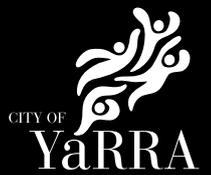


Golden Square Bicentennial Park Landscape Masterplan Report

2023



Yarra City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and future.

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Architects for City of Yarra 2023

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1.0 Introduction

Purpose of the Masterplan: This Masterplan sets the strategic direction for Golden Square Bicentennial Park and guides its future development, improvement and maintenance for the next 10 years.

1.1 Background and masterplan process

The Masterplan has been a study to understand community values around Golden Square Bicentennial Park so Yarra Council can plan and undertake future works based on community priorities.

The development of the Masterplan was guided by extensive community engagement, details of which can be found in the Golden Square Bicentennial Reserve Consultation Reports, available on the project's Your Say Yarra page.

Since the inception of the park in the 1970s, the community has championed it as being an open space for all. Rather than have the land subdivided and sold off for housing, the community has played an important role in ensuring the park remains a much-loved green retreat. Today its role as an urban refuge continues, as development increases in the surrounding areas.

The Masterplan aims to preserve the qualities the community value most as well as include infrastructure provisions to support the growing community far into the future.



2.0 Guiding principles

Vision: To retain a much-loved urban green retreat where the local community can gather, play, reflect and enjoy.

General

Following the results of the engagement process, the following principles have been developed to guide the Masterplan and its key recommendations.

Landscape character

- Enhance the existing landscape character through increased planting and infrastructure improvements.
- Plan for increased usage given the expected growth in the area, whilst maintaining the amenity and quality of the park.
- Continue management of existing trees and plan for the future of mature trees in the park, particularly the Fairy Tree.

Uses and activities

- Allow for public use and enjoyment by encouraging a complementary mix of activities.
- Provide a diverse variety of recreation uses within the park, whilst maintaining the local feel.
- Consider synergies or conflicts between uses.
- Provide additional amenities and uses where these are complementary to the character and capacity of the reserve.



Access and safety

- Ensure public access to the park, considering users of all abilities.
- Support equitable use of the park by people of all ages, cultural backgrounds and genders.
- Implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure safe public space.

Environmental sustainability

- Improve the sustainability of the park and ensure it is able to cope with the impacts of climate change.
- Improve the biodiversity and habitat value of the park through the introduction of indigenous shrubs and ground cover planting.

Seek opportunities for greater water efficiency, water security, water sensitive urban design and improved soil moisture levels where possible.

3.0 Site description

3.1 Site location and context

Golden Square Bicentennial Park is located in the heart of the Burnley residential precinct, and classified as a 'Small Neighbourhood' open space. It covers an area of approximately 8,300 sq metre.

The park is bounded by Madden Grove and Burnley train station and railway line to the north, Stawell Street to the west, Parkville Street to the south and Gibdon Street to the east.

Surrounding the park are footpaths, carparking and heritage residential buildings. A café and some businesses are located along the west side of Stawell Street.

Vehicle and foot traffic during work hours can increase significantly around local roads compared to other times of the day. The path in the park is used as a connection to Burnley train station. A signal crossing light is provided along Madden Grove, connecting the park to train station.

The park is located near the Yarra River and the native tree planting forms an integral connection to the wider wildlife corridor along the Yarra.

This park is locally significant as it is the only open space within this residential catchment.

3.2 Site history

General

The site is Crown land permanently reserved as gardens and recreation reserve. The park is located with the Golden Square Precinct with limited reference being made of the parks significant values and elements. Refer to Appendix 1 for Historical Memorandum.

