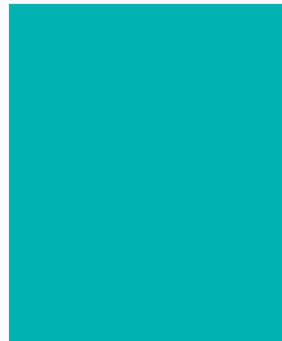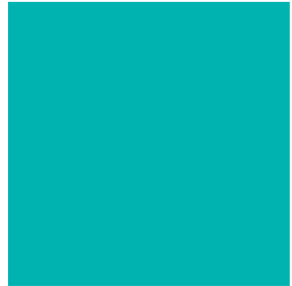# Open Space Plan 2016-2026

Melton
City
Council

February 2016

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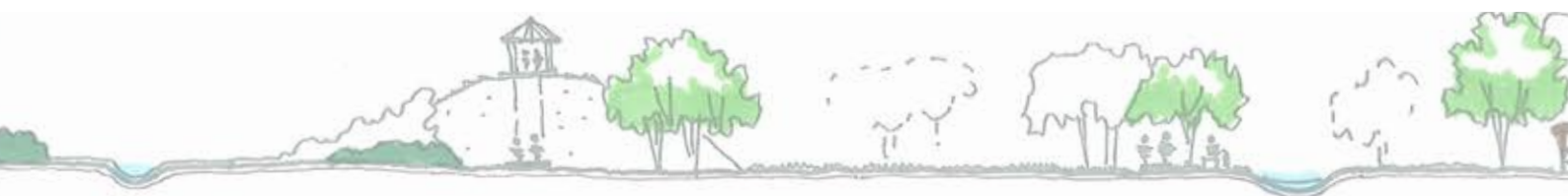
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1	11.05.15	Plan draft	CP & DC	DC	AC
2	11.09.15	Final draft	CP & DC	DC	AC
3	20.11.15	Final draft (revised)	CP & DC	DC	AC

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

A successful open space network is the result of considerable planning and an understanding of local influences (climate; geography; social, culture and political capacity). Therefore, this Open Space Plan (The Plan) is based on foundations that consider and embrace these matters. It has been developed giving thought to what is known about the City's open space, an understanding of local people's preferences to different open space types and functions, Council's (and the community's) capacity to deliver the infrastructure and the State's preferences and guidelines for planning for open space.

Melton City's approach to open space planning is framed by the legislative and policy environment for Victoria, Metropolitan Planning Authority and Melton City Council.

Strategic issues such as population growth, compact living and sustainability goals have been considered. The community's aspirations and expectations in regard to open space have also been paramount in the development of this Plan.

1.2 Scope

The Plan focuses on public open space. Natural areas, including state-owned conservation lands, have been considered for their current role in providing for nature-based recreation, however, are not assessed for future (land) provision as its primary purpose is for conservation and preservation (not active or passive recreation). This Plan does not provide detailed analysis of each individual Council reserve or detailed operational actions[1], however, it acts to provide strategic guidance on key identified issues from the open space network.

Information contained within this Plan is based on an audit and assessment of the City's open space network, and is a snapshot in time only. This information is accurate as at May 2015. Any open space developments or data updates since this time have not been taken into account.

The Open Space Plan is presented as two documents - a Background Report and the Plan. The Background Report provides the reader with contextual understanding, while the Plan provides a summary of the open space classification framework, open space analysis and actions.

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1   *Addressed in Council's Review of Parks and Reserves (2013)*

Toolern Creek Linear Reserve

1.3 Strategic context

The effectiveness of the Open Space Plan will be dependent on the actions and directions being aligned to key outputs from various teams across Council. The Plan will need to be integrated with key Council documents including the Council Plan, Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Municipal Strategic Statement as well as a range of department-specific plans and strategies.

Understanding where the Plan sits within Council's integrated planning framework is important to ensure it aligns with key directions and is pitched at an appropriate strategic level. Ultimately, the Plan will provide a basis for planning and development of open space within the City of Melton.

The diagram below highlights the strategic alignment of the Open Space Plan with other key Council documents.

Strategic Alignment - Open Space Plan

Council Plan

Municipal Strategic Statement

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

Open Space Plan

Ageing Well Strategy

Safer City Plan

Youth Strategy

Early Years Plan

Disability Action Plan

2. What is open space?

2.1 Defining open space?

The definition of open space can be as varied as the communities it serves. For this Plan, open space is Council-managed land that is broadly available for public recreation, pedestrian and cycle movement, sport or for nature conservation purposes. The term 'open space' is a collective term with a number of subsets. Other terms that are often used when discussing open space include:

☐ Parks – publicly accessible open space with specific infrastructure to support recreation functions. While the term 'parks' generally conjures up thoughts of playgrounds and barbecue facilities, the term 'sport parks' is also common and refers to open space providing sport (active recreation) opportunities.

☐ Passive open space - open space that primarily provides a setting for informal play and physical activity, relaxation and social interaction

☐ Active open space - open space that primarily provides a setting for formal structured sporting activities.

This Plan also includes environmental open space that provides a setting for biodiversity and environmental protection.

This Plan breaks open space into three core function areas - passive recreation, active recreation and environmental protection. The photos below illustrate examples of each.

Passive Recreation

Active Recreation

Environmental Protection

2.2 Benefits of open space

Open space can improve an individual's physical and psychological health; strengthen communities and the economy; and make neighbourhoods more attractive places to live, work and visit through implementation of Healthy by Design Principles and Environments for Health Framework.

Benefits to individuals

- Improved health is available to individuals through participation in open space activities. Research has shown[1] that quality access to open space (specifically parks, sporting fields and their connectivity) increases physical activity frequency
- Opportunities exist to develop physical, social and decision-making skills through participation in open space activities
- Participation in open space activities and connection to nature can help individuals explore strategies for conflict resolution and enhance mental health and wellbeing by reducing stress and anxiety.

Benefits to communities

- Open space provision is essential for strengthening and maintaining a healthy community. Open space areas can provide a focal point for community gathering, promote interaction and combat social isolation[2]
- Participation in open space activities can improve social cohesion, build cultural tolerance and support for seniors and people with a disability
- Open space can provide areas of high visual amenity and attractiveness
- Open space areas can be used to record and retain history through place names, commemorative buildings and memorials and preserved areas of cultural significance
- Open space can provide connectivity. Recreation paths along open space corridors can link residential areas with key community facilities
- Open space can provide buffers between incompatible land uses
- Well-designed, maintained, effectively utilised and activated open space contributes to improved perceptions of safety and can lead to reduced opportunity for crime to occur[3].

Benefits to the environment

- Open space can help to maintain a sustainable environment by reducing water run-off and flooding-related problems, offsetting carbon emissions and filtering pollutants (trees)[4]
- Where open space provides for quality active transport opportunities (e.g. cycleways and walking paths/trails) and walking and cycling replace car trips, additional environmental benefits include reduced traffic congestion, reduced air pollution, reduced greenhouse emissions and reduced noise pollution[5]
- Daytime temperatures have been found to be up to 3°C cooler in large urban parks than the surrounding streets as a result of moisture released from trees[6]
- Open spaces provide habitats that support ecosystems. Even highly maintained urban open spaces can be host to a range of mammals, insects, birds and aquatic plant life[7]
- Open space, and in particular natural open space, can have high environmental values as this land may support species and ecosystems not reserved in national parks or other conservation reserves. They may support species and ecosystems that are of national or state significance; and may act as corridor linkages between larger areas of environmental value.

