



Project Overview

This draft Master Plan has been prepared to guide future projects to improve the amenity and functionality of Bill Lawry Oval and Oldis Gardens.

Located on Westgarth Street, Northcote both spaces contribute significantly to the social and historic importance of the area. During the 19th century, they were the only public recreation reserves servicing the local community. A Heritage Overlay has been applied to the site to ensure the heritage qualities are retained. They both are located on Crown land, for which Council is the Committee of Management.

Named after a former Mayor, Oldis Gardens is classified as a Neighbourhood Park, with passive recreational and historic value. The pathway layout, rockery beds, entrance gates, water fountain and mature vegetation are the significant elements of the Gardens. It has a large collection of historic exotic trees and conifers, including Elms, Poplars, Peppercorns, Willows, Oaks, Sugar Gums and Blue Atlantic Cedars. Drought and time has taken its toll on the park as some trees are in decline. Significant works were undertaken around 1986, and again in 2012 to include a new playspace and half basketball court (as recommended by Council's Playspace Strategy 2010-2020). Oldis Gardens also forms an important connection for off-road cycling, with should be reflected in any pathway improvements.

Bill Lawry Oval is used for active recreation purposes and is home to the Northcote Park Football Club and Northcote Cricket Club. Originally called 'Northcote Park', it was renamed in 2001, to honour the recognition Bill Lawry, former captain of the Australia cricket team and Darebin resident.

Project Implementation

The timing and delivery of the proposed actions identified in this Master Plan is subject to Council budget allocations each financial year.

Proposed Actions for Oldis Gardens

1. Preserve and repaint Oldis Garden historical gates
2. Preserve and repaint existing park entrance with historic turnstile feature. Enhance existing entry with new feature paving using brick highlights to reflect existing design.
3. Retain park entry with feature vintage bollards. Enhance existing entry with new way finding signage and a feature paving using brick highlights to reflect existing design. Refer to Action 1 on Bill Lawry Oval for further guidance.
4. Provide a new curving path system, generally based on existing garden bed layout and existing trees. Provide additional seating in the shade of large Oak Tree
5. Renew existing concrete paths, keeping the historic layout. Increase paths to 2.5m wide to support the diversity of park users. Enhance existing lighting and replace light poles
6. Develop a heritage inspired plant palette for both sites. Explore suitable indigenous species for succession planting of the heritage exotics where appropriate. Undertake a tree audit of existing vegetation to confirm health and required treatments of trees. Clear out overgrown woody shrubs and weed species. Rejuvenate garden beds and plant with a diverse display of drought tolerant and hardy botanical varieties including exotic species. Plant more trees to complement existing and maintain views into the park.
7. Renew all lawn surfaces with cultivation, soil amelioration and new grass. Investigate opportunities to irrigate lawn areas with harvested storm-water.
8. Provide new shade trees in lawn (otherwise tree planting generally within garden beds).
9. Upgrade existing informal path through the existing garden bed to encourage people to experience the renewed botanical variety in detail. Provide links to picnic area and play.
10. Improve visibility in existing garden bed. Remove lower branches from trees to provide clear sight-lines at pedestrian level. Dense vegetation to be thinned, remove all weed species, rejuvenate and replant garden beds.
11. New shelter with BBQ, picnic tables, bike hoops and drinking fountain. Provide new footpath connection.
12. Enhance existing playspace with additional equipment. Provide natural play elements (i.e. logs, rocks), new ground-cover planting with a variety of colour and texture in adjoining garden beds – encouraging children to explore.
13. Enhance existing basketball court with additional line-marking for multi-sports.
14. Investigate opportunities to remove barrier fencing, and provide additional space to Oldis Gardens. This includes removing fencing opposite the basketball court with the gymnasium wall forming the boundary and creating tennis hit-up or down-ball wall. Art murals could be also be considered.
15. New Green Exercise stations
16. Provide a new connection between Oldis Gardens and Bill Lawry Oval to improve public access and integration of both sites. Demolish existing bluestone wall and rebuild to accommodate new path. Provide new fencing with gates to allow for closing off during game days. Potential for additional landscaping and rock-work to this boundary.
17. Extend the indigenous vegetation planting. Replace some sections of the lawn area between escarpment fence south of path with indigenous grasses and groundcovers (in consultation with Merri Creek Management Committee [MCMC]). Consider truck access for maintenance.
18. Investigate opportunities for a potential dry creek bed and shallow raingarden as a landscape feature, to improve storm-water quality and improve habitat. Investigate potential to direct low flows from existing drainage infrastructure along open channel (in consultation with MCMC). Consider truck access for maintenance.
19. Provide a new 2.5m shared path connecting to East Street and Cunningham Street.
20. Improve the integration of the Jika Jika Centre to Oldis Gardens. Clear scrubby vegetation and replace existing fencing with steel picket type fence. Improve paths and access to the Centre. Better integrate the upgraded the existing picnic table area with new tables, a drinking fountain with dog bowl addition and landscaping.
21. Investigate options for a community garden to be maintained by the future 'Friends of Oldis Gardens' group.
22. Retain and repaint the historic drinking fountain (1911) for ornamental value only.
23. Undertake signage audit to remove redundant signage in both Oldis Gardens and Bill Lawry Oval (not shown on plan).
24. Provide additional end-of trip cycling facilities for both sites (not shown on plan).
25. Changes to the function of reserves are to encourage sustainable transport modes due to parking constraints of the sites.



