

Open Space Strategy 2016

Connecting People and Spaces

Working towards a clean, green and sustainable community





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Introduction

The Maroondah City Council Open Space Strategy 2016 will direct open space provision and enhancement throughout Maroondah for at least the next 10 years.

The document recognises the key functions of Council in relation to open space engagement, planning, development, and promotion. Drawing from the Maroondah Community Vision 2040 key directions, the strategy aligns with the vision through 15 key policy positions established to guide and underpin decision making regarding open space in Maroondah.

Strategy purpose

Feedback from an extensive community consultation for the Maroondah Community Vision 2040 and specific consultations for other Council strategy development processes, highlighted the value the community places on a leafy green city with generous open space and parklands. Within the 2040 Vision are many directions aimed at enhancement of the liveability of the city through open space improvement and utilisation. The importance the community places on open space emphasises the need to have a succinct policy and strategy document to underpin the provision and enrichment of open space in Maroondah.

The aim of the Open Space Strategy is to:

- facilitate the implementation of Maroondah's Open Space Policy.
- align directions of open space provision with the 2040 Vision.
- direct and underpin the creation of open space strategies, service plans and planning tools.
- assist decision making in relation to the planning, protection or development of open space environments.
- enable options for the development of open space to be prioritised and programmed.
- provide a basis to evaluate and respond to proposals for the use of open space.
- encourage and facilitate open space improvements within the public setting, where land is not owned by Maroondah City Council.
- provide a basis for allocation of funding resources towards open space projects.





Strategy scope

This Strategy is applicable across Maroondah City Council owned and managed open space landholdings and assets. The strategy also guides Council's engagement, negotiations and responses to private and public land owners in relation to open space in Maroondah, that is not owned or managed by Council. While streetscapes are considered as important contributors to the perception of open space within a community, the scope of the strategy focuses more on the public landholdings of Council.

Open space is integral to the core business of many service areas of Council and therefore all relevant departments have been engaged at a management and team level to facilitate the development of the Open Space Strategy. A large amount of internal feedback has been incorporated into the Strategy, to ensure that it integrates and complements existing plans and strategies and reflects the outcomes of service delivery plans across the organisation.

Strategy history

The 2005 Maroondah Open Space Strategy has been one of the guiding documents for open space development over the last 10 years. The strategy included a large amount of detail on precincts, parks and infrastructure as well as actions across a wide range of open space components. Many of those actions have now been delivered. However, the social, political, environmental, cultural and economic situation in Maroondah has evolved throughout the last decade. Given the focus on enhancing and improving open space environments already articulated in Maroondah's future vision, it is timely that the role Council plays in open space provision should be reviewed.

Open space definition

Public Open Space is defined as any parcels of land within Maroondah that is managed by Council or other public authorities and is accessible to the public for the purpose of community outdoor use or environmental protection.



Case study 1: Valuing open space - Interpretive Trails

As part of the ongoing program of creating new tree planting areas in Town Park, Croydon, Council staff on National Tree Day each July have planted a selected species in newly created beds that form part of an interpretive trail. Along the path that weaves through the trees, signs describe the particular tree species and its characteristics. The information helps visitors appreciate the value of different species and their attributes. The area will continue to expand and flourish to form a native arboretum close to the centre of Croydon.

Open space framework and relationship to Council strategies

The framework shown through the diagram below demonstrates the methodology applied to create the 2016 Open Space Strategy.

The diagram and table below also indicates the range of Council documentation that has been considered and that influences the open space strategy. The structure of the open space review entailed the development of an open space policy with clear documented positions and the subsequent creation of strategies that underpinned those policy positions.

This structure is consistent with Council’s integrated planning approach that requires a succinct policy, inclusive of policy positions that drive Council decision making and strategies that are aligned to achieve those policy position outcomes.



**Council documents that influence and integrate with the Open Space Strategy**

Parent documents	
The Maroondah 2040 Vision - Our Future Together	Maroondah City Council Plan
Legislated Strategies and Plans	
Municipal Strategic Statement	Community Wellbeing Plan
Adopted Strategies and Plans	
Active and Healthy Ageing Initiative	Maroondah Children's Plan
Activity Centre Structure Plans	Maroondah Housing Strategy
Arts and Cultural Development Strategy	Maroondah Youth Plan
Asset Management Policy and Strategy	Pedestrian Strategy
Carbon Neutral Strategy	Physical Activity Strategy
Disability Policy and Action Plan	Sustainability Strategy
Habitat Corridors Strategy	Water Sensitive City Strategy
Maroondah Bicycle Strategy	Waterways of Maroondah Strategy
Reference Studies, Policies & Guides	
Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap for Melbourne's East	Protecting Victoria's Environment - Biodiversity 2036
Community Facilities Occupancy Policy	Plan Melbourne Refresh
DTPLI Practice Note 70 - Open Space Strategies and Case Studies	Risk Management Policy
Maroondah Heritage Study	Site Master Plans and Management Plans
Maroondah Public Art Policy	Sites of Biological Significance Study
Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy	Sporting Facilities User Guide
Maroondah Stormwater Management Plan	Tree Management Policy
PLA Open Space Planning and Design Guide 2013	VEAC Metropolitan Melbourne Investigation 2011

Community aspirations and values

An extensive amount of community consultation has been undertaken by Maroondah Council throughout 2014-2015. The consultation generated feedback on the elements and values that the community sought within Maroondah.

The feedback emphasised the importance that open space plays in underpinning community life in Maroondah. In this regard the community consultation consistently expressed the importance of a ‘leafy green’ environment that includes high quality open spaces, parks, playgrounds, bushland, sporting and recreational facilities.

The community’s vision is for Council to be aspirational towards Maroondah’s network and connectivity of open space.

Feedback also indicated there is an expectation on: accessibility, safety, diversity, equity, sustainability, vibrancy and accountability in the provision and enhancement of open space.

The key driving principle therefore is that the Open Space Strategy is vital for community enrichment and so should be a major focus for Council.

The values emphasised by the community, and expressed in the 2040 Vision, are shown in the table on the following page. The table also includes the Council Plan values for the organisation, being continuous improvement, co-operation, communication, commitment and innovation.



Council’s role to deliver on these value expectations is also shown in the table, as expressed by how it can turn these values into policy positions, strategies and actions.

Crucial open space values expressed by the community in consultation.	Council’s role in responding to these values
Connection, Communication, Co-operation	Open Space Engagement
Aspiration, Continuous Improvement, Innovation	Open Space Planning
Equity, Diversity, Accessibility, Sustainability	Open Space Development
Accountability, Commitment, Safety	Open Space Management
Health, Activity, Vibrancy, Inclusion	Open Space Promotion



Maroondah context for open space

In 2016, the quality of Maroondah’s open space is seen as a vital component to liveability.

To deliver quality environments, Council must work within the current open space situation within Maroondah and also respond to Maroondah-specific issues and wider open space trends. These are raised in the following section to provide some context to the policy and strategy development process.

Current status of open space in Maroondah

The current status in relation to open space in Maroondah is summarised below:

Limited new large open space contributions

The era of new large subdivisions has come to an end with almost all large parcels of subdividable residential land in Maroondah now having undergone development.

