



# Council submission on the Albert Park Draft Master Plan

Thank you for providing the City of Port Phillip with the opportunity to make a submission on the Albert Park Draft Master Plan (the draft master plan). The City of Port Phillip recognises the need for a new master plan to guide the future of Albert Park Reserve, particularly given the important role the Reserve plays in providing open space and recreation opportunities for the Port Phillip community.

## Albert Park Lake and wetlands

### Lake promenade and pedestrian bridge

The proposed widening and lengthening of the Lake promenade is supported by Council, as an improved connection between the Lake promenade and the existing path will facilitate a range of running and walking circuits. Council is also supportive of the proposed pedestrian bridge across the Lake particularly that it will cater for both pedestrians and cyclists. Parks Victoria must ensure that the impacts of the proposed bridge on the water-based activities have been appropriately assessed.

### Wetlands

The importance of the wetlands for improving water quality and breeding should be strongly emphasised in the final master plan. Council is supportive of the proposed wetland boardwalk, as well as the proposal to re-establish Indigenous plants from the pre-settlement landscape of the Reserve. However, the location of the boardwalk in front of the Lake overflow weir may impede flow of water. Council suggests consulting with Melbourne Water further prior to finalising the master plan.

The concept design for the Albert Park Lake Stormwater Harvesting scheme proposes a series of raingardens to treat stormwater, to be located adjacent to the proposed wetland boardwalk. It is important that the final master plan protects this area and leaves it clear for this future project.

## Public open space

The role and form of open space is continuing to change, and open space will play a crucial role in supporting community health and well-being as population and built form density continues to increase. Council recognises the importance of the Reserve in providing nearly 60 per cent of public open space in the City of Port Phillip.

### Play spaces

The proposal to deliver additional play spaces in the Reserve is supported by Council. Parks Victoria should refer to Council's *Play Space Strategy 2012* and undertake an analysis of play spaces both



within and in proximity to the Reserve to determine the most appropriate equipment to install in each new play space. A map of Council's play spaces can be viewed on Council's website - <http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/park-playgrounds-facilities-list.htm>.

### **Event spaces**

With the growth in the number of events across the City of Port Phillip, the additional event spaces proposed in the draft master plan will be valuable for the Port Phillip community. The event space proposed in the Eastern Woodland will be particularly important as it will cater for the increased population growth in the Domain Precinct. Parks Victoria must ensure that new event spaces have the ability to host events with minimal impact on surrounding areas, and provide maximum onsite services and facilities, including access to appropriate infrastructure (e.g. water and power).

### **Sport and recreation**

The Reserve plays a significant role in providing sport and recreation opportunities for the Port Phillip community, and at a regional level as a venue for sporting events of State significance. Ensuring our sport and recreation facilities are fit for purpose and can be used by more people, more often is a key action for Council. Council is pleased to see the inclusion of the following initiatives in the draft master plan to ensure Parks Victoria's sport and recreation facilities meet current and future community needs:

- Sharing and use of sports fields and pavilions for different purposes and by a range of user groups
- Adoption of more efficient programming and booking systems
- Investigation into the use of synthetic and hybrid grass playing surfaces
- Sharing of recreation facilities between the new South Melbourne Park Primary School and the general public.

Council would support the inclusion of an initiative in the final master plan to install additional lighting for the sports fields to better cater for future demand.

Furthermore, Council requests that Parks Victoria recognises the need for investment in existing sports fields and pavilions to ensure the Reserve can meet current and future needs of sporting groups and lease holders.

### **Golf Course Precinct**

Parks Victoria have notified Council officers that due to strong community feedback the 18 hole golf course will be retained. Notwithstanding this, Council confirms it strongly supports opportunities to increase both passive and active recreation within the Reserve, and to increase pedestrian access to and through the Reserve from the Queens Road residential area.

Extending, connecting and diversifying our open space network to cater for increased demand is a key priority for Council, and Council is supportive of increasing public open space in a regionally



significant reserve. However, any increase to public open space needs to be balanced with supporting the community to remain active and healthy, and facilitating health and wellbeing outcomes.

