City of Whittlesea

City of Whittlesea
Open Space Strategy

August 2016

Acknowledgements

The City of Whittlesea has recognised the rich Aboriginal heritage of the municipality and acknowledged the Wurundjeri Willum Clan of the Kulin nations as the traditional custodians of the land.

The City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy has been prepared by Thompson Berrill Landscape Design Pty Ltd in association with Environment & Land Management Pty Ltd for the City of Whittlesea. The population forecast information in the Strategy was prepared by the City of Whittlesea based on .id Consulting forecasts. The areas of forecast change are based on the *Housing Diversity Strategy 2013-2033* (May 2014).

Supporting this Strategy is the *City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy Technical Report*, which contains the technical research, definitions, analysis and recommendations.

Accessibility

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Glossary

Specific open space terms used in this Strategy are defined (listed in alphabetical order) as:

Ancillary open space
Public land that contributes to open space but is primarily reserved for other purposes such as education and transport.

Encumbered open space
Public land that meets the definition of open space but where another use restricts the recreational use or activities that can be undertaken in it, for example service easements and drainage reserves.

Higher density areas
This refers to the urban renewal, neighbourhood renewal and neighbourhood interface areas as described in the Housing Diversity Strategy 2013-2033. In these areas housing types will be diverse and may include townhouses, multi-units, small and large scale apartments, shop-top housing and mixed use developments

Informal use
Use of open space for reasons other than recreation pursuits including socialising, picnicking, enjoying the ambience and relaxing.

Open space
Public open space is the publicly owned land that is set aside primarily for recreation, nature conservation and passive outdoor enjoyment. This includes parks, reserves, gardens, waterways, civic forecourts and plazas.

Publicly accessible private open space
Private land that the public can access and use as open space but remains in private ownership such as church grounds and private forecourts to buildings.

Restricted open space
Public land that meets the definition of open space but is not available and accessible to the community, or is only available on a club membership or fee-paying basis.

Standard residential density
Residential areas with detached dwellings, duplex and dual occupancy in urban and township areas, as defined in the Housing Diversity Strategy 2013-2033. The facilities appropriate to standard residential density will also apply to open space in rural areas.

Structured sport and recreation
The activity is organised by a club, association, school or community group and participation is only by either being a member of the club or school, or is on a fee-paying basis.

Unstructured recreation
Where participation in the recreation activity is initiated by individuals rather than by a club or organisation.

Note: In this Strategy, the use of the terms ‘passive open space’ and ‘active open space’ have not been used as the Strategy encourages different types of activities and uses within each open space.

1. Introduction

1.1 Strategy purpose and scope

Open space is the publicly owned land that is reserved for recreation, nature conservation and passive outdoor enjoyment. In the City of Whittlesea the public open space network has a number of key roles including to:

- Provide recreational spaces for the community to exercise, play sport, explore, play, socialise, relax and unwind.
- Protect the unique ecological values including the remnant River Red Gums, native grasslands and waterways.
- Protect and promote the cultural heritage and contemporary cultural values of the community.

The Open Space Strategy (referred to as 'the Strategy' in this document) sets out the strategic direction for the future planning, provision, design and management of open space in the City of Whittlesea through to 2026. This is consistent with the population forecast planning period of 2013 to 2026. As one of the largest municipalities in metropolitan Melbourne it contains a variety of land uses including rural, established urban and extensive designated growth areas. Each of these land use types demand different approaches to the provision of open space. As a result, the Strategy has treated these three broad land use types separately as briefly described below.

Established urban and rural areas, including Whittlesea Township

The Strategy guides the future planning, provision, design and management of open space for the majority of the established rural and urban areas shown in Figure 1-1. The only exceptions are selected Activity Centres and large strategic sites within the established areas that are subject to existing agreements and other statutory planning processes regarding the provision and design of open space. These are noted in the precinct analysis and recommendations in Section 7 of the Strategy.

The open space needs of the existing and forecast population is based on research, consultation, site assessments, population forecasts and the *Housing Diversity Strategy 2013-2033*. The Open Space Strategy includes a list of projects to address the identified open space needs.

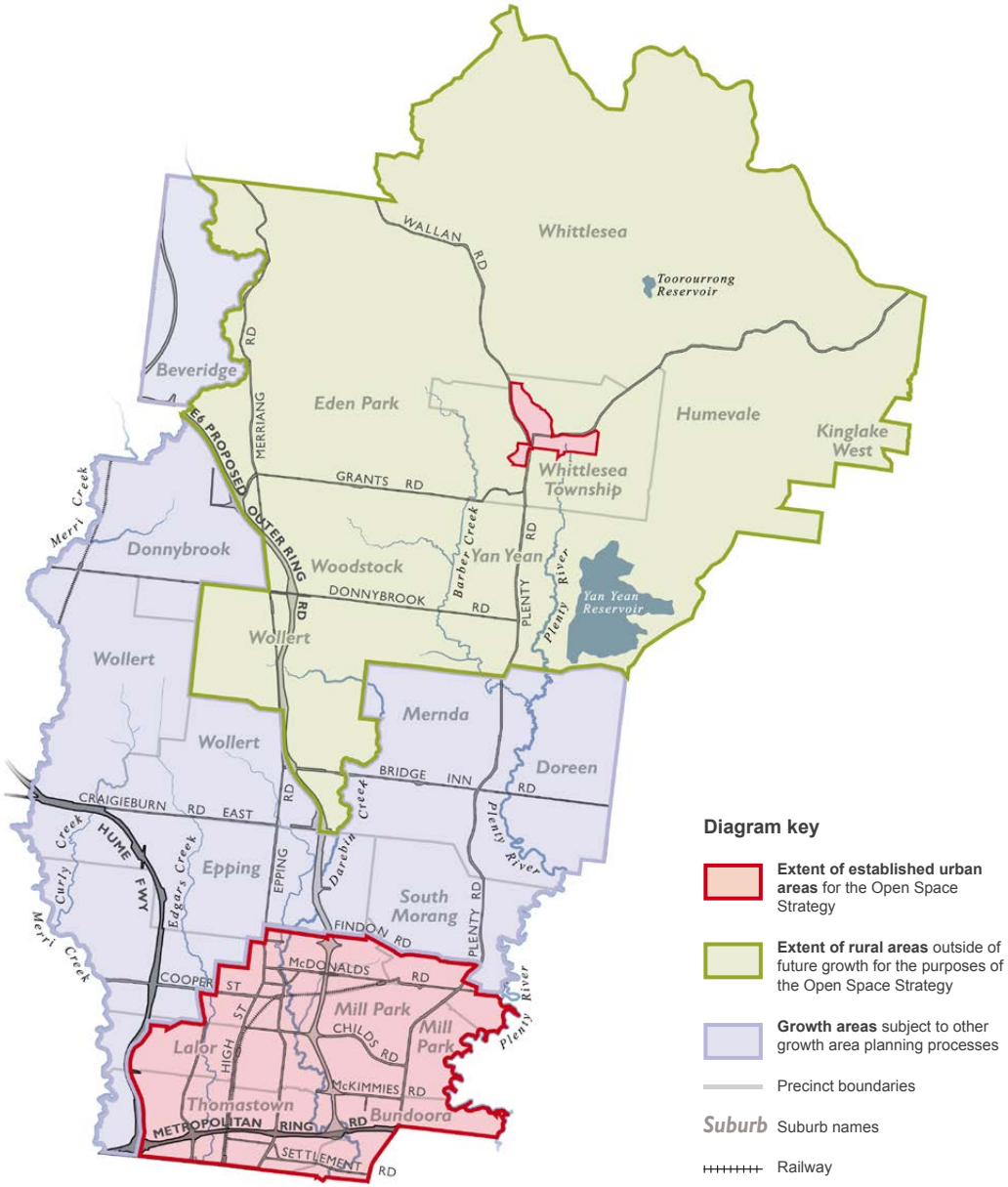


Figure 1-1 Extent of established urban areas, rural areas and growth areas

Growth areas

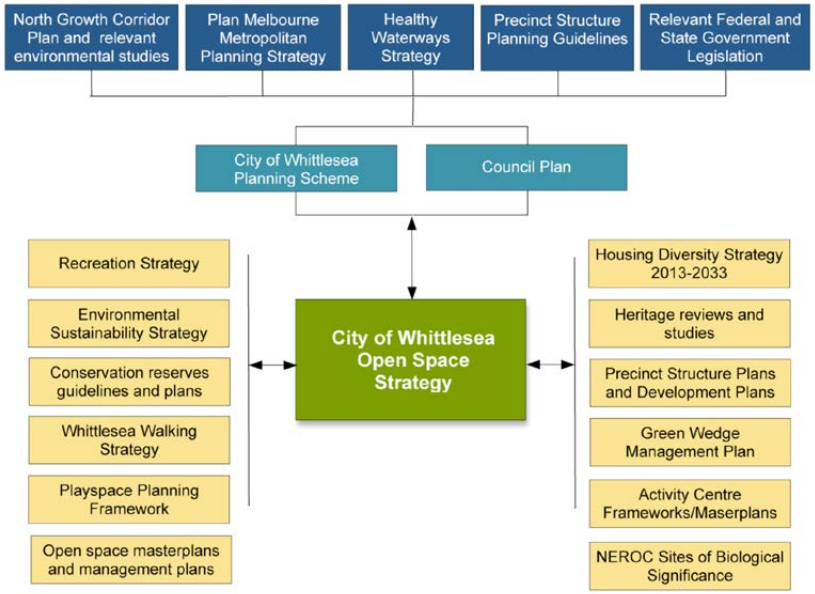
The future planning and provision of open space in all metropolitan urban growth areas is guided by the Victorian Government planning guidelines. These are implemented at the precinct level via Precinct Structure Plans that are prepared in consultation with the City of Whittlesea. The Strategy guides the future design and management of open space in the growth areas. It also provides guidelines regarding the provision of open space at the local level in locations where it has not already been set out and confirmed in the Precinct Structure Plans.

For more information refer to the *City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy Technical Report*, which supports this document and contains the technical research, analysis, conclusions and recommendations.

1.2 Strategy principles and aims

Principle	Aim
Accessible	• Located within easy and safe walking distance of the community living and working in urban areas. • Offer inclusion for all by providing a diverse range of activities and facilities.
Supportive of community health and wellbeing	• Provides outdoor spaces for people to take a break, relax, socialise and exercise, whether they are at work or at home. • Encourage participation in community sport, promoting fitness and health in everyone. • Provide a respite during extended periods of heat, promoting the principles of passive cooling. • Provide green spaces with trees, grass and garden beds to bring the natural character and experiences into the urban centres.
Diverse	• Provide a diversity of character, sizes and facilities to appeal and be accessible to the community.
Equitable	• Provide a system of open spaces that combined achieves access for all. • Embrace and support our cultural diversity. • Equitably funded by the existing and forecast population.
Sustainable	• Protect and strengthen our natural ecological systems. • Support and promote sustainable water use. • Encourage sustainable forms of transport including walking and cycling to school, services and work. • Assist with mitigating urban heat through appropriate distribution, location and design in urban centres. • Support and promote the City of Whittlesea as a great place to live and work.
Connected	• Provide a linked network of diverse open spaces at the neighbourhood and local level. • Improve linear trails and links to and between key facilities and services.
Cultural	• Protect and celebrate the Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritage values. • Encourage community celebrations and social places for the community to meet.
Ecological	• Protect the significant biodiversity values in the municipality. • Protect the remnant River Red Gums and other indigenous vegetation including space for regeneration so future generations can enjoy them.

1.3 Relevant strategies and policies



2. Why open space is important

2.1 Definition of open space

In this Strategy, open space is the publicly owned land that is currently set aside or has the potential in the future to be set aside primarily for recreation, nature conservation and passive outdoor enjoyment. This includes parks, reserves, gardens, waterways, civic forecourts and plazas.

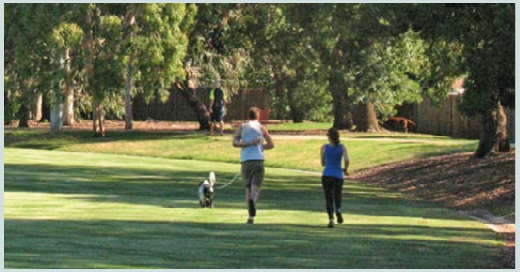
Some public open space is not always accessible to the public, and this is referred to in this Strategy as restricted open space. Examples include parts of Yan Yean Reservoir and areas within Plenty Gorge Park. Other public land including streets, schools and universities complement the open space network and are guided by other plans and priorities and are therefore not the focus of this Strategy.

2.2 Open space values

Open space contributes to the ecological and cultural heritage values, landscape character and liveability of the City of Whittlesea. Open space is important for:

Biodiversity protection, improvement and interpretation

Unstructured recreation



Play

Relaxing (informal use)

Socialising

Structured sport

Being outside (informal use)

Contrasting the built character and form to the natural open space character

Protection and promotion of cultural heritage and diversity

Mitigating urban heat effect and climate change adaptation

3. Existing open space in the City of Whittlesea

An expanding network of more than 760 public open spaces contribute to the inherent character and sense of place and the quality of life for the community in the City of Whittlesea. In our rural setting, the larger natural reserves include Kinglake National Park, the closed catchments of Yan Yean and Toorourrong Reservoirs and Mount Disappointment State Forest. These large reserves contribute to the ecological health and the visual landscape character of the municipality, and have a role in protection of natural resources and biodiversity values for the State of Victoria.

A number of waterways flow north south through the municipality including the Plenty River in the east and Merri Creek in the west. Along these major waterways Craigieburn Grasslands Nature Conservation Reserve and Plenty Gorge Park contain significant biodiversity values of national and state significance. Across the central and southern sections of the municipality, majestic River Red Gums characterise the open space on the volcanic plains. These are continuing to be protected in an expanding open space network as rural land converts to urban use in the growth areas particularly in Mernda, Doreen and Wollert.

Located between the established urban and growth areas, Quarry Hills Regional Parkland has the potential to become a major regional reserve and create a significant non-urban break between South Morang and Mernda.

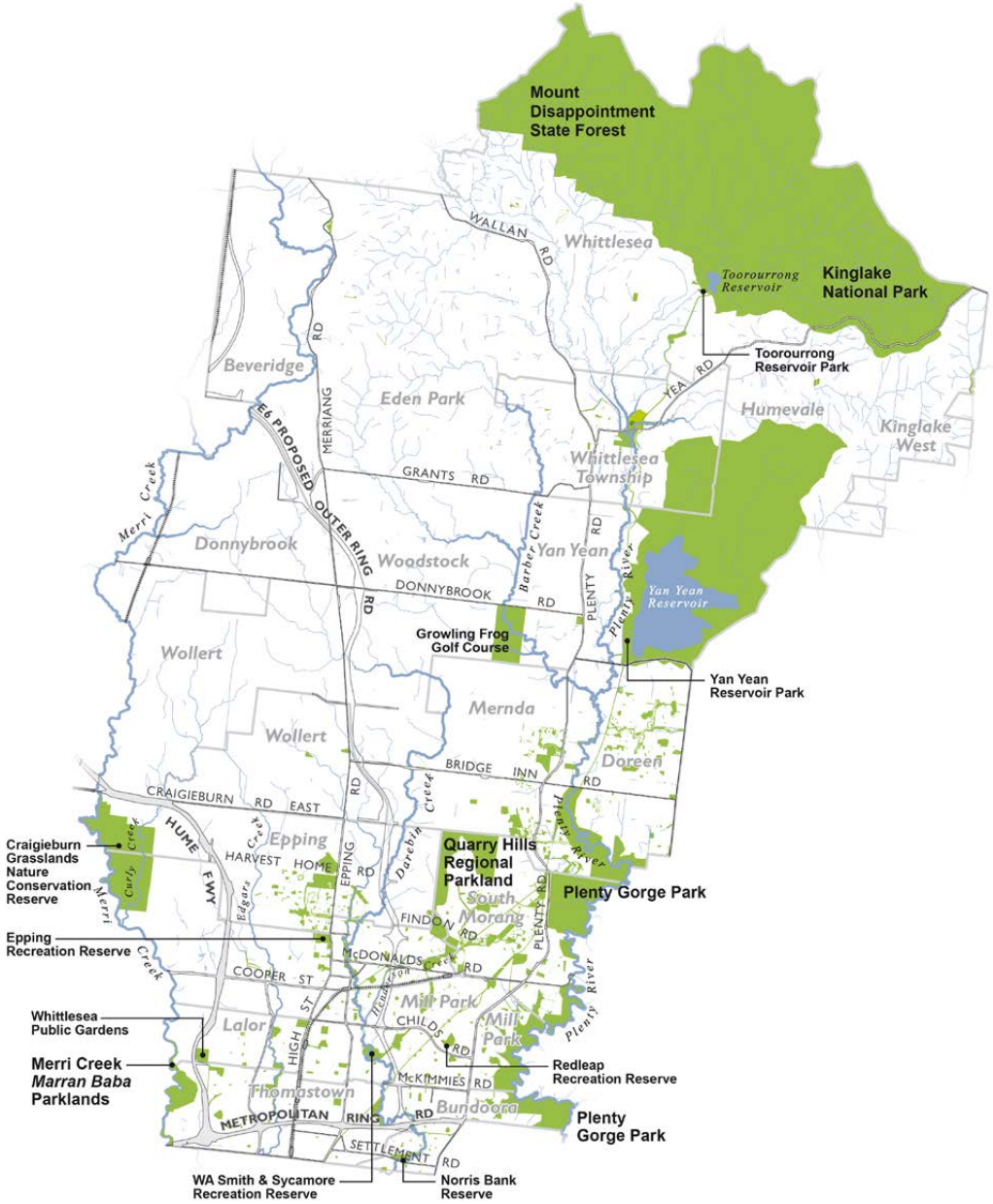


Figure 3-1 Existing open space

This significant geological feature affords spectacular views across the municipality and to the City of Melbourne skyline beyond.

