

Open space

WHAT IS THE ISSUE?

Open space is a highly-valued community priority. The City of Stonnington has the second lowest amount of public open space per person of any Victorian municipality (at 6.7 per cent, or 20 sqm per person); this combined with high development density and a projected population increase of over 30,000 by 2036 means there is a critical need to acquire land as it becomes available.

Parks and open spaces in Stonnington make an important contribution to reducing chronic disease risk factors, increasing social inclusion and building stronger communities. Overwhelmingly, throughout every engagement activity, our community tell us that open space and liveability are the most important issues for Council and access to open space is important to improving their health.

Each year Council invests more than \$5M to strategically purchase land for new park developments across the municipality and continues to explore options to create new urban and green spaces within Stonnington. Given the cost of land acquisition and rate of population growth, the ratio of open space per head of population in Stonnington will continue to decline.

Across all levels of government, open space provision must be built into integrated land use and infrastructure planning now, otherwise the liveability and wellbeing of inner Melbournians will be detrimentally impacted.

Our strategic approach

Council's *Strategies for Creating Open Space* (2013) establishes strategies and a sustainable model of land acquisition and action to deliver increased public and accessible open space across the municipality over the next 20 years.

Municipal-wide objectives and actions of this strategic implementation plan include:

- » **identification of land** – consideration of land adjacent to Council facilities and any drainage and overland flood issues
- » **sustainable plan** – developing a sustainable financial model, systematic approach to property purchase and increasing developers' open space contributions
- » **conversion of at-grade car parks** – investigating the feasibility of undergrounding or decking activity centre at-grade car parks
- » **partnerships, negotiations and agreements** – negotiating with the State Government, statutory authorities and not-for-profit organisations to improve linkages and increase open space through opportunities, such as the off-road bike network and using schools
- » **links** – progressing structure plans in activity centres, providing strategic links and encouraging access to the Yarra River and existing under-used open space, and
- » **alternative spaces** – promoting green roofs and green walls, improving the amenity and accessibility of the public realm, and potential development of streets as linear forms of open space.

What needs to change?

The State Government and other public authorities across Victoria need to increase public and accessible open space to ensure the physical and social wellbeing of inner Melbourne, now and in the longer-term by:

- » maximising railway corridors as open space
- » converting under-used state and other publicly owned land to open space for long term community benefit, rather than short term benefits provided by private developers
- » expand and improve links across the open space network and within the off-road and shared path network, and
- » ensure existing publicly owned open space remains in perpetuity, including retaining existing open space associated with the Horace Petty Housing Estate that links to Princes Gardens and Dye Works Park.

Council action

We are delivering on our long-term plan to provide more open space for Stonnington residents by:

- » The \$60M+ transformation of the old Cato Street car park in Prahran into nearly 10,000m² of multifunctional urban park, with underground car parking
- » Council continues to hold discussions and negotiations with the State Government and other public authorities to increase accessible open space to ensure the physical and social wellbeing of Stonnington residents, now and into the long-term future
- » At every opportunity, Council will seek State Government financial support to acquire additional land for open space, improve links between open space, and improve the quality and amenity of existing open space, and
- » Adopting amendment C186 helps Council acquire land and deliver our 20 year open space strategy by applying an open space contribution rate on new developments, including a:
 - › five per cent rate for new developments in Glen Iris, Malvern, Malvern East, Toorak and Kooyong, and
 - › eight per cent rate for new developments in Armadale, Prahran, Windsor and South Yarra.