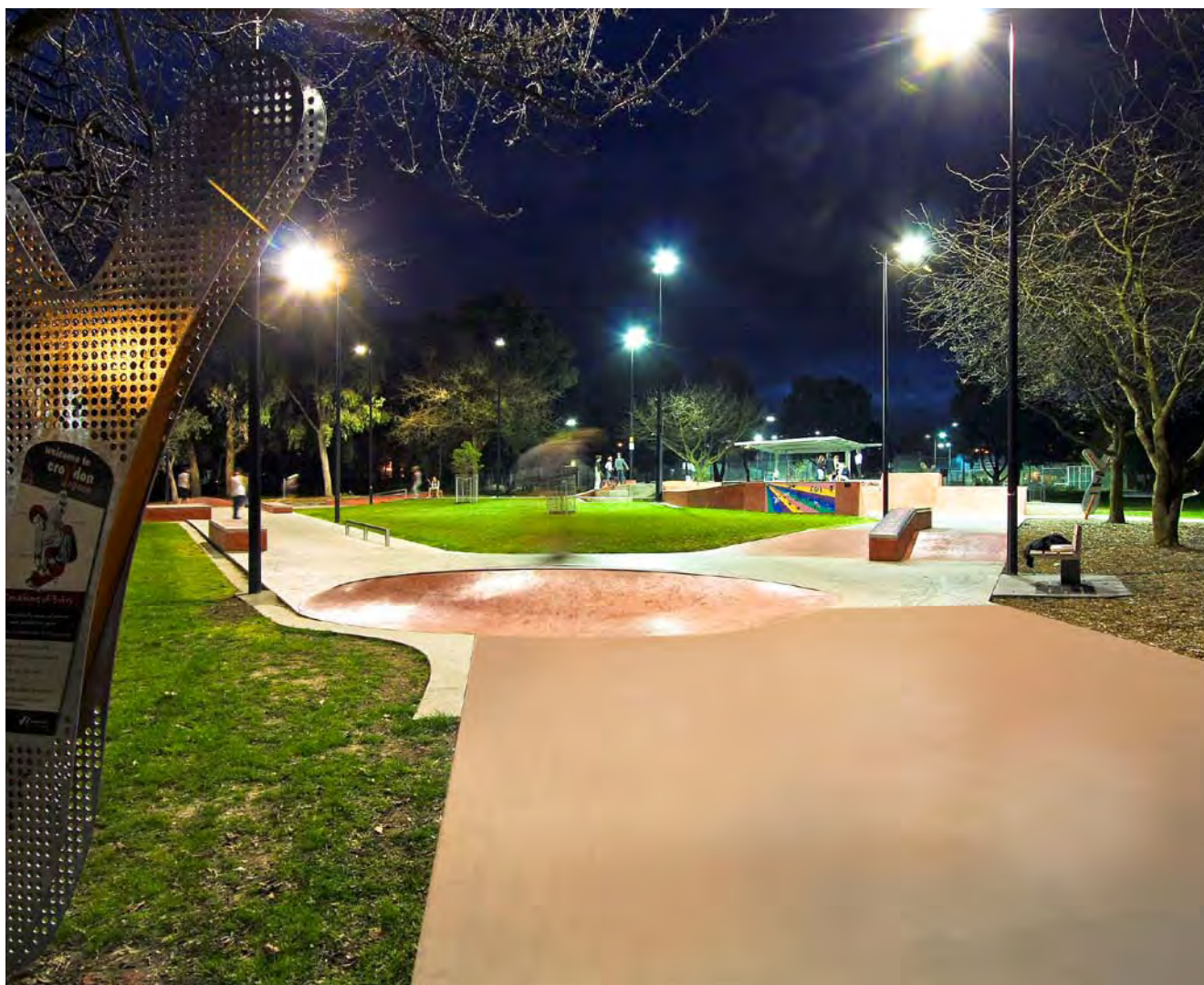
The opportunity for new open space land to become available to the Maroondah community through land developments into the future is very limited. Rather, land assets will need to come from existing site redevelopments, land swap negotiations or from planned acquisition utilising open space contributions.

As a result, the use and development of open space and the pressures between activity types for the provision of quality environments will require greater attention than ever before.

Current open space capacity

Maroondah’s open space network does not include the large state owned regional parkland sites that some other municipalities benefit from. It also has limited ‘green wedge’ zoned land where development is restricted, as opposed to some other outer ring Councils that have large green wedge areas. This increases the pressure to ensure open spaces are allocated, utilised and improved in accordance with a defined strategy. Decision making must become more strategic and evidence based to ensure the open space assets are equitably provided as resources for the whole community and for the long term preservation of the environment.

Area of open space in Maroondah: 650ha /11% of land area



Demographic change

Maroondah's population continues to change. In the last decade Maroondah's population increased by 11% with a further 10% increase forecast for the upcoming decade. The population structure is becoming older, with the median age across all Maroondah residents now at 38 years. There are also an increasing number of retirees living in the municipality. The crux of these evolving changes is that Maroondah's open space will need to be more adaptable and accommodating of an increasing number of people and caters to an increasing variety of age and cultural demographics.

Household size and structure

Maroondah's household size and structure is also undergoing change. In the last decade the ratio of lone person households or couples without children households increased. This is contributing to the increasing number of people moving into smaller medium density housing. The forecast is that the demand for smaller private residential dwellings will continue to grow in Maroondah and that much of this demand will be met by the development of attached or semi-detached medium density townhouses and apartments. This type of housing structure has by nature less private open space per property, increasing the requirement to influence the design of developments and to utilise accessible public and private open spaces as a mechanism to improve social connection and liveability.



Development of activity centres

The increasing and dynamic nature of Maroondah's ageing and changing population is creating demand for innovative forms of development close to existing transport, commercial and service hubs.

Planning strategies have for some time supported the concept of development nodes facilitating growth in locations where these services exist. The Ringwood 'Metropolitan Activity Centre' is one of 11 metropolitan activity centres that are considered secondary only to the Melbourne CBD on a development hierarchy.

Central Croydon is considered a 'Major Activity Centre' and Ringwood East and Heathmont are 'Neighbourhood Activity Centres'. These activity centres are experiencing an increasing level of medium density housing development within them. They are also important commercial hubs where many people work and connect. This has implications for the provision and use of open space resources in these locations.

Number of reserves
in Maroondah:
430



Current issues for open space in Maroondah

A number of key issues that impact on the provision of open space in Maroondah are:

High community expectations

The community consistently demonstrates that they place a high value on open space, in terms of the 'liveability' of a particular location, the visual amenity across the municipality and the extent of opportunities to participate in sport and recreation activity.

This value perception is also influenced by the quality of open spaces, how they connect with built forms and how the open space is maintained. Therefore, the Open Space Policy and Open Space Strategy are aspirational and work towards a future open space network with the functionality and quality that the community wants.

The challenge of meeting high community expectations within Maroondah is how Council will maintain and enhance open space environments within the bounds of finite resources.

Limited Council resources

The commitment of Council to deliver on the wide range of outcomes expressed in the 2040 Vision places a great pressure on available resources. All the endeavours and activities have merit, so a process of prioritisation is necessary to ensure a staged or phased implementation is documented.

The focus can then be directed towards innovative solutions and timely, efficient implementation. A clear message around the timing for implementation of strategies adopted will need to be delivered to the community to avoid creating unrealistic expectations.

Risk mitigation

Personal safety and security are crucial issues in the planning and management of open space. Council's Risk Management Policy as well as government and insurance industry driven initiatives, require greater consideration in open space design, usage policies and maintenance accountability.

