



14

Belleplaine Community Plan

This Community Plan provides additional policy direction for Belleplaine community core and is designed to read in conjunction with the national Physical Development Plan policies. It provides a framework for Belleplaine's continued development as a Regional Centre that acts as the centre of the National Park for residents and tourists alike.

DRAFT
February 2017

➔ 14.1

Introduction to the Community Plan

Belleplaine is designated as a Regional Centre for the first time in the Physical Development Plan. The PDP Amended 2003 categorised Belleplaine as a National Park Village, recognising it as the largest of the three Villages - the others being Bathsheba and Boscobelle - and the economic hub of the National Park.

The PDP Amendment provides strategic and land use policies to strengthen Belleplaine's local economy and better situate the community in relation to economic and cultural opportunities arising from its role as the centre of the National Park. The Community Plan focuses on the core area of Belleplaine along the Ermy Bourne Highway, from the entrance to Walkers Reserve to just south of the polyclinic. The community core contains the St. Andrew's Parish Church, the Alleyne School, and a number of institutional buildings that have recently been closed.

The Community Plan includes policies for Belleplaine related to sustainable development, natural heritage, tourism, mobility, and infrastructure. It provides strategies to re-energize Belleplaine community core as a nature-focused tourism centre at the heart of the National Park, achieving new economic diversity by increasing its amenity and attractiveness as a base from which to explore the surrounding culture- and nature-based attractions.

This Community Plan includes the following sections:

- 14.1** Introduction to the Community Plan
- 14.2** Belleplaine Today: Context and Challenges
- 14.3** Vision, Goals and Objectives
- 14.4** Strategic Policies
- 14.5** Land Use and Built Form Policies
- 14.6** Open Space System
- 14.7** Special Policy Areas



> St. Andrews Parish Church



> Open lot within Belleplaine



Key Directions

1. **Reinforce Belleplaine’s role as a Regional Centre and the centre of the National Park** by encouraging the adaptive re-use of the recently closed institutional buildings to provide community facilities and local amenities for National Park Villages and rural settlements.
2. **Adaptively reuse one of the recently closed institutional buildings** to create a National Park Visitors’ and Interpretative Centre.
3. **Reinforce Belleplaine as the primary trailhead for the National Park trail system** with wayfinding, infrastructure and new trails.
4. **Highlight the National Park Scenic Route** along Ermy Bourne Highway.
5. **Capitalize on the restoration of Walkers Reserve as a potential employment centre** for Belleplaine residents, and as a national tourist attraction by better connecting it to the core of Belleplaine.
6. **Establish a local farmer’s market and food destination** for the surrounding region, showcasing organic farming practices in the National Park.
7. **Use landscaping and signage** to create green gateways that define key entrance points to Belleplaine.

14.2

Belleplaine Today: Context and Challenges

With a resident population of some 2,000 persons, the village of Belleplaine, which includes the smaller villages at Lakes and Walkers, is the largest community within the Barbados National Park. It is centrally located within the Park and situated on a flat savannah separated from the sea by an ancient sand dune known as Walkers Savannah. Belleplaine has developed along both sides of the East Coast Road (Ermy Bourne Highway). The area comprises a collection of independent residential villages that use Belleplaine as their unifying centre. The community core, located at the junction of the East Coast Road and Highway 2, previously consisted of various commercial uses, banking facilities, a community centre, a welfare office, a police station and a polyclinic. Although the buildings remain, most government services have consolidated their operations elsewhere, leaving the polyclinic as the sole remaining service in operation along with a corner store and daycare. Alleyne School and Decosta Edwards Primary are important generators of activity in Belleplaine, along with the community hubs of St. Andrew's Parish Church and the playing field.

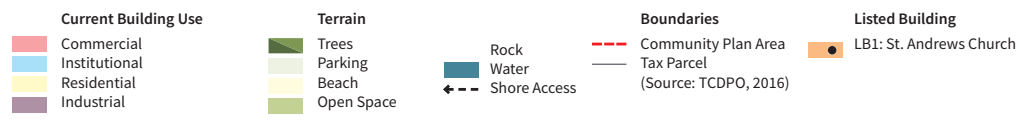
Unique amongst Regional Centres is the rich concentration of natural heritage assets within and adjacent to the community. A river system, rare in Barbados, runs through Belleplaine framed by thick forest at its banks, eventually joining Long Pond Natural Heritage Conservation Area. In addition, the community is close to Chalky Mount, one of the highest mountains in the country and one of the few places where locals acquire clay for traditional pottery making. Natural Heritage Conservation Areas also include the Savannah and Boscobelle Woods.