In the established urban areas many of the 314 existing open spaces are located along the waterway corridors including Darebin, Edgars and Merri Creeks. There is a system of well established and maintained sporting reserves including Mill Park, Thomastown and Epping Recreation Reserves. Linked via the waterway corridors, WA Smith and Sycamore Recreation Reserves adjoin Darebin Creek and Main Street Recreation Reserve adjoins Edgars Creek. Redleap Recreation Reserve is one of the most popular open spaces in the established urban areas, providing both sporting and informal facilities with historical and natural values including the lake. There is potential for selected major recreation reserves to be upgraded with a greater diversity of facilities to broaden their appeal and use in the future.

An extensive network of local open spaces and links are located within easy walking distance of residents and workers. These provide important social and recreational spaces for each neighbourhood. There are gaps in the distribution of the local open space in the majority of the established urban areas. This Strategy has identified where these gaps are, and recommended solutions to address them. A valuable open space network is the sum of its parts, and the City of Whittlesea has an excellent framework on which to refine and expand in order to better support and promote community health and wellbeing.

4. Key influences on open space planning in the future

4.1 Forecast change

Established urban and rural areas

The forecast land use and population change used in this Strategy is based on the City of Whittlesea's *Housing Diversity Strategy 2013-2033 (May 2014)*, which sets the framework for forecast growth in the established urban areas and Whittlesea Township. The population increase for the established urban areas from 2013 to 2026 is estimated to be in the order of 13,000 people. There will be an increasing demand for smaller homes and construction of townhouses and apartments in higher density areas. About half, or 6,000 people, are forecast to move into locations not covered by detailed planning for open space. This Strategy proactively plans for both the existing and forecast population in these areas, to provide a diverse range of open spaces for the community to visit and enjoy.

Growth areas

The Victorian Government in partnership with the City of Whittlesea guides the planning for open space provision in the growth areas. The Strategy provides guidance on the design and management of the new open space and the planning of the local open space network.

4.2 Inconsistency in the quality and distribution of open space between the established and growth areas

Overview

In more recent times there has been a greater awareness of the important role open space plays in improving community health and wellbeing. In the growth areas, the provision of open space has been informed by consideration of walking catchments, community use and protection of biodiversity values. Therefore the open space, particularly the Neighbourhood, Local and Small Local open space, in the growth areas is generally of higher quality than the majority of open space in the established areas. It has a higher level of facility provision particularly for unstructured recreation and informal use, with more attention given to the planted character and quality of the spaces.

To address the inequity between open space in the established and growth areas, the Strategy recommends a prioritised program of works. This includes the provision of new open space in gap areas and upgrades to existing open space for the existing and forecast population in the established urban and rural areas including Whittlesea Township. These are described in Section 7 of the Strategy. The design and management guidelines in the *City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy Technical Report* guide the future upgrades and the quality of new open space in the whole municipality.

Quality of open space in the established areas

The open space survey undertaken for the Strategy, along with site assessments and research, identified that there are relatively low levels of use of open space in the established areas. Reasons for lower levels of use include:

- A lack of diversity of facilities and open space character that appeals to the community.
- Poor visibility of open space due to lack of passive surveillance and presence of dense shrubs at entries.
- Lack of path access to existing facilities.
- Lack of trees and shade.
- Lack of time.
- Poor condition of facilities.

The prioritised program of upgrades described above will improve the quality of open space which aims to encourage greater levels of use by the existing and forecast community.

Playground in the established area

Playground in the growth area with picnic facilities and path

4.3 Improve community health and wellbeing

Distribution of open space

The open space hierarchy and travel catchments for each type of open space have been mapped for the existing open space network. This has identified gaps in the provision of open space in parts of the established urban areas. Gaps mean that people are not within an easy and safe walk (i.e. without the need to cross major roads or railways) of any public open space. Accepted open space planning principles identify that all residents should be able to easily walk to some public open space without the need to cross major roads or drive to reach them.

A well distributed Neighbourhood, Local and Small Local open space network is critical to meeting this need. Well designed, quality smaller spaces that become popular community meeting places contribute to a sense of community and walkable neighbourhoods. The Strategy recommends solutions for each of the gap areas located in the established urban areas described in Section 7.

The provision of public open space supports physical activity, social connectivity and mental health and wellbeing. Open space is valued by the community for its inherent qualities including:

- Playing team sport.
- Supporting physical activity including walking, running, cycling, dog walking and pram walking.
- Social gatherings with family and friends.
- Catching up informally with neighbours.
- Exploring and discovering the natural world as a child.
- Habitat for native flora and fauna
- Respite and shade.
- Relaxing outdoors.
- Enjoying the sense of space.
- Watching people and activity.

The open space survey undertaken for this Strategy identified relatively low levels of participation in sport and recreation, particularly in Lalor and Thomastown. This Strategy therefore focuses on improving the quality of existing open space to encourage the community to be outside and utilising the open space.

4.4 Impacts of climate change

The likely increase in severe weather events as a result of climate change may cause increased incidents of fire, flood, drought and loss of biodiversity in open space.

Sustainable water use

The increase in extended droughts means that open space may be impacted by water restrictions again in the future. The impact of the recent extended drought has meant there was a significant reduction in the capacity of open space to accommodate high levels of use, particularly sports fields. While a range of water wise measures have been taken, including converting sports fields to warm season grasses and installing water tanks, there is a need to proactively plan for integrated sustainable water reuse aspects of the urban water cycle in open space design to support both structured and unstructured recreational use. This will increase the cost of upgrading open space across the municipality.

Urban heat island effect

In higher density urban areas, open space provides a physical break in the built form to allow some radiant passive cooling at night. Positioning open space through higher density areas along with designing them to retain moisture can help mitigate the effects of urban heat. Additionally, open space has an important role in providing safe cool spaces during periods of extended heat if it is designed well to integrate principles of moisture retention and shade. Proactively planning for this influences the provision, type and design of open space in the future. The *City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy Technical Report* includes criteria for new open space (Table D1-4) and design and management guidelines to incorporate these measures into future open space provision and design.

5. Open space framework

5.1 Role and purpose of different types of open space

Each open space has a specific role in the network depending on its location, size, use and character. In developing this Strategy, the role and character of each open space in the established urban and rural areas has been assessed and its distribution mapped. This assessment forms the basis for understanding the existing network and the deficiencies that need to be addressed in the Strategy.

Hierarchy of open space

State open space is of significance to the State of Victoria. This can include open space with biodiversity values of at least State Significance including Plenty Gorge Park and Craigieburn Grassland Nature Conservation Reserve; potable water supply protection as with Yan Yean Reservoir; and heritage values as with Ziebell's Farmhouse and Lutheran Church Land in Thomastown. The typical size varies according to the role and values.

Regional open space primarily caters to a broader regional recreational catchment or biodiversity protection purpose at a broader scale beyond the municipal boundaries. Examples include Merri Creek and Darebin Creek Linear Trails.

Municipal open space provides for the recreational needs of the municipality and includes sporting facilities, historical gardens and major recreational facilities such as large play spaces and skate/BMX facilities. Examples include Harvest Home Recreation Reserve, Redleap Reserve and Edgars Creek Linear Park. The preferred size is 7 hectares with a minimum of 3 hectares, and the travel catchment is within one kilometre radius of 95% of all dwellings and workplaces.

Neighbourhood open space provides a diversity of character and facilities within walking distance of home or the workplace. The minimum size is 1 hectare, meaning they can cater to a range of unstructured recreation and informal facilities. The safe walking catchment is 400 metres and examples include Mimosa Park in Mill Park, Lorne Park in Lalor and Botanica Park in Bundoora.

Local open space is located within an easy safe walk of home or the workplace and large enough to have two activities in the one open space. For example, a play facility and open grassed kickabout area. The size is between 0.99 and 0.26 hectares, and the safe walking catchment is 300 metres. Examples include Prince of Wales Park in Mill Park, Silky Oak Park in Bundoora and Victoria Park in Thomastown.

Small Local open space is located within an easy safe walk of home or the workplace, and differentiated from Local open space by its smaller size. These spaces typically accommodate one use, for example a small playground where they are located outside an activity centre. The size is between 0.25 and 0.05 hectares with a minimum width of 20 metres. The safe walking catchment is 200 metres and examples include Kellaway Crescent Park in Mill Park, Japonica Park in Bundoora and Northumbaland Drive Park in Epping.

Small Local Link provide improved connectivity between streets and open space. They are usually less than 0.05 hectares in size, with a minimum width of 10 metres.

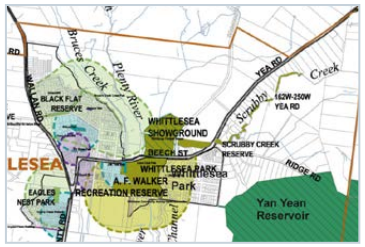
Character of open space

The character of the open space is derived from its inherent natural and physical character along with the urban context in which it is located. In the City of Whittlesea the character ranges from linear open space, to sporting reserves and informal parks, and these different characters appeal to different parts of the community. A primary and secondary character has been assigned to the open space in the established urban and rural areas of the municipality, and has been used to assess the provision and distribution of different types of open space across these parts of the municipality. Refer to the *City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy Technical Report* for further information regarding the character classification.

5.2 Distribution of open space

One of the key principles guiding open space planning is the accessibility of the open space network. One of the objectives is therefore to provide at least one type of open space within safe and easy walking distance of the majority of the community. This aims to encourage the community to go outdoors to exercise and socialise, improving community health and wellbeing.

To assess the distribution, all existing open space has been mapped, and an easy and safe walking catchment applied to the different types of open space. A 500 metre walking catchment was applied to all accessible State, Regional and Municipal open space in recognition that while these reserves are provided for a broader catchment of uses, they are also available for informal and unstructured recreation use by the local community. A 400 metre walking catchment was applied to all Neighbourhoood open space, a 300 metre catchment to Local open space and a 200 metre catchment to Small Local open space. Major roads and railways are barriers that limit walkable access and the catchments applied reflect this. Figure 5-1 illustrates the gaps in the distribution of open space highlighting areas where the community lack easy and safe walkable access to open space. Further information is provided in Section 7 of the Strategy.



Whittlesea Township inset

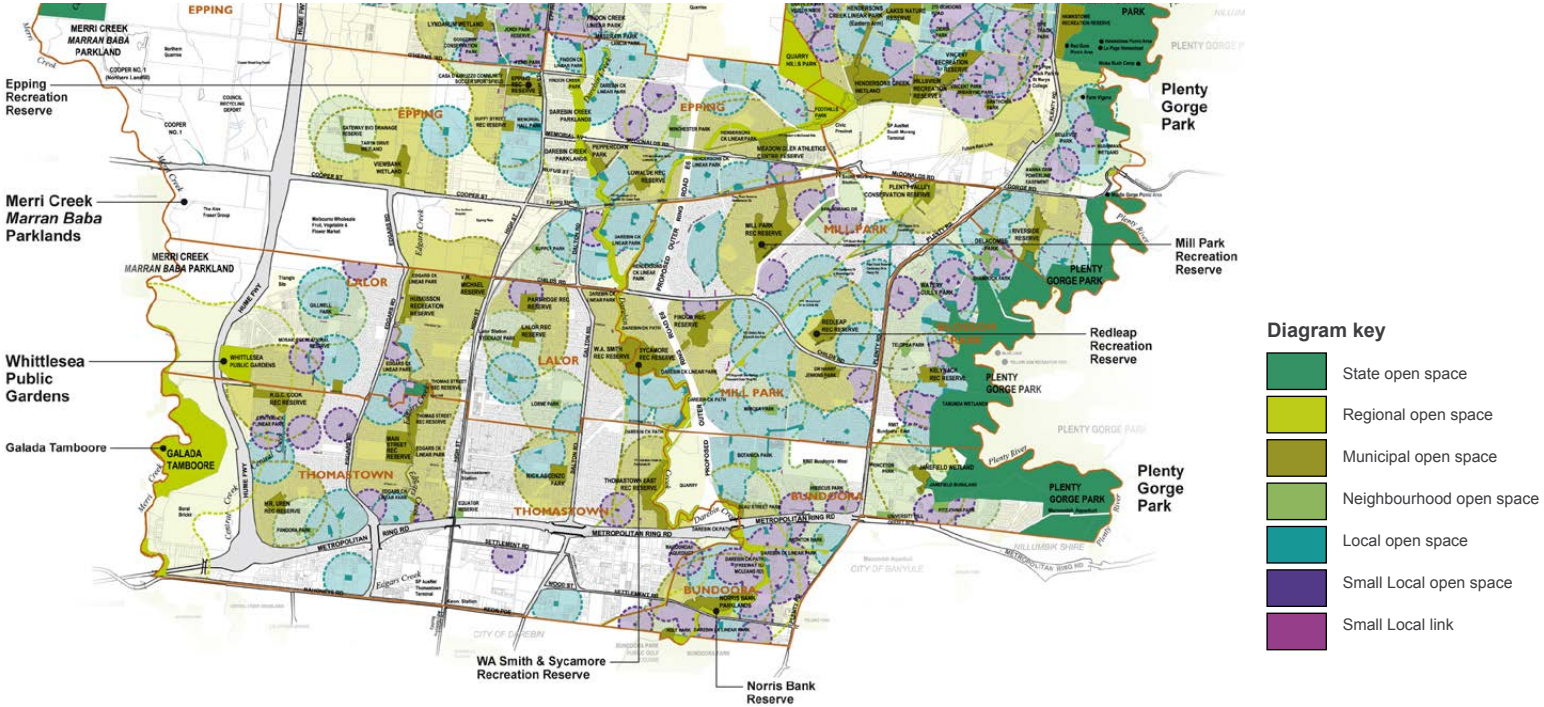


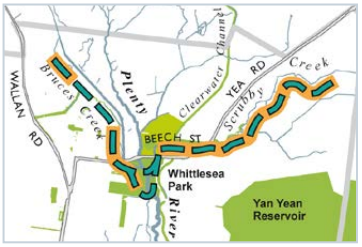
Figure 5-1 Open space distribution in the established urban areas and Whittlesea Township

6. Overall recommendations

6.1 Improve the linear open space network

Linear open space is located along the waterways, pipe track reserves, Maroondah aqueduct and transmission easements. Additional to these, linear off-road shared trails are located along freeway and railway reservations. The Strategy recommends construction of additional shared trail and walking path links to significantly improve the connectivity and accessibility within, to and between open space. This will create looped path circuits and connections within the linear open space to encourage people to use it, particularly for regular exercise. For the service easements including the Pipe Tracks, Council will liaise with Melbourne Water and other service authorities to determine the feasibility of new paths and the design requirements. Additional to the paths, the Strategy recommends continued implementation of existing Management Plans to improve the biodiversity values in the linear open space corridors with appropriate levels of planting.

Figure 6-1 illustrates the key existing and proposed linear shared trail and on-road connections. More detail is provided in the precinct diagrams and descriptions in Section 7 and the recently completed *Northern Trails Strategy (2016).*



Whittlesea Township inset

Figure 6-1 Linear open space in the established urban areas and Whittlesea Township

6.2 Improve the quality of the open space network

Upgrades to existing open space

The Strategy recommends a prioritised program of upgrades to the open space network to make open space more appealing and accessible. The upgrades are proposed across all levels of open space including Municipal, Neighbourhood, Local and Small Local open space. This will achieve a well distributed system of quality open space that the majority of the community can easily reach including those with limited mobility. The upgrades will focus on:

- Increasing the diversity of facilities for unstructured recreation, including fitness stations; looped path and trail networks; multi use courts; diverse play environments; improved playgrounds; picnic facilities and open grassed areas for informal games, events and social gatherings.
- Establishing a range of landscape character types with different planting styles and types of materials used (for example natural or contemporary) to provide a variety of experiences.
- Improving safety in open space by selectively trimming vegetation at entry points and along paths to open up views.
- Including facilities and settings within the open space for relaxation, contemplation and for socialising. This includes a diversity of scales with some catering to large groups and other more intimate spaces for a few people to enjoy.
- Ensuring any future upgrades to structured sporting facilities (as recommended in the *Recreation Strategy*) have multiple-use benefits and promote unstructured recreation and informal use of open space.

