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our **NATURAL** playground

A PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN FOR THE GOLD COAST



foreword

The Gold Coast is one of Australia's leading tourist destinations. It is also one of the fastest growing cities in Australia with a population of 420,000 and a further 250,000 residents expected to live here by 2020.

The City needs to respond to the challenges presented by the major population growth if it is to maintain our enviable lifestyle. The ongoing development and appropriate management of our city's natural areas, parks and recreation facilities is critical to maintaining our lifestyle and position as the nation's leading tourist destination.

I am delighted to present "Our Natural Playground", a strategy to guide parks, recreation and natural area management on the Gold Coast during the next 20 years. This represents Council's proactive response to the challenges of managing our open space areas into the future.

The strategy proposes one of the most comprehensive programs of initiatives undertaken by a local government authority in recent years to improve parks, recreation and the environment.

This strategy focuses on four areas:

1. Sustainably managing Council's natural areas for the benefit of current and future generations.
2. Implementing targeted programs throughout the City to improve the health of residents.
3. Transforming our City through an extensive greening and street planting program.
4. Undertaking a substantial parkland development program throughout the City.

Council has already consulted with members of the community in the development of this draft strategy and I encourage all residents, businesses, community groups and visitors to provide further comment and suggestions.

For further information regarding the strategy and Council's comprehensive park network please contact Council's Parks and Recreation Services Branch on phone number 5581 6984 or visit Council's website www.goldcoast.qld.gov.au



Ron Clarke
Cr Ron Clarke
Mayor - Gold Coast

introduction

Parks play a vital role in the life of Gold Coast residents and visitors. They provide opportunities for interacting with our families and the wider community, while also being ideal settings for many forms of recreation, relaxation and contemplation. Parks add beauty to our suburbs and the City, help protect our native wildlife and habitat and play a key role in ensuring we have clean air and water. They also play a significant role in attracting people to live, work and visit our City. As such they are a major driver of our economy.

The City's beaches, foreshores and protected hinterland areas are part of a park network that is unique. This growing network provides 29, 000 hectares, in 1,824 open space areas. Included are more than 25,000 hectares of protected natural areas, over 1, 000 hectares of wetland reserves and waterway corridors, along with more than 2,800 hectares of open space for sporting, recreation and other community purposes. Gold Coast City also boasts more than 1, 000 hectares of accessible ocean beachfront that stretches more than 36 kilometres from The Spit to Coolangatta.

The Gold Coast and the surrounding region are experiencing unprecedented growth. This means that by 2021 the sporting, recreation and open space requirements of another 250, 000 residents will need to be accommodated. In addition to the resident population, planning for the City's visitors is a significant consideration. Currently, approximately 1 in 7, or 78, 000 people (15% of the City's population) are visitors to the Gold Coast on any given day. Based on the forecast that the ratio of residents to visitors will be maintained at 1:7, the number of visitors to Gold Coast City on any given day by 2021 will be 112, 620.

Along with population growth, there are a number of other trends impacting on the provision and management of the City's park network. These include changes in employment and leisure patterns, decreasing numbers of volunteers in sport and recreation organisations, an aging population, and increasing community expectations regarding personal safety and the protection of our natural environment.

Parks can play a major role in developing a more active community. Physical inactivity, now identified as the second largest cause of disease in Australia, is becoming a significant issue for community planning. While it is important that all levels of government recognise and respond to these issues, local government in particular has a key role to ensure that supportive environments are available to promote physical activity and social interaction. Recognition of this will see our parks positioned as one of our most vital community resources. The Gold Coast Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, "Our Natural Playground" establishes priorities and strategies to guide the delivery of parks, open spaces, recreation facilities and services to the year 2020 and beyond. Through this process Gold Coast City Council has created a parks and recreation vision that aims to build on the beauty of our City, give all residents appropriate access to our parks and natural resources, and ensure a lasting legacy for the generations to come.

Planning for the City's parks and recreation areas will need to respond to future growth and emerging community needs. Consultation with stakeholders

identified a number of themes which, when implemented, will assist Council and the community to protect, enhance and efficiently manage this significant park network. These themes are:

- › **Our Attractive and Shaded City**
- › **Our Active and Healthy Community**
- › **Inspirational Parks for People**
- › **Our Natural Gift**



guiding values

The following guiding values have formed the basis of the strategic plan:

- 1. Protection of Cultural, Historical and Environmental Values:** To ensure that all areas and features with significant heritage values are protected and managed responsibly;
- 2. Sustainable use:** To ensure that the type, level and management of recreation or sporting activities proposed will not adversely impact on opportunities for future generations;
- 3. Quality:** To ensure that all recreation, sport and open space areas and facilities comply with performance requirements and Australian Design Standards;
- 4. Accessibility:** To plan and promote inclusion and access to open space and built facilities for all people;
- 5. Connectivity:** To provide connections and linkages between open space areas, and develop safe off-road routes to encourage greater use of non-motorised transport (bicycles);
- 6. Diversity of Landscape Settings and Recreational Opportunities:** To encourage the development of diverse landscape settings to support a range of recreation and sporting activities that represent the values and the interests of residents and visitors;

- 7. Community Safety:** To ensure that public spaces are designed and maintained with respect to the principles of community safety and environmental design (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design);
- 8. Linkage:** To ensure that significant natural areas are linked to other areas by natural corridors to allow the movement of wildlife. These corridors may be under private or public tenures and in many cases will follow prominent waterways or ridges;
- 9. Co-operation:** To work in partnership with State Government agencies and private landholders to ensure effective land management.
- 10. Community Engagement:** To support and encourage community involvement in the planning, design, management and use of open space areas and facilities; and
- 11. Information:** To promote to residents and visitors information about the City's recreational opportunities, its remarkable biodiversity and the importance of sustainable use of its open space.



review of other strategic plans

The aim of reviewing similar strategic plans and literature from around Australia and the world was to ensure that we learnt from the experiences and strategies of other Cities with similar profiles. In total over twenty strategic plans were reviewed in detail ranging from Shaping Brisbane Open Space to Portland's (Oregon, USA) Parks 2020 Vision.

Common issues presented within these strategies included:

- > The need for proactive and integrated planning of both existing and future open spaces to meet increasing pressures associated with urbanisation;
- > The provision of linkages between parks and community areas to promote physical activity and community interaction;
- > A growing concern at all levels of government regarding obesity and declining physical activity levels;
- > The need to work closely with community and private sector partners to ensure the ongoing viability of sporting organisations; and
- > The importance of protecting and enhancing biodiversity within both our urban and natural areas.

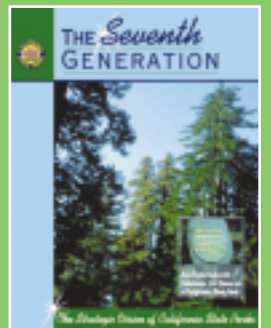


Photo: Russell Shakespeare



Photo: Russell Shakespeare

our attractive and shaded city

By 2020 the Gold Coast will be a city of tree-lined boulevards, with signature landscaping and public art that reinforces and promotes the identity and character of our diverse areas. Through a major greening program and integrated “green” engineering strategies, streets will look more like parks, and will be recreated as safer people spaces.

1. Ensure appropriate planning to facilitate the development of an increasingly attractive and shaded City.
 - › Identify locations throughout the city where increased shade will bring benefits (eg near shops, schools, popular parks, boulevards, and pedestrian routes).
 - › Review the process for approval of street and park tree plans submitted by the development industry, incorporating the management and protection of street trees during building construction.
 - › Regulate planting of shade trees in car parks and new residential subdivisions and encourage planting of shade trees in schools, backyards and streets
2. Improve information sharing and strategic partnerships, which promote development toward an attractive and shaded City.
 - › Review guidelines and manuals provided to developers for the planning and design of related infrastructure, trees and streetscapes.
 - › In collaboration with infrastructure engineers, review road cross-sections and construction detailing to better secure space for street trees and minimise conflicts with services and built infrastructure.
 - › Develop a marketing program to facilitate increased community support for greening the Gold Coast and lifting the profile of street trees as valuable community assets.

