

13. Visual Assessment

13.1 Overview

An assessment of the visual impact of the South Road Superway project on the surrounding environment examined the site characteristics, area of influence, scenic quality rating and visual effects of the project.

Visual assessment of new infrastructure, such as transport corridors, evaluates the visual implications of the infrastructure, in the context of the existing environment through which it passes, and makes recommendations to reduce its visual impact and maximise its visual integration in existing landscapes.

There is no universal approach to visual assessment because many assessment techniques respond to the specific nature of the project's environmental setting, such as topography, vegetation, land use, environmental and cultural values. However, a consistent methodology can be applied to the assessment of various infrastructure options.

13.2 Visual assessment methodology

13.2.1 Assessment method

Overview

A visual assessment is a structured analysis of the landscape character and scenic quality of a project area against which the visual effects and opportunities of a proposed development are assessed.

The visual catchment – from where the project could be viewed – was divided into landscape character areas, each with common distinguishing visual characteristics including landform, land use, water forms, vegetation and available views. The visual assessment, in March 2009, comprised multiple site visits, and a desktop review of photographs, maps and aerial photography to aid the assessment and to correlate and confirm field observations.

Each landscape character area was assessed in detail in three parts.

Existing environment

Visual effects associated with the development of the project can be assessed only against the visual characteristics of the existing landscape.

The assessment began with describing the landscape character and scenic quality of the existing visual environment. Elements identified included land use, built form, areas of cultural significance, heritage items and local landmarks, existing views into and out of the transport corridor and general amenity effects associated with the proximity of the transport corridor to residential areas. Each landscape character area was also assessed for high, moderate or low scenic quality.

Proposed changes

In part two of the assessment, the main visual changes were determined, taking into account the proposed road design and the urban and landscape design treatments.

Impact assessment

Part three of the assessment described the potential effects of the proposed elevated roadway structure and road design elements, assuming proposed urban and landscape design elements would be implemented. The direct visual effect of the proposed corridor on the existing landscape was assessed, as was the visual effect on views from the surrounding area.

A transport corridor may have both positive and negative effects on the surrounding environment. Positive effects may include landscape works such as revegetation, feature tree planting and urban design elements that improve the overall landscape character of a location. Negative effects may include the loss or interruption of views from nearby areas caused by bridge batters or barriers. The visual assessment has helped ensure that negative effects are reduced, eliminated or mitigated where possible.

13.2.2 Assessment terminology

Landscape character

The term 'landscape character' refers to the physical appearance and cultural context of a geographical area that gives it a distinct identity and sense of place. Landscape character is a combination of physical, biological and cultural attributes that make each landscape identifiable or unique. Elements that combine to create a landscape character type include landform, location, vegetation, land use, and views to and from the area. Landscape character may also be informed by the social and cultural context that adds to an individual sense of place.

Scenic quality

Scenic quality or attractiveness indicates the degree to which the scenic beauty of a landscape is valued from a human perspective, for the positive responses it evokes. It is based on commonly held perceptions that the most highly valued landscapes are those that are relatively natural and well vegetated, have dramatic topography, feature water or have interesting cultural features. Least preferred are landscapes that display a high degree of human disturbance, those that have few trees and landforms that are flat and unvaried.

In the study area, distant views to the Mount Lofty Ranges and views of natural vegetation are likely to be preferred to views of urbanised features such as roadways, infrastructure, commercial and industrial landscapes. However, these assumptions are general and do not hold true for all viewers of all landscapes. Scenic quality considers the aesthetic quality inherent in the landscape itself as well as the quality of views possible from the landscape.

The scenic quality of the visual catchment has been considered in relation to the general scenic quality of the landscape of the Adelaide area to enable a meaningful assessment.

The possible quality rankings are:

- High: scenic quality well above average in relation to the surrounding landscape, with the landscape type valued highly by most viewers as being unique, beautiful and offering impressive views
- Moderate–high: scenic quality above average in relation to the surrounding landscape, with a landscape type that most viewers would consider to be well maintained and pleasant to look at
- Moderate: scenic quality average in relation to the surrounding landscape, with a landscape type that most viewers would consider to be of some value and fairly pleasant to look at
- Low–moderate: scenic quality below average in relation to the surrounding landscape, with a landscape type that most viewers would find uninteresting and lacking in maintenance
- Low: scenic quality well below average in relation to the surrounding landscape, with a landscape type that most viewers would find uninteresting, unkempt and in some cases unattractive.

Visual and landscape sensitivity

The sensitivity of the visual environment and the natural landscape are also considered when assessing the impact of the proposed transport corridor.

- Visual sensitivity: the degree to which visual change to the landscape is likely to affect humans, taking into account both visual prominence (how easily a site is seen) and visual accessibility (how closely and often a site is seen)
- Landscape sensitivity: the sensitivity of a particular landscape type to changes necessary for future development

Locations normally the most visually sensitive are those with high and/or fixed viewing populations and sites that are visually prominent and/or elevated. The potential for impact also usually increases as the viewer's position becomes closer. In terms of visual changes, the highest impact will usually be on local or foreground views (less than 1 km away), with sub-regional or mid-ground views moderately sensitive (1–5 km away), and regional or distant views (more than 5 km away) the least sensitive (Queensland Department of Main Roads 1997).

Landscapes most sensitive to change include natural environments with particular characteristics that are vulnerable to alteration, such as vegetated areas and watercourses. Other landscapes may be sensitive due to their social values like those associated with landmarks or culturally important sites.

Visual effects on residents, who have a permanent impact, are usually of more concern than those affecting road users, who perceive a more transient impact. However, unattractive views for road users can contribute to potentially negative economic effects and need to be considered in areas where tourism is important.

Urban design, landscape and visual change

New transport corridors can bring about a number of changes related to urban design, landscape and visual change. The more a new transport corridor contrasts with the surrounding landscape and the greater the severity of such change, the greater its impact will be. Effects may include:

- changes to the natural landform caused by cuttings and embankments
- introduction of new urban infrastructure elements into a natural or rural landscape
- visual separation and prevention of views
- severance of communities
- loss of familiar landscape features or characteristics
- opportunities for views
- opportunities for gateway statements
- opportunities to revitalise urban areas adjacent to the corridor.