Benefits to the economy

- Quality open space can increase the value of nearby properties[8]
- Creating supportive environments where participation in sport and physical activity is accessible, available and affordable, can aid in reducing health care costs associated with increased rates of overweight and obesity, as well as their related non-communicable diseases (e.g. cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some cancers)[1]
- Quality open space can attract businesses, employees and tourists. Research has shown that recreation, parks and open space are some of the most important factors when new business locations are considered[9]
- Many events are hosted in open space areas - from small local community-based events, through to those of national and international importance.

1 World Health Organisation, Global Action Plan for the prevention and control on non-communicable diseases 2013-20.

2 Montgomery, J. (2005). Community Place and Buildings: The Role of Community Facilities in Developing Community Spirit. Stronger Communities Conference, Melbourne, Australia.

3 City of Melton, Safer City Plan 2015-17.

4 Relf, D. (1996). Plants Actually Clean the Air

5 Western Australia Department of Sport and Recreation.(2009), factsandstats – Benefits of Physical Activity. - www.dsr.wa.gov.au

6 Urban Green Space Task Force (2002). Green Spaces, Better Places.

7 XI World Forestry Congress (1997). Significance of Green Areas to Biodiversity and the Environment.

8 Tibbatts, D. (2002). Your Parks – The benefits of parks and greenspace. Urban Parks Forum.

9 Trust for Public Land (United States of America). (1999). Open Space and Attracting Investment – a forum presentation.

2.3 Trends in open space

Participation patterns in sport and leisure are changing. Factors such as a move toward non-organised structured sport, increased use of technology, and increased time pressures have all had a significant impact on the industry. Understanding these trends (and their impacts) is important as Council looks to develop strategies, programs and facilities to encourage people to engage in recreation and environmental activities.

Provision considerations

Expectations of flexible hours

☐ With the amount of time available for recreation pursuits decreasing, participants are seeking flexible hours to undertake activities. Walking, running and cycling are likely to continue to be popular forms of activity as participants can be flexible in when, where and how long they undertake the activity.

Move toward indoor sport?

☐ Anecdotally, within the sport and recreation industry there is some suggestion of a move toward indoor sport (as opposed to outdoor field sports). A notion that is supported by Council's Active Participation Surveys that highlight that participation in indoor sports more than doubled between 2010 and 2013

☐ If this becomes a trend, it may be a result of a preference for activity in a more controlled climate (e.g. out of the summer sun and winter chill), the provision of flexible hours of play and/or for the greater proportion of mid-week competition opportunities generally provided by indoor sport compared with outdoor.

Lengthening seasons

☐ Further impacting on recreation time choices, is a move toward year-round sport. Nation-wide, a number of sports are lengthening their seasons well past the traditional summer/winter season to the point where it becomes difficult for participants to be involved in more than one activity each year. Alternatively, sports are running two seasons or a modified season (e.g. 20/20 winter cricket) as an adjunct to the primary season.

Field overuse

☐ While participation rates for adults in organised sport and recreation activities has decreased somewhat in recent years, sustained participation rates by young people, increasing populations and increasing range of opportunities have resulted in field overuse and/or lack of fields in a number of areas

☐ A growing trend is for councils to develop synthetic playing fields in an attempt to address field overuse, water conservation and field damage. Melton City Council has three synthetic field sites (Brookside Recreation Reserve, Kurunjang Recreation Reserve and Springside Recreation Reserve). They have proven popular and hard-wearing and able to accommodate greater use when compared to traditional grass surfaces.

Multi-purpose community facilities

☐ A trend in open space design and delivery is the move away from single-purpose or dedicated facilities towards a cost and land use efficient model of multi-purpose facilities (e.g. Arnolds Creek Recreation Reserve, that is co-located with a government primary school, and includes a wide range of facilities).

Importance of play

☐ Evidence indicates that the community is placing a higher value on open space as the density of residential developments increases and block sizes become smaller

☐ Play is a key driver of the health and wellbeing of children as well as a tool for their education and development - with active and social play adding to cognitive and social development. Thus, children need access to a range of play opportunities around their neighbourhood as they grow up

☐ A play experience should be vibrant and exciting. Interesting and interactive places to play and explore may be created by designing evocative landscapes such as sculpting the earth or utilising the natural contours, planting (e.g. vegetated tunnels or mazes, forests) and/or utilising textures and materials such as creative paving patterns (stepping stones, steps, edgings for balancing). A playspace may incorporate interesting views, showcase art or innovation (mobiles and alternate energy sources), sculptural furniture, landscape structures or buildings.

☐ The common characteristic in quality playspaces is that the infrastructure suggests (but never dictates) how it is to be used. Moreover, each element can be used in many ways – commonsense says that a toddler will use a mist water play area quite differently to a 12-year old child.
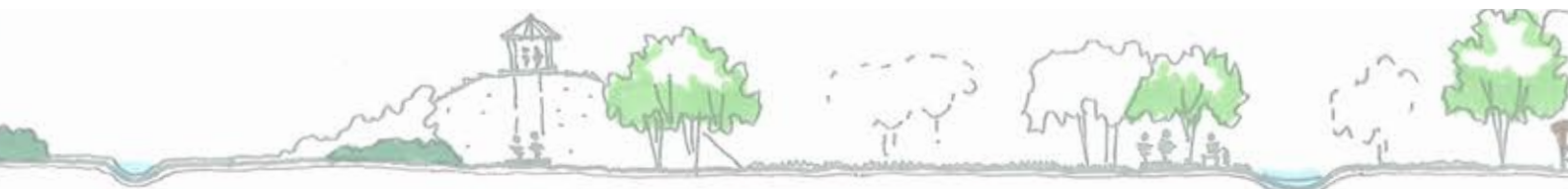
Risk management

☐ In the late 90's and early 2000's spiralling costs of liability insurance premiums placed added stresses on community organisations and councils. Many of these groups responded by developing policies and risk management strategies to control and avoid risk in an effort to reduce (or contain) premiums.

☐ Risk management has seen a reduction in play opportunities through play sanitisation[1]. Many play elements have been removed from public areas through perceived risk and hazard identification. Elements such as large open slides, climbing frames and monkey bars have been removed in many councils.

Water availability

☐ Water is critically important for the management of the landscape and to service the facilities that are located within open space

☐ Potable water is costly. The availability of recycled water is improving and its use (along with stormwater) should continue to be investigated to service both irrigation and toilet facilities. Water sensitive urban design should be incorporated in all landscape development

☐ Council has put in place a number of actions to reduce water consumption associated with recreation reserves including the implementation of a warm season grass program at a number of sports grounds and the use of drought-resistant plants when landscaping.

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1 *Kidsafe NSW, 2013*

Participation considerations

A snapshot:

- ☐ For adults – a move away from traditional organised sport toward physical activity (e.g. walking) and non-organised (social) sport
- ☐ For children – decreases in physical activity (although formal sport participation has not changed), increases in obesity and increases in the amount of leisure time in indoor activities such as computer use.

Impacts of technology

- ☐ Increases in the amount of time young people are spending playing computer games, using the internet and watching television is limiting available time for recreation
- ☐ Councils are beginning to embrace technology as an opportunity to encourage people to use open space. Emerging technologies, such as QR (Quick Response) codes, along with the provision of Wi-Fi in open spaces are popular.

An ageing society

- ☐ The population of Melton City Council is expected to age slightly in coming years[1] (in contrast to much of Australia where marked ageing is expected)
- ☐ An older society will have a greater demand for passive and informal recreation opportunities than a younger society. Access to formal sport and play opportunities will continue to be important as the numbers of young people will continue to increase.