- › Improve understanding of the value of street trees and how we can all work better with street trees.
 - › Develop improved partnerships with Queensland Main Roads, Energex and other utility service providers to facilitate the greening program.
 - › Optimise the value of shared information with other key local government authorities and industry bodies.
 - › Engage with the Urban Design Institute of Australia and landscape/ arborist associations to improve their understanding of the strategic intent to develop a more attractive and shaded City.
 - › Recognise improvements and achievements by engineers and other staff in working toward a more attractive and shaded City.
3. Enhance asset management of our street and park trees.
 - › Review appropriate management of street trees during the various phases of their life (eg newly planted through to old declining trees).
 - › Utilise whole of life costs, contribution to ecological sustainability, shade and amenity values as major determinants to recommend appropriate street tree species.
 - › Reduce Council's use of higher maintenance species (eg hedging plants) and strategically remove inappropriate plantings and replace with more appropriate species.
 4. Undertake a major greening program across the City.
 - › Commence a more proactive approach to management of street trees.
 - › Review costs associated with managing street trees and seek to improve efficiencies.
 - › Focus a major planting program initially in ‘shade-hungry’ areas, and expand to comprehensively transform the City.
 - › Review and enhance the provision of free plants to achieve a more attractive and shady city including encouraging increased use of edible plants (eg balcony herbs, backyard fruit trees etc).
 - › Stage a series of green days (mini green festivals) throughout the City focusing on free plants, backyards for bio-diversity, water wise gardens and plantings for passive cooling.
 - › Ensure new plantings are waterwise through both the selection of appropriate species, soil amendments and use of recycled water to irrigate wherever possible.
 - › Work with Energex and other infrastructure providers to encourage undergrounding old fashioned above ground cables.
 - › Ensure main visitor routes within the City are green and aesthetically appealing.
 - › Work with local nurseries to promote the use of appropriate native species, with a focus on native and endemic species.





our active and healthy community

The Gold Coast will be a city that works proactively to become a more active and healthy community, through lowering the rate of childhood obesity and ensuring our mature residents are among the most active in Australia.

Through strategic partnerships the Gold Coast will have high quality recreation facilities that provide a diverse range of programs, and open space networks, which are designed to encourage greater participation by the community in physical activity.

1. Increase sporting and recreation participation by providing high quality facilities that are multi-purpose and responsive to changing community needs.
 - › Continue to implement effective capital works programs based on the strategic direction of various sports organisations and the identified recreational needs of the community.
 - › Optimise the City's allocation of resources to sports through analysing individual sport's strategic plans, "flow on" club development plans and recognition of new and emerging sports.
 - › Incorporate the needs of high performance training and preparation camps into the City's long-term facility planning assessments and processes.
 - › Investigate opportunities to stock Council managed lakes with appropriate species of fish with a view to enhance the future recreational opportunities that may be provided.
2. Investigate best practice models for sports club development, and share information with clubs, including the possible establishment of a sports advisory committee for the City.
 - › Continue to work in partnership with clubs and funding providers to develop quality-sporting infrastructure.
 - › Assist clubs from different codes to develop networks to encourage sharing of ideas and resources.
 - › Ensure that a member of the Sports Business Taskforce sit on the proposed Sports Advisory Committee to ensure consistency and collaboration between both committees.
 - › Review conditions placed on commercial operators to facilitate a greater role by such providers in helping build a more active and healthy community.
 - › Refine strategic asset management programs for all sporting and infrastructure, including turf on playing fields, irrigation and drainage systems and lighting.
 - › Ensure reciprocal partnerships with Council, Education Queensland and private schools to optimise the use of current and future recreational facilities across the City.



3. Increase participation in sport and recreation through providing good quality information and initiating appropriate programs.

- › Develop a marketing and communication plan to build a more active and healthy community.
- › Develop partnerships with local media to promote the benefits of physical activity.
- › Ensure residents are aware of appropriate bike and walking routes and linkages around their neighbourhoods and promote the use of these.
- › Use role models to promote the benefits of physical activity and getting out in parks.
- › Source grant and other funding opportunities to help the active and healthy community program.
- › Target groups currently under represented in sport and recreation (teenagers, older adults and seniors, ethnic minorities) to increase their participation.
- › Develop partnerships with Queensland Education, Queensland Health, Gold Coast Division of General Practice, commercial providers and Universities to develop programs to get our older and younger residents more active.

4. Ensure increases in sport and recreation activities are sustainable.

- › Examine partnerships with Universities to research ways to improve the activity and health of our community.
- › Conduct a three year trial under the management of an Active and Healthy Community Officer to increase participation in more active and healthy activities across the City.
- › Ensure that adequate open space is available to locate emerging sporting and recreational activities so that competition for facilities does not impact on either existing or emerging activity participants.
- › Work with sporting and recreation groups to prepare participant projections as a basis for planning to provide facilities to support future participation levels.
- › Ensure that expansion of sporting and recreational groups and their activities will not impact on ecological values within, or on, adjacent properties.
- › Optimise the opportunities for nature-based recreation including fishing, bushwalking and other pursuits.





inspirational parks for people

By 2020 the Gold Coast will have a network of parks that are loved by the community, enjoyed by visitors and are admired by all Australian cities. Exceptionally well planned, these places will support local events, provide opportunities for relaxation and contemplation, and be managed to protect our heritage, promote creativity and enhance our cherished outdoor lifestyle.

1. Maximise community benefits for parks through improved strategic planning, local area planning, park network planning, development assessment and individual park design.
 - › Enhance market research and increase communication with the community to better understand the needs of residents and inform planning decisions.
 - › Ensure the design of parks reinforces and enhances the identity and character of local areas in consultation with local residents.
 - › Encourage community involvement in the development of master plans to guide development of all major recreation areas.
 - › Ensure new park developments implement energy efficient, water wise and waste wise strategies, and that new park buildings represent best practice in sustainable building design and construction.
 - › Review guidelines and manuals provided to developers and assessment managers for land contributions and park design.
 - › Improve the quality of the development assessment process and provide greater opportunities for input into developments as they relate to the provision of parks, streetscapes and parkland embellishment.
 - › Develop strategic partnerships with peak development industry bodies (eg Urban Development Institute of Australia) to ensure improved community benefits from parkland development by the private sector.
 - › Determine whole of life costs for new parks and new capital works in parks as part of both the development assessment process and parks planning generally.
 - › Ensure developer contributions and infrastructure charges of new developments adequately fund the impact of those developments on our parks.

- › Improve synergies between open space and transport through the enhanced alignment of recreation planning and bikeway planning including identifying opportunities for linkages in new areas and retrofit existing areas to create safe off road linkages to local area destinations (eg shops, schools, recreation areas).
- › Develop improved partnerships with local media to profile popular parks and events.
- › Develop strategies to address the possible alienation of public open space as a result of various actions and activities (eg events, homelessness).

2. Ensure our parks are safe and accessible for all members of our community and protect our City's unique biodiversity.

- › Incorporate CPTED principals (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) in capital works programs for parks and recreational facilities.
- › Review lighting and electrical standards used in major parks to enhance safety and encourage appropriate night use.
- › Work with Social policy areas of Council and the State Government to respond to issue of homeless people residing in parks.
- › Continue to address equity issues through improved disabled access and features such as wheel chair friendly playgrounds, brail walls etc.
- › Proactively plan for whole of community access to parks by taking into account the needs of older persons, people with disabilities, parents with children and people with mobility problems.
- › Undertake CPTED audit of existing parks and liaise with police and security officers.
- › Proactively plan for the appropriate provision of dog areas so that conflicts between park users are minimised.
- › Work with police, security and Neighbourhood Watch groups to facilitate park watch, with hotline and reward systems as a deterrent to criminal damage activities.
- › Ensure parks and reserves protect and enhance ecosystem services, habitat and biodiversity values through the appropriate selection of plant species and associated management.

3. Improve the marketing and image of our Parks and Recreational assets.

- › Develop a marketing plan for Parks and Recreation on the Gold Coast.
- › Promote the multiple and diverse values of parks (eg ecological sustainability, recreation, landscape amenity and flood mitigation).
- › Ensure, adequate directional signage that allows residents and visitors to locate parks.
- › Enhance Council's parks web pages.



4. Acknowledge, nurture and celebrate the culture of the Gold Coast

- › Align parks planning and management with the Council's cultural development plan and associated policies.
- › Explore the opportunities for use of art, landscape art (contouring), green art (different species used artistically), and art events.
- › Research national and international approaches to art in public open spaces, such as performance art and temporary art (eg sand sculptures).
- › Develop strategic partnerships with the arts community and the Gold Coast Arts Centre.
- › Work with infrastructure providers to increase and improve the standard of infrastructure art (eg artistic bollards, fences, lighting, playgrounds).
- › Use art to reinforce the identity and character of local areas.
- › Identify the whole of life costs for any new artwork in parks and detail the maintenance program required in collaboration with relevant maintenance staff.
- › Promote philanthropic support for 'art in the park' projects.

5. Foster Community Ownership and involvement through partnerships and other related initiatives.

- › Improve community engagement strategies during the development of parks.

- › Investigate best practice models to facilitate community ownership of public space areas and trial new models.

- › Actively foster the development of Park Care, Coast Care and Bush Care groups in the community.
- › Develop recognition schemes to acknowledge the role of dedicated community volunteers in park development and environmental practice.

