

1.1 MONASH OPEN SPACE STRATEGY (SMC: File F17-5072)

Responsible Director: Peter Panagakos

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. *Notes the changes made to the draft Monash Open Space Strategy in response to public consultation undertaken in September and October 2017.*
2. *Notes that following the SGS Planning & Economics review a key direction of the Strategy is to require Public Open Space contribution of 10% for subdivision of all land in Monash.*
3. *Adopt the updated Monash Open Space Strategy.*
4. *Authorise the Director City Development to request the Minister for Planning for authorisation to prepare and exhibit an amendment to the Monash Planning Scheme as outlined in this report, including:*
 - *Changes Clause 53.01 to require that all subdivision is required to provide a public open space contribution at a rate of 10%.*
 - *A new Local Planning Policy to set out the policy for the process for open space contributions.*
5. *Upon receiving authorisation from the Minister for Planning, exhibit the amendment in accordance with Section 19 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987.*

INTRODUCTION

At the Council meeting of 27 February 2018 Council was updated on the key issues raised in the consultation on the draft Monash Open Space Strategy (MOSS) and advised of the process for Council officers to finalise the open space strategy for adoption.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the changes made to the MOSS in response to public consultation in September and October 2018 and to seek Council adoption of the strategy. The report also outlines the results of the review of potential open space funding mechanisms to assist in the implementation of the MOSS.

BACKGROUND

The MOSS sets out a strategic overview of how to plan for the future needs of the existing and growing community for the Monash open space network of sports reserves, local parks and trails over the next 10 years. It responds to the changing needs and expectations of current residents and the additional demands that will be placed on the public open space network. The MOSS identifies the open space needs of existing and future residents of Monash, gaps in the provision of open space and opportunities to address those gaps.

The vision of the MOSS is:

The City of Monash has quality, diverse and accessible open space to drive the liveability, health and wellbeing of our community by:

- *Meeting the current and future needs of the community - close to where people live, work and play.*
- *Having a diversity of functions for social, physical and environmental experiences for the whole community.*
- *Strengthening the 'Garden City Character' of residential, commercial and industrial areas.*

The principles that underpin the strategy are:

- *Equitable access - ensure an appropriate level of open space is available for all residents regardless of where they live, their age, gender, income, ethnicity, education or ability.*
- *Diversity of opportunities and experiences to ensure all residents can use and benefit from open space.*
- *Quantity – the provision of open space across Monash will continue to be increased to ensure an appropriate level is available for all residents.*
- *Quality (fit for purpose) – ensuring that the function of an open space meets the requirements for that function.*
- *Sustainability – in design, development and management of open space.*
- *Dependency – some people, activities and assets are dependent on the inherent natural qualities of open space reserves. And as a priority, open space should support activities and users who are more dependent upon it;*
- *Environmental protection, enhancement and appreciation including the protection of canopy trees, habitat, flora and fauna and waterways.*

CONSULTATION PROCESS

Public consultation on the MOSS was undertaken during September and October 2017; closing on Tuesday 31 October 2017.

Councillors may recall that Council received:

- 23 written submissions directly via either letter or email.
- Over 450 responses via Social Pinpoint, including 50 group chats. The majority of the submissions (300) related to the Talbot Quarry residential development proposal – Planning Scheme Amendment C129, and the Panel Report and recommendations were considered by Council on 25 September 2018.

Of the remaining 150 comments (15 discussion groups):

- Most of the comments relate to a specific issue such as a path or trail across the precincts set out in the MOSS; rather than being focussed on a specific area or topic.
- 27 responses related to the “something I like” about Monash.
- 53 relate to a request for other infrastructure.

- 40 related to maintenance issues to existing infrastructure.

ISSUES AND DISCUSSION

The MOSS has now been updated in response to the responses received during consultation. A summary of the changes made is set out in Attachment 1 and the updated Strategy is at Attachment 2.

The MOSS now includes the following summary for key directions for Open Space.