Navan Park

Becoming time poor

- ☐ Extended trading hours, shift work, increasing numbers in part-time and casual employment, and new communications media are changing the concept of the nine to five, five-day work week to a more flexible work/life style.
- ☐ For a significant proportion of Melton City Council residents, there is additional time pressure associated with the need to travel outside the local government area for work. The additional time pressures involved in travel to work further reduce the uncommitted time available for physical activity and recreation pursuits.
- ☐ The traditional notion of recreation participation on weekends is diminishing and people are seeking more flexibility in facility opening hours and programming, scheduling of training and competition and opportunities for drop-in drop-out participation.

Rising cost of sport

- ☐ The cost of participating in sport is increasing. Cost is now a barrier to participation for many people.
- ☐ With the City of Melton having a moderately high proportion of people from a low socio-economic background (particularly in Melton Township), access to free and/or low cost physical activity options will grow in importance.

2.4 Implications for the open space network

The benefits and importance of open space are clearly evident at both an individual and community-wide level. The important consideration for Council is the delivery of an open space network that is accessible and meets the widest demand whilst retaining sustainable approaches to planning, management and maintenance.

The Open Space Plan assists Council to expand upon the existing open space network (and planning framework) to ensure a wide range of opportunities are available to the community. For example, the Plan recommends the inclusion of district-level passive open space (in addition to local-level provision) in new communities (e.g. where precinct structure plans are yet to be developed). This will provide scope for a variety of exciting playspaces and for the development of further passive recreation opportunities that are attracting and inviting for all ages.

Similarly, the Plan espouses the importance of developing flexible active open space areas that have the ability to adapt to change as sporting trends are established and change. Who knows - potentially formal sports and outdoor activities that do not even exist or are not popular today may be booming in 10-20 years time.

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1   forecast.id (accessed May 2015)

3. Analysis

3.1 Population and demographic considerations

Understanding population size, growth and demographic characteristics is fundamental to responding to community needs and providing adequate and appropriate open space. Estimated population projections also assist in quantifying likely future demand and in prioritising land/facility developments.

Population projections

The City of Melton is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria. The population estimate (provided by forecast. id) for 2016 is 134,967. By 2026, population forecasts of more than 207,000 are indicated while, at ultimate development, Melton City's population is expected to reach approximately 440,000. This is more than 3 times the current population.

Interestingly, the current age structure is projected to continue into the future, with only slight changes in age cohort percentages. Compared to many communities throughout Australia, Melton City Council is not ageing markedly. The predicted ongoing popularity of the local government area as a location for young families is expected to maintain high levels in the younger age brackets.
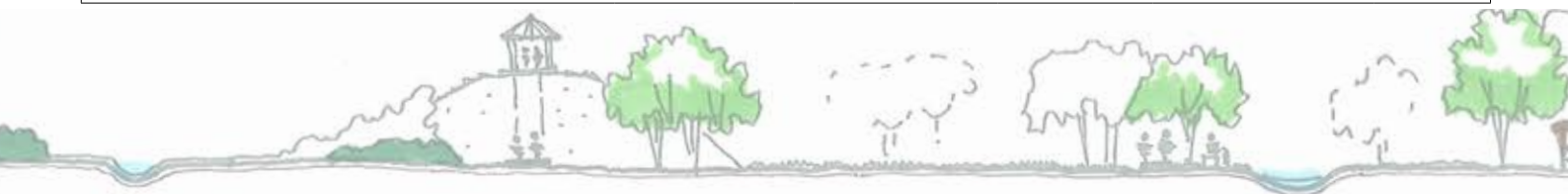
Demographic considerations

A summary of population characteristics (from forecast.id) for the City, Melton Township and Melton East (referred to as the Eastern Corridor in this Plan) are presented below. For comparison purposes, statistics for Greater Melbourne and Victoria are also displayed. Stand-out characteristics include:

- [ ] High proportion of young people (24.7%) and couples with children (43.4%). Particularly high levels in Melton East where 54.1% of the households are couples with children
- [ ] Reflecting the higher proportion of young people, the City of Melton is also typified by a low proportion of residents 65 years and over
- [ ] Melton East has a high proportion of people born overseas and speaking a language other than English at home
- [ ] Melton City Council has a moderate index of relative socio-economic disadvantage (1002.1), making it slightly more disadvantaged than Greater Melbourne (1020.3) and Victoria (1009.6). Interestingly, clear differences exist between Melton Township and Melton East. As an older area (and home to a larger proportion of older residents), Melton Township shows significantly higher degrees of disadvantage (953.4) while Melton East (a newer area with younger population) has significantly lower levels of disadvantage (1043.4)
- [ ] Slightly lower proportion of dwellings with no internet (yet marked differences between Melton Township (19.2%) and Melton East (11.0%) are evident)
- [ ] Lower proportions of dwellings with no motor vehicles
- [ ] Lower proportion of residents undertaking volunteer activities.

Table 1. Demographic profile comparisons

Characteristics*	City of Melton %	Melton Township %	Melton East %	Greater Melbourne %	Victoria %
Age profile					
0 to 14	24.7	22.2	27.7	18.5	18.7
15 to 24	13.4	14.7	12.1	13.8	13.4
25 to 44	34.1	29.9	37.7	30.5	28.7
45 to 64	21.3	24.1	18.0	24.1	25.0
65 and over	6.5	9.0	4.5	13.1	14.2
Household composition					
Couples with children	43.4	33.1	54.1	33.6	31.8
Couples without children	21.2	22.7	19.5	23.5	24.6
One parent families	13.0	15.8	10.4	10.4	10.5
Lone person	15.7	20.1	10.8	22.3	23.5
Ethnicity					
Born overseas	27.8	20.3	34.6	31.4	26.2
Speaks language other than English at home	28.9	14.7	42.3	29.1	23.1
Socio-economic disadvantage					
Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage	1002.1	953.4	1043.4	1020.3	1009.6
Other characteristics					
Dwellings with no internet connection	15.1	19.2	11.0	16.8	19.1
Dwellings with no motor vehicles	4.0	5.8	2.4	9.0	8.3
Undertake volunteer activities	10.5	10.8	10.2	15.8	17.7
* This data is from the 2011 ABS Census (analysed by forecast.id)					

Implications for Council

Marked population growth will put additional pressure on existing facilities while expectations for new facilities will also continue. With a high proportion of young people and an emerging larger proportion of older residents, Council will face demand for both active recreation (e.g. playing fields, court sports and skate/bmx facilities) and for alternate recreation opportunities (e.g. walking, cycling, swimming and bowls).

With demographics which vary significantly throughout the City, it is vital for Council to plan for those areas based on their needs and the resources available to the community. As the Melton Township is significantly more socio-economically disadvantaged than Melton East, it is vital for open space to be located in areas which are easily accessible and allow for free recreation activities. It is also important that open space provides a higher level of recreation for the older age cohorts. In comparison, Melton East will require open space that continues to cater for younger families with children.

What might the City of Melton look like?

At ultimate development, the City of Melton may be:

☐ a large City with more than 440,000 residents

☐ a young city with many children and families

☐ a culturally diverse city

☐ a city with varied socio-economic backgrounds

Burnside Heights Recreation Reserve

Melton Phoenix football action

3.2 Open space provision

Current open space provision

Melton City Council's open space network includes approximately 300 open spaces as well as large areas of land for environmental and stormwater management purposes. Across the City, there is more than 1,000 hectares of Council-managed open space. From environmental areas, sporting grounds and recreation parklands to small local parks and creek-side linear open space opportunities, the open space network is an essential element in delivering and enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors.