These elements support the quality control of services and assist in the process of project management. Risk mitigation holds an increasingly influential say in the assessment of open space decisions whether related to design, installation, purchase or use. When risk and safety requirements are overlaid with increasing usage it changes the dynamics that influence management decision making.

Specific needs

Consultation also highlighted that the community was very connected and committed towards specific groups or activity types. This means that there will be community pressure to invest in a wide range of particular activities regardless of the level of participation. Enhancement of recreation facilities that reach the end of their asset life will be required in future so that they can continue to cater for a broad range of age groups, abilities and pursuits. The Open Space Strategy sets a framework for prioritising projects that protect, develop or improve Maroondah's open spaces.



Infrastructure development expectations and user conflicts

The level of investment in community facilities and in sports and recreation infrastructure continues to grow with changing user expectations around such things as surface condition, support infrastructure, social amenities, on-site parking and training facilities.

Risk mitigation measures are also contributing to additional costs and to the decisions as to what use is acceptable and under what conditions. In some locations, this has impacted on the multipurpose capacity and accessibility of particular open spaces, contributing to user conflicts. Endeavours to further define and emphasise the functional purpose of some open spaces will be central to navigating through issues of competing interests.

Exclusive use and economic context

An increased expectation by clubs and community groups is also creating a perception of exclusivity of certain open spaces. The accessibility and general community usability of certain open spaces is starting to be called into question, as is the cost benefit value, where the use is confined to a small number of users. The cost of meeting sporting expectations is also increasing in light of the diversity of sporting needs expressed across the municipality. Regional partnerships, together with increasing site carrying capacity, will need to be considered as a mechanism to underpin open space planning.

Pressures on the natural environment

Protecting Maroondah's unique natural features, including ridgelines, waterways, canopy vegetation, green open space and bushland reserves was identified as a community priority in recent consultations. This is a challenging outcome to achieve in light of increasing housing density, concerns about trail and site safety, increasing demand for amenities for sports and increased risk mitigation in relation to trees and infrastructure. The Open Space Strategy allows for innovative solutions to find the right balance to ensure that open space environments continue to meet the expectations of the Maroondah community, while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.

Balancing trail use

The shared trail network is a significant asset for the provision of commuter linkages as well as encouraging walking, recreational cycling and other informal activity. With Maroondah's vision to "enhance and promote Maroondah's walking and cycling shared path network, ensuring connections with the wider Metropolitan Melbourne trail network", there is a need to consider the identification, design suitability and promotion of a trail network that supports trail use for commuting and use for recreation activity.

Emerging trends in open space provision

A number of the wider trends in open space provision that are relevant to Maroondah include:

Balance between active sport and passive recreation space

The functional use of open space and the relationship between formal active sport environments and informal recreation activity environments will require greater consideration.

Participation figures show that the traditional membership model of sports participation is decreasing in favour of a more informal and consumer driven participation.

The growth in small fitness groups, walking and cycling events are evidence that people are increasingly interested in a shorter term and evolving commitment to activity. Whilst the change is not rapid, the expectations of the community to have informal active spaces will continue to grow, especially as housing densities rise.

Promotion of physical activity

A great deal has been presented about the growing health risks associated with inactivity. In some ways this has come from a change in focus from an outdoor lifestyle to more sedentary indoor lifestyle.

It is well recognised that open space provision and the opportunity to choose more active lifestyles is an important element of community health planning moving forward. The provision of opportunities in open space as well as the promotion of those opportunities is highlighted in Council's 2040 Vision towards "promoting physical activity and providing a diverse range of accessible open spaces and recreation facilities including entertainment spaces, events and activities".

The Open Space Strategy therefore identifies open space environments that can support the actions of the Maroondah Physical Activity Strategy.





Adapting to climate change

The response to climate change has been woven into the directions of a number of Council strategies. Council has a role as an influencer and potential educator to the community on climate change responses. At the very least, it should be seen as introducing mechanisms and measures that are countering climate change contributors. The Open Space Strategy is a vehicle through which strategies and partnerships can be presented that send the right messages to the community regarding the impacts of climate change and the possible solutions and adaptations.

Fostering partnerships

With limited options for new open space in Maroondah, key decisions around functional use of existing open space areas will need to become more strategic.

Where there are competing interests for the use of open space, the option that new alternate sites may become available through ongoing development can no longer be considered a realistic solution. For example, Council has a key direction through Maroondah 2040 to “protect and restore biodiversity and native habitat for local plants and animals on public and private land” then Council must achieve this outcome through existing sites and through partnerships with the private or public sector land holders.

The innovation and negotiation around partnership projects to enhance liveability will be vital to the Open Space Strategy.

Case study 2: Accessible and connected spaces - Ringwood Lake Park

A review of the Ringwood Lake Park Master Plan in 2013 highlighted a number of improvements that could be made to the park to improve access and better connect it to other nearby facilities. The award winning “Changing Places” Accessible Toilets in the Ringwood Lake Park demonstrates how Council has led the way in developing facilities within open space that allow all members of the community to enjoy the outdoors, irrespective of their physical ability. This approach, combined with upgraded paths, car parking, lighting, fencing and directional signage, ensures that everyone can utilise this popular park for play, exercise, picnics and relaxation. The new Mining History area and the Rotary Peace Garden also provide added attractions and quiet areas for contemplation in a pleasant natural environment. The Park is now better connected to the Ringwood Town Centre and the Mullum Mullum Creek Trail with a pedestrian crossing across Maroondah Highway.



Policy & strategy structure



Mc Alpin Reserve

BBQ, Playspace, Toilets



Carpark



Open Space Policy

The role of Maroondah City Council in delivering open space to the community can be represented by five core activities that provide the framework for the Maroondah Open Space Policy and can be defined by the following descriptions:

- **Open space engagement** describes the process of connecting with key stakeholders, user groups and the broader Maroondah community to share information about our open spaces and to help inform decisions about open space.
- **Open space planning** is work done by Council to identify and help meet the future open space needs of the City of Maroondah.
- **Open space development** is work done to improve the quality and diversity of open spaces available to the community.
- **Open space management** relates to the maintenance, service standards, allocation and programmed use of open space assets.
- **Open space promotion** is how Maroondah City Council encourages residents, community groups and visitors to make the most of our open space assets.

Across these five core activity areas, 15 policy positions have been developed that aim to align the direction of open space provision with the Maroondah 2040 Community Vision and assist Council’s decision making in relation to the protection and management of open space environments.

The policy positions will guide the planning and development of open space, ensuring that community needs are identified and works are prioritised, programmed and resourced appropriately. The Maroondah Open Space Policy commits Council to a process of engaging with the community and user groups on key open space issues and ensuring that the promotion and programming of open space environments respond to need and maximise use.

Number of street trees
in Maroondah:
70,000

Case study 3: Creating new forms of open space - The Range, Croydon

The development of the The Range Housing Estate in Croydon has provided a significant amount of new open space for local residents to enjoy. Much of it is based around the wetlands that have been built to provide management of stormwater flowing from the estate, creating large permanent water bodies that help to clean and control the run off from roads and private properties before it enters the Brushy Creek. A range of amenities have been added around these spaces including a playground, shelter and barbecues. There are also outdoor fitness stations in a circuit linking the parks, as well as seating, paths and solar lights.



