



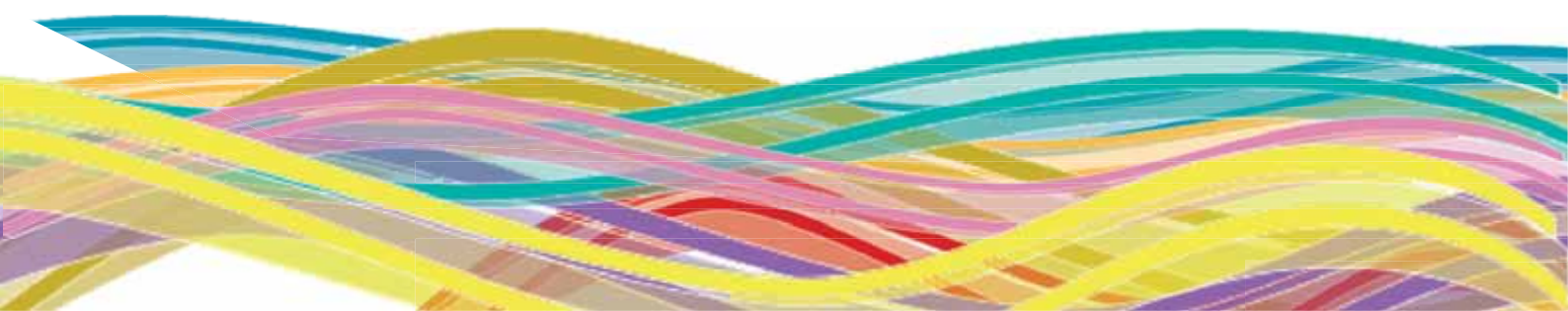
4. Lenses of open space

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This Plan considers open space through nine lenses. Each lens offers a focused perspective on current issues, offers specific approaches to enable the vision and strategic directions to be achieved. Further it suggests indicators that could be used to monitor progress.

The core values and expectations have been gathered from community consultation to date. They describe some of the community's aspirations for open space.

Lens	Core Value	Community Expectations	Community Service Level	
Biodiversity	Nature	Ecosystems are healthy and retained for the enjoyment of future generations	Enhancement of biodiversity throughout open space networks	Open Space Asset Management Plan
Connections	Connection	A well connected network of journeys and destinations	Enhance the shared path and commuter networks	
Culture	Interpretation	Variety of events, art forms and cultural interpretations to explore the landscape	Provide opportunities for performance, interpretation and community art	
Economy	Local	Local places to work, shop and do business	Attractive environments and settings for homes and businesses	
Leisure	Healthy	A variety of leisure and recreational opportunities	Integrate multiple forms of recreational activities across the city	
People	Well-being	Places are safe, inviting and inclusive and engender a sense of belonging	Provide opportunities for community hubs	
Play	Exploration	Places that are inclusive, interesting and close to home	Provide a variety of play experiences for all	
Sustainable	Equilibrium	A healthy environment supporting community and economy	Flexibility of spaces to adapt to different uses in a changing environment	
Water	Quality	Healthy waterways and management of storm events	Manage water in ways to improve its quality and system management	



'The exotic vegetation that replaces indigenous plant communities in urbanising regions disassociates us from the rhythms and diversity of the native landscape and a sense of the place; and we are the poorer because of it.'
Michael Hough, Professor of Landscape Architecture, York University, Canada.

"The Gardens For Wildlife assessment gave me the tools to integrate frog, bird and butterfly habitat into my already established garden"
Sande Muller, Knox resident

biodiversity lens

Biodiversity is an integral part of Knox's open spaces. Biodiversity means the diversity and variety of life forms in an area: the trees, plants, animals, micro-organisms and the ecosystems of which they are a part. Biodiversity is an important concept in open space planning.

Biodiversity contributes to our identity, our health and well-being, our natural places and systems. Biodiversity means different things in different kinds of places. Our creek corridors, hills, wetlands and bushland are complex ecosystems each with distinctive soils, trees, plants, animals, water, aspect and climate. Biodiversity needs to be protected and nurtured in open space areas as it is under continuing pressure from human activities. Our streets, parks, reserves and private spaces can all contribute to biodiversity.



Weed Whacking along Blind Creek
Billabong, Ross Boxshall and Glen
Bithell

The current situation

Knox's flora and fauna are increasingly under pressure, and there is the risk of local extinctions. Human activities – habitat loss, urban development, pollution and climate change – are all impacting on biodiversity. Knox City Council is working towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity for the enjoyment of future generations.

Knox is fortunate to have important areas of biological significance within our suburbs, streets, parks and backyards. The treed green and leafy backdrop of Mount Dandenong provides a 'borrowed' landscape that creates the perception that Knox has a lot of native vegetation, but in truth biodiversity is continuing to decline in Knox. What remains is increasingly precious and fragile, and our bushland reserves, creek corridors and open spaces are important refuges for flora and fauna.

Knox City Council is working to protect biodiversity across both public and private land. Some initiatives involve the community through programs such as Gardens for Wildlife and Biodiversity Buddies to focus on the roles, benefits and risks associated with our bushland. Other programs seek to manage and protect our bushland and increase the tree coverage in the municipality. These programs target cultural attitudes towards local native and introduced vegetation, and the perceptions of danger around dense shrubbery and canopy trees in relation to fire, snakes and other issues that concern the community.



Refer to disclaimer on page 5.

Legend

- Municipal boundary
- Railway
- Melbourne Water drainage
- Creek corridor flood zones
- Vegetation protection overlays
- Parks Vic
- Green Wedge
- Bushfire zones
- Melbourne Water retarding basins
- Sites of biological significance
- Gardens for Wildlife
- Friends Groups
- VicRoad road reserves

Knox's biodiversity lens

This map illustrates Knox's biodiversity network. It is made up of public and private land areas as plants and animals do not conform to these boundaries. The biodiversity system is made up of creek corridors, drainage lines, rare, protected and significant vegetation, road reserves, national parks, significant canopy cover, gardens for wildlife and kinder gardens for wildlife.



'Native vegetation or areas with indigenous tree cover occupy less than five percent of the municipality. But within this small fraction of Knox, some exciting discoveries were made.'
The Sites of Biological Significance, 2010

Community values and expectations

Appreciation:

Ecosystems are healthy and retained for the enjoyment of future generations.

Vision & goals

In all of Knox's open spaces, biodiversity will be a priority. Knox City Council will lead the protection and enhancement of our creek corridors, significant vegetation and ecosystems as custodian for future generations.

The community's aspirations to live within a green and leafy environment will be recognised and supported through celebrating our local biodiversity as a key aspect of Knox's identity.

Our goal is: To improve biodiversity in all open space areas and engage the community in its protection everywhere.

Here are the approaches that will guide the City of Knox for each strategic direction. Together all of these approaches will contribute to our vision and goals.

1. Strategic Direction: Create healthy creek corridors that people love

Approach:

Develop linear open space spines using the creek corridors to ensure that biodiversity is retained, enhanced and connected across all public open spaces.

New biodiversity links will be created along drainage corridors.

Build community appreciation of the importance of biodiversity through education, activities and interpretation focused in the creek corridors and locations that form links to these creek corridors.

2. Strategic Direction: Activate community hubs

Approach:

Use community hubs as an educational and awareness focus for biodiversity activities and the delivery of information.

Introduce new information technologies at community hubs. For example a camera that monitors rare birds nesting.



Friends group at Koolunga Reserve



Heany Park, Rowville a site of biological significance

3. Strategic Direction: Empower the community to take ownership of open spaces

Approach:

Foster community participation in biodiversity conservation, using existing programs and responding to new initiatives as they emerge at community level.