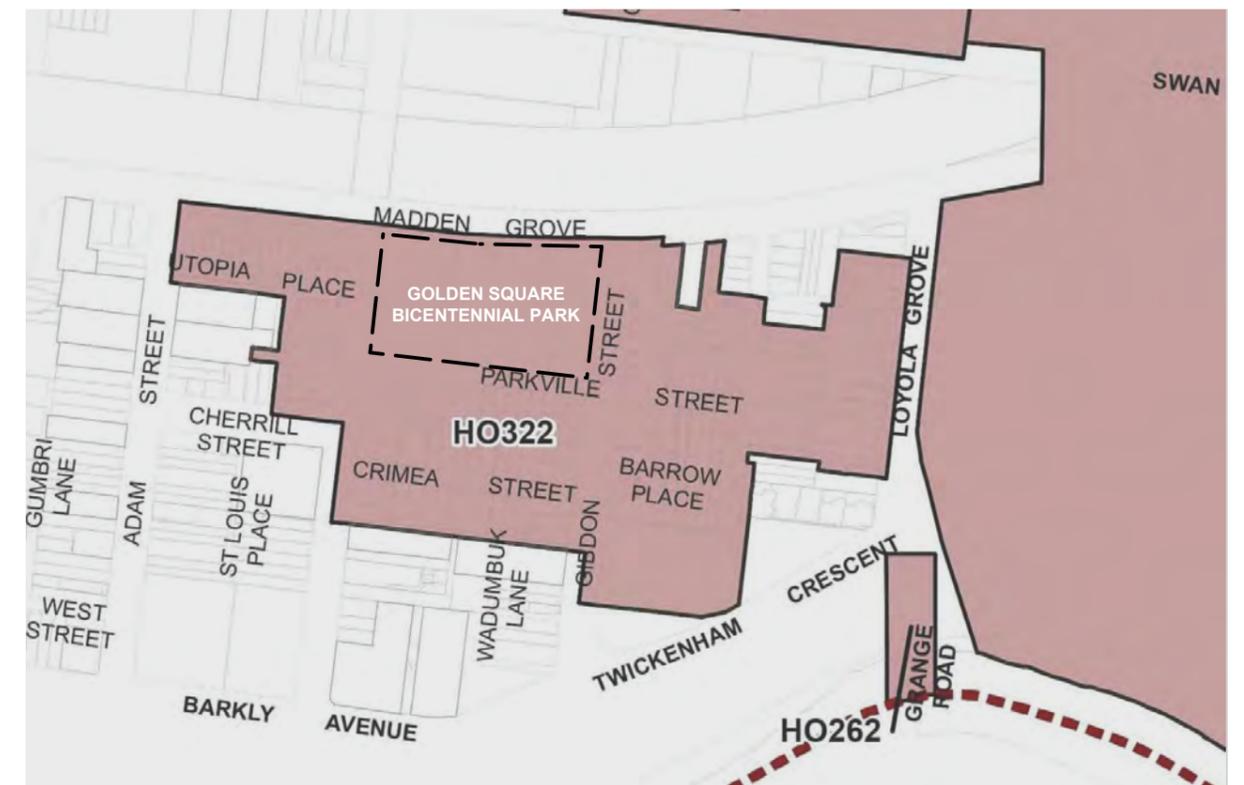
This park is located on the site of a former Burnley State School. The school block was located on the west side of the park. The eastern side of the park was reserved for the Catholic Church but it was never developed. The school was closed and demolished in 1970s and consolidated into the future park site. Golden Square Bicentennial Park was opened in 1988 and named to commemorate the arrival of the First Fleet, reflecting community values at the time.

Heritage and planning controls

No tree controls are applied under the heritage overlay. Built form is limited to the western side of the park where the existing rotunda and playground are located. The site is significant as a former school site with tree planting from the time. Through historical photos, it is established that the English Elm (Fairy Tree) has been on site since 1904.