6. Improve the maintenance of parks through improved management, more strategic management of assets and improved communication among all stakeholders.

- › Increase the use of dedicated parks staff in large high profile parks (eg Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens).
- › Further align maintenance standards with the visibility, profile, status and usage of parks.
- › Trial other models of maintenance in selected local areas.
- › Through enhanced Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) and other communication strategies better inform key stakeholders and the community more generally of maintenance regimes and the impacts of weather on maintenance.
- › Secure a link between the maintenance cost implications of new developments, divisional works and other park capital works for future budget allocations.
- › That a review of the Landscape Strategy be undertaken so that a broader sustainability framework is incorporated.



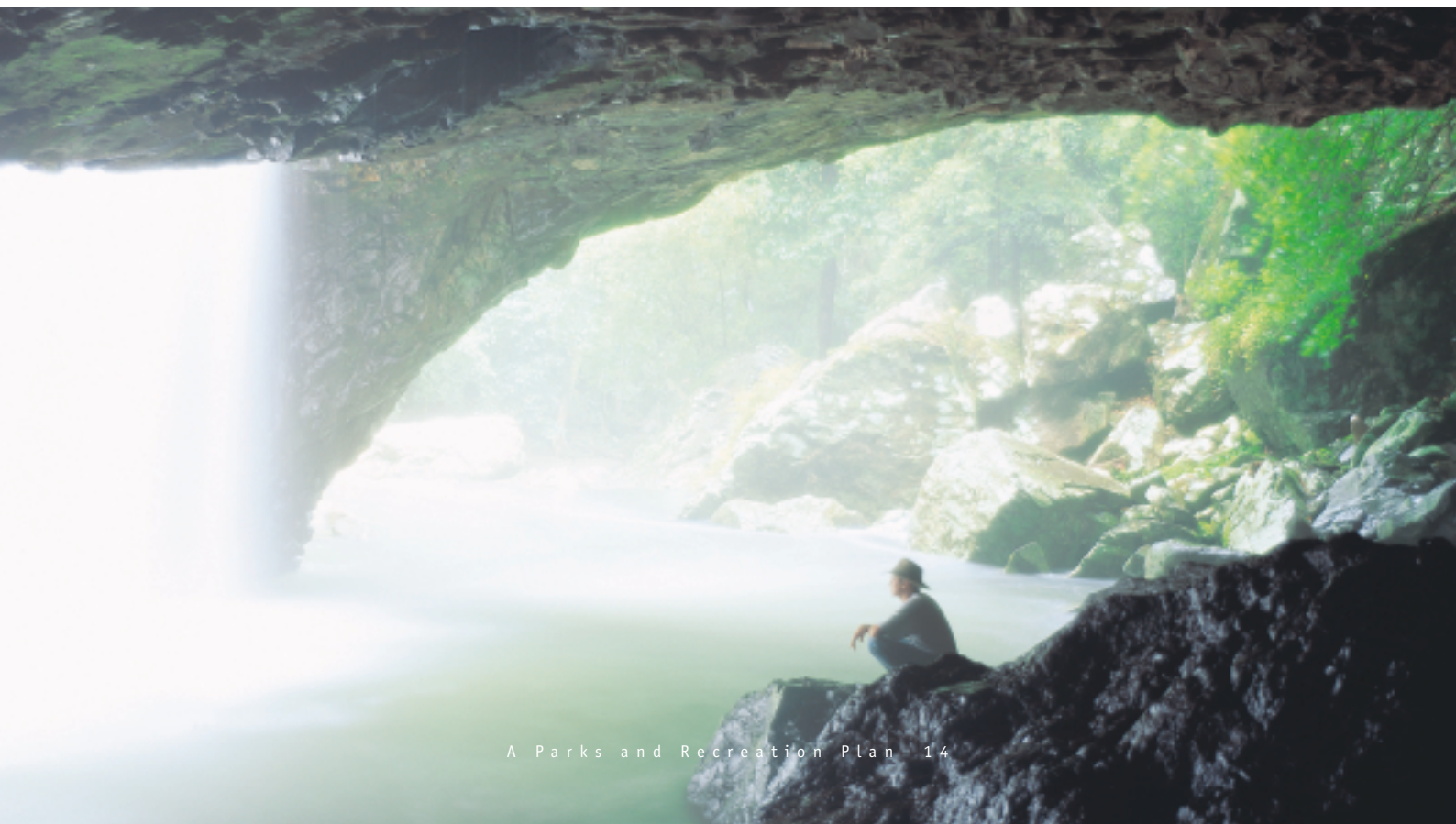
- › Improve communication between field staff engaged in park maintenance and all relevant Council purchasers.
- › Develop recognition schemes to acknowledge high levels of performance by Council staff engaged in park maintenance.
- › Refine benchmarking and review costs associated with the management of the City's parks and recreation assets.
- › Develop strategic asset management plans for all key assets within parks.
- › Continue to seek funding to support improvements to IT systems, enabling improved customer service through enhanced reporting, aligned databases and other tools.

7. Build community cohesion, participation and ownership of parks through more localised events and activities in our parks.

- › Develop and promote a program of minor events in our parks (eg outdoor cinema, concerts, art shows, cultural diversity, food and other festivals) that cater for the diverse interests of the community.
- › Enhance design and ensure adequate infrastructure in appropriate parks for holding events (eg lighting, power, temporary stages).
- › Seek partnerships and sponsorship with the private sector to facilitate a range of minor events.
- › Ensure opportunities are available for the disadvantaged and disabled to participate in events and activities in parks.
- › Secure adequate staff resources to support enhanced community and visitor involvement in our parks.

8. Enhance the important role the City's parks and recreational assets play in attracting tourism and serving the local community.

- › Reclaim further beachfront land to better protect our coastal strip and increase areas available for recreation.
- › Recognise, plan and continue to develop recreational assets within our popular parks to cater for the needs of day-tripper tourists.
- › Increase the carrying capacity of our highly utilised park areas (foreshores and regional parks) through capital development and enhanced management.
- › Upgrade and develop high quality infrastructure to enhance parks values in prominent foreshore and regional parks.
- › Recognise, plan and cater for the different needs of domestic and international tourists within our popular parks.
- › Create a mechanism for acknowledging the benefit realised through parkland provision to the tourist economy.
- › Enhance collaboration between Parks and Recreational Services Branch, and the Tourism Branch, the Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism and the centre for Coastal Management through integrated planning and improved consultation.





our natural gift

The Gold Coast will be a place where our community actively cares for the City's natural treasures and recognises and values the eco-system benefits they provide such as keeping our water and air clean.

By 2020 the Gold Coast will have a major eco tourism industry. Fundamental to this is that the visitors to our natural areas and their impacts are managed in ways that protects the City's wealth of biodiversity assets for future generations.

1. Manage our natural areas for current and future generations to protect bio-diversity and provide recreational opportunities.
 - › Continue the acquisition of areas high in conservation value.
 - › Better manage ecologically sensitive areas.
 - › Ensure the management of natural areas minimises impacts on bio-diversity.
 - › Develop a strategic approach to managing pests based on principles of triage.
 - › In partnership with Queensland Fire and Rescue and the Fire and Biodiversity Consortium develop and implement a communication strategy to positively influence community views on bushfire management and associated issues of biodiversity.
 - › Manage fires based on principles of life and property protection through the identification of property protection zones.
 - › Manage property protection zones for safety first and ecological values as a second order of priority.
 - › Develop appropriate policies and procedures to effectively administer the use of natural areas by commercial operators.
2. Promote the benefits of our natural assets to the community.
 - › Seek to acquire lands and provide facilities for high impact activities in areas of low biodiversity value.
 - › Develop suites of signage to identify natural areas, direct appropriate behaviour in those areas and provide interpretative and educational information on the values of those areas.
 - › Continue to liaise and develop partnerships with State and Federal Government agencies to optimise ecotourism outcomes while protecting bio-diversity.
 - › Develop tracks and trails and formalise car-parking facilities to better manage the impacts of visitation and protect sensitive ecosystems.
 - › Facilitate the development of ecotourism visitor centres in wetland and rainforest ecosystems to showcase these important natural assets.
 - › Review internal best practice in Web sites and promotional literature promoting sustainable visitation to natural areas.
 - › Ensure that the appropriateness of proposed uses is determined through site-specific assessment and appropriate management regimes.

3. Continue to build information resources on our natural assets.

- › Work with the community and tourism agencies to share information and enhance our understanding of the natural areas.
- › Continue flora and fauna studies across the natural estate with a focus on edge areas, fire impacts and pests to inform appropriate management of specific areas.
- › Increase the number of rangers engaged to enhance the management of our natural areas.
- › Develop management plans for all Council owned natural areas.
- › Monitor and support studies and research into the impacts of visitation on the biodiversity in our natural areas.
- › Seek to involve traditional owners in the management planning of natural areas to improve our understanding of the ethno-biological aspects of management.
- › Monitor and support studies and research into the impacts of visitation on the bio-diversity in our natural areas.
- › Examine partnerships with Universities to research new approaches in sustainable eco-tourism and the management of our natural assets.