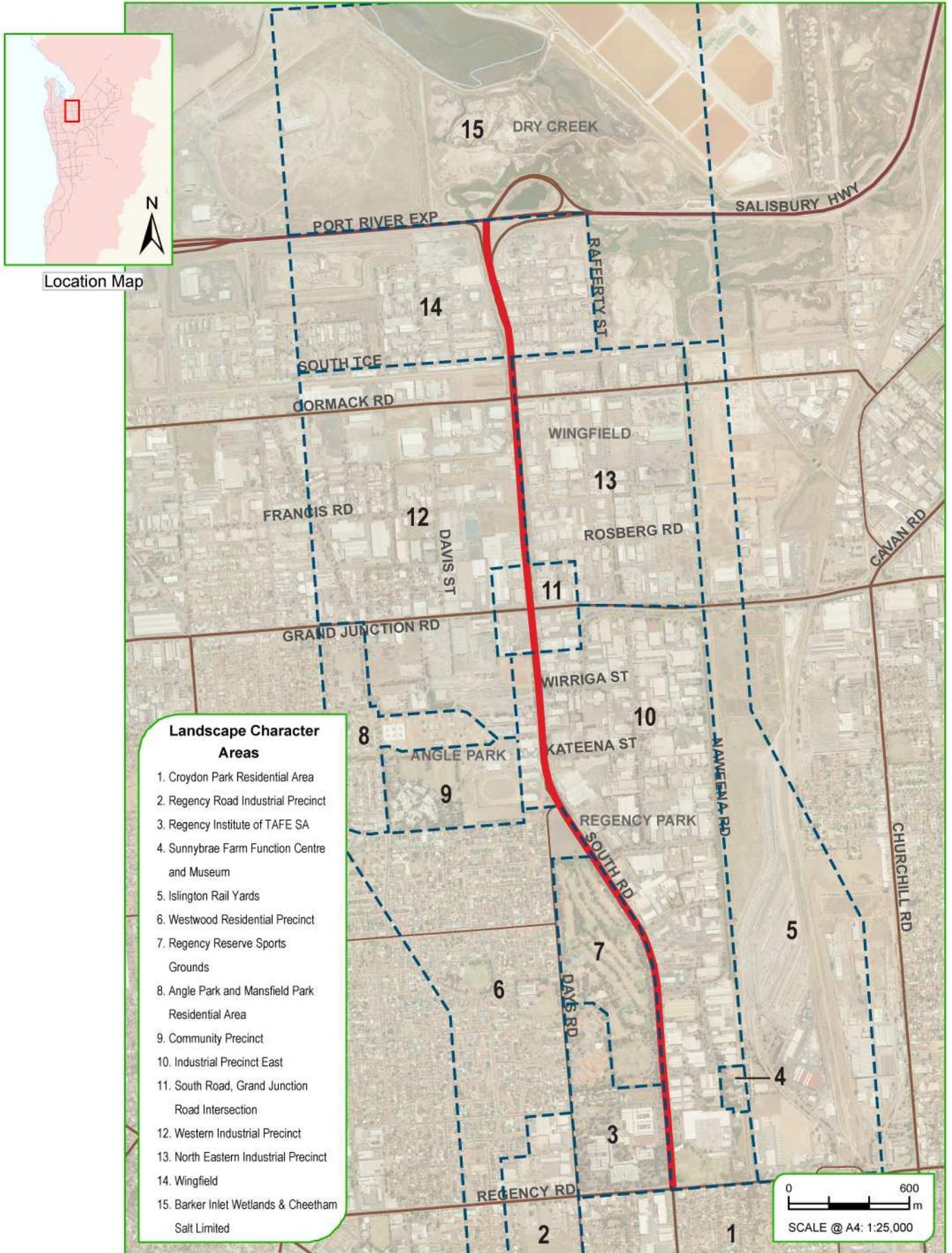
Effect over time

The visual assessment considers the short-term effect of the project (during construction and for about 3 years after completion) as well as the longer term effect (3–10 years after completion). This enables an assessment to be made of the effects before and after the landscape plantings have matured, and also allows consideration of any possible developments that may take place within that timeframe. It is expected that any negative visual effect would be greatest during and immediately following construction, with the effect decreasing as the landscape plantings mature and as people become accustomed to the visual changes.

13.3 Existing visual environment

13.3.1 General context

Most of the study area was divided into 15 landscape character areas (**Figure 13.1**) for the purpose of effectively describing and categorising the visual landscape qualities of the site, as well as assessing its scenic quality (**Table 13.1**).



 landscape character area boundaries

Landscape Character Areas

Figure 13.1

13.3.2 Landform and land use

The study area is characterised by a flat plain cleared of most native vegetation. There is some localised mounding and isolated stands of large eucalypts are a dominant feature of the landscape. Large open stormwater drains and grassed swales run along South Road and through the industrial areas, feeding into the wetlands around Salisbury Highway. Many of these swales are vegetated.

The flat topography of the region means that large structures associated with the project would be visible from several locations. However, large industrial infrastructure such as sheds and warehouses minimises potential views to the road corridors.

Land use includes residential, recreation, open space, community facilities and commercial operations. Important community facilities include The Parks Community Centre, Regency Reserve Sports Ground, Regency Park Golf Course, Sunnybrae Farm Function Centre and Museum, Pony Club, several local primary schools, Greyhound Racing SA, Angle Park and TAFE SA Regency Campus. Several sites of historical importance, including multiple buildings in Islington Rail Yards and Sunnybrae Farm Function Centre and Museum are also present.

13.3.3 Views and landmarks

The visual catchment area is generally flat with localised mounding and is heavily built up. Views out of the catchment are often limited to road corridors. Long distance views to the Mount Lofty Ranges are possible from several locations, mostly through large tracts of vacant land.

Foreground views in the catchment are limited to landscaping of private properties and public open space. Large eucalypts are the dominant form of vegetation in the visual catchment area, particularly around the campus settings of TAFE SA Regency Campus and The Parks Community Centre. The Regency Park Golf Course is the largest area of open space in the visual catchment and land between fairways is well vegetated.

Sunnybrae Farm Function Centre and Museum is a landmark site due to its heritage value and regular use as a well-established function centre. Other key sites in the catchment with a community focus are The Parks Community Centre, TAFE SA Regency Campus, and the Regency Park Golf Course and Regency Reserve Sports Ground.

Immediately north of the Salisbury Highway interchange, the Cheetham Salt Limited salt fields provide interesting visual character and to the south the wetlands are an important area of bird habitat and an interesting landscape feature.

