



Open Space Asset Management Plan 2010



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Preparation of the Open Asset Management Plan

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1 Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of the Open Space Management Plan (OSAMP) is to ensure Council's Open Space Assets fulfil their intended purpose and life expectancy at the most economical cost to the community. The OSAMP balances financial, design, landscape, architectural and technical practices with community expectations to achieve this purpose.

1.2 Background and Drivers

Over the past five years, there have been changes in the sector that have driven a need to improve Asset Management Practices across Local Government. For example, the introduction of the STEP program by the MAV, the introduction of the Road Management Act (2004) and the improved understanding of the infrastructure funding gap across Councils have all been strong drivers to improve Asset Management.

Darebin City Council has also expressed a commitment in its four year plan to; "...ensure that our large and varied asset base is improved so that it can continue to meet the community's needs into the future."

The production of this OSAMP is a first attempt to address gaps and identify improvements to Council's Open Space Management Practices, in response to the above drivers. At this stage, not all information is available to construct a comprehensive picture of Darebin's open space assets, however, future versions of the OSAMP will progressively improve the quality of the information.

1.3 Context

The OSAMP is one of a suite of documents that relate to Asset Management and Open Space Assets within the City of Darebin. The diagram below (Figure 1.1) illustrates where the OSAMP fits within the document hierarchy.

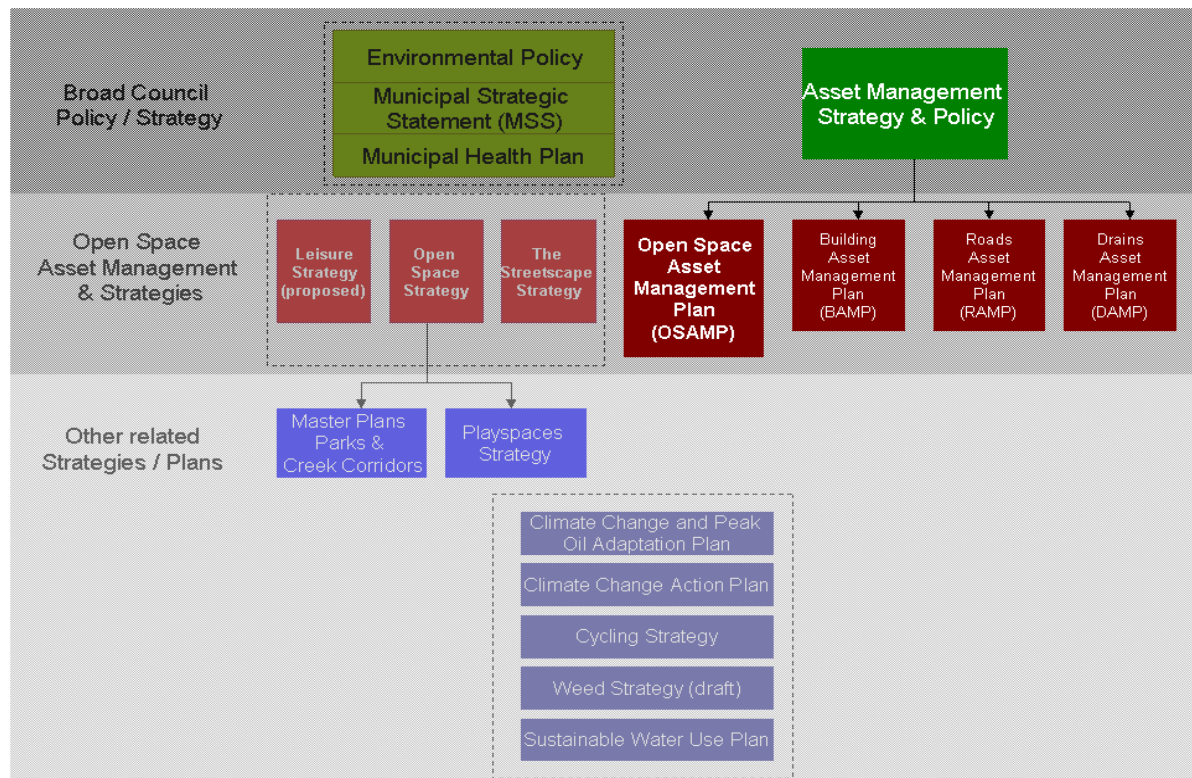


Figure 1.1 – OSAMP in context with other Council Strategies and Plans

1.4 Asset Description and Profile

The City of Darebin has an impressive network of community, formal and sporting parkland which includes creek corridors and bushland sites. The community places a high value on open space and a broad range of spaces are important in meeting the diverse needs of the community. These open spaces range from small local parks up to major regional parklands such as All Nations Park and Bundoora Park. In addition there are the environmentally sensitive areas such as the Central Creek Grasslands, the LaTrobe University Wildlife Reserve and the Leamington Street Wetlands.

In total the City of Darebin has over 800 hectares of parks and reserves. Streetscapes are also a significant part of the open space network. Streetscapes range from residential streets that consist mainly of street trees, naturestrips and traffic treatments. Streetscapes also include Retail Activity Centres and in addition to street trees, include furniture and fixtures. Both are governed by strategic documents, The Green Streets Strategy and the Retail Activity Centre Strategy respectively.

1.5 Key Findings

Open Space is a significant asset within the City of Darebin. Council spends approximately \$ 11 million per year on the maintenance and upgrading of open space. The following is not a comprehensive list of all the findings within the OSAMP, but summarises the key points.

1.5.1 Estimated useful life/asset condition

Currently there is very little information on the anticipated useful life and the condition of Council's open space assets. Consequently the optimum funding required for maintaining open space assets cannot be determined at this time. There are actions listed in the improvement items to address this.

1.5.2 Asset management information system

Council is currently implementing the Customer Request and Asset Management System (CAMS). When fully operational CAMS will provide data on customer requests linked to specific assets, provide a centralised asset register and put in place programmable maintenance and inspection regimes. This information will provide a measure of the maintenance and capital requirements of Council's open space.

1.5.3 Parks maintenance systems

Currently there is very little in the way of written maintenance schedules or standards for Council's parks. This short coming has been recognised and addressed as part of the improvement items.

1.6 Key Improvement Actions

A full listing of the recommended improvement actions can be found in Section 8. Key Improvement Items include:

- Development of service levels for all Open Space Assets;
- Development of a suite of indicators to measure satisfaction with service levels and importance of Open Space Assets and resource use (water and energy) together with the on-going consultation with customer and stakeholders on these service levels;
- Improve the inspection, monitoring and recording process of maintenance activities and investigate the possible introduction of mobile computing for inspector/field staff;
- Develop detailed tables of parks, their relevant category and maintenance schedules as working documents for maintenance staff;
- Development of a twenty year financial forecast based on Asset Management principles;
- Determine the depreciation and useful life of open space assets based on condition and performance information; and
- Monitor and report on actual service level performance vs target performance.

1.7 Conclusion

The OSAMP is Darebin Council's first generation plan for managing its open space. As such, there are areas where improved data will yield a more accurate picture of these assets, enabling more sophisticated analysis. The OSAMP will be reviewed within 4 years from the adoption of this version, building in improvements achieved over that time.

2 Introduction

2.1 A Brief History

Victoria is the most densely populated State of Australia with more than 5 million people living in an area of 227,600 square kilometres. Melbourne has a population of 3.8 million people (2007).

The City of Darebin is located in the north eastern suburbs of Melbourne, between 4 and 14 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD. The municipality covers approximately 53.4 square kilometres and extends from Heidelberg Road in the south to Mahoneys Road in the north, bounded by Darebin Creek to the east and Merri Creek to the west. The City includes the suburbs of Northcote, Fairfield, Thornbury, Preston, Reservoir, Kingsbury and parts of Bundoora, Alphington & Macleod. The municipality was formed in mid 1994 after the amalgamation of the former City of Northcote and the City of Preston with small areas of the City of Coburg and the Shire of Diamond Valley.

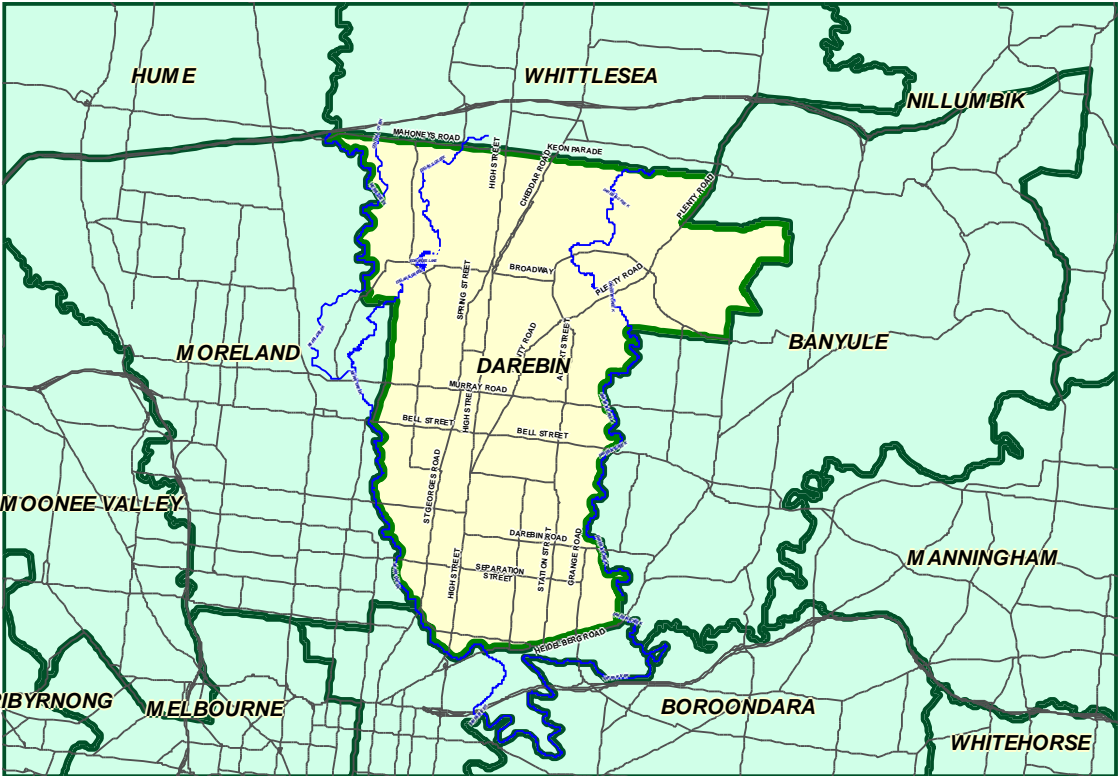


Figure 2.1 - City of Darebin Map

It is anticipated that Melbourne will grow by up to one million people in the next 30 years (Melbourne 2030). During this period, it is predicted that (as a result of urban consolidation and Greenfield development), Darebin is expected to grow from 53,000 properties to over 60,300 properties or approximately 14% increase in the number of properties.

2.2 Purpose of Plan

Asset Management Plans are a tool combining management, financial, design and technical practices to ensure the level of service required by customers is provided at the most economical cost to the community.

An Asset Management Plan is a tactical plan that translates broad strategic goals and plans into specific goals and objectives relevant to a particular activity for the organisation. It may be regarded as a tactical plan for implementing infrastructure related strategies, which arise from the strategic planning process. Tactical planning involves the development of separate sub-plans that allocate resources (natural, physical, financial, etc) to achieve strategic goals through meeting defined levels

of service.

The plan is the medium by which the organisation articulates its management of infrastructure to achieve the desired outcomes.

The specific purpose of this plan is to:

- Demonstrate responsible stewardship;
- Define and articulate how the infrastructure is and will be managed to achieve the organisation's objectives;
- Provide a basis for customer consultation to determine the appropriate levels of service;
- Manage risk of asset failure;
- Achieve savings by optimising whole of life costs;
- Support long term financial planning; and
- Understanding & planning for future demand.

The open space management plan forms one of four asset management plans currently being produced. These four plan cover the majority of assets owned and managed by Council and form the basis of Council's approach to asset management.

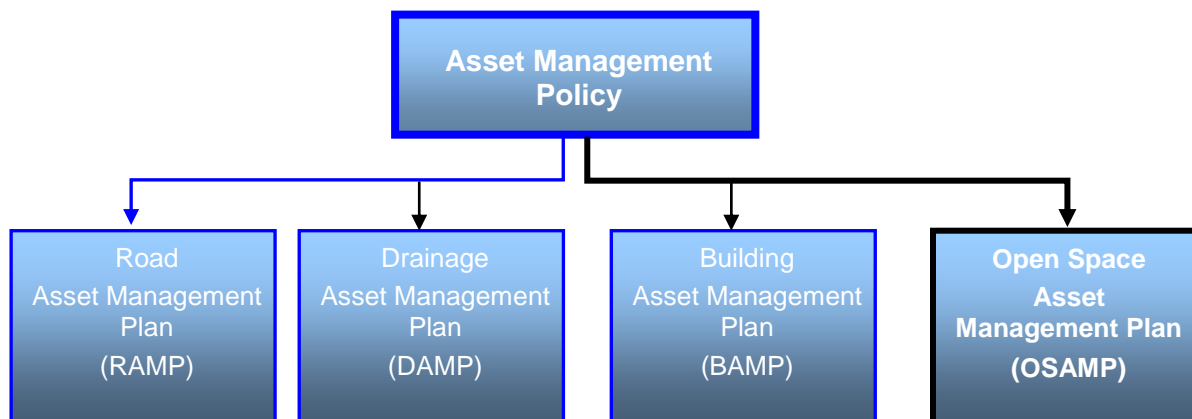


Figure 2.2 – Asset Management Plans

2.3 Background

2.3.1 Overview of the open space system

Open space is a valuable asset in any community and the City of Darebin is fortunate to have an impressive network of community, formal and sporting parkland along with creek corridors and bushland sites. The community places a high value on open space and a broad range of spaces are important in meeting diverse community needs, including an extensive Road Reserve / Streetscape network.

The City of Darebin has over 800 hectares of parks and reserves. Bordered by the Darebin and Merri Creeks, the City of Darebin contains a diverse range of open spaces, ranging from small, local parks up to major regional parklands such as the All Nations Park in Northcote and Bundoora Park in Bundoora. Added to this are environmentally sensitive areas such as the Central Creek Grasslands, the Wildlife Reserve at La Trobe University and the Leamington Street Wetlands.

Open space is defined as the range of public spaces that provide landscape and/or urban design features and are for rest, relaxation and recreation and/or for the preservation of environment. Open space also provides visual amenity and includes the natural landscape / bushland areas and vegetation corridors.

Streetscapes are a significant feature in the open space network and make up a large percentage of open space in the form of retail activity centres, residential streets, amenity spaces, main roads, gateways and railway corridors. These spaces are specifically included in other strategies including the Green Streets and the Retail Activity Centres Strategies. However, as open space they are included in this plan.

2.3.2 Reason for this plan

This Open Space Asset Management Plan (OSAMP) has been prepared to provide an understanding of Council's open space assets and concepts for their sustainable provision and provides a tactical approach towards a cost-effective solution that meets Council's strategic goals in the long term. It is the intention that this plan will be updated every four years.

The main purpose is to enact Council's Asset Management promise to *"Ensure that the physical assets of the City are managed effectively to balance both short term and long term objectives of the community."* The OSAMP is also:

- A tool for determining how current expenditure for these assets compares to required expenditure, for the purpose of minimising the renewal gap for long-term sustainable management of the assets.
- Providing direction with regard to where Council's Asset information sits and what direction Council should take in the data collection.
- A key driver in improving Council's Asset Management processes and practices, inclusive of direction and explanation of the knowledge base of Council's Open Space Assets.

2.3.3 Anticipated benefits of this plan

This OSAMP will assist Council in achieving this Vision/Commitment by documenting the framework by which Council will develop and deliver the efficient and responsible management of Council's open space assets by:

- Demonstrating accountability and responsible stewardship of parks and assets in open spaces
- Identifying least-cost¹ options to provide agreed levels of service
- Improving the citizens', users' and Council's understanding and interpretation of service levels
- Providing the basis of trade-off options and service standards
- Assisting with an interdisciplinary asset management approach throughout Darebin Council;
- Improving customer satisfaction, user perceptions and Council's image
- Providing the basis for long-term financial planning
- Managing the risks of asset failures and risks of capacity failures
- Assisting the development of long-term capital programs; and
- Assisting with an objective decision making process, based on costs, options and alternative assets

This OSAMP will provide a framework that delivers the ongoing development of the management processes and practices of Council and will be subject to continual review, modification and expansion as the knowledge and capability of Council and other stakeholder's increases.

