



Moreland City Council

BRUNSWICK MAJOR ACTIVITY CENTRE

OPEN SPACE BACKGROUND AND ISSUES PAPER

May 2007



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Open space in the Brunswick Major Activity Centre

Discussion Paper March 2007

1. Background

Policy context – Moreland Open Space Strategy (2004)

The 2004 Moreland Open Space Strategy (MOSS) guides public open space provision, development, management and maintenance in the BMAC study area. The types of open space considered in the strategy include the recognised ‘public open space’ – parks, reserves, playgrounds, sports fields, as well as creek corridors/linear open space and civic/urban spaces. It does not deal in detail with large areas of privately –owned or institutional open space, streetscapes or sporting/recreation facilities.

Strategic priorities identified in the MOSS with relevance to the BMAC study area include:

- Providing quality, accessible open space within safe walking distance of all residents.
- Continued restoration of the waterway corridors as regional linear open space.
- Allocating adequate resources for maintenance and refurbishment of existing and additional open space.
- Assessing and prioritising open space needs in Moreland’s designated Principal and Major Activity Centres particularly for higher density residential development.
- Diversifying recreation and open space opportunities for children and youth.
- An annual Parks Improvement Program for local parks.
- Consolidating linear open space corridors, particularly State-owned properties.
- A biodiversity strategy to protect and restore habitat for native plants and animals.
- Community information about the diversity of Moreland's open space system.

2. Open space planning context

Why is open space valuable?

Open spaces are valuable community assets in a built-up inner urban area like Brunswick, and are recognised as being important for social, environmental and economic sustainability. Table 1 lists some of the roles and uses made of open space. Consultation during MOSS development found the most important roles of open space for residents were those associated with relaxation, health and wellbeing, and with nature conservation.

Table 1. Some roles and benefits of urban open space

Relaxation	Trees, greenery	Watching	Recreation
Exercise	Stormwater drainage & protection from flooding	Learning	Food
Socialising	Micro-climate	Playing	Visual image of city
Nature, wildlife habitat	Utilities	Health	History
Landscape	Use for filled land	Competition	Identity
Arts	Space for the future	Quality of life	Celebration

Local non-motorised
travel

Buffer between land uses

Enhanced private
property values

The importance of physical activity to people's physical and mental health is being increasingly recognised and documented. People who are active are more likely to live longer, have lower risk of heart disease and stroke, and are less likely to suffer stress, anxiety and depression. Open space that is accessible and attractive encourages us to undertake various forms of exercise as part of our daily lives.

There is scientific evidence that contact with nature is positive for health in terms of recovering from stress, improving concentration and productivity, and improving psychological state (see Maller et al. (2002) *Healthy Parks Healthy People*). Parks and open spaces provide the main opportunities for viewing and experiencing nature in an urban area. Trends towards more intensive development and increased work-related stress indicate a growing need for these green spaces. Parks also play a significant role in fostering social connectedness, which is important for individual and community well-being. As expressed in the Moreland Municipal Public Health Plan (p37) *"The natural environment is an important spiritual element affecting the health and well-being for all Australians, but particularly for Indigenous Australians. Everyone needs access to open space."*

From the perspective of financial values, the Council-owned public open spaces represent a very substantial real estate asset for the municipality. Many millions of dollars have been invested in developing and maintaining these areas. The MOSS seeks to build on this asset base, and continue to improve its social, environmental and economic values for the people of Moreland.

Melbourne 2030

Melbourne 2030: Planning for sustainable growth is the Victorian Government's strategy for metropolitan Melbourne, released in 2002. The main thrust of the strategy is to continue to protect the liveability of the established areas and to increasingly concentrate major change in strategic redevelopment sites.

Policy 5.6 (p103) is to *"improve the quality and distribution of local open space and ensure long-term protection of public open space"*. It notes that local public open space is a vital component of the urban fabric and makes places more liveable. Four initiatives are listed under this policy, as well as The Parklands Code. Managers of open space, including local government, are to give due consideration to the Code in the planning and management of open space .

Policy 5.7 (p105) is to *"rectify gaps in the network of metropolitan open space by creating new parks and ensure major open space corridors are protected and enhanced"*. The open space corridors along the Merri Creek are identified as being part of the regional public open space network. One of the initiatives under this policy is to create four continuous open space links and trails, including the Merri Creek Parklands within and beyond Moreland, extending to Craigieburn.

