

Public Open Space Strategy

Baw Baw Shire Council
2014



***Open space is not only for recreation and conservation of environmental and cultural values;
it is the foundation of urban liveability.***

*It underpins many social, ecological and economic benefits that are essential
to the healthy functioning of the urban environment.*

*When a park network is well designed and well integrated,
urban liveability and urban amenity are improved.*

*Many people enjoy the aesthetic values of open space and
it is widely accepted that how the urban community looks, feels and functions
is influenced by how much open space there is.
'Linking People and Spaces', Parks Victoria, 2002.*

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Executive Summary

What is Public Open Space?

For a moment, think of your favourite park or open space. It's probably a green space with walking tracks, beautiful trees and people at play, having fun and enjoying each other's company. It's these spaces and places that this strategy is concerned with. The strategy asks questions around whether we have enough, is it in the right places and does it provide the type of experience and activities that we're looking for.

The population of Baw Baw Shire is expected to increase by more than 50,000 residents over the next 30-50 years, with Warragul and Drouin identified in Plan Melbourne as peri-urban towns with potential to attract housing and population growth out of Melbourne. It is essential that high quality open space is accessible not just for existing residents, but also for the many new residents who will be living in the Shire.

The strategy is mainly concerned with land that is (or will be) managed by the Council for community recreation and leisure. This includes:

- parks for 'passive' recreation, such as walking, playing or having a barbeque;
- parks for 'active' recreation such as sports grounds and ovals;
- parks which are 'linear', such as along a creek and usually feature a pathway; and
- parks which offer a more 'natural' setting with conservation values.

Sometimes parks will have elements of all of the above, or will be just one type.

How has the strategy been prepared?

The strategy has been prepared using information from several sources. This includes:

- the feedback of participants during the preparation of BawBaw 2050;
- the recommendations of the Warragul and Drouin Precinct Structure Plans;
- the outcomes from over 600 community and Council participants in surveys and workshops held specifically about public open space during the first half of 2011; and
- a review of the area, location and type of current parks and gardens which are managed by the Council.

What did the analysis find?

The analysis of the surveys and stakeholder participation provided a lot of information that has guided the preparation of this strategy, and will be valuable in the future for the planning and management of individual parks.

The key findings about public open spaces are that:

- They are highly valued by the community;
- Parks are most frequently used closer to home, they are used for between 30 minutes to an hour and one of the most popular activities is going for a walk;
- There is a preference for increased maintenance of public toilets and pathways, which amongst other things, would encourage greater use of parks and gardens;
- The Council currently manages or maintains 407 hectares of parks for the community (in addition to 153 hectares of bushland reserves) (this figure was current in 2011);

- New residential areas will need to be provided with additional District Parks, Neighbourhood Parks, Linear Reserves, Sporting Reserves or Local Parks as appropriate to the hierarchy of the town as identified in the Settlement Strategy.

A summary of the Community Open Space Needs Assessment is attached at Appendix 1. A copy of the full Community Open Space Needs Assessment report is available for viewing on the Baw Baw Shire website at: www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au.

What are the key recommendations?

An action plan has been prepared to help guide the implementation of the Open Space Strategy, and has been set out in a relative order of priority:

1. Review and implement an appropriate process for the management of public open space (including Planning Scheme amendment and asset management);
2. Review level of financial and staff resourcing;
3. Planning for the improvement to existing public open space;
4. Working with other Authority land owners around sharing of resources to provide public access to open space; and
5. Provision of new public open space as required and its improvement.

An action plan is detailed on Section 4.5.



Part 1 Introduction

Purpose of the strategy

This strategy has been prepared for the entire Baw Baw municipality, with particular emphasis on the major and main towns of the municipality, being Warragul, Drouin, Trafalgar, Yarragon, Longwarry and Neerim South.

In relation to both existing and new development, the strategy identifies the needs of the community, how much and where public open space is needed and how it should be designed and developed.

1.2 Strategy context

The strategy aligns with and implements the provisions of a number of Acts, including the Planning and Environment Act, Subdivision Act and the provisions of the Baw Baw Planning Scheme.

The strategy aligns with the principles of the Community Services Planning Framework (adopted by Council on 11 February 2013) and the Baw Baw Settlement Management Plan (adopted by Council on 28 August 2013).

1.3 Hierarchy of plans and planning

The open space strategy is a high level look at what is generally needed across the municipality. It provides guidance as to the different types of parks and their functions, where they should be located and development standards. The strategy contains principles for its implementation, which will generally be put in place by structure plans, park masterplans and new residential developments that include open space.

A **structure plan** is based around an urban area, and identifies where various land uses will occur, such as housing, business, roads and parks. Precinct Structure Plans have been prepared for Warragul and Drouin.

A **masterplan** focuses on a specific park and its design, showing where paths, fences, playgrounds, sports fields, buildings, vegetation and any other items are located. The strategy provides information that will help guide the development of masterplans.

1.4 How the strategy was prepared

Baw Baw Shire Council commenced preparation of this public open space strategy following a successful application to the State Government Community Facility Funding Program.

It has been prepared in four parts:

1. The preparation of a community open space needs assessment, which included significant community engagement around use and experience of Baw Baw's public open spaces;
2. Analysis of the community open space needs assessment, existing public open space and identified relevant trends;
3. Development of this strategy document and preparation of an action plan to address key needs arising out of the analysis;
4. Document review to reflect recommendations of the draft Precinct Structure Plans and associated draft Development Contributions Plan prepared by the Metropolitan Planning.

1.5 Strategy focus

At its broadest, open space includes all spaces which are not otherwise occupied by buildings. However the key focus of the strategy is on public places for recreation such as parks, reserves and gardens, and so **public open space** is defined as:

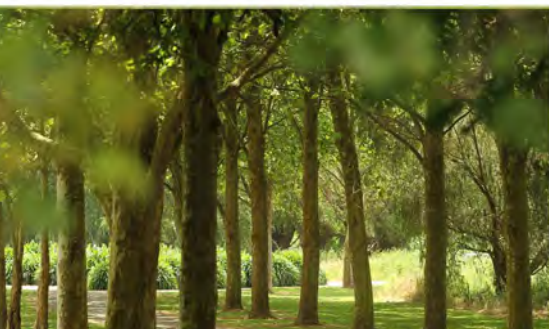
Land that is freely available to the community for recreation and leisure, is high quality, well located and fit-for-purpose based on its amenity and provides environmental, social, health and wellbeing and economic benefit to the community.

The focus of this strategy is on spaces within major and main township areas. Generally the emphasis is on land that is owned or managed on behalf of the community by the Council, however it is recognised that open space opportunities may also exist on land that is owned or managed by other government authorities or on privately owned land.

1.6 Benefits of public open space

Good quality public open space is important and matters to the community. A good quality public open space network is well recognised in providing a range of social, economic, and environment benefits to the community. Open spaces:

- Can provide a sense of wellbeing, rest and relaxation and stress relief.
- Provide refuge from the day to day and urban settings.
- Provide spaces for exercise, play, and people to socialise and interact with friends, family and neighbours.
- Improve the aesthetics and amenity of urban areas. These can be places that people want to live near and a good example is the attraction of residents to leafy streets or homes close to parks.
- Can add to the attractiveness of nearby workplaces which can help contribute towards productivity, morale and the ability of the workplace to attract employees.
- Can contain conservation areas for flora and fauna.
- Provide services such as carbon storage and moderation against extremes in local microclimates.
- Encourage walking and cycling to supplement or replace car travel, particularly for shorter journeys.



Part 2 Key Principles for Planning Public Open Space

The approach to the provision and planning of public open space is to:

1. **Provide adequate public open space in the right places,**
2. **To use high quality land that will be suitable for the intended public recreation use, and**
3. **To design and develop the public open space in a way that maximises community benefit from the place.**

When identifying or proposing new open space, each of these principles should be worked through in order, from identifying the need for open space, to identifying the appropriate land, through to the design and development of the space.

2.1 Principle 1 - Providing adequate public open space in the right places

This section aims to identify the need for public open space to be provided. It asks “is more public open space needed?”

The key principles for the provision of public open space are to provide public open space for communities on the basis of the requirements of the Baw Baw Planning Scheme and the settlement hierarchy (see Table 1).

General principles

The analysis of existing public open space in Section 3 indicates that the total area of public open space is considered to be generally sufficient to cater for the existing and projected population at least into the medium term. However, existing open space is not well distributed, and either existing Council owned land should be swapped for better located land for public open space, or additional public open space and improved connectivity between reserves and community facilities will be required particularly in Warragul and Drouin in response to the growing population and community.

The other key need is for improving the quality of existing public open spaces to cater for the existing and new population.

New and existing public open spaces should be connected to each other and community services and facilities by linear reserves, footpaths and shared pathways, to provide a safe path of travel for pedestrians and cyclists to and between open spaces where possible. Shared pedestrian and cycling paths should link key open spaces in major and main towns.

The current Victorian Planning Provisions contain goals for locating public open space in new residential neighbourhoods, with a focus on land to be subdivided in the residential zones.

The majority of population growth is expected to occur in Drouin and Warragul, creating significant demand on existing public open space and for the provision of new spaces. The precinct structure plans for Warragul and Drouin identify locations for the provision of new open space in the urban growth areas.

The towns of Longwarry, Neerim South, Trafalgar and Yarragon differ from Warragul and Drouin in terms of their projected population growth, and size of the urban areas. In these circumstances limited additional public open space will be required.

The small towns and rural villages are unlikely to require further public open space as a result of population growth, and so the focus will be on an existing key facility which serves both a passive and an active function.

The requirements for future public open space provision based on the Baw Baw public open space hierarchy is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 – Public open space provision goals

DESCRIPTION	PROVISION STANDARDS
Local Neighbourhood Park	
These parks provide passive recreation activities which are normally informal.	<p>Standard density residential areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim to provide a local neighbourhood park within 400 metres walking distance of 95-per-cent of new dwellings.• Generally local neighbourhood parks should be one hectare or greater in area, however smaller sized parks may be considered where co-located with encumbered open space such as waterways corridors and retained vegetation.• Should accommodate a minimum area of 25 x 25 metres to allow sufficient space for trees and play activities. <p>Higher density residential areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional smaller neighbourhood parks may be provided in higher density residential areas, subject to identified local needs. <p>Industrial and commercial areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision should be provided based on identified local needs.
These parks cater for residents within a comfortable walking distance and provide facilities/activities for short visits.	
Local neighbourhood parks incorporate landscaping and structural elements such as seats, paths, built structures and play equipment.	
District Neighbourhood Park	
These parks provide a mix of passive and active recreation activities, both formal and informal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District neighbourhood parks are nominated in two locations in Warragul’s future urban growth areas.
These parks are designed to maximise co-location and sharing opportunities between activities and adjoining complementary facilities.	
District neighbourhood parks incorporate landscaping, and structural elements such as seats and paths, gathering areas, and built structures such as barbeques and shelters. These parks may also include formal active recreation facilities.	

Sporting Reserve

These reserves primarily cater for organised sport and provide facilities for sports such as AFL, cricket, soccer, rugby, hockey, baseball, tennis, basketball, netball etc.