¹ Least cost implies an optimised life cycle approach using whole of life and demand analysis.

2.3.4 Relationship with other planning documents

Darebin City Council has recognised that a corporate approach is essential to achieving sustainable Asset Management and cannot be delegated solely to technicians. If the renewal and maintenance challenge is to be met, it will be by senior management taking a corporate wide and service outcome focus. For this reason strategic and corporate wide information is produced and assessed at a senior management level.

Figure 2.3 below illustrates how the Open Space Asset Management Plan fits with other planning documents in Council's overall strategic approach to Open Space Management.

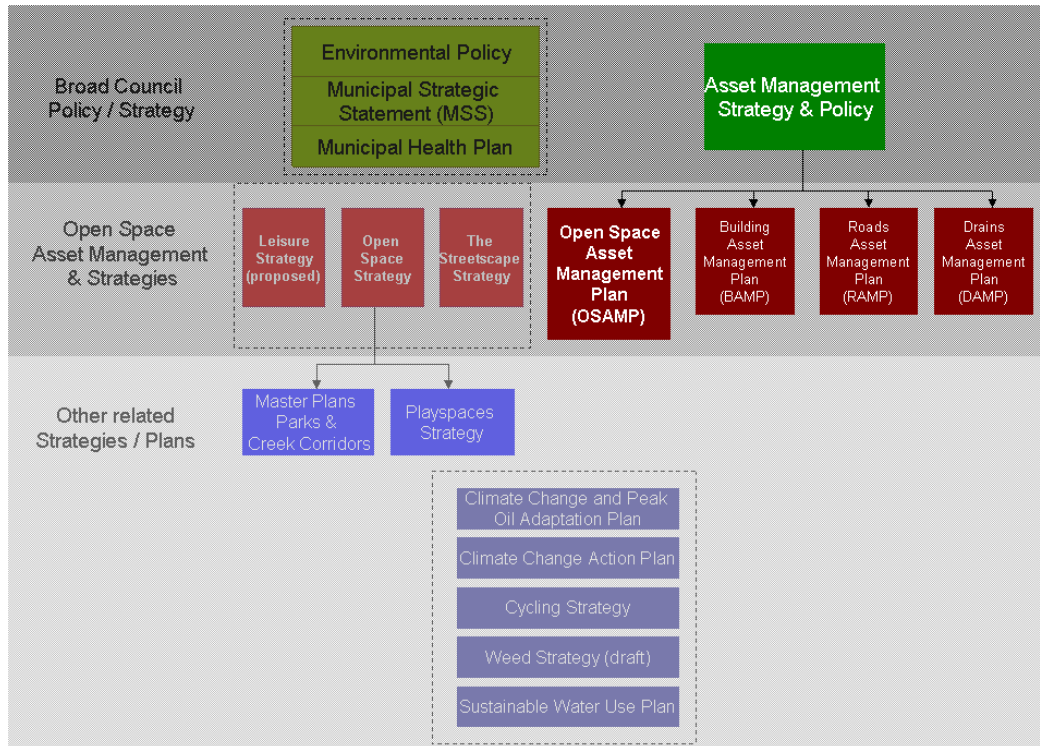


Figure 2.3 – Council's Overall Strategic Approach

Council Plan 2009-2013

Statement of Intent

"As a democratic and accountable local government, we will strive in all that we do to achieve fairness, through innovative and progressive leadership that respects and reflects our diverse community."

Broad Council Policy / Strategy

Asset Management Policy and Strategy – 2005

The development and endorsement of these documents demonstrate Council's commitment to support and achieve sustainable asset management practices. This has also enabled the preparation of long term financial plans rather than just an annual budget. The asset management policy and strategy are currently under review. (Refer Section 2.2 for broader Asset Management information).

Environmental Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for Darebin to contribute to the achievement of sustainability. Council will become a leader in this field by aiming for its own operations to be ecologically, socially and economically sustainable and to be a sustainability promoting organisation.

Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS)

The City of Darebin's Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) outlines the strategic planning vision for Darebin and identifies the challenges and opportunities confronting the City, both now and into the future. Cultural diversity, environmental sustainability, business investment and infrastructure planning are all recognised as key elements for effective planning.

The MSS is a medium term (5-year) strategic plan which is reviewed annually and sets the future direction for the way that the municipality will physically develop. In doing so it provides the strategic justification for the detailed controls contained within the planning scheme. The MSS also sets the framework for Council's ongoing town planning and policy development activities.

Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009-2013 (formerly Municipal Health Plan)

The Community Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009-2013 provides a four-year strategic framework for the City of Darebin and identifies the key health and wellbeing concerns in the municipality and strategies to address them over the coming years. The Plan includes things like quality of life, feeling connected to your community, emotional health, work/life balance, cultural acceptance and, importantly, happiness. The plan also acknowledges that health and wellbeing is influenced by the world around us so it aims to look at the social, cultural and economic factors that affect health and wellbeing, as well as the aspects of the environment that support people to lead healthy lives and adopt healthy behaviours.

Open Space Asset Management & Strategies

Open Space Strategy - 2008

The Darebin Open Space Strategy 2007 – 2017 (DOSS) contains the key analysis and directions for open space provision. While the Darebin open space system generally has good quantity and quality, represented by diverse character and distribution, significant further improvements need to be made. The Strategy makes recommendations for the development and implementation of master plans, improvements in access to and provision of open space.

The Streetscape Strategy 'Greenstreets' - 1995

The 'Green Streets Strategy' has been a valuable Council document which has been supported financially and been successfully implemented over the past 14 years.

The Strategy has provided strategic direction for streetscape design, furniture and fixtures, lighting, tree maintenance, traffic treatments and street tree species selection throughout the City of Darebin. The streetscape success of the strategy has been the associated Street Tree Planting, Capital Works Program. The Strategy has evolved and now considers climate change, species selection, water supply and application, Melbourne 2030, Tree Retention Policy, and other strategic strategies and policies. The Strategy is now under review to fully consider these influences and formalise Council's position in a new adopted strategy proposed for late 2011.

Improvement Plan Issue No 1

Continue the review and update The Streetscape Strategy. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.

The Leisure Strategy (proposed)

The proposed Leisure Strategy will guide the planning and direction of sport and recreation in the City of Darebin over the next 10 years. There have been significant changes in sport and recreation over the past 10 years so the new Leisure Strategy will be developed to reflect current trends and meet the sport and recreation needs of all Darebin residents. The Leisure Strategy will replace Leisure Plan and Sport in the North Strategy adopted in 1999 which have been the major planning tools used to provide sport and recreation in the municipality for the past 10 years. The Strategy is scheduled for completion in 2010.

Improvement Plan Issue No 2

Continue the development of the Leisure Strategy. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1

Other related strategies and plans

Master Plans Parks & Creek Corridors

Master Plans and Review of parks and creek corridors form part of on-going renewal and planning for these open space assets, including Merri Creek Trail Review, Bundoora Park Masterplan. The adoption and review of these documents is on-going.

Playground Strategy – 1999

The current strategy is under review and a new Playspaces Strategy is being prepared. A project plan has been completed and the project is well underway. A project Steering Group is active.

Consultation has been undertaken, a Position Paper prepared, a Literature Review is completed. An audit of all playgrounds is underway and near completion. The first Draft of the Strategy is being written now. It is scheduled to be completed in 2010.

Improvement Plan Issue No 3

Review and update the Playground Strategy. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.

Cycling Strategy – 2005

The Darebin Cycling Strategy (DCS) contains the directions for the provision of cycling facilities within Darebin. The objectives of the strategy include;

“To extend both on road and off road facilities within Darebin to provide a comprehensive and connected network that meets the need of cyclists of all abilities and ages and links with the wider metropolitan network.”

Climate Change and Peak Oil Adaptation Plan (2009)

The aim of the Climate Change and Peak Oil Adaptation Plan is for Council to mitigate risks and adapt to the impacts of climate change and peak oil within Council operations and its community support services. There is a number of key actions from the plan specific to Open Space assets that are outlined in section 4.4 of this document.

Sustainable Water Use Plan - 2008

The Sustainable Water Use Plan (SWUP) has been developed in recognition of increasing concerns about the long term availability of reliable and high quality water resources in Australia. The recent drought conditions experienced across many areas of Australia have highlighted how fragile our water resources can be. Unreliable future supplies have the potential to result in significant detrimental economic, social and environmental impacts for Melbourne and beyond. Only through adopting a strategic and comprehensive response to the current use of our water resources can we create certainty for future generations.

This SWUP sets out the City of Darebin's strategic approach to ensuring sustainable water resources, to be used by all. By accepting our responsibility as a key player in a larger equation, we have taken on the challenge of evaluating and modifying current Council practices and encouraging our citizens to do likewise.

Climate Change Action Plan (2007 - 2009)

The Climate Change Action Plan aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Council's own operations. Effective management of energy use, primarily for lighting, in open space and ensuring that all upgrades and new installations are as efficient as possible will form an important contribution to Council's financial and greenhouse management.

Darebin Planning Scheme

The planning scheme sets out policies and requirements for the use, development and protection of land. The scheme consists of written documents, maps and plans that contain;

- The objectives of planning in Victoria
- Purposes of a planning scheme
- A user guide
- A State Planning Policy Framework
- A local Planning Policy Framework
- Zone and overlay provisions
- Particular provisions
- General provisions
- Definitions
- Incorporated documents

Fire Management Plan 2007

The aim of the Fire Management Plan is to create a safer community for the residents and communities of the City of Darebin. The linear reserves of the Merri and Darebin Creeks and the Gresswell Forest area are open space in the city that are particularly important in this area of management. The plan is due for renewal in 2010.

2.3.5 Infrastructure assets included/excluded in this plan

The following is a list of Open Space assets that are considered in this plan that are owned or managed by DCC (including under agreement);

- Parks & Reserves
- Ticket boxes, coachboxes, scoreboards & picnic shelters in sports open space areas;
- Playgrounds in park and open space areas;
- Wetlands & Edwardes Lake (not weirs)
- Creek Corridors (not including waterways)
- Retention systems
- Irrigation systems in parks
- Furniture in parks, open space areas and road reserves, including seats, tables, bins, signs, dog bag dispensers, drinking fountains and bike racks

- Paths, bollards and fences in parks and open spaces areas
- Sportsfields and sporting infrastructure e.g. cricket nets and goal posts
- Trees, planting areas and grass lands in parks and open space areas.
- Trees in road reserves, parks and open space areas
- All 'green assets' within road reserve (excluding naturestrips in residential properties and any median strips on Vic Road owned Roads)
- Golf Courses (excluding buildings and structures)
- Coopers Settlement (excluding buildings and structures)
- Darebin Parklands
- Lighting in parks and open spaces, including sports lights
- Leachate and methane gas systems

The following are open space related assets that are not considered in this plan but are included in other Asset Management Plans, they include;

- Bridges – Road and Parks (RAMP);
- Public Toilets (BAMP);
- Golf Courses Building & Structures (BAMP);
- Coopers Settlement Building & Structures (BAMP);
- Sports Pavilions/ Complexes (BAMP);
- Aquatic Recreation & Leisure Centres and Sports Stadiums/Centres (BAMP);
- Shade & Sail Structures (BAMP);
- Storage Sheds (BAMP);
- Landscaped residential naturestrips (N/A);
- Shared paths (RAMP);
- Stormwater management (DAMP);
- Lighting (BAMP)

Some buildings and other assets are located within parks and reserves. Only the assets which fall within the building envelope and associated infrastructure are included in the BAMP. Further analysis is required to determine whether allocating these assets to the BAMP, RAMP, DAMP or the OSAMP provides the best outcome.

Improvement Plan Issue No 4

Explore the benefits of whether assets in parks and sports fields, including BBQ's, toilet blocks, scoreboards, stormwater, lighting and shared paths etc., should be included in next version of this Asset Management Plan or another Asset Management Plan, such as Road, Building or Drainage. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.

While all parks and reserves managed and maintained by the City of Darebin are included in this plan, consideration needs to be given to Bundoora Park. This regional park is crown land and is managed by DCC under agreement with the state government. The cost for management, maintenance and renewal of assets within this park is fully borne by DCC. Given its status as a regional park, further investigation of this issue needs to be completed.

Improvement Plan Issue No 5

Investigate issue of on-going costs associated with maintenance and renewal of Bundoora Park assets given its status as a regional park. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.

2.3.6 Key stakeholders in the plan

There are both external and internal key stakeholders involved with this asset management plan. It is recognised that many other departments of Council have a key interest in this plan as either users of the asset and some as providers of other services to the Community. The order of the list does not represent any priority but rather is a general list of all parties concerned.

External Stakeholders

External Body	Type	Expectations/Responsibilities
Ratepayers / Residents	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary users of open space, parks and sports facilities within Darebin
Melbourne Water	State Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional drainage authority responsible for floodplain and waterway management in creeks. Referral Authority for development along waterways.
Parks Victoria	State Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional park authority.
Darebin Parklands (part of Darebin Creek management committee)	Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of Darebin Parklands
Consultants / Contractors	Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design approvals, protection of assets (permit to work). Operate Council facilities. Undertake maintenance services and capital renewals / upgrade works for open space and park assets.
Developers	Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vesting of new open space assets (includes private and public / government owned).
Business / Trader Groups	Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for provision of open space in urban areas.
Service providers	Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of services such as gas, water, sewer, phone in streets
Sports Clubs	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of formal and informal areas for sporting activities and recreation.
Peak Sporting Bodies	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service level expectations of open space areas and park assets.
Friends Groups	Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the quality of open space for flora,

		fauna and users.
Management Committees	Local Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the quality of open space for flora, fauna and users especially creek corridors.
Civic Mutual Plus (CMP)	Insurance body for all Victorian Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting and identification of specific requirements that need to be met to minimise insurance costs, e.g. adoption of risk management guidelines, effective application for pro-active inspection regime.
Office of the Chief Electrical Inspector	State Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Powerline Clearance Management Plan
Department of Primary Industries	State Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pest, plant and animal control.
VicRoads	State Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of declared main roads
Department of Sustainability & Environment	State Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management of remnant vegetation.

Internal Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Department	Expectations/Responsibilities
Councillors/Senior Mgt	n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible management and reporting
Asset Strategy	Community Assets & Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term capital works planning Preparation for Leases Preparation of Valuation Report Purchase and dispose of Open Space
Capital Works	Community Assets & Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and construction standards achieved Assessment and supervision of subdivision developments Implementation of Capital Works Program
Facilities Maintenance	Community Assets & Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building maintenance
Street Cleansing	City Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car park sweeping
Customer Service	Corporate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer Requests/Complaints Communications
Statutory Planning	City Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning controls e.g. Special Building and Land Subject to Inundation Environmental significance overlays
Financial	Corporate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long term financial planning

Services		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuation and depreciation • Fixed asset register
Information Services	Corporate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical Information System • IT support
Darebin Parks	City Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of playgrounds and other parks related assets • Collection of waste from parks and reserves • Maintenance of parks, reserves, gardens and open space • Maintenance of car parks, drains in parks and services • Maintenance of all trees within parks and streets. • Maintenance of bushland and creek corridors • Maintenance of all sporting open space • Development and implementation of Capital Works program
Open Space Planning	Community Assets & Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, research and advice on matters in relation to open space asset needs. • Strategy and policy development and maintenance guidelines • Management plans • Park master plans • Development and implementation of Capital Works program • Development and implementation of Operational Programs (tree planting) • Development and implementation of Establishment Maintenance Programs (Street Trees).
Leisure Services	Community Assets & Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and policy development for open space and related assets. • Management of sporting facilities including liaison between Council and sporting Clubs.
Collection Services	City Services	Collection of waste from parks and reserves bins.
Community Services	Communities & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice on youth and family needs for access to and from facilities and open space.

2.3.7 Organisational Structure – Open Space

Within Council, there are three main departments that are directly involved with the management of open space. They are;

- **City Services** – operation, maintenance and repairs
- **Community Assets & Leisure** – planning, design, construction and supervision
- **Corporate Services** – customer service request processing, GIS/IT support and financial

2.3.8 Plan Timeframe

This OSAMP has been developed to cover a 20 year timeframe. It is envisaged that the plan will be periodically reviewed and revised during that time.

2.4 Goals and Objectives of Asset Ownership

2.4.1 Reasons and justification for asset ownership

Council's main purpose is the supply and delivery of services to the community that meet the needs of that community. One of these services is for the provision of open space provisions. In order to accomplish this, an extensive open space network has been progressively developed and built up over a number of years. This represents a large investment made by the community, and at last valuation, the fixed assets were valued at over \$53 million and the land was valued at \$ 230 million

The City of Darebin has in excess of 65,000 street trees with a replacement value of over \$25 million and an amenity value of approximately \$65 million.