Moreland Municipal Public Health Plan

Health, Safety and Well-being in Moreland comprises a range of strategies addressing 14 key elements where Council and its partners can have an impact, including the built and natural environment.

The community consultation found that people take pride in the parks in Moreland and the areas along the creeks. CERES is valued highly. People would like to see

the outdoor resources used more as they believe this is good for social interaction at many levels. They want shaded seating, drinking fountains and playgrounds fenced off to protect children from dogs and the roads.

The Public Health Plan goal for the built and natural environment is: “An environmentally sustainable, viable, safe and liveable city, where people can shop, work and socialise locally and that promotes physical activity and social connection”.

For the study area, the importance of the Merri Creek, the natural environment as an important spiritual element affecting health and well being, and the need to improve access for all to open and public civic space are highlighted. Relevant actions under this goal include:

- Design and maintain quality infrastructure (parks, bicycle paths etc) that meets community needs of all age groups and is safe, promotes physical activity and is sustainable for future requirements.
- Ensure the public environment promotes safety, physical activity, community strengthening and meets social needs for a diverse and ageing community in terms of seating, sun protection, public toilets and spaces that encourage social interaction.
- Improve waterway health and promote amenity along local waterways through implementing programs include the Creeks Resting Places Strategy and Moreland Bicycle Strategy.
- Promote health and physical activity through the design of the built, open space and natural environment.
- Reduce risk factors for skin cancer by developing policy for sun protection in public spaces.
- Under the ‘Early years’ goal, actions include: Enable access to quality playgrounds, environments and programs that stimulate physical, intellectual, social and emotional development in children.

The ‘Social participation’ goal notes the importance of festivals and local community events, and the need to promote access to Council facilities and public space for community-directed activities.

Community profile and changing needs

The socio-demographic profile of the Moreland community influences the current and future demand for open space. The characteristics making up this community profile include factors such as population size, growth and distribution, age profile, mobility, employment, dwelling type, family size, language.

The recent trend of a declining population growth in Moreland has been reversed, and a gradual increase is projected in future. At present the highest proportion of residents in Moreland fall within the 25-34 year old age group. The population of Moreland will experience a growth in the middle age groups and a decline in the younger age groups.

Moreland is characterised by a migrant community and a high percentage of first generation Australians. There is a relatively high proportion of people living in medium density housing, and a relatively low level of vehicle ownership. Brunswick East will be one the highest growing suburbs

The population profile described above has the following broad implications on planning for open space in the future:

- need for highly accessible open space, especially in areas with an increasing population in medium density housing
- the specific needs of individual cultural and ethnic groups must be taken into account when determining the nature and location of open space

What do people want in open space? Expressed community needs and preferences

Community consultation was undertaken using a range of techniques in preparing the 1996 MOSS, and major themes emerging from the input received are outlined below. These preferences were tested with the Greening Moreland Forum in 2002, and are considered to be relevant for the purposes of this study.

Roles of open space

The most popular roles of open space related to wildlife habitat/nature, relaxation, and exercise/health/wellbeing. A strong desire that open space can and should meet both human and nature conservation needs was apparent throughout the municipality. Habitat links were regarded as of vital importance, with the use of indigenous species widely supported. There was also a strong recognition of the creeks as part of both open space and water management systems, with an emphasis on water quality issues.

Adequacy of provision

Variation in the availability of open space throughout the municipality was recognised in most workshops. Generally there was a desire for more open space, and strong support for the principle of an equitable distribution throughout the municipality. Some workshops highlighted specific areas with little open space, and areas where increasing housing densities will mean an increased need for more open space.

Loss of areas used as open space but not reserved for this purpose, was a concern throughout the municipality, as was the selling off of government land. Loss of open space was seen as disadvantaging residents, and potentially leading to declining property values. There were no advocates for the selling off of open space, but many questioned the relative allocations for different uses, suggesting that there was a need for more informal recreation areas, more multi-use areas and fewer single-purpose sporting grounds.

While there was a desire for more open space, most people saw this as unrealistic (unlikely), and therefore suggested ways of increasing the diversity, quality and accessibility of what already exists. It was suggested that many areas could support a higher level of use for a wider range of activities. Through better links between open space areas, and between open space and adjoining uses, open space could also be made more available to a wider range of people. Better information about what is available was also seen as a key.