The village is well located in relation to cultural attractions within the area, including Morgan Lewis Windmill, Farley Hill Park and the proposed Bruce Vale National Forest Candidate Site. Despite this, tourist-related economic activity is minimal.

Economic activity in the surrounding area includes employment generated by governmental services and agencies, farming, including cane, livestock production and recently organic farming, and employment at the Walkers sand quarry. Nearing the end of its life as a sand mine, Walkers is now in transition, becoming a demonstration of ecological restoration known as Walkers Reserve. In its new form it is still a source of local employment for residents of Belleplaine, though the nature of the employment is changing.

Today, Belleplaine faces a number of challenges resulting from the withdrawal of institutional uses in the community and limited economic opportunities. The challenges in the Belleplaine Community Plan area include:

- Little economic activity or opportunity within the boundaries of Belleplaine, limiting local employment for Belleplaine residents.
- The withdrawal of government institutions, which has damaged community cohesion and resilience and reduced Belleplaine's role as the Regional Centre for the National Park.
- A lack of consistent connectivity to the surrounding natural environment.
- The tourism potential of Belleplaine not been realized, despite a significant opportunity to become the centre of cultural and natural tourism within the National Park.



MAP 14A:
Existing Conditions

14.3

Vision, Goals and Objectives

14.3.1 Vision

Belleplaine will embrace its role as a Regional Centre and the centre of the National Park to become a unique tourism destination and model of the green economy. It will strengthen its tourism offering while building up its suite of community services and amenities to serve the local population. The economy of Belleplaine will be reinvigorated through innovative and sustainable initiatives in the area including organic farming, ecological restoration, and nature tourism in the National Park.

14.3.2 Goals and Objectives

Reinforce Belleplaine as the centre of the Barbados National Park.

- Construct a Visitor and Interpretative Centre for the National Park, along with associated programming and services.
- Expand the network of hiking trails and improve signage of trails and trail heads.

Revitalize the former civic hub at the heart of Belleplaine.

- Adaptively re-use the abandoned institutional buildings as locations for tourism accommodations and facilities, and community services and amenities.

Celebrate Belleplaine's location along the National Park Scenic Route.

- Use enhanced landscaping to mark the entry points to Belleplaine along the Ermy Bourne Highway.
- Provide wayfinding signage along the National Park Scenic Route denoting Belleplaine as the centre of the National Park.

Conserve the natural heritage of the area and encourage respectful visitor interaction.

- Use the proposed new Visitor Centre to educate visitors about National Park ecosystems and threatened species.
- Work with Walkers Reserve to showcase innovative ecological restoration practices.
- Establish strict development policies and trail management guidelines.

Improve mobility and connectivity between Belleplaine and the rest of the island.

- Establish a formalized bus transfer point with integrated amenities.

Embrace the principles of the green economy and nature tourism for economic regeneration.

- Encourage the development of small-scale tourism accommodation and facilities.
- Encourage area branding associated with nature and recreation.

Develop a local food hub in the Belleplaine community core.

- Establish a local farmer's market.
- Support local food vendors and restaurant proprietors in re-using vacant institutional properties.
- Support organic farming operations in the National Park.

14.4

Strategic Policies

The strategic policies build on the direction provided by the national strategic policies. They provide localized policy direction to achieve the vision, goals and objectives for Belleplaine.

14.4.1 Promoting Sustainable Development

Sustainable development in Belleplaine means re-investing in the core of the community. The withdrawal of government institutions has resulted in numerous vacant buildings in the Belleplaine community core. These present an opportunity for adaptive reuse, injecting new activity into the community and reinforcing the role of Belleplaine as the gateway to the National Park and a service centre for the surrounding region.

