



**THE DUCK RIVER PARKLANDS**  
Draft Strategic Masterplan



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# WELCOME TO COUNTRY

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Jumna ya wogal wal ya pemel jumna mingan jumna tamu.  
Ngalaringi wyanga pemal.

Ngalaringi babuna wal gnia ya pemal da lo-loley dice wara  
mooting jumna banga nolla ya.

Pemal jumna wal gnia koi mund wal tati  
pemal jumna annagar dice.

Eorah wal mullana wal mingan jumna gai gnia  
bou gu-nu-gal nglaringi go-roong dyaralang.

Nglaringi go-roong dyaralang.

Ngalaringi bou ngalaringi jam ya tiati nglaringi bubuna  
jumna. Mittigar gurrung burruk gneene da daruga pemal.

Didjeree Goor.

We were the first carers of the land, we took only  
what we needed from our Mother Earth.

Our ancestors knew how to take care of the  
land, so as to continue their survival.

We do not own the land, but we are  
charged with the care of it.

As custodians of this land we ask that all people join us  
and preserve what we have left for future generations.

We must protect the few sites we have  
to ensure our culture continues.

In the language of our ancestors we  
welcome you to Darug Lands.

Thank you.

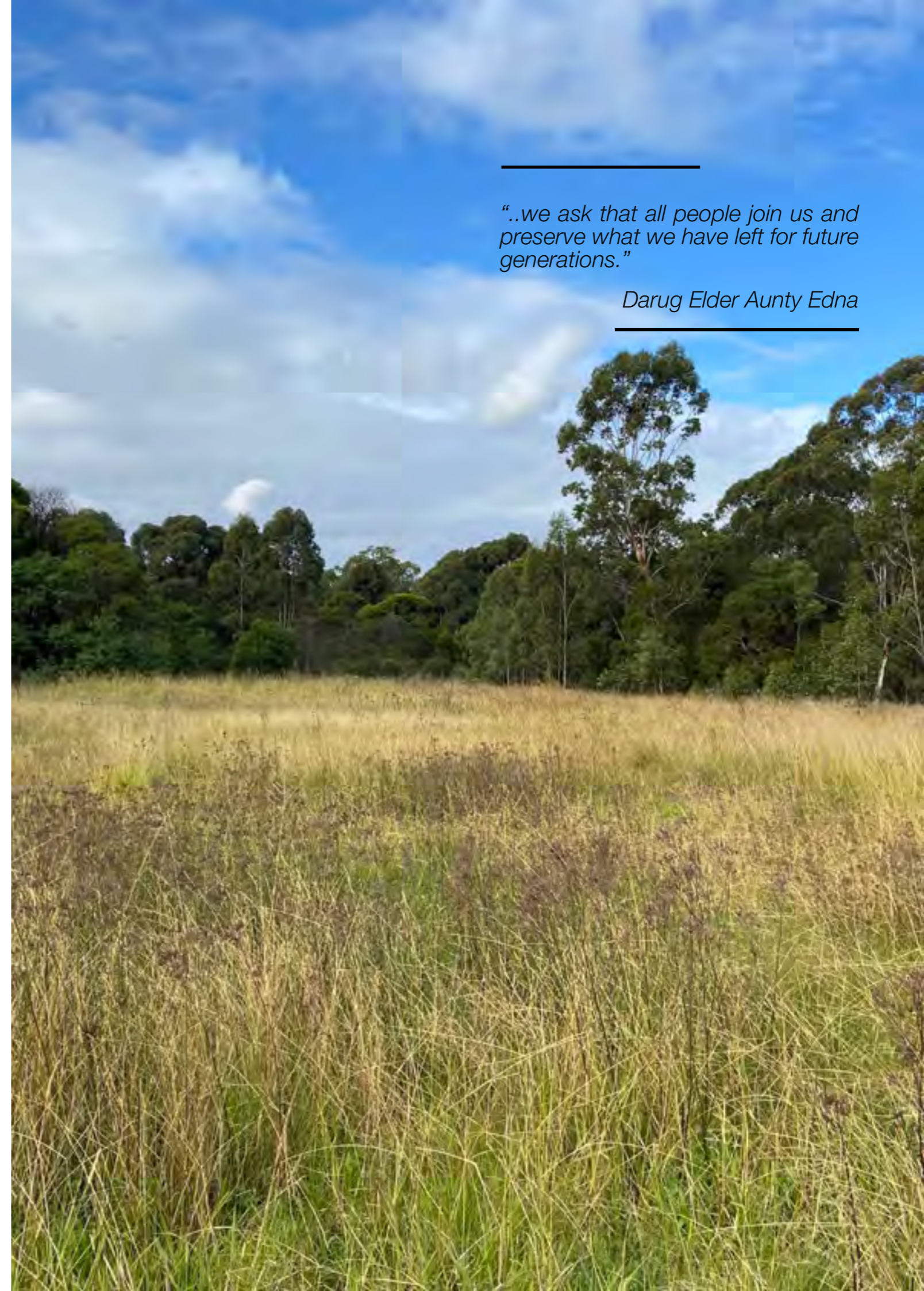
Welcome to Country by Darug Elder Aunty Edna

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*“..we ask that all people join us and  
preserve what we have left for future  
generations.”*

*Darug Elder Aunty Edna*

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# Executive Summary

This document presents the draft strategic masterplan for the Duck River Corridor within Cumberland City (the Masterplan). The Masterplan has been prepared in response to the strategic planning outcomes sought for the Duck River Corridor at a regional level and also at a local level as the “green heart” of Cumberland. It sets out future projects, ideas and interventions at regional and local levels for revitalising and enhancing the Duck River Corridor. Implementation will benefit both the local communities of Cumberland City and the wider region of Sydney.

Through distillation of background documents relating to the Duck River corridor, including current plans, strategies, reports and investigations, the Masterplan identifies three core themes of connections, community & culture, and environment. These core themes are used as a framework for guiding analysis and the development of key strategic ideas, interventions and actions at both the regional and local level.

At a regional level, the corridor is recognised as a key active transport connection and an important environmental and green open space area within the Central River City (Greater Sydney Commission, A Metropolis of Three Cities, 2018). The Masterplan draws on these perspectives and values, adopting a conceptual vision to galvanise support and promote shared aspirations of stakeholders. The shared vision adopted for the Duck River is ‘The Green Heart of Cumberland, and a vital artery of Greater Sydney’.

With this vision in mind, the Masterplan proposes a fundamental shift in thinking by rebranding the section of the corridor within Cumberland City as the “Duck River Parklands”. With the cornerstone of this Parklands perspective, key strategic ideas and interventions are proposed and developed by the Masterplan across the three core themes connections, community & culture, and environment.

The proposed strategic ideas and interventions proposed include:

## CONNECTIONS

### Regional Connections:

- **The 100km Greater Sydney River Loop**

A catalyst Sydney Green Grid project which brings together prominent links to create a new and exciting regional connectivity trail. Connecting the Harbour City via the Parramatta River to the Duck River, south to the Georges River and back north, this connection project of regional significance has potential to become a destination attraction in itself and ultimately an icon of Sydney’s Green Grid.

### Local Connections:

- The Duck River Parklands Green Links
- Parklands Gateway Transformations
- Parklands Interface Transformations

## COMMUNITY & CULTURE

### Regional Community & Culture:

- **Duck River Parklands Botanic Gardens Cultural Precinct calendar of events**

Building on the existing regional attraction of the Auburn Botanic Gardens and the prominent Cherry Blossom Festival, while leveraging off significant community and cultural transformations in the area, the Masterplan proposes establishment of a regional attraction focal point for a year long calendar of events at the Parklands. The Parklands will be brought to life through opportunities for public art, and place activation programs and events, such as monthly markets and food experiences, with high quality regional spaces of playgrounds and BBQ picnic areas providing for the community. These attractions combined with Aboriginal culture and environmental tours, will provide activation and the basis for further establishment of the Duck River Parklands as an important piece of the regional cultural landscape of the Central River City.

The Duck River Parklands Cultural Precinct will provide a unique experience connected to the river and a place for exploration and discovery. People will come to spend a day, experiencing the sites and attractions, taking the trail of the 100km Greater Sydney River Loop.

### Local Community & Culture:

At a local level, the modern-day layers of culture and diversity exist in conjunction with prominent Aboriginal history and culture, the environment, as well as the industrial heritage of the Duck River and surrounding areas. The Masterplan proposes five precincts of distinct character informed by existing features of the Parklands and aspects of local community and culture.

### Parklands Precincts:

- The Wilds

A wild and untamed environment contrasted with the surrounding industrial and commercial built form.

- Sports Precinct

Providing high functioning, quality and well organised sports and recreation facilities.

- Botanic Gardens Precinct

A focal point of cultural events for both local communities and regional visitors to enjoy.

- Wategora Precinct

Respecting Aboriginal heritage and culture and planning for the future with the evolving nature of the golf course

- Makers and Innovators

Harnessing the importance and character of development and industry in the area to create and inspire communities

and activities of the future.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Regional Environment:

- **Championing catchment based environmental management**

The Masterplan proposes implementation of a catchment based water management approach with a dedicated focus on environmental projects within the Duck River catchment. This catchment based approach will engage stakeholders and communities, within Cumberland City and adjoining areas of the north and south reaches of the Duck River, to drive environmental outcomes for the region and Parklands.

### Local Environment:

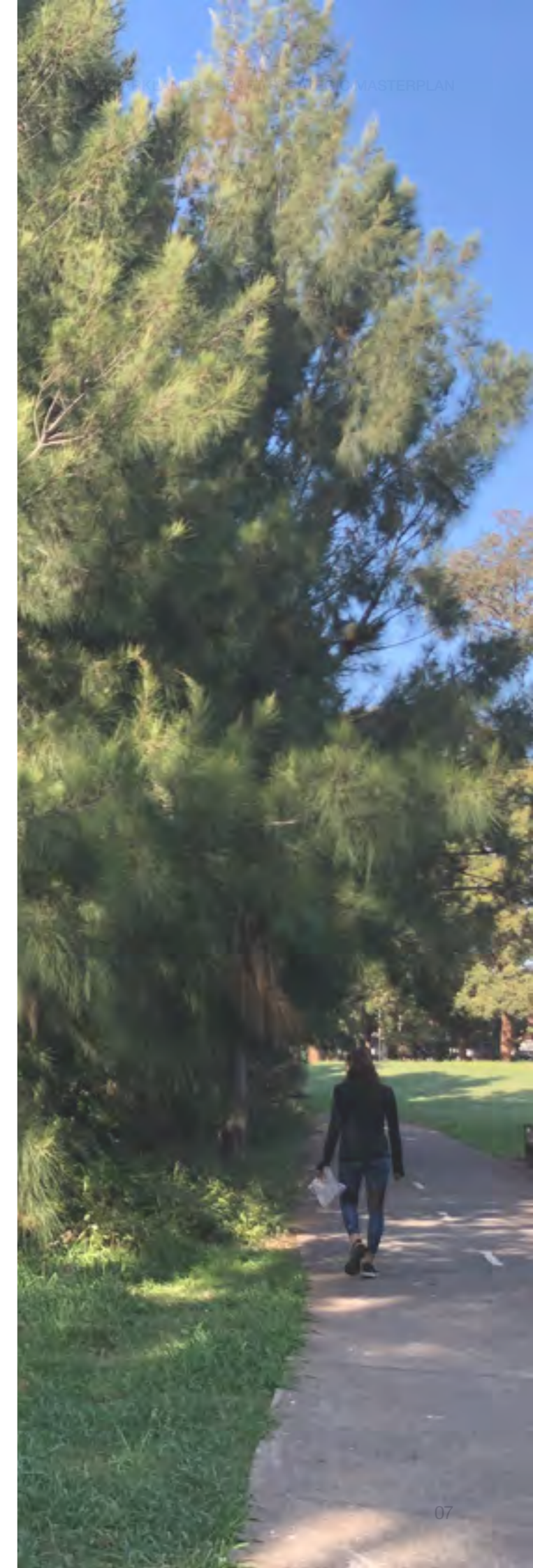
The Masterplan proposes a suite of local environmental projects for the Duck River Parklands which will improve the water quality of the river, promote sustainability that improves livability, enhance ecological diversity, and deliver environmental outcomes for the river and community. These local interventions include:

- Environmental protection and conservation (nature reserves, remnant vegetation and bushcare)
- Riverbank remediation and erosion control
- Urban stormwater management and treatment

Leading from the key strategic ideas and interventions the Masterplan outlines implementation and action through identifying:

- catalyst projects for implementation over a four year planning timeline which are achievable within Council budgets and other mechanisms such as state level funding schemes.
- longer term projects which can be embarked upon over a 5 to 10 year, and 10 year plus planning horizon towards a 2040 future and beyond.

The Masterplan provides an exciting opportunity for Federal, State and Local government collaboration that will benefit both Cumberland’s community and visitors from beyond the Local Government Area. The implementation of the proposed projects





**1.0**  
INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Project Background

The Duck River previously formed the boundary between former Council's Auburn and Parramatta, and since the establishment of Cumberland City Council through amalgamation in 2016, it has been high on the agenda of the newly formed Council. From 2016 onward, Cumberland City Council has affirmed their commitment to the revitalisation of the Duck River and have envisioned a masterplan for realisation of stakeholder visions and priorities at both regional and local levels. While the Duck River corridor extends for over 10km from its mouth at the Parramatta River in the north, to a concrete channel and pipe system in the south towards Bankstown, the core focus for Cumberland City Council is the approximately 4.5km long central section of the Duck River corridor within Cumberland City Council.

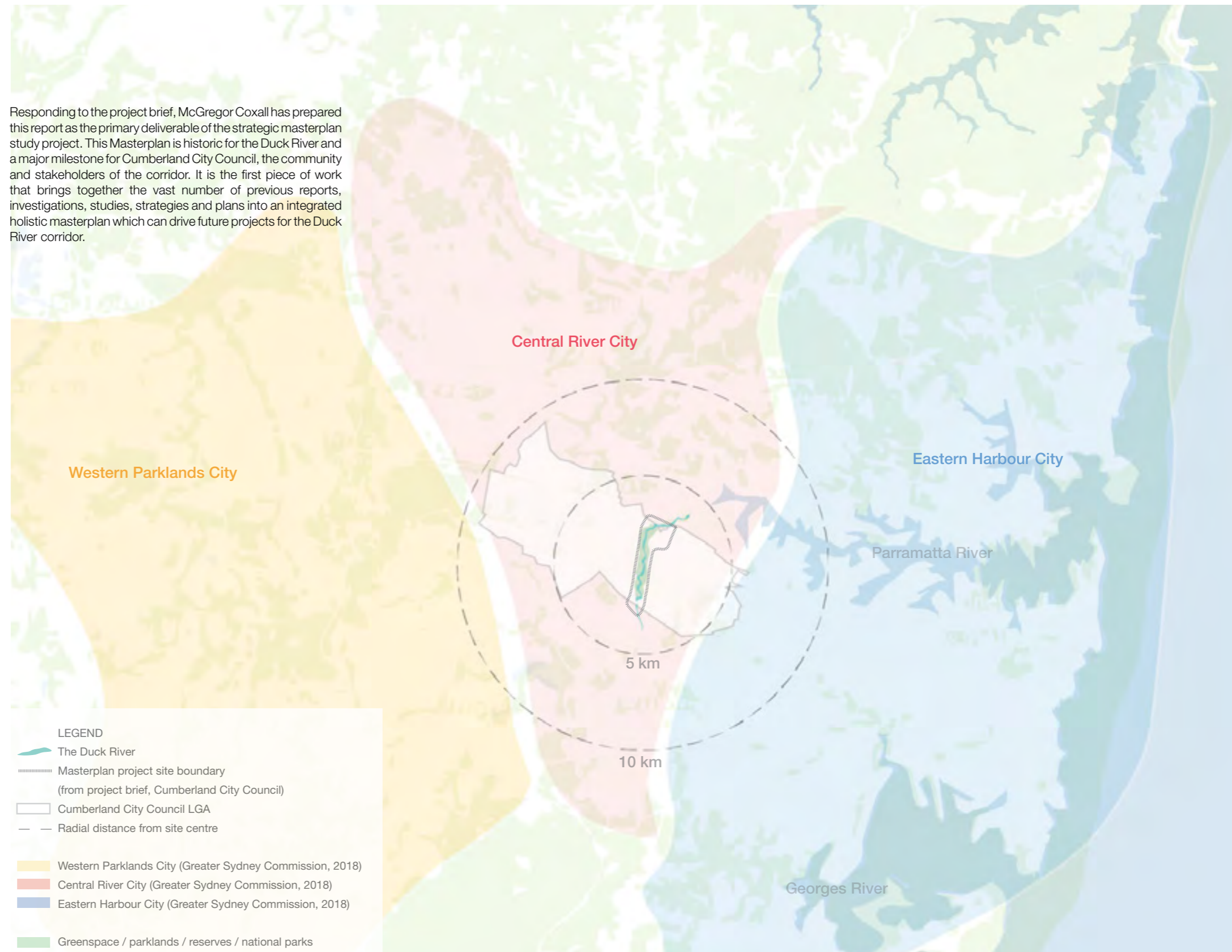
Following a public tender process commenced in May 2019, and a subsequent revised project brief in March 2020, McGregor Coxall was engaged to prepare a visionary strategic masterplan to guide the transformation and management of the Duck River Corridor (Duck River Corridor Study Brief, March 2020). Objectives outlined within the project brief for the masterplan study included to:

- Identify and embrace the environmental, social, cultural and economic attributes of this significant natural resource centred on the Duck River,
- Identify key priorities, objectives and initiatives for future planning, delivery and design for the Duck River Corridor, the "Green Heart" of Cumberland, and
- Prepare a draft Strategic Duck River Corridor Masterplan study to deliver the vision for the Duck River corridor, with a 10 year strategic focus and 4 year action plan.

In addition to these elements, the project brief highlighted regional and local level perspectives as key background context for the development of the masterplan. Specifically, the Duck River corridor is identified as a strategic priority project under the Sydney Green Grid Central City District Plan (2018) and is at the centre of the Central River City as proposed by the Greater Sydney Commission (A Metropolis of Three Cities, 2018).

In conjunction with this regional strategic significance, the brief focused on the Duck River and its surrounding environment as a vital asset for Cumberland City Council and its local communities. The brief included summary of Cumberland 2030: Our Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS, Cumberland City Council, 2020), which outlines a range of focus areas for the local council. Importantly for the Duck River an ongoing focus for Cumberland City Council beyond 2030 will be to continue to enhance the quality of places, particularly green spaces and the design of buildings, to support provisions to meet the needs of the community and foster resilience to regional challenges.

Responding to the project brief, McGregor Coxall has prepared this report as the primary deliverable of the strategic masterplan study project. This Masterplan is historic for the Duck River and a major milestone for Cumberland City Council, the community and stakeholders of the corridor. It is the first piece of work that brings together the vast number of previous reports, investigations, studies, strategies and plans into an integrated holistic masterplan which can drive future projects for the Duck River corridor.



## 1.2 The Site

The Duck River corridor is identified in the Sydney Green Grid Plan (NSW Government Architects Office, 2017) and Cumberland's strategic planning documents as one of the most important environmental and community assets of both the Central River City and Cumberland City Council (Cumberland 2030: Our Local Strategic Planning Statement 2020, Biodiversity Strategy 2019, and Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2019, Urban Tree Strategy 2020).

Located at the geographic centre of Greater Sydney, the Duck River is a key hydraulic, biodiversity and green grid link. Within this context the site is strategically positioned within the West Central District of the Sydney Green Grid - identified as one of the fastest growing areas in greater Sydney and Australia (NSW Government Architects Office, 2017). The site is in close proximity to the regional centre of Parramatta CBD, and key local centres of Cumberland including Auburn, Granville and Lidcombe.

The Duck River is the main tributary of the Parramatta River, and is part of one of the largest river systems in metropolitan Sydney. The highly urbanised catchment of the Duck River covers approximately 40km<sup>2</sup>, and extends over boundaries of three local government areas including Cumberland, Parramatta to the north, and Canterbury-Bankstown to the south.

The site, consisting of the Duck River, its surrounding open green space and community facilities, is typically referred to in local and regional planning documents as the "Duck River Corridor". The Duck River corridor encompasses an area which extends for over 10km, with around 4.5km of the river middle reach within Cumberland City Council (Duck River Parklands Strategic Masterplan site boundary). This area of the corridor within Cumberland City Council is the focus of this masterplan study and holds great value for the community and the environment, including:

- sporting and recreation facilities,
- the prominent regional cultural attraction of the Auburn Botanic Gardens,
- local community amenities and spaces,
- significant sites of Aboriginal culture and heritage,
- nature and environmental protection areas and reserves, and
- unique flora and fauna communities.

In addition to the open green space and community facilities surrounding the Duck River, the corridor is occupied predominately by low density residential development and light industrial and commercial land use.



## 1.3 Planning Context

### Masterplan Context

The Duck River Parklands Strategic Masterplan (the Masterplan) is underpinned by a strategic planning framework that provides the regional and local strategic planning context for its preparation. The Masterplan has been prepared in response to the strategic planning outcomes sought for the Duck River Corridor at a regional level and also at a local level as the “green heart” of Cumberland. In this context, the corridor provides a natural and calming setting within an otherwise densely populated urban area where little naturally vegetated areas remain for both passive and active recreation.

The strategic planning framework is set out below and provides detailed actions, objectives and planning priorities that the masterplan addresses at both the regional and local level.

### Strategic Planning Framework

The Duck River Parklands Strategic Planning Framework (the Strategic Framework) is underpinned by a tiered regulatory framework that sets out State, regional and local strategic planning requirements. For the Masterplan to effectively provide a basis for works to be undertaken on land within the parklands, the Strategic Framework must form the backbone and provide the policy setting through which monitoring and reporting can also be undertaken. The following section provides the key elements of the Strategic Framework to which the Masterplan will respond.

### NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (The Act)

The NSW strategic planning legislative framework is set out under Part 3, Division 3.1 of the Act. Part 3, Division 3.1 of the Act requires that each local council prepares a Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) to give effect to the district plan and to identify planning priorities and the actions to be undertaken to achieve these priorities. Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the actions is also required. In preparing a Masterplan for the Duck River corridor, Cumberland will implement actions that deliver on the requirements of the Act.

### Central City District Plan (Greater Sydney Commission)

The Central City District Plan prepared by the Greater Sydney Commission (2018) provides the district planning context for Cumberland. A number of planning priorities, outlined below (C13, C15, C16, C17) under the district plan are applicable to the Duck River corridor and give effect to the objectives of the Greater Sydney Region Plan.

#### Planning Priority C13 Protecting and improving the health and enjoyment of the Districts waterways

In terms of *Priority C13 Protecting and improving the health and enjoyment of the District's waterways*, the following Regional Plan objective is addressed by the Masterplan:

- The coast and waterways are protected and healthier.

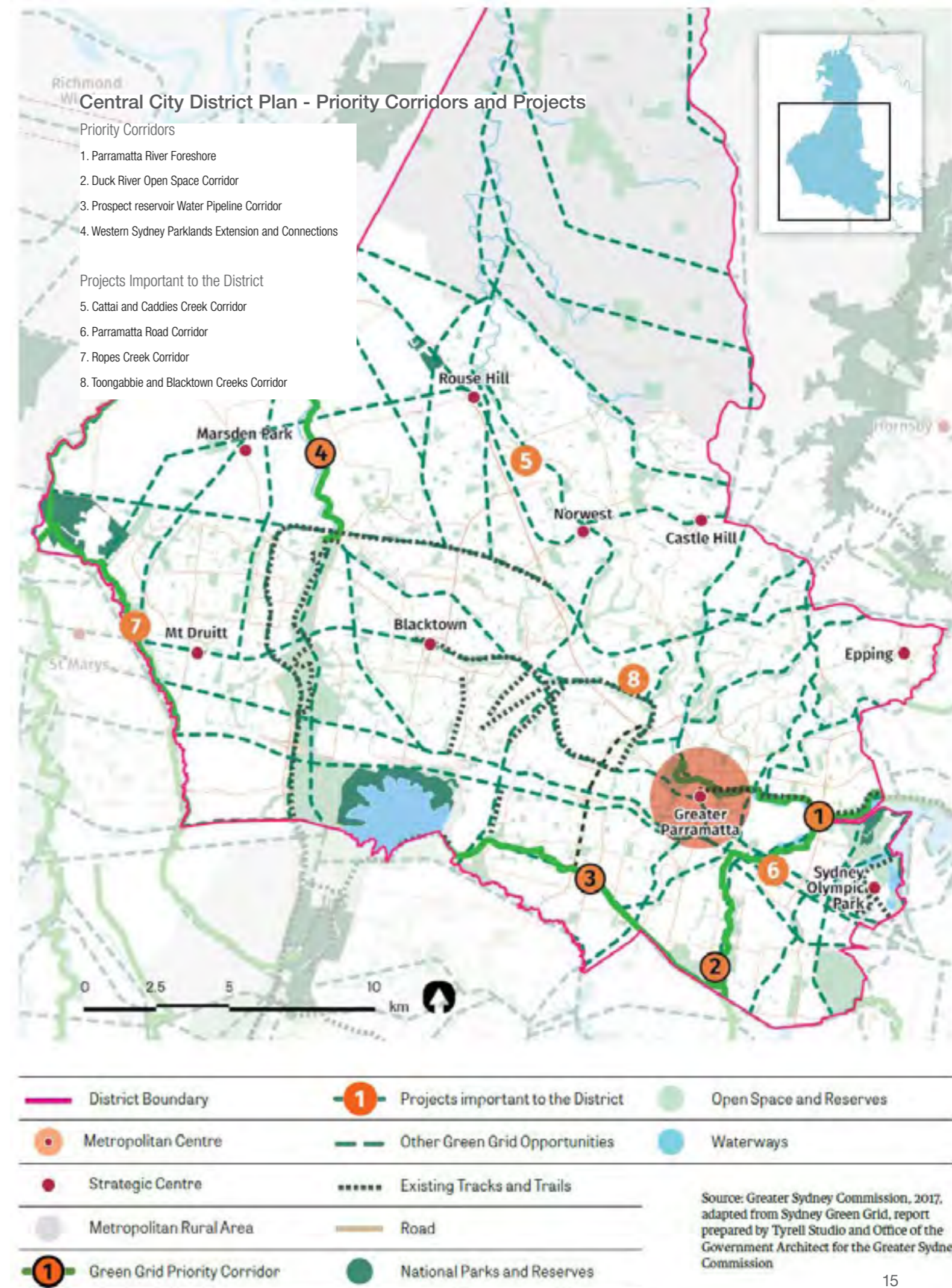
Priority C13 highlights the importance of the District's waterways and their contribution to its landscape and character. As part of the “blue grid” the waterways are part of green infrastructure and have a role in cooling and greening the landscape. Part of the role played by the waterways is to provide habitat for threatened ecological communities alongside catering for stormwater and wastewater disposal.

Prioritisation of community access to the waterways is identified in the district plan together with the need to protect and improve the environmental health of the district's waterways. The Duck River which is the main tributary of the Parramatta River is identified as a key district waterway with important habitat to several threatened and endangered ecological communities. The river corridor is connected to open space, cultural areas including the Auburn Botanic Gardens, the Duck River Walk and environmental conservation areas.

In preparing the Masterplan, Cumberland will implement the district plan's Actions 60, 61, 62 and 64 which are aimed at protecting environmentally sensitive areas of the Duck River corridor to enhancing sustainability and liveability through improved access to the river corridor.

The Masterplan will also shape the Duck River corridor as the green heart of the community and identify:

- Key destination points that will be activated,
- Improved walking and cycling connections
- Where east-west links can be created and cultural and other heritage preserved, and
- Locations within the river corridor where management of storm water and litter will be improved.





**Planning Priority C15 Protecting and enhancing bushland, biodiversity and scenic and cultural landscapes**

In terms of *Priority C15 Protecting and enhancing bushland, biodiversity and scenic and cultural landscapes*, the following Regional Plan objectives are addressed by the Masterplan:

- Objective 27 – *Biodiversity is protected, urban bushland and remnant vegetation is enhanced*
- Objective 28 - *Scenic and cultural landscapes are protected*

Priority C15 identifies Wategora Reserve within the Duck River corridor as a valuable area of bushland and remnant vegetation that is part of the district's green infrastructure. Urban bushland which includes endangered ecological flora communities enhances liveability and provides opportunities for nature-based recreation and habitat for endangered fauna. It is essential to manage stormwater run-off pollution, weeds, and litter and bank erosion to deliver beneficial environmental outcomes, biodiversity and value to the community.

In preparing the Masterplan, Cumberland will implement actions that support the District Plan's Action 65 including restoration of bushland corridors, managing the urban bushland and remnant vegetation within the parklands as green infrastructure and managing bushland and development to reduce edge-effect impacts at the boundary of different areas which results in negative environmental outcomes from habitat fragmentation.

In terms of scenic and cultural landscapes, the Duck River and Prospect Hill are identified under *Priority C15* as contributing to the identity and international profile of Greater Sydney.

These landscapes protect Aboriginal culture with particularly strong resonance where a confluence of waterway and urban bushland occurs. The scenic and cultural landscapes of the Duck River corridor also present opportunities for creating economic activities linked to recreation and tourism.

In preparing the Masterplan, Cumberland will implement the District Plan's Actions 66 and 67 by identifying and protecting scenic and cultural landscapes within the parklands and also enhancing and protecting views of scenic and cultural landscapes from the public realm.

**Planning Priority C16 Increasing urban tree canopy cover and delivering Green Grid connections**

In terms of *Priority C16 Increasing urban tree canopy cover and delivering Green Grid connections*, the following Regional Plan objectives are addressed by the Masterplan:

- Objective 30 – Urban tree canopy cover is increased
- Objective 32 – The Green Grid links parks, open spaces, bushland and walking and cycling paths.