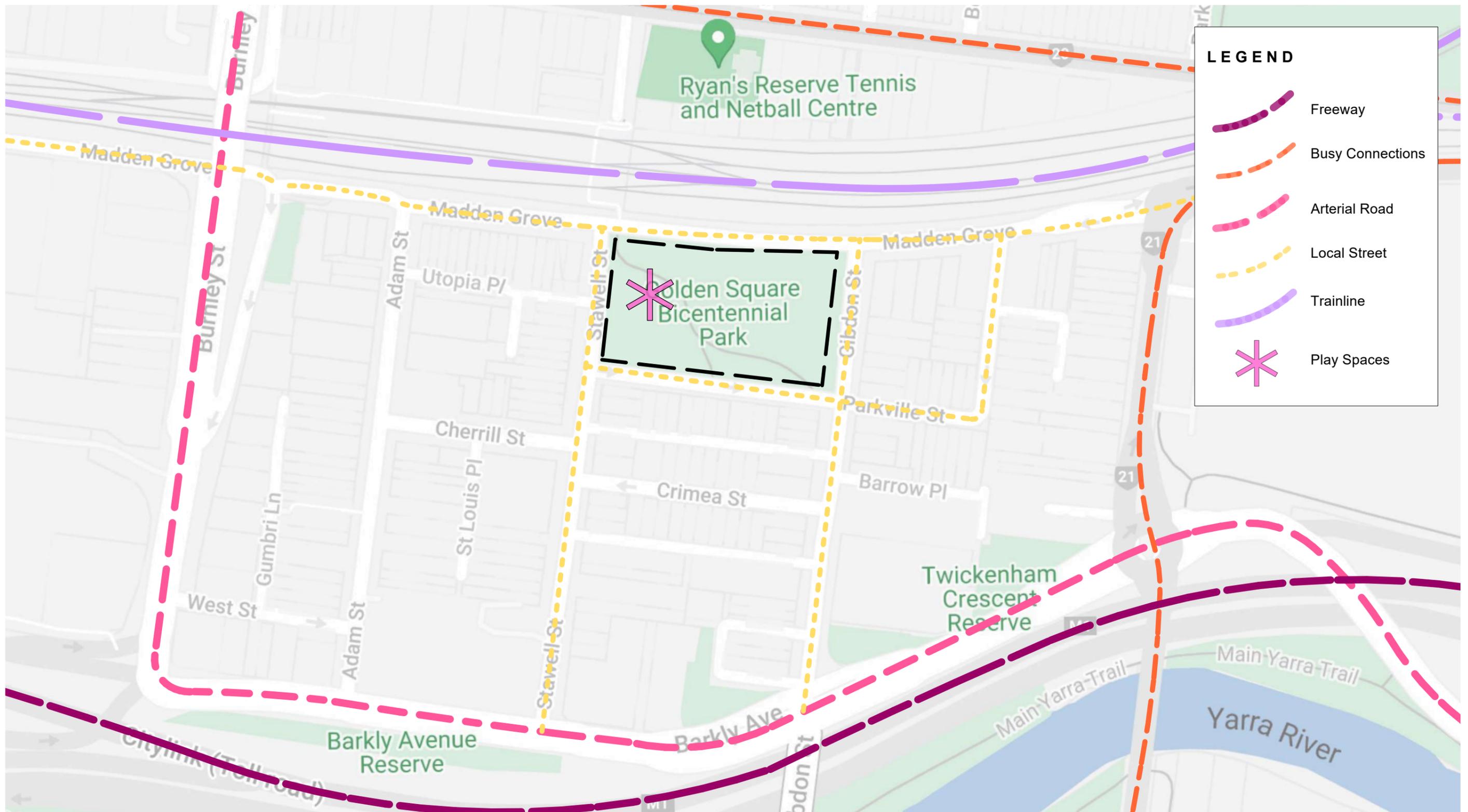
Source: Richmond and Burnley Historical Society



Heritage Overlay

Source: Department of Transport and Planning, Plan Schemes





Open space catchment analysis

Not to scale, refer to Appendix 1 for full scale plan



3.3 Existing conditions

General

Existing features of the park include a playground, rotunda, barbeque, plaques, picnic settings, scattered seating, and a main diagonal walking path connecting the south east to north west corners of the park. There are light poles along the path.

The site is predominantly flat apart from a mound in the playground area, and has a gentle gradient sloping down from North to South.

Dog off leash area

A large open lawn covers the eastern side of the park and is currently used as a dog off leash area. The dog off leash area is bounded by the main diagonal path and tree plantings around the perimeter.

Playground

The playground is located on the west side of the diagonal path and has a timber play structure backing onto a mound and a swing set. It was constructed in 2009. The mound is covered in lawn to the north and synthetic rubber to the south.



Landscape character

The landscape character of the park is predominantly native tree planting with scattered remnant palms, pine trees and a feature English Elm tree, fondly named by locals as the Fairy Tree. Understorey and ground cover planting is currently limited.