Key directions for Good Quality Future Open Space

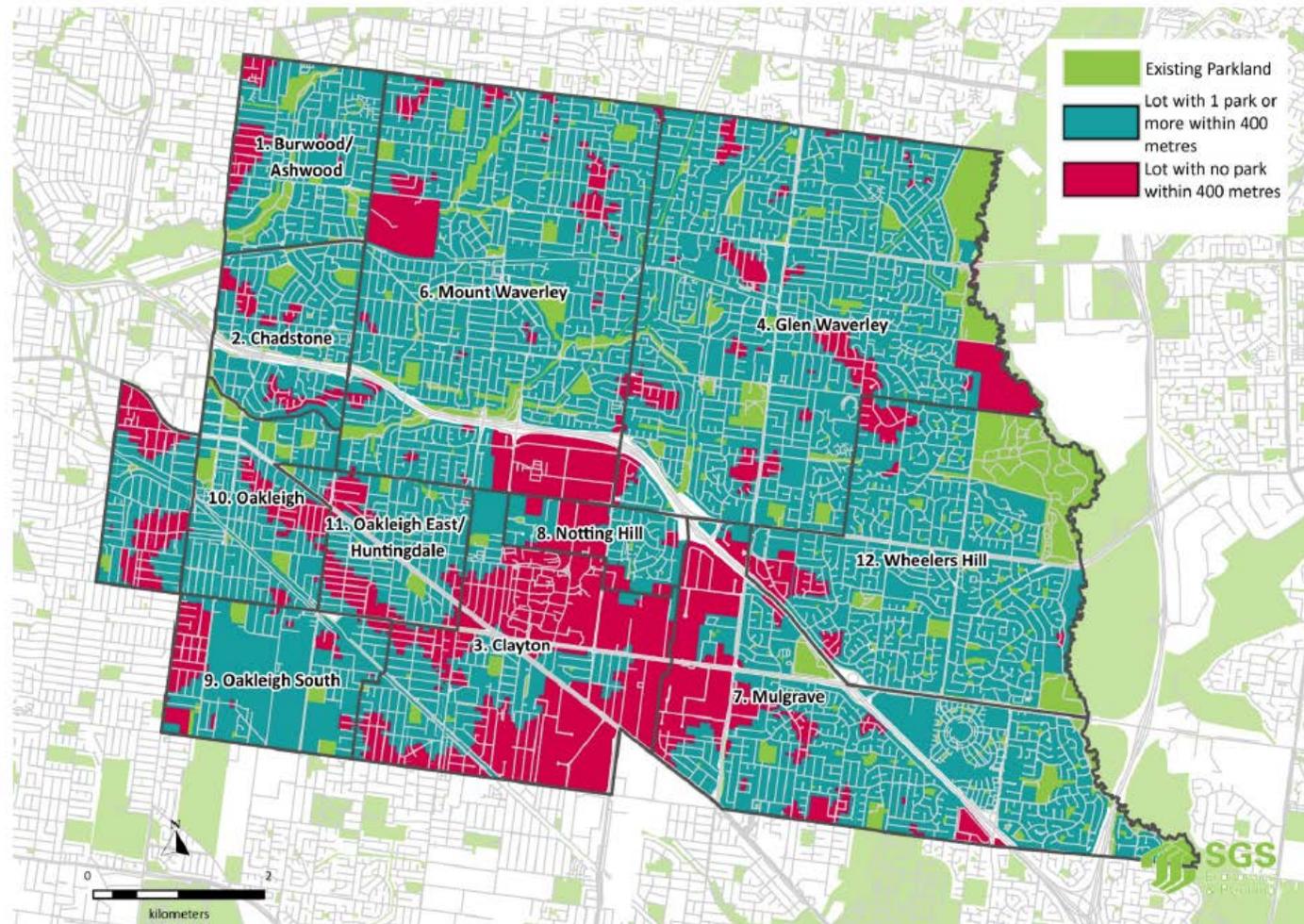
1. Provide local parks within 400m of 95% of all dwellings and active space within one kilometre of 95% all dwellings.
2. Address current and projected future gaps in the provision of open space as identified in Map 2 [Table 1 & Map 1 below]]. Prioritise the development of new or improved open space to areas with the greatest shortfall, including:
 - Hughesdale, Oakleigh East, Clayton, Notting Hill and Chadstone Precincts.
3. Provide for the provision of new open space requirements by requiring subdivision to provide for 10% across the Council to be either taken as a percentage of land area acquisition, or of the total land value.