Priority C16 identifies the importance of linking "tree-lined streets, waterways, bushland corridors, parks and open spaces to town centres, public transport and public spaces" to ensure that urban tree canopy contributes to urban cooling, habitat and cleaner air. In this context the Duck River corridor as the "green heart" of Cumberland contributes significantly to achieving priority C16 as part of the local and district green infrastructure.

In preparing the Masterplan, Cumberland will implement the district plan's Action 68, 69 and 70 by identifying locations within this Priority corridor for expansion of urban tree canopy. Drawing from a significant number of studies and reports prepared over many years for land within the corridor, the Masterplan will also provide a refined 10 year+ strategic implementation framework for identified works and projects. Opportunities for the development of a long term network with linkages and connections to other regionally significant green spaces such as Western Sydney Parklands and Parramatta Park will also be identified in the Masterplan.

**Planning Priority C17 Delivering high quality open space**

In terms of *Priority C17 Delivering high quality open space*, the following Regional Plan objective is addressed by the Masterplan:

- Objective 31 – Public open space is accessible, protected and enhanced.

Priority C17 for existing urban areas anticipates that improving the quality and distribution of open space and sporting facilities will be the main strategic planning outcome. As part of green infrastructure, open space areas for recreation activities facilitate social interaction leading to positive health outcomes for the community. Walking and cycling trails enable greater access and use of these facilities. Opportunities for place-based planning exist for corridor lands within the district which target quality and use of such open space. The District Plan identifies the corridor along the Duck River as high quality open space that supports the community's wellbeing.

In preparing the Masterplan, Cumberland will implement the Regional Plan's Action 71 by identifying actions that facilitate community use of and engagement with the Duck River corridor and contribute to delivering the Greater Sydney Green Grid. Actions that provide walking and cycling links for active transport and for recreation will also be underpinned by the Masterplan.

**Draft NSW Greener Places Design Guide**

The Draft NSW Greener Places Design Guide has been prepared to provide guidance when planning for green infrastructure which includes open space, recreation, urban canopy, bushland and waterways. It responds to the Premier's Priorities relating to **Greening our City** through increase tree canopy and green cover and **Greener Public Spaces** which targets enhanced access within 10 minutes' walk of quality green, open and public spaces by 10% by 2023 for communities in urban areas.

The Design principles for green infrastructure include the following:

- Integration where green infrastructure is combined with urban development and grey infrastructure;
- Connectivity where an interconnected network of open space is created;
- Multifunctionality where multiple ecosystem services can be delivered simultaneously, and
- Participation where stakeholders are involved in development and implementation of green infrastructure.

The Duck River corridor green infrastructure incorporates all the elements identified under the NSW Greener Places guidelines. environmental habitat, open space and recreation facilities, tree canopy and the Duck River waterway provide an engaging environment for the community and a genuine green heart along the 4.5km stretch of corridor lands. The open green space of the Duck River corridor also connect to other important corridors within the Central City District such as the Prospect Creek Corridor and the Parramatta River foreshores while locally, it provides a link to other regional green infrastructure to the east (Cooks River Corridor) and south (Georges River catchment).

In preparing the Masterplan, Cumberland will apply the Greener Places design principles at both the local and regional level and contribute to delivering high quality open space, maintaining and improving significant habitat areas, managing impacts on the waterway and ensuring the community has a say in how land within the parklands is planned going forward.



## Cumberland 2030: Our Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)

Cumberland 2030: Our Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) includes a sustainability theme relating to environment and open spaces. The community values the network of open space and parks. With the Duck River forming the green heart of the LGA, opportunities exist for both passive and active recreation and for biodiversity protection and enhancement.

Cumberland 2030: Our Local Strategic Planning Statement includes four planning priorities for environment and open spaces. These include:

- **Planning Priority 13** – Protecting, enhancing and increasing natural and green spaces;
- **Planning Priority 14** – Improving access to and health of waterways;
- **Planning Priority 15** – Planning for a resilient city that can adapt to natural hazards and climate change; and
- **Planning Priority 16** – Supporting urban cooling to minimise heat island effects.

Cumberland will focus on the Duck River Corridor and Prospect Reservoir Green Grid Corridors and urban cooling as the twin sustainability actions. To achieve the desired outcomes, key actions will relate to protecting, enhancing and increasing natural green spaces, improving access to and health of waterways, planning for resilience and minimising heat island effects.

In preparing the Masterplan, Cumberland will be implementing the relevant actions including delivering Green Grid connections, improving biodiversity within the corridor, re-instating more natural conditions for the Duck River, supporting urban cooling through tree planting and environmental habitat improvements and supporting cultural and heritage infrastructure within the corridor.

## Other Local Strategies

Cumberland has prepared a number of local strategies that are relevant to the preparation and implementation of the Duck River Corridor Masterplan. These include the following:

- Biodiversity Strategy (2019)
- Open Space and Recreation Strategy (2019)
- Urban Tree Strategy (2020).

As a package, these strategies provide key directions and actions that will be essential in delivering key environmental, open space and recreation and urban cooling actions identified for the local area.

The Biodiversity Strategy 2019 outlines a strategic and coordinated approach to manage biodiversity in Cumberland and has been developed to protect and enhance biodiversity in the Cumberland area. It sets out a vision and identifies objectives and actions under three Key Focus Areas targeting community awareness and engagement, habitat connectivity and condition and planning and innovation. The importance of the Duck River corridor in providing habitat connectivity and linkages to the Greater Sydney Green Grid are reflected in the outcomes sought.

The Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2019 includes a set of guiding principles and is closely aligned with the NSW Draft Greener Places Guidelines. Four strategic directions are identified addressing delivery of open space and recreation facilities, increasing capacity of these assets, supporting inclusion and participation and protecting the natural environment.

The Urban Tree Strategy 2020 sets out the urban tree management principles to be applied in increasing tree planting and green canopy cover within Cumberland. Enhancing tree canopy will support green infrastructure which is critical in reducing the urban heat island effect, improving air, water and soil quality, enhancing biodiversity and resilience and improving liveability and outdoor activity.

Collectively, these strategies provide a package of measures that will effectively be implemented under the Masterplan within the critical Duck River Corridor lands. The Implementation Framework under the Masterplan will also provide a cohesive and time-bound approach to the delivery of works that lead to attainment of the desired outcomes under these strategies.



## 1.4 History and Change

### Timeline of a River

The Duck River has a rich tapestry of history interwoven with the Cumberland Plains and the development of the greater Sydney region. This history and the stories of the Duck River highlight the prominent elements which have influenced and shaped the environment and the way we view and understand the waterway and surrounding landscape.

### First Nations People (over 60,000 years)

For over sixty thousand years the Duck River has been an important place of meeting and culture. Located between the four main tribes of the Sydney area; Darug, Gandangara, Guringai and Tharawal Peoples, the site has been, and still remains, a place of significance for Aboriginal people.



Site photo of information board on Aboriginal significance of the Duck River area.

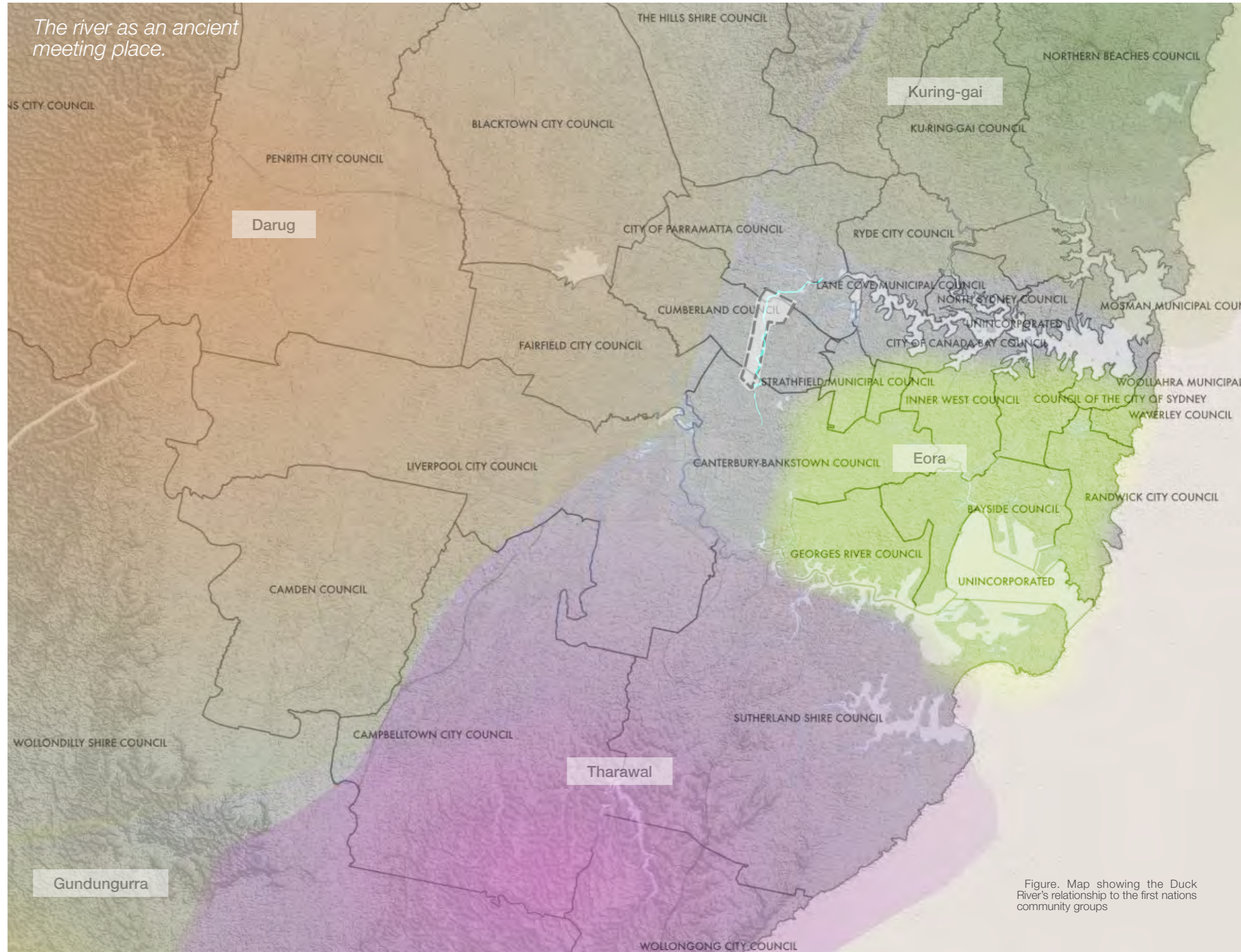


Figure. Map showing the Duck River's relationship to the first nations community groups

### European Settlement and Agriculture (1788 to 1800's)

Following European settlement, the Duck River was seen as a source of water for agricultural practices on the fertile Cumberland Plains. European settlers cleared the land, the river witnessed a change in morphology, and the surrounding area was transformed into a pastoral landscape to provide for the establishing colony.

### Road and Railway Expansion (1797 - 1890's)

The 1790's saw the establishment of Parramatta Road as the major east-west artery of metropolitan Sydney, connecting the Sydney CBD with Parramatta. In 1797, Governor John Hunter commissioned Australia's first properly planned and constructed bridge - a bridge that crossed the Duck River.

Along with this historical road; transformation around the Duck River was fuelled by the expansion of the first railway line between Sydney Central Station and Parramatta in 1855. These key connections shaped the way the Duck River and the surrounding area were accessed and developed. In addition to the trees of the Cumberland Plain being used as vital lumber for the railroad sleepers, the new population of the area continued to grow, with easier transport from the city enabling more people to move west.



Map showing electrification of railways (1926)

### Industry and Development (1890's - 1950's)

The 19th century brought a transition to industrial development on the banks of the Duck River. The river's water was now a valuable resource for industrial processes and manufacturing, as well as the river being used to carry away waste. Along the edge of the river, important landmarks in Australian engineering and manufacturing were established, including Clyde Engineering, locomotive manufacturer, in 1898, and the Clyde oil refinery on the northern banks.

These changes continued to stimulate growth of the population in the area, with residential development beginning to dominate land use in the years following the First World War. Clay mining for tile production (roof tiles) in the early 1900's further impacted the river, and eventually ad-hoc garbage dumping and landfill sites were established along its banks.



Aerial photograph Clyde Engineering Factory on the Duck River (1926)

### Urbanisation (1950's - 2000's)

Having experienced dramatic change since colonial settlement, the river was now running degraded and forgotten behind the back fence of western Sydney's now well established residential population.

In the 1960's and 70's, the visionary Auburn Botanic Gardens were built on a former tip site, sparking the possibilities of change for the river. The gardens owe their origin to the Cumberland Planning Scheme (1946-1951); which set aside the area along the banks of the Duck River for recreation. The champion of driving forward this big idea of a Botanic Gardens on a rubbish tip was Council's former Engineer and Town Planner (1949 - 1979), Mr Eric Black. It was Mr Black who envisaged a series of gardens representing national styles from around the world.

Only a fraction of this big vision of a world gardens has been realised. The Japanese Gardens, of Auburn Botanic Gardens, is today an impressive regional attraction, drawing in over 90,000 people throughout the cherry blossom festival.



Mr Eric Black, Head engineer of the Auburn Shire council looking at the site of a proposed Botanic Garden, on Duck River in Auburn (1974)

### The River Today (The new millennium - at the centre of greater Sydney)

Sydney in the 21st century is a highly populated, diverse, and globally recognised city, and the Duck River is located at its heart in one of the fastest growing areas in the greater Sydney region. A place which was once considered western Sydney, the Duck River and its surrounding communities are no longer western Sydney outliers, they are in the centre of Sydney.

As a result of these changes, the Duck River corridor is now one of Sydney's most important and valuable natural assets if its true potential can be realised.



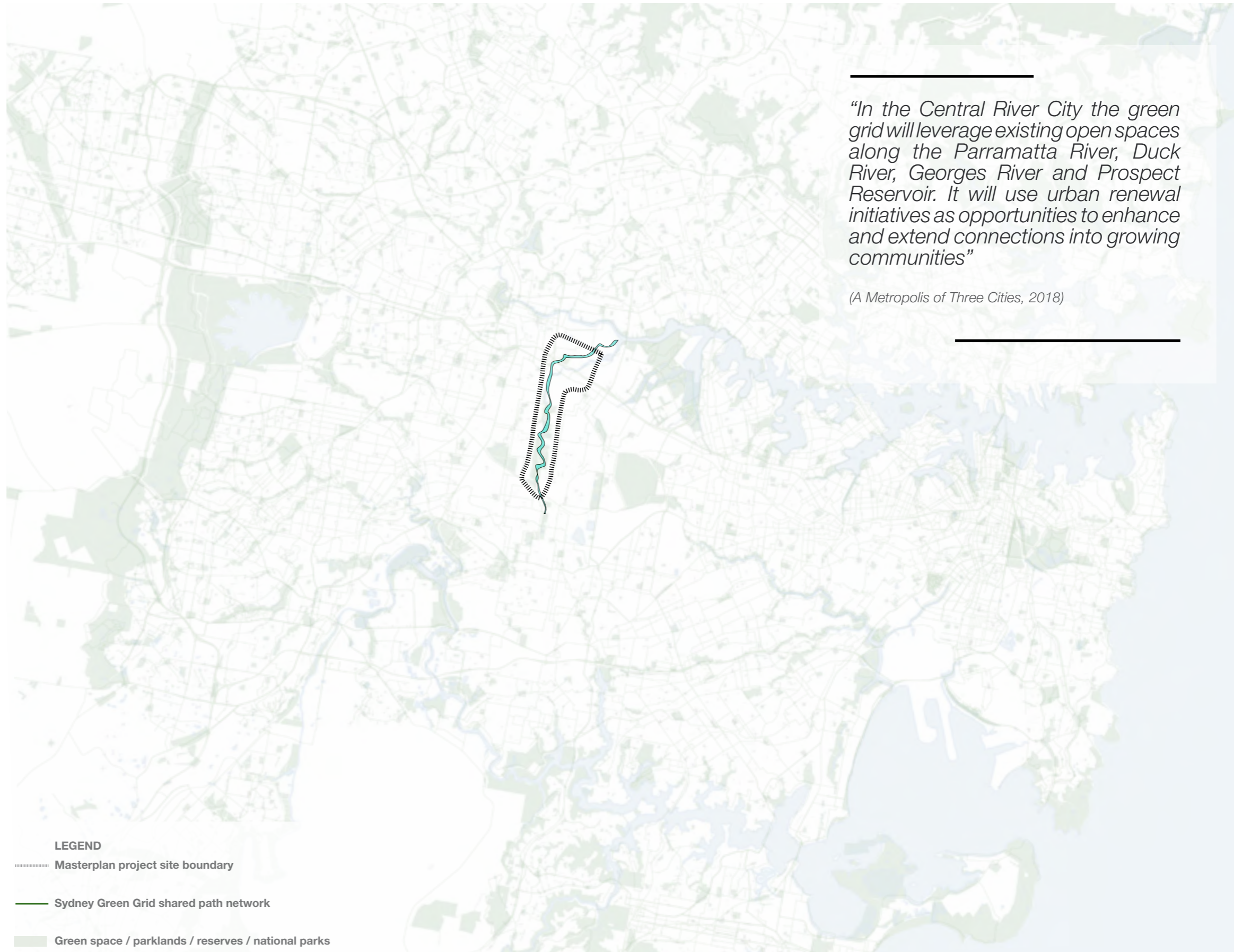
A Metropolis of Three Cities (Greater Sydney Commission, 2018)

### Duck River and the city (2020 and beyond)

The Duck River corridor is not unique in recognising that today, with urban growth and renewal, there is greater pressure on existing local open space and green infrastructure. Creation and transformation of under performing green spaces, such as the Duck River corridor, is important for state and local governments to ensure adequate and diverse open space networks, access and connectivity are provided for growing populations and communities.

This has been strongly addressed by the NSW Government at a regional scale with the greater Sydney Green Grid. The Sydney Green Grid is a long-term vision for a network of high quality green spaces that connect communities to the natural landscape (NSW Government Architect). Within the public realm, it includes enhanced waterway corridors, transport routes, suburban streets, footpaths and cycleways (A Metropolis of Three Cities, 2018). Today, the Duck River, its surrounding parklands and open space, finds itself in the centre and a critical link of this Green Grid network.

It is here where the Masterplan steps in, responding to this breadth of regional and local context, envisaging a future for the Duck River which reaches its potential for providing great value and benefit. This Masterplan represents a major milestone in the history of the Duck River.



*“In the Central River City the green grid will leverage existing open spaces along the Parramatta River, Duck River, Georges River and Prospect Reservoir. It will use urban renewal initiatives as opportunities to enhance and extend connections into growing communities”*

*(A Metropolis of Three Cities, 2018)*

Figure. Sydney Green Grid (NSW Government Architects Office, 2018)

# 1.5 Moving Forward

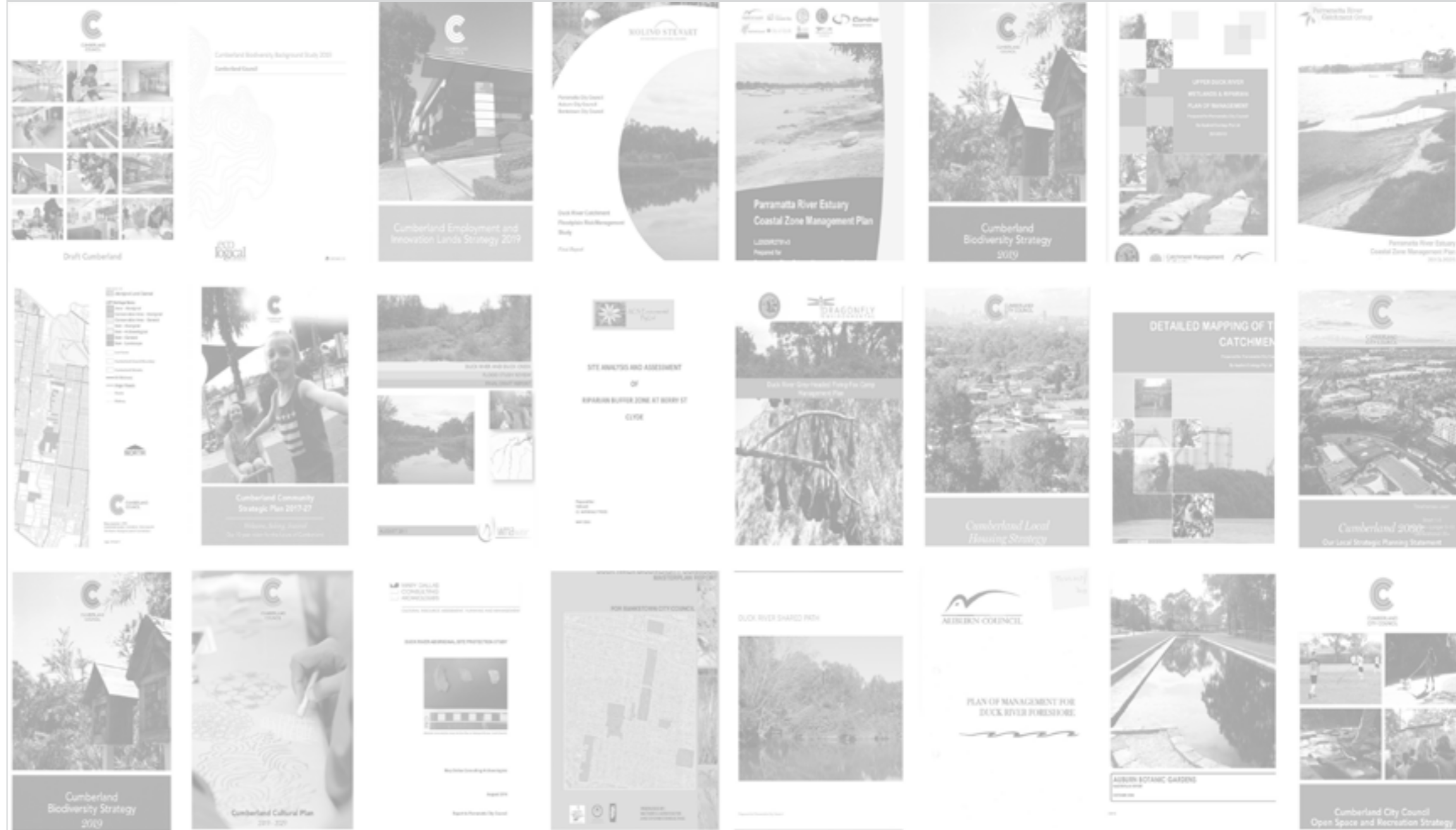
## Imagining the future and driving action

Despite the fact that the Duck River today is recognised as being a vital link of the Green Grid in the middle of Sydney, at the centre of population density and diversity, and a valuable environmental asset, it has been a site of limited action over recent years.

Before this Masterplan; at least twenty nine documents, including reports, investigations, studies, plans and strategies relating to the Duck River and its current state and future use, have been prepared. While a number of these are recent documents, such as the Cumberland Biodiversity Strategy 2019, Cumberland Local Housing Strategy 2020, Cumberland Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2019, Cumberland Cultural Plan 2019, and the Urban Tree Strategy 2020, with Council working towards implementation and action, the Duck River has yet to see definition of catalyst projects, or sustained change and meaningful outcomes leading from these documents.

The amalgamation of Councils in May 2016 has enabled the opportunity for effective planning and management integrated across both sides of the Duck River. In addition, Cumberland City Council is staking steps forward from these plans, and importantly for the Duck River corridor, this is the lead off point.

This Masterplan is driven by the need for strategic direction and a big vision for the corridor to imagine the future and drive action. The Masterplan will do this by putting forward firstly a long term vision for the corridor at a regional and local level; and secondly by prioritising actions as identified in previous planning documents for the corridor, providing small scale catalyst projects that are fundable under current budget allocations and will facilitate the first steps of change towards the bigger long term vision.



Background documents including reports, studies, investigations, strategies, and plans (various authors, 2000 to 2020)



**2.0**  
DUCK RIVER PARKLANDS  
MASTERPLAN

## 2.1 Vision

### Putting forward a shared vision

*'The Green Heart of Cumberland, and a vital artery of Greater Sydney'.*

This simple, yet powerful, conceptual vision is adopted by the Masterplan as a symbol that encompasses the importance, position and potential of the Duck River. Its purpose is to galvanise support and promote shared aspirations of stakeholders at both regional and local level. This vision reinforces the Duck River firmly at the centre of planning with the ambition to engage and drive the revitalisation of the Duck River as a significant initiative for health and well-being of Sydney and Cumberland.

### Making the Duck River the Green Heart of Cumberland and a vital artery of Greater Sydney

The first step in realising the potential and revitalising the Duck River is to look at the existing perspective and understanding of the river "corridor".

The Duck River is currently seen as a river corridor of neglect. This broad understanding of a "corridor" with fragmented sections providing disjointed and diminished value to the community is due to the degraded environmental condition of the waterway and riparian zone; the limited east-west, north-south connections; and underutilised land and facilities for the community.

While the site contains key regional and local assets and value, these areas and elements are currently disconnected across the site, both physically and in the mind of the community and stakeholders.

This underutilised significant asset presents all of us with the opportunity to reimagine its future at the regional and local level. It represents an opportunity to recognise its strategic importance as the green heart of Cumberland and a vital artery of Greater Sydney.

"THE GREEN HEART OF  
CUMBERLAND"



"AND A VITAL ARTERY OF  
GREATER SYDNEY"



## 2.2 A Parklands Perspective

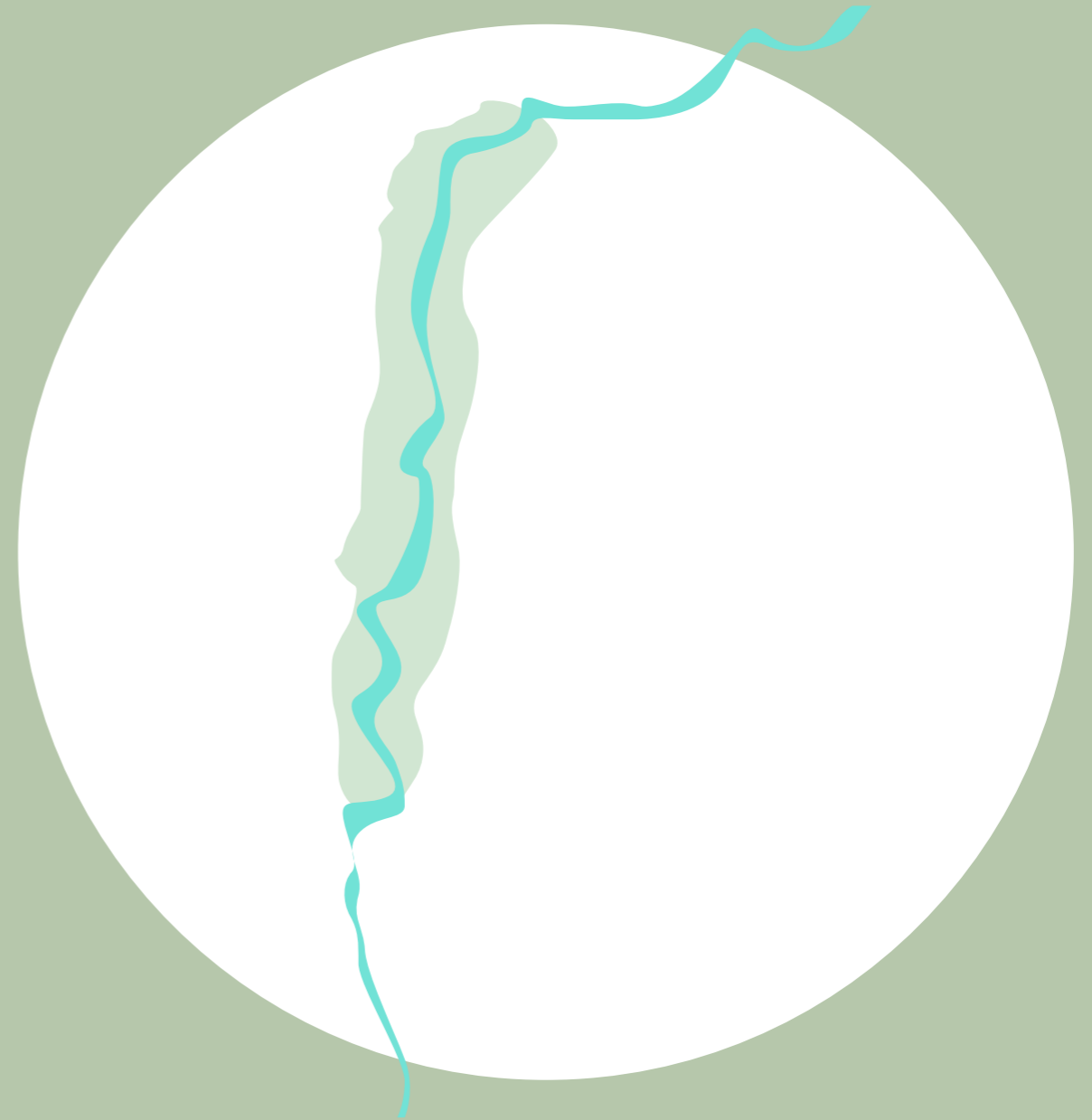
### Transformation of perspective and understanding

Our study has identified that the fundamental challenge facing the Duck River is that it is seen and understood as a fragmented and degraded “corridor”, a conduit of poor quality water on which we have essentially turned our back. Changing our perception by realising the Duck River as “the Green Heart of Cumberland and a vital artery of Greater Sydney” is the first step in revitalisation of the Duck River and harnessing its position as a prominent parklands within the Greater Sydney region.

Transforming our understanding of the Duck River corridor by changing its name to “The Duck River Parklands” is a fundamental next step in reimagining the site and its potential.