City-wide open space supply

An assessment of the existing supply of open space has been undertaken for the City as a basis for beginning to assess future demand. This assessment is based on the '2015' population and the existing supply of open space across the City. The open space network has been broken down into core and non-core open space. This split helps to show those types of open space that can be planned for (and may be sought through a precinct structure plan (PSP)) - referred to as *core*, and the other open spaces that, while they provide a valuable benefit to the community, are not necessarily central to the active and passive recreation needs of the City of Melton's residents and visitors - referred to as *non-core*. The core open spaces are the focus of the Open Space Plan.
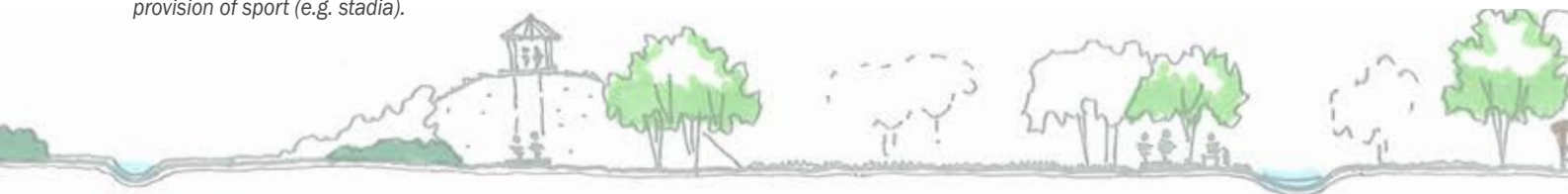
Classification framework

The open space classification framework is an agreed system that allocates open space, based on land and activity use within the City. Various open space types possess different values, functions and settings. Open space can be assessed in terms of its existing and likely future function (classification) and its role (hierarchy) within that function. The classification system is detailed in the table below.

Table 2. Open space classification framework

Core function and purpose	Classification	Hierarchy	Description
Passive recreation *Provides a setting for informal play and physical activity, relaxation and social interaction*	Passive recreation open space	☐ Local (core) ☐ District (core) ☐ Regional (core)	Provide a range of passive recreation activities in a predominately informal setting. The sites can also contribute to the amenity and environmental values of the City
		☐ Linear[1] (non-core)	Long and narrow interconnected open space that can contain natural creek lines and associated riparian vegetation. Linear reserves can also play an important secondary role providing cycle and pedestrian pathways, and values consistent with other open space categories
		☐ Encumbered[1] (non-core)	Encumbered open space is often associated with areas for stormwater, drainage and utility infrastructure. However, it can also add value to the core open space network through provision of pedestrian connections and enhancing visual amenity
Active recreation *Provides a setting for formal structured sporting activities*	Active recreation open space	☐ District (core) ☐ Regional (core)	Sites predominately used for active or competitive recreation including grassed or synthetic playing fields and courts
		☐ Specialised active (non-core)[2]	Open space provided for sporting activities where the nature of the sport precludes the easy transfer of use to an alternative sport, or the nature of the activity precludes free, unrestricted access to members of the public, or where the land and facility requirements result in provision of high level provision of sport (e.g. large stadia)
Environmental protection *Provides a setting where biodiversity is the primary purpose of the reserve*	Environmental open space	☐ Environmental[1] (non-core)	Reserves that contain biodiversity features of local, regional, state or federal significance. As the primary use of the open space is for environmental protection, the area is likely to be significantly encumbered and may preclude unrestricted public access. The reserve may provide a natural backdrop to a neighbourhood and/or recreation opportunities as a secondary function

1   *The development of environmental and linear open space is generally not a planned approach. Rather, the specific land characteristics dictate that open space parcels should be developed or preserved in a particular manner. It is noted that whilst encumbered land is required for other purposes (i.e. drainage), it can have a significant recreation and amenity benefit to the community and should be recognised as such (yet not substituted for unencumbered open space).*

2   *Specialised active sport is not considered core open space as the nature of the sport precludes the easy transfer of use to an alternative sport; or the nature of the activity precludes free, unrestricted access to members of the public; or where the land and facility requirements result in high level provision of sport (e.g. stadia).*

Desired standards of service

Desired standards of service (DSS) are the level of open space that Council strives to provide as a minimum across the LGA. DSS are often categorised under four broad measures - quantity of land for open space, access to open space, land characteristics and embellishments. The access and quantity standards are, traditionally, the two primary measures used to assess and plan for open space. Land characteristics and the level of embellishment provide additional information that should be used as a guide in developing open space. Guidelines for land characteristics and embellishment for each open space type are included in the Background Report.

Table 3. Desired standards of service - core open space

Classification	Hierarchy	Size	Accessibility	Provision rate
Passive open space	Local	0.2-2ha (min. 0.5ha generally preferred, unless smaller is considered fit-for-purpose)	400m	0.6ha/1,000 people
	District	2ha+	2km	0.3ha/1,000 people
	Regional[1]	20ha+	n/a	n/a
Active open space	District	6-15ha	1km	1.3ha/1,000 people
	Regional[1]	15ha+	n/a	n/a
Total core open space provision desired standard of service				2.2ha/1,000

1 - Council has determined that it will not set a desired standard of service for the provision of regional-level open space. The provision of this form of open space is considered to be on a site- and time-specific basis (rather than from a planned approach). Additionally, Parks Victoria is expected to take a lead role in providing regional passive open space.

