



DISCUSSION PAPER 2019

*Central Palmerston*  
**AREA PLAN**



PALMERSTON

## CONTENTS

<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
What is an Area Plan?	3
How you can be involved	3
Understanding the project	4
What this Discussion Paper does	4
Hierarchy of Plans and Information	5
Current Area Plan	6
<b>2 Planning Themes</b>	<b>7</b>
Growth Considerations	7
Town Planning Zones	8
Movement and Transport	10
Essential Infrastructure	10
Social Infrastructure	12
Environment, Culture and Heritage	14
<b>3 Focus Areas</b>	<b>15</b>
Focus Area – The CBD	16
Focus Area – South Side	18
Focus Area – North Link	20
<b>Informing Documents</b>	<b>22</b>

### GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CBD	Central Business District
CDU	Charles Darwin University (Palmerston Campus)
Gateway	Gateway Shopping and Home Centre

### APPROXIMATE TIMEFRAMES

Near Term	< 5 years
Intermediate Term	10 to 20 years
Far Term	40 to 50 years



**Map 1**  
Central Palmerston Area Plan  
**Study Area**

**Legend**

- ① The Central Business District
- ② Oasis Shopping Centre
- ③ Charles Darwin University (Palmerston Campus)
- ④ Palmerston Water Park
- ⑤ Gateway Shopping Centre
- ⑥ Gateway Home
- ⑦ Yarrawonga Service Commercial
- ⑧ Palmerston Police Station
- ⑨ Palmerston Health Precinct

# INTRODUCTION



*The Northern Territory Planning Commission's (NTPC) primary role is to prepare integrated strategic land use plans.*

The NTPC has identified the need to revise the Palmerston City Centre Planning Principles and Area Plan, which were included in the Northern Territory Planning Scheme in 2008.

In 2016, the area planning process commenced and now, following a few years of considerable growth and further studies, Stage 1 is being progressed. This study area is larger than the current plan to capture areas around the city centre that have undergone recent development. Robertson Barracks and Palmerston Regional Hospital are significant influences outside the study area.

## *What is an Area Plan?*

Area Plans are land use and development policies within the NT Planning Scheme. They

establish a long term vision and usually contain maps, planning principles and objectives to give the community, industry, and decision-makers guidance and confidence regarding future land uses.

Area Plans in the Darwin region build on the overarching direction provided by the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan (DRLUP). Planning is informed by population and infrastructure studies, and community input is essential to developing an Area Plan.

Area planning also provides an opportunity for authorities like Power and Water Corporation and local councils to plan for future infrastructure and services such as power, water, roads and drainage. Area Plans do not automatically rezone land. Any applications for rezoning must be made through the Minister responsible for administering the *Planning Act 1999*.

## *How you can be involved*

We are currently in Stage 1 of the area planning process outlined in our three stage area planning process as shown below. The purpose of Stage 1 is to engage the community on the issues presented in the Discussion Paper and share ideas to create a prosperous and dynamic city centre.

Stage 1 is an opportunity to be involved and have your say through information sessions, talking with planners, or making a submission to the NTPC.

Check the Planning Commission's website for details: [www.planningcommission.nt.gov.au](http://www.planningcommission.nt.gov.au)

Look out for the 'Tell Us' boxes throughout this Discussion Paper as these questions might help you prepare a submission, respond to the survey or talk with our team. Your thoughts, comments and questions will help us to prepare the draft Area Plan, which will be released for comment in Stage 2.

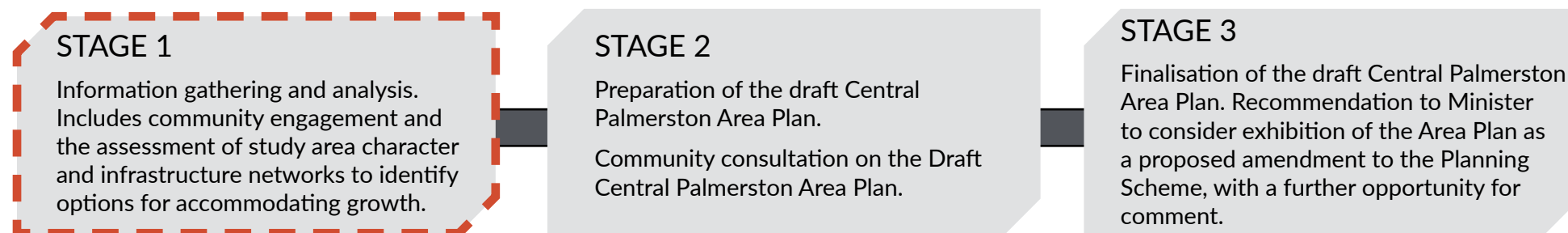


Figure 1 - Area planning process

## ***Understanding the project***

The Central Palmerston Area Plan is important as it will provide an understanding of the future demand for social and physical infrastructure, and land use changes that will occur to support future growth in the study area.

The Area Plan will also give confidence to government, industry and the community about future land use.

The Area Plan will provide a clear and effective land use and development framework that:

- reinforces the CBD as a commercial, service, community and entertainment hub;
- to establishes connectivity between the CBD and surrounding areas, including Gateway Shopping and Home Centre, Charles Darwin University – Palmerston Campus (CDU) and Yarrowonga;
- supports improved amenity for residents and visitors; and
- maintains the character of established localities while enhancing connectivity, and respecting environment, heritage and recreation values.

This project will revise the existing Palmerston City Centre Area Plan and planning principles. It is an opportunity to build on and bring together previous studies, projects and consultation that have focused on shaping the city. Connections will also be made to Northern Territory planning policies such as the Darwin Regional Land Use Plan and the Compact Urban Growth Policy.

## ***What this Discussion Paper does***

This Discussion Paper outlines how you can be involved, what we understand from previous studies and projects, and what needs to be considered in the preparation of the Area Plan.

This section introduces the project, summarises the consultation process and places the Area Plan within the hierarchy of plans and background information relevant to guiding future land use and development (Figure 2).

The Planning Themes section addresses influences on land use and development that apply across the study area. The themes should be thought about in relation to how they contribute to an integrated, functional and liveable city centre and surrounds.

The Focus Areas section looks at the study area's unique localities. Maps in this section highlight the main influences and opportunities for discussion.