Refer to Section 7 of the Strategy for a description of which open spaces are to be upgraded and the level of priority for each. Refer to the table on the following page for appropriate facilities and features in existing and new open space.

Four major community parks in the established areas

To promote and encourage use of open space, four key existing Regional and Municipal open space reserves have been selected to create destination community parks that encourage residents and workers in the established urban areas to use open space. Whittlesea Public Gardens, Norris Bank Reserve and Quarry Hills Regional Parkland are all Regional open spaces, while Mill Park Recreation Reserve is an existing Municipal open space. They have been selected because they:

- Are accessible by existing and proposed shared path networks in addition to the road network.
- Are located in proximity to areas of change in the established areas as shown in the *Housing Diversity Strategy 2013-2033.*
- Are well distributed through the established urban areas of the municipality.
- Are of a size and hierarchy that can accommodate increased levels of visitation and use.
- Have existing facilities or inherent characteristics that can be improved on and expanded to create major destination parks.
- Provide some accessibility from the rural areas and Whittlesea Township to the north, particularly Quarry Hills Regional Parkland.

These four major upgrades will focus on providing facilities that encourage informal and unstructured recreation activities and use of open space. They

will be high quality landscape settings with distinctive characters and facilities that encourage both children and adults to be active, social and outdoors. This includes regional playgrounds, multi-use courts, fitness stations, picnic and barbecue facilities, public toilets, and car parking. These parks will incorporate universal access and design principles and cater to and promote contemporary events and celebrations that target all age groups. Refer to Figure 6-2 regarding the location of the four major community parks.

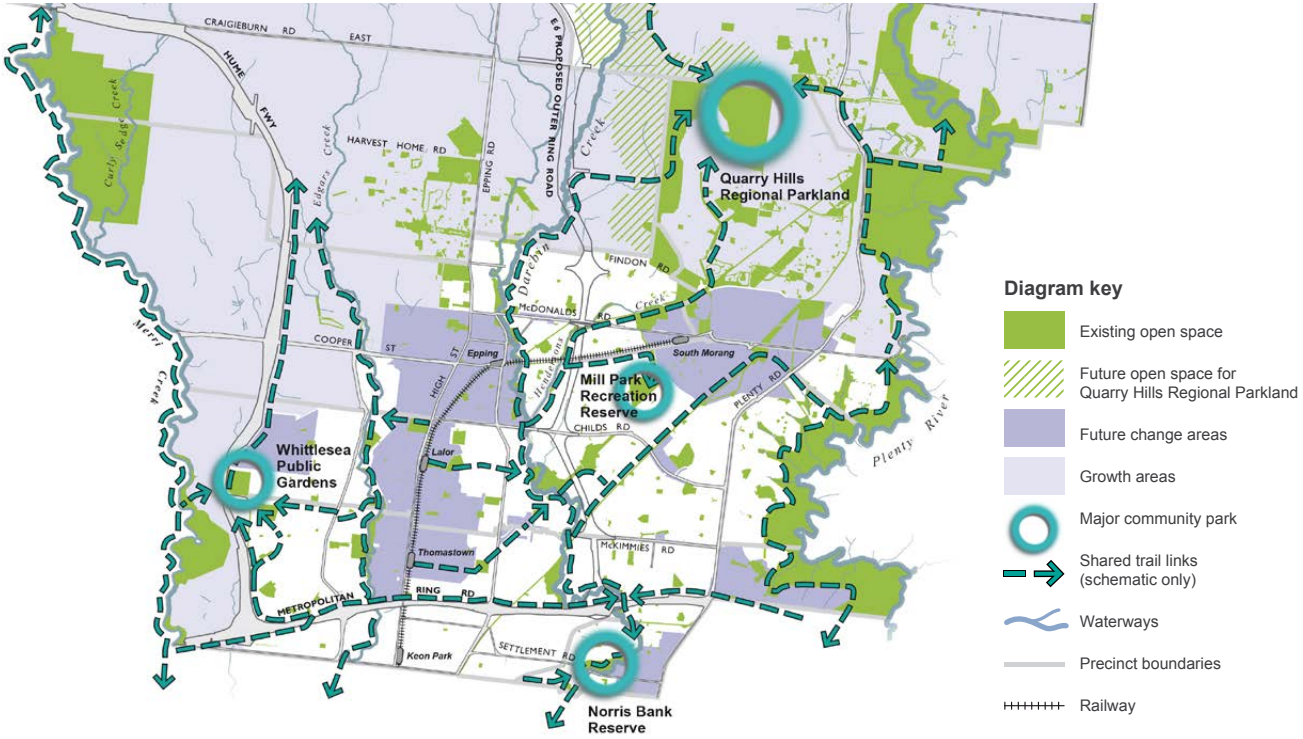


Figure 6-2 Major upgrades to key open spaces in the established urban areas

Facility provision in existing and new open space

The following table provides a guide for the range of facilities and features that are appropriate in the different types of open space as set out in the open space hierarchy (refer Section 5.1). The table is to guide design decisions by Council, developers and other agencies when undertaking future upgrades for existing open space and establishment of new open space.

The facilities and features are listed in alphabetical order. The table is to be used as a guide only for what is appropriate for different types of open space. The actual facilities and features in existing and new open space will vary depending on its location, design, character, recreation needs, community input, environmental values and urban or rural context. Not every facility listed as appropriate will necessarily be provided in each open space of that type.

Guide for appropriate facility and feature provision in existing and new open space by hierarchy

✓ = Appropriate facility/feature for the hierarchy of open space

• = Appropriate facility/feature for the hierarchy of open space in higher density areas only

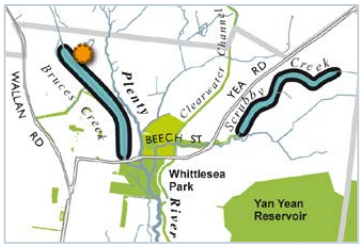
Facility and feature	State & Regional	Municipal	N'hood	Local	Small Local
Barbecue	✓	✓			
Car parking	✓	✓			
Drinking fountain	✓	✓	✓		
Exercise/fitness facility (eg. small scale fitness equipment, half court, outdoor table tennis facility etc.)	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Festivals and events - major	✓	✓			
Festivals and events - minor	✓	✓	✓		
Garden bed - feature/ decorative	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Garden bed - to mitigate urban heat	✓	✓	✓	•	•
Large open grassed area for unstructured recreational use	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Lighting (key linking paths and sports facilities only)	✓	✓	✓		
Path - shared	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Path - pedestrian	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Playground - major	✓	✓			
Playground - large	✓	✓	✓		
Playground - medium		✓	✓		
Playground - minor				✓	✓
Public toilet	✓	✓			
Rubbish bin	✓	✓	✓		
Seating	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Shelter - picnic/shade/rain	✓	✓	✓	•	
Skate/BMX facility	✓	✓			
Structured indoor sport and recreation facility	✓	✓			
Structured outdoor sport and recreation facility	✓	✓	✓		
Tree - large canopy shade	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Unstructured sport and recreation facility (eg. multi-use courts, cricket nets etc)	✓	✓	✓		
Water feature	✓	✓			
WSUD feature and infrastructure, including sustainable water supply	✓	✓	✓	•	•

6.3 Additional open space

Established urban areas, rural areas and Whittlesea Township

The Strategy has identified where and what type of new open space is required to meet the existing and forecast population needs. The locations are shown in Figure 6-3 and are described in the Precinct Recommendations in Section 7 of the Strategy. In summary, the proposed Local and Small Local open space is to address gap areas where there is no existing open space within safe and easy walking distance (without the need to cross major roads or barriers to open space) of residents and workers. The proposed new Municipal open space is located along existing waterway corridors to provide shared trail and recreational access along with improvements to biodiversity values.

Proposed new open space will need to meet the criteria for new open space as described in the table on the next page. The method used to secure the additional land area will be a combination of different mechanisms including contribution of land area by larger strategic development sites, purchase of undeveloped land and conversion of public land to open space. Council will undertake a more detailed assessment of opportunity sites for future open space in locations where the need for additional open space has been identified in the Strategy.



Whittlesea Township inset

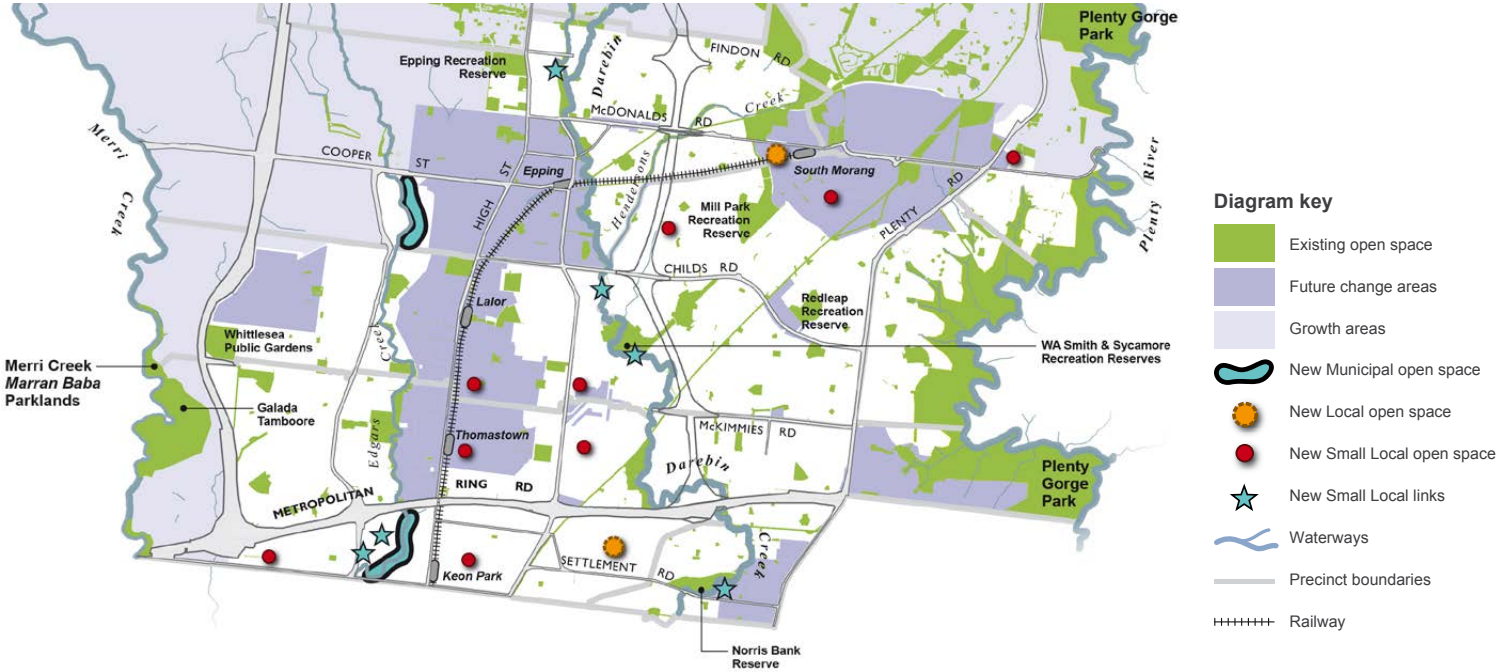


Figure 6-3 Proposed additional open space in the established urban areas, rural areas and Whittlesea Township

Growth areas

Future provision and planning for State, Regional, Municipal and Neighbourhood open space is guided by Victorian Government guidelines, Clause 56.05-2 of the planning scheme and approved Structure Plans, Development Plans and Agreements. Local and Small Local open space has an important role in the open space network including sustaining biodiversity protection, and being within safe and easy walking distance of the community, especially children, thereby supporting health and wellbeing. New Precinct Structure Plans are to include Local and Small Local open space in the proposed open space network and demonstrate they meet the principles, hierarchy description and criteria outlined in this Strategy. For further detailed information regarding the hierarchy and character classification refer to the *City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy Technical Report.*

Criteria to assess suitability of land as open space

All land area proposed for new public open space is to be assessed against a list of criteria as shown in the following table to confirm if it is suitable for that purpose. The decision to accept new land or convert existing public land to open space will be at the responsible authority's discretion as to whether the subject land adequately meets the criteria.

Assessment criteria for suitability of land area for public open space

The criteria are listed in alphabetical and not priority order.

Criteria	Description
Accessibility	Able to make the site accessible and safe for people of all abilities and located on natural ground (not an elevated part of a building).
Adjoining land use	The impacts of existing and future planned land use can be adequately addressed to complement and support the land being used as public open space.
Amenity	Improves the livability and character of the neighbourhood by providing visual relief from built form and noise; and receives adequate levels of sunlight during mid-winter.
Climate change mitigation and adaptation	• Capable of supporting long-lived broad spreading canopy trees. • Capable of supporting sustainable water supply and/or reuse to maximise moisture retention for passive cooling. • Remain useable and functional in the context of larger storm events and sea level rise.
Condition	Meets the relevant legislation and guidelines regarding contamination.
Ecological	• Ability to protect and enhance biodiversity values. • Demonstrate appropriate land area is set aside to protect ecological values and provide for community use where appropriate.
Equity	Provides reasonable physical, visual and economic equity of access to the community.
Heritage values	Protects and enhances Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultural heritage and historical values.
Landscape character	Contributes to the urban or rural context, character and attractiveness of the precinct.
Location/ linkages	Contributes to the wider open space network including forming off-road open space corridor links in the existing and future planned open space system.
Ownership and management	• Capable of being rezoned for public open space purposes and transferred to Council. • Able to be effectively maintained and managed as open space.
Recreation	Accommodates a range of structured sport, unstructured recreation and informal uses consistent with the intended hierarchy.
Safety	The urban context and layout maximises passive surveillance and access to open space, and minimises bushfire risk.
Services/ easements/ encumbrances	To be unencumbered by services or easements including roadways, overhead structures, major underground services, water and power supply, flood mitigation and drainage infrastructure.
Size	Be of an adequate size to meet its intended hierarchy and purpose: • State and Regional; unlimited. • Municipal; preferred size of 7 ha with a minimum of 3 ha (refer to Table D1-1 in the *City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy Technical Report* for additional information). • Neighbourhood; minimum of 1 ha. • Local; minimum 0.26 ha (up to 0.99 ha). • Small Local; minimum 0.05 ha (up to 0.25 ha), with a minimum width of 20 m in at least one direction. • Small Local Link; a minimum width of at least 10 m.

Criteria	Description
State and local government policies	The land is not subject to other planning processes and policies that may be inconsistent with all or part of the site becoming public open space.
Transport	Accessible by a range of transport options (public transport, shared trails, street network) appropriate to the hierarchy of open space.
Visibility	Be visually prominent to maximise its use, safety and contribution to the precinct, with at least two access points and local roads to at least two boundaries.

6.4 Protect and improve biodiversity values

Remnant River Red Gums and Plains Grasslands contribute to the identifiable and unique natural character of the City of Whittlesea. This Strategy supports preparation of a Biodiversity Strategy to guide priorities for protection and improvement of biodiversity values of the public open space. The Strategy promotes the provision of adequate space to allow for recreational access that is compatible with biodiversity values and to encourage community understanding and appreciation of these values. This includes promoting adequate, unencumbered open space to be provided adjacent to the areas of conservation value so there is space for the natural values and habitat values to coexist with recreational use.

