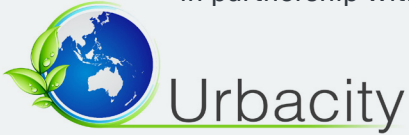




in partnership with



DOUGLAS PARK CENTRE DETAILED REPORT

DECEMBER 2020



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1 Douglas Park

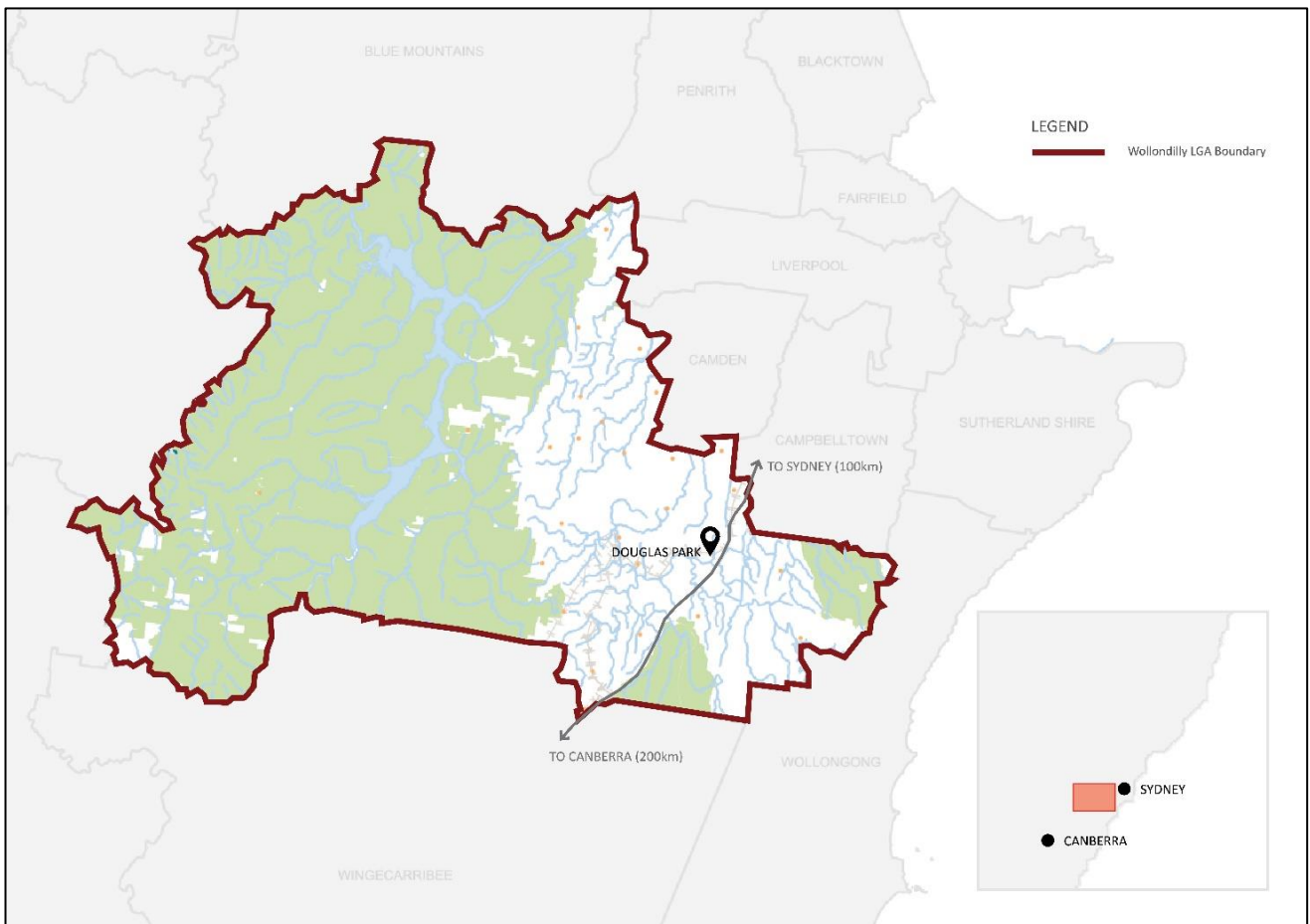


Figure 1-1 Douglas Park Locality Map.

1.1 Douglas Park Town Centre, Activity Core and Edges

The key characteristics of Douglas Park are listed in the table below:

Population	2016 Census	1,362	Increase of 830
	2041 Projection	2,192	
Centre Typology	LSPS: Smaller Centre		Centres Study: Hamlet
Centre Functions	Retail – Limited local convenience and limited services Education – Primary school (outside activity core) Recreation – Sportsfields, natural areas, parks and playgrounds Civic and community – Community hall (outside activity core) Employment – local scale, very small scale Capacity – 6,000m ² + of commercial floor space potential under current LEP		
Centre Special Features	High quality active public open space and community facilities hub Train station Access to the Nepean River regional recreation space		
Future focus	Investigate options to restructure the activity core and enhance the railway station in ways that improve pedestrian experience and the public realm and encourage finer grained scale of mixed use infill development		

Douglas Park is a hamlet-scaled centre catering for minor and limited convenience needs of the spatially contained surrounding residential settlement. It includes a primary school and rail station. There is potential for infill residential development on large existing residential allotments and land zoned R3 Medium Density Residential adjacent to the rail line. There are vacant premises on commercial zoned land in the centre, and potential for infill and intensification of commercial land.

