



FIGTREE TOWN CENTRE STUDY

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FIGTREE TOWN CENTRE STUDY

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Terminology

| Abbreviation | Name |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| LEP | Local Environment Plan |
| DCP | Development Control Plan |
| ESD | Ecologically Sustainable Development |
| WSUD | Water Sensitive Urban Design |

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Executive Summary

Figtree Town Centre like so many town centres both globally and nationally is facing increased challenges through the growth of the shopping mall, greater demand for convenience shopping and the deterioration of the traditional high street. It is through the phenomenal growth of online retailing, the rise of mobile retailing, the speed and sophistication of the major national and international retailers, the modern and immersive experiences offered by today's new breed of shopping mall, combined with the economic downturn that have all conspired to change today's town centre.

Essential to acknowledging the challenges facing town centres today is understanding what principles make a 'vital town centre'. To do this, eight principles were identified assisting the study process and ultimately aiming to establish a socially, economically and environmentally resilient town centre. These key principles are:

- Principle 1: A Unique Identity;
- Principle 2: Street Vibrancy;
- Principle 3: Urban Composition;
- Principle 4: A Community Heart;
- Principle 5: Accessible and Well Connected;
- Principle 6: A Balanced Environment;
- Principle 7: Policy and Governance;
- Principle 8: Community Ownership;

These principles underpin the study process and form a key step in understanding Figtree Town Centre today and the initiatives required to regenerate one of the Illawarra Regional Strategy's designated 'Major Towns'. It is through these principles that the true challenges facing Figtree Town centre have been exposed, re-directing the study process

towards a more community focused approach rather than a development approach. As it's Figtree Town Centre's exposure to both medium and high risk flooding that has highlighted the constraints to development and the limitations to producing a viable master plan.

Strategy Overview

This understanding came about through testing the development opportunities for each town centre Precincts. Key points to note during this process are as follows;

Precinct 1

- Development within Precinct 1 is not achievable due to the significant flooding implications currently imposed at this site;
- Mitigation against the flooding offers the greatest benefits for Precinct 1. However, the investment required to mitigate against the flooding outweighs the demand for new development within Figtree Town Centre.
- A recreational master plan should be undertaken, to identify the needs of the community that can be accommodated within Figtree Oval;

Precinct 2

- With Figtree Town Centre already containing a Westfield Shopping Centre, it is recommended that 'the town centre remain contained and consolidated within the confines of the existing planning zones';
- Mitigation against the flooding offers the greatest benefits for Precinct 2 all be it at a high cost. Extending the town centre boundary is not considered appropriate due to the Wollongong Retail Study [2004].
- It is unlikely community buildings facilities could be contained on the Precinct 2 due to the sites close locality to Figtree Oval and



the significant development restrictions imposed on medium risk flood zones.

Precinct 3

- Developing within the constraints is achievable under current planning controls. However, at present there is a lack of developer demand within the town centre.
- Mitigation against the flooding offers the greatest benefits for Precinct 2 all be it at a high cost. This option would require variation to zoning and height and floor space controls.
- Although the Community focus option looks to balance residential development with community space, a combination of the lack of developer demand for land, the site being a designated tourism zone and the significant development restrictions imposed on the site result in this option unlikely to occur.

Planning Overview

During the course of the study, the extent of the town centre boundary was reviewed. This was in response to community feedback, the urban design analysis and a stakeholder request to extend the Neighbourhood Centre zoning in Precinct 2.

Figtree Town Centre is currently defined as three (3) separate precincts. This reflects land zoned as Local Centre and Neighbourhood Centre, and in the case of Precinct 3, land which supports uses which could be carried out in a Neighbourhood Centre. Dividing these lands into three precincts raises a level of uncertainty in understanding the way these areas connect and interrelate.

This study and the supporting planning document in Appendix A propose to redefine the boundary of the Figtree Town Centre to incorporate 'Figtree Town Centre Support' [refer to Appendix A. The 'Support' area is considered fundamental to

strengthening the connections between each of the existing three precincts, and is expected to become vital to the health and coherence of the town centre. The distances within the redefined Town Centre still provides great potential for a flourishing, robust and sustainable hub.

By introducing this refined boundary, it acknowledges the lands linking the three Town Centre Precincts and ensure they will be considered in context of future design controls for this area. The intention is not to rezone lands in the 'Support' area.

Concluding Comments

Figtree Town Centre offers a unique environment that provides the community with a series of natural assets that separate it from the Illawarra regions neighbouring centres. These assets are Figtree Oval and Allans Creek, which if revitalised offer the potential to enhance Figtree Town Centre's identity and establish a community heart.

Figtree Oval has the potential to improve the recreational offering within the town centre establishing a destination for organised sports groups, improving passive surveillance within the open space. Where as Allans Creek provides an opportunity to link the open spaces within the locality together through a Riparian Greenway, re-associating the Figtree community with a natural asset that can be enjoyed and used.

It is these two components that hold the key to unlocking Figtree Town centre, initiating a change that allows the community to embrace and enjoy the natural environment that makes Figtree distinctly unique.

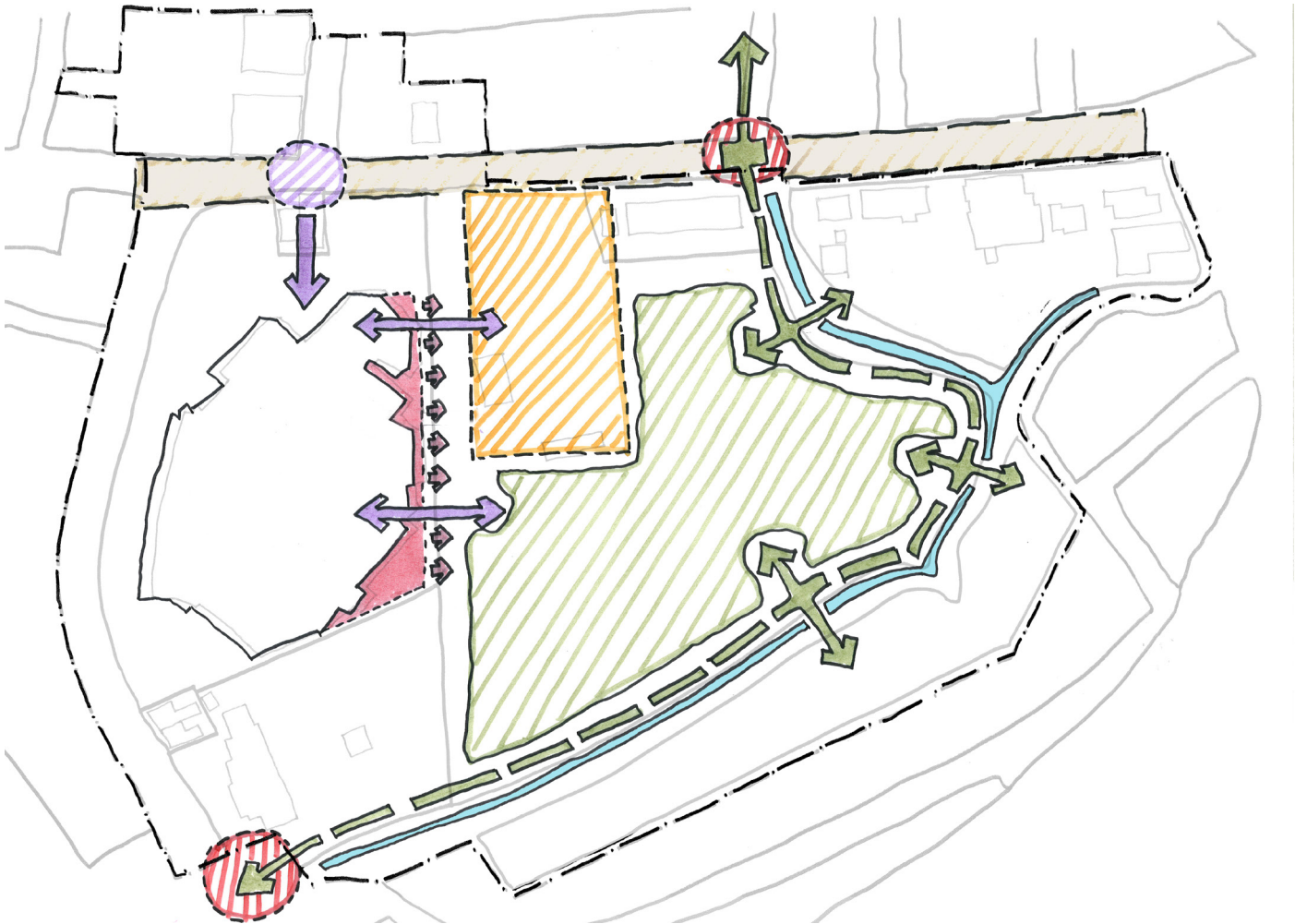


IMAGE. Opportunity Diagram



1.0 Introduction

1.0 Introduction

1.1 BACKGROUND

Wollongong City Council has been reviewing the planning controls for commercial centres and other precincts (as part of a periodic review) with the aim of informing a master planning process to guide future development, infrastructure investment and community development programs.

The Figtree Town Centre Study is nominated as a priority for 2012-13 financial year, and Council is committed to delivering this study in accordance with Wollongong 2022 Annual Plan [2012-13].

In response to this prioritisation, McGregor Coxall has been commissioned by Wollongong City Council to prepare a Master Plan and Implementation Strategy for Figtree Town Centre. The key aim of the Study is to assist in defining the role and identity of Figtree Town Centre; guide built form over the next 30 years; and address public domain, open space and transportation requirements.

1.2 FIGTREE TOWN CENTRE

Figtree is located approximately 3km south west of Wollongong City Centre adjacent to the F6 Freeway and dissected by the Princes Highway. Land surrounding Figtree is largely comprised of low density residential but also contains large public open space areas and some light industrial land uses. FigtreeTown Centre is located approximately 2.5km to the north of the Unanderra Town Centre.

1.3 STUDY BOUNDARY

Figure 1.02 illustrates the existing Figtree town centre study boundary designated for this master plan project, which includes Precinct 1 - 3. To ensure a comprehensive town centre master plan it was recommended that the study boundary extend to incorporate key support areas, shown in Figure 1.03. For further information on this recommendation pleaser refer to Appendix 1.

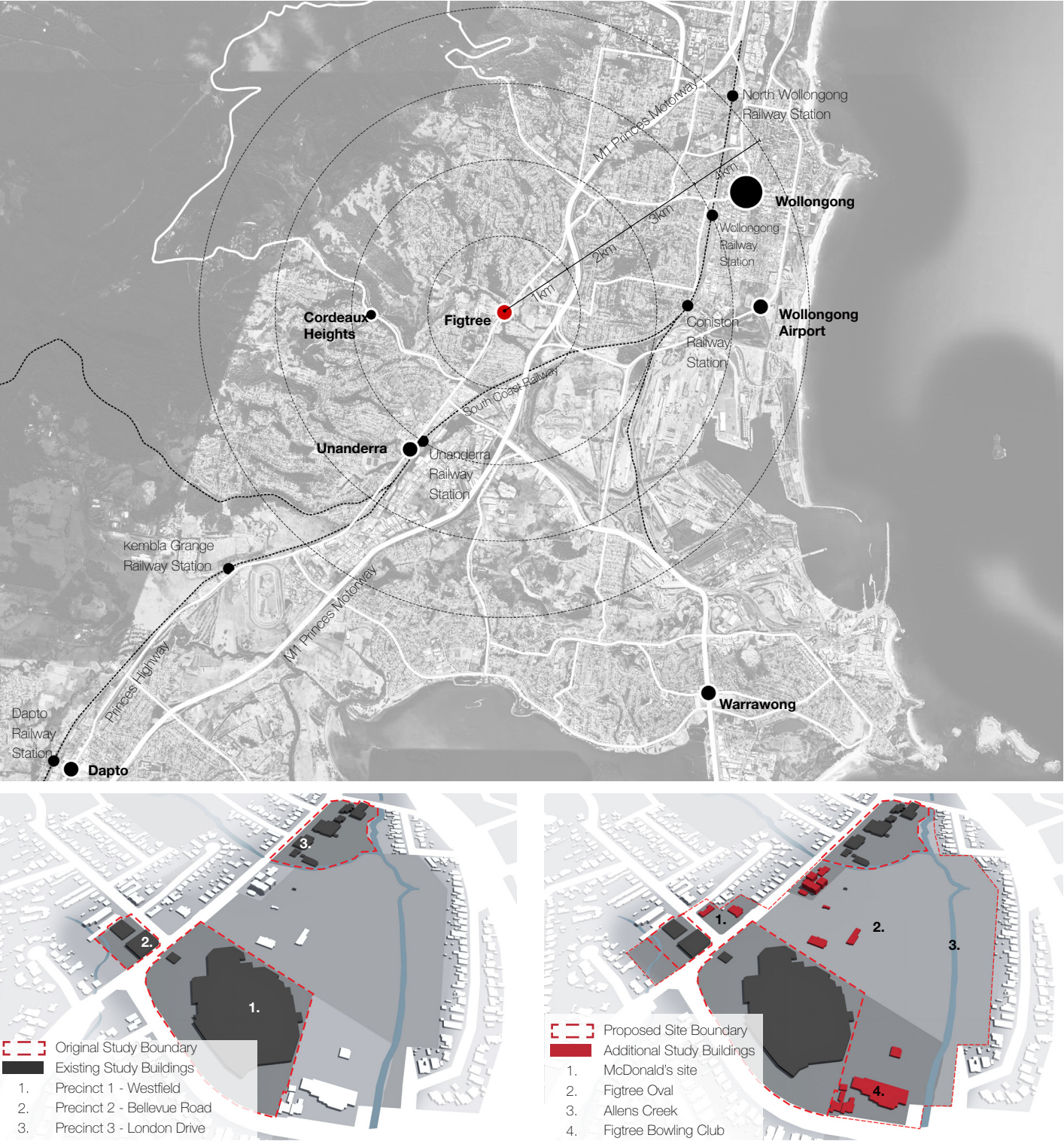


FIGURE 1.01 - LOCATION PLAN
TOP. Unanderra Town Centre's location
FIGURE 1.02 - TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY
LEFT. Existing Town Centre Boundary
FIGURE 1.03 - PROPOSED TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY
RIGHT. Proposed Town Centre Boundary

1.4 REPORT STRUCTURE

The master plan report structure reflects the design process undertaken in preparing this Master Plan and Implementation Strategy for Figtree Town Centre. The following sections form the structure of this document;

- Section 2 looks to understand the complexities comprising a 21st Century town centre and the key principles that make a vital town centre;
- Section 3 applies the key principles that comprise a vital town centre against Figtree Town Centre;
- Section 4 further investigates the impact flooding has on the town centre and proposes possible mitigation options;
- Section 5 proposes key strategies that look to recommend the key priorities for Figtree Town Centre;
- Section 6 summarises the key conclusions and recommendations for Figtree Town Centre;

1.5 THE MASTER PLAN PROCESS

The Town and Village Planning Process Flowchart below has been developed by Wollongong City Council to broadly define the process for delivering Figtree Town Centre Master Plan and Implementation Strategy. This particular project covers Stage 1 of the Town and Village Planning Process, with the intention of informing Stage 2- Implementation.