Create new biodiversity links across the city through programs such as Gardens for Wildlife, Friends groups and local neighbour networks, so that people can enhance the biodiversity of local parks, reserves, streets and neighbourhoods.

Create partnerships with schools and other landholders to create new opportunities for biodiversity connections and better management of larger private open spaces.

Use interpretation and information and community participation programs throughout the open space network to awaken community interest in our local biodiversity and raise the profile of bushland.

Strengthen the interface between the community and Council by investing in the bushland officers as 'rangers'.

4. Strategic Direction: Engender a network of sustainable spaces

Approach:

Promote awareness of bushland settings and their value in biodiversity terms through a branding and marketing strategy.

Increase planting of indigenous vegetation in open spaces

Build partnerships with surrounding councils to ensure that a holistic vision is developed for creek corridors and networks of open spaces that cross municipal boundaries

Ensure that big-picture programs such as Living Links are embraced.

Work with and actively support larger programs like 'Living Links' that seek to build biodiversity across whole catchments and regions.

Partner with State government authorities such as Melbourne Water and VicRoads to develop an accord designed to ensure land is managed with biodiversity as a key priority. Seek specific opportunities to actively build biodiversity across these different public land tenures, taking an integrated approach.

'Bike and shared paths are great for recreation (although some require significant maintenance). Greater emphasis on commuting is required. Better connections also need to be addressed to get directly from one place to another.'
Knox Council, 2011

connections

The connections lens is about movement and travel. Open space can offer links across our neighbourhoods and the city as a whole. Creek corridors are particularly important. Open space connections are used for commuting by bicycle or on foot, as links between our local destinations or simply for the experience of the journey. Improving our health and well-being and helping care for our environment are some of the benefits of travelling by bike, walking with friends and neighbours or exercising the dog.

Connections provides a distinct lens through which to focus on open space as a network for movement, access and to make links across Knox and beyond our city's boundaries.

Current situation

In Knox, three major creek corridors provide excellent east-west connectivity, each linked to the Dandenong Creek Parklands (Eastlink corridor). These parklands provide an outstanding north-south linkage on the western boundary of the municipality. For most of the city, however, north-south movement is only through the street network.








Knox City Council has worked hard to develop shared path and bicycle networks across the municipality. This infrastructure could be further enhanced by better way-finding signage to help users make connections to a range of destinations, and 'branding' that recognises distinct local identities. Over time further connections can be developed between open space and the public transport network.

To support this investment in sustainable transport infrastructure, benefits would be gained by better landscape maintenance (shrubs, garden beds, mowing and overhanging tree branches) and extra facilities (more seats, drinking fountains, better lighting). Principal and secondary routes should be prioritised.

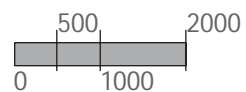


Refer to disclaimer on page 5.

Legend

-  Municipal boundary
-  Railway
-  Shared paths
-  Bus routes
-  Creek corridor flood zones
-  Knox open space
-  Creek corridors
-  Commercial areas
-  Community centres
-  Community hubs

Scale bar approx. m



Knox's connections lens

This map illustrates the sustainable transport network – shared paths, bus and train routes – with Knox's open spaces, activity centres and informal connects such as drainage lines.

“My favourite place is Blind Creek having grown up on it when it was still a creek. We used to go tad-poling in the creek. Over the years it’s had bicycle path added, on which I used to ride to Fairhills High School”
Bernie Hoefler, Knox resident

Community values and expectations

Appreciation:
A well connected network of journeys and destinations

Vision & goals

Knox’s open spaces will be connected. Connected by journeys, places and experiences. Our open spaces will become part of a seamless network of connections, enabling people to move around their local areas and across the city with ease.

Knox will have an integrated network of connections joining key destinations and open spaces, and linking into public transport and the shared path and bicycle networks.

Our goal is: To create a more interconnected city, establishing a network of links using the open space network as a key element.

Here are the approaches that will guide the City of Knox for each strategic direction. Together all of these approaches will contribute to our vision and goals.

1. Strategic Direction: Create healthy creek corridors that people love

Approach:

Integrate and build on the connections available through creek corridor networks as a key element in a wider network of cycle and pedestrian links across the city.

Provide way-finding signage to encourage use of creek corridors between destinations (E.g. key streets, facilities, shops, points of interest).

Ensure ‘Access for All’ is considered in all new path works.

2. Strategic Direction: Activate community hubs

Approach:

Use community hubs as activity nodes and destinations, strengthening the connections to these hubs as a priority.



Local children walking to school



Recreational bike riders on a trail in Knox

3. Strategic Direction: Empower the community to take ownership of spaces

Approach:

Promote and enable the community to use open space as a network for commuting and moving around the city and local neighbourhoods.

4. Strategic Direction: Engender a network of sustainable spaces

Approach:

Work with government agencies and public authorities to progressively link the Knox open space network with public transport.

Strengthen connections across the city by linking open space to other community destinations.

Supporting commuting to work on a bike, walking and exercising through improvements to infrastructure and better maintenance.

'We acknowledge the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations as the traditional custodians of the lands of the Knox Municipal District.'

culture lens

Culture and the arts provide richness, complexity and meaning to open spaces. They provide a way to express connections between communities and places and they enable the telling of collective stories. The culture lens directs us to reflect on the past, express our creativity and look to the future.

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Traditional owners, the Wurundjeri, bring deeply-rooted understandings of land and culture to the whole community, offering everyone the opportunity to see our area with new eyes.

The culture lens advocates integrating public and community art into our open spaces. Art will contribute to a cultural map of the city, both physically and philosophically. Art helps connect us with our community and its many stories of our past, our present and our future. Art builds social capital.

This lens recognises the unique role that vistas to open spaces have in Knox. These cultural landscapes are highly valued by the community. Pastoral and landscape qualities of areas such as Lysterfield, The Basin, Police Paddocks and Mt Dandenong should be conserved with appropriate management plans to prevent inappropriate urban development from eroding these qualities.

The current situation

Knox has a strong history in contributing to the identity of place through community and public art based projects. There are many examples of public art scattered through the municipality that respond to the local history of place. A recent example is Boronia Park's sculptured pine trees.

Progressively Knox City Council has been expanding its public art by embracing emerging trends including ephemeral art and temporary installations. Currently, most art activities, events and performances occur inside buildings. Community art based projects like Wicks Wonderland Photography Exhibition are enriching open spaces by focusing on local issues and sustainability.

The Knox Festival explores the creativity of our community. It is held at Wally Tew Recreation Reserve (previously known as Ferntree Gully Recreation Reserve) and is one of Melbourne's longest running community art festivals. These successes could be further enhanced through a coherent Arts Plan designed to shape our approach to public art, and to consider opportunities for gateway and landmark art for example.



Knox's culture lens

This map illustrates culturally significant sites and opportunities for cultural development in all types of open space across Knox. Sites of biological significance connect to pre-colonial settlements as do creek corridors. Other sites include gateways into Knox, activity centres, shared path trails, and historical landmarks.

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| ① • Starlight Reserve | ⑤ • Chesterfield Farm | ⑨ • Millers Homestead |
| ② • Police Paddocks | ⑥ • Wally Tew Reserve | ⑩ • Ambleside Homestead |
| ③ • Heany Park | ⑦ • Koolunga Reserve | ⑪ • Future Knox Central Park |
| ④ • Stamford House | ⑧ • Mortiboy Reserve | ⑫ • Boronia Park |

Refer to disclaimer on page 5.