Considering the site as the Duck River Parklands (the Parklands) establishes a reference point to envisage and drive strategic ideas and interventions at the regional and local level. Holding this understanding of a unified Parklands embraced and valued by the community, the Masterplan can now embark upon the journey towards a Parklands with strong regional and local connectivity, diverse and rich community and cultural offer and program, and a heathy waterway with thriving environment.

# *The Duck River Parklands*



*Transforming how we connect to, experience and embrace the Duck River.*

## 2.3 Core Themes

### Distilling the background information and documents

Having reviewed the background information and previous reports it was clear that the key issues and objectives for the Duck River corridor could be organised into three main areas of consideration, or core themes. These core themes are:

- *Connections*
- *Community & Culture*
- *Environment*

Guided by the strategic planning framework, and in alignment with the core themes, the key objectives of the masterplan are to:

- Improve access to the parklands for passive and active recreation,
- Protect important biodiversity and habitat for ecologically endangered and threatened species,
- Strengthen the integration of existing industry and economic activities with the corridor and
- Provide for place-making that addresses the significantly important cultural and heritage areas within the corridor.

# CONNECTIONS

Connections - local community connections and links to greater Sydney, and also the connections in and around the corridor and river itself.

# COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Community & culture - which go hand in hand through the people, place and activation of the corridor.

# ENVIRONMENT

Environment – the flora and fauna, the waterway, the interaction of ecological systems and the important natural asset of open green space.

## 2.4 Masterplan Aspirations

### Crystallising a Vision

It is the intention of this Masterplan to be a shared vision and it is important to recognise the three core themes not only align with the findings of the many previous reports, but they form clear objectives when viewed at a regional and local community level.

### Regional Perspective

At the regional level, the Sydney Green Grid highlights the Duck River as a priority corridor and aims to build on the existing open space assets along Duck River to establish the corridor as a regional destination with improved diversity of open space along the river, with the potential for ecological enhancement (NSW Government Architect Office, 2017).

The Central City District Plan identifies the development of this green link as the second top priority for the Greater Sydney Commission, with the following vision for the Duck River corridor:

*"A continuous walking and cycling north-south link between Parramatta, Camellia, Granville, Auburn, Regents Park to Bankstown. Enhancing and expanding the existing open space assets will establish the corridor as regional open space with improved recreational space, habitat for ecological communities and better treatment of stormwater."*

### Local Perspective

Cumberland City Council has defined an environmental and community agenda, as highlighted by the masterplan project brief:

*"The natural environment is a key part of Cumberland's identity and it is Council's responsibility, in partnership with relevant State government agencies and the community, to manage our environment for future generations. Council will focus on connecting and improving our blue and green grids, which includes improving the quality of our waterways and urban bushland and supporting biodiversity outcomes. In addition we will continue to support well-planned and designed urban spaces and built forms that are responsive to changing climatic conditions. Council will implement best practice approaches to open space and recreation facilities provision and management to provide for the recreation needs of our diverse community, taking into account forecast population growth, to contribute to improved community health and wellbeing." (Cumberland City Council, 2020)*

Based on this commitment to the natural environment, the project brief outlined the following draft vision for the Duck River corridor: *"Duck River, revitalising the 'Green Heart' of Cumberland"*

### Community Perspective

Community consultation and survey feedback on elements within the Duck River corridor from between 2017 to 2019, shows that a healthy environment is a key concern of the local community. In addition, there is strong feeling from the community about the sanctuary, recreation and community aspects provided by the Duck River corridor, as well as a place for walking and bike riding. This community perspective can be summarised in a view that while the current environmental condition of the river is degraded, the community have a vision of the potential value of the area to provide access and connection to nature, with diverse and rich community and cultural offer and program, and of utmost importance is a healthy waterway with thriving environment.



Auburn Botanic Gardens,  
Photo Credit: Kylie Purtell, 2018

## 2.5 Existing Parklands Character

### Exploring and leveraging the existing character of the Parklands

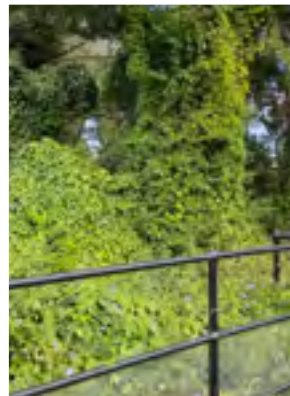
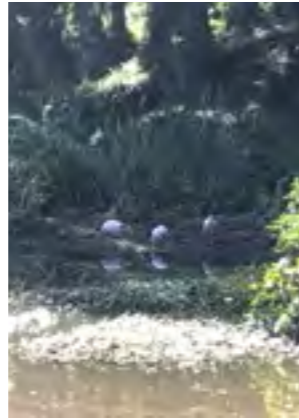
Our analysis of the site has identified that there are distinct areas of unique character throughout the Parklands. The following pages identify these zones, and proposes a strategic framework of precincts for reinforcing and leveraging this character in order to provide a richer community and cultural offering for the Parklands. The five zones of distinctive character identified within the Parklands include:

1. Natural and wild riparian zone and flying fox colony
2. Sports and recreation in the parklands
3. The Botanic Gardens and community centre
4. Aboriginal culture and heritage.
5. History and heritage of industry and development



## Existing Character Zone 1: Natural and wild riparian zone and flying fox colony

The banks and riparian zone of the Duck River have seen substantial rejuvenation and revegetation since the days of agricultural clearing and industrial development. Today, while portions of the riparian zone and waterway are degraded and weed-infested, there are many places of significant native vegetation, unique and wonderful flora and fauna. Particularly along the northern reaches of the river between Mona Street and Clyde Weir, the vegetation is dense and wild, with the river banks and riparian zone home to a wealth of birds and wildlife including one of Sydney's important grey-headed flying fox camps. The prominent industrial zones and dominant built form of the railway and maintenance yards, warehouses and old manufacturing buildings in this area provide a unique juxtaposition of wild nature and human development environments.



## Existing Character Zone 2: Sports and recreation in the parklands

Formal and informal sports and recreation fields are scattered throughout the parklands. Predominant clusters of fields are located between Mona Street and the Botanic Gardens, and also towards the southern end of the Parklands. The provision of local and regional level sporting facilities is a priority of the parklands now and into the future.



# COMMUNITY & CULTURE

## Existing Character Zone 3: The Botanic Gardens and community centre

The Auburn Botanic Gardens is an important regional attraction. The Peacock Gallery and future South Auburn Community and Recreation Centre are both located across the road from this landmark. Together these public places create a focal point of community meeting and cultural event areas in the parklands.



Bunnal Wagun Djarralang Public Art  
Bunnal Wagun Djarralang (Sunshine and Crows)  
by Leanne Tobin and Cindy Laws. Located at the  
Peacock Gallery.



## Existing Character Zone 4: Wategora Reserve, Aboriginal culture and heritage, the existing golf course

Wategora Reserve, named after the Wategora clan of the Darug Nation, holds great Aboriginal cultural and heritage significance. In addition, the environmental and natural beauty of this area cannot be overlooked; with native grasslands and eucalyptus forests, this reserve goes beyond the visual, forming a part of local and regional biodiversity corridors and green grids. The ironbark trees in this area are the prominent vegetation type.

In addition the Auburn Golf Course is located in this area on the eastern side of the river opposite Wategora Reserve. While its landscapes have been modified, the golf course holds significant environmental and open space value for the community.



## Existing Character Zone 5: History and heritage of industry and development

The Duck River has a long history of industry and development along its banks and in the surrounding area. Throughout this history, the river has seen change and transformation of places and spaces, from corroboree grounds and sacred sites to the site of commercial and industrial use. As the parklands develop over time, so will the activities and places along its edges. This is particularly true for the industrial and commercial areas in the south, with their back currently turned and ignoring the parklands.



## 2.6 Duck River Parklands Masterplan Precincts

### A rich and diverse Parklands with thriving community & culture

The vision of the Duck River as the 'Green Heart of Cumberland and a vital artery of Greater Sydney' hand in hand with embracing the concept of a Parklands, leads to the next step of ensuring a rich and diverse offer for the community. One that will support and enable a strengthening of community & culture now and into the future. The Masterplan proposes to achieve this by leveraging off the existing character and important values of the Parklands.

The Masterplan precincts have emerged and are defined by the existing character of the Parklands area and local community needs and aspirations.

### The Wilds

*A wild and untamed environment contrasted with the surrounding industrial and commercial built form.*

### Sports Precinct

*Providing high functioning, quality and well organised sports and recreation facilities.*

### Botanic Gardens Precinct

*A focal point of cultural events for both local communities and regional visitors to enjoy.*

### Wategora Precinct

*Respecting Aboriginal heritage and culture, and planning for the future with the evolving nature of the golf course.*

### Makers and Innovators

*Harnessing the importance and character of development and industry in the area to create and inspire communities and activities of the future.*





# DUCK RIVER PARKLANDS VISION 2040



Artistic impression looking north over the Duck River Parklands from the Botanic Gardens Precinct

## 2.7 Masterplan Ideas and Interventions Overview

### Strategic ideas and interventions at the regional and local level

The strategic ideas and interventions proposed by the Masterplan are set out across the three core themes of *connections, community & culture and environment*. With the vision of the Duck River Parklands in mind, strategic ideas are established for each core theme at the regional level, and then interventions and initiatives proposed at the local level.

### Importance and strength of a regional perspective in addressing the value and opportunity of the Duck River

Having identified that the Duck River Parklands lies at the centre of a vibrant growing Sydney, we now look through the lens of each core theme to imagine the potential opportunities the corridor could bring to Sydney at a regional level.

The importance of a regional perspective is highlighted by the history of the Duck River. From an important meeting place for the First Nations People to a critical source of water and fertility for a growing nation, including the industry and urban development along its banks, the Duck River today is central in Greater Sydney. This regional context sets great opportunity and provides strength for driving benefits and outcomes for the Duck River across all aspects of connections, community & culture, and environment.

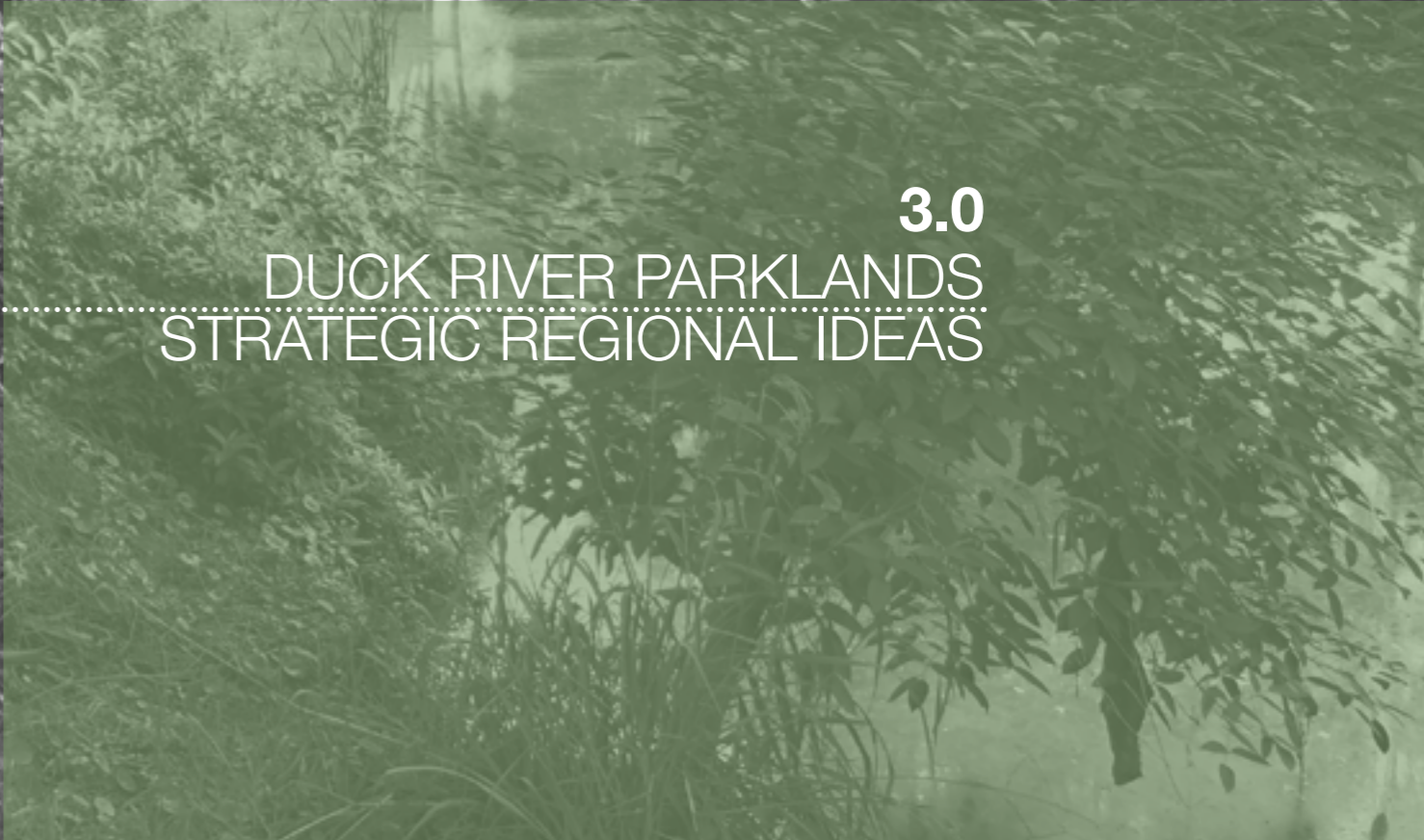
### The importance of connections, community & culture, and environment at the local level

Following the establishment of regional level strategic ideas, the Masterplan identifies a series of local strategic interventions and initiatives which respond to the fine grain conditions, priorities and aspirations of the community and Council at a local level. These local interventions integrate and reinforce the regional concepts while building on, harnessing and enhancing the character and existing conditions of the Duck River and its surrounding environment.



*Setting out key ideas and interventions at the regional and local level for **connections, community & culture**, and **environment**.*

*Following the regional level strategic ideas which will drive and galvanise broader region and state-level stakeholder support, it is at the local level where the implementation of targeted actions can initiate easily achievable small scale change which are the first steps to a broader vision.*



**3.0**

DUCK RIVER PARKLANDS  
STRATEGIC REGIONAL IDEAS

## 3.1 Regional Connections

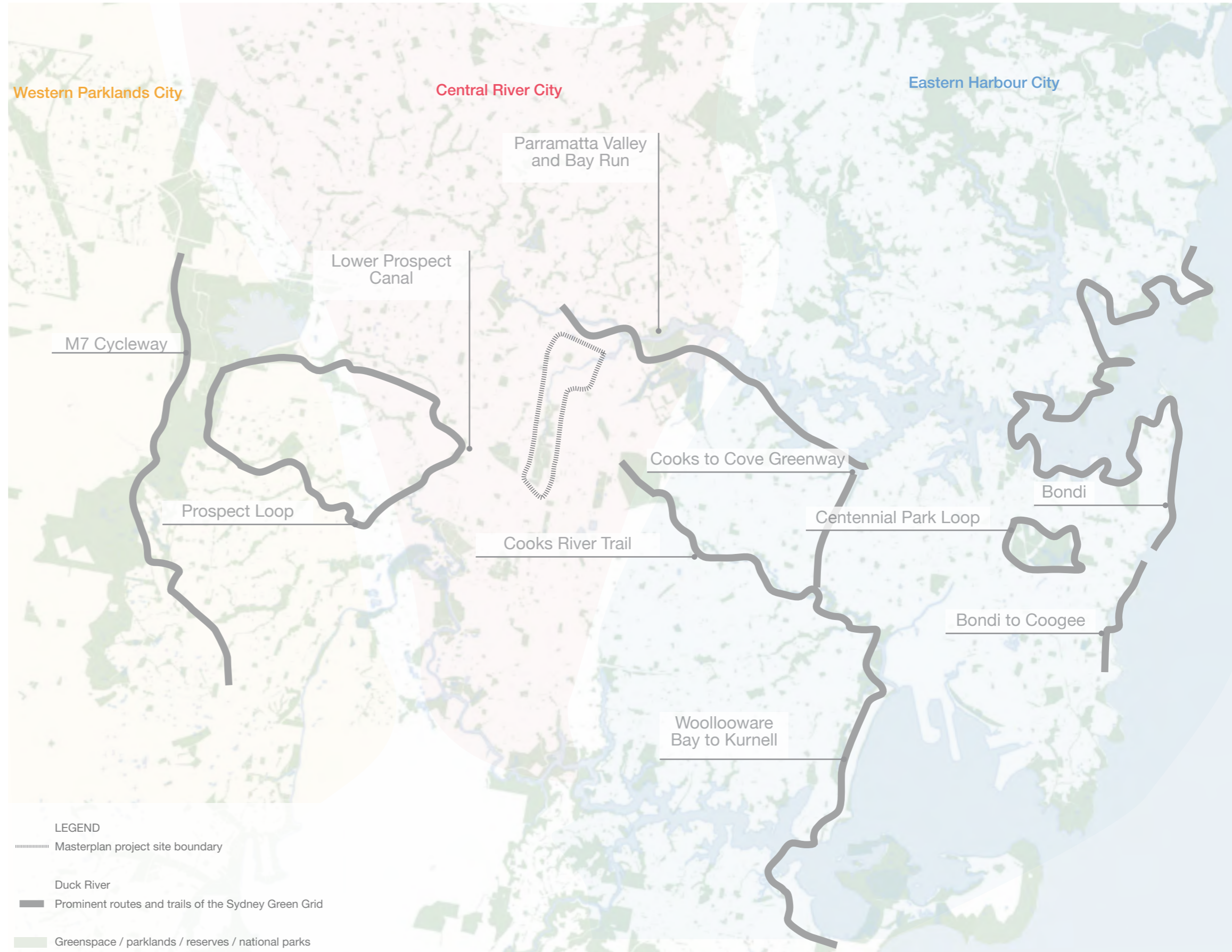
### Existing context at a regional scale

At the centre of greater Sydney and at the heart of the Central River City, the Duck River is a critical green grid connectivity link at the regional scale. Driven by the *Metropolis of Three Cities* vision of the Greater Sydney Commission, which recognises the importance of regional active transport networks and links, important regional connections are envisaged for the future of the Duck River. For the Duck River, this means regionally aligned goals of:

- continuous walking and cycling links north-south connecting Parramatta to Canterbury-Bankstown; and,
- east-west links connecting key local centres of Lidcombe, Granville, Auburn and Regents Park.

At this point it is important to zoom out to understand the existing green grid links and prominent walking and shared path routes, connections and trails across greater Sydney. In doing this, it can be seen that scattered across Sydney is the series of existing green grid links, along with several important links under planning, design and construction.

This regional connectivity, set within the context of establishing the Central River City highlights that the Duck River is not only the green heart of Cumberland, but it is also in striking distance of the major transport routes and nodes, both existing and planned: the Harbour City to the east, south to Bankstown and Liverpool, and a common party wall neighbour to Parramatta.

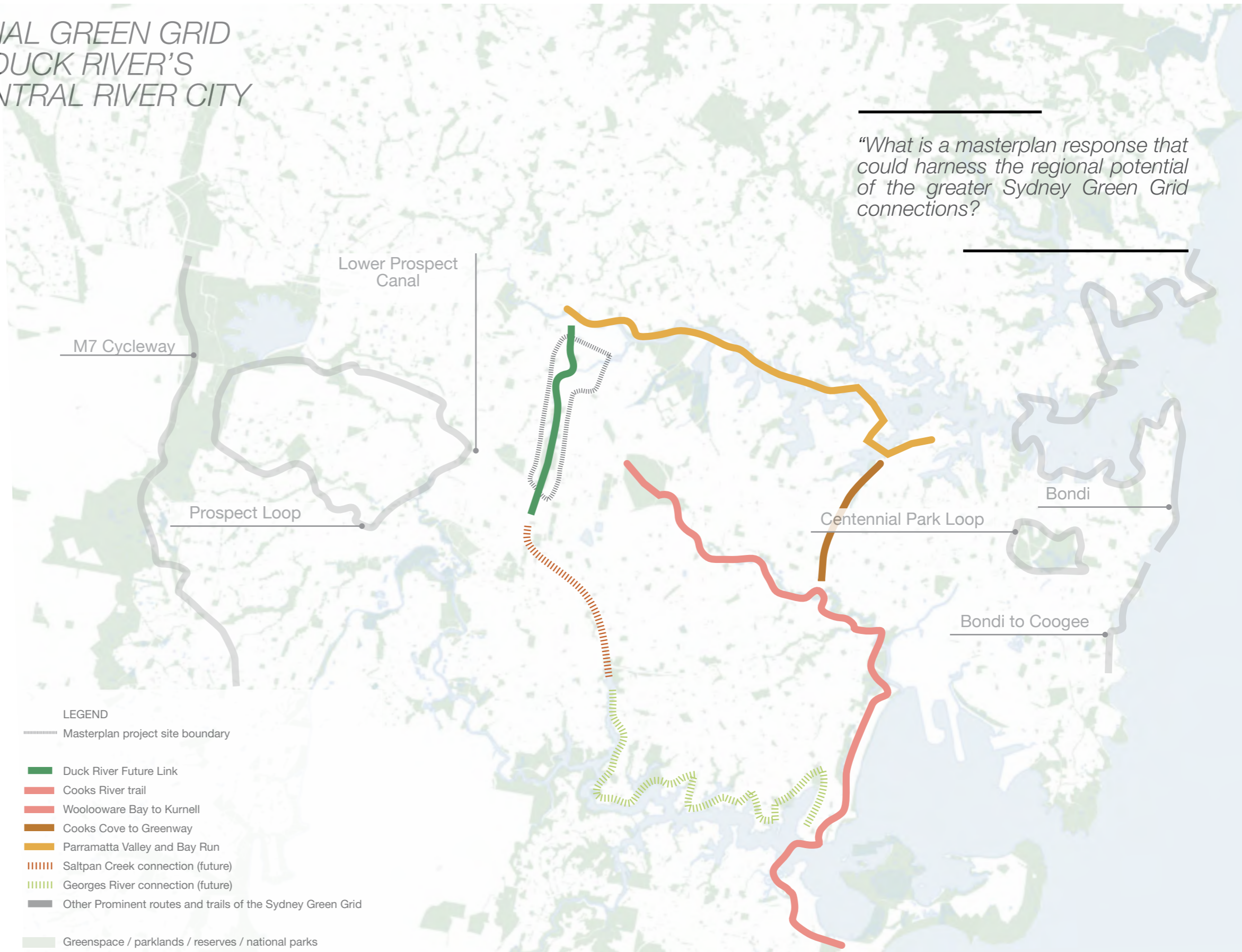


Conceptual map of prominent routes and trails of the Sydney Green Grid

# HARNESSING THE REGIONAL GREEN GRID CONNECTIONS AND THE DUCK RIVER'S POSITION WITHIN THE CENTRAL RIVER CITY

## Greater Sydney green grid opportunity

We can see that while the Duck River is placed in the centre of the Green Grid network it is currently lacking strong connectivity – to the south, east and west of the network. Prominent active transport pathways (constructed and in design) across Sydney include the Prospect loop, Parramatta Valley and Bay Run, Cooks to Cove Greenway, Woollooware Bay to Kurnell. The question is, how could the Masterplan form part of a wider network of integrated path and thereby harness the regional potential of the greater Sydney green grid connections.



“What is a masterplan response that could harness the regional potential of the greater Sydney Green Grid connections?”

Conceptual map of prominent routes and trails of the Sydney Green Grid highlighting Central River City Links existing and potential future

# THE 100km GREATER SYDNEY RIVER LOOP

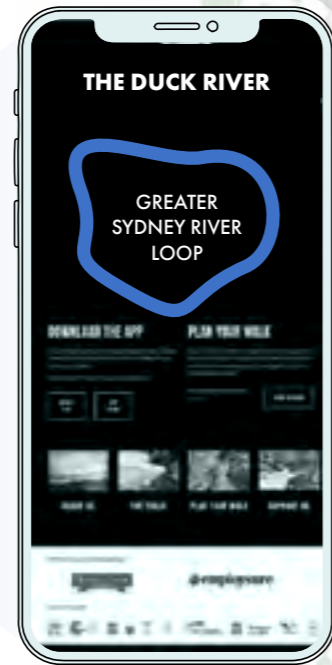
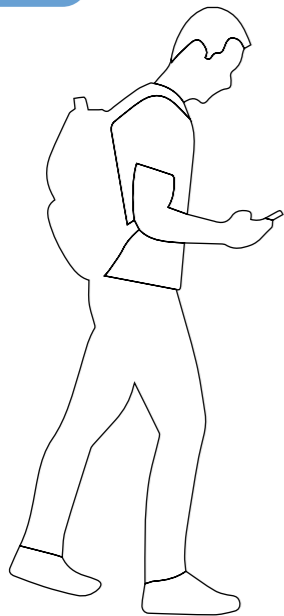
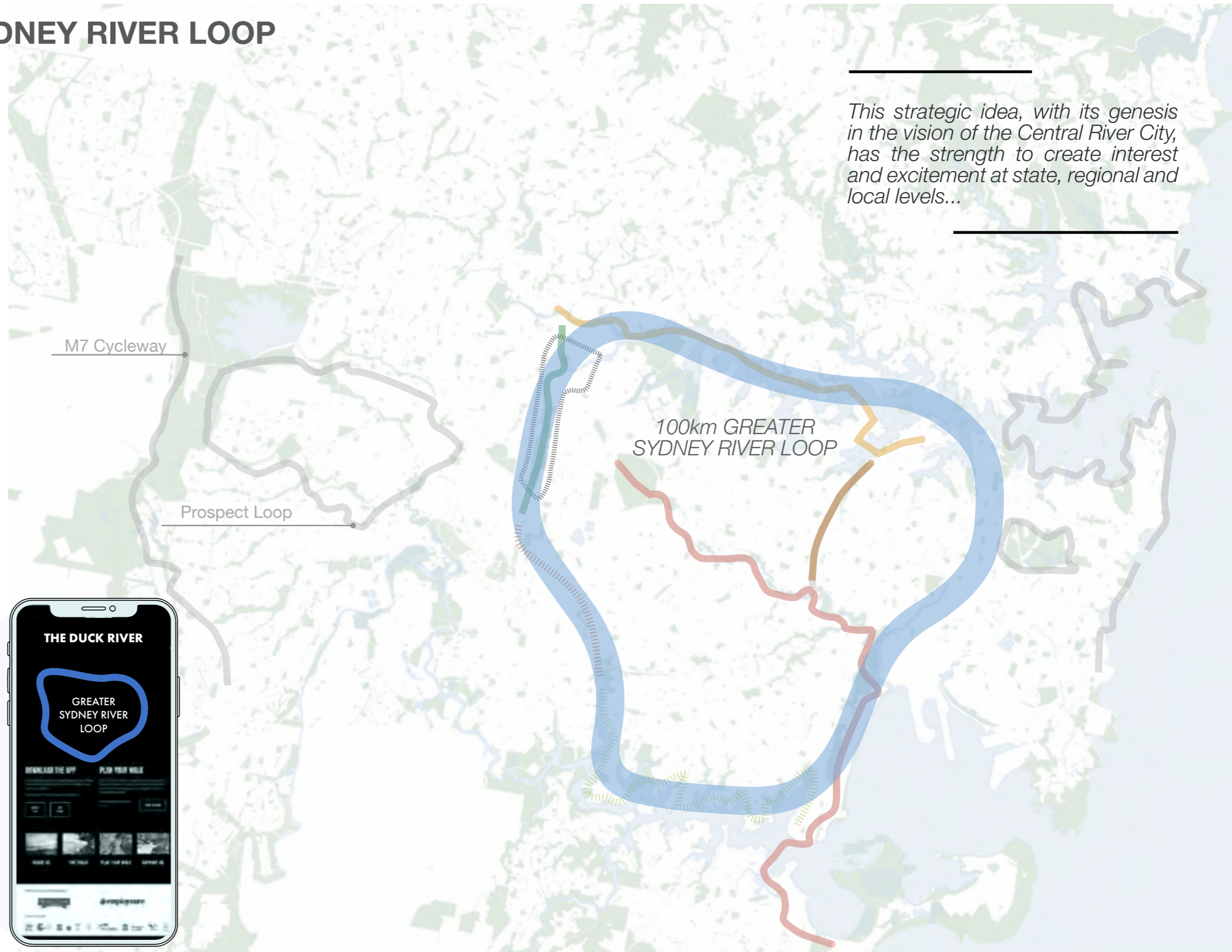
## An icon of the Greater Sydney Green Grid

The Masterplan proposes a catalyst Green Grid project which brings together prominent regional links to create a new and exciting regional connectivity trail - *The 100km Greater Sydney River Loop*.

Connecting existing and future proposed paths and trails from the Harbour City via the Parramatta River to the Duck River, south to the Georges River and back north, this connection project of regional significance could provide strong linkages and activation at a regional and local level, and in doing so become a destination in itself, and ultimately an icon of the Greater Sydney Green Grid.

This strategic design idea, with its genesis in the vision of the Central River City, has the strength to create interest and excitement at state, regional and local levels, and be the catalyst for links of the future for local communities of Cumberland and surrounding key local centres.

