



12.3 PUBLIC SPACE STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: LILI ROSIC, GENERAL MANAGER, CITY STRATEGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**PREPARED BY: SHELLEY BENNETT, HEAD OF CITY STRATEGY
ALEXANDRA HODGSON, SENIOR STRATEGIC PLANNER
CLAIRE ULCOQ, OPEN SPACE PLANNER**

1. PURPOSE

1.1 To present an update on the progress of the Public Space Strategy to Council.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 Council is currently preparing a new Public Space Strategy to replace its existing *Open Space Strategy 2009* and respond to the changing role and demand for public space. The new Public Space Strategy will identify where new public space is needed; set out a strategic approach to guide the re-design and upgrade of existing public spaces; and guide how Council allocates and programs the use of public spaces.

2.2 The development of a new Public Space Strategy is a key initiative of the City of Port Phillip's *Council Plan 2017-27*, Direction 4 – We are growing and keeping our character, and will contribute to the delivery of the following Council Plan outcomes:

- Designing and activating well managed, safe and liveable public spaces for people to enjoy
- Extending, connecting and diversifying our open space network to cater for increased demand.

2.3 To date, Council officers have completed a number of key inputs for the Public Space Strategy, including:

- Preliminary engagement as part of Council's Neighbourhood Conversation sessions held in March 2019
- The first phase of the community and stakeholder engagement process for the Public Space Strategy, which occurred between 3 August and 9 September 2019
- Completion of the *Public Space Strategy Engagement Summary Report (Attachment 1)* which provides an overview of the consolidated feedback received during both the preliminary engagement and the first phase of the community and stakeholder engagement process
- Appointment of external consultants, Thompson Berrill Landscape Design, to prepare the Background Technical Report which will underpin the Public Space Strategy
- Preparation of draft outcomes for the Public Space Strategy.



3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 3.1 Endorses the *Public Space Strategy Engagement Summary Report* for public release (Attachment 1).
- 3.2 Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer to make amendments to Policy to correct any minor drafting errors that do not materially alter the intent.
- 3.3 Adopts the draft outcomes for inclusion in the draft Public Space Strategy.
- 3.4 Endorses community consultation on the draft Public Space Strategy to commence in March 2020.

4. KEY POINTS/ISSUES

Community and stakeholder engagement process

- 4.1 The first phase of the community and stakeholder engagement process was undertaken from 3 August to 9 September 2019, complementing preliminary consultation undertaken as part of Council's Neighbourhood Conversation sessions held in March 2019. The first phase of the community and stakeholder engagement delivered a broad reaching and inclusive range of consultation opportunities, with over 900 people providing feedback on public space in the City of Port Phillip through:
 - Eight neighbourhood pop-up sessions using a Conversation Caravan
 - Two stakeholder workshops (Kitchen Table Conversations) with stakeholders representing key user groups, including:
 - Local primary and secondary schools
 - City of Port Phillip and Parks Victoria sporting groups
 - Community groups
 - Star Health
 - Commercial recreation providers
 - Event providers
 - Local residents
 - Tailored conversations with specific interest groups, including young children, Council's Older Persons Advisory Committee and hard to reach communities (including indigenous community and people affected by homelessness)
 - One Kitchen Table Conversation conducted by community members
 - Online interactive map, Have Your Say survey and online discussion forum.



Public Space Strategy Engagement Summary Report

4.2 The *Public Space Strategy Engagement Summary Report (Attachment 1)* provides an overview of the consolidated feedback received during the first phase of the community and stakeholder engagement process. Overall the community feedback was generally positive about public space in the City of Port Phillip, with the key issues raised including:

- Our public spaces are well used by the community for a range of activities
- Our foreshore is the most popular public space in the City of Port Phillip
- Greening our public spaces should be a priority
- Maintenance of our spaces should be improved
- Sharing of our spaces needs to be managed more effectively
- Community stewardship is supported
- Cultural identity is important
- New public space could be created through repurposing road space.

