

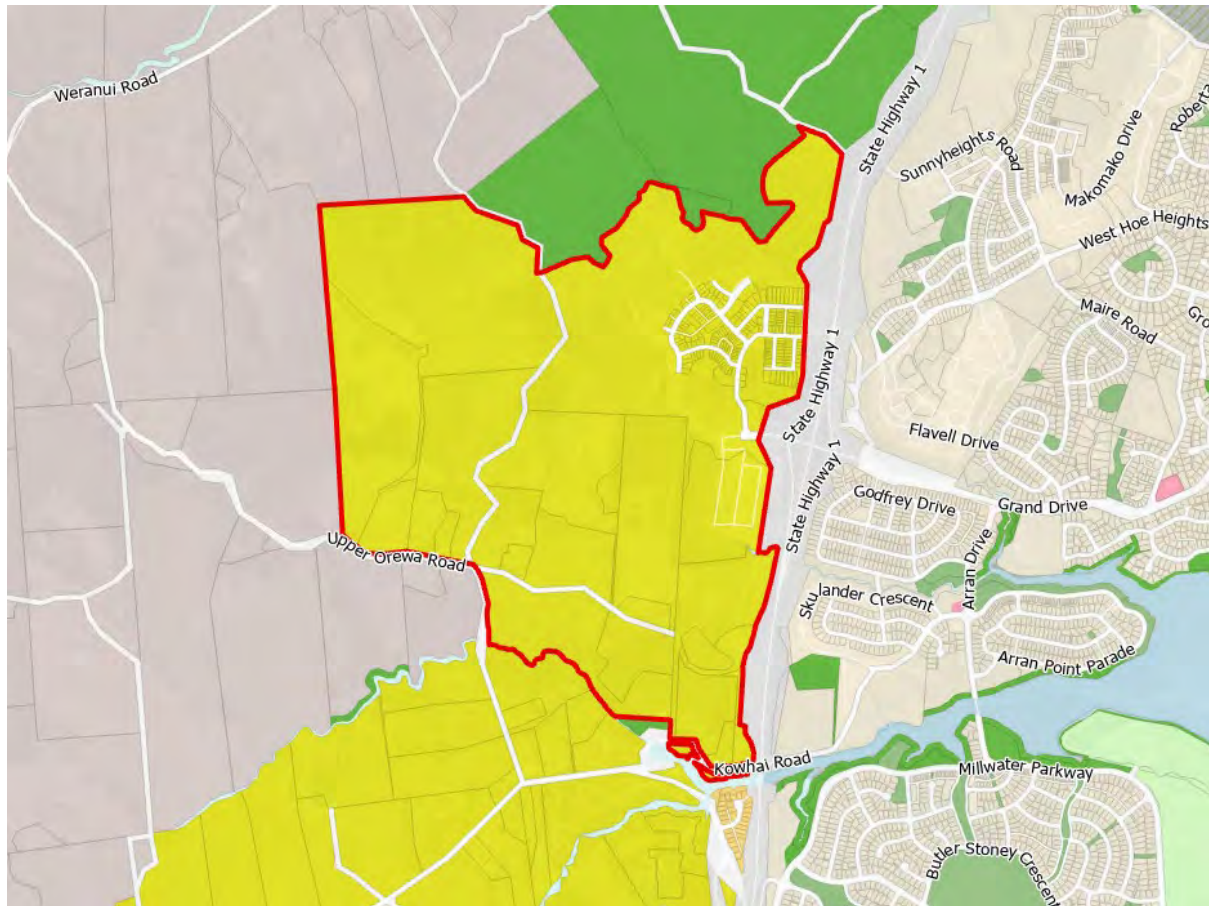
# **Upper Orewa Concept Structure Plan**

**July 2025**



## 1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to present a Concept Structure Plan for the Upper Orewa Area as identified in Figure 1 below to assist both the Fast Track Panel and Auckland Council in understanding how development of this area can be undertaken in an integrated manner and support a well-functioning urban environment (WFUE).



*Figure 1 - Upper Orewa Area*

The Upper Orewa Area encompasses approximately 260Ha of Future Urban Zoned (FUZ) land adjacent to the north-western Rural Urban Boundary (RUB). However, approximately 90Ha of this land is already subject to an approved resource consent for approximately 575 new dwellings, open spaces and a neighbourhood centre as part of the Ara Hills Subdivision. Development of Ara Hills has been underway for several years already which has seen the establishment of street networks, parks and approximately 150 dwellings. Land development required to deliver approximately 100 additional dwellings as well as a new neighbourhood centre (Stage 2 of Ara Hills) is currently underway. The consented layout and supporting structure plan for Ara Hills is shown overleaf in Figure 2.





Figure 2 - Ara Hills Structure Plan (September 2024)

## 1.1 What is a structure plan?

A structure plan is intended to guide future urban development of an area. It is a non-statutory high-level plan that shows how an area of land can be urbanised taking into account constraints and opportunities. It shows the arrangement of various land uses and infrastructure and typically shows how an area connects to adjacent urban areas and wider infrastructure networks.

## 1.2 Other Structure Plans / Strategic Planning

Auckland Council has adopted five structure plans since the Auckland Unitary Plan was first made Operative in Part in 2016. These structure plans and their relative scale in terms of land area are identified below. As can be seen, the extent and scale of detailed structure plans are much larger than the Upper Orewa Area.