13.3.4 Landscape character and scenic quality

The project will pass through an industrial precinct greatly trafficked by heavy vehicles. Also located in the precinct are residential areas and highly utilised areas of open space. These land uses are conflicting in nature and the interface between them is an important consideration.

The highly urbanised mix of residential, industrial and commercial land uses contributes to an eclectic landscape character. Much of the precinct contains ageing building stock and poorly maintained streetscapes. The local road network is a mixture of grid patterns and modern subdivision road alignments. The major arterial roads are north–south dominant leaving Regency Road and Grand Junction Road to carry the majority of east–west traffic.

The study area's visual catchment is generally of low to moderate scenic quality for Adelaide. The more natural sites (e.g. Barker Inlet Wetlands and Regency Park Golf Course), the transforming Westwood residential area, and cultural and community sites (e.g. Sunnybrae Farm Function Centre and Museum, and Regency Reserve Sports Ground) in the area have the highest scenic quality.

13.4 Character area visual assessment

Each character area is assessed in Table 13.1 and referred to in Figures 13.2 to 13.5.

Table 13.1. Character area visual assessment – existing environment

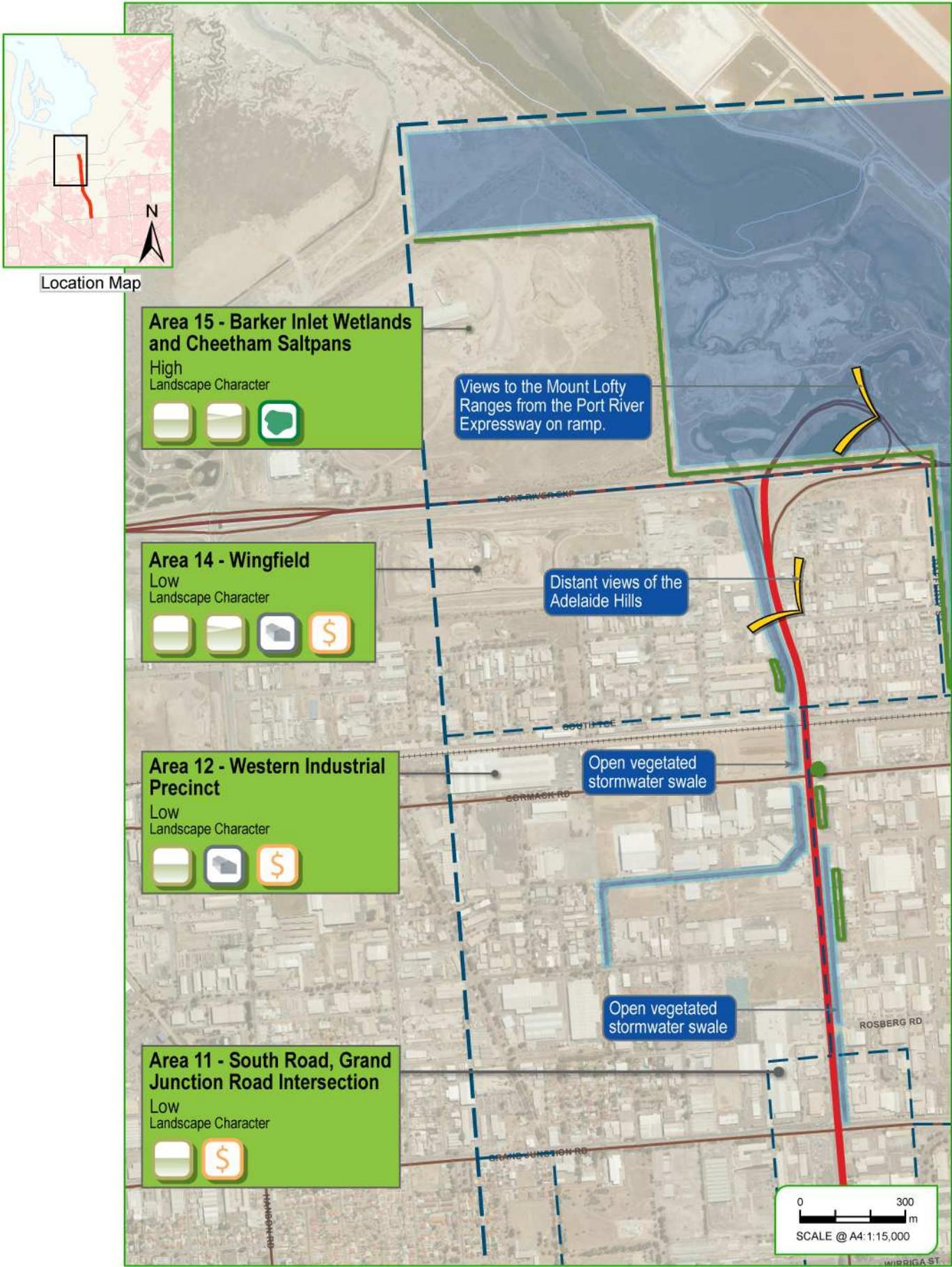
Landscape character area	Landscape character	Scenic quality and visual sensitivity
1. Croydon Park Residential Area	<p>Land use is dominated by residential properties of cream brick construction, situated on large allotments. Commercial businesses operating along Regency Road are set back behind wide verges and car parking. Light poles and stobie poles are visually dominant along the Regency Road corridor.</p> <p>Landscaping along the corridor is predominantly small, immature street tree planting interspersed with larger stands of established eucalypts. The majority of residential areas have mature residential landscapes dominated by larger street trees and some significant stands of eucalypts within reserves. The topography in this area is extremely flat and open. Views are limited to along Regency Road corridor but are expansive over the Islington rail crossing bridge. Distant views of the Mount Lofty Ranges can be seen from the bridge.</p>	<p>The scenic quality of this area is considered to be low to moderate. The orderly nature of residential properties and pockets of mature vegetation contribute to create a generally pleasing environment.</p> <p>Residents in close proximity to the South Road corridor will be highly sensitive to visual change. Residents set further back will be moderately sensitive as mature trees and built form already obscure views to the South Road corridor.</p>
2. Regency Road Industrial Precinct	<p>Industrial area consisting predominantly of large sheds. The built form is sporadically set back from the road and surrounded by hardstand and cyclone wire fencing. The topography of this area is flat.</p> <p>Landscaping is limited in this industrial precinct. A stand of mature eucalypt trees runs along the southern boundary of private property on Regency Road. Large screening shrubs are also located to the western boundary of private property along Regency Road. Views are limited to main road thoroughfares with distant views to the Mount Lofty Ranges looking east along Regency Road.</p>	<p>The scenic quality of this area is considered to be low. The area is used for industrial purposes and the existing landscape is of poor visual quality.</p> <p>This area would have low visual sensitivity to development of the South Road Superway as there are no residential properties and very few locations where permanent views of the transport corridor would be visible.</p>
3. TAFESA Regency Campus	<p>Includes TAFE SA Regency Campus, Le Cordon Bleu Australia, Investigator Science & Technology Centre, and Regency Park Centre for Handicapped Children, a centre for children with disabilities. The built form is cohesive and of high quality. Campus buildings are well maintained and arranged in park like setting. Setbacks from South Road and Regency Road are large and used for vehicle circulation and car parking. Built form frontages face internally on to park land or Days Road.</p> <p>Landscape topography is flat with some low mounding along South and Regency roads providing both visual and acoustic screening. The mounding along South Road also acts as a stormwater swale. The landscape is dominated by mature trees which surround the campus and are planted informally in a park setting. Mature trees are the visually dominant element and provide excellent screening to South Road and Regency Road. Views from the campus are limited by dense tree canopies and mounding along South Road.</p>	<p>The scenic quality of this area is considered to be moderate to high. Mature trees provide visual interest and create a gateway feeling at the intersection of Regency and South roads. The large amount of open space and park land setting contribute to the above average environment.</p> <p>Sensitivity to visual change will be moderate. Visual sensitivity would increase if screening trees are removed from the southern and eastern boundaries.</p>