A figure greater than 10% may be sought by Council on a case-by-case basis for large rezone and redevelopment proposals that seek high residential densities.
4. Provide for shortfalls of open space by maximising the capacity and diversity of existing open space by:
 - Promote the development of multi-use social family recreation and migrate selected spaces to social /family recreation sites.
 - Provide a range of open space function types and landscape setting types in each precinct.
 - Ensure that a range of facilities are provided on parks. Examples of facilities may include playground, kick-about areas, small court areas (i.e. basketball halfcourts), low level casual hard courts or sports provision, exercise equipment, skate, BMX, dog off-leash.
 - Enhance the diversity, play value and inclusiveness of open space and play spaces.
5. Utilise the core service level standards [in Appendix 2 MOSS] to inform the planning, design, infrastructure provision and maintenance standards for open spaces to ensure viability and fit for purpose of the size, quality and diversity.
6. Consider alternative ways to increase funding for open space projects such as grant programs.
7. Wherever possible investigate the options for co-location and sharing of other agency land, such as school's open space after hours to benefit the community.
8. Minimise the loss of open space by ensuring there is no net loss of open space and there is a clear net community benefit and there is no lack of access to the local community.

Table 1: 2016 population and current open space provision by open space precinct.

Precinct No.	Precinct	Population			Open Space Provision			
		Population 2016	% of Monash Population	% of medium or high-density dwellings	All Open Space (Ha)	All Council or Public Access Land (Ha)	Monash Community Open Space (Ha)	Ha per 1,000 Residents
1	Ashwood/ Burwood	10,198	5.3%	26.0%	53.9	43.4	42.6	4.2
2	Chadstone	9,112	4.7%	29.0%	38.2	30.4	17.8	2.0
3	Clayton	20,611	10.7%	48.0%	39.5	12.0	12.0	0.6
4	Glen Waverley	42,272	21.9%	19.0%	256.6	228.4	106.7	2.5
5	Hughesdale	8,002	4.1%	42.0%	5.5	4.5	4.5	0.6
6	Mount Waverley	35,431	18.4%	20.0%	198.0	130.1	129.3	3.6
7	Mulgrave	20,526	10.6%	7.0%	95.4	79.5	64.9	3.2
8	Notting Hill	3,244	1.7%	43.0%	5.9	1.7	1.7	0.5
9	Oakleigh South	5,381	2.8%	12.0%	144.4	16.3	16.3	3.0
10	Oakleigh	8,352	4.3%	29.0%	34.4	33.0	33.0	4.0
11	Oakleigh East/ Huntingdale	8,804	4.6%	34.0%	12.1	10.6	10.6	1.2
12	Wheelers Hill	20,917	10.8%	6.0%	250.1	202.6	72.8	3.5
Total		192,850			1134.0	792.4	512.1	2.7

Map 1: Gaps in access to existing open space network



Source:SGS 2018. This map excludes access to: All private land (e.g. Golf Courses owned by Golf Clubs), All restricted public land (e.g. Golf Courses owned by council), Visual amenity spaces, accessways and trails smaller than 0.1 hectare, Relaxation/contemplation spaces smaller than 500 square metres and Small to medium utility/buffer/environmentally constrained sites It also excludes access to parks outside of Monash.

The MOSS sets out three key methods that can be used to improve the equity and quality of open space. This includes:

1. **Increase the amount of funding that is available to either acquire land or make improvements to existing open space.** This could be achieved through:
 - Capital works and or capital works redistribution
 - Increased rates (rates are capped at 2.5% per annum across Victorian Councils)
 - Direct charges (i.e Special Rates and Charges Scheme (SRCS))
 - Increasing the amount of open contributions that are taken through subdivision.
 - Sale of Council land and reinvestment.
 - Other funding sources such as Government grants or philanthropy.
 - Reinvestment of funds generated from use of facilities.
2. **Maximising the capacity and diversity of existing open space and improve efficiencies.**
3. **Negotiate and increase the facilities that are available to use through joint usage with other landowners.**

Having reviewed a range of potential funding options a key recommendation of the Strategy is that Council should seek a public open space contribution rate of 10% across Monash for Council for all future subdivision development.

Review of funding options - Public Open Space Contribution rate

As part of reviewing funding options SGS Planning & Economics undertook a review of Open Space Contributions. This included a range of potential funding options such as user pays and development contributions. (Attachment 3.)

This review concluded that the most appropriate mechanism of funding open space arising from increased population and development was to increase the open space contribution of the planning scheme to 10%.

A review of the potential funding mechanisms has shown that the current open space contributions rates are inequitable and out of date. The current rates of open space contributions set out in the Schedule to Clause 53.01 are shown in Table 2. It is important to note that Council cannot collect any open space contribution for conventional a two lot subdivision as they are provided with an exemption by the State planning provisions.