New opportunities for open space provision were generally seen as being limited to the better use of other urban spaces such as shopping centres, railway lines, and streets as part of our open space network. Co-operative planning across municipal boundaries and within the region was seen as a way of providing more open space opportunities without necessarily acquiring more open space. The high use of Princess and Royal Parks south of Moreland's municipal boarder by Brunswick residents is a key example of this.

Quality of existing open space

The quality of open space throughout the municipality was regarded as variable, with some high-quality areas, but most lacking in character and distinctive design. Small, neighbourhood parks were most often seen as being of poor quality, offering a sameness of experience to park users.

Many specific criticisms were made about the facilities provided in open space areas. The most common criticisms were the lack of basic requisites: shade, shelter, drinking fountains, seating, toilets, lighting, information signs. Some open space areas were seen as not adequately fulfilling their intended purpose due to poorly designed and located facilities. Maintenance was another commonly perceived problem.

A related issue is the way facilities are arranged within parks: many specific examples were mentioned including lack of seats near children's play equipment; lack of shaded seats; lack of accessible toilets; lack of information (especially for those who do not read English).

Safety, and feeling safe while using open space emerged as a major issue for many people, particularly but not only women and older people. The main problems highlighted were lack of lighting, lack of cleaning (broken glass, syringes), and lack of "supervision". Dogs off the leash also rated many mentions. An important theme to emerge was the need to provide the means and resources to directly involve local people and open space users in redesigning open space areas.

Unmet needs

Many different unmet needs were mentioned. The needs of older people were widely recognised as being under-catered for. Meeting basic needs (such as seats with a view (perhaps near a play area), shade, well-maintained paths) and providing a wider range of opportunities was seen as vital to cater for our ageing community.

Young people's needs were also seen as of great importance. Children's play areas were seen as varying in quality, with little diversity available across the municipality. Small play areas close to home, and spaces where informal ball games are allowed were important. Play areas for older children are lacking. Playing on the street was once a part of inner city life, and safer streets where children can play close to home was desired by many.

Spaces and activities for teenagers are rarely provided, with a need for simple facilities (basketball rings, rebound walls, skateboard/roller blade areas, seats etc) throughout the municipality. Teenagers need spaces where they can meet friends, see and be seen and "muck around".

Local places, close to home and easy to access on foot were seen as important for older people and parents (generally women) with young children. Larger, extended families need bigger clusters of facilities and an environment that is safe and accessible for the youngest through to the oldest person.
Some cultural groups have particular needs

Several ideas emerged for new open space facilities: an adventure park; wild natural areas; performance spaces; lakes and water features; a major park providing for a range of informal recreation uses; places for quiet reflection; community allotment gardens; public art works; exercise and activity sites along trails.

Creating more pleasant spaces along neighbourhood streets, near shopping centres and community venues was regarded as a good opportunity to make better use of small spaces for adults and children, create links between open spaces, and make safer, more pleasant neighbourhoods.

Many people suggested that the best way of catering for a diverse and changing range of needs was by diversifying the informal recreation opportunities available in all open space areas. Single-purpose areas were generally targeted for change. Few people thought there was a need for all of the present sporting grounds, and almost none suggested there should be more.

Trends in open space use

A number of trends in Australian society can be identified that affect how people use public open space, and consequently what types of open space and park development are required:

- more medium-density housing with little private open space
- an ageing population, leading to a demand for local parkland for informal recreation
- increasing competition for leisure time from personal computers and entertainment systems, public and private recreation facilities
- increasing awareness of health issues and the importance of exercise, with walking, jogging and bicycle riding becoming more popular
- concern about environmental quality, and demand for more natural areas
- changing needs for sporting facilities, with increased diversity of choice and reduced demand for some activities.

According to research undertaken by Parks Victoria, *"the community is seeking greater diversity in the range of open space on offer"*.

Emerging demands include:

- improved linear links to surrounding areas, parks and attractions
- open spaces that cater for multiple use, including less structured activities, as well as open space that caters for all age groups
- open space that caters for people from different ethnic backgrounds
- greater protection and enhancement of environmental and cultural values
- improved safety and security in parks and open spaces." (*Linking People and Spaces*, p22.)

3. Open Space in Brunswick

Types of open space in Brunswick

Public open space in Moreland, (and Brunswick) has been categorised according to its function.