Both the Planning Themes and the Focus Areas have been informed by the documents listed at the end of this paper, advice from key government agencies and initial consultation undertaken in 2016.





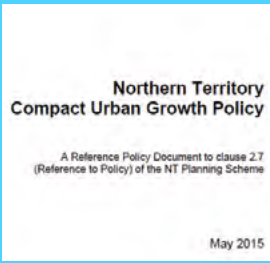
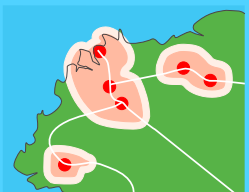





LEVEL 1	<b>Territory</b> 	 	<p>The NT Planning Scheme applies to the whole of the NT except for those areas covered by the Jabiru Town Plan, and includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• statements about land use policy;</li> <li>• zones that permit (with or without consent) or prohibit use and development;</li> <li>• development provisions and guidelines to help the consent authority to assess and decide on development applications; and</li> <li>• maps, plans, designs and diagrams.</li> </ul>
LEVEL 2	<b>Regional</b> 		<p>The Darwin Regional Land Use Plan (DRLUP) is the regional planning policy which sets the future direction and establishes an overarching framework for development across the Darwin region.</p> <p>The DRLUP identifies Palmerston as a principal activity centre in the region and provides for the preparation of detailed Area Plans to guide development.</p>
LEVEL 3	<b>District / Neighbourhood</b> 		<p>Area Plans contain planning principles and objectives along with maps that illustrate opportunities for future development or land use change.</p> <p>The Central Palmerston Area Plan will sit at this level of the hierarchy and build on the broad direction provided by regional planning policy.</p>
LEVEL 4	<b>Guideline Documents and Background Material</b>	 	<p>Guideline documents and background material provide further guidance in land use planning matters. A number of other plans, studies, reports and community consultation will provide further context.</p> <p>Planning for a Vibrant Future identifies Palmerston as the family city. Palmerston is our fastest growing city and will ultimately provide homes, family and community spaces, and facilities to accommodate future growth.</p>

Figure 2 Hierarchy of Plans and Information

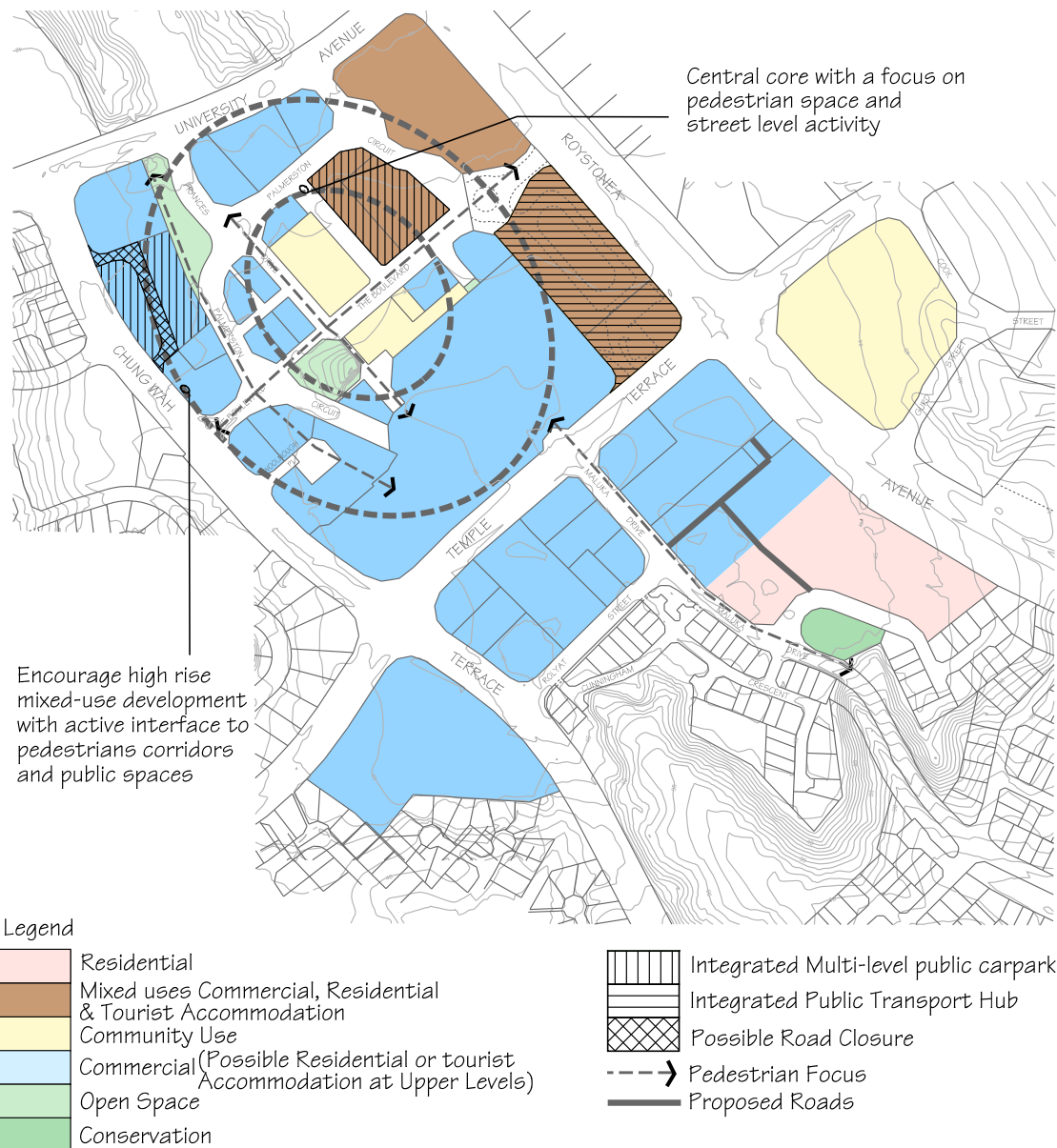


Figure 3 Current Palmerston City Centre Area Plan

## Current Area Plan

The current Palmerston City Centre Area Plan included in the NT Planning Scheme was introduced in 2008 (Figure 3). It identifies future land uses and considerations in transitioning to those uses. The current Area Plan includes a number of key planning principles to guide the development of the city centre to:

- include a diversity of land uses;
- reinforce the role of the city centre as a competitive location of commerce and community activity and as the principle focus for facilities and services for the Palmerston community;
- relate scale and density of development to the significance of the centre to the region and the city;
- reflect desired future character by encouraging high density residential living in a mixed use people friendly urban development; and
- create coherent and interconnected built environment and public domain that contributes to a sense of place and community within the city centre.

