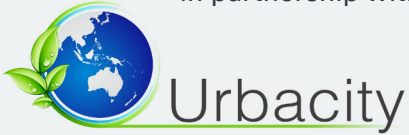




in partnership with



BUXTON CENTRE DETAILED REPORT

DECEMBER 2020



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1 Buxton

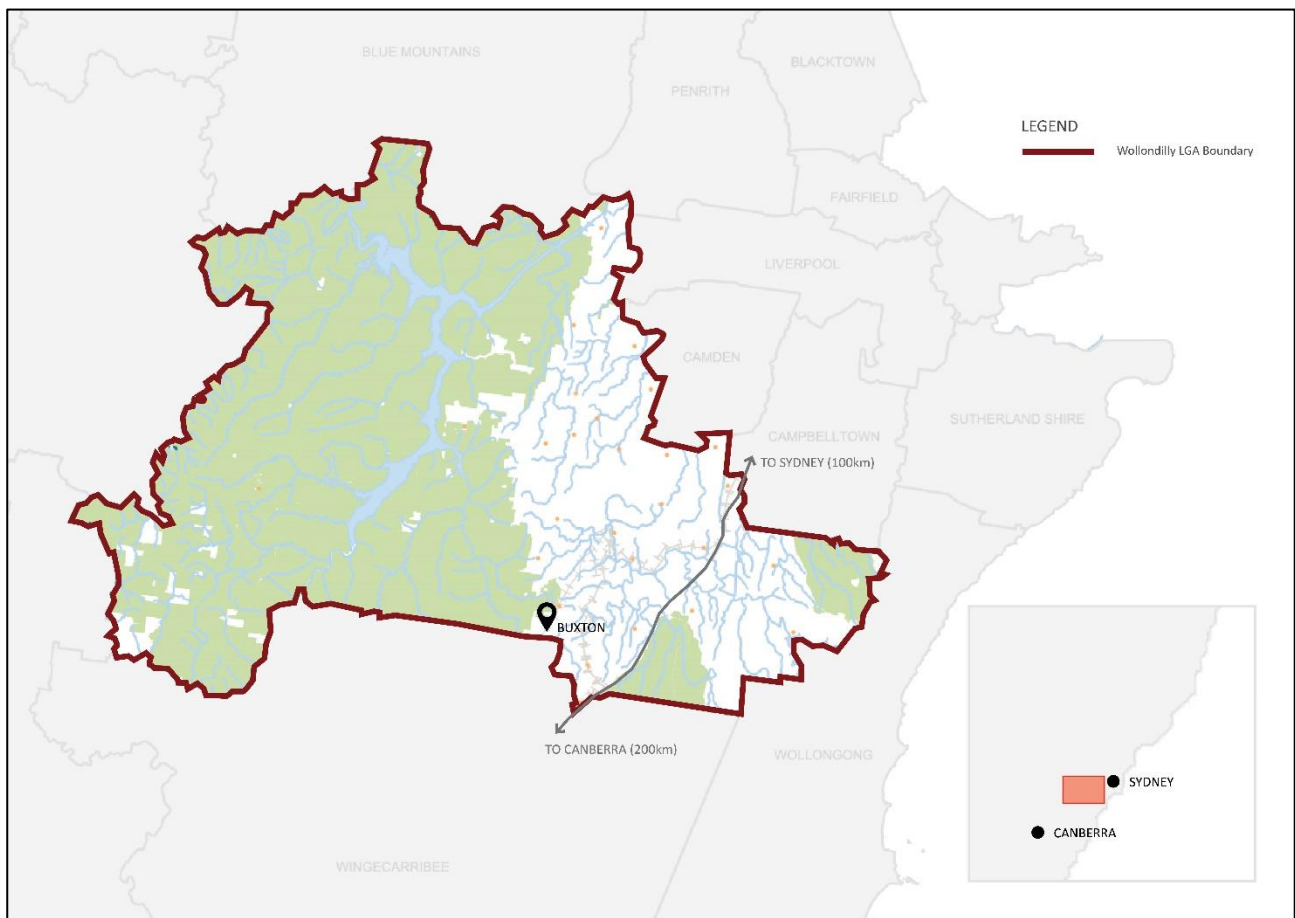


Figure 1-1 Buxton locality map.

