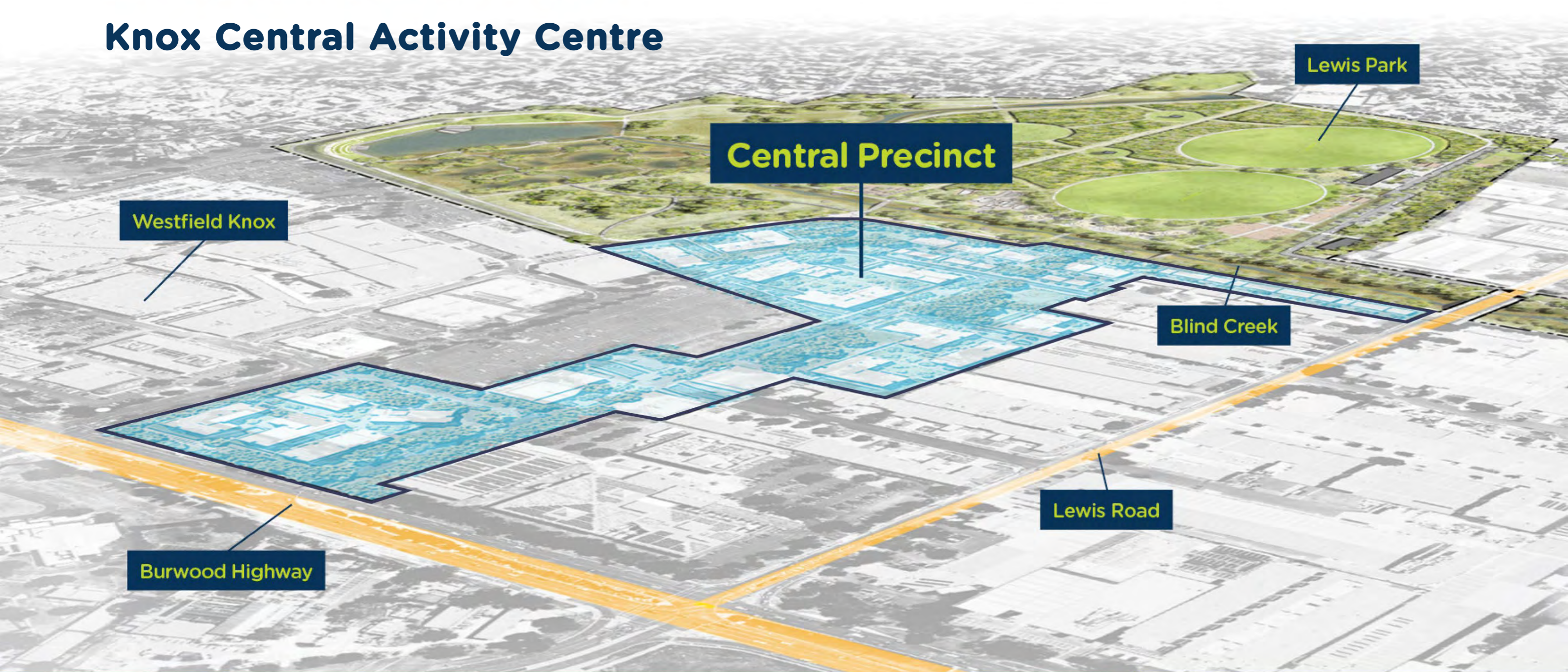


Central Precinct Land Use Plan

August 2024

Knox Central Activity Centre



knox





Yarning Circle, Knox Civic Centre

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

Knox City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as Traditional Custodians of the land in Knox. The Knox Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities come from a variety of different nations within Australia including the Torres Strait, the Traditional Custodians and Stolen Generation. As such, we pay respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region's histories.

Located at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges (Mount Corhanwarrabul), Knox has many places of historic significance to the Kulin Nation. Important cultural and historical sites within Knox hold both the traditional knowledge of First Nations peoples and the traumatic stories of colonisation. The journey ahead for Knox involves the land, the Traditional Custodians, the local First Nations communities, the wider community and the Council itself. We will walk together and listen together to create a culturally safe and culturally rich community for all.

In 2021, Knox City Council announced an intention to promote a “whole of business” mindset, moving forward in its acknowledgement and respect of First Nations peoples, ensuring cross-functional collaboration as opportunities present themselves.

In 2023, Knox Council adopted its first Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) identifying six focus areas: health and wellbeing, recognition and respect, employment and economic development, civic participation, cultural heritage and voice and governance.

“Yana djerring ba ngarrnga djerring* – Walking together and listening together.”

(*Woi-wurrung language used with permission of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation)



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Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Details
C1Z	Commercial 1 Zone
CBD	Central Business District
CHMP	Cultural Heritage Management Plan
EAO	Environmental Audit Overlay
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development
ESO	Environmental Significance Overlay
IN1Z	Industrial 1 Zone
LSIO	Land Subjected to Inundation Overlay
MUZ	Mixed Use Zone
PPTN	Principal Public Transport Network
PUZ	Public Use Zone
RGZ	Residential Growth Zone
WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design



1. Summary

Summary

Purpose

The Central Precinct Land Use Plan (**Plan**) will inform and guide the future planning and development of land owned by the Knox City Council (**Council**) in Wantirna South. The land is approximately nine hectares in size and is known as the **Central Precinct** as it is located in the centre or ‘heart’ of the Knox Central Activity Centre (**Activity Centre**).

The development of the Central Precinct is targeted to higher density housing. Development will respond to community demand in Knox for diverse housing, including affordable and social housing, and state government housing targets. The development of the Central Precinct will help realise Council’s vision for the Activity Centre as a vibrant and modern mixed-use destination. It is anticipated development will support and stimulate the growth and renewal of the activity centre, including the light industrial uses along Lewis Road.

Key Objectives

In preparing this Plan, Council is seeking its landholdings to be developed in a manner that delivers multiple benefits to the City of Knox, its residents and the community. The development is to be sustainable and will enhance the natural features and environmental values of the site and its surrounds. Quality urban design outcomes will be a feature including well-presented built form, and diverse and welcoming open spaces. There will be a focus on safe and inviting pedestrian and bicycle connections through the Precinct and to Blind Creek, Lewis Park and Westfield Knox. The development will support Country, Culture and Connection in line with Council’s Reconciliation Action Plan.

The Plan seeks to implement the objectives of the Knox Central Structure Plan 2017 to deliver primarily high and medium density residential development with some integrated commercial uses. The Precinct will accommodate people close to nearby employment and retail, public transport and natural amenity. The Plan identifies opportunities for new Council offices and open spaces that complement the Lewis Park Masterplan and the Blind Creek daylighting and wetland development. Community facilities such as a community hub, library and performing arts centre are being considered but are subject to needs analysis and funding. These type of uses offer the potential for anchor developments in the Precinct that can act as a catalyst for development in the Activity Centre.

Scope

The Plan sets out the Precinct context and summarises key findings from stakeholder and community engagement. It presents the strategic direction and vision for the Precinct, guiding principles and opportunities for land use and built form, access and movement, and open spaces and natural environment. It includes a Framework Plan that shows the key features and future direction of the Precinct.

Community Engagement and Stakeholder Consultation

Community engagement on the draft Land Use Plan occurred from February to August 2024 with online consultation in May and June. Key findings of the consultation are in Section 3. The Council also considered feedback on the draft Plan from key stakeholders including Council advisory committees, state agencies, adjacent landowners, groups that use Lewis Park and nearby business owners. The final Plan reflects input from the engagement.

Implementation

A range of statutory and non-statutory implementation measures will be used to progress the vision for the Central Precinct. It is anticipated that a Development Plan Overlay will be prepared by Council and applied to the land via a Planning Scheme amendment. Other amendments to the Knox Planning Scheme will also be required to rezone industrial and public use zoned areas in the Precinct to Mixed Use Zone and to ensure consistency between the Land Use Plan and existing planning controls. The timing of this is not confirmed.

Integrated development of the Central Precinct and the Scentre Group landholdings (co-owners of Westfield Knox) will be critical to the overall success of the Activity Centre to meet the needs of residents, workers, businesses, visitors and shoppers.

The Plan represents a view of “what could be” based on anticipated market demand and other considerations. Importantly, aside from any new community facilities, Council does not intend to be the developer of the Precinct. The release of land to the market is aimed at optimising financial returns to Council and community benefits. High and medium density residential development is an emerging market for the area and Council anticipates it will take time for the Precinct to be fully developed.

Investment by the state government in more frequent public transport in Knox is critical to ensure additional traffic in the Knox Central Activity Centre does not clog arterial roads and impose economic costs on the community. Council continues to advocate for the timely extension of the Route 75 tram from Vermont South. Council also seeks Federal and State funding towards the redevelopment of Lewis Park, which will support high density residential development in the Central Precinct and the Activity Centre more broadly.



2. Precinct Context

Local Context ‘Building on Country’

First Nations Care for Country

The Central Precinct is located on the Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. The north boundary of the site is adjacent to Blind Creek with paths and bridge connections to Lewis Park.

Blind Creek itself is a songline and travelling route. The Central Precinct contains remnant vegetation with cultural value for Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people.

To develop an Interpretation Framework for Blind Creek and Lewis Park, consultants undertook a guided walk in February 2022 with Wurundjeri Elder Uncle Dave Wandin and held two yarns or cultural conversations with Aunty Julienne Axford, Aunty Gail Smith and Charley Woolmore, of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, along with Adrian Greenwood, Knox City Council.

The key take aways from these conversations were:

- Traditional knowledges have helped care for this Country for thousands of years.
- Waterways like Blind Creek play an important role in Aboriginal culture. They were rich in resources and provided meeting places. Water continues to connect First Nations people to Country.

Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people are deeply connected to Country. Caring for Country, listening to Country, walking Country, connecting with her songlines and as custodians speaking for Country.

The daylighting of Blind Creek and development of the Central Precinct is an opportunity to participate in Caring, listening, healing and understanding of Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country.

The challenge of ‘Building on Country’ is to truly respond to the essence of Country and its people.

The comments in the box help tell the story of Country in this place.

Council’s Reconciliation Action Plan 2021 – 2025 commits Council to embedding the principles of Reconciliation in everything we do.

Comments by Uncle Dave Wandin:

- *The area would have been like a swamp, which would have acted like a supermarket for Aboriginal people.*
- *Trees are important; everything grows from trees. Trees are like parents.*
- *Eels pass through the area on the way to the Coral Sea to breed. They only live in slow flowing water. Eels are instinctive. Young return to where their parents are from, regardless of how much the country has changed, as long as there is moisture. When adults go out to the ocean, they stop eating, they drop fat so they don’t retain salt as they get closer to the bay. Eels can travel across ground.*

Comments by Aunty Julienne Axford, Aunty Gail Smith and Charley Woolmore:

- *Waterways were traveling routes, walking tracks and meeting places for Wurundjeri. Waterways played a very important role for Ancestors. Not only food but songlines and a way of knowing whose country you are on.*
- *There were a lot of gatherings along creeks and rivers with other mobs. Played more of a big part for Ancestors before colonisation. Waterways are like a compass. It’s a way of direction.*
- *Songlines tell stories on which way you’re heading. Some are short cuts across country or boundaries. It’s about positioning yourself and connecting to identity. It’s a compass that is more than geographic, it’s also personal.*
- *Wetlands were a huge resource area, like a supermarket. A lot of Melbourne was swampy areas that don’t exist now because of changes in land management practice.*
- *Trees are important. From trees, everything grows.*
- *Trees are like parents, something that is part of your life. Like most journeys, their branches vary in directions and shapes. We are moulded to be in a certain shape. Old trees fit into healthy Country, sheltering life beneath them.*

Local Context

The Central Precinct is located within the Knox Central Activity Centre and refers to the area shown in Figure 1. The Precinct is owned by Knox City Council (Council) and is approximately 9 hectares in size.

The Precinct is approximately 25 km directly east of Melbourne’s CBD, and 8 km west of the Dandenong Ranges. The Precinct is serviced by bus routes which provide access to other centres in Knox, as well as to the Melbourne CBD and beyond. The nearest train stations are Boronia (4.7 km), Bayswater (4.9 km) and Ferntree Gully (5.5 km) on the Belgrave line.

The Precinct is home to Council’s Civic Centre. It is flanked by Westfield Knox to the west, light industrial/commercial uses to the east, Lewis Park and Blind Creek to the north, and Burwood Highway to the south.

On the corner of Burwood Highway and Scoresby Road, approximately 1 km east of the Precinct, Development Victoria is planning for over 400 dwellings with construction expected to commence in 2025.

Opposite the Precinct, on the southern side of Burwood Highway, Homes Victoria is delivering 118 dwellings earmarked for low-income households.

The estimated resident population for the City of Knox was 161,766 in 2023. The Knox Community Profile (id Consulting) indicates that the population will reach 185,148 by 2046, i.e. an additional estimated 24,000 people over the next 23 years. The development of the Precinct is an opportunity to support the growing community, deliver on the Knox Central Structure Plan 2017 and Council’s Housing Strategy and respond to State Government housing targets.

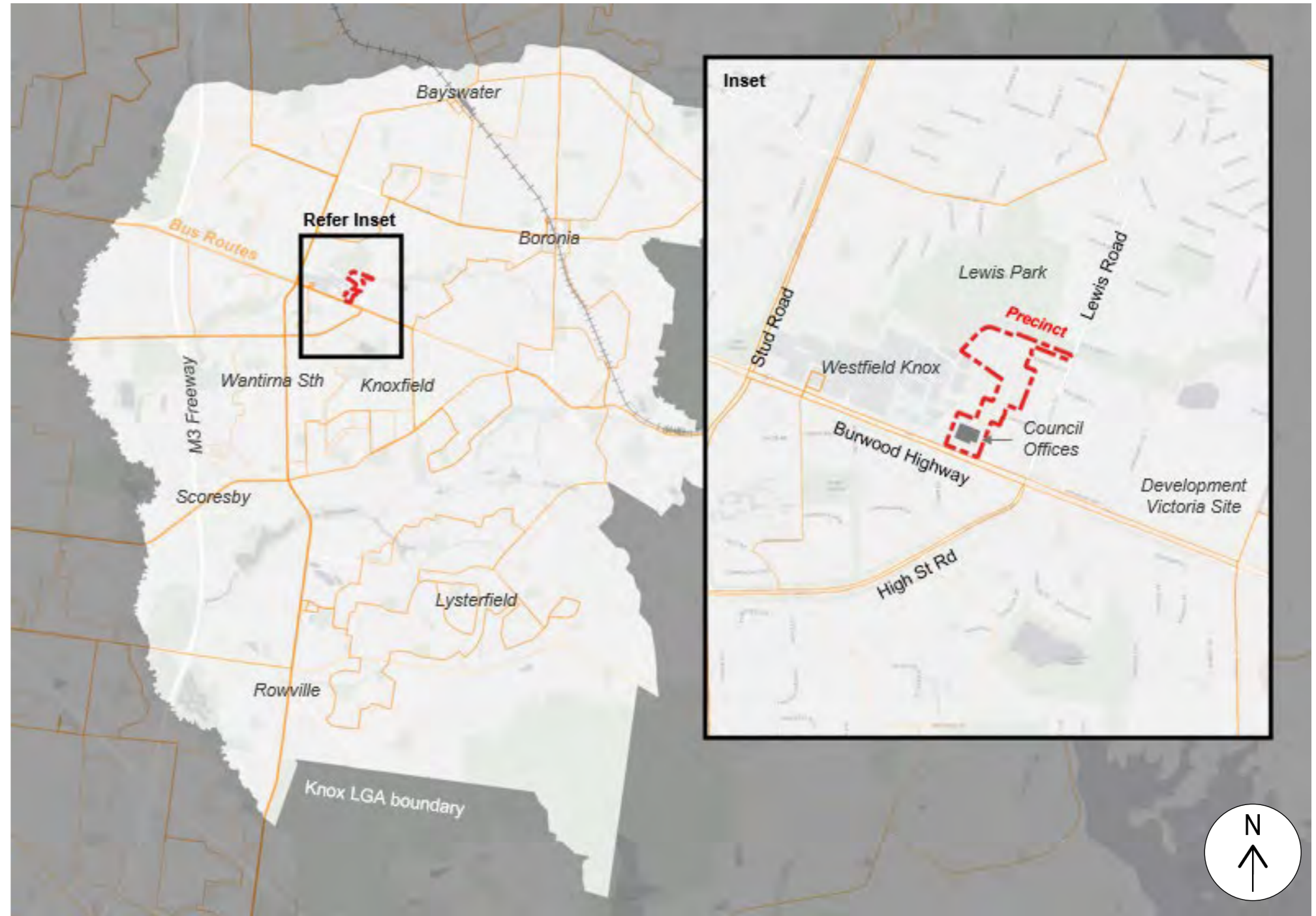


Figure 1: Central Precinct Plan location

Local Context

Knox Civic Centre

Knox was named a City on 4 July 1969, and at that time had a population of about 50,000 people. On 15 December 1994, following a state government review of local government, a new City of Knox was announced.