2.5 Plan Framework

The structure adopted for this Asset Management Plan is based on the framework recommended by the International Infrastructure Management Manual - Version 3 2006.

2.6 Core and Advanced Asset Management

As this is the first version of the OSAMP for open space, it was decided to take a basic asset management approach by addressing each section of the plan only to the extent possible, given the data, systems and processes immediately available. This involved taking a lifecycle approach and using the best available information to provide;

- existing levels of service
- 20 year financial projections for maintenance, rehabilitation and renewal
- documentation of current practices and procedures
- development of an AM improvement plan

Future versions of this OSAMP will employ more advanced AM techniques based on condition monitoring such as asset deterioration (predictive) modelling and optimised decision-making (ODM) techniques in order to evaluate options and identify the optimum long-term AM plan to deliver a particular level of service.

The sophistication of this OSAMP will improve incrementally to an optimum level, appropriate to the needs of Darebin. As the asset information system and other AM processes are enhanced, more detailed data on asset condition, performance and cost will become available.

		Asset Management							
Maturity Level	Score	Clear and Shared Goals	Levels of Service	Future Demand	Lifecycle Management Plans	Financial Summary	AM Practices	AM Plan Implementation	Plan Improvement and Monitoring
Excellent	100								
	95								
	90								
	85								
Competent	80	■		■	■	■		■	
	75	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	70	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	65	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	60	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	55	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Developing	50	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	45	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	40	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	35	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Aware	30	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	25	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	20	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	15	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Unaware	10	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	5	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

 Current Status
  5 Year Target

Figure 2.4 - Gap Analysis in Open Space Asset Management

This figure provides a snapshot of Council’s present OSAM status, and is useful in determining where gaps exist.

With the implementation of a number of initiatives, including the production of this asset management plan and the introduction of an asset management information system, a significant improvement in this score will be achieved.

2.7 Open Space Categories

The Open Space Strategy describes 9 different categories of open space. This recognises the diversity of open space in the municipality and also recognises different management and maintenance requirements.

Open space categories are intended to describe the opportunities for various types of uses and activities. The categories are:

- Parkland
- Formal parkland
- Conservation parkland
- Linkage
- Sporting
- Conservation bushland
- Landscape amenity / streetscape
- Urban space
- Wetlands

Brief details on these categories are listed in the Appendix. Refer to pages 33 & 34 of the Open Space Strategy for more detail.

3 Levels of Service

3.1 Background

The community expects that Council will maintain open space at appropriate levels at minimum cost by doing the right work at the right time using the most efficient methods. In general 'Level of Service' (LOS) is a term used to describe the quality of services or standard provided by the asset under consideration.

Levels of service provide the basis for the life cycle management strategies and works program identified within the AMP. They support the Organisation's strategic goals and are based on customer expectations and statutory requirements.

The levels of service adopted for this plan are the documentation of what Council are currently delivering to the community. This has been developed through consultation with the community over a number of years. However, this will be progressively refined over of time, continuing to strike a balance between the expectation of customers and the resources available.

Improvement Plan Issue No 6

Review, determine, agree and document service levels on all assets referred to in this Asset Management Plan. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.

Improvement Plan Issue No 7

Continue to review and consult with customers and stakeholders over service level on all assets referred to in this Asset Management Plan. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.

The levels of service in this Section will be used:

- to inform customers of the proposed type and level of service to be offered;
- to identify the costs and benefits of the services offered;
- to enable customers to assess suitability, affordability and equity of the services offered;
- as a measure of the effectiveness of the AM Plan, and;
- as a focus for the AM strategies developed to deliver the required level of service

The levels of service outlined in this Section are based on:

- Community Research and Expectations
- Information gathered from customers on expected quality and cost of services
- Strategic and Corporate Goals, such as Open Space Strategy, management plans
- Legislation, Regulations, Environmental Standards and Industry and Australian Standards that impact on the way assets are managed.

- Design Standards and Codes of Practice

3.2 Customer Research and Expectation

Levels of Service provide the platform for all subsequent decisions for the management of the open space infrastructure. It is recognised that there is often a difference between community expectation and the level of service being provided. The challenge for the Council through consultation with the relevant stakeholders is to set targets which are achievable and can be afforded. The need for community education and information to assist in assessing relative priorities and preferences, as well as need for leadership in informing the community of the reasons why certain actions are or are not taken must be acknowledged. Therefore, before determining the level of service the following must be considered:

- Required corporate goals;
- Minimum legislative requirements;
- Technical constraints;
- Community preferences/priorities
- Availability of Funding and Human resources

This Plan builds on the assumption that existing levels of service targeted by Council are generally to the satisfaction of the users, as indicated on the annual satisfaction surveys, and by virtue of the fact that complaints in relation to everyday performance of the assets by and large are minimal. The results of these surveys have been considered in the determination of the level of service and can be found later in this section.

Furthermore, consideration of local knowledge and a detailed analysis of Council's Customer Request System have shown that the items of greatest concern to the community with respect to open space infrastructure are (in no particular order):-

- Maintenance of parks & reserves
- Trees along roads
- Tree pruning
- Tree removal
- Tree planting

3.2.1 Community Satisfaction Surveys

The Council and DVC surveys aim to provide Council with a comprehensive picture of the community's perception of Council performance overall and for the full range of services and facilities provided by Council. The sample size and methodology employed in the surveys is statistically sound and provides the results with a level of statistical significance generally greater than that obtained through other individual service specific surveys.

Below are the results of the DVC surveys for:

- Recreational Facilities
- Appearance of Public Areas

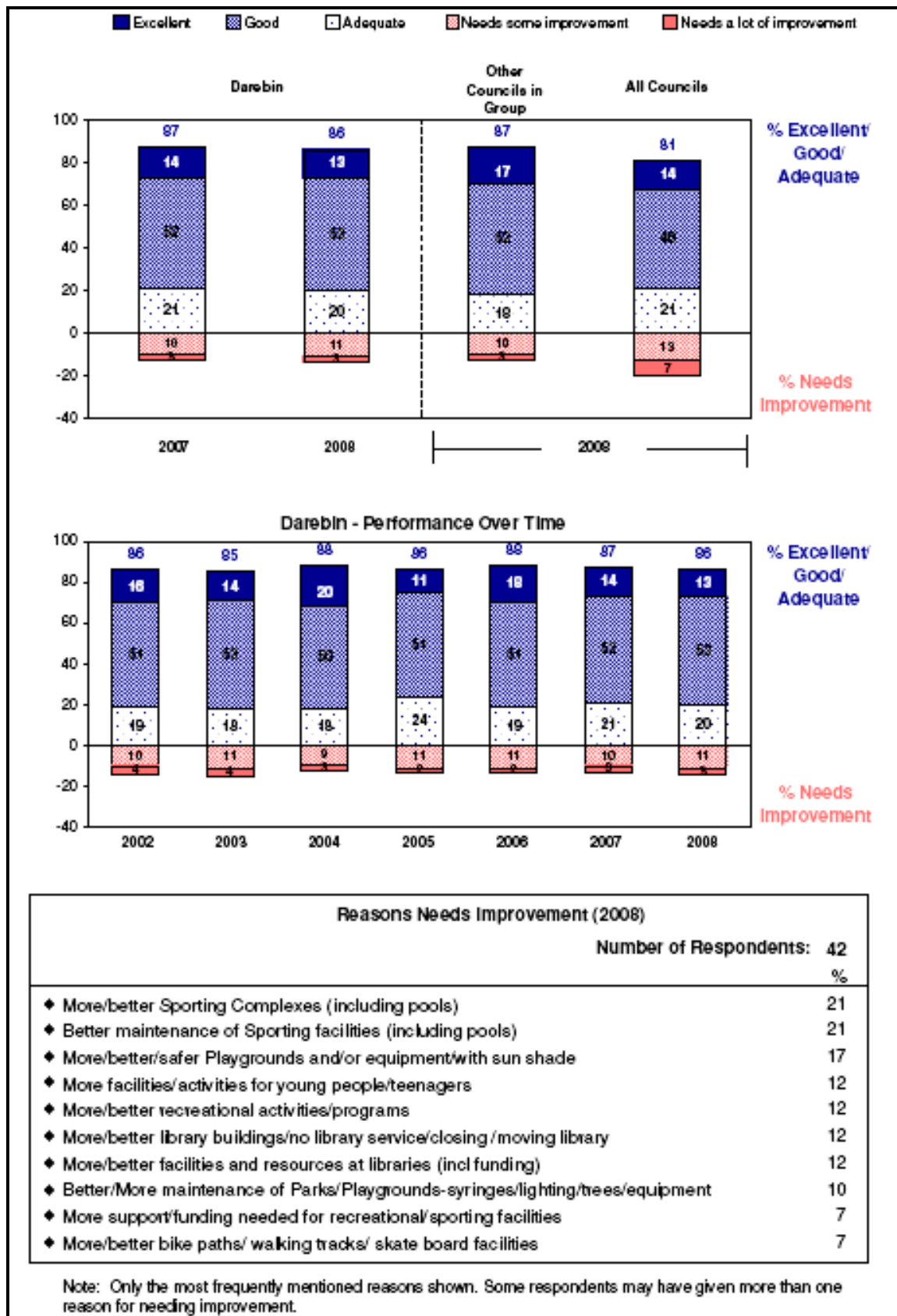


Figure 3.1 – DVC Annual Survey 2008 ‘Recreational Facilities’

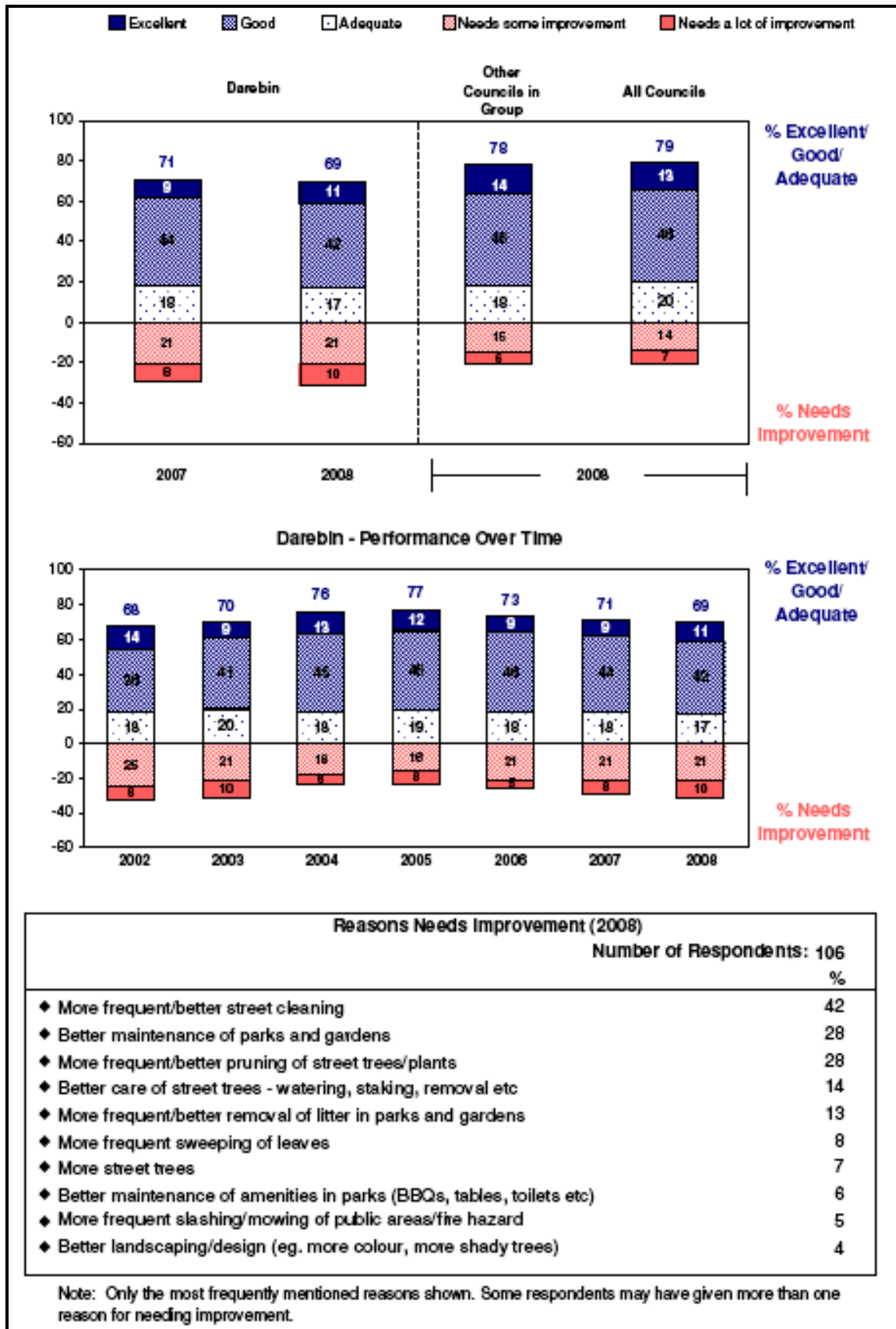


Figure 3.2 – DVC Annual Survey 2008 ‘Appearance of Public Areas’

The DVC surveys above show high levels of satisfaction with Recreational Facilities but a decrease in satisfaction levels for Appearance of Public Spaces since 2005.

Below are the results of Council's own community surveys. Note that there was no survey in 2006. The survey changed in 2007 and no measure was taken of the importance of the maintenance of parks, reserves and open space or of the importance of street trees.

The maintenance of parks, reserves and open space shows a drop in satisfaction between 1999 and 2008.

There is a similar drop in the satisfaction with street trees between 1999 and 2005.

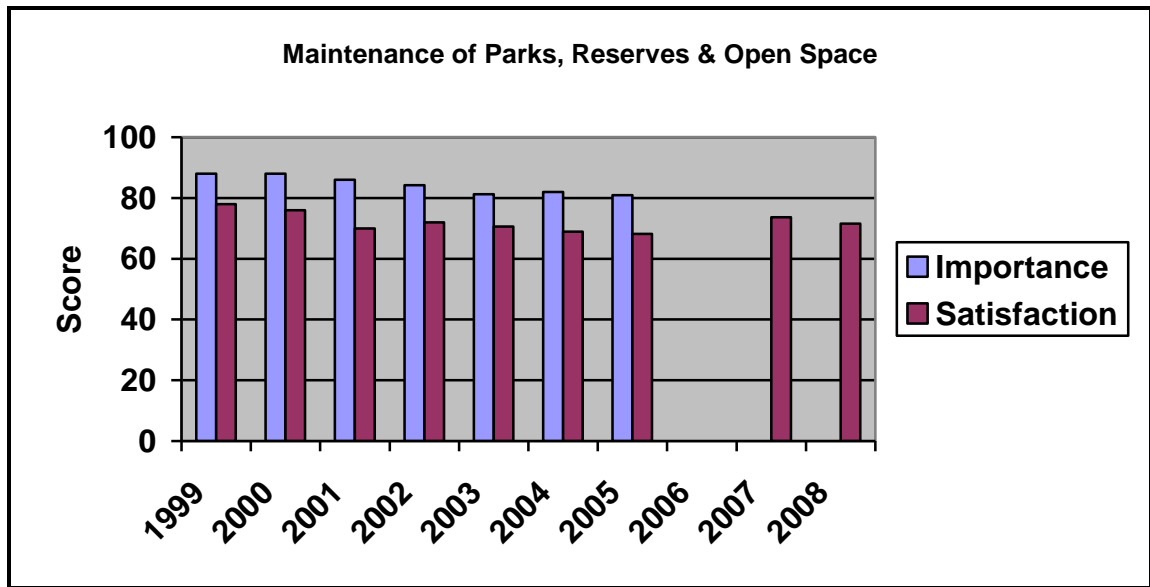


Table 3.1 – Maintenance of Parks, Reserves & Open Space

A measure of the importance placed by the community on the maintenance of parks, reserves and open space is required, just as the importance rating is taken of other Council services. While there is a some results that measure satisfaction with service levels, there is still some way to go to determine the best way to comprehensively measure this.

Current community satisfaction with levels of service is measured in three ways, The Department of Infrastructure annual survey, the City of Darebin Community Survey and the Integrated Open Space Services 'Benchmark Park User Satisfaction Survey Program'. All three surveys have merit however the IOSS survey is much more comprehensive and compares results with other municipalities.