*This strategic idea, with its genesis in the vision of the Central River City, has the strength to create interest and excitement at state, regional and local levels...*



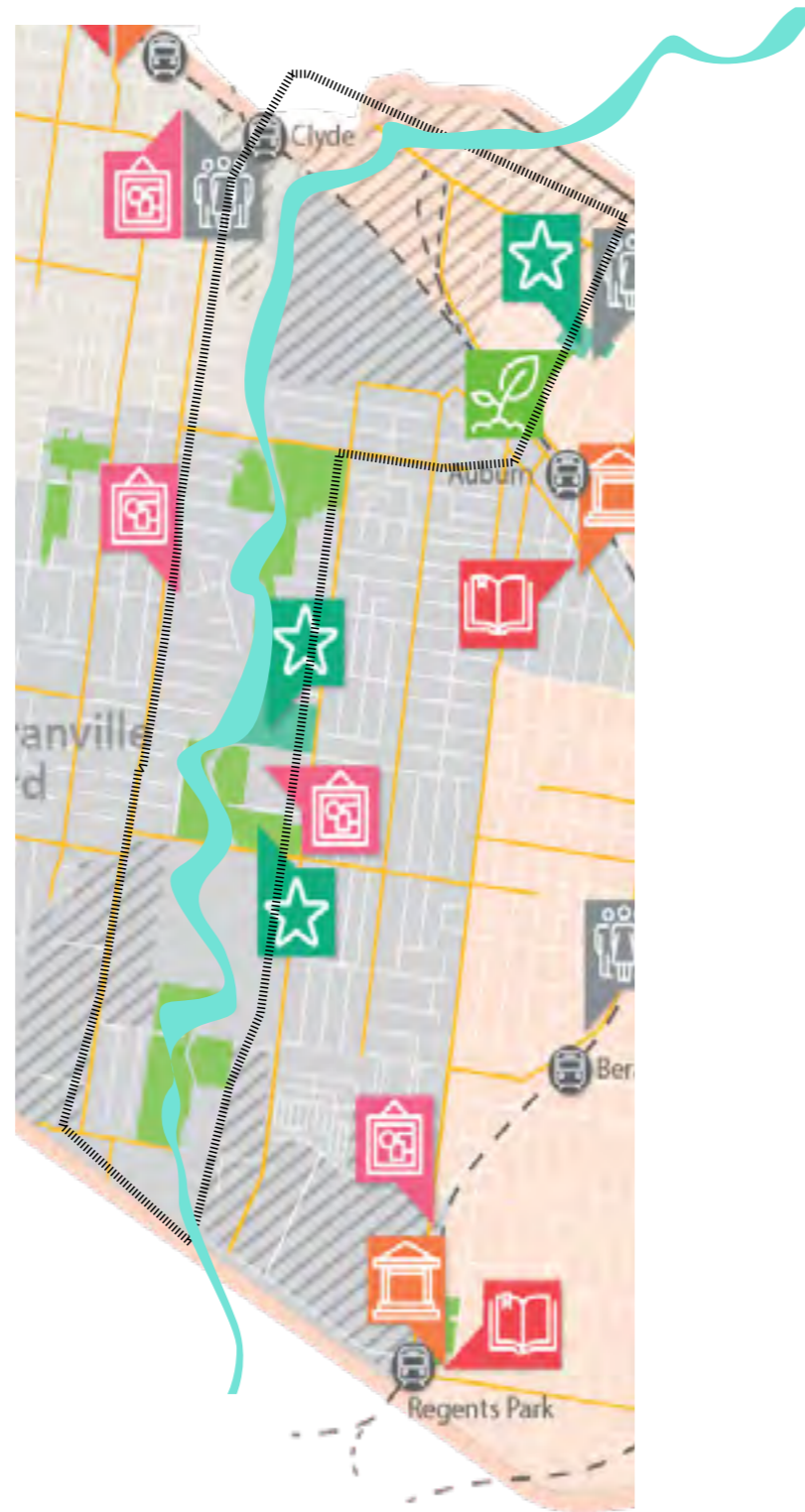
## 3.2 Regional Community & Culture

### Setting and context of community & culture at a regional level

At a regional level, the Duck River finds itself at the epicentre of cultural diversity within Greater Sydney. From the historical perspective of a meeting place for neighbouring First Nations Tribes to the present day at the centre of a growing and diversifying Greater Sydney, the Duck River can be understood as a focal point of community and culture throughout its history. It is located within one of the most culturally diverse regions in Australia. In terms of scenic and cultural landscapes, the Duck River is identified as contributing to the identity and international profile of Greater Sydney.

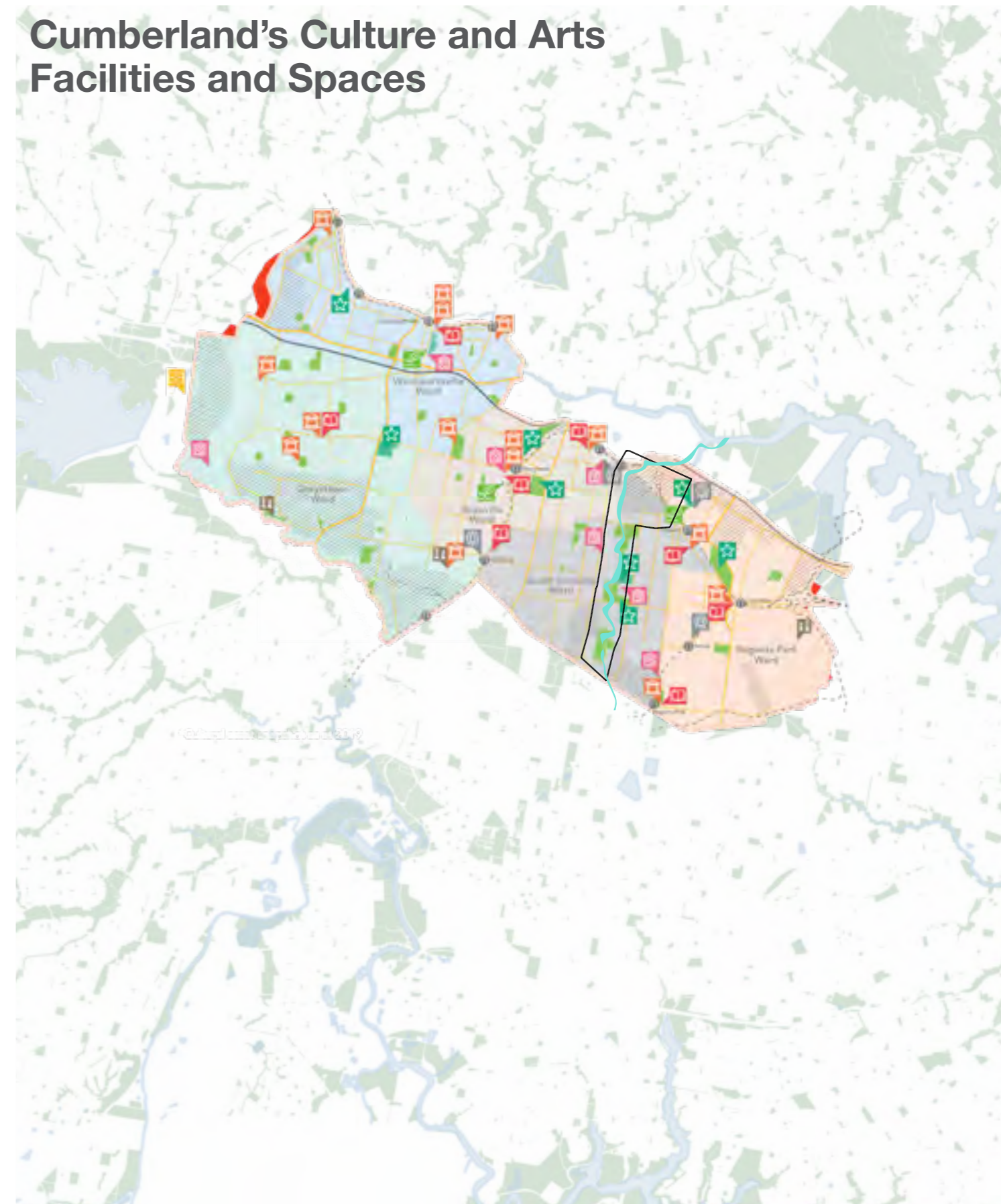
Taking this regional perspective, Cumberland City is one of the most culturally diverse and vibrant areas in NSW, known for its international food, welcoming community events and festivals, high-quality community programs and extensive networks of green spaces. Regionally, the Duck River corridor is at an important and prominent confluence of community and culture.

Within this context, the Duck River Parklands provides a range cultural and arts facilities and spaces, with the Auburn Botanic Gardens currently established as the most prominent regional attraction along the Duck River. The Botanic Gardens will see upgrades in the future, with a range of works proposed including Japanese gardens, billabong/bush tucker walks, marsh and desert gardens. In addition, upgrade to the existing garden amphitheatre is also proposed to host theatre, performance and cinema, which will be further complement to community and cultural spaces of the Peacock Gallery and Artist Studios, and The Granville Centre.



- Railway Station
- Railway Line
- M4 Motorway
- Local Road
- Regional Road
- Regional Park
- Sports Ground
- Industrial Land
- Sites of significant Aboriginal Heritage
- Staffed Community Centre
- Art Gallery/Maker Space
- Library
- Unstaffed Community Halls/Function Venues
- Outdoor Venues Supporting Community Events
- Community Garden
- Key Heritage Items

### Cumberland's Culture and Arts Facilities and Spaces



## CULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE CENTRAL RIVER CITY

### Opportunities of the shifting cultural paradigm

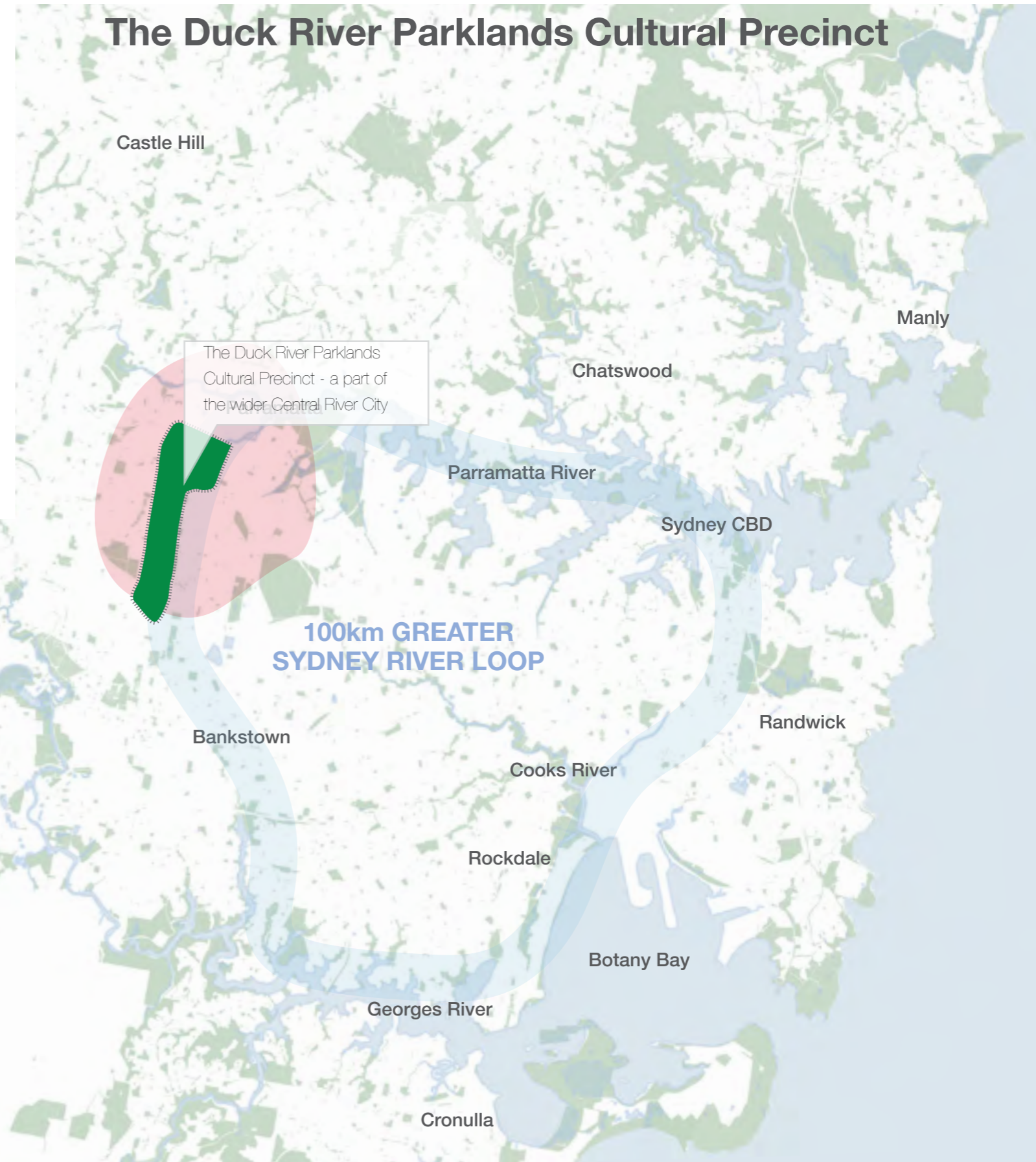
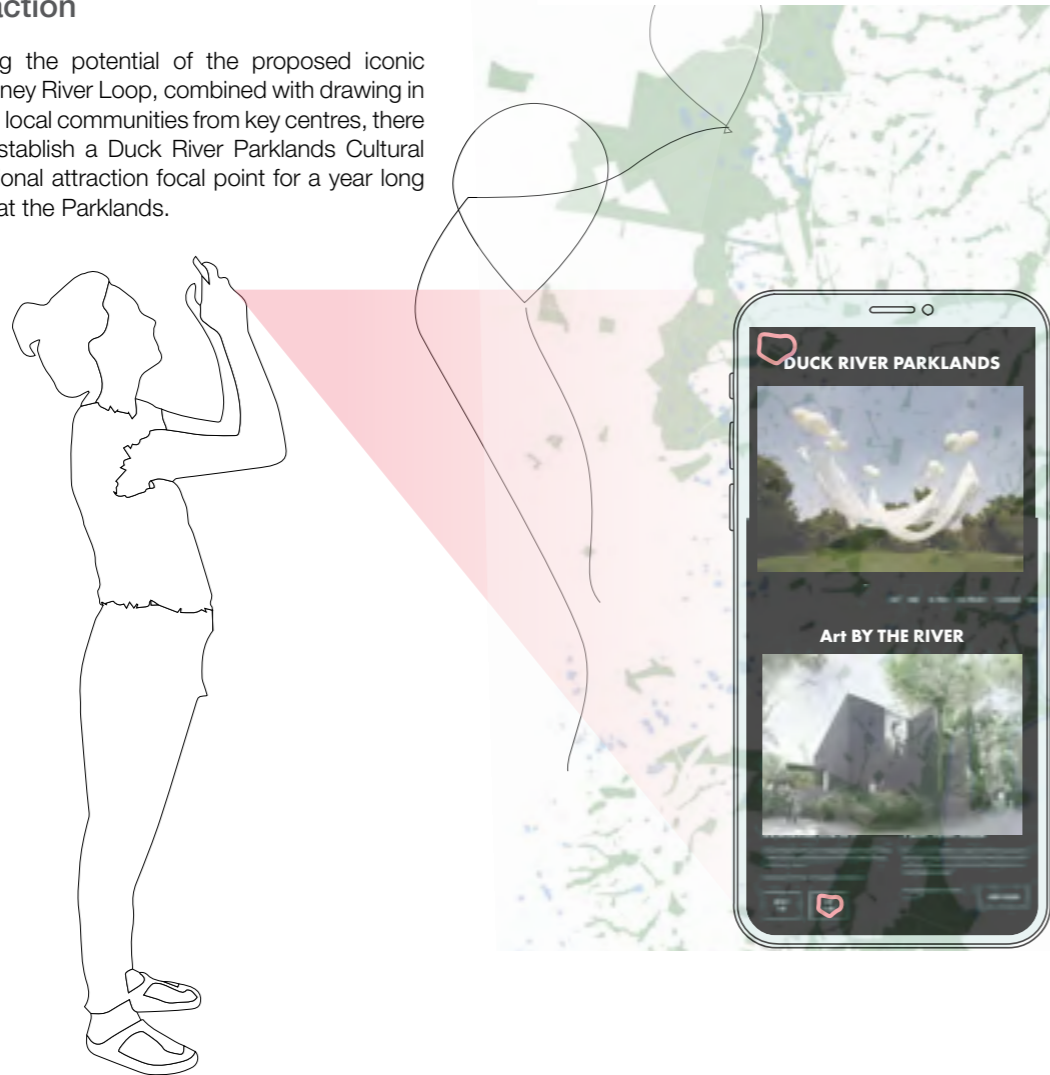
The importance of the Central River City in terms of its location and rich cultural significance is now being recognised at the state government level. Acknowledging this shift in cultural paradigm of Greater Sydney, the Masterplan has the potential to leverage this opportunity to drive benefits and outcomes for the Duck River Parklands. There is clear opportunity to expand upon the long standing regional attraction of the Auburn Botanic Gardens, in conjunction with The Granville Centre, and other key local cultural institutions surrounding the area to create a connected and vibrant regional attraction which provides far more value than just dispersed and siloed elements of community & culture.

### The Duck River Parklands Cultural Precinct Attraction

Through harnessing the potential of the proposed iconic 100km Greater Sydney River Loop, combined with drawing in regional visitors and local communities from key centres, there is opportunity to establish a Duck River Parklands Cultural Precinct, a key regional attraction focal point for a year long calendar of events at the Parklands.

Building on the Cherry Blossom Festival, along with the future upgrades to the Auburn Botanic Gardens and existing community and cultural spaces, there is opportunity for public art and place activation events such as arts, markets and food experiences. These place making elements and events, in conjunction with high quality regional spaces of playgrounds and BBQ picnic areas, will bring the Parklands to life. These attractions combined with Aboriginal culture and environmental tours, will provide activation and the basis for further establishment of the Duck River Parklands as an important piece of the regional cultural landscape of the Central River City.

The Duck River Parklands Cultural Precinct will provide a unique experience connected to the river and a place for exploration and discovery. People will come to spend a day, experiencing the sites and attractions, taking the trail of the 100km Greater Sydney River Loop.





### 3.3 Regional Environment

#### Existing regional environmental context and conditions

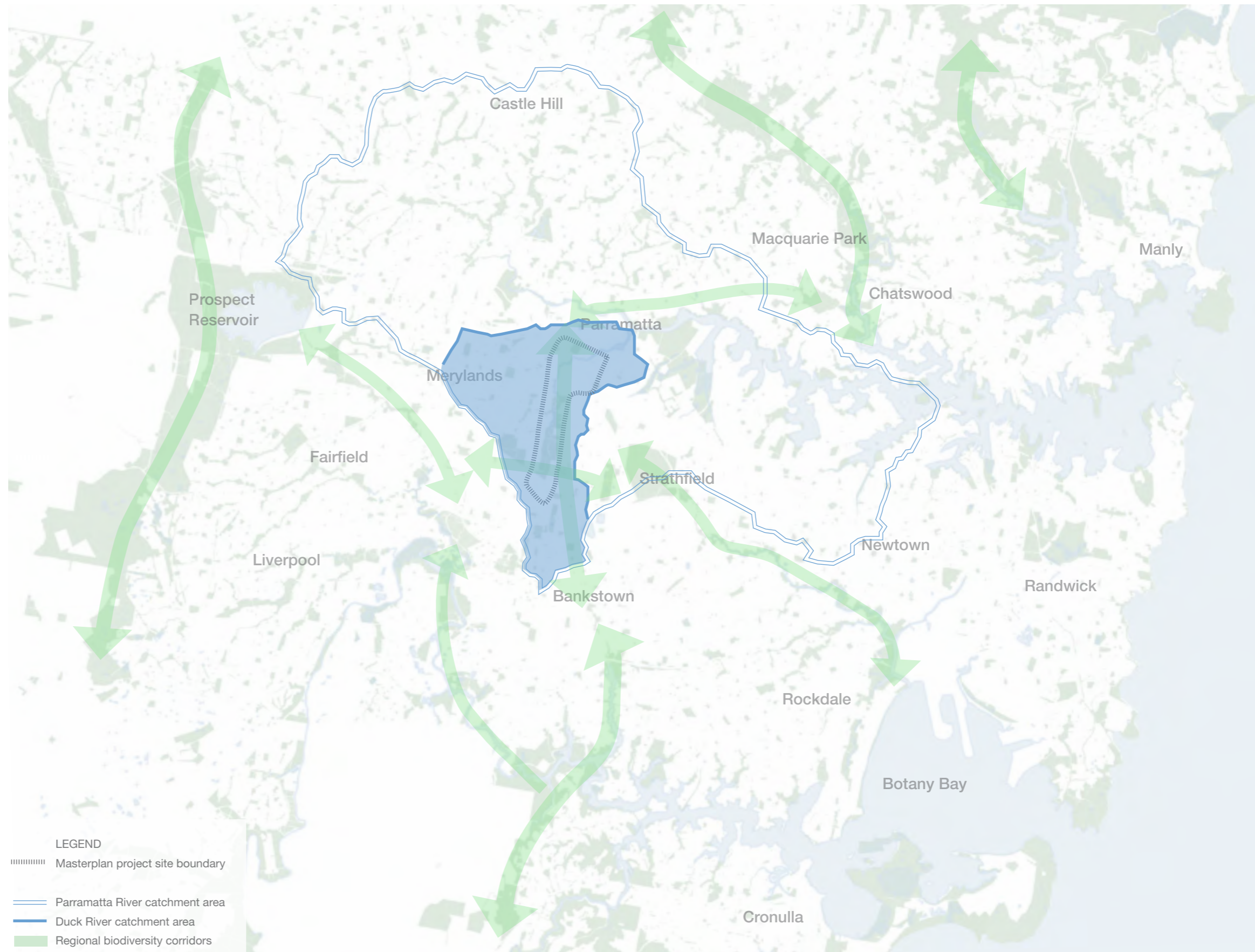
The Duck River and its surrounding riparian environment have been identified as a biodiversity corridor of regional significance, with high conservation value. It is a key waterway and riparian environment in the regional context, connecting major areas of the Sydney region from Georges River in the south to Parramatta River in the north.

The Duck River is a main tributary to the Parramatta River and owing to this has a substantial contribution to the ecology and condition of this regional waterway and catchment. The Duck River catchment flowing to the Parramatta River covers an area of approximately 104 square kilometres. Duck River is tidal and estuarine from its mouth at Parramatta River to the Clyde Weir (Parramatta City Council catchment) near the Main Western Railway Line at Clyde and freshwater above the weir to the south (Cumberland City Council Catchment). Ecology along the river corridor transitions from north to south, with the north estuarine environment home to significant Ficus planting and salt water tolerant plants to fresh water Cumberland Plain species including an Ironbark Forrest community within Cumberland, and further to the south as a concrete lined channel within the Canterbury-Bankstown City area.

The wetlands of the Duck River are of regional conservation significance, providing a home to three endangered ecological communities and several threatened species, and are highly valued by the local community. It is home to numerous ecological communities, and of particular prominence is the Grey Head Flying Fox camp, as well as other endangered bird species, amphibian and reptiles. Overall, however, owing to the history of industry, manufacturing and development along its banks, the corridor and river are in a degraded condition with numerous environmental and hydrological issues.

Duck River is intrinsically connected to Parramatta River, both physically and in a planning and management sense. The Parramatta River Masterplan, which encompasses the Duck River, has the aspiration of providing Sydneysiders with a world-class river - a river that the millions of people who live and work within 20 minutes of the Parramatta River can swim in.

The Masterplan responds to this regional context and condition, driving a strong environmental agenda for the benefit of the waterways, ecosystems and communities at a regional and local level.

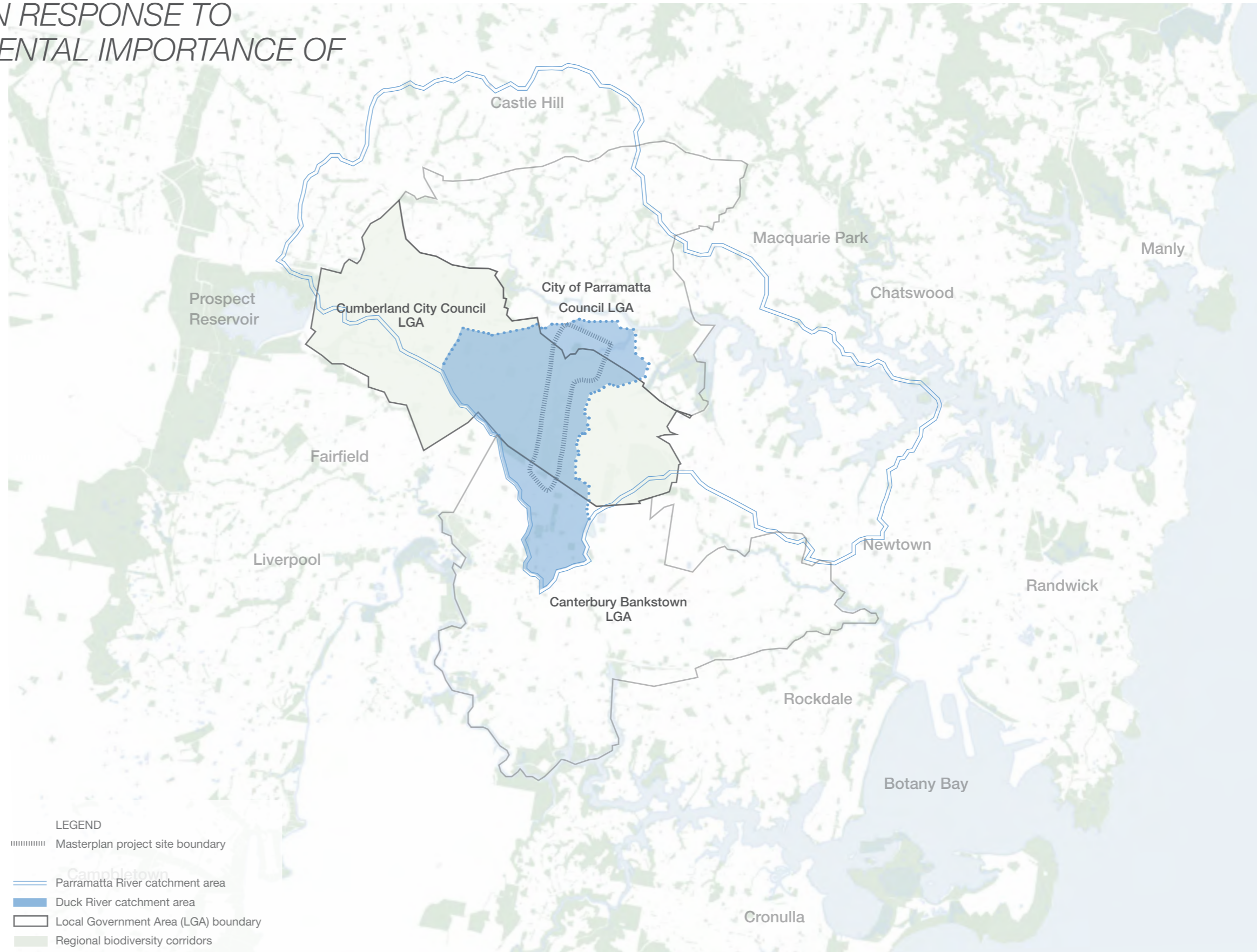


## WHAT IS THE MASTERPLAN RESPONSE TO THE REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF THE DUCK RIVER?

### Environmental agenda and importance

Having proposed significant strategic responses in terms of connections and community & culture at a regional level, the Masterplan positions the Duck River corridor as a destination on the iconic 100km Greater Sydney River Loop with regional community & culture attractions. Taking its lead from the Parramatta River Masterplan and the environmental ambitions of the Greater Sydney Commission and the Sydney Green Grid, the Masterplan aims to drive a strong environmental agenda befitting a river corridor of such regional and local significance.

By establishing an environmental agenda for the Masterplan that is cognizant of both its regional and local significance, Cumberland City Council leverages opportunities for funding change through a diverse stream of grants at a national and state level. There is also the opportunity for Cumberland City Council to step forward and be at the forefront of thought leadership and championing environmental programs.



