

DRAFT

Wantirna Health City

Background Report

Prepared for



Issued
22 October 2019

Tract

Level 6, 6 Riverside Quay,
Southbank VIC 3006

(03) 9429 6133.
www.tract.com.au

Quality Assurance

Wantirna Health City
Background Report

Prepared for Victorian Planning Authority

Project Number
[319-0246-00-U-01-RP05]

Revision (see below)
02

Prepared By
MW

Reviewed By
OH

Project Principal
OH

Issued
22 October 2019

Revision	Date	Issue
00	09 September 2019	Draft Issued to VPA
01	08 October 2019	Revised Draft Issued to VPA
02	22 October 2019	Final Report Issued to VPA

Contents

1.	Introduction	04	2.	Urban Context	10	3.	Issues + Opportunities	26
1.1	Project Overview	05	2.1	Strategic Context	11	3.1	Key Issues	27
1.2	Purpose of this Document	05	2.2	Planning Framework	12	3.2	Key Opportunities	28
1.3	Project Area	06	2.3	Zoning	14			
1.4	Key Stakeholders	08	2.4	Overlays	15			
			2.5	Local Context	16			
			2.6	Character + Identity	17			
			2.7	Landscape + Public Realm	18			
			2.8	Access + Movement	19			
			2.9	Cross Sections	20			
			2.10	Built Form	24			
			2.11	Site Photos	25			

1

Introduction

1.1 Project Overview

Tract in collaboration with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) has undertaken an Urban Design Study for the Wantirna Health Precinct (WHP) as part of the preparation of an evidence base for a Masterplan and Planning Scheme Amendment.

The VPA is working in partnership with Knox City Council (KCC) and State Agencies, which include Department of Transport (DOT), the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and Eastern Health to establish a new integrated future for the WHP.

The WHP is envisaged as an integrated 'Health City' anchored by a best-practice new public hospital with complementary health, research, education and innovation facilities. The precinct is imagined as an integrated, connected and comprehensive centre that promotes patient, carer and staff well-being within a lush and green parklike setting. It is expected to become a vibrant and sustainable place for the community and a nationally recognised health centre in Melbourne's eastern region.

The masterplan for the WHP will be an adaptable and flexible framework that provides a 'road map' guiding future development initiatives in the precinct. It will outline a vision for the 'Health City' that builds upon other allied ongoing initiatives of the Victorian Government.

1.2 Purpose of this Document

This background report provides an urban design and planning overview of the WHP to guide the future masterplan for the site. This report will inform the next stage of the project which will include community engagement and a detailed urban design study to establish the site's future vision, strategic goals and objectives.

This background report provides a concise overview and analysis of the WHP in terms of its physical and policy context, in order to produce the relevant key issues and opportunities for the precinct.

To fully understand the issues and opportunities presented by the site, a range of additional sub-consultants have been engaged by the VPA to provide a review of the various other aspects of the place, including transport, economics, drainage and environment. This background report focuses on the planning and urban design considerations for the site.



University of Technology Sydney

Source: UTS

1.3 Project Area

The WHP is a 21.8ha site located within the north-western area of the City of Knox municipality, generally bounded by major roads including EastLink freeway to the west, Boronia Road to the north, Wantirna Road to the east and Mountain Highway to the south-east.

The precinct abuts the Hungarian Community Centre to the west and a future residential development to the south (on the former Wantirna Caravan Park), comprising 248 townhouses. Wantirna Health, a 64 bed Palliative and Geriatric Medicine Hospital, occupies the north-eastern corner of the site.

Of particular relevance for the proposed Health City is the adjacent Knox Private Hospital - a 359 patient-bed facility providing 24 hour Emergency Department, operating theatres, a large range of medical and acute services, an Intensive Care Unit, a Day Procedure Unit and other allied health and medical services.

The balance of the surrounding urban fabric and neighbourhood is largely suburban residential in scale and character, with local shops to the north east in Wantirna Mall.



Figure 1. Project Location



Figure 2. Project Area



Aerial Photo of Site

1.4 Key Stakeholders

The Project Steering Group (PSG) for WHP is being led by VPA and includes City of Knox, DHHS, DOT and Eastern Health. Consultation with neighbouring landowners/businesses, tertiary education/health providers and the wider Wantirna community will occur throughout the project timeline. The adjacent diagram details the project governance structure.



DRAFT



Monash University, Clayton Campus Source: Andrew Lloyd

2

Urban Context

2.1 Strategic Context

The WHP is located in Wantirna, approximately 25km east of the Melbourne CBD. It is situated adjacent to EastLink which links Frankston and Dandenong to Ringwood, and to the CBD via the Eastern Freeway. The closest train stations are Ringwood Station and Bayswater Station, located approximately 3km to the north and east respectively.

The precinct is identified as a State-significant health precinct in Plan Melbourne, with other significant health and education precincts located at Box Hill and the Monash and Dandenong National Employment & Innovation Clusters (NEICs). One of the key areas of State significance focuses on investment and growth around ‘health and education’. The purpose of health and education precincts (Policy 1.1.4) is identified to:

‘Support the significant employment and servicing role of health and education precincts across Melbourne.’

Plan Melbourne identifies the precinct anchored by Knox Private Hospital as one of the health precincts of State significance. These identified precincts are expected to stimulate innovation, create employment and are of fundamental importance to the emerging knowledge economy and surrounding communities. Co-location of facilities (for example, a university with a hospital) is encouraged to make better use of existing infrastructure and support the growth of associated businesses and industries. Specialised economic functions with opportunities to provide complementary retail, commercial, accommodation and supporting services are also encouraged.

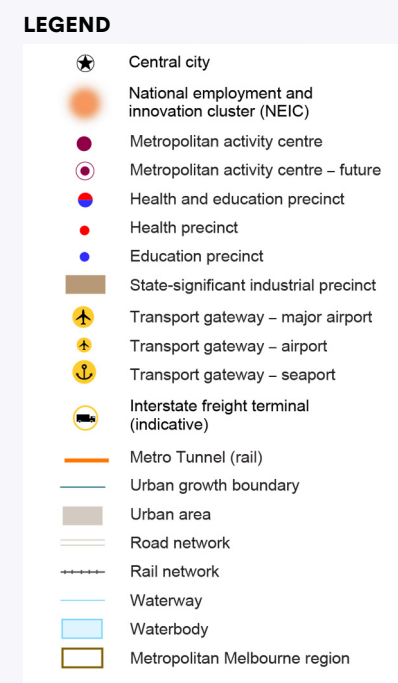


Figure 3. Strategic Context, Plan Melbourne Source: Department of Environment, Land, Water + Planning

2.2 Planning Framework

The following documents have provided the strategic justification for the redevelopment of the precinct, and will act as guiding documents throughout the masterplanning stage of the project.



Plan Melbourne

The WHP has been identified in Plan Melbourne (2017-2050) as being of State significance, as one of the Health Precincts. The Plan identifies Major Health and Education Precincts for further services and jobs growth, with the precincts stimulating innovation, creating employment and integral to the emerging knowledge economy.



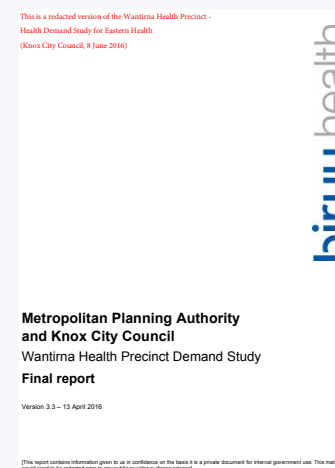
Victoria's International Health Strategy 2016-2020

Victoria's International Health Strategy 2016-2020 was developed by DHHS to enhance existing approaches with international partners across the health, education, aged care and medical research sectors. The strategy identifies international opportunities for deepened relationships, joint ventures and public private partnerships, technology transfer agreements and other collaborative undertakings that enable the delivery of innovative and improved health solutions to communities across the region.



Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2015-2019

The Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan sets out a long-term agenda for improving health and social outcomes in Victoria. The Plan supports the incorporation of health principles into Plan Melbourne's promotion of 20-minute neighbourhoods which are easily accessible and provide better access to local employment and services.



Health Demand Analysis, 2016

A Health Demand Analysis was commissioned in partnership between the VPA and KCC. The outcomes of the Health Demand Study found that a proactive approach to facilitating place-based planning and investment was required of both Local and State Government if a 'health precinct' of State significance was to eventuate.



Health Planning and Development Guidelines, 2018

The Health Planning and Development Guidelines sets out the objectives of the Victorian Health and Human Services Building Authority in undertaking masterplanning of its current and proposed future service delivery sites, the process for undertaking masterplanning and the expected outcomes and outputs from a masterplanning study. The Guidelines outline key masterplanning principles which will be incorporated into any future masterplan and Planning Scheme Amendment.



Knox Amendment C164

Amendment C164 to the Knox Planning Scheme aimed to implement the Future Proofing Knox’s Business Land Project, and in particular the Knox’s Land for Business Directions Plan, December 2018, which included Wantirna Health as a Strategic Investigation Site.

The amendment was gazetted by the Minister of Planning on 21 March 2019 and has been incorporated as part of the Knox Planning Scheme.

Through Amendment C164, the Municipal Strategic Statement identifies the Wantirna Health Precinct as an employment centre and provider of health, community and education services of State significance. Clause 21.07 – Economic Development outlines the role, function and strategic directions for the site.