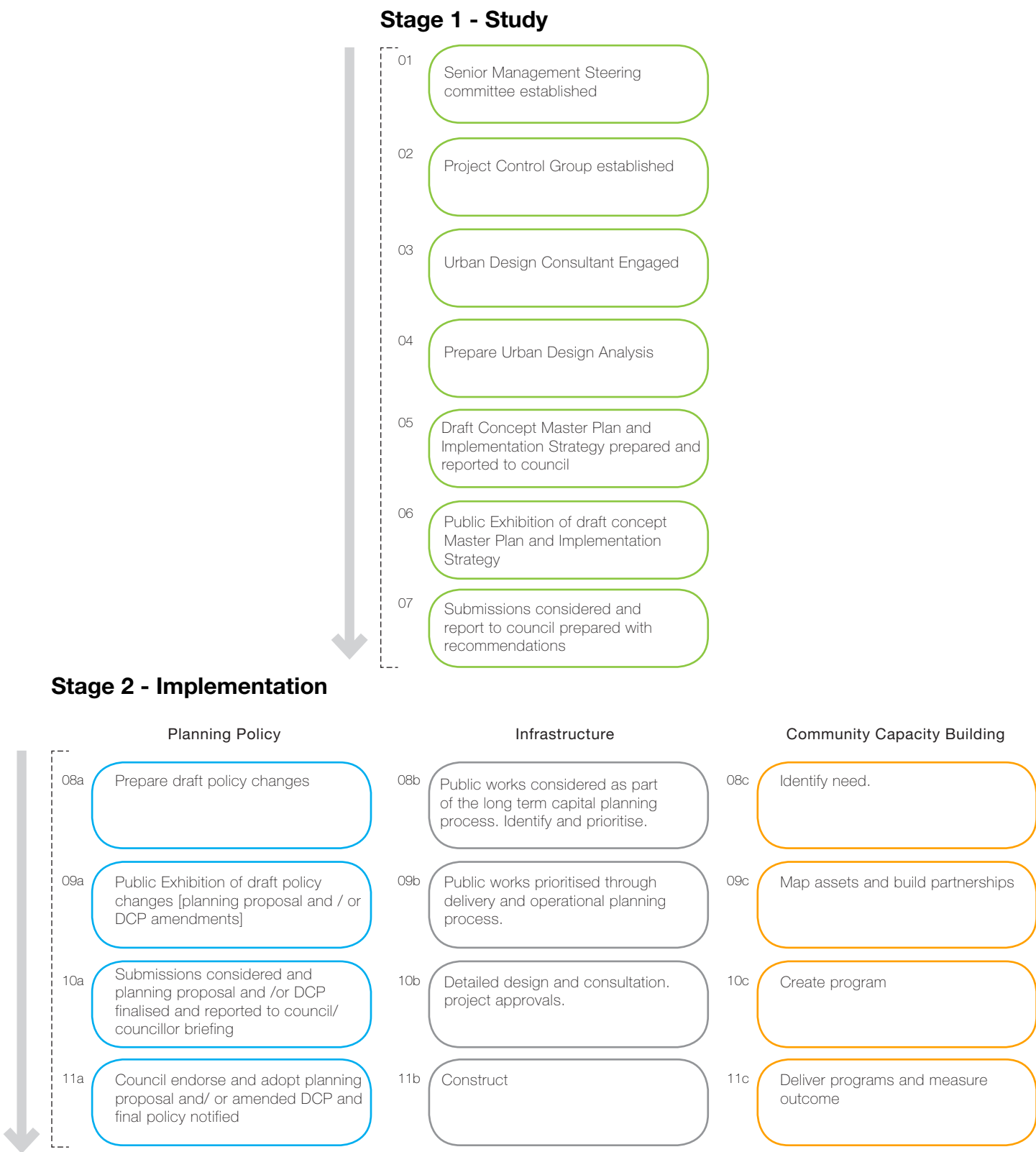
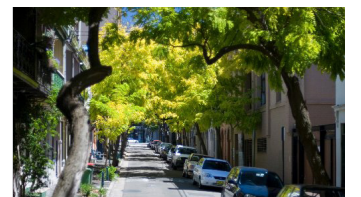
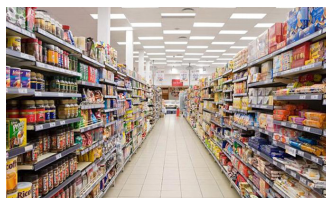


FIGURE 1.04 - TOWN AND VILLAGE PLANNING PROCESS
DIAGRAM
TOP: Flow Chart Diagram



2.0 Understanding the 21st Century Town Centre

2.0 Understanding the 21st Century Town Centre

2.1 THE CHALLENGES FACING TOWN CENTRES TODAY

In order for any town centre to thrive in the future it is important to understand and identify the challenges facing town centre's today. With the increased growth of the shopping mall and the deterioration of the traditional high street, town centre's are now catering for a different shopper mind-set.

The phenomenal growth of online retailing, the rise of mobile retailing, the speed and sophistication of the major national and international retailers, the modern and immersive experiences offered by today's new breed of shopping mall, combined with the economic downturn have all conspired to change today's town centre. Key factors that have impacted on the traditional town centre high street are as follows;

- Boom to Bust - Over the past few decades we have enjoyed a boom in retail and property values, fuelled by easy credit and rising standards of living. The Global Financial Crisis [GFC] has exposed the underlying weaknesses in the economy, resulting in a number of declining town centre high streets. Shops are falling by the wayside as they fail to meet the expectations of today's consumer.
- The Shopping Mall - The lack of economic resilience within the traditional high street has been exposed by the modernised shopping mall which has changed beyond recognition over the past 10 years. With convenience being the new 'buzz' word for the consumer, the shopping mall has catered for this through a compact internalised shopping arrangement that is managed like a business rather than a collection of independent retailers.
- The Rise of the Supermarkets - The traditional supermarket which sold groceries and food has modernised its offering to cater for the convenience of each consumer. Supermarkets have expanded their reach into homewares, stationary, books, flowers etc. All of these retail items, once the preserve of specialists on our high streets are now being sold in volume, and with real sophistication, by the generalists.
- Technological Advances - New technological developments now mean that the internet is one of the key threats to retail on our high streets. Fewer shops are required in our town centres as the typical consumer can now shop online without leaving the comfort of their own home.
- Vehicular Dominance - Town centres, shopping malls and retail outlets have all been designed around the vehicle, catering for mass car parking, wide road carriageways and high volumes of traffic. The vehicle has fuelled the convenience culture creating a car dependent society that associates easy car access, ample car parking and convenient shopping as the norm.

Although the current consumer has new expectations that have been created in terms of value, service, entertainment and experience, town centres and high streets have the physical characteristics to offer something different. As Gordon Cullen states in a Concise Townscape, "Take all the elements that go to create the environment: buildings, trees, nature, water, traffic, advertisements and so on, and to weave them all together in such a way that drama is released." A town centre's distinctly unique characteristics can if appropriately designed separate it from the replicated experiences of the shopping mall, bringing together architecture, the public domain and a variety of uses.

Essential to this high street renaissance is establishing a greater flexibility in planning policy and fostering a community ownership of the town centre. Council can engender this through encouraging the temporary use of town centre spaces, transforming the communities perception of a space, whilst incentivising the revitalisation and redevelopment of a town centre from a more permanent perspective.



2.2 PRINCIPLES THAT MAKE UP A VITAL TOWN CENTRE

By acknowledging what challenges are facing todays town centres it is equally important to understand ‘What principles make up a vital and vibrant town centre’. To do this we have identified eight principles which co-exist to make a vital town centre. The principles of a vital town centre that we describe and illustrate in the following pages are the essential components to a successful town centre environment, founded on new urbanist thinking and accepted principles of good urban and town centre design.

By understanding the urban design principles that make up a vital town centre, we can analyse and identify any particular areas where it is lacking, thus informing the town centre master planning process. Although the key principles proposed will guide the master planning process, it must be noted that in reality these boundaries inter-relate with each other, reinforcing the complex relationships that interplay in creating a vital town centre.

Principle 1: Unique Identity

The identity of a town centre comes from its individuality or distinction from other places, which form the basis of it being recognised as a separable entity. This uniqueness or individuality can come from a town centre’s physical setting, activities and meaning for the local community. Thus the urban character and sense of arriving into a town centre are key elements that form a unique identity.

Character

The character and identity of a town centre is rooted in its urban structure, quality of urban spaces and the patterns of movement and activity that exist. A town centre’s character can be expressed through the form of urban blocks, the scale and size of the buildings and the spaces they create.

Sense of Arrival

Equally as important to a town centre’s character is the sense of entering into a particular area. Successful town centres ensure that key access routes into a district offer individuals a sense of arriving to a collective entity or place, which maybe achieved by physical separation or distinctiveness within the built form and spatial environment.

Principle 2: Street Vibrancy

Successful town centres typically have animation, vitality, and an urban ‘buzz’. By promoting people to the street, animation and vitality is created. To create this vitality and vibrancy a close grain of vibrant uses should be accommodated which respond to the surrounding public domain.

Close Urban Grain and Diversity

Town centres that offer a close grain mix of uses, benefit the economy by encouraging a well connected catchment of customers to local businesses. A finer grain mix of uses within a town centre offers a viable alternative to large single use blocks, as its diversity ensures town centre streets are more resilient to economic uncertainty.

Flexibility and Adaptability

The built form and public domain needs to be flexible and adaptable to cater for a variety of functions. The adaptability of individual buildings and public spaces is important not only to allow for physical change but also cultural and social change. The most successful places are products of growth over time, shaped by and able to accommodate changing economic conditions, development aspirations and cultural differences.



Principle 3: Urban Composition

“Bring half a dozen buildings together and an art other than architecture is made possible. Several buildings begin to happen in the group, which would be impossible for the isolated building. We may walk through and past the buildings and as a corner is turned an unsuspected building is suddenly revealed” (Cullen 2002). Essential to a well composed town centre is its street definition, sense of enclosure and legibility, ensuring a user is guided through a town’s key focus areas.

Definition and Enclosure

Streets and public domain have a symbiotic relation with the built form and its density. If appropriately designed the urban environment can take a positive form and possess a sense of enclosure to the public domain.

Legibility

The articulation of the built form and it’s relationship with the spaces that bound it are crucial to ensuring a legible network of town centre streets. By manipulating the nuances of scale and style, of texture and colour, as well as character a route can have a strong and memorable identity that reflects its importance within a hierarchy, encouraging legibility.

Principle 4: A Community Heart

A community heart forms an essential component to a vital town. Typically a community heart consists of an eclectic mix of uses and activities that is supported by a quality public domain. The concentration of uses and appropriate public domain can establish a gathering point for social interaction that can be deemed as the community heart due to its affiliation with the town centre population.

Focal Point for Social Interaction

The community heart acts as a focal point for social interaction, offering a variety of potential different uses and activities during the day and night. Essentially this focal point evokes a sense of place and ownership for the town centre community.

Community Use

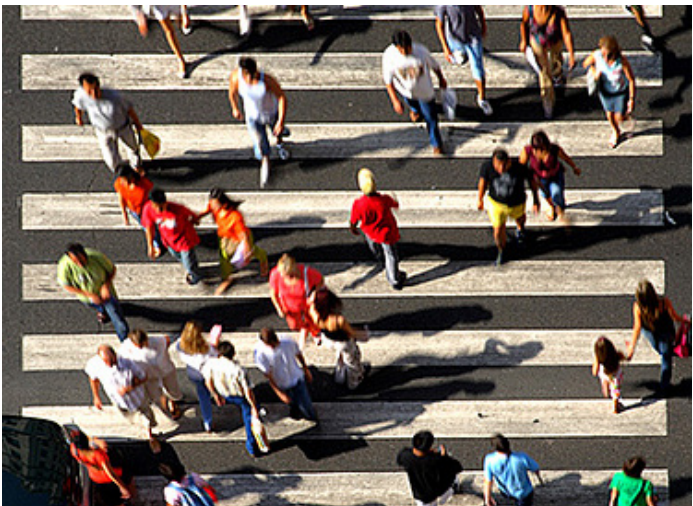
Successful community hearts tend to be civic spaces, squares or a high street, where a variety of functions can be catered for, such as markets, festivals, theatre and relaxation for meeting others. It is imperative that a large proportion of the community heart is public and freely accessible at all times, to all users.

Principle 5: Accessible and Well Connected

Cars form a dominant characteristic in many town centre’s today, however the most vital town centres reconcile the importance of the pedestrian and cyclist, reducing the dominance of the vehicle and prioritising pedestrians, cyclists and modes of public transport.

A Network of Pedestrian Accessible Routes

“Emphasising walking as a viable mode of transportation with a strong impact on health is leading towards a more sustainable city and town centre, where energy consumption and a focus on a lively city during the day and night are part of the new city strategies” (Gehl 2009). The way a town centre is designed can contribute to an individuals propensity to be physically active - to walk instead of drive. This can have a direct influence on improved health outcomes.



Good Public Transport Links

Good public transport can reduce vehicular use within a town centre, supporting the retention of open space, encourage traffic calming, promote walking and cycling, enhance social sustainability and encourage a more compact town centre that is easily accessed and used.

Principle 6: A Balanced Environment

Essential to any vital town centre is the balance between hard and soft landscape, ensuring a symbiotic relationship between the urban and natural environment. As town centres expand, natural habitats are enveloped by the urban environment, altering the natural ecosystems and bringing the urban environment into direct contact with the natural environment.

Public Domain

A quality public domain beyond providing an aesthetic component for town centres, can create an ongoing series of systems, patterns and interactions between living things. Thus a vital town centre offers a public domain that responds to the user requirements and local ecosystems, creating a more balanced environment.

Environmental Sustainability

A vital town centre must be sustainable by responding to its environment and ecosystems within it, ensuring a resilience to extreme weather conditions. Additionally, through the appropriate planting of trees and vegetation, carbon dioxide can be sequestered, winds speeds can be reduced, shelter belts are established and dust pollution can be filtered. These considerations are essential for any vital town centre.

Principle 7: Policy and Governance

“Sustainable communities and town centres are characterised by leadership, and strong governance frameworks that are transparent, accountable and adaptable”. They enable active partnerships to build capacity and achieve a shared vision, and deliver a variety of stakeholder benefits. [Green Star - Communities, 2012]

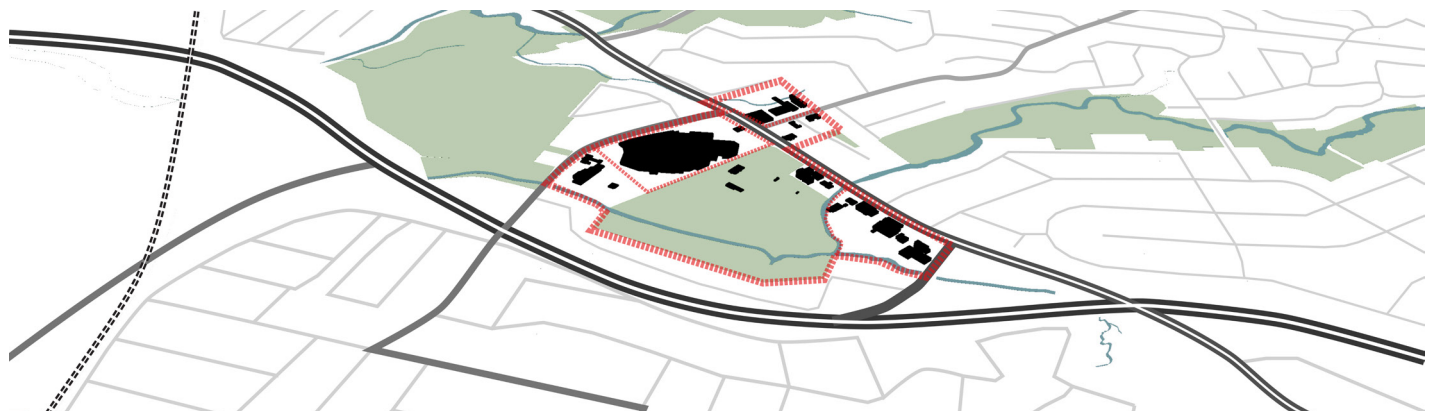
The correct governance and policy for a town centre is essential to ensuring its vitality and viability. For this to happen, local, state and federal government require a clear and inclusive governance model, incentivising the successful implementation of development within a town centre.

Principle 8: Community Ownership

“Sustainable communities are liveable. They are diverse, affordable, inclusive and healthy. They enhance social interaction and ownership, are safe and caring and improve people’s wellbeing” [Green Star - Communities, 2012]. In creating a vital town centre, the master planning process must incorporate the community and establish an understanding of their current and anticipated demands of the town centre.

A vital town centre requires a community that is actively involved in ensuring their town centre is vital and vibrant. A vital town centre encourages community cohesion through engagement processes that allow stakeholders and the community to have a say in the evolution of their communities, from policy development, to ongoing revitalisation, evaluation and adaptive management.





3.0 Understanding Figtree Town Centre

3.0 Understanding Figtree Town Centre

3.1 CONTEXTUAL POSITIONING

This section establishes an understanding of Figtree Town Centre both physically, economically and environmentally by assessing it against the key principles that make a ‘Vital Town Centre’. The analysis work produced in this study is supported by the Figtree Town Centre - Desktop Analysis [2013] produced by Wollongong City Council.

Figtree Town Centre is made up of three Precincts. this study considers these nominated precincts and Figtree Oval that connects them. Figtree is located approximately 3km south west of Wollongong City Centre and 2.5km north of Unanderra Town Centre. Figtree Town Centre is bordered by Cordeaux Heights to the south and Mangerton to the north. The trade area of Figtree is considered to extend north to Gwynneville, east to Coniston, south to Unanderra, Farmborough, and the Port Kembla Steel works; and west towards the escarpment of Mt Kembla and Cordeaux Heights.

Regional Connections

Figtree Town Centre is well served by the regional bus network with connections available to Wollongong City Centre, University of Wollongong, Mt Keira, Mangerton, Unanderra, Kembla Heights and Dapto. The F6 Freeway runs adjacent to the town centre and connects to Sydney in the north and the NSW South Coast. The Princes Highway dissects the town centre and provides connections to regional centres in the north and south

Open Space Connections

Vast amounts of open space surrounds Figtree Town Centre and a number of potential links exist. Allans Creek, which flows through Figtree Town Centre also flows through a number of adjacent open spaces including Harry Graham Park to the west and Sid Parrish Park to the South. These potential connections present a unique opportunity for Figtree Town Centre to develop sustainable links with surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

3.2 ECONOMIC POSITIONING

In understanding Figtree's physical context it's equally important to understand Figtree's economic positioning within the Illawarra Region. To key elements of the economy are Figtree's retail/ commercial market and its housing market.

Retail and Commercial

Figtree Town Centre contains approximately 25,000sqm of retail floorspace, with the majority of the centres capacity being located in Westfield, which is strengthened by its close proximity to the Princes Highway. key points to note are;

- No rail access limits potential growth;
- Limited growth potential in trade area;
- Potential undersupply of retail floorspace – Westfield Figtree is performing 21% better than the median for similar sized shopping centres. This over trading may indicate an undersupply of certain types of retail floorspace in the area;

Housing

Demand for housing in Figtree is flat based on the following indicators;

- Low house prices – Median house price is currently \$410,000 which is \$82,525 lower than the median for the Wollongong LGA
- Low unit prices – Median unit price in 2012 was \$334,000 which is \$29,750 lower than the median for the Wollongong LGA,
- Below average capital growth in residential property – Median sales prices for dwellings has risen on average by 4.3% per annum since 2003 compared to 5.1%p.a. across the LGA.