- Drury-Opaheke – 1,900Ha
- Whenuapai – 1,500Ha
- Warkworth – 1,000Ha
- Pukekohe – Paerata – 530Ha
- Silverdale West – 600Ha

In addition to this, Auckland Transport and New Zealand Transport Agency (NZTA), through the Supporting Growth Alliance (SGA), has also undertaken analysis on the strategic transport network required to support future growth in North Auckland which includes the Upper Orewa Area. Importantly, this work has already identified the need for significant infrastructure development in the Upper Orewa Area through the delivery of the Milldale to Grand Drive Connection (now known as the NoR6 Road / Grand Drive Extension). Other ancillary transport upgrades in the vicinity of the Upper Orewa Area include an active modes corridor along SH1 between Grand Drive and Silverdale and the upgrade of Wainui Road.

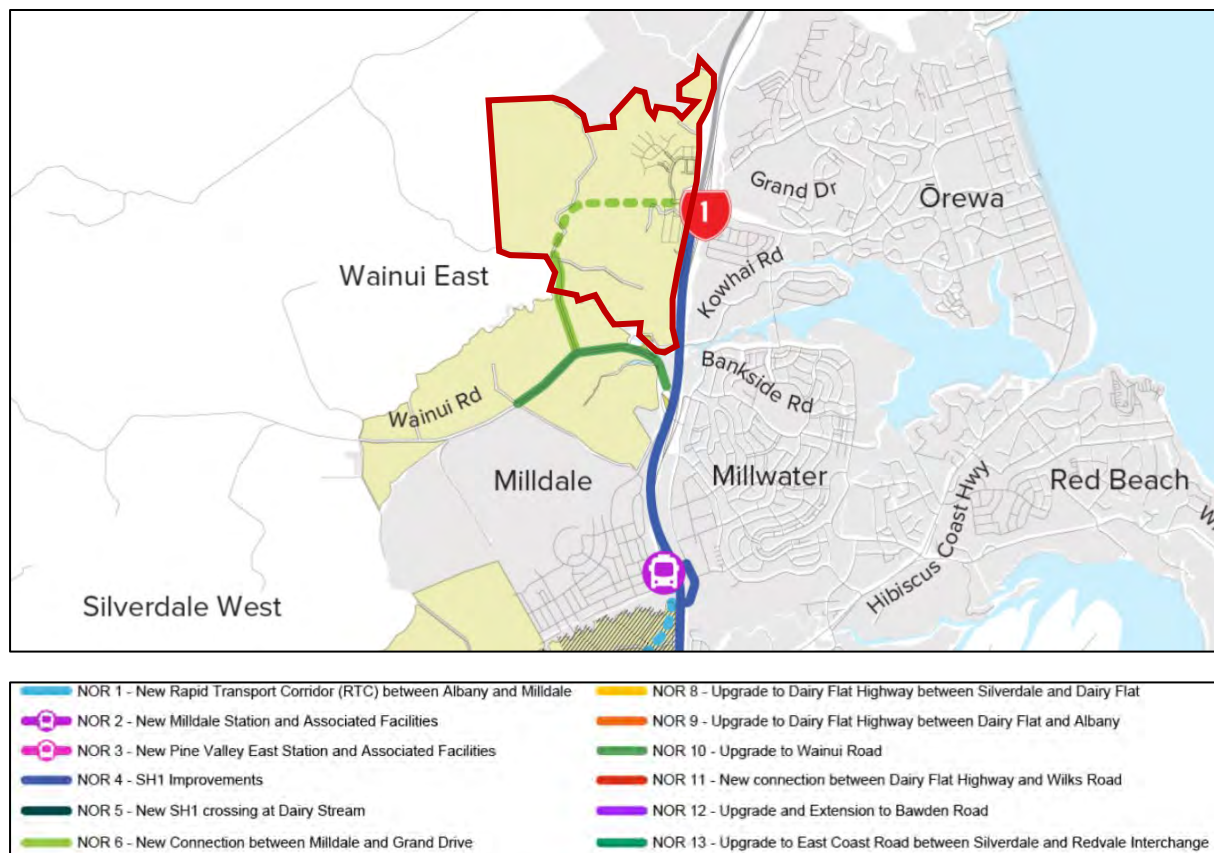


Figure 3 - North Auckland Strategic Transport Network (Part Copy) – Upper Orewa outlined in Red



### ***1.2.1 Auckland Future Development Strategy 2023-2053***

The Auckland Future Development Strategy 2023-2053 (FDS) provides a high-level strategy for how Auckland will grow (in terms of residential and business land) over a 30-year period. At a high-level, the FDS seeks to implement the direction of the Regional Policy Statement for a quality compact urban form. It directs the majority of future residential growth into existing brownfield areas (i.e. via intensification) whilst still enabling the ability to “grow-out” within areas identified as suitable for greenfield development. The FDS also identified the sequencing of land for redevelopment based on the timing / funding of strategic infrastructure by Council themselves (as opposed to demand or the market attractiveness of an area for development). However, the FDS does identify the potential for private sector infrastructure provision to enable development in advance of Council’s proposed sequencing.

The Upper Orewa area is identified as an area suitable for greenfield development within the FDS. The Upper Orewa area was identified as being “development ready” not before 2050+ with four main (Auckland Council-led) infrastructure prerequisites listed:

- 1 Wainui Road Upgrade;
- 2 Milldale & Grand Drive Connection;
- 3 North Shore Rapid Transit (Extension to Milldale); and
- 4 Army Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade (due for completion by 2031).