### **Proposed road cycling criterium circuit**

Council is supportive of Parks Victoria's proposal to program a criterium circuit using existing roads within the Reserve. The St Kilda Cycling Club has a long history of hosting criterium and Super Criterium races in South Melbourne within the City of Port Phillip.

Due to the increased development in Fishermans Bend, including the growth in construction activity, residents, pedestrians and associated traffic, Council is unsure whether these criterium races will be able to be held in the South Melbourne location in the future. Council is supportive of the Reserve becoming a new home base for the St Kilda Cycling Club's criterium and Super Criterium races.

### **Outdoor fitness stations**

Council is supportive of the proposal to install a range of outdoor fitness stations throughout the Reserve. Parks Victoria must ensure planning and analysis is undertaken to inform the types of fitness equipment throughout the Reserve, taking into consideration the existing outdoor fitness stations in the Reserve and in the surrounding City of Port Phillip area. Council manage outdoor fitness stations at Middle Park Foreshore and Kings Way Reserve which are both in proximity to the Reserve.

## **Access and movement**

### **Sustainable transport**

Improving transport, traffic management and parking management is a key challenge for Council. To respond to this challenge, Council is developing an Integrated Transport Strategy, investing in improving safety and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists, and advocating for improvements to the public transport network. Council is particularly supportive of Parks Victoria's inclusion of the following initiatives in the draft master plan:

- Improving pedestrian connectivity between Queens Road and the Reserve by providing at-grade pedestrian crossings. Providing a pedestrian link to the Reserve across Queens Road was identified as an action in Council's *Open Space Strategy 2009*. Council would not support raised share bridges for access across Queens Road
- Diversity of paths for different cyclist types, including on-road, separated paths and shared paths
- Additional connecting paths for increased permeability through the Reserve
- Improvements to underpasses for pedestrians and cyclists
- Separation between road, pedestrian and bicycle paths
- Creation of a bicycle path along Aughtie Walk.



The final master plan should be amended to include the following initiatives in relation to sustainable transport:

- Identify which Queens Road crossings are upgrades, and which are new crossings
- Identify the Queens Road crossing at Hanna Street as a high priority as it links the Reserve to Tennis World, Fawkner Park, Commercial Road and to the St Kilda Road precinct
- Identify the existing Queens Road crossing at Lorne Street, which should be upgraded to better cater for pedestrians and cyclists
- Improve pedestrian crossing facilities, including median islands, on internal roads within the Reserve
- The Lakeside Drive bicycle lanes must include a redesign of intersections to improve cyclist safety, particularly at the intersection of Lakeside Drive and Queens Road
- The shared function of the western path should still remain accessible for cyclists. This wide path provides a sheltered route adjacent to the tram line, and connects directly to existing on-road paths to the west
- Proposed improvements to existing underpasses should facilitate improved connection to Canterbury Road into the Reserve for cyclists and pedestrians. These underpasses do not currently meet best practice design standards including lighting, sight lines, passive surveillance, emergency access, path widths and ramp grades
- Page 29 of the draft master plan refers to a bicycle strategy Parks Victoria has prepared for the Reserve. Please advise who was consulted during preparation of this strategy and how it fits into the wider network, and provide a copy of this strategy for Council to view
- The master plan should include directions to facilitate connections beyond the boundaries of the Reserve towards public transport, including renewed tram stops, bus stops and improved at grade pedestrian connections through St Kilda Junction to adjacent areas including Wellington Street and St Kilda Road.

Council would encourage Parks Victoria to consult with VicRoads to further understand the impacts of the proposed at-grade pedestrian crossings on traffic movement of Queens Road.

### **Vehicle movement**

Council supports the following initiatives proposed in the draft master plan in relation to vehicle access and movement within, and surrounding the Reserve:

- Reducing all speed limits to 40 kilometres per hour within the Reserve
- Investigation to reduce the amount of non-Reserve user related vehicle traffic through the Reserve and what the impact on the wider transport network would be.