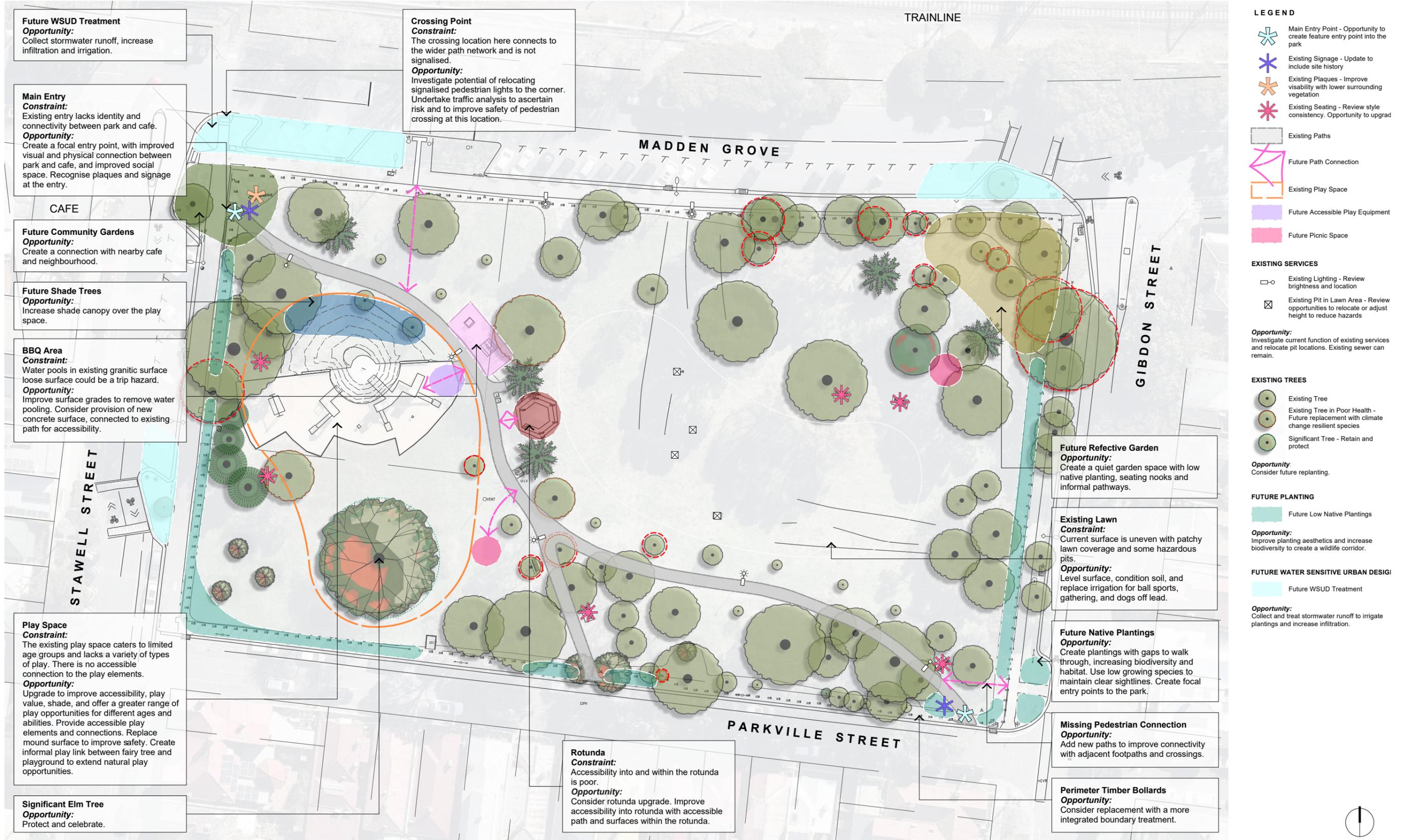
The local community appreciates the way the park functions as a 'hidden gem' within Burnley and would like to retain its current quality, and not have it overdeveloped.

Rotunda and facilities

A rotunda is located towards the centre of the park and is well used by the local community as a gathering point. A barbeque, picnic setting, drink fountain and bins are located close to the rotunda. Timber bollards currently line the perimeter of the park.



3.5 Constraints and opportunities plan



Constraints and opportunities plan

Not to scale, refer to Appendix 3 for full scale plan

4.0 Analysis and key recommendations

4.1 Uses and activities

4.1.1 Play

Playgrounds are often the main focal points for families and users in parks and reserves for social activities, health and mental well-being. The existing playground is located on the western side of the park amongst a copse of pine trees, north of the existing Fairy Tree and adjacent to the rotunda and picnic areas. There are good opportunities for natural informal play to extend under the existing trees.

The existing playground was constructed in 2009 and is close to reaching the end of its usable life. Accessibility and play opportunities are limited within the current layout and there are signs of rot at the base of the timber posts.

The play structure was designed with a mound approx. 2.0 – 2.5m high to the north side. The mound has a lawn surface to the north and synthetic rubber surface to the east. Although the mound is a nice feature introducing a high point to the overall park, the synthetic surface can be slippery, and the mound impedes views.

Given its current condition and restrictions, the playground will require replacement within the next 3 years. Some respondents from the survey requested the playground be catered for older aged children.