Although Figtree Town Centre's housing market is underperforming there are some positive signs that market activity is increasing, due a small number of units sold for over \$500,000 in 2012.

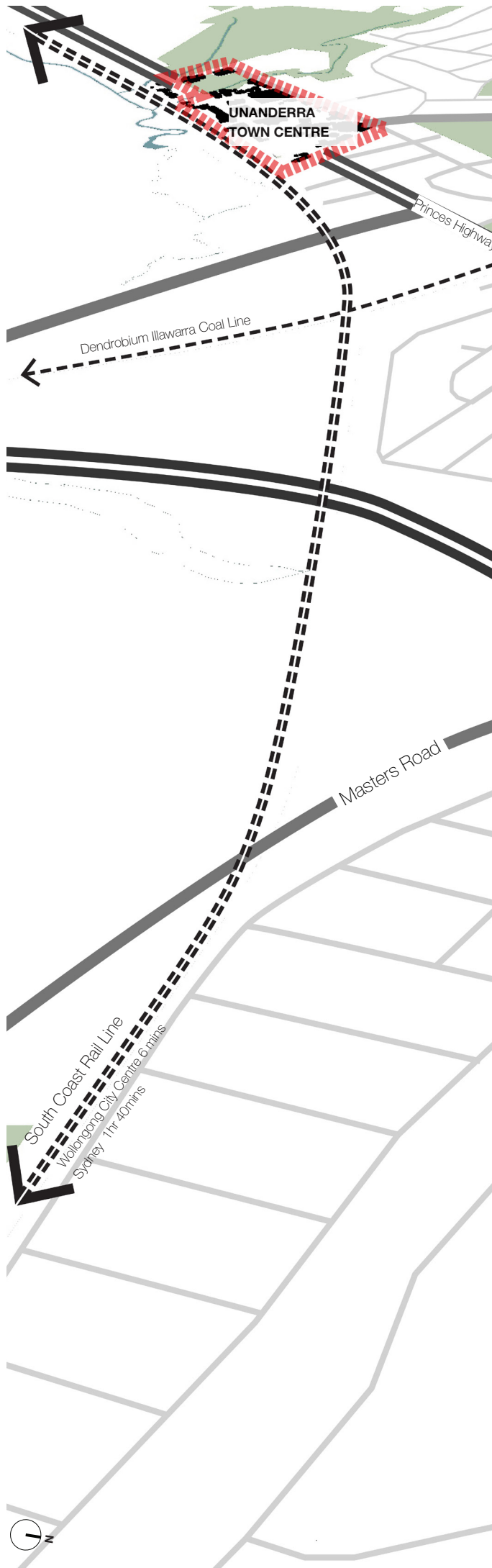


FIGURE 3.01 - CONTEXTUAL POSITIONING
BOTTOM RIGHT. Context plan illustrating Figtree Town centre's location within its context



3.3 IDENTITY

A key priority for the master plan is to identify and direct the town centre to deliver a clear identity and character, which represents the community and history. The below headings offer an understanding to what is identifiable in Figtree Town Centre.

Character

Figtree Town Centre is dominated by formal and informal car parks and spaces which are poorly defined by a disconnected built form. The Key Characteristics of Figtree Town Centre are as follows;

- Image 1 - The major intersection of the Princes Highway, The Avenue and Bellevue Road presents a hostile pedestrian environment, with crossing points prioritised for vehicular movement. The built form fronting the road does little to define the space or mark the arrival to Figtree Town Centre.
- Image 2 - A small collection of retail premises are located on the southern side of Bellevue Road. Their setbacks however, do little to define the street edge or activate the pedestrian environment.
- Image 3 -The informal car parking on the vacant lots behind the Crinis Fruit Market offer little to the town centre beyond overflow parking.

- Image 4 - The Westfield Shopping Centre dominates Figtree Town Centre and provides its major attractor. The vast at grade parking areas which surround the building provide no activation or definition of space.
- Image 5 - The Wollongong Hellenic Club, which backs onto Allans Creek is a major asset for Figtree Town Centre.
- Image 6 - The Figtree Community Hall is a well utilised public asset within the town centre. Its location within Figtree Oval presents many opportunities to further integrate it into the community.
- Image 7 Figtree Oval presents an extremely valuable and well used public open space with the playing fields in high demand from a number of sporting groups. The peripheral passive open space however, is less utilised with large areas unused by the community.
- Image 8 - Allans Creek, which flows around the periphery of Figtree Oval is presently highly degraded and presents a significant flood risk to Figtree Town Centre.



LEFT IMAGE 1. Princes Highway and Bellevue Rd Intersection
LEFT IMAGE 2. Car Park at the back of the Crinis Grocers
LEFT IMAGE 3. Wollongong Hellenic Club rear Car Park
LEFT IMAGE 4. Figtree Oval
RIGHT IMAGE 5. Retail Premises on Bellevue Road
RIGHT IMAGE 6. Westfield Car Park
RIGHT IMAGE 7. Figtree Community Hall
RIGHT IMAGE 8. Allans Creek

Limited Individuality and Distinctiveness

The focal point of Figtree Town Centre is the Westfield Shopping Centre. Other dispersed elements which are identified within the town centre are Crinis Fruit Market and

Wollongong Hellenic Club. Figtree Oval presents an under-activated public asset while the degraded Allans Creek provides the opportunity to connect to adjacent open spaces.



No Sense of Arrival

The entry points into Figtree Town Centre lack a sense of arrival. The Princes Highway South entrance is dominated by the major intersection of the Princes Highway and The Avenue.

When coupled with the adjacent Westfield carpark the result is a vast, undefined space. The entry points from the north and east similarly lack spatial definition and a sense of arrival.

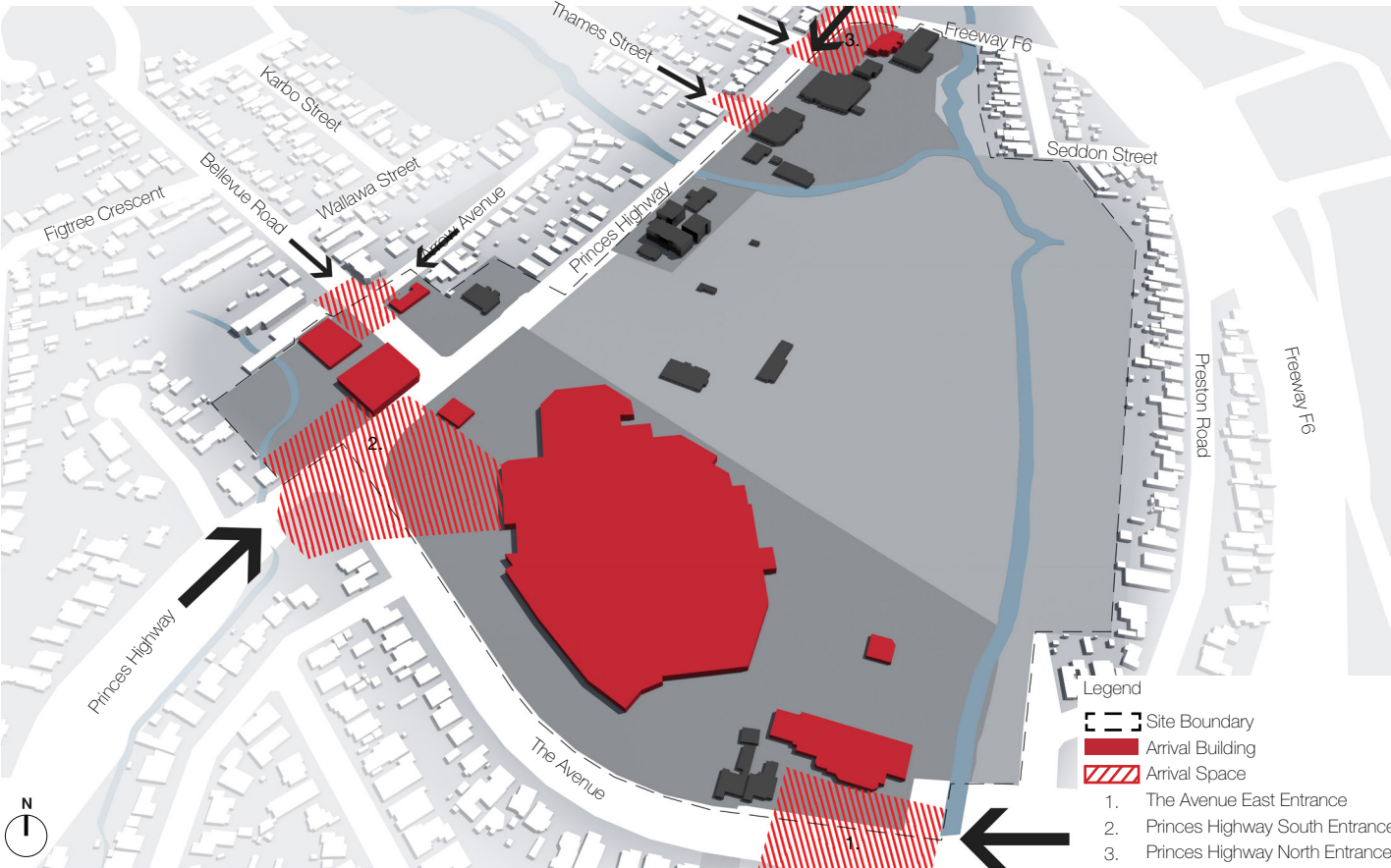


FIGURE 3.02 - LOCAL FEATURES
TOP. Key character features existing in Figtree Town Centre today
FIGURE 3.03 - ARRIVAL POINTS
BOTTOM. Entry points into Figtree Town Centre

3.4 STREET VIBRANCY

A key priority for the master plan is to guide built form, which promotes street vibrancy and activates the pedestrian environment. The below headings offer an understanding to what street vibrancy exists in Figtree town centre today.

LEP Land Use Zones

Figtree Town Centre has a variety of designated Land Uses as described by the LEP. The Westfield site is designated as B2 Local Centre while the two smaller retail/commercial pockets

are zoned B1 Neighbourhood Centres. A SP3 Tourism zone contains the Hellenic Club site and adjacent commercial lots. Recreation and residential zones complete the town centre.



Existing Land Uses

The existing land uses of Figtree town centre are primarily Retail, both small and large scale. Other uses include Commercial, Community, both public and private and

Residential. Two inconsistent Land Uses appear with the McDonalds site being zoned residential and the residential development in the SP3 Tourism zone.



FIGURE 3.04 - LEP 2009 LAND USE ZONES
TOP. Land Use Zones in LEP 2009
FIGURE 3.05 - EXISTING LAND USES
BOTTOM. Existing Land Uses

Edges

There are no truly active edges found within the Figtree Town Centre. This is primarily due to the vast amounts of at grade car parking fronting the pedestrian realm as well as the

inherent nature of the Westfield Shopping centre being inward focussed. The Crinis Fruit Market and adjacent retail uses provide some activation to the streetscape.



Excessive Space

Figtree Town Centre is dominated by big bulk buildings that provide little spatial definition or activity between their frontages. The majority of the space around the buildings

is dedicated to car parking, presenting little in the way of pedestrian amenity. There is little to no opportunity for community interaction provided by any of these spaces.



FIGURE 3.06 - BUILDING FRONTAGES
TOP. Existing frontages within Figtree Town Centre
FIGURE 3.07 - FIGURE GROUND
BOTTOM. Building to space comparison

3.5 URBAN COMPOSITION

A key priority for the master plan is to create high quality streets through appropriate scale and massing. The below headings offer an understanding to what the urban composition of Figtree Town Centre is today.

Existing Building Heights

The existing building heights range from 3-9 metres [1-3 storeys], sitting primarily in the middle of this range. The recent residential development located on the Princes Highway presents the only buildings over 10 metres. This

predominance of low built form leads to a lack of definable space, especially when coupled with the vast amount of space between buildings.



Permissible LEP 2009 Building Heights

The 2009 LEP allows for an increase in building heights across the town centre. The B2 Local Centre zone has a permissible height of 15 metres while the two Neighbourhood Centre

zones and the SP3 Tourism zone permit a maximum height of 12 metres. These permissible heights allow for greater spatial definition and an improved legibility in the town centre.



FIGURE 3.08 - EXISTING BUILDING HEIGHTS
TOP. Existing building heights within Figtree Town Centre
FIGURE 3.09 - LEP 2009 HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS
BOTTOM. Existing building heights contained within LEP 2009

Floor Space Ratio [FSR]

The current LEP 2009 FSR's are not fully exploited by the existing built form. The greatest potential exists in the 1.5:1 FSR zones as each lot currently has an FSR value between

0.35:1 - 1:1. Coupled with the permissible building heights there is an opportunity within the existing LEP to improve the definition and legibility at key locations.



Street Form

There is presently little definition of the streets within Figtree Town Centre. A combination of low built form and the width of the Princes Highway, especially at the junction of The Avenue and Bellevue Road [image 1], leads to a poor environment for pedestrians. The lack of built form along both sides of the street also makes it difficult to create a legible street form.

A lack of vegetation, in particular street trees, also increases the hostility of the street scape and the alienation of pedestrians. The vast scale of car parking areas throughout the town centre, as seen in image 2 below, lead to permeable undefined edges with no activation. This further degrades the character of the streets, intensifying the hostile environment.



FIGURE 3.10 - LEP 2009 FSR RATIO'S
TOP: Existing FSR Ratio's contained within LEP 2009
IMAGE 1. Princes Highway: Poor street form
IMAGE 2. Westfield Car Park: Poor street form

3.6 COMMUNITY HEART

A key priority for the master plan is to identify opportunities to define a community heart and build on the focal points that exist. The below headings offer an understanding to what focal points for social interaction exist within Figtree Town Centre today.

Limited Focal Point for Social Interaction

The primary attractor of the Figtree town centre is the Westfield Shopping Centre. This privatised space provides the only real place for social interaction within the town centre. The Crinis Fruit Market and the Wollongong Hellenic Club are also

identified as important community assets and meeting places however, both are privately owned spaces.



Poor Frontage to the Community Focal Point

As is the case with the majority of ‘big box’ shopping centres such as Westfield, their inward focus is detrimental to the surrounding land uses. In the case of Figtee, the carpark

associated with Westfield dominates the street scape of the town centre and does little to define space, create legibility or establish an active public domain.

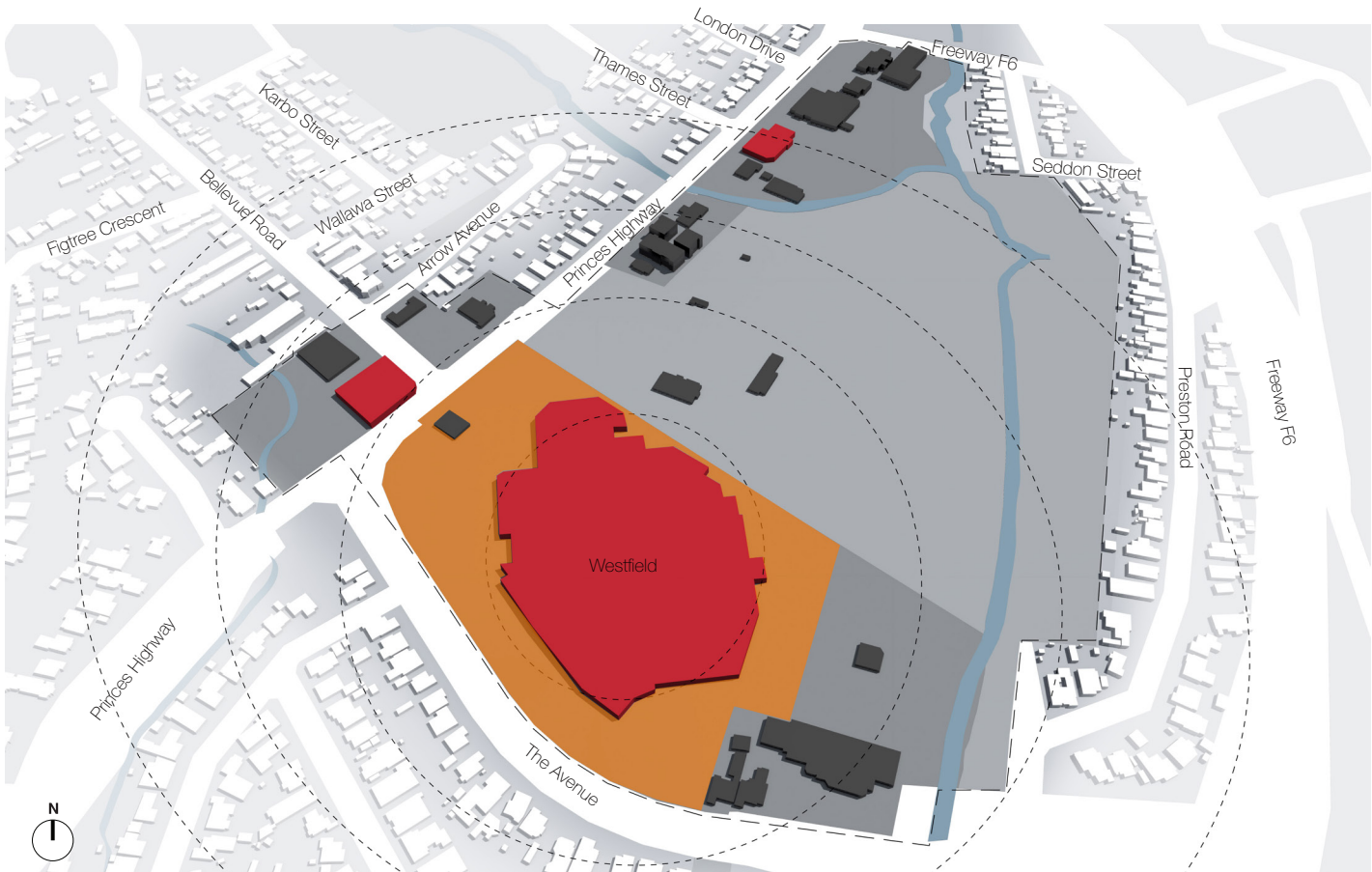


FIGURE 3.11 - EXISTING COMMUNITY HEART
TOP. Westfield acts ast Figtree Town Centre's community heart
FIGURE 3.12 - COMMUNITY HEART SURROUNDINGS
BOTTOM. Space and frontage surrounding the community heart

3.7 ACCESS AND MOVEMENT

A key priority for the master plan is to promote pedestrian links, cycling and greater use of the local public transport system. The below headings offer an understanding to what access and movement patterns exist in Figtree Town Centre today.