The FDS was prepared on the basis of the implementation of the Medium Density Residential Standards (MDRS) and Plan Change 78 under a ‘Medium’ growth projection scenario. However, as at June 2025 Central Government and Auckland Council themselves have signalled that Plan Change 78 will be withdrawn and replaced with a new plan change modifying the spatial extent of intensification to be enabled and extensive downzoning in areas subject to significant natural hazard risks. As with the Future Urban Land Supply Strategy 2017 before it, changes to national policy direction, Council’s own policies and infrastructure programmes, means that the sequencing strategy set out within the FDS is indicative at best, representing Auckland Council’s preferences at a certain point in time.

## 2.0 Upper Orewa

As previously stated, the Upper Orewa Area encompasses approximately 260Ha of FUZ land, the majority of which is still in use for pastoral farming or rural residential uses. However, the majority of this land (ca. 200Ha) has already been subject to more detailed analysis and assessment than a typical structure plan area through the Ara Hills consenting processes, the development of the Delmore Fast Track Application and SGA's assessment of the strategic transport network for North Auckland. This includes the NoR6 Road Designation which traverses through the heart of this area.

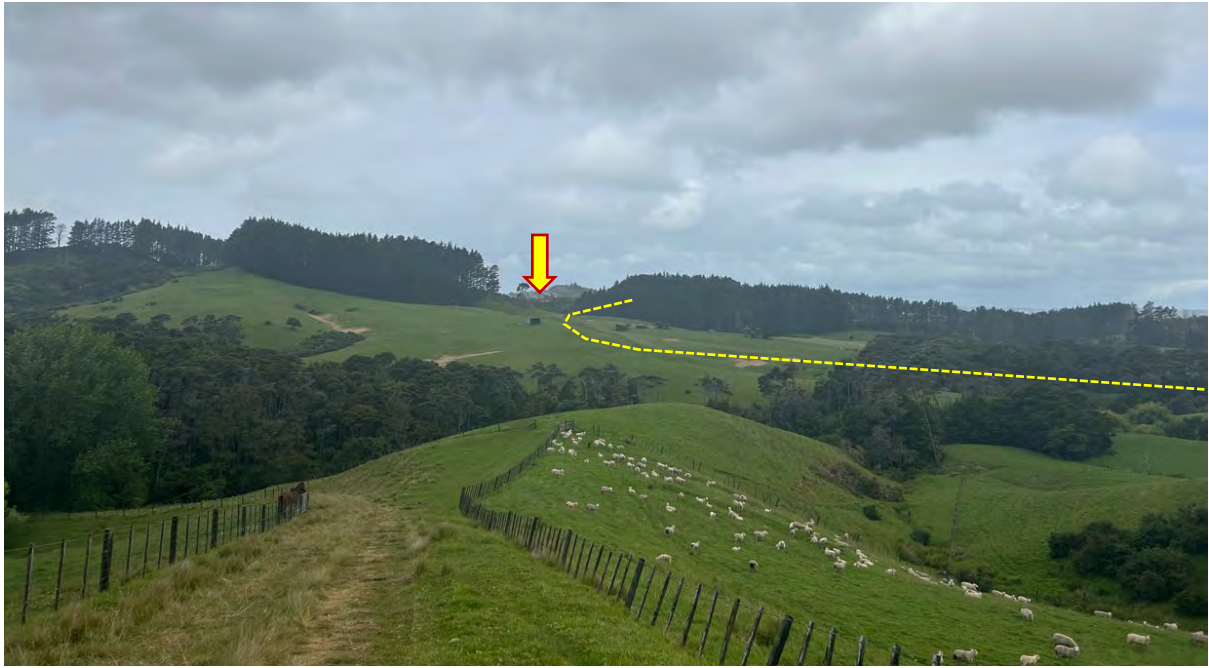
The Upper Orewa Area is characterised by its topography which features a series of existing water courses / tributaries of the Orewa Awa which generally flow from west to east, with the Orewa Awa itself forming the southern boundary of the Structure Plan area (refer to Figure 3). The topography of the area rises and falls between a series of ridgelines and gullies, with steeper areas concentrated closer to water courses as well as its northern interface with Nukumea Scenic Reserve. Much of the area in between the waterbodies features is land which could be described as rolling with a general fall to the east towards the Ōrewa River (refer to Figure 4). This topography, combined with other ecological features including wetlands, Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) and other protected native bush creates obvious constraints to the nature of future development, particularly north-south connectivity. These challenges are documented in the various application documents for both the Ara Hills and Delmore proposals.

Of the remaining 60Ha of land within the Upper Orewa Area that has not been subject to detailed analysis, it is observed that approximately 13Ha falls within existing SEAs, while a further 1ha would likely fall within a future Esplanade Reserve of the Orewa Awa. The NoR6 Road (including Upper Orewa Road), Russell Road and Kowhai Road form the key existing connections to this area.



*Figure 4 - Perspective Aerial of the Upper Orewa Area showing watercourses (blue) and SEAs (turquoise).*





*Figure 5 - Looking east from Delmore. The southern portion of Stage 6 of the Ara Hills development is shown by the arrow and dotted line indicates the general alignment of the NoR6 Road for reference.*

Given the area's topography and other contextual factors around the NoR6 Road and Ara Hills resource consents, the development of a full Structure Plan for the Upper Orewa Area and a subsequent Plan Change process is considered unnecessary and would not facilitate the development of the Delmore project in a more timely or cost-effective manner. As such, a "Concept Structure Plan" has been prepared to help demonstrate how Delmore can be integrated with Ara Hills (to the extent practicable) as well as other areas of the remaining FUZ land.