The Knox Civic Centre buildings were constructed in 1975. The main building, and Eastgate North and South buildings were constructed around the same time.

The main building was damaged by fire on 31 August 1994.

The main building was reopened on 30 November 1996, which included an atrium that was not originally constructed in 1975.

There has been no change in the building footprint since 1975.

The site has access from Burwood Highway and from Lewis Road through Eastgate Court.



Figure 2: Aerial view of the Civic Centre site with no building, 1968



Figure 3: Aerial view of the Civic Centre showing a part of the building complex under construction, 1996



Figure 4: Aerial view of the Civic Centre building with completed atrium, 2001



Figure 5: Aerial view of the Civic Centre, 2024

Local Context

Westfield Knox Shopping Centre

Westfield Knox is immediately west of the Precinct. It is a proud space for local businesses and has provided amenities to the wider community for 25 years. In the late 1990s the redevelopment of Knox O-Zone provided an indoor/outdoor entertainment and hospitality strip. Knox O-Zone is a few minutes walk from the Precinct.

Scentre Group, the co-owners of Westfield Knox, has undertaken significant upgrade works to the shopping centre through 2023 and 2024. To create a more contemporary retail offering new stores, a playground, swim centre and a basketball court have been added to the main retail core. Further redevelopment is planned.

In March 2024 Council opened the new 2,000 m² Knox Library – Ngarrgoo. Council’s youth services hub, the Youth Hive, is located within the Knox Library.

Council is working with Scentre Group to plan for connections between the Precinct and Westfield Knox. Both landowners will continue to jointly plan and manage interfaces.



Figure 6: Knox Shopping Mall, 1977 (now Westfield Knox)



Figure 7: Knox Shopping Mall, 1982



Figure 8: North facing facade of Westfield Knox, 2024



Figure 9: Entrance to Knox Library, 2024

Local Context

Blind Creek Trail

To the north of the Precinct, the Blind Creek Trail is a popular destination for cyclists, dog walkers and families. The trail has a strong community following including support from the Knox Environment Society and Friends of Blind Creek Billabong. Blind Creek forms part of a broader wildlife corridor and is home to many species of native flora and fauna.

Council and Melbourne Water are investing in projects including daylighting and naturalisation of Blind Creek. New shared paths and revegetation is an attractive improvement to amenity along the Blind Creek Trail. A new pedestrian bridge over the creek improves connectivity to Lewis Park Reserve.

Lewis Park Reserve

On the northern side of Blind Creek, Lewis Park is host to Knox City Cricket Club, Fairpark Junior Football Club, Wantirna South Cricket Club, Wantirna South Football Club and Knox City Tennis Club. It houses several venues including the Lewis Park Pavilion and the Knoxfield District Scout Centre.

The Lewis Park Masterplan, adopted in 2019, has a vision for inclusive public spaces, where visitors can engage with nature, culture and sport, and the natural environment can thrive. Stage One of the project (as of August 2024) aims to enhance the existing amenity of Lewis Park by increasing connection with Blind Creek, improving biodiversity and creating flexible open spaces.

Skate and BMX Park

The Skate and BMX park is a joint community project run by the Knox City Council and YMCA and is a popular family-friendly recreation amenity located in Lewis Park.



Figure 10: View of the new pedestrian bridge on Blind Creek, 2024



Figure 11: Aerial view of the wetland looking north from above Westfield Knox, 2024



Figure 12: Skate and BMX Park, 2024



Figure 13: Blind Creek with seating, 2024

Land uses

Existing Uses

There are three Council buildings located at the southern end of the Precinct with access from Burwood Highway and Eastgate Court.

These are the Civic Centre and buildings called Eastgate North and Eastgate South.

The existing Civic Centre is physically nearing the end of its useful life and will need to be replaced in the medium term.

A model-car club leases a small area of land from Council.

The Precinct is otherwise vacant or used for at-grade carparking.

The Council Operations Centre (Depot) previously located in the northern part of the Precinct has been relocated to Henderson Road, Knoxfield.

The State Emergency Services (SES) building has been relocated to State Government land in Knoxfield.

The Knox Library and Youth Hive is located towards the north-west end of Westfield Knox where Myer used to operate.

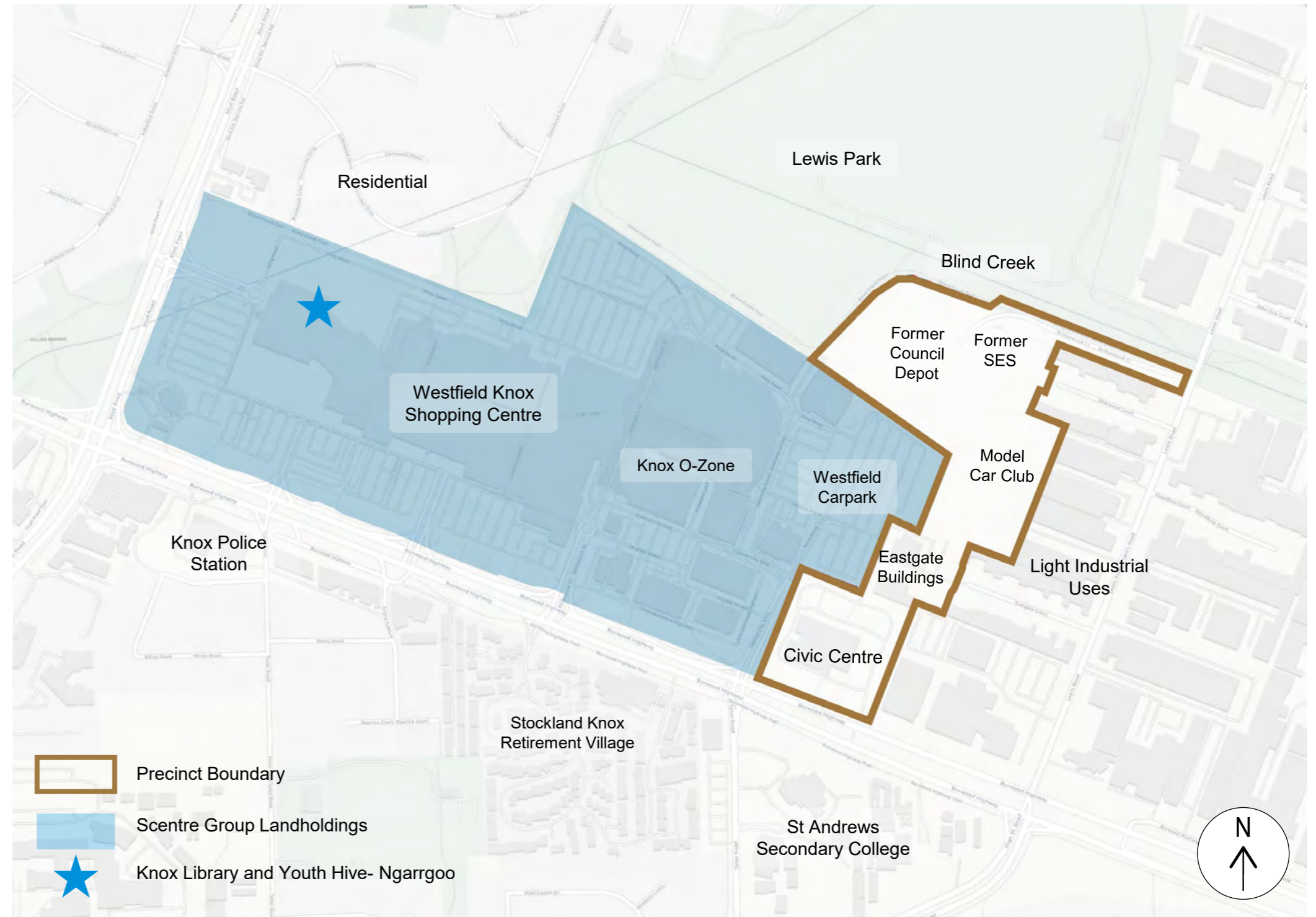


Figure 14: Existing Uses

Planning

Strategic Planning

The Precinct is part of the Knox Central Activity Centre – the largest activity centre in the municipality.

The Knox Central Structure Plan 2017 sets out the vision for the Activity Centre to become a vibrant modern mixed-use destination that attracts residents, workers and visitors from across Melbourne’s east.

The Structure Plan promotes mixed-use, civic and community development in the Precinct. The yellow area designated as Commercial Core is the Westfield Knox Shopping Centre.

Civic and community uses are notionally identified at the interface with Blind Creek and Lewis Park.

Over time it is expected that the commercial / light industrial uses along the western side of Lewis Road will transition to higher intensity mixed use outcomes.

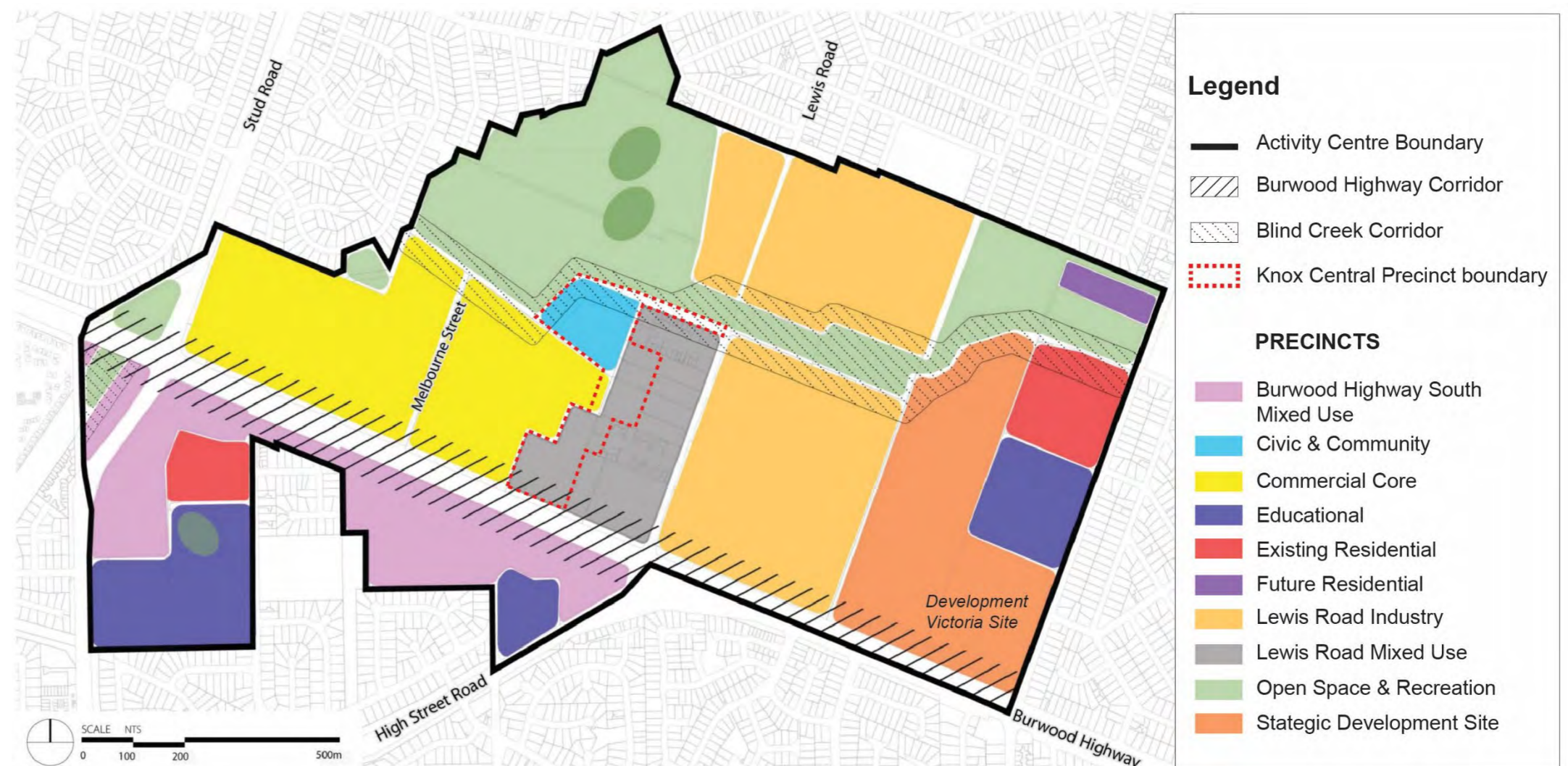


Figure 15: Knox Central Structure Plan 2017

Extracts from the Knox Central Structure Plan 2017

“Knox Central’s physical form, encompassing a distinctive boulevard presence along Burwood Highway alongside the well-activated Blind Creek Corridor and Lewis Park, will provide a unique Activity Centre presence in Melbourne’s eastern suburbs”

“the most well-known and popular destination in the east of Melbourne”

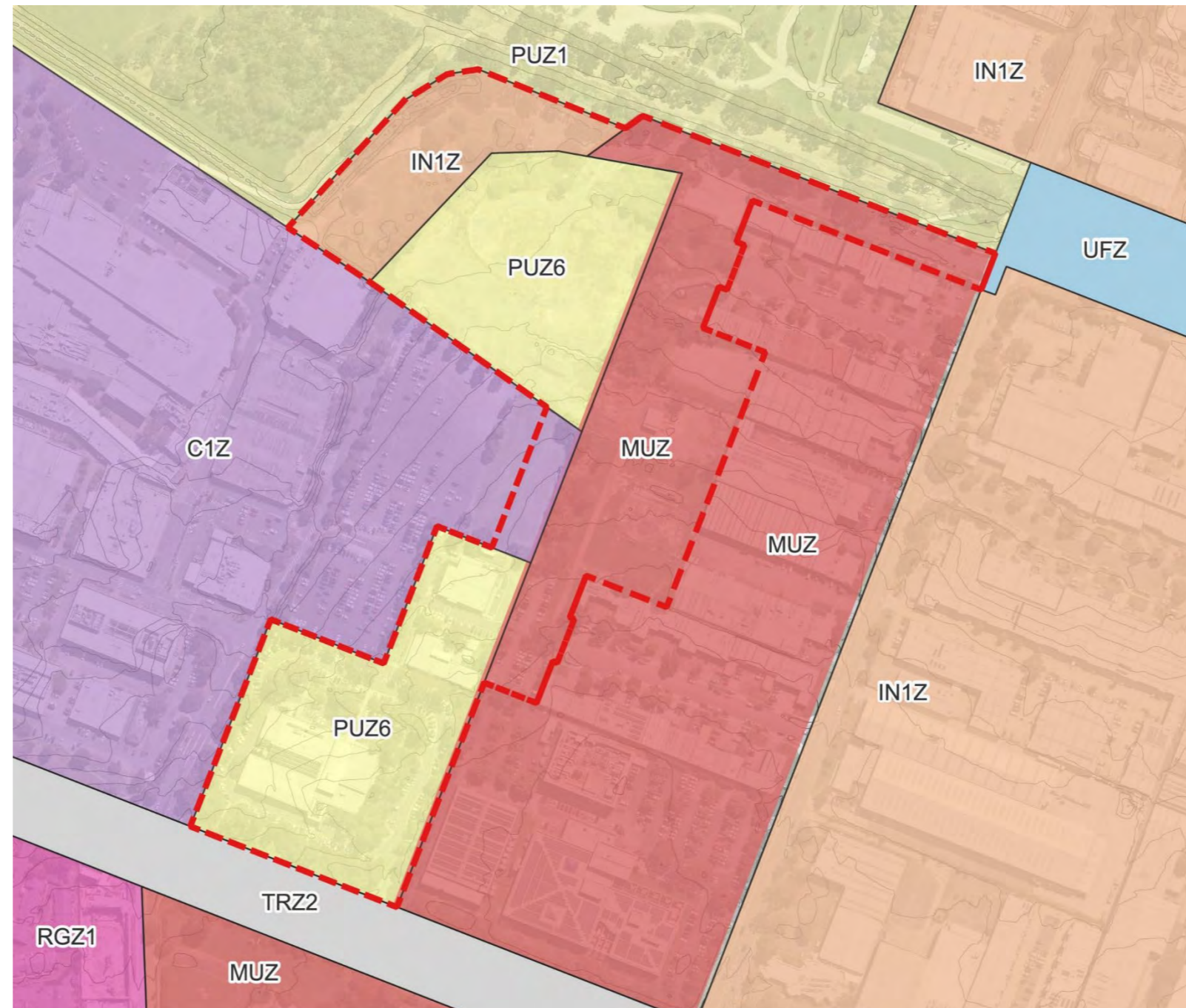
“provide a focus for public life, connecting people and communities, and will be an attractive place to live, work, and play”

“a busy and attractive urban centre which has a strong connection to the natural environment”

Planning

Zones

The Precinct comprises the Mixed Use Zone (**MUZ**), Public Use Zone 6 (**PUZ6**), Industrial 1 Zone (**IN1Z**) and Commercial 1 Zone (**C1Z**). The MUZ parcels were rezoned in 2018 to facilitate renewal of the Precinct and the Lewis Road Industrial and Commercial areas over time.