Legend

- Municipal boundary
- Railway
- Shared paths
- Creek corridor flood zone
- Local open space
- Creek corridors
- Neighbourhood open space
- Municipal open space
- Commercial areas
- Site of biological significance
- Culturally significant open space
- Municipal gateways
- Community centres
- Community hubs

'Knox City Council's Stringybark Festival attracts more than 25,000 visitors; the festival is one of the most significant community environmental festivals on the national calendar. In 1984, Rowville sat on Melbourne's semi-rural fringe and Stringybark was Australia's premier conservation based environmental festival. Today, Knox City Council is at the apex of one of this country's largest suburban growth corridors and Stringybark now showcases a contemporary sustainability program that more accurately reflects its own current day suburban context both in practical terms and future vision.'
Knox City Council, 2011

Community values and expectations

Appreciation:
Variety of events, art forms and cultural interpretations explore the landscape

Vision & goals

Our open spaces will be places where the rich and vibrant cultures of our community can be expressed, interpreted and shared. Performances, landmarks, events, festivals, and activities will link neighbourhoods with the wider stories that criss-cross our city.

Aboriginal cultural perspectives will be embraced and expressed in art, place-making and environmental protection, helping us see our landscape anew.

Both nature and culture will be recognised as inspirational, and people's sense of identity and connection to place will be explored and celebrated through all forms of art.

Our goal is: To reflect the richness and diversity of our many local cultures in our open spaces through design, art, performances and other cultural expressions. Here are the approaches that will guide the City of Knox for each strategic direction. Together all of these approaches will contribute to our vision and goals.

1. Strategic Direction: Create healthy creek corridors that people love

Approach:

Use art in the creek corridors as drawing on both multiple view points to create an interconnected interpretation framework.

Encourage performance and creative expression and interpretation to be part of creek corridor journeys and destinations.

2. Strategic Direction: Activate community hubs

Approach:

Engage local artists in community hubs to develop a cultural presence, express local identity and to enliven spaces with art, story-telling and events.



Gilbert Park



Knox Festival

3. Strategic Direction: Empower the community to take ownership of spaces

Approach:

Support local artists and community groups working together to connect local people and places and to help build increased use and involvement of open spaces.

4. Strategic Direction: Engender a network of sustainable spaces

Approach:

Promote use of Knox open space for culture and the arts in all its diversity: including performance, events, sculpture, dance, installation and ephemeral art.

Engage Aboriginal communities and artists in bringing their knowledge, culture and stories into open space art and interpretation.

Interpret local histories, multi-cultural communities ecosystems and new technologies.

Of the 75,508 employed City of Knox residents in 2006, only 23,149 (approximately thirty percent) both lived and worked in the City of Knox, with the remaining 52,359 employed outside the City
AEC Group, 2011

economy lens

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The value of open space can be measured in many ways. Economic measures include land and property value. Business and industry gain measurable benefits from use of, or adjacency to open space. But it is harder to put a monetary value on most of the benefits we gain from open space: open space provides health and well-being benefits, habitat for native species, ecosystem 'services' like clean air and water, production of sustainable food and material resources and more.

The economy lens is intended to provide direction and clarity as to how open space and the economy can actively support each other. For example open space is an important part of Knox's high level of amenity, helping to attract businesses and a skilled workforce. Well-designed open space in local activity centres enhances their distinctive character, helping to attract traders and shoppers. And open space offers opportunities for income generation, helping build small-scale production through food gardens, farmers markets, solar power (etc.) that can form part of a more localised and resilient economy.

Open space is an overlooked but very valuable addition to all areas of economic activity: retail, commercial and industrial.

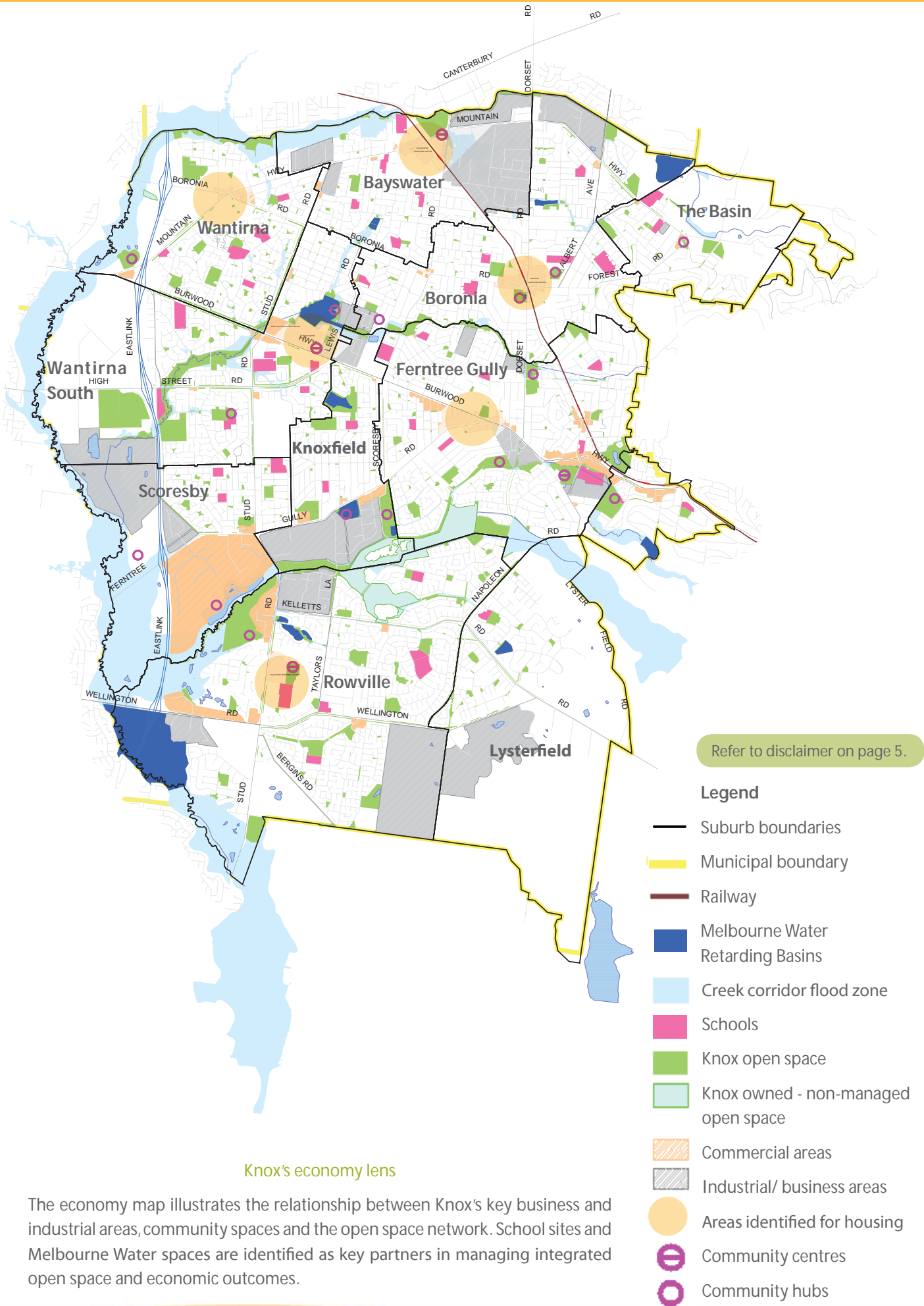
The current situation

Knox's largest economic sectors are manufacturing, retail trade and health care. The Draft Knox Economic Futures Study has recognised some important shifts in our local economy and identified three locations as a focus for changing technology and new business opportunities: the industrial areas of Knoxfield, Rowville and Bayswater.

In relation to open space, Knoxfield industrial area has the best access to open space networks, primarily along creek corridors. Rowville industrial area could develop links to future creek corridor connections and is surrounded by 'green wedge' zoned land. Bayswater industrial area has little provision of open space and the majority of the area south of Mountain Highway is not connected to any creek corridors. These industrial areas are currently like monocultures, lacking activity at night and after hours.