Isolated and Disconnected Plots

There is very little opportunity to move between the various plots of Figtree Town Centre. The crossing points that do exist along the Princes Highway are heavily prioritised for vehicular

movement. There is a lack of protection from environmental elements at crossing points which further adds to the sense of disconnection throughout the town centre.



Vehicular Prioritisation

Vehicular movement, particularly along the Princes Highway and The Avenue is the dominating feature of Figtree Town Centre. The traffic creates a hostile pedestrian environment and at

present the vehicle receives total priority. Car parking areas dominate the open space throughout the town centre removing opportunities for community interaction.



FIGURE 3.13 - PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT
TOP. Pedestrian links and crossings within Figtree Town Centre
FIGURE 3.14 - VEHICULAR MOVEMENT
BOTTOM. Road and vehicular hierarchy within Figtree Town Centre

Limited Public Transport Links

Public transport in Figtree Town Centre is limited to the local bus network. Comprehensive connections are available through the region to Wollongong Centre, University of Wollongong, Mt Keira, Mangerton, Unanderra, Kembla

Heights, Dapto etc. A small section of cycleway was installed as part of the recent upgrade to the Prince Highway/The Avenue junction.

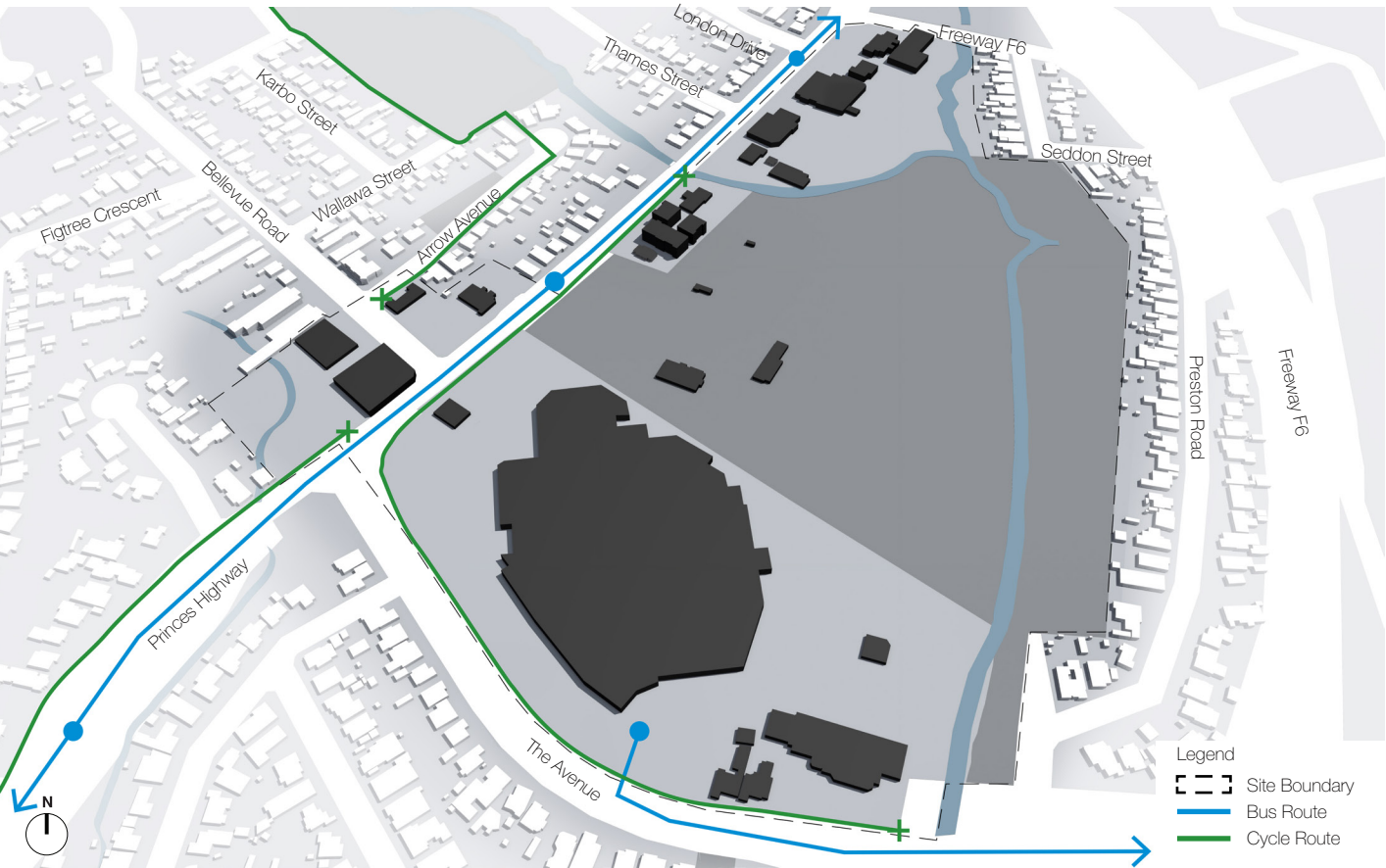


FIGURE 3.15 - PUBLIC TRANSPORT
TOP. Local bus routes within Figtree Town Centre
IMAGE 1. Crinis Grocers car park
IMAGE 2. Princes Highway and Bellevue Road traffic and pedestrian intersection
IMAGE 3. Westfield car park
IMAGE 4. Local McDonalds restaurant with fencing along the central reservation of Princes Highway

3.8 ENVIRONMENT

A key priority for the master plan is to ensure the vision for the town centre responds to the existing environmental conditions, offering a balanced environmental experience for the local community. The below headings offer an understanding to the environmental characteristics existing within Figtree Town Centre today.

Flooding

Allans Creek presents a significant flood risk to Figtree Town Centre. With the exception of the northern lots on the eastern side of the Princes Highway, all of the Town Centre is impacted by flooding to various degrees. The area shown in red is the

High Risk Flood Zone and new development is excluded from this area. For further information please refer to the Allans Creek Flood Study.



Poor Environmental Quality

Due to the dominance of vehicular parking, much of the open space within the town centre is impermeable hardscape. The lack of streetscape planting amplifies this imbalance of hard

and soft landscape and leads to a poor environmental quality throughout. Figtree Oval presents a significant asset to the environmental quality of the town centre.



FIGURE 3.16 - FLOODING
TOP. Flood conditions within Figtree Town Centre
FIGURE 3.17 - LOCAL ENVIRONMENT
BOTTOM. Soft and hard space within Figtree Town Centre

3.9 COUNCIL CONSULTATION

A key priority for the master plan is to ensure the vision for the town centre responds to the council's aspirations, ensuring the master plan process considers relevant policies and governance. Essential to understanding the councils aspirations is undergoing a council workshop process.

Council and Councillor Workshop 01

Workshops were held with Councillors and council staff at Wollongong City Council on 18th January, 4th February, 18th February and 26th February 2013. The workshops were facilitated by Michael Cowdy and Matthew Ritson from McGregor Coxall.

The aim of the workshops was to present the teams understanding of Figtree Town Centre and initial strategies to gain feedback and input through a workshop process. Participants worked in groups and key ideas were relayed back to the group. Key points discussed at the workshops were as follows;

- Westfield forms the predominant retail heart of Figtree Town Centre, however it is agreed that the shopping mall has stifled any opportunities to broaden the retail offering within the centre;
- Talks with Westfield are important to understand the opportunity to improve the shopping malls integration with Figtree Oval;
- Properties along Arrow Avenue are being acquired or raised o mitigate the flood risk on local properties;
- A pedestrian walkway along Allans Creek offers an amazing opportunity to connect the local open spaces together;

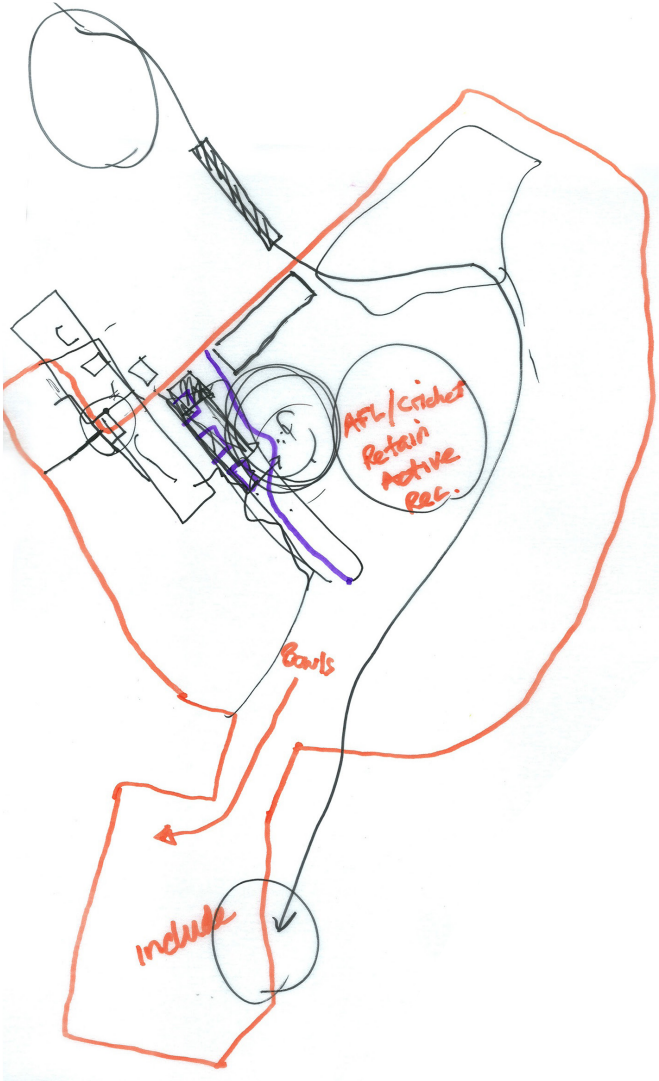
- The Community Hall is well used;
- Flooding is a key constraint within Figtree Town Centre and a greater understanding of these issues is required;
- There is an opportunity to widen the culverts to mitigate the flood risk areas within Figtree Town centre. A key issue with this is the cost required to implement such mitigation measures;
- Access across Allans Creek should be improved;
- Allans Creek should form a key recreation opportunity for the town centre;
- A community heart should be focussed within Figtree Oval and around the existing Community Hall;



1



2



3

IMAGE 1. Council and Councillor Workshop 01
IMAGE 2. Council and Councillor Workshop 01
IMAGE 3. Council and Councillor Workshop 01 Sketch

3.10 COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A key priority for the master plan is to ensure the vision for the town centre responds to the communities aspirations, ensuring a level of community ownership in the master plan process. Essential to understanding the communities aspirations is undergoing a community workshop process. For a more detailed understanding of the community consultation feedback please refer to the Figtree Town Centre study Community Engagement Summary Report.

Community Workshops

During November and December 2012, Council engaged with the community to ask about their ‘vision’ for the future of the town centre, and to better understand how the town centre functions. A range of ideas and concepts for the town centre were discovered through conversations with the community, and the feedback gathered has informed the preparation of Figtree Town Centre study.

Council staff conducted around 230 conversations with local schools and businesses, residents, local social and community groups and local service providers.

- A total of 37 surveys were completed with over 91% of respondents living in Figtree or one of 10 surrounding suburbs targeted in the consultation.
- 6 submissions were received.
- Hundreds of ideas were shared.

What we asked the community

- Three consultation exercises were used at face to face forums including ‘Where do you visit?’, ‘Where do you feel safe/ unsafe?’ and based on the 6 goals of Wollongong 2022: ‘What is

your key priority for the future of Figtree town centre?’

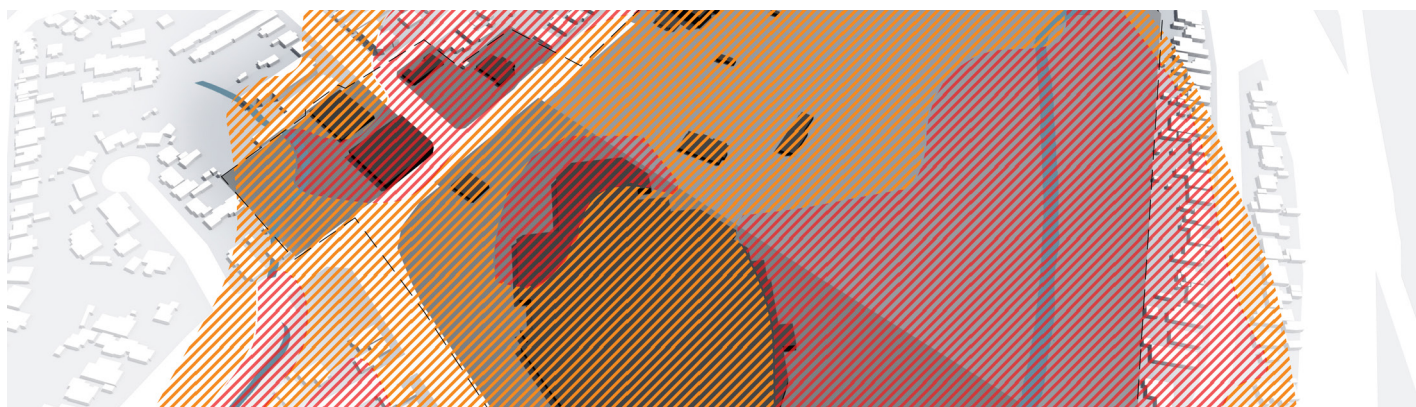
- Survey questions asked what they valued most about the town centre, what needs to be retained or protected, what things they would like to see improved and what is something new or different they would like included in the town centre in the future.

What the community told us

- The community most valued the variety of shops and facilities in the town centre.
- Overwhelmingly, the community wished to retain and enhance the recreational facilities such as parks, children’s playground and tennis courts for health and family reasons.
- The community told us they wanted to see public amenities and facilities improved in the future, as well as public transport, traffic and parking improvements.
- The most common top priority for a new element in Figtree Town Centre was the creation of a public outdoor space.
- It was recognised that all Wollongong 2022 goals were important and interconnected.
- More than 84% of visits to Figtree Town Centre occur during the day.
- The top place to visit with the town centre was Precinct 1 - Westfield (37% of responses) followed by Precinct 2- Crinis Fruit Market and surrounding buildings (28% of responses). Precinct 3 was considered by many not to be part of Figtree Town Centre.
- Overall, youth indicated that they felt safe in the three Precincts (66% overall), with Precinct 2 (Crinis Fruit Market) reporting the highest proportion of ‘safe’ responses (72%). 60% responses indicated they felt unsafe in Figtree Oval and Park.
- The majority of people who visited Figtree Town Centre last, come by car (78%).



TOP LEFT IMAGE 1. Community Goal 1 - We value and protect our environment
TOP MIDDLE IMAGE 2. Community Goal 2 - We have an innovative and sustainable economy
TOP RIGHT IMAGE 3. Community Goal 3 - Wollongong is a creative, vibrant City
BOTTOM LEFT IMAGE 4. Community Goal 4 - We have a healthy community in a liveable City
BOTTOM MIDDLE IMAGE 5. Community Goal 5 - We are a connected and engaged community
BOTTOM RIGHT IMAGE 6. Community Goal 6 - We have sustainable, affordable and accessible transport



4.0 Flooding at Figtree Town Centre

4.0 Flooding at Figtree Town Centre

4.1 FLOODING ISSUES

As identified in the previous section, Figtree Town Centre is exposed to a high level of flooding. As expressed in the Councilor Workshop 01, further investigation was required to understand the implications of flooding within Figtree Town Centre.

The following section provides a more detailed understanding of the flooding implications in Figtree Town Centre and the potential opportunities that could be further explored.

Allans Creek Flood Study

A review of the Allans Creek Flood Study (Lawson and Treloar, 2006) was undertaken with reference to the impacts of flooding on Figtree Town Centre. The flood study has found that there was significant flooding in the Figtree Town Centre as shown in Figure 4.01.

Flooding impacts are dominated by two major constraints at Figtree Town Centre:

- The Princes Highway road crossing
- The Avenue road crossing

The Avenue crossing, in particular, is a major factor in flooding for the town centre (Figure 4.02). Due to the relatively small size of the culvert cells it is assumed to be 100% blocked during storm events. This causes significant back-watering throughout the town centre during large storm events.

