



Walkerville North Foreshore Reserve Master Plan 2018

Prepared by Tract Consultants
for Walkerville Foreshore Reserve
Committee of Management

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Project team

This **Project Analysis** report is part of a master plan for a section of the Walkerville foreshore – from the Camping Ground entry to the area north of the Walkerville Hall.

The report has been prepared by Tract Consultants (Landscape Architects, Urban Designers and Town Planners) on behalf of the Walkerville Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management (WFRCOM).

Acknowledgements

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Walkerville Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management

Isley Sutherland (Project Manager), Bill Bray (Chair), Irene Irvine, Mick Dortman, Paul O'Neill, Margaret McRobertson, Merran Wilde, Paul Stampton

Stakeholders

Walkerville Camping Reserve, Walkerville Kiosk, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, South Gippsland Shire Council (Alyson Skinner, Jeremy Rich), CFA, Parks Victoria, AusNet

The Walkerville Community

Walkerville residents, Walkerville Residents and Ratepayers Association, Walkerville visitors

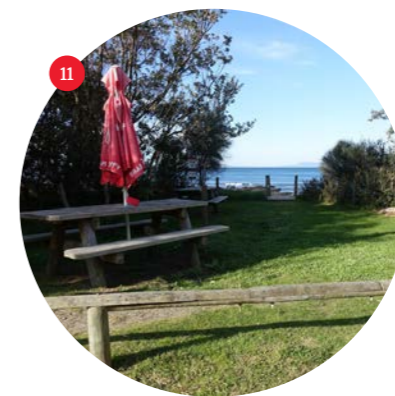
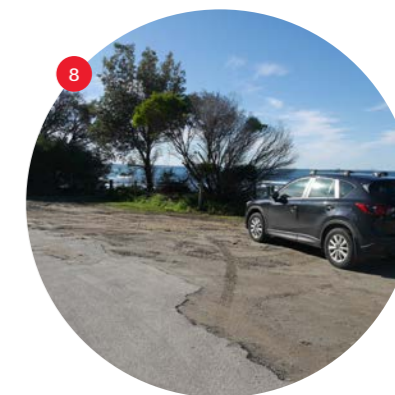
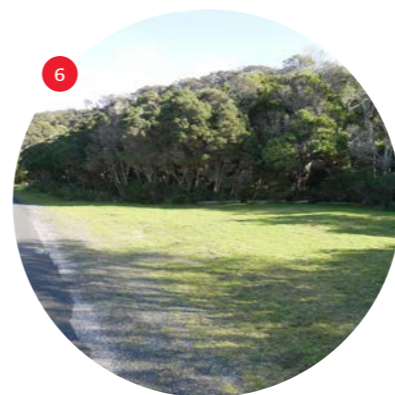
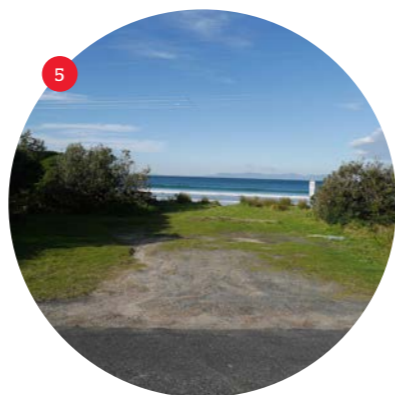
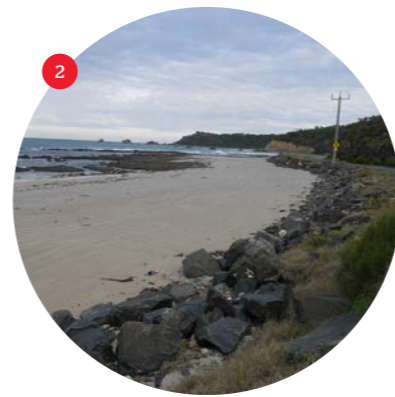
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This master plan report is based in part on a range of existing technical reports, data and opinion from a range of sources available at the time of the study. Data on which project recommendations are made may not be complete or may change over time. Tract Consultants do not accept liability for the use of this material.