### 3.0 The Concept Structure Plan

The Concept Structure Plan is set out in three key plans and are attached to this document. The key elements of the Concept Structure Plan include:

- Indicative Land-uses and densities;
- High-level transport network; and
- Parks and open-space network.

#### 6.1 Land-uses

Given the location of the area and its underlying topography, it is considered that residential uses, supported by neighbourhood centres, represent the most appropriate land-use within the Upper Orewa Area. The types of activities (and associated scale of built form) enabled within Light Industrial and Local / Town Centre zones (e.g. large-scale supermarkets, trade suppliers, warehousing) typically require larger footprints which would be challenging to deliver within the Upper Orewa Area without substantial land modification. In contrast, more fine-grained residential development requires smaller building platforms / lot sizes which can allow for development to better follow the natural contour of the land and reduce the extent and or scale of retaining required.

No specific zones have been identified within the Concept Structure Plan in acknowledgment of the shifting policy direction around standardised zones as part of Resource Management reform. Rather, indicative densities and typologies are identified, with more intensive medium density typologies such as those enabled by the Mixed Housing Suburban or Urban zones (e.g. terraced housing) concentrated along proposed public transport corridors and around centres. Lower density typologies (e.g. detached housing on larger lots) are then identified in areas at the periphery, close to the RUB or other sensitive features such as SEA's. In general, development in the area is anticipated to be in the range of one-to-two stories and more "suburban" in character.

Based on the nature of consented development at Ara Hills, what is proposed as part of the Delmore application, and the nature of the balance land around Russell Road, it is estimated that the Upper Orewa Area could support approximately 2,400 homes (or around 7,700 people assuming 3.1 people per dwelling). This is comprised of up to 1,250 dwellings at Delmore, 575 dwellings at Ara Hills and approximately 600 dwellings across the 60Ha balance of the remaining area.

Overall, this works out to a low gross density of 9 dwelling per hectare which is appropriate in the context of the various development constraints which exist in the Upper Orewa Area.

##### 6.1.1 Centres

A Local Centre Demand Assessment for Delmore and Ara Hills has been undertaken by Urban Economics (June 2025). This assessment concluded that the scale of the centre already provided for at Ara Hills has the potential to provide for approximately 6,790m<sup>2</sup> of GFA once developed. A centre of this size has the ability to support up to 11,300 residents.

Taking into account the projected household / populations of the entire Upper Orewa Area, this would equate to approximately 0.9m<sup>2</sup> of Retail GFA per capita. This figure would be higher than the Auckland



average and is comparable with other recent comparable masterplanned centres at Hobsonville Point, Millwater, Stonefields and Long Bay.

The Ara Hills Neighbourhood Centre is located in close proximity to the SH1 interchange (on Grand Drive) meaning it is well located to serve a range of users utilising different modes of travel. However, its location at the eastern extent of the Upper Orewa Area means that western and southern portions of the Upper Orewa Area are less conveniently served (in terms of walkability) by the Ara Hills Centre. As such, the Concept Structure Plan has identified another “Primary” neighbourhood centre around the intersection of the NoR6 / Upper Orewa Road and Russell Road to take advantage of a range of different modes of travel by residents and to take advantage of the higher levels of passing trade inherent along an arterial road corridor. Given the fact that the Ara Hills Centre is sufficiently sized to service the entire Upper Orewa Area, the exact size and extent of this additional primary neighbourhood centre would best be determined as part of a future planning process that can factor in the actual uptake and development of the Ara Hills Centre once it is constructed.

In addition to the two primary neighbourhood centres, two “secondary” neighbourhood centre locations have been identified at other nodal points in the north-western and south-eastern parts of the Upper Orewa Area. These are envisioned to be small-scale “corner-store” type locations which could include a café or dairy and be co-located with other amenities such as park to create a local destination.

### ***6.1.2 Rural Urban Interface***

The northern and western boundaries of the Upper Orewa Area adjoin the RUB. The majority of this boundary is defined by an existing SEA with dense native vegetation and falls within the Nukumea Scenic Reserve. Much of this land is itself elevated above the area and will continue to provide a vegetated backdrop and buffer with nearby rural uses. The natural topography of the land around these SEAs also restricts the nature of development that could reasonably occur.

Part of the western boundary of the Upper Orewa Area is defined by Upper Orewa Road itself, with a large section forming part of the NoR6 Road and subject to upgrade as a future arterial road. Upper Orewa Road also runs along a ridgeline with neighbouring properties at 105 and 117 Upper Orewa Road located on a south-facing slope towards the Milldale North FUZ. As such, existing topography and Upper Orewa Road itself provides a physical buffer with adjacent rural residential properties. Further, future residential uses would likely need to incorporate a degree of front yard landscaping depending on any zone standards adopted or applying providing for a further transition in scale between development of the Upper Orewa Area and rural land.

## **6.2 Transport**

Policy 1 of the National Policy Statement on Urban Development and Objective 2.2.1(1) of the Auckland Regional Policy Statement seeks “a well-functioning urban environment with a quality compact urban form that enables [*amongst other things*] ... good accessibility for all people, including by improved and more efficient public or active transport”. Importantly, this objective does not explicitly exclude accessibility via private motor vehicles or does it require that even a majority of trips are undertaken by public or active transport. Rather, it must be viewed and applied within the specific context of a particular location. In this regard, good accessibility, including by improved and more efficient public or

active transport, would (and should) look differently between areas like, for example, Upper Orewa and Pt Chevalier.