Improvement Plan Issue No 8

Develop a suite of indicators to measure satisfaction with service levels and importance of assets and resource use (water and energy) referred to in this Asset Management Plan once service levels have been established. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.

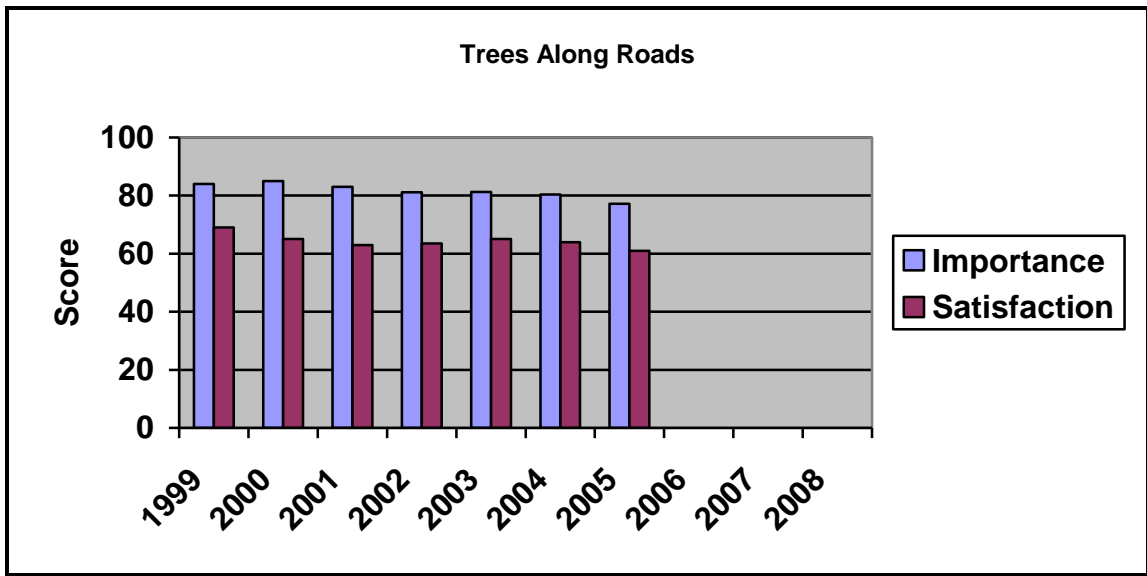


Table 3.2 – Trees Along Roads

The importance of and satisfaction with street trees was measured until 2005. A current measure of both importance and satisfaction is desirable.

Details of customer requests to parks maintenance is shown in table 3.3 below. The major request items are all tree related with the most requests being for tree pruning followed by tree removal.

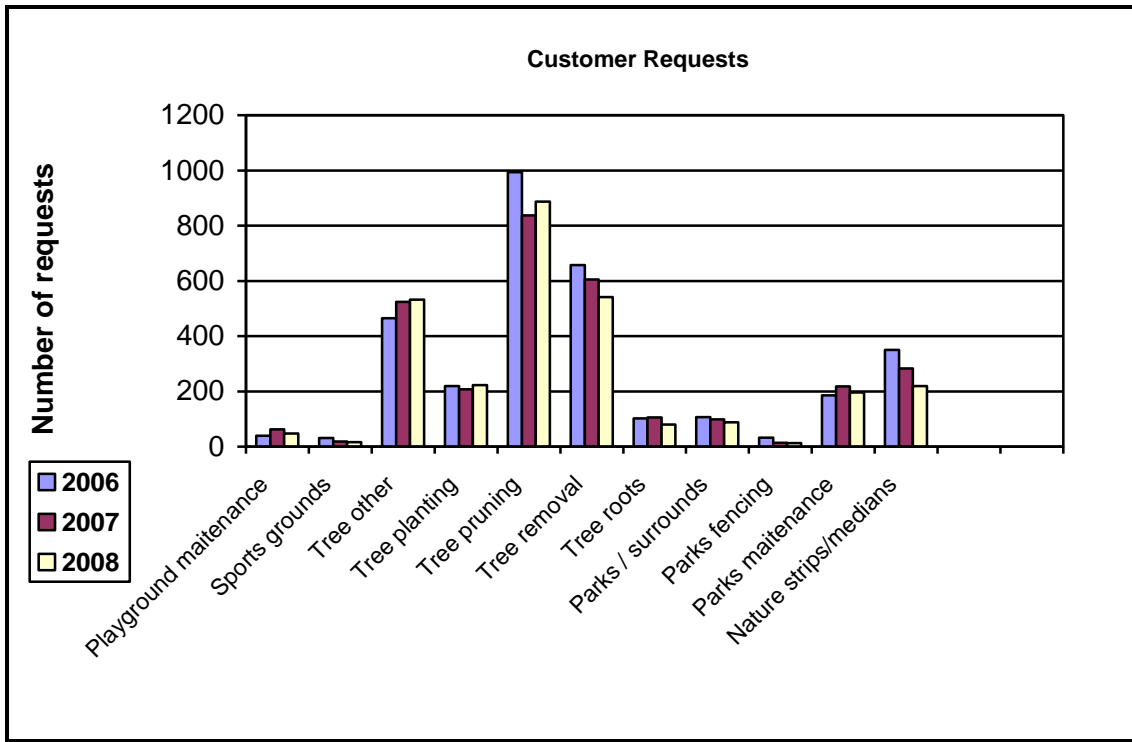


Table 3.3 – Parks Maintenance Customer Requests

Details of customer requests to Open Space Planning are shown in Table 3.4 below. As for parks maintenance, the major request items are tree related. Consideration needs to be given the allocation of resources between proactive and reactive activities, as highlighted by the high number of reactive tree pruning requests in table 3.3. Refer section 7.2 Asset Management Systems.

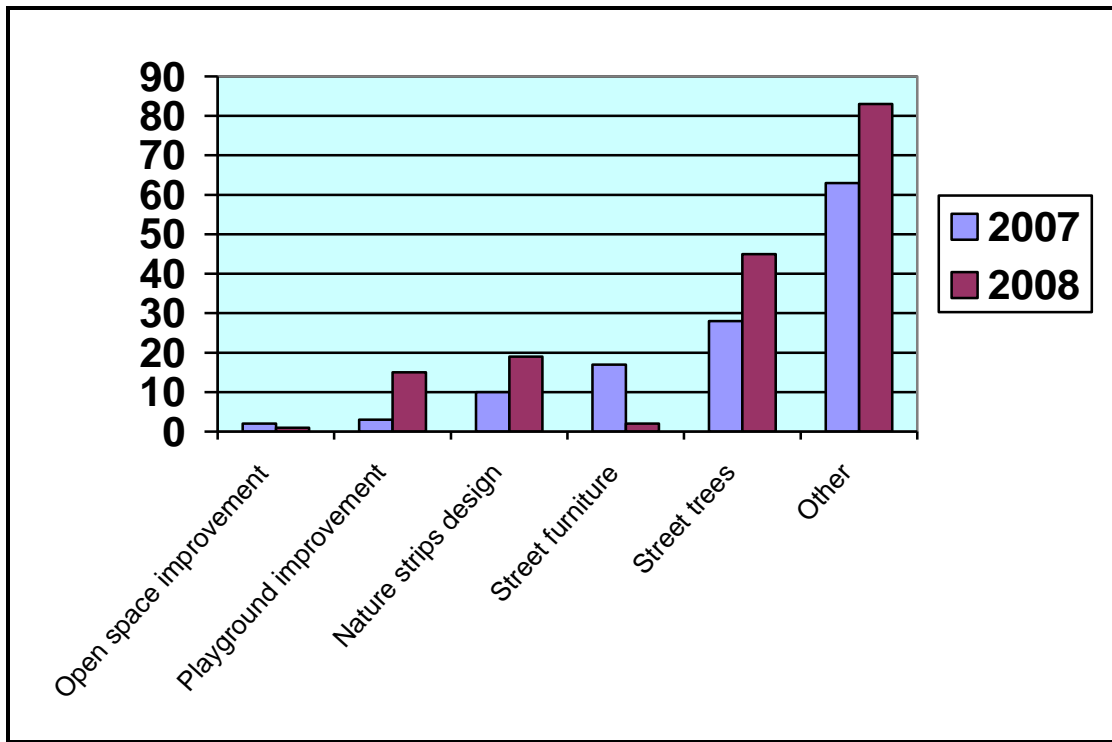


Table 3.4 – Open Space Planning Customer Requests

3.3 Strategic and Corporate Goals

Council’s Asset Management Policy

The purpose of the asset management policy is to set a broad framework for undertaking asset management in a structured and co-ordinated way. The asset management vision as defined by Council is to;

“work with the local community to set affordable standards for the quality and safety of those public assets we manage on their behalf. Further, we will acquire, dispose of and optimise the use of these assets to ensure that the overall asset base best meets these standards while not negatively impacting on future Darebin communities or the environment”.

This policy does not exist in isolation but is set within the context provided by other corporate and service plans. In particular the policy provides support to Council’s commitment towards a total Asset Management approach having consideration for other competing demands from our community.

Council Plan (2009-2013)

The following is an extract from the Council Plan demonstrating Council's commitment to asset management and long term financial planning of its infrastructure assets for the purpose of delivering services to the community;

- *We will continue to manage our existing asset base, ensuring that the city's public spaces, facilities and infrastructure is maintained to a high standard.*
- *We will continue the process of asset renewal and rejuvenation to ensure that our large and varied asset base is improved so that it can continue to meet the community's needs.*
- *We will deliver recreation and leisure facilities that provide a range of different experiences and opportunities to residents and respond to their diverse needs.*
- *We will protect and improve the city's biodiversity, natural assets and wildlife corridors, as well as promote and develop pride in the municipality's natural heritage areas and waterways.*
- *We will undertake robust long term financial planning to ensure our investment and budget decisions are responsible and position Council to continue the provision of quality programs and services.*
- *We will strive for ongoing and demonstrable efficiency improvements through performance measurement, process re-design and innovative business practices.*

Asset Management Strategy

The objectives of the asset management strategy are to develop a set of actions aimed at improving asset management throughout the organisation.

The key benefits of implementing the Asset Management Strategy are as follows:

- More efficient allocation of Capital & recurrent expenditure, making the best use of available funds
- Stronger focus on long term planning, making long term financial sustainability more achievable
- Improved customer satisfaction with agreed service levels and improved systems to respond to needs
- Improved safety – particularly public safety – by the timely identification of risks and the proactive maintenance of Assets
- Risk reduction - Identifying critical and high risk assets and ensuring these are addressed with priority
- More efficient use of maintenance funding potentially leading to extended Asset life
- Satisfying external requirements e.g. legislation under asset management and other related activities
- Improved accuracy of financial information relating to Assets, and
- Improved understanding of funding limitations and their impacts.

Risk Management Policy

The Risk Management Policy dated 3 November 2006, states the following:-

“The City of Darebin recognises that the effective management of the risks facing Council is central to the continued prosperity of our community, our organisation and our relationships with key stakeholders. Through applying a robust and consistent consideration of risk management across all our operations and activities, we will be focused on protecting the health of our staff and community, maximising the efficient use of Council's assets, understanding and complying with our obligations, and achieving Council' and Corporate objectives”.

3.4 Legislative Requirements

There are various Acts and Regulations that relate to / affect Council's Open Space operations are listed below.

Local Government Act 1989

The *Local Government Act 1989* states “to ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively and services are provided in accordance with Best Value Principals to best meet the needs of the local community”.

The Best Value principals provide a framework against which Council services are tested to:

- Confirm relevance and accessibility;
- Prove that customer expectations are being met;
- Demonstrate appropriate quality and affordability standards have been set;
- Confirm efficiency and accountability; and
- Demonstrate continuous improvement.

In accordance with these legislative requirements, Council will test the adopted levels of service periodically with residents to ensure the Best Value principals are being met.

Australian Accounting Regulations

The Australian Accounting Regulations set accounting standards for the private, public and not-for-profit sectors and participates in the formulation of international accounting standards.

Environmental Protection Act 1970

The Act is outcome oriented, with a basic philosophy of preventing pollution and environmental damage by setting environmental quality objectives and establishing programs to meet them. Over the years the Act has evolved to keep pace with the world's best practice in environment protection regulation and to meet the needs of the community.

Planning and Environmental Act 1987

The purpose of this Act is to establish a framework for planning the use, development and protection of land in Victoria in the present and long-term interests of all Victorians.

Crown Land Reserves Act 1978

This is the principal legislation dealing with the reservation and management of Crown lands in Victoria. Some Council open space reserves are on Crown land.

Electrical Safety Act 1998

This act specifies the public land manager as being responsible for keeping trees clear from electric lines.

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

The objects of this Act are—

- (a) to secure the health, safety and welfare of employees and other persons at work; and
- (b) to eliminate, at the source, risks to the health, safety or welfare of employees and other persons at work; and
- (c) to ensure that the health and safety of members of the public is not placed at risk by the conduct of undertakings by employers and self-employed persons; and
- (d) to provide for the involvement of employees, employers, and organisations representing those persons, in the formulation and implementation of health, safety and welfare standards

having regard to the principles of health and safety protection ...

Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994

The purposes of this Act include community participation in the management of land and water resources, to set up a system of controls on noxious weeds.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The Federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (D.D.A.) provides protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability. Disability discrimination happens when people with a disability are treated less fairly than people without a disability.

3.5 Current and Desired Level of Service

The service levels to be defined in this section are divided into two main types:

- Community based; and
- Technical based

Community based levels of service relate to the function of the service provided and how the customer receives the service in terms of:

- Appearance;
- Legislative Requirements;
- Availability;
- Comfort;
- Safety;
- Empathy (understanding, individual attention); and
- Assurance (knowledge, courtesy, trust, confidence)

Technical based levels of service relate to the technical measures and the outputs the customer receives in terms of:

- Quality;
- Quantity;
- Maintainability;
- Reliability and Performance;
- Responsiveness;
- Capacity;
- Environmental Impacts; and
- Cost/affordability

One of the issues encountered whilst documenting the current level of service provided is the limited information available to quantify our current performance. The introduction of the Customer Request and Asset Management System (CAMS) by late 2009 will provide data on how service requests are responded to.

CAMS is a series of modules that integrate with each other at specific points in the work flow process providing information flow and capture in different work areas. As an example, when a service request is lodged that requires works to be completed – e.g. a report of a pot hole – a works order will be created and recorded against an asset. Additionally, each Service Request type i.e. a pot hole in the road, has a dedicated response time, that when exceeded are automatically escalated to the next level. Work requests and work schedules will be incorporated in CAMS.

The collection of data is essential for a proper asset management system. The type of data required includes the number of assets and the condition of those assets.

Improvements in data collection can be assisted by the introduction of technologies such as mobile computing and integrated works management systems. It is anticipated that this will be addressed as part of the implementation of the corporate asset management information system.

Comprehensive data is currently being collected on park assets, including condition, age, type, material and location. This data collection will continue over the next two years. This data will be migrated into CAMS to form the basis of Asset Register and for the establishment of proactive maintenance routines and recording of inspection results

Improvement Plan Issue No 9

Finalise data collection for all parks and reserves and develop process for ongoing maintenance and collection. Refer to the Improvement Plan in Section 8.2.1

Improvement Plan Issue No 10

Improve the inspection, monitoring and recording process of maintenance activities. Refer to the Improvement Plan in Section 8.2.1.