The scale and pace of change in Douglas Park will be incremental and slow over the next 10+ years. The current layout of commercial zoned lots and the road network in the Douglas Park centre does not readily cater to incremental and fine-grained growth or a diversity of commercial and employment opportunities. Therefore, it is an appropriate time for a detailed urban design analysis of the existing and potential activity core to re-structure lot sizes, set out new public movement spaces and potential road layout changes and investigate new building siting, design and public realm requirements to accommodate fine grained, incremental growth to improve the quality of the Douglas Park Centre and enhance the potential of the railway station to be an integral feature of the activity core.

The railway station, the community hall and sports facilities and access to the Nepean River with its high biodiversity and scenic values will be the points of difference which can potentially sustain activity in Douglas Park as the region grows.

1.2 Greater Macarthur Growth Area

Douglas Park is on the periphery of the Greater Macarthur Growth Area (GMGA). The GMGA has been strategically identified by the State Government for future housing, employment and major infrastructure. Detail of the Interim Structure Plan developed after public exhibition is included in **Figure 1-2**.

Douglas Park has been indicated in the Interim Structure Plan as being close to a new major transport route connecting a series of greenfield centres and residential areas. Douglas Park will also be separated from the greenfield growth areas to the east and south by land reserved for the protection of Cumberland Plain Woodland and a Koala Corridor aligned with the Nepean River.

Opportunities:

- > Whilst significant growth is not planned for Douglas Park, new infrastructure investment and population growth within the adjacent GMGA will provide opportunities to leverage off this growth through improvement in the quality of infrastructure and visitation for Douglas Park. Such opportunities will provide improvements for the betterment of the Douglas Park community and could include connections to upgraded utilities such as reticulated sewer and NBN services and improvements to access and utility of regional quality recreation space in the Nepean River corridor.
- > Council should identify a 'Vision' for Douglas Park, which identifies the towns points of differences and sense of place and which can be relied upon should pressure for development in Douglas Park increase.

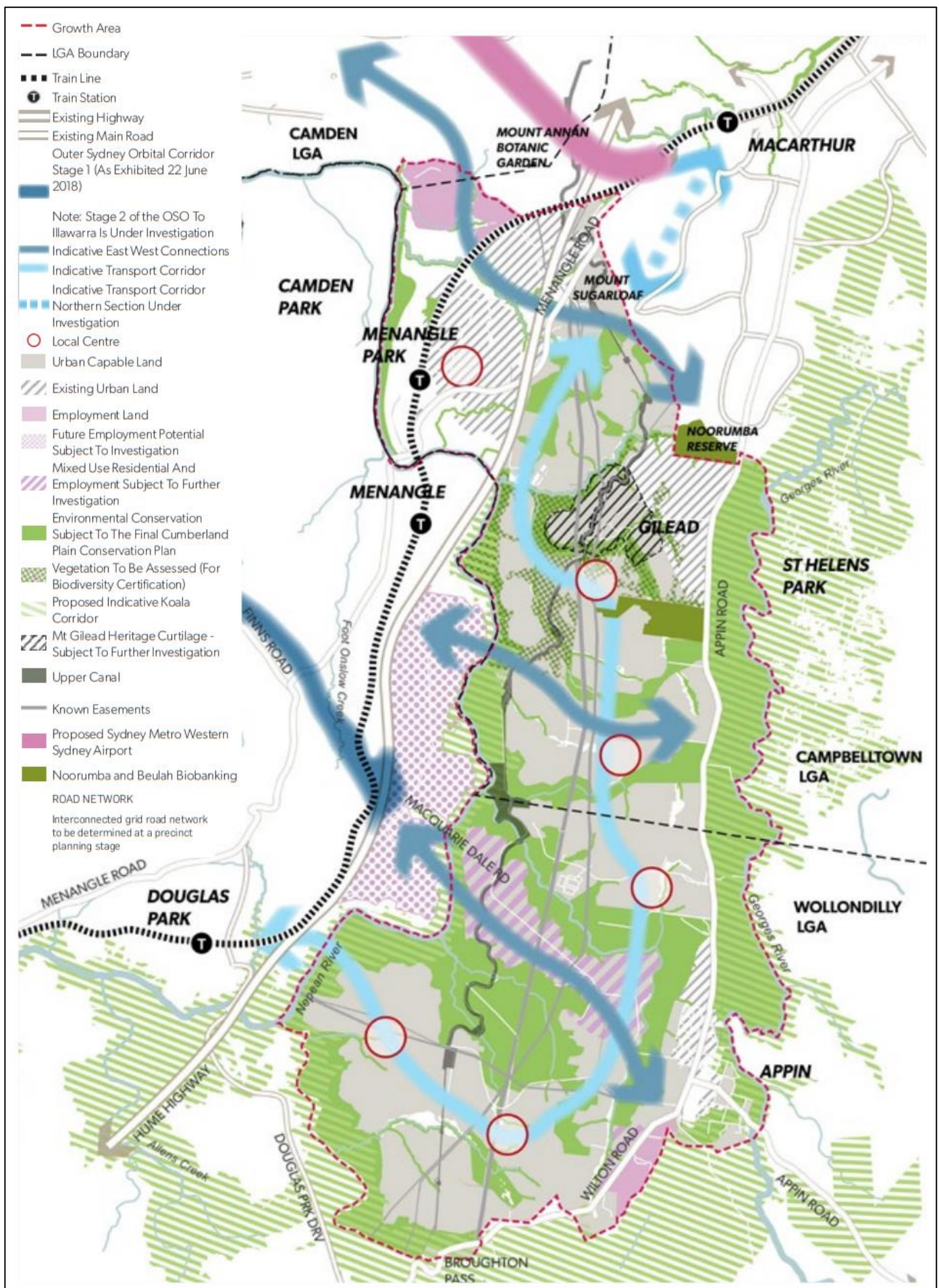


Figure 1-2 Land release areas detail from Greater Macarthur Structure Plan (Source: Greater Macarthur 2040 Interim Plan, 2018)