The crossing at Princes Highway is also a constraint on flood flows and has a significant impact on flooding upstream of the Princes Highway. The creek breaks its banks immediately upstream of the road crossing and water flows along Arrow Avenue causing significant flooding along this overland flow path. This continues to flows through the Figtree Town Centre

west of Bellevue Rd. Flows in this vicinity are complex and are affected by:

- Overland flows along Arrow Avenue
- Existing building and street frontages
- Backwatering from The Avenue culverts interacting with overland flows along Arrow Avenue

Within high flood risk zones commercial and residential development is not permitted and within medium flood risk zones essential community facilities is not permitted. This impacts significantly on the Figtree Town Centre restricting development throughout large parts of the town centre.

In the Floodplain Risk Management Study, Lawson and Treloar (2006) looked at a regional scheme to improve flooding in the Figtree Town Centre and surrounding properties. Lawson and Treloar's flood mitigation option focused on the road crossing constraints at Princes Highway and The Avenue. Flood mitigation works required a number of structural actions including significant upgrades to at least 5 bridges/culverts as well as 'creek improvement works' primarily to improve conveyance.

Improving and alleviating flows in one location (e.g. Figtree Town Centre) needs to be considered in a catchment wide context to ensure that the flooding is not worsened elsewhere. For example alleviating culvert constraints to reduce flooding at Figtree Town Centre can cause flooding downstream, as the areas upstream of the culverts can act as de-facto detention basins reducing peak flows and flood levels downstream.

The option that Lawson and Treloar investigated involved extensive works as their primary focus was on a regional scale solution (rather than for one particular site or land area).

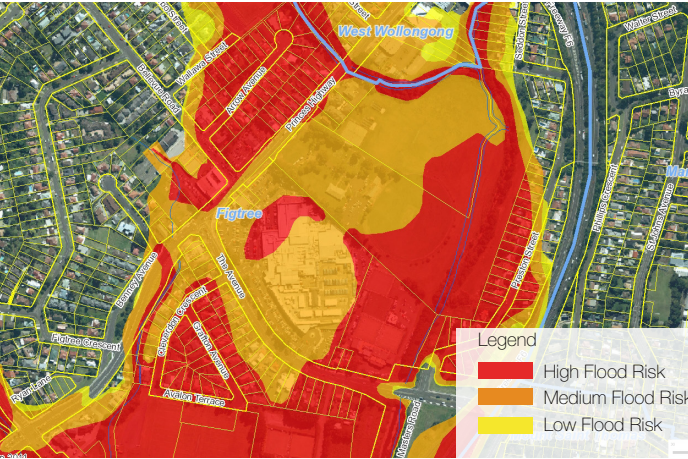


FIGURE 4.01 - FLOODING AT FIGTREE TOWN CENTRE
TOP. Flood Risk Diagram [Red - High Risk]; [Orange - Medium Risk]; [Yellow - Low Risk]
FIGURE 4.02 - THE AVENUE CULVERT
BOTTOM. Photograph
FIGURE 4.03 - FLOOD PLAIN RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN - MATRIX
BOTTOM. Table

| Planning Consideration | Flood Risk Precincts (FRP's) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------------|---|------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| | Low Flood Risk^ | | | | | Medium Flood Risk^ | | | | | High Flood Risk^ (and Interim Riverine Corridor) | | | |
| | Essential Community Facilities | Critical Utilities | Subdivision | Residential | Commercial & Industrial | Essential Community Facilities | Critical Utilities | Subdivision | Residential | Commercial & Industrial | Essential Community Facilities | Critical Utilities | Subdivision | Residential |
| | Tourist Related Development | Recreation & Non-Urban | Concessional Development | | | Tourist Related Development | Recreation & Non-Urban | Concessional Development | | | Tourist Related Development | Recreation & Non-Urban | Concessional Development | |
| Floor Level | 3 | | | | | 2, 6, 1, 2 or 7, 5 | 2 | 1 | 2, 4 | | | | 1 | 2, 4, 6 |
| Building Components | 2 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Structural Soundness | 3 | 3 | 3 | | | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | | | | 1 |
| Flood Affection | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | | | | 1 |
| Evacuation | 2, 4 | * | 3, 4 | 4 | 3, 4 | * | 3, 4 | 1, 4 | 3, 4 | 1 | 1 | | | 1 |
| Management & Design | 4, 5 | 1 | | | | 1 | 2, 3, 5 | 2, 3, 5 | 2, 3, 5, 6 | 2, 3, 5 | | | 2, 3 | 2, 3, 5 |
| | Not Relevant | Unsuitable Land Use | | | | | | | | | | | | Industrial Only, Commercial Not Permitted |
| Floor Level | 1 For industrial land use only - All Floor Levels to be equal to or greater than the 100 year flood unless justified by site specific assessment | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2 Habitable floor levels to be equal to or greater than the 100 year flood plus 0.5m (freeboard) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3 All Floor Levels to be equal to or greater than the PMF level plus 0.5m (freeboard) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4 Floor levels to be as close to the design floor level as practical & no lower than the existing floor level when undertaking alterations or additions | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 5 Floor levels of shops to be as close to the design floor level as practical. Where below the design floor level, more than 30% of the floor area to be above the design floor level or premises to be flood proofed below the design floor level | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 6 Garage floor level to be no lower than 300 mm above finished adjacent ground | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 7 Garage floor level to be no lower than the 100 year ARI flood level minus 300 mm or 300 mm above the finished adjacent ground (whichever is the greater) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Building Components & Method | 1 All structures to have flood compatible building components below or at the 100 year flood level plus 0.5m (freeboard) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2 All structures to have flood compatible building components below or at the PMF level plus 0.5m (freeboard) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Structural Soundness | 1 IEAust NPFR Structural Engineers report to certify that any structure can withstand the forces of floodwater, debris & buoyancy up to & including a 100 year flood plus 0.5m (freeboard) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2 Applicant to demonstrate that any structure can withstand the forces of floodwater, debris & buoyancy up to & including a 100 year flood plus 0.5m (freeboard) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3 IEAust NPFR Structural Engineers report to demonstrate that any structure can withstand the forces of floodwater, debris & buoyancy up to & including a PMF plus 0.5m (freeboard) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Flood Affection | 1 IEAust NPFR Hydraulic Engineers report required to certify that the development will not increase flood affection elsewhere, includes medium and high density residential proposals | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2 The impact of the development on flooding elsewhere to be considered, includes low density residential | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The works involved upgrades to the Princes Highway Bridge, The Avenue Culverts, three sets of F6 freeway culverts and obstructions to flows on the F6. The total estimated cost of these works was \$33M.

Based on these works benefits accrued to a number of properties and the total value of these benefits was approximately \$14M. Due to the low benefit/cost the option was not recommended to proceed. This option did not include the value of improving the development potential of Council owned land. It was not documented whether these works would mitigate flooding impacts on Figtree Town Centre although it would be expected that there would be benefits to a number of properties in the Figtree Town Centre, including Council's. It is also likely that the flood study did not look at what works would be required to improve flooding options at one particular property (or a small number of properties). The emphasis was on maximising regional flooding benefits.

Hence one option to understand the potential for alleviating flooding at Figtree Town Centre would be to undertake an analysis of what flood mitigation works would be required to relieve flooding at one or a few particular properties which requires less works, but provides benefits to particular properties. This may reduce the cost and extent of the flood mitigation works required.

There are also likely to be a number of additional options that could be explored including looking at the option of using Figtree Park as a formalised detention basin to assist in for any attenuation of flows through the town centre and to offset the impacts of improved flows through culverts at The Avenue for example.

The flood study has significant implications for Figtree Town

Centre which are not easily resolved. There are a number of options to further progress options for improvement works to Figtree Town Centre including:

- 1. Option 1: Engage a flood study consultant to further pursue investigations into flood mitigation options with a specific objective to improve flooding within Figtree Town Centre and with options to use Figtree Park as a detention basin. This study will further inform the potential for re-development at the site.
- 2. Option 2: accept the flooding within Figtree Town Centre and the restrictions to development and do not develop the town centre further. Permitted recreational development uses and non-urban development can occur. Development potential may change in the medium to long term if future flood mitigation works were undertaken.
- 3. Option 3: Develop in medium risk zones. Development control could be incorporated into a town centre DCP to influence the development form. However it is likely that development in these zones will be compromised in terms of urban design due to the need to overcome the impacts of flooding. Development in these zones will likely have raised site floor levels (for an example of impact on urban design refer Figure 4.05)
- 4. Option 4: Develop in medium risk zones and in zones where Council owns land it can control the development outcomes by taking an active role in the development of the site. This could occur for example on the Bellevue Rd site. Blue Mountains City Council partnering with Coles to develop its Blue Mountains Cultural Centre and Library is a good example of such a partnership.



FIGURE 4.04 - FLOOD MITIGATION SCHEME OPTION
LEFT. Diagram
FIGURE 4.05 - RAISED BUILDING
RIGHT. Building with raised platform and culverts to accommodate flooding

4.2 OPPORTUNITIES

Multi-Purpose Riparian Corridors

The creek is a major natural asset of the Figtree Town Centre. It has significant natural value. It is currently significantly detached from the town centre and Figtree Park. It has very little active frontages to the creek line or activity centres along the creek line. The creek is currently under pressure from historical and continuing urbanisation within the catchment including (please refer to the photographs below)

- Erosion to bed rock in a number of places
- Bank erosion including significantly unstable banks
- Significant invasive non-native plant growth
- Limited riparian zone
- Poor water quality

There is significant opportunity to enhance both the passive recreation values of the creekline and the health of the stream by developing a multi-purpose riparian corridor along the creek line.



LEFT IMAGE 1. Exposed bedrock
LEFT IMAGE 2. Bank erosion creating unstable banks
LEFT IMAGE 3. Liquorland [Heritage Item]
LEFT IMAGE 4. Informal access to the creek edge
RIGHT IMAGE 5. Largeexpanse of open space
RIGHT IMAGE 6. Overgreen creek edge
RIGHT IMAGE 7. Informal crossing point for the community
RIGHT IMAGE 8. Local community interact with creek

A multipurpose riparian corridor adopts the concept of using the landscape along the creekline for multiple uses including:

- Native vegetation for habitat for flora and fauna and stream health
- Passive recreation, including the use of recreation nodes
- Pedestrian and cyclist transport corridors
- Stormwater management including water quality improvement and flood mitigation

Examples of precedent images of different uses within a multi-purpose riparian corridor are shown on the right.

Currently the creekline within the town centre is already being used for a number of different recreational and community purposes indicating it already plays a role in the local community's use of Figtree Town Centre.

The creation of a multi-purpose riparian corridor should also be integrated with

- any options to alleviate or mitigate options for flooding within the Allans Creek catchment
- a wider 'Greenway' pedestrian and cycling corridor along the creekline extending upstream of Princes Highway. This allows linking Council's open space along the creekline
- future plans for land that becomes available due to the program of voluntary purchasing of houses along the west side of the creekline upstream of the Princes Highway

Allans Creek presents an amazing opportunity for Figtree and its community. It equally presents a challenge for future development opportunities. This master plan process must test and understand the development implications within the town centre precincts due to Figtree's propensity for high levels of flooding. Through this exercise an appropriate solution can be proposed that balances the communities requirements with the viability of developing within Figtree Town Centre.



Informal waterway crossing that allows interaction with the creekline and provides a chance for children and adults to play and interact with the waterway.



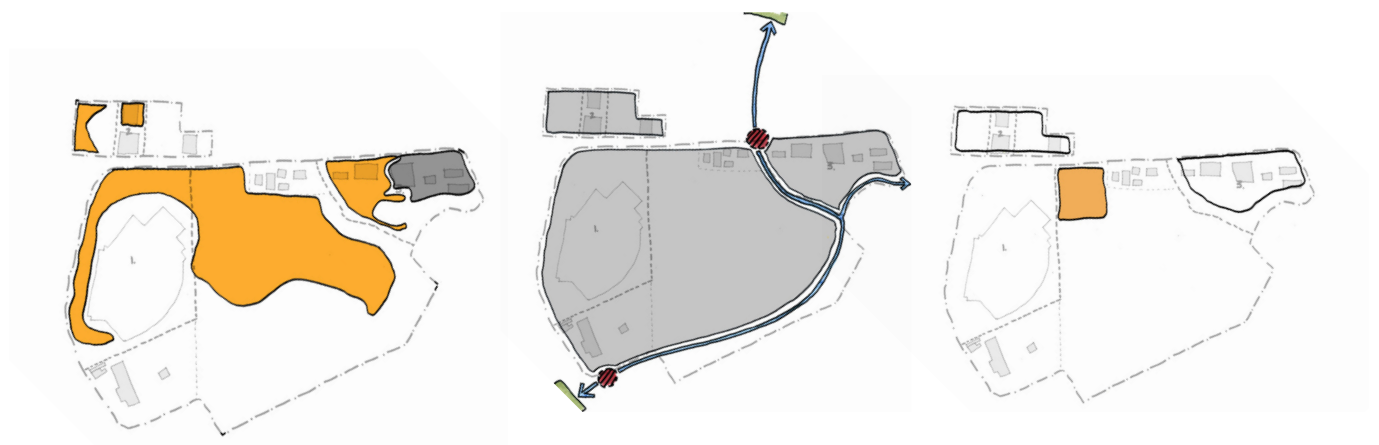
New cycleway created along the foreshores of the Cooks River combined with a passive recreation facility including a children's playground.



Stormwater quality wetland and detention works integrated along the riparian zone incorporating native re-vegetation and passive recreation and community involvement through ongoing bush regeneration of the wetland



Stream health improvement works including bank restoration and re-vegetation. The image shows combination of hard and soft elements to prevent ongoing erosion in areas of steep banks and active erosion.



5.0 Strategising Figtree Town Centre

5.0 Strategising Figtree Town Centre

5.1 STRATEGIC OPTIONS

With Figtree Town Centre being characterised by high and medium flood risk zones there are limited opportunities to provide a quality built form and public domain response within the defined town centre. This major constraint has led to three strategic options being identified which look to inform the future direction of Figtree Town Centre. These options are as follows;

- Develop within the Constraints
- Mitigate against the Flooding
- Focus on the Community

#1 Develop within the Constraints

Although the majority of land within Figtree Town Centre is prevalent to various categories of flood risk, there is an opportunity to still develop within the medium and low risk zones. This strategic option looks to develop within these zones and understand the development implications imposed on buildings within these zones.

#2 Mitigate against the Flooding

The town centre is characterised by Allans Creek which although a valuable natural asset, is the major reason for the town centre's propensity to flood. This strategic option looks to prioritise the mitigation measures and recreational opportunities along Allans Creek, minimising the flood risk zones within the town centre and establishing improved benefits for the local community and future developers.

#3 Focus on the community

Due to the environmental constraints experienced within Figtree Town Centre and the limited economic growth expected in the coming years, a key strategy could be to focus on prioritising the community and concentrating recreational facilities within key locations of the town centre. This option would see the focus on Figtree Town Centre moving away from development opportunities and rather prioritise the next stages of the town centre's evolution on its natural assets. If appropriately designed and implemented these natural assets could unlock future demand for future development and initiate the appropriate mitigation measures to minimise the town centre's flood risk.



FIGURE 5.01 - DEVELOP WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS
TOP. Sketch Plan
FIGURE 5.02 - MITIGATE AGAINST THE FLOODING
MIDDLE. Sketch Plan
FIGURE 5.03 - FOCUS ON THE COMMUNITY
BOTTOM. Sketch Plan

5.2 TESTING THE PRECINCTS

To further understand the implications of the three strategic options, they have been tested on the three town centre precincts, informing the master plan process on identifying the appropriate strategic direction for Figtree Town Centre.

Precinct 1 - Westfield and Figtree Oval

#1 Develop within the Constraints

With the majority of the Westfield Shopping Centre and Figtree Oval being affected by both high and medium flood risk zones the key opportunities for developing within the constraints are as follows;

- Proposing new community uses to the south of the Princes Highway.
- Improve the recreational playing fields in Figtree Oval, ensuring a range of playing fields can be accommodated;
- Re-orientate the Westfield frontage towards Figtree Oval, establishing an improved relationship between the community heart and the retail heart;
- Propose a new riparian greenway and cycle path along Allans Creek connecting through to the neighbouring parks;
- Provide a community space that accommodates a range of activities alongside the community hall;
- Propose temporary interventions within the community space including pop-up cafes and food vendors;

This option is not achievable due to the significant flooding implications currently imposed at this site.

#2 Mitigating against the Flooding

This option looks to propose the appropriate mitigation measures required to minimise the existing flood risk zones. Allowing Allans Creek to become a natural feature for the community and incentivising development within the precinct. The key opportunities for this option are as follows;

- The culverts located on the Princes Highway and The Avenue can be redesigned to accommodate a larger through-flow of water;
- Figtree Bowling Club can be relocated presenting an opportunity site for more appropriate town centre uses;
- Concentrate community facilities and commercial uses along the south of the Princes Highway, creating a new community heart to Figtree Town Centre;
- Improve the recreational playing fields in Figtree Oval, ensuring a range of playing fields can be accommodated;
- Re-orientate the Westfield frontage towards Figtree Oval, establishing an improved relationship between the community heart and the retail heart;
- Propose a new riparian greenway and cycle path along Allans Creek connecting through to the neighbouring parks;

Although this solution offers the greatest benefits for Precinct 1 the investment costs required to mitigate against the flooding outweighs the demand for new development within Figtree Town Centre.