Improvement Plan Issue No 11

Investigate the possible introduction of mobile computing for inspector / field staff. Refer to the Improvement Plan in Section 8.2.1

The process for developing and recording performance is shown in Figure 3.3 below:

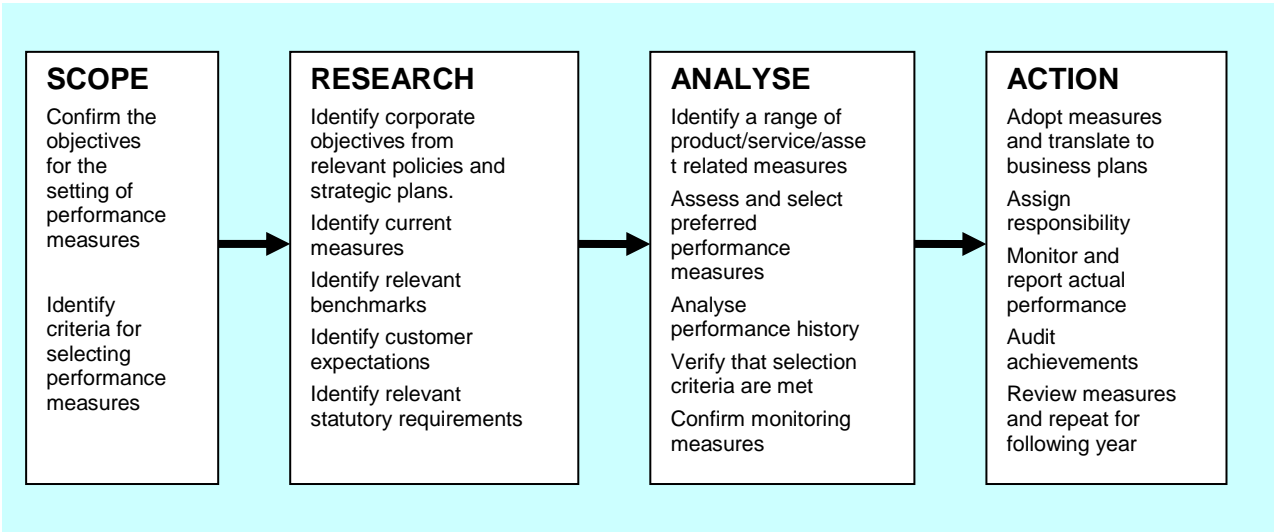


Figure 3.3 – Flow Chart for Developing and Recording Performance

Level of Service (LOS) is a term used to describe the quality of services or standard provided by the asset under consideration. Service levels usually relate to quality, quantity, reliability responsiveness, environmental acceptability and cost. Further details on the LOS for open space are listed in the Appendix.

3.6 Risk Management

Risk management is an iterative process consisting of well-defined steps which, taken in sequence, support better decision-making by contributing a greater insight into risks and their impacts. The risk management process can be applied to any situation where an undesired or unexpected outcome could be significant or where opportunities are identified. It is a process that enables Council to know about possible outcomes and take steps to control their impact. Risk Management is as much about identifying opportunities as avoiding or mitigating losses. The process is shown in Figure 3.4 below:

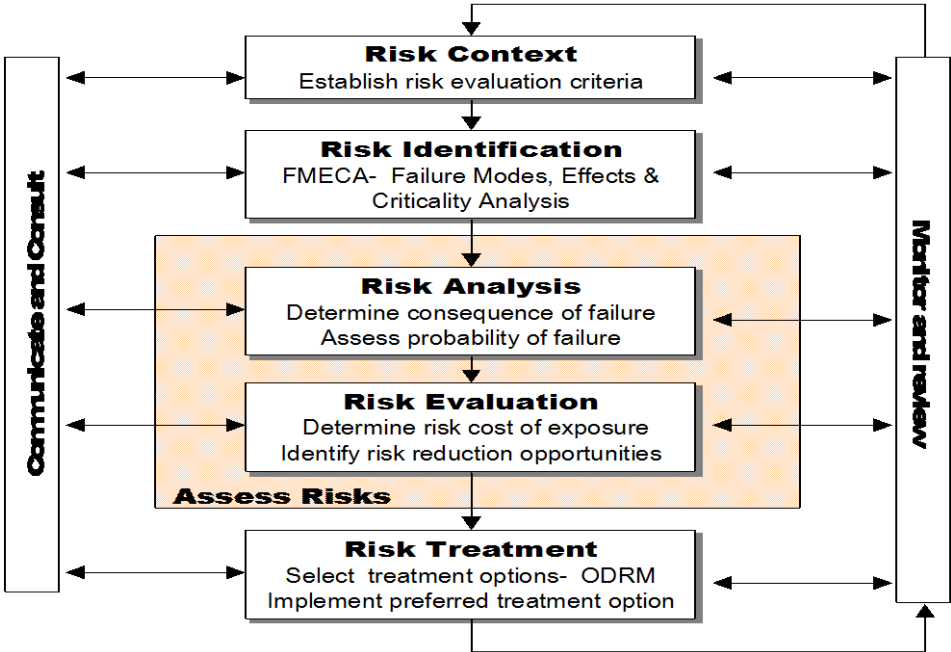


Figure 3.4 - Risk Management Process – AS/NZS 4360:2004

At the City of Darebin, risk management is recognised as an integral part of good asset management practice. Risk management has become part of Council’s culture and is integrated into the Council plan and through individual business plans. For effective management of risk, all hazards or potential exposures need to be identified. The level of risk that they pose should be analysed, and action taken to avoid or manage unacceptable levels of risk. A risk is defined as:

*“the chance of something happening that will have an impact upon objectives. It is measured in terms of **consequences** and **likelihood**.” Where;*

Consequence is defined as the outcome of an event expressed qualitatively or quantitatively, being a loss, injury, disadvantage or gains. There may be a range of possible outcomes associated with an event; and

Likelihood, probability or frequency is a measure of the rate of occurrence of an event expressed as the number of occurrences of an event in a given time.

It is important to have an understanding of all potential exposures that Council faces. However, not all potential exposures pose a high-risk for Council. Assessing the level of risk that specific exposures represent, enables Council to prioritise risk management strategies. For example, an activity that represents a low frequency and low severity potential level of exposure does not warrant a high priority with respect to risk management intervention.

The objectives of this analysis are to separate the minor acceptable risks from the major risks, and to provide data to assist in the evaluation and treatment of these risks. This analysis is also a good

decision tool to assist in determining the response times, frequency of inspections and options for treatment of the risks identified. These processes, in combination with available resources have been considered to be the main factors in setting reasonable levels of service.

Communication and consultation are an important consideration of the risk management process. It is important to develop a communication plan for both internal and external stakeholders at the earliest stage of the process. This plan should address issues relating to both the risk itself and the process to manage it. This involves a two way dialogue between stakeholders with efforts focused on consultation rather than a one way flow of information from the decision maker to other stakeholders. It is also important to ensure that those responsible for implementing risk management, and those with vested interest understand the basis on which decisions are made and why particular actions are required. Since stakeholders can have a significant impact on the decisions made, it is important that their perceptions of risk, as well as their perceptions of benefits, be identified and documented and the underlying reasons for them understood and addressed.

3.6.1 Method of Assessing Risk

The table below provides a simplistic approach to assessing both the likelihood and consequence of risk. The relative combination of these two variables enables Council to prioritise potential exposures and consequently adopt management strategies to mitigate the risk. The table conforms to the methodology described in the Australian and New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 4360: Risk Management. The Risk score is calculated by the product of Likelihood with Consequence.

5 x 5 Risk Analysis Matrix			Consequences				
			AS 4360 Descriptions				
AS/NZS 4360			1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood - Description	Likelihood or Probability	Council Likelihood Ranking	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Rare	10%	1	1	2	3	4	5
Unlikely	30%	2	2	4	6	8	10
Possible	50%	3	3	6	9	12	15
Likely	70%	4	4	8	12	16	20
Almost certain	90%	5	5	10	15	20	25

This method is used to determine the level of risk for various operations for open space maintenance which then provided a measurable means to categorise and prioritise the risk.

Council Levels	Levels start at	AS/NZS Levels - Descriptions	Council Criticality Risk Descriptions
A	20 - 25	E – Extreme	Extreme Risk - immediate action required
B	15 - 19	H – High	High Risk – senior management attention required
C	10 - 14	M – Moderate	Moderate Risk – management responsibility must be specified
D	5 - 9	L – Low	Low Risk – manage by routine procedures
E	1 - 5	L - Low	Insignificant Risk – manage if available resources are available

Furthermore, this risk assessment is performed on all projects in the long term Capital Works program and in combination with a weighted score is used to rank the works from highest to lowest. This allocates priority to projects of highest risk to Council and ensures full consideration is given to the need to balance costs, benefits and opportunities. It is believed that this process provides a mechanism for identifying large reductions in risk with relatively low expenditure. Where the cumulative cost of implementing all the projects in the Capital program exceeds the available budget, the priority is determined by a combination of risk ranking and weighted score analysis. Projects which cannot be implemented within the limit of available budget must either await the availability of further financial resources or, a case needs to be made to secure additional funds.

The above Risk Management approach is able to support Council's efforts as it provides the

following:

- A tool for managing and reducing risk before and during projects, or for on-going operational risks
- Documentation of the likelihood and consequences of identified risks, and easy monitoring of any high risks to reduce likelihood and/or consequences
- Assistance in identifying mitigation actions and the means by which those actions may be evaluated by cost and effectiveness, and the monitoring of those actions until completed
- Evidence for interested parties such as project owner, Senior Management, Council, and the legal Courts that a valid risk management framework is in place to reduce project or organisational exposures
- A mechanism to easily communicate risk management issues and seek involvement and action by people who are best able to reduce the likelihood and/or consequences of risks

Adopting the above risk management approach shows compliance with the standards and indicates the importance Council places on addressing risks to the community in a structured and organised manner that meets best practice guidelines.

3.6.2 Risk Assessment - Identify Risks and Priorities

Identifying sources of risk and areas of impact provides a framework for risk identification and analysis. Because of the potentially large number of sources and impacts, developing a generic list focuses risk identification activities and contributes to its more effective management.

Although the current risk assessment and management process currently used by Darebin is adequate, it is believed that a review will make the process more effective with better utilisation of available resources.

The ongoing management and maintenance of Leachate and Gas systems located within open space assets will continue to be managed to mitigate risk. This includes taking these systems into account in the planning and implementation of capital works and as part of maintenance and inspection regimes across Open Space assets.

4 Future Demand

This section provides details of the growth forecasts which will affect the management, provision and utilisation of open space assets within the City of Darebin.

4.1 Demand Forecast

4.1.1 Overview

The City of Darebin covers an area of approximately 53 square kilometres, stretching from Melbourne's inner northern suburbs of Northcote and Fairfield out to the traditional middle ring suburbs of Reservoir and Bundoora. With over 55,000 properties and 128,000 people residing in the municipality, it makes Darebin amongst the largest and most diverse communities anywhere in the state.

The population declined steadily from the 1970's to the late 1990's, but has grown slightly since. Current projections will see Darebin experience moderate to slow population and household growth between now and 2030. As Melbourne grows, demand for inner and middle suburban locations will increase and residential and redevelopment sites will be sought to accommodate this demand. Darebin will see a steady decline in the number of children and younger adults and an increase in older adults in all age categories over 30 years, through this period.

4.1.2 Population and Household Growth

In 2007, the total population of the City was estimated at 128,000. It is expected to increase by over 8,000 people to 136,000 by 2031, at an average annual growth of 0.27%. This is based on an increase of almost 3590 households during the period, with the average number of persons per household falling from 2.39 to 2.23.

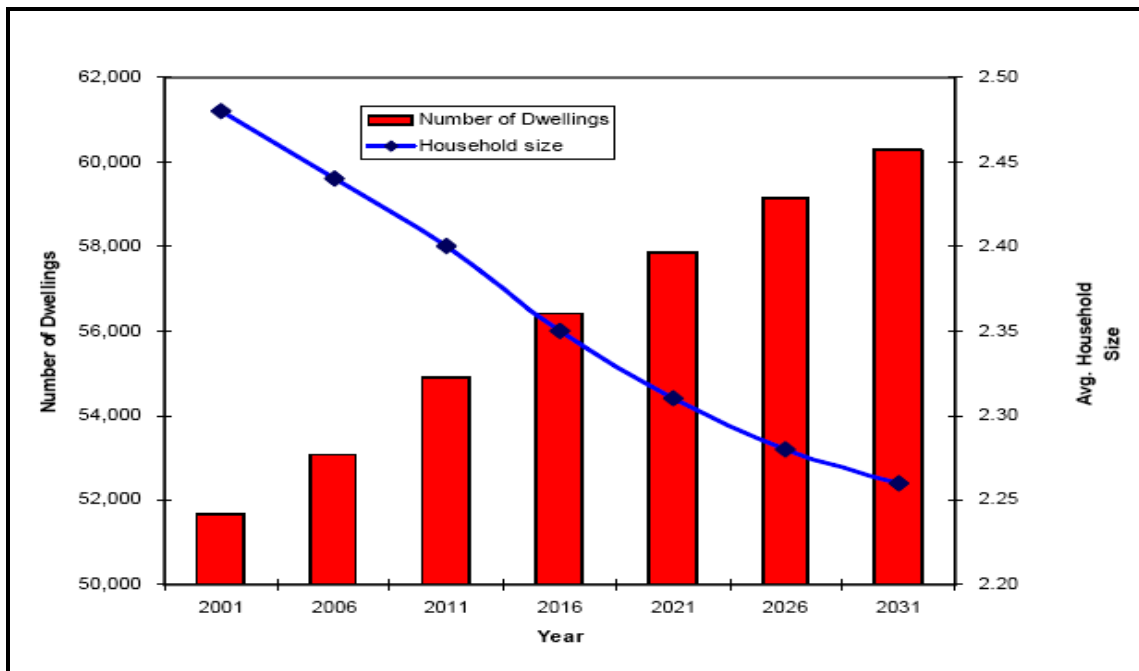


Table 4.1 – Dwellings & Household Size

4.1.3 Age Structure

The age structure of a population provides key insights into the level of demand for services, including use of sports fields and open space. The age structure of Darebin has a spread of population across most age groups. The largest age groups include the 31-35 year olds and the 36-40 year olds.

The largest group in the population are expected to be aged 30 years and over.

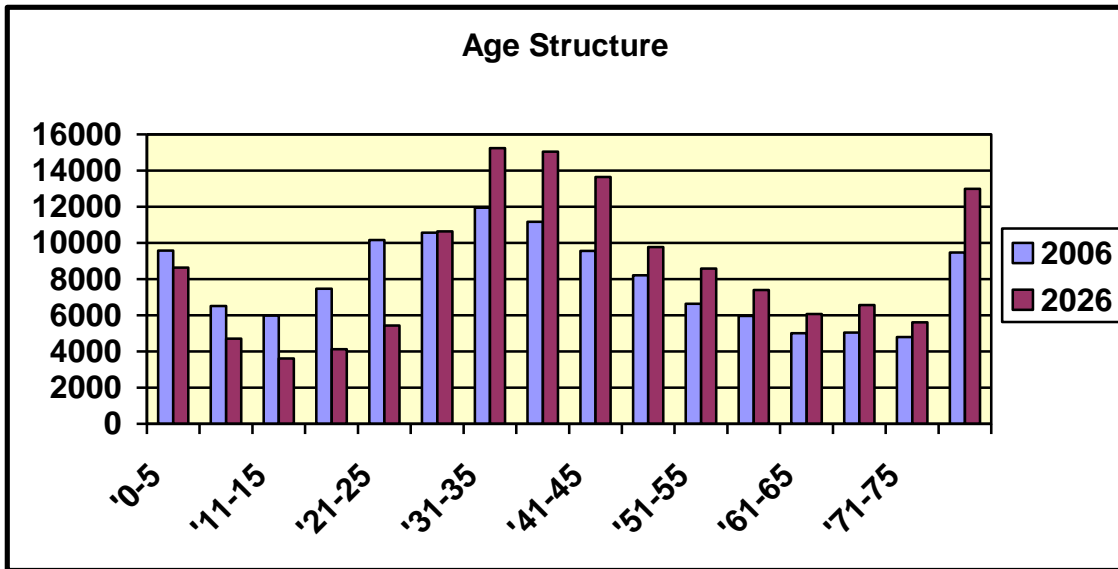


Table 4.2 – Population Profile

4.1.4 Participation

Information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007 survey) on participation in sport and physical recreation is shown in Table 4.3 below;

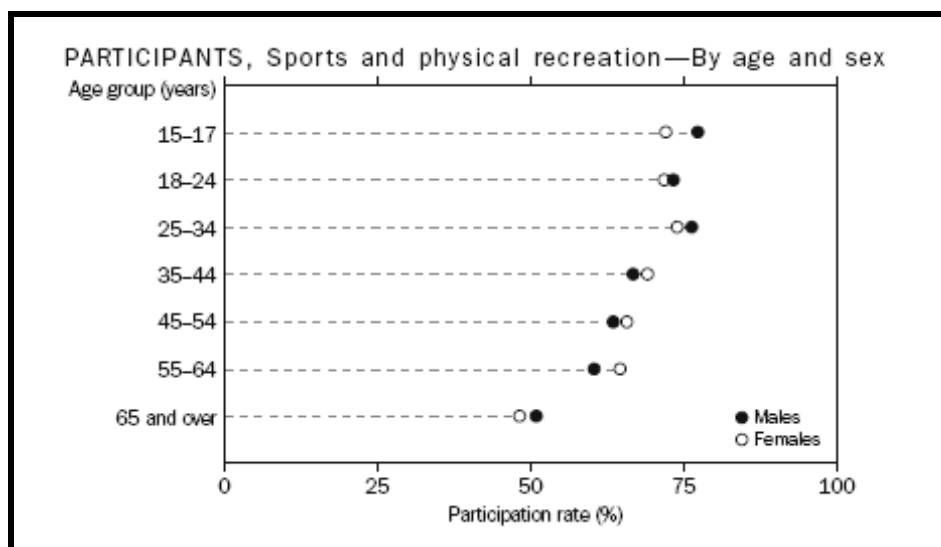


Table 4.3 – Participation by Age

4.1.5 Implications for Open Space

The changing demographics outlined above have implications for the provision of open space. These include:

- Open Space areas to be planned taking into account people of all abilities. Consideration needs to be given to the range of abilities/disabilities and associated requirements for access.
- There is a need to provide a diverse range of open space areas across a variety of settings which considers and celebrates the cultural diversity of the city.
- Family recreation areas in open space are important to encourage interaction and participation across a range of age groups.
- There is a need to provide a range of organised sporting facilities (i.e. playing fields, sports courts) and unstructured open space facilities (i.e. skate parks, half courts, bocce facilities) to cater for all residents and cultural groups.
- Open spaces should be accessible to residents across the city, particularly the high proportion of people living in flats, units and apartments.
- The preservation of amenity and environmental values along the creeks and waterways will promote continued use by pedestrian and cyclists, and help bio-diversity values.
- With the increased population and the inevitable reduction of tree canopies within private open space, the need for Council to increase and maintain healthy treed streetscapes is more important.