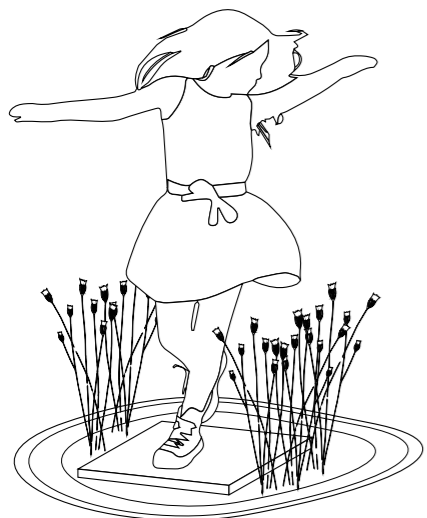
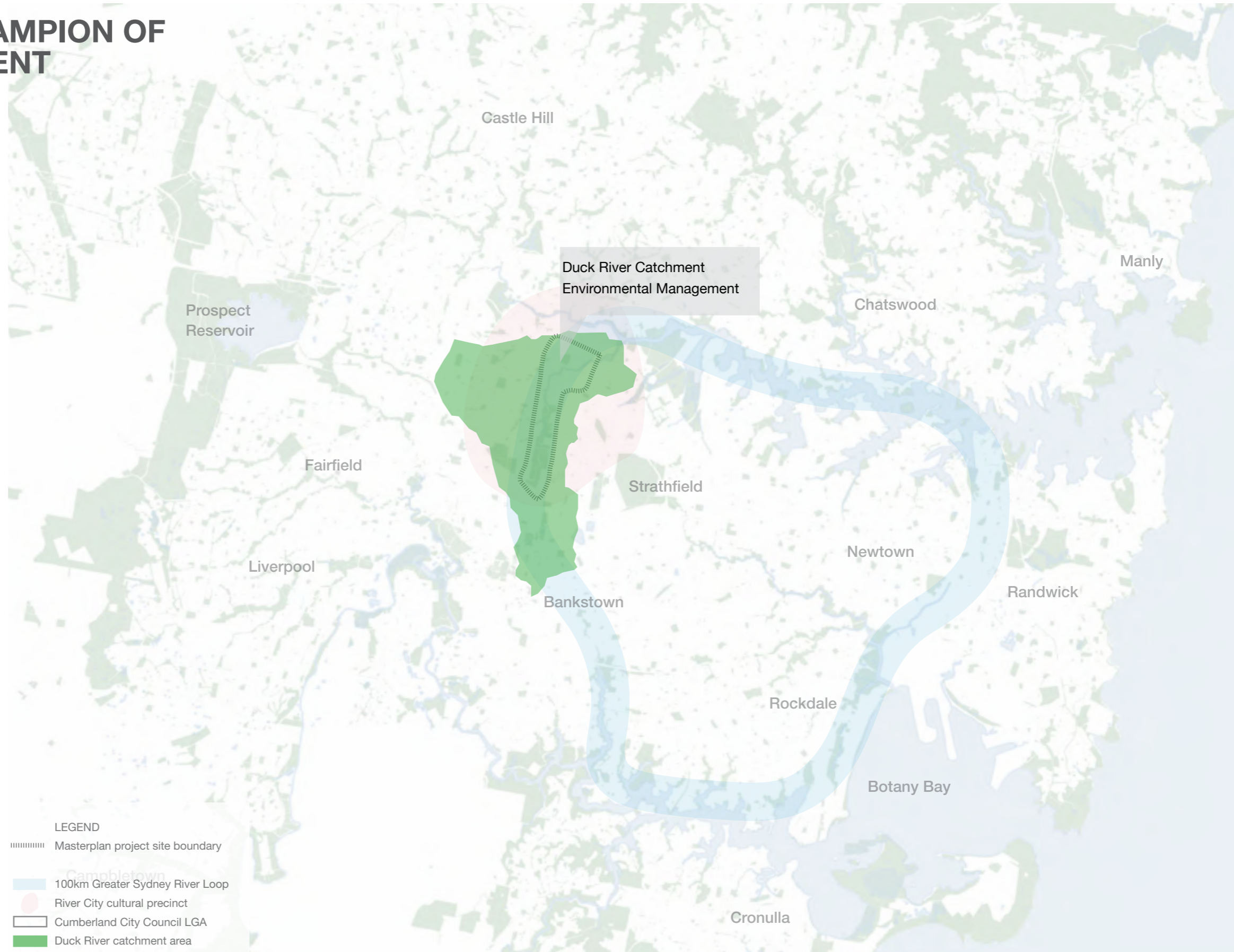
# THE DUCK RIVER - A CHAMPION OF CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT

## Championing catchment based water management and regional biodiversity for the Duck River.

If the Parramatta River is to be swimmable, the waterways of the Duck River must be enhanced to reduced pollution flowing downstream. The Masterplan proposes implementation of a catchment-based water management approach with a dedicated focus on environmental projects within the Duck River catchment. This catchment-based approach will engage stakeholders and communities, within Cumberland City and adjoining areas of the north and south reaches of the Duck River. Holding the conceptual vision of the Duck River as the green heart of Cumberland, Council will work with other environmental agencies including the Parramatta River Catchment Group, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, and Sydney Water to take steps towards revitalising the Duck River and making substantial contribution to making the Parramatta River swimmable.

If the Parramatta River is to be swimmable, then it is clear that by 2040 the Duck River itself should be moving to provide a place for public engagement and contact with the river waterway. Restoring the health of the river catchment and the river itself would seem a fundamental requirement for a waterway within the Central River City, and it would establish Cumberland City Council at the forefront of environmental leadership.

In addition, environmental protection, conservation and enhancement of critical flora and fauna habitat, will contribute to regional biodiversity plans and strategies which aim to promote and enhance regional biodiversity corridors. Through adopting these environment strategic ideas at a regional level the Masterplan will drive beneficial outcomes for the community and environment at both regional and local scales. This regional ecological action approach elevates the ability of the Masterplan to guide future outcomes for the Duck River in reaching its potential for providing benefits and value to the community and stakeholders.





**4.0**  
LOCAL INTERVENTIONS AND  
INITIATIVES

## 4.1 Local Access and Connections

### Parklands connectivity, access and the urban interface

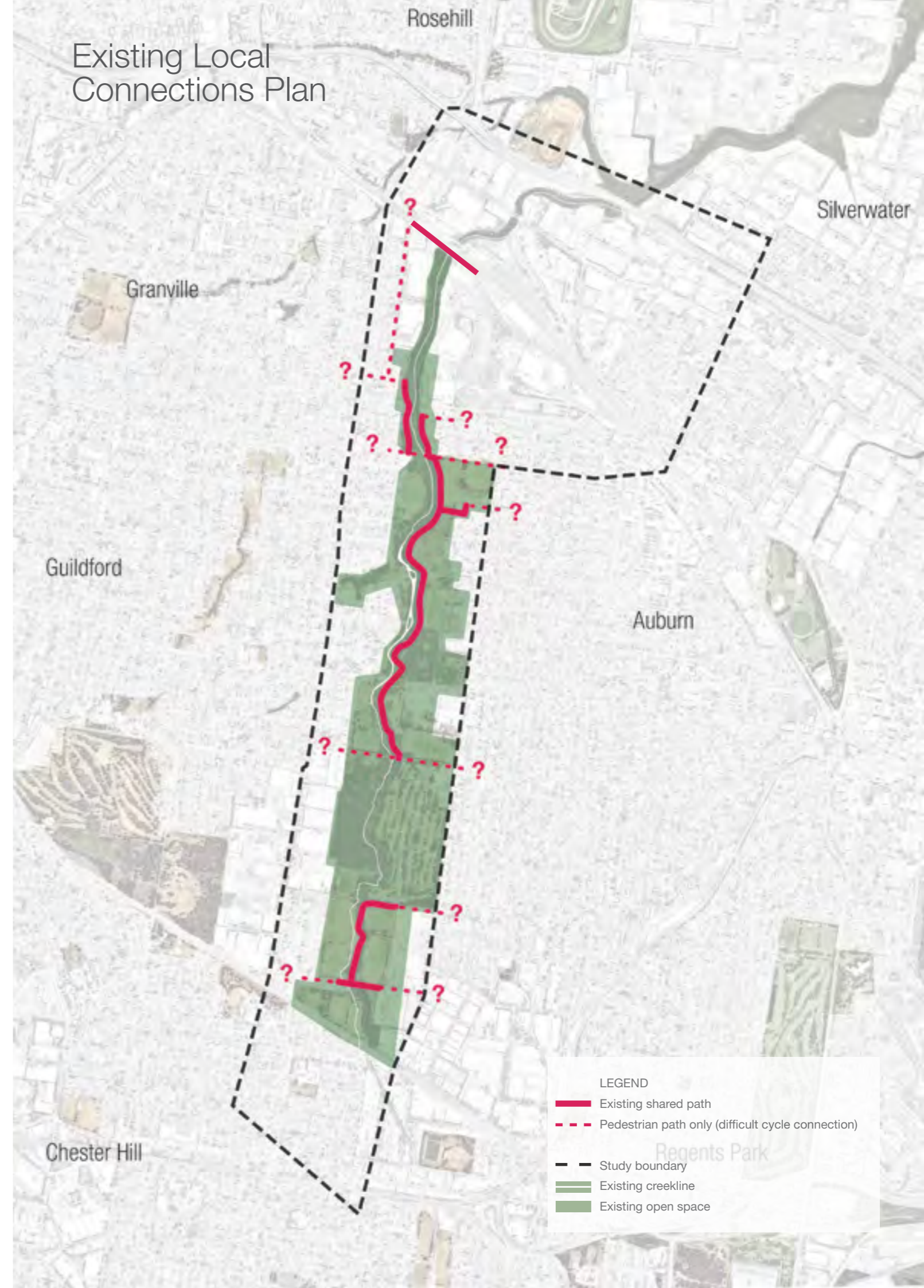
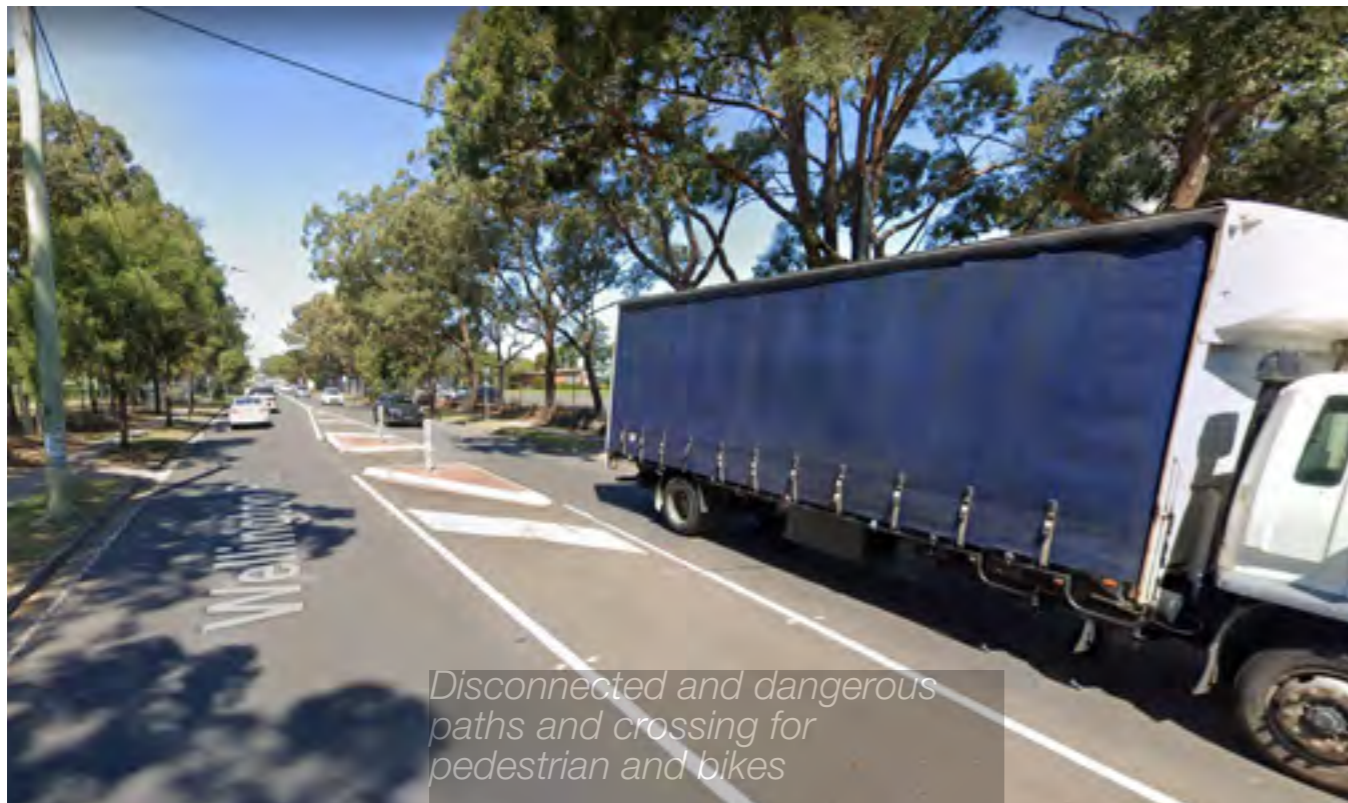
Key to local connections are the north-south and east-west main connector links, along with the parkland entry points and interfaces along the boundaries. The aim of the parklands local connections is to enhance movement and access to homes, schools, centres and recreation facilities, and to offer and promote to the community a healthier possibility. The importance of this comes into sharper focus given what we have learnt from the current global pandemic crisis.

### Local Interventions: Existing conditions of local connectivity

There are limited dedicated east-west active transport connections across the river. Nor is there an established continuous active transport link connecting the parklands north to south. This restriction and discontinuity of local parkland connectivity diminishes the activity and value of the parklands and prevents ease of access and use for local communities.

The Masterplan responds to these challenges in local connectivity by providing strategies to transform the Duck River Parklands into a vital and accessible connector for regional, city and local community movements.

*Q: What is the key strategic response for local connectivity?*



# THE DUCK RIVER PARKLANDS GREEN LINKS

## A north-south connector for local and regional accessibility

With the perspective and vision of the parklands functioning as an integrated whole, combined with the strategic regional level move of the 100km Greater Sydney River Loop, the establishment of the Duck River Parklands Green Links is a key local strategic move.

This continuous active transport link through the Parklands, connecting north to south, and east to west, is critical for the future realisation of the benefits of the parklands for the local community, as well as regional visitors.

In addition to the connections to the key local centres and regionally to the north and south, local loops, circuits and trails within the parklands will provide activation, accessibility and ultimately health and well-being outcomes for the local community.

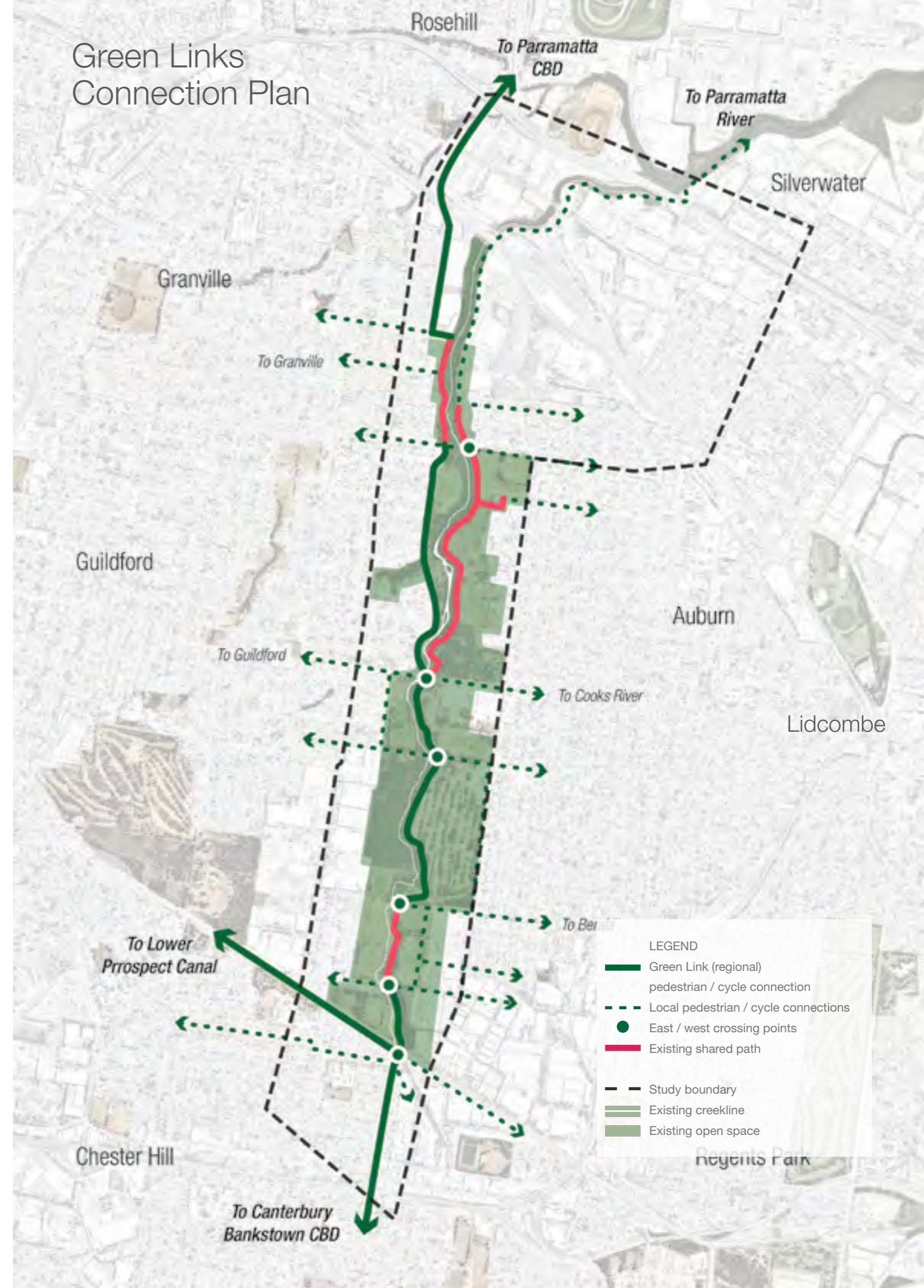
*Q: What is the key strategic response for local connectivity?*

*A: Continuous and interconnected paths for bikes and pedestrians.*

Implementation of the Duck River Parklands Green Links will provide bike and pedestrian priority pathways where they do not currently exist and integrate with the existing shared path that runs through sections of the parklands.

The Masterplan proposes new crossing points east-west and broader connections that promote a movement economy that integrates with the green grid network of the Central River City and the 100km Greater Sydney River Loop proposed by the Masterplan.

The Duck River Parklands Green Links will utilise different types of shared and single use pathways including bike boulevards along roadways, concrete and composite material paths within the parklands. Bike and pedestrian only bridges over the river are proposed at key crossing points to enable integrated local connectivity throughout the parklands.



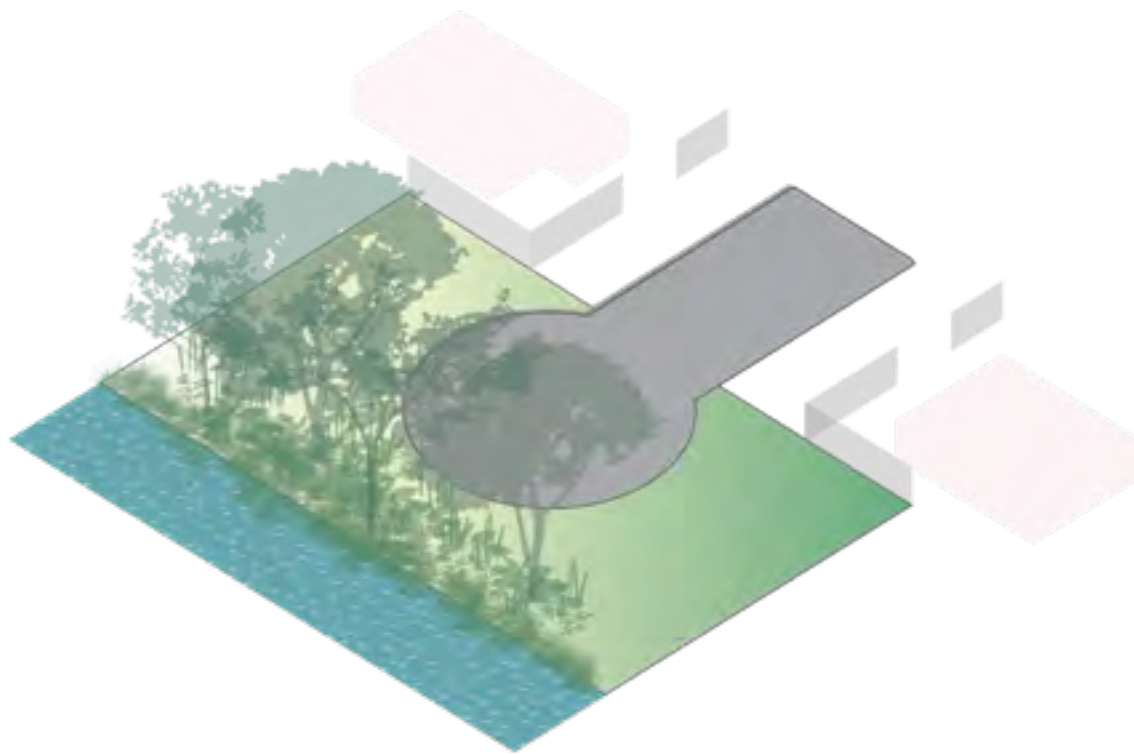
**Local Interventions: Existing conditions at key entry points to the Parklands**

Key points of entry for the local community into the parklands, located on both the east and west sides of the river, are cul-de-sac dead end streets. These dead end streets currently provide a visual and physical barrier for the local community to the parklands. The stark condition of these dead end streets are typified by a place of illegal garbage dumping, informal car parking and a point of discontinuity and disconnection for people and cyclists, rather than welcoming entry points.

These potential key entry points to the parklands provide an important opportunity for the Masterplan to harness the unrealised value and benefit for the community and integration of the parklands connectivity network.

The Masterplan responds to these points of disconnection by proposing a simple and powerful design move. One that will provide the community with gateways that celebrate and promote access to the parklands. This easy configuration change will be one of the first steps in transformation to achieve a safe, connected, activated and thriving parklands.

*Q: What is the local level response for these neglected gateways into the parklands?*



**Existing Cul-De-Sac Street Entry Points and Crossings Plan**



**LEGEND**

- Parkland gateway locations
- - - Pedestrian / cycle crossing opportunity locations
- Study boundary
- Existing creekline
- Existing open space

# PARKLANDS GATEWAY TRANSFORMATIONS

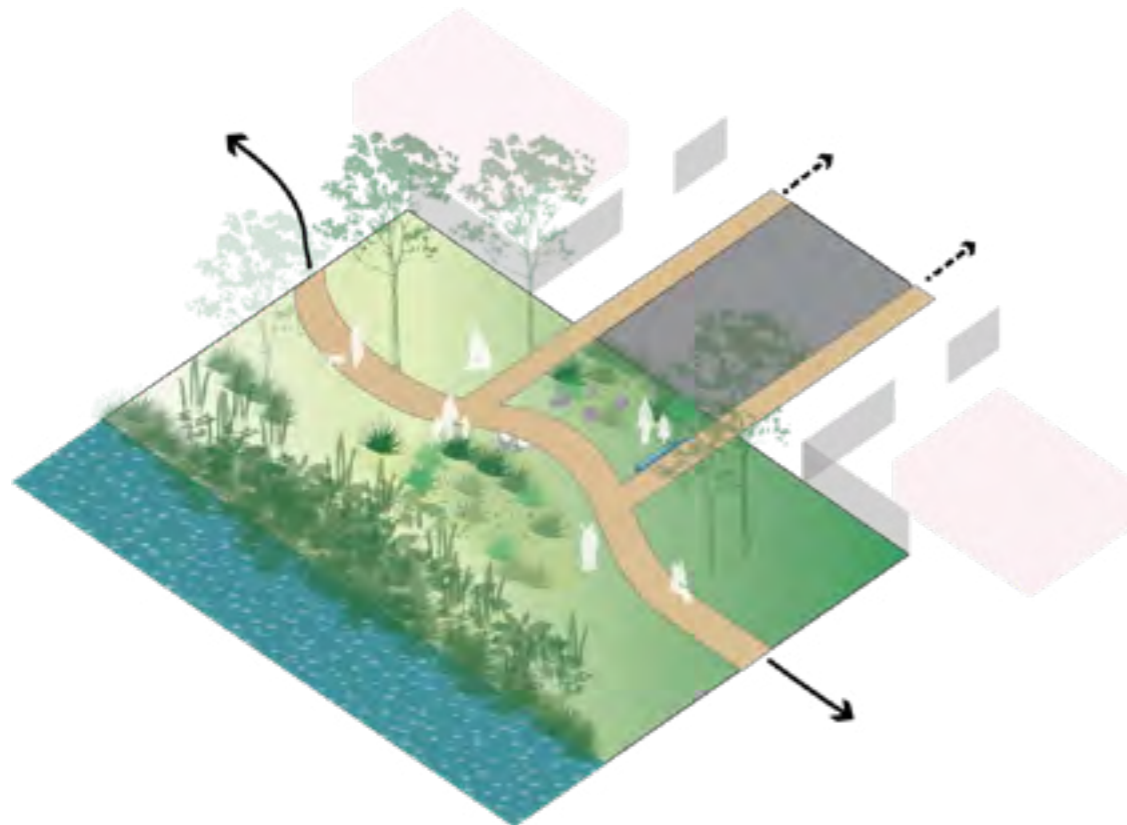
## Gateways, pathways, health and well-being activity

A key local strategic intervention of the Masterplan is to transform the existing dead end streets into welcoming and connected gateway entry points to the parklands.

These key local interventions provide opportunity for people to engage and embrace the parklands, as well as the potential for implementation of water sensitive urban design

(WSUD) elements for treatment of stormwater runoff from urban catchments. Integrating WSUD elements into the gateway transformations will provide multiple benefits of delivering environmental outcomes of improved waterway health and riparian Environment, in addition to increased public amenity and engaging the community with the riparian environment and 'water story' of this important river.

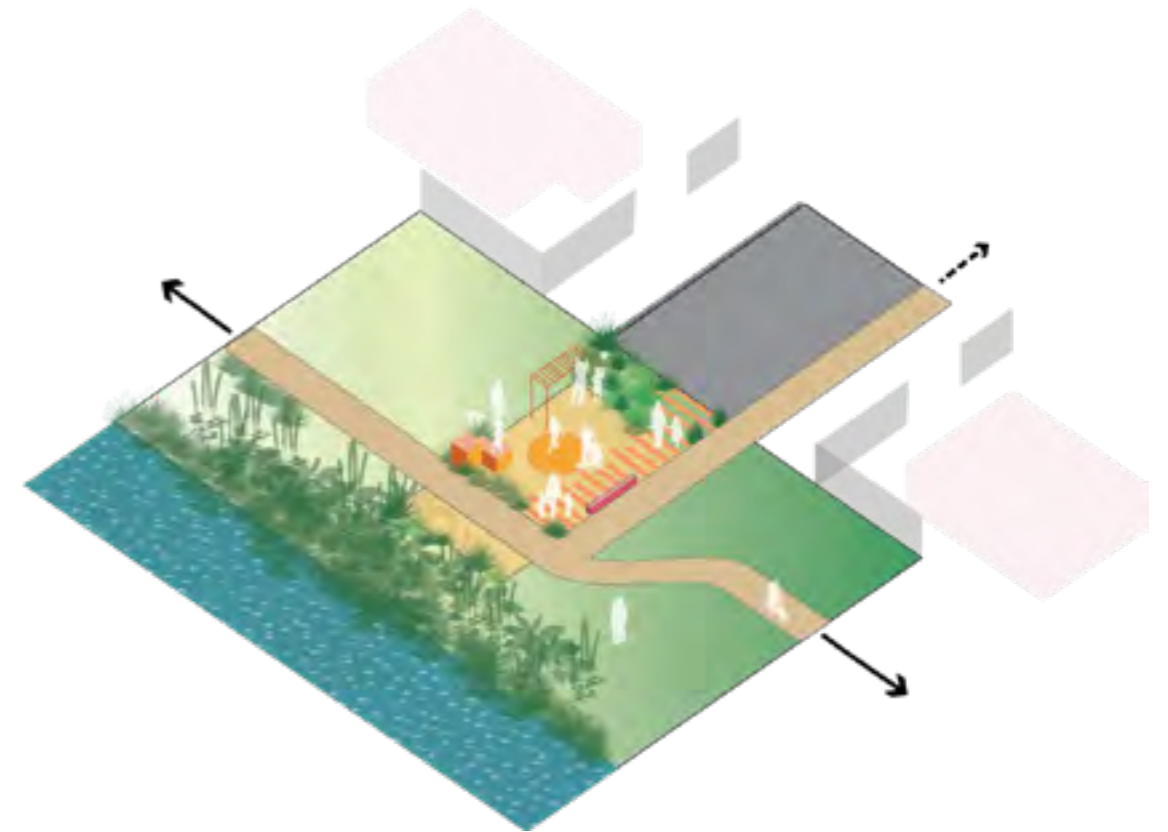
*Q: What is the local level response for these neglected gateways into the parklands?*



*A: Green links street connection and shared path connectivity.*

A relatively low cost intervention that increase the safety and amenity for pedestrians and cyclists along the Duck River Green Links route is this gateway intervention of capping off the end of the existing dead end street to allow for shared path connectivity. Some additional elements may include seating in the shade, wayfinding and a drinking fountain.

*Q: What is the local level response for these neglected gateways into the parklands?*



*A: Programmed Parklets.*

This gateway transformation would provide both a local play facility and a gateway to the Duck River Parklands. Programmes for these spaces may include kiddies play, youth play, fitness stations, community gardens and urban farming.

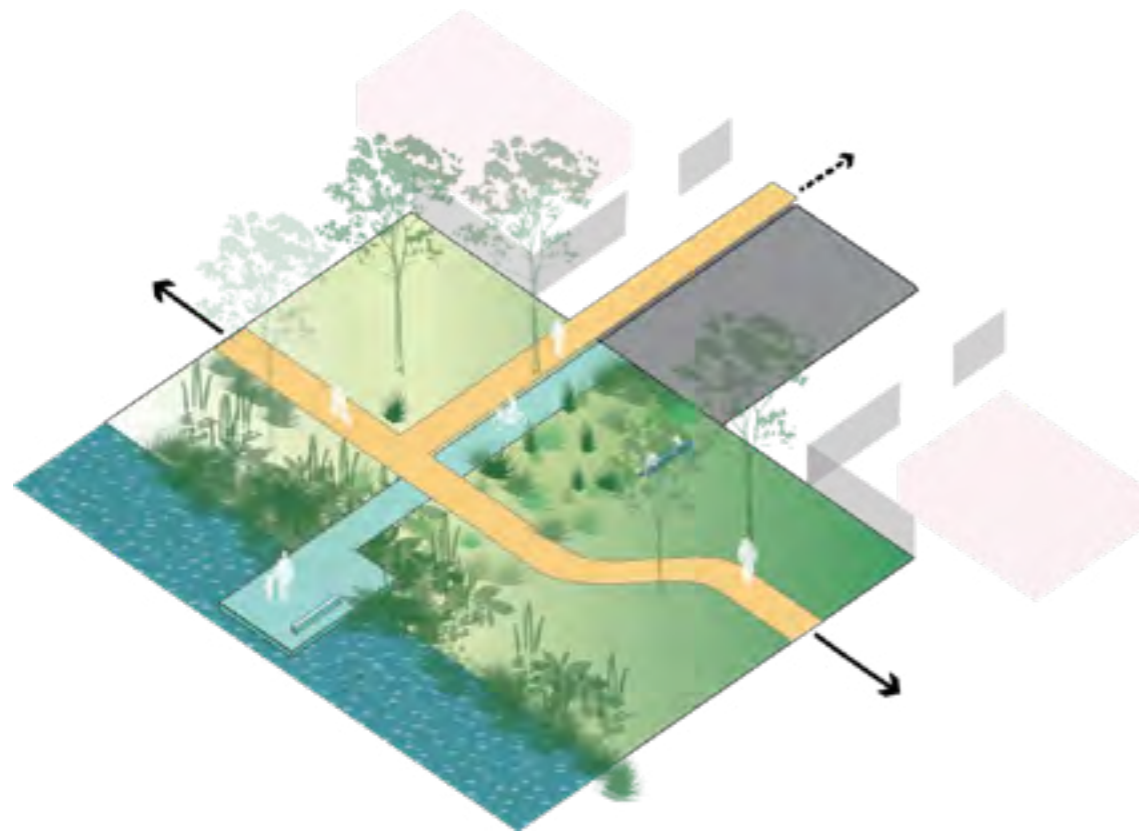


# PARKLANDS GATEWAY TRANSFORMATIONS

## Visual and physical connection to the river

The Parkland gateway transformations also present the opportunity to extend visual and physical connection into the parklands and the river from these local entry points. These important connections provided enhanced experience and accessibility for the community.