Open Space Strategy

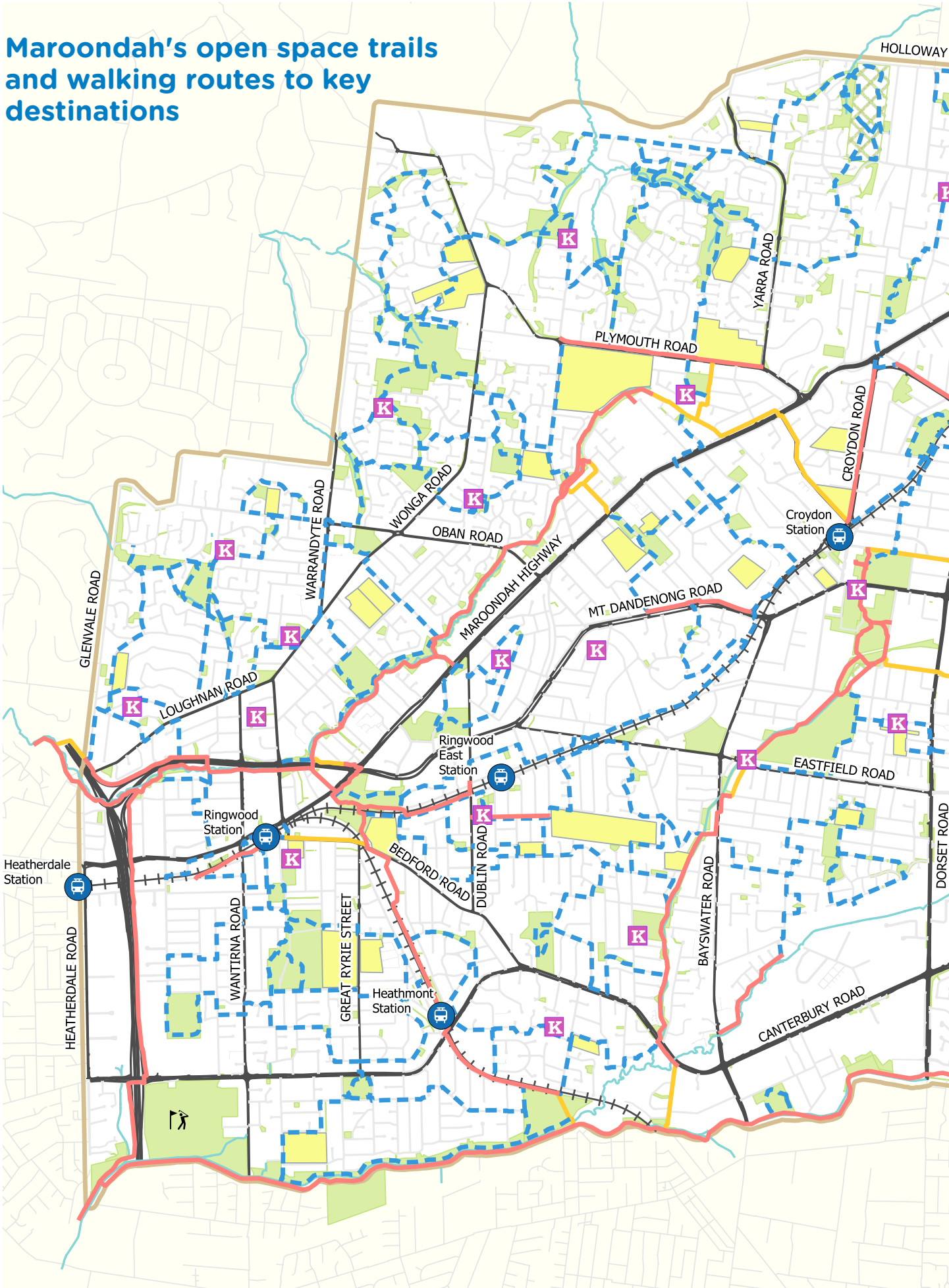
A series of strategies sit beneath each of the 15 policy positions of the Maroondah Open Space Policy. The strategies are designed to facilitate the implementation of the Maroondah Community Vision 2040 and the Open Space Policy. Strategies have been referenced to each of the policy positions and incorporate both planning and direct service delivery initiatives.

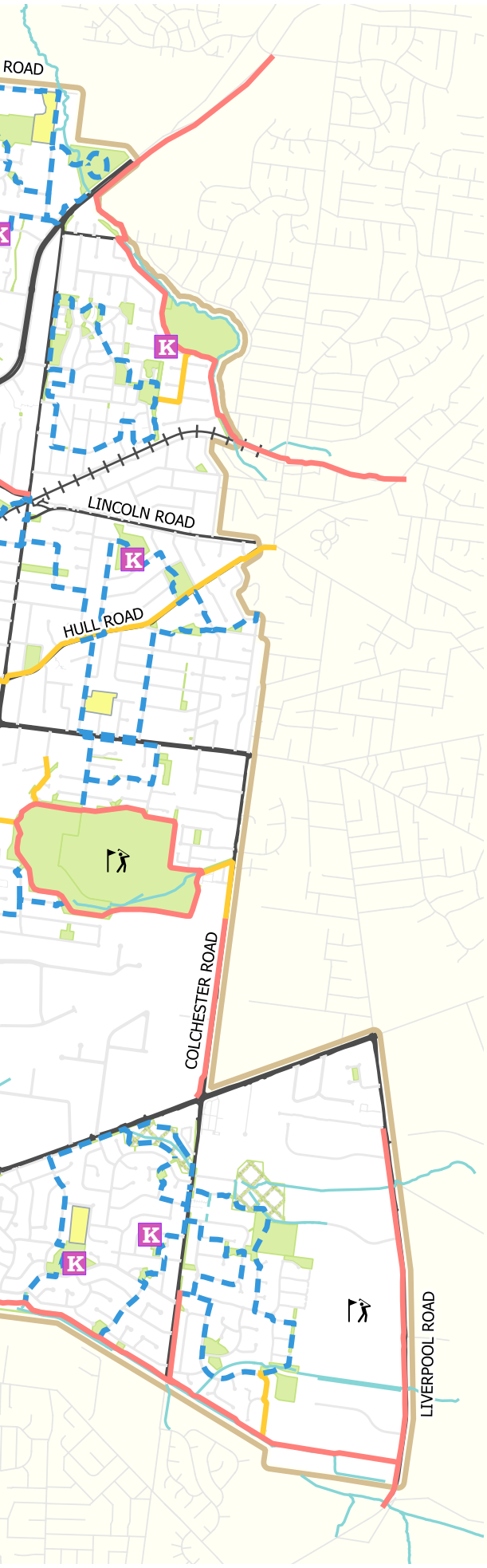
The Maroondah Open Space Strategy will provide a basis for the allocation of resources to open space projects and guide Council's provision and enhancement of open space in Maroondah over the next 10 years.





Maroondah's open space trails and walking routes to key destinations



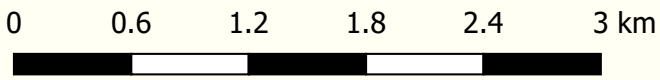


Legend

- Existing Trail (Shared)
- - - Local Circuit
- Trail Connection
- Council Reserve
- Crown Land (Restricted Public Access)
- School
- K Kindergarten
- Natural Waterway
- Maroondah City Council Boundary
- Railway
- Train Station
- ⛏ Golf Course



N





Open Space Action Plan

To enable effective and efficient delivery of the Maroondah Open Space Strategy, each of the strategies identified under the policy positions will be assessed against a comprehensive criteria. The criteria will include, but not be limited to indicators such as:

- internal stakeholders
- external stakeholders
- stakeholders that may influence the project
- knowledge or information required
- systems or procedures required
- resources required
- expected timeframe for implementation
- links to other key initiatives/projects/strategies (internal and external)
- agreements or arrangements in place that may impact implementation
- decision making processes required (e.g. Council processes required)
- responsible service area(s).