The inclusion of the WHP within the Knox Planning Scheme gives the redevelopment of the site greater strategic weight, and provides further guidance on the requirements and potential of the precinct.

Knox Planning Scheme, Clause 21.07

Role + Function	Strategic Directions
<p>This location is a health precinct of State significance, consisting of land in residential, commercial and public use zones. The precinct includes the Knox Private Hospital, Wantirna Health Hospital and the Wantirna Mall Activity Centre.</p> <p>This precinct will be a major employment centre for health, community and education services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Engender a collaborative approach to investment and strategic planning direction for the precinct to facilitate outcomes commensurate with its importance as a State significant health precinct.Focus on new employment generating uses which support and strengthen the health, education and community sectorsConsider employment- generating uses on all sites, as part of an integrated health-based precinct. Ensure residential developments are integrated with employment generating land uses.Ensure residential development manages sensitive interfaces with existing and future employment generating uses, to avoid future amenity impacts affecting the economic viability and competitive strengths of the precinct.Support opportunities to improve integration of employment generating uses with open space, residential uses and the Wantirna Mall Neighbourhood Activity Centre.Allow for non-residential uses within residential areas which support major health providers in the precinct, where location and amenity considerations are met.Support development which creates high standards of built form and landscaping design and amenity standards.

Wantirna Health City

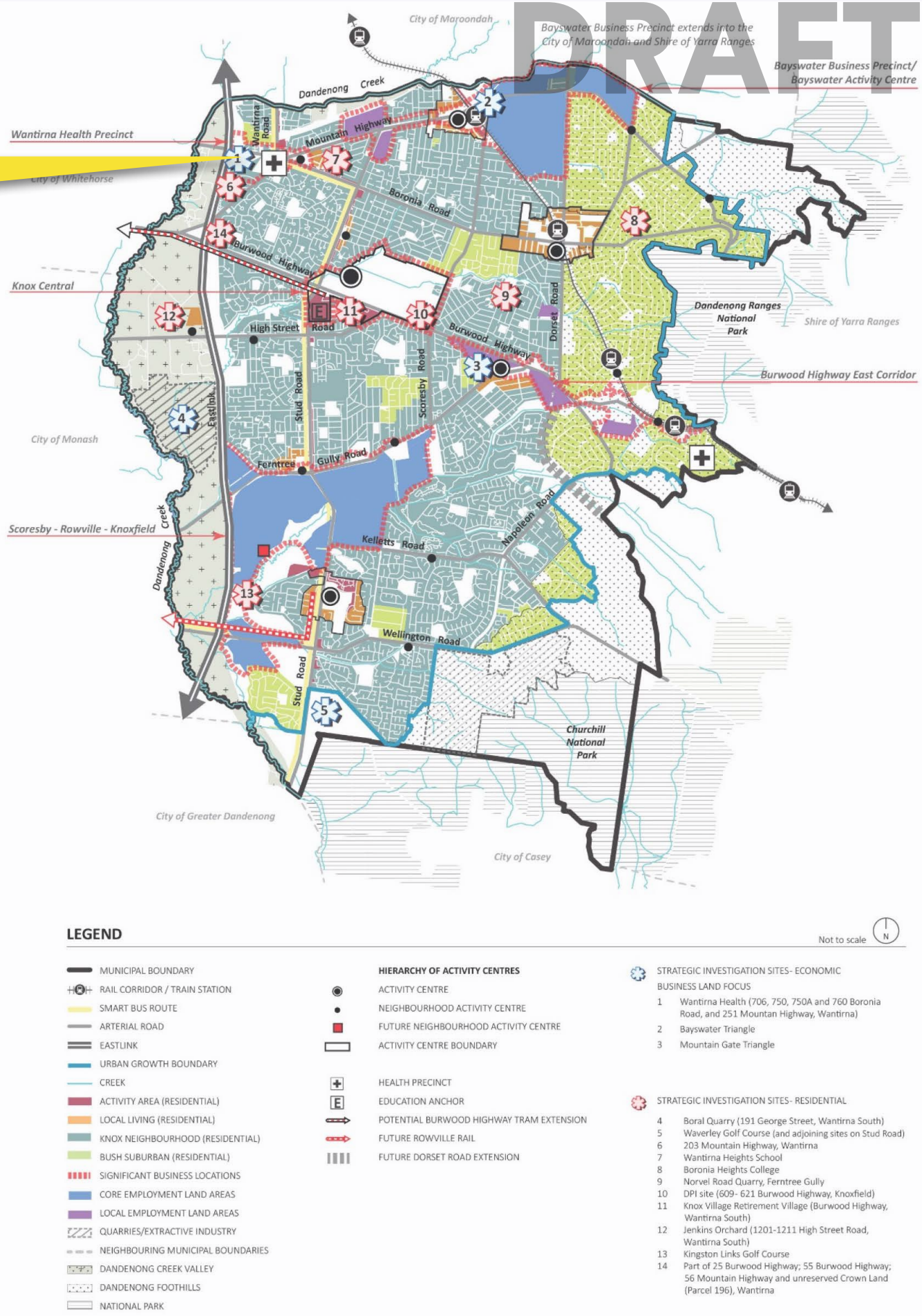


Figure 4. Knox Strategic Directions Plan Source: Knox Planning Scheme

2.3 Zoning

Three planning zones are currently applied to the site;

- **Public Use Zone (PUZ3)**

The purpose of this zone is to accommodate public land uses for public utility and community services and facilities. In particular, Schedule 3 is for 'Health and Community'.

- **General Residential Zone (GRZ1)**

The purpose of this zone is to encourage a diversity of housing that respects the neighbourhood character of the area, as well as allowing educational, community and other non-residential uses that serve local community needs.

- **Road Category Zone (RDZ1)**

The purpose of this zone is to identify significant existing roads and land which has been acquired for significant proposed roads.

The Public Use Zone (PUZ3) applies to the DHHS site and is fit for purpose for establishing future health related uses on the site. However, the General Residential Zone and Road Category Zone may be subject to a future rezoning process.

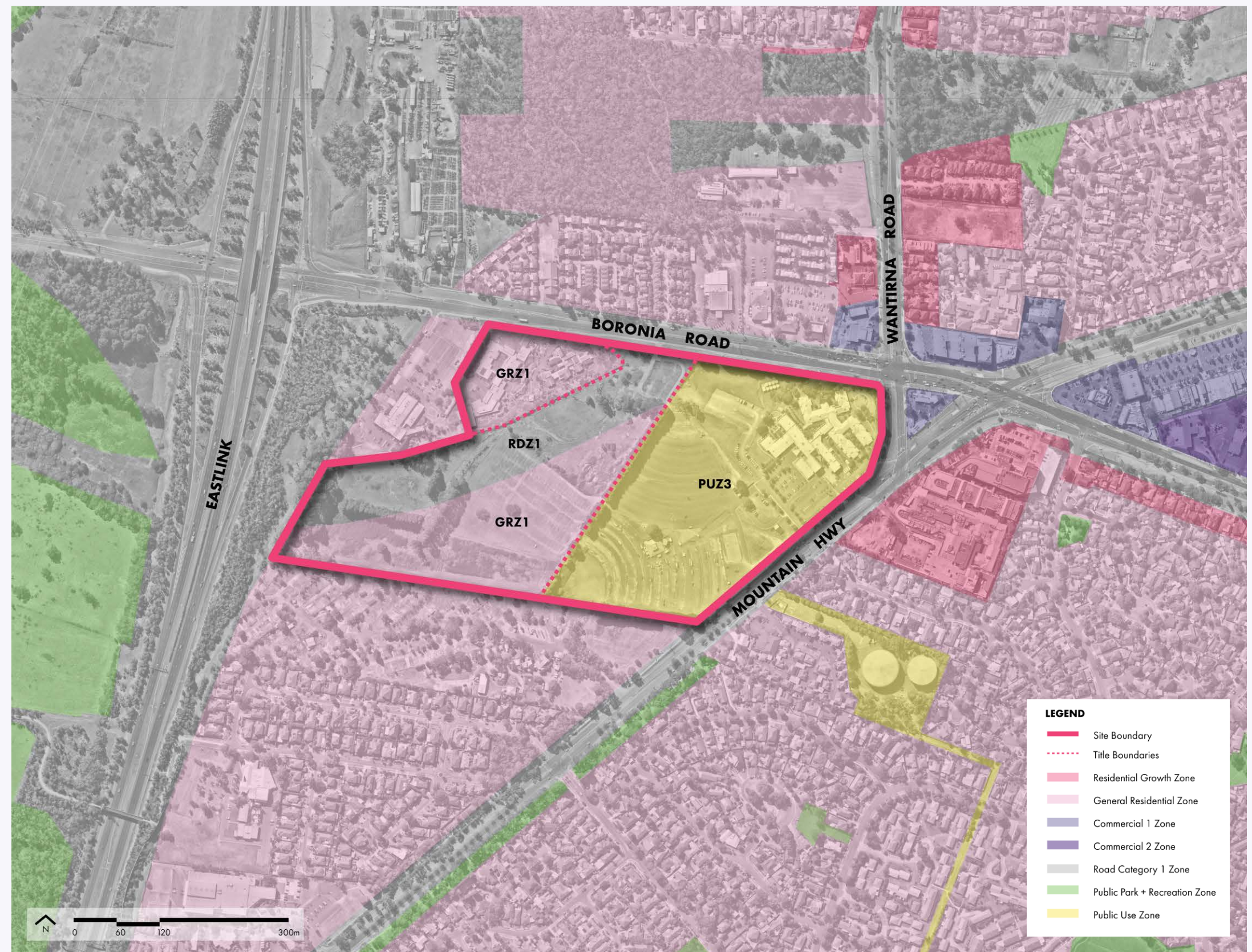


Figure 5. Zoning Plan

2.4 Overlays

The site is affected by 3 overlay controls:

- **Vegetation Protection Overlay - Schedule 1**

This applies to remnant overstorey vegetation, and protects the existing vegetation and habitat for native fauna.