Landscape character area	Landscape character	Scenic quality and visual sensitivity
<p>4. Sunnybrae Farm Function Centre and Museum</p>	<p>Includes Sunnybrae Farm Function Centre and Museum, and Pony Club, Gallipoli Grove, Regency Park, accessed via Gallipoli Grove and Tikalara Street. Sunnybrae Farm is a historical homestead, on the State Heritage Register, and associated farm buildings now operate as a function centre. The buildings are of high quality, are well maintained and have been restored and refurbished to accommodate its new use as a tourism and function centre.</p> <p>The topography of this area is flat and buildings are placed in a landscaped setting of historical orchards and ornamental gardens. Several significant stands of eucalypt trees are located in the gardens that possibly pre-date European settlement. More recent plantings of plane trees are scattered around the grounds and provide a key point of visual interest. Views from the site are limited by dense tree canopies. However, some distant views across the adjacent Islington Rail Yards to the east occur at tree breaks along the boundary.</p>	<p>The scenic quality of this area is considered to be high. The historical buildings and well manicured landscaped grounds offer unique and beautiful views.</p> <p>Users of Sunnybrae Farm Function Centre and Museum and the Pony Club will be highly sensitive to visual change as the current environment is of high scenic quality. Maintaining boundary screening will be important to minimise any visual impact of the proposed transport corridor.</p>
<p>5. Islington Rail Yards</p>	<p>Islington Rail Yards run adjacent Churchill Road. This intermodal rail terminal also accommodates associated freight activities and support industries. Built form in the area includes large sheds, gantry frames and shipping containers. Infrastructure includes rail lines, rail spurs and hardstand associated with intermodal activities. A large tract of vacant land runs along the western edge of the character area. The Islington Rail Yards contain several State Heritage listed places.</p> <p>The topography of this area is open and flat. The dominant landscape is vacant, open grassland dominated by low growing weeds. A dense screen of eucalypt planting and a large open channel drain run along the western edge of the rail yard abutting Naweena Road. Views of the Mount Lofty Ranges are evident across the vacant land but are limited within the terminus itself.</p>	<p>The scenic quality of this area is considered to be low. In many areas it is uninteresting and poorly maintained with several areas of vacant land covered in weeds.</p> <p>Visual sensitivity, to the South Road Superway Project, of people using this area would be low.</p>
<p>6. Westwood Residential Precinct</p>	<p>The residential area of Woodville Gardens and Ferryden Park is now known as Westwood, a new suburban development and regeneration of old SAHT building stock. Building type is predominately single and double storey residential buildings built in the last 10–15 years. Buildings are well presented and maintained. The subdivision layout is modern and well planned with facilities and public parks well maintained and designed.</p> <p>Streetscapes in the area are well presented and consistent, landscaping is well manicured with regular street trees and verge treatments. Mature trees grow around the sports oval and primary schools. The topography of the area is flat and open. Views are limited to road corridors. Some views to South Road are visible at the intersection of Days Road and South Road across a large tract of vacant land.</p>	<p>The scenic quality is considered to be moderate to high, and the buildings and landscapes in most cases are well maintained and pleasing to look at.</p> <p>The residents of Westwood will be highly sensitive to visual change in and around this area. As the area has and continues to undergo vast changes including upgrades to housing stock and landscaping changes to immediate foreground views will be significant.</p>