These reserves may provide infrastructure for passive recreation in areas not occupied by sporting facilities, such as walking/cycle paths and playgrounds.

- Aim to provide a sporting reserve within 1 kilometre walking distance of 95-per-cent of new dwellings.
- Sporting reserves should generally be a minimum size of three hectares to accommodate one AFL/cricket oval and associated infrastructure (pavilion, car park etc) up larger where accommodating multiple sporting facilities.
- Sporting reserves are nominated in the urban growth areas of Drouin and Warragul to cater to existing and future needs of the community.
- Sporting reserves already exist in medium and small town.

Linear Reserve

These parks typically comprise linear spaces that serve another purpose (such as waterway corridors, service easements, retained vegetation areas and wide road reserves) but which can also be used for a limited range of passive recreation activities.

These parks are typically considered encumbered open space, given their primary function is not open space related.

- Waterway corridors, service easements, vegetation retention areas and wide road reserves are to be utilised as linear reserves wherever possible.
- Shared paths and landscaping (including mature trees) are to be provided in linear reserves wherever possible.

Municipal Reserve

Open spaces serving residents of the entire Baw Baw Shire.

- No minimum provision standards.

Regional Reserve

Open spaces serving residents of the entire Baw Baw Shire and residents of surrounding municipalities.

- No minimum provision standards.

State Reserve

Open spaces serving the State of Victoria.

- No minimum provision standards.

2.2 Principle 2 - Choosing high quality land for public open space

Once the need for additional land for open space has been identified, this section aims to identify the most suitable land for public open space. It asks 'what is the most suitable land to use for public open space?'

The goal is to provide good quality land for public open space, and balancing this against the need to reserve land for other purposes such as drainage and native vegetation conservation. This aims to maximise the availability of developable land while also enabling the development of a connected open space network.

Land which is preferred for public open space

The land which is preferred for public open space is good quality, well located land that provides for a range of landscape opportunities and settings, or is identified on a structure plan.

To be considered as good quality, prospective sites for public open space **must**:

- Add to the variety of landscape types and topography across the open space network.
- Be well oriented.
- Be of an appropriate size and dimension to provide for the intended use.
- Be suitable for recreation in all seasons.
- Be well located near houses, community facilities and features.
- Be unencumbered by significant topographical, geographical or hydrological constraints.
- Be cost effective to develop, manage and maintain.

Prospective sites for public open space **should**:

- Generally be located on flat land. However it is recognised that much of the Baw Baw area is sloping and gently sloping land and this land will add to the variety of public open space landscapes and settings.
- Include, where appropriate, scattered significant trees and natural and cultural features.

Land which is unsuitable for public open space

Generally, land which meets one or more of the following criteria would be considered to be unsuitable for public open space:

- Where there is no demonstrated need for additional public open space.
- Land that is considered to be unsafe and contains unacceptable risks, such as land that has poor passive surveillance from streets and buildings
- Not accessible, or easily accessible to the community.
- Provides limited community open space benefit.
- Where the land is not considered to be fit-for-purpose.
- Does not comply with planning permit conditions.

The following specific constraints render land unsuitable for use as public open space at any time:

- Major retardation infrastructure and land subject to frequent flooding (below 1:10 year or otherwise appropriate level).
- Land steeper than 20%.
- Contaminated land that is unsuitable for public open space uses or will at some stage require remediation.
- Land which will be difficult or expensive to develop and maintain.

Constrained land which may be integrated with public open space

Constrained land may be located **adjacent to** and integrated with public open space. But this should only occur where the constrained land is complementary to the primary use of the public open space for recreation. Whilst constrained land may be integrated with public open space, it is not considered to be in lieu of public open space.

Constrained land that may be integrated with public open space includes areas protected or set aside for:

- Significant native vegetation or habitat and their buffers.
- Native vegetation offsets.
- Water management systems, waterways and their buffers, wetlands and other water bodies.
- Flood ways and land subject to inundation (above 1:10 year).
- Steep land up to 20%.

Land which has cultural heritage conservation values may be successfully integrated into public open space where this will not detract from its conservation values, or the primary purpose of the public open space. Where a cultural heritage asset is to be integrated into public open space, reference should be made to the appropriate legislative requirements.

Whilst constrained land does not contribute to public open space contribution, it should still be designed to be accessible and address safety concerns as it is in the public realm.

The design of water sensitive urban design (WSUD) infrastructure and landscape design for waterways should be consistent with the Draft Baw Baw Shire and West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority Waterway Management Plan Guidelines 2014 and the Melbourne Water Water Sensitive Urban Design Guidelines South Eastern Councils.

2.3 Principle 3 - Designing and developing public open space

Once the most suitable land has been identified, this section aims to help design and develop public open space. It asks 'how should the new land be designed and developed?'

Parks must be designed to be fit for its intended purpose, to be functional and attractive and ultimately it must be designed for people.

General principles are that public open space must:

- Provide for a range of different community recreational needs and activities and multi-use spaces and contribute to a sense of place.
- Be designed and developed so that it can be used for its intended purpose, including facilities and infrastructure.
- Be sustainably and economically designed and managed with good orientation and respond to site characteristics.
- Be safe with good surveillance and provide opportunities for all community members in accordance with Universal Design principles.
- Include appropriate facilities and infrastructure.
- Take account of and appropriately respond to cultural heritage values.
- Respond to biodiversity conservation values and needs providing habitat and encouragement of native flora and fauna.

Table 2 - Park development standards

Item Description	Local Neighbourhood Park	District Neighbourhood Park	Sporting Reserve	Linear Reserve
Seating	✓	✓	✓	✓
Table and seats	?	✓	✓	?
Paths	✓	✓	✓	✓
Canopy trees	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grassed areas	✓	✓	✓	✓
Garden beds	?	?	?	?
Mulched revegetation areas	?	?	?	?
Bollards or fencing	✓	✓	✓	✓
Signage	?	✓	✓	✓
Bicycle racks	?	✓	✓	?
Playgrounds	?	✓	✓	?
Exercise stations	?	?	?	?
Public art	?	?	?	?
Rubbish and recycling bins	?	✓	✓	?
BBQ and picnic area	?	✓	✓	?
BBQ shelter	?	✓	✓	?
Lighting along pathways	?	?	?	?
Public toilets	✗	✓	✓	✗
Drinking fountain	?	✓	✓	?
Power outlets	?	✓	✓	✗
Water taps	?	✓	✓	?
Carparking and lighting	?	✓	✓	?
Sports facilities (ovals, pitches)	✗	✓	✓	✗
Sports pavilions or club rooms	✗	?	✓	✗

KEY:

- ✓ The item is likely to be located within a park
- ? The item may be located within a park
- ✗ The item is unlikely to be located within a park

Exploring creative opportunities for public open space

Formal public open spaces do not necessarily have to be developed or used in a traditional way and there are many opportunities to use parks in a more creative way for the benefit of the community. Some which have been put forward during the preparation of this strategy are listed below.

- 'Pop-up' parks that take advantage of otherwise vacant land for a temporary period prior to its development.
- Casual or part-time open space which takes advantage of land that may be suitable for occasional open space use, but has another primary purpose, for example a day time car park which is not used during the evenings.
- Alternative and innovative planting schemes, such as gardens which are adapted to lower rainfall and higher temperatures or gardens which appeal to all of the senses (touch, feel, scent, taste, sound).
- Playgrounds that provide for older children and youth and also adult sized play features.
- Commercial opportunities in the park, ranging from a permanent café through to a regular coffee cart.
- Summer fun in parks, such as giant games, deck chairs on sunny days, evening cinema.
- Temporary and permanent art installations and creativity in parks.
- Making more park space available for food production.

Part 3 Existing Public Open Space and Future Objectives

3.1 Summary of existing public open space

For the purposes of open space analysis and future planning, the municipality has been divided into four main regions, including North West, North East, South West and South East. The key regions and towns within these regions are outlined in Table 3 and are shown in Figure 1.

For the purpose of the open space strategy, the analysis of open space focuses on the broad regions, and the shire's major and medium towns (based on town boundaries). The shire's small towns and villages are addressed generally.

Table 3 - Baw Baw Regions and key towns

Region	Main towns	Small towns & villages
North West	Neerim South	Neerim, Noojee, Jindivick, Rokeby
North East		Erica, Rawson, Walhalla
South West	Warragul, Drouin, Longwarry	Darnum, Nilma, Buln Buln
South East	Trafalgar, Yarragon	Willow Grove, Thorpdale

3.2 Analysis summary

- There is a significant total area of public open space across the municipality and in the major and main towns. There are a total of approximately 682 hectares of passive, active and linear public open spaces, and approximately 48,385 hectares of bushland areas in state reserves.
- Baw Baw Shire Council currently manages or maintains approximately 407 hectares of passive, active and linear public open spaces (in addition to approximately 160 hectares of bushland reserves).
- Although the total area of public open space in existing developed areas is currently high, there is a need for additional well distributed public open space in some new growth areas, particularly in the main towns in order to meet the needs of new residents.
- There is a high level of provision of public open space across the regions and major and medium towns on a per capita basis. The mix between passive and active open space varies across the shire, however in many cases, active open space will also be used for passive purposes when not being used for games or training, which is encouraged. This high level of provision is expected to continue even with projected population growth.
- Although anecdotally there is increasing pressure on sports open spaces in the municipality, the total area of active open space is high.