Policies

1. Belleplaine's role as a nature-focused Regional Centre at the centre of the Barbados National Park will be reinforced.
 - a) Belleplaine will be the focus of National Park facilities and programming.
 - b) New services and amenities for residents of the National Park will be directed to Belleplaine.
2. Adaptive reuse of the former institutional buildings in Belleplaine will be encouraged (see Section 14.7 for further guidance on this key opportunity site). Potential uses include:
 - a) A Visitor and Interpretative Centre for the National Park.
 - b) A local food hub.
 - c) Tourism-related uses small-scale accommodation.
 - d) Local-serving amenities and community space.
3. Development and investment will enhance the Belleplaine community core as a complete, healthy and age-friendly community by:
 - a) Improving walkability.
 - b) Encouraging seniors' housing to locate in the Belleplaine community core.
 - c) Improving accessibility to community facilities and businesses for persons with disabilities.
 - d) Encouraging health facilities and clinics.
 - e) Promoting local food.
 - f) Developing multimodal transportation options.
4. The remaining community facilities and amenities in Belleplaine community core, including the Alleyne School, Dacosta Edwards Primary School, polyclinic and playing field, will be maintained and connected with additional pedestrian routes where possible.



> Old Police Station

Protecting Core Assets Cultural Heritage

The history of Belleplaine stretches back to the early 1600s, with St. Andrew's Parish Church thought to have been established between 1630 and 1645. Highlighting the cultural heritage assets of Belleplaine and the National Park would play a strong complementary role to the focus on the natural heritage of the area.

Policies

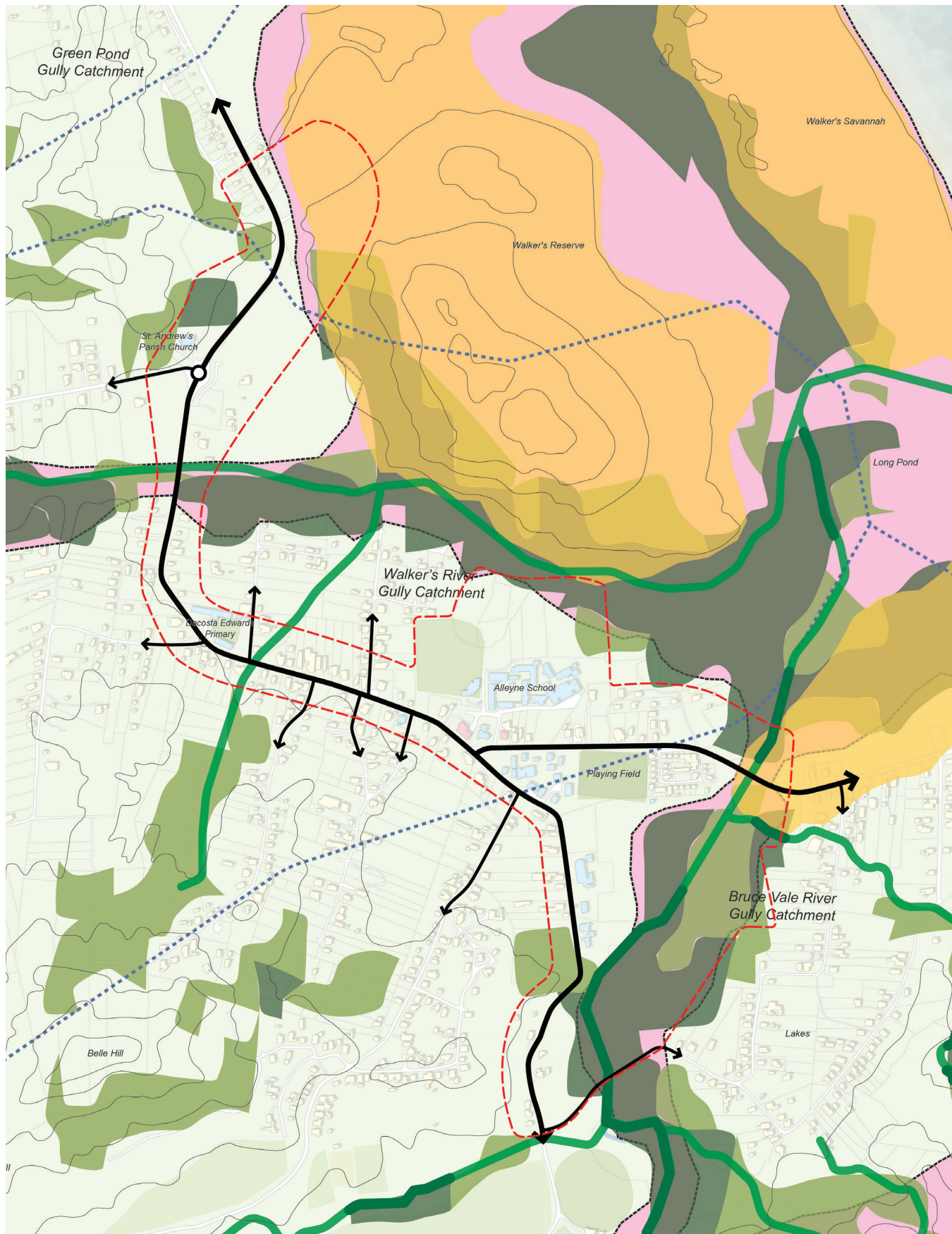
5. St. Andrew's Parish Church, a gazetted heritage building, will be listed and described in the Barbados Register of Historic Places.
6. The Government will review and expand the list of heritage properties to be included in the Barbados Register of Historic Places.
7. The proposed National Park Visitor and Interpretive Centre will celebrate the cultural landscape of the National Park in addition to the natural landscape (see Section 14.7 for further guidance on this key opportunity).
8. Traditional cultural practices such as pottery-making using clay from Chalky Mount will be showcased in the Belleplaine community core, potentially at the proposed National Park Visitor and Interpretive Centre.