This overlay is currently under review and may be removed in the future.

- **Vegetation Protection Overlay - Schedule 2**

This applies to significant exotic and non indigenous native trees and aims to protect vegetation of special significance, natural beauty, interest and importance.

- **Public Acquisition Overlay - Schedule 1**

This allows the Roads Corporation to acquire the land for road purposes.

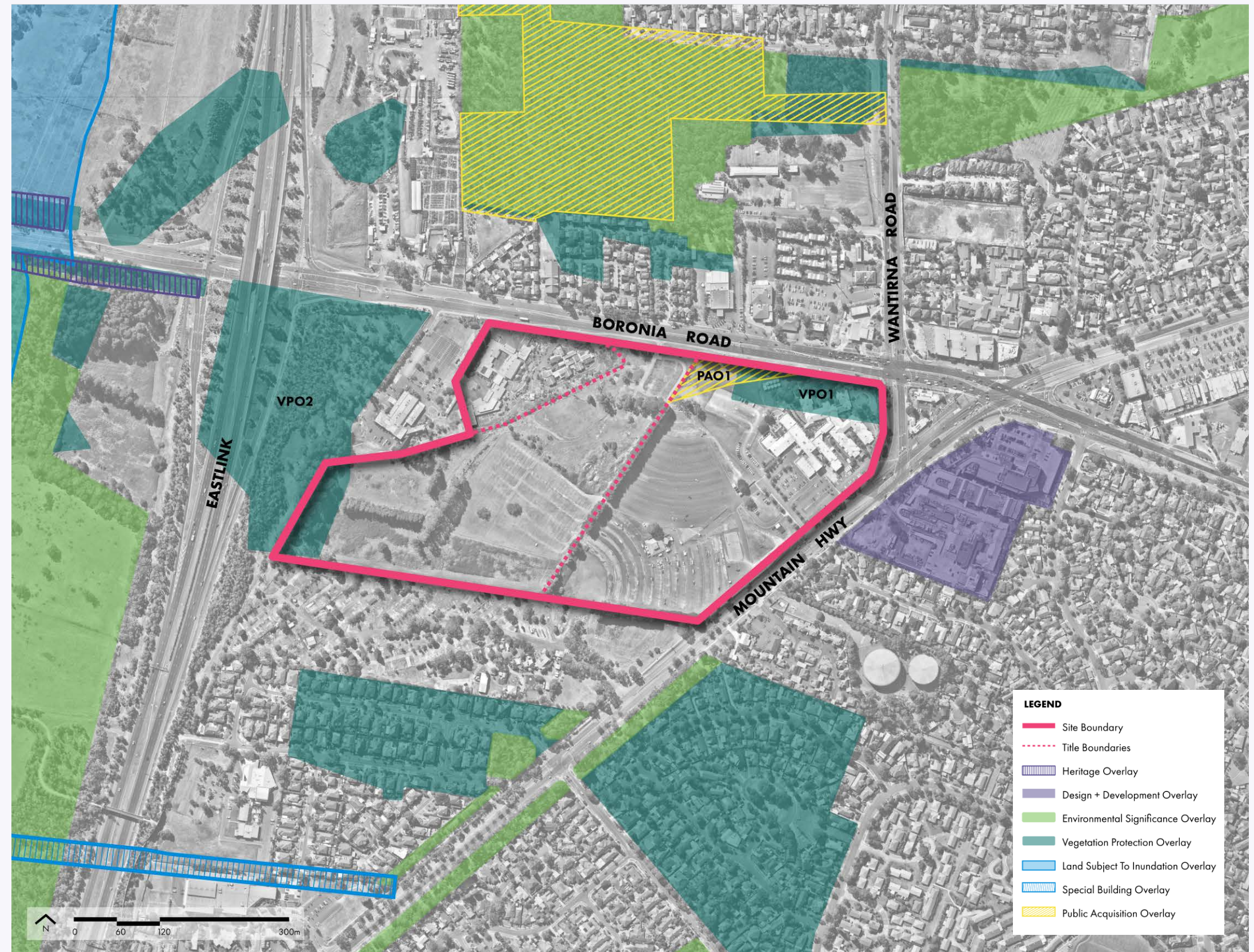


Figure 6. Overlays Plan

2.5 Local Context

The WHP sits within a relatively 'suburban' context, surrounded by predominantly low-density residential with a number of medium-density multi-unit infill sites being developed, including the future townhouse site directly south of the site on Mountain Highway.

There are a number of commercial/retail uses opposite the site along Boronia Road and Wantirna Road such as restaurants, fast food outlets, service stations and small-scale offices.

Whilst there are a number of key destinations within 400m of the site, the time taken to walk to these destinations from the site is significantly increased due to barriers such as major roads and limited pedestrian crossings. These destinations include:

- **Knox Private Hospital** - located directly opposite the site at the corner of Boronia Road and Mountain Highway.
- **Wantirna Mall** - a local centre with an IGA Supermarket and range of specialty stores, located on Mountain Highway approximately 400m from the site.
- **Dandenong Valley Parklands** - located on the opposite side of EastLink bordering Dandenong Creek. Dandenong Valley Parklands are a regional level open space containing a series of hike and bike trails including the Dandenong Creek Trail and the EastLink Trail.
- **Bateman Street Bushland** - a significant conservation area located 150m north of the site with several walking tracks.
- **Hungarian Community Centre** - directly abutting the site to the west, accommodating regular on-site activities. A multi-faith church is located at the southern part of the site.
- **Grace Church of Christ** - located 300m south of the site.

Key considerations for WHP:

- Consideration of adjoining land uses (Hungarian Community Centre and residential townhouse site to the south).
- Strengthening connections with surrounding uses, particularly Knox Private Hospital.
- Improving connections to Dandenong Valley Parklands and other open spaces.
- Potential for a range of complementary uses on site to serve wider community (eg. health, education, community, retail, open space).

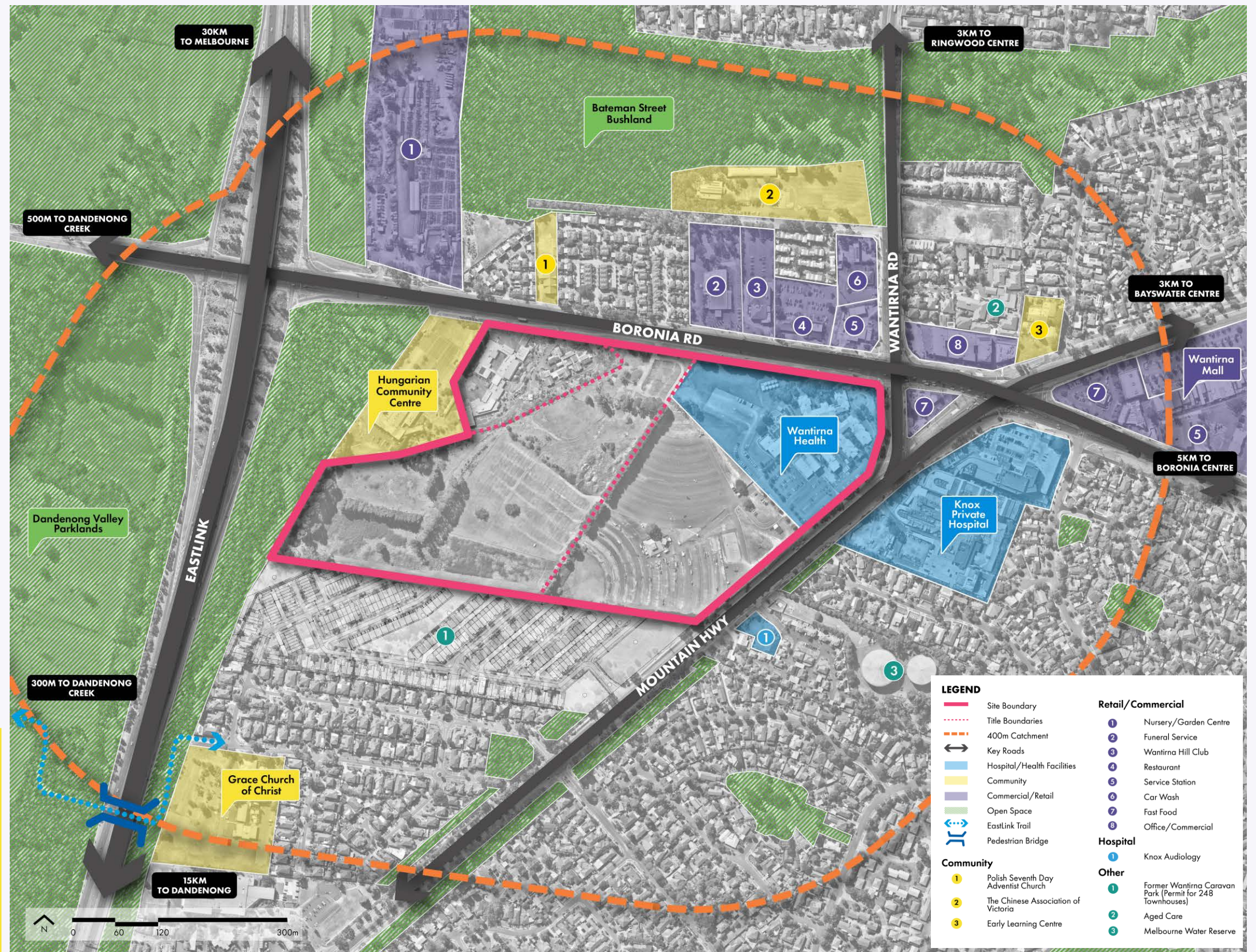


Figure 7. Local Context

2.6 Character + Identity

Zooming out from the local context, the broader context reveals the WHP is situated adjacent to number of key character areas/identity elements:

- **Topography + Views** - the regional topography is undulating with rolling hills and ridgelines, providing views to both the Dandenong Ranges and Dandenong Valley Parklands, which is a large valley that meanders through the wider area.
- **Gateways** – the major roads that pass through the Dandenong Valley Parklands form a landscape gateway to Wantirna from the west, welcoming visitors with a sense of green and openness. The corner of Boronia Road, Mountain Highway and Wantirna Road has the opportunity to become a gateway to the WHP, given its elevated topography and prime location at the end of major road viewlines.
- **Bush Boulevards** – the surrounding arterial road network is characterised by wide road reservations planted with informal avenues of native trees. These accentuate the green and leafy character of the area.
- **Neighbourhood Suburban** – the majority of the surrounding context is characterised as ‘neighbourhood suburban’; low-scale neighbourhoods with predominately 1-2 storey detached homes and dual occupancies in a green and leafy setting.
- **Suburban Mixed Use/Activity Centre** – the area to the north-east of the site is characterised by a mix of retail, commercial and medical buildings, generally setback from the street with large car parking areas. This includes Wantirna Mall and Knox Private Hospital.
- **Dandenong Valley Parklands** – the significant open space area to the west of the site along Dandenong Creek has a natural, creek character with large areas of vegetation and walking/cycling trails.
- **EastLink Corridor** – major freeway and adjoining open space areas with significant trees/vegetation and shared paths.

Key considerations for WHP:

- Defining a character for the WHP that considers the surrounding context - suburban/urban.
- Maintaining/re-interpreting the bush boulevard character.
- Establishing a natural, green and leafy character.
- Maintaining key viewlines to Dandenong Ranges and Dandenong creek corridor.
- Ability to create a new landmark/gateway for the wider area.

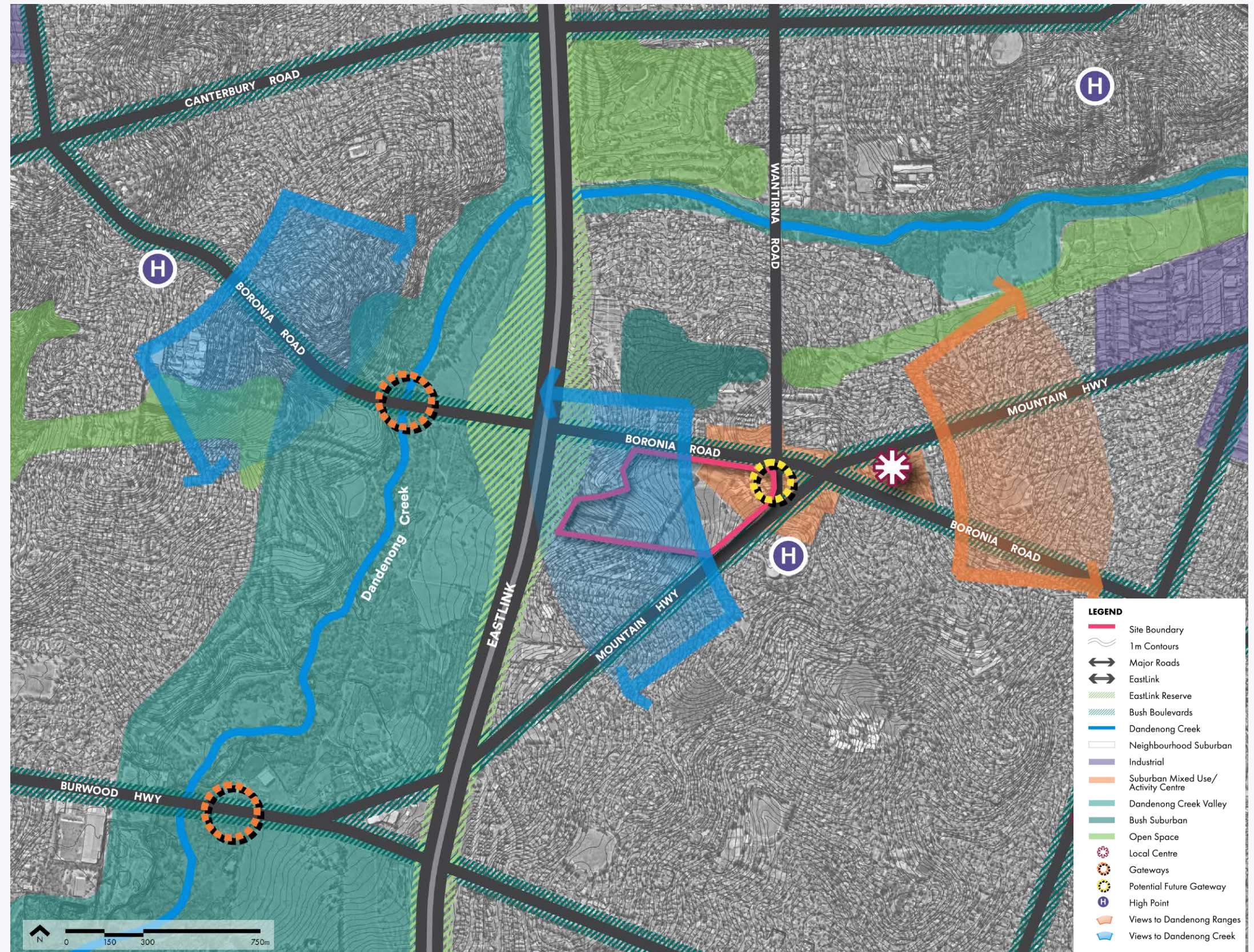


Figure 8. Character + Identity

2.7 Landscape + Public Realm

There are several landscape and public realm features that are likely to influence the development of the WHP. These include:

- **Topography** – steep slope across the site, generally falling 35m from the north-east to the south-west. There is a significant level change along the south-eastern boundary of 750 Boronia Road, approximately 4-5m. There is also a major level change along the north-eastern boundary, where Wantirna Health sits approximately 4-5m below Wantirna Road.
- **Views** – long views across the site to Dandenong Creek, as well as views to the Dandenong Ranges from Boronia Road and the north-eastern corner of the site.
- **Existing trees + vegetation** – rows of mature pine trees along Boronia Road and within the site, and several other mature trees of high aesthetic value. There are two Vegetation Protection Overlays (VPO) located within the site in the north-eastern and south-western corners of the site.
- **Bush Boulevards** - Both Boronia Road and Mountain Highway are identified as 'Bush Boulevards' in the Knox Planning Scheme, however Mountain Highway has a much stronger 'bush boulevard' character with strong avenues of native trees.
- **Open Space** - There is currently little in the area that is easily walkable from the site due to the need to cross major roads. However, the future townhouse site to the south will include a 4000m² park centrally located that connects into the WHP.
- **Stormwater/Drainage** - The plans for the residential townhouse site to the south show a stormwater retention asset located in the north-western corner, abutting the site. It is therefore likely that the south-western corner of the site will require some form of stormwater retention in this location.

Key considerations for WHP:

- Utilising topography to create site-responsive design and maximise views to Dandenong Creek and Ranges.
- Maintaining/Reinterpreting bush boulevard character.
- Creating new public realm destinations and experiences on site.
- Using the natural attributes of site (trees, water, views) to create a green, natural and healing environment.

