

PURPOSE

The Maroondah Open Space Policy establishes Council’s position in relation to the engagement, planning, development, management and promotion of its open space environments and assets.

SCOPE

The Maroondah Open Space Policy is applicable across all City of Maroondah owned and managed open space landholdings and assets. The policy also guides Council’s engagement, negotiations and responses to private and public land owners in relation to open space provisions and connections within Maroondah, where land is not owned by Council. All policy statements are developed in context with, and aligned to, a wide range of adopted Maroondah City Council strategies, plans and studies.

OBJECTIVES

The policy aims to establish position statements that:

- Align directions of open space provision with the Maroondah 2040 Community 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 for allocation of funding resources towards open space projects.
- 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 Council.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

Community consultation that has been undertaken for various Council strategies, consistently demonstrates the value the community places on public open space. Open space is central to the perception of ‘liveability’ within Maroondah and feedback emphasises the importance of parks, trails, natural environments, sporting and recreational facilities. The driving principle therefore is that open space is vital for community enrichment and so should be delivered in a fair, accountable and aspirational manner.

The community has also emphasised an expectation for the enhancement of open spaces in the future to ensure that they cater for a broad range of age groups, abilities and recreational pursuits. For this reason, the Open Space Policy sets a platform for the improvement of Maroondah’s open space in accordance with principles of enhanced functionality, connectivity, accessibility, safety, diversity, equity, sustainability and vibrancy.

Policy Control Schedule

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Policy creation date: March 2016	Current version approved: << Insert text >>	Current version number: 1.0	Policy review date: July 2018
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RELATIONSHIP TO THE MAROONDAH 2040 COMMUNITY VISION

The Maroondah Open Space Policy responds to, aligns with, and contributes towards, the community vision and key directions, specifically:

A safe, healthy and active community – Key Directions 1.1, 1.2, 1.12, 1.17, 1.18, 1.19, 1.20, 1.21,

A prosperous and learning community – Key Direction 2.17

A vibrant and culturally rich community – Key Directions 3.2, 3.5, 3.6, 3.8

A clean, green and sustainable community – Key Directions 4.1, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.10, 4.12

An accessible and connected community – Key Directions 5.6, 5.9, 5.11

An attractive, thriving and well-built community – Key Directions 6.5, 6.7, 6.11, 6.13, 6.14

An inclusive and diverse community – Key Directions 7.1, 7.4, 7.11, 7.14

A well governed and empowered community – Key Directions 8.2, 8.4, 8.6, 8.8, 8.10, 8.11, 8.13

ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL'S MISSION AND VALUES

The policy aligns with five areas, being engagement, planning, development, management and promotion. These areas are, in essence, the roles Council undertakes in the provision of open space for the community. The policy supports the implementation of Council's mission and values through the creation of policy positions that will lead to quality, accessible, well planned and sustainable open spaces. Council's key values are listed below, together with a statement of how the Open Space Policy underpins these values.

Co-operation	The Open Space Policy acknowledges that shared knowledge and common goals creates value and accountability for the community.
Commitment	The Open Space Policy identifies that it is the right of all of the community to access and utilise open space and not just select individuals or groups.
Communication	The Open Space Policy specifies that community consultation is the essence of achieving community input and community support.
Continuous Improvement and Innovation	The Open Space Policy emphasises that quality systems and innovative processes are crucial for a municipality with growing expectations on open space resources and assets.

BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

The development of the Open Space Policy has been undertaken within the following governance and environmental contexts.

Social and Political

- The community's high expectation for a leafy green municipality with quality, well managed open spaces.
- The recognition that open spaces may take different forms from bushland to purpose built community spaces.
- Increasing population and housing density forecasts for Maroondah in the coming decade.
- A growing trend towards unstructured recreation activity and use of open space.
- A desire to encourage physical activity for the health and wellbeing it provides for the community in response to increasing sedentary lifestyles.
- The need to encourage complementary open space uses and manage conflicting use of open space.

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Environmental and Cultural

- Limited new open space land available to the Maroondah community through developments in the future.
- The need for the existing open space network to cater for formal sports, informal recreation, environmental values and other specific purposes requiring balanced strategic consideration.
- Increased necessity to preserve and protect natural environments as housing densities grow.
- The recognition that some open spaces are specifically for the purpose of appreciating and protecting them.
- The need to protect cultural assets located in, and values associated with, public open space.
- The need to implement climate change mitigation strategies.