This process of assessment will determine the appropriate priorities, resources and timelines for implementation and form the foundation for the development of an Open Space Action Plan.

The Action Plan will be prepared through an additional phase of cross-Council engagement via the creation of Open Space Reference Group(s). The reference group(s) will be established under specific “Terms of Reference” to guide the makeup and responsibilities of the group(s). The Action Plan will ensure specific actions, timelines and responsibilities are coordinated for each strategy adopted.

The Open Space Action Plan is a three year rolling implementation document that will be reviewed and progress evaluated on a regular basis. The Action Plan will then be linked to relevant Council area’s Service Delivery Plans to complete the planning cycle and ensure effective implementation.

Case study 4: Safe, healthy and active people and spaces - walking and running circuits

Council has gradually been developing a number of local walking and running circuits within reserves for all the community to enjoy. These have been built in Barneong Reserve, Cheong Park, Glen Park, Heathmont Reserve, Jubilee Park and Quambee Reserve and have proved very popular with local residents for walking, running and dog exercise. Several of them have also included outdoor fitness equipment to provide extra opportunities for physical fitness.

New larger circuits that are within one park, or that join several reserves, will be developed in coming years to ensure that all residents have easy access to these routes. These will encourage exercise and also provide ways to walk to schools, shops and other community facilities.



Open space engagement

Open space engagement describes the process of connecting with key stakeholders, user groups and the broader Maroondah community to share information about our open spaces and to help inform decisions about open space.



Policy Position 1

Open space engagement will actively seek to understand and respond to the aspirations of the community when planning for open space development.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 1.1, 1.21, 8.8, 8.9 and 8.13
- Council Plan
- Community Engagement Policy

Strategies

1. Conduct meaningful and inclusive public participation in engagement processes when planning and designing community, recreation and sporting developments in open space.
2. Incorporate questions related to open space usage when Council is conducting community surveys.
3. Continue to consult and involve the local community, including key user groups, when undertaking or reviewing park Master Plans and Management Plans to ensure they continue to respond to local needs.
4. Ensure all stakeholders are consulted in relation to development proposals and provide opportunity for them to formally express their views.
5. Look at innovative ways to engage with the community and to collect observations and data on how, when and why people use open spaces.
6. Use direct engagement 'on site' to understand local needs and via local events, community organisations and businesses.
7. Ensure that engagement includes concepts referencing financial viability of open space network expansion and enhancement.
8. Encourage community involvement and participation in environmental elements of open space planning and management through information distribution to "Friends Of" groups.
9. Research and monitor recreation trends to understand and respond to open space values and community expectations.
10. Link service standards and available budget through an open space "Best Value" process and communicate an achievable level of service to the community.
11. Obtain specific feedback on site specific use to identify key issues where there is high usage or alternately where there is low usage.



Policy Position 2

Open space engagement processes for site planning and development will include consultation with relevant authorities, and where appropriate, foster partnerships or advocate, to ensure effective improvement of open space.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 1.18, 5.10, 8.10 and 8.11
- Council Plan
- Community Engagement Policy

Strategies

1. Implement broader cross-Council consultation in relation to major strategic projects that can influence and affect open space and facility provision.
2. Develop guidelines or policy for open space contributions to clearly define when cash contributions are taken and how they are allocated to improve existing open space.
3. Support private and not for profit sectors to meet the community needs for recreation, community and sporting activities in public (non-Council) or private open spaces where they are best placed to deliver a service.
4. Devise an internal system to consider broad new objectives for subdivisions and commercial developments and ensure all stakeholders have adequate and timely input into the planning process.
5. Recognise commitments and implement recommendations from other policies, strategies and reports (e.g. Community Wellbeing Plan, Maroondah Bicycle Strategy, Physical Activity Strategy) relevant to open space.
6. Develop greater community understanding of the value of natural areas and conservation of habitat and its importance for the future of Maroondah, through signage, brochures, interpretation and education.
7. Work within the regional planning framework to plan for regional sports facilities in partnership with neighbouring Councils, the private sector and the State Government.
8. Participate in the development of a regional trail network strategy as recommended in the Melbourne East Regional Sport and Recreation Strategy.
9. Work with developers and land owners to leverage private open space that could be redeveloped to support public open space linkages/connections and objectives.
10. Work closely with other government agencies who have significant parcels of open space in Maroondah, such as drainage reserves and road reserves, to maximise the value of open space with non-recreation functions and enhance landscape amenity and environmental values.
11. Promote healthy places for the community by encouraging and protecting natural areas and biodiversity within the residential, industrial and commercial built environments.
12. Advocate for improved design, use and management of non-Council owned public open space by other agencies.
13. Encourage the development of communal open spaces on private land developments as a response to increased density in Activity Centres and other high density locations.

Open space planning

Open Space Planning is undertaken by Council to identify and help meet the future open space needs of the City of Maroondah.



Policy Position 3

Open space planning will deliver diversity in recreational activities and sporting opportunities through well planned public open spaces which contribute to improved community health, physical activity and neighbourhood connection.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 1.1, 1.12, 1.19, 2.17, 6.13, 7.1 and 7.11
- Community Wellbeing Plan
- Active & Healthy Ageing Initiative
- Physical Activity Strategy
- Youth Plan
- Children's Plan
- Pedestrian Strategy

Strategies

1. Respond to the diversity of needs in Open Space by identifying, assessing and reviewing the functional benefits and catchment of each individual Maroondah open space parcel.
2. Identify, assess and develop key parks in each suburb with capacity to accommodate a range of features for social family recreation activity with appropriate facilities including public amenities, BBQ's, picnic settings, shade and playspaces.
3. Seek to provide consistency in the quality of sports playing fields, representative of a grading hierarchy, and align this with consistent management regimes.
4. Aim for an equitable distribution of accessible and diverse open space for informal activity within walking distance of every household.
5. Design public open space within the designated Activity Centres with a focus on creating a sense of place and connectivity.
6. Investigate options to develop local walking trail circuits by utilising existing reserves, streets, and either acquisition of land or by access agreements.
7. Revise network of 'pocket parks' for consideration of suitable activities and enhanced planting as well as provisions for those with limited mobility.
8. Plan and develop the playground network to include locations that can cater for specific user groups (e.g. secure fenced playgrounds)
9. Include guidelines for future design and material use in open space infrastructure to ensure public open spaces are designed to be adaptive in response to the predicted impacts of climate change
10. Investigate shared property boundaries where there is a question of land occupancy to ensure Council owned land has not been encroached upon for private use.
11. Ensure that the design criteria when planning park improvements consider neighbourhood characteristics relative to the localities in which the improvements are being planned.