4.1.6 Opportunities for New Open Space

The City of Darebin is mainly a mature and well established area, providing limited opportunities for new large scale developments. It is anticipated that by 2011, all broad hectare greenfield developments, such as Mount Cooper, Lancaster Gate and Springthorpe will be completed, resulting in a reduced need for 'new' infrastructure. However, infill developments will place additional pressures on the existing infrastructure.

Reservoir, and to a lesser extent, Preston provide opportunities for infill development to occur due to generally larger allotment sizes. The older established suburbs of Northcote, Fairfield/Alphington and Thornbury have developed over a longer period of time and generally have smaller allotment size limiting the possibility of further consolidation.

The opportunities to provide additional local parks are limited and may require the purchase of existing allotments. One of the measures used by the City of Darebin to address this is with the implementation of the Development Contribution Plan (DCP). The DCP is a requirement placed on developers, and which will, in part, generate additional revenue for new or upgraded infrastructure. Further detail on the acquisition and disposal of open space is included in the Open Space Strategy page 43.

4.2 Changes in Strategy/Management

Changes in management strategies for open space include:

- Introduction of Council's Customer and Asset Management System (CAMS)
- Introduction of warm season grasses especially for sports fields
- The introduction of drought tolerant cultivars
- The use of recycled plastics instead of timber
- Water collection and reuse

- Revising plant selection during master planning

4.3 Demand Forecasts

4.3.1 Demands

Key factors affecting the demand for new open space assets and changes to existing assets are discussed in the Background Paper to and in the Darebin Open Space Strategy, and include the following:

- Residential development (subdivisional development is anticipated to decrease over the next 20 years, however more multi-unit and medium density developments are anticipated in already developed areas).
- Population growth
- Changes in population age structure

4.3.2 Changes in Customer Expectations

Council's key objective with its open space network is to improve and expand the range and quality of open space areas across a variety of settings which considers and celebrates the cultural diversity of the city.

4.3.3 Demand Management

Various Council programs and policies affect open space. These include:

- Darebin Open Space Strategy
- Darebin Green Streets Strategy
- Darebin Retail Activity Centre Strategy
- Darebin Playground Strategy
- Darebin Sustainable Water Use Plan
- Darebin Cycling Strategy
- Merri Creek & Environs Strategy 2009-2014
- Darebin Creek Master Plan

4.4 Environmental Change

4.4.1 Climate Change and Sustainability

Climate Change is a critical issue for the future of our community and has major implications for the planning and management of Darebin's open space system. The effects of reduced rainfall in conjunction with higher temperatures and the necessity to save water, along with the implications of severe weather events that are increasing in both intensity and frequency, will require a review in the approach to parks planning, development and management.

A program of converting sports fields to warm season drought tolerant grasses has commenced delivering large water savings. Management techniques such as mulching, appropriate design and low water plant selection need to continue so that our open space system reflects the changed climatic conditions.

4.4.2 Environmental Education and Leadership

Council currently provides environmental leadership through the establishment and achievement of environmental targets within Council's own operations (eg greenhouse and water reduction targets), pursuing best environmental practices across all of Council's operations and through promoting sustainability to the community. Council delivers a range of environmental education programs that provide direction on sustainable living and gardening as well as publications like the Guide to Indigenous Plants in the City of Darebin. Council will continue to scope opportunities to provide environmental education and leadership by demonstrating sustainable and low water gardens and through the utilisation of interpretive material and signage in open space. Council also contributes to the Water Watch program run through local schools.

4.4.3 The Climate Change Action Plan

The Climate Change Action Plan identifies how Council will achieve its 2010 greenhouse reduction target for Council operations (20% reduction on 1995 levels by 2010) and sets a Carbon Neutral target for 2020.

The Open Space Strategy includes a commitment to:

- the use of appropriate lighting levels in parks
- minimising ornamental lighting
- ensuring new or upgraded lighting is best practice energy efficient
- investigating stand alone solar lighting where appropriate
- new and upgraded barbecues in parks that are best practice energy efficient
- shared trail development and connectivity through the open space corridors
- the use of recycled and low embodied energy and environmentally preferable materials in park construction
- the use of low emissions vehicles in Council's parks and gardens fleet

Council is committed to continuing to reduce greenhouse emissions in addition to adapting to the ongoing reducing rainfall conditions of Climate Change.

4.4.4 Darebin Water Strategy 2007

The Darebin Water Strategy is an overarching document that reviews and incorporates Darebin's Sustainable Water Use Plan, Drainage Management Plan and Drainage Asset Strategy. Council will continue to plan and design parks for minimal water usage and will continue to investigate design methods to implement water sensitive urban design principles including:

- scope opportunities for use of open space to achieve broader storm water management outcomes that provide improved landscape amenity outcomes without loss of open space function (for example, wetland treatments as an alternative to retarding basins)
- assess which current plantings are priorities (i.e. mature trees contributing to the quality of the open space system and of value to the community) that can be reasonably maintained in ongoing drought conditions and prioritise these for mulching and watering where appropriate.
- tree planting programs with appropriate drought tolerant species will be undertaken to maintain and ideally increase the number of trees in the open space system
- avoid or minimise use of mains water and install the most efficient irrigation systems where watering is identified as a priority.
- minimise grassed areas and prioritise use of drought resistant grasses.
- Preference for indigenous plants, native plants and other drought tolerant species

- Investigate opportunities for the direction of stormwater overflows into planter swales and rain gardens in open space areas
- Investigate opportunities for the use of recycled / treated water in parks
- Investigate opportunities for the integration of underground stormwater storage tanks in parks

4.4.5 Climate Change and Peak Oil Adaptation Plan

The aim of the Climate Change and Peak Oil Adaptation Plan is for Council to mitigate risks and adapt to the impacts of climate change and peak oil within Council operations and its community support services. The key actions for this plan that impact Open Space assets include:

- Identify infrastructure and assets at risk and infrastructure that poses risk and develop long term plan to increase resilience;
- Review street tree and planting policies in relation to adaptation issues. Develop tree data base including identification and scheduled treatment of vulnerable trees including consideration of significant trees on private land. Scope opportunities for fruit and nut trees in public spaces to support urban food production
- Continue to review asset management and maintenance practices and prioritise at risk infrastructure.
- Conduct climate change impact assessment for Darebin's most vulnerable open space areas
- Continue to expand low water turf replacement in sports fields, consider artificial turf where appropriate.

A project is currently underway to collate current and future adaptation strategies based on the key recommendations outlined above. This work will be documented and provide clarity on priorities.

Improvement Plan Issue 12

Continue the work to prioritise and action the priorities for open space assets as identified in the Climate Change and Peak Oil Adaptation Plan. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1

4.4.6 Key Environmental Directions

- Management techniques in open space such as mulching, appropriate design and low water plant selection need to continue so that Darebin's open space system is more resilient to changed climatic conditions
- Council will continue to identify opportunities for environmental education and leadership through demonstration and use of interpretive material and signage in open space
- The impacts of lighting in open space will be minimised through appropriate lighting levels (best practice lumination), less use of ornamental lighting and best practice energy efficient lighting
- Council will give priority to environmentally preferred, recycled and low embodied energy materials in all open space development works
- Shared use trails and connectivity throughout Darebin will be prioritised to assist with reducing greenhouse emissions
- Council will continue to plan and design for minimal water usage and will continue to investigate design methods to implement water sensitive urban design principles

- Council will encourage development of wetlands as an appropriate treatment for stormwater management

Improvement Plan Issue 13

Continue to monitor and improve environmental practices for all assets included in this asset management plan. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1

5 Lifecycle Management Plan

This section outlines what is planned in order to manage and operate the assets at the agreed service level while optimising lifecycle costs.

5.1 Background Data

5.1.1 Asset Valuation

Asset valuation at 30 June 2008 was as follows:

	Replacement Value	Annual Depreciation	Accumulated Depreciation	Written Down Value
Parks Irrigation Equipment	\$ 4,824,251	\$ 110,756	\$ 2,995,121	\$ 1,829,130
Parks Playgrounds	\$ 3,490,478	\$ 88,691	\$ 2,091,157	\$ 1,399,321
Playing Surfaces	\$ 779,835	\$ 112,759	\$ 304,467	\$ 475,368
Paths & Biketracks	\$ 894,679	\$ 21,371	\$ 91,420	\$ 803,260
Fences	\$ 1,233,452	\$ 29,835	\$ 436,667	\$ 796,785
Other Park Structures	\$ 4,340,992	\$ 46,612	\$ 1,002,416	\$ 3,338,576
Car Parks	\$ 2,697,114	\$ 40,597	\$ 9,563,754	\$ 1,785,007
Landscaping	\$ 498,033	\$ 10,509	\$ 34,766	\$ 463,267
Sports Grounds	\$ 24,651,198	\$ 517,243	\$ 7,122,484	\$ 17,528,714
Retarding Basins	\$ 6,915,876	\$ 138,317	\$ 574,540	\$ 6,341,336
Retail Streetscapes	\$ 114,975	\$ 2,644	\$ 7,752	\$ 107,223
Total	\$ 50,440,883	\$ 410,024	\$ 24,224,544	\$ 34,867,987

Table 5.1 – Asset Valuation

Note that these figures include assets installed at Bundoora Park. Note that street trees are not capitalised and therefore not included. While current accounting standards do not consider street trees as assets, Council spends considerable sums each year on street trees. Street trees should be included in Council's assets, with a current replacement value and be depreciated as are other assets.

The site valuation of Council's reserves was \$230,042,300 at 30 June 2006.

Improvement Plan Issue 14

Review financial valuations after data has been collected for all assets included in this Open Space Asset Management Plan. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1

Improvement Plan Issue No 15

Review the process that Darebin uses for inclusion of assets in financial accounts. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.

5.2 Routine Maintenance Plan

There are two types of maintenance;

- Reactive or Unplanned maintenance - Works carried out in response to reported problems

(e.g. clearing a fallen tree)

- Proactive or Programmed maintenance - Works carried out inline with a predetermined schedule (e.g. bbq cleaning, furniture painting)

5.3 Renewal/Replacement Plan

A number of criteria have been used to assess the provision and quality of open space across Darebin. These are:

Quantity – the amount of open space that is provided across the city and within each precinct area.

Distribution – open space being provided within 500m of every residence, giving consideration to barriers that prevent access to open space.

Size of Open Space – minimum areas and widths as well as typical sizes are defined in Darebin's open space development standards to ensure that the range of community needs can be met.

Quality of Open Space – consideration of the quality of presentation plus an assessment of how well any open space matches the agreed development standards.

Opportunities / Community Needs – considers the opportunities and activities provided for plus consideration of current and future community needs.

These criteria are further explained in Darebin's Open Space Strategy.

5.4 Creation/Acquisition/Upgrade/Disposal Plan

Council can acquire new open space through a number of various activities, they include;

- Assets donated through the creation of new subdivisions or developments
- Development Contributions Scheme
- New and/or upgrading of existing assets due to issues identified from complaints received.

5.4.1 Creation/Acquisition

Donated Assets

The Subdivision Act allows Council to require a developer to provide an open space contribution of up to 5% of the area of the subdivision or 5% cash in lieu. Council can accept land when appropriately sized and located parcels are provided.

Development Contributions Scheme

Darebin has a Development Contribution Plan overlay in its planning scheme that applies to buildings and works approvals.

To ensure that adequate levels of provision for future demand are achieved, particularly with increasing residential densities, developers are required to contribute to open space acquisition and / or development. This strategy recommends developers contributing to open space development in a number of ways: -

1. Through the provision of land and the full development of Neighbourhood Parks to meet Darebin's Development Standards where the development is sufficiently large enough.
2. Through a cash contribution to allow Council to acquire and develop open space of the appropriate size and in the appropriate location.

Capital Works Program

Any new, upgrade or renewal works beyond the scope of maintenance requires an application to be made for capital funding through the capital planning process. This process has been in its current form, with minor modifications, since 2001. The process utilises a central capital works database (CAPEX) to store all projects requiring capital funding. Submissions are entered via an intranet site specifically created for this purpose.

A panel is formed to assess every individual project within each separate category. The projects are evaluated, prioritised and ranked based on the following weighted evaluation criteria;

- Community benefit
- Organisational benefit
- Fit with Council Plan
- Risk
- Financial issues
- Part of an adopted strategy
- Environmental impacts

This prioritised list is then assessed by Council's Capital Co-ordinating Group, Executive Management Team (EMT) and finally by Council for adoption.

5.4.2 Upgrade and Disposal

Council will pursue opportunities to enhance the open space system. Council has successfully implemented a number of master plans and neighbourhood open space improvements over recent years. As community expectations and needs change and environmental conditions provide new challenges, Council will upgrade existing and develop new open space according to agreed standards.

Some existing open space areas may be unsuitable and/or surplus for open space requirements.

Both the Upgrade and Disposal of Open Space is discussed in detail in the Darebin Open Space Strategy, refer pages 35, 43 and 44.

5.5 Standards and Specifications

Development standards are detailed in chapter 7 of the Open Space Strategy.

Brief maintenance standards are included in the Appendix. Detailed maintenance schedules are to be prepared and reviewed, refer to the Darebin Open Space Strategy, page 62.

Improvement Plan Issue No 16

Develop detailed service level working documents for maintenance crews to implement once service levels have been agreed to. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.

6 Financial Summary

This section contains the financial requirements resulting from all the information presented in previous sections. It classifies the types of expenditure that Darebin City Council will be undertaking and explains the issues relating to finance and models that sit behind the expenditure profiles.

The financial analysis considers both Operations & Maintenance and Capital expenditure.