Taylors Hill Recreation Reserve

Navan Park

Geographic planning areas

In order to assess the current demand for open space across the City, eleven geographic areas have been established. For ease of reference and to ensure data is presented in a logical manner, the existing supply of open space is discussed using these geographic areas. These areas are illustrated in the figure below, while the localities and PSPs included in these areas are highlighted in the adjoining table.
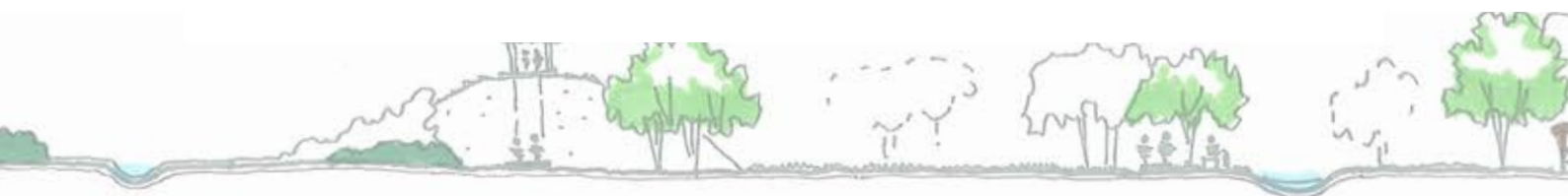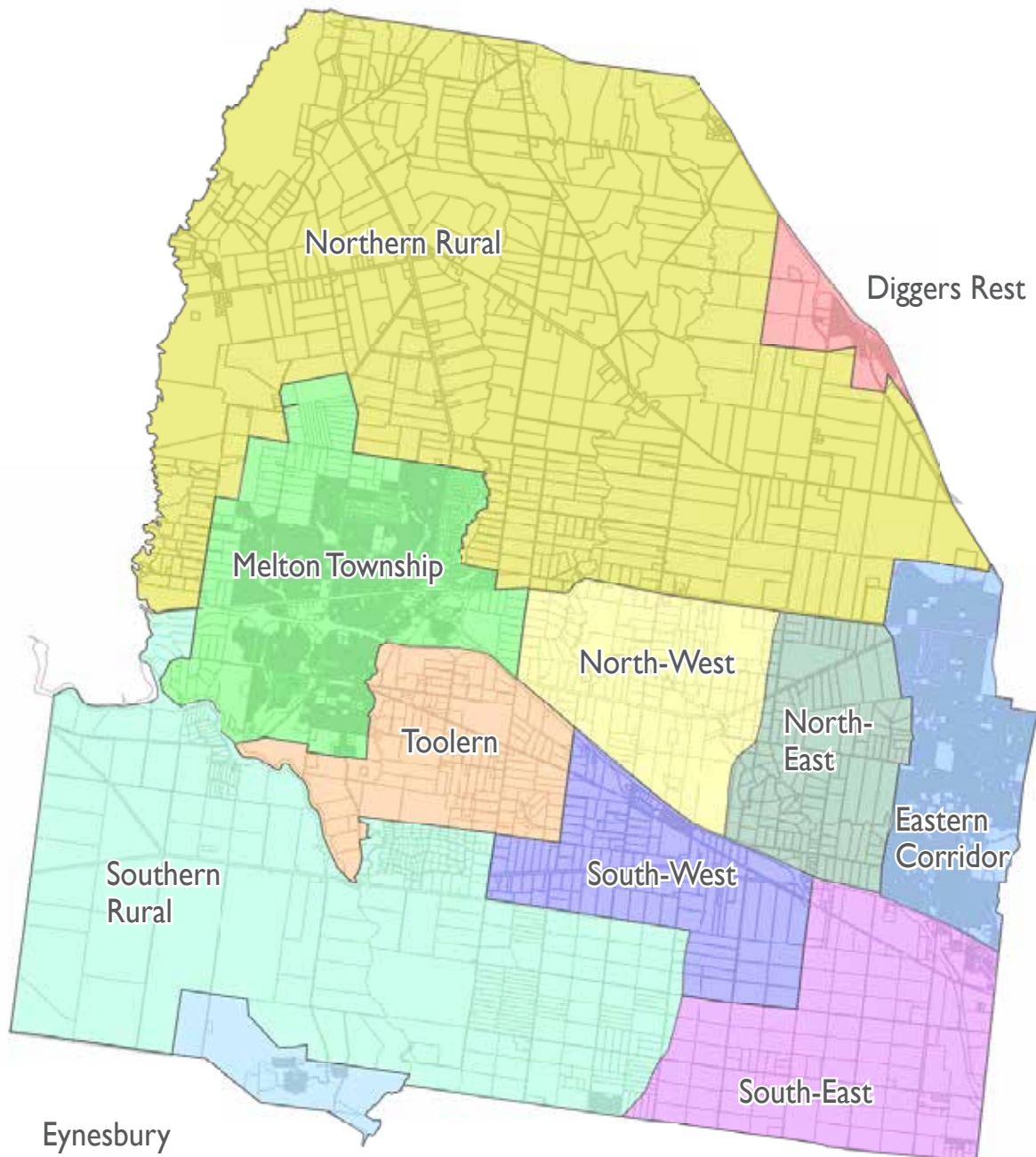

Northern Rural

Diggers Rest

Melton Township

North-West

North-East

Toolern

Eastern Corridor

Southern Rural

South-West

South-East

Eynesbury

Table 4. Localities and PSPs within planning areas

Geographic planning area	Included localities	Precinct structure plans
Northern Rural	☐ Toolern Vale ☐ Rural balance	
Diggers Rest	☐ Diggers Rest	☐ Diggers Rest (approved)
Melton Township	☐ Brookfield ☐ Kurunjang ☐ Melton ☐ Melton North ☐ Melton South ☐ Melton West	☐ Melton North (approved) ☐ Minns Road (yet to be planned) ☐ Bulmans Road (yet to be planned) ☐ Melton West (yet to be planned)
North-West	☐ Melton East ☐ Rockbank North ☐ Warrensbrook	☐ Melton East (yet to be planned) ☐ Rockbank North (approved) ☐ Warrensbrook (yet to be planned)
North-East	☐ Kororoit ☐ Plumpton ☐ Taylors Hill West	☐ Kororoit (under development) ☐ Plumpton (under development) ☐ Taylors Hill West (approved)
Eastern Corridor	☐ Burnside ☐ Burnside Heights ☐ Caroline Springs ☐ Hillside ☐ Taylors Hill	
Toolern	☐ Toolern ☐ Toolern Park	☐ Toolern (approved) ☐ Toolern Park (approved) ☐ Paynes Road (under development)
South-West	☐ Rockbank ☐ Rockbank South ☐ Mount Atkinson	☐ Rockbank (under development) ☐ Rockbank South (under development) ☐ Mount Atkinson (under development)
South-East	☐ Chartwell East ☐ Derrimut Fields ☐ Ravenhall ☐ Robinsons Road ☐ Tarneit Plains ☐ Warrawee	☐ Chartwell East (yet to be planned) ☐ Derrimut Fields (yet to be planned) ☐ Ravenhall (yet to be planned) ☐ Robinsons Road Employment Area North (approved) ☐ Robinsons Road Employment Area South (approved) ☐ Tarneit Plains (under development) ☐ Warrawee (yet to be developed)
Southern Rural	☐ Mount Cottrell ☐ Rural balance	
Eynesbury	☐ Eynesbury	☐ Eynesbury Township Development Plan (approved)

3.3 Demand and gap analysis - summary

Population predictions

By considering population predictions developed by forecast.id and those associated with precinct structure plans, a set of population forecasts have been established for each of the planning areas and for Council as a whole. Populations are provided for 2016, 2026 and ultimate build out.

The Council-wide population forecasts are included in the table below, while planning area populations are summarised in the Background Report

The City of Melton is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria. The projected 2026 population is more than 73,000 additional residents from 2016. Additionally, at ultimate development, Melton City's population is expected to reach 440,759 (more than 3 times larger than the 2016 population base). The majority of the population growth will occur in existing and planned precinct structure plan areas with limited growth expected to occur in established areas.

Table 5. City-wide population projections

Projected populations	2016	2026	Ultimate build out
City of Melton	134,967	207,256	440,759

Council-wide core open space assessment

The table below details the likely demand and gap assessment for the City of Melton's core open space extrapolated out until ultimate build out. It is important to note that regional-level core open space has been excluded from this table given that Council will not be developing a desired standard of service for this land type. However, clearly regional-level open space facilities are a key component of the open space network and have, thus, been included in the overall analysis and considered within the individual planning areas.

Table 6. City-wide core open space assessment

Classification	Applicable hierarchy	Current supply (ha)	Approved PSP (ha)	Proposed PSP (ha)[1]	Total supply (ha)[2]	Desired supply (ha)[3]	Ultimate gap (ha)[4]
Passive open space	Local Passive	85.56	89.18	104.34	279.08	264.46	14.62
	District Passive	58.28	0	52.17	110.45	132.23	-21.78
Active open space	District Active	103.96	128.18	226.07	458.21	572.99	-114.78

1 - Proposed PSP - where draft PSPs are yet to be developed, the DSS has been used to project open space development given population projections
2 - Total supply = current supply + approved PSP + proposed PSP
3 - Desired supply = ultimate build out population projection x DSS
4 - Ultimate gap = total supply - desired supply (Note: positive numbers reflect an over-supply, negative numbers reflect an under-supply)

Passive open space

The analysis shows that Council has planned for more than 245ha of additional passive open space through approved and proposed PSPs. With the planned provision, an over-supply in local passive open space and a significant under-supply of district passive open space is forecast.