The current Area Plan and planning principles will be reviewed as part of the Central Palmerston Area Plan drafting process to take into account the wider scope of land use and activities within the surrounding area not included in the current plan.



### Growth Considerations

#### Population and housing

Palmerston is a young population with a median age of 30 years. This is below the Northern Territory median of 32 years of age, and the Australian median of 38 years. Just over 25% of the Palmerston population is under the age of 15 years and only 4.5% of the population is aged 65 years and over.

Over the past decade Palmerston has achieved growth rates substantially higher than the rest of the Darwin region and other Australian cities, with a projected growth rate at 2.4 percent annually to 2036. The population of Palmerston in 2016 was 35 880 people. With the completion of the remaining eastern suburbs, Palmerston is likely to accommodate more than 40 000 people.

Central Palmerston's residential population is expected to grow at a moderate pace to an estimated 3200 residents in the far term. In contrast, the daytime population of Central Palmerston is projected to increase considerably. In 2015 the daytime population for Central Palmerston was 4700 and it is projected to be around 16 300 in the far term. This will result in an increase in demand across a range of services and infrastructure, such as public transport and pedestrian/cycleway networks, office and retail floor space, and community facilities.

The first residential tower in the CBD was completed in 2018, signifying the beginning of a residential population in the study area. Recent population studies estimate the number of dwellings required in the CBD in the far term to be approximately 1800.

#### Office and retail space

In 2015, the Palmerston CBD had 25 200m<sup>2</sup> of commercial office space. The NT Government is the single largest tenant in the market and so future demand is largely shaped by policy relating to the distribution of Government office space. If the CBD was to retain its current share of office demand, a total of approximately 44 000m<sup>2</sup> will be required in the far term.

Completion of the Gateway Shopping and Home Centre has met the short and intermediate term demands for retail space. However, a market gap of approximately 30 000m<sup>2</sup> will still need to be met in the far term.

#### Service Commercial and Industrial

A large proportion of the study area is the Yarrowonga precinct, which consists of light industrial land to the north of Stuart Highway and service commercial land south of the highway. There is a mix of manufacturing, storage and onsite administrative and sales

functions. Other key land uses that have established in the area include:

- showrooms;
- gym and fitness centres;
- vehicle repairs and servicing;
- community facilities; and
- a veterinary hospital.

Most land in Yarrowonga is now developed and many properties have the potential for future re-development due to either underutilisation, or age and condition of existing structures. The increase in traffic in the vicinity due to the opening of Gateway could lead to the re-development of land in this area.

The Area Plan requires clear objectives to retain the appropriate balance of retail and commercial uses between the CBD and Yarrowonga.

#### TELL US ...

*What would encourage you to live in Central Palmerston?*

*How do you spend time in Central Palmerston? What is the best thing about this area?*

*What would you like to see here in the future?*

## *Town Planning Zones*

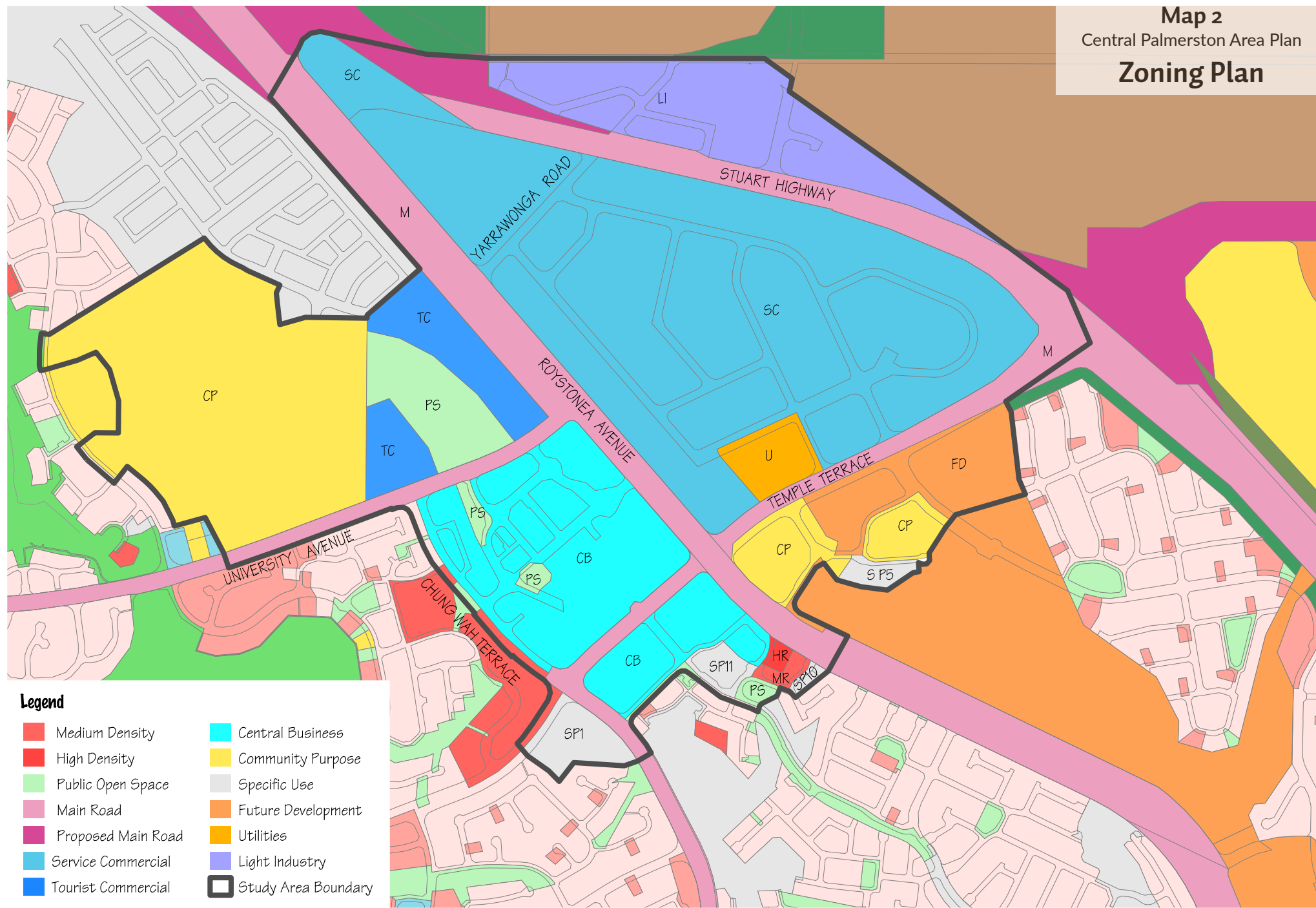
Land use zones in the NT Planning Scheme control the use and development of land.