1.2 Buxton Activity Core and Edges

The key characteristics of Buxton are listed in the table below:

Population	2016 Census	2,314	Decrease of 39 people (1.7% decrease on 2016 population)
	2041 Projection	2,275	
Centre Typology	LSPS: Small Centre/Neighbourhood Centre		Centres Study: Hamlet
Centre Functions	Limited daily convenience		
Centre Special Features	<p>Two individual sites cater for community activity space.</p> <p>Retail – limited local trade, small scale weekend tourism (Rail Museum trips), convenience only</p> <p>Education – Primary school (170 students)</p> <p>Recreation – Sportsfield, natural areas, park and playground (under construction)</p> <p>Civic and community – Buxton School of Arts</p> <p>Employment – local scale, very small scale</p> <p>Capacity – approx. 1,000m² of GFA potential on commercial-zoned land under current LEP</p>		
Future focus	Improve pathway networks for walkability		



Figure 1-2 Buxton commercial core.

Buxton is a hamlet. The centre consists of two allotments in Zone B1 located on East Parade and the Buxton School of Arts Community Hall on West Parade. These sites are within a short walking distance of each other (across the rail line) and are the two hubs of community activity.

The development capacity of Buxton is finite. The settlement is bounded by land of conservation significance and is within a bushfire hazard area.

The settlement was surveyed in a grid pattern with little consideration for topography. Most streets are east-west radiating from the rail line. North-south links are limited and depend primarily on East and West Parades parallel to the rail line.

The settlement pattern is compact. The grid road system combined with the topography is not ideal for walking other than in close proximity to the rail line. However, the narrow streets and compact, isolated layout of the settlement means new opportunities to encourage walking should be given high priority.

The rail line heavily delineates the potential of the east and west sides. The hamlet has a small group of shops just off East Parade, organised around a car park.

Buxton is only slightly smaller than Appin in population but has almost no passing trade. Consequently, the retail function is much smaller, providing mainly top-up items for the local community who would do regular weekly shopping at Tahmoor, Thirlmere or Bargo.

The centre sits on the eastern side of the rail line and presents an inactive side wall to the street. The building is set back from East Parade more directly addressing its car park.

The centre lacks the characteristics to be a focus of community life, with that function more likely to occur at the Buxton School of Arts, with its hall, community garden and play areas. Council should consider this facility as the basis for potential assistance with social exchange, rather than the centre.

There is a footpath only on the eastern side of East Parade but no footpaths on the contributory streets feeding East Parade. The pedestrian desire lines are well-formed in the grass and earth of the sides of these streets.

Likewise, there is no footpath on West Parade.

Often (but not always), a footpath is an indicator of the presence of a desired destination such as a park or shops or community centre etc. However, lack of available walking infrastructure such as footpaths is proven to be associated with increased levels of obesity. Two driving factors influence the desire to walk:

1. The attraction or attractiveness of the destination;
2. The availability of footpaths and the quality of the journey.

Given that the rail line splits Buxton, the east and west side require different destination strategies.

To the west, the only public destination is the Buxton School of Arts and community garden. This facility appears to be a focus of wider community life. A primary focus of this study is the improvement of social

connections within and along the journey to centres. However, a shared community resource is as capable of providing for high levels of social exchange as a centre.

We recommend that Council and the community encourage improvements to the School of Arts to increase levels of use and amenity. An option would be a verandah on the north face of the building, with folding doors enabling entrance to the hall and a more seamless use. Further enhancing the facility would occur by moving the current barbecue and oven area to the middle of the park, addressing this indoor-outdoor space. We also recommend the creation of a gravel path along the street edge from Boundary Road to the Hall.

