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Prepared for the City Of Ryde

Ryde River Walk

Master Plan Report



City of Ryde

Ryde River Walk

Master Plan Report

PREPARED BY



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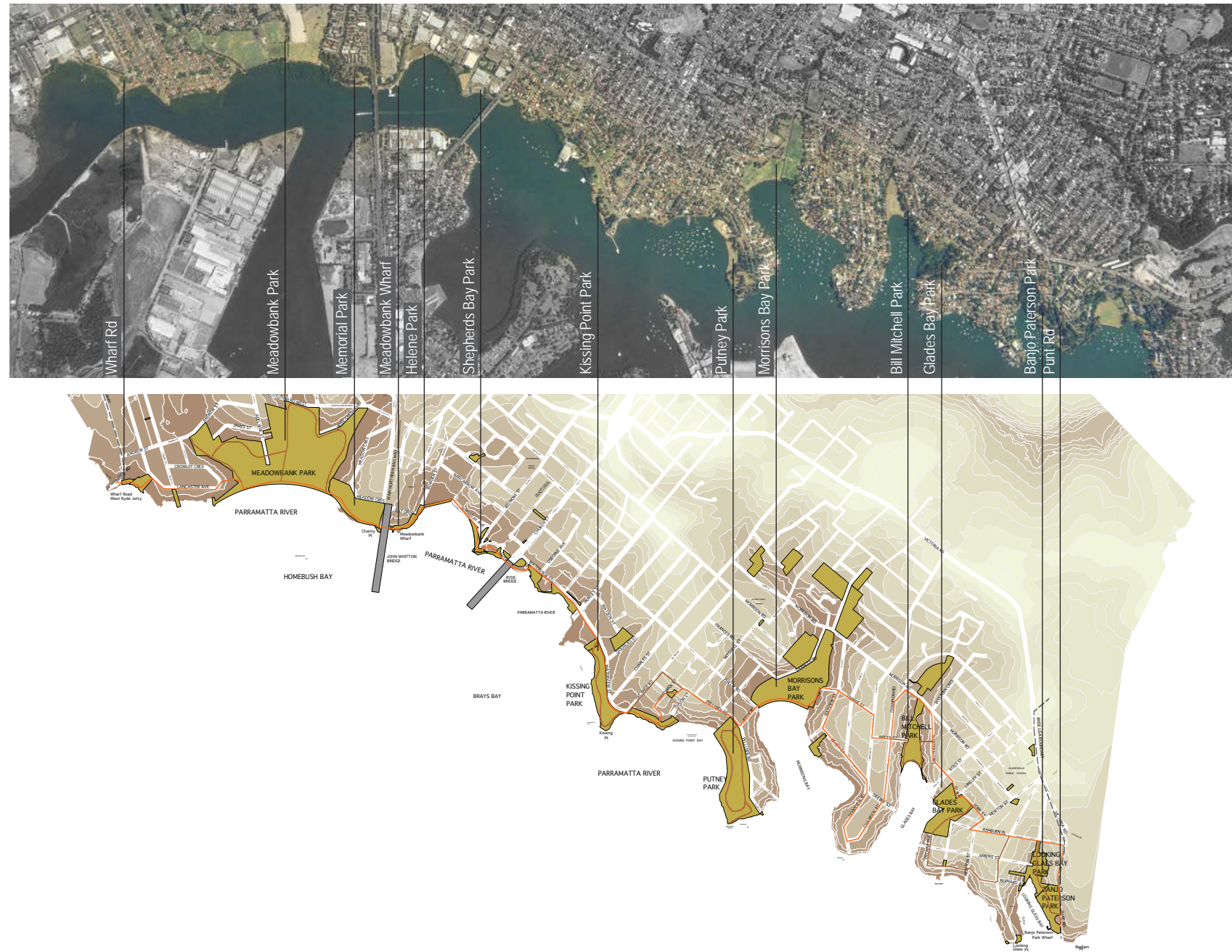


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PROJECT OUTLINE



BACKGROUND

The River Walk project undertaken by the City of Ryde, is to provide a vision and working plan for a recreation trail focused along the Parramatta River within the Ryde Local Government Area (LGA). The trail proposes to connect existing foreshore parks and provide an important link in a regional systems of recreation trails. The study develops a strategy for the staged implementation and enhancement of the recreation trail over time. A public art strategy that animates and reveals the landscape and stories of the places of the local area, is also proposed in conjunction with the trail.

Study Area

The study area includes the parks and connecting streets along the northern foreshore of the Parramatta River in the Ryde LGA, from Wharf Road in the west to Punt Road in the east. The River Walk seeks to connect to adjacent recreation trails, public parks, urban centres and public transport hubs.

Wherever possible, the trail is directly along the foreshore edge, with a direct physical and visual connection to the water. In other areas, the trail is set back behind residential properties or steep bushland parks due to topography or limited physical access. These areas seek to enhance the visual connection to the water overlooking the river, adding diversity to the River Walk experience.