Most of the Palmerston city centre is within Zone CB (Central Business), which allows a wide range of land uses and activities typical of a regional city centre.

Zoning of land surrounding the city centre allows for a range of housing types, recreation, retail, entertainment and industrial uses (Map 2).



# Map 2 Central Palmerston Area Plan Zoning Plan



## Movement and Transport

Integrating land use and transport planning creates efficient movement networks and contributes to walkable neighbourhoods, accessible public transport, and increased economic and social activity.

### Current situation

Central Palmerston is dominated by major transport networks which both link and divide the city. The CBD is separated from its surrounding areas by a system of ring roads and roundabouts. This design, when originally developed, sought to promote a network of car oriented streets and laneways around large scale office and retail development.

The study area has a variety of public and private transport networks that provide local and regional links, as shown on Map 3. Pedestrian and cycling activity is focused around Goyder Square with various links through to surrounding

commercial and retail outlets, and community facilities. Public transport is focused on the Palmerston Bus Interchange, on the periphery of the CBD adjacent to Roystonea Avenue. Bus services within Palmerston and to Darwin and Casuarina are provided, as well as services to the rural area.

Recent developments have established new transport and land-use patterns across the city centre and influence the manner in which it will be used and developed in the future. There have been recent upgrades to a number of intersections within the study area, primarily along Roystonea Avenue and The Boulevard. Temple Terrace serves as the primary connection between the Palmerston Regional Hospital and future urban development in Holtze, located approximately 2.5km from the CBD.

### Planning considerations

Community feedback from 2016 reveals concerns around movement and connectivity, such as the impact of vehicular traffic on pedestrians and the limited number of crossings that link the pedestrian network.

With more residential uses expected in the city centre in the future, the challenge lies in managing the travel patterns that this new urban arrangement brings.

Greater emphasis on alternative modes of transport could lead to more residents choosing options such as cycling and walking to get to their destinations.

## Essential Infrastructure

Essential services (power, water, sewer), roads, drainage and communication networks need to be planned to match likely development locations, land uses and future populations.

### Current situation

Existing essential service components are shown on Map 3. Investigations of power, water and sewer networks have been undertaken to test capacity and identify necessary upgrades to support growth.

These investigations have identified that there is sufficient capacity in the existing infrastructure to cater for existing and near term development. Upgrades will be required across water, sewer and power networks to accommodate anticipated intermediate and far term development. There is sufficient capacity in the telecommunications network to cater for anticipated growth and telecommunications infrastructure will not require any upgrade.

### Planning considerations

Infrastructure plays a fundamental role in how the city operates and functions. Understanding the current capacity and planning for future demand will identify where upgrades are necessary, including any additional land needs.

#### TELL US ...

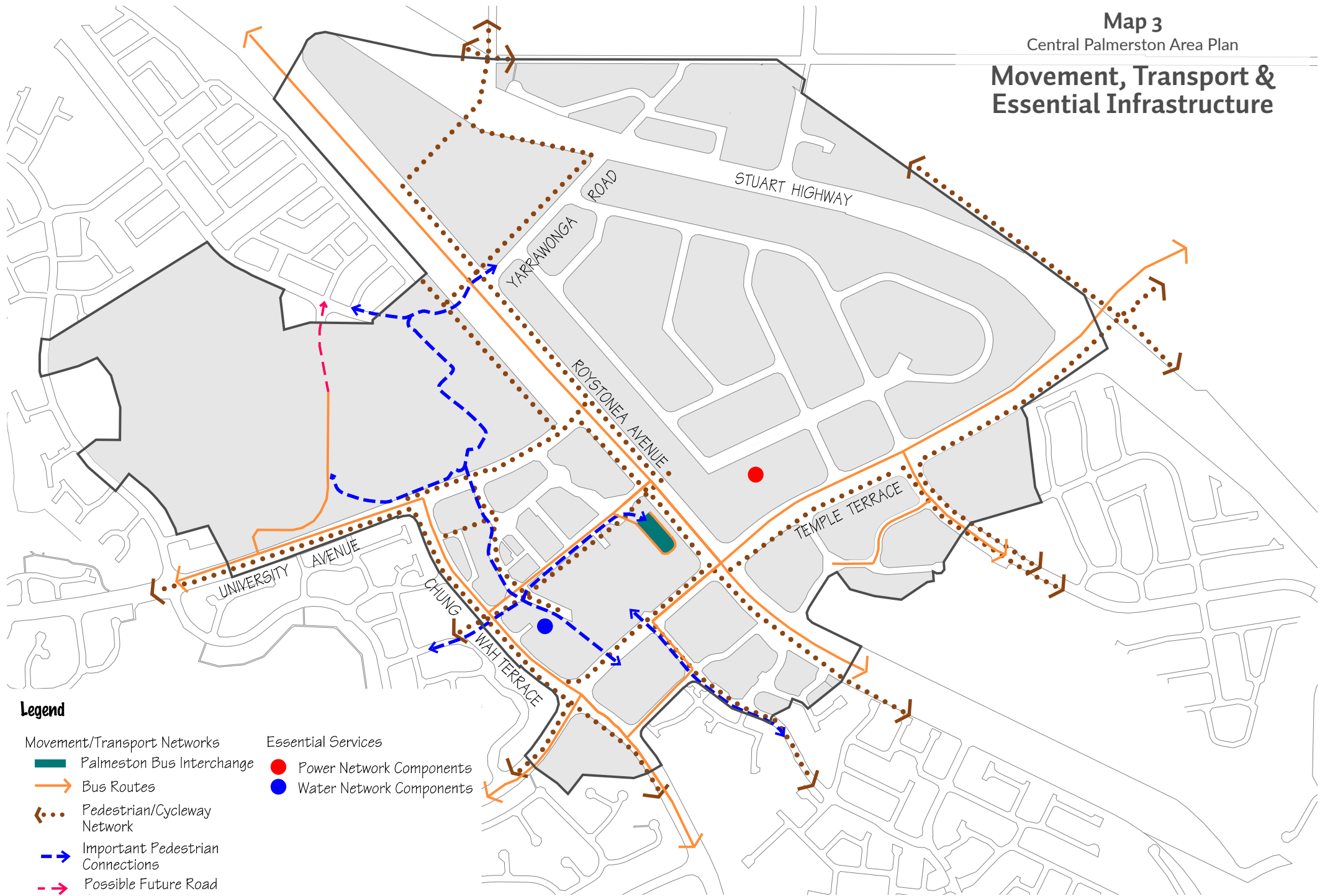
*How do you travel to and around Central Palmerston?*