Even though most industrial areas across the city are aligned with creek corridors, the physical relationship between these areas and their surrounds are poor, usually with high, barbed wire fences separating them from shared path networks for example. There is a significant opportunity for business to create dual frontages to streets and to creek corridors, taking advantage of open space and shared path networks and promoting safer environments. There is also potential for better use of spaces in industrial areas that are close to these open space networks, to attract the users of these networks.

Improving access to recreation opportunities at lunch times and between and after work will provide healthier work environments.



Refer to disclaimer on page 5.

Legend

- Suburb boundaries
- Municipal boundary
- Railway
- Melbourne Water Retarding Basins
- Creek corridor flood zone
- Schools
- Knox open space
- Knox owned - non-managed open space
- Commercial areas
- Industrial/ business areas
- Areas identified for housing
- ⊙ Community centres
- ⊙ Community hubs

Knox's economy lens

The economy map illustrates the relationship between Knox's key business and industrial areas, community spaces and the open space network. School sites and Melbourne Water spaces are identified as key partners in managing integrated open space and economic outcomes.

"There are some things money can't buy"
Mastercard

Community values and expectations

Appreciation:

Local places to work, shop and do business

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Vision & goals

Knox's open space will become an important attractor for business, adding to our city's amenity and creating a livelier, connected community as a user of local business and industry services. By adding to the quality of our overall environment, open space will help build the strong sense of identity that attracts a loyal workforce to the city.

At the local level and within all business precincts including activity centres, open space amenity such as squares and promenades will benefit businesses, their workers and shoppers with economic and leisure environments. Opportunities for income generation will be explored and developed in suitable open spaces across the city, helping develop a resilient economy. Examples could include food gardens, farmers markets, solar power etc.

Our goal is: To build economic resilience and sustainable local economic activity, using open space and amenity as key attractors and platforms. Here are the approaches that will guide the City of Knox for each strategic direction: Together all of these approaches will contribute to our vision and goals.

1. Strategic Direction: Create healthy creek corridors that people love

Approach:

Develop new initiatives and planning guidelines to improve the connections between business precincts (especially industrial areas) and creek corridors and shared path networks.

Identify and mark links between creek corridors and movement networks to local shops, businesses and facilities.

Support a diverse range of activities in creek corridors that will enhance the experience of using these links for local travel on foot or bicycle.

2. Strategic Direction: Activate community hubs

Approach:

Enliven community hubs by encouraging local economic activities to locate there: examples include farmers markets, coffee and alfresco eateries.



Community orchard in Knox



Photovoltaic panels in Knox

3. Strategic Direction: Empower the community to take ownership of spaces

Approach:

Foster local community initiatives to use and build the productivity of open spaces: for example, community gardens, solar power (etc.)

Allow small scale economic activities like busking or coffee carts to enliven local spaces.

4. Strategic Direction: Engender a network of sustainable spaces

Approach:

Develop open space within or near business precincts - industrial, commercial and retail – to improve amenity, provide health benefits, and encourage use of local business services and products.

Enhance sustainable commuting infrastructure (e.g. bicycle network) to increase access to local business precincts.

Foster local economic activities suited to each type of open space, and investigate how open space can more actively support growth and change within Knox's local economy.

Enhance Knox as an attractive and desirable place to live through excellent open space design and maintenance.

Provide opportunities for orchards, community gardens, solar power networks and the demonstration sites of other emerging technologies and landscape practices as small-scale productive activities within the open space network.

“My new park is fantastic! I live an easy walking distance to Jenola Reserve and I love having a park so close. Jenola’s a great venue with lots of open space and a nice playground”.

Debbie Girvan, Wantirna South

leisure lens

Open space is an important place to enjoy our leisure time, relaxing, being active and participating in sport. In Knox people use open space for a wide range of activities – alone or with children, family or friends. The Knox community is fortunate to have such a wide range of open space settings to explore. Being active in outdoor spaces is an important part of Australian culture and supports healthy, active, communities.

The community has told us that they place greater value on the passive use of open space, whilst recognising the importance of active and sporting functions. The core activities are walking, socialising, family recreation and finding a peaceful place to rest and relax in.

The leisure lens focuses on bridging the divide between structured and unstructured activities: that is, between sports and activities with highly structured requirements for space and facilities, and other activities that have more flexible requirements and that can adapt to fit into many different types of open spaces. For example, compare cricket and tai chi – cricket needs a well-prepared ground, and facilities such as pavilions and fencing to ovals. Tai chi can occur in any flat, grassy or paved open space area.

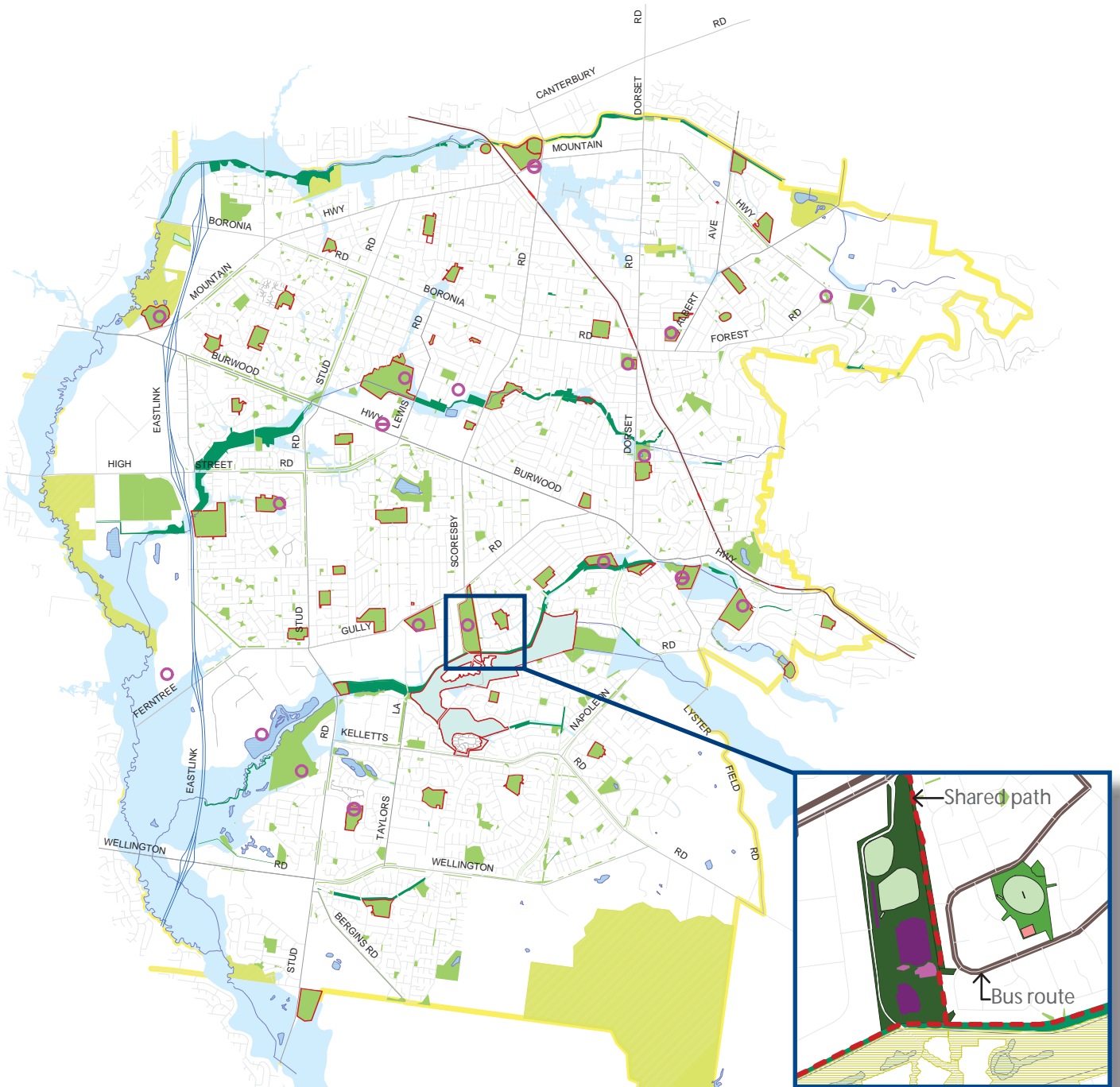
Evolving management, planning and design approaches can create more flexible and integrated spaces, reducing the boundaries between different types of open space (e.g. creek corridors, shared paths, parks and sports fields) and enabling people to move seamlessly between different activities and settings.