Study Team

The preparation of the River Walk Master Plan for the City of Ryde is by a comprehensive team of consultants assembled to address the complex issues and opportunities the River Walk offers. The consultant team includes:

Primary Consultants

Pod Landscape Architecture
Jamieson Foley Traffic and Transport
Artlandish Art and Design

Head Consultant and Landscape Architect
Cycle and Traffic Planners
Public Art and Historic Research

Supporting Consultants

Lighting Art and Science
Urban Forestry Australia
BDA Consultants

Lighting Review and Assessment
Vegetation Impact Assessment
Cost Planning

CONSULTATION

The master plan study is also been informed by contributions from local residents and interested groups through the consultation processes listed below.

Community Information Day

A community information day held in Kissing Point Park, was an open community forum to raise awareness and prompt feedback. The information day introduced the scope of the project, provided information on the existing walkways and cycle routes in the area, a summary of local history, and sought feedback on the alignment of the trail based on local understanding of the area.

Ride Ryde Day

An interested group of residents and cycle enthusiasts were taken along the length of the proposed location of the trial route to gain immediate feedback on the connections, quality and practicality of the walkway. Invaluable suggestions were made and have been used to inform the detailed planning of the cycle route.

Public Exhibition

The Draft Master Plan Report was exhibited through the City of Ryde in early 2006. The main submission received was from Bike North. The submission was supportive of the plan, and provided a number of suggestions for the precincts.



Community Information Day



Ride Ryde Day



Ride Ryde Day

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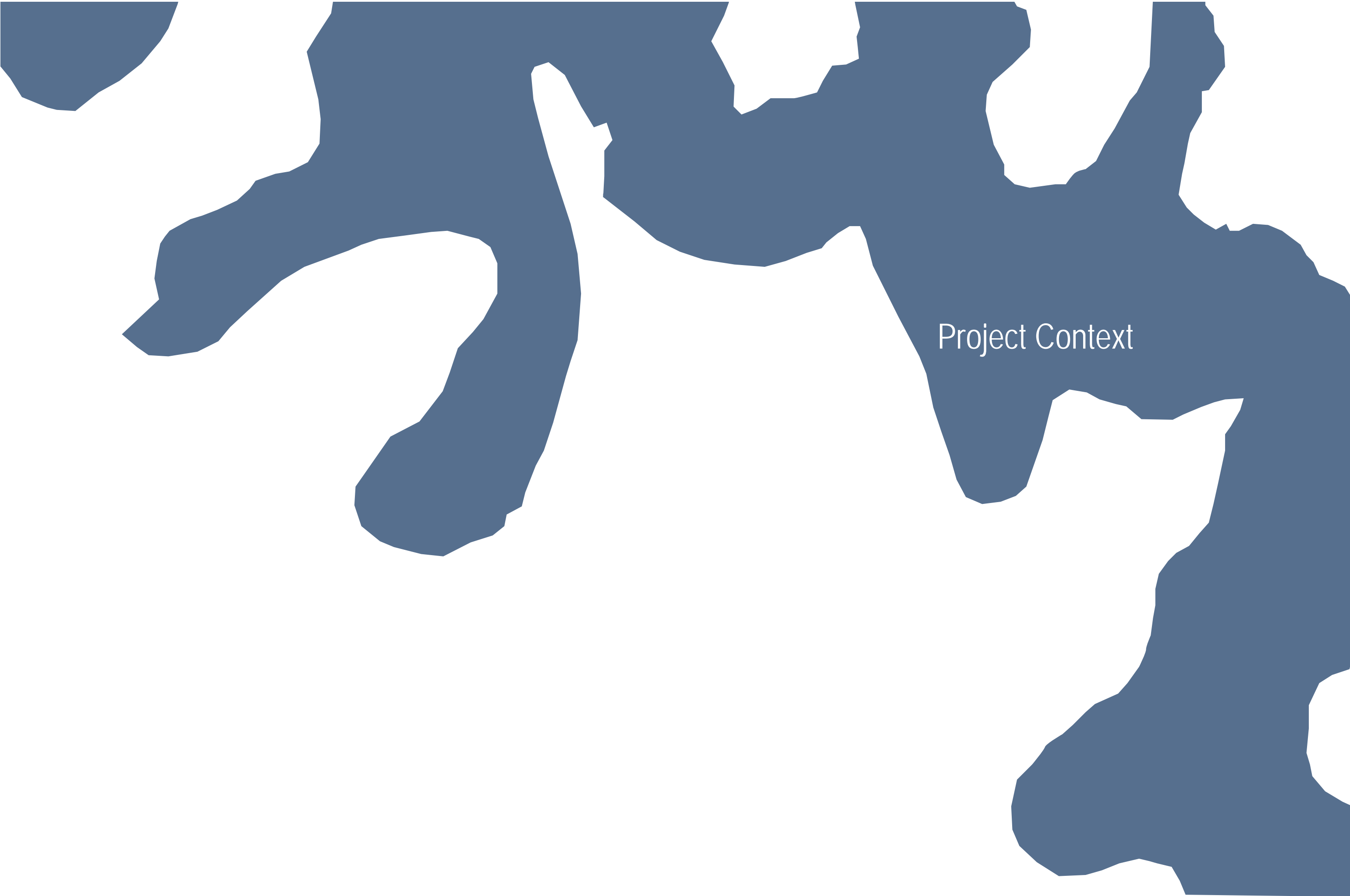
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Project Context