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1.1 Project background

The Walkerville Foreshore Reserve covers approximately 41.3 hectares of coastal reserve along 3.3 km of the Walkerville coast on Waratah Bay in South Gippsland. The Reserve protects important natural, cultural, heritage and landscape values, and provides an attractive and peaceful setting for informal recreation and relaxation. It has been identified as having State Significance for its landscape and environmental values in the Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment study 2006.

The Crown Land reserve is managed by the Walkerville Foreshore Reserve Committee of Management (WFRCoM) on behalf of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). The reserve is bordered by the Cape Liptrap Coastal Park, Waratah Bay and a small number of private properties (less than one hundred). Refer Figure 1.

With its unique natural beauty, cultural heritage features, landscape character, water access and intimate scale, the foreshore reserve is increasingly popular as a destination for residents, campers and day visitors, which has led to increasing seasonal demand for water access, camping, parking, pedestrian access and visitor support facilities. The coastline is also subject to significant rates of coastal erosion which impacts on the narrow coastal edge and has the potential to affect existing and future infrastructure and environmental assets.

A Coastal Management Plan (CMP) was completed in 2014. This document provides the foundation principles for how the Walkerville Foreshore Reserve will be developed and managed over the long term and provides overall guidance for this master plan.

1.2 Walkerville vision

The following vision is taken from the Walkerville Foreshore Reserve Coastal Management Plan, April 2014 (page 4&5):

- Visitors and residents using the Walkerville Foreshore in 2020 find a peaceful retreat with well protected natural, cultural and landscape values and small scale facilities, which provide opportunities for nature based relaxation and quiet enjoyment.
- The camping area has been enhanced and offers a range of low key accommodation nestled in coastal vegetation. Coastal walks provide fine views and interpretive information helps visitors to appreciate Walkerville's rich heritage.
- Vehicle access, parking and boat launching are regulated to provide a safe and pleasant experience for families, other visitors and residents and minimise intrusion on the foreshore. Day visitor areas have been enhanced with defined parking areas, sensitively designed structures and indigenous planting to blend with the coastal setting.

- Foreshore protection works have been undertaken to mitigate erosion (ongoing) and climate change impacts are monitored.
- Walkerville is a highly regarded destination for people who appreciate nature largely free from commercial development and enjoy the area's safe beaches, beautiful coastal landscapes and rich cultural heritage.
- The Committee has worked with the community and government agencies to successfully implement management and maintenance programs, obtain external funding and complete improvement projects.

The Master Plan is intended to assist in achieving these outcomes.

1.3 Master Plan objectives

The Master Plan has been prepared for the Walkerville Reserve Committee of Management. It provides the Committee with an analysis of the site and issues affecting the long term development and management of the study area, along with high level concept design for the study area. The stakeholder and community consultation process adopted for the project informs the proposed design outcomes.

This initial report documents the project analysis phase along with consultation findings, opportunities, constraints and design

principles. The Design Principles and subsequent Schematic Design options provide alternative design and development approaches for the Walkerville North foreshore. Subject to further consultation, ideas and priorities, the schematic design plans will form a basis for the Master Plan design brief.

The Master Plan does not address the technical design of erosion protection systems (elements requiring detailed engineering and geotechnical design) or other engineering systems such as roads, but does identify overall design strategies for those systems. Further technical design and approvals will be required for all design systems.

1.4 Study Area

The Master Plan study area extends from the Walkerville Hall (the location abutting the end of works proposed under the previous design concept (planning permit 2015/398) to the Walkerville Camping Reserve Kiosk (including the kiosk area and manager's residence / office).

The study area encompasses crown land under delegated management to the west and the low water mark to the east. Adjoining areas may also influence the Master Plan and may be referenced within the design outcome, but the master plan design will not directly affect any private land.