6.1 Financial Statement and Projections

6.1.1 Historical Expenditure

ASSET	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE					
Renewal / Upgrade / New					
Playground Equipment	100,000	64,972	116,220	79,378	266844
Playing Surfaces	425,000	742,051	813,651	737,084	445136
Irrigation systems	80,000	63,140	89,499	137,556	78415
Street Trees	289,140	0	0	286,917	363719
Parks	510,000	708,496	934,967	833,556	1286954
Public Art	69,000	47,178	43,766	124,895	44508
Streetscapes	367,000	610,852	680,681	249,428	329871
Bikepaths / Pathways	0	0	130,245	45,264	718595
Bridges / Culverts	100,000	188,149	632,282	196,542	135049
Total Capital Expenditure	1,940,140	2,424,837	3,441,311	2,690,622	3,669,091
% Change		20%	30%	-28%	27%
OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE					
Open Space Planning Administration & Management	301,896	317,476	346,807	443,140	458,417
Yarra Bend Trust	37,884	38,680	40,188	40,992	42,808
Darebin Creek Co-ordinator	43,000	40,909	47,000	61,709	50,000
Merri Creek Management Committee	122,000	128,000	134,000	137,350	140,784
Infill Planting	110,000	119,186	120,114	129,209	0
Darebin Parklands	3,325	3,050	5,278	0	145,115
Bundoora Park Administration & Management	315,697	328,804	313,418	336,393	333,492
Coopers Settlement & Café	611,241	683,056	759,489	849,068	893,588
Bundoora Park Open Space Maintenance	274,168	316,067	368,177	366,755	372,530
Bundoora Park Golf Course	568,079	609,296	547,547	521,008	545,062
Darebin Parks Administration & Management	411,213	560,624	662,496	711,624	714,688
Northcote Golf Course			261,718	285,315	271,852
Arboriculture Management	673,831	681,293	734,534	747,056	806,303
Bushland Management	670,447	652,042	624,729	654,636	594,791
Park Maintenance	1,537,030	1,595,793	1,546,306	1,782,677	2,110,057
Park Infrastructure Maintenance	997,388	687,494	768,019	719,604	788,844
Irrigation and Oval Maintenance	470,113	583,130	625,374	747,623	649,860
Central Creek Grasslands	24,069	39,565	53,142	43,147	45,411
Weed Management	70,531	143,549	117,363	103,469	114,433
DISC Maintenance	15,904	37,041	40,126	9,558	19,008
Springthorpe & New Estates		9,754	118,308	90,459	33,940
Total Routine Expenditure	7,257,816	7,574,809	8,234,131	8,780,794	9,130,983
Income: Bundoora Park - Coopers Settlement & Café	-370,462	-378,718	-421,754	-457,425	-465,095
Income: Bundoora Park Open Space	-11,171	-10,698	-10,643	-13,266	-17,559
Income: Bundoora Park Golf Course	-681,884	-670,091	-638,660	-598,085	-682,966
Income: Northcote Golf Course			-356,494	-333,765	-343,540
Income: Darebin Parks Open Space	-10,633	-6,296	-39,465	-36,095	-22,350
Income: Bushland Management	-49,227		-2,015	-800	-2,362
Total Routine Income	-1,123,376	-1,065,803	-1,469,030	-1,439,437	-1,533,872
Net Total Routine Expenditure	6,134,440	6,509,006	6,765,101	7,341,357	7,597,111
Total Capital & Routine Open Space Expenditure	8,074,580	8,933,844	10,206,412	10,031,979	11,266,202
% Change		10%	12%	-2%	11%

Table 6.1 – Past Expenditure

6.1.2 5 Year Forecast Expenditure

Current forecast expenditure on open space assets is shown below.

ASSET	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE					
Renewal / Upgrade / New					
Playground Equipment	240,000	240,000	240,000	240,000	240,000
Playing Surfaces	772,000	656,000	802,000	815,000	830,000
Irrigation systems	83,000	121,000	130,000	130,000	135,000
Street Trees	0	95,000	90,000	95,000	100,000
Parks	1,558,000	1,201,000	1,313,000	1,300,000	1,350,000
Public Art	65,000	85,000	85,000	85,000	85,000
Streetscapes	1,040,000	1,110,000	1,415,000	1,450,000	1,500,000
Bikepaths / Pathways	20,000	150,000	200,000	250,000	250,000
Bridges / Culverts	0	95,000	90,000	90,000	90,000
Other	819,000	1,253,000	796,000	750,000	750,000
Total Capital Forecasts	4,597,000	5,006,000	5,161,000	5,205,000	5,330,000
% Change		8%	3%	1%	2%
OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE					
Open Space Planning Admin & M'ment	529,149	547,207	565,888	582,588	605,194
Darebin Creek Co-ordinator	50,738	52,006	53,307	54,639	56,005
Merri Creek Management Committee	142,861	146,433	150,093	153,846	157,692
Infill Planning	45,000	46,287	47,612	48,889	50,379
Darebin Parklands	147,139	150,817	154,588	158,453	162,414
Bundoora Park Admin & M'ment	298,075	306,368	314,927	322,867	332,874
Coopers Settlement & Café	908,712	938,324	968,927	996,723	1,033,219
Bundoora Park Open Space Management	414,244	426,523	439,214	450,711	465,885
Bundoora Park Golf Course	598,894	614,942	631,485	647,117	666,107
Darebin Parks Admin & M'ment	780,738	801,752	823,360	844,524	868,423
Northcote Golf Course	266,456	267,355	268,276	269,220	270,187
Arboriculture Management	829,121	850,735	872,986	894,412	919,469
Bushland Management	675,913	696,627	718,029	737,537	762,979
Park Maintenance	2,169,253	2,236,073	2,305,193	2,367,076	2,450,599
Park Infrastructure Maintenance	784,676	805,614	827,200	847,550	872,388
Irrigation and Oval Maintenance	742,712	762,362	782,651	801,345	825,219
Central Creek Grasslands	48,093	49,295	50,528	51,791	53,086
Weed Management	132,785	136,373	140,072	143,576	147,810
DISC Maintenance	17,283	17,715	18,158	18,612	19,077
Springthorpe & new Estates	36,592	37,507	38,444	39,406	40,391
Total Routine Expenditure Forecasts	9,618,434	9,890,316	10,170,936	10,430,879	10,759,396
Income: Bundoora Park - Coopers Settlement & Café	-538,188	-551,463	-565,069	-579,014	-593,310
Income: Bundoora Park Open Space	-17,610	-18,020	-18,440	-18,870	-19,310
Income: Bundoora Park Golf Course	-704,809	-722,304	-740,237	-758,618	-777,458
Income: Northcote Golf Course	-352,334	-350,648	-350,648	-350,648	-350,648
Income: Darebin Parks Open Space	-5,304	-5,437	-5,573	-5,712	-5,855
Total Routine Income Forecasts	-1,618,245	-1,647,872	-1,679,966	-1,712,861	-1,746,581
Net Total Routine Forecasts	8,000,189	8,242,444	8,490,970	8,718,018	9,012,815
Total Capital & Routine Open Space Forecasts	12,597,189	13,248,444	13,651,970	13,923,018	14,342,815
% Change		5%	3%	2%	3%

Table 6.2 – Forecast expenditure

Due to limited financial records for Open Space Assets and the limitations of data/ information for forward projections, this version of the OSAMP has been unable to project a high level 20 year financial forecast.

Improvement Plan Issue No 17

Develop a 20 year Financial Forecast based on Asset Management accounting principles. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.

6.2 Funding Strategy

Funding for the delivery of open space services are generally derived from the following sources;

- General Rates Revenue
- Developer Contribution Plan (DCP) contributions
- Grants and subsidies from other levels of government
- Developer funded new works as part of development

Although there are a number of funding sources available, the vast proportion of funding is obtained through general rates revenue.

6.3 Valuation Forecast

The methodology currently used by Council to depreciate the Open Space assets is the straight-line method. This has a number of advantages and disadvantages, the main advantage is that it is relatively simple method, not requiring a great deal of detailed information. The downside is that it does not truly reflect the real 'value' of the asset.

In future, as data is gathered on the condition of Open Space assets, valuations and depreciation will be based on condition rather than age as is currently done. This can only be achieved when sufficient condition information is collected, and comprehensive conclusions can be drawn. Only when this is achieved can any revision of the current methodology take place.

The useful life of many open space assets is determined by the quality of the initial assets and an established maintenance program. An assessment of the Parks Assets Audit will help determine useful life under existing conditions. Existing assets types can be reassessed and a maintenance program adopted to get value for money and quality asset infrastructure.

Improvement Plan Issue No 18

Determine useful life of Open Space assets based on condition and performance information. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.

6.4 Key Assumptions Made in Financial Forecasts

The following are assumptions made in order to produce the 5 year financial forecast;

- Future new, upgrade and major maintenance expenditure forecast is based on projects which are currently residing in the Capital Works (CAPEX) database.
- No allowance has been made to account for CPI increases over the forecast period.

7 Asset Management Practices

This section outlines the information available on Open Space Management, the information systems used (i.e. software, files) and the process used to make decisions on how these assets will be managed. This section demonstrates a logical and thorough decision-making process and explains the management strategy and financial estimates used.

The following diagram illustrates the general principals for effective asset management planning.

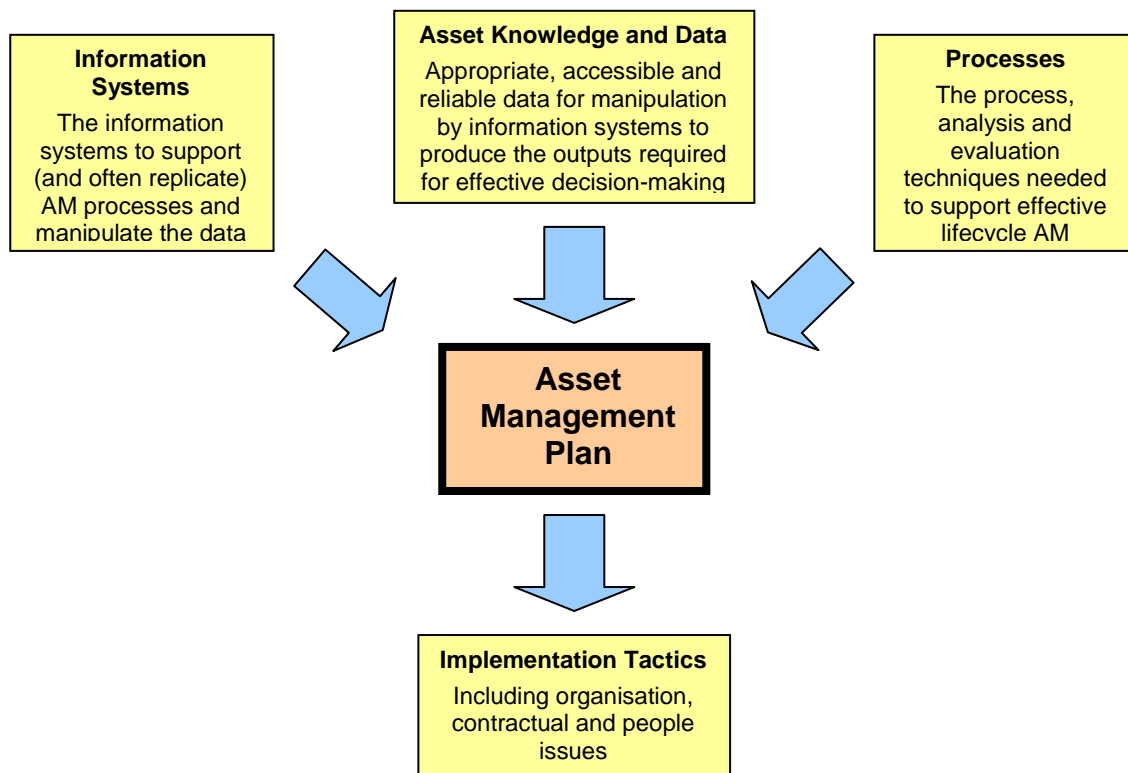


Figure 7.1 - Asset Management Planning components

7.1 Accounting/Financial Systems

Types of expenditure on infrastructure assets

The two main categories of expenditure relating to infrastructure assets are recurrent and capital. It is important to be able to distinguish between these categories as their accounting treatments differ. The diagram below illustrates this relationship.

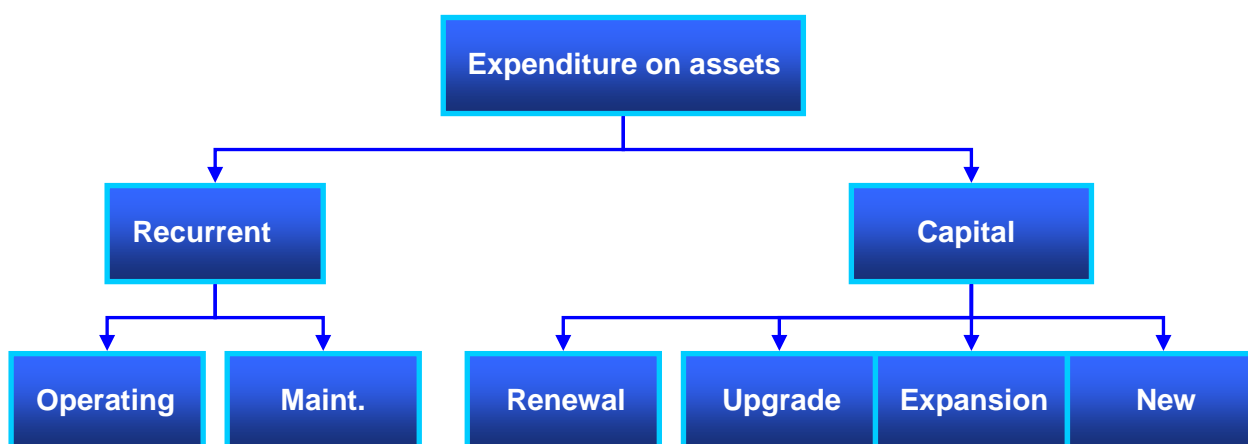


Figure 7.2 - Types of Expenditure on Assets

Recurrent expenditure

Recurrent expenditure includes operating and maintenance expenditure, which are 'expensed' or written off through the Statement of Financial Performance (operating statement) in the financial

year in which they are incurred. This accounting treatment reflects the fact that such expenditure neither extends the remaining life of the asset nor enhances the service potential or the value of the asset. It has simply enabled the asset to achieve its intended service levels and expected useful life. Such expenditure will have been 'used up' by the end of the financial period or is not of sufficient size (materiality) to warrant recording as an asset in the asset register. Predetermined thresholds are often used by councils to implement their policy decisions with regard to materiality. By setting thresholds, materiality is simplified, which ensures greater consistency of application.

Operating expenditure - recurrent expenditure, continuously required to enable the asset to operate for the benefit of the community such as electricity, water, and fuel.

Maintenance expenditure - recurrent expenditure, periodically or regularly required as part of the anticipated schedule of works required to ensure that the asset achieves its useful life. It is expenditure which keeps an asset in a condition that helps maintain or ensure realisation of the future economic benefits that are expected from the asset over its initially assessed useful life.

Capital expenditure

Capital expenditure is relatively large (material) expenditure which produces economic benefits expected to last for more than 12 months. Capital expenditure includes renewal, expansion and upgrade. Where capital projects involve a combination of renewal, expansion and upgrade expenditures, the total project cost needs to be allocated accordingly.

Capital expenditure is recorded in the Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet) as additions to the value of the asset (that is, it is capitalised). This accounting treatment reflects the fact that this expenditure has resulted in the creation of additional value in an asset of discernable magnitude (materiality) which will benefit the community over several years and which has not been 'used up' in the year.

The asset value is then progressively 'expensed' or written off to the Statement of Financial Performance (operating statement), as its life (or service potential) is used up through the depreciation charge. In this way the total cost or value of the asset is spread over the periods in which it is used and the operating result in each of those periods reflects the consumption of assets and service potential during that period.

These different expenditure types have different effects on the future resources of the council as explained below. It is important, therefore, to distinguish between upgrades, expansions and renewals or replacements so that asset managers can predict and plan for their effects on the council's resources in the future.

Where a project involves renewal and upgrade or expansion of an asset the expenditure should be apportioned between the relevant categories. For example, if a swimming pool with a replacement cost of \$3,000,000 is replaced with a leisure centre at a cost of \$15,000,000, the expenditure on the project would be allocated \$3,000,000 renewal and \$12,000,000 upgrade. Reconstruction of an existing sealed road from 4 m to 6 m width would see 66 per cent of expenditure to renewal and 33 per cent to upgrade.

Capital renewal expenditure - is expenditure on an existing asset, which returns the service potential or the life of the asset, up to, that which it had originally. It is periodically required expenditure, relatively large (material) in value compared with the value of the components of the asset being renewed. As it reinstates existing service potential, it has no impact on revenue, but may reduce future operating and maintenance expenditure if completed at the optimum time. Where capital projects involve a combination of new and renewal expenditures, the total project cost needs to be allocated accordingly.

Capital expansion expenditure - is expenditure which extends an existing asset, at the same standard as is currently enjoyed by residents, to a new group of users. It is discretionary expenditure which increases future operating and maintenance costs, because it increases a council's asset base, but may be associated with additional revenue from the new user group. Where capital projects involve a combination of new and renewal expenditures, the total project cost needs to be allocated accordingly.

Capital upgrade expenditure - is expenditure which enhances an existing asset to provide a higher level of service or expenditure that will increase the life of the asset beyond that which it had originally. Upgrade expenditure is discretionary and often does not result in additional revenue unless direct user charges apply. It will increase operating and maintenance expenditure in the future because of the increase in the council's asset base. Where capital projects involve a combination of new and renewal expenditures, the total project cost needs to be allocated accordingly.

New capital expenditure - is capital expenditure which does not have any element of expansion or upgrade of existing assets. New capital expenditure may or may not result in additional revenue for council and will result in an additional burden for future operation, maintenance and capital renewal.

Interpretation

Exactly what is included in each of the above categories may vary between councils depending on the specific policy set by each council, how their assets have been defined and their asset management procedures. In particular, what is material for each council will differ due to the quantum of the council's asset base.