Protecting Core Assets Natural Heritage

Belleplaine comprises a diversity of natural heritage assets. The Community Plan focuses on preserving the ecosystems of the National Park, educating visitors about the Scotland District and facilitating enjoyment of the natural environment in a controlled way. In addition, the proximity to the natural heritage system requires that development in Belleplaine be particularly sensitive to its surroundings.

Policies

9. The restoration of Walkers Reserve will be supported and promoted as a demonstration of sustainability and innovation.
10. Strict trail management guidelines will be established to ensure that hikers enjoy the recreational benefits of the trail system without impacting the ecosystems of the National Park.
11. The proposed National Park Visitor and Interpretive Centre will celebrate the species and ecosystems of the National Park.
12. The beach at Walkers Savannah will be recognised as a critical breeding ground for leatherback turtles. This will include:
 - a) Ensuring that this critical habitat is undisturbed by visitors.
 - b) Educating visitors about area's significance to leatherback turtles with on-site signage.
 - c) Designing any development in the area to minimize disruptions to the turtle population, including turtle-friendly lighting.
13. Development in the Belleplaine community core will demonstrate best practices in sustainable design.
14. The gully catchment areas in and beyond the Belleplaine community core will be conserved and enhanced for their natural functions including encouraging biodiversity and providing natural stormwater management.



- OS2: Natural Heritage Conservation Area
 - Status 1 Gullies (GEMS, 2004)
 - Forested Gullies (USI, 2017)
 - Gully Catchments Areas (GEMS, 2004)
 - Forests over 7m (CZMU 2015)
 - Emerging forests 4-7m (CZMU 2016)
 - Sand Dunes (PDP 2003)
-
- Boundaries**
 - Community Plan Area
-
- Contours**
 - 5m interval (Source: CZMU, 2015)

MAP 14B:
Natural Heritage

Protecting Core Assets

Food and Agriculture

The Barbados National Park has substantial areas devoted to traditional farming, including sugarcane harvesting and livestock husbandry. There is also an active organic farming community in the National Park. There is an opportunity in Belleplaine to showcase the healthy, sustainable, local products grown in the area.

Policies

15. A local food hub will be developed in Belleplaine community core both to provide local food options for the community and to showcase the produce of the National Park. See Section 14.7 below for further guidance on this key opportunity.
16. Organic farmers in the National Park will be encouraged to develop local food tours and other tourist experiences which can be incorporated as part of the recreation, health and wellness offering of the National Park.