Landscape character area	Landscape character	Scenic quality and visual sensitivity
<p>7. Regency Reserve Sports Grounds</p>	<p>Regency Park Golf Course and Regency Reserve Sports Ground sit between South Road and Days Road. This area is mainly used for recreation activities including golf, skate park activities and multiple sports including soccer. This area also accommodates a licensed tavern, clubrooms and a landscaped park area suitable for picnics etc. Built form is limited to the Regency Tavern, a well maintained and typical modern hospitality facility, and club rooms for the sporting area.</p> <p>Topography of the site is flat with some gentle mounding between fairways and to the South Road boundary. The landscape is dominated by very well maintained grassed fairways with buffer planting of mature eucalypt trees. Views out of the site in all directions are limited due to mounding and mature trees. The South Road corridor is visually dominated by the mounding and mature trees of the course which provide a pleasant green edge and a point of difference to the surrounding industrial land use.</p>	<p>The scenic quality of area 7 is considered to be high. It is well above average in relation to the surrounding industrial and residential landscapes. The landscape would be valued highly by most viewers as it is unique and offers impressive views.</p> <p>Visual sensitivity of users will be high given that this is one of the few open spaces servicing the adjacent residential areas.</p>
<p>8. Angle Park and Mansfield Park Residential Area</p>	<p>This residential area consists primarily of post-war SAHT 'double units'. Much of the housing stock is in poor condition. Streetscapes are ageing and are poorly maintained. Low voltage powerlines are the dominant vertical element. A large tract of vacant land is being prepared for redevelopment.</p> <p>Vegetation in the area is limited to plantings on private properties and very few street trees. The topography of the area is flat. Views are mainly limited by urban development but there are open views across the vacant tract of land to the South Road corridor.</p>	<p>The scenic quality of this area is considered to be low. The ageing housing stock and poorly maintained appearance of the area contribute to create an uninteresting and unattractive visual landscape.</p> <p>Visual sensitivity of residents in this area will be high as there are currently open views across the vacant tract of land directly to the South Road corridor.</p>
<p>9. Community Precinct</p>	<p>Land adjacent South Road used for community and recreational facilities accommodating The Parks Community Centre, Greyhound Racing SA, Angle Park, and Harold Tyler Reserve. The Parks Community Centre is a well maintained and cohesive set of buildings in a campus like setting. The grounds are well maintained and presented. The Greyhound Racing SA clubrooms have been upgraded and are well presented.</p> <p>Several stands of significant mature trees, particularly around The Parks Community Centre and associated playing fields, are the visually dominant feature of the precinct. The landscaping to road verges is clearly suffering the effects of drought. Large areas of vacant land and car parking dominate the eastern edge of the precinct giving mid-range views to the South Road corridor.</p> <p>Topography is flat with the exception of mounding around the edge of the greyhound track. This limits long range views to the Mount Lofty Ranges.</p>	<p>The scenic quality of this area is considered to be moderate. The significant mature trees and campus style setting create a reasonably pleasant view.</p> <p>The visual sensitivity of users of this area would be moderate to high as mid-range views of the South Road corridor are open from the areas of vacant land and car parking.</p>
<p>10. Industrial Precinct East</p>	<p>In this industrial precinct between Regency Road to the south, South Road to the west, Grand Junction Road to the north and Naweena Road to the east, built form consists of large sheds with offices/retail outlets trading to the street. Buildings are well presented and heavily branded. The built form is generally set back a large distance from the road to accommodate car parking in the front.</p> <p>Coopers Brewery is a key feature of the character area. It has a prominent position on the corner of Regency Road and South Road and its grounds are well landscaped and maintained.</p> <p>Landscaping is evident within property boundaries and the</p>	<p>The scenic quality is considered to be moderate to low.</p> <p>Visual sensitivity will be low as there are no residential properties in the area.</p>