Figure 1 Context and site boundary

1.1 Existing foreshore design

A concept design has recently been completed for the coastal area immediately north and south of the Walkerville Hall (Aspect Studios 2016). This work considered a range of issues related to coastal protection, vehicle access, parking (car and car/boat trailer), boat launch related vehicle movement and pedestrian access.

A planning permit has been granted by the South Gippsland Shire Council (no. 2015/398) to undertake infrastructure improvements works at Walkerville North. The works involve constructing a sea wall along the foreshore at Walkerville North to assist in controlling coastal erosion, as well as upgrades to the road, car parking and recreational facilities near the Walkerville North boat launching area.

Construction works were due for completion by the end of 2017.

This master plan study area connects to this previous design area but does not re-visit the design for that area, or any issues that were addressed through that project.

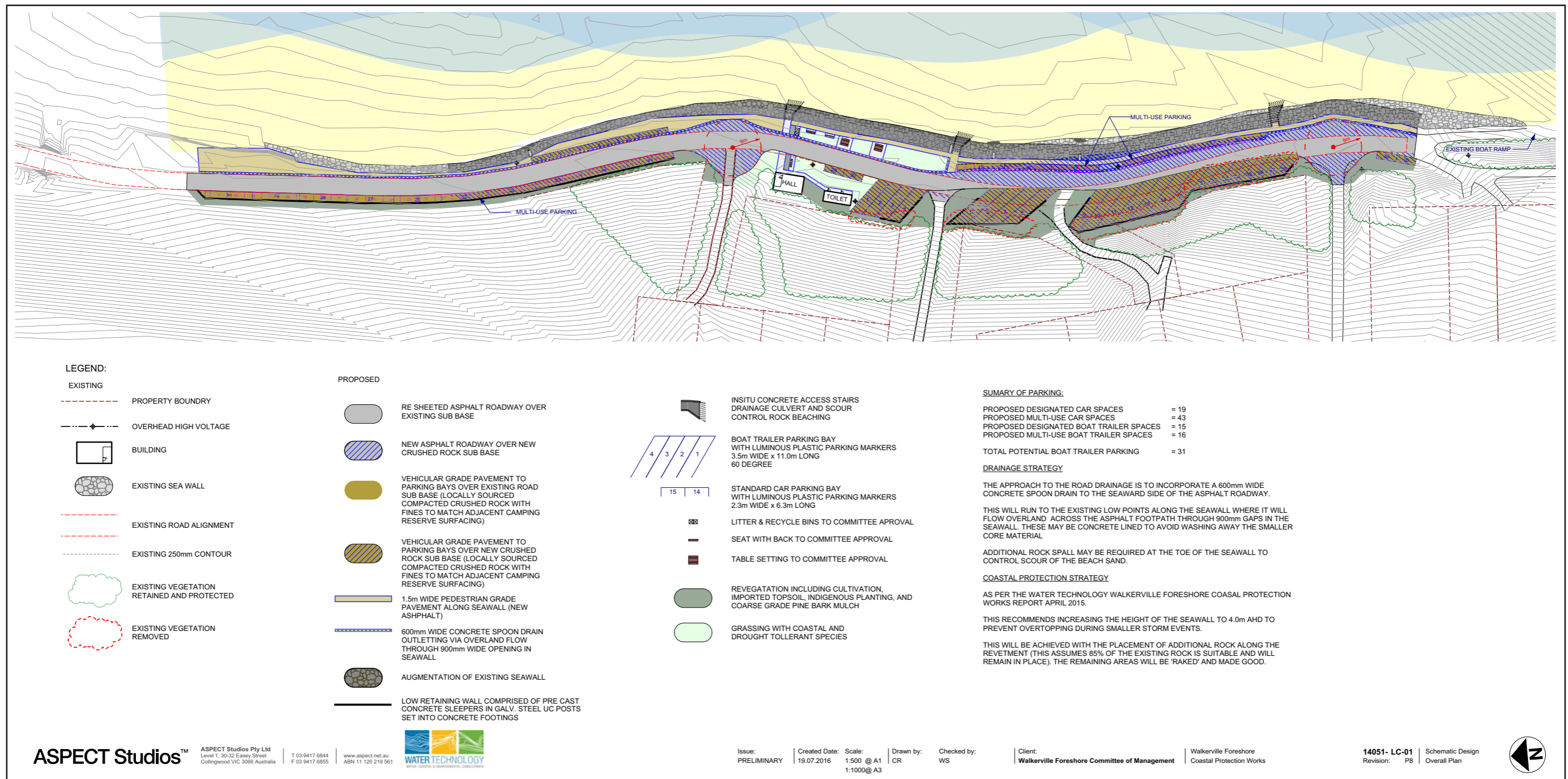


Figure 2 Concept design (Aspect Studios 2016)

1.2 Regional context

Walkerville is approximately a 2.5 hour drive south-east of Melbourne (Figure 3). The township was founded in the late nineteenth century and enjoyed commercial success exporting lime to Melbourne by ship until 1926. The remains of six lime burning kilns and a jetty in Walkerville South and are on the Victorian Heritage List.

South Gippsland, often referred to in tourism promotions as Prom Country, is a predominantly rural landscape with much of the coast protected by coastal reserves, national parks and marine parks. The area attracts nature-based tourism, focusing on natural bushland, quiet beaches and exceptional scenery.

The Waratah Bay region consists of a number of small coastal hamlets, including Bears Gully, Walkerville, Walkerville South, Walkerville North, Waratah Bay and Sandy Point (Figure 4). The small towns provide accommodation and basic facilities but are largely undeveloped commercially. The small size, visual character and simplicity of the coastal settings are considered to be an essential part of their charm as residential and leisure destinations.

The Walkerville Foreshore Reserve sits within the traditional land of the Gunai – Kurnai Nation. Little archaeological evidence has been found of Aboriginal land use in the reserve – most likely due to the lime burning era. Middens have been found in Cape Liptrap Coastal Park suggesting seafood was a major food source in the area. The Committee needs to work with traditional owners of the land to protect and maintain cultural connections and heritage in the region.