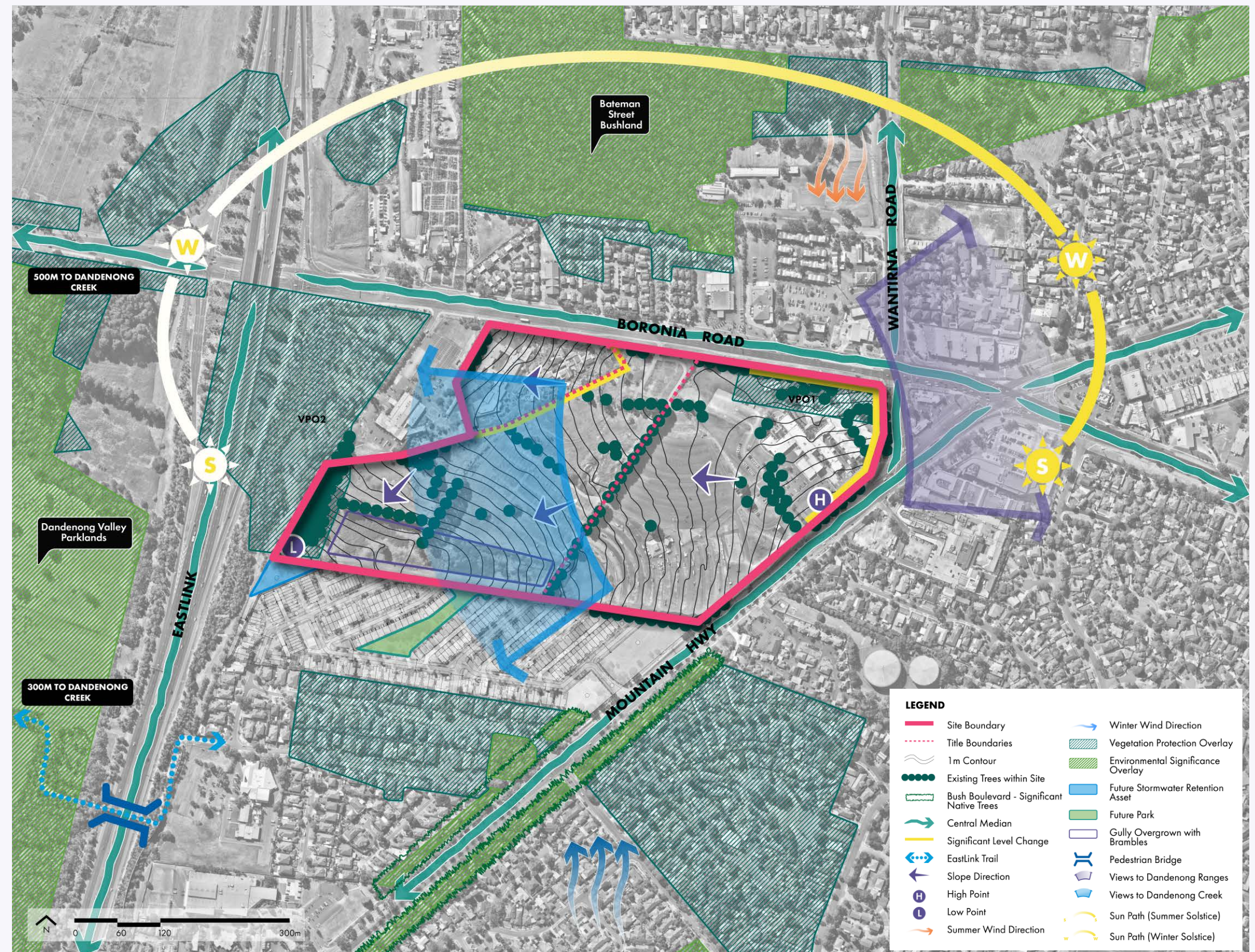


Figure 9. Landscape & Public Realm

2.8 Access + Movement

Key access and movement related features that will likely shape the development of the WHP include:

- **Major arterial roads** – the site is surrounded by major roads (including EastLink Tollway) that provide good vehicle access to the precinct.
- **Vehicle access points** – there is currently an existing vehicle access point (signalised intersection) on Mountain Highway which is the entry for Wantirna Health. There are three other vehicle access points from Boronia Road (non-signalised) and two future local street connections with the adjoining property to the south.
- **Major junction** – The junction where Wantirna Road, Boronia Road and Mountain Highway meet is a hostile and unsafe pedestrian environment.
- **Public transport** – Bus routes 738 & 745 service the site along Boronia Road/Wantirna Road and Mountain Highway. There is also a SmartBus route (901) that runs close to the site however the closest bus stop is on Wantirna Road and requires crossing Boronia Road.
- **Cycle network** – There are off-road shared paths along the southern side of Boronia Road and the north-western side of Mountain Highway. However, these paths are not clearly marked and terminate only a couple hundred metres away from the site, without connecting into any other cycle network. There is also no connection to the EastLink Trail, which is a dedicated shared path route which provides access to the Dandenong Valley Parklands.
- **Pedestrian access** – The site is difficult to access for pedestrians due to being surrounded by major arterial roads with limited pedestrian crossings, as well as the significant level changes along the site boundaries. Pedestrian access from the residential area to the east are also limited due to the lack of pedestrian connections through to Mountain Highway.

Key considerations for WHP:

- Utilising existing vehicle access points and taking advantage of access to major roads.
- Improving pedestrian and cycle accessibility to site.
- Providing a series of walking and cycling paths within site that link to surrounding destinations.
- Investigating opportunities for a new public transport node within the precinct.

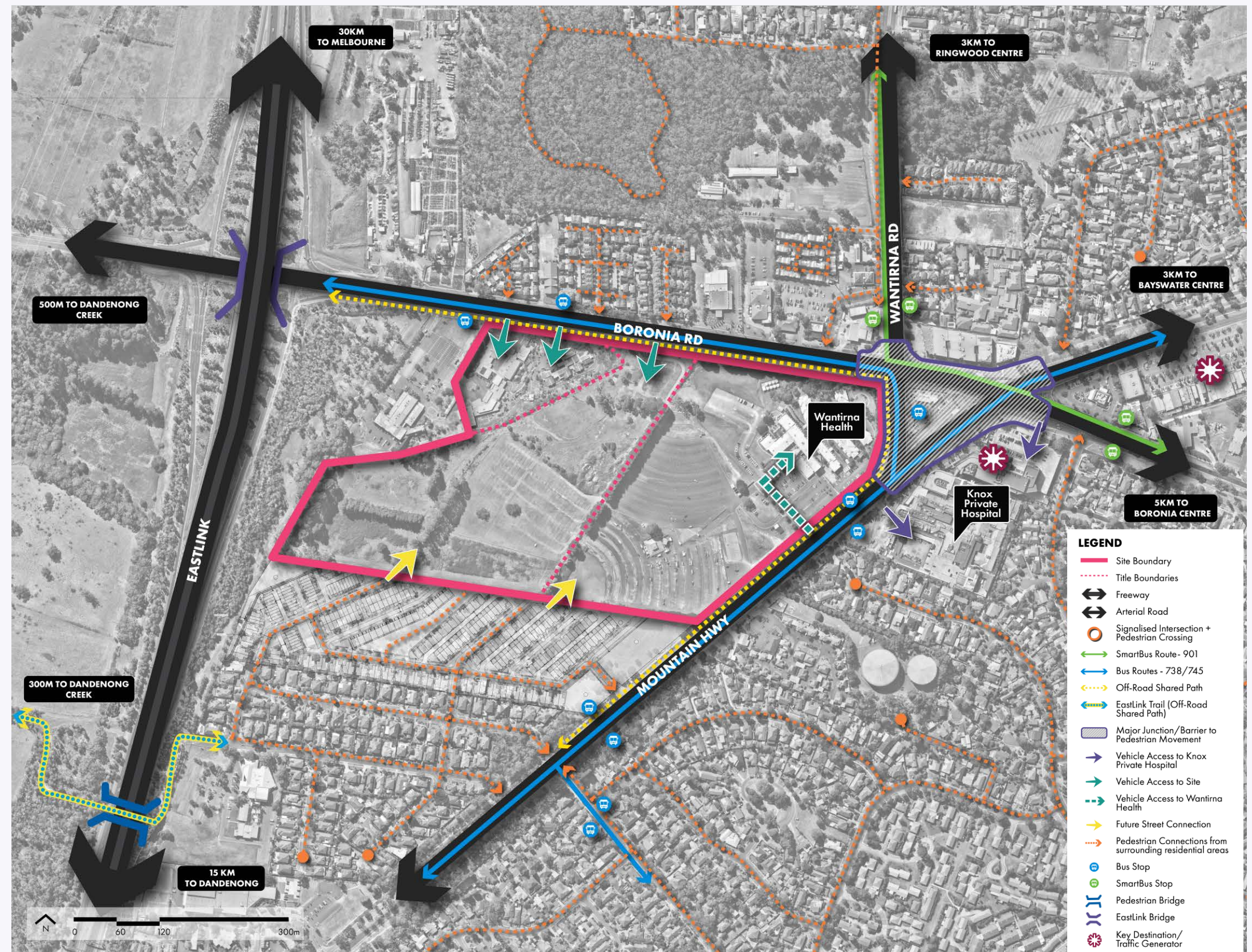


Figure 10. Access + Movement

2.9 Cross Sections

The following pages illustrate the cross sections and conditions of the major roads surrounding the site:

- **Boronia Road** – between the site and the residential/commercial uses to the north.
- **Mountain Highway A** – between Wantirna Health and Knox Private Hospital.
- **Mountain Highway B** – between residential uses further south along Mountain Highway.

The sections highlight:

- The significant width of the major roads surrounding the site.
- The poor pedestrian accessibility to the WHP from the surrounding community.
- The topography and level change constraints in the north-eastern corner of the site where Wantirna Health is located.
- The lack of active frontages to the roads surrounding the site.
- The amount of trees and vegetation along Mountain Highway south of the site.
- Lack of permeability from the surrounding neighbourhoods.