Legend

- RGZ1** – Residential Growth Zone 1
- UFZ** – Urban Flood Zone
- C1Z** – Commercial 1 Zone
- MUZ** – Mixed Use Zone
- IN1Z** – Industrial 1 Zone
- PUZ** – Public Use Zone

Figure 16: Current Planning Zones

Planning

Building Heights

The Structure Plan established preferred building height controls for the Precinct (refer Figure 17).

Preferred building heights in the Precinct range from 20m (approximately 6-storeys) in the north to 28m (approximately 8-storeys) towards the central and southern part of the Precinct. The Structure Plan also identified 40m (approximately 12-storeys) along the Burwood Highway frontage for 'feature' buildings.

The preferred building heights seek to provide guidance to developers and the community on the likely future urban form of the Precinct. They are not intended to be prescriptive or mandatory heights.

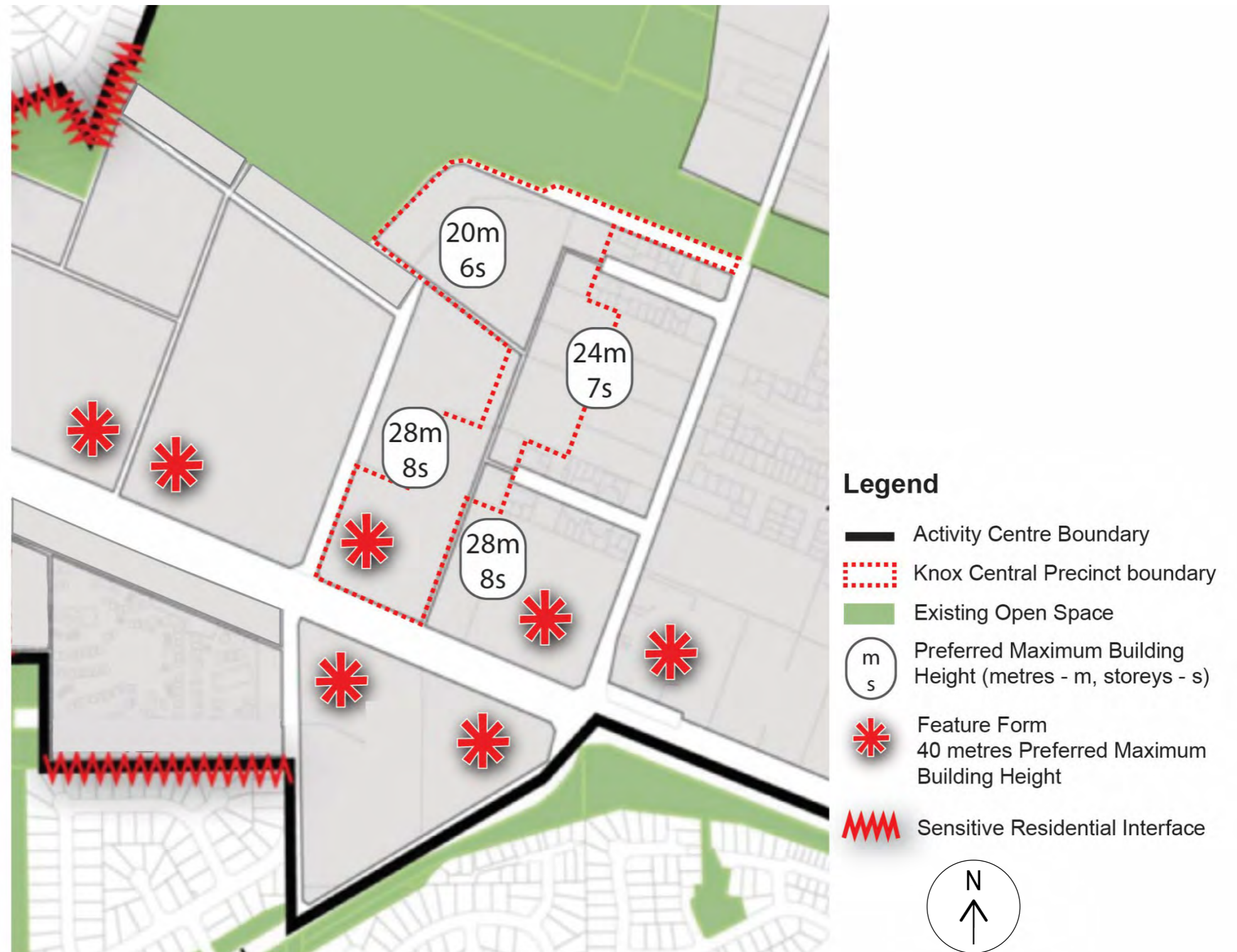


Figure 17: Preferred Building Heights (Knox Central Structure Plan 2017)

Planning

Overlays

Schedule 13 of the Design and Development Overlay (DDO13) applies to the Precinct. DDO13 has design objectives and sets out the design and built form requirements across the Knox Central Activity Centre.

A Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) covers areas to the northern part of the Precinct. Development in this area will be subject to engineering advice and detailed design.

An Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO) applies to a Site of Biological Significance in the Precinct, where there is high value biodiversity (refer Figure 18). Other areas of remnant vegetation can be found through the Precinct (refer Figure 19 on page 19).

An Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) is in place in the east of the Precinct. The EAO will trigger an Environmental Audit for the delivery of sensitive uses (such as residential) in these areas.

Cultural Heritage

There are cultural heritage values in the Precinct and these values will be protected.

A Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been prepared to assess the potential impact of the Precinct on Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Cultural Heritage Management Plan has been approved by the local Registered Aboriginal Party.

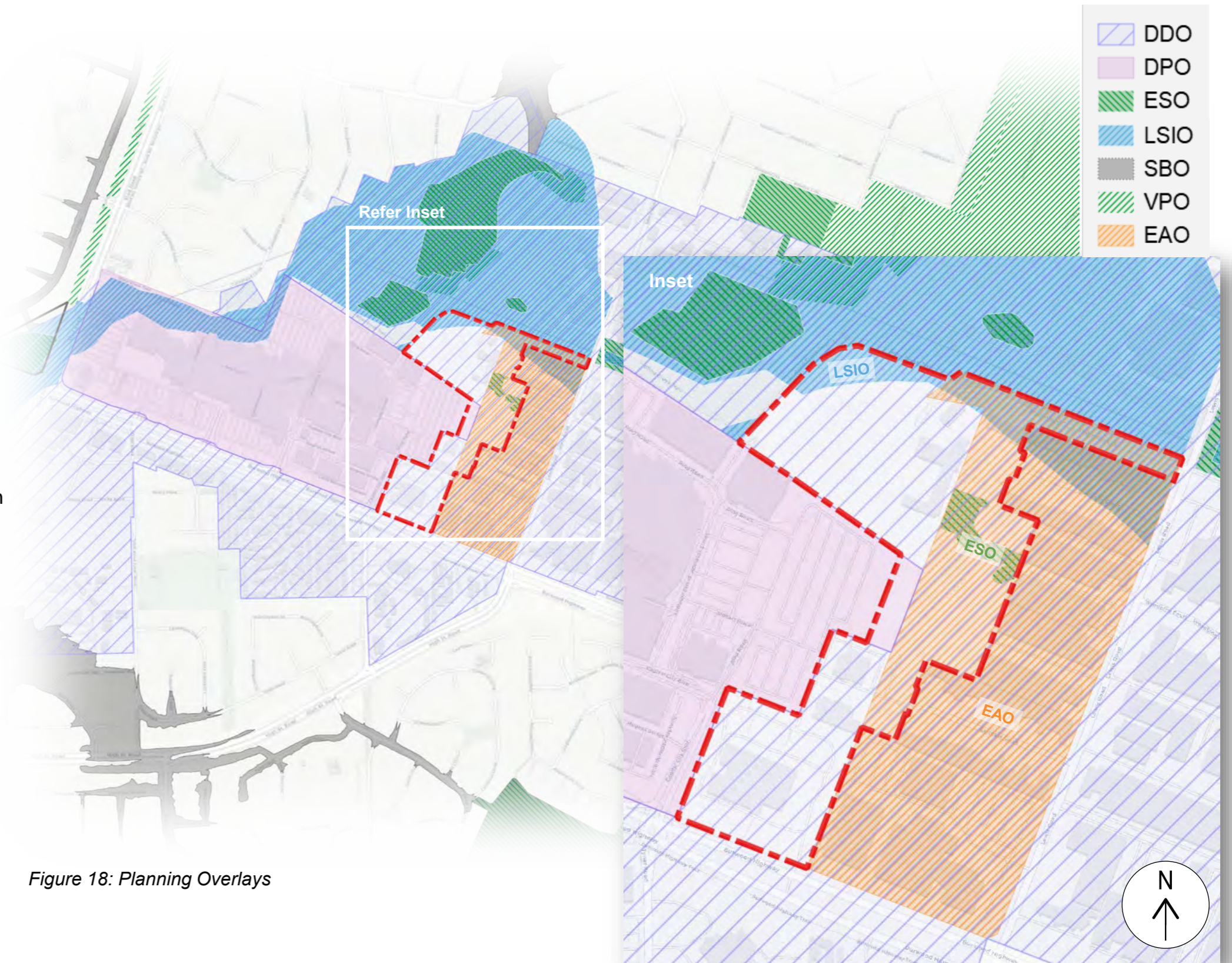


Figure 18: Planning Overlays

Natural Environment and Habitat

Proximity to Natural Environment

The Precinct is uniquely located next to significant open space assets in Lewis Park Reserve and Blind Creek.

Blind Creek is undergoing daylighting - that is, opening up the buried Creek and restoring it to more natural conditions. This daylighting is occurring alongside the development of three new wetlands, about 6,300 m² of new paths and 1,700 new trees.

Existing Tree Coverage

The Precinct has two designated Habitat Zones. The Zones are proposed to be protected. Outside of these Zones, there is generous tree coverage towards Burwood Highway as well as the north-west of the Precinct.

Topography

The Precinct is relatively flat, with approximately 10 m decrease in ground level from the south-east to the north-west corner.

There are changes in elevation east-west and north-south in parts of the Precinct including where soil has been removed due to the siting of former buildings and remediation of the former Council Operations Centre (Depot) site.

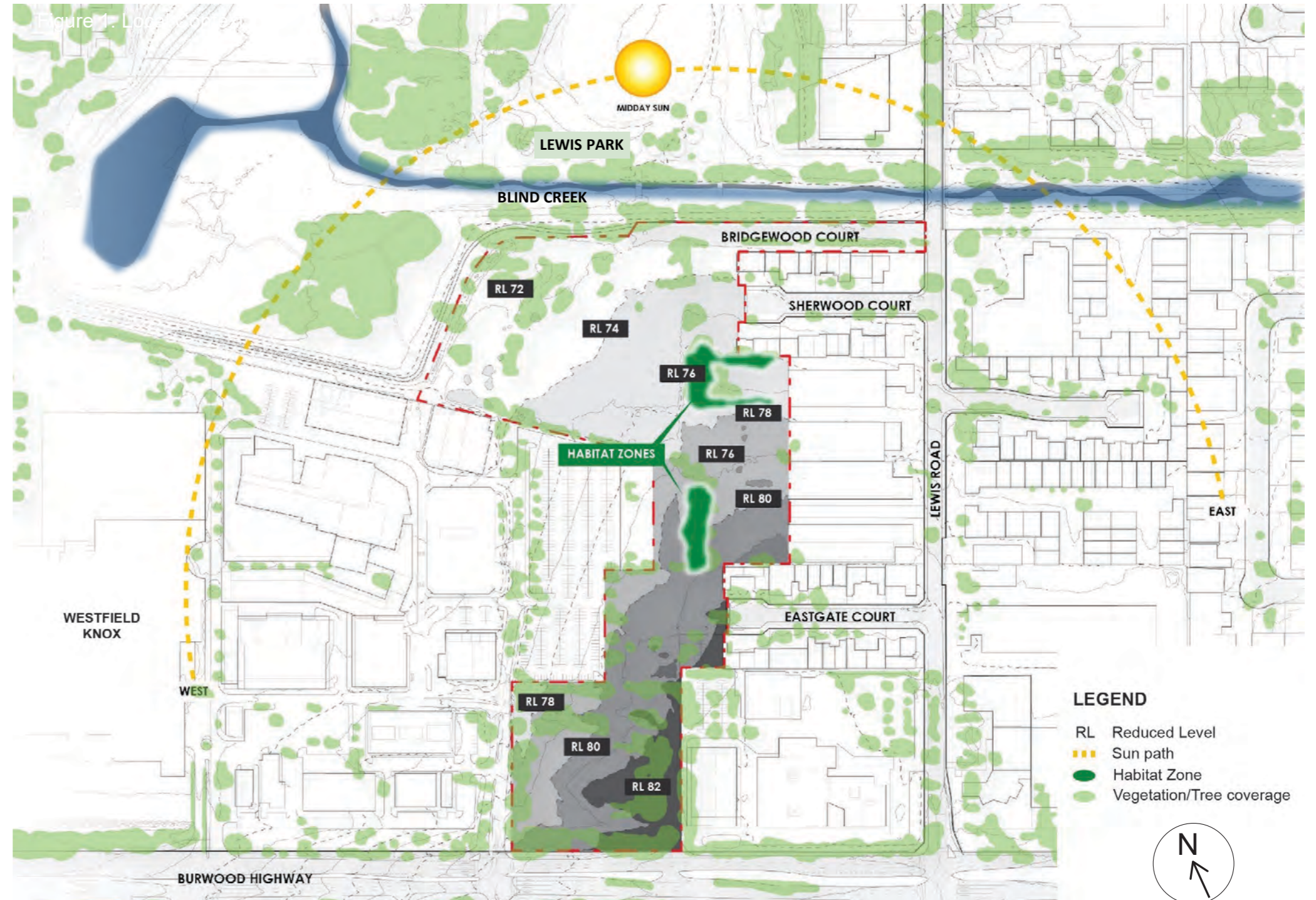


Figure 19: Natural Environment

Access and Infrastructure

Public Transport

The Precinct is well serviced by bus, with a major regional public bus interchange located at Westfield, approximately 600m to the west of the Precinct. There are no other public transport modes servicing the Precinct.

There are several bus services that stop at the bus interchange (routes 664, 681, 682, 732, 737, 738, 745, 755, 757, 758, 901 and 968) which can take commuters as far as Monash University (Clayton), Frankston and Tullamarine.

There are multiple bus stops along Burwood Highway, including one in front of Council's Civic Centre. Being located along this major bus corridor, the majority of the Precinct is within 400 metres of the Principal Public Transport Network (PPTN). The PPTN permits a reduced statutory car parking rate for future development given the proximity to public transport.

At present, the route 75 tram along Burwood Highway terminates in Vermont South, approximately 5.7 km west of the Precinct. A bus transit link connects the Precinct to the terminus. Council is advocating for the state government to extend the tram further along Burwood Highway, terminating beyond the Precinct.

The nearest train stations are Boronia (4.7 km), Bayswater (4.9 km) and Ferntree Gully (5.5 km) on the Belgrave line.