4. Enhance protection of bio-diversity on private property and areas outside Council's natural estate.

- › Align street tree planting, park planting and free plant giveaways to increase the usage of appropriate local native species.
- › Improve support for community activities including bush care, waterway care and dune care groups to facilitate increased community participation, appreciation of our natural assets and environmental outcomes.
- › Integrate with the proposed greenday festivals to be conducted throughout the City to enhance the community's appreciation of our natural environment and promote backyard bio-diversity in urban, semi-rural and rural areas.
- › Increase support and incentives for property owners to enter into conservation agreements.
- › Monitor the performance of property owners with conservation covenants attached to land titles to ensure the intent of the covenant is being honoured.
- › Encourage private landowners to take on some of the provision of active recreational pursuits on already cleared lands (eg Mountain Biking, horse riding and Trail Bikes).





acquiring land for new parks and recreation areas

The Gold Coast is continuing to grow rapidly with an extra 12-15,000 residents moving to the city each year. Council will be proactive in meeting the demands of such growth, as it wishes to ensure the new population is adequately serviced by quality local, district and city parks. It is critical also that the impacts of the new population do not excessively diminish the quality of park and recreational experiences for the existing population.

Council proposes to acquire significant parkland over the next 20 years to service the new population. This will occur primarily through the direct purchase of land or land contributions required from the developers of new residential areas and will also include increases to important foreshore parks through sand pumping and landscaping. The latter approach also brings the added benefit of increasing the "storm proofing" of foreshore areas and reducing erosion caused by major cyclone and storm surge events.

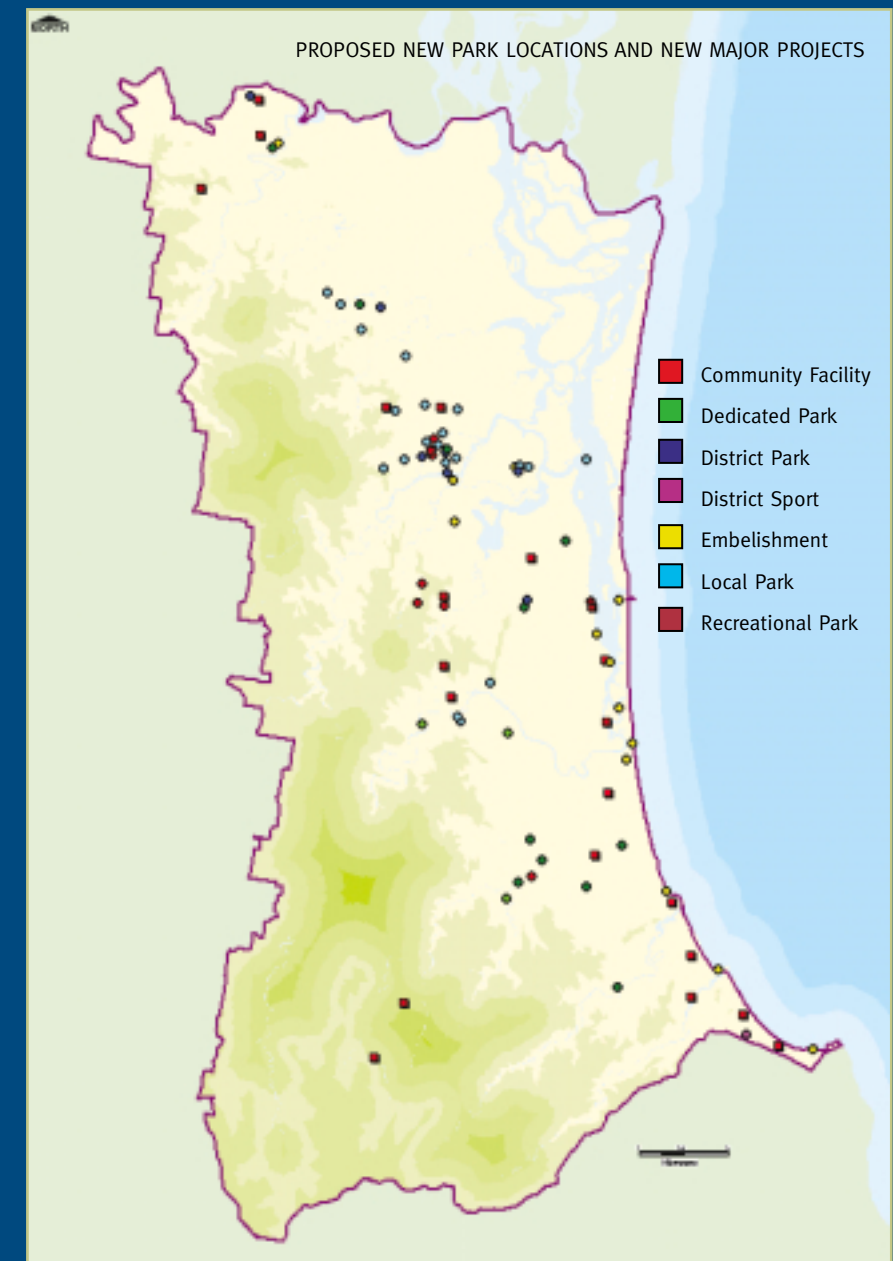
Council will continue to work with individual property owners to deliver appropriate balances between optimising population densities, developing highly liveable communities as well as protecting and rehabilitating our natural environment and important waterways.

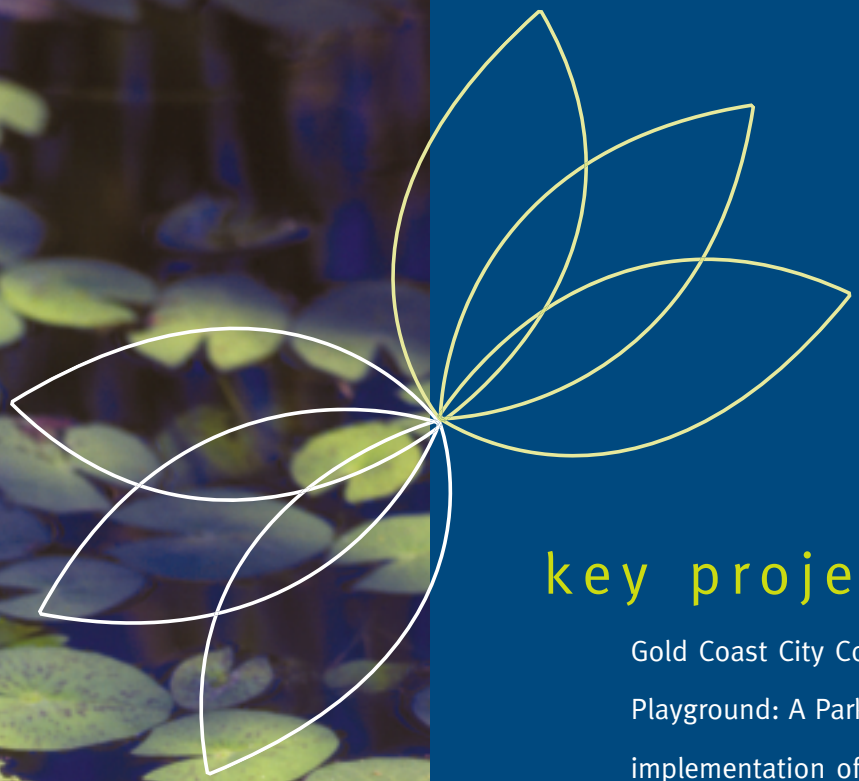
Council uses a desired standard of service of 5.11 hectares of recreation land per 1000 people to assist with the identification of the potential adequacy of parkland provision. This has increased from previous standards due to the need to increase connectivity and linkages within communities to further optimise both transport outcomes and to respond to changes in physical activity trends.

the shape of things to come

Importantly, the shape of new parks is likely to be increasingly linear with more conventionally shaped nodes distributed along the linear "spine". The intention of this is to ensure that the shape of new parks more appropriately responds to the importance of walking as the most popular form of exercise.

An integrated approach to minimising the negative impacts of motor vehicles on our lives is to facilitate safe off-road non-motorised transport. Consequently, it is also important that wherever possible, these linear parks connect local communities to schools, shops, sporting or larger recreational areas and other attractions.





key projects

Gold Coast City Council has proposed a number of ‘Key Projects’ as part of the Our Natural Playground: A Parks and Recreation Plan. ‘Key Projects’ represent the tangible ‘on the ground’ implementation of the Parks and Recreation Plan. If endorsed by Council and the community, these projects will be implemented by 2008 through a major parks program designed to ensure that the Gold Coast becomes admired across Australia for its park, natural area and recreation facilities network.