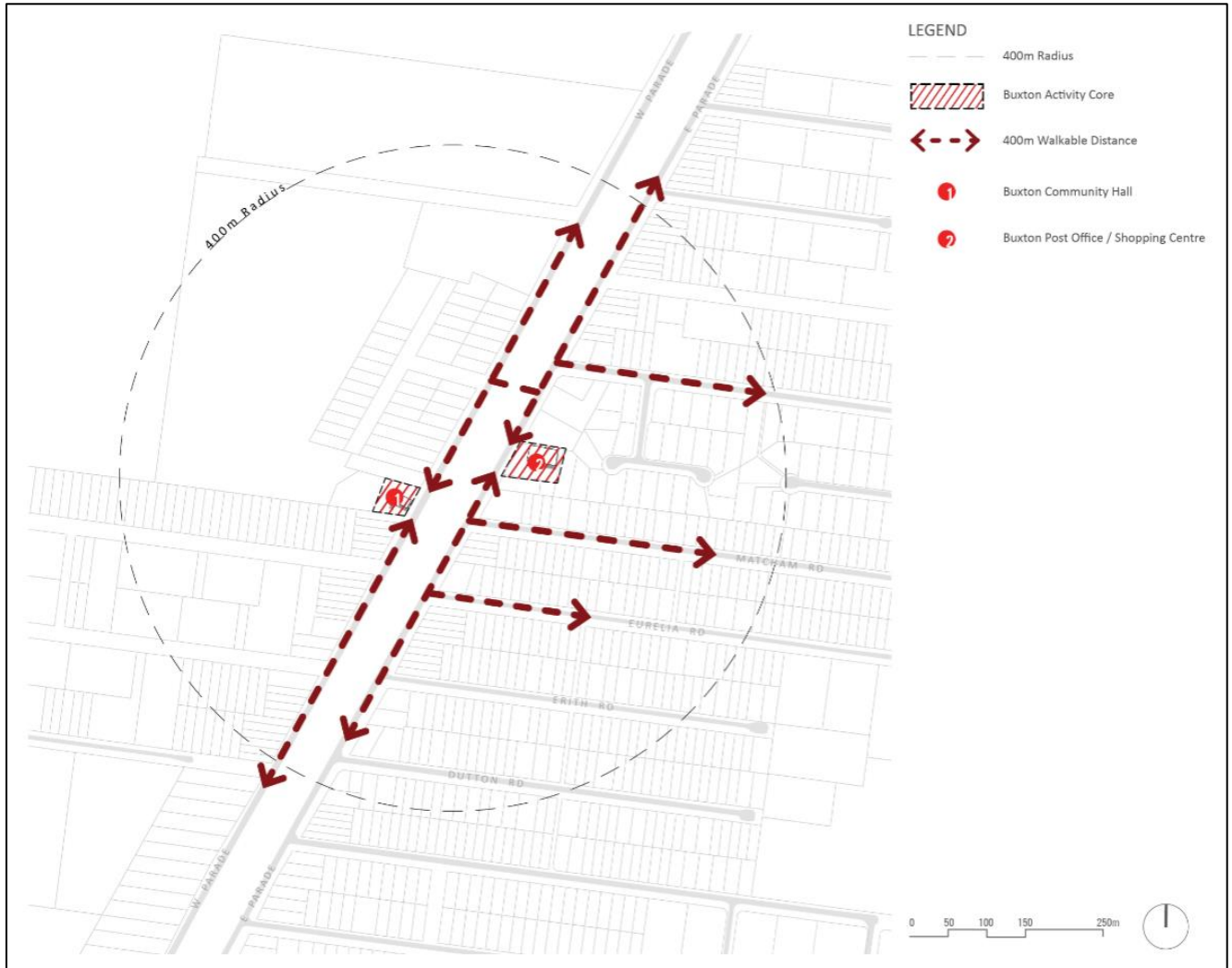


Figure 1-3 Buxton activity core.

1.3 Treatment in the LSPS

There are no Actions in the LSPS specific to Buxton. The LSPS identifies the following community values and needs for Buxton:

- *a new master-planned park that would contribute to people's health and happiness*
- *the local shops that connect people and make Buxton more self-sufficient*
- *local community facilities that help people to connect with others*

This Study supports the upgrading of Telopea Park as a multi-use activity space as well as pathway connectivity to the park. This Study also recognises and supports the enhancement of the School of Arts as the hub of community life.