Figure 20: Existing Public Transport Access Plan

Access and Infrastructure

External Road Network

Travel to, from and around the Knox Central Activity Centre is heavily car dependent at the current time.

Primary vehicular access to the Central Precinct is via an unsignalised fully directional intersection at Burwood Highway and Civic Access Road. Retaining direct access to the Precinct off Burwood Highway to achieve a standalone road network for the Precinct is critical.

Scentre Group has installed boom gates to each of its entry and exit points, including at the southern end of Capital City Boulevard, which is Westfield Gate 5. The carpark to the west of the Precinct is a designated Westfield staff carpark.

Access to the northern Precinct is via Bridgewood Court. There is direct access to the Precinct though Eastgate Court. Sherwood Court could provide a future point of access.

Internal Road Network

The existing road network within the Precinct is sparse and disconnected, lacking any north-south and east-west connections to facilitate movement.

Infrastructure

An infrastructure audit was undertaken in 2019. The audit found that all services and utilities are readily available in close proximity to the Precinct with the exception of recycled water. Opportunities exist for localised stormwater harvesting and integrated water management.

Detailed design, analysis and capacity assessments by relevant authorities will be required to support the delivery and implementation phase of the Precinct. This will determine the precise location of services upgrades needed in the Precinct, including the location of gas, sewers, and any new High Voltage electrical substations or kiosks.



Figure 21: Existing Road Network



3. Stakeholder and Community Engagement



Engagement activity at the Youth Advisory Committee meeting, 2024

Engagement key findings

Council undertook stakeholder and community engagement on the draft Land Use Plan between March and August 2024 with targeted consultation from May to June 2024. Various engagement activities were conducted to hear from diverse voices of people who visit, live, work and play in Knox. Specific activities were undertaken to engage with children and young people.

A 3-dimensional physical model of the Precinct was used in some engagement activities. This helped people to see what the future development 'built form' could look like such as building heights and the location of open space.

Feedback was sought on:

- the high-level 'built form' concepts in the draft Land Use Plan, access and movement, and open spaces and the natural environment
- proposed Design Guidelines for the Precinct and for Open Spaces and the Natural Environment
- how public spaces could be used
- what community facilities are a priority in the Precinct
- what is important to the community through the development of the site
- community views on a community hub and future civic facilities
- ideas to achieve high quality design, amenity and environmental outcomes.

A summary of the results of the community engagement is publicly available. Feedback is summarised below.

Land use and built form

- a desire for high-quality designs and different types of housing that caters to people of all stages of life
- more affordable housing options including social housing
- broad support for higher-density developments in this location, with many aware of examples such as Burwood Brickworks, however there were some people concerned with increased density in Knox
- development that is pedestrian friendly, walkable and pleasant
- the need to avoid wind tunnel effects
- suggestions that Council investigate opportunities for different models of housing delivery including co-housing.

Access and movement

- walking and bicycle paths and better connections beyond the Precinct
- clear access to all parts of the Precinct including public open spaces
- concern about the impact of higher-density on the traffic around the area
- a public transport hub for buses within or close to the Precinct
- extension of the no.75 tram line from Vermont South or extension of the train line from Glen Waverley
- support for east-west pedestrian links connecting to Westfield Knox
- people of all abilities can move independently and in a safe way
- better use of existing ground level car parking; parking for residents and visitors should be accommodated within the building sites
- parking on site that can accommodate sporting games and events in Lewis Park
- a quality pedestrian connection from the Precinct to Blind Creek and Lewis Park via the new pedestrian bridge.



Figure 22: Engaging with people during the pop-up at Knox Library

Engagement key findings and design considerations

Open space and natural environment

- spaces that are well shaded during summer
- spaces that are green and connected to the environment
- spaces that cater to people of all ages and abilities (multigenerational)
- a mix of spaces for active and passive activities
- spaces that are safe and can be used day and night and are multiuse spaces
- a safe environment for children to play but also supports adventurous activity
- open spaces are carefully planned to create garden settings, with an open feel, given the high-density environment in the Precinct.

Future Community and Civic Infrastructure

- comments that the Council Office should be welcoming and accessible with preference towards its current location on Burwood Highway
- a performing arts centre
- outdoor and indoor settings for everyone
- spaces for the public to gather and enjoy activities like the plaza at Bunjil Place
- places for young people to gather
- places where families and all ages can come together and spend time in the area with entertainment and access to cafes/food.

Design considerations across the Precinct and for future community and civic facilities

- Universal Design principles
- Dementia and senior friendly principles
- Crime prevention through design principles
- Movement and Place framework
- Biodiversity sensitive urban design
- Gender sensitive urban design principles
- Urban Design Guidelines for Victoria



Figure 23: Engaging with people at Knox Festival



Figure 24: 'Bright Ideas' board capturing feedback from people during the pop-up at Knox Library



4. Strategic Direction and Vision

Strategic direction

The important role of the Central Precinct in the Activity Centre

The Knox Central Structure Plan provides the vision, objectives and actions for the future of the Knox Central Activity Centre and development of the Central Precinct. It includes guidance for changes to land use, built form (including preferred building heights), transport networks and public spaces, that together can achieve positive economic, social and environmental outcomes. The Structure Plan was implemented through Amendment C149 to the Knox Planning Scheme.

Objective 1 of the Structure Plan is “To enhance Knox Central’s role as the civic and public heart of the municipality where communities connect and congregate”.

The Structure Plan sets out actions to support the development of the Precinct. This Land Use Plan responds to those actions by setting out the Precinct context, design principles, opportunities, anticipated development outcomes and implementation considerations.

The Precinct aims to deliver primarily high and medium density residential development with some integrated commercial uses. The Precinct will accommodate people close to nearby employment and retail, public transport and natural amenity.

Affordable Housing

In 2024 Council adopted *Housing Changes Lives. Knox Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan*.

Council seeks to encourage high quality, well-designed homes that promote liveability, are integrated with and contribute to local neighbourhood amenity and are built to a high environmental standard.

While not expressly shown, the Plan presents opportunities for affordable housing in the Precinct.

Lewis Park Master Plan

The Land Use Plan proposes open spaces that complement and connect to the directions set in the Lewis Park Masterplan. It responds to Melbourne Water and Council investment in the naturalisation of Blind Creek, the addition of wetlands and enhancement of the natural environment through the Blind Creek corridor.

Future civic and community facilities in the Precinct

The Land Use Plan identifies land for future civic and community facilities (subject to needs analysis, business case and funding) in the middle of the Precinct. This is a different location to the area identified in the Structure Plan (Figure 12 Activity Centre Precinct Plan). Council is continuing to assess the location for future civic and community uses and will retain the southern portion of the Precinct in the short term.

Future possible civic uses identified include a performing arts centre, public plaza, community hub and council offices. Council will also assess the service needs of the future residential population in the Precinct. Civic and community facilities offer the potential for iconic anchor developments in the Precinct that can act as a catalyst for development in the Activity Centre.

To respond to the strategic directions, the Plan sets out the following elements:

- Key Interfaces
- Land Use and Built Form
- Access and Movement
- Open Spaces and Natural Environment
- Implementation.

Vision for the Central Precinct 'The Heart of Knox'

The Central Precinct is the heart of Knox.

It is a vibrant, safe and desirable destination in Melbourne's outer east for people to live, work and play. High and medium density development showcases excellence in urban design and sensitive integration of apartment living with open spaces and the natural environment.

The Precinct builds on and integrates with Westfield Knox and the broader commercial and employment opportunities of the Knox Central Activity Centre. It is the focal point for the community to gather and connect.

It is a green and sustainable place where nature can be found everywhere, and the Blind Creek is celebrated.

The Central Precinct delivers housing and a convenient lifestyle for people at different life stages and of all abilities and backgrounds. It is well connected to nearby retail, employment, sports and community facilities.

The Precinct is a welcoming place with interesting public spaces that encourages people to be active and also enables quiet contemplation.







The Precinct connects people and celebrates Country, culture, history and the arts. It is a well-loved place for the community to gather.



5. Guiding Principles








Design Guidelines

The Design Guidelines reflect the aspirations of the community. They seek to enhance a sense of place, create inviting streets and public spaces, encourage dwelling diversity and facilitate the development of key nodes, interfaces and amenity in the Precinct.

Guiding Principles	Details
 <p>Enhance the community's pride and sense of place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Precinct will celebrate and respect Country. • The Precinct will serve as a focal point for community activities, celebrations, history, arts and culture, and support community identity. • The Precinct will protect and enhance local biodiversity by connecting habitat and supporting flora and fauna. • The Precinct will be designed to be safe and pleasant during the day and at night.
 <p>Strengthen the Central Precinct as a hub for community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Precinct will be a primary hub for community organisations and civic facilities. These facilities have the potential to create iconic, landmark and anchor developments to attract and stimulate further investment. • The Precinct will provide multifunctional and multigenerational spaces.
 <p>Create inviting streets, open spaces and destinations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Precinct will have a permeable and functional urban structure with an interconnected street layout that encourages walking and safe bicycle riding. • A network of diverse open spaces will provide passive and active recreational options for the community and encourage all ages and abilities to connect and enjoy the spaces. • Development will engage with and complement Lewis Park and Blind Creek. • Safe pedestrian and bicycle movement will be prioritised through sensitive road design and a low-speed environment. • The public realm will include diverse and interesting spaces that are inclusive for all ages and abilities. • The Precinct will be designed in accordance with Biodiversity sensitive urban design principles. • The design and location of buildings within and adjacent to the Precinct will maintain winter solar access for key public spaces and streets. • Development will incorporate rear or side lane access to carparking to retain safe and attractive street frontages.
 <p>Expand Central Precinct's role as a mixed-use centre</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Precinct will provide a balanced mix of housing and employment opportunities, that increases the vitality of the centre and attracts residents, workers and visitors. • The Precinct will support economic activity including local retail, small businesses and employment consistent with a mixed-use precinct. • Development will complement the nearby commercial and retail core.
 <p>Enhance dwelling diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of housing will be provided within the Precinct with a focus on dwellings in a high and medium-density setting. • Dwelling diversity will cater for different housing needs in the community, including for people with a disability and social and affordable housing. This will support a vibrant and inclusive mixed-use activity centre.
 <p>Facilitate partnerships to achieve common goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong partnerships with Westfield Knox and other landowners will be fostered to benefit all users and encourage landowners to work together to achieve the sustainable growth of the Activity Centre. • Facilitate opportunities with the private sector to achieve the Vision for the Precinct.

Open Space and the Natural Environment Design Guidelines

The Open Space and the Natural Environment Design Guidelines reflect the aspirations of the community. They seek to facilitate the future planning for open spaces and the natural environment in the Precinct.

Guiding Principles		Details
	Linked and permeable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate clear links to key spaces that are public, pedestrian focussed, welcoming and safe.
	Canopy cover and green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the public realm provides natural shade and retains existing large healthy trees where possible and considers ecological sensitive plant species resilient to climate change. Encourage use of indigenous and native plants to create a sense of place. Protect and support important remnant vegetation and consider linkages with the Blind Creek corridor.
	Sense of place and identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Celebrate and respect Country Foster public art and meaning through collaboration with Traditional Owners and land custodians, including with First Nations artists. Create a distinct identity for the Precinct through spatial design, architecture as well as appropriate landscape character, furnishings, art, wayfinding signage and plant selection. Create frequent rest stops throughout the Precinct for pedestrians, including weather protected options.
	Sustainable initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate spaces that are shaded in summer and have excellent solar access in winter, including outdoor spaces protected from the elements Integrate water sensitive initiatives throughout the Precinct to prevent impacts on Blind Creek. Provide appropriate soil depth to enable plantings to thrive and support large trees and tree canopy. Utilise durable high quality public realm materials and furnishings.
	Retention of habitat zones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure habitat zones retain natural feel and character that are distinct from curated open space areas. Maximise the ecological function of the habitat zones as natural features while capitalising on them to provide opportunities for neighbourhood amenity.
	Legibility of urban structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a strong sense of arrival with clear sightlines to destination spaces and a legible hierarchy of parks, civic spaces, pedestrian networks and streets. Ensure high quality, consistent wayfinding and destination signage throughout the Precinct
	Active edges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activate the public realm with active edges that foster a spill out of activity from adjacent buildings. Link facilities and new buildings with an integrated pedestrian network.



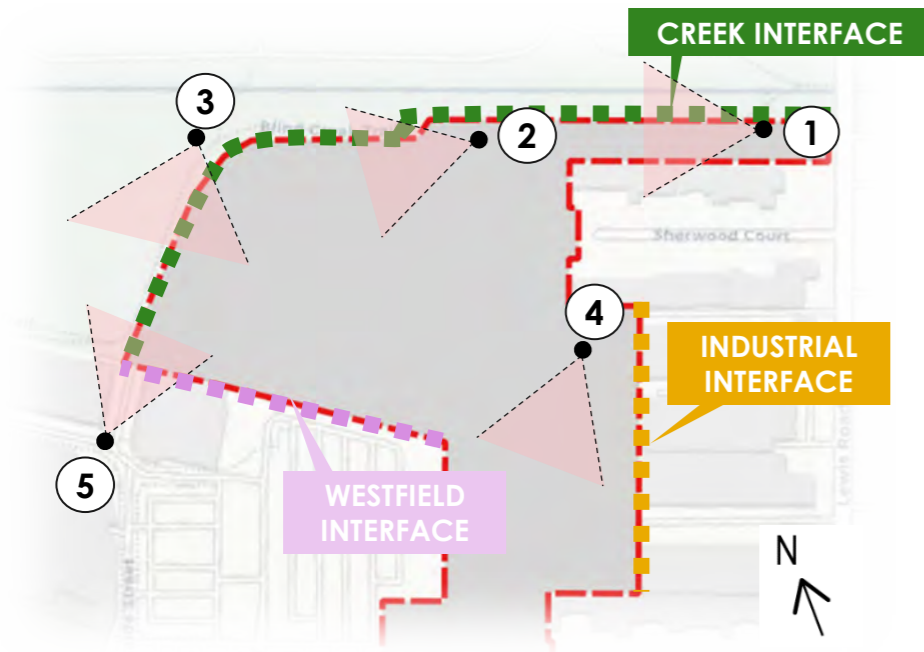
6. Key Interfaces



The Northern Sub-Precinct is accessible from Bridgewood Court and is adjacent to Blind Creek

Key Interfaces

Future development will consider these key interfaces and the opportunities they present.



1
Bridgewood Court / Blind Creek
Requires sensitive treatment. Existing road to be considered for access to the northern part of the Precinct.



2
Bridgewood Court
Strong potential for links and views to Lewis Park from north-facing dwellings.



3
Lewis Park and Blind Creek
Opportunity to create residential interface to Blind Creek and new wetland.



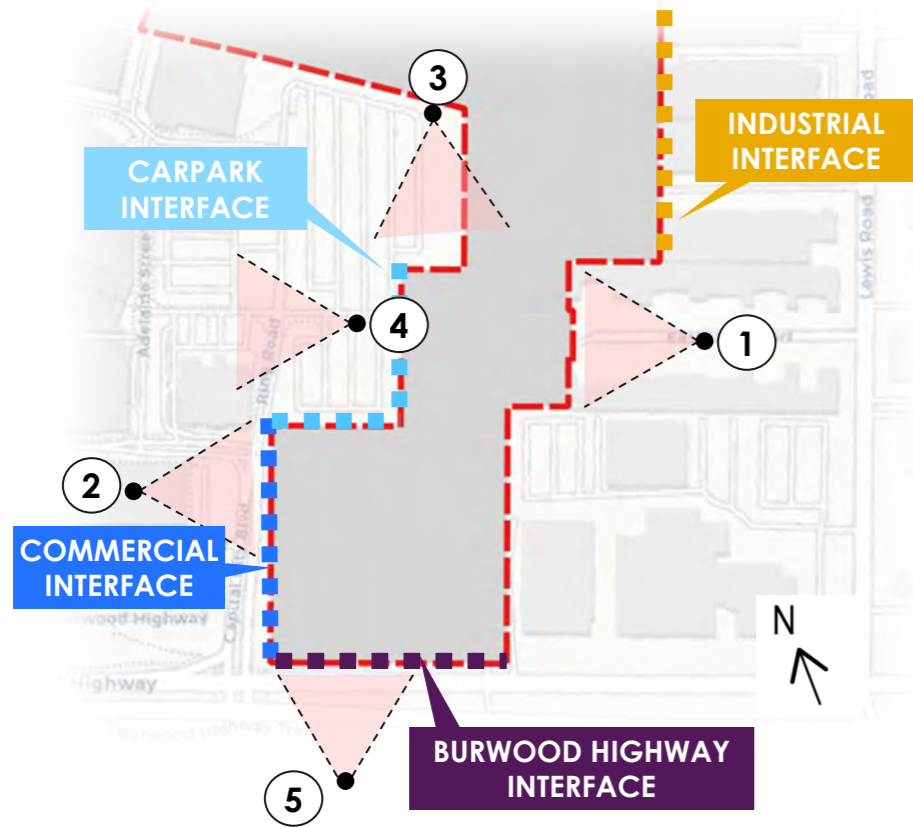
4
Existing Trees and Habitat Zones
Large canopy trees and native vegetation across the Precinct to be maintained and incorporated within the Precinct design.