Given the Upper Orewa Area's location at the north-western fringe of the Hibiscus Coast urban area, itself separate from the core metropolitan Auckland area, the mix of transport requirements needs to respond to this context to maximise the amenity afforded to future residents and respond appropriately to the requirements which contribute to a WFUE.

### **6.2.1 *Roading***

Due to the topography and extent of water bodies across the Upper Orewa Area there is limited potential to establish a clear gridded street network with a range of road hierarchies as is generally considered desirable in a relatively flat greenfield environment (such as in Milldale for example).

The key piece of roading infrastructure serving the Upper Orewa Area is the NoR6 Road which provides for a multi-modal, arterial road connection between Grand Drive and Upper Orewa Road. This includes segregated cycling facilities, footpaths and a wide carriageway to support bus movements. New development fronting the NoR6 Road will need be 'rear-loaded', where access occurs via rear lanes or consolidated accessways, to minimise vehicle crossings and potential conflicts with buses, pedestrians and cyclists. This road is intended to accommodate the majority of traffic movements generated by activities within the Upper Orewa Area in the medium-to-long term.

Local road alignments have generally been identified to align with ridgelines across the Upper Orewa Area. Two local road typologies have been identified within the Concept Structure Plan reflective of their anticipated use / role within the wider urban structure. "Main Local Roads" are intended to provide important north-south connectivity across the Upper Orewa Area and to the NoR6 Road but generally carry total vehicle volumes below the standard required of a Collector Road (i.e. less than 3,000 VPD). These roads would also function as the secondary cycling routes (behind the NoR6 Road) and would require the incorporation of traffic calming devices to ensure design speeds are appropriate for the mixing of general traffic and cyclists. If traffic calming is not proposed it is expected that segregated cycling facilities would be required.

"Key Local Roads" have been identified as those which extend access into more topographically constrained areas of the Upper Orewa Area. At the southern end of the Upper Orewa Area lies Kowhai Road which passes beneath SH1 and provides a direct link with established neighbourhoods of Arran Drive and forms part of the Rodney Greenways Network. There is insufficient clearance beneath SH1 for heavy vehicles to use this route but it will remain an important local connection.

### **6.2.2 *Public Transport***

In terms of Public Transport, in the long-term, the NoR6 Road has been designed to support two-way bus movements as part of the **Frequent Transit Network (FTN)** linking Orewa Town Centre and the Milldale Rapid Transit Station as indicated within SGA's long-term transport network for North Auckland. This route has the potential to also support access to a number of other key local destinations including Milldale Local Centre, the new education campus on Upper Orewa Road, Victor Eaves Park and the Highgate Industrial node. An accessibility analysis has indicated that the majority of lots within the Upper Orewa Area would be located within a 10-minute walk of bus stops along this route. This demonstrates that bus services along the NoR6 Road can generally provide very good levels of accessibility to the FTN for the Upper Orewa Area.



Staged frequency increases to public transport along the NoR6 Road have also been identified by the SGA as wider development comes online and other complimentary infrastructure projects are delivered. In the short-term, the Auckland Regional Public Transport Plan proposes a new Route 987 to serve Ara Hills (from 2027) and provide onward connections to Orewa Town Centre and the Hibiscus Coast Station. There would be an ability to extend this route into the Delmore development and would be subject to further planning by Auckland Transport.

Auckland Transport has also established a programme of **on-demand services** to extend the reach of public transport services where conventional fixed route services are not suitable. Owing to its location on the urban fringe, relatively low overall density and the nature of the topography it is considered that the Upper Orewa Area could be a suitable location to utilise on-demand services to flexibly expand public transport coverage.

The **Albany to Milldale RTN** is proposed as a significant public transport project to serve North Auckland. The North Staging Considerations document prepared by SGA notes that it is primarily related to future development in the Pine Valley and Dairy Flat areas.<sup>1</sup> In particular development of the full RTN corridor is heavily dependent on the development of Dairy Flat area. The nearest proposed RTN station sits in Milldale approximately 2.5km at its closest with the Upper Orewa Area, this extends to around 3.5km to 4km for the Delmore and Ara Hills developments respectively. The North Staging Considerations document notes that development of the Wainui Area (which includes Upper Orewa) is not dependant on delivery of this project and could be supported by other smaller scale projects including the NoR6 Road, Wainui Road upgrade and the SH1 active modes corridor.

### **6.2.3 Active Modes**

In terms of active modes, the NoR6 Road and Wainui Road projects are proposed to feature segregated cycling facilities which will provide for a direct segregated network linking the Upper Orewa Area with key destinations in the wider area including the proposed Education Campus, Milldale Local Centre, the Metro Sports Park, Victor Eaves Park, Orewa College and Orewa Town Centre.

A new pedestrian / cycling crossing adjacent to Grand Drive and over SH1 has been secured via a condition as part of the Ara Hills development and is intended to be in place in the short-term. This new pedestrian / cycling crossing will also link in with the proposed active modes corridor proposed by SGA to run alongside the southbound carriageway of SH1 between Grand Drive and Silverdale. In time, it is envisioned that these active modes corridor will extend to Albany and also provide a cycling connection to employment nodes at Highgate and Silverdale.