Recommendations:

- Prepare a design brief for replacement of the playground.
- Retain the playground in its current location but look at expanding the footprint on that side.
- Remove the existing mound to improve supervision sightlines and reduce risk of slip on the embankment surface.
- Design a new playground that considers users of all abilities and equipment for a wider age range.
- Provide accessible path connections from the main paths, to bring users into the playground, social spaces and onto equipment.
- Include pretend play/creative/sensory play elements as well as physical play activities.
- Use durable, natural materials for construction.
- Provide shade over the play area.

The following suggestions were raised during consultation but are not considered appropriate due to the limited size of the park, and proximity to residential buildings:

- Water play (splash pad type) -not recommended due to cost of infrastructure and maintenance. A small manual water pump or dry creek bed may be considered.
- Sand play (due to limited size of park and availability of maintenance capability)
- A hard court for ball games (due to the limited size of the park and proximity to surrounding residences).

4.1.2 Dogs off leash

The dog off leash lawn area covers a quarter of the park. When not in use by dogs, the open lawn area is used for ball games and picnics. There is a local understanding that this lawn area will continue to be used for dog off leash activities.



4.1.3 Rotunda and picnic areas

The existing rotunda is well loved by the residents as it provides a space for users to sit in a circle facing each other during social events. The rotunda is located centrally within the park, providing good supervision /sightlines within the park. This gathering space is supplemented by the BBQ and picnic setting, north of the rotunda.

The rotunda, BBQ and picnic setting have limited accessibility. The rotunda and BBQ area is located off the main path and currently has an unsealed surface with poor surface drainage. Access into the rotunda is limited by the existing bluestone surface.

Recommendations:

- Replace the rotunda with a new shelter that retains the social seating arrangement. This should incorporate spaces for wheelchair users to participate equally.
- Design the rotunda and BBQ area to be accessible for all users.
- Retain the BBQ area in its current location.
- Provide a new shelter over the picnic tables and BBQ.
- Consider the design of the former primary school building (that previously occupied this site) as a design reference, in terms of built-form or materiality, for the design of new buildings/shelters.



4.1.4 Seating areas

The park currently offers users a number of different seating options within the park. Formal seating is mainly focused within the playground, rotunda, BBQ and along the paths. Some seats are scattered to the east side of the park to the periphery of the dog off leash area.



Recommendations:

- Provide formal and informal seating areas for social interaction.
- Ensure the majority of seating areas are accessible to all users.
- Provide different seating design options to cater for users of different ages/abilities.
- Provide some seats along the perimeter of the park.
- Create smaller gathering areas away from the focal gathering points to allow users a quiet place for reflection and contemplation.



4.2 Infrastructure and buildings

4.2.1 General

All future upgrades to infrastructure and building work are to be designed with best practice, current standards and CPTED principles.

4.2.2 Rotunda

Recommendations:

- Replace the rotunda and retain in its current location.
- Ensure all new surfaces and connections are accessible to users of all abilities.
- Incorporate a design that reflects and sits well with the existing character of the park.

4.2.3 Additional shelters

Recommendations:

- Add an additional shelter over the picnic settings to allow users to extend their stay at the park.
- Design the new shelter to be wheelchair accessible, connected to main access route/s.
- Provide picnic settings of an accessible design for users, arranged with space to manoeuvre between furniture.
- Complement the new rotunda design.

4.2.4 Barbecue

Recommendations:

- Retain the BBQ in its current location.
- When the existing BBQ is due for renewal, replace with an accessible BBQ design.



4.2.5 Lighting

Consultation revealed a strong demand for better and increased lighting to accommodate movement through the park. The existing lights provide way-finding along the existing main path and path intersections.

Recommendations:

- Review the existing lighting layout to improve safety within the park.
- Implement as funding becomes available.
- Design all lighting to be simple and contemporary in nature, energy efficient, and in keeping with the Yarra Open Space Lighting Policy.
- The lights should also not detract from way-finding and disrupt local wildlife during night-time.

4.2.6 Pedestrian crossing lights

The pedestrian crossing lights provide a signalized crossing point across Madden Grove to the train station. The crossing lights that had been recently installed in 2019 are in close proximity to an unsignalized crossing point at the corner of Madden Grove and Stawell Street.

A number of respondents and site observations suggest that users tend to use the unsignalized crossing point due to desire lines and a lack of path connection.

Recommendations:

- Commission a feasibility study to rationalise the crossing points between the park and train station.
- This study should provide a clear rationale for the selection of one favoured crossing point and access route, and any infrastructure replacement options.