The current situation

Knox is well provided with open space catering for a wide variety of leisure, active and sports pursuits. Each open space is managed to suit the range of activities provided. For example, the Recreation Plan defines a hierarchy of sports grounds and their management requirements. Knox’s sporting clubs use all available active spaces in the City and at peak times there is not enough space to meet the demand. Peak times occupy around 20% of the week; in off-peak times (80% of the week) sports grounds are available to the wider community.

Management and planning segregation between active, club based and passive spaces has created physical barriers such as fences that have been erected to enable clubs to collect entrance fees or protect Council’s investment in vulnerable infrastructure. These can create the appearance of inaccessibility, causing confusion amongst the community. They can also create a negative atmosphere which may lead to safety concerns. In many instances there may be design solutions to respond to these issues. Furthermore, Council’s Recreation Plan can also consider the requirements for active recreation while balancing the need for access for the community.

Across Australia, new active pastimes are occurring in open space areas previous reserved for quieter activities such as walking. Emerging activities range from scooters to bocce. Another example is personal training. Organised group activities need to find space in our open space network, but on the other hand they should not impact on other open space users. Careful planning and respectful behaviours are needed.



- Legend**
- Open space - passive
 - Open space - active
 - Creek corridor
 - (Golf)
 - Creek corridor flood zone
 - Parks Vic managed open space

Knox's passive and active open space distribution

This map illustrates the areas of open space that have an active or structured recreation component within them. The inset shows the type and hierarchy of active uses together with the type of open space. The inset map can be found in the appendix.

- Refer to disclaimer on page 5.
- Inset legend**
- Active open space**
- Unique (BMX) - municipal
 - Unique (Athletics) - Regional
 - Tennis - local
 - Sports grounds - local
 - Golf
- Passive open space**
- Neighbourhood
 - Municipal

“We would like to see adventure areas that can test our skills, like rock climbing walls”

*“We could have a kiosk that lent out canoes and hovercraft so that you can use it on the lake”
students desires in their local open space,
St. Andrews College, 18th April, 2011*

Community values and expectations

Appreciation:

A variety of leisure and recreational opportunities

Vision & goals

Knox’s open space will be used by all kinds of people in a wide variety of ways for leisure and recreation. Being active in outdoor spaces will be encouraged to support healthy, active communities. Our open spaces will be friendly, inclusive and feel safe.

More people will use open space, making it safer and encouraging others to get active. Good open space design will reduce the barriers between different types of activity areas, opening up more space for a diverse range of leisure pursuits. Both groups and individuals will be the users of open space, and careful planning will reduce the impacts of group and commercial activities on individual users.

Here are the approaches that will guide the City of Knox for each strategic direction. Together all of these approaches will contribute to our vision and goals.

1. Strategic Direction: Create healthy creek corridors that people love

Approach:

Promote and support a diverse range of leisure and recreation activities along creek corridors, provided they do not detrimentally impact on biodiversity.

2. Strategic Direction: Activate community hubs

Approach:

Use community hubs as the location for new group activities, building the role of hubs as active community places.



Knox dog park



Interesting objects in the landscape, Boronia Park

3. Strategic Direction: Empower the community to take ownership of spaces

Approach:

Establish partnerships with sporting clubs to promote multi-use of designated sports areas in non-peak times, addressing and resolving issues of access, safety and the protection of sporting assets.

Through good open space planning and design and working with communities and users, remove barriers to access throughout the open space network.

4. Strategic Direction: Engender a network of sustainable spaces

Approach:

Recognise that the role of open space is changing and seek to accommodate a wider range of activities across the open space network.

Promote the idea of being active in open space and tackle barriers that prevent activity (e.g. perceptions of safety, access barriers etc.).

Design spaces so that they can be enjoyed by groups and individuals at the same time.

Create opportunities for exercise and provide attractive and interesting places for walking.

“Higher density development around open space could be encouraged where it provides an opportunity to develop a site that could front onto the open space.”
Environment Advisory Committee

people lens

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People bring open space alive: they are ‘activators’. They can be involved in developing and enhancing open space as well as using it. People active in open space areas encourage others to come and enjoy open space. As our city develops and our population increases, demand on open space to provide for both structured and informal activity will increase. Well-used open space feels safe.

People need to connect with natural places for their mental health and well-being. Open space provides a place for communal activity, whether it is active recreation, chance meetings, participating in caring for an open space area, or play and relaxation. In this context, open space is the glue that binds healthy communities together.

Open space needs to offer a diversity of opportunities and be accessible to all. People enjoy all kinds of places: from bush settings, to parks where you can kick a footy or have a picnic, to performance and art spaces, coffee spots and all the other special places that are part of Knox. Diversity helps ensure open space is available, relevant and used by everyone – no matter what their age or abilities. As the city evolves, there will be new pressures and requirements on our open spaces, especially in activity centres.

Small, quiet, less developed spaces are important too. These spaces dotted throughout our streets allow our neighbourhoods to ‘breathe’ and are important to local residents as ‘their’ space.

Knox residents love their ‘green and leafy’ suburbs, views to the Dandenong Ranges and into open spaces, tree lined streets and backyards with shade. The city is dotted with small local parks, reserves and creek corridors that contribute to the city’s character and trees are an enduring element that help define this.