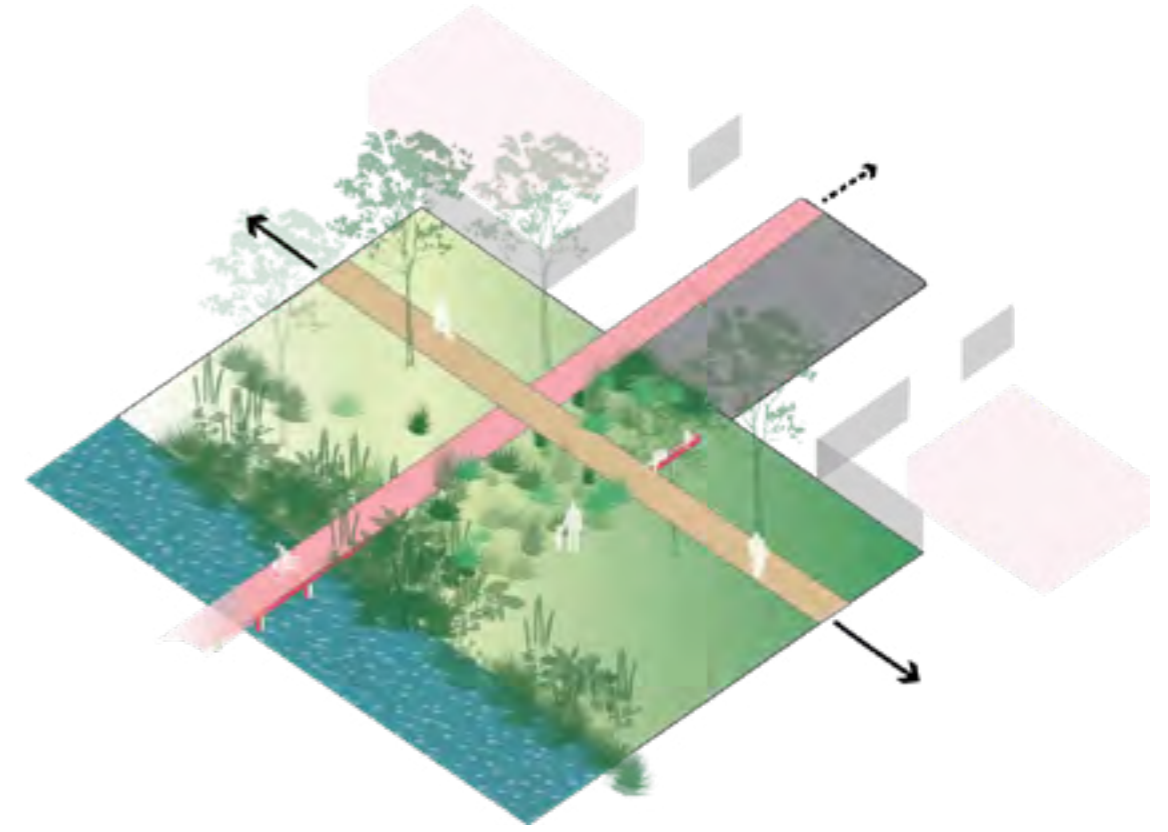
*Q: What is the local level response for these neglected gateways into the parklands?*



*A: Visual connections - Pause points and river view platforms.*

These gateway transformations harness the potential of locations which lend themselves to providing beautiful and unique pause points, lookouts and engagement with the river.

*Q: What is the local level response for these neglected gateways into the parklands?*



*A: Physical connections over river.*

At selected important key east-west connections; some existing junctions have the potential to connect over the river to provide cycle and pedestrian linkages.

### Local Interventions: The Parklands Interfaces and existing built

One of the most important aspects in considering the site as parklands and the change of local perspective is the physical interface of the surrounding built form. The existing built form interface with the parklands; whether it be residential, industrial or commercial, currently have their back turned to the parklands and river, and with a fence line confirming this clear separation.

These interfaces along the parklands boundary present a unique and important opportunity. This opportunity is embedded within the connection the local community has with the parklands and the value and benefit that can be gained in a transformation of going from having our backs turned to a neglected and degraded river and riparian corridor to turning to face the river, embracing and engaging with a revitalised Duck River.

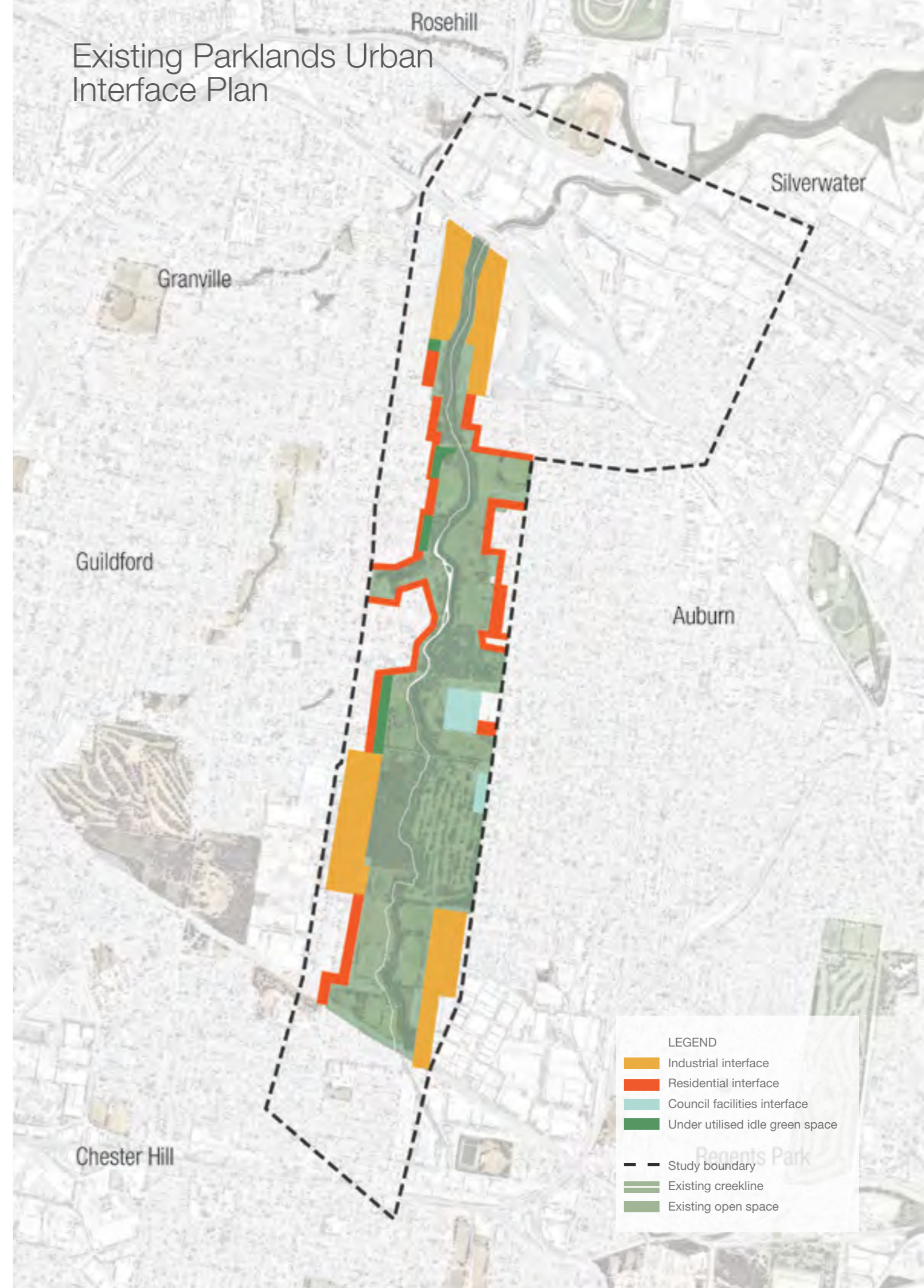
In addition to the urban built form boundaries, there are spaces and areas around the perimeter of the parklands which are currently underutilised and functioning as idle green space. These underutilised grassed spaces within the parklands are currently soaking up Council resources in mowing maintenance and return little value and benefit to the community. The Masterplan proposes these important spaces be upgraded as a chain of parklets along the north-south active transport network of the Duck River Parklands green links.

A suite of transformations is proposed by the Masterplan which reimagines the connections and interfaces that could be in a 2040 future for areas including:

- Residential
- Commercial and Industrial
- Idle green space - parklets



## Existing Parklands Urban Interface Plan



## Residential Interface

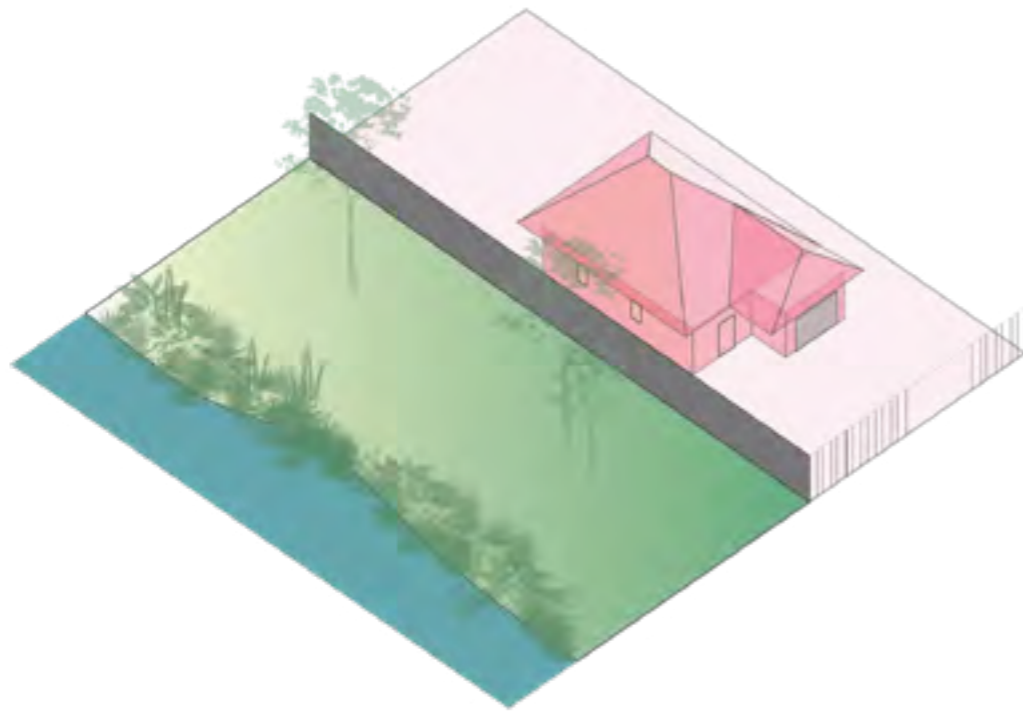
### Existing houses with their back turned to the parklands and river

The existing residential houses along the interface boundary have their back turned to the river and parklands. This creates a physical and mental barrier to connecting, engaging and embracing the benefits and value of the parklands.

Here the Masterplan responds to this existing condition by imagining the parklands interface and communities of the

future. How can a transformation be made for the community to connect with the river, have access and benefit from the Parklands Green Links connectivity to key local centres, and achieve greater health and well-being outcomes from parklands amenity, facilities, places and spaces?

*Q: How does the Masterplan see The Parklands interface and communities in 2040?*



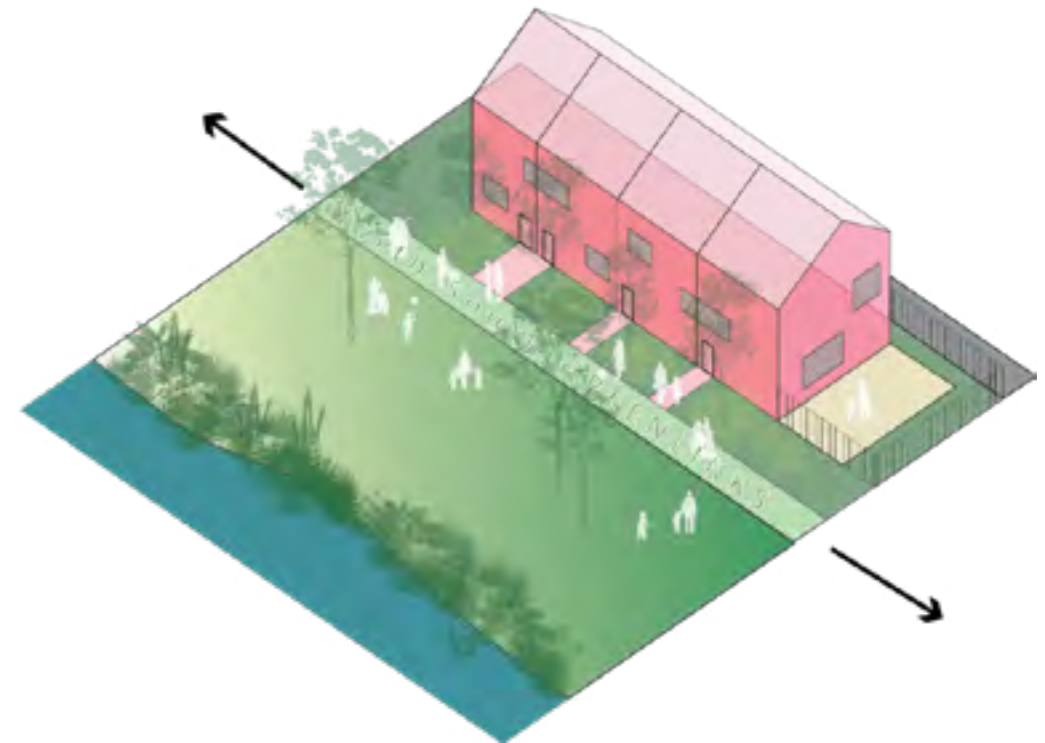
## INTERFACE TRANSFORMATION

### Embracing the parklands and river through urban transformations

This simple re-orientation of the residential built form along the parklands interfaces creates a unique and fundamental reconnection of the community with the parklands river environment. This change of perspective in turning to face the river and parklands enables increase local connectivity, activation, and importantly safety for park users and adjacent residents. It is well recognised that the more open and activated a place becomes, the safer it becomes, with more eyes equalling greater security.

Opportunity may also exist for targeted residential redevelopment along the corridor, utilising existing Council owned land holdings. This would be integrated with the Parklands interfaces through appropriate design and built form responses.

*A: Embracing, engaging and turning to face the parklands and river.*



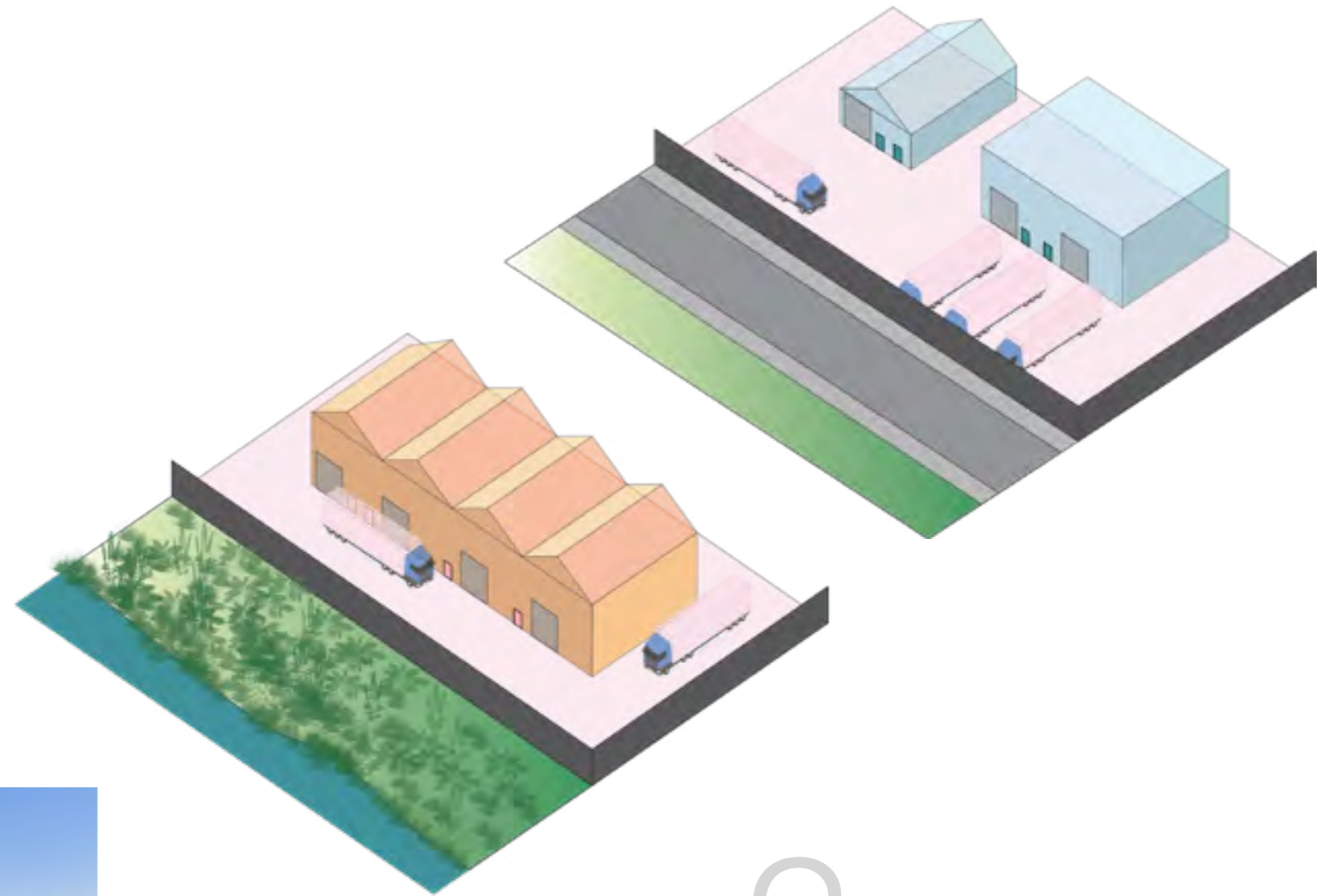
## Commercial and Industrial Interface

### Existing conditions where commercial and industrial areas meet the parklands

The history of industry and development around the Duck River corridor has led to prominent lengths of the parklands boundary having an interface with industrial and commercial built form. These interfaces now create barriers to the parklands. While it acknowledges these industrial and commercial areas are critical productive land use, the Masterplan interrogates the possibilities of these stark interfaces. Here it is questioned how the industrial and commercial interface typologies may open up possibilities for the workers, community and environment in the future.



Q: How does the Masterplan respond to the commercial and industrial interfaces with the Parklands?



# INTERFACE TRANSFORMATION 2040 PARKLAND VISION

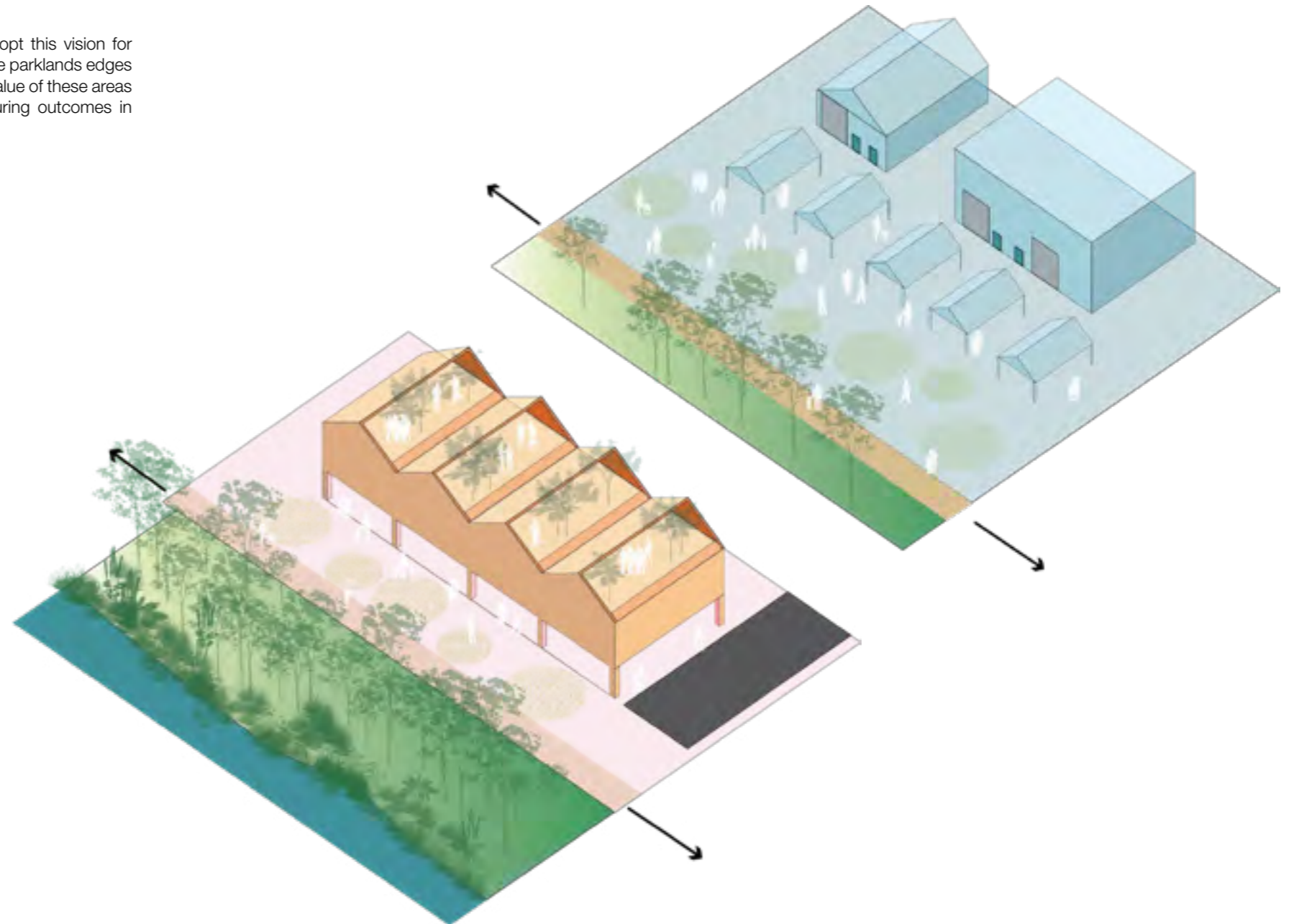
## Opening the doors to activation of the parklands interface

Commercial and industrial areas and precincts of the future will not be the same as the past. The Masterplan proposes imagining the suite of benefits which can be achieved for the community, workers and stakeholder by reimagining of the commercial and industrial parklands interfaces.

Industrial and commercial areas of the future will be state-of-the-art precincts and vibrant employment areas. Delivering premium facilities that blend flexible warehousing, office space and small-scale local amenities such as a local cafés, recreation, leisure and activity hubs, and integrated connectivity and access. They will not only be a commercial asset for business, but have a wider local community function delivering value and benefits.

The Masterplan proposes that council adopt this vision for industrial and commercial facilities along the parklands edges and work with stakeholders to realise the value of these areas along the interface of the parklands ensuring outcomes in which all parties benefit.

*Q: How does the Masterplan respond to the commercial and industrial interfaces with the Parklands?*



*A: Integrating and activating the parkland interface.*

## *Under utilised and idle green space at the interface*

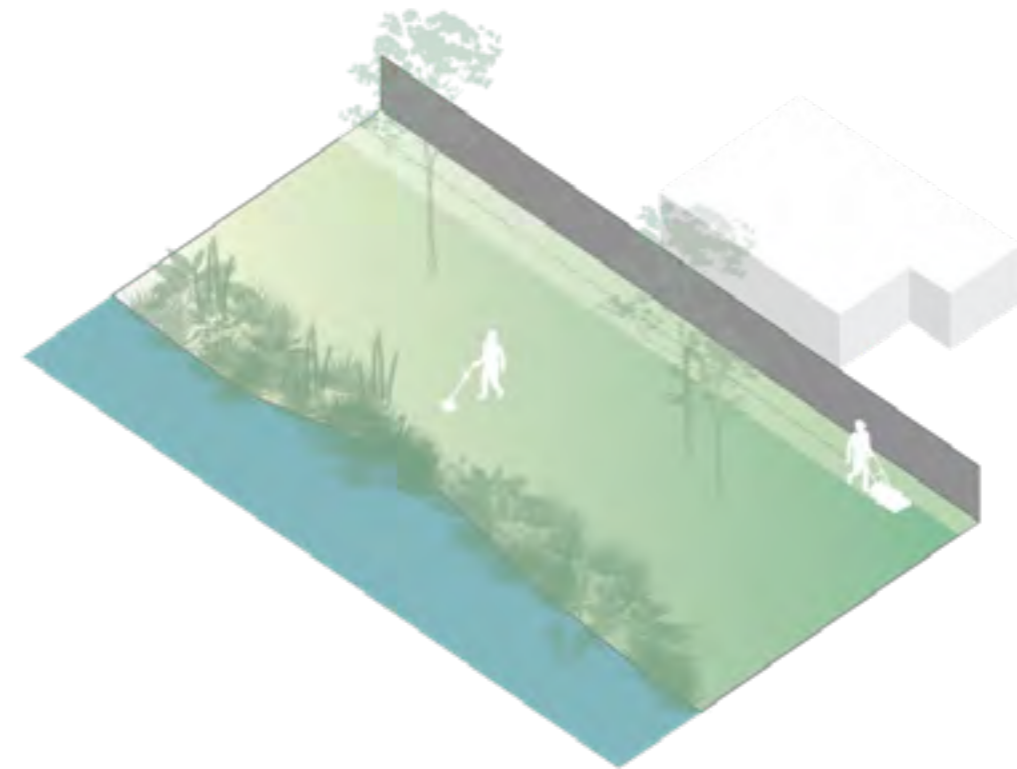
### **Existing unused green space in the parklands**

Throughout the Parklands, particularly along with the boundary interfaces, there is open green space which is providing limited benefit and value, environmentally and to the community and public amenity. These existing underutilised spaces are currently only tended to by council staff in periodic mowing and occasional passers-by. With the view of the Parklands as a place providing great public benefit and amenity, combined with the connectivity and access of the Parklands Green Links and the urban built form transformations, the Masterplan embraces these idle green spaces of the Parklands as potential opportunities.

With the community turning to face the Parklands and embracing and engaging with the river, how does the Masterplan respond to these idle green spaces looking to the future.