Major Citywide Greening Program

This program proposes the development of a more attractive and shaded city through significant street tree plantings, enhanced free plant giveaways and community events such as green festivals.

Over the next four years more than 50,000 trees are proposed to be planted to create attractive tree lined boulevards that will enhance the image of the City.

Plantings will also target “shade hungry” areas including bus stops, routes to schools and shops and important pedestrian and bicycle routes.

Tree species used will be attractive, provide shade, enhance the character of local areas, require lower levels of maintenance and contribute to the City’s biodiversity.

Council needs to continue to be cognisant of the impacts of the drought on any planting program. In general it is considered inappropriate to commence any major planting program while the City is in drought due to the difficulties and associated costs in supplying adequate water and maintaining appropriate soil moisture levels for young plants. Notwithstanding that, windows of planting opportunity may arise creating situations where some planting can proceed with the utilisation of tankers using

recycled water to provide adequate supplementary watering. Consequently this program is dependent on more favourable weather.

The city wide greening program will also include a series of localised greenday events throughout the City, which will provide environmental and sustainable living messages for all ages. Involving community groups (eg Rotary, Scouts, Bush Care), State Government agencies and other relevant Council areas (eg waste, water, catchment management) these events will be informative yet fun for all ages and help strengthen local communities.

It is proposed that Council may hold up to four “Green day” events each year, focusing on new and emerging communities as well as areas identified with lower tree cover in the first instances. Similar events in other local government areas give away 5,000 – 7,000 plants at each day in various plant packs such as plants for small gardens, plants to attract birds and butterflies and herb kits for unit balconies. Other than the herb kits, all plants supplied will be natives and of species suited to particular areas.

Coomera Sports and Leisure Park

Coomera Sports Park adjacent to Dreamworld at Coomera has been recently developed as a district sporting facility to accommodate the new population of the Coomera Growth Corridor. The development of the Coomera Sports and Leisure Park will see this well utilised sporting facility expanded and enhanced to become a regional sport and leisure precinct similar to other citywide leisure precincts such as Pizzey Park.

Proposed works at the Coomera Sports and Leisure Park include:

- › Land acquisition to expand the size of the existing park to approximately 44 hectares
- › Developing new day and night sporting facilities
- › Establishing a district parkland including a major playground, BBQ's and picnic shelters
- › Shared use pathways linking the entire site to provide opportunities for informal recreational use
- › Community common to facilitate outdoor events
- › Rehabilitation of natural areas and development of natural trails

Eagleby Wetlands and Parklands

Working in close partnership with the community and the State Government, Gold Coast City Council has recently completed a concept plan for the development of the Eagleby Wetlands. The implementation of this concept plan will see the enhancement of the wetlands and adjoining Oliver's Sports Complex developed to provide access, recreational, eco-tourism and educational experiences at this regionally significant site. This project, along with the current redevelopment of the Logan River Parklands, will also ensure that the community has ongoing access to our important Logan and Albert Rivers.

Proposed works in relation to the Eagleby Wetlands and Parklands consist of:

- › Rehabilitation of the Eagleby Wetlands
- › Boardwalks and pathways
- › Bird hides and observation towers
- › Interpretation signage
- › Improved entry access
- › Development of further playing fields
- › Park furnishings

Runaway Bay Sports Park

The recent development of the Runaway Bay Sports Super Centre and other sporting facilities has converted Runaway Bay into an important sporting centre for the Gold Coast. The proposed Sports Park will enhance this existing hub of sporting facilities through the development of sporting fields on the previous Runaway Bay landfill site. This will see an additional 16 hectares of sporting facilities made available for our future sporting enthusiasts.

The proposed Runaway Bay Sports Park will consist of:

- › Luke Harrop High Performance Cycle Circuit
- › Sporting fields
- › Public toilets and change rooms
- › Clubhouse
- › Car parking facilities
- › Expansion of tennis facilities
- › Landscaping



Redevelopment of Pizzey Park

Pizzey Park is an open space precinct of some 60 hectares - a major portion of the area is a former landfill. Today the site functions as a multi-use sports and recreational park at district and regional level. The park is regarded as important green space offering a diverse range of activities associated with sporting facilities and playing fields, open parkland, lake areas, natural vegetation and a plantation pine forest.

A Masterplan has been developed for the site to address issues of fragmentation and circulation in addition to the need to maximise recreational opportunities for a growing population catchment. The Masterplan acknowledges that users travel from as far as Maudsland and Labrador in the north, Numinbah Valley and Lower Beechmont to the west, and south to the Queensland-NSW border.

Council has the opportunity to progress the key recommendations of the Masterplan that will:

- › Enhance vehicle and pedestrian circulation into and throughout the park;
- › Protect natural and remnant forest areas;
- › Provide appropriate streetscaping and identity to the site;
- › Maximise active and passive recreational opportunities; and
- › Remove existing conflict and safety concerns from the park

The creation of defined recreational areas and structured access and linkage for the park will ensure that the whole community is catered for while its visual and natural amenity is maintained. The project will also ensure this regional facility is capable of servicing the ongoing needs of an increasing population and will contribute to the City's biodiversity.

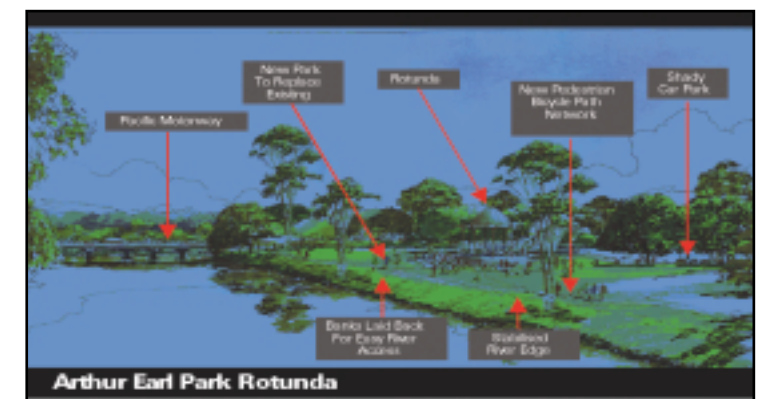


Nerang River Parklands

The Nerang River Parklands are a collection of riverside parks located on the perimeter of the Nerang central business district. The development of these parklands will meet the growing demands for the greater communities of Nerang providing them with open space for informal passive recreational pursuits.

The parklands have over a kilometre of foreshore fronting the Nerang River, which provides a key connection for the local community and travelling public to the Gold Coast's marine environments. With investment into this parkland and the adjoining corridor open spaces, increased numbers of local people will arrive as cyclists and pedestrians with the Parklands being the key destination for local recreational journeys. Planning and acquisition of land will continue to further develop and enhance existing linkages and create attractive, safe, off-road pedestrian and bikeway routes.

This increased demand will also require various treatments such as pathways and site hardening to protect the park from expected high levels of visitation. The more vulnerable mangrove communities and riverbanks will also need treatments to protect and enhance the area's appeal.



Palm Beach/Currumbin Creek Parklands

The Palm Beach/Currumbin Creek Parklands are a collection of foreshore parks that front ocean, creek and estuarine environments. This diverse landscape provides for an array of passive land and water-based recreational opportunities for residents, day-visitors and tourists.

The outdoor recreational pursuits envisaged for this site include (but are not limited to) walking, nature study, cycling, fishing, swimming, surfing, paddle sports, picnicking, children's play and other youth friendly activities. Opportunities also exist for participation in environmental programs (eg. revegetation activities).

There are opportunities to develop activities to celebrate connections with the marine environment (a wet play area). The formal playgrounds near the carpark contrast with the non-urban bushland park experiences available within Tarraborra Reserve and along the sand spit. There are sheltered swimming areas accessible from these parklands.

Necessary upgrades include removal of bowling greens and buildings from foreshores, new active and passive play areas including activities focusing on connections with marine environments, improved carpark layout returning foreshore space to public use, stage area and viewing mounds.

An existing building also provides opportunity for indoor health and leisure opportunities and perhaps dining experiences to complement the community's visit to the site.

The parklands are also earmarked for their potential to site a regional playground.

This exciting project will provide an alternative 'still-water, family destination and reduce demand on the City's existing foreshore parks and beaches in the face of a growing population.