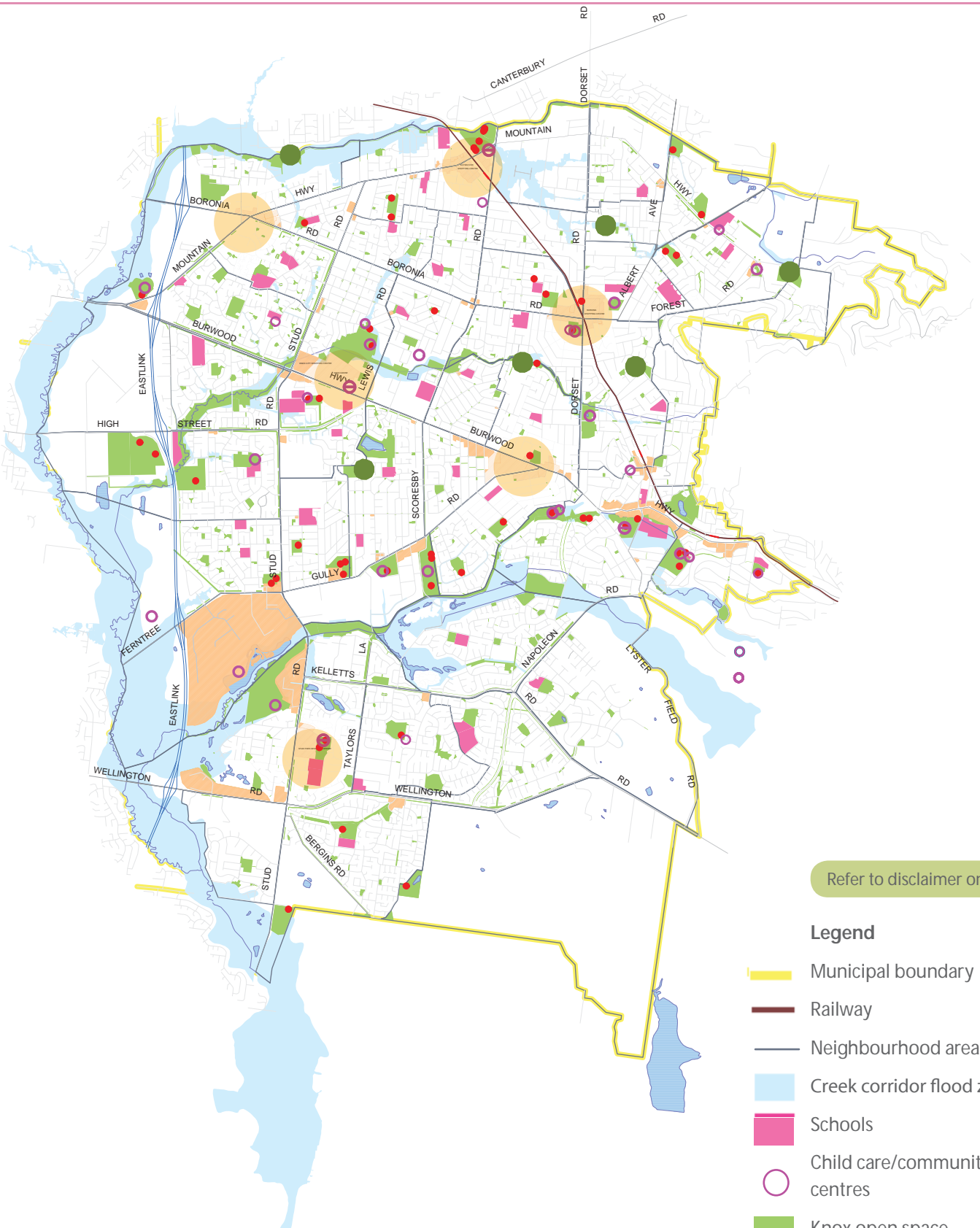
The people lens is intended to highlight the opportunities for a strong sense of community ‘ownership’ of public open space in Knox and to prioritise open space investment in areas planned for greater population growth, such as the larger activity centres. Community participation in and understanding of, the planning and design processes for open space delivery will build the potential for community involvement in shaping and managing of local open spaces.

The current situation

Knox has many parks that the community loves, from larger municipal open space to small local spaces. The demands on these parks and other open spaces will change as the community changes. These changes vary in different parts of the municipality and include increased housing density, smaller household sizes, different family structures, new cultural mixes, and new recreational interests.

Approximately 99.3% of Knox residents have access to passive open space within 500 metres of their home. This measure, while important, does not tell the whole story. Open space also contributes to our sense of local identity. People feel a connection to their local neighbourhoods and open spaces. Collaboration with Council in the design of these places will build a sense of personal and community ownership. Effective community engagement is an essential foundation, especially in times when communities are experiencing change. Knox City Council currently assesses community open space needs through benchmarks and community engagement as part of open space master-planning and design.

Community facilities such as schools and community centres are key places for people to come together. Working with these organisations is essential in strengthening community well-being.



Refer to disclaimer on page 5.

Legend

-  Municipal boundary
-  Railway
-  Neighbourhood areas
-  Creek corridor flood zones
-  Schools
-  Child care/community centres
-  Knox open space
-  Commercial areas
-  Community hubs
-  Friends groups
-  Areas identified for housing
-  Pavillions (Sports)

Knox's people lens

This map illustrates the relationship between open space, key places where people gather, including schools, child care centres, community facilities and activity centres.

Transition Knox is a not for profit group committed to assisting people within Knox live more sustainable lives. We think that the Knox community would benefit from building local resilience to future price hikes by learning new skills such as growing your own vegetables or keeping chooks as well as adopting more sustainable practices such as recycling clothes, purchasing local produce or installing energy saving devices at home. (Knox, 2011)

Community values and expectations

Appreciation:

Places are safe, inviting and inclusive

Vision & goals

Our open spaces are vital active places, well used and cherished. They are a valued public asset locally and across the municipality. Communities and groups are active participants in planning and caring for open space areas, working collaboratively with Knox City Council and other public land managers.

Our goal is: To encourage and facilitate greater use of open space by all and support community involvement in open space planning and development. Here are the approaches that will guide the City of Knox for each strategic direction. Together all of these approaches will contribute to our vision and goals.

1. Strategic Direction: Create healthy creek corridors that people love

Approach:

Use creek corridors to open up new opportunities for people, using them as links between of activity areas, community hubs and other local facilities and services.

Consider creek corridors as local, neighbourhood and municipal open spaces that offer a unique setting as linear corridors of movement, water and habitat.

Build on community 'love' of creek corridors by developing a network of friends groups.

2. Strategic Direction: Activate community hubs

Approach:

Increase the diversity of open space activities and services available at community hubs to ensure these become lively, engaging and well-used places.



Playtpus environment day Koolamarra Waters



Gardening group in Knox

3. Strategic Direction: Empower the community to take ownership of spaces

Approach:

Promote, engage and foster a local sense of connection to open spaces through activities and education.

Enable communities to partner with Council in planning, developing and maintaining their local parks and community spaces.

Build participatory models of community engagement and apply to open space planning, development and maintenance.

4. Strategic Direction: Engender a network of sustainable spaces

Approach:

Create safe and inviting open space by encouraging increased use at all times.

Progressively make open space more inclusive and accessible for all generations and abilities to support community health and well-being.

Promote walking and other sustainable modes of transport.

Support the creation of community gardens and other local initiatives designed to increase active participation in and use of open space.

Recognise the importance of providing a variety of open space types including bushland settings, quiet spaces, urban spaces, places for pets, active spaces and urban spaces.

Create urban/cosmopolitan space or spaces within each activity centres.

“Nature is important to children’s development in every major way—intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and physically.”
Stephen R. Kellert

play lens

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Play is one important way people use and enjoy open space. Play can be for all ages. It’s about engaging our imaginations, testing our skills and just having fun. Play includes throwing a ball, kicking a footy, playing on the swings, building a cubby, throwing a stick for the dog. Play revitalises and energises; when we play we relax, we learn about our own capabilities, interact with others, and connect with the world outside ourselves. Play is both a physical and social activity.

Natural play spaces are an important part of our open space network too.

The play lens focuses on providing play places that are inclusive and accessible, that cater for all ages, that are fun and dynamic and that help us connect with nature.

The current situation

Today, our lifestyles mean we stay inside more than in the past. Our backyards are becoming smaller as our houses become bigger. ‘Wild’ spaces are less and less common in suburban areas. All these factors mean that our public open spaces are becoming the place where play will happen. They are replacing backyards and streets as play spaces. As a result, open space will need to cater for increasingly diverse range of activities.

There is an increasing movement towards natural play spaces. How we plan our open spaces will have a direct bearing on natural play opportunities.

The municipality is well supplied with open space, especially along our creek corridors. It is also well endowed with traditional play equipment and areas dedicated to specific activities such as BMX riding, sports grounds for cricket and football, tennis, netball and golf facilities. But often local open spaces that serve a neighbourhood lack the variety required to support all the open space needs of a healthy community. Increased provision of off-leash dog parks, natural play spaces and places designed in collaboration with the community are required, together with more attention to the effective functioning of open space as a network of spaces, facilities and environments.