Policy Position 4

Open space planning will establish an integrated network of trails across the municipality that provides connectivity for travel purposes as well as for recreational use.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 1.2, 1.18, 2.17, 5.6, 5.10 and 5.11
- Maroondah Bicycle Strategy
- Risk Management Policy
- Pedestrian Strategy
- Melbourne East Regional Sport & Recreation Strategy
- Carbon Neutral Strategy

Strategies

1. Review the Maroondah trail network to identify the key purpose and undertake mapping of the movement flows.
2. Develop 'categories of use' for trails in consideration of regional destination linkages.
3. Undertake trail risk assessments utilising projected usage as the measure for design and surface expectation and performance.
4. Develop design criteria to respond to the different categories of trail use.
5. Investigate options to develop key linear trails to regional parks in partnership with Land Management Agencies and adjoining Councils.
6. Ensure trail capacity and safety assessment are considered in trail design with specific reference to lighting, visibility, surface condition and inter-connection points for trails.
7. Improve the design of existing linear open space to improve accessibility to major parks and community places.
8. Seek external funding to complete linear trails, including land acquisition, exchange, lease or agreement.
9. Create a system for enhanced delineation of a trails purpose, such as neighbourhood trail, local shared trail, primary destination commuter trail and regional links.
10. Analyse the distribution and extent of trails by category to determine future needs and gaps across the municipality.
11. Create amenity hubs as destinations for people who drive to the trail or as rest stops for those on longer rides or walks.
12. Create a trail signage 'on pavement' colour coding system to identify and support main trail directional travel.
13. Assess options for improved public lighting of main trails used for commuter travel and major thoroughfares.



Length of shared trails
in Maroondah:
35km

Policy Position 5

Open space planning will identify opportunities for strategic land acquisitions which would improve the accessibility, connectivity, natural environment and functionality of Maroondah's open spaces.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040 Key Directions: 1.18, 1.20, 4.10, 6.7 and 6.14
- Municipal Strategic Statement
- Precinct Structure plans
- Housing Strategy
- Stormwater Management Plan
- Pedestrian Strategy

Strategies

1. Undertake accessibility mapping of open space across the municipality to identify pockets of disadvantage in relation to availability and connectivity of open space and identify an aspirational overlay that represents a potential future network.
2. Review the current open space network to identify options to improve the structure and to acknowledge gaps where private and public land could strengthen current open space links and provisions.
3. Implement a process to highlight land that could strengthen open space links or enhance existing open space when development planning enquiries or planning applications are made.
4. Ensure that cross-department consultation is undertaken in relation to major development planning/projects within Maroondah and surrounding areas to allow for consideration of open space needs.
5. Investigate opportunities to convert, utilise or activate existing Council owned land to open space (e.g. road closures to achieve open space connections, road reserves and drainage reserves).
6. Liaise with other public agencies to identify opportunities to convert, swap or obtain occupancy (lease) of existing public land for open space where they form important linear links.
7. Reference other key Corporate strategy documents adopted by Council (e.g. Stormwater Management Plan, Housing Strategy) to present a shared case for negotiating acquisition that will also serve and improve the open space network.
8. Seek additional open space as future re-development occurs to strengthen the open space network and links where appropriate.
9. Secure new and/or upgrade existing open space associated with Activity Centres through appropriate developer contributions to open space or through public accessible spaces on private land.
10. Acknowledge that open space provision in relation to new, higher density development will have increased importance, and develop planning procedures on its provision in that context.
11. Work in partnership with land owners and developers in order to better meet both commercial and open space objectives.
12. Engage with developers where there has been consideration of lot amalgamation into larger sites for redevelopment proposals to facilitate open space inclusion.
13. Ensure new open space is of a scale appropriate to the intended function and catchment



Policy Position 6

Open space planning will use a thorough needs assessment to examine the open space network in regards to public open space sites being appropriate and adaptable for single purpose or multipurpose use.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 1.10, 1.18 and 3.2
- Council Plan
- Community Facilities Occupancy Policy
- Melbourne East Regional Sport & Recreation Strategy

Strategies

1. Assess and document key open space sites for their capacity and suitability to service a wider single purpose catchment, or a multitude of purposes, for a smaller catchment.
2. Support the introduction of an open space planning framework to identify the most suitable recreation activities in the most suitable locations.
3. Create walking and exercise circuits by linking existing open space, off road paths and corridors.
4. Participate in regional networks to discuss the potential for future partnership projects where opportunities are identified.
5. Research specific sports for current and emerging facility standards and guidelines for assessment against current provisions.
6. Identify areas that are not well served by foundation level sports facilities, or accessible recreation and play opportunities, and work with any school in the vicinity to develop or strengthen these community partnerships.
7. Seek to develop sustainable high use single purpose venues (e.g. Ringwood Soccer) where practical and reclassify multi-purpose sites to best meet a broad range of activities and users.
8. Continue to facilitate regional planning activities to identify options for acknowledged regional development of sport and recreation sites and assets.
9. Investigate options to amalgamate assets to achieve larger capacity or higher standard sports or recreation sites.
10. Review and document a long term plan for the future placement/removal of public amenities based on locations that are high usage hubs.
11. Establish assessment criteria and undertake a site carrying capacity analysis to inform and guide planning and management in relation to the sustainability of Maroondah open spaces to meet the functional needs of user groups and future growth expectations.
12. Review open space provision standards to plan for the future population increases within Maroondah's Metropolitan, Major and Neighbourhood Activity Centres.

Number of off-leash parks in Maroondah:
35

Open space development

Open space development is undertaken to improve the quality and diversity of open spaces available to the community.



Policy Position 7

Open space development will respect the strategies and partnerships that have been created to enhance and protect the cultural value and heritage of the City of Maroondah.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 4.5 and 4.6
- Heritage Study
- Arts & Cultural Development Strategy
- Reconciliation Policy
- Public Art Policy
- Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap for Melbourne's East

Strategies

1. Explore relevant community partnerships to protect indigenous and cultural heritage within the open space network.
2. Develop greater community appreciation of cultural values through cohort projects bringing together cultural interest stakeholders.
3. Protect and enhance the natural landscape within, and adjacent to, the open space network.
4. Develop greater community understanding of the value of neighbourhood character and natural and cultural heritage and its importance for the future of Maroondah.
5. Map, document and introduce actions to preserve and promote all significant cultural or heritage sites/artefacts including public art and heritage tree sites.
6. Ensure that representatives of the local indigenous community have the opportunity to assess, comment and contribute to development proposals at sites of cultural heritage or cultural significance.
7. Develop and implement additional policies to protect the environment (e.g. waste management, use of solar powered lighting in reserves, and recycled water) and to underpin the sustainability measures of Council.
8. Develop effective communication tools to celebrate and increase awareness of community partnerships and the cultural heritage value of sites.
9. Identify and prioritise possible open space sites for the placement of public art installations that celebrate the unique characteristics of Maroondah.
10. Identify suitable bushland spaces capable of hosting cultural and environmental education experiences.



Policy Position 8

Open space development will strive to improve open space environments that cater for physical activity, acknowledging the increasing need for informal participation, as well as providing for formal sporting activities.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 1.17, 5.9 and 7.1
- Physical Activity Strategy
- Active & Healthy Ageing Initiative
- Youth Plan
- Children's Plan
- Melbourne East Regional Sport & Recreation Strategy
- Carbon Neutral Strategy
- Pedestrian Strategy

Strategies

1. Undertake an external sportsground review to determine current capacity, potential capacity and to identify the capability for increased usage or alternate usage patterns.
2. Facilitate consultation with sporting leagues regarding issues including future growth in sport capacity and capping of municipal resources and potential for alternative programming.
3. Increase availability of informal exercise equipment in visible locations in parks.
4. Provide open space infrastructure (seating, paths, lighting, etc.) to increase the appeal and accessibility of parks to a diverse age range and ability level of residents.
5. Increase the diversity of unstructured recreational facilities in existing open space reserves to encourage a broad cross-section of community use.
6. Encourage young people's involvement in the development of new youth facilities in open space that are youth orientated and respond to their specific needs.
7. Provide strategically planned routes and off-road paths leading to dedicated spaces for small wheel sports.
8. Investigate the potential to develop a prominent soft surface circuit trail and exercise area for walking and running promotion similar to the 'Tan Track' in Melbourne.
9. Restrictive fencing of parks should be limited to allow free public access.
10. Create inviting frontages within key parks, connecting to perimeter circuits around the park and to adjoining open space.
11. Investigate the opportunity to utilise floodlighting in a key reserve to provide access for all casual evening exercise use.
12. Engage with sports clubs and associations to identify the capability to grow the opportunities they provide to include more targeted social and introductory level sports activities.