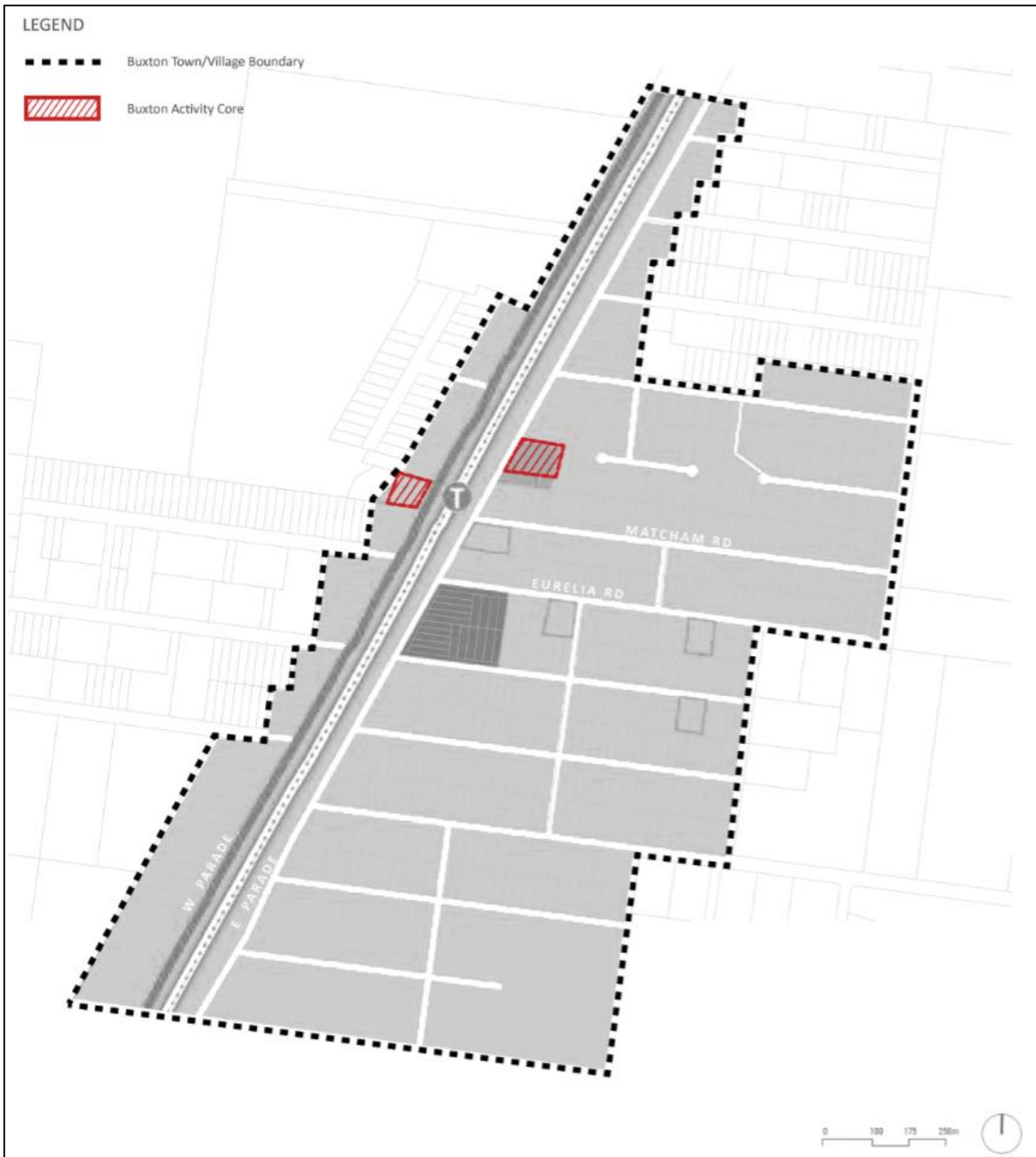


Figure 1-4 LSPS representation of Buxton boundary, with activity cores in red.

2 Centre appraisal and opportunities

2.1 History

Buxton is named after a small town in Derbyshire, England.

In 1867, the great southern railway was extended from Picton to Mittagong through Buxton.

The settlement dates back to 1883, the earliest settlers consisted of orchard farmers and railway workers.

After the rail deviation to the current Main Southern Line the growth of Buxton slowed.

Buxton's original allotments were created by survey without detailed consideration to topography. The lots and streets follow a predominantly east-west grid pattern radiating from the rail line. There are few north-south connections.