Figure 4 Location Plan

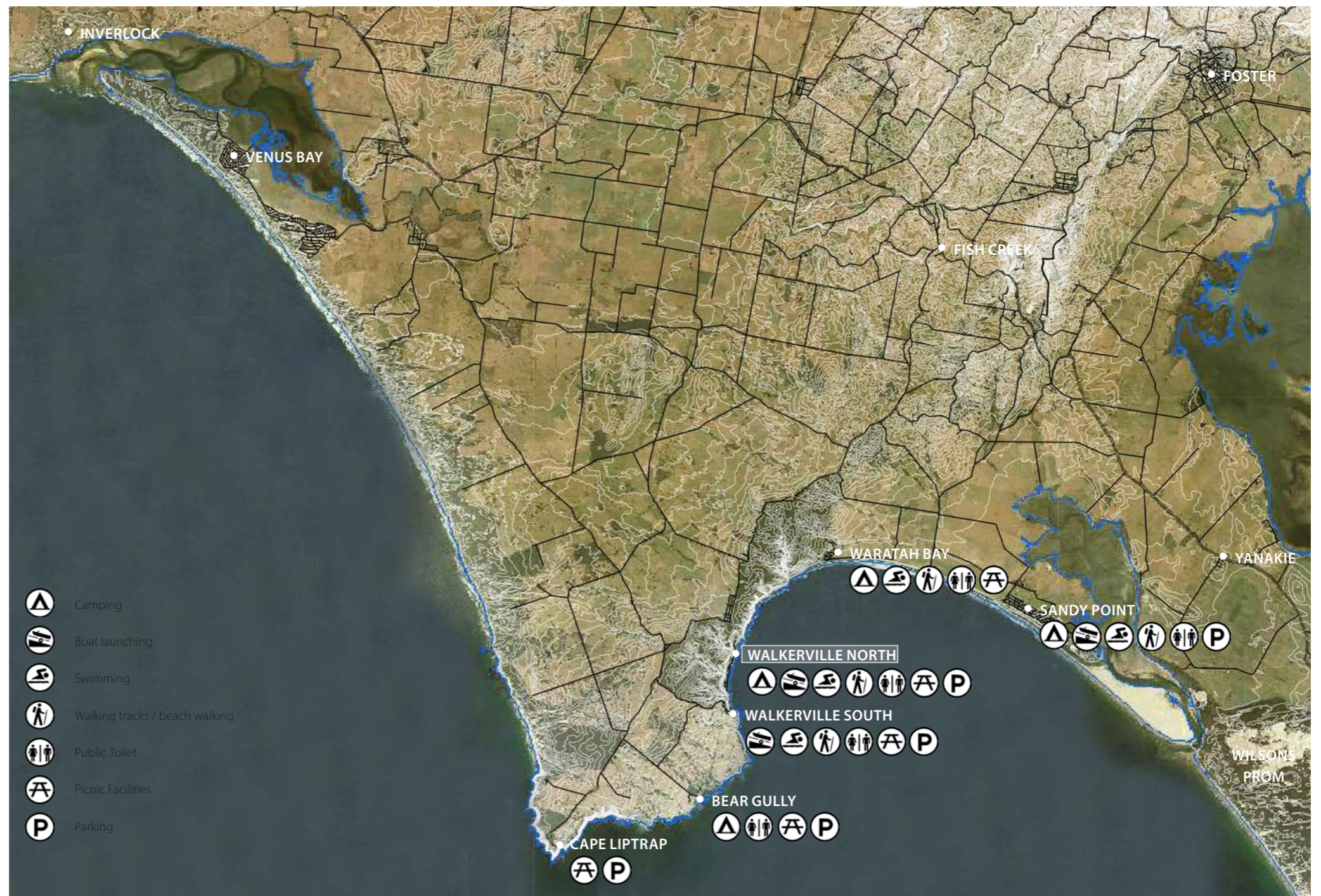


Figure 3 Context Plan

2.1 Regional tourism

2.1.1 Regional tourism

Tourism data provided in the *Walkerville Foreshore Reserve Coastal Management Plan*, April 2014 suggest that:

- Prom County attracts an estimated 1.1 million visitors each year, a quarter of which own holiday homes in the region. Most are drawn to the areas by its national parks and scenery.
- Three quarters of Prom County visitors are from Melbourne and only 3% from overseas.
- The Prom Country Tourism Market Research Report (2010) found that up to 90% of visitors to the region have little awareness of Walkerville and the natural beauty of the site.
- The Prom Country Economic Impact and Visitor Profile (2012/13) has recorded an increase in day visitors, with the five year average (2003-2007) number of day visitors 10% higher than the 10 year average (2003-2012). While the number of day visitors to Walkerville is unknown, numbers are expected to increase, as is consistent with the region.

The South Gippsland Shire Rural Tourism Development Strategy (SGSC 2010) found that:

- South Gippsland Shire is a strong holiday/leisure destination, attracting an estimated 1.1 million visitors annually. Holiday homes are a significant contributor to tourist visitation, accounting for approximately one quarter of all visitation.

- The top three activities undertaken by visitors to the Shire include general sightseeing (76%), visiting a National Park (72%) and going to the beach (56%).
- 73% of visitors to the South Gippsland Shire are from Melbourne (mostly from the eastern and south-eastern suburbs), 14% of visitors are from Country Victoria, 11% are from interstate and 3% are from overseas.
- Visitors from Country Victoria are mainly from regional centres including the Latrobe Valley, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong.
- Over half (52%) of all visitors to the Shire perceive it as “relaxing and peaceful” and a further 42% of visitors perceive the Shire as “beautiful and scenic”. Almost half of all visitors (43%) associate the South Gippsland Shire specifically with Wilsons Promontory, followed by 30% who associate it with rolling hills and 19% with the beach.