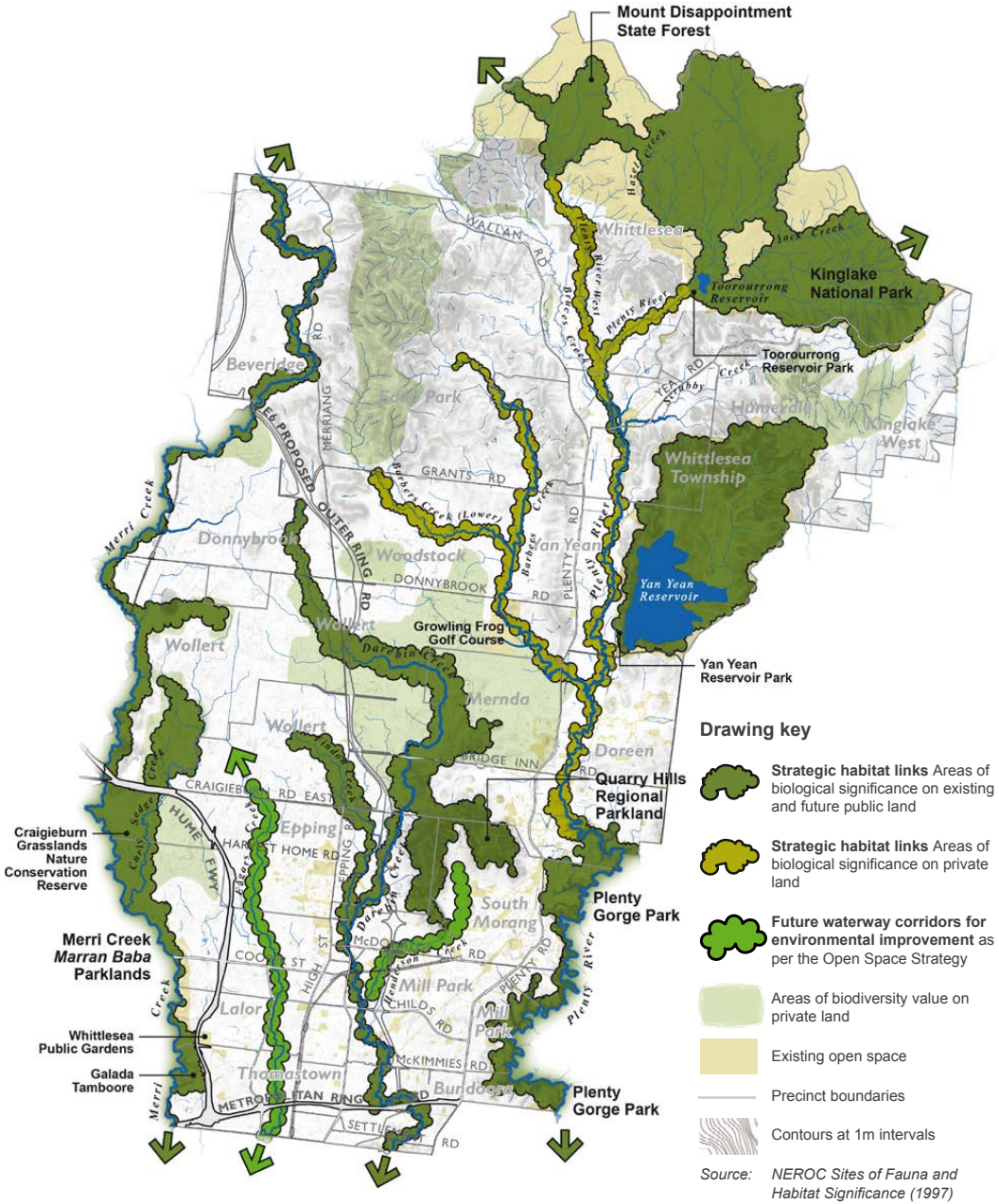


Figure 6-4 Biodiversity values

6.5 Environmental sustainability

Sustainable water use is critical to future design and management of open space. Future open space designs will incorporate water sensitive measures including water harvesting and reuse. All new open space designs in higher density urban areas will incorporate principles of passive cooling to assist mitigate urban heat. This includes increasing the amount of porous surfaces, planting long-lived broad spreading canopy trees and sustainable use of turf rather than paved surfaces utilising sustainable water sources.

6.6 Cultural significance

In future upgrades of open space, confirm whether there are any existing cultural heritage values. If present, prepare appropriate cultural heritage management plans to protect, manage and where appropriate interpret Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage values in open space. The Strategy design and management guidelines (refer to the *City of Whittlesea Open Space Strategy Technical Report*) encourage and support the inclusion of contemporary cultural events and values in open space. Consultation with the local community during the design process for future open space upgrades is encouraged so cultural diversity can be reflected in the open space design and facilities.

6.7 Open space contributions

In the established urban and rural areas including Whittlesea Township, Council will continue to collect open space contributions to be used towards the implementation of the precinct recommendations in Section 7 of this Strategy using a sliding scale of rates and the *Subdivision Act 1988*.

For the growth areas, Council will continue to implement its open space contributions program utilising the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

7. Established areas precinct recommendations

7.1 Overview

The City of Whittlesea has been divided into established and growth areas for the purposes of this Strategy. The established areas include the established urban areas, rural areas and Whittlesea Township. These are listed below, and form the precincts included in this Section of the Strategy, listed in alphabetical order:

- Blossom Park
- Bundoora
- Epping (part)
- Lalor
- Mill Park
- Rural North
- South Morang (part)
- Thomastown
- Whittlesea

Locations outside those listed above are identified as metropolitan growth areas, and the provision of open space in them are guided by approved structure plans and precinct structure planning processes by the Victorian Government.

The open space precincts are aligned to those used for other planning projects in the City of Whittlesea. The Strategy has assessed the open space needs of the existing and forecast population.

This is described in each precinct with accompanying recommendations to address these needs for each existing and proposed open space. If the actual level of change varies significantly from that described, it will affect the delivery of the specific recommendations. If change occurs more slowly, then some projects may not occur and conversely, if more change occurs than anticipated, additional projects based on the same method and analysis may be delivered.

Diagram key for the precinct diagrams in Sections 7.1 to 7.10

- Existing open space
- Restricted open space
- Higher priority projects
- Lower priority projects
- Proposed Municipal open space
- Sub-precinct for proposed Local open space
- Sub-precinct for proposed Small Local open space
- Proposed Small Local link
- Off-road shared trail
- Future off-road pedestrian and/or shared trail links
- Precinct Structure Plan boundary
- Major open space upgrades
- Major community park
- Improve on-road pedestrian and/or cycle links
- State open space
- Regional open space
- 500m walking catchment
- Municipal open space
- 500m walking catchment
- Neighbourhood open space
- 400m walking catchment
- Local open space
- 300m walking catchment
- Small Local open space
- 200m walking catchment
- Small Local link

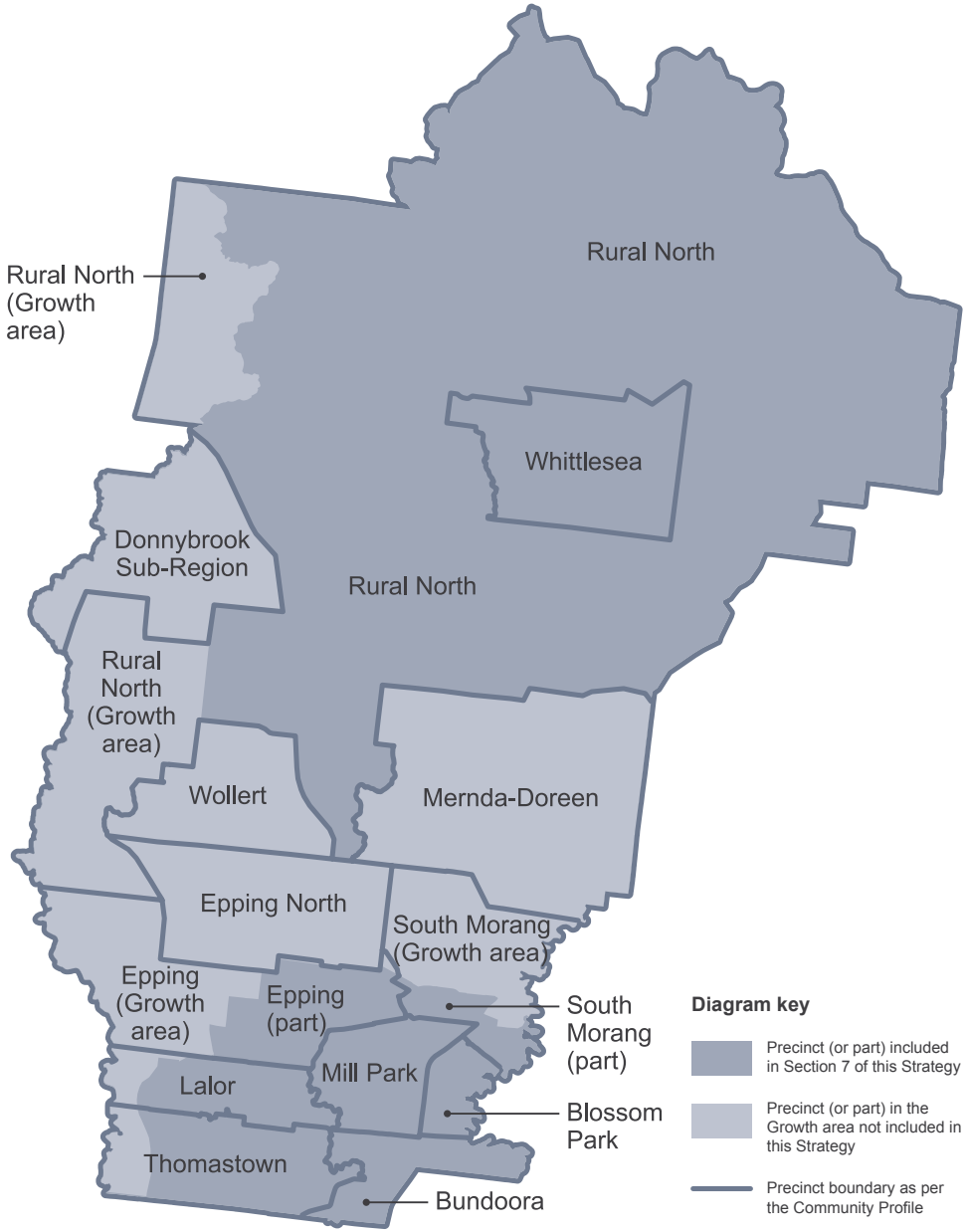


Figure 7-1 Precinct diagram

7.2 Blossom Park

Fast facts

= 100 Ha = 10 sqm

Quantity of open space

Existing open space:

159.66 Ha

Percentage of total precinct area:

43%

Available open space per person:

255 sqm

Open space use

Top values of open space
1. Place to relax and unwind.
2. Spacious.
3. Quiet.

Most frequently visited open space within walking distance
1. Kelynack Rec Reserve.
2. Janefield Wetland.
3. Bundoora Park.

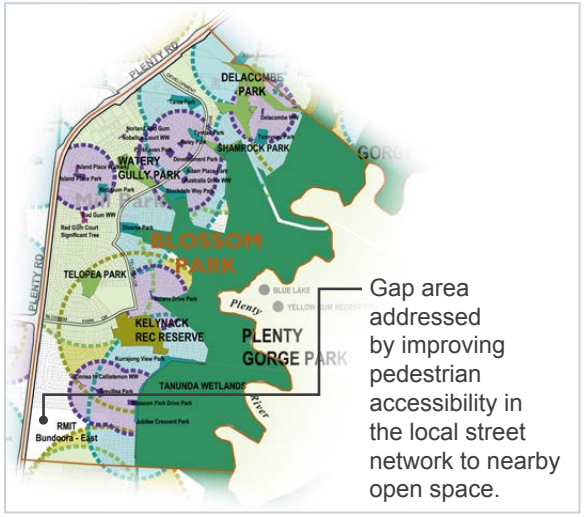
Top 3 activities/facilities
1. Walking paths.
2. Seats.
3. Open grassed areas.

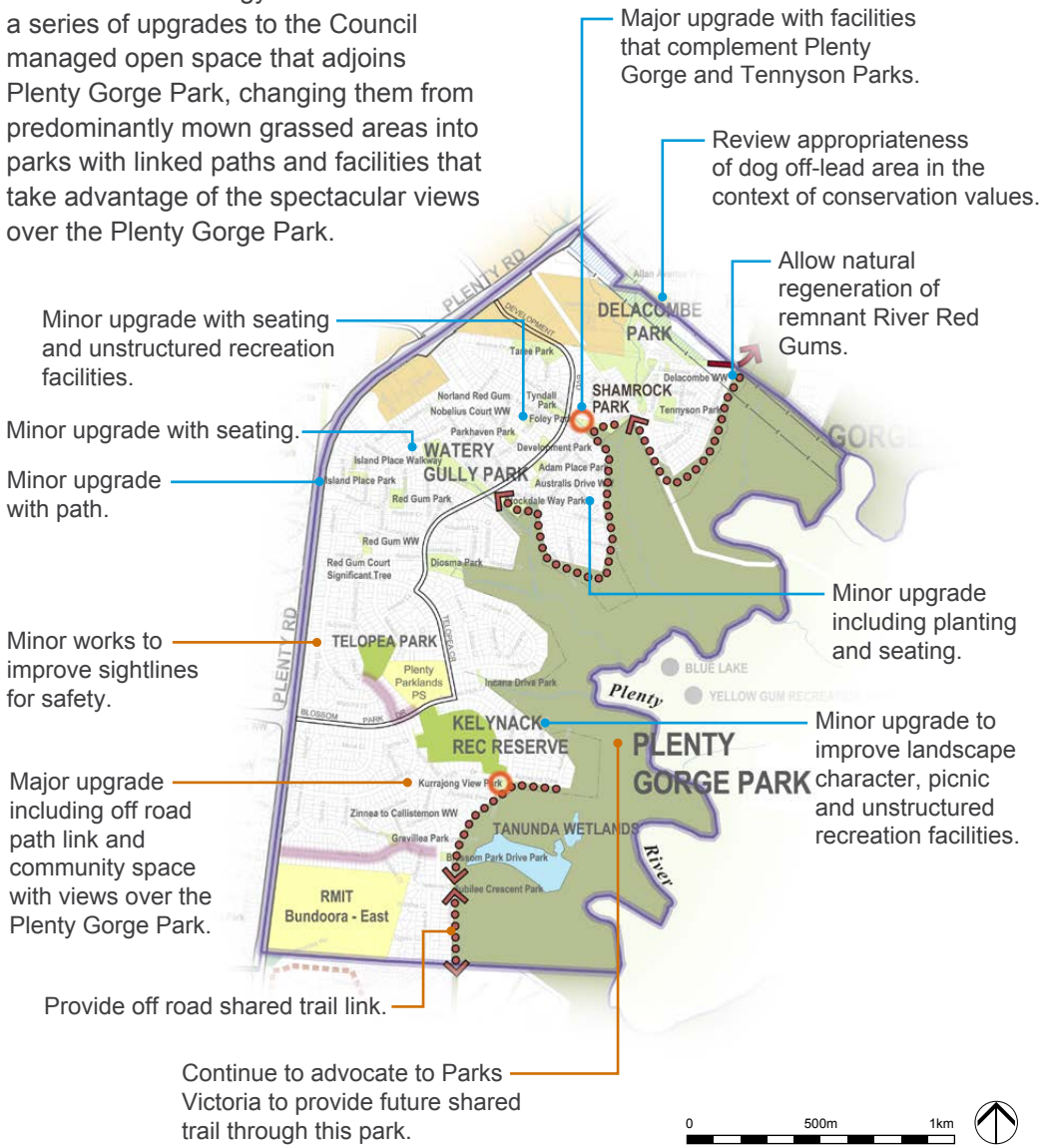
Precinct summary and recommendations

Overall, there is excellent provision of open space in Blossom Park. Plenty Gorge Park flanks the Plenty River along the eastern boundary of Blossom Park. Council owned open space extends out from Plenty Gorge Park along the tributaries and vary in quality and design. The adequacy of open space provision is reinforced by the 255 sqm of open space per person, and over 40 per cent of the total precinct area being open space. Watery Gully and Tyndall Parks are examples of reserves with existing paths and facilities. Other open spaces including Kurrajong View Park and Shamrock Park have the potential to be upgraded to improve community use.

Kelynack Recreation Reserve is the key sporting reserve for Blossom Park. A major upgrade is proposed, mainly to include unstructured recreation and informal facilities. The Strategy recommends a series of upgrades to the Council managed open space that adjoins Plenty Gorge Park, changing them from predominantly mown grassed areas into parks with linked paths and facilities that take advantage of the spectacular views over the Plenty Gorge Park.

Open space distribution analysis





7.3 Bundoora

Fast facts

= 100 Ha = 10 sqm

Quantity of open space

Existing open space:

186.01 Ha

Percentage of total precinct area:

26%

Available open space per person:

143 sqm

Fast facts

Open space use

Top values of open space
1. Place to relax and unwind.
2. Trees.
3. Escape from traffic noise and movement.

Most frequently visited open space within walking distance
1. Norris Bank Reserve.
2. Botanica Park.
3. Bundoora Park (in the City of Darebin).

Top 3 activities/facilities
1. Walking paths.
2. Seats.
3. Open grassed areas.