Economic

- State Government legislated rate capping for Councils from 1 July 2016 increasing the need for processes to prioritise open space improvements.
- Increasing demand and expectations for ancillary sporting infrastructure, such as social buildings, car parks and training facilities as well as ground surface improvement driving increased cost of infrastructure in open space.
- The need to examine the cost/benefit value of open spaces where access is limited to a small number of users.

Legislative and Historical

- Plan Melbourne Refresh (2016) and its emphasis on activity centre development placing pressures on existing open space provisions in those areas.
- Protecting and enhancing the historical and current perception of Maroondah as a leafy green community.
- The necessity to maintain public safety in open space and to mitigate risks associated with use of open space.

POLICY POSITIONS

The following statements form the Maroondah Open Space Policy and establish Council's positions in relation to its key roles for delivering open space environments and assets throughout Maroondah.

Open Space Engagement will:

1. Actively seek to understand and respond to the aspirations of the community when planning for open space development.
2. Employ engagement processes for site planning and development that will include consultation with relevant authorities, and where appropriate, foster partnerships or advocate, to ensure effective improvement of open space.

Open Space Planning will:

3. 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.
4. Establish an integrated network of trails across the municipality that provides connectivity for travel purposes as well as for recreational use.
5. Identify opportunities for strategic land acquisitions which would improve the accessibility, connectivity, natural environment and functionality of Maroondah's open spaces.

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- 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 multi-purpose use.

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.
- 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.
- Review development requests using a thorough site assessment and analysis process which considers outcomes for all stakeholders, to ensure responsible decision making.
- Seek to preserve and rehabilitate natural bushland environments, wildlife corridors and remnant vegetation to nurture a sustainable environmental system.

Open Space Management will:

- Use thorough and accountable risk and safety assessment procedures to ensure best practice design, construction and maintenance processes.
- Actively protect and nurture the health of natural environments containing significant trees, waterways and native flora, fauna and habitat.
- 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

Open Space Promotion will:

- Embrace the use of technology to connect residents and visitors to increase awareness of, and encourage appropriate use of, Maroondah's open spaces.
- Consider current and emerging local area demographics when developing spaces and promoting activities to ensure they respond to community need and expectation.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Open Space Policy is prepared with specific alignment and reference to the Maroondah 2040 Community Vision and other reference documents. It is driven by the detailed feedback received from the community through a range of recent consultation initiatives.

The Open Space Policy will be underpinned by the Open Space Strategy. The implementation process will be facilitated by an Open Space Reference Group(s) made up of responsible teams across Council involved in open space planning, management, promotion, development and engagement. The Reference Group(s) will be accountable to ensuring open space action plans and service delivery plans are created and delivered in accordance with the adopted policy positions.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Asset Management Service Area (through the Open Space Coordinator) will be the initial driver of the Open Space Reference Group(s). The Strategic Planning Service Area will contribute to the integration of the Open Space

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Policy and Strategy with other Maroondah strategic directions to ensure consistent and accountable connection of Council actions.

RELATED LEGISLATION

There is no specific legislation that establishes or sets a single regulatory basis for the Maroondah Open Space Policy and Strategy. There is a wide range of legislation, guidelines, codes of practice and Australian Standards that are applicable to specific aspects of open space contributions, asset design, installation, usage and maintenance.

RELATED POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The Policy is influenced by and interrelated with, a range of Council policies, strategies, plans and studies including:

Parent documents	
The Maroondah 2040 - Our Future Together	Maroondah City Council Plan 2013-2017
Legislated Strategies and Plans	
Municipal Strategic Statement	Community Wellbeing Plan 2013-2017
Adopted Strategies and Plans	
Water Sensitive City Strategy	Habitat Corridors Strategy
Maroondah Children's Plan	Arts and Cultural Development Strategy
Waterways of Maroondah Strategy	Active and Healthy Ageing Initiative
Sustainability Strategy	Asset Management Policy and Strategy
Maroondah Bicycle Strategy	Physical Activity Strategy
Disability Policy and Action Plan	Maroondah Youth Plan
Maroondah Housing Strategy	Activity Centre Structure Plans
Carbon Neutral Strategy	Pedestrian Strategy

DEFINITIONS

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

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

The Open Space Strategy 2016 has been developed to support the implementation of this Policy.

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