Council has identified the following initiatives that require further investigation to inform the final master plan:



- Investigate threshold treatment options to indicate to drivers that they are leaving the arterial network to enter local streets in a recreation reserve, and that they should adjust their driving and speed accordingly
- Investigate options for preventing freight which are trying to bypass St Kilda Junction from using internal roads within the Reserve
- Assess the impacts on Reserve users if Aughtie Road is temporarily closed for the proposed criterium circuit
- Investigate existing recorded incidents in the Reserve and assess intersections to determine if any safety upgrades are warranted
- Undertake a parking and traffic assessment to understand the impacts on surrounding Council roads from increased use of the Reserve, and a reduction in the existing car parking areas. In particular, Council would like further information about the impacts on parking and traffic from future events and general use at Junction Oval on Council roads.

### **Legibility and wayfinding**

Council is supportive of Parks Victoria's commitment to improving the legibility and connectivity of the Reserve to enhance the visitor experience. This should be further strengthened in the final master plan with the inclusion of wayfinding and legibility initiatives, including:

- Developing a wayfinding plan, including a coordinated suite of signage to clearly identify path networks, distances to key destinations within the Reserve and external linkages to places outside of the Reserve (e.g. Fitzroy Street, South Melbourne and the Foreshore)
- Improve links between the Reserve and surrounding parks of regional significance, including Fawkner Park, Port Phillip Bay and Foreshore and the Royal Botanic Gardens
- Further strengthen the identity of the Reserve through the new entrances by using consistent signage, lighting and architectural interventions
- Include an additional design and development parameter specifically in relation to legibility.

### **Aboriginal and European history**

Section 2.4 of the draft master plan provides a broad overview of Aboriginal and European history in the Reserve. To strengthen the final master plan, this could be further supported by including a timeline to demonstrate the historic development of the Reserve, and to provide an understanding of the historic significance of the Reserve. The final master plan should recognise the Reserve as a historic landscape in its own right, not just as a place that contains a series of historic features. This should also include clear references to recognise, conserve and celebrate historic heritage in the Reserve.



## **European history**

Council suggests the following amendments should be made to strengthen the references to European history in the final master plan:

- The precinct plans should show all heritage places, labelling them as 'conserve heritage places'
- There is only one reference to historic heritage in the draft master plan, which relates to heritage tree avenues being respected. Further information is required as to whether these heritage tree avenues will be maintained and replanted over time, and the location of these should be shown in the final master plan
- Include references to the built heritage aspects of the Reserve, which appear to be missing from the draft master plan
- The historic maps used as background images in the draft master plan are very useful information and should be better utilised to explain the historic development of the Reserve
- Provide further explanation about the historic significance of the carriageway near the Queens Road Boundary of the Reserve
- Include strategies to conserve and enhance the existing heritage and cultural characteristics of the Reserve in the final master plan
- Provide reference to Local and State Government heritage policies, guidelines and strategies.

## **Aboriginal history**

The following information should be incorporated into the final master plan in relation to the Aboriginal history of the area:

- Explain the significance of the Ngargee Tree to local Boon Wurrung culture
- Emphasise how the Lake looked prior to European settlement and provide further information of the Aboriginal history of the Lake
- Install signage in the Reserve to include the clan of the Traditional Owners to provide more public education regarding Aboriginal history
- Parks Victoria should consider extending the Ngargee Tree planting as per the original landscape plans to celebrate Aboriginal cultural heritage and reintroduce native vegetation into the landscape and connect people to place.

Council requests that Parks Victoria engage with the Boon Wurrung Foundation to invite their input into the Aboriginal history of the area and the design of shared spaces and areas.

## **Mapping areas of heritage and cultural interest**

The map on page 32 of the draft master plan identifies areas of heritage and cultural interest. Council recommends amending the map for the final master plan to include:

- Points of heritage interest which appear to be missing, including:



- Two historic grandstands at Junction Oval
  - The Mac.Robertson Girls' High School
  - Lord Somers Camp and Power House
  - Former South Melbourne Technical School
  - Middle Park Railway Station
  - Middle Park Bowling Club
  - St Kilda Railway Station
  - St Kilda Park Primary School
  - Tree avenues
  - Palm Lawn
  - Pinetum
  - Carriageway near Queens Road
  - Isaac Jacobs Memorial Fountain located on the corner of Fitzroy Street and St Kilda Road.
- Differentiation between 'points of heritage interest' and 'areas of high cultural interest'.

