

3. Context

3.1 The Region

The University of the Sunshine Coast is located at Sippy Downs in south-east Queensland, approximately seven kilometres inland from the Pacific Ocean and ninety kilometres north of the state's capital city, Brisbane. The nearest urban centres are Buderim, three kilometres to the north; Maroochydore, eleven kilometres to the north; Caloundra, approximately ten kilometres to the south-east and Nambour, fourteen kilometres to the north-west.

The Sunshine Coast is bounded by the Gympie region to the north and west, the Moreton Bay region to the south, and the Somerset region to the south-west, and is characterized by a land area of over 3,000 square kilometers with over 200 kilometers of coastline, numerous hinterland towns, coastal urban centers, over 100 kilometers of waterway, and a number of national parks and state forests.¹ The Kabi Kabi people are the region's traditional land owners.

The Sunshine Coast has experienced considerable population growth in the decade prior to 2011. It is expected that this trend will continue. In 2009, the Sunshine Coast population was approximately 323,000 and growing at approximately three percent, a rate well above the approximately two percent average national growth rate for Local Government Areas. Population estimates for the Sunshine Coast, based on 2006 Census data and assuming growth at the national average rate, forecast a 2011 population of approximately 339,000, rising to 381,000 by 2016 and over half a million by 2031².

While tourism remains the major element in the regional economic base, the University of the Sunshine Coast offers the region an opportunity to develop and innovate in a number of knowledge-based disciplines, through collaboration between University research and local industry. In the next five years a major change to the economic context of the region will be the development and opening of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital (SCUH). Located on a twenty hectare green field site at Kawana, approximately ten minutes drive to the south-east of the University, this facility, with over two billion dollars of investment, is intended to meet the region's growing need for health care by offering a range of new and expanded medical services. It will open with 450 beds in 2016 and expand to a 738 bed facility by 2021. SCUH will become the centre piece in a network of regional hospitals which includes Nambour General Hospital, Caloundra Health Service, Gympie Hospital, and Maleny Soldiers Memorial Hospital. The SCUH site will also include a Skills, Academic and Research Centre and health related commercial developments in the Kawana Health Innovation Park (KHIP). It will require a total of approximately 3,500 staff and bring substantial numbers of visitors to the region each day³. It is anticipated there will be a close relationship between SCUH and the health services programs offered at the University of the Sunshine Coast.

The location of University of the Sunshine Coast makes it an ideal place for students to experience an Australian coastal lifestyle in a safe and affordable environment. The Sunshine Coast is one of Australia's most popular holiday destinations, with beautiful beaches, rivers and mountain ranges. It has a pleasant, subtropical climate, which is comfortable all year round.