Figure 2-1 Historic photo of Buxton community (Source: Link: <https://www.stonequarry.com.au/towns/buxton.html>)

2.1.2 Heritage items and Heritage Conservation Areas

The School of Arts community centre is a heritage item.

Opportunities:

- > Visitation to the School of Arts Community Centre should be improved with a footpath extending north and south along West Parade and a continuous footpath connection to the shops in East Parade including a safe, well separated pathway crossing of the rail line.
- > Functionality of the Community Centre could be improved with an indoor/outdoor transition space on the northern side of the building. A covered deck suitable for outdoor seating and eating with an outdoor kitchen/BBQ would be ideal.
- > The School of Arts site is within Zone R2 Low Density Residential. Clause 5.10 to WLEP 2011 allows consideration of uses and activities beyond the land use table of the LEP provided there is a benefit to the heritage integrity of the School of Arts Hall. Council could consider options for a resident caretaker cottage or resident artist to assist with casual surveillance and daily maintenance, access control and coordination of use.

2.2 Natural, Cultural, Community and Scenic Assets



Figure 2-2 Community assets within 500m of the Buxton, showing location of planned redevelopment of Telopea Park.

The School of Arts Community Centre is the primary community asset in Buxton. The hall is available for hire and is suitable for a variety of functions including meetings, activities and performances. The kitchen was upgraded to a full commercial catering fitout in 2018. The property includes a community garden, children's playground and picnic facilities. There is no formal on-site parking.



Figure 2-3 Buxton School of Arts, with adjacent open space.

Buxton primary school is located in Hassall Road and has 173 students.

Telopea Park is the only public park in Buxton. Council has committed to a master planned redevelopment of the park a plan of which is included in **Figure 2-2** and **Figure 2-4**. Works have commenced with a new amenities building, playground and exercise equipment and some pathways. Works will continue in accordance with Council's adopted schedule.

The tourist steam train from Thirlmere Rail Museum travels to Buxton with a short stop at Buxton Station.

There is an informal trail that follows the rail line extending south and north of Buxton which is well used by locals for walking and mountain bike riding.

There are several bushwalks in Bargo State Conservation Area such as Caves Creek walk which extends through a sandstone cave.

Opportunities:

- > Pathway connectivity between the shops in East Parade and the Community Centre to be improved.



Figure 2-4 Extract from the adopted Master Plan for Telopea Park, Buxton

2.3 Scenic Landscape Elements and View Corridors

Buxton settlement was intentionally created on a topographic high point. However, this is not readily evident to people in the Centre. There are impressive views particularly to the east from the centre.

The visual link between East and West Parade across the railway crossing is an important feature in the Centre.

Opportunities:

- > Installation of an improved pathway link across the rail line to include beautification works (pathway in concrete or decomposed granite and planting) to enhance the aesthetics of this focal point.
- > Views to the east can only be achieved from an elevation above the existing single storey built form of the shops in East Parade. The height controls allow two storey construction.

2.4 Natural Hazards

Buxton is surrounded by natural bushland including National Parks and State Conservation Areas. The December 2019 fires devastated large areas of bushland surrounding the town and two firefighters lost their lives at Buxton during these fires. The RFS station is located in the centre adjacent to the rail line and is a focal point in the community's experience.