Table 2. Existing open space contribution rates in Monash

Type or location of subdivision	Amount of contribution for public open space
3 lots	2%
4 lots	3%
5 lots	4%
6 lots or more	5%
Other	5%

Source: Monash Planning Scheme, 2018

Over the past five financial years Monash City Council has collected between \$2 and \$5 million in open space contributions for the year, as summarised in Table 3. If current development trends continue it is expected that overall contributions would increase allowing Council to more actively improve and expand the public open space facilities and network into the future.

Table 3. Open space contribution collections 2013-2018

Financial Year	Open Space Contributions collected
2017-2018	\$4.97 million
2016-2017	\$4.22 million
2015-2016	\$5.31 million
2014-2015	\$3.03 million
2013-2014	\$2.05 million

Source: Monash City Council, 2018

Review of funding options - Basis of the contribution

SGS Economics and Planning has undertaken an analysis for the consideration of open space contributions in the City of Monash. The calculation of open space contribution requirements is founded on three key principles:

1. The City of Monash is considered a **single planning unit for open space planning purposes**. Clause 53.01 allows for open space contributions collected to be spent anywhere within the municipality.
2. All residents (existing and future) of the City of Monash are entitled to enjoy access to a reasonable standard of open space at a given horizon year, and planning for future open space acquisitions and upgrades should seek the most equitable distribution of open space services across the City.
3. An inclusionary provisions approach means that all development should equip itself with sufficient open space to meet its needs as indicated by planning standards, and this can be through land or cash in kind contributions.

The methodology for determining the open space contribution rate is outlined below and in Table 4. SGS has also recently used a similar methodology for other Councils across Melbourne, including City of Darebin and Wyndham City.

Table 4. Open space contribution rate calculation

Step	Metric	Value
1	Planned population* (effective build out)	206,907 people
2	Total net developable urban area (total area of all developable lots in study area).	6,494 hectares
3	Open space required (@30m ² /capita)	620.72 hectares
4	Open space requirement from all developable land (value at step 3 divided by value at step 2)	10 per cent**

Source: SGS Economics and Planning, 2018, *id. forecasts, 2016.

This inclusionary requirements approach does not burden development in under-supplied areas with greater costs for improving open space. **Instead it recognises that the entire municipality is a singular planning area for open space, across which an acceptable standard of open space services must be met.** Open space has the same implications for usage and need regardless of whether it is commercial, residential or industrial land use.

The singular planning unit is an important consideration for Monash as it recognises that open space is not collected for individual areas and open space is important across the City.

A contribution rate of 10 per cent of land value is recommended to deliver a reasonable standard of open space provision across the whole of Monash. This contribution rate reflects the need to ensure that all residents in the future (2028) have contributed to providing an appropriate level of open space services. Currently, 10 per cent of net developable land area is used in Precinct Structure Plans as a guideline for open space provision across Melbourne's growth areas.

The MOSS acknowledges that there may be some circumstances when the 10% figure is not sufficient to meet the open space demands of a development. For large rezoning or redevelopment sites where there is a high density of residential proposed it may be necessary to seek an open space contribution that is higher than 10%. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis as part of further strategic work such as in the current Clayton Precinct Structure Plan.

Implementation

To ensure that the above key directions are implemented the following actions will need to be undertaken:

- a. Prepare a planning scheme amendment for:
 - i. Changes Clause 53.01 to require that all subdivision provide an open space contribution rate of 10%.
 - ii. Prepare a new Local Planning Policy to set out the policy for the process for open space contributions.
- b. Undertake an assessment of schools to identify future options for expanding the open space network.

- c. Prepare an action plan for each of the twelve precincts to identify priority capital works projects based on gaps and future growth and providing a diversity and range of open spaces.
- d. Undertake a strategic assessment of park function and infrastructure across Monash and identify priorities for improvements and sites to acquire land for either new open space or additions to existing open space.
- e. Produce a series of model design guides for parks of different function types of open space.
- f. Prepare practice notes and guidance for practitioners in determine the type of open space in an area.

Should Council adopt the MOSS officers will seek authorisation from the Minister of Planning to exhibit a planning scheme amendment for the matters set out in Point A. The changes recommended to the planning scheme will only be able to be considered through subdivision applications once the amendment is approved by the Minister of Planning and Gazetted.