1.3 Treatment in the LSPS

The LSPS identifies the following community values and needs for Douglas Park:

- *improvements to transport infrastructure that enhance connections*
- *improvements that allow increased access to natural surroundings that help people to maintain and celebrate their relationship with the environment*
- *improvements to public space that boost people's pride in Douglas Park*
- *more educational and childcare facilities and initiatives that support families*
- *sport is integral to the community and helps people to connect with others.*

Greater Macarthur 2040: An interim plan for the Greater Macarthur Growth Area (November 2018) identifies an indicative transport corridor that extends towards Douglas Park. The adopted master plan for Douglas Park Sportsground includes a walking track connection to the Nepean River and the sports and community hub overall.



Figure 1-3 LSPS representation of Douglas Park boundary, with activity core in red.

2 Centre Appraisal and Opportunities

2.1 History

Douglas Park started with original agricultural land grants to people of highly ranking social status including Major Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, who built a mansion in the 1842 known then as 'Park Hall'. The mansion was acquired for religious use in 1904. It is used by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart for silent retreats and is known as 'St Mary's Towers'. The mansion remains as a heritage item of State significance.

The railway line was operational by 1863 and supported agricultural producers linking to the Sydney markets. The first school house was built in 1919. A community hall was constructed in 1937.



Figure 2-1 Historic photos of Railway Heritage Cottage (left) and St Marys Towers (right) (Source: <https://www.joseflebovicgallery.com/pages/books/CL181-59/nepean-towers-douglas-park-nsw>)

2.1.2 Heritage items and Heritage Conservation Areas

There is one local heritage item in the Douglas Park Centre, which is the Railway Cottage located at 3 Camden Road, as shown in **Figure 2-1**.

2.2 Primary Production Influences

South 32 operates a coal mine shaft on the heritage-listed Mountbatten rural property north east of Douglas Park. Underground coal mining occurs in the locality. South 32 contributes to a Community Enhancement program which has included finding support for works in Douglas Park such as upgrading of the sports facilities and community hub and a playground at the church.

2.3 Natural, Cultural, Community and Scenic Assets

Douglas Park Railway Station

The railway station is at the centre of the urban settlement. It is easily accessible and has substantial space surrounding the station for streetscape enhancement and commuter parking.

Douglas Park Sports Ground

Council has adopted and is implementing a master plan for the sportsground and community hall, which is located to the south of the centre on Camden Road.

Nepean River and Douglas Park Bridge

The sandy beach and weir near the base of Douglas Park bridge on the Nepean River is visually striking due to the contrast between the natural setting of the river and the imposing bridge structure overhead. The sandy beach is a popular location for swimming and kayaking/canoeing.

Sandstone Overhangs to Douglas Park Drive

The sandstone overhangs along Douglas Park Drive between the Nepean River crossing and Douglas Park is also spectacular.

St Mary's Towers

A heritage item of State significance, St Mary's towers is open to the public for small tours and is accessible by a short drive from Douglas Park along Douglas Park Drive.

2.4 Scenic Landscape Elements and View Corridors in the Centre

Camden Road south of the rail line is a very broad main street and offers a view line connection between the sportsground and rail station. The section of Camden Road north of the station is also broad and straight, offering a clear view of the commercial zoned land of the Douglas Park Centre.

2.5 Infrastructure and Utilities

There are no infrastructure or utility constraints to infill development opportunities in the Centre. Sydney Water operates a pressure sewer system based on the capacity of development under WLEP 2011 which includes infill development.

The GMGA Interim Plan identifies the opportunity for new transport routes through Appin to Douglas Park. New routes include the outer Sydney Orbital which is intended to connect Box Hill with the Hume Motorway in Stage 1. Stage 2 connects further east to Bulli-Appin Road. However, the timeframe for detailed planning and route selection may be outside the scope for this Centres Study.

2.6 Special and Regular Community Events and Activities

The sportsgrounds and community hall are suitable to accommodate a variety of formal and informal gatherings and activities.

2.7 Community

2.7.1 Who uses the Centre and why?

The commercial centre serves limited daily incidental needs of the local residents. It does not serve regular shopping needs or personal services and does not cater for entertainment. Residents frequently travel to Camden, Narellan and Campbelltown for entertainment, shopping and other services not available locally.

The sportsgrounds and community hall are in outstanding condition and are very popular for local athletics and sports groups, with users travelling from nearby centres such as Picton, Wilton, Menangle and Appin.

2.7.2 PlaceScore Engagement Survey

The PlaceScore Engagement Survey collated information on Wilton and Douglas Park together and therefore the following results reflect the views of residents in both communities:

Douglas Park residents value the safety and familiarity of the locality and its natural assets. They identify there is a lack of evening entertainment options, education and health services and local employment options.

Suggestions for improvement to the locality include:

- Improved movement options.
- More and better community facilities, education and health care.
- Protection of natural assets.
- A greater number and diversity of local businesses, retail, leisure and employment options.

Opportunities:

- > The opportunities identified in this Centres Study align with the issues important to the community in terms of improved pathway connectivity and a detailed urban design analysis to improve the layout and scale of roads, allotments, frontages, public realm and increase diversity of opportunities for future land uses and activities.