- **Informal:** Parkland for informal recreation, including areas with facilities like playgrounds, barbecues or basketball hit-up walls. (*Examples include - Fisher Reserve, Randazzo Park, and Barkly Street Park*).
- **Sporting:** Open space used for outdoor sports playing areas and associated facilities. (*Examples include Fleming Park, Gillon Oval, Brunswick Veladrome*).

- **Conservation parkland:** Areas for informal recreation in a natural landscape setting with indigenous planting. Facilities may include paths and seats. (*Examples include Roberts Reserve, Merri Creek*).
- **Habitat:** Land containing remnant indigenous vegetation in the process of restoration, or land with no recreation facilities on which revegetation is being undertaken to create habitat. Primarily for native flora and fauna, rather than recreation. (*Examples include Albion St end of Merri Creek*).
- **Heritage:** Parkland with cultural heritage significance due to historic, social and/or aesthetic values that should be protected in future development and management. (*Examples include Temple Park, Warr and Methven Parks*).
- **Civic place:** Public spaces designed for intensive use in an urban setting, including squares, plazas, and malls. Largely paved, may have some trees. At least 400 sq. metres in area. (*Examples include Sparta Place*).
- **Streetscape:** Very small areas (less than 400 sq. metres) or long narrow open spaces adjoining streets, and sites where the only obvious use is to provide a pedestrian and/or bicycle link to another area. These are important spaces and opportunities for enhancing the open space network in Brunswick. (*Examples include wider pavements in Lygon Street South near the Gelobar, outside old Post Office in Sydney Road*).
- **Undeveloped:** Sites that have not been developed for open space uses, for example by the construction of recreation or sporting facilities, paths or planting. There is very little undeveloped open space in Councils control within the study area.

Hierarchy of open space in Brunswick

Major (regional) parks

Moreland does not have any major or regional-scale parks, but its residents have access to several of these that are located near the municipal boundaries, such as Royal Park and Princess Park, to the immediate south of the study area.

Regional linear open space

The open space corridors along the Merri Creek are identified in the State government's metropolitan strategy (*Melbourne 2030*) as being part of the regional public open space network. Shared footways have been constructed along the creek as part of the metropolitan trails network.

The former Inner Circle Railway Line Linear Park is regionally important linear park to the south of the study area and provide an important east/west green and pedestrian/cycle link between Royal Park and the Merri Creek.

District parks

The 1996 MOSS identified Gilpin Park and Sumner-Kirkdale-Merri Parks as existing district parks, together with some district parks just outside Moreland, which service parts of the municipality. It recommended the development to district park standard of CERES and North East Parklands.

Considerable progress has since been made on these sites. Gilpin Park can now be considered as part of the Brunswick Central Parklands, which include Gillon Oval, Brunswick Park and Clifton Park.

Local parks

The 1996 MOSS mapped areas within 300m and 500m of publicly accessible open space larger than 0.5ha, and made recommendations for improving access to open space for areas not within 500m.

In order to apply the *Victoria Planning Provisions* guidelines for large local and small local parks, two maps are presented here. Map 6 shows households that are more than 500m from a large local park (1 hectare or more in area). Map 7 shows access to local parks down to an area of 0.07 hectare¹. Households that are more than 500 metres from any local open space are the highest priority need areas, while those more than 300 metres from local open space are the second priority need areas. *Note that this analysis is indicative, simply using a radius around open spaces rather than actual walking distance, and it does not incorporate the effects of barriers to pedestrians such as major roads without traffic signals.*

Quality of Open Space in Brunswick

Brunswick, while not flush with open space, boasts a healthy variety of open spaces from well designed small parks, such as Randazzo Park, to Heritage Parks, such as Methven, Warr and Temple Parks to the conservation parklands of the Merri Creek Corridor. Current open space in the activity centre offers the community a broad variety of recreational activities and experiences.

Considerable resources have been invested in planning, design and development of parks throughout the study area since amalgamation and in the last decade of the former Brunswick City Council. These include:

New/upgraded parks

Clifton Park Festival Site
Gilpin Park development
Randazzo Park
Kirkdale St Park
Barkly Street Park
Gilpin Park
Jones Park
Merri Creek Improvements
CERES (council funded)
Numerous parks improvements

Civic Urban Spaces:

Sparta Place
(see Sydney Rd Improvement program*)

Opportunities exist to provide greater pedestrian connectivity to parks from within the study area, and to create smaller local open space opportunities through road closures/traffic management solutions.