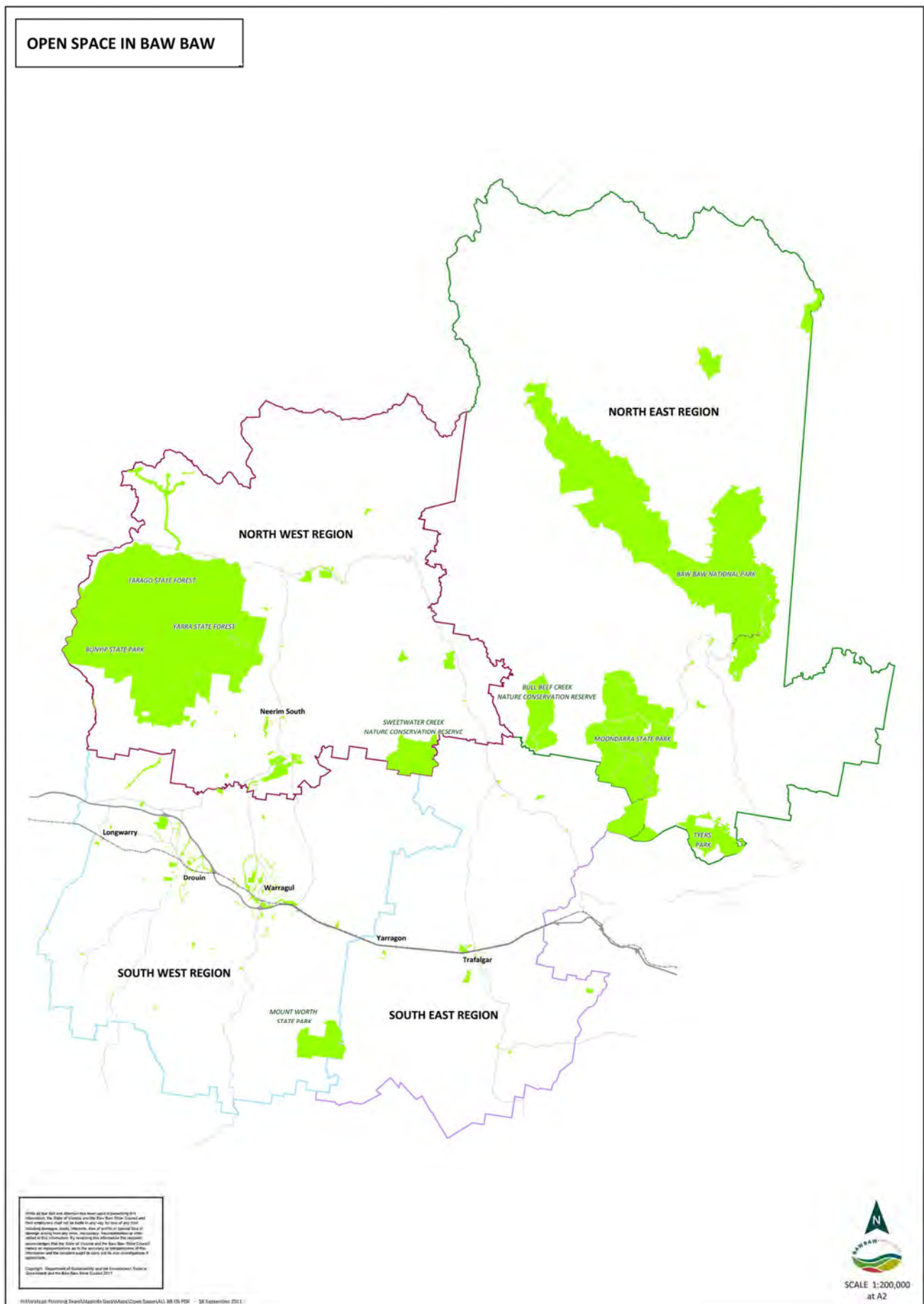
- As the level of provision of public open space is high, this creates qualitative issues in terms of adequately developing and maintaining those spaces to meet the needs and expectations of the community. Public open spaces are generally very expensive spaces to initially develop, maintain and then renew.
- Land that is used as public open space is owned and managed by many different authorities, including Baw Baw Shire Council, Crown Land, Department of Environment and Primary Industries water management authorities and others. Each land owner and manager has different management goals and standards for their land.

The following sections provide an analysis on the existing and required public open space in each of the regions and towns shown in Table 3.

Note: The figures contained in Section 3 & 4 were current in 2011. Population figures and areas of open space are likely to have changed slightly in most towns since this data was collected.



Figure 1 – Open space across Baw Baw



3.3 North West Region

The North West region includes the main town of Neerim South, and the key smaller towns and villages of Neerim, Noojee, Jindivick and Rokeby.

Current public open space

There is over 100 hectares of passive and active public open space in the North West Region (of which Council manages or maintains approximately 23 hectares), serving a population of approximately 3,334 people. There is also approximately 21,888 hectares of bushland in state reserves in this region.

There is approximately seven hectares of passive and active open space in Neerim South, serving an estimated population of approximately 1,193 people. Up to two hectares of additional public open space may be required as a result of future development occurring in the town.

A key characteristic of public open space in the region (and generally across the shire) is the amount of land that is managed by other authorities. There are also significant areas of state reserves including Yarra, Tarago and Bunyip State Parks and Sweetwater Creek Nature Conservation Reserve located in this region.

Table 4 – Council managed public open space in the North West Region

Region/ Town	Total Public Open Space			Bushland	Ratio of public open space per 1,000 people	
	Total (ha)	Council managed (ha)	Potential future (ha)	Council managed (ha)	'passive' public open space (ha)	'active' public open space (ha)
North-west Region	105.6	23.3	2.0	135.1	1.0 – 19.8	5.9 – 8.5
<i>Neerim South</i>	<i>7.0</i>	<i>6.5</i>	<i>2.0</i>	<i>1.1</i>	<i>0.9 – 1.0</i>	<i>4.5 – 4.9</i>
Shire total	2800.6	407.0	143.9	151.3	4.8 – 56.5	4.6 - 8.6

Notes:

1. *Undeveloped* = public open space which has been transferred to Council or soon will be. Effectively the public open space contribution has been paid.
2. *Potential* = land which has been identified through a proposed subdivision and may at some stage may become public open space, but the subdivision or planning for the surrounding land has not commenced or is in early stages. No public open space contribution has been paid.
3. *Ratio of public open space per 1,000 people*: the lower number is based on Council owned or managed land, and the higher number includes all land available to the public for open space regardless of ownership.

Report card status

- Total area of public open space – **A** (good)
The total area of public open space is high and is expected to remain high over at least the next twenty years.
- Types of public open space – **B** (adequate)
The majority of public open space within the region and in Neerim South is classified as ‘active’, and tends to serve a sport function. It is important that the multi-use of such spaces is planned for, and access for passive use provided and encouraged.
- Distribution of public open space – **B** (adequate)
There are relatively large parts of Neerim South that are greater than 400 metres walking distance to public open space, and this could be addressed by identifying opportunities where necessary to improve connectivity to existing parks.

Future planning for public open space

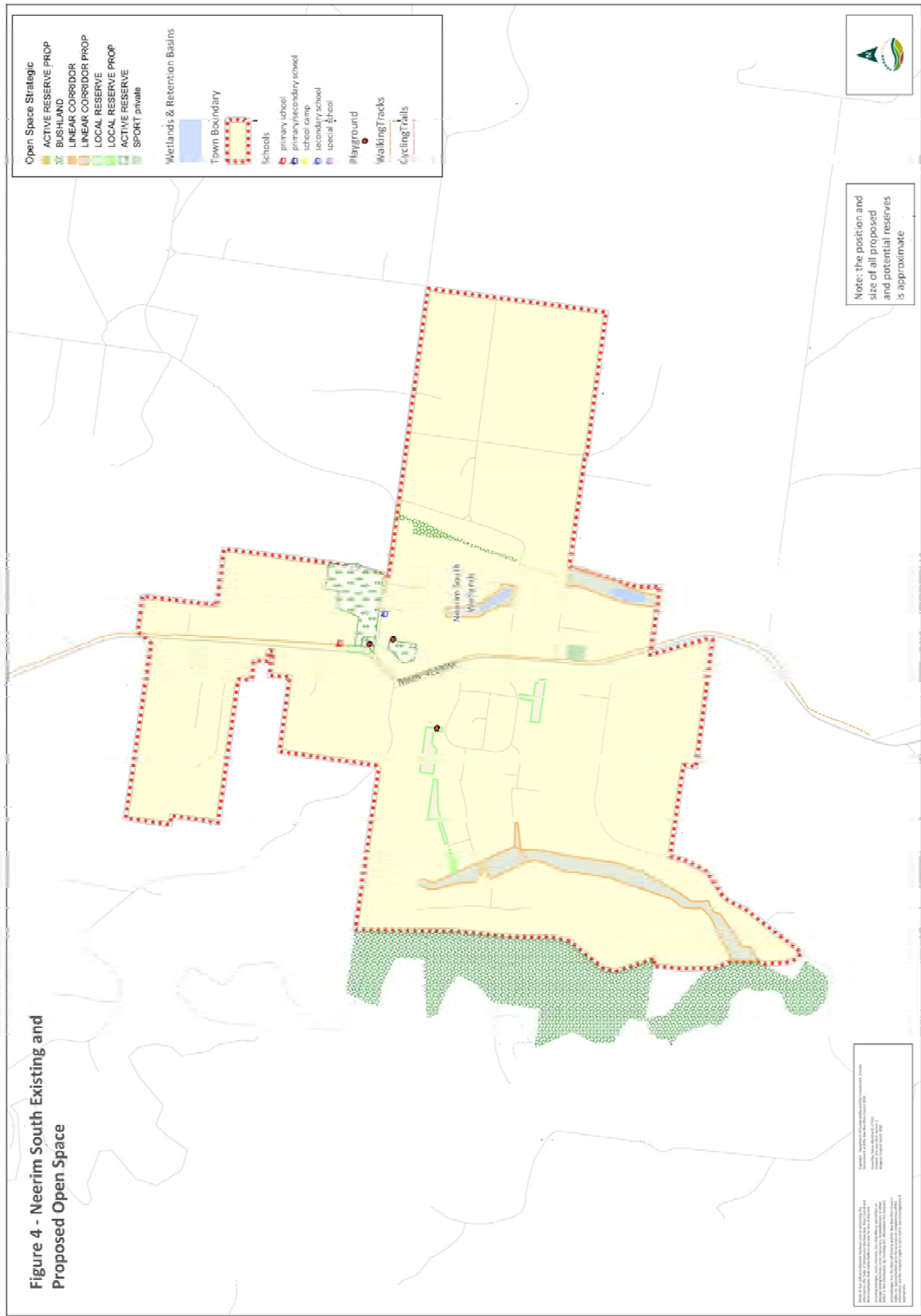
There is not expected to be significant population growth in either the region or Neerim South, and so the current level of provision is generally considered sufficient at least in the medium term.

In Neerim South:

- No additional provision of district parks is required within the existing town boundary based on current population projections.
- The focus of future open space planning will be on the Neerim South Recreation Reserve and Wetlands which together provide for passive and active recreation.
- Consistent with the above point, park development standards (see Table 2) will be considered on a town-wide basis rather than for parks individually, to ensure that open space facilities are provided across the town as opposed to meeting the standards for each park.
- The quality of Council owned and/or managed reserves in the town should be improved where appropriate, with particular focus on priority items.
- Open spaces should also be incorporated into existing footpath and shared path networks to provide a safe path of travel for pedestrians and cyclists to and between open spaces.

Public open space in the small towns and rural villages of the North West Region will be based on the needs of the local community, however analysis of existing levels of provision and projected population growth indicate that the need for additional public open space will be highly unlikely.

Figure 4 - Neerim South Existing and Proposed Open Space



3.4 North East Region

The North East region includes the smaller towns and villages of Erica, Rawson and Walhalla.

Current public open space

This area is well served by public open space, with a total of approximately 22 hectares of sports and passive public open space almost all of which is managed and maintained by the Council. This is a fairly high level of provision based on the population of the region (approximately 842 people). There is also approximately 25,304 hectares of bushland in state reserves in this region.

Table 5 – Council managed public open space in North East Region

Region/ Town	Total public open space			Bushland	Ratio of public open space per 1,000 people	
	Total (ha)	Council managed (ha)	Potential future (ha)	Council managed (ha)	'passive' public open space (ha)	'active' public open space (ha)
North-east Region	21.9	21.5	0.0	2.5	16.9 - 17.3	8.7
Shire total	2800.6	407.0	143.9	151.3	4.8 – 56.5	4.6 - 8.6

Notes:

1. *Undeveloped = public open space which has been transferred to Council or soon will be. Effectively the public open space contribution has been paid.*
2. *Potential = land which has been identified through a proposed subdivision and may at some stage may become public open space, but the subdivision or planning for the surrounding land has not commenced or is in early stages. No public open space contribution has been paid.*
3. *Ratio of public open space per 1,000 people: the lower number is based on Council owned or managed land, and the higher number includes all land available to the public for open space regardless of ownership.*

Report card status

- Total area of public open space – **A** (good)
The North East region has the highest per capita level of Council owned and managed public open space in the municipality.
- Types of public open space – **A** (good)
There is a good mix of public open space types in the region, including extensive areas of National and State Parks.
- Distribution of public open space – **B** (adequate)
Open space is relatively well distributed across the region, and residents have access to significant state reserves including Bull Beef Creek Nature Conservation Reserve, Moondarra State Park, Baw Baw National Park and Tyers Park.