2.8 Land Uses, Open Spaces and Community Services and Facilities

Figure 2-2 shows the current land uses in the activity core and immediate surrounds. There are several vacant and underutilised buildings and land in in the Douglas Park activity core which could be adapted for a variety of uses. Commercial zones lots are large and deep. The shape and dimensions of commercial zoned lots does not lend itself to a permeable, fine-grained pedestrian-friendly activity centre.

The settlement is compact and the topography is gently sloping. Traffic activity on local streets is low and walking and cycling to the centre, the rail station, the school and the sportsfields is viable provided there was a safe and clear pathway connection and the walking route provided interest.

There is an adequate diversity of land use zones in the Douglas Park locality.

The railway station is unmanned with sheltered seating on the platforms and on-street parking. Passenger rail services are on average hourly during the week. There is on-street parking available for train users and a lack of kerb and gutter along Station Street and Railway Parade means car parking is typically on the grass verge. The station is well used by commuters.

Opportunities:

- > There are opportunities for redevelopment and increased density of development on residential and commercial zoned land in the Douglas Park settlement.
- > Land use types permitted in the commercial centre should be investigated for increased diversity and finer grained redevelopment opportunities. Whilst growth in the surrounding settlement is limited, any change in the commercial development of the centre will be small and incremental and this is a good time to strategically plan for changes to the centre.

2.9 Urban Structure and Built Form

Figure 2-2 provides a visual representation of the urban structure, built form and access arrangements for Douglas Park.

Camden Road is clearly the focal point for movement. It links the sportsgrounds and community hall with the rail station and the commercial properties. The primary school is one block east of Camden Road and north of the commercial centre. The railway station is central to the urban settlement and easily accessible.

The heritage listed Railway Cottage does not set a design theme for the centre as it is more affiliated with the rail station structures. Two storey development is appropriate. Camden Road has a wide road reserve and it is appropriate for commercial buildings to be set close to the front boundaries to enliven the street.

The commercial-zoned properties are very large (up to 1,000m²). However, the capacity and drivers for growth in the short and medium term are small scale and incremental.

Large scale growth identified in the GMGA is focused on Appin and not Douglas Park. Future road corridors and enhanced transport connections have been identified to and through Douglas Park as part of the Greater Macarthur Interim Plan. However, the timeframe for works exceeds the practical timeframe for recommendations of this Centres Study.

Opportunities:

- > Given the current slow rate of growth anticipated over the next 10+ years a detailed urban design analysis is recommended to identify more appropriate scale, density and form of growth including building siting, streetscape, public realm, lot size and movement patterns to prioritise the pedestrian experience for locals. Consideration could be given to a rear service lane for commercial properties fronting Camden Road to enable commercial buildings with zero or minimal front setbacks and to increase activation and interest along the main street. Street tree planting and more formalised parking for the railway station would improve the public realm surrounding the station.
- > Adaptable building typologies in and surrounding the activity core have the potential to add variety and increase activity with a mix of commercial and residential uses
- > Enhanced use of the railway station may be facilitated by upgrades to the station and immediate surrounds. Council can seek funding and resource assistance from TfNSW by submitting a Problem Statement to TfNSW Research hub specific to this topic (see <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/data-and-research/research-hub/templates-and-forms>)



Figure 2-2 Urban structure and built form, land uses, access and movement analysis for Douglas Park.

2.10 Commercial Floor Space

The Draft Centres Study 2008 identified the following for Douglas Park commercial land:

- > *Five (5) commercial premises*
- > *Total commercial floor space constructed 550m²*
- > *Total vacant commercial floor space 100m²*

There has been no change in the floor space within the commercial-zoned land since the 2008 study. There has been an increase in the amount of vacant floor space with premises for lease and sale at No.133 to 139 Camden Street at the northern end of the commercial zoned centre. No.141 Camden Road remains as vacant land.

There is capacity for more than 6,000m² of additional commercial floor space to be constructed in the centre under the current planning provisions.

Opportunities:

- > There is adequate capacity within existing constructed commercial premises and on underutilised commercial zoned land for growth and expansion of a variety of land uses. There is variety in the existing building form available for a variety of non-residential uses.
- > A mix of residential and non-residential uses is to be considered with adaptable building typologies on key sites
- > A detailed urban design analysis identified in Section 2.9 can include engagement with existing landowners and business operators to clearly understand why large areas of land and commercial premises have remained vacant and to engage with residents and business operators to foster community support and investment for future changes

2.11 Housing Within and at the Edges of the Centre

Existing residential development in the Douglas Park settlement is mostly on large lots and low density.

The R3 Medium Density Residential zone on the western side of Camden Road and north of the rail line was recently approved for redevelopment to contain 35 medium density dwellings with Development Consent DD010.2018.00000790.001. This is an example of the incremental infill growth that can be reasonably anticipated in the Douglas Park settlement.

The only form of residential development permitted on commercial-zoned land in the Douglas Park centre is 'shop top' housing, which strictly requires dwellings above ground floor retail and business premises. This standard definition of built form, as contained in WLEP 2011, is considered too strict for the Douglas Park centre and discourages adaptable building typologies.

Opportunities:

- > Add key sites to WDCP 206 for adaptable building typologies to encourage a diversity of built form and a resilient built form that can adjust to future changes.

2.12 Access and Movement

The train station has on-street parking close to the platforms. The train trip to Campbelltown from Douglas Park by train in 13 minutes which is quicker than by car at 22 min. Train services are on average every 1 to 1.5 hours during the week.