The 21.78ha shortfall in district passive open space is a reflection of no provision of this type included in any of the approved PSPs. There are currently three regional passive open space parks (totalling 42.52ha) that have the potential to offset this district-level shortfall somewhat. However, all of these parks are located in Melton Township.
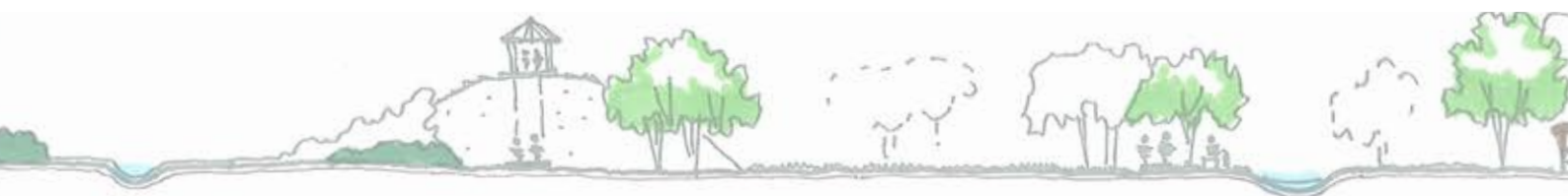
Inspections and consultation have noted the limited scope in provision of passive open space. Many of the passive open space parks offer similar recreation facilities, limiting the range and diversity of opportunities available. There are also a number of small local parks that are very heavily embellished (and in some cases appear largely under-utilised) given their local-level status. Finally, the City appears to have few marquee parks that would be attractive for visitors and residents seeking higher level experiences.

Council also maintains a significant network of linear open space (458.8ha). Much of this network has been developed with pedestrian and recreation opportunities. As such, much of the linear network also functions as usable passive open space.

Active open space

Despite more than 354ha of district active open space planned to be developed, a significant shortfall is forecast. Much of this shortfall is the result of a significant under-supply in Melton Township (19.05ha) and the Eastern Corridor (68.13).

While, this shortfall is balanced somewhat by the 97.9ha of regional-level active open space in Melton Township and the proposed development of a 30ha regional-level active open space site at Warrensbrook PSP and a 16.6ha site in the South-West planning area, Council can expect the active open spaces to continue to be heavily used.

3.4 Implications for the open space network
Ultimate development

With a projected population of more than 440,000 at ultimate build out, Council can expect significant open space demand. If the proposed open space developments are achieved (in-line with forecast population growth), Council will be managing an extensive open space network including almost 800ha of local- and district-level open space, more than 190ha of regional-level open space and vast tracts of linear, encumbered and environmental open space.

However, it will be important that Council's planning and provision of this open space network reflects the vision and guiding principles and, ultimately, addresses community demand.

Broadening the scope of passive recreation opportunities

The Metropolitan Planning Authority does not include the development of district-level passive open space within its Precinct Structure Planning Guidelines. Where significant residential growth will be framed by PSPs this has the potential to limit the range of passive recreation pursuits that can be catered for across the passive open space network. Additionally, this may result in a vast number of 'duplication-style' local parks and limited 'destination' parks developed across the network.

Council has shown clear foresight in proposing the development of both local- and district-level passive open space in future PSPs. This will ensure a wide range of desirable passive recreation opportunities are available (including larger parks suitable for groups (e.g. family gatherings), parks with a variety of interesting activity nodes and activities that are appealing to all age groups). Further, this approach will assist to limit the inappropriate over-embellishment of local-level passive open space.

As more detailed design is undertaken for the open space network within a planning precinct, Council should undertake a needs-based approach to facility provision to ensure open space function, open space characteristics and diversity of activities across the precinct are considered.

Ensuring flexibility in active open space provision

Council faces an exciting time in outdoor sports planning and provision. Almost 325ha of district-level active open space is planned between approved and proposed PSPs. An additional 51ha of regional-level active open space is also forecast for development. As a result, Council has the opportunity to plan for an innovative, sustainable and accessible network of outdoor sports facilities.

Council and the MPA currently have a preference of developing district-level active open spaces with either two ovals or three rectangular playing fields (6ha or 10ha options). This has resulted in a significant number of facilities being developed and ensured nearby access to sporting facilities for residents. However, it has also seen a somewhat cookie-cutter approach to sports provision with a number of facilities having the same inclusions and 'feel'. Additionally, this approach appears rather inflexible as it does not allow for ease of changes over time to reflect participation fluctuations. For example, a football (soccer field) cannot be readily converted to a rugby league or rugby union field, while the construction of typical ovals limits conversions across to rectangular fields in an efficient manner. Expanding the current suite of sports facility options to include larger more flexible layout options may provide a more sustainable active open space network.

Excitingly, the development of three regional-level facilities will provide more flexibility in design and the range of sports provided for. Additionally, these facilities will place Council and local sporting associations in a much better position to bid for larger state-level sporting events (that often require multiple fields in one location).

Development triggers and timing

While it would be ideal if the entire open space network within a planned community (PSP) could be developed in one stage, the reality is that development occurs in-line with lot uptake triggers. While this approach may be appropriate for the development of passive open spaces, a more proactive approach should be undertaken for the development of active open space. It is important to understand the significant time required to develop quality sporting facilities. Timing issues associated with sporting organisation consultation, seeking grant funding, facility design and master planning, construction and establishment (for instance the time taken for new turf wicket blocks to become stabilised and available for play can be up to one year) can be beyond three years. If significant residential development is achieved in this time, residents will either be without suitable facilities and/or have created overuse and capacity issues for existing facilities.

Council will need to take a proactive approach to the development of district-level active open space. With a DSS of 1.3ha/1,000 for district-level active open space and a preferred facility design of between 6ha and 10ha, an appropriate trigger for the development of new facilities would be between 4,600 and 7,600 new residents. However, as noted above, given the time required to develop quality sports facilities, Council will be required to monitor residential growth and project growth forward (up to three years) to ascertain likely timing of commencement of sports facility planning and development.

4. Open space network for the City of Melton

4.1 Vision and guiding principles

To assist Council focus its efforts in relation to open space planning and provision, a vision and set of guiding principles have been developed.

Vision

The vision provides the end goal for open space provision. It reflects the community's aspirations and Council's corporate vision. The vision for the open space network for the City of Melton is to ensure that:

> *"Our open space network will include attractive and desirable places to visit and use. It will be a well-connected network, offering a diverse range of vibrant and engaging opportunities for health and wellbeing and settings that reflect the demands of our local communities."*

Guiding principles

Flowing from the vision, the following principles are seen as fundamental in guiding overall open space network provision at a strategic level. These principles reflect the themes and priorities outlined in the Council Plan 2013-2017:

Desirable

- ☐ Open spaces are attractive and desirable places for residents and visitors
- ☐ Open spaces are fun, stimulating, challenging and safe
- ☐ The open space network is adaptable to future recreation needs
- ☐ The community is proud of the quality of the open spaces and the benefits the network provides

Accessible

- ☐ Open space is accessible by all. It is available to and encourages people of all ages, abilities, gender and cultural backgrounds to recreate
- ☐ Open space is developed as a linked network with appropriate pedestrian and cycling connections
- ☐ The provision of open space is equitable across and within planning areas
- ☐ The open space network expands commensurate with growth in the community

Diverse

- ☐ All members of the community have ready access to a comprehensive range of open space and recreation opportunities and settings that reflect the diversity and interests of the community
- ☐ Open space is co-located with other community facilities where possible
- ☐ The open space network considers the history and character of places and spaces and incorporates these themes into design
- ☐ A wide range of health and wellbeing pursuits are available in the open space network