Future planning for public open space

The North East Region is expected to experience minimal population growth over the next ten years, with a very low absolute growth rate projected across the whole region, so the level of provision is considered sufficient at least in the medium term. However where appropriate, the quality of existing Council owned and/or managed reserves should be improved, with particular focus on priority items.

Public open space in the small towns and rural villages of the North East Region will be based on the needs of the local community, however analysis of existing levels of provision and projected population growth indicate that the need for additional public open space will be highly unlikely.

3.5 South West Region

The South West region includes the key towns of Warragul, Drouin and Longwarry and the smaller villages of Darnum, Nilma, Buln Buln.

Current public open space

Over the next ten years and beyond, the South West Region is expected to experience the most significant population growth and urban development pressures in the municipality, particularly due to urban growth in Warragul and Drouin. This region will create the most significant demand on existing public open spaces and their facilities, as well as creating demand for additional spaces.

There is a total of approximately 448 hectares of public open space across the region, of which approximately 290 hectares is Council managed or maintained. Up to a further 133.9 hectares of land may be required for public open space across the region in the existing structure plans and as a result of the analysis of this open space strategy.

A key characteristic of public open space in the region (and generally across the shire) is the amount of land that is managed by other authorities. Mount Worth State Park is also located in this region.

Table 6 – Council managed public open space in the South West Region

Region/ Town	Total public open space			Bushland	Ratio of public open space per 1,000 people	
	Total (ha)	Council managed (ha)	Potential future (ha)	Council managed (ha)	'passive' public open space (ha)	'active' public open space (ha)
South-west Region	448.3	290.6	133.9	21.4	5.7 – 6.0	3.7 – 8.8
Drouin	177.7	84.2	47.6	17.7	5.1 – 5.2	3.3 – 13.2
Longwarry	10.8	8.2	1.0	0.0	2.2 – 4.1	3.2 – 3.4
Warragul	179.2	138.6	85.3	2.2	5.3	4.5 – 7.4
Shire total	2800.6	407.0	143.9	151.3	4.8 – 56.5	4.6 - 8.6

Notes:

1. *Undeveloped* = public open space which has been transferred to Council or soon will be. Effectively the public open space contribution has been paid.
2. *Potential* = land which has been identified through a proposed subdivision and may at some stage may become public open space, but the subdivision or planning for the surrounding land has not commenced or is in early stages. No public open space contribution has been paid.
3. *Ratio of public open space per 1,000 people*: the lower number is based on Council owned or managed land, and the higher number includes all land available to the public for open space regardless of ownership.

Report card status

- Total area of public open space – **A** (good)
Each of the major and main towns in the region (Drouin, Longwarry and Warragul) is well serviced in terms of absolute area of open space and the per capita level of provision.

- Types of public open space – **B** (adequate)
There is a good mix of open space types in the region.
- Distribution of public open space – **C** (needs improvement)
Current residential areas are well fairly provided with public open space, but expansion of existing residential areas to the town boundary will require additional public open space in Drouin and Warragul, including Sporting, District, Neighbourhood (small, medium and large), and linear reserves.

When required, Longwarry should be provided with a new Neighbourhood/Local Reserve, and opportunities to improve connectivity to existing parks should be identified to improve access for existing residents who are not located close to an existing park.

Future planning for public open space

The majority of population growth is expected to occur in the major towns of Drouin and Warragul, creating significant demand on existing public open space and for the provision of new spaces.

In Warragul and Drouin:

- The draft Warragul and Drouin precinct structure plans provide an analysis for the full development of the town boundaries.
- There is a projected need for an additional 47.6 hectares to be provided in the the Drouin urban growth areas. The approximate locations of these parks are shown in the draft precinct structure plan. Within this total figure there is an additional 17.4 hectares in 2 sporting reserves and 30.2 hectares in Local Neighbourhood Parks (10 small, 10 medium and 7 large).
- There is a projected need for an additional 85.3 hectares to be provided in the Warragul urban growth areas. The approximate locations of these parks are shown in the draft precinct structure plan. Within this total figure there is an additional 34.8 hectares in 3 sporting reserves, 29.0 hectares in 2 District Parks and 21.5 hectares in Local Neighbourhood parks (4 small, 17 medium and 3 large).
- The local topography of Warragul and Drouin makes the provision of large sporting surfaces difficult in many places. As a result, there is pressure to use the land that can be provided more efficiently. There may be a requirement for additional upgrades to facilities or surfaces in existing areas.
- The draft development contributions plan details the funding arrangements for the open space in detail.
- Open spaces should be connected via new and existing footpath and shared path networks to provide a safe path of travel for pedestrians and cyclists to and between open spaces. Potential new paths/linear corridors have also been identified on the draft precinct structure plans.
- Review the level of provision of active open space and alternatives including formalising agreements with schools for access to school ovals, and improvements to existing ovals (such as lighting and synthetic pitches) to increase the time that sports fields are available for use.
- Community facilities, schools and active recreation reserves that are co-located should be designed to maximise efficiencies through the sharing of car parking and other complementary infrastructure and services.
- Investigate the potential sale of underutilised or poorly located Council owned land in order to provide for upgrade to the existing public open space needs.
- The quality of individual parks and reserves will be improved where appropriate, with particular focus on those priority items identified by the community.

In Longwarry:

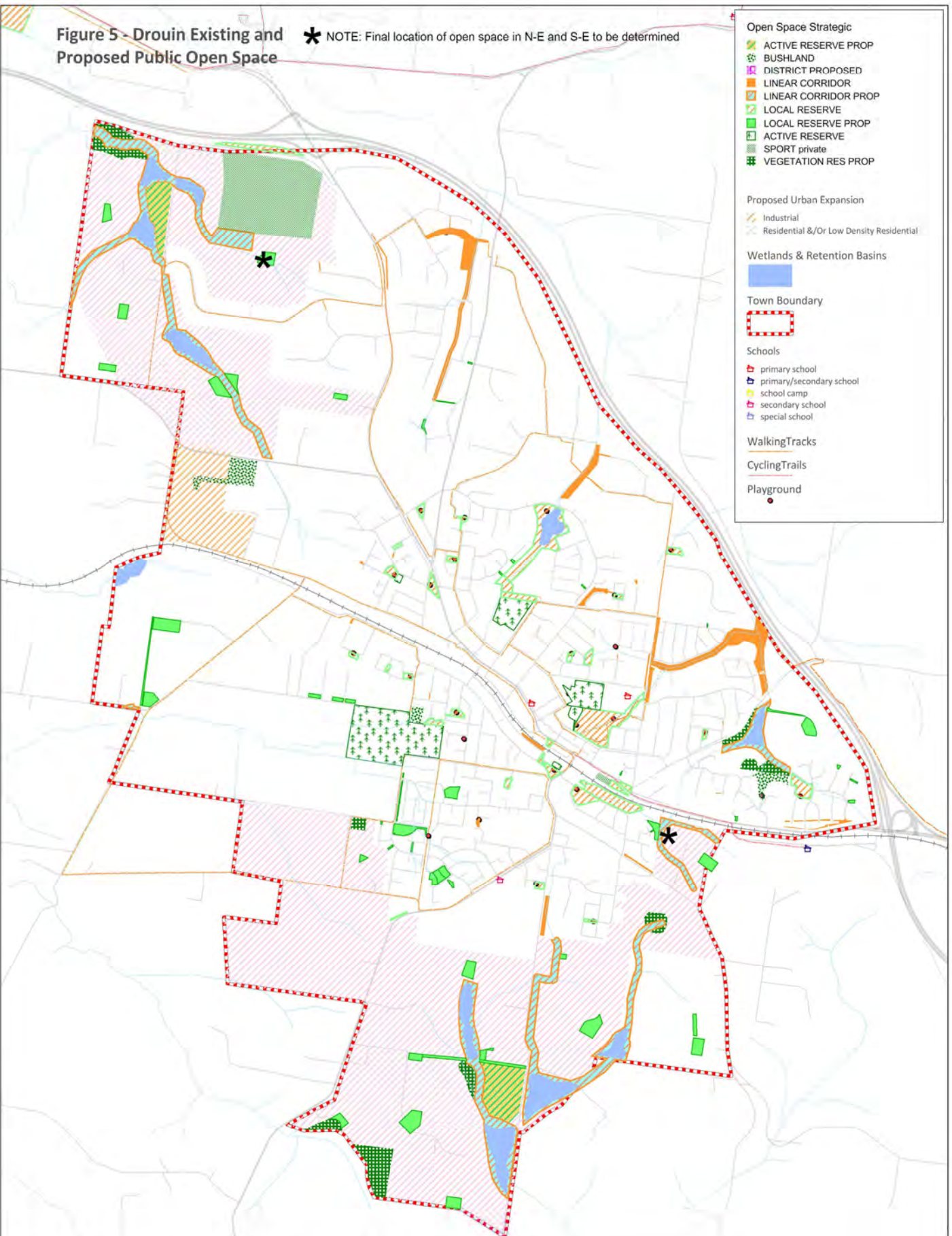
- No additional provision of district parks is required within the existing urban growth boundary based on current population projections.

- An additional Neighbourhood Park – Local (Medium) of up to 1 hectare in size should be provided as the residential area grows (at a distance of approximately 800m to existing reserves).
- The focus of future open space planning will be on the Longwarry Recreation Reserve which together provide for passive and active recreation.
- Consistent with the above point, park development standards (see Table 2) will be considered on a town-wide basis rather than for parks individually, to ensure that open space facilities are provided across the town as opposed to meeting the standards for each park.
- Open spaces should be incorporated into existing footpath and shared path networks to provide a safe path of travel for pedestrians and cyclists to and between open spaces.
- The quality of Council owned and/or managed reserves in the town should be improved where appropriate, with particular focus on priority items.

Public open space in the small towns and rural villages of the South West Region will be based on the needs of the local community, however analysis of existing levels of provision and projected population growth indicate that the need for additional public open space will be highly unlikely.