4.3 The key findings relating to each of the City of Port Phillip neighbourhoods (excluding the Montague and Sandridge/Wirraway neighbourhoods) include:

- The community loves public spaces with playgrounds for children; being able to walk and ride around the neighbourhoods; and meeting neighbours while walking their dogs.
- The community would like to change or add:
 - More amenities in public spaces (seating, public toilets, drinking fountains and lighting)
 - Separated walking and cycle paths
 - More informal sport and recreation opportunities
 - Increase community stewardship of public spaces
 - Provide communal composting in public spaces
 - More shade trees
 - Incorporate public art into the design of public spaces
 - De-pave hardscaped spaces to create green public spaces
 - More dog off-leash areas
 - More pocket parks
 - Repurpose existing and underutilised spaces
 - Ensure public spaces are clean and safe
 - Increase native vegetation



- Incorporate nature play
- Address the issue of people sleeping rough to ensure that both they and the community feel safe.
- The top six most popular public spaces in the City of Port Phillip, identified by the community, include the Foreshore, Albert Park Reserve, South Melbourne Market, Elwood Canal, St Kilda Botanical Gardens and St Vincent Gardens.
- The public spaces with the highest number of ideas suggested by the community for future changes or improvements include the St Kilda Foreshore, Albert Park Reserve, Fitzroy Street, Elwood Canal, Elwood Foreshore, South Melbourne Market, Acland Plaza, St Kilda Botanical Gardens and Bay Street Activity Centre.

4.4 The outcomes of the first phase of the community and stakeholder engagement process will inform Thompson Berrill Landscape Design's preparation of the technical Report, which will ultimately underpin the preparation of the Public Space Strategy.

Draft outcomes for the Public Space Strategy

4.5 Council officers have prepared draft outcomes for the Public Space Strategy, which provide the strategic direction for what the strategy will achieve. These draft outcomes are aligned with the *Council Plan 2017-27* and other core Council strategies (including *Move, Connect, Live: Integrated Transport Strategy 2018-28* and *Act and Adapt: Sustainable Environment Strategy 2018-28*); and have been informed by the feedback received during the first phase of the community and stakeholder engagement process, as well as the work undertaken to date by Thompson Berrill Landscape Design.

4.6 The draft outcomes include:

- Our foreshore is the city's signature public space
 - Create a series of destinations along the foreshore (balance activation with environmental values)
 - Improve connections to and along the foreshore for pedestrians and cyclists
 - Increase the resilience of the foreshore to climate change and sea level rise
 - Reflect the cultural significance of the foreshore to the Yaluk-ut Weelam clan of the Boon Wurrung.
- Our public space network caters for more people in a higher density city
 - Protect and enhance the quality of our existing public spaces
 - Increase access to public space using innovative ideas (e.g. secure access to 'restricted' public space)
 - Design and program our public spaces to be flexible, cater for diverse needs and withstand higher levels of use for a growing community
 - Manage contested space to accommodate sharing by a range of user groups.
 - Maintain solar access to key public spaces.



- Our public spaces are places for people
 - Embed the City's heritage, art and cultural identity in our public spaces
 - Provide inclusive places for the community to relax, connect and socialise (all ages, cultures and abilities)
 - Involve the community in the design and creation of public spaces
 - Ensure the effective management and maintenance of our public spaces.
- Our public spaces improve our community's health and wellbeing
 - Provide formal and informal sport and recreation opportunities
 - Provide direct walking and cycling links to and between public spaces
 - Ensure our public spaces are safe, welcoming and inclusive for all
 - Provide access to nature in all spaces.
- Our streets connect and expand our public space network
 - Recognise the importance of activity centres and streets as public spaces
 - Create green links to connect the public space network and enhance accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists
 - Repurpose our streets temporarily and permanently to create new public space.
- Our public spaces contribute to a more resilient and sustainable city
 - Ensure our public spaces are adaptive and resilient to a changing climate
 - Ensure public spaces contribute to a greener, cooler city and improve biodiversity
 - Design our public spaces to contribute to a water sensitive city.
- Our public spaces are effectively delivered, managed and maintained
 - Collaborate with strategic partners to improve and manage our public space network
 - Ensure investment in our public spaces is fair, equitable and financially sustainable.

Public Space Strategy Technical Report

4.7 Thompson Berrill Landscape Design have been appointed to prepare the Technical Report which will underpin the Public Space Strategy. The Technical Report will include:

- The definitions of our public space
- An overview of the challenges we face with our public space in to the future
- An overview of the benefits that public space can deliver for our community



- A public space hierarchy and character classification to define the types of public space within the municipality
- An outline of our existing public space network, as well as a neighbourhood needs assessment
- A prioritisation framework to determine the priority for future upgrade works and the provision of new public space in the future
- A public open space contributions framework to guide the transparent collection and spending of funds
- An action plan for future projects
- An implementation plan to guide the delivery of the Public Space Strategy.