Refer Diagrams 3.1.1 – 3.1.4

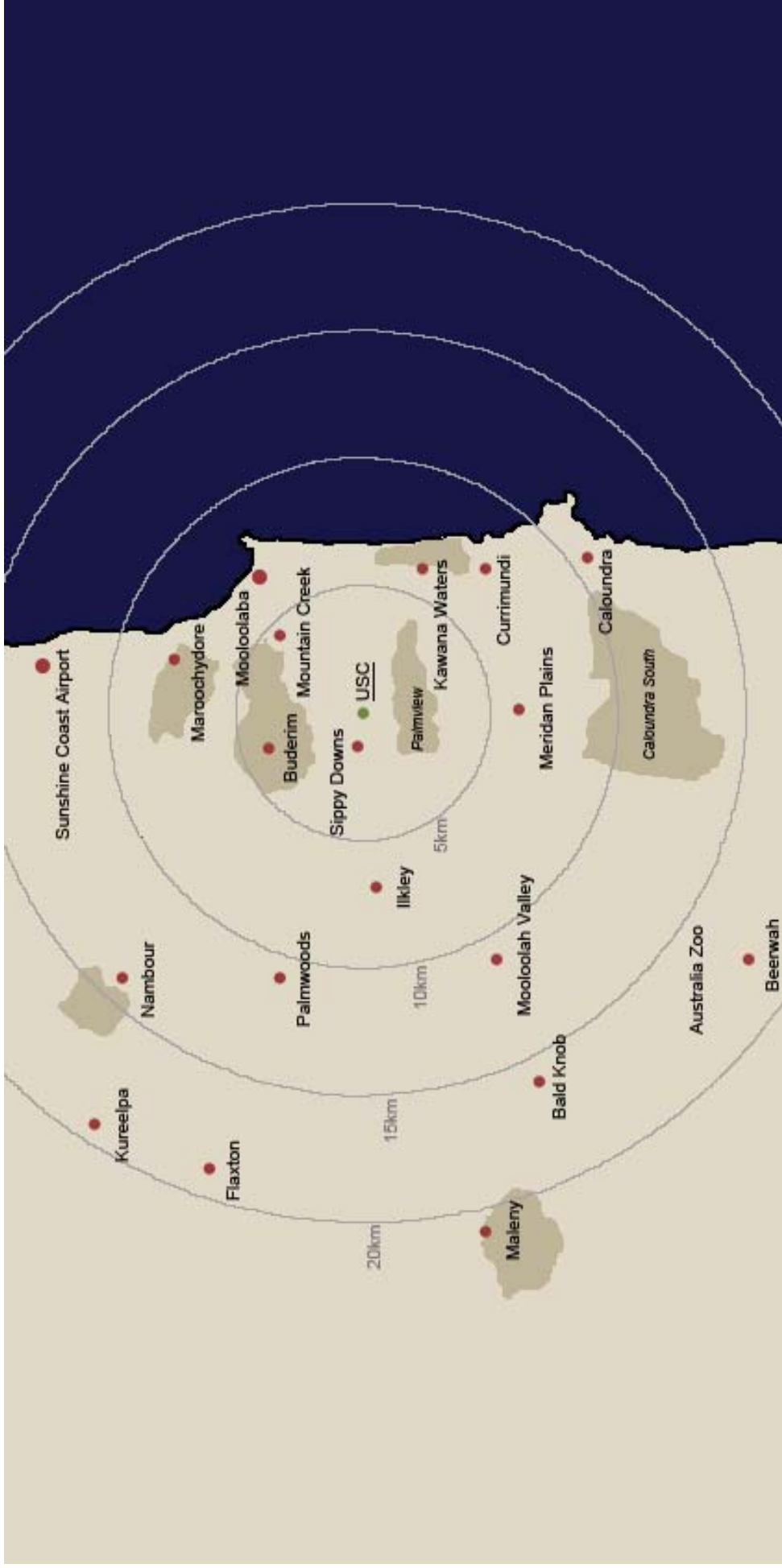


¹ Sunshine Coast Council: Community Planning Fact Sheet 01

² Source: <http://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/sitePage.cfm?code=statistics-population> (referenced 18 October 2011)