Figure 5 – Drouin Existing and Proposed Public Open Space

✱ NOTE: Final location of open space in N-E and S-E to be determined



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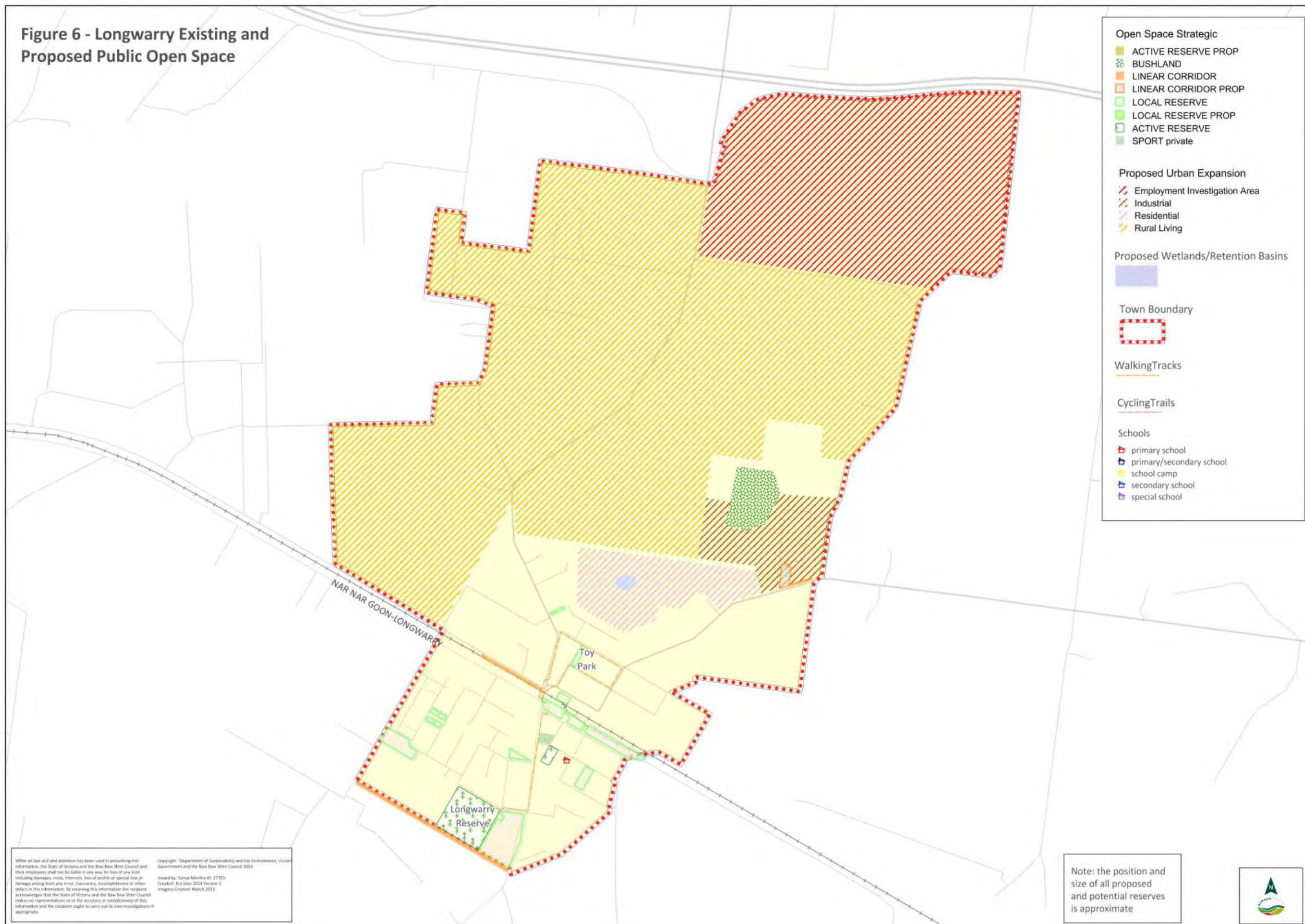
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Note: The position and size of all proposed and potential reserves is approximate



Figure 6 - Longwarry Existing and Proposed Public Open Space



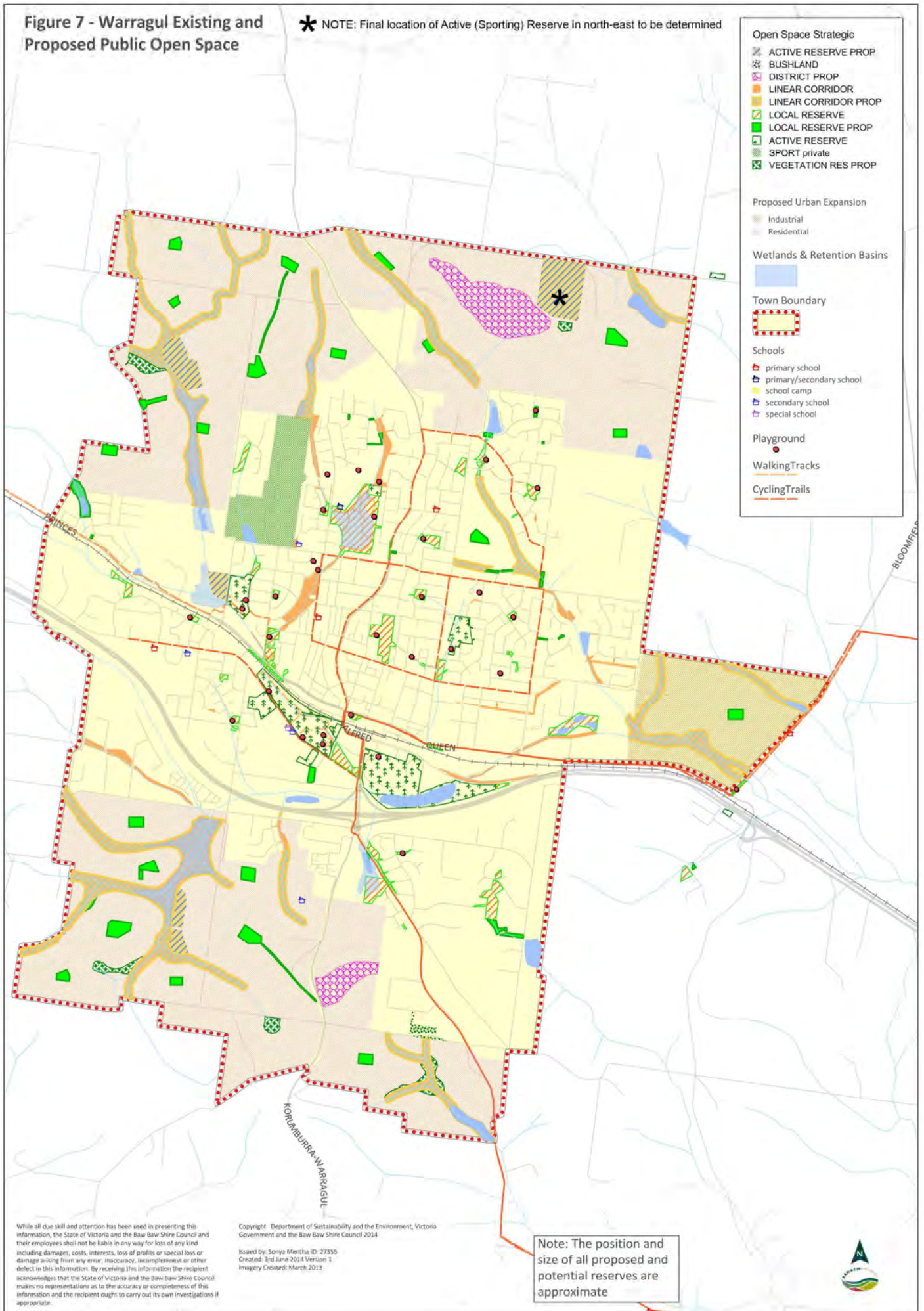
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Figure 7 - Warragul Existing and Proposed Public Open Space

✱ NOTE: Final location of Active (Sporting) Reserve in north-east to be determined



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3.6 South East Region

The South East region includes the towns of Trafalgar and Yarragon, and the smaller towns and villages of Thorpdale and Willow Grove.

Current public open space

There is a total of approximately 71 hectares of Council managed public open space in the South East region serving a population of approximately 8,339 people. Of this, 50 hectares is located in Trafalgar and 11 in Yarragon. Each of these towns, and the region as a whole, has a good level of public open space. Residents in this area also have access to the significant state open space Blue Rock Lake Reserve.

Table 7 – Council managed public open space in the South East Region

Region/ Town	Total existing public open space			Bushland	Ratio of public open space per 1,000 people	
	Total (ha)	Council managed (ha)	Potential future (ha)	Council managed (ha)	'passive' public open space (ha)	'active' public open space (ha)
South-east Region	2224.8	71.5	8.0	0.3	1.8 – 258.9	6.8 – 7.9
<i>Trafalgar</i>	<i>76.6</i>	<i>50.8</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>2.4 -9.2</i>	<i>11.6 – 11.9</i>
<i>Yarragon</i>	<i>13.4</i>	<i>11.1</i>	<i>4.0</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>1.9 – 3.4</i>	<i>5.4</i>
Shire total	2800.6	407.0	143.9	151.3	4.8 – 56.5	4.6 - 8.6

Notes:

1. *Undeveloped = public open space which has been transferred to Council or soon will be. Effectively the public open space contribution has been paid.*
2. *Potential = land which has been identified through a proposed subdivision and may at some stage may become public open space, but the subdivision or planning for the surrounding land has not commenced or is in early stages. No public open space contribution has been paid.*
3. *Ratio of public open space per 1,000 people: the lower number is based on Council owned or managed land, and the higher number includes all land available to the public for open space regardless of ownership.*

Report card status

- Total area of public open space – **A** (good)

The total area of public open space is high in the Region and Trafalgar and good in Yarragon, and is expected to remain so over at least the next ten years.

- Types of public open space – **B** (adequate)

There are adequate levels of passive and active public open spaces across the region and the two towns.

The majority of public open space particularly within Yarragon is classified as 'active', and tends to serve a sport function. It is important that the multi-use of such spaces is encouraged, with access for passive use provided and encouraged when not being used for sports purposes.

- Distribution of public open space – **B** (adequate)

Public open spaces are generally well distributed in both Yarragon and Trafalgar, however there are gaps in access to larger parks. This should be addressed by identifying opportunities where necessary to improve

connectivity to existing parks and providing additional Neighbourhood Park – Local (small & medium) in new residential areas.

Future planning for public open space

The bulk of population growth over the next ten years in this region is expected to be focused particularly on Trafalgar, but this will not reduce the overall ratios of public open space to population below a level comparable with other regions in the shire and growth towns.

In Trafalgar:

- No additional provision of District park is required within the existing settlement area based on current population projections.
- To provide for the full development of the town boundary, there is a projected need for up to additional 4 hectares of Neighbourhood park - Local (small/medium), with a distance of approximately 800m to existing reserves.
- Establish good quality connections between existing and new residential areas with the Trafalgar Recreation Reserve to the north of the railway line.
- Park development standards (see Table 2) will be considered on a town-wide basis rather than for parks individually, to ensure that open space facilities are provided across the town as opposed to meeting the standards for each park.
- The quality of Council owned and/or managed reserves in the town should be improved where appropriate, with particular focus on priority items.
- Open spaces should also be incorporated into existing footpath and shared path networks to provide a safe path of travel for pedestrians and cyclists to and between open spaces.