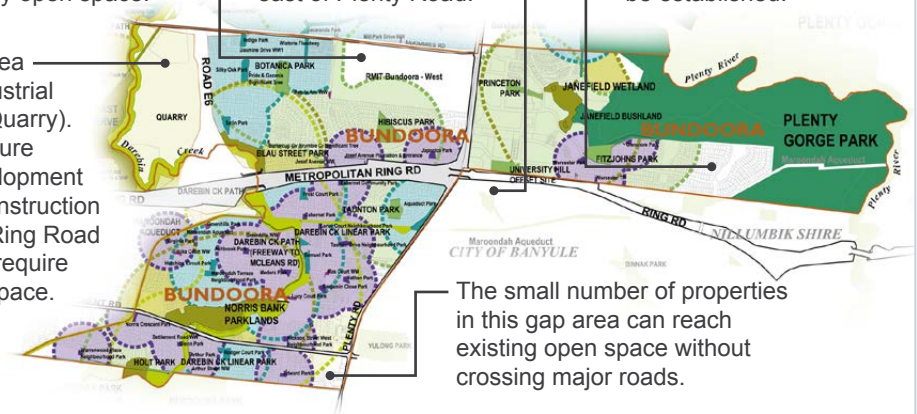
Open space distribution analysis

This gap area is located in the University grounds and is addressed via ancillary open space.

Excellent provision of open space in terms of quantity and distribution east of Plenty Road.

Gap in distribution to be addressed by future open space already agreed to be established.

Gap area on industrial land (Quarry). Any future redevelopment and construction of E6 Ring Road would require open space.



The small number of properties in this gap area can reach existing open space without crossing major roads.

Precinct summary and recommendations

Bundoora extends both sides of Plenty Road. To the east, Plenty Gorge Park and Plenty River provide an extensive natural open space system. This area is the subject of a major urban renewal project on the former Janefield Training Centre site. New open space has been delivered through the development process and will continue to be established and handed over to Council as this area develops. The presence of the Plenty Gorge Park results in the 143 sqm per person and more than 25 per cent of open space relative to the total precinct area.

West of Plenty Road, Darebin Creek forms the key spine of open space. Norris Bank Reserve is the most popular open space and this Strategy recommends a major upgrade of this reserve to expand it as a key destination point for the Bundoora and surrounding community on the Darebin Creek Trail. This includes expanding the path network to the east side of the creek and adding a new Small Local Link into the creek corridor from the adjoining urban area.

In the future, Council will seek to expand the looped trail network along Darebin Creek and into the Maroondah Aqueduct reserve in consultation with Melbourne Water. This will encourage increased use of this trail system by the local community, particularly walking. Away from the linear open space corridors selected Local and Neighbourhood open spaces will be upgraded to better meet local community needs. Major upgrades are proposed to Hibiscus Park, Maroondah Terrace Neighbourhod Park, Satin Park and Roger Court Park. A number of other minor upgrades and improvements are proposed in the other areas of Local and Small Local open space.

Bundoora

Major upgrade to increase unstructured recreation facilities and play.

Minor upgrade to improve character, seating and shade.

Minor upgrade with additional trees and paths.

Minor upgrade with linear path.

Seek opportunities to establish path links on both sides of Darebin Creek to increase accessibility.

Minor upgrade of play facility.

Construct a linear path along Maroondah Aqueduct in consultation with Melbourne Water.

Council to continue to liaise with Parks Victoria regarding interface between urban area and the park.

Minor upgrade with path links to Darebin Creek trail.

Major upgrade with picnic facilities, shade, paths and seats.

Minor upgrade with tree planting and path link.

Minor upgrade with path link.

Minor upgrade with path link and trees.

Major upgrade together with Maroondah Terrace Neighbourhood Park.

Minor upgrade with path.

Minor upgrade with path link and seats.

Minor upgrade with play facility.

Minor upgrade with trees and seats.

Council to liaise with Parks Victoria regarding future management of BMX riding in Plenty Gorge Park.

Construct walking paths on east side of creek to establish looped walking circuits.

Minor upgrade with path link and seats.

Minor upgrade with path link and trees.

Minor upgrade to include path link.

Minor upgrade with trees to shade play area.

Minor upgrade with unstructured recreation facilities and paths.

Minor upgrade with path, trees and seat.

Provide new Small Local Link between urban area and future Darebin Creek Linear Path on east side of creek.

Upgrade to create major community park for unstructured recreation and informal facilities for the existing and forecast community in the southern area of the municipality.

Major upgrade to cater to existing and forecast population.

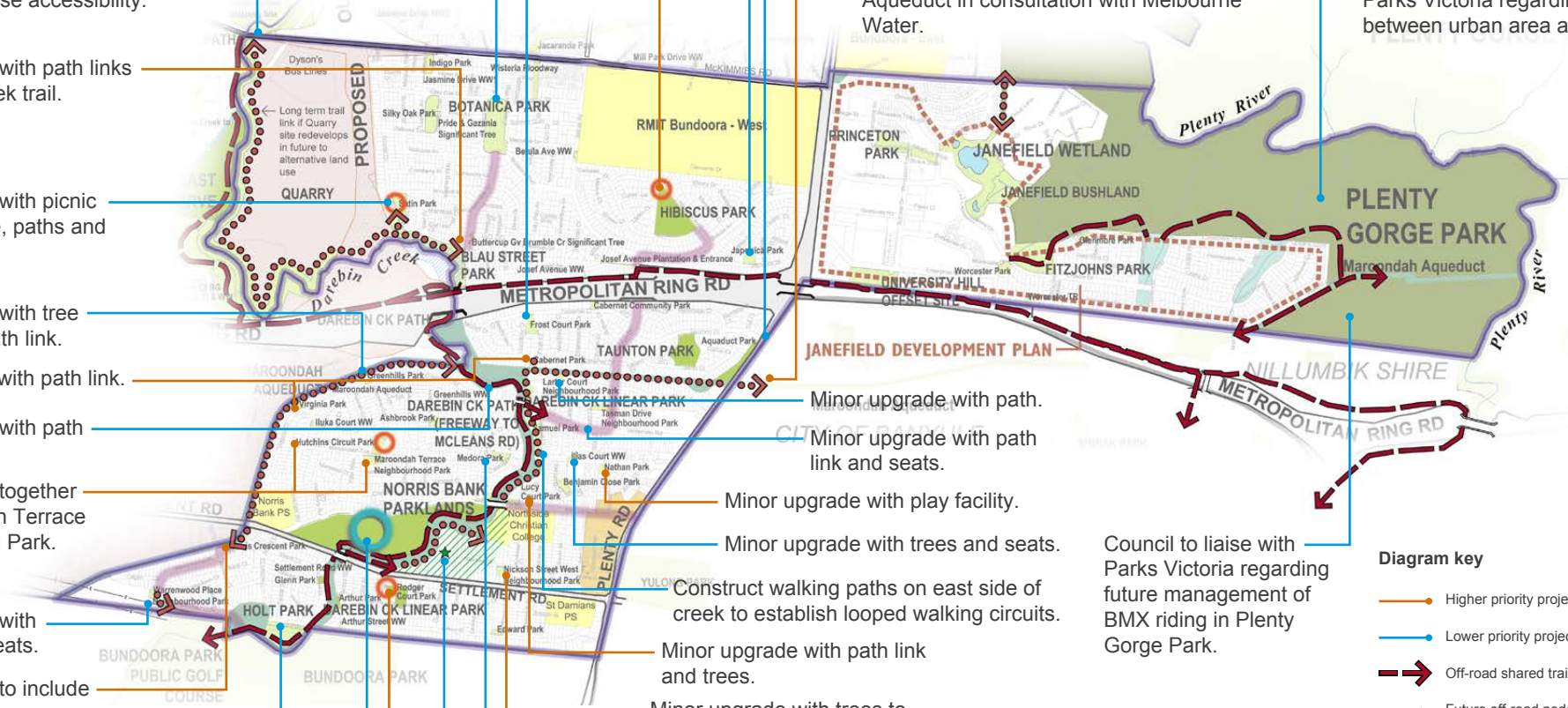


Diagram key

- Higher priority projects
- Lower priority projects
- Off-road shared trail
- Future off-road pedestrian and/or shared trail links
- Major open space upgrades
- Major community park
- Improve on-road pedestrian and/ or cycle links

For full key, refer to 7.1 Overview

0 500m 1km

7.4 Epping (part)

Fast facts

= 100 Ha = 10 sqm

Quantity of open space

Existing open space:

337.26 Ha

Percentage of total precinct area:

13.3%

Available open space per person:

77 sqm

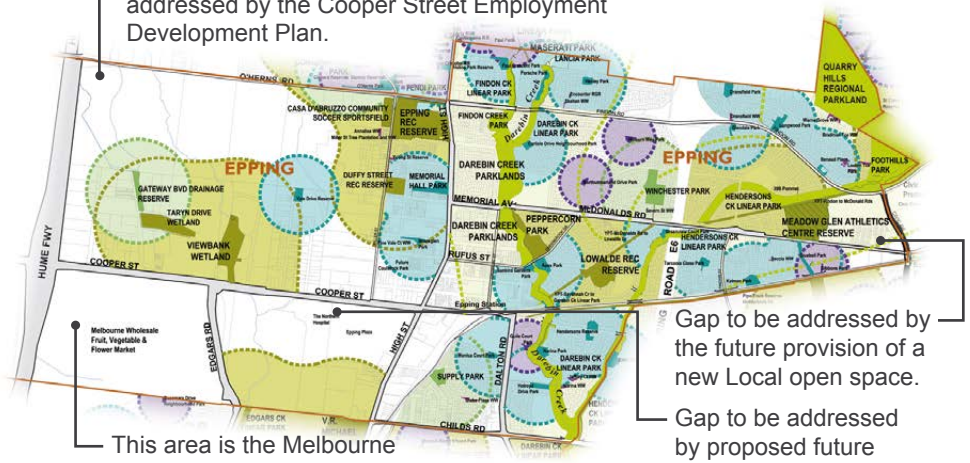
Open space use

Top values of open space
1. Place for children to play.
2. Place to relax and unwind.
3. Trees.

Most frequently visited open space within walking distance
1. Darebin Creek Parklands.
2. Meadow Glen Athletics Centre Reserve.
3. Winchester Park.

Top 3 activities/facilities
1. Walking paths.
2. Seats.
3. Open grassed areas.

Open space distribution analysis



Precinct summary and recommendations

The strong spine of open space along Darebin Creek and its tributaries, Merri Creek, Foothills Park and Quarry Hills Regional Parkland are characteristic open spaces for Epping. The focus of the recommendations is to: improve the diversity and quality of the informal recreation facilities in the existing open space; and improve linear access and connectivity with new paths along the Pipe Track Reserves.

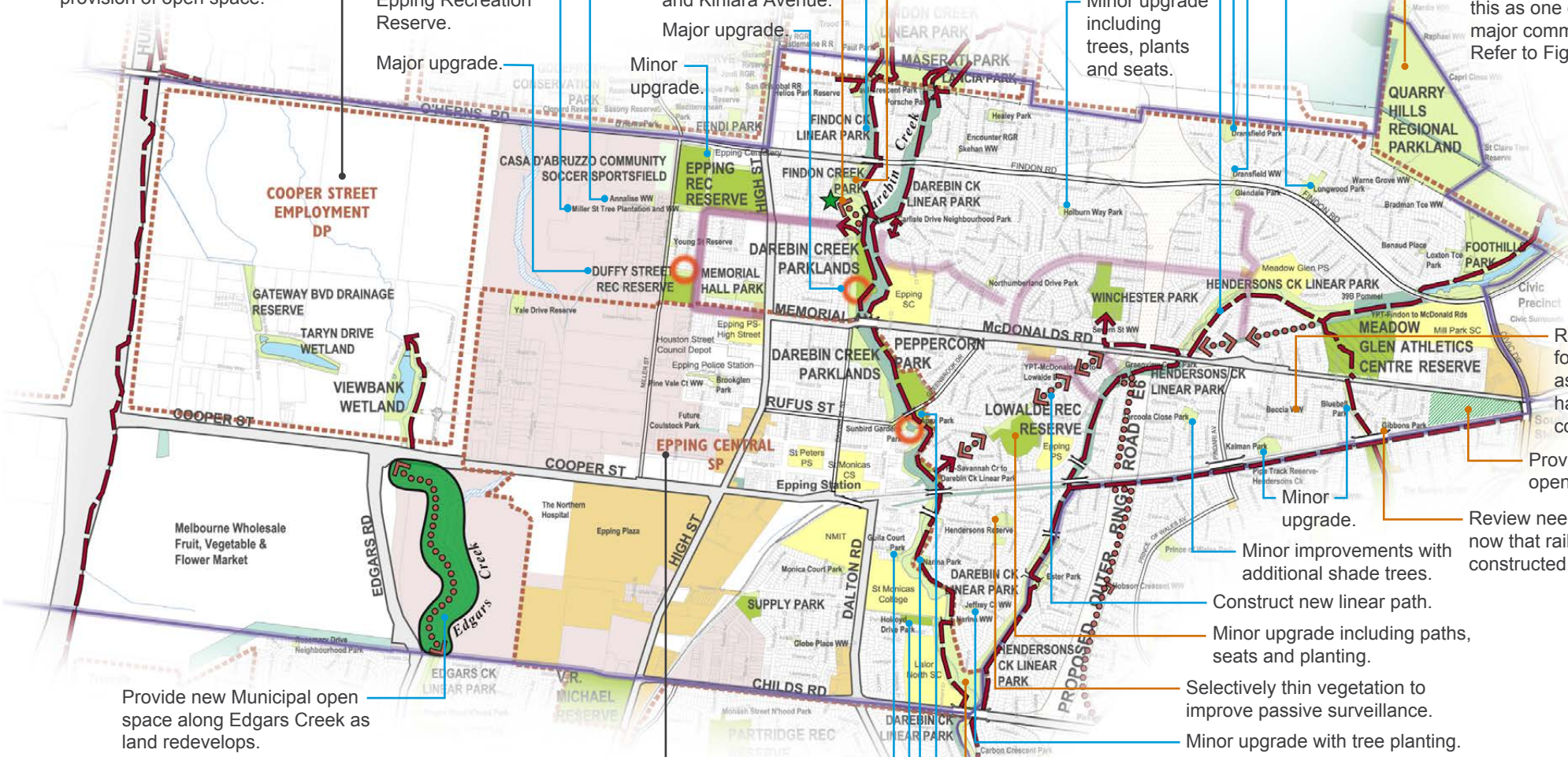
There is adequate open space per person, while the relatively low percentage of open space for the total precinct area reflects the undeveloped nature of the industrial land between Edgars Road and the Hume Freeway.

The future Merri Creek *Marran Baba* Parkland protects Craigieburn Grasslands, which is of National conservation significance. Quarry Hills Regional Parkland and Foothills Park both offer unique ecological and landscape characters, with expansive elevated views and a diverse range of unstructured recreational activities including bush walking and cycling.

In the non-residential area of Epping west of High Street, the major recreation reserves offer an excellent range of sporting facilities. Darebin, Findon and Hendersons Creeks from the major open space spine to the east of High Street with the shared trail popular for walking and cycling. The smaller open spaces have limited appeal due to lack of facilities and character, while the sporting reserves have potential to provide a greater range of facilities to encourage increased levels of use for informal activities and as social meeting places.

Two new areas of open space are recommended for Epping. This includes a new Municipal open space along Edgars Creek as the land redevelops; and a new Local open space in the south east part of Epping. Other recommendations include upgrading selected areas of open space to include greater diversity of facilities and improve the character and quality to attract more people outdoors to enjoy them.

Epping (part)



Cooper Street Employment Development Plan (DP) – refer to the DP for future provision of open space.

Minor upgrade.

Retain and upgrade to Local open space or incorporate into Epping Recreation Reserve.

Major upgrade.

Minor upgrade.

Continue to improve passive surveillance.

Provide a path link between Darebin Creek Parklands and Kinlara Avenue.

Major upgrade.

Improve paths and provide seating.

Plant additional indigenous trees to improve habitat and landscape values.

Minor upgrade including trees, plants and seats.

Minor upgrade to seats and planting.

Minor upgrade with tree planting.

Minor upgrade with seats and planting.

Major upgrade to establish this as one of the four major community parks – Refer to Figure 6-2.

Review the need for this walkway as it does not have any connectivity.

Provide new Local open space.

Review need to retain now that railway has been constructed.

Minor upgrade.

Minor improvements with additional shade trees.

Construct new linear path.

Minor upgrade including paths, seats and planting.

Selectively thin vegetation to improve passive surveillance.

Minor upgrade with tree planting.

Provide new Municipal open space along Edgars Creek as land redevelops.

Epping Central Structure Plan (SP) – Refer to the SP for future provision of open space in this area.

Minor upgrade.

Minor upgrade including shared path and seats.

Darebin Creek Linear Park: Aim to establish a continuous linear open space corridor along Darebin Creek and continue to improve landscape and environmental values.

Minor upgrade.