In addition to the above, the Concept Structure Plan identifies a number of pedestrian connections. It is intended that these could be delivered through footpaths on local roads or via separate off-road facilities (or a combination of both). These are intended to provide for increased connectivity within the Upper Orewa Area and to provide for recreational / leisure opportunities through areas of established or revegetating forest.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://hdp-au-prod-app-growth-zones-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/5817/0710/6424/Appendix\\_N\\_-\\_Staging\\_Considerations.pdf](https://hdp-au-prod-app-growth-zones-files.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/5817/0710/6424/Appendix_N_-_Staging_Considerations.pdf)

### **6.3 Parks**

There are a number of existing esplanade and native bush reserves within or adjacent to the Upper Orewa Area, but currently only one park in Ara Hills with a specific recreational purpose. However, three other parks in addition to open space connections are consented within the Ara Hills development.

Given the proposed population growth expected in the Upper Orewa Area, there is a need for the provision of parks and open space to provide adequate informal recreational opportunities and experiences for the anticipated residents. Given the relatively low gross housing density proposed across the Upper Orewa Area, the Concept Structure Plan has identified a total of 9 neighbourhood / pocket parks to provide for informal recreational opportunities generally spaced at approximately 300m distances and concentrated around the areas of more intensive residential development. These parks would be in addition to riparian corridors (including esplanade reserves), and protected areas of vegetation.

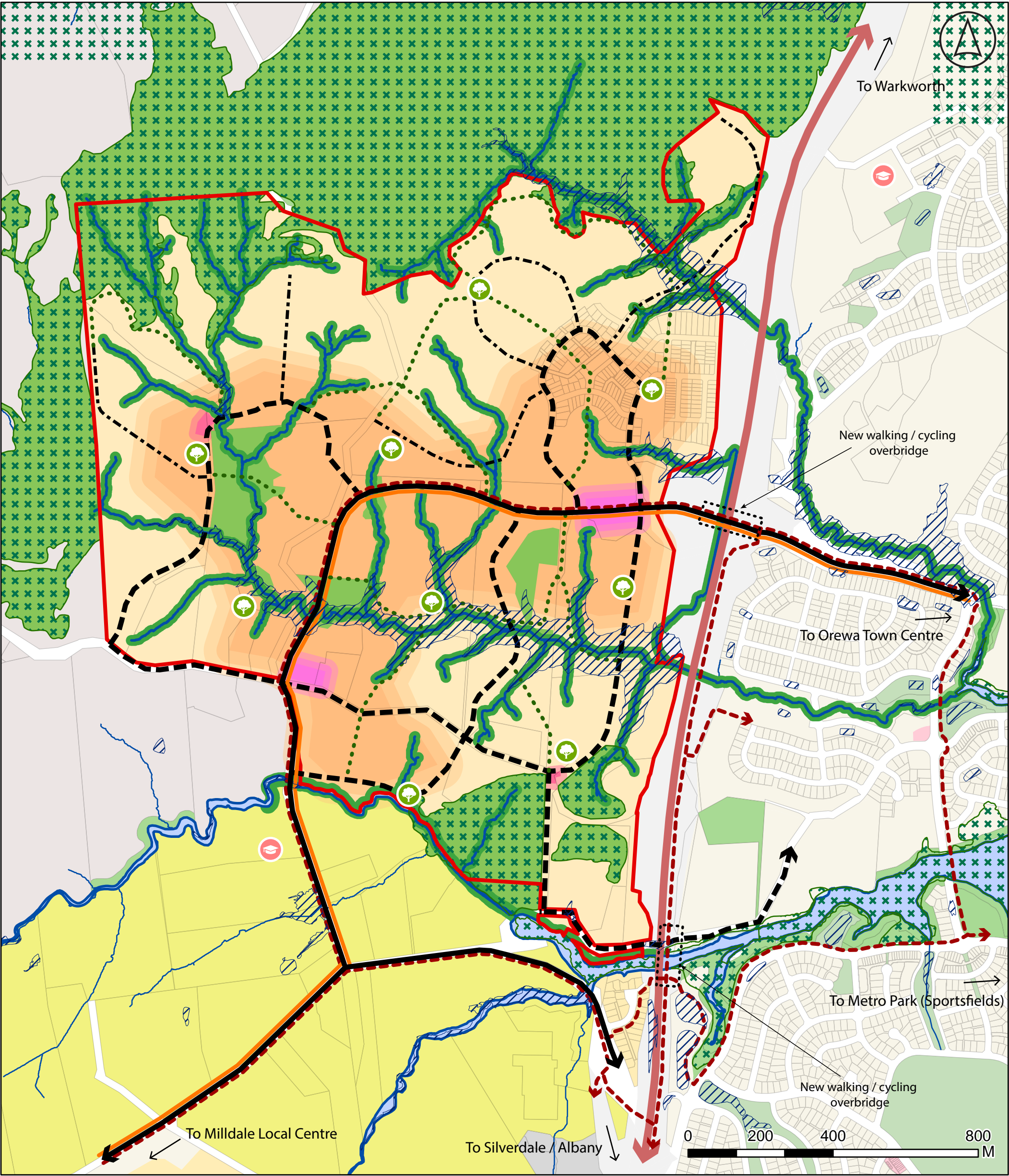
Given the topography of the Upper Orewa Area, there is no suburban park proposed within the Concept Structure Plan. Auckland Council's Open Space Policy notes that suburban parks should indicatively provide for elements including organised sports facilities, car parking, multiple flat spaces, playgrounds and walking trails. A standard football pitch alone requires at least 7000m<sup>2</sup> of flat land (excluding any additional requirements around car parking and areas for spectators). The space required to accommodate a number of these amenities with only modest terracing as generally required by Auckland Council Parks is considered impractical for the reasons established throughout this document.