In Yarragon:

- To provide for the full development of the settlement area, there is a projected need for up to an additional 4 hectares of Neighbourhood Park – Local (small/medium), with a distance of approximately 600m to existing reserves.
- The focus of future open space planning in Yarragon will be on the Dowton Park Recreation Reserve which provides for passive and active recreation.
- Park development standards (see Table 2) will be considered on a town-wide basis rather than for parks individually, to ensure that open space facilities are provided across the town as opposed to meeting the standards for each park.
- Open spaces should also be incorporated into existing footpath and shared path networks to provide a safe path of travel for pedestrians and cyclists to and between open spaces.

Public open space in the small towns and rural villages of the South East Region will be based on the needs of the local community, however analysis of existing levels of provision and projected population growth indicate that the need for additional public open space will be highly unlikely.

Figure 8 - Trafalgar existing and Proposed Public Open Space

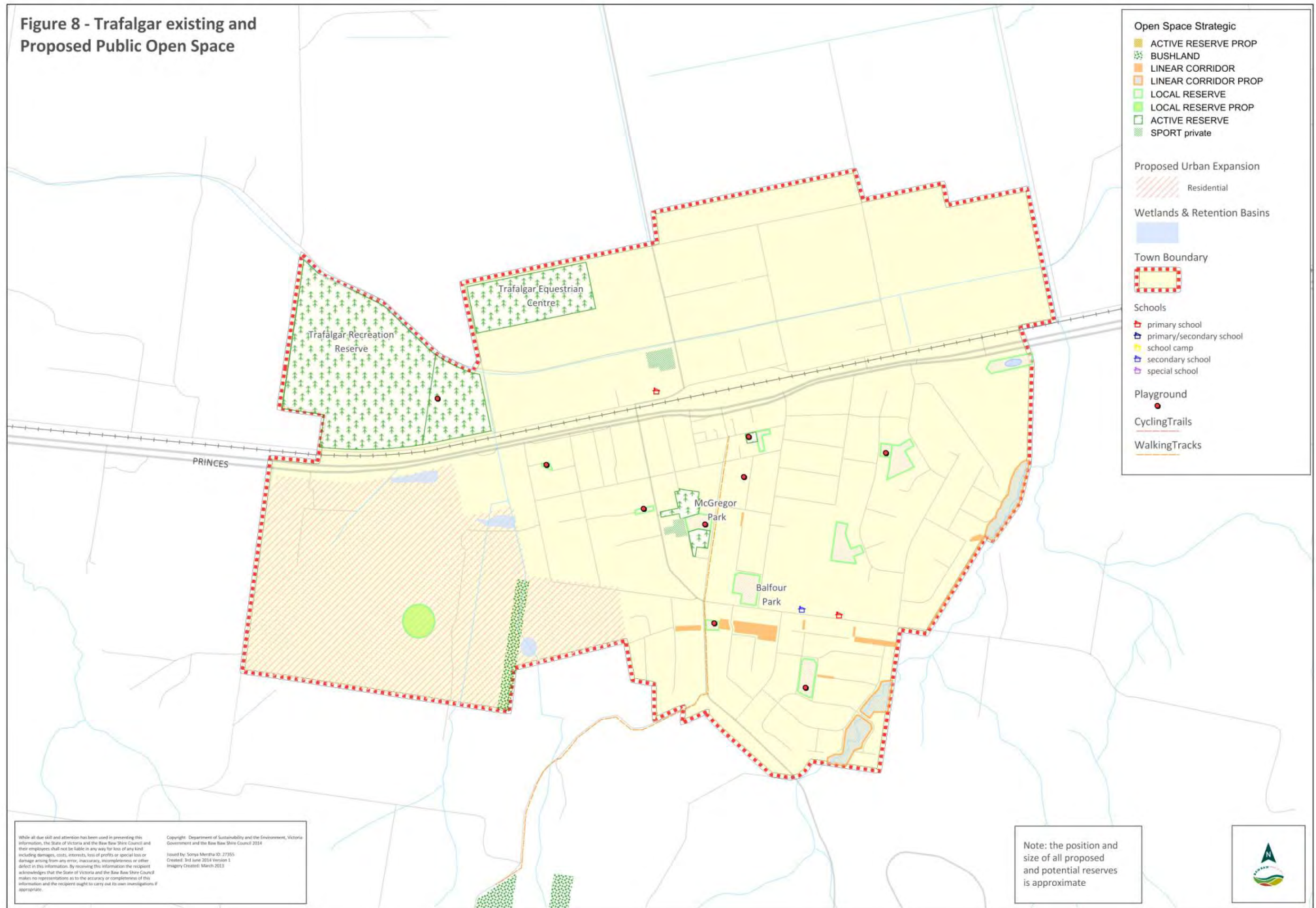
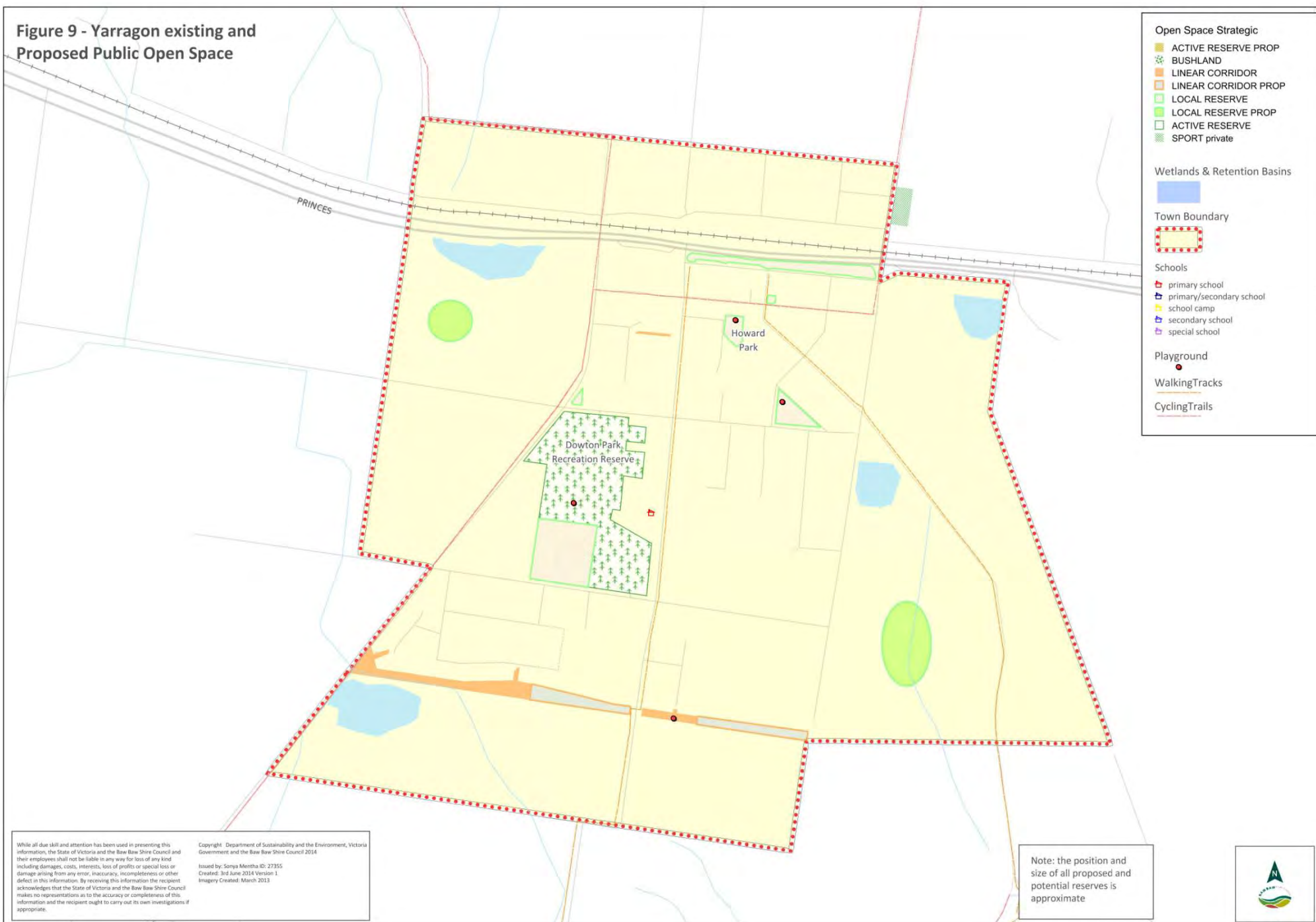


Figure 9 - Yarragon existing and Proposed Public Open Space



Part 4 Strategy Implementation

The purpose of this section is to highlight the key findings and recommendations of the Open Space Strategy, and set out a plan of implementation.

Implementation of the Strategy relies on a substantial ongoing commitment of resources, including staff and annual capital works and operational budgets, and support for the preparation of strategies and plans such as park Masterplans.

A range of key actions have been identified, which will be the responsibility of several Council departments. These are set out in the attached Action Plan and include recommendations, responsibilities, required resources and priorities. These actions will be included in annual business plans as appropriate.

In some circumstances, the actions listed in the action plan may need to be modified, removed or expanded over time in response to changing needs. This should be highlighted in any review of the strategy. Any substantial changes should only occur following consultation with the affected community.

Several actions are likely to be most effectively implemented as a result of action by both Council and other agencies who manage land being used by the community as public open space. A strong emphasis will be placed on forming partnerships to achieve the goals and actions of the strategy. In addition, partnerships should also be sought with community groups.

Following adoption of the strategy, an amendment to the Baw Baw Planning Scheme may be commenced in order to specify an open space contribution at the schedule to Clause 52.01 or as appropriate.

This Strategy should be reviewed and updated following a review to the Baw Baw Settlement Management Plan or any Structure Plans.

4.1 Key Recommendations and Action Plan

Future public open space needs have been identified through the community needs assessment, analysis of the existing public open space network, and emerging trends and issues and key principles for future public open space in Part 2.

In summary, the Strategy identifies the potential need for significant additional public open space to be provided as the community grows.

- Over the period to 2050, or full development of the current urban growth boundaries, it is currently estimated that an additional 127 hectares of public open space will be required in key towns across the municipality. To 2031, it is estimated to be 37 hectares.
- Gradual improvement to existing public open space where required.

Acquisition of Public Open Space

The current levels of public open space provision across for much of the shire is expected to be adequate to provide for both the existing and new population.

However, there is expected to be significant urban growth occurring in centres along the highway and to the west of the municipality in particular which will trigger the need for additional public open space. While the total area of open space would normally provide for this growth, it is not well distributed to new residential areas.

The actual need for additional public open space will be based on ongoing monitoring of population growth and development of greenfields urban land. Population growth affects the quantum of additional public open space that is required for new residents, and also affects the provision of public open space provided by development.

Alternatives to the provision of new open space include formal agreements with other authorities (such as for access to school ovals), or the sale of existing Council land in order to purchase better located and suited land.

Emphasis should be placed on generally improving the connectivity and integration between existing and new areas of public open space, and other key attractions such as housing, schools, shops and workplaces.

Improve existing public open space

The community open space needs assessment in Section 3.1 clearly identifies some key open space facilities that are of a high priority, but are currently considered to be in a generally poor condition. The top five priorities as identified by the community comprise: public toilets, recycling bins, lighting, seating, shelters.