³ Source: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/scuhospital>





■ Growth Areas

Diagram | 3.1.2

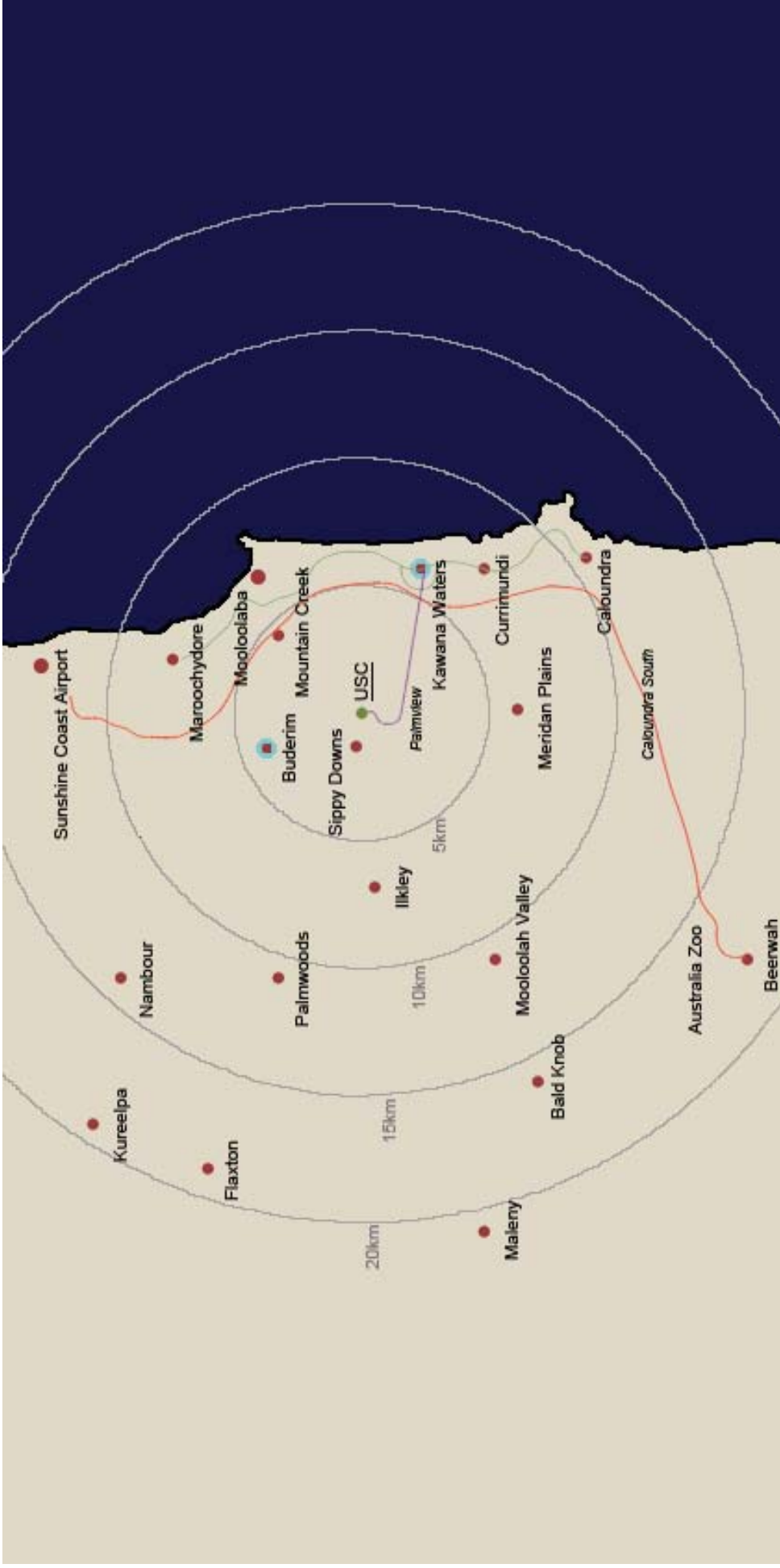
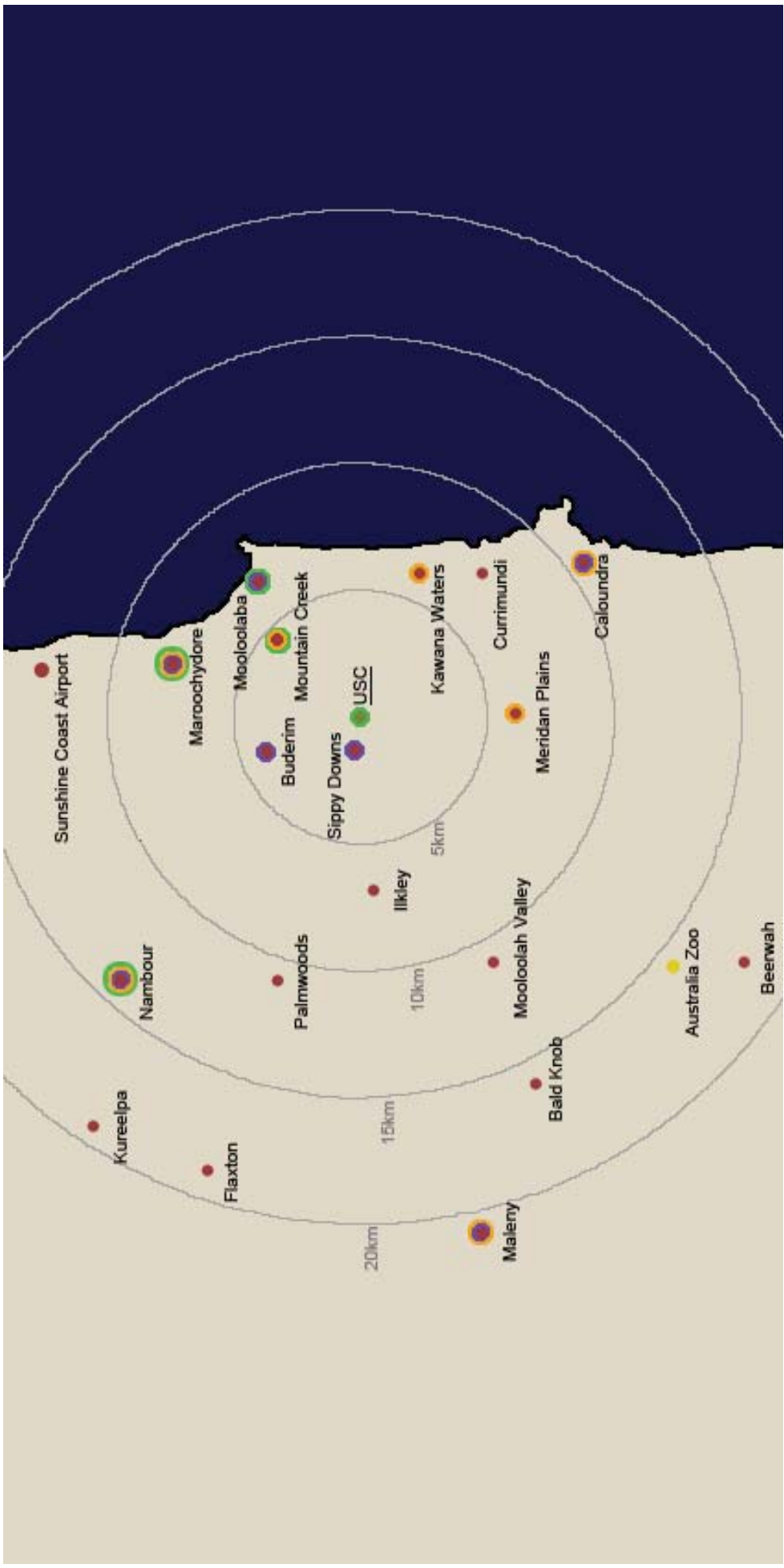


Diagram | 3.1.3

The Sunshine Coast Region : Transport



Shopping

Education

Hospital

Australia Zoo

Diagram | 3.1.4

The Sunshine Coast Region : Key Attractors