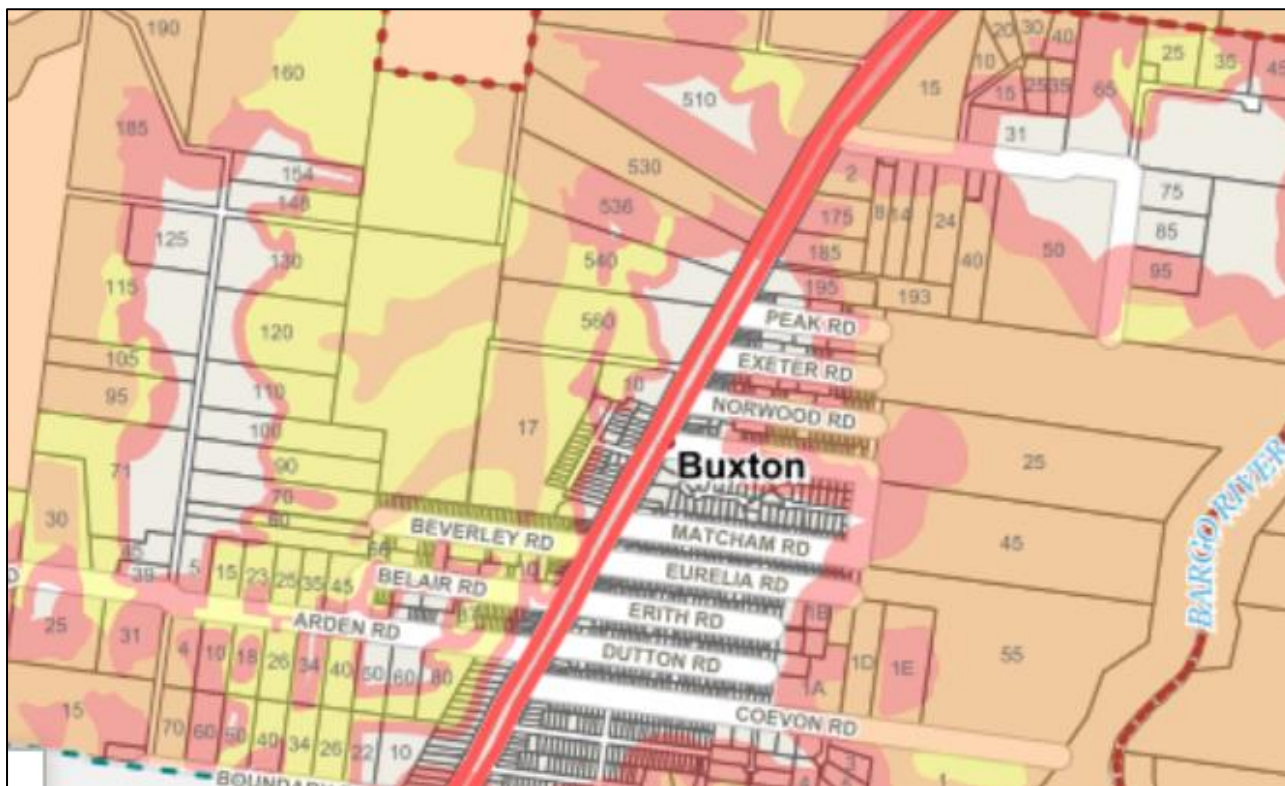


Figure 2-5 Extract from Wollondilly Council bushfire prone land map for Buxton hamlet centre (Source of bushfire prone land map <https://maps.wollondilly.nsw.gov.au/intramaps97public/>)

2.5 Infrastructure and Utilities

Buxton was recently connected to reticulated sewer services based on the existing number of residential properties. There is a finite limit to the capacity of the sewer reticulation and subdivision limitations based on the 'original holdings' density controls in the LEP.

2.6 Community

2.6.1 Who uses the Centre and why?

The Centre is used by local residents and occasional visitors. Trips to the shops are mainly by car, and there are pedestrians consistently using the East Parade footpath. Most of these appear to be accessing the centre including prams, cyclists and exercise. Tourists on the steam train from Thirlmere can stop briefly at Buxton. There is little through traffic past the centre as East Parade serves no regional movement function.

2.7 Special Events, Regular Community Events and Activities for Individuals and Groups

The School of Arts is the focal point and accommodates a wide variety of community activities.

Opportunities:

- > As above, functionality of the School of Arts could be improved with an indoor/outdoor transition space on the northern side of the building.

2.8 Land uses, open spaces and community services and facilities

Important land uses for Buxton are shown in **Figure 2-6**, below.

Opportunities:

- > Pathway connectivity and continued improvement to the facilities and activities at the Community Centre are key to support the Buxton settlement. This could be in the form of a gravel path between Parnwell Street and Belair Road. In addition, side streets off East Parade lack footpaths, although a footpath exists for the entire length of East Parade between the centre and Orange Street at the southern extremity of the settlement. Improving the desire to walk from these side streets could be as simple as painting a shared zone on the side of the street, as shown following.

2.9 Urban structure, built form and land use



Figure 2-6 Urban structure and built form for buildings in and surrounding the Buxton.