1.0 PROJECT DEFINITION

1.1 PROJECT PURPOSE

The proposed Ryde River Walk presents an opportunity to create an engaging and important regional recreation route along the Parramatta River foreshore. The River Walk project aims to establish a regional mixed-use recreation trail that provides for cycling and walking for a range of users.

The key to establishing the Walk as an integrated and well patronised route, will be to:

- design the walkway as part of the experience of the Parramatta River;
- connect to the surrounding land uses and destinations;
- link to commuter routes and transport nodes;
- create a distinctive and memorable Walk that reveals the landscape and setting;
- value and interpret the character and cultural identity of the place, providing access to points of interest;
- create a vitality to the Walk through site specific public art revealing environment and history;
- ensure the physical pathway meets best practice in the detail design for use by cyclists and pedestrians;
- provide amenity to encourage a wide range of users;

1.2 REGIONAL OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the project are reinforced by State Government initiatives which aim to support increased access to recreation networks. There are a number of cross-over benefits for the development of the Walk as a regional trail including:

- establishing a recreational resource at both regional and local levels;
- establishing viable transport alternatives;
- improving public health and well-being;
- improving education and understanding of the regions' history and environment;
- providing cultural enrichment through public art and community art;

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is prepared for the City of Ryde to provide a master plan and feasibility for the future implementation of the Walk.

The scope and methodology of this study is to

- Address regional objectives for improving recreation provisions, public health and community well-being;
- Assess the existing provisions for recreational cycling and walking;
- Gain a greater and more detailed understanding of the physical considerations of the route;
- Improve connections and linkages between existing open space in the study area;
- Plan the route that enhances understanding of the cultural landscape through art and interpretation;
- Provide a culturally stimulating environment with opportunities for community involvement;
- Propose connections to surrounding land uses and destinations;
- Provide guidance on detail design considerations in the realisation of the Walk.