*What is needed to encourage walking or cycling to and around this area?*

*Do you catch a bus from Palmerston?*

*If so, where to?*

## Movement, Transport & Essential Infrastructure



## Social Infrastructure

The Area Plan is informed by the Palmerston City Centre Social Infrastructure Assessment (2017). This assessment outlines the availability and relevance of social infrastructure and open space for Central Palmerston, and determines the required capacity to cater to future demands.

Social infrastructure includes:

- community, education and health facilities;
- public open space;
- recreation and sporting facilities; and
- places of worship.

Notable facilities are identified on Map 4.

## Current situation

### Community and recreation facilities

Central Palmerston has many community and recreation facilities, including Palmerston Library and the Palmerston Water Park. These facilities collectively provide opportunities for events, active and passive recreation and entertainment.

## Education

The CDU campus is walking distance from the CBD and provides educational opportunities, services and connections to the community, with a focus on vocation education and training programs. The campus is surrounded by large areas of open space both in the form of native woodland and sports ovals. The ovals and associated sporting facilities have the capacity to operate during both day and night.

All levels of government schools that are in close proximity to the study area are at or close to capacity.

## Health

The Palmerston Health Centre provides a variety of health care services and creates an opportunity to collocate allied health services. The new Palmerston Regional Hospital is in close proximity to the study area.

## Planning considerations

Central Palmerston functions as both a regional and local centre, providing social infrastructure to both populations. Most facilities are currently operated by City of Palmerston, government agencies and non-government organisations.

Consideration will need to be given to the upgrade and provision of additional social infrastructure to meet the diverse needs of future residents, workers and visitors.

Potential sites for social infrastructure may be nominated in the Area Plan based on the site characteristics required for particular facilities.

Not all social infrastructure required for the region will be provided within the CBD. Some facilities may be better located elsewhere.

### TELL US ...

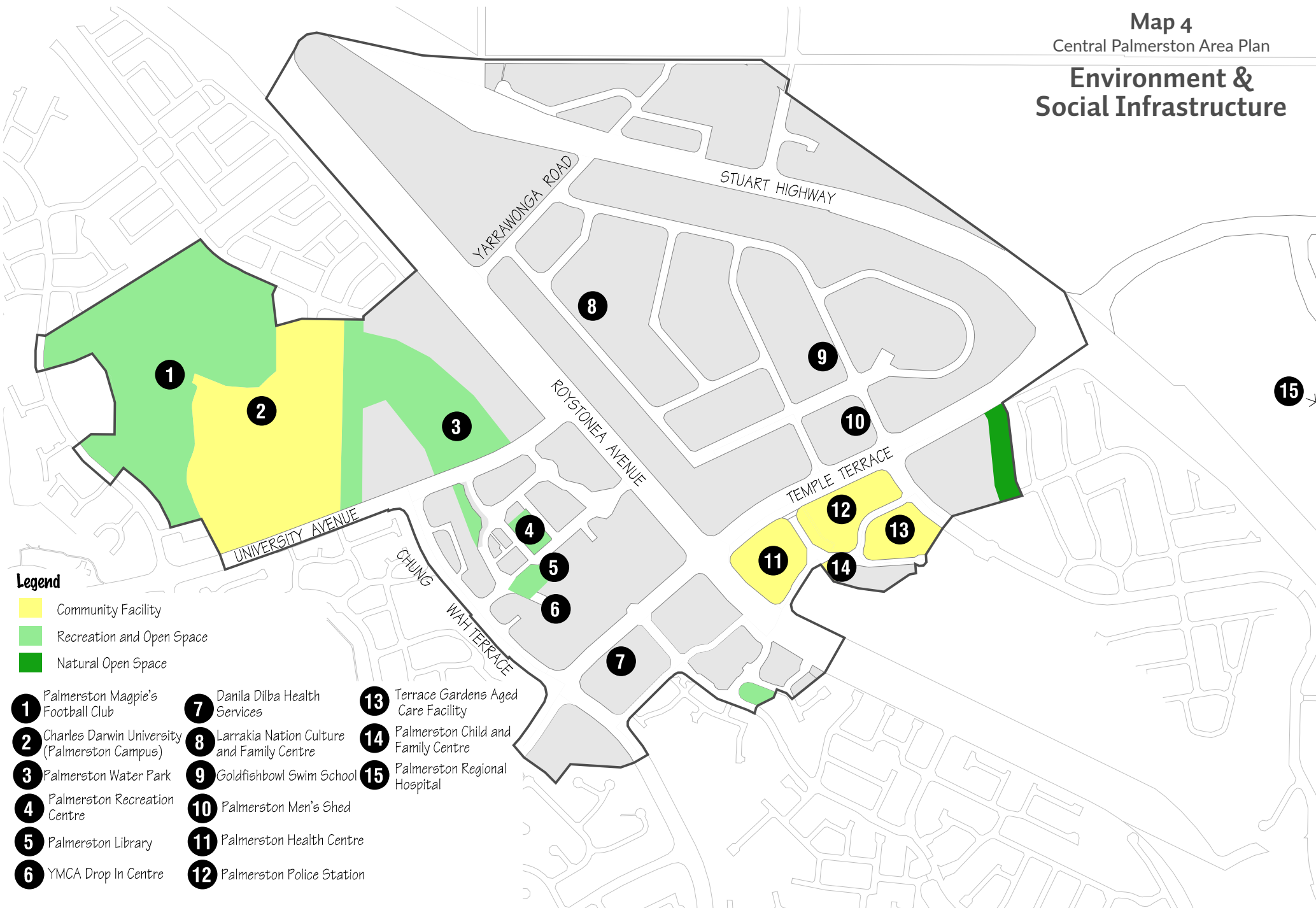
*Which facilities do you use in Central Palmerston?*