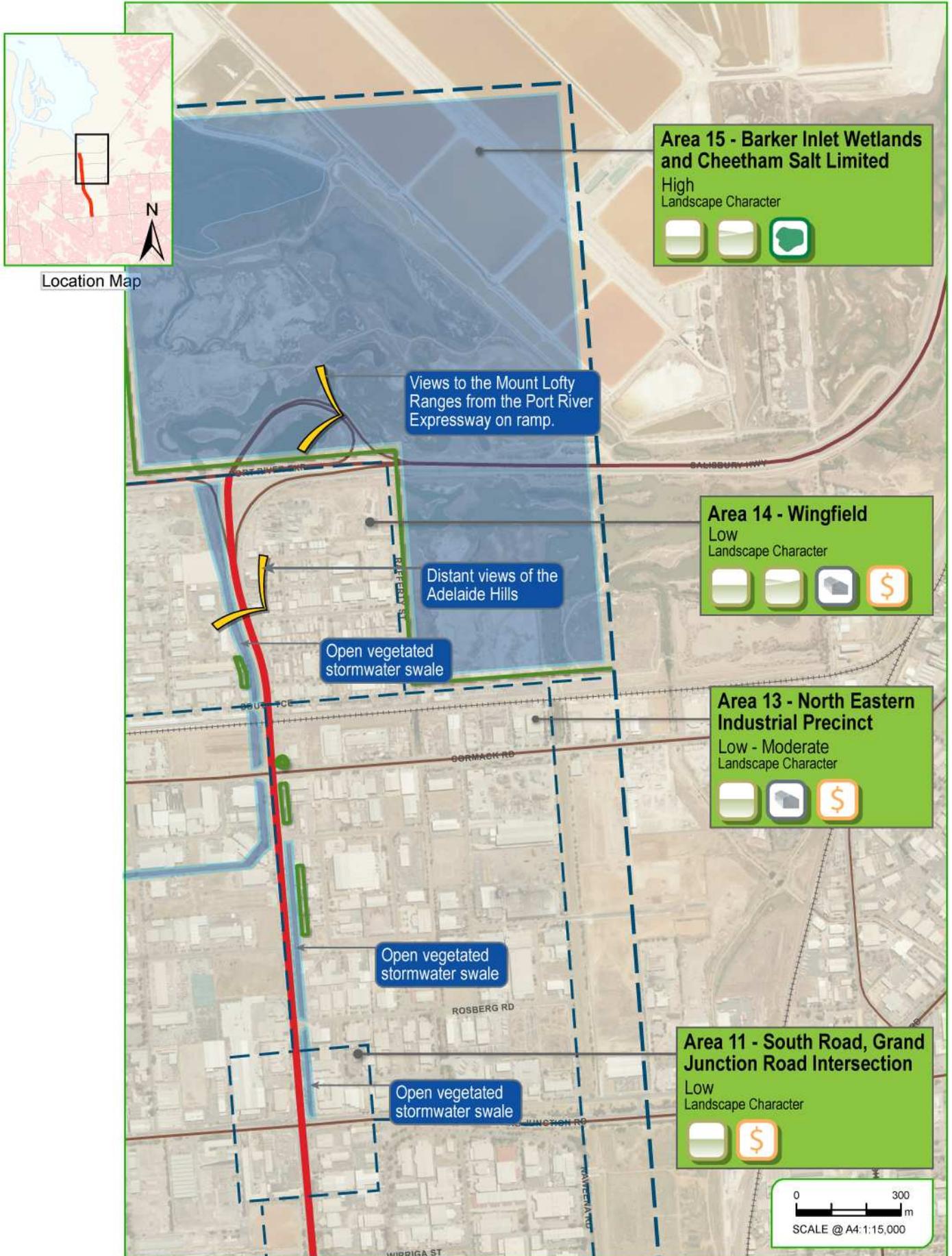
Landscape character area	Landscape character	Scenic quality and visual sensitivity
	<p>area is home to several mature trees. There is no formalised street tree planting but this is offset by well maintained landscaping within private property boundaries. The topography of the area is flat.</p> <p>Dense planting of trees runs along the eastern side of Naweena Road screens the adjacent rail yards and long distance views. There are some broken views to the Mount Lofty Ranges across the adjacent rail yard lands. These are mostly screened by dense planting.</p>	
<p>11. South Road, Grand Junction Road Intersection</p>	<p>The South Road Grand Junction Road Intersection area accommodates retail and services businesses. The built form on this intersection has a very strong retail orientation towards the road with car parking in front. Signage and branding are dominant features of the streetscape. Commercial vehicle sales take over the southwestern quadrant of the intersection and vans and trucks are displayed along the street frontage and dominate the streetscape.</p> <p>The topography of the area is flat. An open grassed stormwater swale runs along the eastern side of South Road, north of Grand Junction Road. Vegetation is limited to border plantings along private property boundaries and some more mature planting in the grassed stormwater swale.</p>	<p>The scenic quality rating of this area is considered to be low as it is dominated by large sheds and has minimal vegetation.</p> <p>Visual sensitivity will be low to moderate. Businesses trading to the street may object to views into their property being obstructed by any proposed built structures.</p>
<p>12. Western Industrial Precinct</p>	<p>This industrial precinct to the west of South Road contains built form of large sheds and associated hardstand. Allotments and built form are larger than surrounding industrial land. Presentation in the area is considered poor.</p> <p>Vegetation is limited and streetscapes are poorly maintained. Some mature trees are scattered throughout the precinct. A large open channel drain running through the precinct is lined with trees. Views are limited to road corridors.</p>	<p>The scenic quality of this area is considered low due to the poorly maintained buildings and limited vegetation.</p> <p>The visual sensitivity of users of this area would be low.</p>
<p>13. North Eastern Industrial Precinct</p>	<p>The industrial area east of South Road and north of Grand Junction Road has built form of large sheds with office buildings fronting the street. Businesses are trading to the street and are well presented with landscaped frontages and car parking to the front.</p> <p>Streetscapes are well presented with grassed verges and consistent street tree plantings. The South Road corridor is dominated on the eastern side by a large open channel drain. Tree plantings and large shrubs along the drainage channel are visually dominant and provide a visual separation of the precinct from the South Road corridor. The topography of this area is flat.</p>	<p>The scenic quality of this area is considered to be low to moderate. Views of the area are uninteresting and lacking in maintenance.</p> <p>The visual sensitivity of users of this area is low.</p>
<p>14. Wingfield</p>	<p>The Wingfield precinct west of Rafferty Street and north of South Terrace is industrial with built form comprising large sheds and associated hardstand. The Wingfield waste dump is also located within this precinct. Building presentation is poor.</p> <p>The topography of this area is flat with some artificial mounding to waste dump. Streets are wide but poorly presented with limited street trees. Some eucalypts are scattered around the precinct. A large open channel drain runs along the western edge of the South Road corridor into the wetlands. There is limited tree or shrub planting along the drain. Views are limited to road corridors. Some longer distance views to the wetlands are broken by the Port River Expressway which rises up at the end of South Road and is the visually dominant feature. Views from the</p>	<p>The scenic quality of this area is considered to be low. The built form is poorly presented and streetscapes are lacking in maintenance creating an unattractive landscape.</p> <p>The visual sensitivity of users of this area is low.</p>