Heavy vehicle traffic from the mine shaft operations does not pass through Douglas Park. Some mine staff live in the Illawarra and travel through Douglas Park centre.

Road and footpath reserves are wide and generally straight, gently sloping and suitable for walking and cycling paths. However, existing paved footpaths are discontinuous with variable condition and materials. There is potential for an enhanced pedestrian experience in the Centre by providing pathway connectivity linking the frontages of commercially-zoned land and by encouraging future finer-grained infill development addressing the frontage to Camden Road.

The adopted master plan for the Douglas Park Sportsfields includes connectivity north along Camden Road and recommends a walking trail south from the sportsfields to the Nepean River.

Access and movement for Douglas Park has been diagrammatically analysed at **Figure 2-3**.

Opportunities:

- > Increased attention is needed to Douglas Park railway station as it is part of the activity core and can play a major role in enhancing the function and activity in the centre and provide substantial benefit to centre users.
- > Enhance pathway connection between the commercial centre and the sportsground via the station along Camden Road with a safe, separated pathway (consistent with the adopted Douglas Park Sportsground Master Plan) to encourage walking between the activity hubs of the settlement.
- > Provide a walking trail between the sportsground and the Nepean River weir and crossing, also consistent with the Douglas Park Sportsground Masterplan.

2.13 Street Appeal – Public Realm and Pedestrian Experience

There is no consistency in shopfront and pedestrian experience in the Douglas Park centre. There is no clear pattern of building form. The present built form encourages driving and discouraged walking and cycling.

Street appeal is represented in **Figure 2-4**.

Opportunities:

- > A detailed urban design analysis is recommended to identify more appropriate scale, density and form of growth including building siting, streetscape, public realm, lot size and movement patterns to prioritise the pedestrian experience for locals and to encourage infill development which improves the street character and supports pedestrian activity.

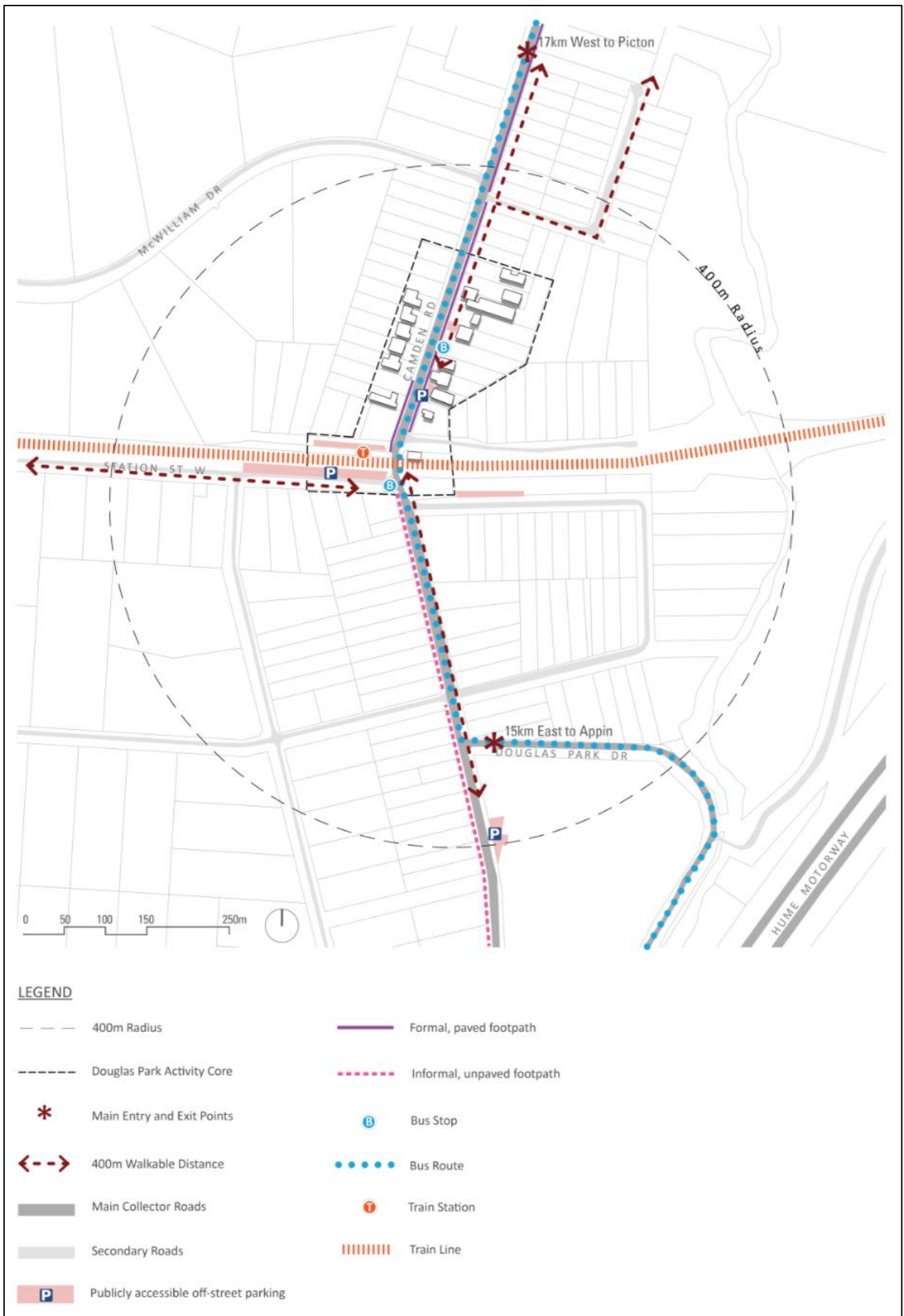


Figure 2-3 Access and movement analysis for Douglas Park.