5
Connection to Precinct
Key access point to the Precinct and Blind Creek from Westfield Knox.

Key Interfaces

Future development will consider these key interfaces and the opportunities they present.



Connection to Eastgate Court
Opportunity to enhance and create east-west vehicle connection to the Precinct and beyond.



Capital City Boulevard
South-western edge presents opportunity for pedestrian access to Westfield Knox.



Westfield-owned carpark
Consideration of the abutting at grade car park and understanding its impact now and in future.



View to Westfield Knox
Visual line of sight to Knox O-Zone presents an opportunity for a strong pedestrian and bicycle connection.



Burwood Highway Frontage
Burwood Highway frontage and access supports intensive mixed-use development. Opportunity for upgraded, all weather bus stop and strong pedestrian connection to access the Precinct.



7. Land Use and Built Form



Artist impression showing apartments and townhomes in the Precinct

Sub-Precincts

Four Sub-Precincts support development, built form and urban design outcomes that respond to different conditions across the Precinct.

Central Junction Sub-Precinct

The Central Junction Sub-Precinct is the 'heart' of the Precinct with access from Burwood Highway and Eastgate Court.

It provides opportunities to create strong North-South and East-West connections with potential for civic and community uses*, residential, office, local retail or other functions.

Burwood Highway Sub-Precinct

High-density, high-quality mixed-use buildings with active ground-floor uses including an option for civic and community uses*.

Landscaping contributes to a treed boulevard character on Burwood Highway.

Northern Park Sub-Precinct

High and medium density residential development fronting new and existing green parks and recreational spaces.

Activated ground floors in key nodes with opportunity for local retail such as cafes. Development to engage with Lewis Park and be sensitive to the Blind Creek corridor.

Eastern Sub-Precinct

High or medium density residential development. Frontage to open spaces that incorporate existing habitat trees and vegetation.

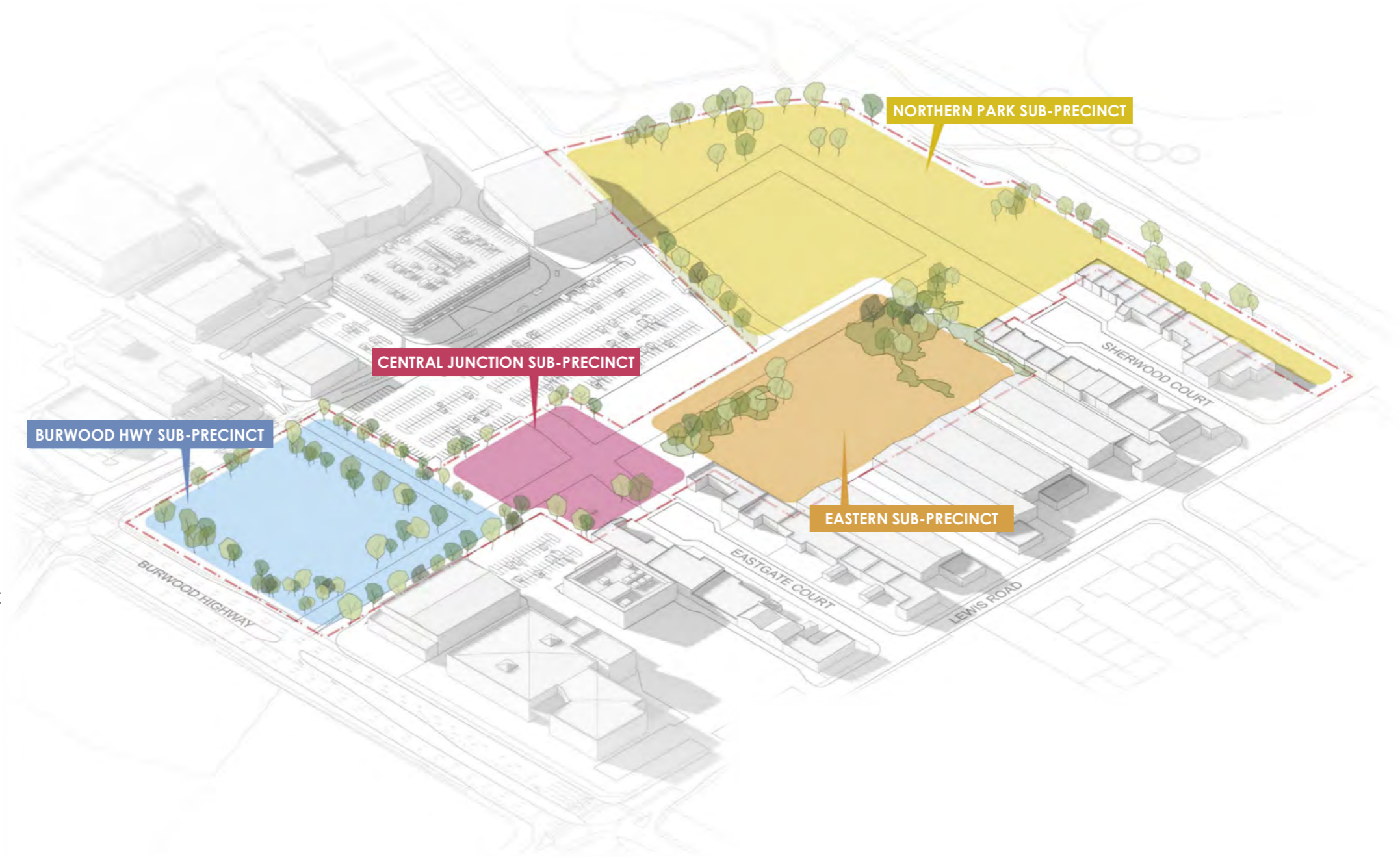


Figure 25: Sub-Precincts

* Future location of civic and community facilities has not been confirmed.

Proposed Land Uses and Preferred Heights

The figure reflects the preferred building heights in the Knox Central Structure Plan 2017 and Knox Planning Scheme and takes into consideration community feedback.

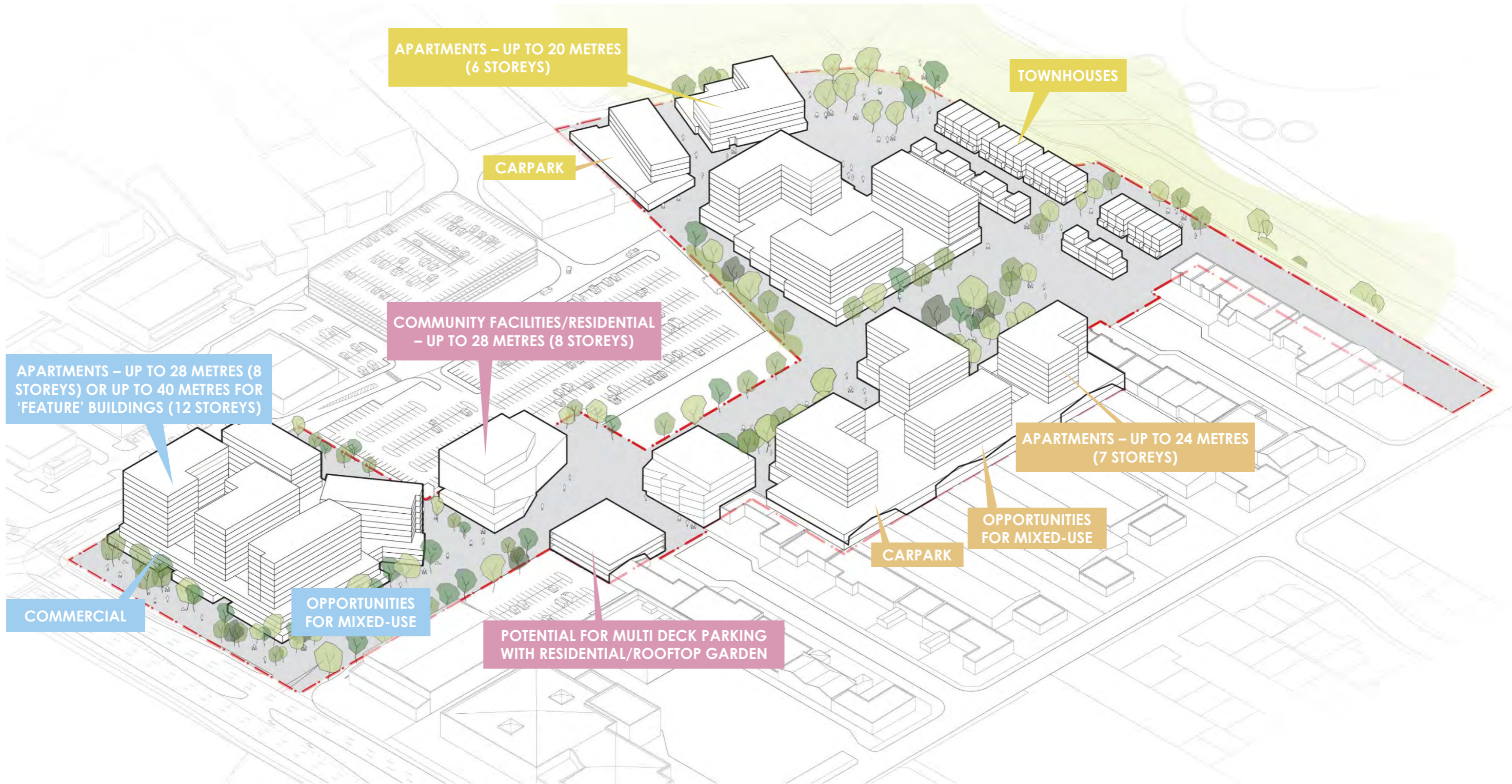


Figure 26: Proposed Land Uses and Preferred Heights

Sub-Precinct Characteristics

Sub-Precinct characteristics vary. These diagrams indicate potential 'massing' and layout in each Sub-Precinct but are not indicative of the final building configuration or the location or extent of open spaces.

Central Junction Sub-Precinct

Public node with civic and community uses* along with commercial, mixed-use and potential residential at upper level. Unique building designs drawing people into the Precinct.



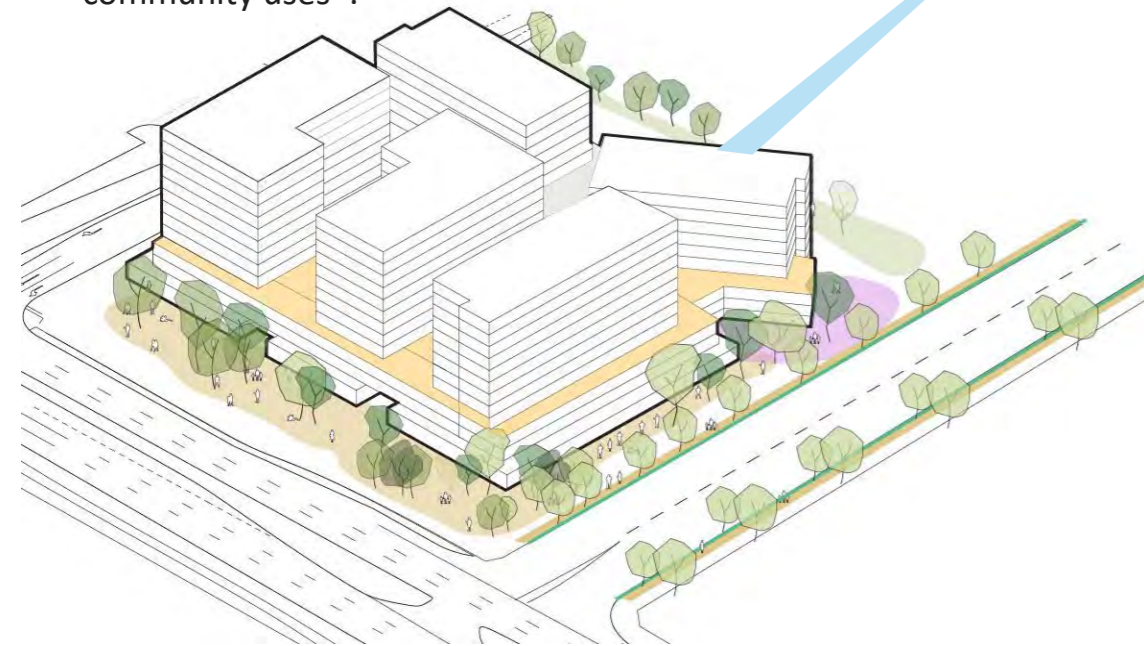
Northern Park Sub-Precinct

High and medium density residential around existing green parks and recreational spaces with lower building height towards Blind Creek.



Burwood Highway Sub-Precinct

High-density, mixed-use towers with activated ground floor. Potential location for civic and community uses*.



Eastern Sub-Precinct

High or medium-density residential with frontage to green open spaces that integrate with existing trees and vegetation