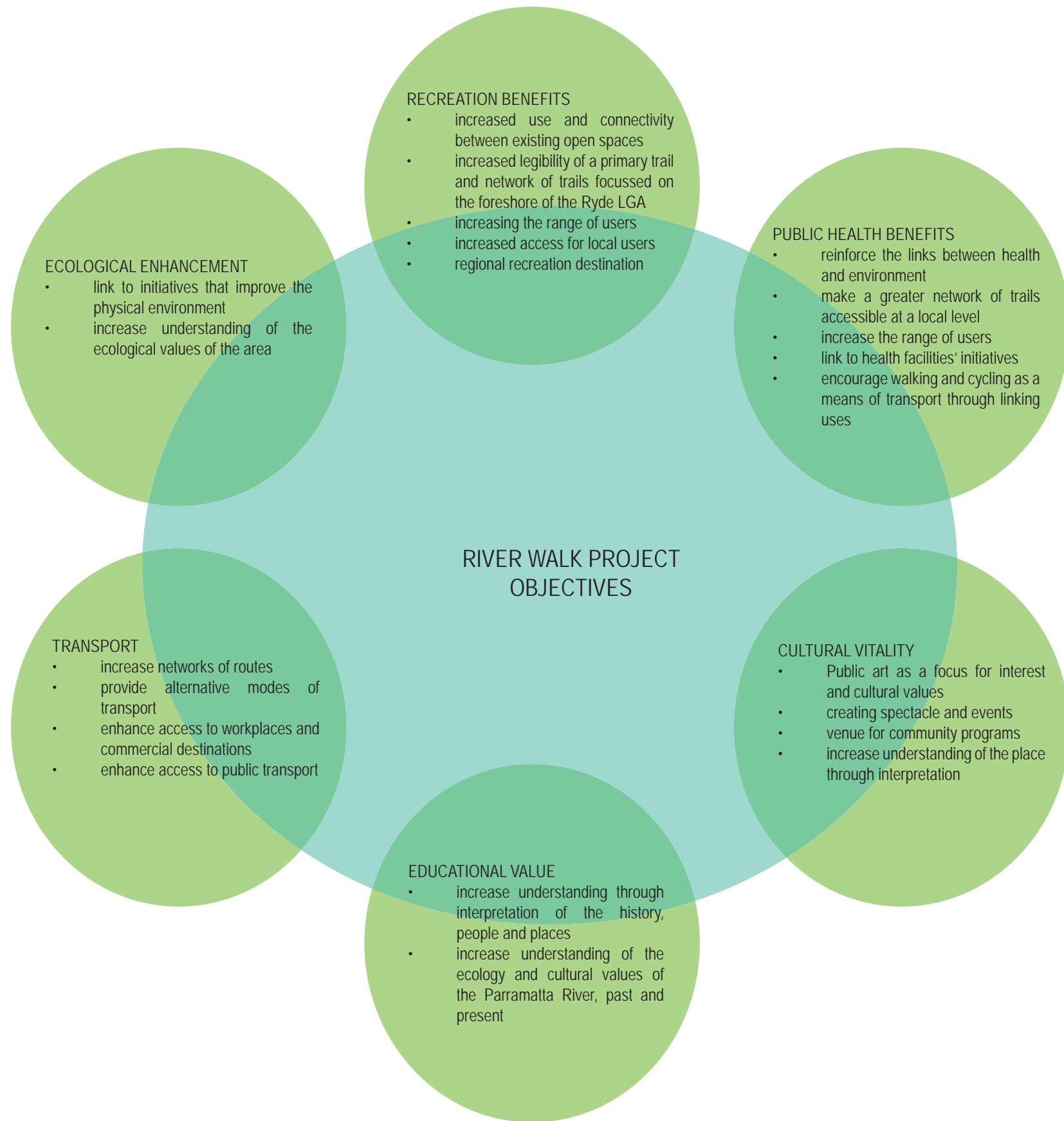


Figure 1
River Walk project objectives

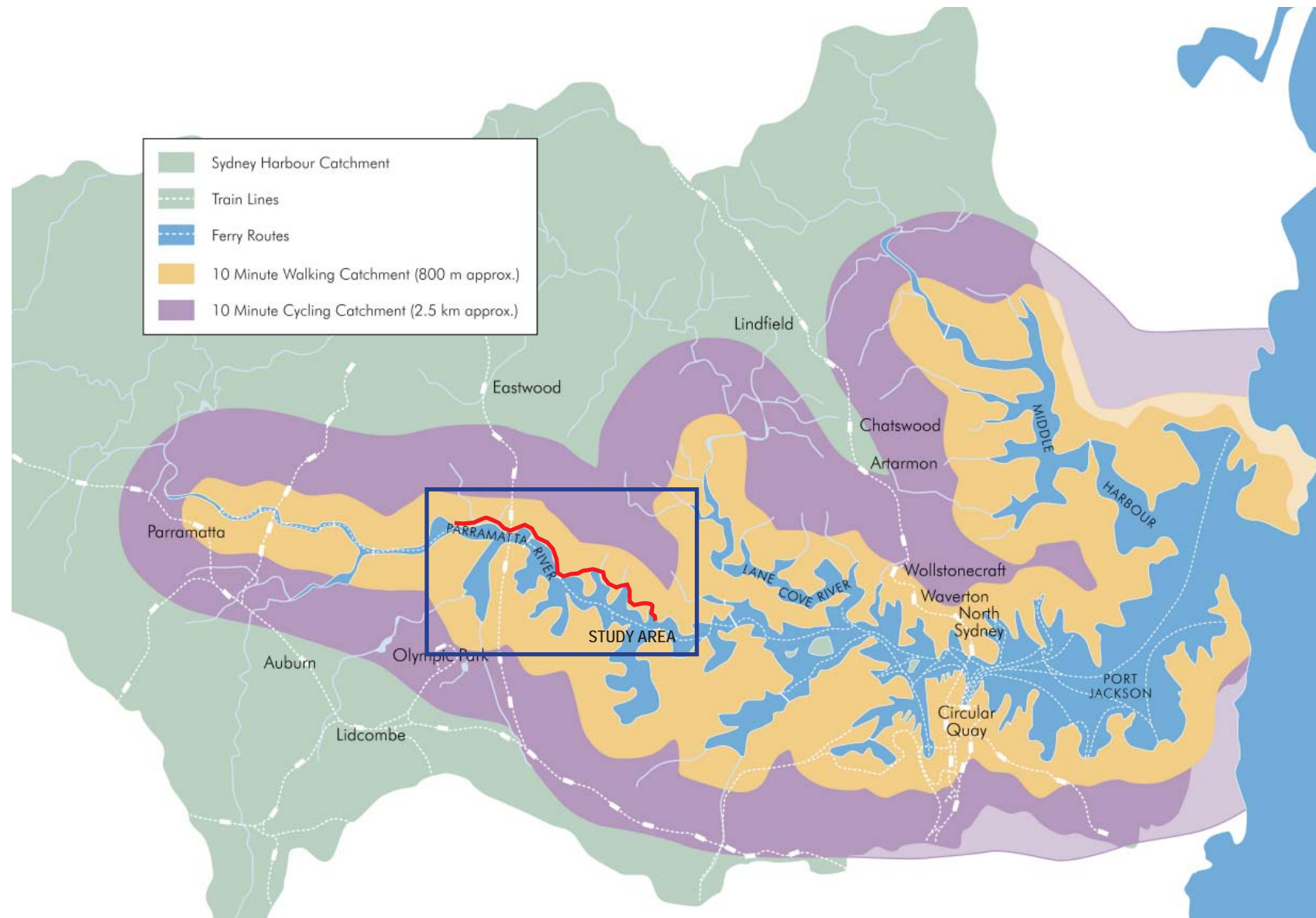


Figure 2
SSHAP Extract: walking and cycling catchments
The harbour is a focus for regional recreation activity, as well as provides for local recreation for those living within walking a cycling distances from the water edge

1.4 RECREATION PLANNING CONTEXT

There are a number of Government planning instruments and guidelines that reinforce the regional objectives for recreation trail networks. These plans also work in tandem with funding mechanisms for project implementation. Key issues from the plans are summarised below.

Sharing Sydney Harbour Access Plan, DIPNR 2003

- The Access Plan has been jointly prepared by the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources (formerly PlanningNSW) and the NSW Waterways Authority, following wide consultation.
- The Access Plan's vision is to improve public access to, and enhance the recreational enjoyment of, Sydney Harbour and its tributaries for the people of Sydney and visitors to the city.
- The Access Plan takes an integrated approach to land and water-based access requirements for Sydney Harbour. Typical projects identified in the Access Plan tend to be within 2.5 kilometres of the harbour foreshore but may go beyond to the catchment boundary. It contains the vision for improving access to the foreshores and waterways and proposes the following publicly accessible (non-commercial) improvements and facilities for a range of recreational users including pedestrians, cyclists and recreational boaters.
- Ten minute walking and cycling catchments (refer Fig. 2) are an important indicator of potential to access the foreshores on foot or bicycle by local communities and those travelling into these catchments by public transport.
- A catchment-wide network of accessways will link metropolitan parklands with urban waterfronts and connect to water access points. Improved boating facilities will provide better public access for recreational craft such as dinghies, canoes, kayaks and sailing boats. (Refer Fig.3).
- The Access Plan identifies strategic projects that may be developed in the short term, over the next 5 years, and over the longer term, over the next 20 years.
- There is scope to increase the existing level of foreshore access by extending existing accessways to and along the foreshores and by providing new accessways in currently inaccessible areas including redevelopment sites.