4.2.7 Signage

Signs are currently located at the two corner entrances to the park and in the centre near the Rotunda.

Recommendations:

- The purpose of park signage is to provide welcoming, wayfinding and information/regulations.
- Consistent with the Council-wide approach to park signage, signage should be kept to a minimum and information incorporated into single signs wherever possible to reduce visual clutter in the reserve.
- Re-organise signage as required to the entry point from Stawell and Madden Grove.
- Upgrade when required using Council standard designs.



4.2.8 Park furniture

There are picnic settings and seats located near the playground, as well as some seats along the path and some scattered under existing vegetation to the east. There are currently different styles of park furniture within the reserve.

There is also a demand for increased seating in the reserve to provide more places to rest, sit, socialise and contemplate.

Recommendations:

- Upgrade all ageing furniture with a consistent furniture suite.
- Retain the current location of picnic settings near the playground area to provide gathering and supervision spaces.
- Locate seats across the reserve to allow users to enjoy the different seasons.
- Locate some seats in a group to form smaller areas away from the rotunda and playground, for gathering in a quiet setting.
- Provide informal seating opportunities, such as with logs and rocks, where suitable.

4.2.9 Fencing

Timber bollards currently line the perimeter of the park forming a visual barrier between park and surrounding roads.

Recommendations:

- Remove the ageing timber bollards and replace with buffer planting to increase habitat value and complement the natural character of the park.



4.2.10 Other infrastructure: toilets

The provision of toilets was suggested by some during consultation. Due to the size and nature of the reserve as one that predominantly services the local community, toilets are not considered suitable for the site and will not be included.

4.3 Landscape, drainage, planting and maintenance

4.3.1 Drainage and soil investigation; lawn and irrigation

The current lawn surface is in poor condition; lawn cover is patchy and large pits are scattered through the lawn. Further investigations into the pits reveal that most are redundant.

The existing lawn area is currently used for dog leash exercise and informal recreational activities. Improvements to the surface of the existing lawn was listed as the highest priority during community engagement.

Recommendations:

- Investigate in detail the existing pits to confirm relevance and remove any surface pits if redundant.
- Undertake all soil excavation work in accordance with a Soil Management Plan.

Recommendations:

- Investigate the need for new pits, and if required, locate these on the perimeter of the lawn area if feasible.
- Resurface and regrade the existing lawn area to ensure good drainage and ease of maintenance.
- Install an updated irrigation system for the reserve.
- On going maintenance and management of the lawn surface.



4.3.2 Trees

The trees in the park consist of predominantly native trees plus some exotic species including:

- Canary island date palms,
- Arizona cypress and
- An English elm known by the community as the fairy tree.



These trees are predominantly established, with some newer tree planting along the path, south of the park.

Paperbark trees are the predominant street tree species with some damaging footpath infrastructure.

It is assumed that the trees in this park form a valuable part of the Yarra River habitat value due to its proximity to that corridor.



Recommendations:

- Continue to maintain and care for existing trees within the park, particularly the Fairy Tree.
- Consider removal of some existing trees identified as deteriorating with age or in poor condition to improve passive surveillance.
- Avoid tree species that could potentially damage path, road or building infrastructure.
- Consider future planting of suitable species for a changing climate and biodiversity improvements, as well as deciduous trees to improve options for all year sun/shade.

4.3.3 Mid and lower level shrubs

There is currently very little mid or low-level planting within the park.

Recommendations:

- Introduce a new layer of low shrubs and ground cover planting, less than a meter in height, along the perimeter of the park to establish a barrier and create new habitat areas.
- The new perimeter plants are to be maintained to less than 1 meter height to retain passive surveillance into the park.
- Feature species are to be located at the park entrances to identify these entry points and welcome users into the park.



4.4 Proposed masterplan

Landscape Masterplan Vision

To retain a much-loved, urban green retreat where the local community can gather, play, reflect and enjoy.

The landscape masterplan has been developed to guide future improvements, ongoing maintenance and the sustainable development of Golden Square Park.

The park is bounded by heritage houses and its landscape character includes a large open lawn, naturalistic playground, traditional style rotunda, standard BBQ facilities, walking paths, some seating and the much-loved Fairy Tree. Scattered plantings of predominantly evergreen native trees and some exotic deciduous trees have been established over time. Timber bollards surround the park and understory garden beds are sparse.