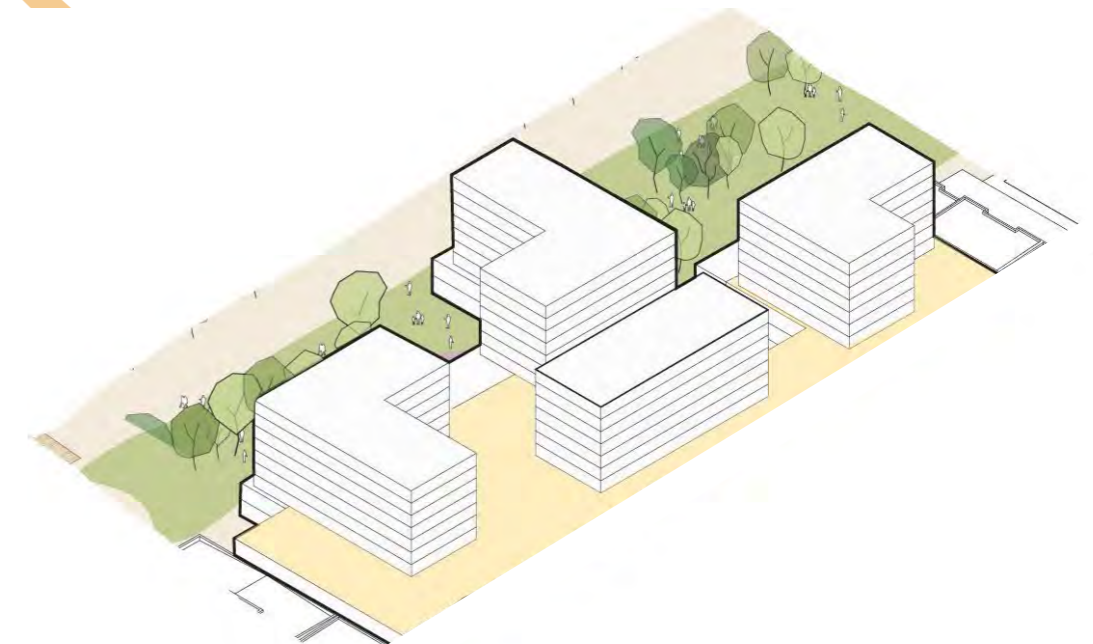
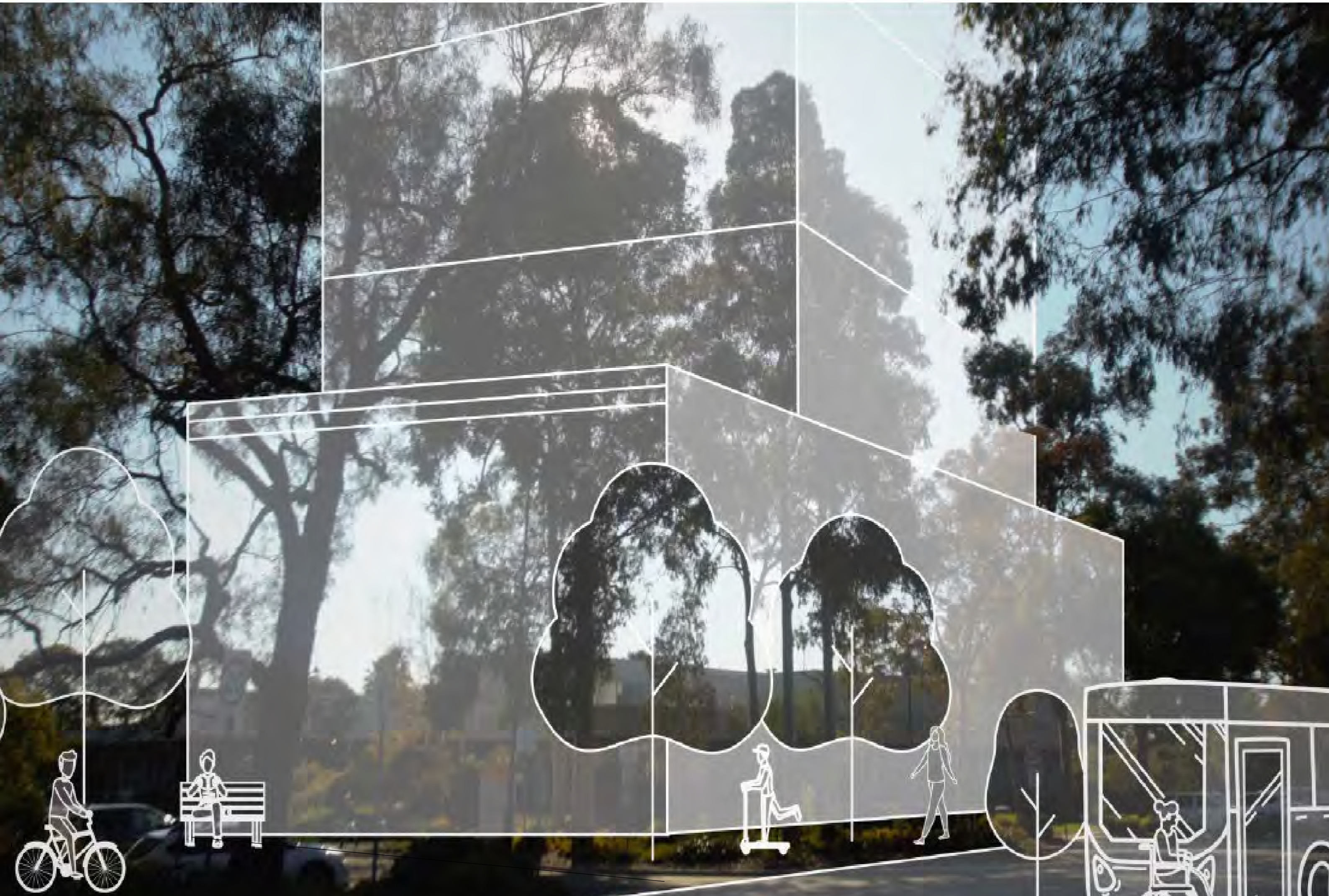


Figure 27: Sub-Precinct Characteristics

* Future location of civic and community facilities has not been confirmed.



8. Access and Movement



Conceptual illustration showing movement of people and vehicles

Public Transport Connections

The Structure Plan shows a regional bus interchange closer to the Precinct and an East-West vehicular connection and future bus route linking Westfield Knox and the Precinct through to Eastgate Court.

Consultation with Scentre Group, the co-owners of Westfield, indicates the regional bus interchange is likely to remain at the current location.

The potential East-West vehicular connection is unlikely due to the change in grade on both sites and siting of existing buildings.

An alternative proposed bus route could utilise the traffic signals at the intersection of Burwood Highway and Tyner Road. However, this would require use of internal roads on private Westfield land.

Key public transport actions over the short, medium and long term are:

- investigate an upgraded bus stop on Burwood Highway to provide access to the Precinct and civic and community facilities, close to the entrance to the North-South connection
- work with Scentre Group and the state government to determine whether there is potential for a North-South connection from Burwood Highway through Westfield Knox to Lewis Road, including for buses
- continue to advocate for extension of the route 75 tram to service the Central Precinct and development further East.

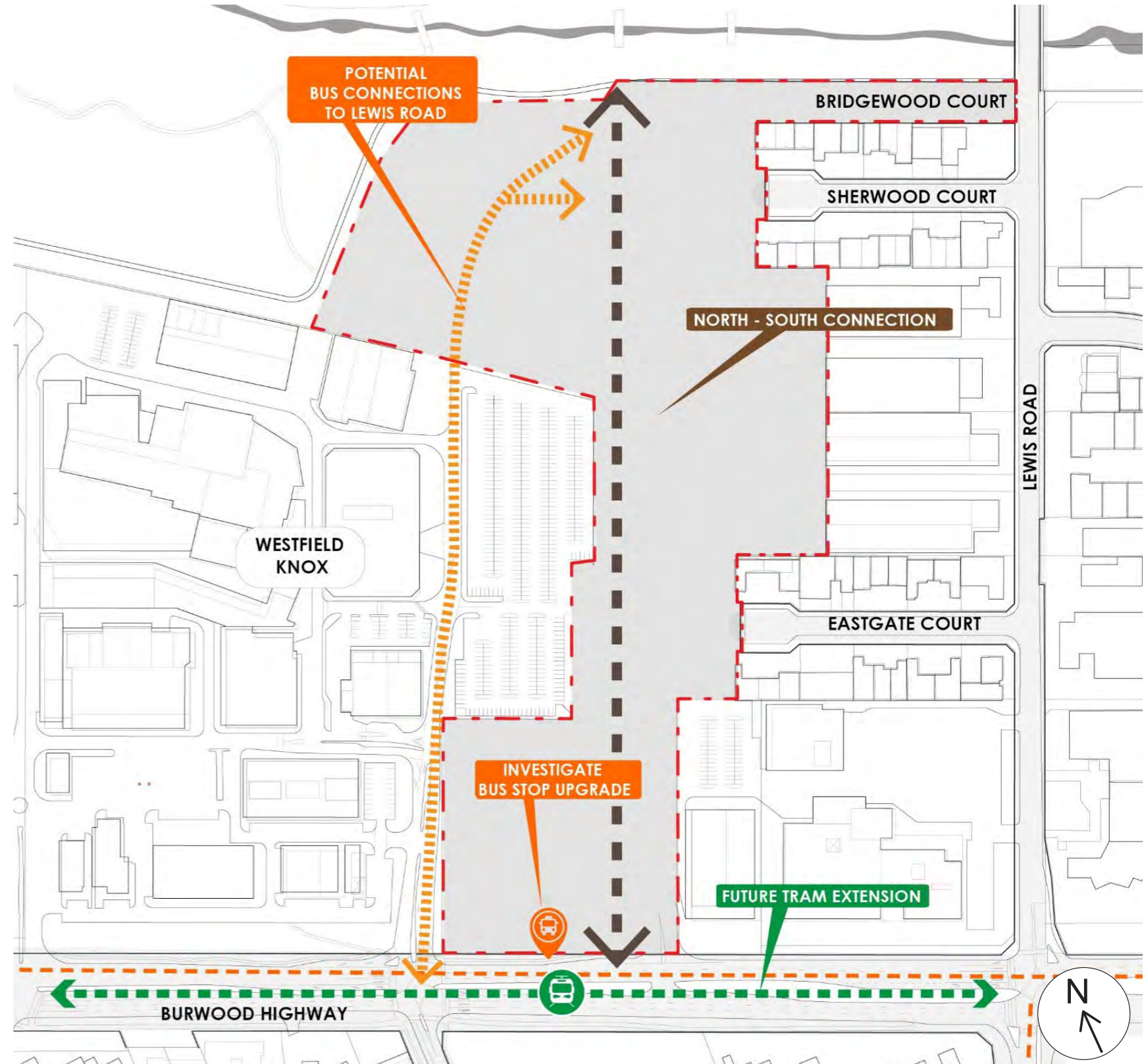


Figure 28: Future Public Transport Connections

Disclaimer: The bus connection indicated is potential only and places no obligation on either Scentre Group or Knox City Council. The bus route is a state government responsibility.

Proposed Movement Network

The Precinct will have an interconnected street network that encourages walking and safe bicycle riding. To facilitate a safe, vibrant, and interactive heart for the Precinct, the road network will prioritise pedestrians and bicycles through appropriate road treatments and speed limits. The walking and bicycle paths will connect to the key nodes, open spaces, Lewis Park, the Blind Creek, and Westfield Knox. The North-South connection is an important link to help connect to regional cycling routes.

1 North-South Connection

A connection between Burwood Highway to Bridgewood Court provides destination-based access to Lewis Park and Blind Creek. It will cater for vehicles at low-speed with dedicated bicycle and pedestrian paths.

2 East-West Connection

An East-West pedestrian and bicycle link through the heart of the Precinct connects Westfield Knox to Lewis Road, and the industrial area to the East.

3 Burwood Highway Intersection

The Burwood Highway intersection provides the primary vehicular access to the Precinct.

4 Lewis Road Access

Existing road provides access to the Northern Sub-Precinct. It may extend to provide a future bus connection between Westfield Knox and Lewis Road.

5 Active Transport Network

Connection to existing shared paths. Priority given to safe walking and bicycle paths along the North-South and East-West corridors, and connection to the Blind Creek trail.

6 Street Network

Interconnected local streets encourage walking and bicycle movement and provide vehicular access to residential buildings.

7 Pedestrian Links

Prioritised pedestrian links with access to all parts of the Precinct via footpaths, linking high-quality open space, the civic and community precinct and the Blind Creek corridor.

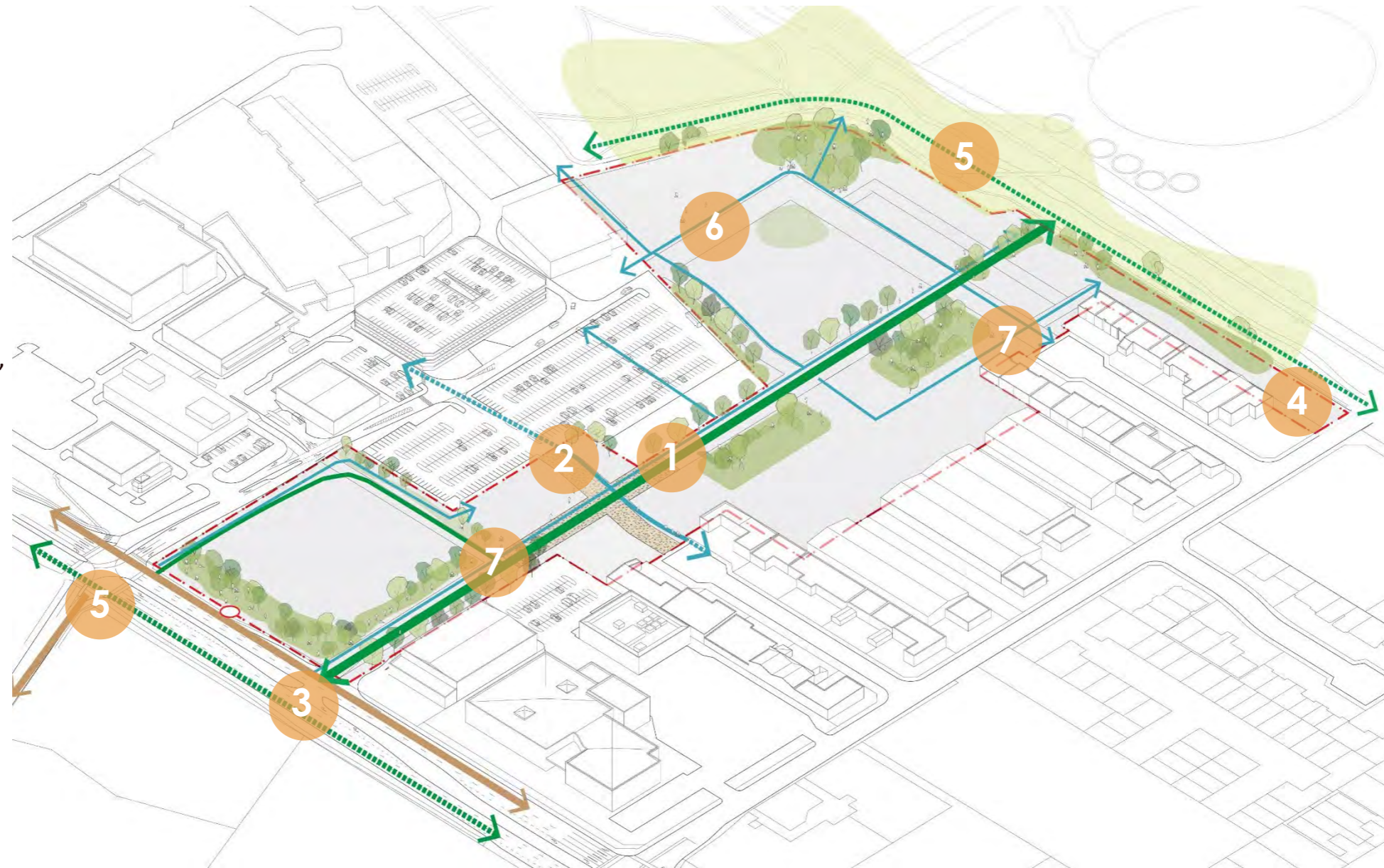


Figure 29: Future Movement Network

Indicative North-South Road Cross Section

The North-South road will be a public road and the main connection between Burwood Highway and Bridgewood Court. It provides destination-based access to Lewis Park and Blind Creek.

The road cross section illustrated below presents an option that encourages low traffic speeds to provide an accessible and safe street for all forms of movement.