14.4.3 Greening the Economy

Sustainable nature tourism is a logical fit for Belleplaine, focused around natural heritage and the community's role as a gateway to the National Park. New investment in the community, including the proposed National Park Visitor and Interpretive Centre, food hub, and the restoration of Walkers Reserve, emphasize the future direction of Belleplaine as a destination for recreation and nature tourism. Greening the economy will be essential to reach this end, and to support the future prosperity of the community.

Policies

1. The principles of the green economy and nature tourism will be embraced to drive economic regeneration in the Belleplaine community core.
2. The development of small-scale tourism accommodation and facilities will be supported in the Belleplaine community core, including:
 - a) A range of accommodation types, including inns, hostels, camping sites, eco-lodges and high end accommodation.
 - b) Adaptive reuse of former institutional buildings as tourist accommodations.
3. A tourism branding strategy will be developed, focusing on nature tourism, health and wellness.
4. Belleplaine's presence as an important waypoint along the National Park Scenic Route will be reinforced.
 - a) Entry points to Belleplaine will be creatively marked with signage and landscaping.
 - b) The development of amenities catering to long-distance vehicular travel will be encouraged, such as food vendors and restrooms

5. The Government will support the restoration of Walkers Reserve, which offers a significant opportunity for shared economic and tourism benefits.
 - a) The training and employment of local residents in ecological restoration practices will be encouraged.
 - b) Physical linkages between the Belleplaine community core and Walkers Reserve will be maintained and enhanced, including the pedestrian linkage along the Emy Bourne Highway and pedestrian routes/trails.
 - c) Walkers Reserve will be promoted as part of the sustainable tourism offering of Belleplaine and the National Park.



> Old Rectory along Bruce Vale River



> Above two images: Walkers Restoration

14.4.4 Advancing Mobility and Accessibility

Belleplaine is designated as a Mobility Node (Bus Transfer Point) in the island mobility network. It is in need of improvements to its public transport infrastructure to facilitate the movement of residents and tourists alike. Unique to Belleplaine is the importance of pedestrian route/trail connections to the local attractions in the National Park.

Policies:

1. New development in the Belleplaine community core will support walkability and multi-modal transportation choices.
2. As the centre of the National Park, a pedestrian route/trail network is key to Belleplaine's identity and tourism function and will be implemented and enhanced.
 - a) Routes/trails will connect Belleplaine to National Park attractions such as Chalky Mount and Walkers Beach.
 - b) Routes/trails will be marked with wayfinding signage and made accessible to persons with disabilities wherever possible.
3. Priority pedestrian linkages with a higher potential for pedestrian flows have been identified on Map 14C and will be earmarked for improvement.
 - a) Contiguous sidewalks should be built on both sides of the street where possible, with pedestrian crossings added or improved as needed.
 - b) The streetscape should be enhanced with new lighting, furniture and vegetation where street widths are appropriate. Particular attention should be paid to trail entrances and community amenity areas,
 - c) Traffic calming measures should be introduced to reduce vehicular speeds and alleviate the dangers of pedestrian crossings.
4. Pedestrian improvement areas have also been identified on Map 14C. These areas will also be improved, but have a lower level of priority and/or require a lesser degree of amenity. They are intended to create pedestrian permeability into the residential neighbourhoods in Belleplaine and connect the

community core to important destinations including St. Andrew's Parish Church and Walkers Reserve.

- a) Contiguous sidewalks should be built on at least one side of pedestrian improvement areas, with pedestrian crossings as needed.
 - b) Streetscape improvements should be made in pedestrian improvement areas where possible.
5. Cycling will be supported by encouraging the provision of local bicycle routes and trails and bicycling parking.
 - a) Mountain biking trails should be explored as an alternative local attraction for visitors.
 6. A Mobility Node will be developed in Belleplaine, recognizing its role within the island mobility network.
 - a) A Bus Transfer Point will be established at the intersection of Ermy Bourne Highway and Highway 2 to formalize and integrate facilities and amenities for public transport users (see Section 14.7 for further guidance on this key opportunity).