Coolangatta Oceanway

The foreshores of Coolangatta face north and provide a unique coastal experience for Gold Coast City. They contrast with the northern beaches by providing more sheltered and relaxed coastal energy environments. The completion of the Southern Points Promenade project between 2000 and 2002 has demonstrated the capacity for foreshores to lead an urban renewal cycle that has promoted a new pride in property along southern beaches. Coolangatta is the heart of the southern foreshores and the Oceanway Corridor needs to celebrate the Southern Points CBD as it passes along the Coolangatta foreshore.

Other areas either side of this location have recently been upgraded via the Southern Points Promenade project, and has highlighted the need for an upgrade in this well used area.

Proposed works in relation to the Coolangatta Oceanway consist of:

- › New dual use wide pathway
- › Restoration of the native dune vegetation
- › Reallocation of car parking spaces
- › Refurbishment of existing public amenities
- › New barbeque facilities
- › Park tree plantings
- › Seating along pathway
- › Pathway lighting
- › Upgrade of park facilities
- › Improved beach access tracks
- › New lighting along pathway



Burleigh to Miami Parklands and Oceanway

Miami and Burleigh are key emerging lifestyle communities located along the central beaches. Recreational activities involving moving along the unique foreshores of the area are highly valued by residents and visitors staying in nearby areas. It is important that the quality of infrastructure continues to be improved so these foreshore parklands can retain their character and continue to support a coastal village atmosphere as visitor and residential numbers grow. Without proper investment into these foreshores increasing usage pressure and congestion will degrade experiences.

The Burleigh to Miami Parklands and Oceanway has previously been designed with the close involvement of the local community. It includes a long open foreshore park and the stunning natural beauty of Burleigh and South Nobby Headlands. Locals and tourists use this foreshore area very intensively with this project aiming to revitalise the area while ensuring its capacity is increased.

Proposed works in relation to the Burleigh to Miami Parklands and Oceanway consist of:

- › New dual use wide pathway
- › Restoration of the native dune vegetation
- › Reallocation of car parking spaces
- › New viewing decks
- › New toilet facilities
- › Refurbishment of existing public amenities
- › New barbeque facilities
- › Park tree plantings



Suntown Parklands Stage 1

Similar to other major landfill sites nearing completion of their lifecycle, this project aims to utilise an expansive area of open space to provide ongoing recreational opportunities to meet growing community demands. In recent years there has been significant residential development close to the landfill site. This program will see necessary active and passive areas developed to meet the needs of the surrounding community. Stage 1 will see passive parkland created.

Proposed works to include:

- › Dual pathways for pedestrian and bicycle traffic linking 15 hectares of parkland
- › Playgrounds
- › Carparks
- › Seating
- › BBQ and picnic areas
- › Significant tree planting

The project will provide an attractive and shaded setting with selected plant species based on their ability to provide adequate shade, require lower levels of maintenance, and contribute to the biodiversity of the area.

Future staged development will complement the passive open space by creating dedicated playing fields and associated infrastructure. This significant investment will provide a new and diverse park that will enhance the character of the local area and become a popular destination for the wider community.



Parkland Development Carrara

This proposed project would see a regional playground established in partnership with a local residential property development at Emerald Lakes. Servicing the growing central residential community of the Gold Coast, this proposed parkland will provide a wide variety of high quality and innovative parkland experiences for the whole family.

Parkland development at Carrara is proposed to consist of:

- › Regional Playground
- › Shade tree plantings
- › Picnic facilities
- › Public amenities
- › Pathways and car parking to provide ease of access



Surfers Central Riverwalk

A key outcome identified by the traffic studies for the Heart of the City is the need to encourage increased pedestrian and bicycle journeys around the City's heart. The Surfers Central Riverwalk vision is to create a waterfront pedestrian corridor free from vehicular traffic that will encourage Surfers Paradise residents and visitors to make longer and more frequent pedestrian journeys.

The central section of the Surfers Riverwalk will connect from the Surfers Intercity bus station along the Nerang Riverfront to Budds Beach.

With an increasing emphasis on this riverfront for residents and visitors, through new residential development and commercial cruise boat operations, it is essential to provide a suitable walking and cycling route in this locality. The current pathway in this area is generally in poor repair or incomplete.

This project will link a number of public boardwalk sections already constructed on adjacent highrise developments to create an integrated Riverwalk facility.



Foreshore Works - Narrowneck and McIntosh Island

Narrowneck is located at a critical landscape point in the fabric of our City's urban geography. The Nerang River comes very close to the ocean at this point separating Main Beach from Surfers Paradise along a narrow spit of sand. Narrowneck beach frontage itself is one of the few gaps in the coastal dunes and buildings allowing people vistas of our coastline when travelling at street level. The existing infrastructure needs to be upgraded so that Narrowneck Foreshore can become the active face for the McIntosh Island regional parkland and provide land support for marine activities occurring at the artificial reef. Development of this area will also provide recreational opportunities between Main Beach and Surfers high-rises and support a major pedestrian transport node within the Indy Precinct.

One of the major goals of this project is to reduce the flow of vehicular traffic and encourage people to walk. To make this true, the northern end of The Spit will need to link through Narrowneck to the population centre at Surfers Paradise. The area from the Sheraton Mirage Hotel to the Surf Life Saving Club at Main Beach requires a new pathway to be constructed. The final link is then to build a pathway along the dunes linking the surf club to the existing path at Narrowneck and further south to Surfers Paradise.

Proposed works in relation to foreshore works – Narrowneck consist of:

- › New foreshore pathways linking population centres to natural assets such as the Federation Walk
- › Relocation of existing car parks to make best use of scarce foreshore land
- › Upgrade of park facilities



Foreshore Works Biggera Waters

The foreshores of Labrador and Biggera Waters are supporting a newly emerging coastal lifestyle area. Many people are now targeting properties within walking and cycling distance of these foreshores as a key international lifestyle destination. The numbers of people walking and cycling along these foreshores has grown considerably over recent years and existing infrastructure is now struggling to cope. The Broadwater beaches have the potential to improve the quality of tourism and lifestyle services that they support. For this to occur it is critical that proper investment is made into the foreshore infrastructure at Labrador and Biggera Waters.

Supporting this strategy has been the recently completed pilot project to widen a section of this foreshore along Marine Parade, Labrador. These works involved dredging to establish a wider sustainable riparian buffer zone along a previously vertical seawall area. The new riparian buffer allowed the construction of a four metre shared use foreshore way. This project has been very popular with residents and visitors, and is proposed to be extended further south to link up with Harley Park at Labrador.

Proposed works in relation to this project consist of:

- › Widening existing foreshore
- › New wide, shared pathway
- › New dune plantings
- › Beach showers
- › Park furnishings
- › Shade tree plantings



Sports Field Lighting Upgrades

Projected population growth will place an increased requirement to have more sports facilities available for competition. In many locations it is difficult and expensive to establish new fields and it is seen as more cost effective to light the fields to higher levels of illumination to meet Australian Standards for night competition.

The selection and prioritisation of facilities is to be based on an assessment of a number of factors including:

- › The growth in demand from various sports
- › The location and quality of existing facilities
- › The costs to upgrade or install lights
- › The numbers of users that will benefit
- › The degree of body contact
- › Criticality of visibility
- › The number of users per unit of capital invested and maintenance costs
- › Potential impacts on residential amenity
- › Potential to attract a higher level of sport to the City with the minor or major upgrade of facilities
- › Capacity of existing power supply to meet needs of upgraded lighting



Each site has different requirements and an audit of lighting reveals that the range of works will vary from site to site and include the following types of work:

- › Electrical repairs
- › Additional lights on existing poles
- › Relocating existing lights and poles
- › New lights and poles
- › Improved glare protection

The long-term maintenance and operating costs are an important consideration with factors such as electricity consumption and the interchangeability of lighting components from various manufacturers driving long-term costs, and consequently built into design specifications.

Initial estimates reveal that total costs of lighting all existing facilities to Australian Standards will cost in the vicinity of \$6.5m.

To achieve this total program Council will be relying on significant commitments from the State Government through grants with matching dollar contributions as well as clubs seeking grants and making contributions themselves.

Parkland Redevelopments Broadbeach

The development of the new Convention Centre and population growth around Broadbeach require improvements to existing parkland to both enhance the City's image as presented to tourists and cater for the need to "carry" an increased population.

Importantly it is envisaged that providing safe, well-lit, shady, attractive pedestrian routes will encourage more residents and visitors to walk to major attractors such as Pacific Fair, Jupiters Casino, the Convention Centre and local parkland and shops.

The Cascade Gardens parkland offers a different experience from foreshore parks and needs significant embellishment to improve its capacity to cater for increasing visitation without lessening the quality of the experience for existing residents.