Community feedback indicated a range of open space improvements that would increase usage rates of public open space. The top five priorities as identified by the community comprise: walking and cycling paths, toilets, more facilities generally, dog friendly areas, and maintenance.

Other factors identified by the strategy analysis is the generally low levels of participation in physical activity to be sufficient for health, and focus can be given to improving facilities or encouraging programs for activities for health.

Open space improvements could occur over time as parks were subject to regular maintenance or scheduled renewals.

Preparation of park masterplans

The preparation of park Masterplans has been identified as a key measure for the implementation of the open space strategy for at least Neighbourhood Park – District (Large) and Sporting Reserves. This applies to both new and existing district parks and sporting reserves to guide their initial and ongoing development and improvement.

4.2 Key Roles and Responsibilities

All Directorates of Council currently play a role in the management and planning of public open space, with approximately eight different business units currently involved. The current roles and responsibilities are indicated in Table 9.

Without proper management and oversight, there is a risk of:

- Respective roles not being fully understood and appreciated,
- Issues may arise which are not the clear role of any particular business unit, and so may not be immediately or satisfactorily addressed, and
- Issues arising may be considered with respect to the business unit, rather in respect of the entire open space management system.

Given the growing significance of public open space as an asset class, there is need in particular for ongoing strategic oversight and planning specifically for public open space. Current gaps identified include the need for a position or business unit to have the lead and coordinate the planning and management for open space assets. Other skills gaps identified include turf management and wetland management.

Table 8 – Open Space Responsibility Matrix

Open Space Tasks	Community Assets	Growth and Economic Development	Community Services	Corporate Services	Gaps
Open space and recreation planning		<i>Temporary Position</i>	Recreation		Open space planning coordination
Project Design	Urban Operations, Program Planning and Delivery		Recreation (for recreation projects)		Turf and wetland management expertise
Construction	Urban Operations, Program Planning and Delivery		Recreation		
Operation and Risk	Urban Operations, Assets and Roads		Recreation	Governance & Compliance	
Planning and enforcement of dogs off leash areas				Local Laws	
Managing Maintenance	Urban Operations				
Renewal Planning	Urban Operations, Assets and Roads				
Responsible for disposal	Governance				
Condition inspections	Urban Operations, Assets and Roads				
Maintenance of asset management register	Assets and Roads				
Development of Asset Management Plans	Assets and Roads				
Collection and Administration of Public Open Space Contributions Scheme		Statutory Planning		Finance	Strategy for collection, management and distribution of contributions.

Legend:	Lead Unit	Supporting Unit
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4.3 Public Open Space Contributions

The open space contribution rates for Warragul and Drouin are directly from the draft Precinct Structure Plans.

The open space contribution rate for main towns and the rest of the shire uses a formula of: the total value of the open space projects where demand is created by new residents, divided by the total estimated value of the land to be developed.

The contribution can be calculated as either a flat rate for the entire municipality, or several different rates can be created for different geographic areas. However it is considered that a flat rate would create some inequities particularly for those areas where minimal additional public open space is proposed.

As such a differential public open space contribution rate should be applied based on the township hierarchy as established by the Baw Baw Settlement Strategy and draft Precinct Structure Plans.

A public open space contribution is triggered generally by subdivisions of three or more lots (subject to the Subdivision Act 1988). The significant majority of developments triggering a public open space contribution will occur in the towns listed above.

The draft Development Contributions Plan included in the Warragul and Drouin Structure Plans will direct the funding of open space in those towns between developers and Council.

For other areas, the total dollar costs, and the dollar costs attributable to both Council and developers will change over time in response to inflation, and all dollar cost figures will index at the appropriate rate.

Prior to implementation of a revised public open space contribution rate, any changes would be considered by Council as part of a planning scheme amendment process.

Table 9 – Potential Public Open Space Contribution Rates

Town	Open Space Contribution Rate - Residential	Open Space Contribution Rate - Commercial & Industrial
Warragul & Drouin	4.5%	4.5%
Neerim South, Longwarry, Trafalgar and Yarragon	6.4%	2%
Rest of Shire	0.4%	0.4%

4.4 Monitoring and Control

The Open Space Strategy will be subject to regular monitoring to determine whether the Strategy implementation is proceeding as projected. Monitoring will include key indicators which will indicate the likely source of any problem and give guidance as to the measures which can be taken to bring the Strategy back on course.

Key indicators to be monitored include:

1. The growth of key communities, including both population and residential land area;
2. Cash and land received from developers via Public Open Contributions;
3. The area of land that has been improved for new public open space for residents use; and
4. Community satisfaction with municipal public open space.

Where these indicate that the Strategy implementation is not proceeding as projected or new strategic directions will have impacts on implementation, then a review of the Strategy should be carried out to either change implementation timelines; change recommendations set out in the Action Plan; change the strategy/ies; or change the objectives of the Strategy itself. A significant change would require community and stakeholder input.

4.5 Action Plan

An action plan has been prepared to help guide the implementation of the Open Space Strategy, and has been set out in a relative order of priority:

- 1 Review and implement an appropriate process for the management of public open space (including Planning Scheme amendment and asset management);
- 2 Review level of financial and staff resourcing;
- 3 Planning for the improvement to existing public open space;
- 4 Working with other Authority land owners around sharing of resources to provide public access to open space; and
- 5 Provision of new public open space as required and its improvement.



Table 10 Open Space Strategy Action Plan

Strategy Recommendation		Responsibility	Required Resources	Target, Timeline or Priority
1	Planning Scheme Implementation <i>This recommendation aims to include the Open Space Strategy into the Baw Baw Planning Scheme and develop an agreed approach to the public open space contributions required from developers, including the amount and whether cash and/or land.</i>			
1.1	Review of Development Contribution Plan Overlay Schedule 1 and development contributions projects and open space contribution figures should be undertaken. A planning scheme amendment should be prepared to implement the findings of the review.	Strategic Planning	Resourcing for the Planning Scheme Amendment process.	Medium to High Review to occur every 2-5 years
1.2	Preparation and Implementation into the Baw Baw Planning Scheme of Warragul and Drouin Structure Plans and the associated Development Contributions Plan	Strategic Planning	Resourcing for preparation of Structure Plans and Planning Scheme Amendment process	High
1.3	Update town Structure Plans (Neerim South, Longwarry, Yarragon and Trafalgar) with the proposed location of Neighbourhood Parks.	Strategic Planning.	Minimal, if carried out in association with Structure Plan reviews and amendments.	Medium

Strategy Recommendation		Responsibility	Required Resources	Target, Timeline or Priority
2	Review Council's Asset Management Strategy and Plans with regards to public open spaces owned by Council <i>This recommendation aims to develop a sustainable program for managing the acquisition, improvement, maintenance and renewal of public open spaces.</i>			
2.1	Develop and maintain a single public open space asset register.	Asset Management.	An appropriate Asset Management System to monitor public open space assets.	High
2.2	Planning for required public open space acquisition, including its location, size and future use.	Asset Management. Infrastructure Services. Strategic Planning. Urban Operations	Open space planning expertise.	Medium
2.3	Review and develop maintenance specifications schedules, condition assessments, inspections and works management for all existing and new public open space.	Urban Operations. Asset Management. .	An appropriate Asset Management System to monitor public open space assets.	Medium
2.4	Audit of the quality of all existing public open space against the park development standards set out in Table 2 – Park Development Standards, and develop plans for the improvement of parks consistent with action 4.2 below.	Asset Management. Urban Operations. .	Staff resources.	Medium
2.5	Review and develop a periodical reporting system for monitoring public open space assets and resourcing (both capital and operational).	Asset Management. Urban Operations.	An appropriate Asset Management System to monitor public open space assets.	Medium

Strategy Recommendation		Responsibility	Required Resources	Target, Timeline or Priority
3	Public open space resourcing <i>This recommendation aims to develop a sustainable approach to the resourcing of public open space planning, management, maintenance and renewals.</i>			
3.1	Review of the annual operational and capital works budget to provide for an agreed level of staff resourcing, improvements, maintenance and renewals to Council owned public open space	Urban Operations. Finance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional funds to the annual Capital and Operational budgets in accordance with the general principles of this Open Space Strategy or as otherwise agreed. Additional EFT in accordance with the general principles of this Open Space Strategy or as otherwise agreed. Additional plant to maintain open space in accordance with the general principles of this Open Space Strategy or as otherwise agreed. 	High
3.2	Review the organisational structure for the ability to deliver on sustainable, affordable, efficient and effective open space management: need in particular for ongoing strategic oversight and planning specifically for public open space. In the interim, the need for an Open Space Planner has been identified.	All business units with an involvement in Public Open Space.	Open Space Planning expertise.	Medium
3.3	Development of a policy statement in relation to the sale of Council land and reserves	Property Coordinator. .	Asset management and open space planning staff resources and expertise.	Medium
3.4	Review underutilised land currently owned by Council, for potential sale or land swaps to provide open space in those key areas identified by this strategy and meet the open space needs of the community.	Property Coordinator. .	Asset management staff resources and expertise.	Medium

Strategy Recommendation		Responsibility	Required Resources	Target, Timeline or Priority
4	Park master planning and improvements <i>This recommendation aims to develop long-term planning for park design, management and renewals; to ensure that park improvements reflect community needs and priorities over the longer term; and encourage greater use of public open spaces.</i>			
4.1	Prepare park masterplans for all existing and proposed Neighbourhood Parks - District (Large) and Sporting Reserves to guide the development of these key public open spaces.	Recreation. Strategic Planning Urban Operations	Open Space Planning expertise.	Medium
4.2	For existing key parks, as part of the scheduled Park maintenance and renewals:	Asset Management. Urban Operations. Open space coordination.	Additional funds to the annual Capital and Operational budgets in accordance with the general principles of this Open Space Strategy or as otherwise agreed.	Medium Target: shift the current standard or quality to satisfactory or better for highest priority items.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve high priority facilities and infrastructure (see Sykes 2011). Generally provide appropriate open space improvements consistent with the park development standards (see Table 2), commencing with high priority parks, and highest priority facilities and infrastructure (Sykes 2011). 			Medium
4.3	Continued implementation of the Baw Baw playground strategy and review the strategy with regards to the play needs particularly in growth areas.	Urban Operations. Recreation	Capital budget allocation.	Medium
4.4	Improve the connectivity between the new larger public open spaces, new and existing residences, existing public open spaces and community facilities via the Linear Reserve network.	Community Assets. Open space coordination.	Additional funds to the annual Capital and Operational budgets in accordance with the general principles of this Open Space Strategy or as otherwise agreed.	Medium

Strategy Recommendation		Responsibility	Required Resources	Target, Timeline or Priority
5	Dogs in parks <i>This recommendation aims to address the needs of all park users in relation to dogs in public open spaces.</i>			
5.1	Review the suitability of parks across the municipality for opportunities to provide dog off leash opportunities.	Community Compliance. Urban Operations. Open space coordination.	Adequate financial and staffing resources for implementation (signage, dog litter bags & bins) and enforcement.	Medium