The community were a driving force in ensuring Burnley Primary School demolished in the 1970's was converted to this park, rather than be sold off for housing development as initially proposed. Today the park remains a much-loved green retreat and its role as an urban refuge continues as development increases in the surrounding areas. We used community feedback to develop and refine the masterplan.

Recommendations - On going

Tree Planting

Continue to maintain and care for existing trees within the park, particularly the Fairy Tree. Consider removal of some existing trees identified as senescing or in poor condition to improve passive surveillance. Consider future planting of suitable species for a changing climate and biodiversity improvements, as well as deciduous trees to improve options for all year sun/shade.

Furniture

Replace ageing furniture with a consistent suite across the park. Seating to be a mix of benches, seats with back and arm rests. Informal log seats are provided to tie in with natural aesthetics of the dog off leash and Fairy Tree areas. Locate furniture to create informal social gathering spaces and quiet seating areas for reflection.

Water sensitive design and management

Seek opportunities for greater water efficiency, water security and improved soil moisture levels.

Recommendations - Short Term

- 01 Open Lawn area**
Improve the lawn area for recreational activities. Level the surface, top dress, provide new irrigation and remove redundant pits.
- 02 Existing signalled crossing**
Undertake a feasibility study to rationalise the crossing points between the park and train station. This study should provide a clear understanding of the primary access route to be encouraged and any infrastructure replacement options.
- 03 Reserve Entry**
New path and plaque relocated within feature entry garden beds.
- 04 Path connectors**
New paths to be constructed from existing pram crossing locations on surrounding streets to connect to the park's main path network.
- 05 Playspace**
Redesign play space to improve accessibility, play value, shade and offer a greater range of play opportunities for different ages and abilities. Include accessible play elements, routes and seating locations within the proposed play footprint. Ensure all elements meet current safety standards.

Recommendations - Mid Term

- 06 Picnic shelter and BBQ**
Improve the existing BBQ area with a new shelter, picnic setting, accessible BBQ unit and paved surface to improve access. The lawn area behind the proposed shelter provides a spill out space for larger gatherings.
- 07 Perimeter planting**
Replace existing perimeter timber bollards with groundcover and shrub planting over time. The new garden beds aim to improve biodiversity and create a physical barrier around the park, without compromising safety or visual permeability.
- 08 Lighting**
Prepare a lighting plan to improve safety and wayfinding provisions in the reserve. Implement as funding becomes available.

Recommendations - Long Term

- 10 Rotunda**
Replace the existing rotunda and ground surface with a suitable structure that provides plenty of seating and improved access.
- 11 Quiet space for reflection**
Create spaces that provide opportunity for quiet reflection. Include seating under existing shade trees and around sensory plants.

Proposed masterplan

Not to scale, refer to Appendix 4 for full scale plan



LEGEND

- Existing trees, predominantly native evergreen
- Existing Palm trees
- Existing Pine trees
- Existing feature evergreen trees
- Existing feature deciduous trees
- Existing tree to be removed in future to improve sightlines and protect infrastructure. Tree removal pending on on-going and future assessment of tree health.
- Proposed Trees - species to be confirmed
- Existing garden beds
- Proposed garden beds
- Garden bed mulch surface including mulch zone under existing Fairy Tree
- Lawn surface
- Proposed mounds formed using existing site excavated soil, locations to be confirmed on site
- Existing paths
- Proposed path and paved surfaces
- Proposed logs from tree removal work as informal seating edges and informal play elements
- Proposed picnic setting
- Proposed platform table
- Proposed seat with back and arm rest
- Proposed bench
- Proposed BBQ
- Proposed Bins
- Proposed drink fountain
- Existing light
- Relocated plaques
- Indicative dog off leash area
- Indicative future playground footprint

5.0 Implementation

5.1 Budget implementation

The actions recommended in the Masterplan will be funded through the open space capital works budget. Projects are subject to Yarra Council's annual budget process, in competition with other works across the City of Yarra.

The responsibility of implementing the Masterplan will sit with the Open Space Planning and Design Unit. Council officers will consult with the local community on the detailed design of new elements in the Reserve, such as the proposed playspace and rotunda in advance of these works occurring.

Recommendations and indicative timing and costs are listed below. Recommendations around maintaining existing assets are not listed in the table. Estimates are approximate only and will require detailed design and quantity surveying to determine exact costs.



5.2 Estimated funding breakdown

Note: these are estimates based on 2022 rates and must be reviewed and updated regularly depending upon the timing of the works.