Knox's play lens

This map shows the diversity of play opportunities across the municipality including the types of open space and creek corridors, with locations of active recreation areas and playgrounds. Activity centres and areas identified for housing are also shown as these are key gathering places in the city and put a different emphasis of play use in open spaces. The inset map, located in full in the appendix, shows this information together with active recreation uses and neighbourhood zones, to give an indication of opportunities available in different areas, with bus routes and shared paths to illustrate accessibility.

Refer to disclaimer on page 5.

Legend

-  Municipal boundary
-  Railway
-  Creek corridor flood zone
-  Local open space
-  Creek corridors
-  Neighbourhood open space
-  Municipal open space
-  Commercial areas
-  Playgrounds
-  Community centres
-  Community hubs

"I was amazed to find out about this hidden reserve that I wasn't aware of, which is called Koolunga Reserve. It's very unique. It has winding paths that take you up and down small hills and over bridges. You can follow a little path that takes you over streams and has a jungle theme to it... That natural untouched feel to it... 'it's like you're in another world'."
Norton McDougall, Knox resident

Community values and expectations

Appreciation:

Places that are inclusive, interesting and close to home

Vision & goals

Knox will prioritise play throughout the open space network, creating opportunities for everyone to engage in multiple forms of play that suit their age and abilities. At the local level, play spaces for children will be close to home, in local parks. Through other concepts such as 'liveable streets', communities will reoccupy these spaces for informal play. And intimate 'wild' spaces will be created and retained to spark the sense of adventure, freedom and imagination gained by exploring nature.

Our goal is: To create new and more diverse opportunities for play throughout the open space network. Here are the approaches that will guide the City of Knox for each strategic direction. Together all of these approaches will contribute to our vision and goals.

1. Strategic Direction: Create healthy creek corridors that people love

Approach:

Implement more nature-based play spaces within our creek corridors.

2. Strategic Direction: Activate community hubs

Approach:

Locate formal and informal play spaces at community hubs to increase the diversity of opportunities at these hubs.

Encourage multi-generational play activities through community hubs. Provide programs to build community awareness of play for all ages.



Outdoor chess



The happy log at Wicks Reserve

3. Strategic Direction: Empower the community to take ownership of spaces

Approach:

Involve local communities in creating play spaces to suit their needs, using and combining public open space, gardens and backyards, streets and other spaces (e.g. school grounds).

4. Strategic Direction: Engender a network of sustainable spaces

Approach:

Encourage play, exploration and connection with natural spaces and materials.

Promote safe and walkable neighbourhoods where informal play is encouraged.

Develop play spaces within the open space network as inclusive, intergenerational spaces.

Progressively develop natural play spaces to complement traditional play experiences.

“My vision for a sustainable Knox is place that is home to individuals who are doing their personal best to live in a manner that sustains life on earth, supported by a proactive Council working in practical ways to create a positive future.”
Sande Muller, Knox resident

sustainable lens

Knox's open space has a significant role to play in ensuring the sustainable future of the Knox community, environment and economy. Open space provides opportunities for 'living local' and increasing community resilience as the cost of natural resources continue to increase.

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People have become disconnected from natural systems and functions, and escalating urbanisation sees growing pressure on community resources and infrastructure. There will continue to be increasing costs associated with food production, transport and access.

Knox's open space provides us with an opportunity to respond to these issues by introducing 'green' or sustainable infrastructure (local energy; water; waste treatment); local food production (community gardens); increasing carbon storage and heat sinks with vegetation; community engagement and education; and development and testing of new and emerging sustainability technologies, particularly those developed locally.

The current situation

In Knox we enjoy an excellent lifestyle where food, energy and shelter are of high quality and plentiful. This occurs at a cost that puts our environment under increasing pressure: Our city is water, energy and resource hungry, and car-dependent.

In Knox we have the second highest rate of car ownership in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Recent changes to our building and subdivision pattern has diminished the average block size. All of these hard surfaces combined with demands on natural resources are increasing the 'heat island effect' (Cardno, 2009), creating more intense storm water run-off, using more natural resources and decreasing habitat. Which means our local environment is getting hotter, harder and less sustainable. Improving Knox City Council open space management systems including life cycle costs and integrated design are key to achieving a sustainable city.

Knox City Council has been taking innovative first steps in energy conservation using civic buildings and infrastructure: A stand-alone photovoltaic system, passive cooling measures, managed lighting controls and voltage optimisation units. This innovative rethinking now needs to be applied to our open spaces, to protect our 'soft' open space, enhance and regenerate our local waterways and drainage lines, embrace technical innovation and material changes and to create local sustainable systems. It is imperative that the community shapes and embraces these changes.



Knox's sustainable lens

This map illustrates sustainable initiatives taken across the municipality together with opportunities in open spaces for activities and interventions such as water harvesting and community gardens. This map also highlights sustainable transport options including bus routes, rail lines and shared paths.

Refer to disclaimer on page 5.

Legend

- Municipal boundary
- Railway
- - - Shared paths
- Bus routes
- Melbourne Water drainage
- Creek corridor flood zones
- ⊖ Community centres
- Community hubs
- Water harvesting sites
- + Potential water harvesting sites
- Local food/Community Gardens
- Renewable energy opportunities

*Our challenge is to address our ecological footprint, re-think the way we live and invest in clean, renewable energy and sustainable water and public transport.
Australian Conservation Foundation, 2011*

Community values and expectations

Appreciation:

A healthy environment supporting community and economy.

Vision & goals

Our open spaces will demonstrate sustainability in how they are designed, developed, managed and used. Knox City Council will introduce sustainability approaches and infrastructure progressively, working with the community to increase their awareness and learn from community interests and innovations. What we achieve in open space areas will create a more sustainable and resilient Knox.

Our goal is: To shape our open space network into a web of sustainable landscapes demonstrating the best in contemporary thinking. Here are the approaches that will guide the City of Knox for each strategic direction. Together all of these approaches will contribute to our vision and goals.

1. Strategic Direction: Create healthy creek corridors that people love

Approach:

Re-establish natural systems as the primary sustainability approach within creek corridors.

2. Strategic Direction: Activate community hubs

Approach:

Adopt sustainable design in community hubs, and promote.

Promote sustainability initiatives that can be applied across the community through community hubs.

Provide sustainability learning opportunities for all ages and support community capacity building.



Environment Youth Summit, Swinburne University



Bayswater Oval Siemens water recycling

3. Strategic Direction: Empower the community to take ownership of spaces

Approach:

Work with the community in developing local sustainable initiatives through a range of educational and participatory programs.

Facilitate community 'ownership' of sustainability projects and initiatives.

4. Strategic Direction: Engender a network of sustainable spaces

Approach:

Foster an 'eco-literate' community through promoting local sustainable initiatives across a range of educational and participatory programs.

Provide educational and interpretative signage and other information sources, using media that suit each local community and age group.

Build flexibility into all open space design so that it can accommodate new sustainable technologies and demonstrate sustainable landscape management practices.

Use open space areas to trial new and innovative approaches to sustainability.

Work with local communities to encourage the uptake of sustainability approaches applied in open space areas to streets, neighbourhoods and homes.

water lens

Studies carried out in 2007 have shown that the amount of stormwater generated is close to the quantity of reticulated water supply in Melbourne. Managing stormwater appropriately through Water sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) systems is becoming an increasingly important issue in Australia, with respect to its ability to provide both an alternative water resource and to reduce the amount and frequency of hydrologic and water quality disturbance to receiving waterways.
Knox City Council

Water is a life-giving element that sustains us and our open spaces. Water is a vital ingredient in Knox's green and leafy environment. Throughout our open space network water can create a much appreciated focal point: water makes places special.

The water lens focuses on the whole water system, and its relationship with open space and the community. It considers hard infrastructure such as pipes and pits; passive systems such as swales and retarding basins and bigger elements like our creeks, wetlands and lakes.