Additionally, Council requests that Parks Victoria ensures the Isaac Jacobs Memorial Fountain is relocated from its current location and integrated into any future landscape improvements in the Reserve.

## **Resilience and sustainability**

The sustainability initiatives proposed in the draft master plan are targeting the right elements; however the final master plan should set specific targets and benchmarks for these elements (e.g. set targets for canopy coverage in the Reserve). Additional initiatives that should be incorporated into the final master plan include:

- A commitment to net zero emissions from all lighting within the Reserve
- Set sustainable design standards for the construction of new buildings, and upgrades to existing buildings, from the outset
- Further detail about how the Reserve will respond to the conditions of climate change and manage its activities during extreme weather events.

### **Urban Heat Island effect**

Council is encouraging of the proposal to increase planting in the Reserve to assist in reducing the Urban Heat Island effect. To further this initiative, Council recommends incorporating the following actions into the final master plan:

- Undertake a study on the canopy coverage in the Reserve and thermal heat mapping to understand which areas of the Reserve are most vulnerable and should be modified to lower temperatures
- Preparation of a strategy to cool the Reserve, undertaken in collaboration with Council and the City of Melbourne



- Inclusion of green and blue infrastructure in the Reserve.

## **Albert Road – Northern Gateway Precinct**

Council have the following comments in relation to the initiatives proposed in the Albert Road – Northern Gateway Precinct:

- The proposal to provide a wide, separated pedestrian and cyclist path along Albert Road to connect the Reserve to the new Anzac Station is supported. However, further details are required as the cross-section presented on page 42 of the draft master plan may require removal of existing trees
- Supportive of the tree lined avenue along the edge of the Reserve connecting the Albert Road – Northern Gateway precinct to St Kilda Road and Port Phillip Bay
- Ensure bicycle paths in this precinct connect into the Moray Street bike path which is being upgraded by the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority as part of the Metro Tunnel project
- The final master plan should reflect what is proposed in the Melbourne Metro Rail Authority's *Domain Precinct Development Plan* in relation to the connection between the new Anzac Station and the Reserve and Albert Road, particularly in regards to the changes to car parking along Albert Road.

## **Albert Road – Lakeside Precinct**

Council have the following comments and items that require additional clarification in relation to this precinct:

- There are no pedestrian connections shown from Albert Road to the Lake promenade. This is a direct link from Cecil Street
- Access for pedestrians and cyclists at South Melbourne Park Primary School needs to be considered
- The vehicle drop-off area at South Melbourne Park Primary School is likely to have a negative effect on pedestrian and cyclist access, and safety at the intersection of Albert Road and Old Aughtie Drive. This intersection may need to be reconfigured to allow for safer movement of people, greater pedestrian priority and better connections for cyclists
- It is not clear whether the existing play space in this precinct will be upgraded. Additionally, the draft master plan states that the play space in this precinct will cater for all age groups; however given the proximity of the play space to the South Melbourne Park Primary School it would be better targeted towards the younger years.

## **Youth and community area – Lakeside Precinct**

Council is supportive of the proposal to include additional fitness equipment throughout the Reserve, as well as a youth and community hub in the Lakeside Precinct. The youth and community hub





should be consolidated with the proposed fitness equipment to create an informal outdoor sporting precinct, similar to the Box Hill Gardens Multipurpose Area.

## **Fitzroy Street Precinct**

The following initiatives in the draft master plan in relation to the Fitzroy Street Precinct are supported by Council:

- The general direction of the design of the Fitzroy Street leafy urban plaza
- Proposal to line Fitzroy Street with plane trees, particularly given the value Fitzroy Street residents place on the green aspect of the Reserve
- Emphasis of the key pedestrian routes along Fitzroy Street to form an important east-west 'green link' from Acland Street to St Kilda Road, then along Wellington Street to Chapel Street.