- Walking and cycling have many similar requirements, e.g. continuity, legibility, directness, low traffic volumes and low speeds, therefore both modes can often share the same access way. Sometimes their requirements may differ, e.g. a steep topography or sensitive natural environment may be better suited to walking than cycling. In some locations, such as waterfront promenades, shared access may be impractical and unsafe. A separate provision for each mode should be made in such instances.

Sydney Harbour Catchment Sydney Regional Environmental Plan, Dept Of Planning 2005

- Sydney Harbour, including Parramatta River and its tributaries, is a major natural, cultural, recreational and commercial asset for both Sydneysiders and visitors alike. The continuing growth and importance of Sydney has resulted in increasing pressures on the harbour and its foreshores. As such, it is critical to have a clear and consistent planning framework to protect and enhance the unique attributes of the Harbour.
- The Harbour REP aims to establish a balance between promoting a prosperous working harbour, maintaining a healthy and sustainable waterway environment and promoting recreational access to the foreshore and waterways.

Sydney Metropolitan Recreation Trails Framework, DIPNR, 2005

- Approx 35% of people in NSW participate in regional trail related physical activities, more than 3 times the number who participate in swimming or aerobics.
- Walking for exercise identified as most popular recreational activity.
- Demand for access to natural areas using existing networks and foreshore greenspace was a common theme.
- The provision of new connecting walking and bike trails is the fourth highest priority among Western Sydney Regional Councils, while a strong demand was identified for the further development of recreation trails along attractive linear corridors and coastlines, which connect open spaces and provide health and fitness benefits. eg Bay Run – 15-20k users per week, Coastal walk (bondi-bronte)
- The study identified the demand for new trails as being closely linked to the demands for better planning of the shared use of these trails or parts of these trails, for improved signs, for the provision of seating, for retaining or extending public access to the coastline, for interpretation opportunities and for extending the links to residential, retail and commerce areas.