14.4.5 Planning for National Infrastructure

As the centre of the National Park, Belleplaine is well situated to demonstrate leadership in renewable energy and sustainable community design.

Policies:

1. The Government will promote the use of renewable energy in the Belleplaine community core.
2. The proposed National Park Visitor and Interpretive Centre will celebrate sustainable development and energy practices in the National Park.



- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Roads | Pedestrian | Mobility |
| Primary Road | Priority Pedestrian Linkages | Bus Transfer Point |
| Secondary Road | Pedestrian Improvement Areas | Trailhead |
| Existing Crosswalk | Existing Pedestrian Routes | |
| | Proposed Pedestrian Routes | |

MAP 14C:
Mobility

14.5

Land Use and Built Form Policies

The following land use policies apply within the boundaries of the Belleplaine Community Plan as shown on Map 14B: Land Use. They are intended to guide development in a manner which supports the strategic policies of this Plan and enhance the urban fabric, character and economic vitality of Belleplaine. These policies build on the land use and built form policies in Section 3 and are to be read in addition to those policies. Where there is a discrepancy between the policies of Section 3 and of this section the policies of this section apply. Where no land use and built form policies are included in this section the policies of Section 3 apply.

14.5.1 Design Strategies

Design strategies for the Belleplaine community core are intended to ensure compatibility of new development with existing fabric and promote a high quality public realm that facilitates walking and public transport use.

Policies:

1. New development will be designed to complement existing development in Belleplaine in terms of scale and massing.
2. The public realm on Ermy Bourne Highway, from St. Andrew's Parish Church to the entrance to Walkers Reserve, and the intersection of Ermy Bourne Highway and Highway 2 will be improved with landscaping and wayfinding signage to mark the signature gateways to the Belleplaine community core.
3. New buildings along Ermy Bourne Highway will be positioned close to the street, with minimum landscaped frontages to create a comfortable walking environment.

14.5.2 Mixed Use

1. Additional uses beyond those permitted in Section 3.4 may be considered in Belleplaine community core at the discretion of the Chief Town Planner in order to encourage adaptive reuse of former institutional buildings.

14.5.3 Predominantly Residential

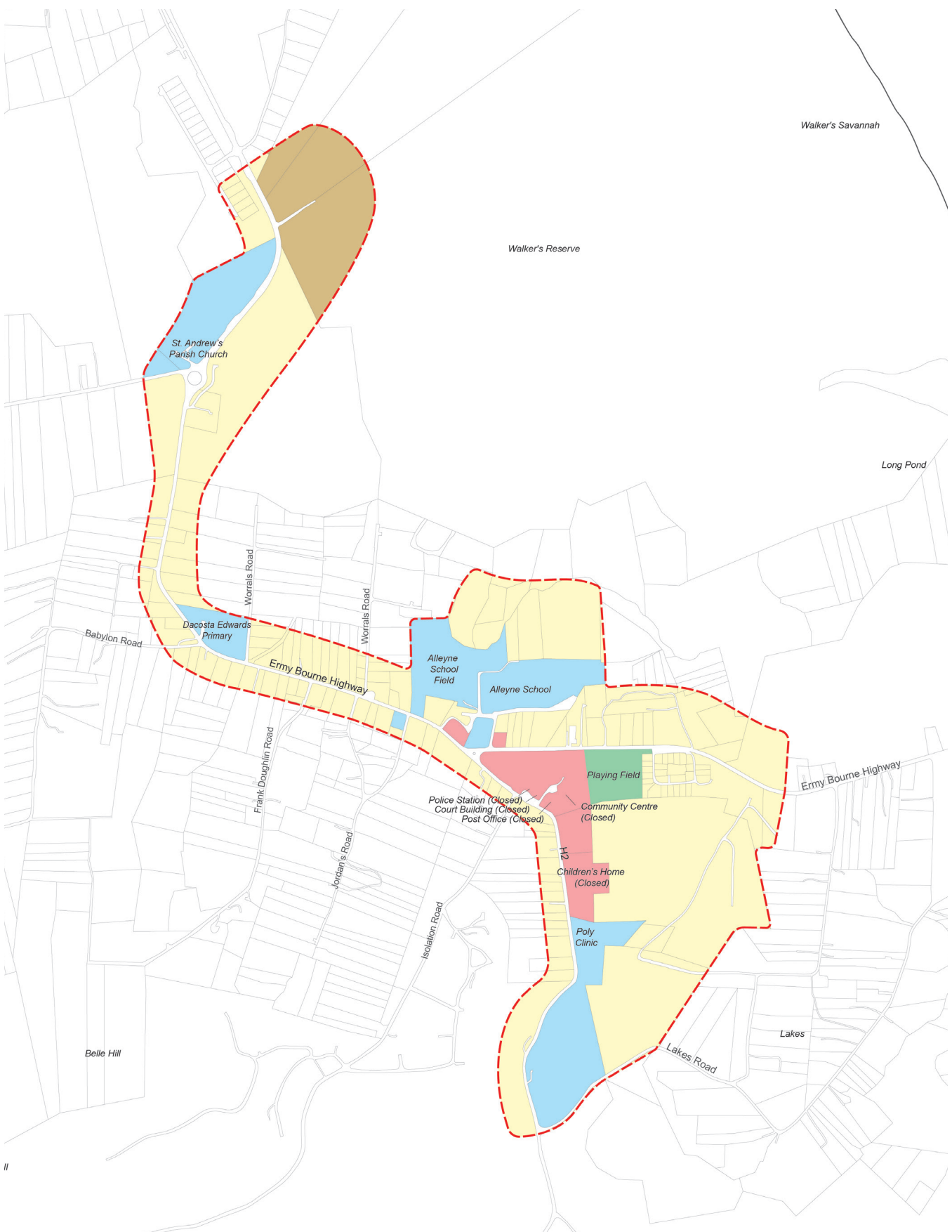
1. Additional permitted uses include:
 - a) Small scale tourism facilities, including short- and long-term accommodation.