Council have the following amendments in regards to the initiatives proposed for the Fitzroy Street Precinct:

- The draft master plan map needs to be amended to show the corner of the Reserve that is bounded by Fitzroy Street and Queens Road in the map which is currently covered by text boxes, and label St Kilda Junction as an important interface to the Reserve
- The wide perimeter path along Fitzroy Street, which will create a formal promenade, should be supported with smaller meandering paths leading to the Ngargee Tree and revegetation areas. Council would encourage Parks Victoria to refer to the landscape plan previously prepared, but not implemented, by Taylor Cullity Lethlean for the area south of Junction Oval.

Additional initiatives should be included in the final master plan to strengthen the interface between Fitzroy Street and the Reserve, including:

- Incorporate a lighting strategy to make the interface between the Reserve and Fitzroy Street more welcoming
- Undertake improvements to the at-grade crossing of Fitzroy Street in conjunction with the upgraded tram stops
- Strengthen the entrance experience at the corners of Fitzroy Street and Queens Road, and Lakeside Drive and Fitzroy Street
- Identify the proposed locations of DDA compliant tram stops on Fitzroy Street
- Install fitness equipment, a play space and public toilets to cater for Fitzroy Street residents and users, particularly given the significant increase in high density living in this area.

### **Interface between the Fitzroy Street Precinct and surrounding areas**

The interface of the Reserve to St Kilda Junction is critical. This space currently acts as freeway landscape treatment, with approximately 30,000 vehicles passing this space per day. Council would



support this interface being improved to visually establish the entry into the Reserve and Junction Oval, particularly to benefit future events at Junction Oval.

There is also a key opportunity for Parks Victoria to improve the presence of the St Kilda Sports Club to Fitzroy Street, showcasing this building as an outstanding local asset. Increased lines of sight from the St Kilda Sports Club to Fitzroy Street have begun to improve this interface, and modifying the height of existing vegetation could further assist with this.

### **Pedestrian desire lines**

The final master plan should address the pedestrian desire lines from future tram stops on Fitzroy Street to the St Kilda Park Primary School, the St Kilda Sports Club and Junction Oval. Improvements to Lakeside Drive in the Fitzroy Street Precinct should also address pedestrian desire lanes.

## **Planting strategy**

Council is supportive of the initiatives proposed in the Planting Strategy, particularly the botanic themed areas in the Reserve including the Palms Lawn, Pinetum and Open Woodlands. The Planting Strategy could be further strengthened in the final master plan by including the following initiatives:

- Future landscaping in the Reserve, particularly in the Fitzroy Street Precinct of the Reserve, should respond to and respect the Aboriginal history of the Reserve. Australian native trees could be used to link formal rows of plane trees to the Ngargee Tree, and additional specific Indigenous planting in the main area of the Reserve, in addition to the north eastern corner of the Reserve
- Additional planting on the western side of the Reserve, where it can be accommodated in relation to the Grand Prix infrastructure
- Planting of native grasses into the Fitzroy Street Precinct area
- More strategies in relation to shrubbery/low planting and grasses as important vegetation types for biodiversity and habitat.

There is also an opportunity to take advantage of the existing topography of the Reserve, using the changes in landform to define spaces, provide viewing opportunities for sports and to create a more dynamic walking/viewing experience.

## **Implementation strategy**

Council is supportive of the inclusion of design and development parameters in the Implementation Strategy, in particular the consistent design theming across all precincts to develop a cohesive identity within the Reserve. However, further work is required to strengthen these parameters and Council supports Parks Victoria's plan to prepare detailed guidelines to support these parameters as part of the final master plan. Council would like to have the opportunity to provide feedback on the final design and development parameters and the detailed guidelines.



Council would also like to see the following included in the final Implementation Strategy:

- A list of all proposed projects, including the indicative staging of these projects
- An indication of which projects Parks Victoria seeks to partner with Council.

Council would also request that Parks Victoria continues to engage with sporting groups and lease holders within the Reserve regarding any proposed changes that will impact their existing or future use of the Reserve.