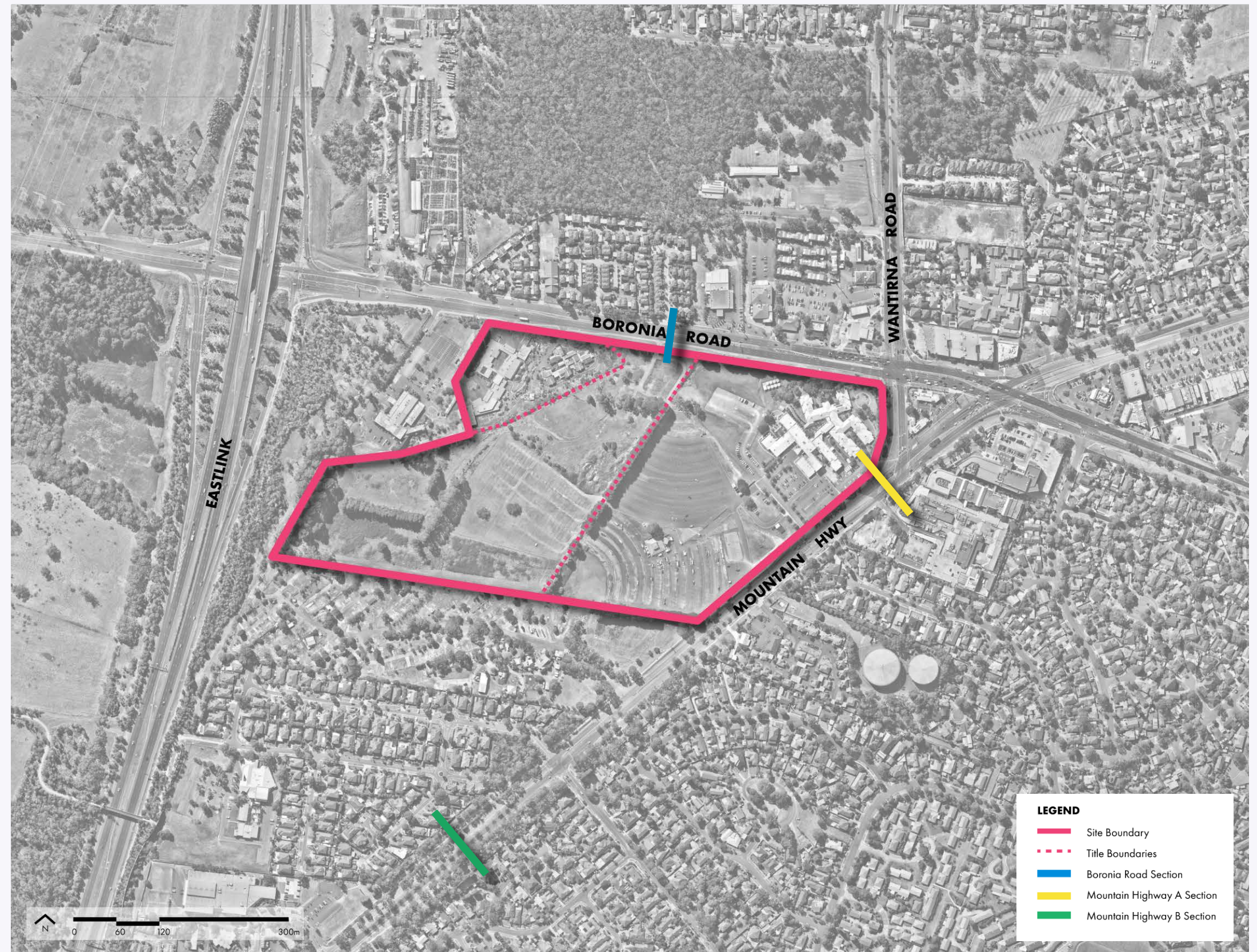


Figure 11. Cross Sections

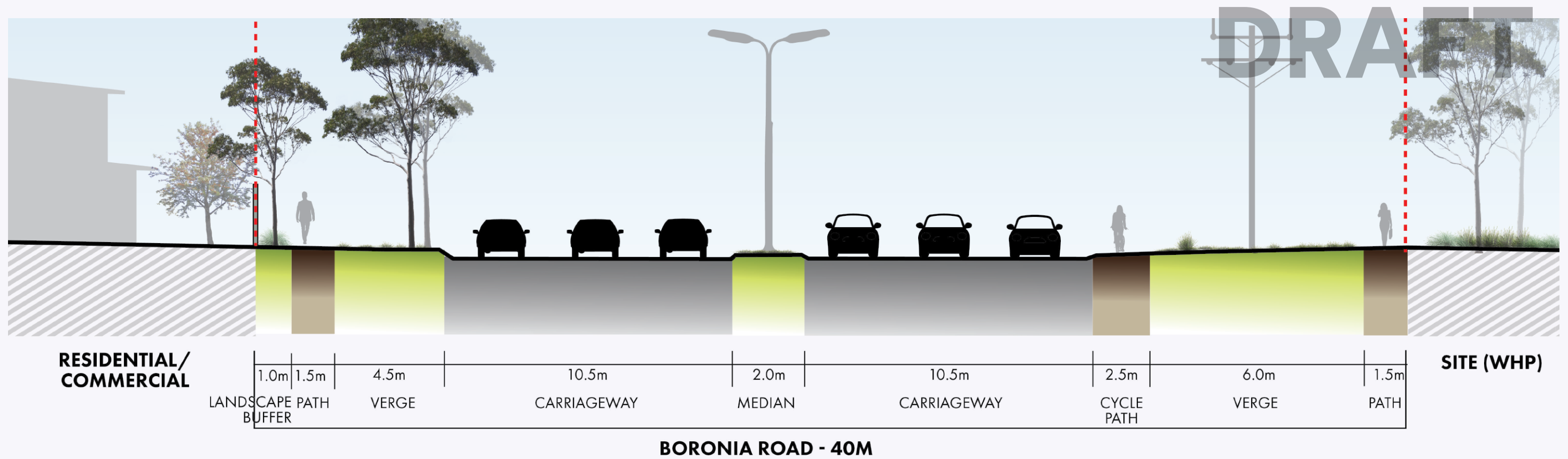


Figure 12. Boronia Road Cross Section

DRAFT

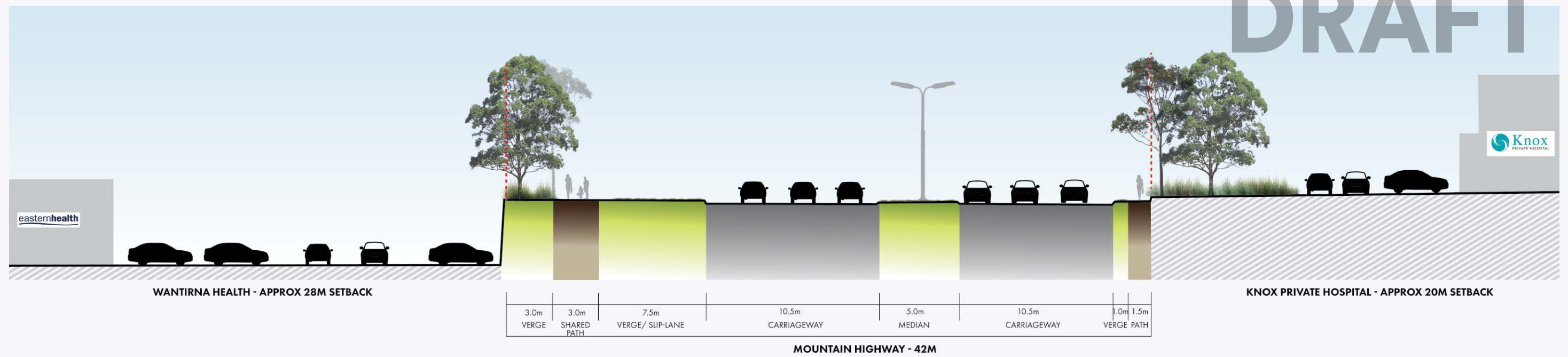


Figure 13. Mountain Highway Cross Section A (between Wantirna Health + Knox Private Hospital)

DRAFT

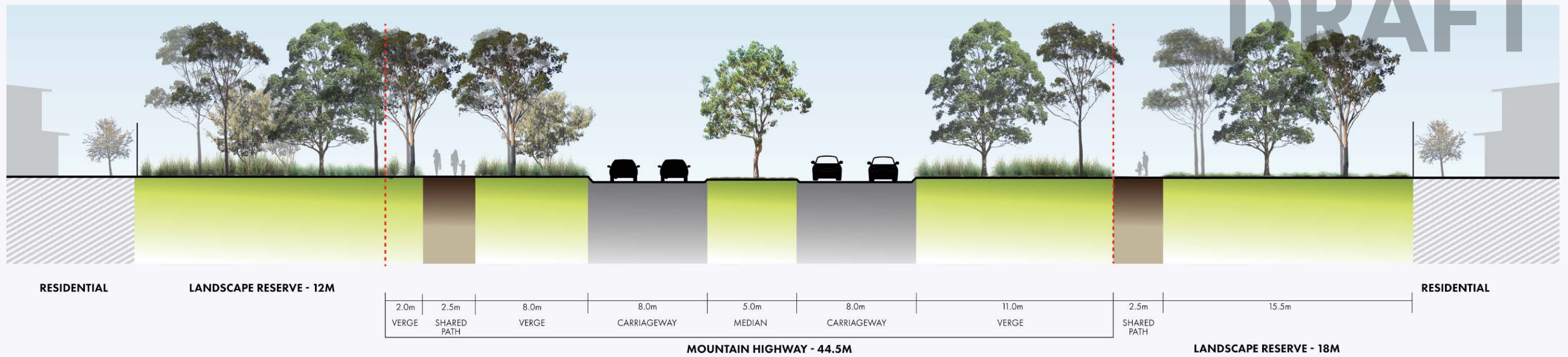


Figure 14. Mountain Highway Cross Section B

2.10 Built Form

Key built form related features relevant to the WHP include:

