

21.10 RECREATION AND LEISURE

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21.10-1 Overview

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Leisure encompasses a range of active and passive, social and health related activities which people undertake for pleasure and enjoyment, while recreation is generally associated with the more organised and active forms of leisure activity.

Boroondara has over 80 indoor and 60 outdoor sporting and recreation facilities and 670 hectares of open space. Of these, many such as Yarra Bend Park, Studley Park, Studley Park Boathouse, Maronoa Gardens, Hawthorn Town Hall and the Camberwell Civic Centre attract tourists and visitors from other parts of Melbourne.

Our larger parks and linear open space networks are among the City's greatest assets. These areas are expansive, with large multi-purpose areas of open space being found along the Yarra River, linear trails following the Yarra, Gardiners Creek and the Outer Circle Railway (Anniversary Trail) with the remaining open areas being distributed throughout the City. Many of these areas attract people from around the Melbourne metropolitan region, and in some cases even further afield.

Council has undertaken the improvement of the Anniversary Trail with the assistance of grants from Parks Victoria. Recommendations for priority improvements to the shared path system within the municipality are included in Council's draft "Bicycle Strategy" (1997), its "Open Space Policy" (1996) and the "Melbourne Parks and Waterways, Guide to Priorities for Open Space Planning" (1995).

Many of the education facilities within the City also have high standard recreation and leisure facilities. However, use of such facilities by the broader community is often limited.

The City of Boroondara has prepared its "Open Space Policy" (1996), "Leisure Facility Strategy" (1997) and "Arts and Culture Strategy" (1996) to provide direction to the provision of leisure and recreation services in the City.

The main findings of these studies indicate that the existing infrastructure provides an excellent basis on which to build the future provision of recreational and leisure services. The emphasis will be on improving existing facilities to accommodate greater use. One of the major opportunities within the leisure facilities area has been identified as the creation of a multi-functional indoor basketball/netball facility that is of a regional significance. With respect to the open space system, however, there are missing links (particularly along the waterways) and significant variations in the distribution, level, style and quality of open space provision across the municipality. Both the "Open Space Policy" and the "Leisure Facilities Strategy" recommend increased diversification of use of existing parkland and ongoing improvement of the trail system (with emphasis on the main, strategic cross-municipal links and riverside trails).

The area of recreation is one of change. There is a slow reduction in participation in competitive and traditional sports (such as lawn bowls and Australian Rules football), a greater demand for indoor facilities and higher quality outdoor playing surfaces (such as for basketball, netball and hockey). Facility provision is changing from single purpose to multipurpose with the need for more flexible designs. This increasing demand for purpose built facilities has implications in relation to siting and space requirements, multi-use options and amenity impacts. It is expected that many new facilities may have to be joint venture arrangements between private and public sectors and sports clubs.

The City has a long history of mounting and supporting a diverse range of events and festivals and hosts a large number and a wide range of artistic and cultural displays and performance, with increasing requirements for space both in quantity and quality.

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What are the main recreation and leisure issues?

Boroondara provides a wide range of high quality recreation and leisure opportunities to its residents. Measures need to be taken to promote many of these opportunities more broadly and to increase their use.

Appropriate means need to be identified to accommodate changing patterns in the use of and demand for many recreation and leisure facilities and to address any existing deficiencies.

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Objectives, strategies and implementation

Objectives

- To ensure the City provides a full range of high quality recreation and leisure facilities to its residents and other user groups.
- To ensure facilities are highly accessible to all user groups
- To develop the City's open space and recreation systems in a manner sensitive to the surrounding environment.

Strategies

- Retain and extend the total open space asset base in the City.
- Create a diversity of recreational and leisure opportunities throughout the City.
- Actively seek funding for improved or new open space or recreation facilities.
- Identify new or intensified recreational and leisure opportunities within the City.
- Provide the greatest degree of access to leisure and recreational facilities for all users.
- Minimise the impact of intensive recreational and leisure uses on residential and other sensitive uses.
- Protect and enhance sites of high natural environmental value.

Implementation

These strategies will be implemented by:

Policy and exercise of discretion

- Minimising the alienation of open space (by disposal, large built facilities or exclusive use) and, if it occurs, compensate for the loss by ensuring a high degree of public access to the development or the replacement of the open space elsewhere.
- Applying an Environmental Significance Overlay to facilitate coordinated development which improves facilities and recreational access along the Yarra River..
- Facilitating the provision of more facilities within selected open spaces, with the emphasis on passive and informal active opportunities.
- Encouraging increased use in parks identified for "intensified use" and "diversified use".
- Accommodating purpose-built recreational and leisure facilities for which there is a demonstrated demand, and in accordance with local area amenity and other criteria.

- Applying local policy (Public Open Space Contributions Policy at Clause 22.09) to impose fair and equitable subdivision levies to fund open space improvement in accordance with the requirements of the Subdivision Act, 1988.
- Encouraging major recreational and leisure facilities to locate in proximity to commercial/community centres/transport foci and/or major open spaces.
- Applying local policy (Discretionary Uses in Residential Areas Policy at Clause 22.04) to ensure new or intensified recreational and leisure uses in and near residential areas are operated, located and designed so that their impact on surrounding residential areas is limited.
- Ensuring that recreational activity nodes locate away from sensitive areas within sites of high natural environmental significance or have the access controlled.
- Ensuring that within open spaces, more intensive uses locate in less sensitive areas or have effective amelioration measures applied to reduce amenity impacts.

Zones and overlays

- Applying the Public Park and Recreation Zone to all existing open space.
- Applying Public Acquisition Overlays to extend the open space system and create a linked network across the City, with initial emphasis on the main metropolitan strategic links along the Yarra River.

Further strategic work

- Identifying further areas for acquisition for public open space.

Other actions

- Implementing Council policy (City of Boroondara Culture and Arts Policy).
- Seeking opportunities to accommodate cultural displays and performances, for which there is a demonstrated demand and in accordance with local area amenity and other criteria relevant to the locality.
- Using strategies and actions in Council's Open Space Policy and Leisure Facilities Strategy to support applications for grants for improvements to open space and to provide new recreational facilities.
- Preparing a Tourism Policy.
- Investigating appropriate private sector involvement in open space provision and development in accordance with local area amenity and other criteria. (with reference to the City of Boroondara Open Space Policy).
- Implementing local policy (City of Boroondara Open Space Policy and Bicycle Strategy) to improve the shared pathway system, with initial emphasis on the primary trails.
- Implementing local policy (City of Boroondara Open Space Policy and Leisure Facilities Strategy) to provide a diversity of settings, services and facilities which encourages use by traditionally low-user groups.
- Designing all recreation and leisure facilities to be accessible by the majority of users, including those with additional needs.

Reference documents

City of Boroondara Open Space Policy, 1996

City of Boroondara Leisure Facilities Strategy, 1997

City of Boroondara Culture and Arts Strategy, 1997

River Concept Plans:

- Lower Yarra - Punt Road to Dights Falls, 1986
- Middle Yarra - Dights Falls to Burke Road, 1990
- Middle Yarra - Burke Road to Watsons Creek, 1993

City of Boroondara Community Disability Access Policy, 1996

Melbourne Parks and Waterways, Guide to Priorities for Open Space Planning, 1995

City of Boroondara Bicycle Strategy (draft), 1997

Guide to Priorities for Melbourne Open Space Network, Parks Victoria, 1998

Study of Rowing and Non-recreational Boating Facilities on the Yarra River, City of Boroondara, 1998

Recreation and Leisure Framework Plan

21.3 Framework Plan - Recreation & Leisure