For drawing key, refer to 7.1 Overview

0 500m 1km

7.5 Lalor

Fast facts

= 100 Ha = 10 sqm

Quantity of open space

Existing open space:

65.66 Ha

Percentage of total precinct area:

7%

Available open space per person:

24 sqm

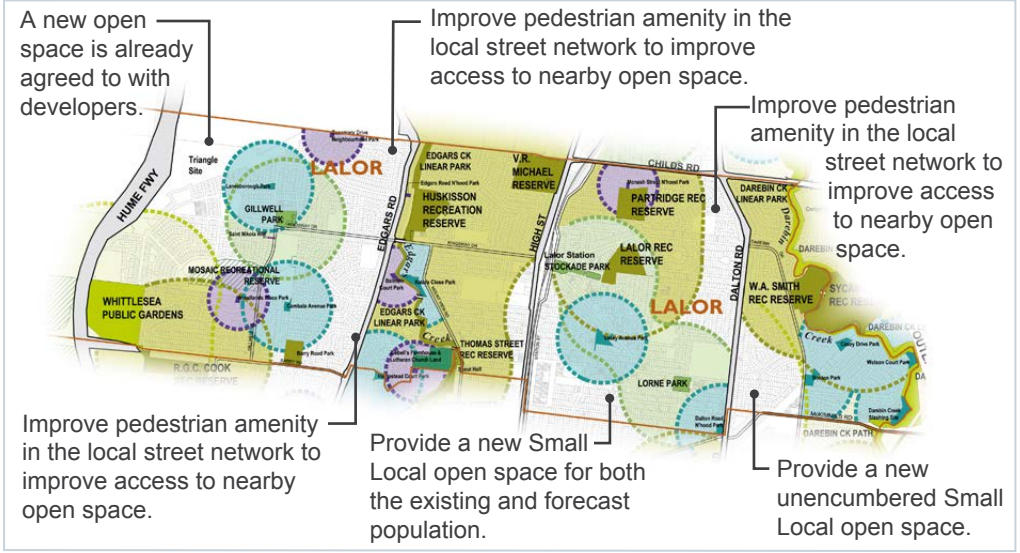
Open space use

Top values of open space
1. Place to relax and unwind.
2. Habitat for native plants and animals.
3. Place for children to play.

Most frequently visited open space within walking distance
1. VR Michael Reserve.
2. WA Smith Recreation Reserve.
3. Lorne Park.

Top 3 activities/facilities
1. Walking paths.
2. Open grassed areas.
3. Seats.

Open space distribution analysis



Precinct summary and recommendations

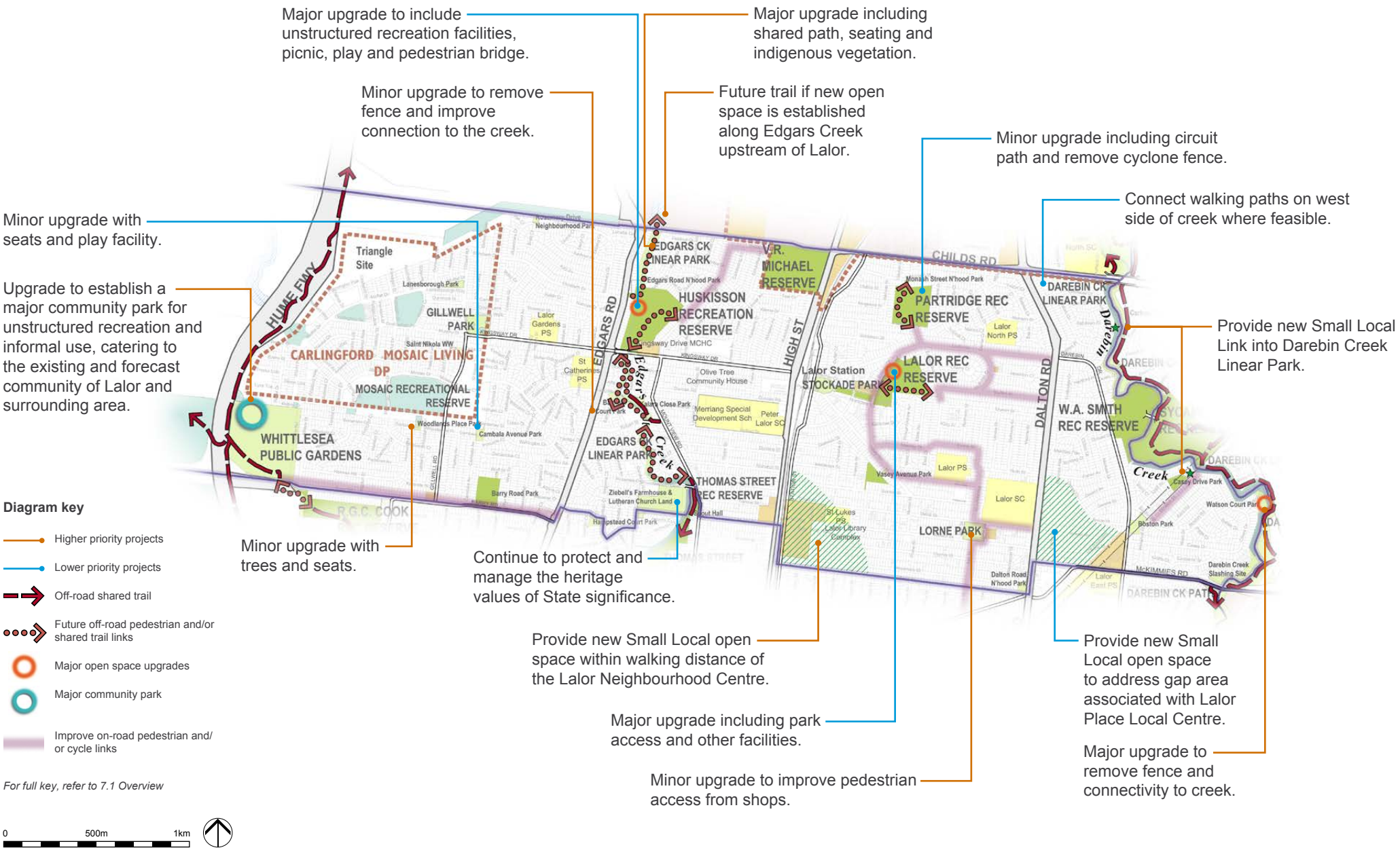
Edgars, Merri and Darebin Creeks flow north south through Lalor. Edgars Creek is central to the precinct and includes the Ziebell's Farmhouse and Lutheran Church Land that is of State heritage significance and contributes a unique rural character to this part of Lalor. The Strategy recommends constructing a continuous shared trail along Edgars Creek in consultation with Melbourne Water, along with a major upgrade to Huskisson Recreation Reserve at the northern end of Edgars Creek.

The 24 sqm per person and 7 per cent of open space relative to total precinct area reflects the gaps in open space distribution.

To the west of the precinct towards Merri Creek, Whittlesea Public Gardens is the major regional entry point to the future Merri Creek *Marran Baba* Parklands. This Strategy recommends a major upgrade to Whittlesea Public Gardens to cater to both the regional visitor demand and local community use, creating a major destination park. The gardens are already well connected to the Merri Creek *Marran Baba* Parklands via the shared trail overpass bridge, however there is a need to open up the park to Lalor by improving the eastern area of the reserve, along with proposed on and off road shared trails via Central Creek, RGC Cook Reserve and Barry Road.

East of High Street the recently upgraded Stockade Park connects Lalor Station with the Rochdale Square shopping centre, which forms part of the Peter Lalor Housing Estate, identified to be of local heritage significance. The Strategy recommends a major upgrade to the Lalor Recreation Reserve to complement the recent works in Stockade Park. Two new Small Local open space reserves are proposed to address gaps in the local open space network, in areas of Lalor that are forecast to change. Two new Small Local Links to provide access into the Darebin Creek Linear Park are also recommended as well as upgrading selected areas of open space to include greater diversity of facilities and improve the character and quality to attract more people outdoors to enjoy them.

Lalor


Major upgrade to include unstructured recreation facilities, picnic, play and pedestrian bridge.
Minor upgrade to remove fence and improve connection to the creek.
Major upgrade including shared path, seating and indigenous vegetation.
Future trail if new open space is established along Edgars Creek upstream of Lalor.
Minor upgrade including circuit path and remove cyclone fence.
Connect walking paths on west side of creek where feasible.
Minor upgrade with seats and play facility.
Upgrade to establish a major community park for unstructured recreation and informal use, catering to the existing and forecast community of Lalor and surrounding area.
Provide new Small Local Link into Darebin Creek Linear Park.
Minor upgrade with trees and seats.
Continue to protect and manage the heritage values of State significance.
Provide new Small Local open space within walking distance of the Lalor Neighbourhood Centre.
Major upgrade including park access and other facilities.
Minor upgrade to improve pedestrian access from shops.
Provide new Small Local open space to address gap area associated with Lalor Place Local Centre.
Major upgrade to remove fence and connectivity to creek.
Triangle Site
HUME FWY
GILLWELL PARK
CARLINGFORD MOSAIC LIVING DP
MOSAIC RECREATIONAL RESERVE
WHITTLESEA PUBLIC GARDENS
EDGARS RD
EDGARS CK LINEAR PARK
HUSKISSON RECREATION RESERVE
V.R. MICHAEL RESERVE
HIGH ST
CHILDS RD
PARTRIDGE REC RESERVE
LALOR REC RESERVE
Lalor Station STOCKADE PARK
DALTON RD
W.A. SMITH REC RESERVE
DAREBIN CK LINEAR PARK
Darebin Creek
THOMAS STREET REC RESERVE
LORNE PARK
Edgars Creek
Diagram key
Higher priority projects
Lower priority projects
Off-road shared trail
Future off-road pedestrian and/or shared trail links
Major open space upgrades
Major community park
Improve on-road pedestrian and/ or cycle links
For full key, refer to 7.1 Overview
0
500m
1km

7.6 Mill Park

Fast facts

= 100 Ha = 10 sqm

Quantity of open space

Existing open space:

79.55 Ha

Percentage of total precinct area:

8.5%

Available open space per person:

28 sqm

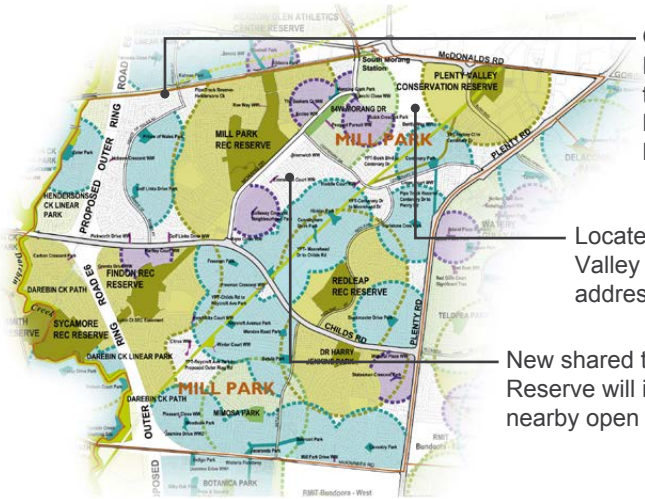
Open space use

Top values of open space
1. Place to relax and unwind.
2. Trees.
3. Place for children to play.

Most frequently visited open space within walking distance
1. Redleap Recreation Reserve.
2. Mill Park Recreation Reserve.
3. Mimosa Park.

Top 3 activities/facilities
1. Walking paths.
2. Seats.
3. Open grassed areas.

Open space distribution analysis



Once proposed E6 Ring Road is constructed, enlarge the existing Small Local Link and upgrade to a Small Local open space.

Located in catchment of Plenty Valley Activity Centre and will be addressed by future Structure Plan.

New shared trail in the Pipe Track Reserve will improve access to nearby open space.

Precinct summary and recommendations

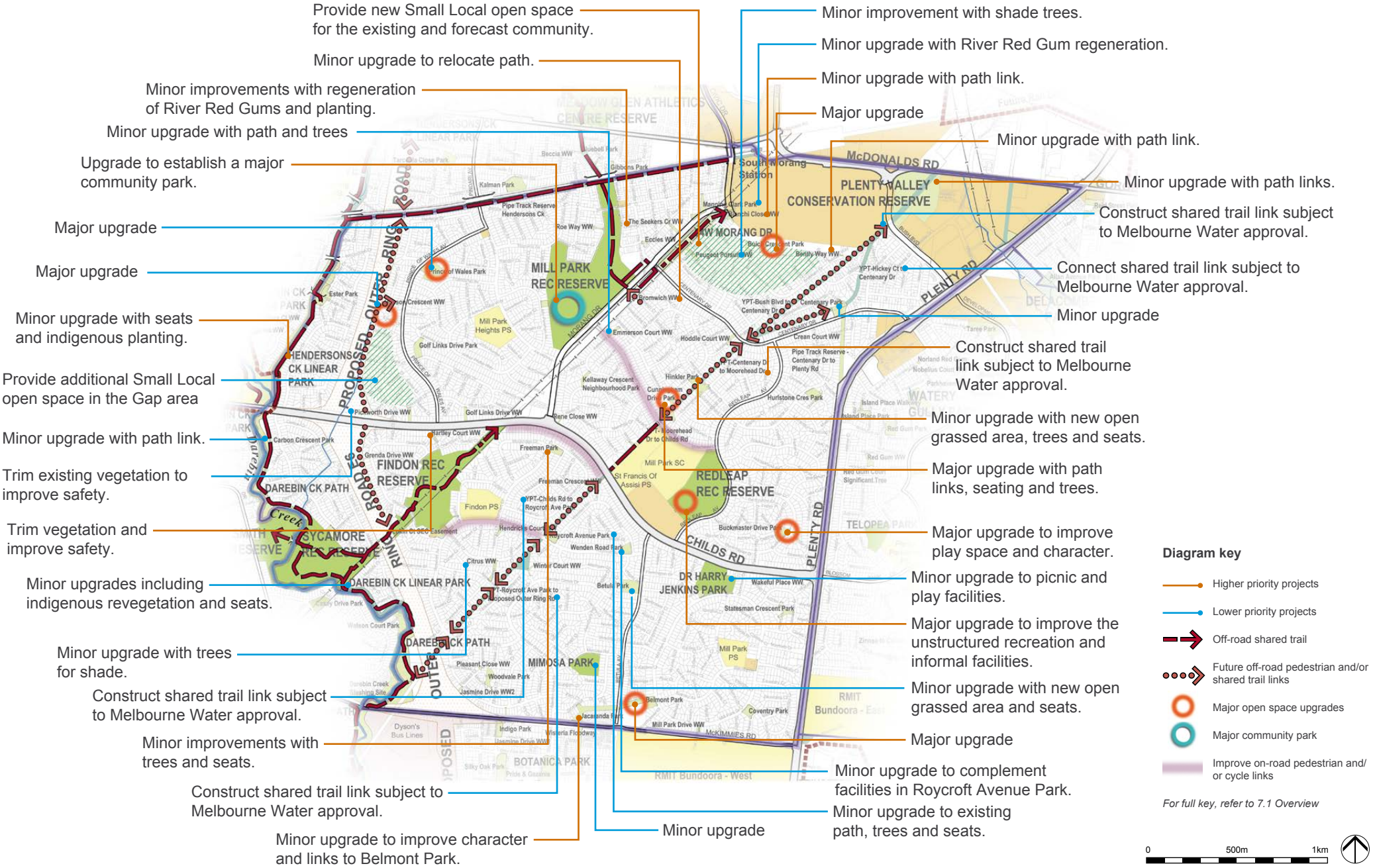
Significant large recreation reserves feature in this precinct including Findon, Sycamore, Mill Park and Redleap Recreation Reserves. The most popular of these in the open space survey undertaken for this Strategy is Redleap Recreation Reserve, due to its diversity of facilities and landscape settings including the lake. Its proximity to the school and shopping precinct makes Redleap Recreation Reserve an ideal destination point for a range of recreational activities and informal uses including community events. The Strategy has therefore proposed a major upgrade to Redleap Recreation Reserve to build on and strengthen it as a key destination point for the surrounding community.

The 28 sqm per person and 8.5 per cent open space relative to the total precinct area is consistent with the presence of some gaps in distribution and the underdeveloped land along the Proposed Outer Ring Road.

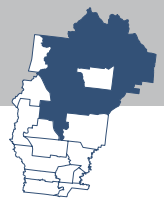
The Yan Yean Pipe Track Reserve runs generally north south through Mill Park from Plenty Valley Conservation Reserve in the north to Darebin Creek Linear Park in the south, providing excellent off-road shared trail connectivity. Sections of trail have been built, and this Strategy recommends extending the trails to achieve a continuous link. Darebin and Hendersons Creek flow along the western boundary of Mill Park providing recreation and habitat connectivity into the adjoining precincts including Bundoora to the south, Epping to the north and Thomastown to the west.