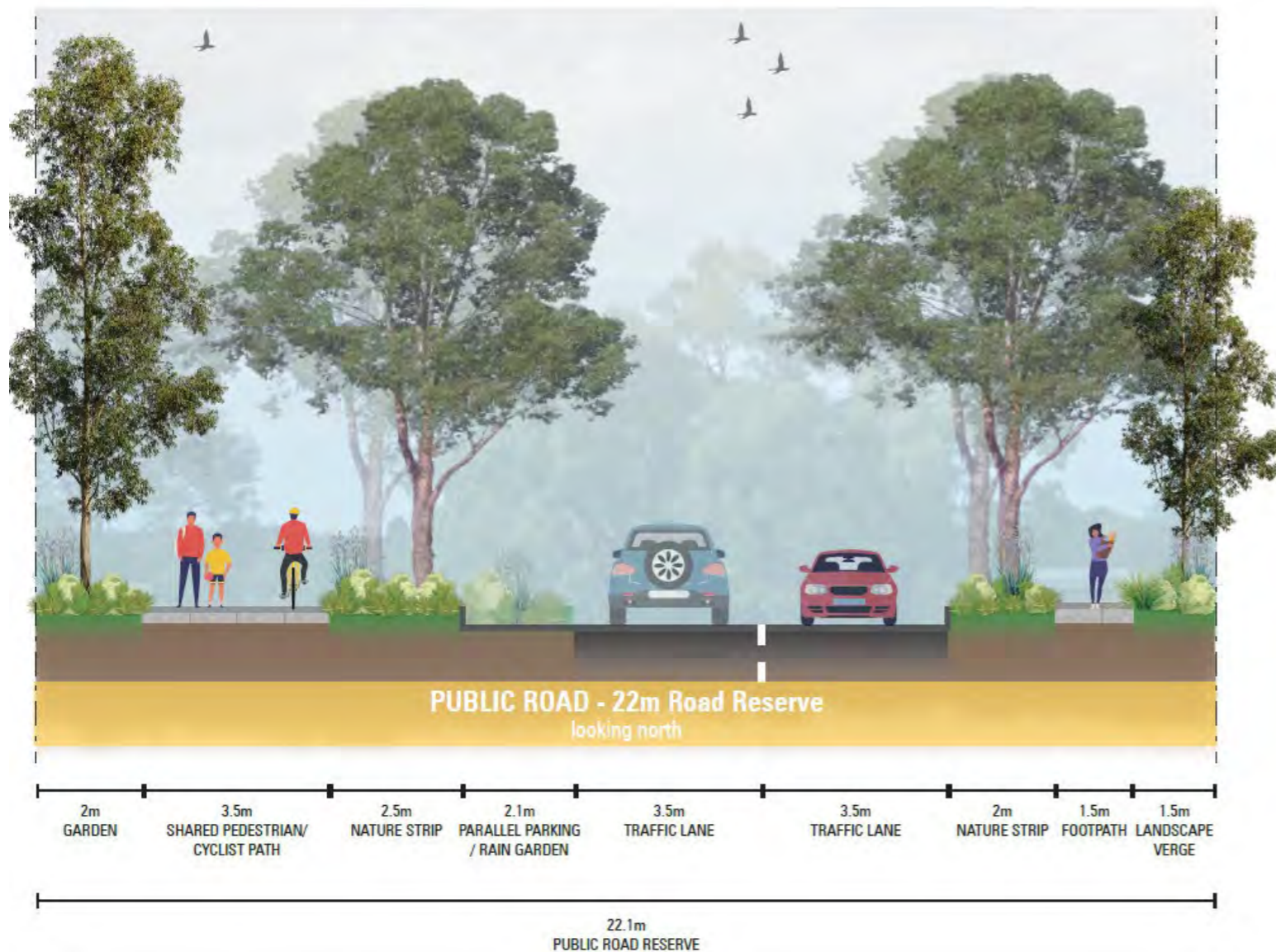


Figure 30: Indicative road cross section



Figure 31: Indicative location of the public road

Opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian movements



Figure 32: Low speed environment with dedicated two-way bicycle path and pedestrian path, Montreal, Canada



Figure 33: Dedicated two-way bicycle path with vehicular traffic on one side, Auckland, New Zealand



Figure 34: Vision for proposed dedicated bicycle lane on Oxford Street, Sydney along an active public transport corridor



9. Open Spaces and Natural Environment



Conceptual illustration showing the potential use of open space around existing culturally sensitive area

Proposed Open Space Network

Each Sub-Precinct will support high quality open space and natural environment outcomes. Biodiversity values will be protected and open space will be designed to respect existing habitat, large trees and indigenous vegetation. There are opportunities for hard surface open space and potential for water play. These opportunities will be explored as planning for the development of the Precinct is progressed.

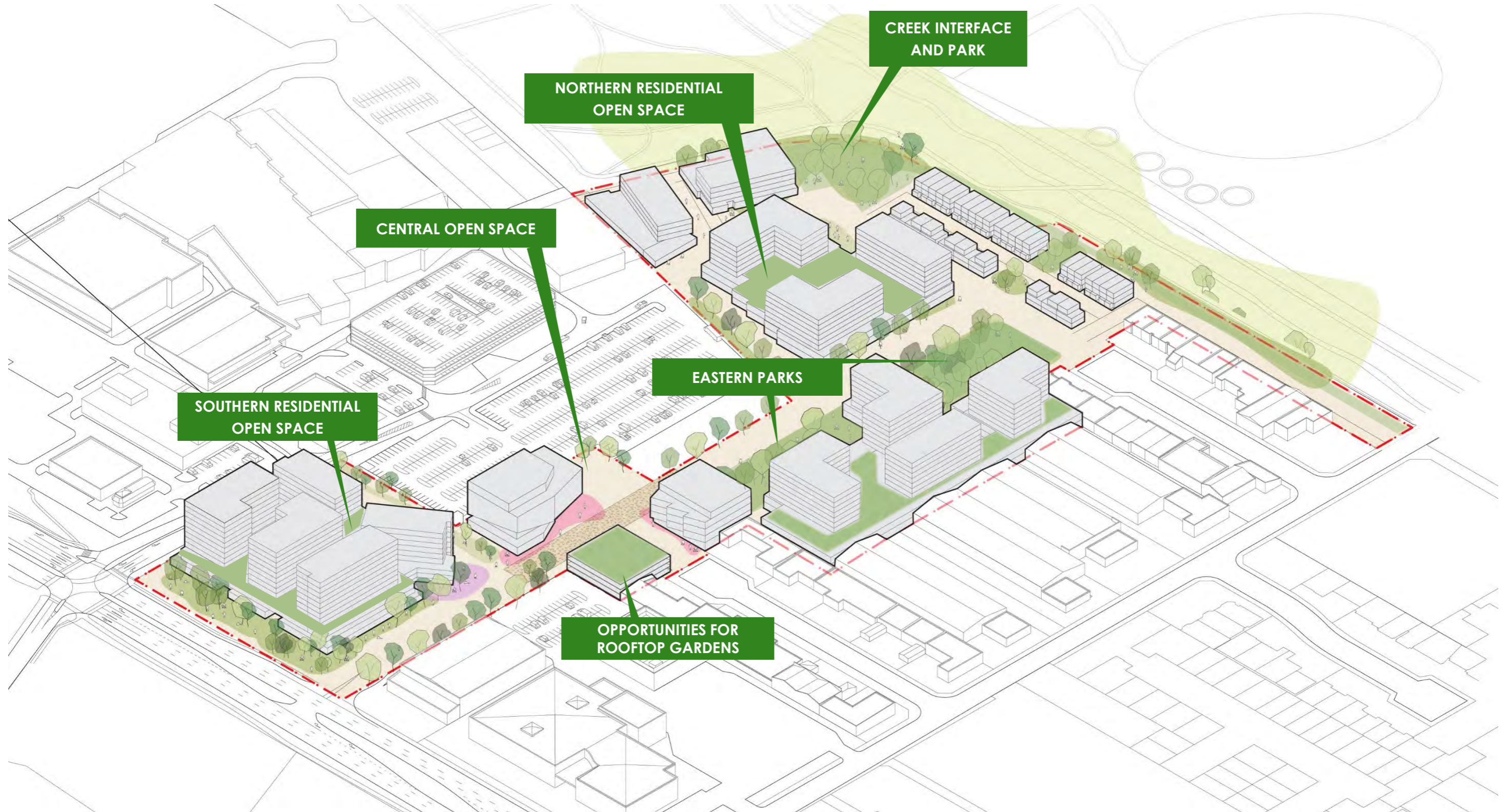


Figure 35: Precinct Open Space Network

Creek Interface and Park

Context

- Blind Creek interface
- Proximity to regional open space - Lewis Park
- Existing vegetation
- North facing

Opportunities

- Regional park connections
- Primary passive park/link
- Play spaces, BBQ, shelter, native garden
- Potential café / alfresco dining at ground floor of adjacent development
- Park could link to civic community use
- Creek Indigenous landscape theme
- Integrated WSUD
- Excellent solar access
- Attractive outlook and passive surveillance to parkland
- Adventure activities



Northern Residential Open Space

Context

- Residential / Apartment interface
- Northern location
- Potential podium landscape

Opportunities

- Shared open / park space
- Gardens, shelters, productive gardens, small play element, courtyard spaces



Eastern Parks

Context

- North-Eastern orientation
- Adjacent to central North-South connection and Sherwood Court
- Existing vegetation and habitat zone

Opportunities

- Shaded environment
- Recreation (passive activities)
- Nature play
- Public amenities, e.g. BBQ's seating and furniture
- Native garden
- Open lawn
- Circuit paths
- Integrated WSUD



Context

- North-Eastern orientation
- Adjacent to North-South connection
- Existing vegetation
- Culturally sensitive area

Opportunities

- Recreation (passive activities)
- Nature Play
- Public amenities, e.g. BBQ's seating and furniture
- Native garden
- Open park
- Circuit paths
- Protection of cultural sensitivity
- Integrated WSUD
- Alfresco dining
- Active edges



Central Open Space

Context

- Central location
- Visual connection to Knox O-Zone

Opportunities

- Strong node and meeting point
- Large public gathering space
- Pedestrian priority spaces and movement North-South, East-West
- Direct link to Westfield Knox
- Activation at ground floor
- Enveloping tree canopy
- Civic furnishing, lighting and paving
- Flexible hardscape
- Welcome to Country – civic events
- Arts events
- Potential signature art and water element
- Opportunity for development parcel depending on final location of civic and community facilities.



Southern Residential Open Space

Context

- Mixed-use/ Apartment interface
- Southern location
- Podium typology

Opportunities

- Activation at ground floor
- Flexible hardscape
- Potential podium landscaping





10. Framework Plan

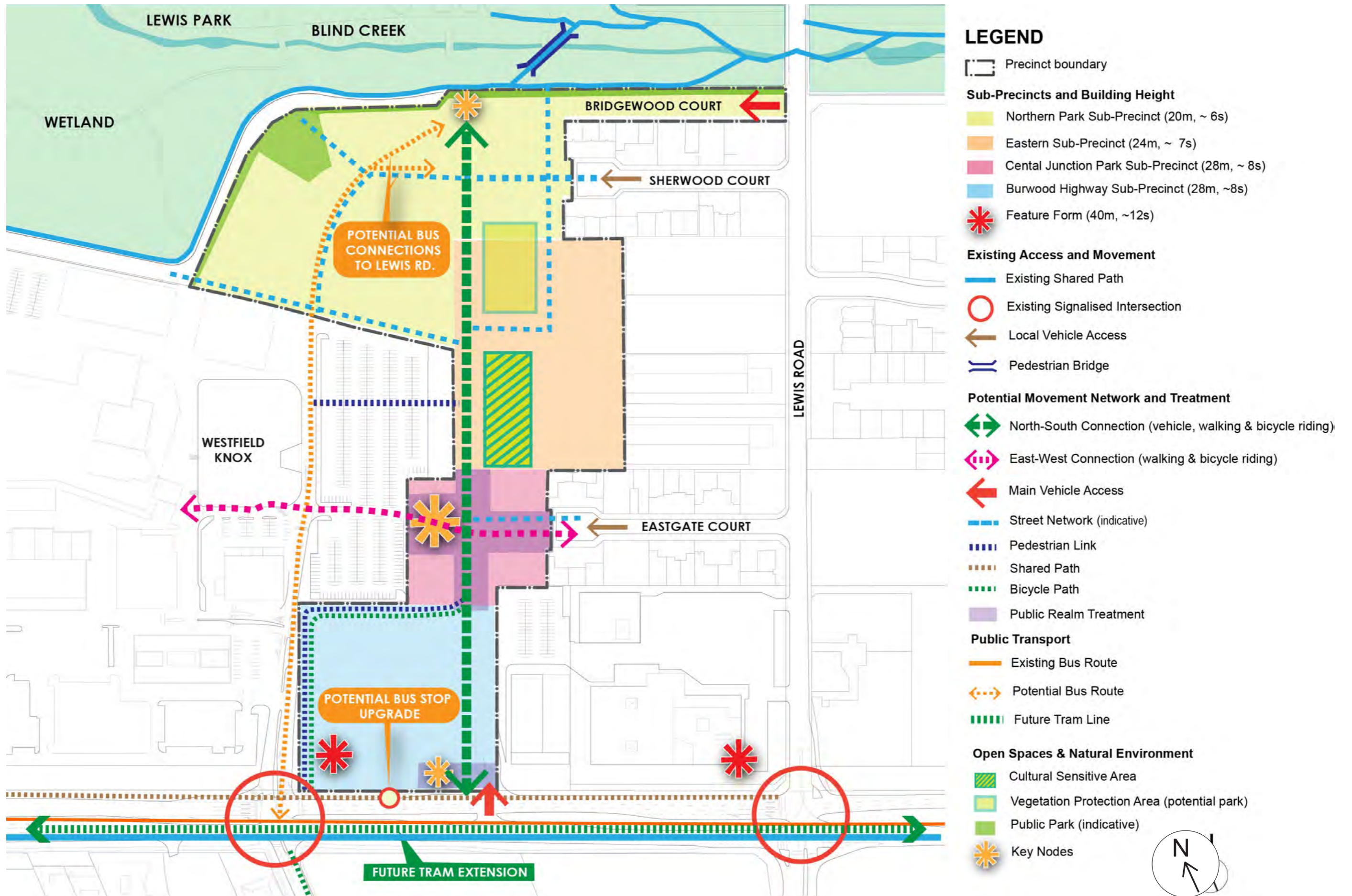
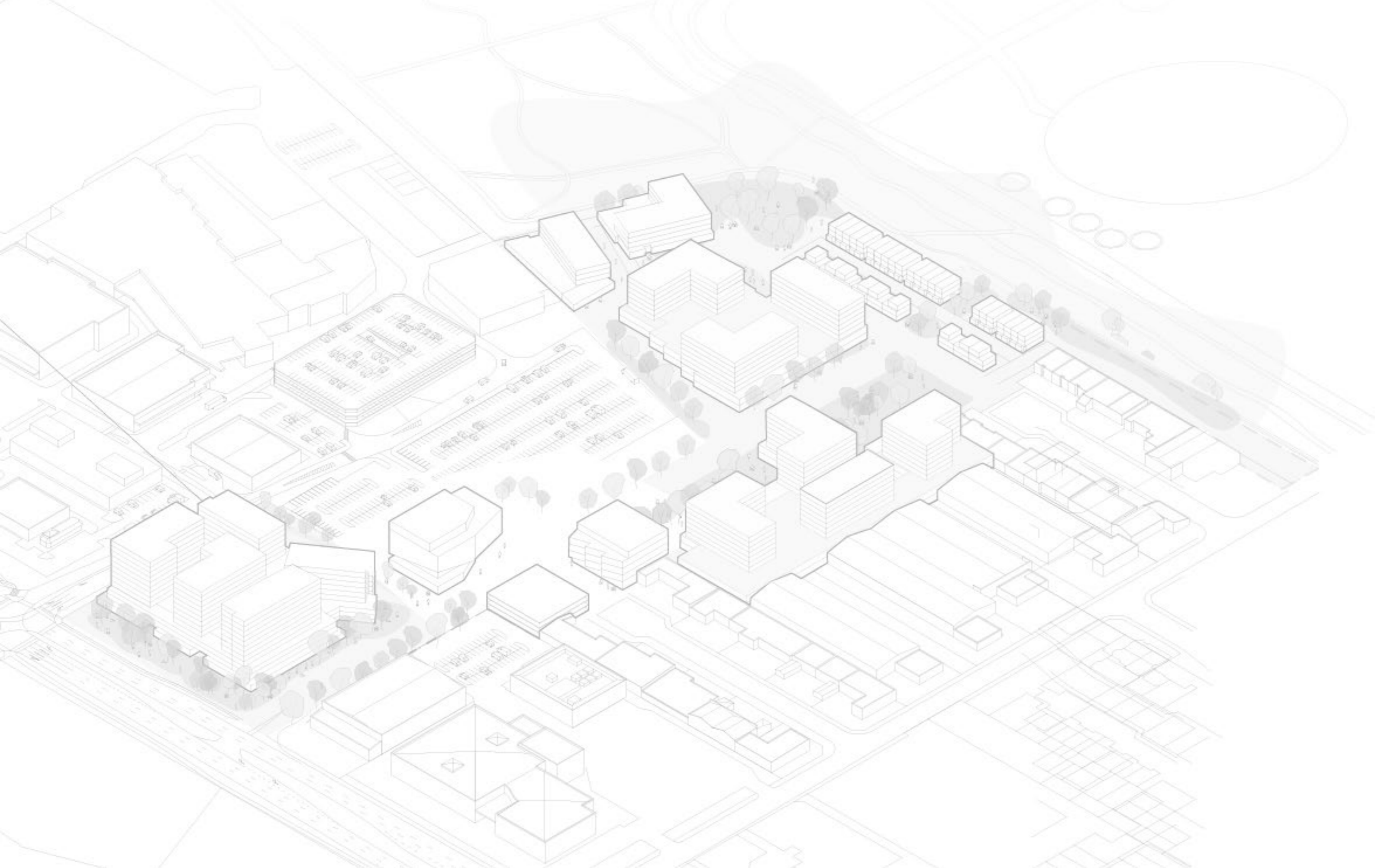


Figure 36: Central Precinct Framework Plan

Disclaimer: The bus connection indicated is potential only and places no obligation on either Scentre Group or Knox City Council. The bus route is a state government responsibility.



11. Implementation

Implementation Actions

Development of the Central Precinct will require amendment of the Knox Planning Scheme.