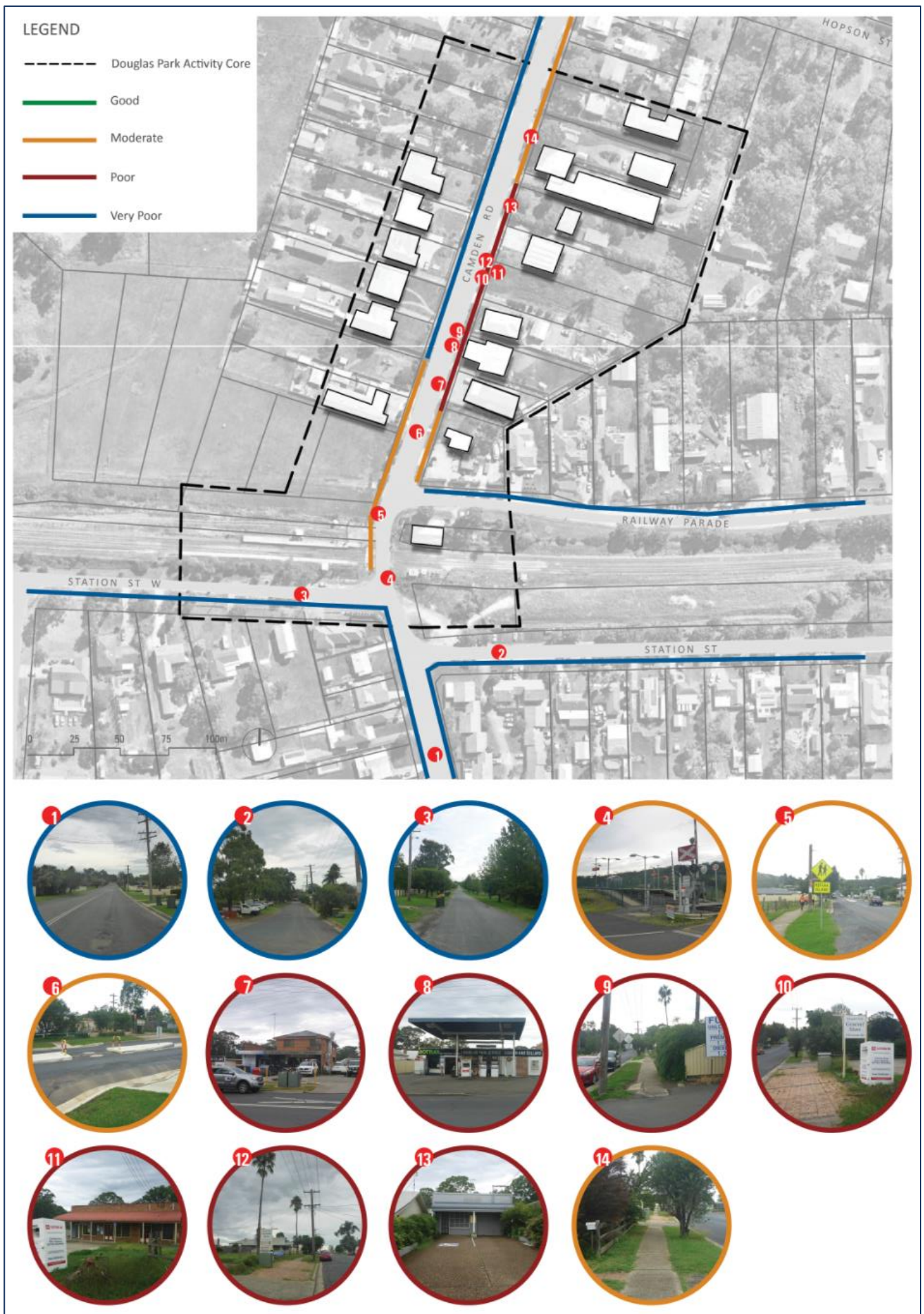


Figure 2-4 Rating pedestrian and public realm experience of the current Douglas Park hamlet centre

3 Current Commitments to Works, Adopted Plans and Strategies

3.1 Previous Centres Study

The Centres Study 2008 included the following objectives for Douglas Park:

- To activate and promote a viable neighbourhood centre along Camden Road.
- To integrate and link residential, retail, commercial and community uses within Douglas Park.
- To enhance the relationship between buildings, streets and spaces within Douglas Park.
- To create an open space system that supports Douglas Park.
- To improve access to, from and within Douglas Park.

Since the 2008 Centres Study, Council has committed to the master planned works for the Douglas Park sportsground and community hall and works are in progress.

3.2 WLEP 2011 Provisions

The zoning which applies to land in Douglas Part town centre together with the recommended investigation areas for adaptable building typologies is shown in **Figure 3-1**.