Two additional Small Local open spaces are recommended in Mill Park to address existing gaps in open space distribution, one of which is located in the catchment of the Plenty Valley Activity Centre. The second is located near the Proposed Outer Ring Road (E6) and would only be required when this proposed road is constructed. Other works include a range of minor and major upgrades to selected areas of open space to improve the quality and diversity of facilities available to the community in the local open space network.

Mill Park


Provide new Small Local open space for the existing and forecast community.
Minor upgrade to relocate path.
Minor improvements with regeneration of River Red Gums and planting.
Minor upgrade with path and trees
Upgrade to establish a major community park.
Major upgrade
Major upgrade
Minor upgrade with seats and indigenous planting.
Provide additional Small Local open space in the Gap area
Minor upgrade with path link.
Trim existing vegetation to improve safety.
Trim vegetation and improve safety.
Minor upgrades including indigenous revegetation and seats.
Minor upgrade with trees for shade.
Construct shared trail link subject to Melbourne Water approval.
Minor improvements with trees and seats.
Construct shared trail link subject to Melbourne Water approval.
Minor upgrade to improve character and links to Belmont Park.
Minor improvement with shade trees.
Minor upgrade with River Red Gum regeneration.
Minor upgrade with path link.
Major upgrade
Minor upgrade with path link.
Minor upgrade with path links.
Construct shared trail link subject to Melbourne Water approval.
Connect shared trail link subject to Melbourne Water approval.
Minor upgrade
Construct shared trail link subject to Melbourne Water approval.
Minor upgrade with new open grassed area, trees and seats.
Major upgrade with path links, seating and trees.
Major upgrade to improve play space and character.
Minor upgrade to picnic and play facilities.
Major upgrade to improve the unstructured recreation and informal facilities.
Minor upgrade with new open grassed area and seats.
Major upgrade
Minor upgrade to complement facilities in Roycroft Avenue Park.
Minor upgrade to existing path, trees and seats.
Minor upgrade
MILL PARK REC RESERVE
HENDERSONS CK LINEAR PARK
FINDON REC RESERVE
DAREBIN CK PATH
SYCAMORE RESERVE
DAREBIN CK LINEAR PARK
MIMOSA PARK
BOTANICA PARK
REDLEAP REC RESERVE
DR HARRY JENKINS PARK
PLENTY VALLEY CONSERVATION RESERVE
McDONALDS RD
PLENTY RD
CHILDS RD
McKIMMIES RD
MORANG DR
PROPOSED OUTER RING ROAD
South Morang Station
RMIT Bundoora - West
Diagram key
Higher priority projects
Lower priority projects
Off-road shared trail
Future off-road pedestrian and/or shared trail links
Major open space upgrades
Major community park
Improve on-road pedestrian and/ or cycle links
For full key, refer to 7.1 Overview
0
500m
1km

7.7 Rural North (part)



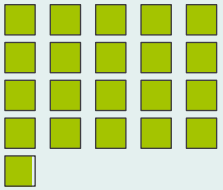
Fast facts

= 100 Ha = 10 sqm

Quantity of open space

Existing open space:

2,088.46 Ha



Percentage of total precinct area: 8%

Available open space per person: Not applicable due to non-urban nature of the land use.

Open space use

Top values of open space
1. Trees.
2. Place to relax and unwind.
3. Habitat for native plants and animals.

Most frequently visited open space within walking distance
1. Other public realm (streets, schools etc).
2. Yan Yean Reservoir Park.
3. Whittlesea Showgrounds.

Top 3 activities/facilities
1. Public toilets.
2. Seats.
3. Walking paths.

Open space hierarchy plan

Precinct summary and recommendations

The major areas of existing open space in Rural North significantly contribute to the biodiversity and landscape character of the area including Kinglake National Park, Yan Yean Reservoir and Mount Disappointment State Forest. The Strategy recommends that Council continues to advocate to Parks Victoria for improved recreational facilities at Yan Yean Reservoir Park. The Growling Frog Golf Course Conservation Area offers a unique setting that combines a public golf course with conservation areas that are available for informal walking access and use. The Strategy recommends an upgrade to include picnic and play facilities to broaden the appeal of this Council reserve.

Other smaller areas of open space are distributed through Rural North. The Strategy has assessed these, and prioritised improvements to the facilities, quality and nature conservation values of these existing open spaces where they are accessible to the community. Improvements include path links, seating and other informal facilities particularly where they are accessible from and connect between rural roads. This Strategy recommends that a cycle and walking strategy be prepared for the rural north area to identify logical waking and cycling links that will connect into the existing open space reserves. A review of structured sporting facilities required for the rural community is proposed for TH Hurrey Recreation Reserve.

Refer also to the Whittlesea Precinct, 7.10 for recommendations that will benefit the rural community as well.

Rural North (part)

Assess the nature conservation values and access arrangements to confirm ongoing retention as open space.

Major upgrade of these two open spaces to provide paths, informal facilities and improve nature conservation values.

Assess the nature conservation values and access arrangements to confirm ongoing retention as open space.

Major upgrade to provide unstructured recreation and informal facilities and improve nature conservation values.

Major upgrade of local facilities adjacent to Clearwater Channel.

For Whittlesea refer to Section 7.10 in this Strategy.

Investigate the need for additional structured sporting facilities at this reserve to cater to the forecast population in Whittlesea.

Retain, future use will be determined as part of the Wollert PSP.

Council to advocate to Parks Victoria to support a major upgrade to visitor facilities.

Major upgrade to improve informal visitor facilities including picnic and play.

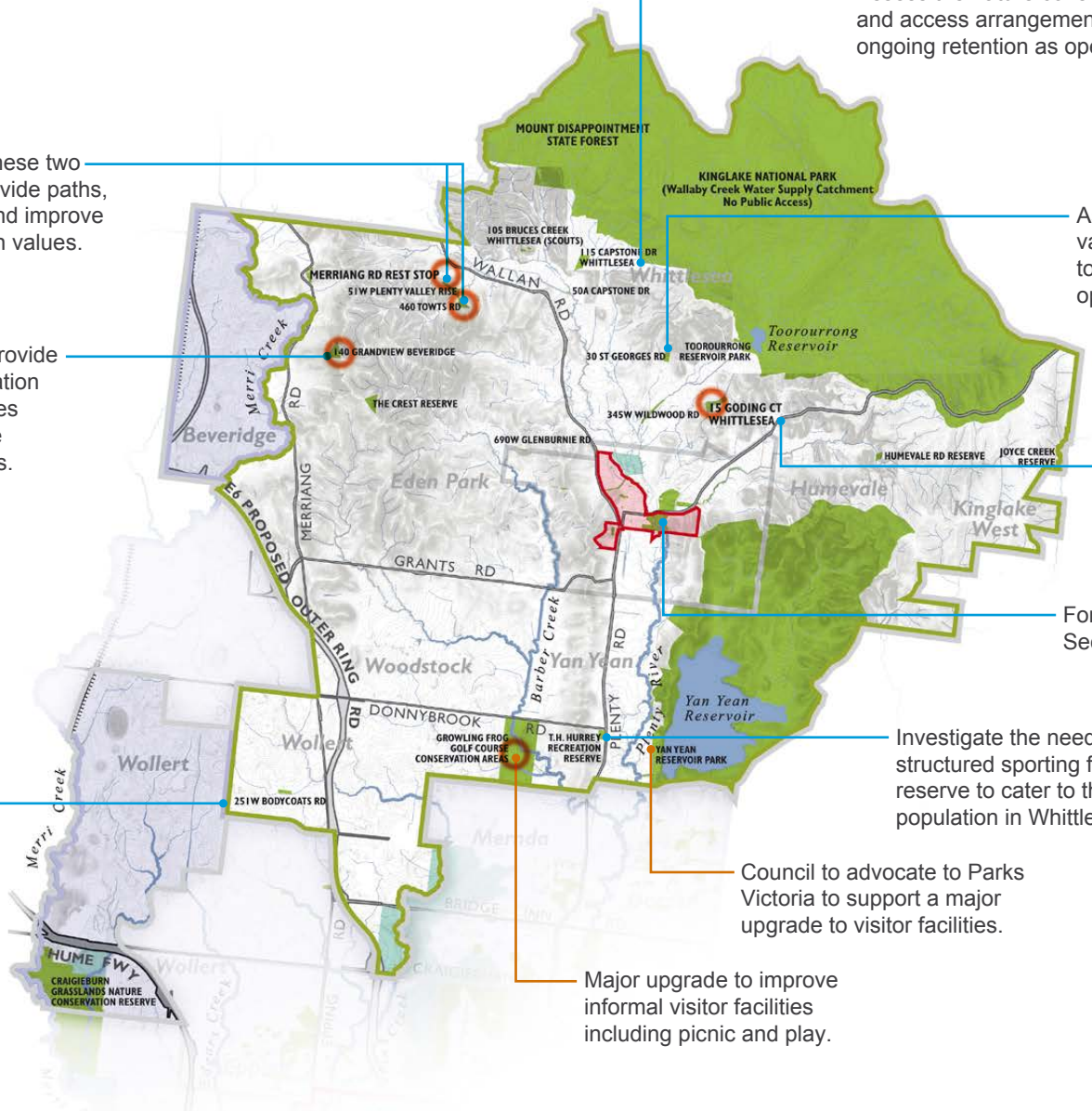


Diagram key

- Higher priority projects
- Lower priority projects
- Off-road shared trail
- Future off-road pedestrian and/or shared trail links
- Major open space upgrades

7.8 South Morang (part)

Fast facts

= 100 Ha = 10 sqm

Quantity of open space

Existing open space:

80.71 Ha

Percentage of total precinct area:

30%

Available open space per person:

Not applicable as no population estimate is available for this part of South Morang.

Open space use

Top values of open space
1. Place to relax and unwind.
2. Place for children to play.
3. Trees.

Most frequently visited open space within walking distance
1. Hendersons Cr Wetlands.
2. Hawkstowe Rec Park.
3. Plenty Gorge Park.

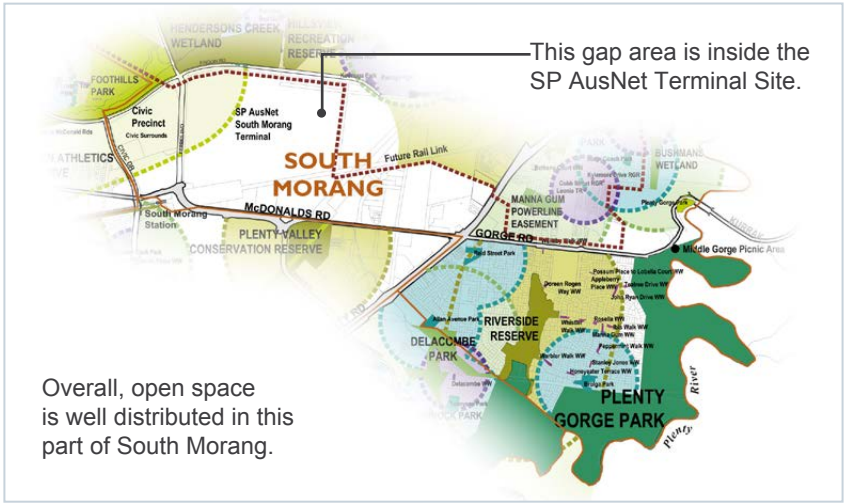
Top 3 activities/facilities
1. Walking paths.
2. Playgrounds.
3. Open grassed areas.

Precinct summary

South of Gorge Road, and east of Plenty Road, open space provision is excellent with the presence of Plenty Gorge Park. A major upgrade is proposed to Reid Street Park to improve the interface to the existing shopping precinct, and also to Brolga Park to improve character and amenity adjacent to Plenty Gorge Park.

East of Plenty Road, a small precinct north of Gorge Road will require new Small Local open space as part of any future redevelopment. Minor upgrades are proposed to some selected other open spaces to improve their character and use.

Open space distribution analysis



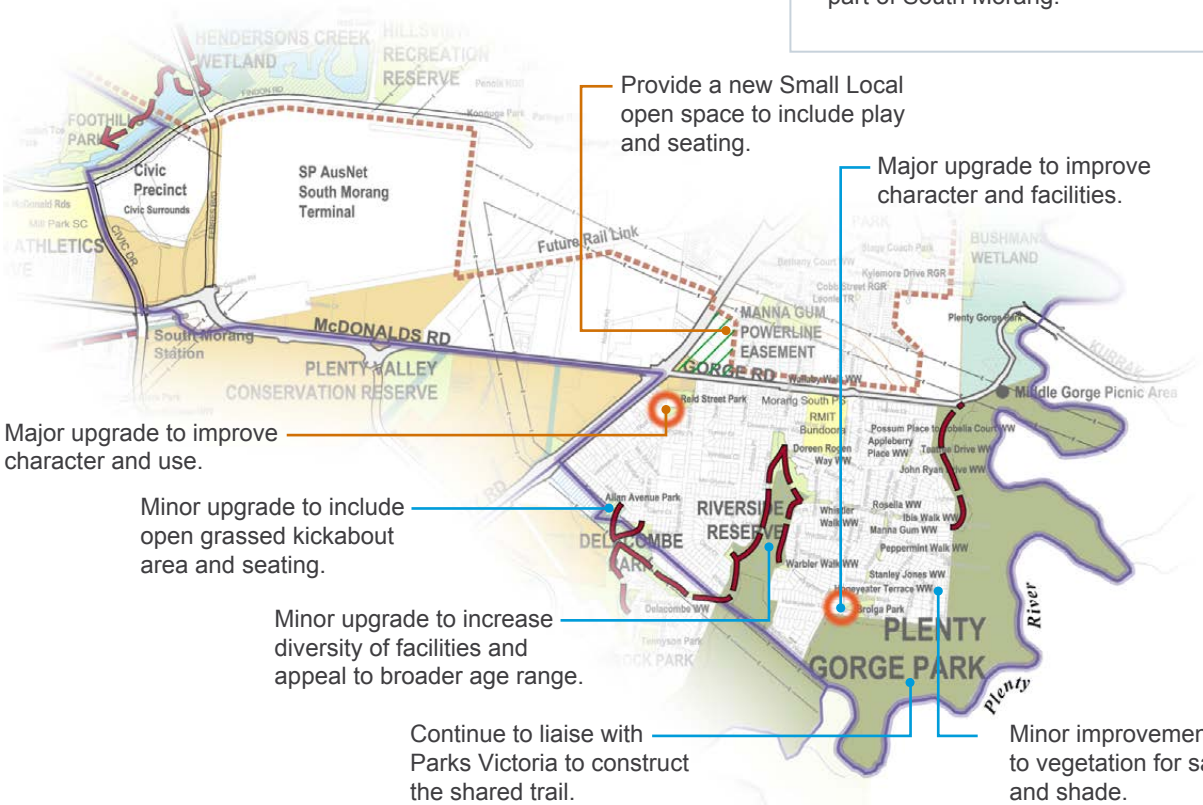


Diagram key

- Higher priority projects
- Lower priority projects
- Off-road shared trail
- Future off-road pedestrian and/or shared trail links
- Major open space upgrades

For full key, refer to 7.1 Overview

0 500m 1km

7.9 Thomastown

Fast facts

= 100 Ha = 10 sqm

Quantity of open space

Existing open space:

120.81 Ha

Percentage of total precinct area:

8.2%

Available open space per person:

23 sqm

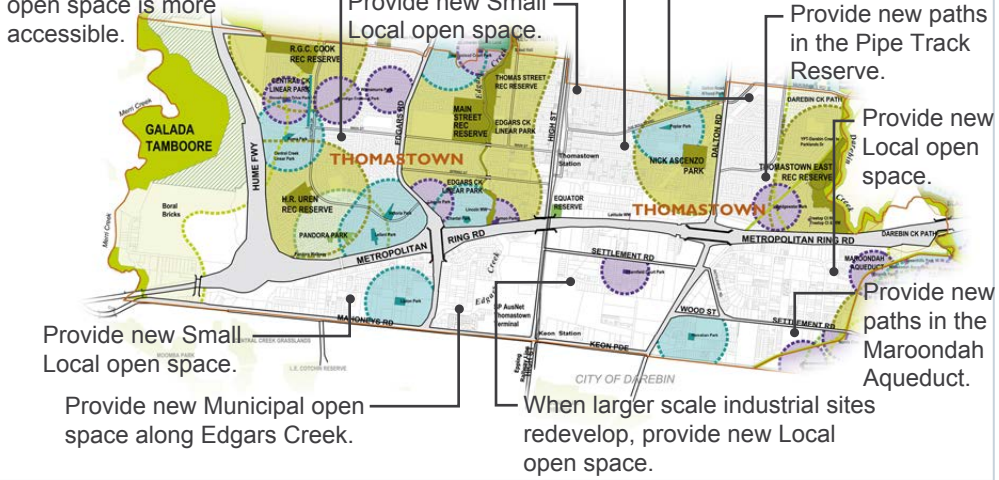
Open space use

Top values of open space
1. Place to relax and unwind.
2. Trees.
3. Place for children to play.