7.2 Asset Management Systems

In the open space area, there is generally a lack of, or limited, integration between various corporate systems in place across Council. Data is stored on multiple systems and in various formats, resulting in inefficient practices, such as double handling, resulting in an increased possibility of errors occurring.

Council is currently in the process of implementing an integrated Asset Management Information and Customer Request Tracking System (CAMS) that is able to directly link up with other core systems currently in place. Key benefits of the system include:

- More efficient and effective method of actioning customer requests and managing our assets
- Will eliminate much of the duplication we currently experience
- Better and more accurate information will be available to more staff than before
- Better reporting capability

This will enable Council to better track the real cost associated with asset ownership, as well as being able to analyse data to fully optimise asset usage.

The key items for Open Space Assets to achieve as a result of the Asset Management System Implementation and on-going further development include:

- Establishment of an agreed and centralised Asset Hierarchy
- Establishment of a Centralised Asset Register
- Collection of detailed Asset Data, including identification, condition and age of assets

In turn this will allow the implementation of the following practices:

- Recording of information by multiply service units against the same centralised record

- Raising and recording of regular maintenance and inspection routines against individual assets against agreed to service levels

For all the above mentioned items to work successfully there is a requirement for agreed to service levels. Additionally, consideration also needs to be given to the allocation of resources between proactive and reactive activities and maintenance and capital expenditure.

Improvement Plan Issue No 19

Complete the implementation of CAMS for the Open Space assets and establishment of centralised Asset Register & Asset Hierarchy. *Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.*

Improvement Plan Issue No 20

In conjunction with development of 20 year financial plan, review expenditure allocation between reactive, proactive, maintenance and capital expenditure. *Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.*

Consideration needs to be given the allocation of resources between proactive and reactive activities, as highlighted by the high number of reactive tree pruning requests in table 3.3. Refer section 7.2 Asset Management Systems.

7.3 Financial Standards and Guidelines

The City of Darebin applies accrual accounting standards in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards ASS27. AAS27 requires the value of infrastructure assets to be shown in the balance sheet and the consumption of assets in the reporting period to be shown as depreciation expense in the operating statement.

8 Plan Improvement and Monitoring

This section provides details on planning for monitoring the performance of the AMP and identification of any improvements to AM systems, data or processes that will improve the level of confidence in future AM Plans. This will lead to the development of a long term improvement program to assist in implementing the improvements identified.

8.1 Performance Measures

The performance of this asset management plan will be measured against a number of indicators. These indicators include the improvement program (Section 8.2), service levels (Section 3.4) and the maintenance/upgrade/new intervention levels (section 3.6 & 3.7). All of which provide a clear set of objectives in which the performance can easily be measured against and monitored for future reference.

Darebin Parks and Open Space Planning Branch will provide Council with an Annual Report that considers the following matters:

- Performance against Quality and Cost Standard
- Benchmarking Information
- Responsiveness to community requests
- Surveyed community levels of satisfaction for services delivered by the Parks Unit.
- OH&S and Workcover performance

With respect to reporting to the community, Darebin Parks and Open Space Planning Branch will use the following methods:

- The Annual Report
- Community Consultative Committees
- Service specific reports
- Councils Newsletters (“Darebin Facts”)
- Press Releases as determined
- Information brochures
- Website
- Direct feedback to individuals/community groups
- Presentations to service providers, service users and community groups

Reporting to its staff, Parks and Open Space Planning will use the following methods:

- Regular work group meeting that provides a forum for information exchange.
- Regular unit meeting to provide internal and organizational information.
- Regular feedback from workplace committees such as OH&S and Workcover.

Improvement Plan Issue No 20

Monitor and report annually on actual service level performance vs. target performance, as specified in Section 3.4. Refer to the Improvement Plan Section 8.2.1.

8.2 Improvement Program

This asset management plan is based on existing asset management practices currently employed by the City of Darebin. The plan will be periodically updated to maintain relevance and reflect any changes.

The table below (fig 8.1) details an improvement program that has identified issues as being beneficial to the organisation. These issues have been raised throughout this document and have been compiled in the one table. The table contains a description of the issue, category, importance, responsible unit and timeframe required for the implementation of the various tasks. The table also contains page references where all the particular issues can be referred to in more detail and within their context.

However, as all the issues identified could not all be resolved immediately, they have also been prioritised and will be completed as time and resources permit. The importance of each task has been prioritised and defined as high, medium and low.

8.2.1 Improvement Plan

Priority	Issue No	Description	Category	Timeline	Responsible Unit	Page
High	2	Continue the development of the new Leisure Strategy	Processes	2010	Leisure & Open Space	10
High	3	Review and update the Playground Strategy	Processes	2010	Leisure & Open Space	10
High	6	Review, determine, agree and document service levels on all assets referred to in this Asset Management Plan	Processes	2010	Darebin Parks / Leisure & Open Space	19
High	7	Continue to review and consult with customers and stakeholders over service level on all assets referred to in this Asset Management Plan	Processes	Ongoing	Darebin Parks / Leisure & Open Space	19
High	8	Develop a suite of indicators to measure satisfaction with service levels and importance of assets and resource use (water and energy) referred to in this Asset Management Plan once service levels have been established	Processes	Ongoing	Darebin Parks / Leisure & Open Space	23
High	9	Finalise data collection for all parks and reserves and develop process for ongoing maintenance and collection	Data and Information	On-going	Darebin Parks	29
High	10	Improve the inspection, monitoring and recording process of maintenance activities	Data and Information	2011	Darebin Parks	29
High	11	Investigate the possible introduction of mobile computing for inspector/field staff	Data and Information	2011	Darebin Parks, Leisure & Open Space and Information Services	29

High	12	Continue the work to prioritise and action the priorities for open space assets as identified in the Climate Change and Peak Oil Adaptation Plan.	Processes / Information systems	2010	Darebin Parks / Leisure & Open Space	40
High	13	Continue to monitor and improve environmental practices for all assets included in this asset management plan	Processes	On-going	Darebin Parks / Leisure & Open Space	41
High	19	Complete the implementation of CAMS for the Open Space system and establishment of centralised Asset Register & Asset Hierarchy	Information Systems	2010	CAMS	53
Medium	1	Continue the review and update The Streetscape Strategy	Processes	2010	Leisure & Open Space	9
Medium	4	Explore the benefits of whether buildings in parks and sports fields, including BBQ's, toilet blocks, scoreboards, stormwater, lighting, and shared paths etc., should be included in next version of this Asset Management Plan or another Asset Management Plan, such as Building, Road or Drainage	Organisational	2011	Leisure & Open Space	12
Medium	5	Investigate issue of on-going costs associated with maintenance and renewal of Bundoora Park assets given its status as a regional park	Organisational	2011	Leisure & Open Space	13
Medium	16	Develop detailed service level working documents for maintenance crews to implement once service levels have been agreed to	Data and Information/ Information Systems	2011	Darebin Parks	44
Medium	21	Monitor and report annually on actual service level performance vs. target performance	Processes	2011	Darebin Parks	55
Low	14	Review financial valuations after data has been collected for all assets included in the Open Space Asset Management Plan	Information systems	2012	Finance	42

Low	15	Review the process that Darebin uses for inclusion of assets in financial accounts	Information systems	2012	Finance	42
Low	18	Determine useful life of Open Space assets based on condition and performance information	Data and Information	2012	Darebin Parks / Asset Strategy / Finance	49
Low	17	Develop a 20 year Financial Forecast	Data and Information	2012	Darebin Parks / Leisure & Open Space / Asset Strategy / Finance	48
Low	20	In conjunction with development of 20 year financial plan, review expenditure allocation between reactive, proactive, maintenance and capital expenditure.	Data and Information	2012	Darebin Parks / Leisure & Open Space / Asset Strategy / Finance	53

Figure 8.1 Improvement Plan

8.3 Monitoring and Review Procedures

This asset management plan will be reviewed regularly and updated to accommodate any changes. The likely areas of significant change will occur to the life cycle management section and the projected financial forecasts. In line with current accounting standards, infrastructure assets are required to be re-valued every 3 years. Darebin is not yet in a position to undertake a revaluation of open space assets based on condition. See Improvement Item No 10 in section 8.2.1. above.

Also Council's performance against agreed levels set in this plan will be monitored along with the performance of the commitments as outlined in the improvement plan (section 8.2.1).

It is anticipated that the initial review of this first generation asset management plan will occur in 3 years, with subsequent reviews occurring every 4 years.

9 References

AAS27 – 1996 Australian Accounting Standard 27 – Financial Reporting for Local Governments – *Public Sector Accounting Standards Board*

International Infrastructure Management Manual - International Edition - *Association of Local Government Engineering New Zealand Inc & Institute of Public Works Engineering of Australia – 2006*

AS4360:2004 Risk Management – *Australian Standards – 2004*

Darebin Streetscape Strategy ‘Greenstreets’ – 1995

Darebin Open Space Strategy - 2008

Darebin Playground Strategy - 1999

Darebin Sustainable Water Use Plan - 2008

Darebin Environmental Management Strategy – 2000

City of Darebin – Cycling Strategy 2005

Accounting for Infrastructure Assets – Guidelines - *Dept for Victorian Communities – 2003*

Darebin Best Value Policy – *City of Darebin*

Asset Management Policy - *City of Darebin – 2005*

Annual Community Survey – *City of Darebin – 1999 - 2005*

Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plan - Guidelines for Developing an Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plan – *Local Government Victoria - Dept for Victorian Communities – 2004*

Darebin Open Space Achievements 1997 – 2007 – *City of Darebin – 2007*

Darebin Open Space Strategy – Background Papers 2008

10 Appendix

10.1 Asset Portfolio

Information on the types of assets included in Open Space is listed in Table 10.1 below:

Asset Type	Asset Component	Quantity	Unit
Sports Fields	Football	Accurate Info avail	
	Cricket	Accurate Info avail	
	Soccer	Accurate Info avail	
	Rugby	Accurate Info avail	
	Baseball	Accurate Info avail	
	Hockey	Accurate Info avail	
Golf Course	Golf Course	2	
Hard Playing Surfaces	Tennis Courts		
	Basketball	Accurate Info avail	
	Netball	Accurate Info avail	
	Skate Facilities	Accurate Info avail	
	Running Track	Accurate Info avail	
	Bicycle Track	Accurate Info avail	
	Trotting Track	Accurate Info avail	
Soft Playing Surfaces	Sand Pit		
	Rubberised Area		
	Bocce Courts		
Irrigation System		Accurate Info avail	
Drainage System			
Structures	Picnic Shelter		
	Sheds		
	Coaches Boxes		
	Scoreboards		
	Goal Posts		
	Cricket Wickets	Accurate Info avail	
	Bridges		
	Boardwalks		
	Shade Sail		
Walls	Timber		
	Rock Low		
	Rock or Brick		
Viewing Platforms			

Asset Type	Asset Component	Quantity	Unit
Seats			
Tables			
BBQ's		Accurate Info avail	
Signage			
Memorials			
Drinking Fountains			
Bins		Accurate Info avail	
Dog Stations		Accurate Info avail	
Bike Racks			
Lighting	Park Lighting		
	Sports Lighting		
War Memorial	Cannon		
	Other		
Public Art	??????		
Water Feature	Pond		
	Lake		
	Fountain		
Trees	Street Trees		
	Park Trees		
Pumps			
Fencing	Child		
	Cricket Practice Nets	Accurate Info avail	
	Cyclone		
	Gal Pipe		
	Iron		
	Wire and Timber		
	Paling		
	Post and Rail		
	Post and Wire		
Planted Areas	Various		
Garden Beds			
Paths / Tracks	Concrete		
	Asphalt		

Asset Type	Asset Component	Quantity	Unit
	Paving		
	Crushed Rock		
	Lilydale Topping		
	Rubber Rock		
Carparks	Asphalt		sq m
	Concrete		
	Crushed Rock		
	Lilydale Topping		
Edging	Concrete		m
	Timber		m
	Recycled plastic		m
Play Equipment	Merry Go Round	Accurate Info avail	No. of
	Combination Unit	Accurate Info avail	
	Swings	Accurate Info avail	
	Slides	Accurate Info avail	
	Spring Rider	Accurate Info avail	
	Miscellaneous	Accurate Info avail	

Table 10.1 – Asset Portfolio

10.2 Open Space Inventory

An inventory of open space in Darebin is listed in the Darebin Open Space Strategy, refer Chapter 8.

10.3 Description of Open Space

Brief details on the categories of open space are listed below. Refer to the Darebin Open Space Strategy for additional information.

Parkland	Open space that provides for a range of informal recreation experiences / uses (i.e. playgrounds, open space areas for informal play, walking, picnic and bbq facilities, relaxation). It also includes the open space around the perimeter of sporting fields.
Formal Parkland	<p>Parks managed to conserve the value of significant plantings (often exotic) structures (often historic) and landscape features. Often formally designed and of a high standard usually with mown and irrigated lawns or grass, paving, sculpture, shrub or flower beds. Often subject to intensive use and may host special events. An ornamental open space area will primarily be managed to protect the normally fragile plantings and, as a result, some recreation activities may be restricted.</p> <p>Parks that preserve environmental components that have aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural or social significance for the present community and for future generations.</p>
Conservation Parkland	<p>Areas of open space comprised of previously disturbed land which has been developed to provide a bushland – like setting with some habitat values for wildlife and to help maintain biological diversity. Because of their disturbed character, they can cater for a range of low – key recreational activities, which may include pathways, rest areas and interpretive signage.</p> <p>Often located as a buffer zone between areas of Conservation Bushland and Parkland.</p>
Linkage	Long, relatively narrow, interconnected open space areas which can serve a variety of purposes including drainage / flood ways, visual buffers, and movement corridors (for pedestrians, cyclists etc where appropriate). Generally, the most significant corridors will be located along waterways, but also include many drainage reserves.
Sporting	Open Space primarily developed and managed for the playing of organised sports in an outdoor setting. Facilities within the reserve would generally include grassed and / or synthetic playing fields and courts, car parking, pavilions and toilets. Perimeter areas would generally be developed as parkland with playgrounds, picnic areas and walking paths to provide informal recreation opportunities.
Conservation Bushland	Areas of often remnant vegetation that have generally been complemented by revegetation / restoration works. The area is conserved and protected based on its significant biological values. Recreation activities are therefore limited to highly controlled interpretation trails and low key nature based facilities such as bird hides. Community groups such as Landcare or park “Friends” groups may actively assist to regenerate these areas.
Landscape Amenity / Streetscape	Small spaces with a primary function of visual amenity. Can comprise landscaped footpaths / road verges, central median strips, tree reserves and entrance statements containing planted trees, shrubs and grasses.

Urban Space	Important open spaces in urban areas often designed to incorporate people and activities and frequently include large paved areas adjacent to or in retail centres.
Wetlands	Open space with naturally occurring wetlands or a constructed wetland in a natural depression with a creek or drainage line. Includes areas developed for stormwater treatment in new residential subdivisions. There is usually a function to improve water quality provide native habitat and enhance visual amenity.

10.4 Maintenance

A brief description of maintenance standards is listed below:

Parkland	Maintenance - Mowing every three to four weeks with grass no longer than 100mm. Litter collected before mowing and bins emptied twice per week. Garden beds mulched and replanted yearly and weeds controlled as required. Playgrounds inspected every three to four weeks and maintained to current Australian Standards.
Formal Parkland	Maintenance - Mowing every three to four weeks with grass no longer than 30mm. Litter collected up to three times per week. Garden beds mulched and planted as required and weeds kept to less than 10% of the garden area
Conservation Parkland	Maintenance - Mowing four to five times per year with additional mowing along street frontages and car parks. Litter collected before mowing and after floods. Weeds controlled among young plants four times per year and subsequent weed control once or twice per year.
Linkage	Maintenance - Mowing every three to four weeks with grass heights between 50-150mm. Litter collected before mowing and as requested.
Sporting	Maintenance - Mowing regime varies between sports. Ovals mown weekly or as determined by sporting code. Oval surrounds mown every three to four weeks. Oval renovation annually as required. Litter collected before mowing and weekly around facilities. Playgrounds inspected every three to four weeks and maintained to current Australian Standards.
Conservation Bushland	Maintenance - Mowing four to five times per year with additional mowing along street frontages and car parks. Litter collected before mowing and after floods. Weeds controlled among young plants four times per year and subsequent weed control once or twice per year.
Landscape Amenity / Streetscape	Maintenance - Mowing varies between one to three weeks depending on location. Litter collected before mowing. Garden beds mulched and planted as required and weeds kept to less than 10% of the garden area.
Urban Space	Maintenance - To be developed.
Wetlands	Maintenance - To be developed.