4. Current provision and access to open space in the Brunswick

The BMAC study area contains 9.5% or 56 hectares of an overall 576 hectares of open space in Moreland.

District Parks

All households within the study area are within 2kms of a district park (defined as a park greater than 3 hectares). District Parks within the study area include: the

Brunswick Central Parklands (Clifton, Gilpin and Gillon), North East Parklands (Allard, Jones, Roberts), and CERES (not technically a park, but has the highest visitation of any open space in Moreland and is used as such).

In addition to these, there are district parks within 2kms outside or bordering the municipality. These include: Royal and Princess Parks (Melbourne CC), and the Edinburgh Gardens (Yarra).

Large Local Open Space

There is a clear deficiency of large local parks/open space in the central north-south spine, between Sydney Rd and Lygon Street, and west of the Upfield Line clustered around Albion Street. The majority of households in this area have no access within 500 metres to a large local park (a park of at least 1 hectare with the provision for both informal and active recreation).

Small Local Open Space

Small local open space is defined as parkland with more than 0.07 ha for informal recreation (e.g. Randazzo Park, Foletta Park). Most households, with the exception of some areas west of the Upfield Line clustered around Albion Street and a large area east of Sydney Rd between Albion and Blyth Street, have access to one or 2 small parks within 300 metres walking distance of their homes.

Areas with no access to any local open space

West of the Upfield Line clustered around Albion Street. There are two areas in this vicinity that are listed in the MOSS as priority areas for improved access to local open space. Key MOSS recommendations to address this deficiency include:

- Seeking after hours public access arrangements to the grounds of Brunswick North Primary School
- Developing a small local park as part of open space provision for the Anstey Urban Village.

5. Future/unmet needs in Brunswick

With the increase in population expected in the centre, there is a need to ensure that the open spaces of the Brunswick Major Activity Centre are adapted to meet a wider range and number of users. There is a need to diversify the range of open space types available to residents, workers and visitors to the centre. A range of opportunities exists to improve the quality of open space and redevelopment provides the opportunity to make improvements to open space access.

6. Key Moreland Open Space Strategy (MOSS 2004) actions

Key actions from the MOSS with direct implications for the improvement and further development of open space in the BMAC study area include:

- 6.3 Finalise the development of North East Parkland (Allard, Jone, Roberts), East Brunswick to provide a range of recreation opportunities of district park status. *(This is nearly completed, however work is still required in Roberts Reserve).*

6.4 Incorporate existing plans for Clifton, Gilpin and Gillon Parks, Brunswick, into master plan with an overall vision for an integrated open space precinct of district park status. *(This is yet to commence, however should be a BMAC outcome).*

6.6 Continue to support the development of CERES as a district level park for informal recreation, special events and education. *(CERES, although not a traditional park, has many open space functions, is zoned open space, has a strong horticulture theme and attracts more visitors annual than any other open space in Moreland).*

6.7 Undertake a detailed analysis of open space needs and opportunities in activity centres. Identify and priorities opportunities to improve provision and access to local open space, including civic space.

6.8 Investigate the sites designated for residential redevelopment in the Moreland Industrial Land Use Strategy to identify whether there is a need for local open space to be provided in conjunction with redevelopment. Investigations should include a walking catchments analysis around existing open spaces in the vicinity of the sites. *(Not sure of the status of this for individual sites?)*

6.14 Develop guidelines and memoranda of understanding with schools regarding out of hours public access with schools *(not commenced, but some informal arrangements already exist).*

Under table 5, priority sites for improvements to local open space, the following are recommended:

- Seek after hours public access arrangement to the grounds of Brunswick North Primary (not commenced)
- Develop a small local park as part of open space provision for Anstey Urban Village.

7.5 Design, develop and maintain civic places to enhance activity centres and urban villages. *(This will be a key outcome of the BMAC plan).*

7.6 Review and, as funds allow, implement the existing, documented development plans for heritage parkland. *(The plans require review prior to this occurring).*

8.2 Plan, design and construct skateboard facilities in several locations that are safe and accessible to young people *(previous assessments have identified Clifton park as a suitable site however there needs to be revised assessments. Any facility should be highly visible, and well located near public transport and other amenities).*

8.3 Consult with teenagers and young adults about the types of outdoor recreation settings and facilities they prefer, and pursue opportunities to create these.