- **Existing buildings** – Wantirna Health features 1-2 storey modern buildings which face south-west, away from the Boronia Road/ Wantirna Road intersection. These buildings are sunken below street level due to the significant level change and therefore are not visible from this key corner.
- **Surrounding built form** - Consists mainly of 1-2 storey commercial/retail uses along Boronia Road, 1-2 storey townhouses and detached dwellings in the surrounding residential areas, the Hungarian Community Centre and 1-3 storey Knox Private Hospital which is elevated above road level.
- **Former Wantirna Drive-In Projection Building** - The Wantirna Drive-In was built by Hoyts in 1968. Whilst the drive-in closed in 1984, the former projection building remains in the south-eastern area of the site. The building was designed by architect Peter Muller and features ground hugging brown brick walls and a striking, temple-like roof form. The National Trust considers this asset to be one of the remnants of the 1960's drive-in culture.
- **Interfaces** – the southern interface with the future townhouse site is the most critical, given the sensitive nature of residential and the risk of potential overshadowing. The interface with the Hungarian Community Centre will also require careful consideration, as will the interface with EastLink, which has a series of design interface requirements that will need to be addressed (eg. noise, visual amenity, setbacks etc).
- **Active Frontages** - The frontages to Boronia Road and Mountain Highway are generally non-active, with long runs of residential back fencing screened by landscaping, or commercial buildings setback from the street.

Key considerations for WHP:

- Reflecting the historical and social value of the drive-in theatre.
- Consideration of surrounding interfaces.
- Creating active frontages to address key streets and public realm.
- Ability to create a distinct, landmark built form.
- Utilising level changes to create unique, site-responsive built form.
- Consideration of setbacks to Boronia Road and Mountain Hwy.

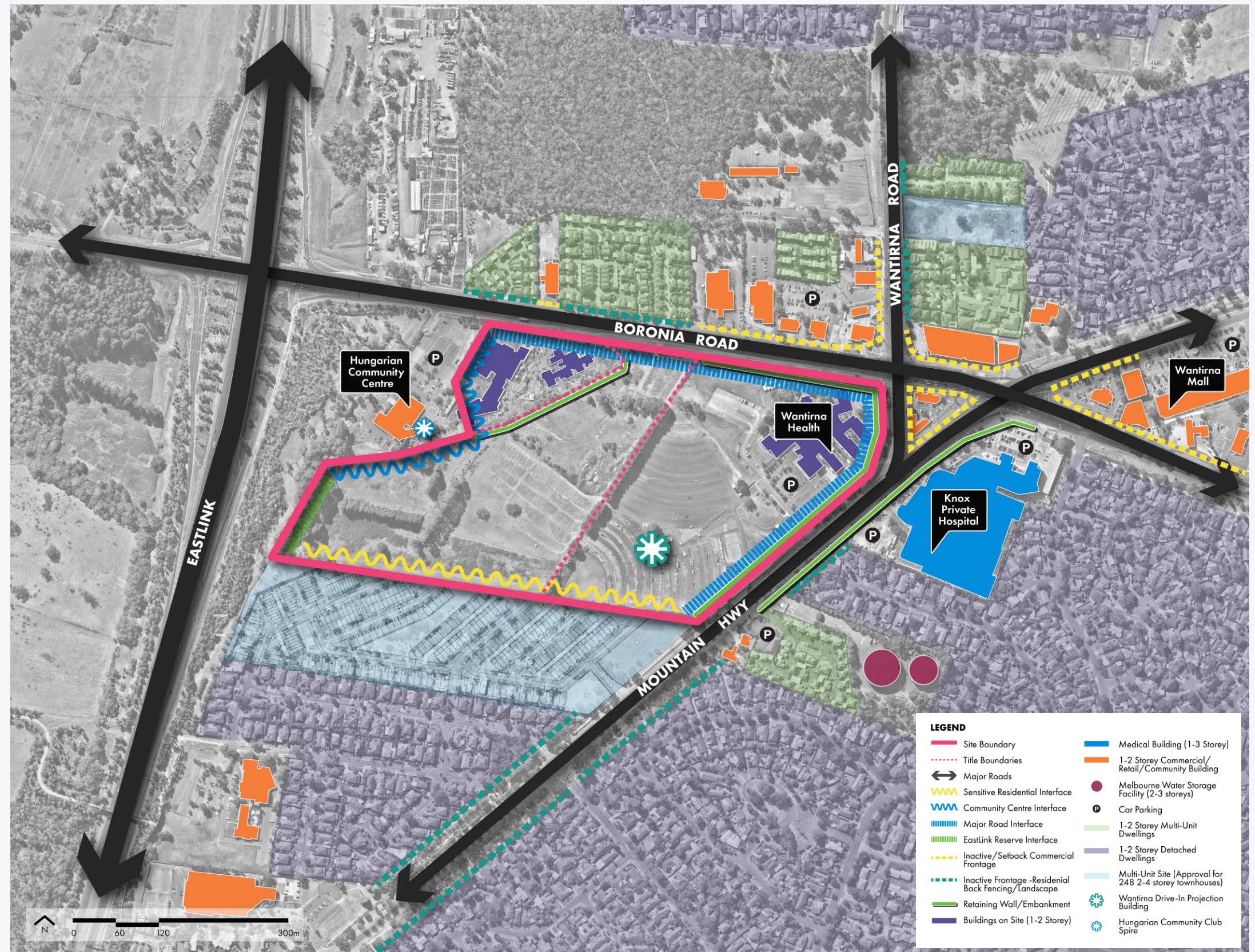


Figure 15. Built Form

2.11 Site Photos

LANDSCAPE + PUBLIC REALM



Significant level change



Views to Dandenong Creek



Views to Dandenong Ranges

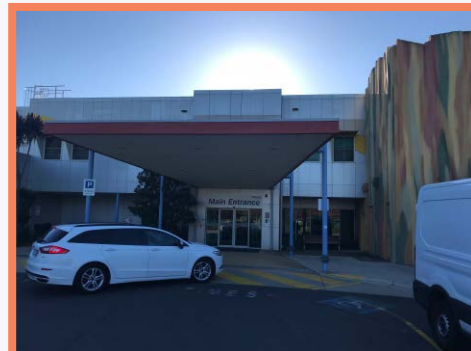


Landscape gateway

BUILT FORM



Sunken built form



Wantirna Health buildings



Former Drive-In Projection Building



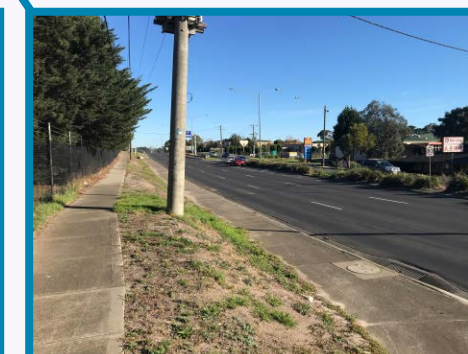
ACCESS + MOVEMENT



EastLink Trail



Major arterial roads surrounding site



Shared paths surrounding site



Access to Wantirna Health



Long rows of Pine trees



Mature Elm trees

3

Issues + Opportunities

3.1 Key Issues

LANDSCAPE + PUBLIC REALM

- 1 Topography and major level changes require careful design consideration.
- 2 Vegetation Protection Overlays seek to protect high quality vegetation and habitat for native fauna.
- 3 Existing utilities in western area of site to be retained.
- 4 Stormwater to be managed and to be located at the lowest point of the site.

ACCESS + MOVEMENT

- 1 Major roads create barrier surrounding site, impacting pedestrian accessibility.
- 2 Disjointed and confusing cycle network.
- 3 Limited public transport services to site.
- 4 Poor connection between Knox Private Hospital and site.
- 5 Lack of connection between EastLink Trail and the site.
- 6 Poor pedestrian connectivity from residential areas to the north and the east.
- 7 Steep topography limits walkability.

BUILT FORM

- 1 Masterplan to address current ownership of the land parcels within the site.
- 2 Sensitive residential interface to south with potential overlooking, overshadowing, noise, traffic and other amenity impacts.
- 3 Consider appropriate design response to the interface with Hungarian Community Centre and EastLink landscape reserve.
- 4 Topography reduces the site's visual and physical permeability to Boronia Road and the ability to create gateway / landmark built form on key corner.