Policy Position 9

Open space development requests will be reviewed using a thorough site assessment and analysis process which considers outcomes for all stakeholders, to ensure responsible decision making.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 1.2, 7.1 and 8.2
- Site specific master or management plans
- Community Facilities Occupancy Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Youth Plan

Strategies

1. Create a formal application process and methodology for assessing all proposals for the development of new or improved infrastructure on open space to ensure they can be considered against other proposals and identified needs.
2. Continue to implement recommendations of existing Masterplans and Management Plans for major reserves such as Ringwood Lake, Jubilee Park and Town Park.
3. Maintain a balance between providing opportunities to make spaces attractive, interesting and challenging for young people while managing unacceptable risks associated with public safety.
4. Improve streetscapes where they form links between open space, including upgrading crossing points over roads, planting of street trees and installation of seats as resting points.
5. In areas where residents are not within walking distance to some form of open space, investigate the possible improvement of links as a priority.
6. Establish and adopt an open space 'value' model that can be utilised to place a true economic cost onto development proposals that will result in loss of accessible and usable open space.
7. Ensure that development proposals acknowledge the full extent of works to support a major infrastructure improvement including peripheral assets needed to support larger buildings (such as car parks and access roads).
8. Complete an assessment and select specific key sites for development as event locations and identify any required logistics enhancement for these locations.
9. Undertake a planning review of potential sites for the establishment of permit system and policy for Personal Trainer activity across Maroondah.
10. Investigate the use of cost/benefit analysis for major sports infrastructure projects to document the case for increased usage of sports fields that could result from improved quality of infrastructure.
11. Ensure that the roles and responsibilities for the management and activation of current and proposed facilities are included in the project planning phase.
12. Foster the development of community gardens in suitable community or private spaces, ensuring that broad access policies are created to support these sites.



Policy Position 10

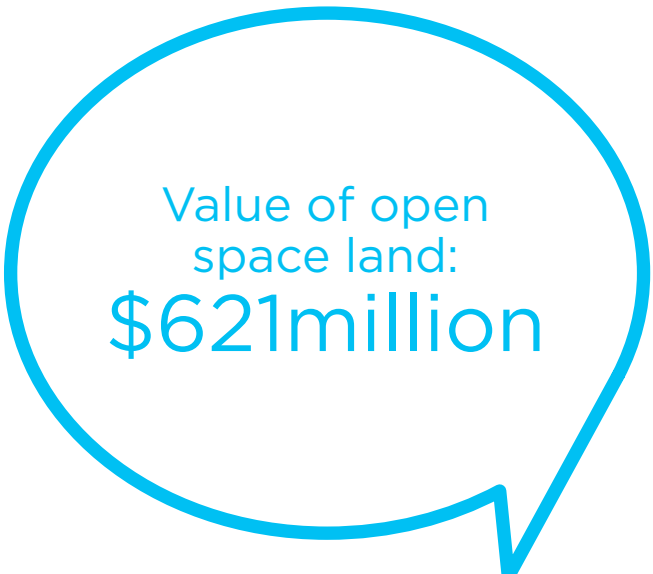
Open space development will seek to preserve and rehabilitate natural bushland environments, wildlife corridors and remnant vegetation to nurture a sustainable environmental system.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 4.1, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8 and 4.12
- Habitat Corridors Strategy
- Sites of Biological Significance Study
- Sustainability Strategy
- Waterways of Maroondah Strategy
- Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap for Melbourne's East

Strategies

1. Provide logistics and information-based support to community environmental groups that assist habitat protection works.
2. Improve the design of specific aesthetic and tranquil open spaces that allow users to experience and appreciate the natural environment.
3. Encourage the development of an "adopt a park" program that underpins community pride and contributes to community safety in local open spaces.
4. Utilise the tree planting regime to facilitate increased shade canopy in response to shade strategy objectives.
5. Establish principles for the protection of bushland environments and for measuring impacts of developments on or adjacent to bushland sites.
6. Engage with internal and external planning authorities for the inclusion of stronger environmental controls in the planning scheme to protect remnant vegetation, habitat corridors and bushland.
7. Review Council's Streetscape Policy to consider frontage setbacks to enhance the leafy green feel of streetscapes.
8. Introduce acquisition and/or protection mechanisms to conserve sites of biological significance.
9. Ensure that all offset planting sites, that add value to the open space network, are mapped for improved future management.
10. Update existing open space corridor mapping and undertake condition assessments for identified habitat corridors.
11. Identify the cost implications from climate change in terms of loss of biodiversity, tree loss, water quality and quantity and flood damage to assist in promoting projects that counter climate change.



Value of open
space land:
\$621million

Open space management

Open space management relates to the maintenance, service standards, allocation and programmed use of open space assets.



Policy Position 11

Open space management will use thorough and accountable risk and safety assessment procedures to ensure best practice design, construction and maintenance processes

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 1.2, 1.4, 1.12 and 8.4
- Risk Management Policy
- Asset Management Policy & Strategy
- Sporting Facilities User Guide
- Pedestrian Strategy
- Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap for Melbourne's East

Strategies

1. Ensure there are documented and recurrent processes for undertaking and recording on-site risk and safety assessments for open space sites and trails.
2. Select new tree species for specific locations based on safety, suitability, whole-of-life cost and maintenance requirements.
3. Co-locate community groups within facilities already in open space locations to support use across a greater spread of hours to improve natural surveillance.
4. Encourage the replacement of solid fencing on reserve boundaries with open style fencing to encourage greater passive surveillance.
5. Ensure that a regime of regular maintenance, rectification or replacement, as well as installation sign off, is in place for all assets.
6. Ensure trees in public open space are valued as assets for the purposes of management and institute a cost recovery regime for damage or unauthorised tree removal.
7. Improve shade by planting appropriate trees wherever possible to provide shade and shelter in public places.
8. Incorporate Active and Safer by Design Principles in the planning and design of open space.
9. Minimise conflict between activities in spaces serving large community gatherings through management plans and through clear occupancy policy.
10. Evolve design guidelines to reflect community expectations, best practice and sustainability outcomes.
11. Utilise Best Value principles to ensure that design, provision of services, asset renewal and accessibility processes reflect the fiscal efficiency constraints on Council.
12. Design criteria for undertaking sustainability and asset life span modelling to support asset management decisions.
13. Implement a process to identify and remove dated or unused assets.