The proposed Local Planning Policy will guide the process for determining open space contributions through the subdivision process. Key aspects of the policy will include:

- Requirements for open space contributions.
- Priority areas for undertaking open space improvements.
- How and when Council will seek an open space contribution. For instance, when a percentage of land will be sought, or an equivalent cash contribution as a percentage of land value.
- Circumstances and guidance for when Council may seek a higher percentage than 10% for large redevelopments and rezone proposals that seek high levels of residential densities and would increase the demands on open space provision in an area.
- The type and criteria of open space that will be required, in terms of distribution and size; and design, quality and facility attributes. (Linked to Appendix 2 of the MOSS for Core Service Levels).
- Open space to be delivered on unencumbered land in most circumstances.

Assuming the Minister of Planning approves the exhibition of the Planning Scheme Amendment, the community will have the opportunity to make a submission to either support or oppose the amendment.

Other key directions for the MOSS.

Key directions and actions are also included in the MOSS for the following:

- Off-road trails network. Including a need to expand the Monash trail network and a setting out the criteria for determining trail priorities.
- Managing spaces for sustainable sport.
- Open space to suit increasing density.

- Other aspects of open space, including accessibility and inclusion, reinforcing ‘Garden City Character’ and connecting with nature, marketing and education and land use zoning of existing open space.

The land use zoning recognises that Council owned public open space should generally be included within a Public Park and Recreation Zone, under the Monash Planning Scheme. Across Monash there are a number of public open spaces that are not included within this zone and have a residential land use zoning. It is appropriate that a planning scheme amendment is undertaken to rectify this incorrect zoning.

- Recommendations for each of the twelve precincts have been updated. This has listed key actions for priority works to be undertaken, along with potential improvements that may be considered by Council in the future.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The development of the Monash Open Space Strategy is consistent with a range of strategic policy directions of Monash and the State Governments Plan Melbourne.

Plan Melbourne – 2017-2050

Outcome 5: Melbourne is a city of inclusive, vibrant and healthy neighbourhoods

- Direction 5.4: Deliver local parks and green neighbourhoods in collaboration with communities.
- Policy 5.4.1: Develop a network of accessible, high-quality, local open spaces.

At a local level the policy direction and support includes:

Council Plan 2017-21

The Draft Council Plan 2017-21 contains the following key objectives:

- *A Liveable & Sustainable City*
We value our natural environment and want to preserve and enhance the leafy and green character of our city. Monash’s desirability as a place to live, learn, work and play needs to be protected.
- *Inviting Open & Urban Spaces*
we will continue to improve our public infrastructure, meeting places and open spaces, providing inclusive, safe and inviting places for community use.

The MOSS builds on this policy framework by providing key directions to plan for the current and future needs of the diverse Monash community and ensure the provision of appropriately located, designed and accessible public open space that is equitable.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community consultation on the Strategy has concluded.

The next opportunity for community consultation will be as part of the consideration of a planning scheme amendment should Council seek to change the public open space contribution rate as recommended in this report.

Consultation on the amendment would be undertaken in accordance with the Planning and Environment Act.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As has been set out in detail in this report, a key direction of the MOSS recommends increasing the amount of open space contributions that are collected through subdivision applications.

The delivery and prioritisation of projects will be subject to further council budgeting decisions on a year by year basis, as well as seeking opportunities for alternative funding sources.

CONCLUSION

The Open Space Strategy will guide the future planning, provision, design and management of open space in Monash for the next decade. The Open Space Strategy is a high level strategic document that seeks to identify the open space needs of existing and future residents of Monash, gaps in the provision of open space and opportunities to address those gaps.

The open space strategy has now been updated to reflect the responses received during community consultation in October 2017. The open space strategy has also been updated to reflect additional work that has been undertaken by SGS Economics and Planning regarding the analysis of localised gaps of open space provision and an assessment on the feasibility and appropriateness of open space contribution rates within Monash. The assessment concludes that the current open space contribution rates are insufficient to address the future needs of population growth and residential development.

It is recommended that the current rate for open space contributions under Clause 53.01 of the Monash Planning Scheme be increased to 10% for all subdivision. It will be necessary to undertake a planning scheme amendment to change the open space contribution rate. It is also recommended that a new Local Planning Policy be prepared to set out the process for collecting open space contributions.

The Open Space Strategy is aspirational, and it is acknowledged that not all of the recommendations will be able to be implemented in the life of the Open Space Strategy as implementation relies on a number of factors including budget, the pace of redevelopment and the availability of land to purchase in appropriate locations.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Summary of changes to Monash Open Space Strategy
- Attachment 2: Monash Open Space Strategy 2018
- Attachment 3: SGS Planning & Economics – City of Monash Open Space Contribution Rate Planning October 2018