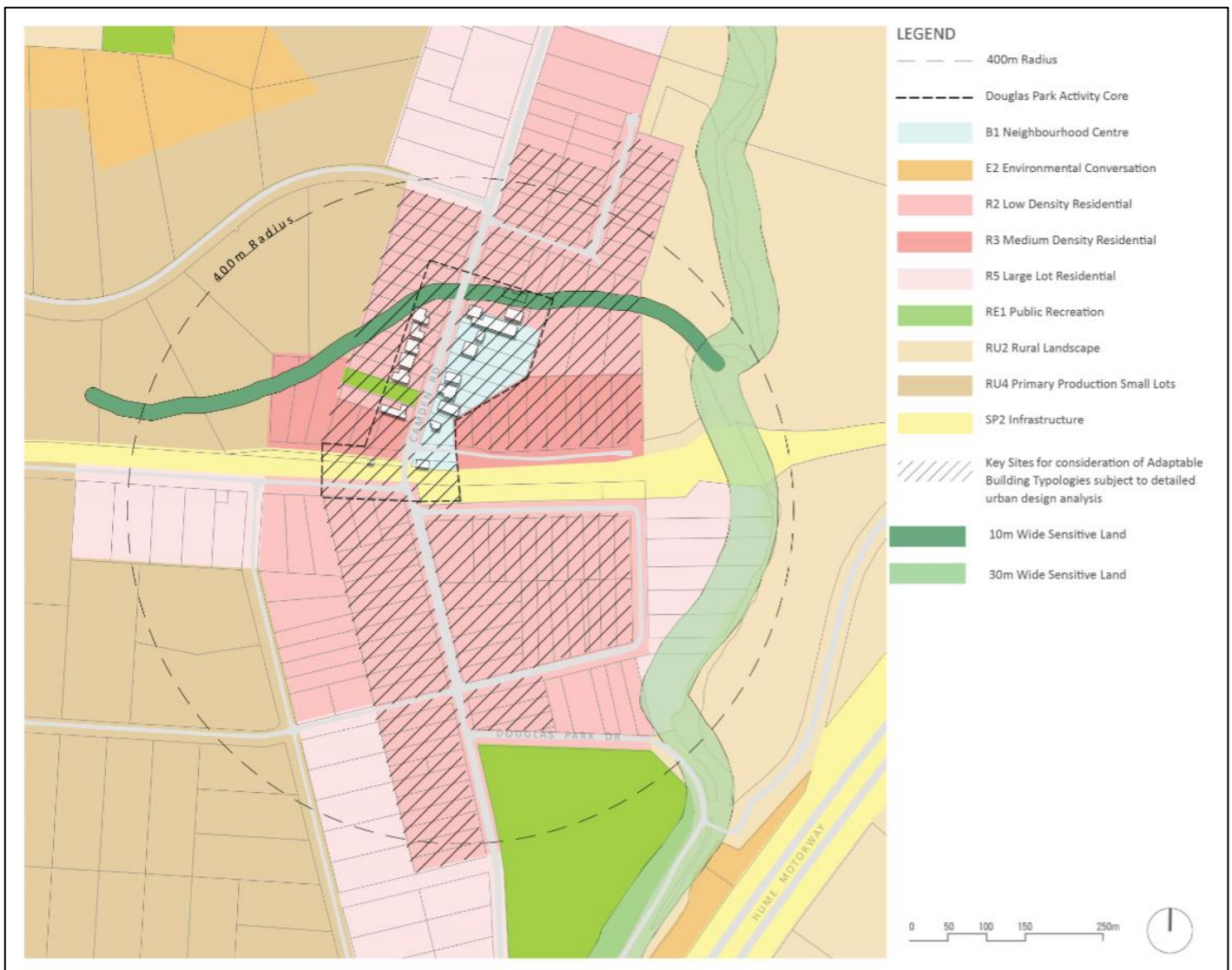


Figure 3-1 Current land use zones for Douglas Park under WLEP 2011, riparian lands and recommended investigation area for 'Adaptable Building Typologies'.

Any future infill or additional development proposed within Bargo Centre would need to consider evacuation needs in the event of risk from major hazard such as bush fire. Localised flooding can be addressed with development-specific design solutions.

There is sufficient capacity within existing commercial zoned land for growth by infill, however the urban design analysis should consider the ability to accommodate fine-grained, incremental growth on small parcels. This is not compatible with the current lot size, road pattern and land use table for commercial zoned land.

Connectivity to the Nepean River is important to the sense of place and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Riparian corridors are important elements in close proximity to the Douglas Park centre as shown in **Figure 3-1**. The future acquisition of land between the sportsground and the Nepean River should be retained in WLEP 2011. However, the total area of land required for future Regional Open Space could be reconsidered as the current land reserved for acquisition is mostly steep land and the better quality land for recreational purposes is located on the southern side of the river.

Opportunities:

- > Review the WLEP 2011 requirement for acquisition of land for Regional Open Space to determine whether the land identified along the Nepean River is appropriate for recreational opportunities or whether more suitable land should be zoned for this purpose. The increased visitation of this land associated with GMGA will require an increase in the area accessible for public recreation and the safe provision of car parking in or near the river.
- > Implement any required amendments to WLEP 2011, following completion of the urban design analysis, to accommodate adaptable building typologies and fine-grained growth on small parcels of land.

3.3 WDCP 2016 Provisions

Opportunities:

- > The provisions for the Douglas Park Centre contained in WDCP 2016 should be reviewed based on the outcomes of the recommended urban design analysis.

3.4 Council's Current Commitments

Council is committed to the upgrade of Douglas Park sportsgrounds.

Opportunities:

- > Council consider introducing a works program for streetscape and movement network improvements after these matters have been analysed with a detailed urban design analysis of the Douglas Park Centre.