2.1.2 Seasonal population impact in regional coastal towns

- Coastal towns in the South Gippsland Shire are becoming increasingly popular with holiday home owners and day visitors, creating a fluctuating seasonal population and community. This has an impact on the infrastructure, service provision and management of these towns.
- Seasonal visitors often create congestion within the small coastal towns, put pressure on services and can be a challenge to manage successfully.
- The 2015 DRAFT Seasonal Population Impact in Coastal Towns in South Gippsland Shire highlights parking in general, parking on the beach, vehicle speed and boat trailer parking as a major issue in peak season in Walkerville. It identifies the track beach access as difficult during peak season, increased rubbish and the potential safety concerns associated with bushfires and the one-way road access.
- The study suggests that people management strategies, rather than land use strategies, are a key to successfully managing the vast difference in population throughout high and low season. It is considered important for the community and government to work together to strike a balance between services and infrastructure for both peak and non-peak communities.

2.1.3 Community and tourist use of the Walkerville Foreshore Reserve

- Walkerville Foreshore Reserve, with its largely undeveloped coastal landscape, is seen to play an important role in the region, providing a “beautiful and scenic” setting and “relaxing and peaceful” recreation opportunities.
- The main user groups at Walkerville are permanent and part-time local residents, campers, tourists and travellers staying for short periods in the area, casual day visitors and water-based users.
- The number of day visitors is not known. Many local residents (permanent and part-time) and other ratepayers also make regular use of the beaches and walking tracks.
- Visitor numbers have increased in recent years with improvements in access roads and direction signs. The number of day visitors is likely to increase further as the area becomes better known and more is done to enhance visitor experiences.

2.2 Community Profile

The Walkerville community includes a broad range of people; home owners, holiday makers, day visitors and specific user groups such as boaters, surfers, hikers, naturalists and school groups (Figure 5). Walkerville North consists of only 29 private dwellings and has a small permanent population (five people were present in Walkerville North for the 2016 Census). As a result, the community are largely non-residents.

The Walkerville Foreshore Reserve Coastal Masterplan (2014) observed an increase in day visitors in conjunction with improvements in access roads and signage, which is consistent with regional trends - the five year average (2003-2007) number of day visitors to Prom Country was 10% higher than the 10 year average (2003-2012) (The Prom Country Economic Impact and Visitor Profile 2012/13).

It is predicted that day-visitor usage will increase further as more is done to enhance visitor experience in the area.

2.3 Statutory Planning

Walkerville is subject to a number of Planning Scheme zones and overlays which guide development and management of the township.

2.3.1 Zones

Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)

Affects the entire foreshore area and seeks to 'protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat or cultural values' and to 'provide facilities which assist in the public education and interpretation of the natural environment with minimal degradation of the natural environment or natural processes'

Township Zone (TZ)

Is intended to 'encourage development that respects the neighbourhood character of the area'.

Road Zone (RD22)

A portion of land connecting the Kiosk and Promontory Views Estate is covered by the Road Zone – Category 2 (RD22). This area of land does not align with the built Walkerville Rd (Figure 6). Council has advised that this is most likely a legacy issue and does not indicate road modifications.

2.3.2 Overlays

Environmental significance overlays and a wildfire management overlay (WMO) span the whole study area. The site is under the provision of Environmental Significance Overlay 3 (ESO3) which

addresses coastal settlements and Environmental Significance Overlay 5 (ESO5) which addresses areas susceptible to erosion.

Environmental Significance Overlay 3 (ESO 3)

The purpose of the overlay is:

- To protect and enhance the natural beauty of the coastal area.
- To protect and enhance the environmental quality of the coastal area.
- To minimise the risk of erosion, pollution and destruction of the environment through poorly managed development.
- To ensure that development adjacent to coastal areas is compatible with the environment and does not result in adverse impacts on coastal processes.