14.5.4 Institutional

The national policies of Section 3.8 Institutional apply.

14.5.5 Resource Extraction Policies

1. Walkers Reserve will be required to meet the provisions of Section 3.11 Resource Extraction regarding rehabilitation of the mine site after the sand mining operations have ceased.
2. Applications related to restoration activities at Walkers Reserve will be considered in light of the conceptual development strategies set out in Section B of the National Park Development Plan and Section 4.2.1 National Park Land Use Policies of the PDP Amendment regarding new National Attractions in the National Park based on eco-tourism, permaculture, coastal landscape remediation and environmental education.



MAP 14B:
Land Use

14.6

Open Space System

The aim of this section is to establish a hierarchy of open spaces within Belleplaine for formal and informal recreation and to improve the quality of the environment. Recreational spaces that meet the needs of the community are an important component of healthy communities, providing opportunities for physical activity. Designated open spaces are protected for this function.

These policies build on the parks and open space policies in Section 4 and are to be read in addition to those policies. Where there is a discrepancy between the policies of Section 4 and of this section the policies of this section apply.

14.6.1 OS1 – Barbados National Park

National policies for the National Park in Section 4.2 apply.

14.6.2 OS2 – Natural Heritage Conservation Areas

The National Park Natural Heritage Conservation Area includes areas within and near Belleplaine including Long Pond and Chalky Mount (see Map 14B Natural Heritage).

National policies for Natural Heritage Conservation Areas - Land in Section 4.3.1 apply.

14.6.2 OS4 – Public Parks and Open Spaces

Recreational Park

The Playing Field provides an important amenity for the community.

Policies

3. The Playing Field will continue to be maintained and improved to serve the recreational needs of residents of Belleplaine and surrounding communities.
 - a) Improvements may include lighting, seating and additional recreational amenities.



> Bruce Vale River Valley



Key Opportunity Site:

- National Park Visitor's Centre
- Bus Transfer Point
- Food Hub
- Trailhead

- Directions
- Key Opportunity Site
 - Proposed Trails

MAP 14E:
Public Realm

14.7

Special Policy Areas

14.7.1 Key Opportunity Site

Policies in this section provide additional guidance for a large and centrally located key opportunity site, the rehabilitation of which is essential for the ongoing health and prosperity of Belleplaine as the centre of the National Park.