As such, residents will need to rely on other proximate suburban parks to support their recreational needs. These parks, and their distance from the boundary of the Upper Orewa Area are identified below:

- Metro Park West, Millwater – 1.6km
- Hillside Park, Milldale – 2.2km
- Victor Eaves Park, Orewa – 2.3km
- Metro Park East, Millwater – 2.3km

It is noted that each of these destinations will be directly linked to Delmore via either segregated cycling infrastructure or public transport (as well as a combination of both).





- Upper Orewa Structure Plan Boundary
- Waterbodies
- Significant Ecological Areas
- Other Protected Vegetation
- Riparian Margins
- Flood Prone Areas
- State Highway
- New Arterial Road
- Main Local Roads
- Key Local Road
- Frequent Transit Network
- Segregated Cycling Routes
- Pedestrian Connections
- Medium Density Residential Typologies
- Lower Density Residential Typologies
- Primary Neighbourhood Centres
- Secondary Neighbourhood Centres
- Proposed Park
- School

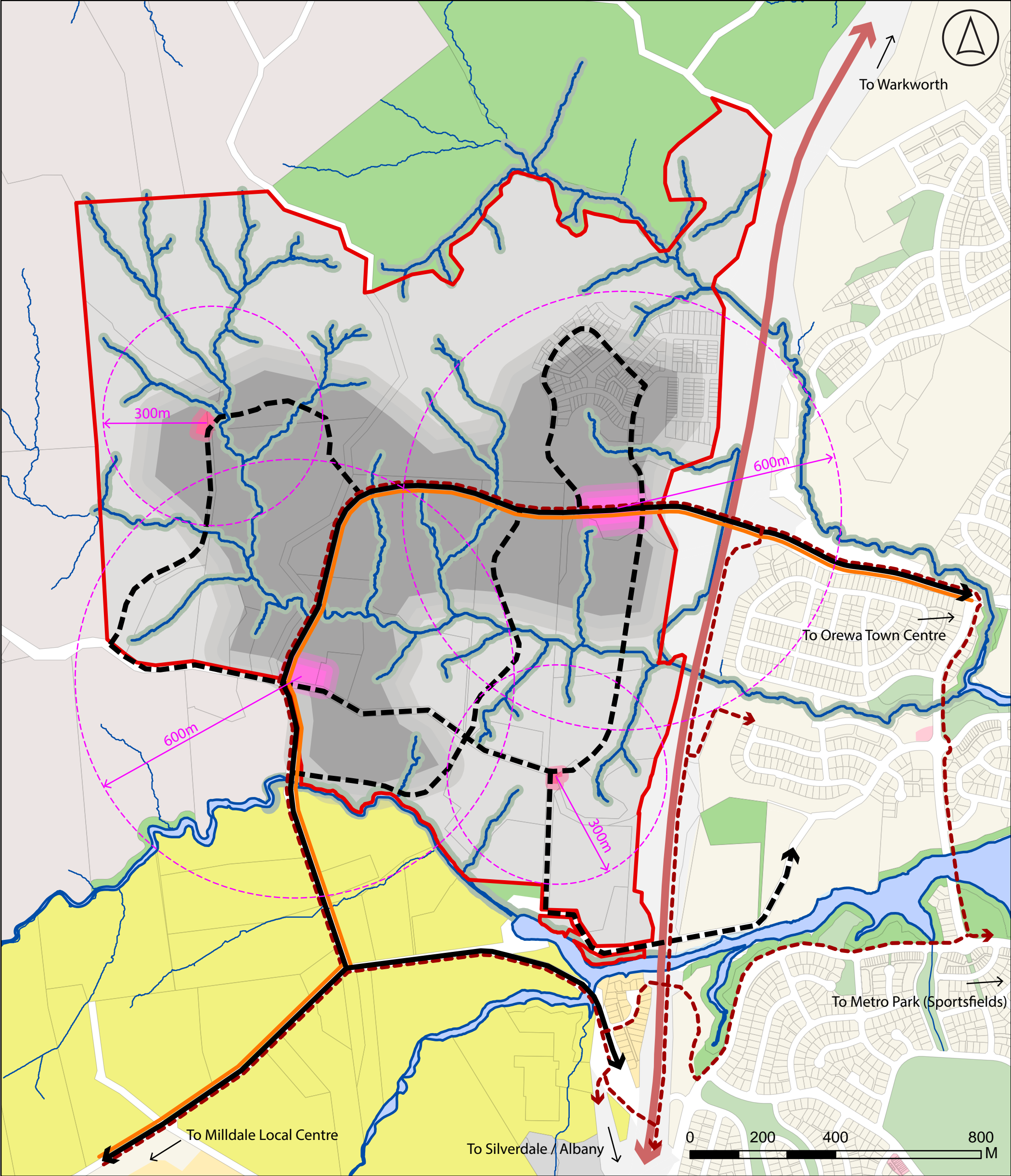
Notes:

1. Pedestrian Connections are intended to be delivered through a combination of local streets and off-street facilities (i.e. through open spaces).
2. 'Primary Neighbourhood Centres' are located along the main movement network and are intended to serve as the primary retail convenience and commercial needs of residents (e.g. grocer, bakery, estate agent, cafe, hairdresser, medical). 'Secondary Neighbourhood Centres' are located at other nodal points and are intended to provide for a small block of shops or other non-residential uses (e.g. cafe, dairy, childcare).