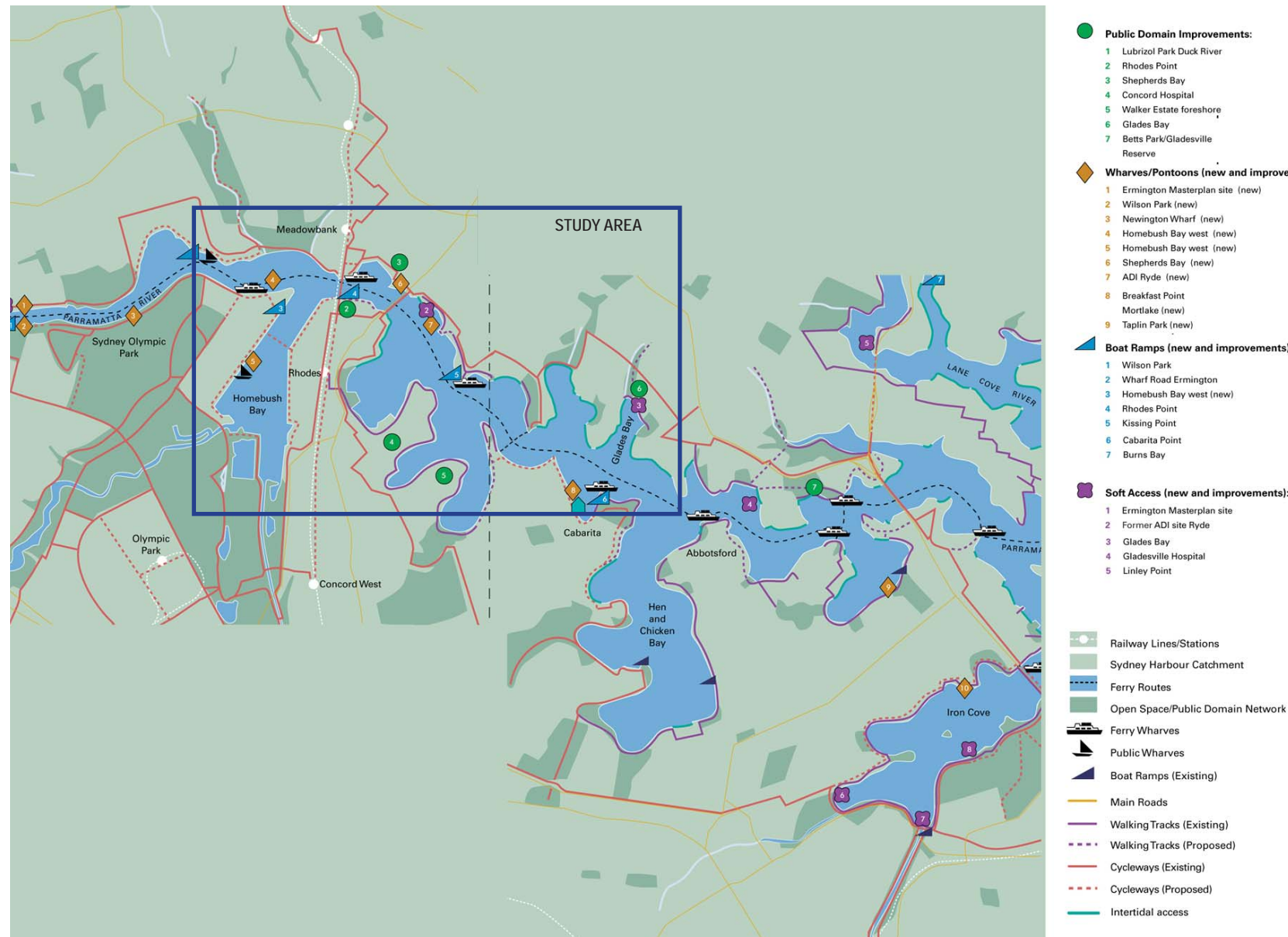


Figure 3
SSHAP Extract: access improvements
Identification of regional access routes and water access points

- The primary focus of the regional trails framework is off-road connections performing the functions of linking significant areas of Sydney Greenspace, connecting recreational precincts, providing links between major urban centres and public transport nodes and links to other destinations.
- The trails should be an integrated network of walking and cycle trails.
- Demand for shared walkways and cycleways – opportunities exist for continuous foreshore reserves, most areas in Northern Sydney have potential for a network of walking and cycling tracks – ie. Links between Ryde, Meadowbank and Sydney Olympic Park. Northern Sydney Area identified as a short term priority.

Short term priorities and initiatives (0 –5yrs) of the Plan include

- Strategic framework of trails
- Missing links to a regional recreation trail
- Trails connecting residents from a wide region to a major regional destination
- Trails connecting to a major urban centres
- Developing as a resource for regional populations
- Serving existing demand for regional recreation trail facilities

Walking Sydney Harbour

Walking Sydney Harbour is a partnership project between community walking volunteers, the State Government, Local Government and other relevant authorities. These partners share the vision to improve public access to, and enhance the recreational enjoyment of Sydney Harbour and its tributaries for the people of Sydney and visitors to the city. The 26 km walk focuses on the Harbour west of the Harbour Bridge linking foreshore edges, bays, headlands, bridges and historic streets.