Landscape character area	Landscape character	Scenic quality and visual sensitivity
	top of the Port River Expressway on-ramp are expansive and go all the way to Port Adelaide, across the salt pans to the Mount Lofty Ranges.	
15. Barker Inlet Wetlands and Cheetham Salt Limited	<p>The area includes Barker Inlet Wetlands and part of the Cheetham Salt Limited salt fields. The wetlands vary in quality with some areas yet to fully establish. Some interpretive signage gives information on the wetlands but access to this area is difficult from the highway. Wildlife and habitat opportunities in the wetlands are high. Physical access to most of the site is prohibited but some of the land is used illegally for dirt bike riding. This landscape is of high visual interest to people travelling along the Salisbury Highway and Port Wakefield Road. Powerlines are the dominating vertical element in this area.</p> <p>The topography of this area is generally flat with localised depressions to form the wetlands and localised mounding of salt and soil in some areas. There are distant views of the Mount Lofty Ranges across the salt fields, and views of the salt mounds over the wetlands from the expressway.</p>	<p>The scenic quality rating for this area is considered to be high. It provides a unique and interesting landscape and impressive views from the main roads.</p> <p>The visual sensitivity of users of this area would be moderate to high.</p>



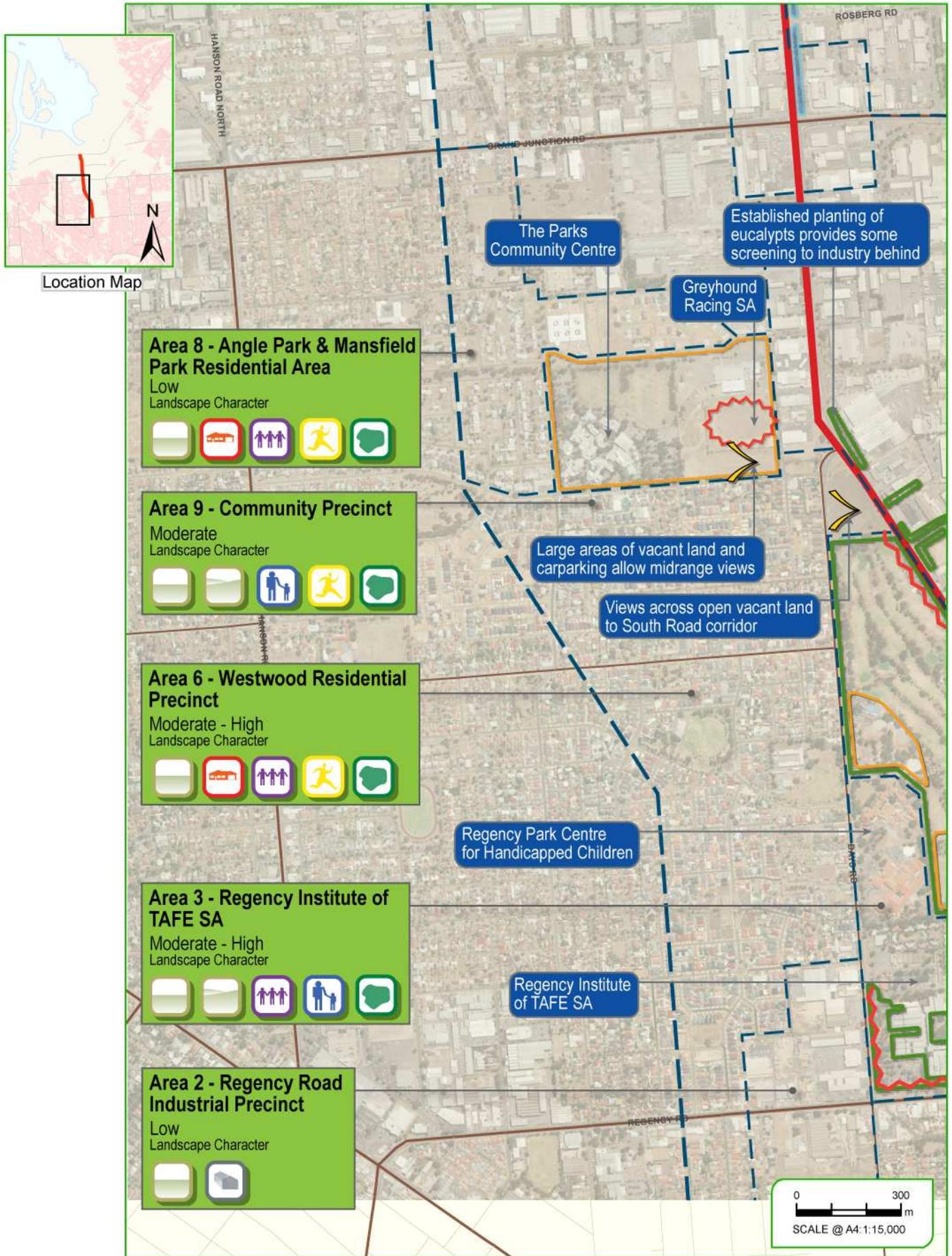
Visual Assessment

Figure 13.2



Visual Assessment

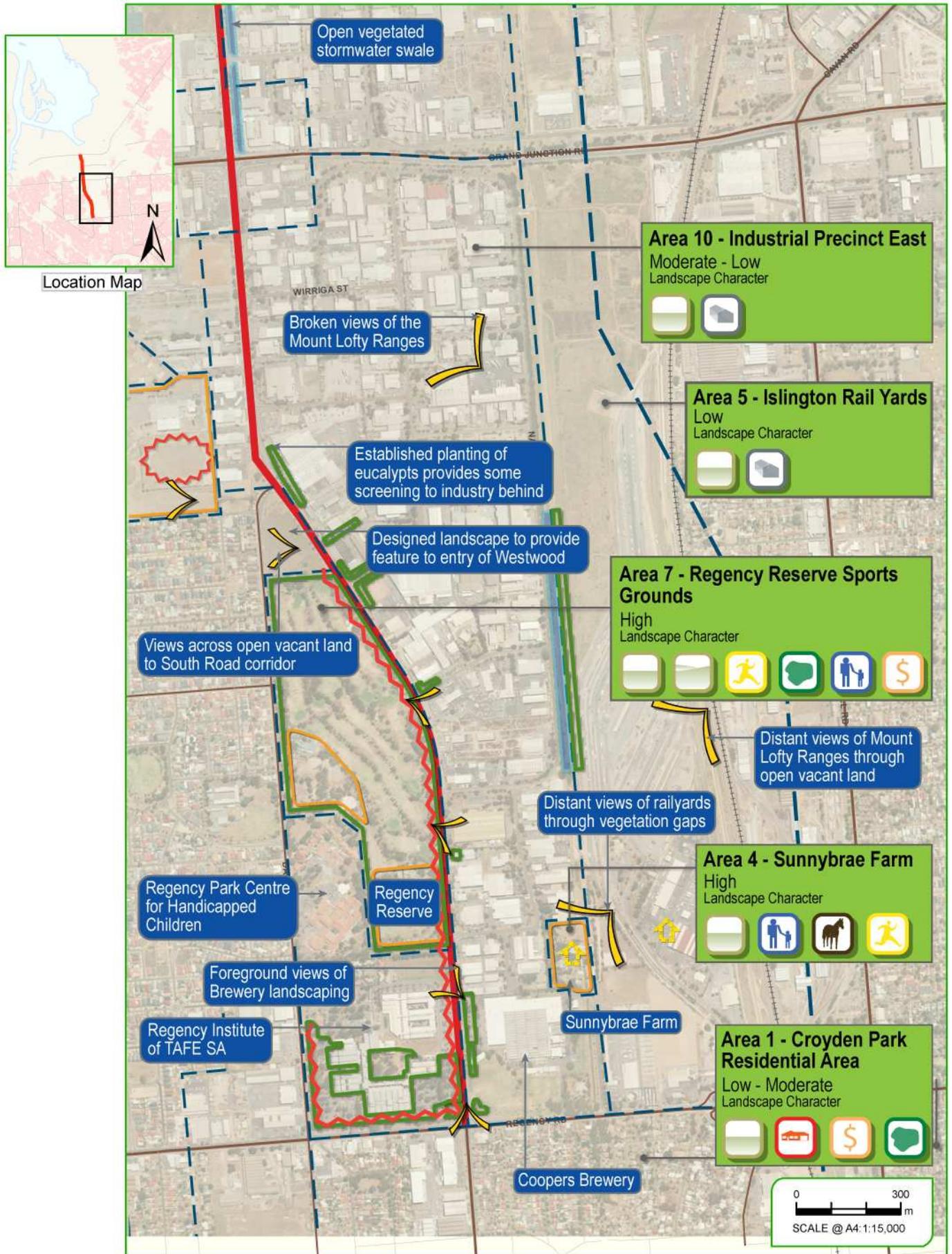
Figure 13.3



flat	education	stormwater feature	foreground views
localised mounding	recreation	landscape feature	buffer
open space	community facilities	cultural / character area	
industrial	residential	character area boundaries	

Visual Assessment

Figure 13.4



flat	commercial	community facilities	background views
localised mounding	recreation	state heritage item	foreground views
open space	equestrian	stormwater feature	cultural / character area
industrial	residential	landscape feature	buffer

Visual Assessment

Figure 13.5

13.5 Effects of the project on the existing environment

Visual effects

The visual effects of the South Road Superway Project on the surrounding environment are potentially significant. The height and scale of the elevated roadway will visually dominate the landscape character of the corridor and surrounding land. More specifically, the exit and entry ramps may block east–west views.