Embellishments to the park will include:

- › Enhanced visitor facilities
- › Improved signage
- › Better parking
- › Enhanced pedestrian circulation
- › Improved lighting
- › More seating
- › Improved irrigation using reclaimed water
- › Landscaping

Kurrawa and Pratten Parks along the foreshore of Broadbeach are among the most popular in the City. However, regular events and large numbers of visitors are impacting significantly on this important open space. This population pressure and the consequent impacts will increase as Broadbeach continues to grow. Large numbers of visitors will move from the Convention Centre to these parks and for many this will be their primary view of the Gold Coast influencing future decisions on return trips. Works within these parks will include replacement and renovation of facilities (eg BBQ's, shelters) a purpose built events staging area, new public toilets, significant upgrade to the playground and / or location of another playground towards the southern end of the parklands. Other works may include the replacement or upgrading of fitness trail equipment, review of existing fence around the recycled water dam, irrigation system replacement and integrated artwork.



Development of Regional Playgrounds Across the City

Research indicates that a significant number of visitors to our parks are children and families, or groups accompanied by children. The traditional playground in local parks no longer adequately caters for the needs of children. Observations indicate that children spend more time in play, and play for longer when the location provides a diversity of experiences for them. This proposal seeks to establish a number of major playgrounds at various locations throughout the City.

These new playgrounds will incorporate best practice and the following principles will apply:

- › A variety of elements to accommodate a number of play forms (active to focused), and a wide range of developmental skills.
- › Linkage of the elements and flow between them to increase options for use.
- › Each element can be used in several ways, altering as the skill level develops.
- › Spatial diversity to accommodate children playing alone, and in small, large and family groups.
- › Balance between parental supervision and independent play.
- › Safety without sacrificing play.
- › Use of art to combine imaginative and physical play.
- › Shapes, varied textual surfaces, colour and planting, to add layers of sensory detail and an exciting complexity.
- › Strong ties with the local community.
- › Linkages between play elements and other park facilities and features.
- › Good access and surveillance.
- › Integration of a range of elements, including landscaping, shade, and under-surfacing, to achieve visual appeal.

These playgrounds are of a larger scale and cater for higher visitor numbers than local playgrounds. Regional playgrounds should only be located in parks where the supporting infrastructure (car parking, picnic nodes, toilets) is sufficient for this level of use.

It is proposed that these regional playgrounds should:

- › Serve an intended catchment of 20 km from the park.
- › Ideally be located close to public transport.
- › Contain play elements suitable for at least three age groups, including 10 years and over.
- › Be designed by a team including a landscape architect, artist and a person with expertise in children's play.
- › Involve the community in the design process.
- › Provide for some degree of access by children with a disability.



Rehabilitation and Open Space Works at The Spit

The Spit is a unique area of coastal dunes and provides a significant area of public open space as a contrast to the urban high-rise areas further south. Local community groups have identified and promoted the Spit's potential to become a key environmental asset for the Gold Coast. The Spit also has opportunities for significant formal and informal public open space outcomes. There is also scope to develop major facilities on the Spit that can alleviate congestion of other areas.

While there have been a range of community-led initiatives aimed at enhancing the natural environment of The Spit, major government funding is required to see the community's vision for this area realised.

This project aims to provide a national park standard experience that will be a considerable contrast to the feel of other major foreshores of the City, but this will require the support of the State Government to proceed. The project will include significant revegetation works along a new pathway at the northern end of The Spit, providing safer public access to the walkways and beaches in a sustainable manner.

Capital works required to create this experience will include:

- › Viewing decks
- › Boardwalks for walking and cycling
- › Major vegetation restoration
- › Revamp of existing car parks
- › Information signs
- › Vehicle crossing points
- › Pathway lighting



Logan River Parklands

The Logan River Parklands are a collection of future riverside parks. The parks are to be developed to provide the community and visitors to the northern areas of the Gold Coast an open space resource with the potential to support lake, river and land based passive recreation.

While local parks and district sport developments reasonably service the area, a large regional park is required to meet the growing demands of the community.

Objectives:

- › To provide a regional open space facility for the northern areas of the City of the Gold Coast.
- › To connect communities and open space sites throughout the region (including linking Gold Coast and Logan) and to increase the visibility of the Eagleby and Beenleigh Communities.
- › To develop a community outdoor recreation facility focused around water, nature and people.
- › To provide a gateway experience / setting for visitors and tourists to the Gold Coast.

The parklands are aligned with Council's corporate goals to improve community health and individual well-being and create and maintain an accurate, positive and consistent image of Gold Coast City.

The project proposes to develop a diversity of recreational opportunities (eg. picnicking, nature study, cycling, walking, family gatherings, fishing, water activities) all of which will be non-commercial and therefore attractive to the demographics of the region.





Major Redevelopment of Southport Foreshore

Southport is a major emerging lifestyle and business community and the Broadwater Parklands are one of the City's most popular recreation areas. For many visitors to the Gold Coast this parkland represents a major entry point to the "Heart of the City" and significant redevelopment is required to ensure these parklands are recognised as world class.

Similar to other very successful major foreshore redevelopments in Townsville, Cairns and the Whitsundays, this project is aimed at upgrading access along the Broadwater Foreshores of Southport and making this foreshore area a focal point for the City. At present previously very narrow and uneven existing footpaths within the Parklands are being upgraded to provide a continuous foreshore experience. By continuing this redevelopment of existing park facilities and integrating these with a foreshore pedestrian corridor this project will encourage walking as a transport alternative and form of recreation for the Southport community. The creation of new, diverse and state-of-the-art parklands will also ensure that Southport becomes a key destination for residents and visitors alike.

Current and proposed works in relation to the Redevelopment of Southport Foreshores consist of:

- › New dual use wide pathways
- › Restoration of the native dune vegetation
- › Improved beach access tracks
- › New lighting along pathways and other areas
- › Potential development of the Southport Pier
- › Improved linkages from the Southport Mall and the foreshores
- › Park furnishings
- › Timber decks
- › Potential undergrounding of car parking
- › Significant Regional Playground including major wet play areas

The vision for the Southport Foreshores will also include the further planning and development of an Arts and Cultural Hub adjacent to the Bathing Pavillion. This area will offer a range of opportunities from arts and cultural exhibitions and education to artistic reflection and contemplation.



Coomera River Parklands

Coomera is one of the fastest growing areas in Australia with a large number of development applications recently received by Council. Demand for increased quality passive recreation parkland will increase as these applications translate into construction activities. The Coomera River Parklands are an important, unique collection of riverfront parklands offering significant and diverse recreational opportunities for residents in the northern part of the City. Planning and acquisition of land will continue to further develop and enhance existing linkages and create attractive, safe, off-road pedestrian and bikeway routes.

The acquisition and staged development of parkland along the Coomera River is important because recent surveys have indicated the higher value residents place on waterfront parkland. It is envisaged that the acquisition of the site near Beattie Road will provide the basis for a high quality regionally significant waterfront park, with initial stages forming the foundation for future more significant works across a network of waterfront parklands. **Stage one will include:**

- › Master planning
- › Carparking
- › Toilets/amenities construction
- › Tree planting and landscaping
- › BBQ's and Shelters
- › Restoration of waterway vegetation
- › Boat ramp construction

Future stages will include higher levels of embellishment and increases in the carrying capacity of the land.

Hinterland Regional Park

The 58-hectare Hinterland Regional Park located in Mudgeeraba will be a quality facility of regional significance. It will provide a range of low key and nature based recreation, education and interpretive opportunities in a range of settings, from semi rural to natural.

The park has strong community support with an established Park Care group. Valued for its peace and quiet, the master plan prepared to guide its development reflects this highly regarded value, but still provides a facility to attract the local community and visitors alike to explore the great outdoors.

The park proposes to support a range of activities including nature study, revegetation programs, walking, and cultural appreciation. Prominent features are to include a community forest, open common, and a picnic area all linked with an extensive trail/pathway network.



Eco Tourism Centre

Eco tourism represents a virtually untapped opportunity to increase the understanding of the value of the Gold Coast's unique natural areas for residents and tourists. The potential is significant to increase both the number of tourists visiting the Gold Coast as well as the length of stay of those tourists.

Fundamental to facilitating this is to effectively provide for and manage visitors to our natural areas. An Eco Tourism Visitor Centre located in one of our important natural areas (wetland or rainforest) will provide a gateway to the area in which it is located.

Appropriate interpretive information and staffing will facilitate an enriched experience and enhanced appreciation of our unique natural assets. Importantly the centre will contain a range of displays using best practice exhibit techniques as well as guided walks and information sessions for visitors including schools. The centre may also provide a base for research into biodiversity protection by hosting postgraduate students and other researchers

Such facilities will also allow the impacts of visitors to be better managed to protect sensitive sites that contain rare and threatened plants and animals. It is envisaged that such facilities will contain adequate parking for cars and buses, usual visitor amenities including toilets, picnic facilities, links to walking trails to suit varying levels of fitness and may offer café and kiosk facilities.



Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens: Rosser Park

Gold Coast City Council has determined that a Regional Botanic Gardens is to be developed as an integral component of existing and proposed facilities within the city that preserve and enhance the environment, botany, horticulture and lifestyle in the region.

The Master Planning process for the Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens has responded to community concerns and expectations, and the specific characteristics of the site, and its physical, functional and environmental relationships within the region.

The resultant planning concept provides a firm basis on which to progressively develop a botanic facility related to the development, display and interpretation of the region's flora.

The proposed Gold Coast Regional Botanic Gardens at Rosser Park has been planned to:

- › Create a specialised scientific and educational facility primarily related to conservation of the gene pool of rare and endangered species of the region;
- › Complement, but not attempt to recreate, the botanic and ecological elements of the existing natural environments, parks and open spaces of the region;
- › Identify, research and develop the environmental and commercial values of selected regional flora for use in conservation, for rehabilitation and for ornamental horticulture; and
- › Primarily, to retain the inherently pleasant and attractive surroundings that encourages passive recreation and relaxation.



Public Conveniences Renovation Program

Council provides more than 200 toilet amenities across the City, some of which are reaching their end of useful life and require replacing. Many others require renovations to provide access for residents or visitors with a disability.

Combined with an emphasis on improving community safety, many toilets are also in need of modifications to meet the fundamental principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). The inadequacies of old designs, failing buildings and poor presentation are a regular source of criticism and complaint from the wider community.

As a major tourist destination and events venue, it is important such facilities are safe, functional and accessible, whether they exist on foreshore parks, district sporting grounds or major regional parks.

Comprehensive audits, which will contribute to a proposed Toilet Plan, are yet to be completed. However, a random visual observation reveals a number of toilets need removing, replacing or major renovation.

It is proposed Council implement a rolling program of renovations to improve its provision of public amenities. An annual budget of \$800,000 over the next 4 years is proposed, as it is considered an essential resource required to ensure the current network of toilets do not diminish the City's community safety objectives, tarnish its city image, or worse, render its City's assets liable.

The old



The new



Strategic Capital Asset Management

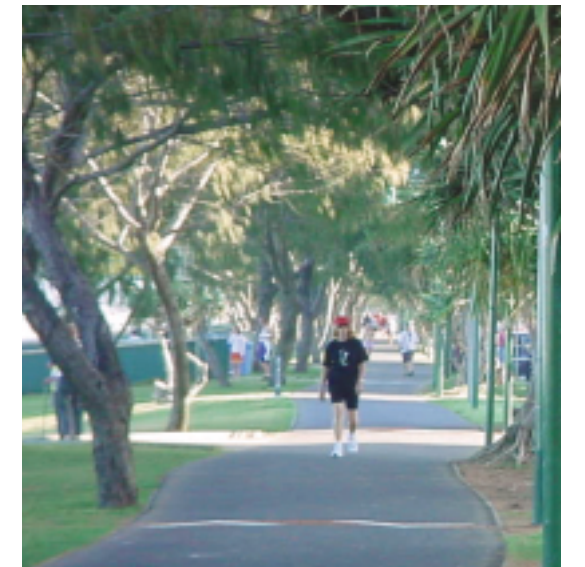
Council has allocated over \$1m in the 2003-04 financial year towards the renovation and replacement of a range of park assets with a replacement value of over \$50m. If it is assumed that funding continues at that rate, Council will allocate \$20m to the planning, refurbishment, replacement and renovation of key park assets including:

- › Carparks and park roads
- › Seats
- › Picnic Shelters
- › BBQs
- › Power poles and electrical equipment
- › Bubblers and taps

Other important park assets such as toilets, irrigation systems, grass and trees are subject to specific budget allocations.

Decisions on how much and where to allocate funds must be made on the basis of need, with that being informed by a range of issues such as:

- › Strategic and corporate goals
- › General information on the assets (inc. age, size, material, location, relationship with other assets) etc and how that data is maintained
- › Condition assessments of the various assets
- › Information on current and future demand
- › Risk assessments
- › Optimal intervention periods
- › Legislative requirements
- › Australian Standards
- › Availability of non asset solutions
- › Heritage or cultural values
- › Renewal standards
- › Asset disposal issues
- › Management of planned and reactive maintenance



Management of Our Natural Areas

This plan proposes a comprehensive approach to the management of the City's natural areas and significant and ongoing acquisition of lands of high conservation significance.

Some important initiatives include:

- › Strategic pest management (especially weeds) with the funding allocation proposed to rise to \$1m per year over the next 10 years
- › Fire management with an expectation that Council will need to spend \$300k a year for the next 4 years on fire management infrastructure to protect life and property then allocate adequate funding to the maintenance of that infrastructure and fuel reduction activities in property protection zones
- › It is expected as more residents and visitors discover the wealth of magnificent natural areas that the requirement for rangers will increase considerably. It is anticipated that over the next 5 years Council will need to have an additional 10 rangers informing, educating and influencing the behaviour of park visitors, weed control programs and fire management inappropriate use by visitors
- › Council recognises that the community plays an important role in biodiversity, protection and environmental rehabilitation. Gradually, increases in funding for groups such as Dune and Bush Care over the next 10 years to \$400k a year) should allow up to 100 groups to be appropriately supported.



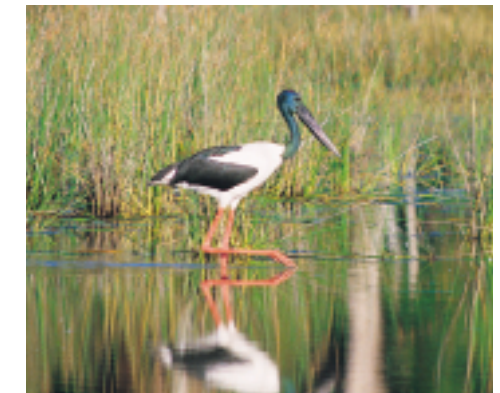
- › The community benefits from the decision by some private landowners to enter into Conservation Agreements, Land for Wildlife Agreements and Conservation Covenants. This allows Council to assist with the preservation of important biodiversity values. It is proposed to provide increased monitoring and support for these property owners through rates relief and on site support.



Coombabah Lakelands Conservation Area

Coombabah Lakelands Conservation Area (CLCA) is located approximately ten kilometres northwest of Surfers Paradise, and encompasses over 1000 hectares of coastal wetlands. The CLCA represents one of the last remnants of coastal lowland vegetation present on the Gold Coast with a significant array of wildlife. It has been repeatedly identified as an area of ecological significance. Lake Coombabah is part of the Southern section of Moreton Bay Marine Park and is also a Ramsar (protected wetland) Site. The diversity and extent of the plant populations together with the interaction of marine, estuarine, wetland and terrestrial areas provides a wide range of environments for wildlife. This area is home to a number of rare and threatened wildlife species.

There are numerous walking tracks throughout the Conservation Area taking the visitor through a series of vegetation communities. There are three boardwalks within the park including a tranquil walk through a wet paperbark landscape and one taking in the views along the banks of the canal. The newly constructed mangrove boardwalk and bird hide allows the observer a birds-eye view of local mangrove wetland species and migratory shorebirds.



Proposed works in relation to Coombabah Lakelands Conservation Area consist of:

- › Implementation of nature-based educational and recreational opportunities, namely Walks and Talks and Kayaking programs
- › A holistic environmental and cultural education centre
- › Upgrade of the track system within the Conservation Area
- › Formalised picnic area with amenities
- › Viewing platform over the lake with a shelter and seating



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strategic plans from other cities

Shaping Brisbane's Open Space

Brisbane City Council

The Seventh Generation - The Strategic Vision of California State Parks

California State Parks

Parks and Recreation Strategic Master Plan

City of London, Canada

Parklands 21 Strategy – The future of Open Space in Adelaide

Government of South Australia

Growing Green – An environmental Sustainability Plan for the City of Melbourne's open space and recreational facilities

Melbourne

Parks 2020 Vision – Portland Parks and Recreation

Portland, Oregon

Strategic Plan Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation System

Santa Clara, California





The Value of a Park

“We all, at some time, search for
peace,
solitude,
contemplation,
inspiration,
physical and emotional release from
stress,
refreshment of the mind, body and
spirit,
positive thoughts and feelings,
creative expression,
true communication with the people
who are important to us,
a time to allow patience and
wisdom back into our thoughts,
the ability to see problems in
perspective,
a renewed love and zest for life.
All of these can be found anywhere,
At any time
But you greatly increase the chances
of finding them
when you are in a park.”

Peter Nicholls, Royal Australian Institute of Parks and Recreation
National Newsletter, Vol 21 No7, August 1997