

Urban Greening: The Mackay Experience



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Why an Urban Greening Strategy?



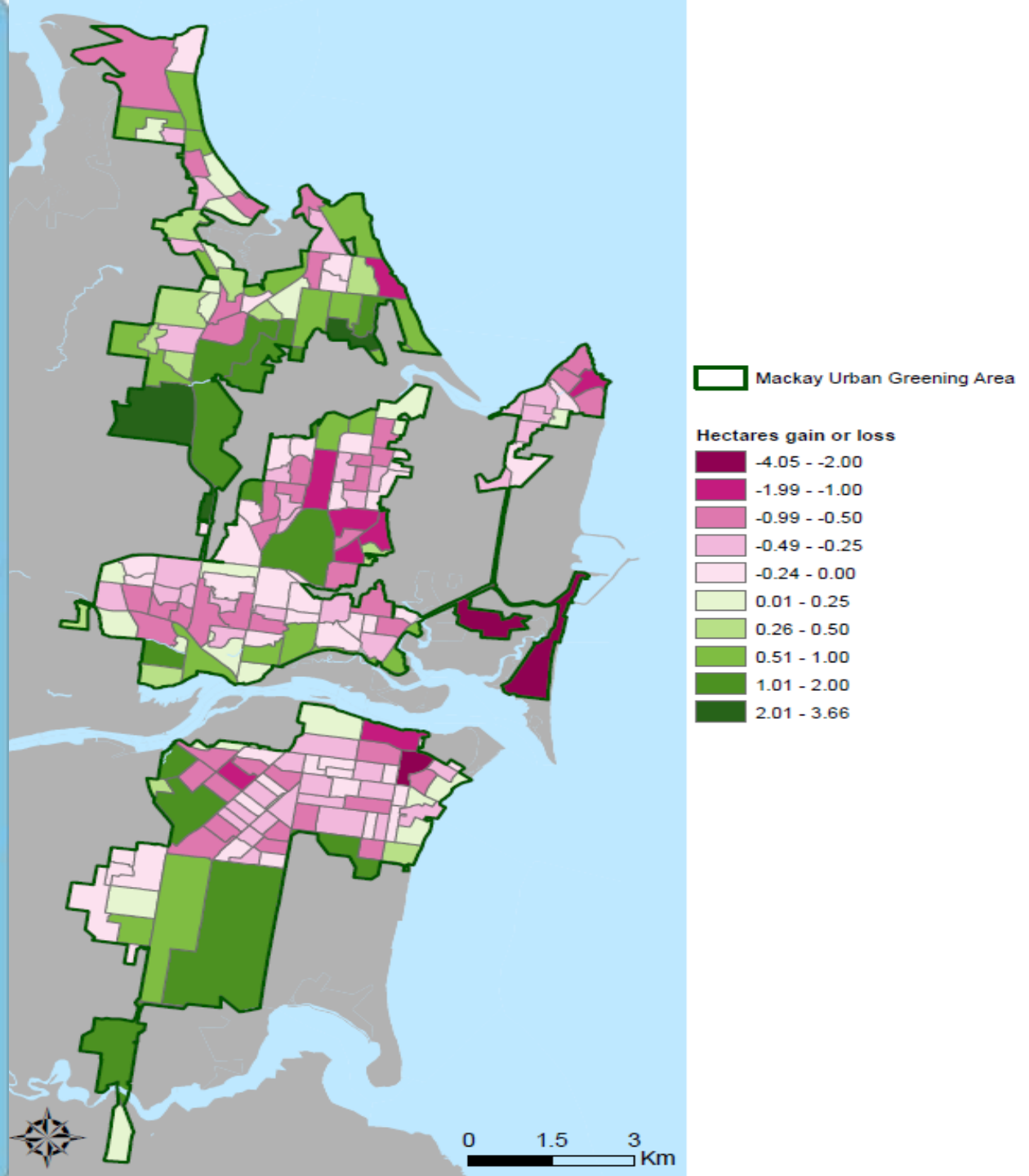
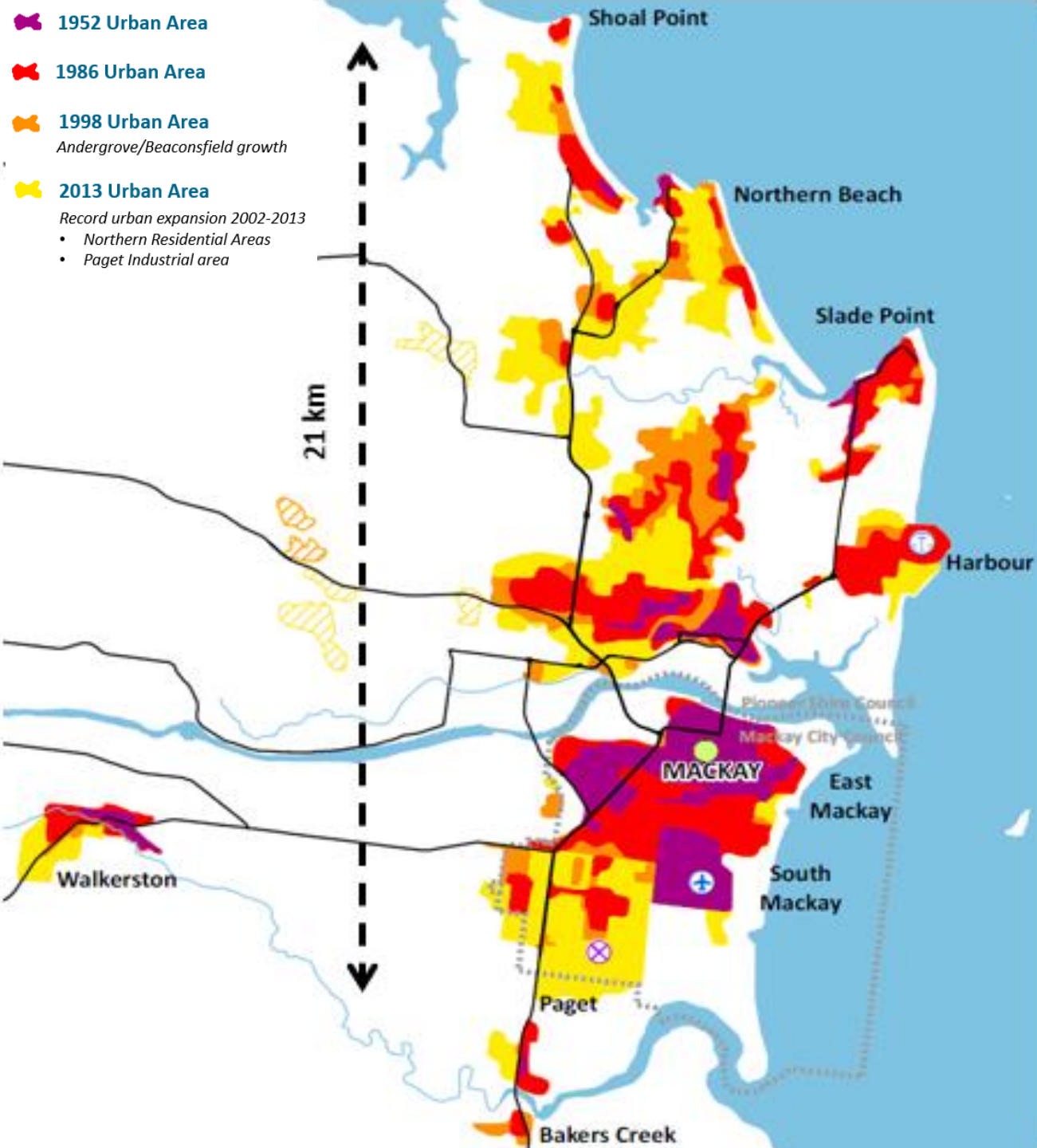
The data