*What facilities would you like to see?*

*What public spaces or facilities do you enjoy at the moment in city or the suburbs of Palmerston?*

*How can the parks and public spaces be improved?*

## Environment & Social Infrastructure



## Environment, Culture and Heritage

Central Palmerston has some pockets of remnant native vegetation that are particularly valuable in contributing to the liveability of the area.

Similarly, cultural assets require ongoing investment as they have high economic value, engage the community and contribute to a sense of place.

### Current Situation

#### Environment

Whilst most of the study area has been cleared and the land developed, there are some pockets of remnant native vegetation adjacent to the Palmerston Water Park and within the CDU campus grounds. The surrounding gullies in this locality facilitate stormwater drainage from the CBD through the University Lake and to Durack Lakes downstream.

The City of Palmerston manages most parks and street planting on public land.

#### Culture and Heritage

Cultural assets, such as festivals, community centres, organisations and traditions will continue to be established as the relatively young city continues to grow in time. The NT

Heritage Council administers the *Heritage Act 2011*, the object of which is to provide for the conservation of the Territory's cultural and natural heritage. There are no listed heritage items within the study area.

The investigation into the identification of any sacred sites is undertaken prior to the commencement of development or land clearing through the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority, in accordance with the *Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989*.

### Planning considerations

The Area Plan will have limited ability to influence the management of public open spaces. However, the NT Planning Scheme does contain landscaping and open space requirements for development on private land. Planning for the interaction of landscaping across public and private land will help to maximise community benefit.

The Area Plan may include principles for various localities, as well as site specific concepts and objectives, to guide the relationship between development and our natural systems.

As Palmerston continues to grow, planning policies and zoning contribute to the ongoing

protection of the existing environmental assets and evolution of cultural assets.

The establishment of future cultural assets can be supported by land use planning through the identification of appropriate sites and planning policy. Sacred sites are not incorporated into Area Plans unless specified.

#### TELL US ...

*What makes a great city?*

*Are there any places in Central Palmerston that are important to you in terms of environment or culture?*

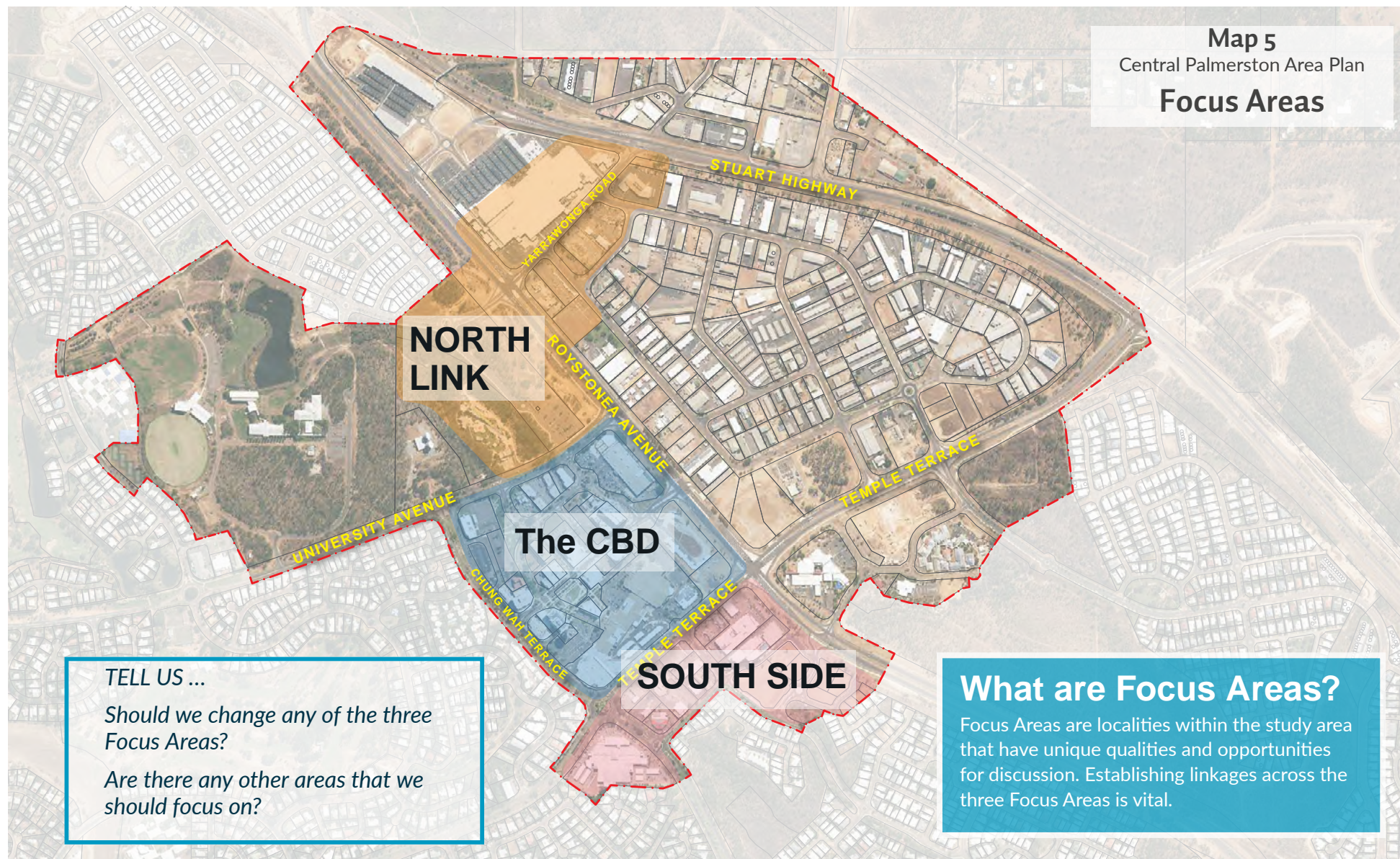
*What events or facilities would you like to see in Central Palmerston?*