Environmental Significance Overlay 5 (ESO 5)

The purpose of the overlay is:

- To protect areas prone to erosion by minimising land disturbance and vegetation loss.
- To prevent increased surface runoff or concentration of surface water runoff leading to erosion or siltation of water-courses'

Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO)

The purpose of the overlay is:

- To ensure that the development of land prioritises the protection of human life and strengthens community resilience to bushfire.

2.4 Walkerville Foreshore Reserve Coastal Management Plan (2014)

The Walkerville Foreshore Reserve Coastal Management Plan (2014) (CMP) is the foundation for the Walkerville Foreshore Master Plan and provides the overarching vision, principles, key actions and priorities that define the master plan outcomes. The following section provides a brief overview of key elements of the Management Plan that inform the Master Plan. The Master Plan is an action arising from the Management Plan.

2.4.1 Purpose of the plan

A Coastal Management Plan (CMP) is a strategic planning document prepared to identify the values of coastal Crown land, threats to these values, and opportunities and actions to protect and enhance values and provide for compatible use and enjoyment. Coastal Management Plans are prepared in accordance with the Coastal Management Act 1995 and the

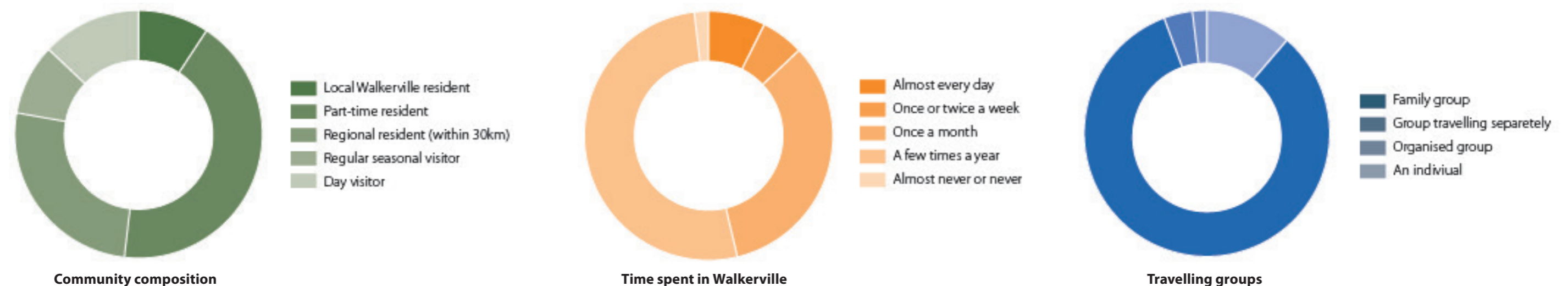


Figure 5 Community composition statistics (Walkerville North Reserve Master Plan Online Survey)

Victorian Coastal Strategy (VCC 2008) and include consultation with local communities and relevant government agencies.

CMPs are endorsed by DELWP prior to approval by the Minister as directed by section 32 of the Coastal Management Act 1995.

The Coastal Management Plan documents an agreement between the Committee, DELWP and the community on the principles underlying coastal management, the main goals for management and actions to be implemented. The CMP is to be reviewed after 3 years as required under the Coastal Management Act.

The CMP is based on legislation, principles, policies and plans developed to ensure protection of coastal values in Victoria while providing for compatible access and recreational activities. The CMP builds on an understanding of the values of the study area, threats to these values and opportunities to enhance the coastal environment.

2.4.2 CMP Vision

Visitors and residents using the Walkerville Foreshore in 2020 will find a peaceful retreat with well-protected natural, cultural and landscape values, and small-scale facilities, which provide opportunities for nature-based relaxation and quiet enjoyment. The camping area has been enhanced and offers a range of low-

key accommodation nestled in coastal vegetation.

Coastal walks provide fine views and interpretive information helps visitors to appreciate Walkerville’s rich heritage.

Vehicle access, parking and boat launching are regulated to provide a safe and pleasant experience for families, other visitors and residents and minimise intrusion on the foreshore. Day visitor areas have been enhanced with defined parking areas, sensitively designed structures and indigenous planting to blend with the coastal setting.