#3 Focus on the community

This option looks to focus on improving the recreational offering within Figtree Oval, through proposing appropriate community oriented solutions that can be implemented without the investment costs required to mitigate against the flooding. This will also focus on delivering a clear identity for Figtree Town Centre that is more than a retail offering. The key opportunities for this option are as follows;

- Improve the recreational playing fields in Figtree Oval, ensuring a range of playing fields can be accommodated;
- Re-orientate the Westfield frontage towards Figtree Oval, establishing an improved relationship between the community heart and the retail heart;
- Propose a new riparian greenway and cycle path along Allans Creek connecting through to the neighbouring parks;
- Provide a community space that accommodates a range of activities alongside the community hall;
- Propose temporary interventions within the community space including pop-up cafes and food vendors;

For this option to be further developed it is recommended that a Figtree Oval Recreational Master Plan be undertaken, to identify the needs of the community that can be accommodated within the space.

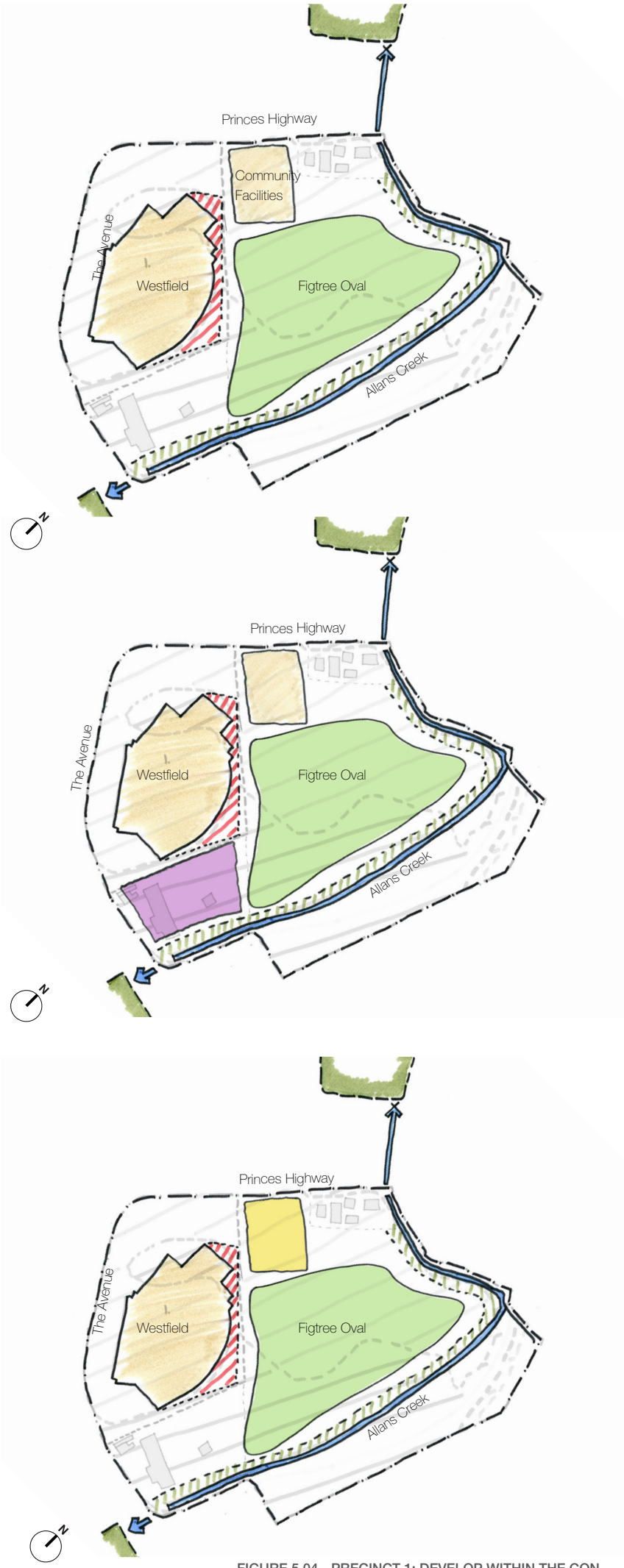


FIGURE 5.04 - PRECINCT 1: DEVELOP WITHIN THE CONSTRAINTS
TOP. Sketch Plan
FIGURE 5.05 - PRECINCT 1: MITIGATE AGAINST THE FLOODING
MIDDLE. Sketch Plan
FIGURE 5.06 - PRECINCT 1: FOCUS ON THE COMMUNITY
BOTTOM. Sketch Plan

Precinct 2 - Bellevue Road

For the purpose of this analysis the residential zoned land to the south west [38-40 Princes Highway] and north west [22-32 Princes Highway] currently occupied by McDonalds has been considered. This does not imply inclusion of this land in the town centre, but reflects the importance of considering the relationship between these sites.

#1 Develop within the Constraints

Precincts 2 is subject to both high and medium flood risk zones, which limits its potential for development in particular residential development, at ground level. With these major constraints an option to develop the precinct is limited to a big bulk goods building. Big bulk retailers can more often accommodate the costs required to ensure flood damage is minimised and so present a valid opportunity to develop the precinct. The key opportunities for this option are as follows;

- Proposed activated pedestrian connection linking Precinct 2 to Westfield;
- Building 1 [B1] could be a potential location for a big bulk retailer [Council can impose strict design guidelines to ensure the developer creates quality frontages along key movement corridors];
- Building 2 [B2] has the potential to be redeveloped into a new mixed use building that accommodates the development controls imposed on a medium risk zone;
- A shared surface connection located between building 2 and the Crinis Grocer could ensure good access to the Precinct for both vehicles and pedestrians;

The option of extending the Figtree Town Centre to include the adjacent residential land is not concerned appropriate, as per the Wollongong Retail Study [2004] it is recommended that ‘the town centre remain contained and consolidated within the confines of the existing planning zones’. With Figtree Town Centre already containing a Westfield Shopping Centre, another big bulk retailer could further inhibit the future growth of Figtree Town Centre. Additionally this option presents a highly compromised urban environment that doesn’t comply with the principles that contribute to make a ‘vital centre’. Introducing a big bulk retailer would require a rezoning from residential to local centre.

#2 Mitigate against the Flooding

The limitations in developing Precinct 2 can be reduced through implementing the appropriate mitigation measures along Allans Creek, minimising the high and medium flood risk zones. If this option was selected the key opportunities for the precinct are as follows;

- The culverts located on the Princes Highway and The Avenue can be redesigned to accommodate a larger through-flow of water;
- Propose an activated pedestrian connection linking Precinct 2 to Westfield;
- Proposed buildings can be orientated and designed to maximise the quality of space encouraging greater developer incentives within the precinct and residential land uses adjacent to the town centre could be supported;
- A shared surface connection between building 2 and the Crinis Grocer can ensure good access to the Precinct for both vehicles and pedestrians;

Although this solution offers the greatest benefits for Precinct 2 the investment costs required to mitigate against the flooding outweighs the demand for new development within Figtree Town Centre. The option extending the Figtree Town Centre to include the adjacent residential lands is not considered appropriate due to the Wollongong Retail Study [2004].

#3 Focus on the Community

This option tests the development opportunities for Precinct 2 within the medium risk flood zone and identifies potential community benefits for the town centre. The key opportunities for this option are as follows;

- Building 1 [B1] can be appropriately redeveloped into a new mixed use building that accommodates the development controls imposed on a medium risk zone;
- Buildings 2 [B2] and 3 [B3] can be developed into residential development. However due to the flood specific development controls imposed on any new buildings the ability to achieve residential uses on this site is heavily compromised by the need for flood free access;
- The Crinis Grocer building is retained ensuring a building edge alongside the Princes Highway;
- A large swathe of undevelopable land is located in the centre of the precinct to accommodate the high flood risk area. This space could accommodate a range of recreation uses bringing a community focus to the precinct.
- A shared surface connection located between building 1 and the Crinis Grocer can ensure good access to the Precinct for both vehicles and pedestrians;

This option although achievable with current planning controls may prove to be unrealistic due to the significant development restrictions imposed on medium risk flood zones. Also with Figtree Oval being located adjacent to Precinct 2 it is unlikely that this space would be identified as a quality community function.



FIGURE 5.07 - PRECINCT 2: DEVELOP WITHIN THE CON-
STRAINTS
TOP. Sketch Plan
FIGURE 5.08 - PRECINCT 2: MITIGATE AGAINST THE
FLOODING
MIDDLE. Sketch Plan
FIGURE 5.09 - PRECINCT 2: FOCUS ON THE COMMUNITY
BOTTOM. Sketch Plan

Precinct 3 - London Drive

#1 Develop within the Constraints

Precinct 3 is subject to the least amount of flood risk due to only part of the site being designated a high and medium flood risk zone. For that reason this option presents the greatest opportunity to develop within Figtree Town Centre. If this option was selected the key opportunities for the precinct are as follows;

- The Hellenic Club can be retained and enhanced to accommodate for a range of community uses
- A series of bridge links can be proposed that re-connect Precinct 3 to Figtree Oval;
- The west of the site will be redeveloped into a series of residential plots. However due to the flood specific development controls imposed on any new buildings the quality of the buildings will be heavily compromised;
- A new pedestrian spine could be proposed, linking Precinct 3 and its surroundings to Figtree Oval;
- A new riparian greenway and cycle path along Allans Creek has the potential to allow good connections to Figtree Oval and the neighbouring parks;

This option is achievable under current planning controls. However, for the site to accommodate residential uses the precinct would have to be rezoned, which at the present moment would be a longer term approach due to the lack of developer demand within the town centre. A mixed use zoning would be able to accommodate there uses.

#2 Mitigate against the Flooding

The limitations in developing Precinct 3 can be reduced through implementing the appropriate mitigation measures along Allans Creek, minimising the high and medium flood risk zones. If this option was selected the key opportunities for the precinct are as follows;

- Hellenic Club would be relocated to accommodate for a higher density of commercial and residential uses;
- A series of bridge links can be proposed that re-connect Precinct 3 to Figtree Oval;
- A new community space could be proposed to the east of the site providing an expansion of greenspace from the Allan's Creek corridor;
- New access roads off Princes Highway can align with adjacent road network, integrating the Precinct 3 seamlessly into its surrounding context;
- An active pedestrian connection through the heart of the site can link the new centre to its natural surroundings;
- A new riparian greenway and cycle path along Allans Creek will allow good connections to Figtree Oval and the neighbouring parks;

Although this solution offers the greatest benefits for Precinct 3 the investment costs required to mitigate against the flooding outweighs the demand for new development within Figtree Town Centre. This option would require variation to zoning and height and floor space controls.

#3 Focus on the Community

This option tests the development opportunities for Precinct 2 within the available developable land and identifies potential community benefits for the town centre. The key opportunities for this option are as follows;

- The Hellenic Club can be retained and enhanced to accommo-

date a range of community uses

- A series of bridge links can be proposed that re-connect Precinct 3 to Figtree Oval;
- The west of the site offers limited development opportunities for residential development due to the high and medium flood risk zones, creating an opportunity for a key community space;
- A new pedestrian spine could be proposed, linking Precinct 3 and its surroundings to Figtree Oval;
- A new riparian greenway and cycle path along Allans Creek has the potential to allow good connections to Figtree Oval and the neighbouring parks;

Although the option looks to ensure a community focus to the precinct, a combination of the lack of developer demand for land, the site being a designated tourism zone and the significant development restrictions imposed on the site result in this option unlikely to occur. Changes to zoning would be required to facilitate residential development across this precinct. At this stage, demand to drive residential development on this site is not identified.

5.3 STRATEGY OVERVIREW

From this comprehensive testing phase of the Figtree Town Centre Study it is understood that Town Centre offers little to no development opportunities at present due to a combination of high flood risk land and a flat economy. Key points to note during this testing phase are as follows;

Precinct 1

- Development within Precinct 1 is not achievable due to the significant flooding implications currently imposed at this site;
- Mitigation against the flooding offers the greatest benefits for Precinct 1. However, the investment required to mitigate against the flooding outweighs the demand for new development within Figtree Town Centre.
- A recreational master plan should be undertaken, to identify the needs of the community that can be accommodated within Figtree Oval;

Precinct 2

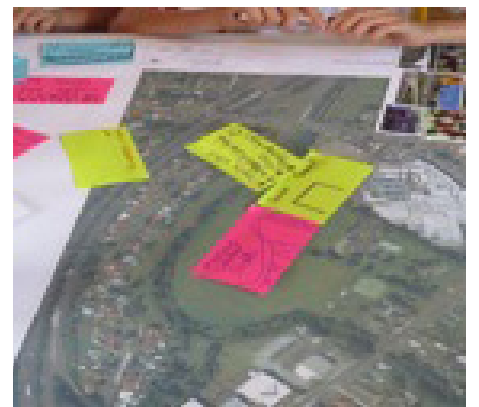
- With Figtree Town Centre already containing a Westfield Shopping Centre, it is recommended that 'the town centre remain contained and consolidated within the confines of the existing planning zones';
- Mitigation against the flooding offers the greatest benefits for Precinct 2 all be it at a high cost. Extending the town centre boundary is not considered appropriate due to the Wollongong Retail Study [2004].
- It is unlikely community buildings facilities could be contained on the Precinct 2 due to the sites close locality to Figtree Oval and the significant development restrictions imposed on medium risk flood zones.

Precinct 3

- Developing within the constraints is achievable under current planning controls. However, at present there is a lack of developer demand within the town centre.
- Mitigation against the flooding offers the greatest benefits for Precinct 2 all be it at a high cost. This option would require variation to zoning and height and floor space controls.
- Although the Community focus option looks to balance residential development with community space, a combination of the lack of developer demand for land, the site being a designated tourism zone and the significant development restrictions imposed on the site result in this option unlikely to occur.



FIGURE 5.10 - PRECINCT 3: DEVELOP WITHIN THE CON-
STRAINTS
TOP. Sketch Plan
FIGURE 5.11 - PRECINCT 3: MITIGATE AGAINST THE
FLOODING
MIDDLE. Sketch Plan
FIGURE 5.12 - PRECINCT 3: FOCUS ON THE COMMUNITY
BOTTOM. Sketch Plan



6.0 Community Consultation

6.0 Community Consultation

6.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

To inform the refinement of the draft Figtree Town Centre Study, a second stage of consultation was undertaken to discuss the range of ideas and concepts presented by the Figtree Town Centre draft Study: Stage 2 – Refining the Town Centre Study.

The draft Town Centre Study was exhibited from 25 March to 3 May 2013. The community were asked to provide feedback on the Strategies, principles and recommendations put forward by the draft Study.

Council carried out a range of conversations with the community through kiosks near Crinis Fruit Market and adjoining specialty retailers, face to face discussions with business owners and community groups, schools and government agencies.

9 written submissions (including 3 completed surveys) and hundreds of conversations have shaped the refinement of the Figtree Town Centre Study.

The key message from consultation was an overarching support for the key strategies and recommendations identified in the draft Study. Overall, the response provided by the community was positive, with general support given to strategies and recommendations put forward by the draft Study.

Feedback from Youth

Council staff visited Figtree Public School to seek the ideas and thoughts of children on the draft Study, in particular, possible uses for a community space near Figtree Oval. Children were asked to draw what their community space may look like. The

most popular theme was ‘Play’, followed by ‘Spaces for the community’ and ‘Formal Sporting areas’ and the third most noted theme of ideas was ‘Events’.

The top overall 10 ideas included: markets/fete/fun fair (20 responses), a bike path/track/motor bike track (10), laser tag/skirmish/paintball which could be temporary (10), an activity centre and pool (10), a better park with upgraded children’s play area (8), picnic areas, shade huts/shelter (7), trees/ plantings (6), outdoor movies/cinemas (6), BBQs (5) and a stage for music/temporary concerts (5).

Feedback from Community Conversations

The community were invited to share their thoughts on the draft Study for Figtree Town Centre. Council conducted a number of activities in order to engage with the community including holding a community kiosk in the town centre on Saturday 6 April, meeting with Neighbourhood Forum 5 sub-committee, meeting land owners and retailers.