*What makes Palmerston unique?*



## FOCUS AREAS

**Map 5**  
Central Palmerston Area Plan  
**Focus Areas**



**TELL US ...**

*Should we change any of the three Focus Areas?*

*Are there any other areas that we should focus on?*

### **What are Focus Areas?**

Focus Areas are localities within the study area that have unique qualities and opportunities for discussion. Establishing linkages across the three Focus Areas is vital.

# The CBD

The CBD hosts a range of government, civic and business activities for Palmerston residents, workers and visitors.

TELL US ...

*How do you use this area?*

*Where do you spend the most time when you visit?*

*Is there anything missing that would make you visit more or stay longer?*

## Regeneration

The introduction of residents to the CBD will bring a new level of activity, increasing activation throughout the day and into the night, and enabling key drivers for change such as improved economic certainty. Strong linkages to the surrounding areas are essential to establishing a vibrant city centre.

Map 6  
Central Palmerston Area Plan

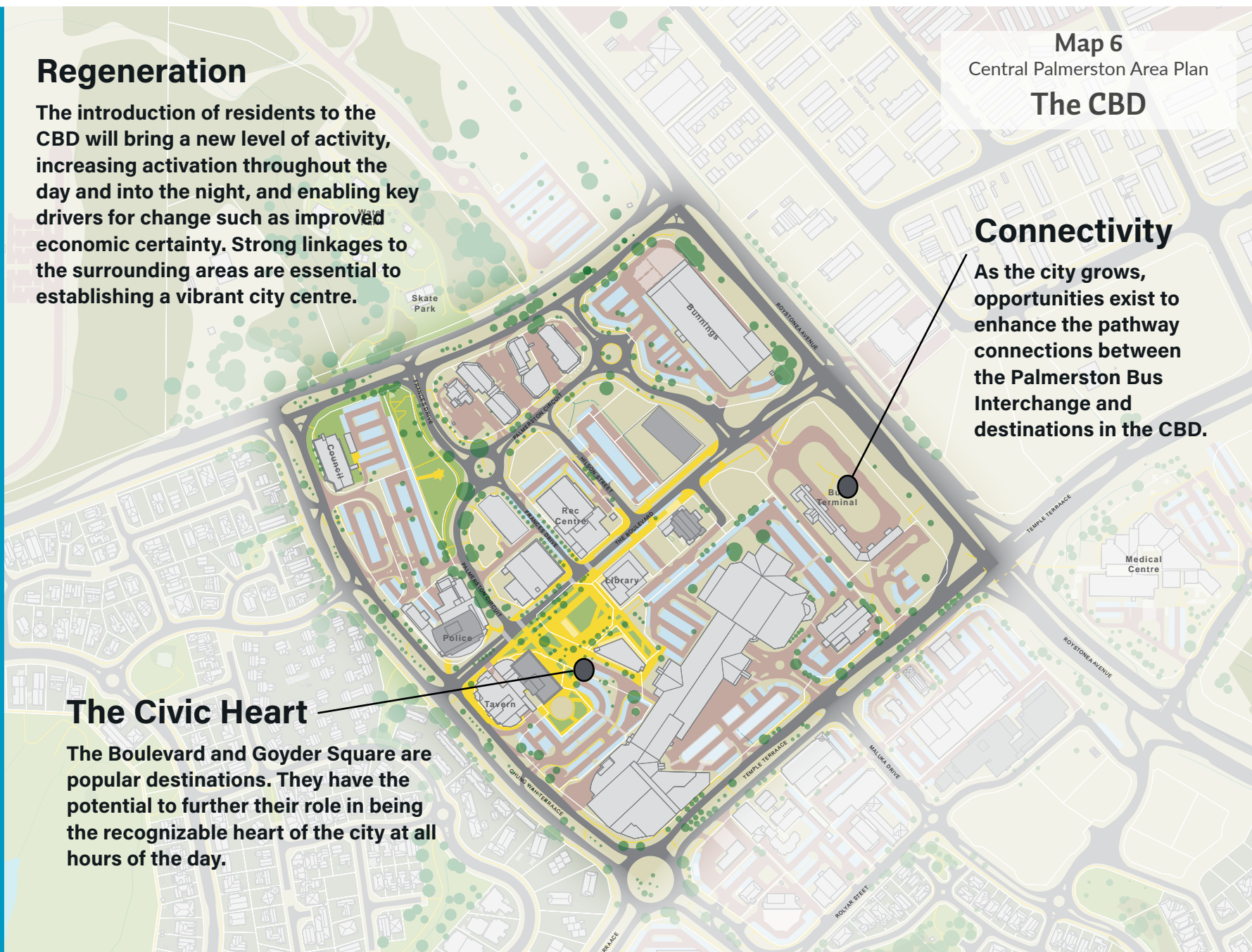
## The CBD

## Connectivity

As the city grows, opportunities exist to enhance the pathway connections between the Palmerston Bus Interchange and destinations in the CBD.

## The Civic Heart

The Boulevard and Goyder Square are popular destinations. They have the potential to further their role in being the recognizable heart of the city at all hours of the day.



# South Side

South Side is a locality at the southern edge of the CBD and is anchored by Oasis Shopping Centre and the Rydges Hotel.

TELL US ...