Viewers in closest permanent proximity to the corridor will be affected to the greatest degree, particularly those people living or working nearest to the structure. Reducing the impact of such a large structure requires urban design interventions on the ground plane and for the structure itself. Treatment at ground level will use wide footpaths and median strips and provide mass planting to contrast the structural elements of the elevated roadway.

Architectural input into the design of the elevated roadway structure will consider the pier design and aim to minimise the visual interruption of east–west views. Architectural treatments will focus on breaking down the scale of the bridge infrastructure to create a visually pleasing structure that sits well in the mixed use environment.

Visual links in an east–west direction will be emphasised on the ground level to reinforce the connection between the two sides of the road.

Underneath the Superway, effort will be made to introduce planting and smaller scale vertical elements, such as bollards, to break down the scale of the elevated roadway structure. Trees and planting along footpaths should be used to provide a 'human scale' to areas where there is pedestrian movement in particular adjacent to the residential areas of Westwood.

Noise barriers and reinforced earth walls of entry ramps will be designed to incorporate artwork patterning and colour to reduce their visual intrusion. This philosophy will be applied along the whole corridor but extra attention will be given to structures fronting on to the TAFE SA Regency Campus, golf course and Westwood residential area.

Noise barriers

The noise modelling has determined that noise barriers may be required in some locations, such as near the intersection of Days Road and South Road. Several options for the design and location of the barrier will be investigated. Noise barriers offer significant opportunity to incorporate interesting and high quality urban design elements to the corridor.

Local road network changes

The South Road Superway Project proposes several changes to the local road network to improve movements of local traffic through the area. These changes are primarily extensions to existing roads or additional roads to improve the local access network. The changes will not have significant effects on the landscape character of the area but they could improve the scenic quality by introducing quality road infrastructure with associated footpaths and street trees. In some areas, the proposed changes will require alterations to the open stormwater drainage system which could improve the visual quality of these systems.

13.5.1 Environmental management

Revitalisation opportunities

The project provides an opportunity to revitalise urban areas adjacent to the transport corridor. Urban design improvements could include upgrades to pedestrian areas such as footpaths and median landscaping, the creation of gateway statements to create a sense of arrival at key destination points,

and upgrades to adjacent public open space. The elevated roadway structure will also open up views across Adelaide for people travelling along the north–south corridor.

Superway design

The concept design for the South Road Superway has aimed to create a light, elegant and striking design for each of the infrastructure elements, including piers, elevated roadway, light poles, gantries and barriers. Width to height design principles will be employed to make a visually sensitive and expressive structure.

The concept design includes the use of light and dark grey concrete in a curved form with tree-like columns separating the elevated roadway to allow sunlight penetration. Curved metal lighting structures will soften and enhance the structure. Artist's impressions of a typical elevated roadway, single or dual pier designs are detailed in **Figure 7.4**.

This design is yet to be subject to detailed design, which may alter the final South Road Superway shape and supporting structure design.

Streetscape

New footpaths, street trees, and verge and median planting will improve the visual character of the corridor and help to break up the visual dominance of the elevated roadway. In particular consistent street tree planting will create a strong visual element and introduce a more human scale into the larger scale of the industrial landscape.

This verge treatment is similar to that in the adjacent Westwood development, with a difference in scale to suit the arterial nature of the road.

Typical treatment concepts use a palette of native species, planted in a horizontal banding pattern. This pattern is then replicated in the footpath treatment which alternates segmental pavers and broom finished concrete in coloured bands. Street trees will be a prominent feature of the landscape treatments as they create a strong lineal visual element in the landscape and a softer vertical component to the elevated roadway structure that reduces its scale.

At several key points, the medians will have substantial width. A banded pattern of low native planting is proposed. Shading from the elevated roadway will prevent trees being planted in the median but opportunities for vertical sculptural elements will be explored.

A key opportunity in the streetscape is to underground services, which will reduce visual clutter and improve the overall appearance of the corridor.

Gateway statements

The creation of gateway statements at key destination/arrival points serves to link the corridor with the surrounding areas. Iconic urban form at strategic points will create landmarks along the corridor, allowing commuters to identify their location and/or acknowledge arrival. Gateway statements will also improve the visual diversity of the corridor, improving the experience for local users and potentially creating a memorable experience for travellers. Potential also exists to reference location in a more direct sense by incorporating elements of cultural interpretation into the gateways themselves.

Large scale, public art elements could be introduced into the landscape to delineate zones and create visual excitement to users and the community.

Water sensitive urban design

Currently a series of vegetated stormwater drains run adjacent to sections of South Road. The introduction of the elevated roadway structure will release large tracts of land that can be used to collect and, to some degree, treat stormwater runoff from the road and surrounding properties.

The landscape concept designs incorporate water sensitive urban design principles to ensure that the landscape treatments perform an important environmental activity. Medians and road verges are treated as vegetated swales that collect stormwater runoff and filter it to a primary degree. Introducing a water sensitive urban design element to the project will also improve the area's biodiversity.

13.6 Conclusion

The proposed project will have an effect on the existing visual environment as well as on the local character and amenity of the study area. Viewers in closest permanent proximity to the corridor, particularly those living or working nearest to the elevated roadway structure, would be affected to the greatest degree.

The highly urbanised mix of residential, industrial and commercial land uses in the precinct contribute to an eclectic landscape character. The project will provide opportunities for opening up views of the foothills and wetlands, creating gateway statements, and revitalising the adjacent urban areas. These opportunities will be explored in the concept design and detailed design project phases and realised during and after construction.

By integrating the project into the landscape, providing an interesting journey experience, addressing sustainability issues and erecting structures of good visual quality, visual effects of the project will be minimised.

The project also allows a design that reinvigorates and highlights positive elements of the area and addresses the conflicting land uses through a uniform streetscape upgrade and the introduction of gateway statements. Over time, potential effects of the project would be mitigated as the landscape plantings mature and as people become accustomed to the elevated roadway in the landscape.