A walking map is available through downloading from the internet along with notes on points of interest and historic information that accompany the route. There are a number of magnificent additional loop walks (marked in green on the map), to explore scenic and historic areas in more detail. The Ryde River Walk is located near the west corner of the main walk and could be marked as another alternative loop walk linking through Gladesville Hospital and Betts Park.

Metro Strategy, Dept Planning 2005

Aims outlined in the Metro Strategy seek to continue to develop the framework for an integrated network of regional recreation trails as part of the overall open space system in partnership with local government, National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Roads and Traffic Authority.

Regional recreation trails meet the growing community demand for informal healthy activities, for recreation and active transport across Sydney. Trails are a corridor or pathway, mainly off-road, used for recreational walking or cycling and pass through or connect landscapes, facilities or sites of regional or metropolitan significance.

Department of Planning will work in partnership with other Government agencies — such as Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation, NSW Health and Department of Environment and Conservation — to develop a comprehensive communications package, to ensure Sydneysiders are aware of the trails network. The package will provide signage and maps showing links to facilities such as railway stations, shops, picnic areas and playgrounds

The Australian National Cycling Strategy 2005-2010, Austroads 2005

Australia currently faces a multitude of transport, health and environmental challenges. There is a need to:

- Provide for the safe, affordable and enjoyable movement of people and goods
- Reduce the environmental and health impacts of transport, for instance by reducing motor vehicle tailpipe (including greenhouse gas) and noise emissions
- Increase physical activity by Australian people
- Combat rising traffic congestion, which is increasing travel times and industry costs.
- In order to meet these needs, we need to:
- Reduce our dependence on the private motor vehicle
- Increase the use of 'active transport' (walking, cycling and public transport)
- Providing a transport system that offers attractive choices for travel other than by the private vehicle – including cycling.

1.5 PHYSICAL AND SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

The River Walk will connect to the existing regional networks and infrastructure. Through developing the relationships between physical and social infrastructure, the relevance and benefits of the River Walk will be embedded into local and regional patterns of use. (Refer Fig.4).

Cycle And Walking Trail Provisions

Major Regional Cycle Routes

- Connecting north to M2, Macquarie University, Lane Cove River; south to Strathfield, Cooks River, Botany Bay; east to the city; west to Parramatta.
- Meadowbank is an important node for the meeting of the east and west regional routes.
- Bicentennial Park and Olympic park are major drawcards for recreational cyclists.

Ryde Bicycle Strategy and Masterplan 2007

The City of Ryde is preparing a new cycle plan for the LGA addressing commuter and recreational cycling. The plan should be referred to for cycle focussed recommendations, strategies and networks.

Western precinct of the study area (west of Kissing point)

- Generally gentle topography.
- Foreshore pathway of width sufficient for shared pedestrian and cycle access.
- Linking large scale parklands including Meadowbank Park, Settlers Park and Kissing Point Pk.
- Poor connection west to Parramatta route.

Eastern precinct of the study area (east of Kissing Point)

- Areas of steep topography.
- Cycle access mostly on road / limits user range.
- Walking trails located in parks with difficult topography and dense bushland.

Public Transport Access and Connections

The study area is well served by public transport routes. These are important to the River Walk in establishing regional connections that allow flexibility of use in recreation patterns as well as important in encouraging commuter use for public transport / cycle / walking modal combinations.

Railway Access

- Northern railway line - connection to the CBD and Strathfield transport nodes
- Trail loops need to connect to encourage this eg. trails between Meadowbank and Homebush Bay

Ferry Access

- Connections east and west
- Trail loops need to connect to encourage this eg. trails focused along both sides of the Parramatta River

Putney Punt

- Connections across Parramatta River
- Facilitates trail loops involving connection to Public Transport stops