	Item	Proposed budget
Short Term Works		
	Lawn rejuvenation works including pit investigation, grading, top dressing, earthworks and maintenance	\$70,000
	Irrigation design and installation works, any other services upgrade required for irrigation	\$80,000
	Madden Grove crossing location investigation	\$15,000
	Playground upgrade design fees	\$60,000
	Horticulture design including arborist report and planting plan	\$15,000
	Subtotal Short Term Works	\$240,000

	Item	Proposed budget
Mid Term Works		
	Construction of new pathways	\$35,000
	Playground construction works	\$450,000
	Picnic area works to include shade structure and associated furniture	\$60,000
	Lighting design and implementation	\$80,000
	Subtotal Mid Term Works	\$625,000
Long Term Works		
	Rotunda renewal including permits	\$140,000
	Playground audit, maintenance, miscellaneous	\$15,000
	Tree planting and garden beds including removal of timber bollards	\$40,000
	Furniture upgrades and construction of quiet space for reflection	\$35,000
	Maintenance	\$15,000
	Subtotal Long Term Works	\$245,000
	Total proposed investment over 10 years	\$1,110,000

5.3 Proposed masterplan works in stages

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Recommendations - On going

Tree Planting

Continue to maintain and care for existing trees within the park, particularly the Fairy Tree. Consider removal of some existing trees identified as senescing or in poor condition to improve passive surveillance. Consider future planting of suitable species for a changing climate and biodiversity improvements, as well as deciduous trees to improve options for all year sun/shade.

Furniture

Replace ageing furniture with a consistent suite across the park. Seating to be a mix of benches, seats with back and arm rests. Informal log seats are provided to tie in with natural aesthetics of the dog off leash and Fairy Tree areas. Locate furniture to create informal social gathering spaces and quiet seating areas for reflection.

Water sensitive design and management

Seek opportunities for greater water efficiency, water security and improved soil moisture levels.

Recommendations - Short Term

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Improve the lawn area for recreational activities. Level the surface, top dress, provide new irrigation and remove redundant pits.
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Redesign play space to improve accessibility, play value, shade and offer a greater range of play opportunities for different ages and abilities. Include accessible play elements, routes and seating locations within the proposed play footprint. Ensure all elements meet current safety standards.

Recommendations - Mid Term

- 06 Picnic shelter and BBQ**
Improve the existing BBQ area with a new shelter, picnic setting, accessible BBQ unit and paved surface to improve access. The lawn area behind the proposed shelter provides a spill out space for larger gatherings.
- 07 Perimeter planting**
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- 08 Lighting**
Prepare a lighting plan to improve safety and wayfinding provisions in the reserve. Implement as funding becomes available.

Recommendations - Long Term

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Replace the existing rotunda and ground surface with a suitable structure that provides plenty of seating and improved access.
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Create spaces that provide opportunity for quiet reflection. Include seating under existing shade trees and around sensory plants.

Proposed masterplan

Not to scale, refer to Appendix 4 for full scale plan



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- Proposed Bins
- Proposed drink fountain
- Existing light
- Relocated plaques
- Indicative dog off leash area
- Indicative future playground footprint

6.0 References

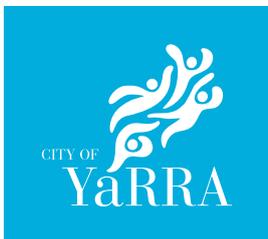
Council Strategies, Policies and Standards

- [Council Plan \(2021-2025\)](#)
- Nature Strategy (2020-2024)
- [Yarra Ngargna Plan 2020 – 2023](#)
- [Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021 - 2024](#)
- [Draft Transport Strategy 2022](#)
- [Integrated Water Management Plan](#)
- [Urban Forest Strategy \(2017\)](#)
- Yarra [Open Space Strategy \(2020\)](#)
- [Access and Inclusion Plan \(2018-2024\)](#)
- [Active Healthy & Ageing Strategy \(2018-2024\)](#)
- [Yarra Arts and Culture Strategy 2022- 2026 \(2016-2020\)](#)
- [Yarra LGBTIQ+ Strategy 2021-2024](#)

7.0 Appendix

1. Open space catchment analysis
2. Existing site condition plans
3. Constraints and opportunities plan
4. Proposed masterplan
5. Analysis and verbatim results community engagement
6. Lovell Chan – Historical Memorandum
7. Existing Tree Health Report





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Connie Benn Centre

160 Brunswick Street, Fitzroy

Bargoonga Nganjin, North Fitzroy Library

182 St Georges Road, Fitzroy North