8.5 Prepare a sports field strategy...*(see Tony Oulton's assessment)*

8.7 Prepare a public toilet strategy...*(completed however requires discussion regarding decommissioning of current toilets, and provision of new in key sites)*

These are the key MOSS items related directly to the BMAC study area. There are more generic actions that may have some lesser relevance however these have not been discussed in this context.

7. Greening Sydney Road

'Greening' Sydney Road has been a long held community and trader vision to improve the pedestrian environment of Sydney Road. There have been numerous streetscape and urban design studies and propositions since the mid 1990's. The Sydney Road Urban Design Improvements Strategy by Green and Dale Landscape Architects (1997) has guided most of the recent Council capital works projects.

While the myriad of numerous underground services, overhead power lines, tramways infrastructure, heritage controls on facades, limited footpath width and pedestrian amenity have made turning Sydney Rd into a lush boulevard of touching tree canopies (like Royal Parade to the south), significant solutions and interventions have been made in the along and nearby the strip where space permits.

Key projects that have been implemented in the structure plan area under the Sydney Road Strategy 1997 – 2002:

- Hooper Reserve 'gateway project' 1993, renewal 97 and 99
- Kerb extension planting 1999
- Little Jones Street Car Park and Police Station Forecourts 1999
- Sydney Road Waste Bin enclosures 2001
- Tram Shelter – Arts Stop at Mechanics Institute 2000
- Baptist Church Forecourt 2000
- St Ambrose Church Forecourt 2001
- Greening Planters 2001 (removed 2003)
- Sparta Place upgrade 2003
- Sydney Road Cable Relocation pilot project 2002

Many of these projects have been a direct response to the community's desire to 'green' Sydney Road, and a number have been very successful. Others have not been as successful.

In 2001 Council designed and implemented a range of concrete and stainless steel planter boxes between Blyth and Phoenix Street, as part of a pilot program to 'green' Sydney Road. Trader concerns, poor plant survival rates, impacts on pedestrian access and amenity and vandalism prompted Council to remove the planters. Despite their failure, the planters proved how complex and technically difficult greening Sydney Road is, and how the most appropriate opportunities for greening lie in the less constrained spaces adjacent to Sydney Road, such as side street kerb extension or civic spaces like Sparta Place.

8. Upfield Line Corridor

The Upfield Line contains a significant amount of open land running through the centre of the study area. Vic Track manages most of this land with the objective of providing a rail corridor, however it serves a variety of other open space functions. Council has a long lease over a large parcel of land adjacent to Jewell Station west, providing much needed local open space.

In 1998 Council developed the Upfield Railway Habitat Landscape Concept Plan in collaboration with Bayside Trains Corporation, and the Cities of Hume and Melbourne. The project examined the 15 kilometres and 40 hectares of land within the corridor for it's potential to provide a sustainable flora and fauna corridor that

incorporates a long distance pedestrian/cycle trail. The vision advanced for the Upfield Line is that it would be:

- A corridor of indigenous vegetation that incorporates and preserves existing remnant vegetation and that is consistent with the operation and management requirements of an important railway line;
- An area that achieves it's maximum potential as a wildlife habitat;
- The setting for a continuous shared pedestrian and bicycle track; and
- A visually, educationally and socially significant zone that shares these values with the areas that surrounds it.

The plan was a visionary and collaborative effort at the time, however it's implementation has been problematic due to Vic Track, and the fact that Council would have been investing considerable capital on others lands.

9. Open space issues to be addressed by the structure plan

Design, development and management of existing open space system to meet future needs

The structure plan should investigate the projected future open space needs of a changing community, particularly surrounding the central Sydney Road/Lygon Street spines and areas likely to host higher residential densities.

Realistically, Council's capacity to acquire additional open space within areas with high land value is limited. Opportunities to negotiate public realm and public open space outcomes within the structure plan area should be pursued through MILUS rezoning and other planning avenues wherever practical.

Existing open space within the study area should be actively redesigned and redeveloped to meet changing community needs. There are a number of large open spaces, such as the Clifton/Gilpin/Gillon oval or Brunswick central parklands that are underutilised. Activating open space, through design or improved access, safety and amenity, is a realistic way to meet the demands of the future.

Numerous small 'pocket parks' could be improved to provide a richer program of passive recreational activities. An excellent example of this type of rejuvenation is the 2001 Randazzo Park development. While small, these parks provide an important local community focus, and for a fraction of the cost of acquiring and developing new open space could be redeveloped to meet broader community aspirations.