Connection To Facilities and Land Uses

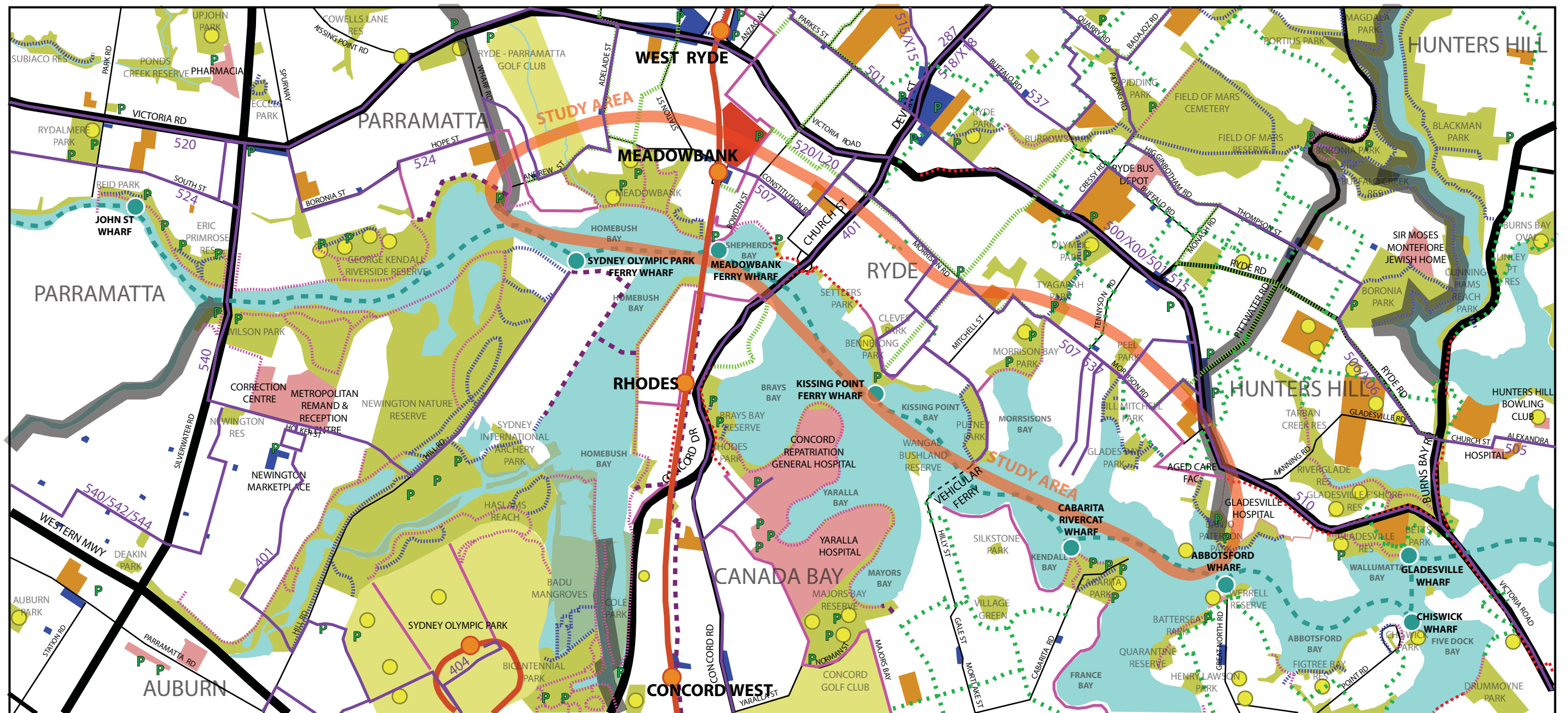
The connection to surrounding land uses is important in increasing the effective benefits to the local residents through increasing recreation use as well as establishing walking and cycling as alternative transport to these destinations.

- Urban Centres - shops used by recreation cyclists as well as encouraging cycling walking to shops
- Schools - encouraging student to cycle to school
- TAFE - encouraging local access
- Open Space / Recreation - encouraging local access and connection between parks

Health And Community Programs

Programs for public health encourage participation in a variety of recreation possibilities for physical and social well being. The potential for the River Walk is to link into programs and initiatives in realising the connection between public domain improvements and increasing accessibility and user participation. Programs and groups may include:

- public health programs
- hospital and rehabilitation programs
- schools
- social groups / community groups / sports groups



- PARKS
- RECREATION AREA
- URBAN CENTRES
- SCHOOLS
- SPECIAL PLACES
- LGA BOUNDARY
- ROADS
- TRAIN CONNECTION
- FERRY CONNECTION
- 404 BUS CONNECTION
- P P PARKING
- EXISTING CYCLE ROUTES ON-ROAD (City of Ryde 2003, Sydway 2005)
- EXISTING CYCLE ROUTES OFF-ROAD ON FOOTPATH (City of Ryde 2003, Sydway 2005)
- EXISTING CYCLE ROUTES OFF-ROAD IN PARK (City of Ryde 2003, Sydway 2005)
- UNMARKED USEFUL CYCLE ROUTES (City of Ryde 2003)
- BIKE-IT-ROUTES (Sydney Bike-it! Guide 2005)
- EXISTING WALKING TRAILS (City of Ryde 2003, Sydway 2005)
- PROPOSED CYCLE ROUTES

- BUSROUTES**
- 278 RYDE - MILSONS POINT
 - 401 SYDNEY OLYMPIC PARK - LIDCOMBE
 - 404 OLYMPIC PARK STATION - LIDCOMBE
 - 458 RYDE - BURWOOD
 - 459 RYDE - STRATHFIELD
 - 461/501 RYDE - CITY
 - 500/506/507/510/515/520 RYDE - CIRQLAR QUAY
 - 502/505/508 RYDE - DRUMMOYNE
 - 540 5420 5440 RYDE - AUBURN
 - 520 523 524 RYDE - PARRAMATTA
 - 534 RYDE - CHATSWOOD



Figure 4
Ryde River Walk Study Area and Context
Existing cycle and walking trail provisions, access, connections and social infrastructure