Sustainable

- ☐ Citywide and regional requirements are considered when undertaking a proactive open space planning approach
- ☐ Financial viability and cost effectiveness are incorporated in all aspects of the planning, development and management of open space
- ☐ Multiple use of open space is encouraged to provide cost effective options for Council while still providing community health and well-being benefits
- ☐ Open space design considers environmentally sustainable design principles and practices
- ☐ Open space protects, enhances and manages indigenous vegetation and waterways to provide habitat and movement corridors for native fauna
- ☐ Council works closely with key funding bodies to lobby and to advance its established open space priorities

Mt Carberry Recreation Reserve
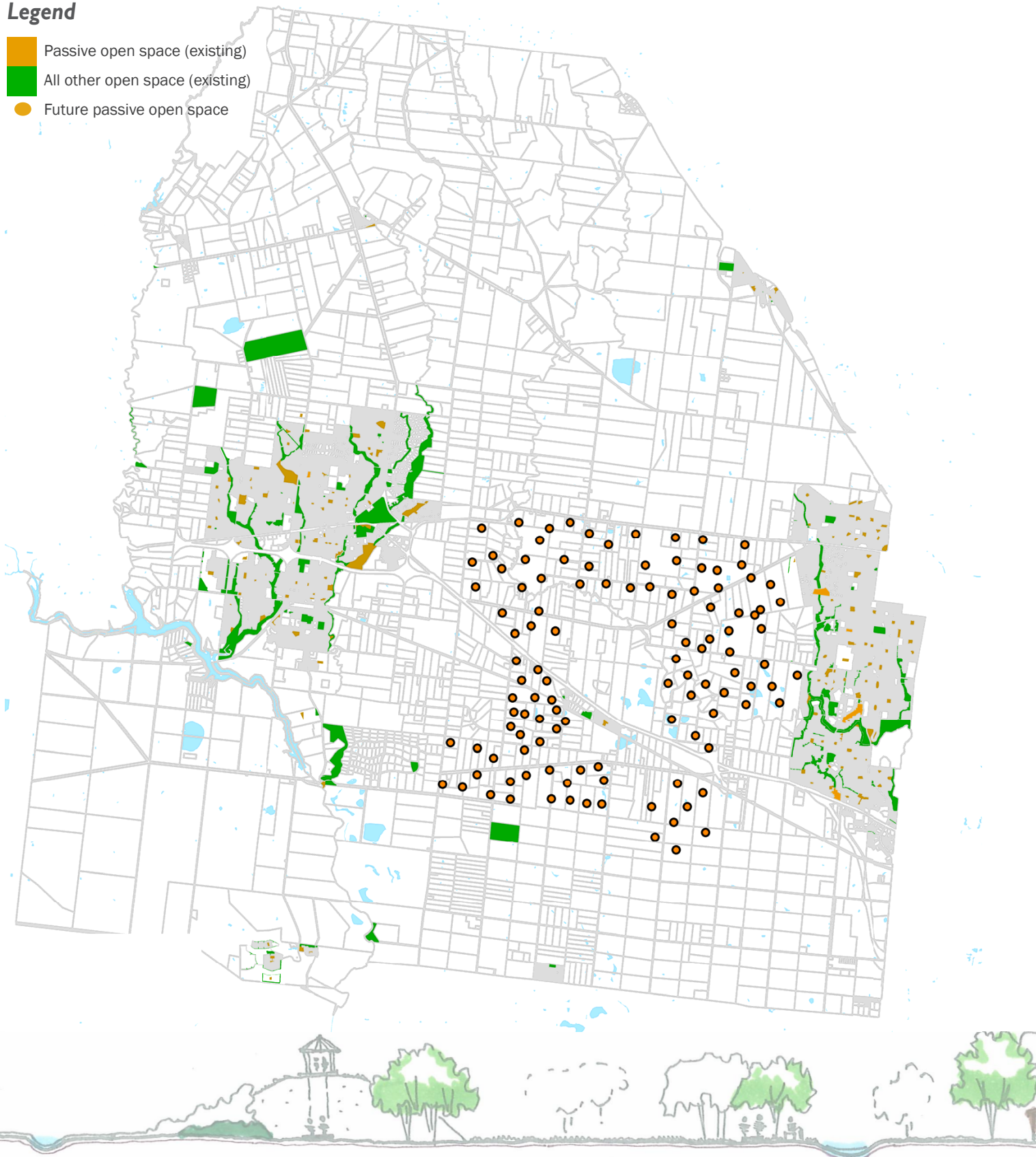

Melton Recreation Reserve

4.2 Open space provision

These maps highlight the current and proposed open space provision at a City-wide level.

Passive open space

Legend
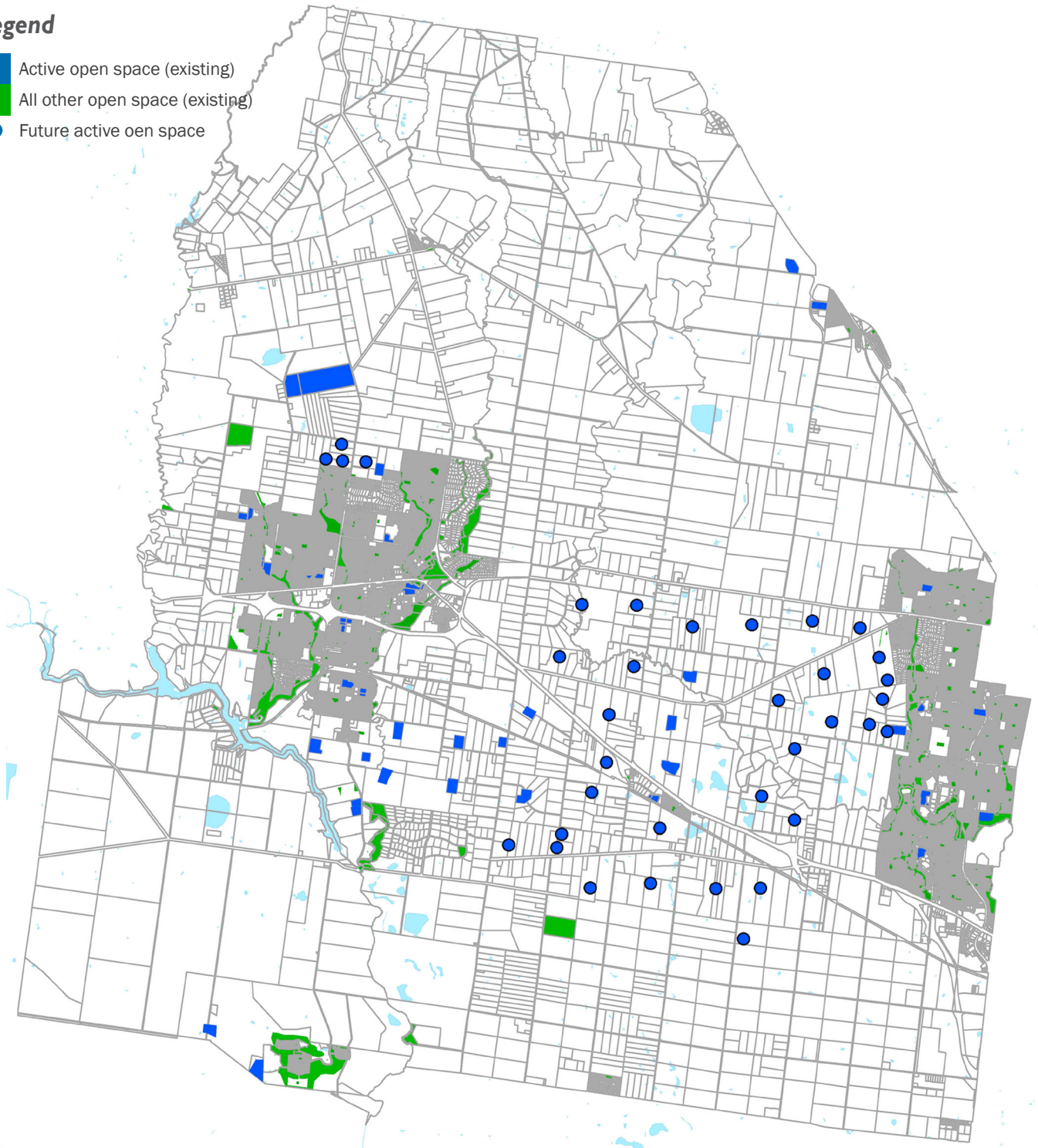
- 🟧 Passive open space (existing)
- 🟩 All other open space (existing)
- 🟠 Future passive open space