Foreshore protection works have been undertaken to mitigate erosion and climate change impacts are monitored.

Walkerville is a highly regarded destination for people who appreciate nature largely free from commercial development and enjoy the area’s safe beaches, beautiful coastal landscapes and rich cultural heritage.

The Committee has worked with the community and government agencies to successfully implement management and maintenance programs, obtain external funding and complete improvement projects.

2.4.3 Guiding principles

The plan is guided largely by the four principles set out in the

Victorian Coastal Strategy (VCS), 2008 and objectives and guiding principles described in the Marine & Coastal Act 2018.

In summary these are: protect natural and cultural values, provide integrated planning, and ensure sustainable use of resources. When these are addressed, consider development within nominated constraints. The Strategy provides context and specific policies and actions to address important coastal issues including climate change.

2.4.4 Future directions

The plan builds on the Committee’s overall aim to conserve and enhance coastal values while providing community access. It identifies a vision and future directions for management and sets out a series of goals and actions.

Four goals identified are:

- Protect and enhance natural, cultural and landscape values.
- Sustainably manage coastal access and a range of compatible recreational facilities.
- Facilitate community involvement in coastal planning, management and appreciation.
- Manage the coast effectively and sustainably.

2.4.5 Actions identified

An action program was developed to achieve the goals (section 5.3). Some of the major actions are:

- Landscape/facility enhancement: With South Gippsland Shire Council (SGSC), develop and implement basic master plans for all visitor and parking areas.
- Coastal erosion mitigation: In cooperation with DELWP and SGSC, implement works to reduce the impact of erosion on the foreshore (near Hall and camping area).
- Weeds: Implement and monitor a structured, ongoing weed control program.
- Access, parking and facilities: In conjunction with SGSC, manage vehicle access and parking at beach areas. Continue to provide for off the beach launching at North. At South, undertake a safety audit and, if appropriate, prohibit the launching of motorised craft in the summer and Easter holidays to minimise risk to other beachgoers.
- Maintenance program: Develop and implement a costed maintenance and replacement program.
- Capital works program: Develop and implement a rolling 5-year capital works program.

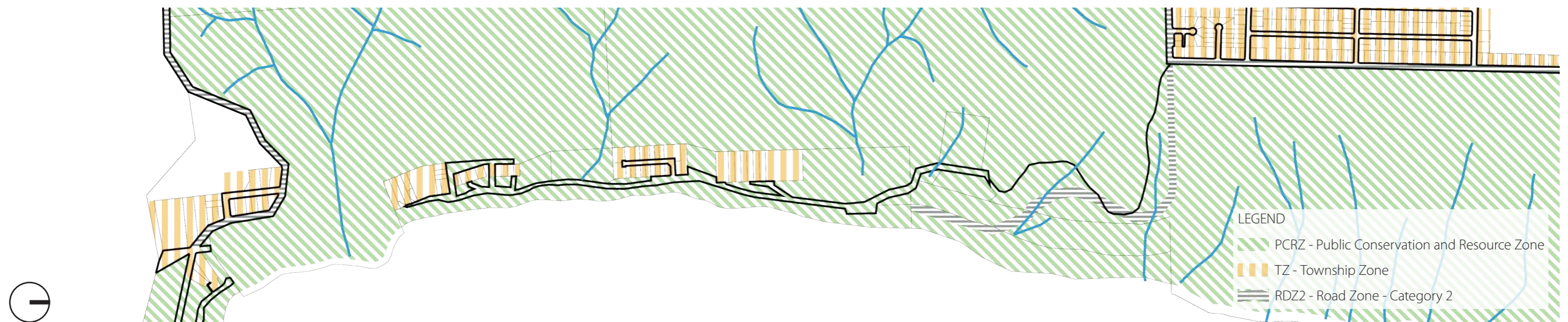


Figure 6 Planning Zones