Most frequently visited open space within walking distance
1. Main Street Recreation Reserve.
2. Barry Road Park.
3. Other public realm (streets, schools etc).

Top 3 activities/facilities
1. Walking paths.
2. Seats.
3. Playgrounds.

Open space distribution analysis



Precinct summary and recommendations

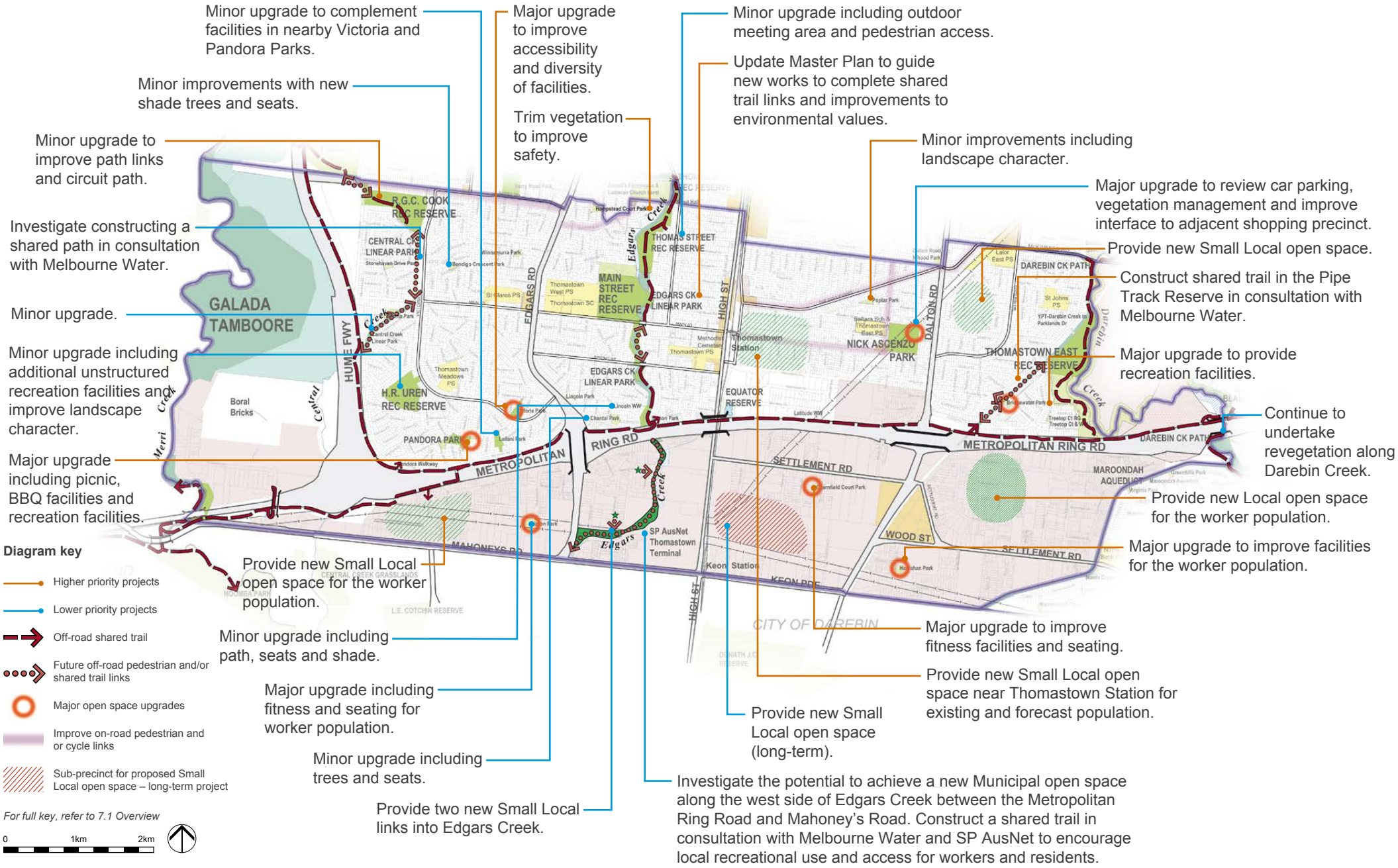
Central, Edgars, Merri and Darebin Creeks flow north south through Thomastown. Edgars Creek is central to the precinct and includes Main Street and Thomas Street Recreation Reserves as key sporting reserves both sides of the creek corridor. To improve access to these reserves, construction of the shared trail between Main and Spring Streets is recommended. South of the Metropolitan Ring Road the land use changes to industrial and the Strategy recommends establishing a new Municipal open space reserve along the creek and constructing a shared trail in consultation with Melbourne Water. For Central Creek, the Strategy recommends investigating the potential to provide an off-road trail to RGC Cook Recreation Reserve and improved path links to Whittlesea Public Gardens.

The 23 sqm per person and 8.2 per cent of open space relative to total precinct area reflects the gaps in open space distribution and non-residential land use in the precinct.

Thomastown has some gaps in the provision of open space, including immediately west of Edgars Road, east of High Street and south of the Metropolitan Ring Road. Three additional Small Local open spaces are proposed in the predominantly residential areas north of the Metropolitan Ring Road. South of the Metropolitan Ring Road, an additional Local and Small Local open space, along with two Small Local Links are recommended primarily for the worker population. Other gap areas are to be addressed by improved connectivity to existing open space via off-road shared trails and improvements to pedestrian amenity in the street network.

Major upgrades are proposed to existing areas of open space north of the Ring Road. This includes Pandora and Victoria Parks west of Edgars Road, along with Nick Ascenzo Park and Bridgewater Park east of High Street. In the industrial precinct, major upgrades are proposed to the three existing open spaces.

Thomastown


Minor upgrade to complement facilities in nearby Victoria and Pandora Parks.
Minor improvements with new shade trees and seats.
Minor upgrade to improve path links and circuit path.
Investigate constructing a shared path in consultation with Melbourne Water.
Minor upgrade.
Minor upgrade including additional unstructured recreation facilities and improve landscape character.
Major upgrade including picnic, BBQ facilities and recreation facilities.
Major upgrade to improve accessibility and diversity of facilities.
Trim vegetation to improve safety.
Minor upgrade including outdoor meeting area and pedestrian access.
Update Master Plan to guide new works to complete shared trail links and improvements to environmental values.
Minor improvements including landscape character.
Major upgrade to review car parking, vegetation management and improve interface to adjacent shopping precinct.
Provide new Small Local open space.
Construct shared trail in the Pipe Track Reserve in consultation with Melbourne Water.
Major upgrade to provide recreation facilities.
Continue to undertake revegetation along Darebin Creek.
Provide new Local open space for the worker population.
Major upgrade to improve facilities for the worker population.
Major upgrade to improve fitness facilities and seating.
Provide new Small Local open space near Thomastown Station for existing and forecast population.
Provide new Small Local open space (long-term).
Investigate the potential to achieve a new Municipal open space along the west side of Edgars Creek between the Metropolitan Ring Road and Mahoney's Road. Construct a shared trail in consultation with Melbourne Water and SP AusNet to encourage local recreational use and access for workers and residents.
Provide two new Small Local links into Edgars Creek.
Minor upgrade including trees and seats.
Major upgrade including fitness and seating for worker population.
Minor upgrade including path, seats and shade.
Provide new Small Local open space for the worker population.
R.G.C. COOK REC RESERVE
CENTRAL CK LINEAR PARK
GALADA TAMBOORE
HUME FWY
H.R. UREN REC RESERVE
PANDORA PARK
Boral Bricks
Merri Creek
Central Creek
EDGARS RD
MAIN STREET REC RESERVE
THOMAS STREET REC RESERVE
EDGARS CK LINEAR PARK
HIGH ST
Edgars Creek
EQUATOR RESERVE
Thomastown Station
NICK ASCENZO PARK
DALTON RD
THOMASTOWN EAST REC RESERVE
DAREBIN CK PATH
Darebin Creek
METROPOLITAN RING RD
SETTLEMENT RD
MAROONDAH AQUEDUCT
WOOD ST
SP AusNet Thomastown Terminal
Keon Station
KEON RDE
MAHONEYS RD
CITY OF DAREBIN
Diagram key
Higher priority projects
Lower priority projects
Off-road shared trail
Future off-road pedestrian and/or shared trail links
Major open space upgrades
Improve on-road pedestrian and or cycle links
Sub-precinct for proposed Small Local open space – long-term project
For full key, refer to 7.1 Overview
0
1km
2km

7.10 Whittlesea

Fast facts

= 100 Ha = 10 sqm

Quantity of open space

Existing open space:

30.74 Ha

Percentage of total precinct area:

1.5%

Available open space per person:

62 sqm

Open space use

Top values of open space
1. Place to relax and unwind.
2. Trees.
3. Place for children to play.

Most frequently visited open space within walking distance
1. AF Walker Reserve.
2. Other public realm (streets, schools etc).
3. Whittlesea Showgrounds.

Top 3 activities/facilities
1. Walking paths.
2. Open grassed areas.
3. Public toilets.

Open space distribution analysis

Overall there is good provision of open space in Whittlesea Township, with a need to improve additional linear open space along waterways.

Precinct summary

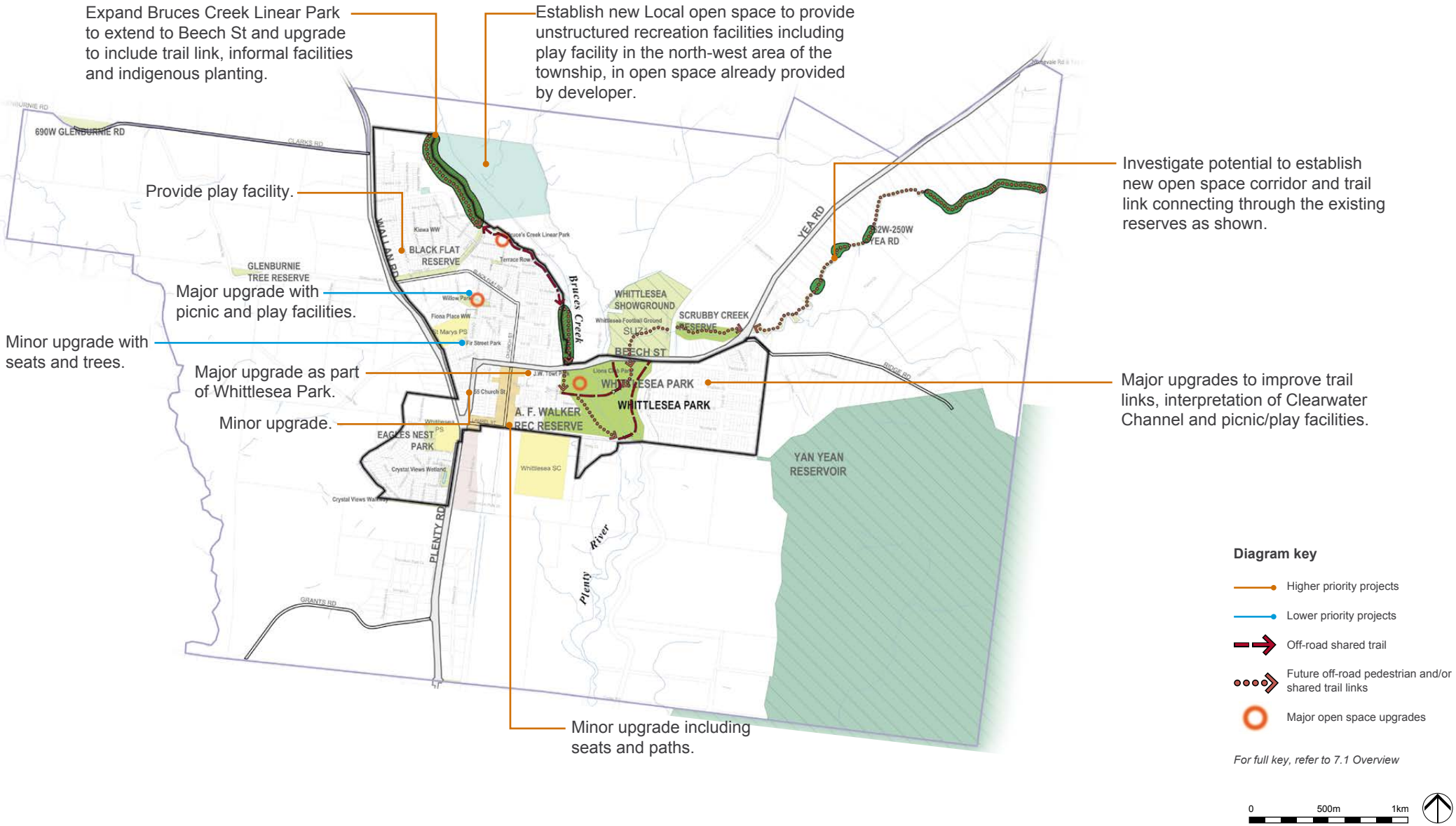
The Plenty River tributaries all converge and form the main stem of the Plenty River in Whittlesea Park in the Whittlesea Township. The Strategy focuses on upgrading Whittlesea Park along with AF Walker Recreation Reserve to improve the diversity of facilities available for the rural community. The other key recommendations include expanding and linking the linear open spaces along Bruces Creek and Scrubby Creek so that continuous trails can be constructed and environmental improvements undertaken. This will improve recreational and habitat connectivity between the outlying suburban and rural residential areas, and Whittlesea Township.

The 62 sqm per person and 1.5 per cent of open space relative to the total precinct area reflects the rural and low density residential land use in the precinct.

Additional to the linked open spaces a new larger open space area has been provided to Council and will be developed to include Local open space facilities including play areas for the existing and forecast community. Additionally, other selected open space reserves will be upgraded to improve their character and facilities.

Council will continue to investigate the feasibility of the future Whittlesea Rail Trail between Whittlesea Township and Mernda.

Whittlesea


Expand Bruces Creek Linear Park to extend to Beech St and upgrade to include trail link, informal facilities and indigenous planting.
Establish new Local open space to provide unstructured recreation facilities including play facility in the north-west area of the township, in open space already provided by developer.
Provide play facility.
Investigate potential to establish new open space corridor and trail link connecting through the existing reserves as shown.
Major upgrade with picnic and play facilities.
Minor upgrade with seats and trees.
Major upgrade as part of Whittlesea Park.
Minor upgrade.
Major upgrades to improve trail links, interpretation of Clearwater Channel and picnic/play facilities.
Minor upgrade including seats and paths.
690W GLENBURNIE RD
BLACK FLAT RESERVE
GLENBURNIE TREE RESERVE
WALLAN RD
Bruces Creek
WHITTLESEA SHOWGROUND
SCRUBBY CREEK RESERVE
BEECH ST
WHITTLESEA PARK
A. F. WALKER REC RESERVE
EAGLES NEST PARK
YEA RD
52W-250W YEA RD
YAN YEAN RESERVOIR
PLENTY RD
Plenty River
GRANTS RD
Diagram key
Higher priority projects
Lower priority projects
Off-road shared trail
Future off-road pedestrian and/or shared trail links
Major open space upgrades
For full key, refer to 7.1 Overview
0
500m
1km

8. Implementation

Overview

The recommendations are prioritised over a 13 year period, and their implementation will be informed by the rate and location of land use change in the municipality. Improving the quality, accessibility and values in the existing open space reserves is a key focus of the implementation program. As land use change and growth occurs in the established areas, new open space is recommended in seven precincts with identified gaps or need for additional linear open space in the network.

Responsibilities

As well as significant Council involvement, successful implementation of the Strategy will require ongoing coordination of involvement by the following:

- Melbourne Water regarding management of all interfaces with the creek corridors including conservation areas. Additionally regarding all future shared trails and walking paths along pipe tracks and waterways and the ongoing management of the closed water catchments of Yan Yean and Toorourrong Reservoirs.
- Parks Victoria regarding the management and local access to the future Merri Creek *Marran Baba* Parklands, Plenty Gorge Park and the visitor facilities at Yan Yean and Toorourrong Reservoirs.
- Community groups and Committees of Management, particularly in relation to works and improvements in the conservation areas and along the Merri and Darebin Creeks.

Funding

The funding for open space improvement works and land acquisition for the established urban and rural areas, including Whittlesea Township will be sourced from a combination of:

- Council revenue.
- External grants from State and Commonwealth Government agencies.
- Open space contributions.

Next steps

- Align the budget priorities and existing program of works for asset renewal to the recommendations and priorities in this Strategy to establish annual, coordinated programs of capital works.
- Undertake sub-precinct analyses to identify opportunity sites for the new open space recommended in this Strategy.
- Continue to implement existing Master Plans for major park upgrade works.