4 Summary of Opportunities

The following opportunities have been identified for Douglas Park, as shown in the Structure Plan in **Figure 4-1**:

- > Enhance pathway connection between the commercial centre and the sportsground via the station along Camden Road with a safe, separated pathway (consistent with the adopted Douglas Park Sportsground Master Plan).
- > Provide a walking trail between the sportsground and the Nepean River (consistent with the adopted Douglas Park Sportsground Master Plan)
- > Propose Council request the Office of Strategic Lands to collaborate on a review the WLEP 2011 requirement for acquisition of land for Regional Open Space to determine whether the land identified along the Nepean River is appropriate for recreational opportunities or whether more suitable land or additional land should be zoned for this purpose given likely increases in visitation with GMGA.
- > Undertake a detailed urban design analysis of the commercial zoned land and activity core, together with land and roads immediately adjoining to consider:
 - Appropriate scale, density and form of future buildings including building siting, streetscape, public realm, lot size, setbacks, façade continuity.
 - Movement patterns to prioritise the pedestrian experience and introduce new public roads that protect the continuity of Camden Road for pedestrians and cyclists.
 - The introduction of adaptable building typologies in the commercial centre and adjoining commercial zoned land.
- > Depending on the outcomes of the urban design analysis, Council may need to consider introducing provisions within WLEP 2011 relating to:
 - Acquisition of land for new public realm movement routes.
 - Additional land use typologies.
- > Depending on the outcomes of the urban design analysis, Council may need to consider introducing provisions specific to the centre within WDCP 2016 relating to building siting and setbacks and a works program for streetscape and movement network changes.
- > Introduce provisions to WDCP 2016 for adaptable building typologies on key sites after the urban design analysis
- > Request collaboration with TfNSW for upgrade of parking and public realm surrounding the railway station. This can be initiated by submitting a Problem Statement to TfNSW Research hub specific to this topic (see <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/data-and-research/research-hub/templates-and-forms>).

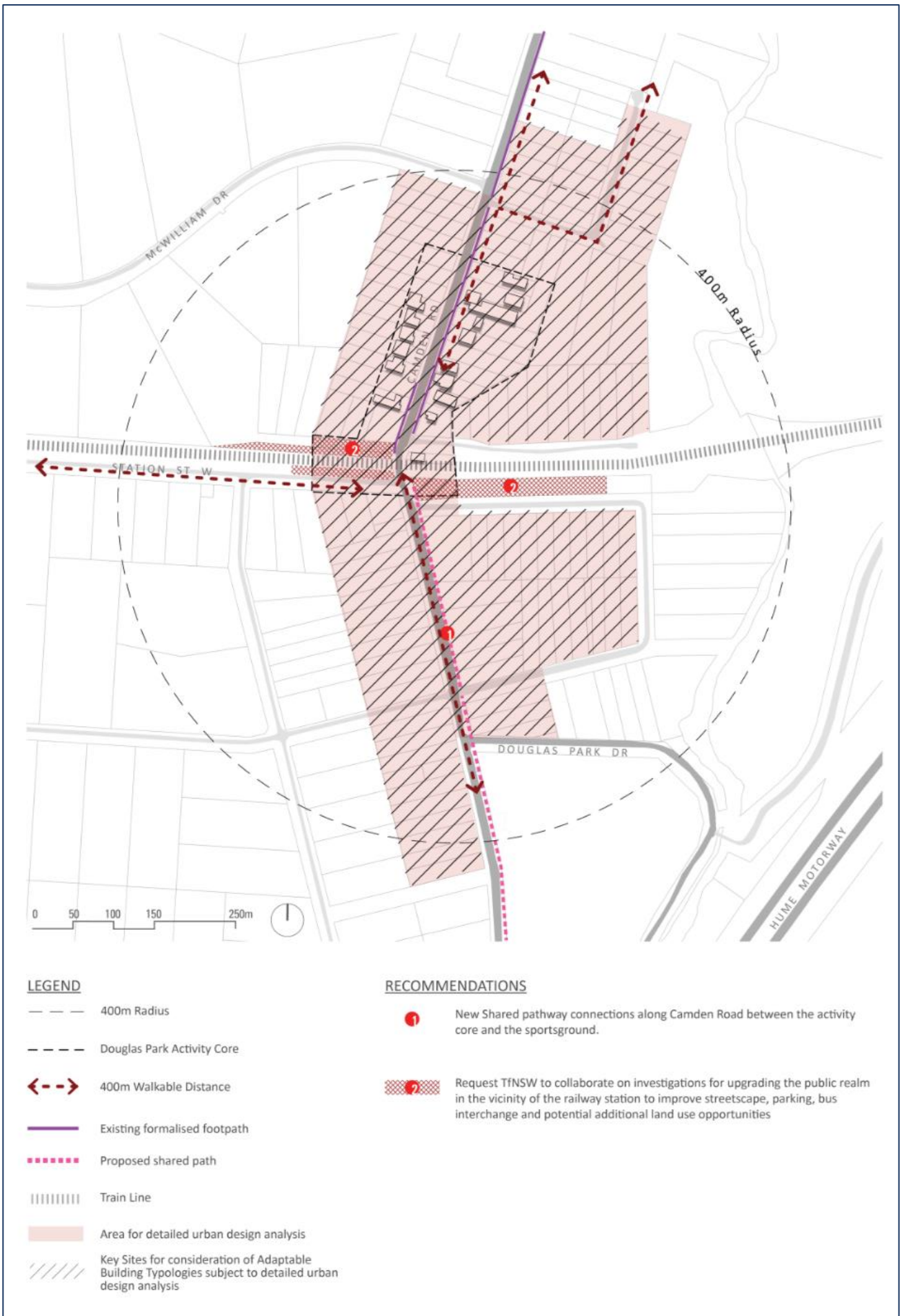


Figure 4-1 Structure plan of opportunities for Douglas Park.