Conversations identified a range of ideas, themes and commentary on the draft Study. Overall, the feedback has been divided into four most popular themes:

- Community Space
- Allans Creek and Figtree Oval
- Crinis Fruit Market and specialty retail stores – Precinct 2
- Traffic and parking

i. Community Space

The conversations demonstrated that the community wanted to see a space for the community to meet and socialise

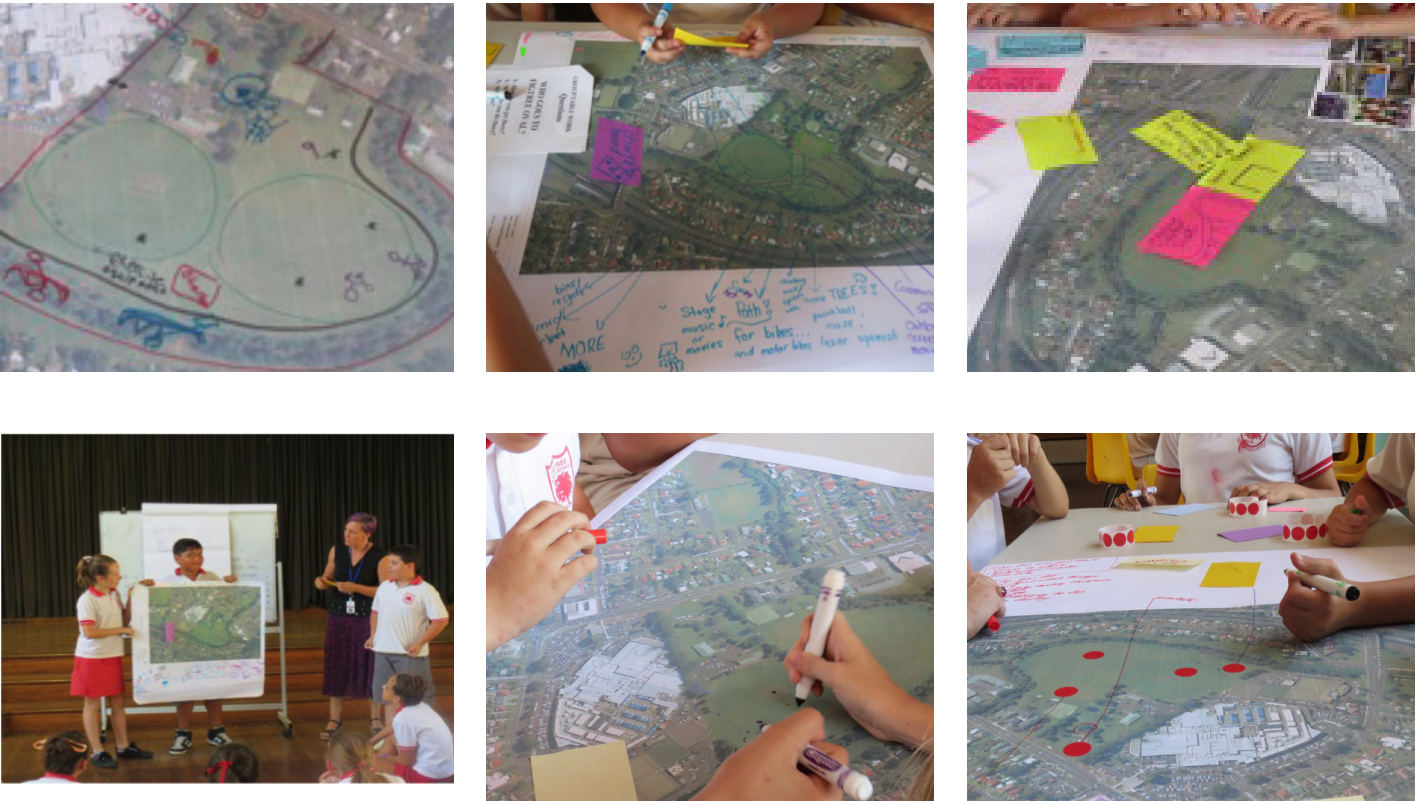


FIGURE 6.01 - COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
TOP. Community Workshop photographs

outside of Westfield.

ii. Allans Creek and Figtree Oval

In conversations, the community were supportive of connecting open spaces along a green riparian corridor with walk/cycle path in Figtree. The community identified the need to maintain the creek.

iii. Crinis Fruit Market and specialty retail stores – Precinct 2

A significant number of comments related to the importance of this precinct, wanting to beautify the precinct and create a space for the community. Traffic congestion and pedestrian access to Westfield were raised as issues.

iv. Traffic and Parking

A significant number of comments related to traffic congestion on The Avenue, Princes Highway and Bellevue Road. The community identified a need for better pedestrian connections across the Princes Highway and a bike lane through the town centre

Conclusion

The consultation process identified a range of ideas, actions and aspirations of the Figtree community to inform the development of a Figtree Oval Recreational Master Plan.

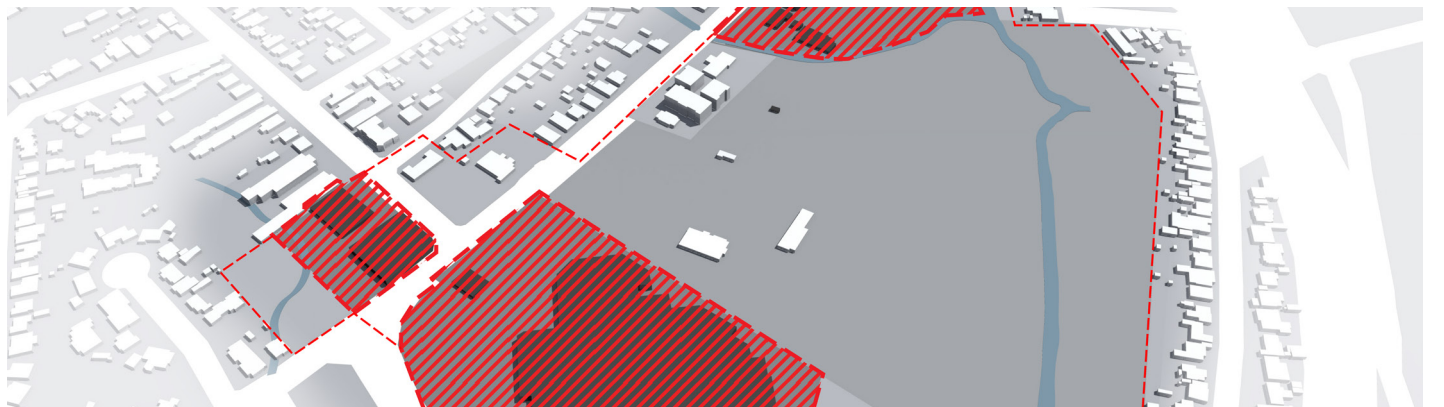
This feedback informed the strategies and recommendations put forward by the draft Study and have assisted staff to refine the Town Centre Study.

Following adoption of the Figtree Town Centre Study the information provided by the community will remain relevant. A large number of ideas put forward by the community do not rely on the Council or a Study process to be actioned, and therefore, could be happening NOW. The information presented in this document will be shared across the Divisions of Council, key stakeholders and industry within the Figtree area to assist in sharing the wonderful ideas and aspirations of the community and to promote a consistent approach to delivering outcomes for the community.



FIGURE 6.02- COMMUNITY CONSULTATION
TOP. Community Workshop photographs

MCGREGOR
COXALL



7.0 Zoning and Town Centre Boundary Review

7.0 Zoning and Town Centre Boundary Review

7.1 REVIEW SUMMARY

To inform the process, a review of zoning and town centre boundaries was undertaken, please refer to Appendix A. In considering the zoning and town centre boundary implications for Figtree Town Centre, the following is recommended.

Having consideration to the history of zonings, the Wollongong Retail Centre Study and site constraints, it is recommended that the land zoned to accommodate the retail/ commercial functions of the Figtree Town Centre remain unchanged. That is, the areas zoned B1 Neighbourhood Centre and B2 Local Centre identified within the three Figtree Town Centre Precincts are maintained with no extension to these recommended.

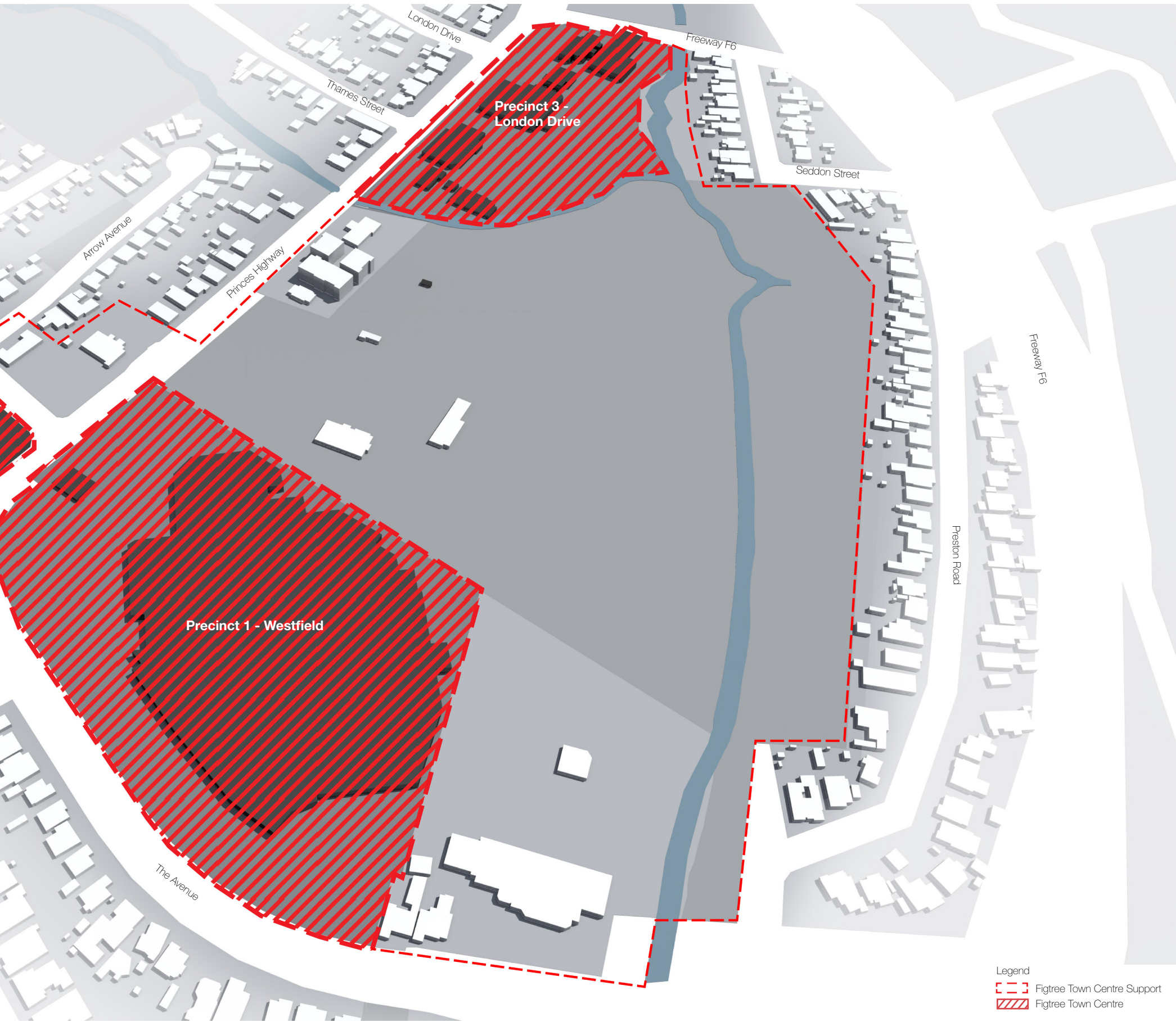
While it is recognised that there are a number of sites with historic zoning within and adjacent to the Figtree Town Centre which now conflicts with current land uses, it is not recommended that zones be formalised in accordance with established / constructed land use. This is primarily due to the flooding constraints evidenced across the majority of these sites, and the lack of developer demand to transform / guide a future use. Over time, and should appropriate developer demand be presented to Council, the rezoning of sites, particularly those currently zoned Special Uses (Tourism) could be considered.

The current boundary of Figtree Town Centre is awkward. Three separate Precincts which do not interrelate. It is proposed to redefine the boundary of the Figtree Town Centre to incorporate 'Figtree Town Centre Support'. The 'Support' area is considered fundamental to strengthening the connections between each of the existing three Precincts, and is expected to become vital to the health and coherence of the Town Centre. The redefined Town Centre provides great potential for a flourishing, robust and sustainable hub.

By introducing this refined boundary, it acknowledges the lands linking the three Town Centre Precincts and ensure they will be considered in context of future design controls for this area. Land included in 'Figtree Town Centre Support' will not be rezoned.



FIGURE 7.01 - TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY
BOTTOM. Town Centre Zones and Town Centre Support
Zones





8.0 Key Conclusions and Recommendations

8.0 Key Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 CONCLUSION

Figtree Town Centre like so many town centres both globally and nationally are facing increased challenges through the increased growth of the shopping mall and the deterioration of the traditional high street. This master plan process aims to set in motion a strategy that responds to these challenges and incrementally transforms Figtree Town Centre into a vibrant and vital town centre for the community to enjoy and use.

Originally conceived to be a Town Centre Master Plan project the analysis based on the principles that make a ‘Vital Town Centre’ has exposed the true challenges facing Figtree Town Centre. The vast amounts of high to medium risk flooding within the town centre study area, constrain the potential to develop within Figtree Town Centre, limiting the viability of a town centre master plan.

Although the existing planning controls provide capacity for growth, the town centre at present offers little demand for this growth. What this study process has highlighted is that the future success of Figtree Town Centre does not lie in preempting its evolution through a master plan, but rather ensuring a focus on the community and improving the recreational opportunities within the centre.

Figtree Town Centre offers a unique environment that provides the community with a series of natural assets that separate it from the Illawarra region’s neighbouring centres. These assets are Figtree Oval and Allans Creek, which if revitalised offer the potential to enhance Figtree Town Centre’s identity and establish a community heart.

Figtree Oval has the potential to improve the recreational offering within the town centre establishing a destination for organised sports groups, improving passive surveillance within the open space. Where as Allans Creek provides an opportunity to link the open spaces within the locality together through a riparian greenway, re-associating the Figtree community with a natural asset that can be enjoyed and used.

It is these two components that hold the key to unlocking Figtree Town Centre, initiating a change that allows the community to embrace and enjoy the natural environment that makes Figtree distinctly unique.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations stated below are based on the outcomes of the study process and look to assist Wollongong City Council in prioritising the future interventions that can lead to the transformation of Figtree Town Centre. The recommendations are as follows;

- Updated Wollongong DCP to illustrate inclusion of Figtree Oval and Park as part of the Town Centre to reflect the endorsed Figtree Town Centre Study;

Develop a recreational Master Plan for Figtree Oval and Park to;

- Identify opportunities for community meeting spaces; [1]
- Ensure the enhancement of sporting, social, environmental and recreational needs;
- Investigate opportunities to improve the creek for recreational uses; [2]
- Explore the extension of the cycle and walking track along Allans Creek, to establish a green corridor that links the open spaces with Figtree together to increase connectivity. [2]
- Identify opportunities to improve the pedestrian connections between Figtree Oval and Westfield; [3]
- Look to re-orientate the Westfield Shopping centre improving its address to Figtree Oval; [4]
- Investigate the opportunities for a community space and landscape are located adjacent to the existing community hall; [5]
- Explore open space linkages and improve pedestrain crossings along the Allans Creek; [6]
- Council to liaise with RMS to consider ways to create increased pedestrian amenity and safety of the Princes Highway within Figtree Town Centre; [7]
- Investigate opportunities to mitigate against the high risk flooding; [8]
- Investigate parking capacity to support recreation activities; [9]

8.3 IMPLEMENTATION

The Figtree Town Centre Implementation Strategy has been developed in parallel with the Figtree Town Centre Study. At this stage the recommendations of this study forms the actions of the implementation strategy. Following the completion of Figtree Recreation Master Plan, the implementation strategy will be updated with more detailed actions aligned with delivering key planning, infrastructure and community capacity building outcomes.