*Q: How does the Masterplan see the parklands interface and communities in 2040?*



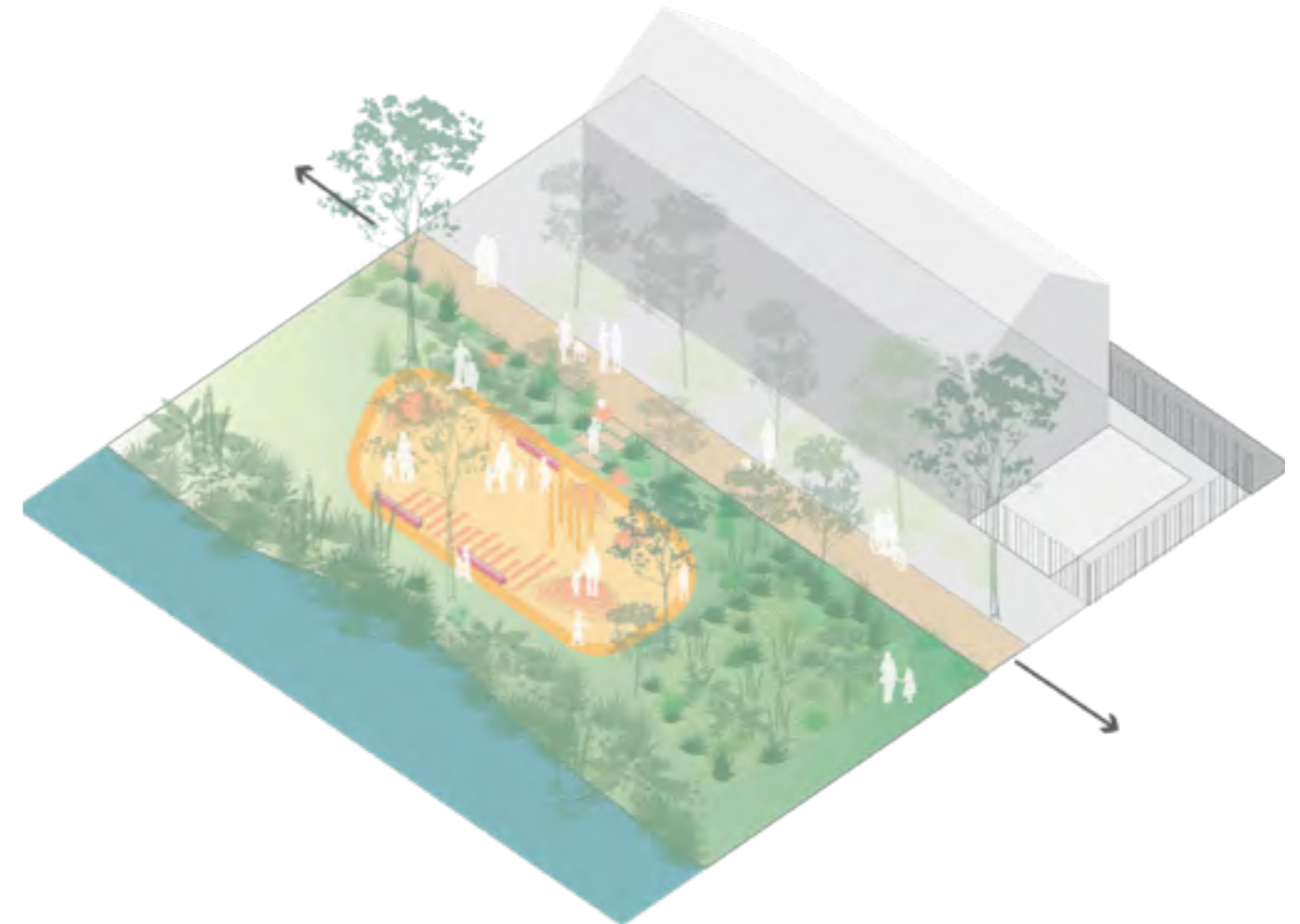
# LOCAL PARKLET TRANSFORMATIONS

## Bringing connections and activity of the Duck River Parklands together through local parklet transformations

Recognising the opportunity of idle green space and the underutilised areas along with the parklands, the Masterplan proposes the transformation of these areas into local parklets. These interventions will connect, engage and activate the parklands. With the now established green link connections north-south and east-west (increasing pedestrian and cycle movements), gateway enhancement (improving amenity and safety) and urban interface transformations, these upgrades will provide a series of focal and activity points that provide local play and areas for the neighbourhood community and those using the active transport network.



*Q: How does the Masterplan see the parklands interface and communities in 2040?*



*A: Providing play, recreation and well-being for local communities.*

# DUCK RIVER PARKLANDS VISION 2040



Artistic impression of the Duck River Parklands Green Links Connections and Local Parklet





## 4.2 Local Community & Culture

### Exploring and leveraging the existing character of the Parklands

At a local level, the modern-day layers of culture and diversity exist in conjunction with prominent Aboriginal history and culture, the environment, as well as the industrial heritage of the Duck River and surrounding areas.

The important indigenous Australian heritage coupled with prominent contemporary diversity provides a rich tapestry of community & culture. This can, and should, inform the future vision for the Parklands.

Local community and culture throughout the Parklands is captured by the establishment of the five distinct precincts of the Parklands. These Parklands precincts harness and leverage existing character and ensure that a diverse and high quality offering is provided for the current and future needs of the community. The Parklands precincts also provide a framework for identifying the actions to be initiated at a fine grain local level for the benefit of the community.

### The Wilds

*Precinct ambition: A precinct where 'The Wilds' remain wild and the public experience views and glimpses of the natural flora and fauna of the river. A place which frames the existing unique character and elements, protects the natural environment and embraces the juxtaposition of the industrial built form to create engaging and informed experience.*

### Sports Precinct

*Precinct Ambition: A precinct which provides high quality sports and recreation facilities. A consolidated and optimised area that provides increased value to the community, catering for the sports and recreation needs of Cumberland's local residents and regional visitors now and into the future.*

### Botanic Gardens Precinct

*A precinct which is the focal point of community and culture within the Parklands. A place where local's and regional visitors come to enjoy and embrace community and cultural activities. Leveraging off this diverse community, the Botanic Gardens Precinct will be a place where connection and engagement with the river and its scenic qualities will be embraced. This will be done by promotion of opportunities for public art and place activation programs and events, an iconic pedestrian and bike bridge connection over the river and providing place and space for beautiful moments along the river's edge.*

### Wategora Precinct

*A precinct which embodies a meaningful acknowledgement and recognition of this land being a meeting place for Aboriginals for thousands of years, a place that celebrates their culture and heritage, and provides a place for all people and communities to come learn, experience, play and enjoy the Parklands.*

*With half the precinct area currently occupied by the Auburn Golf Course, which restricts access to allow only golfers, a staged phasing of establishing the precinct is envisaged. Over an initial four year plan, critical projects of riverbank restoration and north-south green links connections should be undertaken.*

*Further consideration to the transition of the golf course to future uses will also be undertaken, balancing bushland, open space and recreation with the potential for targeted residential development along Chisholm Road.*

*The Masterplan proposal for the Wategora precinct is set around the strong core themes of connections, community & culture, and environment, and proposes a well-connected parklands playground serving the needs of Cumberland's local community and regional visitors, additional nature reserve areas to that of the existing Wategora reserve. These proposals of the Wategora precinct would be set within both the Parklands and along the 100km Greater Sydney River Loop, providing a strong bookend attraction of the River*

### Makers and Innovators

*A precinct encouraging thriving creativity and innovation inspired by the past and looking to the future. With the change and transformation brought by the connections to the thriving community & culture offer of the Parklands, the surrounding industrial and commercial areas adjacent to the precinct area will turn to face and open up to the parklands, creating a unique aspect to community and cultural activities in the future. This precinct will be a 'hub' of innovation, with potential across different sectors for example:*

- STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics)
- DESIGN (Architecture Fabrication and Automation)
- ART (Visual, Graphic and Motion Picture)

*This will be in conjunction with upgraded existing facilities of the Duck River Parklands south sports hub, centered around Melita Stadium and Everly Park.*

## Duck River Parklands Masterplan Precincts Plan



## 4.3 Local Environment

### Driving a strong environmental agenda for the Parklands

A fundamental aspect of the Duck River Parklands and this Masterplan is the environmental agenda and goal of revitalising and enhancing the waterway and ecology of the river and its environs.

The vision of the Duck River being the green heart of Cumberland and a vital artery of greater Sydney sets the foundation for generating support and action around environmental projects within the parklands. Also, the powerful regional level strategic interventions of an iconic green blue grid river connection trail and a cultural precinct of the Central River City will provide a further catalyst for the implementation of local level environmental and ecological projects.

The change in perspective and understanding of the parklands being embraced and valued by the wider community will inspire an environmental agenda which strives towards enhancing and revitalising the waterway and local environment.

Taking from the strategic regional approach of catchment based water management with a dedicated catchment taskforce, if the Duck River is to contribute to improvement or regional Parramatta River waterways which are swimmable, then the Duck River needs to embrace an aspiration which takes steps forward towards being swimmable itself, and allowing public engagement and contact with the waterway.

To achieve this the Masterplan proposes a suite of local ecological projects for the Duck River Parklands which will improve the water quality of the river, promote sustainability that improves livability, enhance ecological diversity and deliver environmental outcomes for the river and community.

Interventions such as riverbank erosion mitigation and restoration, litter & plastics prevention, and water sensitive urban design elements to manage stormwater runoff and improve water quality, are key for enhancing the waterway. In addition, retention of plant communities, native revegetation and protecting and building on remnant vegetation patches are critical for biodiversity outcomes. The ultimate goal is for the Duck River Parklands to be a driver for championing environmental protection, enhancement and resilience, inspiring environmental conservation and demonstrate leadership in sustainability.



### Local Interventions: Waterway and riparian existing environment

The Duck River and its surrounding riparian zone hold significant environmental and ecological importance at both regional and local scale. The history of industry and development along its banks has seen the river and areas of the surrounding land be degraded and polluted. Undoubtedly, issues of contaminated land and pollution require a long term plan approach to management and remediation.

In addition to long term land contamination issues, the Duck River faces several immediate threats to the overall health of the waterway and its flora and fauna. Critical issues include riverbank erosion and pollution from stormwater runoff from surrounding urban catchments which significantly impact the water quality of the river, and invasive species and weed infestation which negatively impact native habitat.

At a local level the Masterplan proposes key design interventions to enhance the waterway and create an environment for current and future generations to enjoy with flora and fauna flourishing throughout a regional biodiversity corridor. The key interventions include:

- Ensuring protection of existing threatened species, important habitats and natural reserves

- Enhancing the river water quality through implementation of WSUD in all corridor projects and within the catchment
- Providing additional nature reserve areas to extend local and regional biodiversity corridors
- Protect and enhance remnant vegetation patches to protect the local ecosystem
- Engage and activate the community on the environmental agenda of the Parklands through education programs, events and activities.

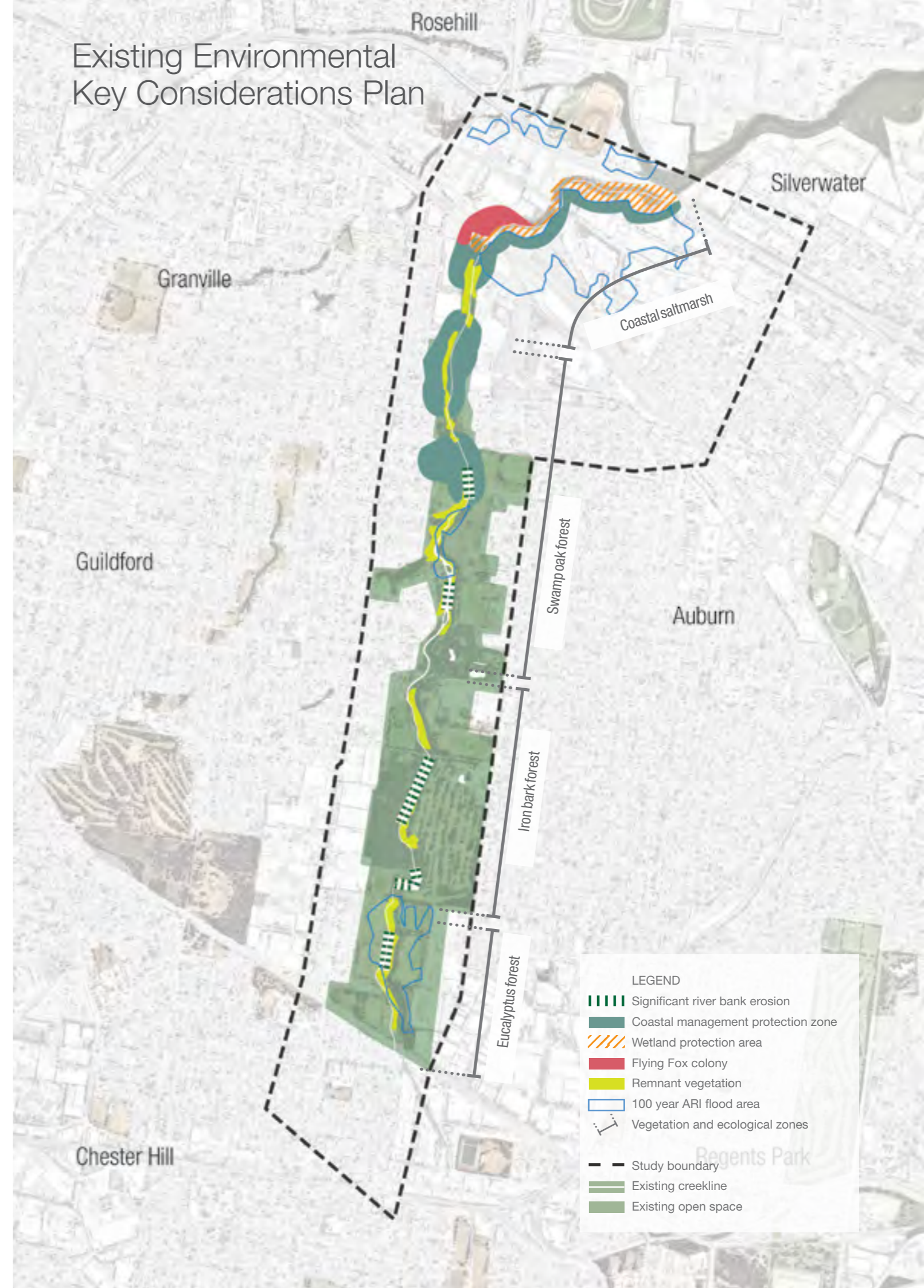
Long-term dedication and commitment is required for achieving a revitalisation of the Duck River to be a healthy and cherished waterway. This will require continued implementation of key environmental strategies including:

- Waterway and bushland restoration
- Re-establishment of significant vegetation communities, natural habitat and habitat connections
- Contaminated site rehabilitation works
- Stormwater management and treatment
- Litter and plastics prevention
- Planning for ongoing maintenance of improved lands
- Monitoring and evaluation of waterway health

*Q: How does the Masterplan respond to conservation, waterway health and enhancing water quality?*



## Existing Environmental Key Considerations Plan



## PROTECTED AREAS AND RESERVES

### Conservation of flora and fauna for enhanced biodiversity

Protected areas and reserves hold great importance within the Duck River Parklands in the conservation of threatened plant species and vulnerable and endangered fauna. A key local environment move proposed by the Masterplan is the future establishment of additional protected areas and nature reserves to extend and connect to the existing Watergora Reserve and riparian zone protected areas. Providing additional nature reserve areas within the parklands will ensure conservation of flora and fauna and enhance local and regional biodiversity corridors. The future transformation of the Botanic Gardens Precinct and Watergora Precinct proposed by the Masterplan, present opportunity for creation of new nature reserve areas within the parklands.

In addition to the creation of additional nature reserves, the support and extension of bushcare groups and activities is an important opportunity for the Duck River Parklands. Bushcare

volunteers of the Duck River have substantially contributed to habitat conservation and biodiversity enhancement for many years and will continue to be an important part of the environmental agenda into the future.

The Masterplan proposes two key interventions to support and extend bushcare within the parklands:

- utilise and build upon existing bushcare sites and locations, with education, community engagement and conservation activities.
- Include bushcare activities in conjunction with implementation of key infrastructure and park development projects.

Key bushcare activities within the parklands include bush regeneration, weed removal and habitat restoration, native tree planting, monitoring and surveying of native wildlife, water quality monitoring, community education, and establishing a community nursery for growing native plants.

### Threatened plant specie, vulnerable and endangered fauna of the Duck River Parklands



Tadgell's Bell



Downy Wattle



Narrow Leaf Wilsonia



Spotted Tail Quoll



Cumberland Plain Land Snail



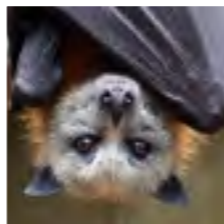
Green & Golden Bell Frog



Little Eagle

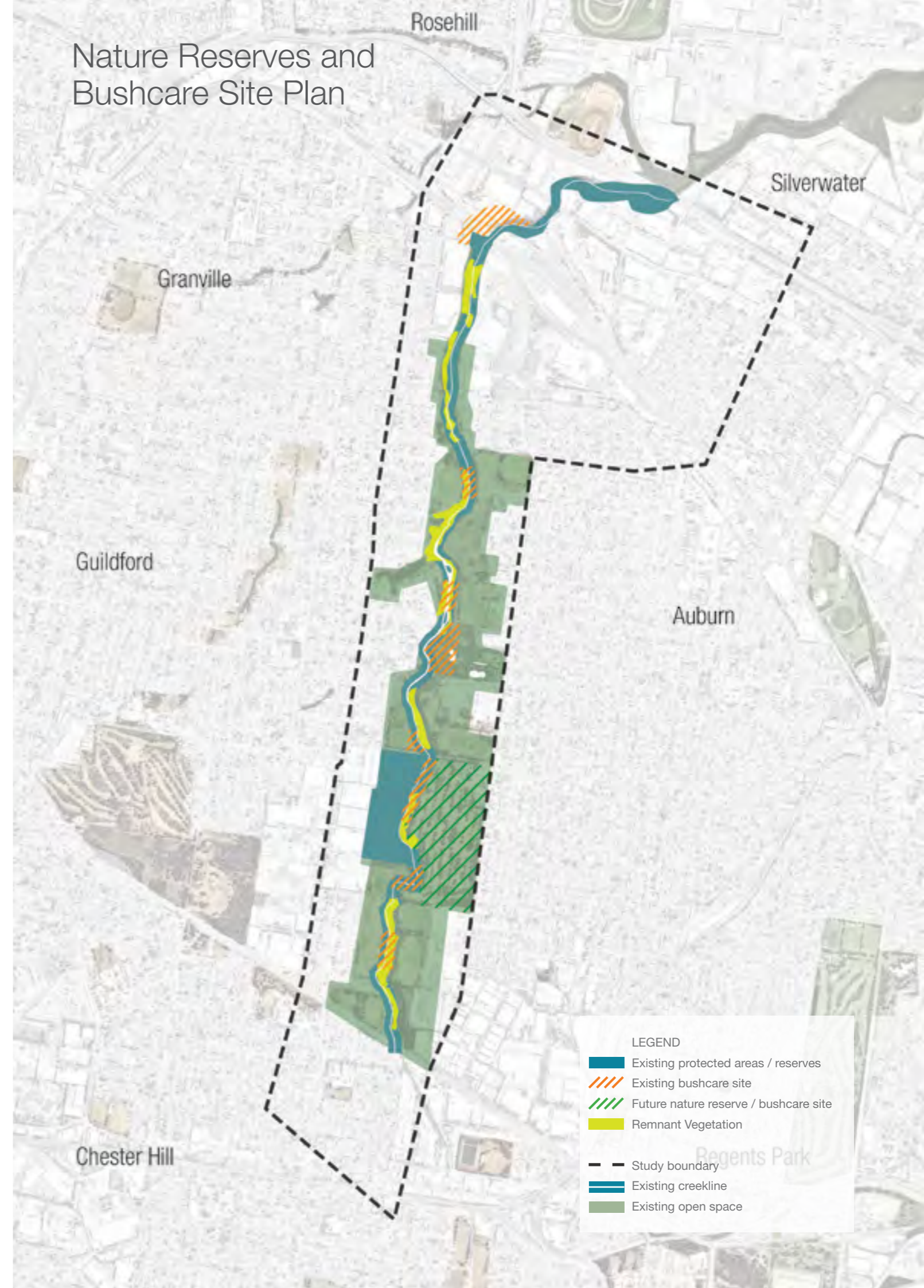


Eastern Bentwing Bat



Grey Headed Flying Fox

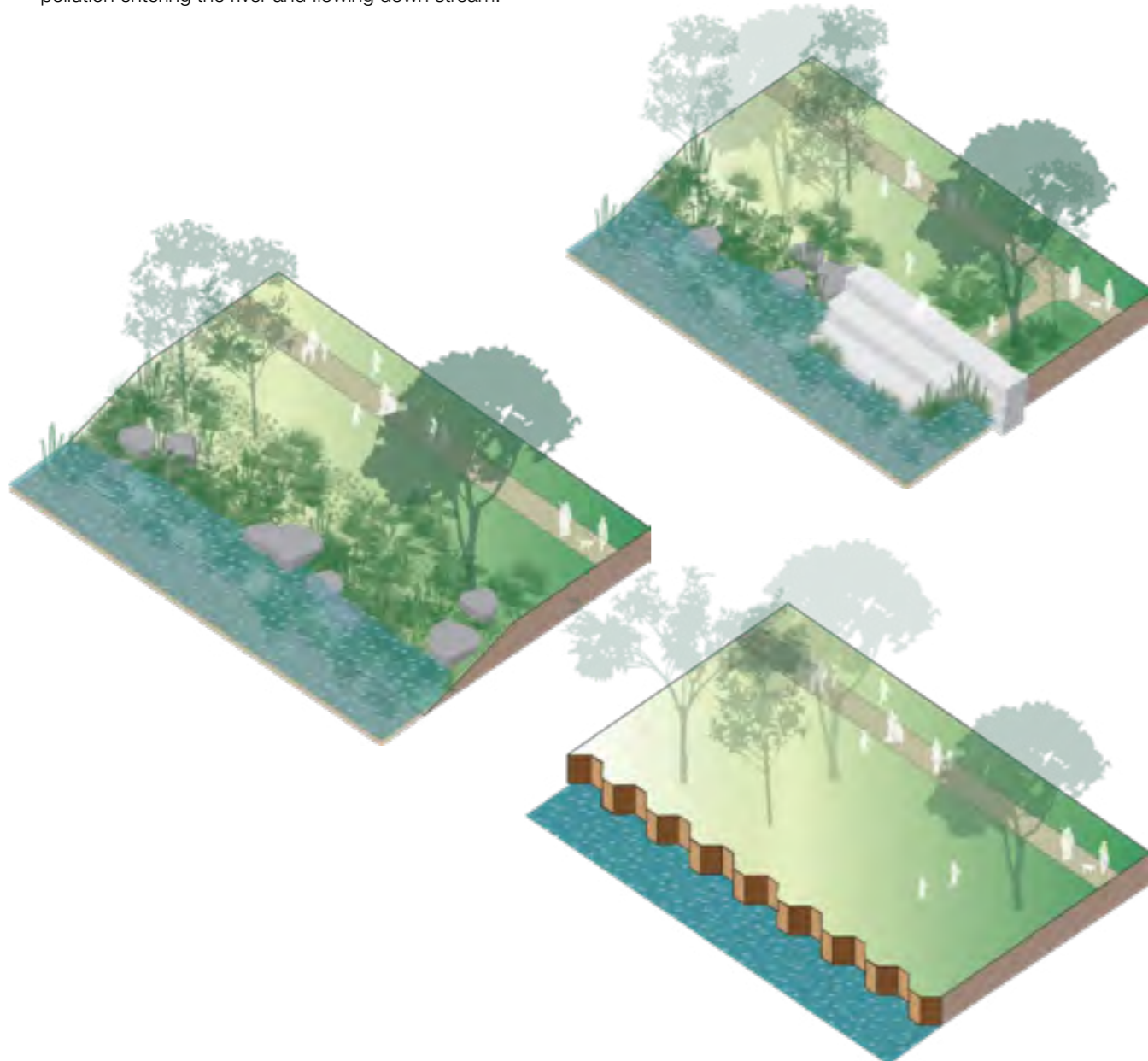
## Nature Reserves and Bushcare Site Plan



# RIVERBANK REMEDIATION AND EROSION CONTROL

## Reducing mass erosion sediment loads

These riverbank remediation and erosion control interventions are key local design moves which can address mass erosion and sediment loads which not only contribute to waterway pollution, but also have the long-term impact of land and property encroachment. These typologies and environmental interventions address environmental priorities at a local scale along the river as well as contribute to the regional strategic agenda of enhanced waterways and improved water quality at a catchment scale. Remediation and rehabilitation of riverbank areas which are at risk of continual and mass erosion has the potential to prevent hundreds of tonnes of soil sediment and pollution entering the river and flowing down stream.



## River Bank Remediation and Erosion Control Priority Plan



# URBAN STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT

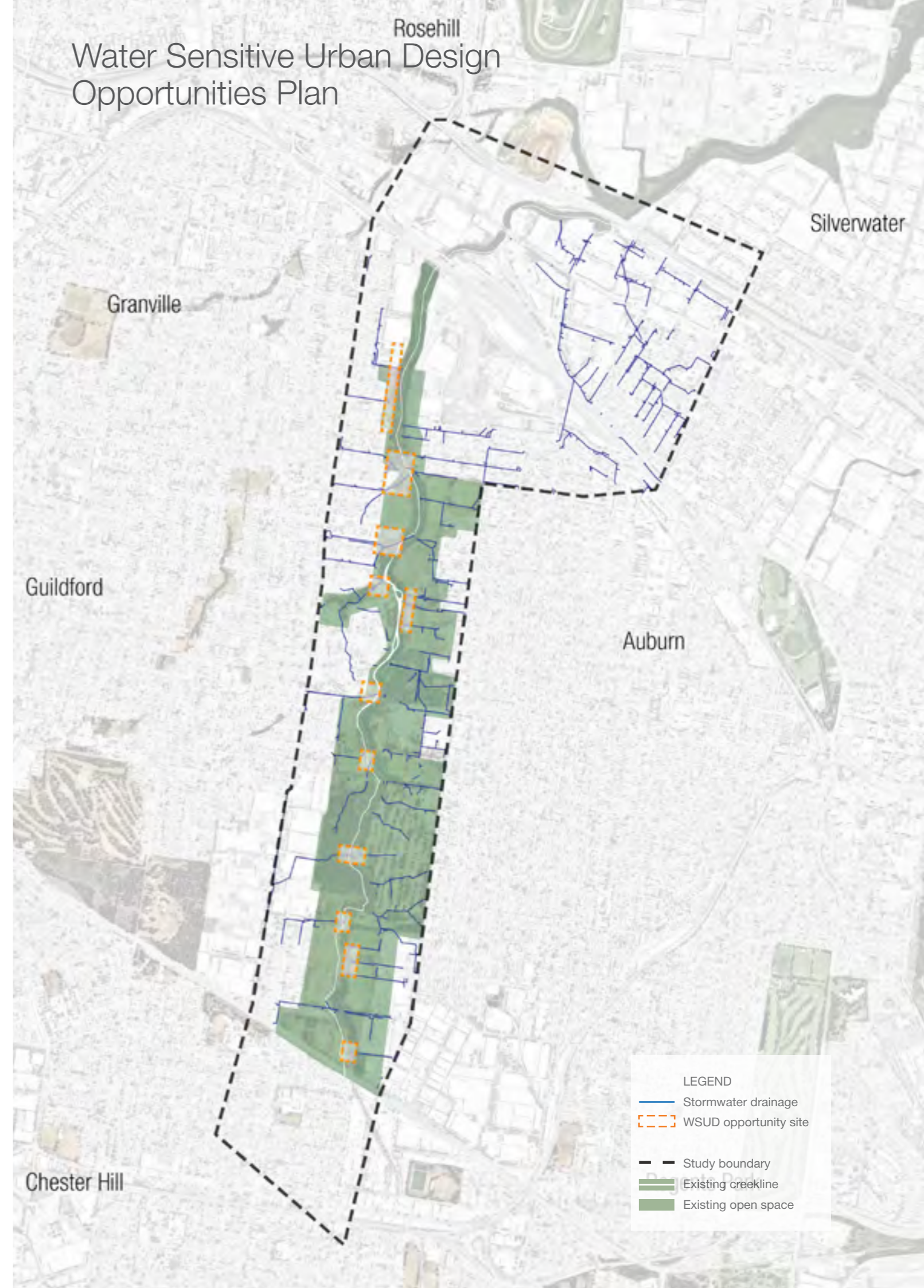
## Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) interventions to reduce pollution from stormwater runoff going into the river

Stormwater runoff, and all the rubbish and other pollution it brings with it, is the number one way the river gets dirty. The Masterplan promotes a catchment-wide approach to reducing this runoff and implementation of WSUD interventions. These interventions aim to absorb and filter rain water where it lands, as well as capture and treat stormwater runoff from urban catchments to improve the river water quality.

In order to improve the water quality of the Duck River and enhance the waterway environment of the parklands, stormwater management and implementation of WSUD elements in all projects is critical. This includes projects of all scales and sizes,

from industrial and commercial developments, to residential developments, gateway and interface transformations, parks, shared path connections and riverbank restoration projects.

The combination of WSUD projects with the suite of connections and parklands transformations projects proposed by the Masterplan will provide increased amenity and benefit for the community and the environment through increased engagement and interaction with the river and waterway environment.





**5.0**  
MASTERPLAN  
IMPLEMENTATION

## 5.1 Introduction

### Masterplan implementation overview

The Masterplan brings together the strategic ideas, interventions and initiatives and provides a framework for the implementation of actions identified for land within the Parklands.

The objectives of the Masterplan are to:

- Improve access to the parklands for passive and active recreation,
- Protect important biodiversity and habitat for ecologically endangered and threatened species,
- Strengthen the integration of existing industry and economic activities with the corridor and
- Provide for place-making that addresses the significantly important cultural and heritage areas within the corridor.

The Masterplan makes provision for dual regional and local outcomes for Connections, Community and Culture, and Environment. It identifies regional and local outcomes that form the core framework for the identification of the priorities for the Parklands. The following pages of the Masterplan Implementation Chapter identify actions and projects within each precinct proposed to achieve the Masterplan objectives.

### Connections

In terms of regional outcomes for Connection, the Masterplan provides for the development of a key 4.5km link within Sydney's Green Grid which will contribute to the Greater Sydney 100km walking and cycling loop between the Central and the Harbour Cities. The Duck River Parklands will also provide key links to the new Western City via the high priority Prospect Creek Corridor identified in the Central City District Plan.

Local Duck River Parklands outcomes for Connection include Green Links and both Gateway and Interface Transformations within the Parklands.

### Community & Culture

To deliver outcomes for Community & Culture at the regional level, the Masterplan provides for the diversification and expansion of activities associated with the Auburn Botanic Gardens. Hand in hand with the regional proposal of the 100km Greater Sydney River Loop, the Masterplan also provides for diversification of economic activities within the central part of the Parklands to create a vibrant destination that attracts visitors from the Greater Sydney Region and beyond. The Duck River Parklands also provides for the acknowledgement and protection of culturally important areas within Wategora Reserve and recognition of the significance of the Duck River to Aboriginal communities within the Greater Sydney Region. The importance of the industrial heritage of the area within the vicinity of the Parklands is also integrated into the regional

outcomes sought for the area.