Brunswick's three Heritage Parks (Methven, Warr and Temple) have well documented heritage management plans and complimentary development plans (2003). These should be reviewed and implemented incrementally to ensure heritage significance is protected, while meeting contemporary open space needs.

The Merri Creek corridor and surrounds contains a large percentage of Brunswick's open space, including the Jones/Roberts/Allard Parks (North East Parklands), Kirkdale Street Park, CERES and the Merri Shared Trail. The creek environs provide a rich variety of recreational activities from nature study, to walking/cycling, and other public open space facilities such as playgrounds within nearby parks.

There is great potential to further improve this regionally important linear open space system, however the greatest potential for the study area community is improved east/west pedestrian and cycle access environments. The structure plan should investigate the potential to improve east/west links and pedestrian amenity to ensure access to this system is maximised.

Civic spaces – is the new green really grey?

Community consultation on open space needs and aspirations has found that people generally perceive open space as 'green'. Despite living in a built up inner urban environment, people still desire open space that conforms to long held notions of what a park should be. The MOSS goes some way to addressing this issue with the inclusion of 'Civic' open space in its typology. The structure plan should be mindful

of providing the community with civic urban open space, such as Sparta Place, in lieu of traditional parkland. This will require promotion and education.

Playgrounds

The Draft 2007 Moreland Playground Strategy propose to provide new playgrounds in prominent, central locations with good pedestrian access and passive surveillance in activity centres. A new playground is proposed for the BMAC area, most likely within walking distance from the Sydney Rd spine, and a major district playground is proposed for Jones Park in East Brunswick.

In a Moreland wide context Brunswick has adequate provision of playgrounds. The focus in the medium terms is to improve the diversity of play experiences for a wider ages group and to ensure surrounding amenities, such as shade, and appropriate.

Sydney Road Urban Design Improvement

The initiatives of the past decade require a rethink. This is an important and separate piece of work that should be a priority action from the Structure Plan.

Youth Space

The BMAC is a major youth destination, within short distance to Melb Uni, RMIT City, RMIT Dawson St, and Sydney Road Community School. Aside from ensuring the entire study area is a youth inclusive and friendly space, the MOSS identifies a need for a well located 'youth space' where young people can hang out safely. Previous assessments have identified the need for a skate facility in close to public transport and activity, which could form part of an integrated space incorporating venues/meeting spaces. The issue of making public space a positive place for young people requires broader discussion and consultation.

Community gardens and food security

With an increase in density there will be both interest and desire for community allotments. Spaces for gardens (which could be managed by an external provider like Cultivating Communities or CERES) should be investigated (Upfield Line Food Security Habitat Master Plan?). There is already greater demand for allotment spaces at CERES than there are spaces, and with higher densities and a growing community interest in sustainable organic food produce this is likely to increase. An investigation of the potential future demand for community gardens should be a BMAC outcome.

Streetscapes

This should be addressed as a separate item like the C2020 plan, closely aligned to transport, walking/cycling and mobility issues. There is great scope for integrated urban design interventions along the major spines, but also in the wider quieter streets that run east/west (Michael St?).

Schools/institutions/churches – shared use.

Large areas of potential public open space are contained within public or semi-public institutions, such as RMIT, Schools etc. The potential and viability for shared use

should be explored through the structure plan in areas where there are significant deficiencies.

CERES

CERES, although not technically public open space is perceived and operates in many respects as a major 'theme' park, beyond it's educational focus. CERES has a regional focus, however also provides important 'messy' spaces for local children and families to meet and play in a non-urban setting.

The structure plan should acknowledge the multi faceted purpose CERES serves and ensure it is considered as a key part of the open space system of the study area. Pedestrian connectivity to and interface with the surrounding urban context should be improved.

Activating the Brunswick Central Parklands

Badly designed, underutilised, hard to access, lonely and desolate. Gilpin, Clifton, Gillon need a rethink in the context of surrounding land use changes and east west legibility. A master plan for the three is proposed in the MOSS, and should focus on both active organised recreation and passive local recreational use. This should be a key open space outcome of the structure plan.

Green roofs

This concept is gaining huge momentum in Australia as a way of greening cities – requires investigation and discussion as part of ESD recommendations. See below.

http://www.greenroofs.org.au/Greenroofs_Australia.html