Active open space

Legend

- █ Active open space (existing)
- █ All other open space (existing)
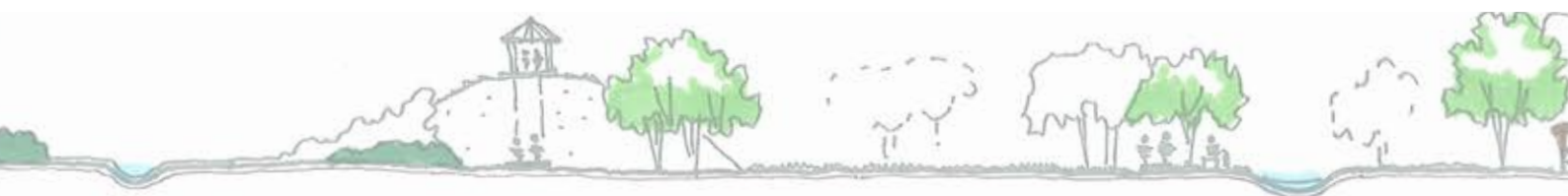- ● Future active oen space

5. Action Plan

Implementation of the actions outlined in this Open Space Plan will require strong leadership, appropriate resourcing and a commitment from Council to making some difficult decisions. Council should consider conducting a review of the Plan within five years with a new Plan developed in ten years.

For ease of referral, actions have been presented in four sections to reflect the guiding principles - Desirable, Accessible, Diverse and Sustainable. Additionally, actions have been cross-referenced with strategies from the Council Plan 2013-2017.

Priorities are assigned for each action. A high priority recommendation should be undertaken as soon as resources allow while medium (in the next 5 years) and low priorities (in the next 5-20 years) are not as urgent (but remain important for future provision). A number of ongoing actions have also been included.

Action	Responsibility	Priority
Open spaces will be *DESIRABLE* places for residents and visitors		
Ensure a consistent approach to community consultation processes relating to planning and provision of future open space	Recreation and Youth*, Community Planning	High
Work in partnership with state government authorities to provide regional-level open space	Recreation and Youth*, City Design, Strategy and Environment	High
Encourage and facilitate sustained physical activity through implementation of healthy by design principles	Recreation and Youth*, City Design, Strategy and Environment	High
Undertake parks usage and participation surveys on a biennial basis	Recreation and Youth*, Operations	Medium
Survey/monitor the standard of open space on a biennial basis	Recreation and Youth*, Operations	Medium
Complete bicycle participation counts annually, completing the Super Tuesday bike count one year and the Super Saturday bike count the alternate year	Recreation and Youth*, Engineering	Medium
Develop policies that guide Council on the provision of open space (i.e. facility naming, playspace audit and lifecycle matrix, water play in district-level passive open spaces, shade sail provision, public conveniences, public lighting)	Recreation and Youth*, Operations, City Design, Strategy and Environment	Medium
Develop a suite of preferred furniture and signage standards for open space	Operations*, Recreation and Youth	Medium
Open spaces will be *ACCESSIBLE* by all		
Collaborate with the Metropolitan Planning Authority to ensure suitable open space to meet the demands outlined in the planning area-based assessments	Recreation and Youth*, City Design, Strategy and Environment	High
Continue advocating to MPA to ensure collocation of open space and community infrastructure where possible	Community Planning*, Recreation and Youth, City Design, Strategy and Environment	High
Create a connected and active community through the design and delivery of walking and cycling networks	Engineering*, Recreation and Youth	Medium
Advocate to the MPA to change from a net developable area model to a demand based model when planning for open space provision	Recreation and Youth*, City Design, Strategy and Environment	Ongoing
Undertake parking analysis to determine parking requirements for open space.	Engineering*, Recreation and Youth, City Design, Strategy and Environment	Medium
A *DIVERSE* range of open spaces will be provided		
Investigate opportunities to ensure the inclusion of district passive open space in future PSPs	Recreation and Youth*, City Design, Strategy and Environment	High
Identify areas in open space with the highest environmental values to protect and enhance them while maintaining suitable public access	City Design, Strategy and Environment* Recreation and Youth	High
Develop a position paper on the planning and provision of ornamental lakes in new developments	Engineering Services*, Recreation and Youth, City Design, Strategy and Environment	Medium
Open space planning and design will ensure a *SUSTAINABLE* network		
Develop policies to provide Council with clear direction for the management of open space. Proposed policies could include: Fees and Charges, Ground Allocations, Self-Managed Capital Works, Sporting Infrastructure	Recreation and Youth*	High

Action	Responsibility	Priority
Prepare comprehensive feasibility studies, management plans and infrastructure plans to ensure future provision of assets for the five-year capital plan (i.e. Park Development Plan, MacPherson Park Master Plan, Diggers Rest Recreation Reserve Master Plan, Hannah Watts Park Master Plan, Melton Reservoir Interface Plan)	Recreation and Youth*, Operations, City Design, Strategy and Environment	High
Plan for flexible multiuse active open space that can be redeveloped for alternate uses if future demand dictates. Consider designs that overlay AFL/cricket ovals and rectangular pitches	Recreation and Youth*, City Design, Strategy and Environment	High
Develop a Recreation Action Plan that focuses on activation, maximising use of open space and capacity building of volunteers	Recreation and Youth*	High
Develop an asset renewal facility program based on the recommendations from the sporting surfaces audit	Operations*, Recreation and Youth	Medium
Seek alternate sources of funding to support Council's capacity to deliver community infrastructure, planning and programs	Recreation and Youth*, Community Planning	Medium
Complete an "Active Participation Survey" every 3 years	Recreation and Youth*, Community Planning	Medium
Investigate water conservation and water recycling measures at all recreation reserves	City Design, Strategy and Environment*, Recreation and Youth	Medium
Investigate opportunities to incorporate water sensitive urban design in areas of open space	Engineering*, City Design, Strategy and Environment, Recreation and Youth	Ongoing
Ensure Environmentally Sustainable Design principles are considered in all Council upgrades and new developments	City Design, Strategy and Environment*, Recreation and Youth	Ongoing
Closely liaise with state sporting organisations to ensure appropriate infrastructure development and use of active open space to meet expanding growth in demand	Recreation and Youth*	Ongoing
Prepare at least one sport and active participation study per year (i.e. indoor sports, soccer, bowls, female participation, non-mainstream sports, Western Metropolitan Region football facilities, Western Metropolitan Region trails)	Recreation and Youth*	Ongoing

* Lead Department

recreation
open space
and sport
specialists

ross
planning

CITY OF

MELTON