Key planning actions include:

- A new Schedule to the Development Plan Overlay (DPO) to apply to the Precinct
- Review of the extent of the Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)
- Application of the Environmental Audit Overlay (EAO) to the northern half of the Precinct including the Industrial 1 Zoned land
- Review of the Land Subject to Inundation Overlay (LSIO) extent following future updated flood modelling by Melbourne Water
- Rezoning of land within the Precinct.

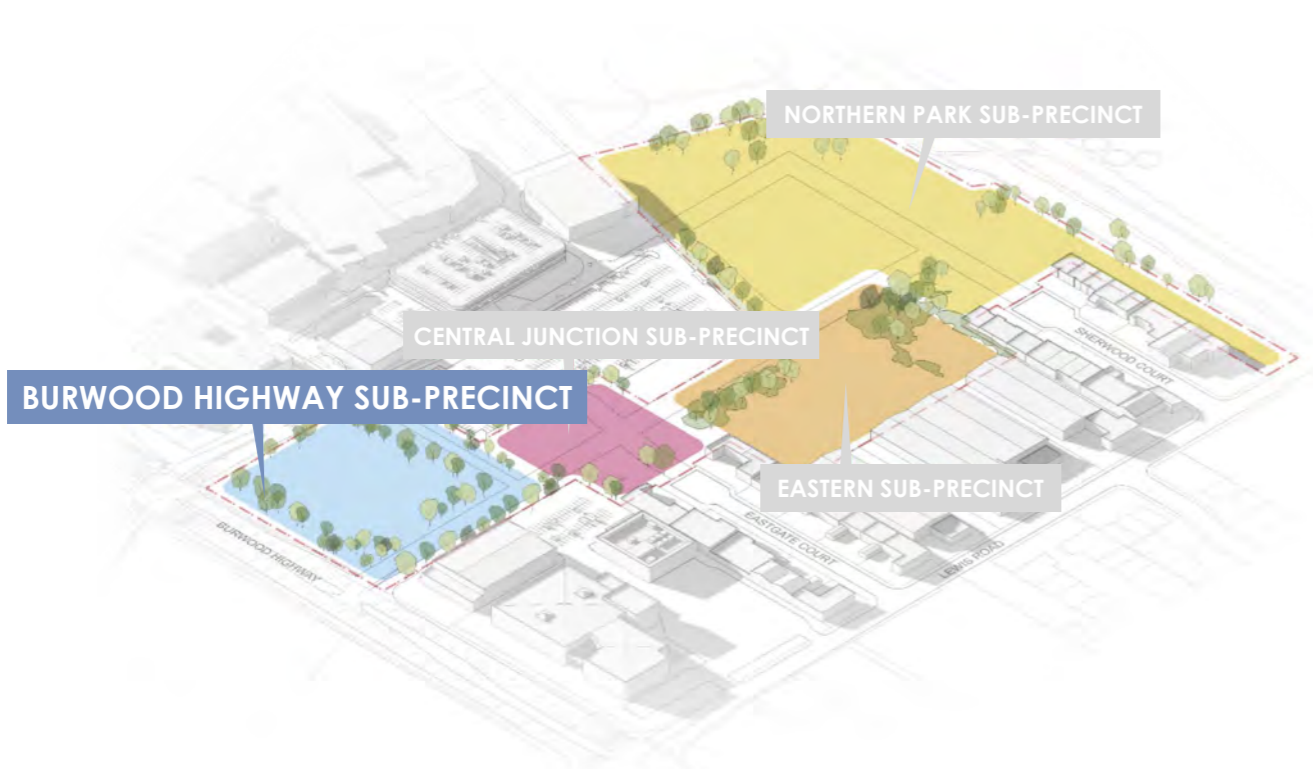
Other key implementation actions are:

- Continue discussions with Scentre Group to confirm pedestrian and bicycle connections between Council's land and Westfield Knox
- Investigate an upgraded bus stop on Burwood Highway to provide access to the Precinct and civic and community facilities, close to the entrance to the North-South connection through the Precinct.
- work with Scentre Group and the state government to determine whether there is potential for a North-South connection from Burwood Highway through the Westfield Knox to Lewis Road, including for buses
- Continue to advocate for extension of the route 75 tram to Knox Central
- Investigate opportunities for improving habitat connectivity between important remnant vegetation in the Precinct and with Blind Creek
- Confirm the location and uses in the future Civic and community precinct.



12. Appendix

Burwood Highway Sub-Precinct: Examples of Developments*

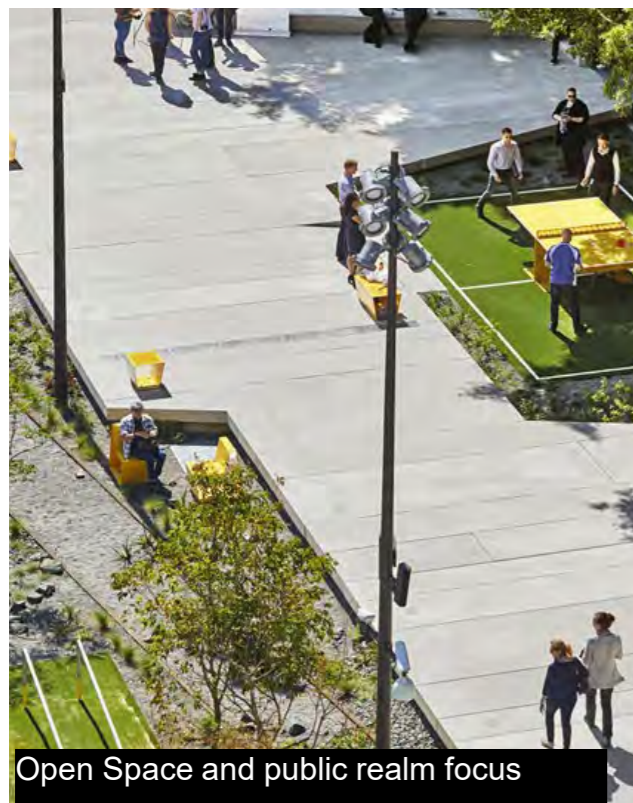
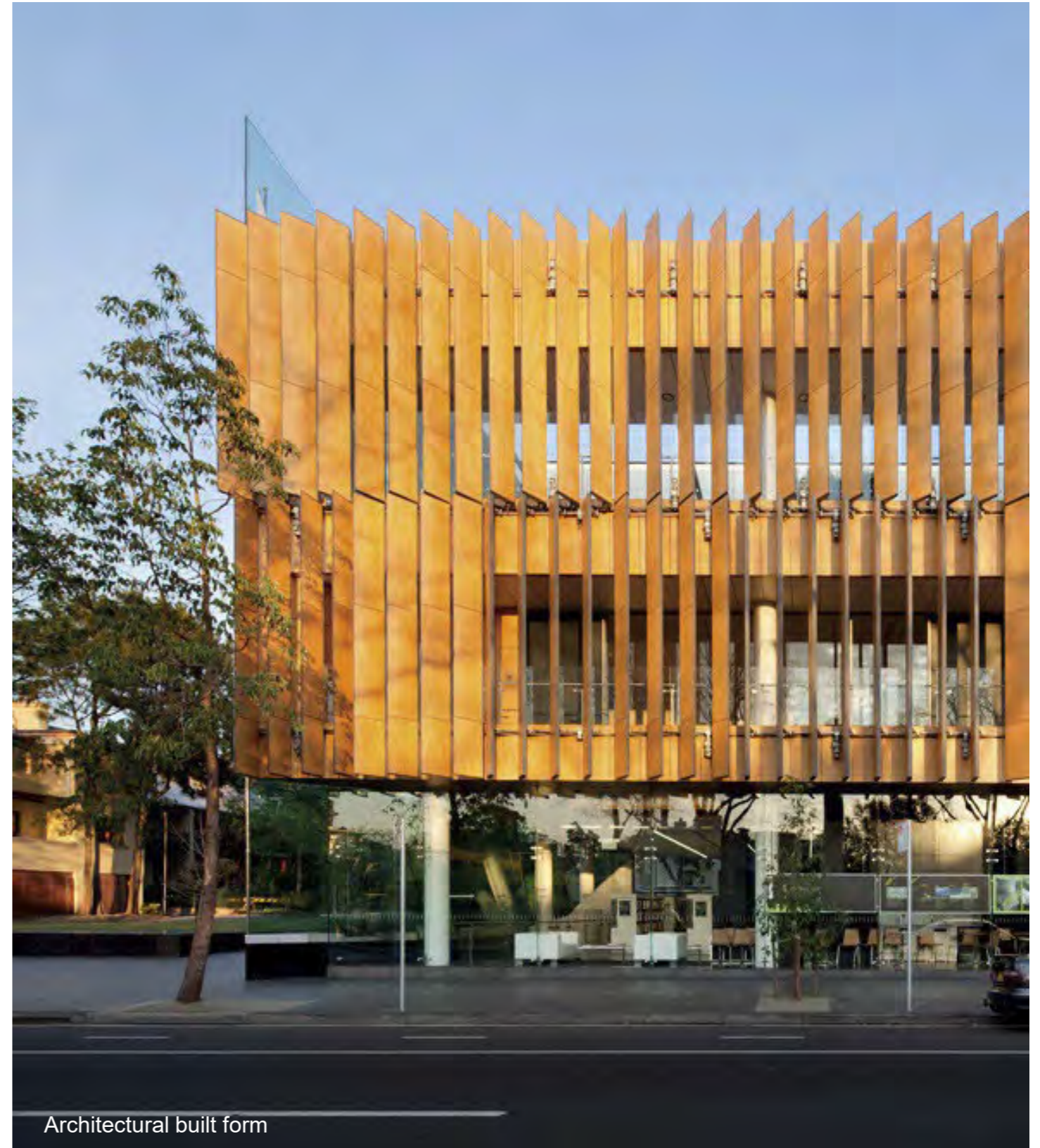
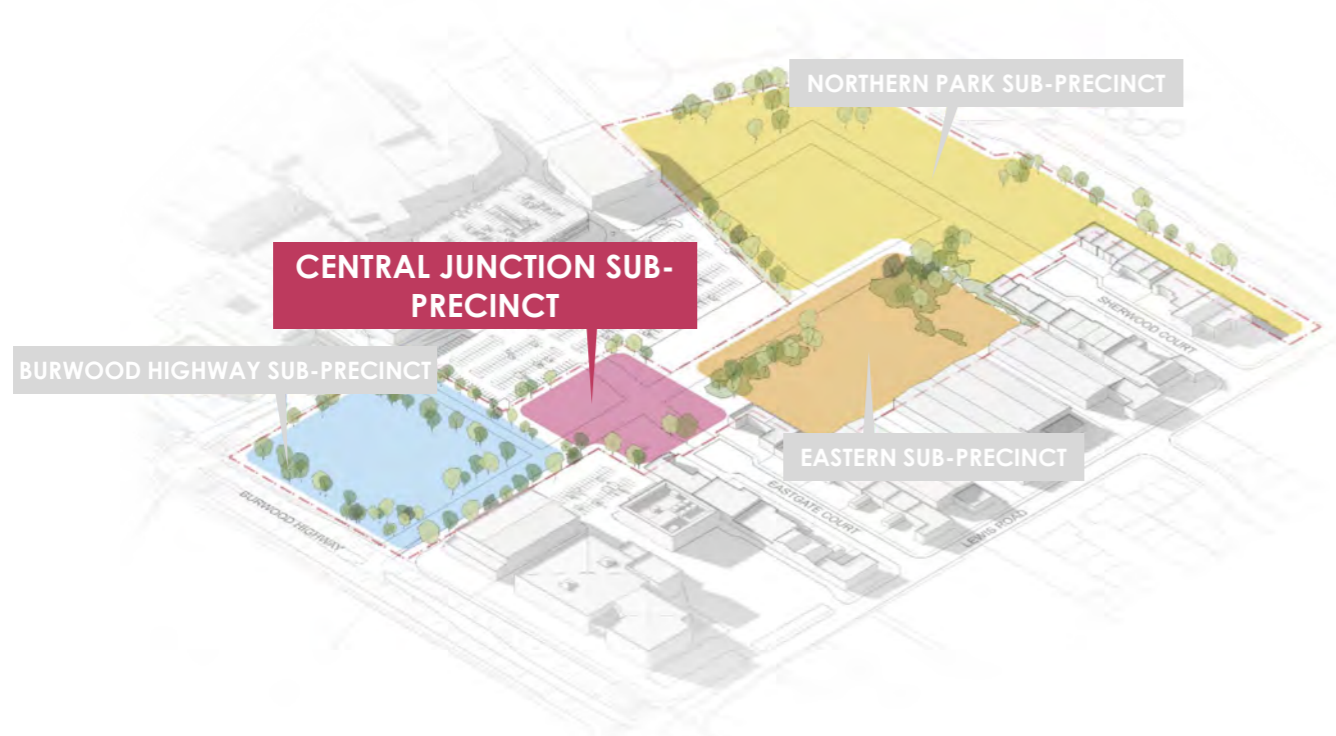


Integrated active mixed-use facade

Public realm and prominent street presence

* These images are sourced externally.

Central Junction Sub-Precinct: Examples of Developments*



Open Space and public realm focus

Local retail provides an active ground floor

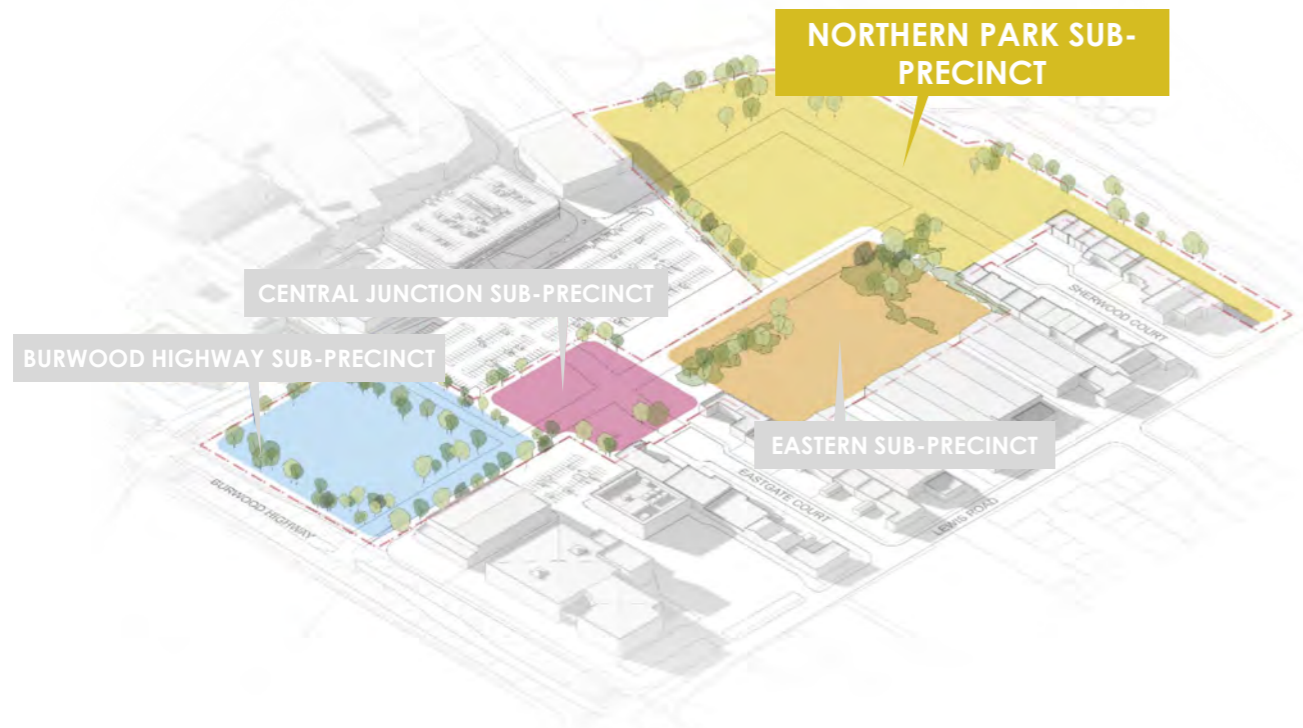
Architectural built form

* These images are sourced externally.

Eastern Sub-Precinct: Examples of Developments*



Northern Park Sub-Precinct: Examples of Developments*



Passive open space using a mix of landscape treatments



Two and three storey townhouses fronting open space

* These images are sourced externally.