Buxton has a finite settlement footprint and limited through traffic. There is one commercial building and the School of Arts Building that form the activity centres. The primary school is north east of the centre in Hassall Road and is more than 500m radius from the centre.

Opportunities:

- > Connectivity of the pathway network between the shops and the School of Arts building could be improved. This could be in the form of a gravel path between Parnwell Street and Belair Road.
- > Side streets off East Parade lack footpaths, although a footpath exists for the entire length of East Parade between the centre and Orange Street at the southern extremity of the settlement. Improving the desire to walk from these side streets could be as simple as painting a shared zone on the side of the street, as shown following.

2.10 Commercial Floor Space and Capacity for Growth

The previous Commercial Centres Study 2006 noted the following for Buxton:

4 commercial premises with a total of 550m² of commercial floor space

2 vacant premises representing 200m² of commercial floor space

There has been no increase in the total commercial floor space in Buxton. All existing commercial premises are in use.

There will be little growth in Buxton settlement to 2041. Buxton Centre caters for Buxton residents and a small number of visitors. There is adequate capacity for increased floor space within the existing commercial zoned land with the potential for an additional 1,000m² (approx) of additional floor space within the current LEP and DCP provisions.

2.11 Housing within and at the edges of the Centre

The settlement boundaries are fixed by proximity to national parks, state conservation areas and bushfire prone land. Reticulate sewer servicing has a limited capacity. There is adequate capacity for incremental infill development although there will be no significant population growth. The centre provides little or no variation in urban amenity capable of encouraging a more diverse suite of housing nearby.

2.12 Access and movement

The original street pattern is east-west streets radiating from the station with East and West Parades running north-south as the main collector roads.

Although street topography is undulating, the compact nature of the settlement supports walking where pathways are safe and all-weather.

Opportunities:

- > Improve connectivity of the pathway network with a safe and continuous path between the shops and the School of Arts (across the railway land).

2.13 Street Appeal - Public realm and pedestrian experience

The shops in East Parade are designed for driver convenience. They do not activate the street.

Opportunities:

- > A new pathway link from the shops to the School of Arts with some beautification works (landscaping and signage) along the link would greatly improve pedestrian experience.