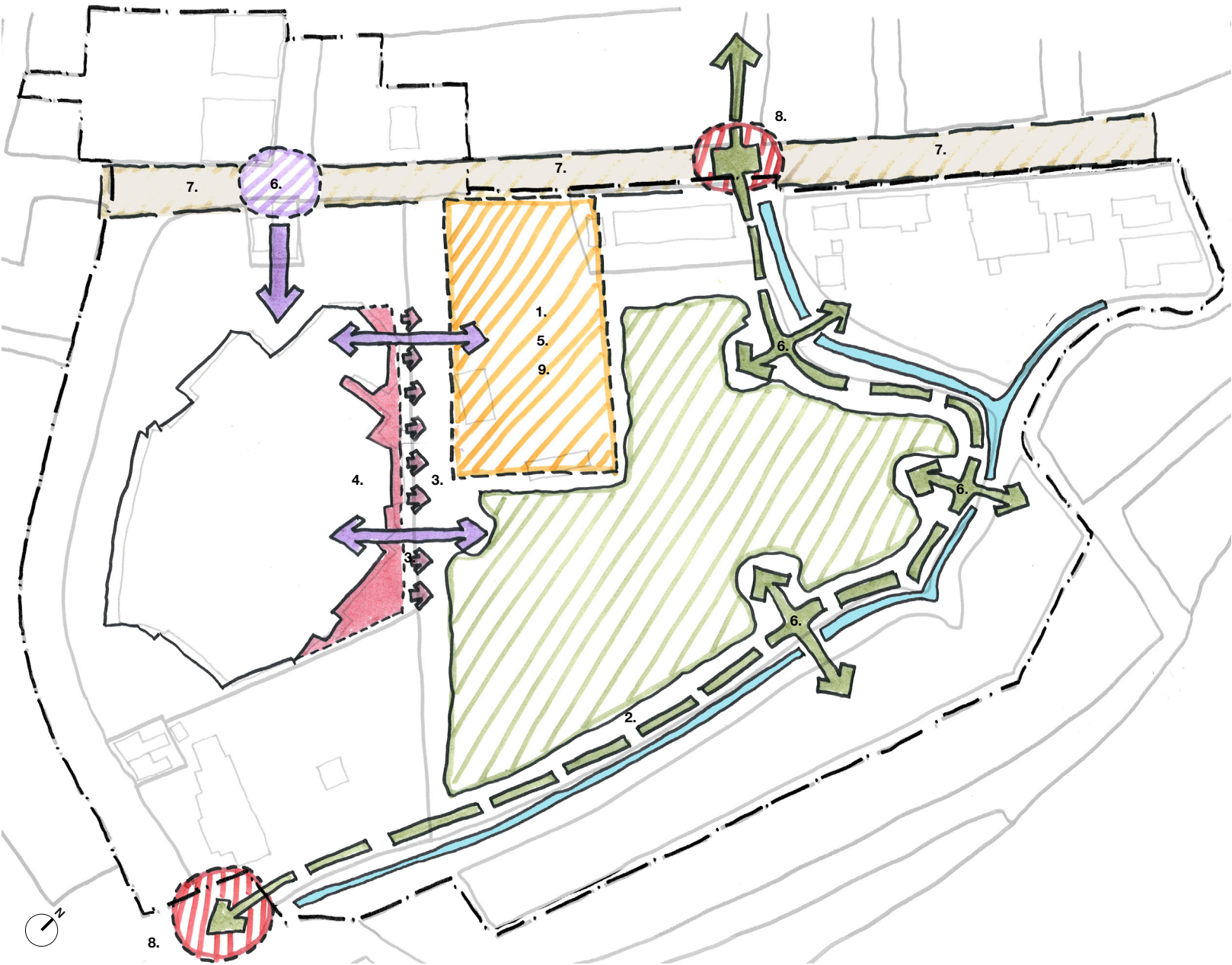
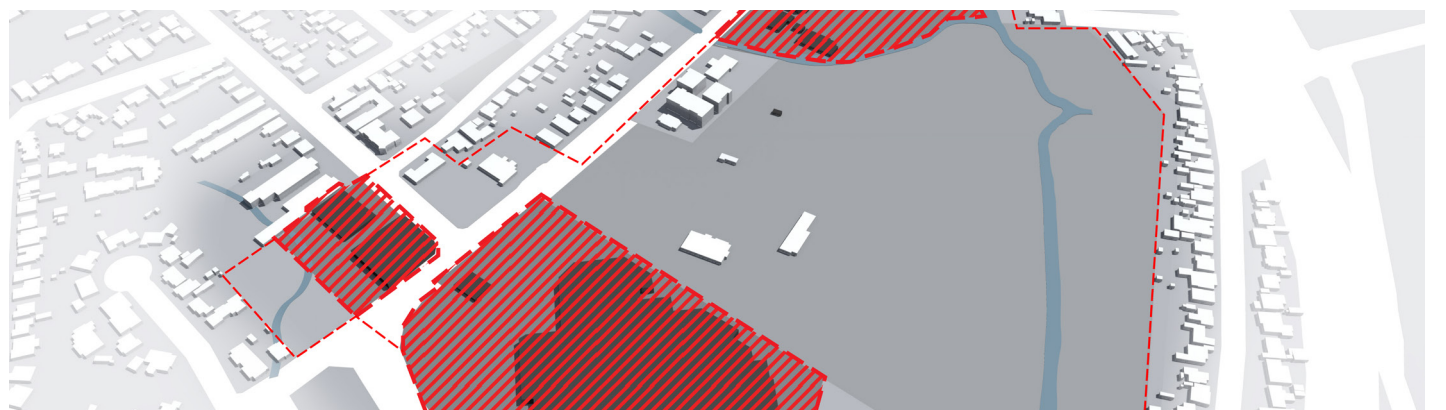


FIGURE 8.01 - RECOMMENDATIONS DIAGRAM

TOP: Sketch Plan



Appendix A - Zoning and town Centre Boundary Review

During the course of the study, the extent of the town centre boundary was reviewed as were the areas defined and zoned as town centre. This was in response to community feedback, the urban design analysis and a stakeholder request to extend the Neighbourhood Centre zoning in Precinct 2.

This study has been prepared to consider the extent of land zoned for a Neighbourhood Centre or Local Centre within Figtree Town Centre, zoning anomalies and the extent of area included in the town centre boundary.

1 Review of the extent of land zoned Neighbourhood Centre/ Local Centre

The key challenge for the future planning and development of Figtree is to ensure that its dependence on road access is managed, and that the integrity and role of Wollongong City Centre as the Regional Centre is not jeopardised.

1.1 Wollongong Retail Centre Study 2004

The Wollongong Retail Centre Study was carried out in 2004, at that time, Precinct 3 did not exist as a business zone. The B1 zone in Precinct 3 was created through the adoption of Wollongong LEP 2009 in 2010. The land identified now as Precinct 3 was zoned part residential and part tourism.

Business / shops existed in this location and this is acknowledged in the Wollongong Retail Centre Study through reference to Hungry Jacks. This is relevant when considering the recommendations of the Retail Centre Study which look at containing and consolidating retail activity within the town centre.

Wollongong Retail Study recommendations:

- _it is appropriate to contain and consolidate retail activity within the existing land zoned to support town centre;
- _growth of peripheral sales (bulky goods retailing) be contained within the existing town centre zones (then referenced as the 3(d) Commercial zone); and
- _special emphasis be directed toward consolidation and development of a more cohesive built form (refer page 76).

1.2 Retail Recommendation

Having consideration to the history of zonings, the Wollongong Retail Centre Study, and site constraints, the extension of the current land zoned B1 Neighbourhood Centre, or B2 Local Centre is not considered appropriate.



Far left:
Extract LEP 38 – Deferred
zoning

Middle and right:
Extract: Wollongong LEP
LEP 1990

Zone No 2 (b) (Medium
Density Residential Zone)
Zone No 6 (a) (Public
Recreation Zone)
Zone No 6 (c) (Tourism
Zone)

Figure 1.1_Historic Zoning Maps

2 Town Centre Zone Anomalies – Precinct 3 and adjacent Special Uses zones

As noted in Section 3.3 of the Figtree Town Centre Study (Street Vibrancy), there are a number of land use zone anomalies. These relate in particular to Precinct 3.

2.1 History of zones in Precinct 3

- _ Unzoned/ deferred under Wollongong LEP 38
- _ Changed to special uses tourism in Wollongong LEP 1990 (historically all clubs were zoned Tourism)
- _ Northern most site rezoned to 2B under Wollongong LEP 1990
- _ Additional uses permitted under Schedule 2 (Amendment 131) under Wollongong LEP 1990 to permit Liquor shop
- _ Additional uses permitted under Schedule 2 (Amendment 174) under 1990 LEP to permit other shops
- _ Wollongong Retail Centre Study was carried out while Precinct 3 was zoned residential and special uses tourism.
- _ Precinct 3 transferred to B1 Local Centre and Special Uses on translation to Wollongong LEP 2009 to reflect the established use on the site
- _ Likely Wollongong Retail Centre Study was carried out while Precinct 3 was zoned residential and special uses tourism
- _ Precinct 3 became part of the 'Town Centre' through creation of Wollongong DCP 2009

2.2 Current zonings

- _ Objectives of B1 Neighbourhood Centre are: to provide retail, business and community uses to use the local people; and allow for residential accommodation while maintaining active retail and business.
- _ Objectives of SP3 Tourism are: provide a variety of tourist-orientated development and related uses.
- _ The current land uses are Hellenic Club (tourism/community use), retail/fast food and a pet food barn.
- _ The land is close to the park/oval RE1 and adjoining tourism land SP3, Westfield B2, surrounding low density residential R2.

The Figtree Town Centre Study by McGregor Coxall tested Precinct 3 against 'Develop against the Constraints', 'Mitigate against the Flooding' and 'Focus on the community'.

The study identifies 'Develop against the Constraints' as the most achievable out of the three options. This option included retaining the Hellenic Club and enhancing a range of community uses and reintroducing residential at the site, and a riparian greenway and cycle path along Allans Creek connecting green spaces and parks. Bridges link Precinct 3 to Figtree Park/Oval and potential residential development to the west of the plot (quality of buildings may be compromised by strict flood constraints).

The study does note that for this option to be carried through, the site would need to be rezoned to permit residential land uses which they suggest would be a longer term approach due to the lack of developer demand within the town centre.

The current zone of B1 does allow residential development in the form of shop top housing and seniors housing, however, that does not respond to the recommendations presented by McGregor Coxall.

Figtree Town Centre Study

Zoning and Town Centre Boundary Review (July 2013)

Land Use Zones which allow residential development with some community use and shop top housing include:

- _B4 mixed use – tourist and visitor accommodation, flats, shop top housing, seniors accommodation
- _B2 Local centre – hotel/motel, multi-dwelling, flats, seniors, shop top housing
- _R3 Medium Density Residential – community facilities, shop top housing, neighbourhood shops, flats, semi-detached, seniors accommodation
- _B1 Neighbourhood Centre – shop top housing, seniors accommodation, community facilities
- _R1 General Residential – community facilities, neighbourhood shops, seniors, shop top housing

| Lot & DP | Address | Zoning | Current Use | Comments/ Recommendation |
|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------|---|---|
| Lot 1, 2 & 3 DP 839750 | 55-59 Princes Hwy | SP3 Tourism | Hellenic Club & kitchen joinery | Low/ med/ high flood risk Opportunity to consider rezoning to B4 – Mixed Use No known catalyst for rezoning at this stage. Heritage item |
| Lot 4, 5 & 6 DP 788652 | 47 Princes Hwy | SP3 Tourism | Satuorac Corp - Liquor | Low/ med/ high flood risk Opportunity to consider rezoning to B4 – Mixed Use No known catalyst for rezoning at this stage. |
| Lot 101 DP 1014730 | 45 Princes Hwy | B1 | Kebab and Subway Take away shops | Low flood risk Opportunity to consider rezoning to B4 – Mixed Use No known catalyst for rezoning at this stage. |
| Lot 102 DP 1014730 | 41 Princes Hwy | B1 | Hungry Jacks. Owner Morison, McDonald and others | Uncategorised flood risk Opportunity to consider rezoning to B4 – Mixed Use |
| Lot 103 DP1014730 | 43 Princes Hwy | B1 | Roadway & Pet Food Barn. Owner – Walrot Pty Ltd | Low/ med/ high flood risk Opportunity to consider rezoning to B4 – Mixed Use |
| Lot 45 DP 847121 | 1-3 Princes Hwy | SP3 Tourism | Eye care specialist Owner - Lee | Medium / high flood risk High flood risk across majority of site with flood affected access/ egress. Formalising the land use would conflict with Council's flood risk management principles. No action – retain existing zoning. Review zoning following medium to long term flood mitigation works for Allans Creek. |
| Lot 1 SP77237 | 5-7 Princes Hwy | SP3 Tourism | Flats – various owners | Medium / high flood risk High flood risk across majority of site with flood affected access/ egress. Formalising the land use would conflict with Council's flood risk management principles. No action – retain existing zoning. Review zoning following medium to long term flood mitigation works for Allans Creek. |
| Lot 5 DP 1136414 | 9 Princes Hwy | SP3 Tourism | WCC Baby Health Clinic | Medium / high flood risk High flood risk across majority of site with flood affected access/ egress. Formalising the land use would conflict with Council's flood risk management principles. No action – retain existing zoning. Review zoning following medium to long term flood mitigation works for Allans Creek. |

In considering the zoning anomalies, there are two clear objectives:

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- i. To consider land uses which do not conflict with flooding restrictions on site
- ii. To consider land uses which do not conflict with the Wollongong Retail Centre Study

2.3 Zoning Recommendations

At this stage, given the flooding constraints across Precinct 3 and land south of Allans Creek zoned special uses, it is not recommended that zones be formalised in accordance with established / constructed land uses.

When developer demand presents opportunities for renewal of sites, further consideration can be given to the opportunities and constraints of these sites.

3 Defining the boundary of Figtree Town Centre

Figtree Town Centre is currently defined as three (3) separate precincts. This reflects land zoned as Local Centre of Neighbourhood Centre, and in the case of Precinct 3, land which supports uses which could be carried out in a Neighbourhood Centre. Dividing these lands into three precincts raises a level of uncertainty in understanding the way these areas connect and interrelate.

3.1 Boundary Review

For the purposes of defining Figtree Town Centre, it is important to acknowledge the principles that make up a vital town centre (as per Section 2.2 of the Study) and in doing this, the different elements/ spaces contributing to the way the town centre functions. A town centre is more than just retail and commercial land uses, but the interrelationship between a range of social, economic, environmental and aesthetic elements which create an interesting place to spend time.

In considering the boundary of Figtree Town Centre, three strategies have been considered:

- 1_Retaining the Precincts – limiting the town centre to land zoned Local Centre or Neighbourhood Centre. This would see the reduction in land identified within Precinct 3.
- 2_Consolidating the Centre – to reduce the area defined as the town centre to be restricted to Precincts 1 and 2 (Westfield and adjacent Bellevue Street precinct)
- 3_Include Supporting Areas – identify and incorporate supporting lands which form a link between the three precincts to acknowledge the importance and role of these lands (which are not zoned Local Centre or Neighbourhood Centre) in the way Figtree Town Centre functions.

For each strategy above, a range of options were considered. These are illustrated over page.

3.2 Recommended Boundary Amendment

It is proposed to redefine the boundary of the Figtree Town Centre to incorporate 'Figtree Town Centre Support'. The 'Support' area is considered fundamental to strengthening the connections between each of the existing three precincts, and is expected to become vital to the health and coherence of the town centre. The distances within the redefined Town Centre still provides great potential for a flourishing, robust and sustainable hub.

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By introducing this refined boundary, it acknowledges the lands linking the three Town Centre Precincts and ensure they will be considered in context of future design controls for this area. The intention is not to rezone lands in the 'Support' area.

1_Retaining the Precincts



Existing Precincts maintained

2_Consolidating the Town Centre



Town Centre is limited to Local Centre zoned land (Westfield Site)

3_Include Supporting Areas



Town Centre includes Precincts and extends a Town Centre Support area to include the Oval.



Precinct 3 is reduced to include Neighbourhood Centre zoned land only



Town Centre limited to Precinct 1 and 2 including the links between



Town Centre includes Precincts . Town Centre Support area includes Oval and McDonalds site.



Town Centre includes Precinct 1 and 2 and extends to include a support area (McDonalds site) due to importance of corner treatment and entry to the town centre.



Town Centre includes Precincts . Town Centre Support area includes Oval, McDonalds site and Bowling Club.

Figure 3.1_Town Centre Boundary Options

4 Conclusion

In considering the zoning and town centre boundary implications for Figtree Town Centre, the following is recommended.

Having consideration to the history of zonings, the Wollongong Retail Centre Study and site constraints, it is recommended that the land zoned to accommodate the retail/ commercial functions of the Figtree Town Centre remain unchanged. That is, the areas zoned B1 Neighbourhood Centre and B2 Local Centre identified within the three Figtree Town Centre Precincts are maintained with no extension to these recommended.

While it is recognised that there are a number of sites with historic zoning within and adjacent to the Figtree Town Centre which now conflicts with current land uses, it is not recommended that zones be formalised in accordance with established / constructed land use. This is primarily due to the flooding constraints evidenced across the majority of these sites, and the lack of developer demand to transform / guide a future use. Over time, and should appropriate developer demand be presented to Council, the rezoning of sites, particularly those currently zoned Special Uses (Tourism) could be considered.

The current boundary of Figtree Town Centre is awkward. Three separate Precincts which do not interrelate. It is proposed to redefine the boundary of the Figtree Town Centre to incorporate 'Figtree Town Centre Support'. The 'Support' area is considered fundamental to strengthening the connections between each of the existing three Precincts, and is expected to become vital to the health and coherence of the Town Centre. The redefined Town Centre provides great potential for a flourishing, robust and sustainable hub.

By introducing this refined boundary, it acknowledges the lands linking the three Town Centre Precincts and ensure they will be considered in context of future design controls for this area. Land included in 'Figtree Town Centre Support' will not be rezoned.

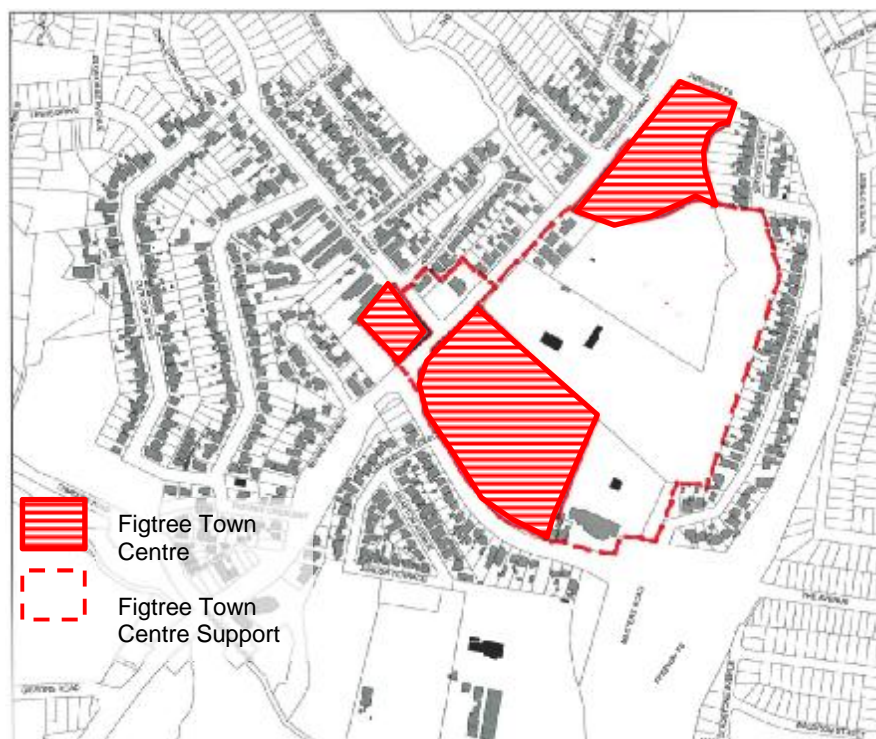


Figure 4.1_Recommended Figtree Town Centre Boundary