The heart of Belleplaine at the junction of the Ermy Bourne Highway and Highway 2 previously consisted of various commercial uses, banking facilities, a community centre, a welfare office, a police station, a polyclinic and a children's home. Although the buildings remain, most government services have consolidated their operations elsewhere, leaving the polyclinic as the sole remaining service in operation along with a corner store and daycare. Adaptive reuse of the now vacant buildings is a prime opportunity to stimulate new activity in Belleplaine, as well as provide valuable services for locals and tourists.

National Park Visitor and Interpretive Centre

The Barbados National Park does not currently have a visitor centre, forgoing a critical opportunity to engage with visitors, educate them about the ecology of the Park and share information about tourism and recreational opportunities in the Park. The Centre should function as the front door to the National Park and its Natural Heritage Conservation Area.

A Visitor Centre is an excellent opportunity to revitalize one of the vacant former institutional buildings and create new opportunities related to the exposure that such a facility would bring to Belleplaine. It would act as an anchor to stimulate reinvestment in the central core, and demonstrate the possibilities of adaptive reuse that could be applied to other disused government buildings in the community. The vacant institutional buildings are easily accessible from the National Park Scenic Route, are centrally located within Belleplaine, offer views of the forest and river, and are well situated to connect with the Park's trail network.

Policies

1. The Government will develop a National Park Visitor and Interpretive Centre in Belleplaine community core, ideally through adaptive reuse of an abandoned government building.
2. The building should include:
 - a) Park administration offices;
 - b) Restrooms;
 - c) Information desk;
 - d) Souvenirs.
3. Programming should include:
 - a) Distribution of brochures and literature providing information on activities and features within the National Park, such as the location of trails and trail heads, the location of accommodation and refreshment services, as well as local guide services and community-based services or products.

- b) Exhibitions highlighting the importance of National Park ecosystems for threatened species, climate change resilience and natural heritage protection, including the restoration of Walkers Reserve.
 - c) Consolidation of scattered Park programming to create a strong activity focus around the Visitor's Centre, including guided tours to promote nature-based and cultural heritage tourism in the area.
4. The Visitor Centre will be connected to the trail network where possible and will provide clear connections to local trail heads.
- Food Hub**
- A food hub is an ideal use to anchor the revitalised central core of Belleplaine. The rich farming heritage of the National Park and innovative organic agriculture practices in the area would provide a strong complement to the nature-tourism offering, while also providing an important service to local residents and supporting the local economy.
- Policies**
- 5. A local food hub will be organized in Belleplaine community core. The food hub may include:
 - a) A farmers' market;
 - b) A crafts market displaying local crafts, such as the work of Chalky Mount potters;
 - c) A farming demonstration site;
 - d) A series of leasable wood construction kiosks.
 - e) Outdoor pedestrian scale lighting.
 - f) Grassed picnic areas.
 - g) Shade tree planting.
 - h) Garbage receptacles.
 - 6. Linkages will be formed with the local organic farming community to facilitate sale of their produce at the food hub.
 - 7. Local food vendors and restaurant proprietors will be supported in re-using vacant institutional buildings.
 - 8. Washroom facilities, provision for water and electricity, storage and refuse collection will be centralized within a single service building on, or adjacent to, the market site.



> Highway 2 near the former Childrens Home.

Bus Transfer Point

Community cores are meant to be the most accessible places on the island, reachable by a variety of forms of transportation including public transport. Currently, Belleplaine has bus stops, but there is an opportunity to create a more formalized Bus Transfer Point befitting the community's designation as a Mobility Node within the island-wide mobility network. The parcel identified for the Bus Transfer Point is centrally located within the community at the intersection of Ermy Bourne Highway and Highway 2.

Policies

9. Bus laybys will be installed in each direction of travel to facilitate transfer routes.
10. A waiting area with shade, seating and waste facilities will be provided.
11. An improved pedestrian crossing will be provided to facilitate crossings of Highway 1 and Highway C.
12. Pedestrian linkages on Highway 1 and Highway C will be improved to provide a safe walking environment leading to the bus transfer point.
13. Bike parking will be incorporated in the site design to encourage active transportation and provide a last mile commuter solution.



> Old Police Station



> Old Post Office