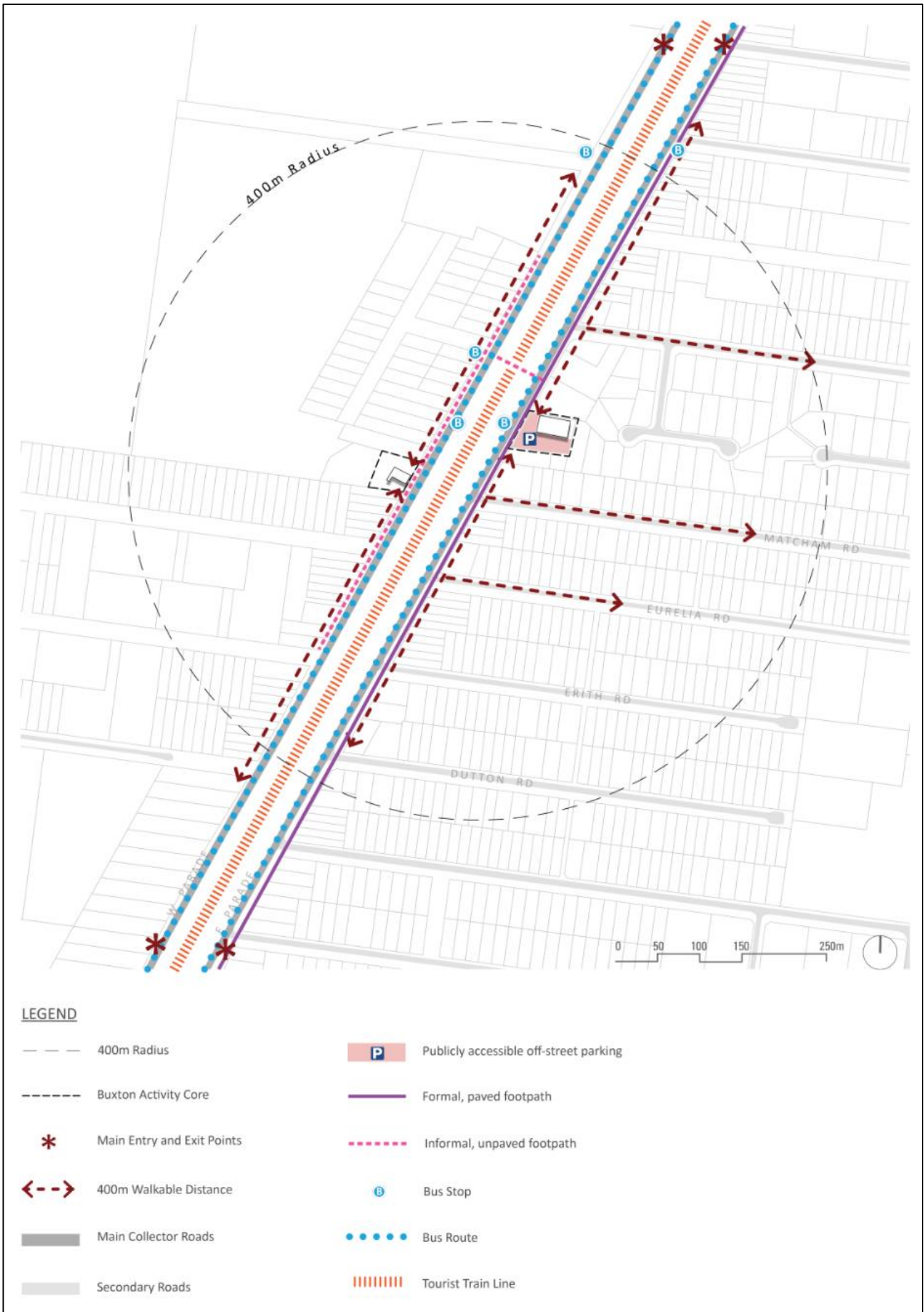


Figure 2-7 Options for access and movement to and through the Buxton centre

3 Current commitments to works, adopted plans and strategies

3.1 Objectives for Buxton from previous Centres Study

The HillPDA Centres Study of 2008 recommended improved links between residential, commercial and community land uses, enhanced built form at the Centre and improved access to, from, and within Buxton.

The built form, connectivity and access have not changed since 2008.

Opportunities:

- > This Centres Study maintains the recommendation for improved pedestrian links.

3.2 WLEP 2011 Provisions



Figure 3-1 Current land use zoning for Buxton, with recommended investigation area for 'Adaptable Typologies'.

The provisions of WLEP 2011 allow for expansion of commercial floor space. The School of Arts Community Centre is within Zone R2 Low Density Residential Zone which does not constrain its continued use as a focal point for community based activities. As a heritage item, Clause 5.10 to WLEP 2011 allows consideration of a variety of works and activities not otherwise contained in the LEP if the use and work is conducive to the heritage integrity of the School of Arts Community Hall.

Zone R2 allows for home business, home occupation and home industry and facilitates work from home businesses.

Opportunities:

- > No change to WLEP 2011 provisions.

3.3 DCP Provisions

Opportunities:

- > No change to DCP provisions.

3.4 Council's Current Commitments

The master planned upgrade of Telopea Park is listed in Council's adopted schedule of works and is underway.

4 Summary of Opportunities

- > Ease and convenience of visitation to the School of Arts Community Centre should be improved with a footpath extending north and south along West Parade and a continuous footpath connection to the shops in East Parade including a safe, well separated pathway crossing of the rail line.
- > Functionality of the School of Arts Community Centre could be improved with an indoor/outdoor transition space on the northern side of the building. A covered deck suitable for outdoor seating and eating with an outdoor kitchen/BBQ would be ideal. Opportunities for a caretaker residence/artist in residence program could improve security and more regular opening of the site to the public.
- > Council's Economic Development team to investigate the opportunity for a shared work hub on the commercial land with enhanced internet connectivity and shared facilities such as administration and online meeting facilities. Grants and funding assistance may be available as demonstrated by case studies such as Port Stephens and Newcastle pop up work hubs.
- > Key sites to be considered for adaptable building typologies provisions to be added to the DCP.



Figure 4-1 Visual representation of opportunities for Buxton.