Local Duck River Parklands outcomes for Community & Culture include the development of five unique precincts, each with an identified predominant use identified, and together providing a holistic, visionary and unifying landscape at the local level.

The five precincts include *The Wilds* which is located at the northern end of the Parklands where threatened species habitat is can be found and the industrial heritage of the area remains. The *Sports Precinct* where a variety of sporting and recreation activities are undertaken. *The Botanic Gardens Precinct* located within the central part of the Parklands with various socio-cultural and economic activities also ongoing. *Wategora Precinct* catering to Aboriginal cultural heritage in conjunction with nature and open space recreational engagement for all people within the context of environmental conservation land. At the southern end, the *Makers and Innovators Precinct* addressing both industrial heritage activities and active recreation.

### Environment

To meet environment outcomes at the regional level, the Masterplan provides for improvements to the Duck River waterway including management of the inter-tidal areas, to protect environmentally significant habitat containing endangered ecological communities and threatened species. The Masterplan will also provide opportunities to enhance urban tree canopy and contribute to the management of urban heat island effects within Greater Sydney.

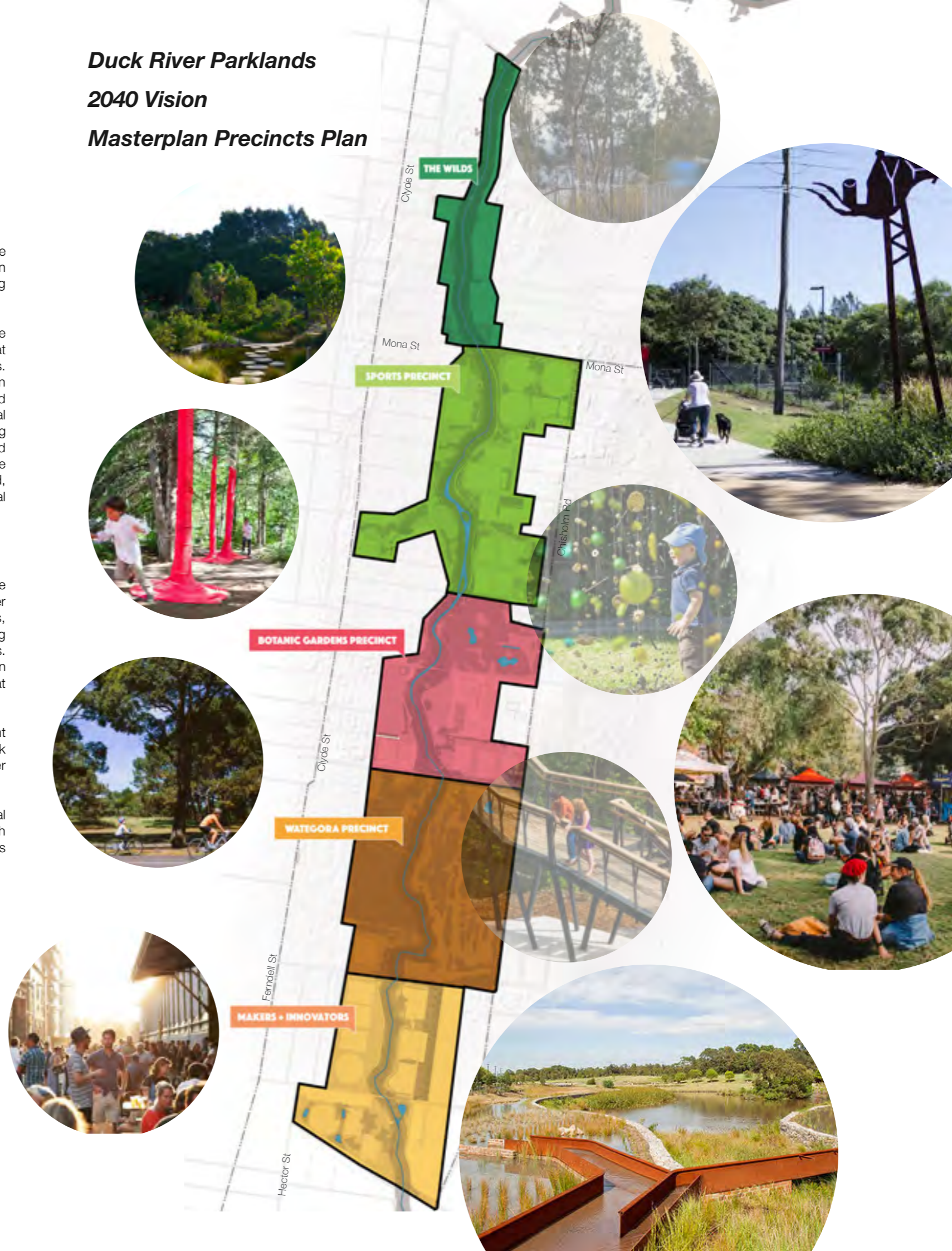
Local Duck River Parklands outcomes for environment include environmental protection and conservation, riverbank remediation and erosion control and urban stormwater management and treatment.

The culmination of actions and outcomes at both the regional and local level are to be planned and implemented aligned with a catchment management approach contributing to benefits and outcomes over a wider regional area.

## Duck River Parklands

### 2040 Vision

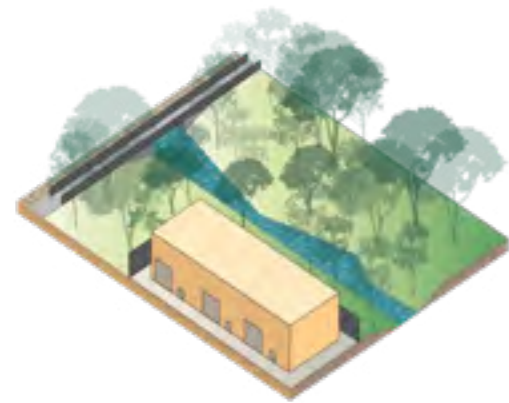
### Masterplan Precincts Plan



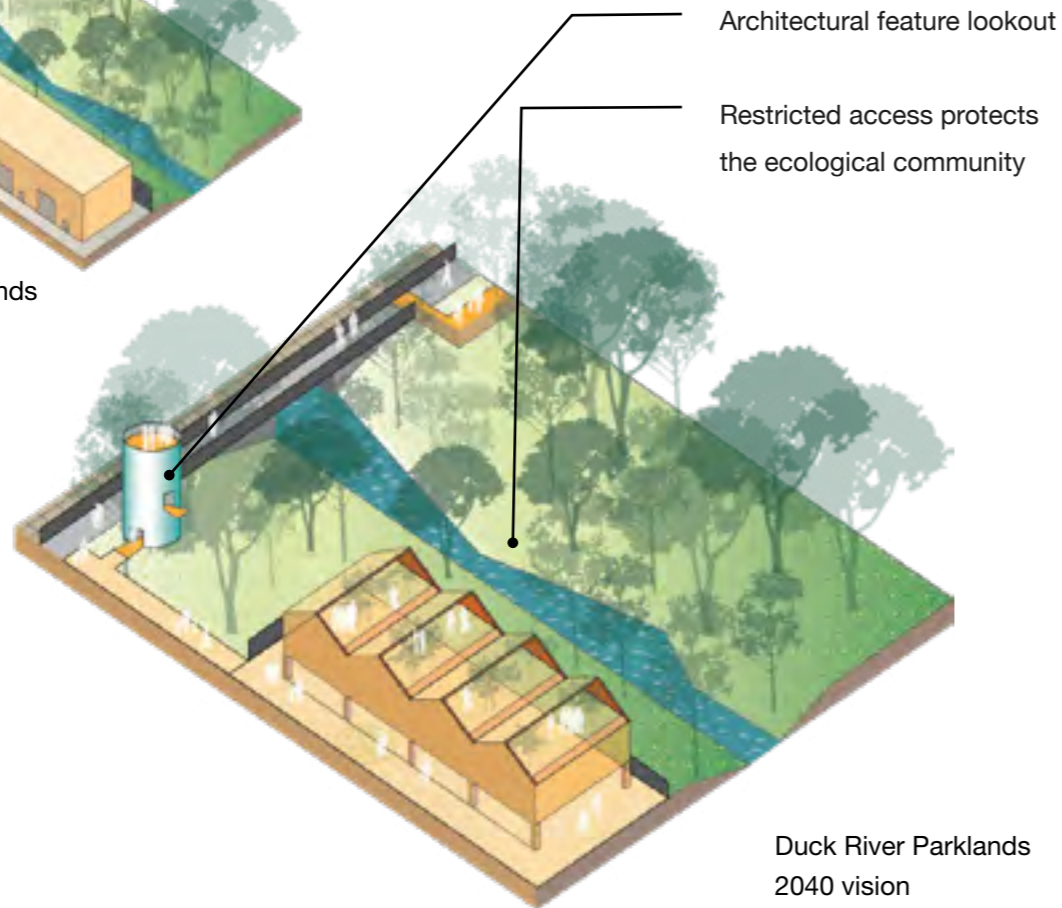


## 5.2 The Wilds Precinct

*A wild and untamed environment contrasted with the surrounding industrial and commercial built form.*



Existing parklands condition



Duck River Parklands 2040 vision

Architectural feature lookout

Restricted access protects the ecological community



## 5.3 Sports Precinct

*Providing high functioning, quality and well organised sports and recreation facilities.*



**Duck River Parklands  
2040 Vision**  
Provision of quality sports grounds and facilities meets the demands of the Community



### **Duck River Parklands 2040 Vision Sports Precinct Plan**



Mona Street underpass

Oriole Park sports hub

Future pedestrian connection

Gumtree grove trail and river play

Riverbank remediation and erosion control

Stepping stone crossing upgrade

Baraba Reserve boardwalk

Mona Street to Gardens Bridge shared path link (west)

Investigate landholdings at and adjacent to Duck River Parklands to confirm best use of land that aligns with the intent of the masterplan

Gateway transformation Edgar Street river connection

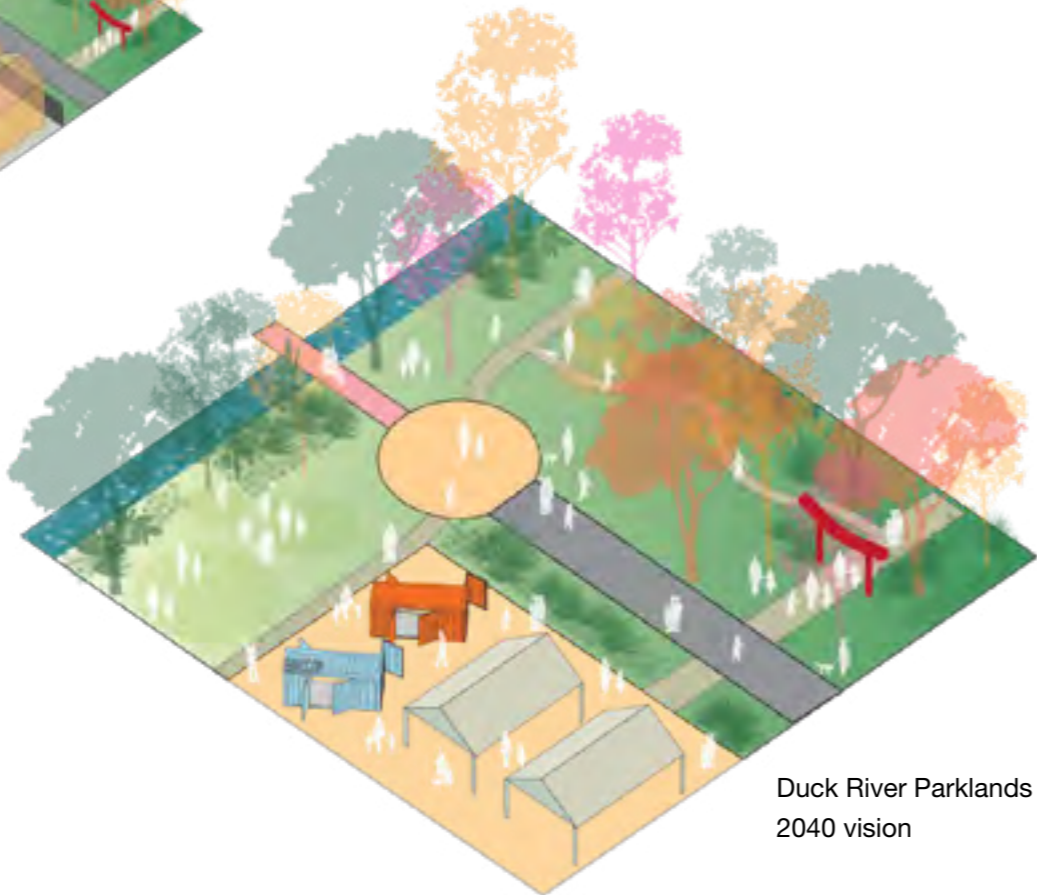
Webbs Avenue upgrade, Mixed use youth sports and play, dog off leash area

## 5.4 Botanic Gardens Precinct

*A focal point of cultural events for both local communities and regional visitors to enjoy.*



Existing parklands condition



Duck River Parklands 2040 vision

### Duck River Parklands

#### 2040 Vision

#### Botanic Gardens Precinct Plan



Riverbank remediation

Public art and place activation programs

Community building

Western shared path

Riverbank walking trail

Botanic Gardens masterplan works

Gardens bridge

Regional Playgrounds

Community marketplace

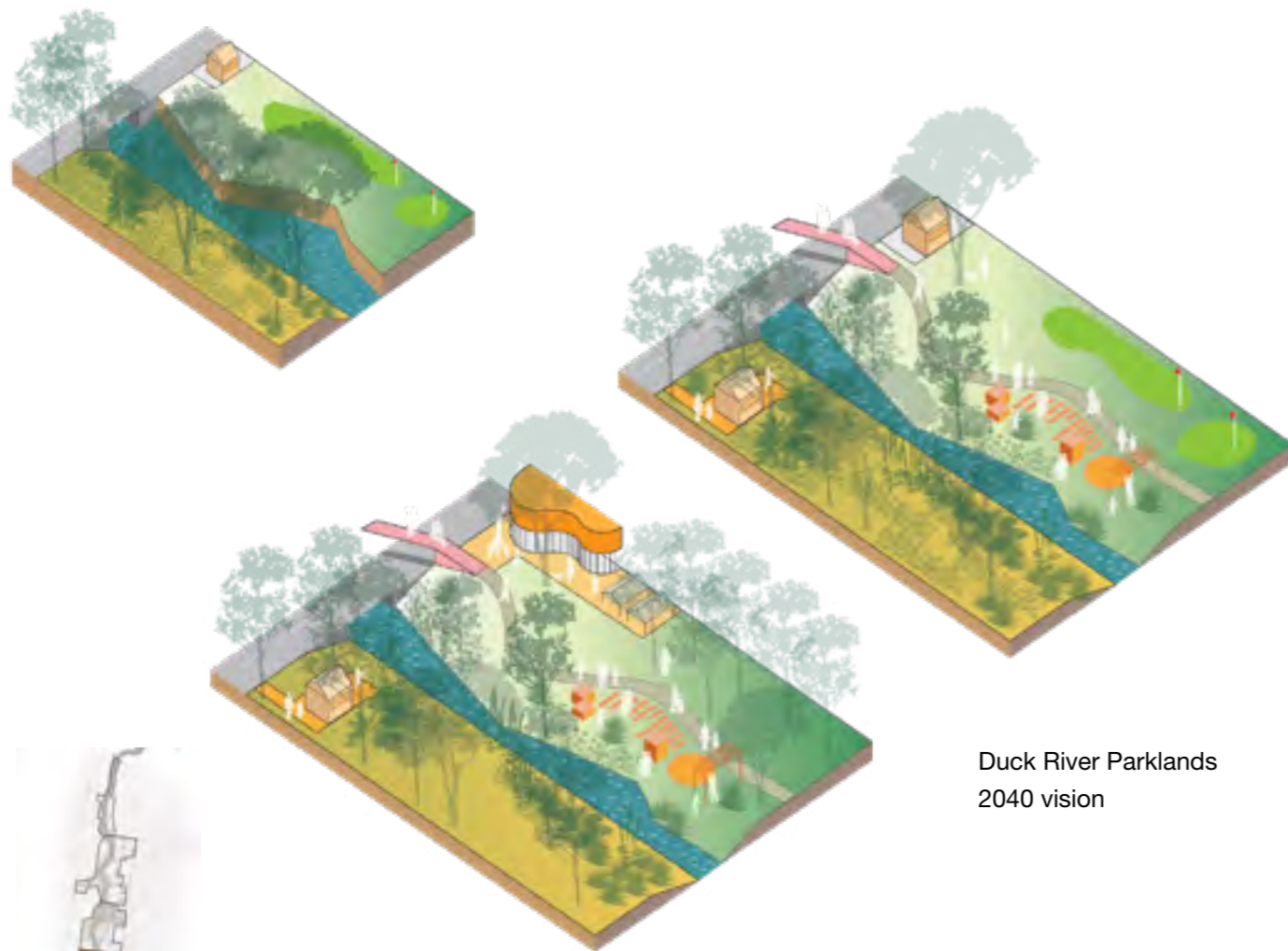
Upgrade existing path

Wellington Road Green Links Bridge

## 5.5 Wategora Precinct

*Respecting Aboriginal heritage and culture, and planning for the future with the evolving nature of the golf course.*

Existing parklands condition



Duck River Parklands 2040 vision

### Duck River Parklands 2040 Vision Wategora Precinct Plan

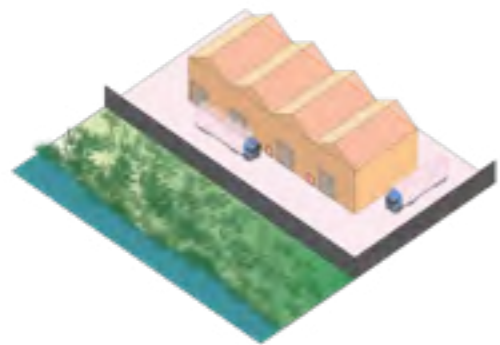


The transition of the existing golf course to a future use will be further explored. Elements to be considered include:

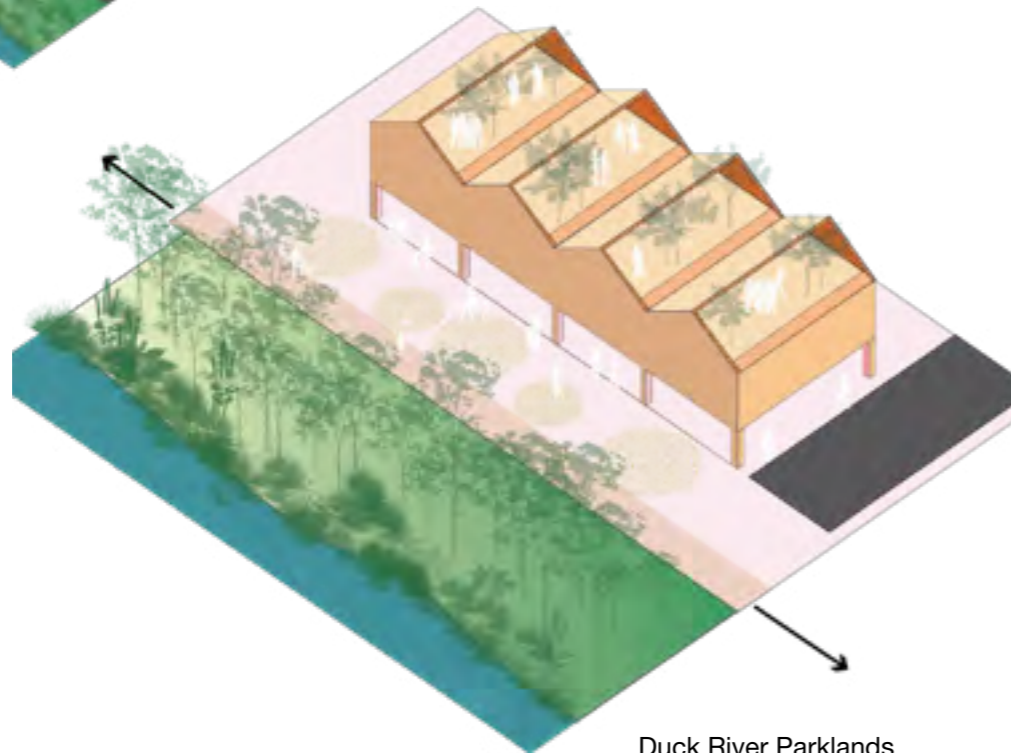
- Shared path green link along river
- Riverbank restoration and erosion control
- Sports fields and facilities to meet community needs
- Regional playground
- Landscape, bush regeneration and nature reserve areas
- Public amenities buildings and community facilities
- Potential for low density housing on Chisholm Road frontage.

## 5.6 Makers and Innovators Precinct

*Harnessing the importance and character of development and industry in the area to create and inspire communities and activities of the future.*



Existing parklands condition



Duck River Parklands 2040 vision

### Duck River Parklands 2040 Vision Makers & Innovators Precinct Plan



Duck River Parklands south sports hub

Western river shared path

Regional Green Links Connection to Lower Prospect Canal and Bankstown

Everley Road shared path bridge

Makers and Innovators community promenade

Eastern riverbank shared path

Princes Road and Boundary Road Bridge

Sports/Cricket Oval

East-west shared path connection to Lower Prospect Canal

North-south shared path connection to 100km regional loop with bridge over Sydney Water Pipe

## 5.7 Implementation Approach

### The Duck River Parklands Strategic Masterplan: a 2040 vision

The Masterplan draws together the key strategic ideas, interventions and initiatives across the five precincts of the parklands to achieve the vision of the Duck River Parklands as the 'Green Heart of Cumberland, and a vital artery of Greater Sydney'. Through addressing the core themes of *connections, community & culture, and environment* at both the regional and local level, the Masterplan will drive beneficial outcomes for the community and environment.

### Masterplan - 2040 vision key project list

ID	Project Description
1	Seventh Street Parklet Gateway Transformation
2	Mona Street underpass and WSUD
3	Mimosa Street Parklet Gateway Transformation
4	Flying Fox colony riparian environmental enhancement
5	Mona Street to gardens bridge shared path link (west)
6	Upgrade existing shared path Wellington Road to Mona Street (east)
7	Gardens Bridge over river (feasibility study)
8	Golf Course Transformation Masterplan (shared path connection east Wellington Road and Everley Road)
9	Everley Road pedestrian bridge over river (concept design)
10	Regional Playground Botanic Gardens Precinct
11	Wategora education hub
12	Parklands Sports Hubs (Oriole Park Sports Hub & Duck River South Sports Hub) - masterplan and upgrade facilities
13	Riverbank remediation, green infrastructure, WSUD and bush regeneration, including protection and enhancement of remnant vegetation
14	Riverbank remediation, green infrastructure, WSUD and bush regeneration (works as part of the Golf Course Transformation Masterplan)
15	Green Links shared path connections (Sydney Water pipeline bridge/path): west to Lower Prospect Canal, and south to Canterbury-Bankstown (detailed concept design)
16	Factory Street bike boulevard
17	Gumtree grove trail and river play trail from Horlyck Reserve to Stepping Stone crossing
18	Wellington Road shared path bridge overpass
19	Princes Road - Boundary Road Bridge
20	Parklands River Play and Nature Reserve (Golf course landscape regeneration, WSUD and Parklands passive recreation - implementation of Golf Course Transformation Masterplan)

To achieve this bold 2040 vision, further detailed work will be undertaken following the Masterplan to confirm projects that can be realised within the current budget structure over a 4 year plan, as well as projects for implementation over a medium to long term of 5 to 10 years, and longer term of 10 years and beyond.

The rebranding of the Duck River Parklands is a fundamental step of the strategy. Through implementation of the catalyst projects, both the government and the community can come together to realise the incredible resource that the Parklands represents. Implementation will allow the Duck River Parklands to grow and flourish and ultimately see the fully formed Parklands vision achieved by 2040.

22	New community building (Botanical Gardens Precinct west)
23	Bangor Park connection
24	Boardwalk connection Bangor Park to Clyde Bridge
25	Stepping Stones Crossing upgrade and stormwater management
26	Baraba Reserve boardwalk and river jetty view point
27	Shared path Wellington Road to Botanic Gardens (west)
28	Everley Park river track
29	Shared path Everley Road to Boundary Road
30	Edgar street river jetty lookout
31	Lookout and jetty point Clyde Marshalling yards
32	Manchester Road off road shared path
33	The Wilds viewing platform and education/activity hub
34	Old Carlingford Railway line connection to Parramatta
35	Connection to Parramatta River

### Parklands wide activities and initiatives:

- Develop Parklands activation strategy including program/ events strategic plan, interpretation plan, public art plan, new signage specific to the Duck River Parklands including Aboriginal culture and heritage recognition and information
- New tree planting throughout the Parklands including on-going protection and enhancement of remnant vegetation
- Riverbank restoration and erosion control
- Stormwater management, litter and plastics reduction in waterways
- Identify and enhance modified landscapes to complement core habitat locations
- Review Council land holdings to ensure they can support future plans for the Duck River Parklands. Consider potential for landholdings to be divested or acquired to support better use of land that aligns with the rest of the masterplan.
- Review planning controls to support future plans for Duck River Parklands and confirm that identified sites for land acquisition are still required.
- Areas requiring remediation of contaminated land are not shown. Cumberland City Council will work with State Government to identify and remediate or contain contamination within the corridor to ensure the safety of both people and the environment.

### The Duck River Parklands Masterplan 2040 vision



# DUCK RIVER PARKLANDS VISION 2040



Artistic impression looking south over the Duck River Parklands from the Botanic Gardens Precinct



## 6.0 REPORTING AND MONITORING



## 6.1 Masterplan Priorities

Priorities at both the local and regional level consistent with State and Local planning strategies and policies.

### Regional Priorities

Three regional priorities have been identified for each cluster of activities as set out below:

Priority	ENVIRONMENT	CULTURE	CONNECTION
P1	Erosion and remediation control	Program/events and activation Strategy	Green link connections
P2	Urban Stormwater Management	Interpretation Plan	Shared path network along parklands
P3	Protection and conservation	Public Art Plan	Parklets at end of Cull-de-Sacs

Table 1: Regional Priorities for the Duck River Parklands Table.

### Local Priorities

Five key precincts have been identified along the 4.5km stretch of the Duck River within Cumberland LGA. These include the following:

- The Wilds Precinct – providing important habitat, industrial land and State Significant Infrastructure
- Sports Precinct Precinct - providing for active recreation and a variety of sporting venues

- Botanic Gardens Precinct – providing for cultural and economic activities
- Wategora Precinct – providing for Aboriginal cultural heritage, environmental conservation and recreation activities, and transformation of the golf course for future use
- Makers and Movers Precinct – providing for industrial

Priority	The Wilds Precinct	Sports and Recreation Precinct	Botanic Gardens Precinct	Wategora Precinct	Makers and Movers
P1	7 <sup>th</sup> St and Minnie Parked	Shared Path western side Mona St to Botanic Gardens	Upgrade existing bike paths	Erosion and remediation works	Everloy Road pedestrian bridge
P2	Mona St Underpass	Erosion and remediation works adjacent Mona St	Erosion and remediation works	Shared path eastern side	GPT installation
P3	Ecological restoration works associated with Bul. Colony		Botanic Gardens upgrade	Aboriginal Education Hub	Signage linking to Prospect Creek Corridor and Cools River
P4	Signage linking to Panaramita LGA		New pedestrian Bridge		

Table 2: Regional Priorities for the Duck River Parklands Table.

## 6.2 Reporting and Monitoring

### Monitoring and Reporting of the Duck River Parklands Masterplan

The Masterplan will be reported on consistent with Council's monitoring and reporting requirements and also with the requirements set out under the Central City District Plan.

Council will work with the community to accomplish the vision for Duck River "The green heart of Cumberland and a vital artery of Greater Sydney" by protecting and enhancing this natural asset, providing quality green infrastructure and connecting into the regional green network of Greater Sydney for current and future generations. Actions to be implemented by Council address objectives for three key focus areas; Connection, Community and Culture and Environment.

Actions will be monitored to determine if they are meeting the objectives of the key focus areas. The results will be reviewed and reported to the community each year to demonstrate effective use of public funds. Council's annual report to the community will identify:

- The types and locations of actions taken
- Lessons learnt for future action
- Measurable changes for the year against the strategic objectives
- Cumulative changes against the strategic objectives since implementation of the Duck River Strategic Masterplan commenced

A review and re-prioritisation of remaining actions will be undertaken as part of ongoing monitoring, to account for relevant funding opportunities, changing legislation or relevant conclusions from previous studies. The action plan will remain flexible to meet the changing needs of the Council over the life of the Strategy.

As part of Council's continuous improvement philosophy, project planning will include a review of relevant past strategies and plans.

A range of district and local priority areas have been identified across the Duck River Parklands for action, as shown in the action plan. Council will align actions from the Key Focus Areas in the Strategy and delivery initiatives to support protection and

enhancement of Cumberland's green heart.

### Key Focus Area 1: Connection

#### Measures

- Improve active transport links
- Improve connectivity between open space, bushland and waterways
- Improve the interface between the urban environment and the green grid

### Key Focus Area 2: Community & Culture

#### Measures

- Community participation and connection to the River through place making events and spaces
- Aboriginal engagement and participation
- Provision of quality open space for active and passive recreation is accessible for all and meets the demand and needs of the community

### Key Focus Area 3: Environment

#### Measures

- Deliver multiple ecosystem services simultaneously to improve the health outcomes for the Duck River Parklands
- Protect and conserve ecological values by supporting waterway health, habitat function and biodiversity
- Maintain, protect and enhance existing urban tree canopy
- Create partnership opportunities with respective stakeholders in the development and implementation of green infrastructure