14.0% canopy cover across Mackay's Urban Areas

Canopy loss of 30ha or 0.2% from 2015 – 2021

Canopy loss predominantly on residential properties and in older areas with established canopy





Mackay Urban Greening Strategy

Vision: The Mackay region will have cooler, greener and better-connected neighbourhoods

Objectives:

- Grow greener and cooler neighbourhoods
- Protect and nurture our valued green assets
- Build community stewardship and partnerships
- Adapt and learn



Mackay Urban Greening Strategy - Targets

Targets: By 2041 we will achieve:

- 40% Canopy cover over public pathways (up from 16.8 % in 2021)
- 40% Canopy cover over parks and open spaces (up from 33.6% in 2021)
- An annual net gain in public tree numbers – plant more than we remove



- Targets address areas suggested by community during consultation
- Targets translated into number of trees that need to be planted
- In setting targets, budget impact of establishment and maintenance considered
- No target set for private land – focus on areas under Council's control.



Challenges in achieving targets

40% Canopy cover over public pathways

- Pathways can often be in highly constrained streetscape environments with infrastructure in proximity and required setbacks (e.g. from streetlights, intersections, driveways) limiting planting opportunities
- Adjacent residents may object to tree planting on verges.

40% Canopy cover over parks and open spaces

- Planting to minimise mowing effort is a key consideration for these areas – group trees in mulched beds
- Planting in conservation areas can achieve a high canopy cover.

An annual net gain in public tree numbers

- Need to change behaviour and past practices
- Work is underway to establish a policy that limits removal of public trees to instances where all options to retain the trees have been explored and establish monetary contributions for removals that will fund additional planting, considering the value of the tree in question.



Community input into Urban Greening Strategy

- Perception that the community in Mackay generally have a negative view about trees
- This perception has come about due to:
 - Resident opposition or damage to trees planted on the verge
 - Comments on Council Facebook posts about trees
- The result was under-investment in trees generally, with limited planting of new trees.



Community perceptions about trees

In contrast to perceptions, a community survey about Urban Greening showed overwhelming support for additional trees

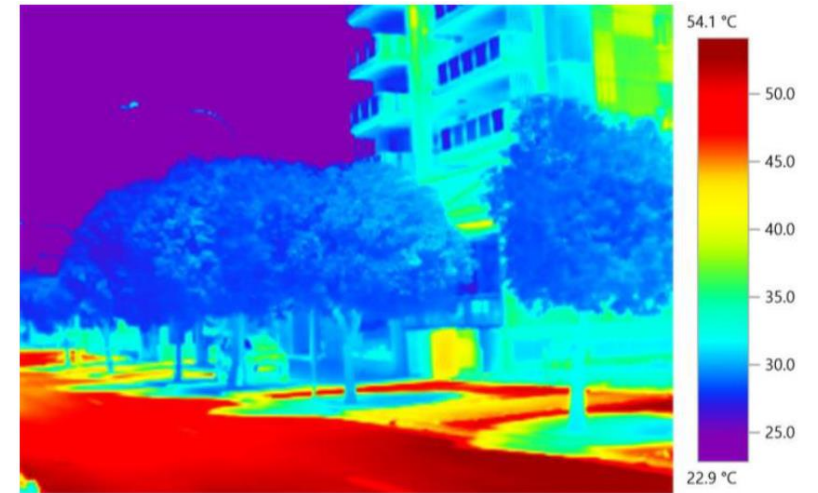
Overwhelming support for Council to invest in more trees 99.2%

95% believed trees contribute a lot to the quality of a neighbourhood

66% of respondents thought their neighbourhood needed a lot more trees

25% thought theirs needed a few more trees

Only 1.5% thought their neighbourhood needed fewer trees



The biggest concerns:

- 1. poor choice of trees**
- 2. risk to life and property during extreme weather**

The second most popular answer was - 'no concerns about trees'

Respondents felt that trees are needed most along walking and cycling paths to schools, shops, parks etc followed by along habitat linkages and along residential streets

Monitoring and evaluation

- LIDAR analysis of canopy cover every 5 years
- Interim estimates of tree canopy gains/losses by average canopy size
- Report on progress of achievement of the action plan
- Annual reporting on tree planting / removal numbers and report on delivery of all urban greening related projects
- Track numbers of free tree giveaways and public participation numbers at planting events.



Key learnings

- Having good data to inform decisions is important
- Resourcing and other constraints should be understood, and strategy should respond to these
- Not just about planting trees – maintenance and watering should be factored into costs and protecting existing trees is critical
- Do not rely on the vocal minority for input – people like trees
- Tailor your approach to maximise benefits and minimise known conflicts (choose where to target your planting programs)
- Trees are a critical investment for creating liveable places.



MACKAY URBAN GREENING

Growing cooler, greener and connected neighbourhoods





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