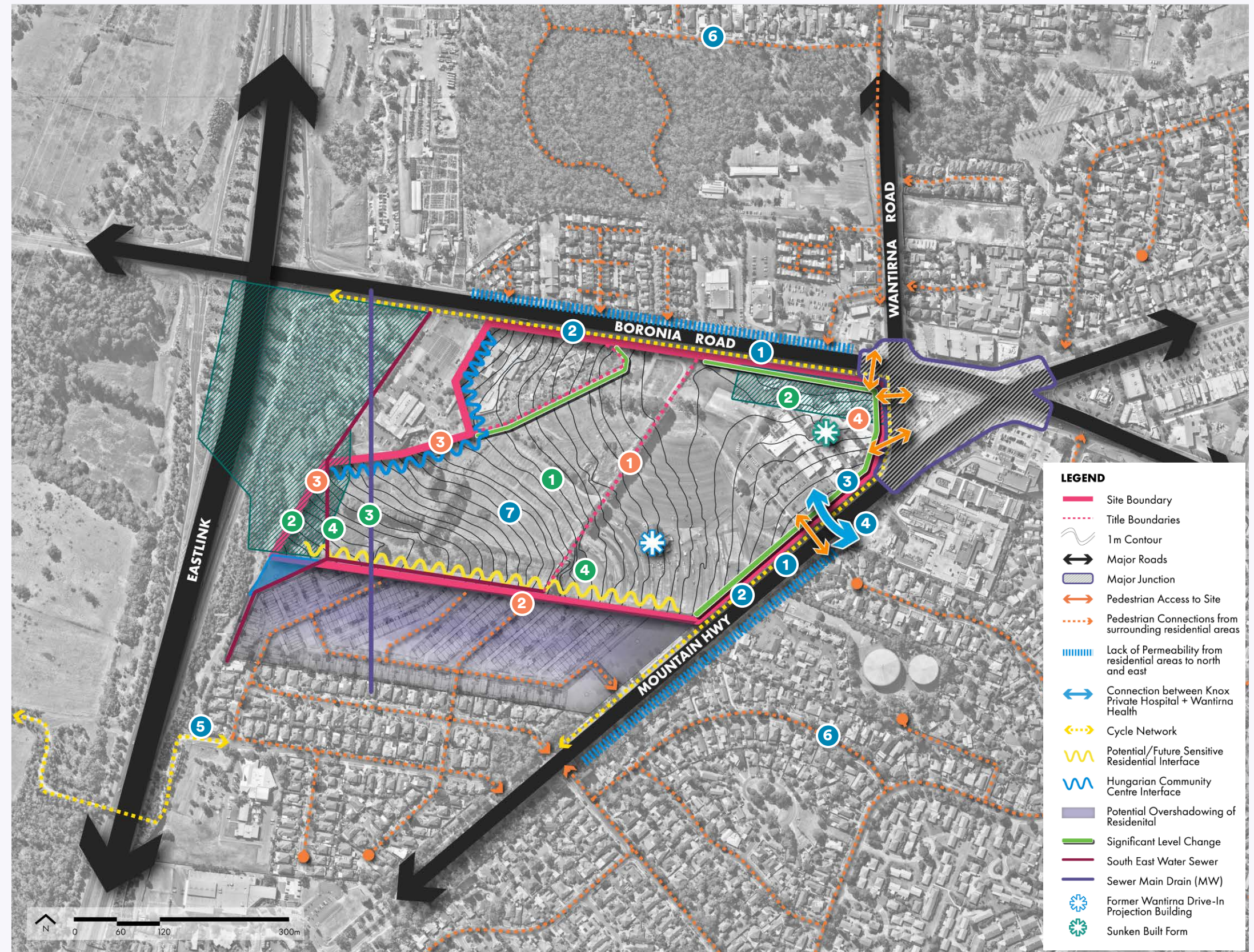


Figure 16. Key Issues

3.2 Key Opportunities

LANDSCAPE + PUBLIC REALM

- 1 Utilise topography to provide key views to Dandenong Creek and Ranges.
- 2 Establish a landscape buffer along Boronia Rd/Mountain Hwy to reference 'Bush Boulevard' character.
- 3 Retain high amenity trees and vegetation where possible and plant new trees to create a green, leafy and naturally cooler environment.
- 4 Create a new public open space and a series of pedestrian friendly streets to serve WHP and the wider community.
- 5 Potential open space that connects into EastLink reserve with a stormwater retention asset in the south-western corner.
- 6 Provide opportunities for WSUD treatments integrated into the design of the public realm.
- 7 Create a park-like environment that enhances community health and wellbeing.

ACCESS + MOVEMENT

- 1 Utilise the existing vehicle access point on Mountain Hwy and establish new vehicle access points along Boronia Road.
- 2 Improve public transport to the site and investigate opportunities for a new public transport hub within the precinct.
- 3 Potential to integrate the site with the adjacent future street and open space network to the south.
- 4 Improve cycle network within and surrounding the site and provide off-road connection to EastLink Trail and Dandenong Creek.
- 5 Create a series of pedestrian and cycle links through the site that connect to surrounding destinations.
- 6 Strengthen the connections between the site and Knox Private Hospital.

BUILT FORM

- 1 Potential to reference the historic use of the site as a drive-in theatre through design of future buildings and spaces.
- 2 Potential to increase pedestrian activity and safety along Boronia Road and Mountain Hwy, through active and attractive street frontages.
- 3 Create a gateway/landmark built form that establishes a strong identity for the site and helps with wayfinding.
- 4 Utilise level changes to create distinct and site responsive built form.
- 5 Avoid overshadowing of the residential neighbourhood to the south.

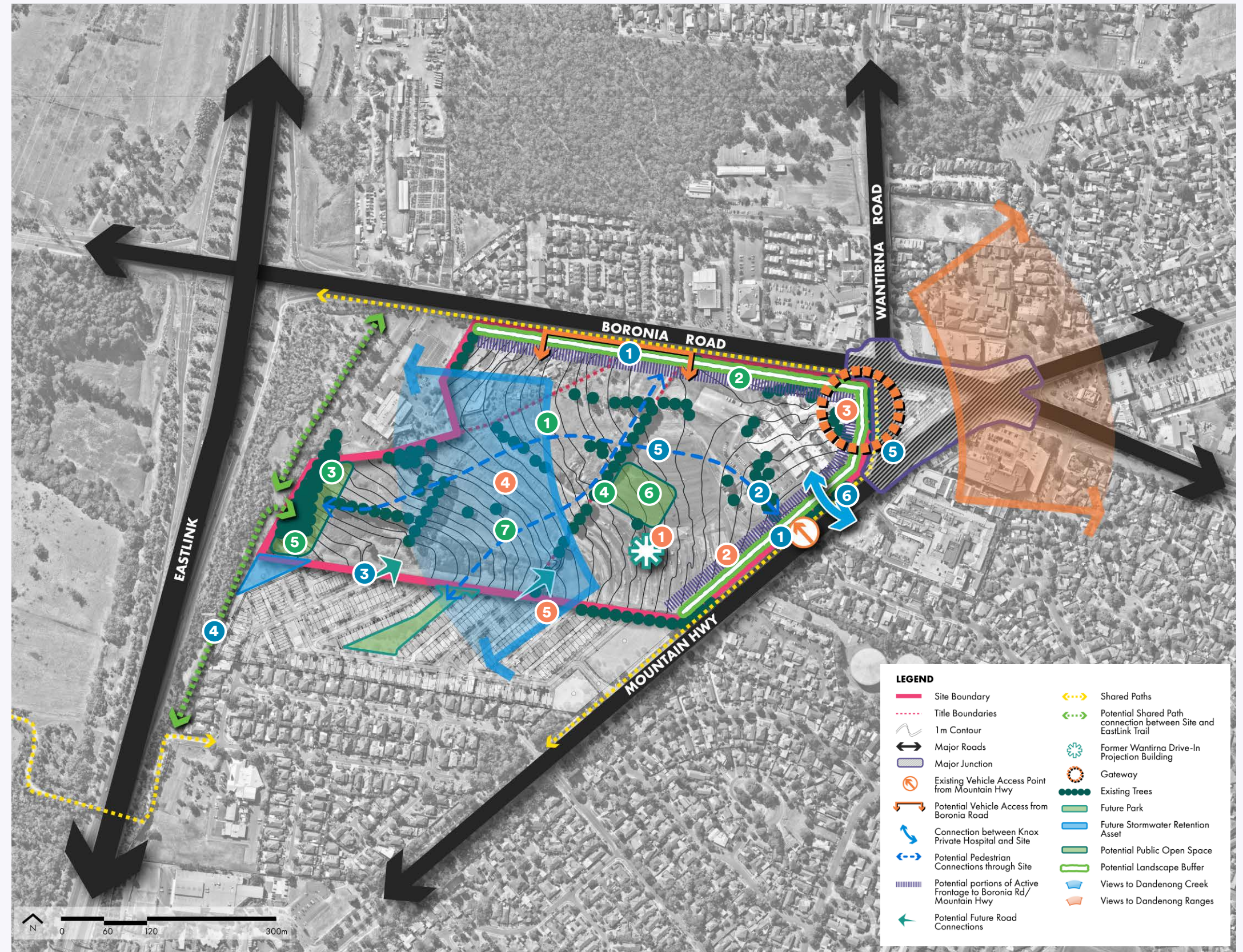


Figure 17. Key Opportunities

DRAFT