*How do you use this area?*

*Where do you spend the most time when you visit?*

*Is there anything missing that would make you visit more or stay longer?*

## Connecting the City to the Suburbs

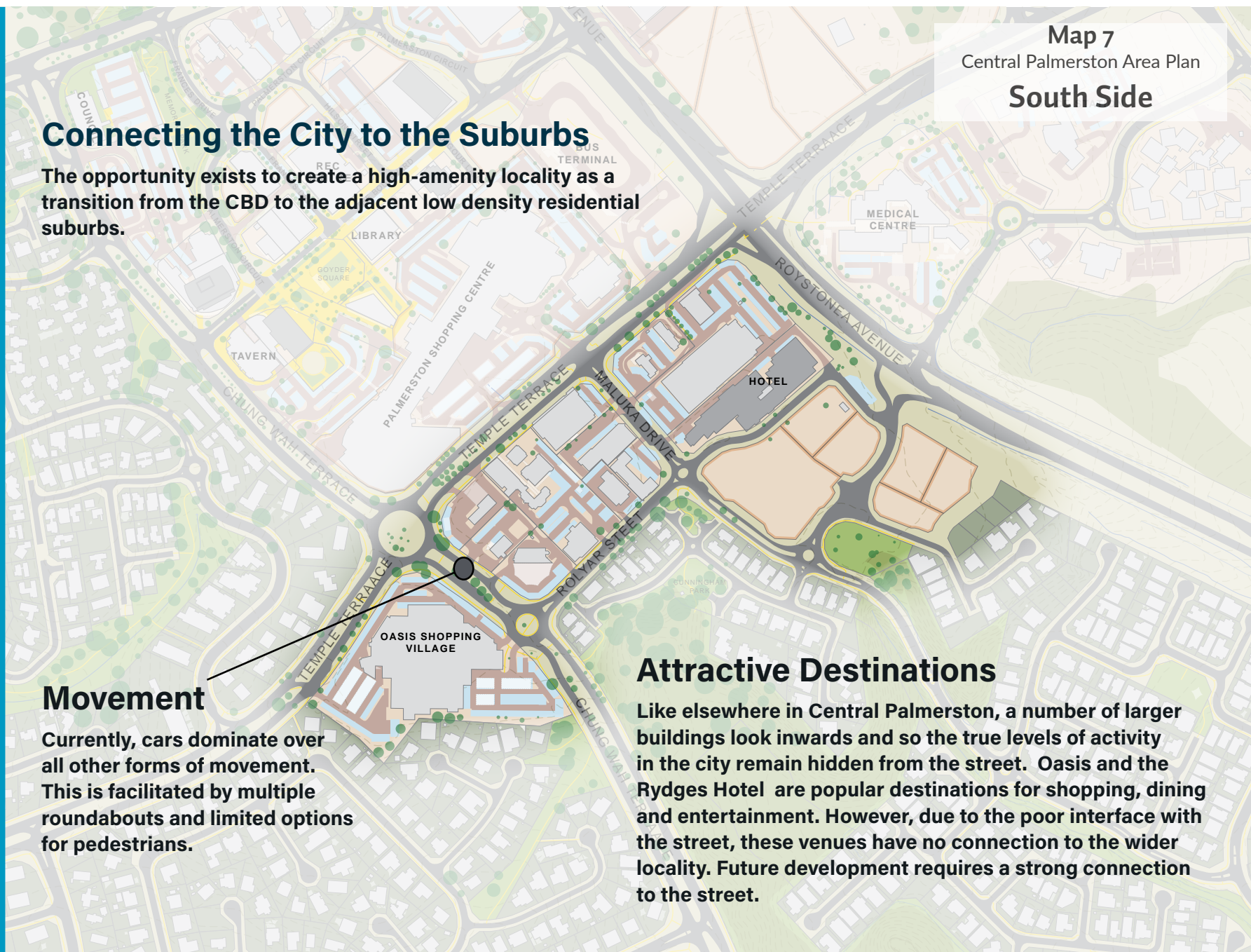
The opportunity exists to create a high-amenity locality as a transition from the CBD to the adjacent low density residential suburbs.

## Movement

Currently, cars dominate over all other forms of movement. This is facilitated by multiple roundabouts and limited options for pedestrians.

## Attractive Destinations

Like elsewhere in Central Palmerston, a number of larger buildings look inwards and so the true levels of activity in the city remain hidden from the street. Oasis and the Rydges Hotel are popular destinations for shopping, dining and entertainment. However, due to the poor interface with the street, these venues have no connection to the wider locality. Future development requires a strong connection to the street.



# North Link

North Link is a unique destination within Central Palmerston linking the CBD to the Gateway Shopping Centre.

TELL US ...

*How do you use this area?*

*Where do you spend the most time when you visit?*

*Is there anything missing that would make you visit more or stay longer?*

Map 7  
Central Palmerston Area Plan  
**North Link**

## Welcome to Palmerston

This area is ideal for a bold, entry statement to the city.

## Unlocking Public Open Space

The natural drainage lines can be utilised as attractive open space areas for passive and active recreation for future city residents and visitors.

GATEWAY SHOPPING CENTRE

SERVICE STATION

WATER PARK

SKATE PARK

## Linking Gateway to the City

The locality has a critical role in connecting the Gateway Shopping Centre with the CBD.

## Tourism

This area has the potential to become a tourism precinct offering a range of recreational and retail experiences that evolve over time as the city grows. The Water Park could become a tourist destination, similar to the Wave Lagoon at the Darwin Waterfront.

## INFORMING DOCUMENTS



Australian Bureau of Statistics Census Community Profiles (2016)

Community Plan - City of Palmerston (2019)

Community Safety Design Guide (2010)

Darwin and Palmerston Central Business Districts: Economic Assessment to Inform Area Planning (2017)

Darwin Regional Land Use Plan (2015)

Darwin Regional Transport Plan (2018)

Northern Territory Compact Urban Growth Policy (2015)

Northern Territory Planning Scheme (2007)

Northern Territory Population Projections - NT Department of Treasury and Finance (2019)

Palmerston Bike Plan (2015)

Palmerston City Centre Social Infrastructure Assessment (2017)

## NOTES

---

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

NOTES

This image shows a full page of a document template. It consists of approximately 20 evenly spaced, horizontal blue dashed lines running across the width of the page. The background is plain white, and there are no margins, headers, or footers visible. This type of template is commonly used for teaching handwriting to children or as a guide for letter height in professional writing.

---

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## For more information

Email: [ntpc@nt.gov.au](mailto:ntpc@nt.gov.au)

Visit: [planningcommission.nt.gov.au](http://planningcommission.nt.gov.au)

Phone: 08 8924 7540