# Upper Orewa Concept Structure Plan

Date: 24.06.2025  
Scale @ A3: 1:10,000





- Upper Orewa Structure Plan Boundary
- Waterbodies
- Riparian Margins
- State Highway
- New Arterial Road
- Main Local Roads
- Key Local Road
- Frequent Transit Network
- Segregated Cycling Route
- Primary Neighbourhood Centres
- Secondary Neighbourhood Centres

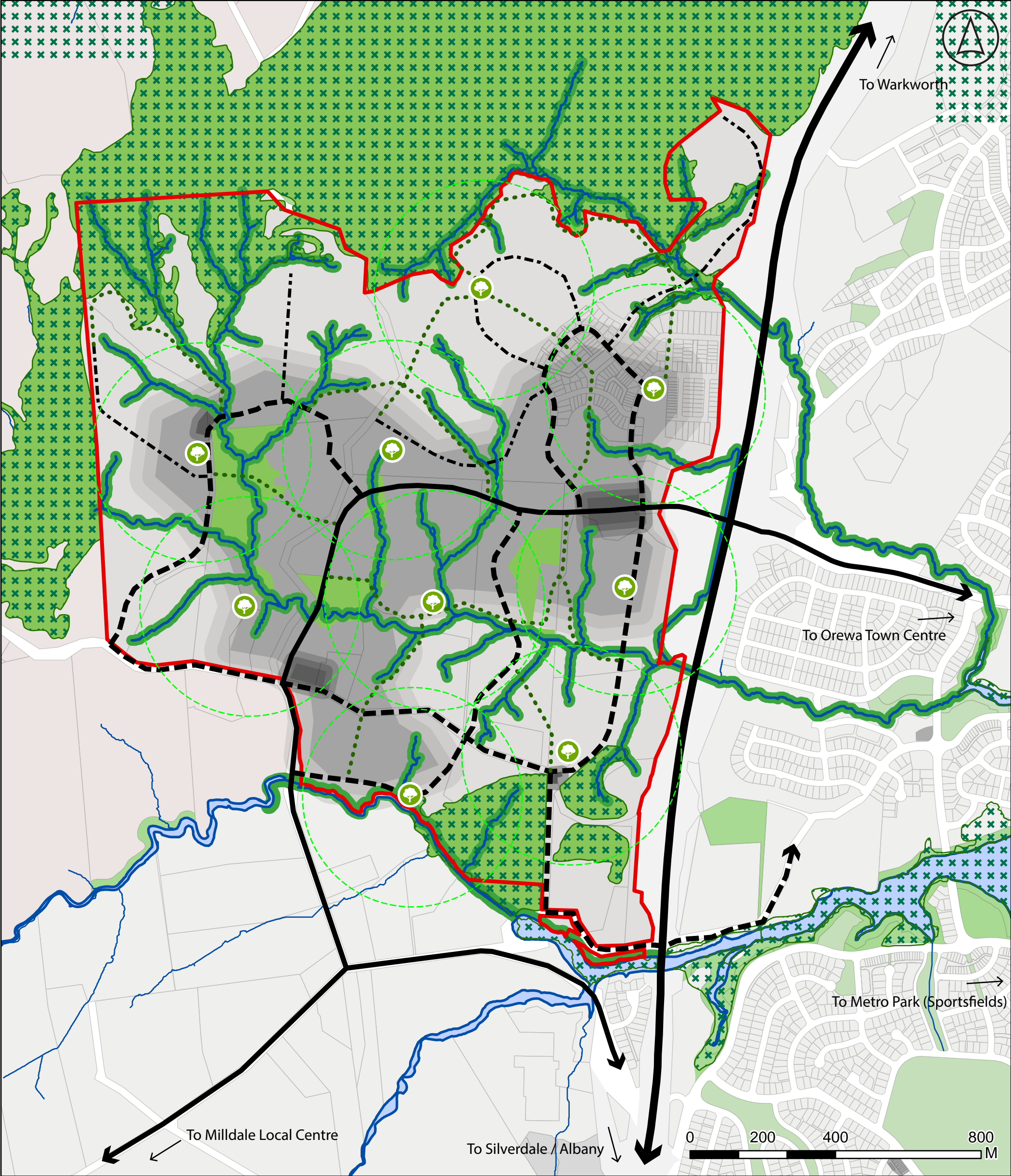
# Upper Orewa

## Concept Structure Plan - Centres

Date: 24.06.2025  
Scale @ A3: 1:10,000

Notes:  
1. 600m radial catchment used as a proxy to identify 800m actual walking distance.  
2. 300m radial catchment used as a proxy to identify 400m actual walking distance.





- Upper Orewa Structure Plan Boundary
- Waterbodies
- Significant Ecological Areas
- Other Protected Vegetation
- Riparian Margins
- 🌳 Proposed Park
- State Highway
- New Arterial Road
- Main Local Roads
- Key Local Road
- Pedestrian Connections

# Upper Orewa

## Concept Structure Plan - Open Spaces

Date: 24.06.2025  
Scale @ A3: 1:10,000

Notes:  
1. 300m radial catchment used as a proxy to identify 400m actual walking distance.