Draft Public Space Strategy

- 4.8 Council officers are currently preparing the draft Public Space Strategy, which will be publicly released during the second phase of the community and stakeholder engagement process in March 2020.
- 4.9 The draft Public Space Strategy is informed by the Technical Report currently being prepared by Thompson Berrill Landscape Design, as well as the community feedback received during the first phase of the community and stakeholder engagement process.
- 4.10 It is intended that the Public Space Strategy will be finalised by 30 June 2020.

5. CONSULTATION AND STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 Over 900 people provided Council with feedback on public space in the City of Port Phillip during the first phase of the community and stakeholder engagement process held during August and September 2019. The key stakeholders consulted during the process included:
- Community members;
 - Stakeholders representing key user groups, including local primary and secondary schools, sporting groups, community groups, Star Health, commercial recreation providers, event providers and residents;
 - Specific interest groups, including young children, Council's Older Persons Advisory Committee and hard to reach communities (including indigenous community and people affected by homelessness).
- 5.2 The second phase of the community and stakeholder engagement process is scheduled to commence in March 2020 to seek the community's feedback on the draft Public Space Strategy.

6. LEGAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No significant legal or risk implications have been identified. The Public Space Strategy will include measurable outcomes and timeframes for Council to monitor the progress of the delivery of each action in the strategy.



7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 7.1 The Public Space Strategy will include a Priority Action Plan to guide Council's investment in public space over the next 10 years. Actions will be allocated over short, medium and long-term timeframes and associated costs will be identified.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 8.1 The Public Space Strategy will recognise the need for Council to design public spaces differently to cope with the impacts of climate change and to meet Council's commitment to being a water sensitive city.
- 8.2 The Public Space Strategy will guide the delivery and management of the public space network to ensure it offers a range of environmental benefits to help reduce the urban heat island effect, offer cooler places for respite and improve biodiversity.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 9.1 The Public Space Strategy will guide the future of the public space network to cater for the growing demand for public space by the community; and create more places for the community to connect and socialise.
- 9.2 The Public Space Strategy will guide the sharing of public spaces to ensure Council can respond to the diverse needs of the community.

10. ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICY

- 10.1 The development of a new Public Space Strategy is a key initiative of the City of Port Phillip's *Council Plan 2017-27*, Direction 4 – We are growing and keeping our character, and will contribute to the delivery of the following Council Plan outcomes:
- Designing and activating well managed, safe and liveable public spaces for people to enjoy
 - Extending, connecting and diversifying our open space network to cater for increased demand.
- 10.2 The development of a new Public Space Strategy also has links to the following key directions and outcomes in the *Council Plan 2017-27*, including:
- Direction 1 – We embrace difference, and people belong
 - A safe and active community with strong social connections
 - Community diversity is valued and celebrated
 - Direction 2 – We are connected and it's easy to move around
 - Our streets and places are designed for people
 - Direction 3 – We have smart solutions for a sustainable future
 - A greener, cooler and more liveable City
 - A City with lower carbon emissions



- A City that is adapting and resilient to climate change
- A water sensitive City
- A sustained reduction in waste
- Direction 5 – We thrive by harnessing creativity
 - A city where arts, culture and creative expression is part of everyday life.

10.3 The new Public Space Strategy will replace Council's existing *Open Space Strategy 2009*.

11. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

11.1 TIMELINE

11.1.1 The draft Public Space Strategy will be publicly released during the second phase of the community and stakeholder engagement process, scheduled to commence in March 2020.

11.1.2 It is intended that the Public Space Strategy will be finalised by 30 June 2020.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

11.2.1 Council officers will update Council's website and provide interested stakeholders with a copy of the *Public Space Strategy Engagement Summary Report* (Attachment 1), as well as an outline of the project timeframes and upcoming opportunities for further engagement on the Public Space Strategy.

12. OFFICER DIRECT OR INDIRECT INTEREST

12.1 No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in the matter.

TRIM FILE NO: 66/35/05

ATTACHMENTS 1. Public Space Strategy Engagement Summary Report