Strategy Recommendation		Responsibility	Required Resources	Target, Timeline or Priority
6	Management of other Authority land: <i>This recommendation aims to develop understanding and agreements with other land managers around land used as public open space, including roles and responsibilities, and minimum maintenance standards.</i>			
6.1	Continue advocacy and discussion with the Catchment Management Authority regarding the future management and responsibility for buffers to creek corridors.	Asset Management.	Unknown	Medium
6.2	Develop a policy and strategy to direct the consideration of working towards partnerships and agreements with other public authorities, including Department of Education (DEECD) around public recreation and required standards, including the multi-use and sharing of public authority land.	Property Coordinator. Open space coordination. Community Services Asset Management.	Property Management and Open Space Planning expertise. Financial implications are unknown	Medium

Strategy Recommendation	Responsibility	Required Resources	Target, Timeline or Priority
<p>7 Provide additional open space</p> <p><i>This recommendation aims to provide additional public open space, in accordance with the current requirements of the Baw Baw Planning Scheme, in response to population growth and development of new residential land which is designed and developed to respond to the needs of the community.</i></p>			
7.1	<p>Provide additional public open space in areas of new urban development to the town boundaries consistent with the criteria as outlined in this strategy.</p>	<p>Asset Management.</p> <p>Property Coordinator</p> <p>Finance</p> <p>Open space coordination.</p> <p>Statutory Planning.</p> <p>Strategic Planning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional funds in the annual capital budget for the acquisition and improvement and public open space. • Additional funds in the capital and operational budgets to cover maintenance and renewals for all new open space added to the Council owned or managed public open network. • Provision for additional staff resourcing to manage new public open space. • An appropriate Asset Management System to monitor public open space assets. • An adopted public open space contributions scheme. <p>High</p> <p>In accordance with the principles set out in the Baw Baw Planning Scheme and this Strategy, the following minimum ratios of public open space to new development should apply.</p> <p>For every 35 hectares of new land developed within the Town Boundaries, approximately 1 additional hectare of fully improved public open space is to be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One fully improved District Reserve is to be provided for every 600 hectares of new urban development. • One fully improved Local Reserve is to be provided for every 66 hectares of new urban development.

Strategy Recommendation		Responsibility	Required Resources	Target, Timeline or Priority
8	Monitoring <i>This recommendation aims to monitor and report on the effectiveness of the implementation of the Open Space Strategy.</i>			
8.1	Monitor the following performance indicators at least annually to track the implementation of the Open Space Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The growth of key communities, including both population and residential land area. • Cash and land received from developers via Public Open Contributions and Development Contributions Plan. • The area of land that has been improved for new public open space for residents use. • Community satisfaction with municipal public open space. 	Open space coordination. Finance and Revenue.		High

Appendix 1 – Summary of Community Open Space Needs Assessment 2011

Community use and need for public open space

A community open space needs assessment was prepared during the first half of 2011 (Sykes Consulting, 2011) to help guide the preparation of this open space strategy, which featured the following:

- Distribution of an open space issues and opportunities paper.
- Mail out of surveys to 2,000 randomly selected residents (based on stratified geographic and population sampling). 452 surveys were completed and returned.
- 109 surveys carried out in parks at various locations across the municipality.
- Three focus groups attended by approximately 60 people, including one of Councillors and council officers with an interest in the planning and management of open spaces, and two with community representatives.

Community sentiment expressed in the surveys and focus group meetings strongly reinforce the value of public open space to the community.

The full report of findings from the above is available from Baw Baw Shire Council and www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au.

Summary of issues raised by the community

The following is a summary of the community open space needs assessment outcomes:

- Parks and open space are valuable in **encouraging people to be active and healthy**.
- Open spaces need to **provide for a diverse range of experiences** and should provide for casual and unstructured activity in addition to the more formal provision of sporting facilities.
- Open space should be **well located and improved** in such a way that maximise opportunities for physical activity and recreation opportunities.
- The ability of the open space system to be **responsive to change over time**, as priorities and popular activities change is a critical planning consideration. For example, in the past sporting reserves were often planned with football / cricket ovals. Contemporary planning is more flexible in planning for oval and rectangular playing fields allowing for multiple and emerging sports to utilise active spaces.
- There is support for some small parks that are walking distance from home combined with larger more central parks, and almost as much support for few small parks through neighbourhoods and larger more central parks.
- People are mainly using parks that are **close to home** (up to 400 m and up to 1km from home). However, if there is a special attraction or parks offer a particularly pleasant setting, then people will travel up to 2km.
- The **hierarchy of open space** and facilities is reinforced as a viable way to plan and deliver relevant and appropriate services. Ensuring a good range and diversity of high level destinations with local parks, district sporting reserves and linear corridors to connect key facilities is important for quality open space provision.
- There is a gap in performance of **high priority facilities** when compared to community perceptions of quality including: public toilets, recycling bins, lighting, pathways, seating, shelters, shade trees, natural areas and picnic tables.

- Improved **walking and cycling paths and toilet facilities** would encourage greater community use of open space, and more facilities in parks that are well landscaped, accessible for all ages and have dog friendly areas are generally desired by the community.
- Parks are particularly used for more passive activities, which may indicate that more focus should be placed on **facilities for walking, social gatherings, children's play and dogs**.
- **Dogs should be permitted on-lead in public open spaces** (unless otherwise prohibited, such as near playgrounds). Parks should be reviewed for the suitability for full-time or part-time off leash opportunities.

Community use of open space

Responses to surveys indicate that nearly all residents will at some time use public open space, and there is a trend of most frequent use occurring in local parks close to home (between everyday up to weekly).

Most people will use parks in the company of other people. However there is an interesting trend for younger age groups to use parks in larger groups. This trend declines with age, with people aged 65+ are more likely to visit a park alone.

The vast majority of people are accessing parks by walking and driving, and this is reflected in the range of distances that people are willing to travel in order to access a park. People are mainly using parks that are close to home (up to 400 m and up to 1km from home). However, if there is a special attraction or parks offer a particularly pleasant setting, then people are more inclined to travel further to get to them.

The majority of respondents are using open space for between 30 min to 1 hour, which may reflect the popularity of parks for walking. Younger age groups tend to stay longer and older age groups tend to stay for shorter periods.

Factors attracting the community to open spaces

The key reasons cited for why people use a particular park is that it is conveniently located being close to home, easy to get to or within walking distance. Other factors include: being clean and well maintained, having a good setting, can be accessed with a dog and being easy to access.

Facilities rated as being most important to provide in parks include; toilets, paths, shade trees, recycling bins, lighting, seating, plants and vegetation. These are currently rated as being in a satisfactory condition, with the exception of public toilets and recycling bins, which were more likely to be rated as being in poor condition. Half basketball courts/tennis hitting walls were also likely to be rated as being in a poor condition, but these are considered to be a relatively low priority.

Lack of time is the main reason nominated by most people for not using public open space, followed by no desire, being too far away, using open space elsewhere and a lack of facilities. The key factors that respondents indicate would encourage use of open space include; improved walking and cycling paths, public toilets and shade. Other factors cited include more facilities and dog friendly areas.

Key community activities in open spaces

The key activities that the community is using public open space for is unstructured or passive recreation activities. This includes walking, meeting friends and family, picnics and barbeques, children's play, relaxing, walking the dog, exercise and cycling. 'Using a playground' and 'taking children to play' both occur in the top ten activities that were nominated. Organised sport is mainly occurring at larger parks and involving 29% of respondents.

There are clear trends in the way people are using parks, and the popularity of activities varies according to the type of open space, for example large, linear or local parks. Larger parks are most popular for meeting friends and family and picnics/barbeques. Walking is the most popular activity in linear parks and local parks close to home. Local parks are a preferred location for walking the dog and using playgrounds.

The key activities by park size and type are shown in Table 3.

Table 1 - Key activities by park

Larger parks	Linear parks	Local parks
Picnicking / barbeque	Walking	Walking
Meeting family or friends	Riding a bike / skating	Using a playground
Taking children to play	Exercise / fitness (jogging)	Walking the dog
Walking	Relaxing, escape, rejuvenation	Taking children to play
Sightseeing	Walking the dog	Meeting family or friends
Relaxing, escape, rejuvenation		Relaxing, escape, rejuvenation
Using a playground		
Organised sport		

Children and youth priorities in open space

Workshops were held with over 170 primary school and high school aged children and youth in 2010 during the preparation of *BawBaw 2050*.

The key priorities raised in these workshops with regards to public open space (in order of priority) include:

- Sports and sports facilities;
- The environment, plants and animals;
- Providing natural parks and reserves;
- Skate parks;
- Having activities and choices;
- More parks;
- Safety;
- Good amenity;
- Health and fitness;
- Walking and footpaths;
- BMX;
- Cleanliness;
- Environmentally friendly, sustainable; and
- Disabled access.

Emerging trends and issues

A number of key issues have been identified as a result of the open space analysis, the community open space needs assessment and during the preparation of *BawBaw 2050*.

Demographics

Large parts of the shire, including Warragul and Drouin, are located within 100km of Melbourne and are experiencing increasing urban growth pressures. Baw Baw Shire is currently the sixth fastest growing municipality in Victoria, growing at a rate of 3.8% per annum (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

This growth pressure is expected to continue over at least the next 15 years in response to a number of drivers such as housing affordability, with an approximate 40% increase in population expected over the period 2006 – 2026 (Victoria in Future, 2008).

An additional emerging trend is the general ageing of the population, with significantly higher proportions of older residents expected to live in the municipality compared to other age groups. Older residents will have different needs and expectations of public open space, and may experience barriers to accessing parks such as distance, missing footpaths, perceptions of safety, lack of seating to rest.

There are expected to be many different impacts of this changing population, particularly with regards to open space:

- Different expectations of services and facilities between the new residents compared to existing residents.
- Demand for more or different types of public open space.
- Potential changes to social cohesion and the character of the towns and municipality generally. Currently many residents recognise the significance of knowing and being known by neighbours and friends in the community.
- Growing diversity of residents and their cultural backgrounds.
- Consideration of the ageing population, and potentially the location of parks and the distance thresholds for access to parks, and facilities located in parks and along key access routes.

The health and wellbeing of the community

The Australian Sports Commission survey report indicates that 82.6% of all Victorians participate in physical activity, both organised and non-organised, and 60.8% of Victorians are participating in organised physical activity at least once per week.

However an increasing proportion of adults are unlikely to meet the minimum guidelines for physical activity for health. Department of Health data suggests that only 59% of adult males and 65% of adult females (aged 18 and older) meet minimum physical activity guidelines, which is around 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days according to the National Physical Activity Guidelines for Australians (Department of Health and Ageing).

The key sport and activity that most people participate in is walking, with a total participation rate of 35.9% of all people (Australian Sports Commission 2009). This significantly outweighs participation in all other activities.

Changing climate and low carbon economy transition

A changing climate, peaking oil and increasing energy costs are key issues that were identified during the preparation of *BawBaw 2050*. This has potentially significant implications for the design and management of public open spaces, including shade and shelter, plant species selection, water sensitive design principles, local food production and providing for non-motorised transport. The planning and management of public open space must take account of these issues.

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