Policy Position 12

Open space management will actively protect and nurture the health of natural environments containing significant trees, waterways and native flora, fauna and habitat.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 4.1, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 6.11, 6.14 and 8.2
- Habitat Corridors Strategy
- Sites of Biological Significance Study
- Stormwater Management Plan
- Sustainability Strategy
- Water Sensitive City Strategy
- Waterways of Maroondah Strategy
- Tree Management Policy
- Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap for Melbourne's East

Strategies

1. Ensure there is a net gain in tree planting programs in areas of open space (more trees planted than perish and/or are removed on an annual basis).
2. Identify, record, and protect notable trees and habitat in public open space through appropriate management, maintenance and education programs.
3. Protect remnant native vegetation along roadsides, ridgelines, water courses and in open space.
4. Implement planting and maintenance practices and ongoing audits and monitoring of works to ensure good tree and plant health, to maximise establishment success rate, enhance safety and to aid water conservation.
5. Seek to protect key sites of biological significance and corridors of environment importance and negotiate to have these managed consistently under one land management agency, to the highest possible standard.
6. Ensure that relevant strategies, management plans and policies are regularly updated (e.g. Sites of Biological Significance, Notable Trees Register, Bushland Management Plans).
7. Ensure staff, suppliers, consultants, developers, contractors and volunteers operating in open space are aware of, and accountable to, Council's environmental management practices and principles.
8. Enhance recreational, amenity, habitat and open space values along Maroondah's waterways in partnership with other land owners/managers.
9. Continue to support "Friends Of" environmental groups and residents abutting corridors to address localised weed infestation, pest control, and revegetation and other habitat protection works in waterway corridors and bushland reserves.
10. Expand tree value database to include all open space sites, including properties adjoining Council open space where those trees have an impact on the amenity of open space.



Policy Position 13

Open space management will ensure that open space environments are maintained and improved through responsible decision making and service provision that considers site capacity, community need, user expectations and available resources.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 4.1, 6.5, 6.11, 7.1 and 8.2
- Council Plan
- Asset Management Policy and Strategy
- Active and Healthy Ageing Initiative
- Youth Plan
- Climate Change Adaptation Roadmap for Melbourne's East

Strategies

1. Maintain collaboration across Council Departments to achieve effective and efficient management systems for open space service delivery.
2. Develop an assessment tool to determine appropriateness of specific activities and usage levels at individual sites (e.g. dogs off/on lead, commercial users).
3. Establish a framework and methodology for the prioritisation and programming of asset improvements.
4. Develop a plan for the placement of designated dog off leash enclosures in support of Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan and broad management of dogs in open space.
5. Create mechanisms to support the enforcement of dogs on leash policies within open space.
6. Continue the Responsible Pet Owners campaign that encourages and facilitates owners to utilise infrastructure that supports the program.
7. Review open space capacity to host specific events, including mapping available infrastructure (car parking, amenities, utilities, etc.) to ensure spread of adequately resourced parks for Council and public events.
8. Develop equitable and transparent processes for responding to and administering requests for commercial and non-commercial organised activities within open space.
9. Progressively develop maintenance and management plans for key reserves to highlight and set in place specific directions on important site issues and characteristics.
10. Review tenancy of open space by user groups in reference to open community access and equity.
11. Enhance Council's register for open space assets that includes reference to detailed asset specifications for installation, maintenance and renewal.
12. Ensure that Council policy on allocation and use of open space is consistent with its position on responsible consumption of alcohol, gender equity and encouraging diverse use.
13. Develop a strategy to address the management and activation of existing Council owned skate, BMX and youth oriented facilities.
14. Enforce regulations relating to commercial and promotional signage within and facing open space.
15. Review public toilet layout design and location network to ensure design matches site and community needs.



Open space promotion

Open space promotion is how Council encourages residents, community groups and visitors to appreciate and make the most of our open space assets.

Policy Position 14

Open space promotion will embrace the use of technology to connect residents and visitors to increase awareness of, and encourage use of, Maroondah’s open spaces.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 1.18, 5.11, 8.6 and 8.7
- Physical Activity Strategy
- Information Communication and Technology Strategy

Strategies

1. Investigate the capacity for mobile technology to promote and assist with in-transit connectivity with the shared trail network.
2. Enhance Council’s website to better promote open space, exercise trails and other recreational opportunities.
3. Improve signage and trail markings in open space to regulate and inform users.
4. Explore the viability of a Maroondah ‘App’ to show what facilities and attractions are located in a park.
5. Celebrate open spaces and encourage community life through connection to cultural and arts promotions.
6. Promote open spaces with specific information on the physical, mental and social health benefits of outdoor recreation.
7. Promote and develop existing open space use through Maroondah’s leisure, cultural and community facilities and encourage programming beyond the walls of the facility and into surrounding spaces.
8. Publicise the location of social family recreation spaces, the facilities provided and whom they target (e.g. age groups and activities).
9. Develop a new suite of promotional images that reflect changing demographics and new innovations in open space provision.
10. Ensure that the degree of accessibility and availability of appropriate facilities are well advertised and promoted.
11. Embed scan technology (QR code) on park signage for visitors to access more detailed interpretive guidance information via their mobile phones/ tablets.
12. Implement a plan to rationalise signage onto ‘totems’ where there is a proliferation of signage structures impacting the visual amenity at open spaces.
13. Identify, document and promote specific areas that are no dogs or dogs off leash throughout the Maroondah community.

Value of open space assets in Maroondah:
\$234million

Policy Position 15

Open space promotions will consider current and emerging local area demographics when developing spaces and promoting activities to ensure they respond to community need and expectation.

Council Framework connection:

- Maroondah 2040: Key Directions 3.2 and 6.7
- Physical Activity Strategy
- Active & Healthy Ageing Initiative
- Youth Plan
- Children's Plan

Strategies

1. Publish open space information relative to specific age brackets and interest groups.
2. Partner with schools to promote community and school objectives around enhanced physical activity and encouraging children to walk and cycle to school safely.
3. Use data from the Housing Strategy to identify specific demographic areas to target events, programs or development for that local area.
4. Apply a necessity test for signage to ensure signage is relevant, clear and regulations are enacted and enforced for areas such as playgrounds, sports fields, and BBQ's.
5. Provide information using a range of languages and mediums, about park facilities, accessibility, walking routes and programs that encourage the use of open space by the whole community.
6. Undertake specific promotions to facilitate greater participation and access amongst specific demographic groups including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups, young people, people with a disability, older adults and women.
7. Undertake promotions to connect children and families with the natural environment for the purpose of play, education and greater awareness.
8. Ensure open space projects consider resources for promotion and activation of spaces during initial phase of provision.
9. Create partnership projects with specific departments/agencies contributions to drive targeted promotion of activities.
10. Continue to monitor and report against participation numbers and resource investment into informal physical activity promotion.
11. Promote the wide range of play and social opportunities for children and youth that are provided throughout the municipality.





Evaluation



The Open Space Strategy is designed to be implemented over a 10 year period. It is envisaged that it will be the role of the Asset Management Department and the Open Space Reference Group(s) to manage and monitor progress of implementation.

The evaluation of the Open Space Strategy will be undertaken through Action Plan reviews, annual reporting mechanisms, Service Delivery Plan outcomes, capital works reporting procedures and through the Strategic Planning Department's strategy integration process. Specific responsibilities for reporting will be established within the "Terms of Reference" of the Open Space Reference Group(s).



Throughout the life of the Maroondah Open Space Strategy, the strategies listed will need to be reviewed in context with any changes to the Maroondah Open Space Policy.

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Translating and Interpreter Service

13 14 50


National Relay Service (NRS)

13 36 77

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