The current situation

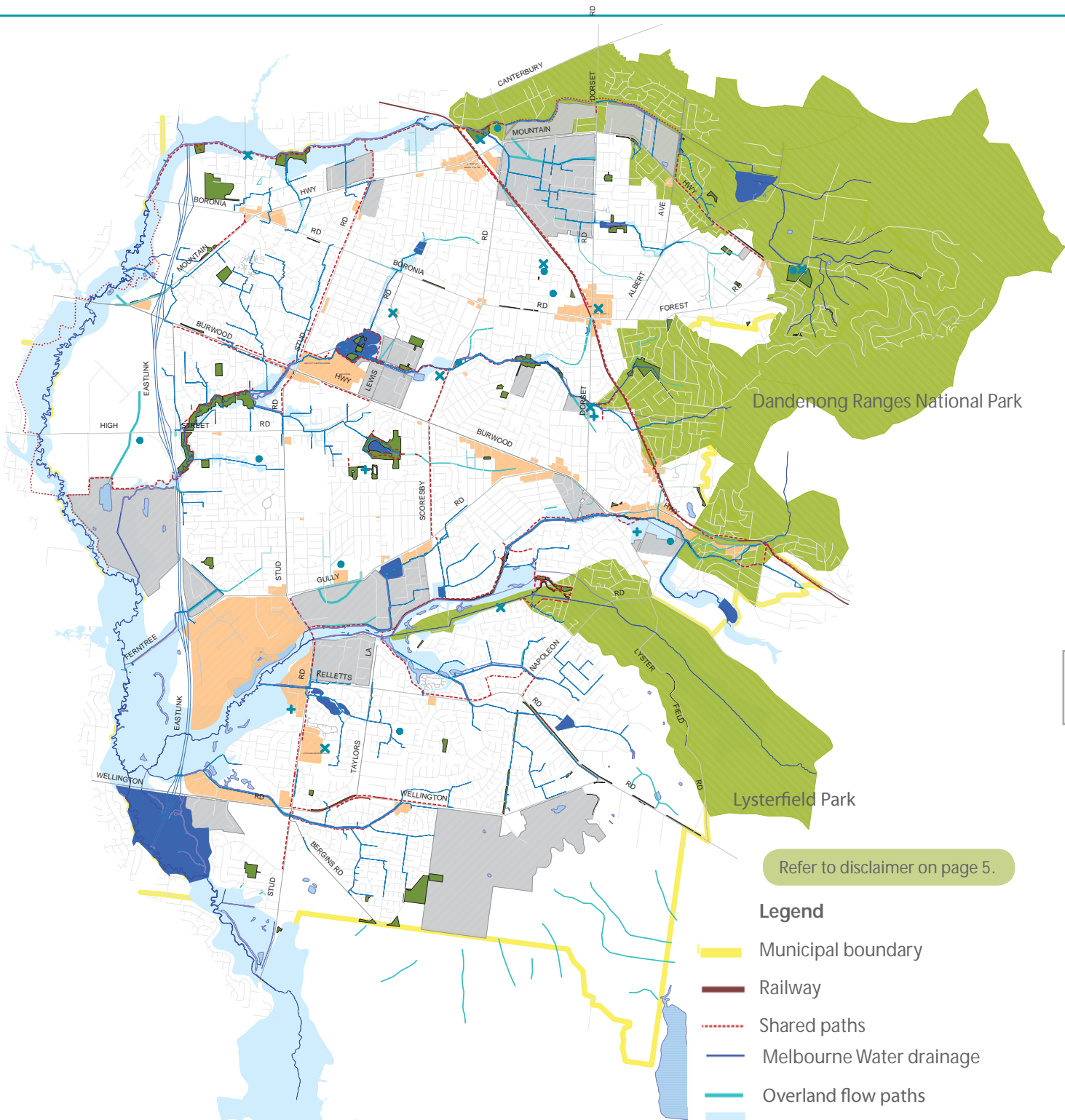
Knox has three major creek systems, each feeding into Dandenong Creek which flows into Port Phillip Bay. Parts of our creek system have high water quality, especially at the base of Mount Dandenong. As the water flows through our creeks, its quality declines sharply, a result of excessive and often polluted storm water run-off, made worse by the increasing extent of impervious surfaces across the city.

These stormwater flows in peak and standard rain events contribute to erosion of our natural waterways, damaging habitat and contributing to flooding of local areas.

Knox has six drainage catchments and each requires different interventions to tackle water issues. These catchments are defined by valley landforms and are made up of streets, open drains, underground pipes, retarding basins (lakes) and creeks. Parts of the system have different managers, including Council and Melbourne Water, both having a responsibility to provide safe places, protect the environment, provide access and meet other statutory requirements.

The three main creek systems form inter-connected strands of open space, weaving their way across the city. They are highly valued by the community for their biodiversity, and the opportunities they offer for recreation and education.

Knox City Council is working towards a sustainable system of water capture, use and re-use, and is targeting major problems in our catchments (such as reducing peak stormwater run-off, flooding, pollution) and increasing stream health.
















Knox's water lens

This map illustrates Knox's water system. This system includes constructed drainage such as pits, pipes and under ground creeks, creek corridors and their tributaries, overland flow paths and high value catchment areas. It is important that water is viewed as an integrated system, as our streets and storm water flow directly into our waterways, and have significant impact on the quality of water and their overall health. 91% of our industrial areas are located on creek corridors or major tributaries. Our healthiest water ways are located in the foothills area and near Lysterfield Park and Dandenong Ranges National Park.

Refer to disclaimer on page 5.

Legend

-  Municipal boundary
-  Railway
-  Shared paths
-  Melbourne Water drainage
-  Overland flow paths
-  Creek corridor flood zones
-  Melbourne Water retarding basins
-  Commercial areas
-  Industrial/ business areas
-  Sites of biological significance
-  High value catchment areas
-  Water harvesting sites
-  Water harvesting opportunities
-  WSUD sites

Community values and expectations

Appreciation:
Healthy waterways and management of storm events.

Vision & goals

Our creeks, wetlands and lakes will be healthy, protected and enhanced habitats and ecosystems that offer interesting places for leisure, recreation and learning. Water quality will be improved substantially throughout the whole system. Water will be captured for use in our open spaces to help create healthy systems and to help sustain a green and leafy Knox.

Our goal is: To progressively improve the sustainability of our water system and the health of our creeks.

Here are the approaches that will guide the City of Knox for each strategic direction. Together all of these approaches will contribute to our vision and goals.

1. Strategic Direction: Create healthy creek corridors that people love

Approach:

Ensure water is healthy and flows are adequate and slow to protect and enhance our creek systems and the associated open space areas.

Work towards improving waterway health by reducing the impact of stormwater-based 'peak flows'.

Progressively turn drainage areas into more natural places and integrate them into the inter-connected open space network.

2. Strategic Direction: Activate community hubs

Approach:

Promote, provide and install opportunities for education about local water conservation and management practices through community hubs.

Design and implement sustainable water management and treatment strategies at all community hubs.



Lewis Park retarding basin, holding water



Dandenong Creek at Eastlink



Ferry Creek

3. Strategic Direction: Empower the community to take ownership of spaces

Approach:

Promote and provide opportunities for education about local water conservation and management practices in local open spaces. Encourage and support community initiatives.

Establish Council-agency-community partnerships to help achieve healthy creeks: engage the community in caring for these creek systems.

4. Strategic Direction: Engender a network of sustainable spaces

Approach:

Take a holistic approach to Knox's water system and progressively improve its health through infrastructure improvements and innovation.

Investigate stormwater capture, reuse and treatment to create the principal water supply for the maintenance of Knox's open space areas.

Include water sensitive urban design (WSUD) in all new open space design and development.

Identify opportunities for new sustainable infrastructure to be trialled, for example micro turbines within pipes.