Existing tree to be protected and retained (where possible)

New tree planting

New concrete path

Gravel Path. Potential for brick edging.

New feature paving to entrances with brick highlights

Grasslands and Raingarden planting.

Existing light location.

New planting and garden bed

Bench Seat

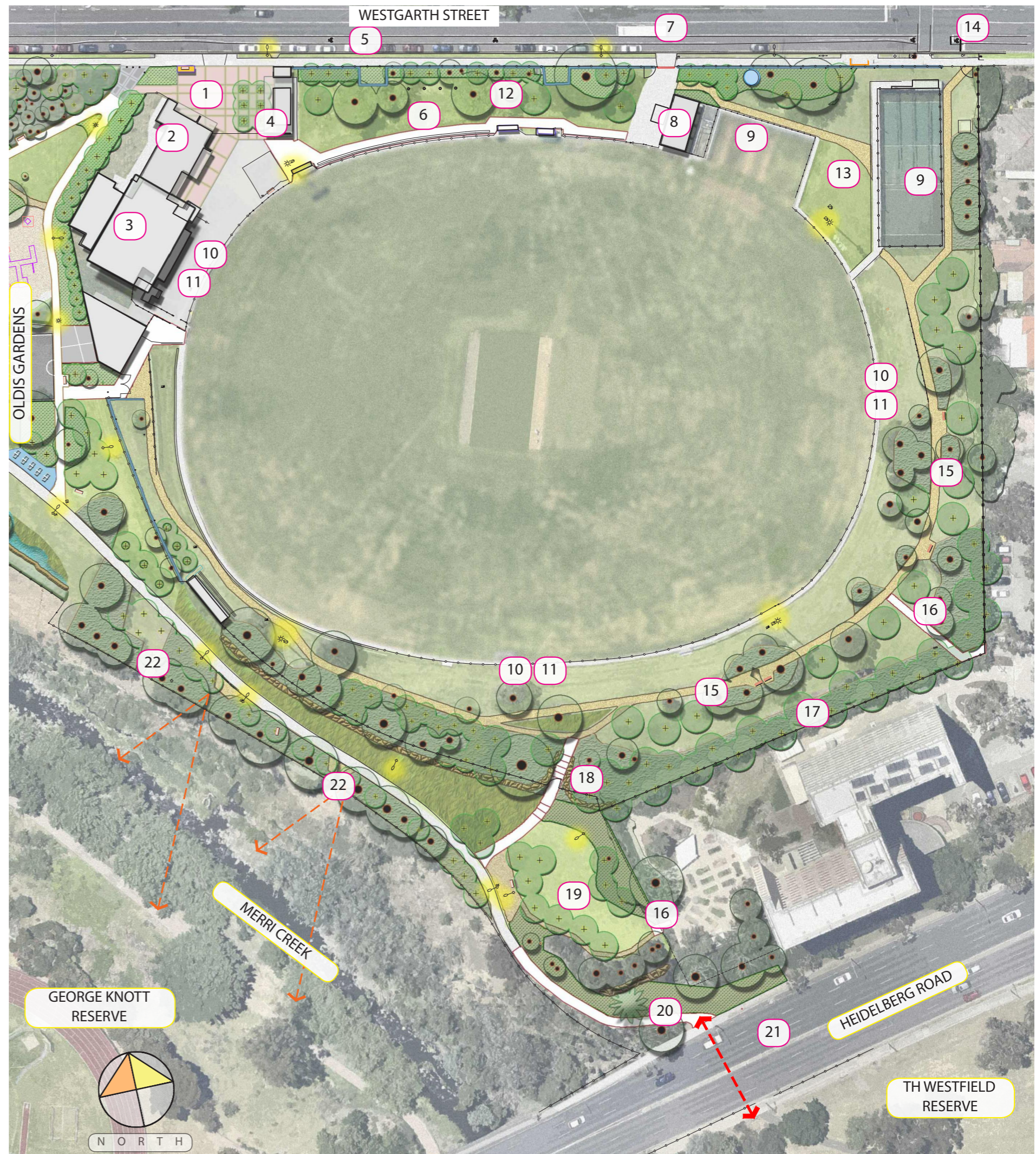
Significant views



Bill Lawry Oval Landscape Masterplan (Nov 2016)

Proposed Actions for Bill Lawry Oval

1. Create a new welcome entry feature to both sites from Westgarth Street. Improvements should include new feature gates, fencing, landscaping & reserve and way-finding signage. Investigate options to remotely open/lock gates to Oval and consider Public toilet access to Westgarth Street. Retain bus stop and work with the PTV to setback the bus stop and incorporate it into the entry design. New entry to consider Oldis Gardens vintage bollards and paving and explore options to remove existing fencing.
2. Upgrade the Bill Lawry Oval pavilion, in accordance with Council's 'Outdoor Sports Infrastructure Priority Plan' - Scheduled to occur in 16/17 and 18/19. Ensure that redevelopment provides greater opportunity for wall activation to Oldis Gardens.
3. Retain clubrooms and historic grand stand (1926). Investigate opportunities to reduce the amount of internal fencing to improve pedestrian circulation and interface with Oldis gardens.
4. Reconfigure existing public toilets, to improve public access and visibility from Westgarth Street, in accordance with the Darebin Public Toilet Strategy.
5. Retain the heritage bluestone retaining walls along Westgarth Street. Landscape existing alcoves. Replace cyclone fencing with new steel picket palisade type fence along entire boundary to Westgarth Street.
6. Improve existing spectator area in front of existing flag-poles. Install new concrete path, new low concrete seat-wall or terracing to retain existing slope. Improve landscaping to Westgarth Street.
7. Replace access gate for park maintenance (short term only) with view to relocating the maintenance shed within Pavilion longer term.
8. Investigate options for relocating the existing maintenance shed through a redevelopment of the Pavilion. If relocation is unfeasible, improve the visual appearance and upkeep of the shed from Westgarth Street.
9. Retain existing turf wicket practice nets and synthetic cricket nets.
10. Upgrade playing arena boundary fence, in accordance with Council's 'Outdoor Sports Infrastructure Priority Plan'.
11. Replace the existing oval concrete spoon drain. Reinstate playing surface levels to the new concrete spoon drain and fence.
12. Install a basic irrigation system to provide a high quality lawn area between the path and the fence line.
13. Install a basic irrigation system to provide a high quality lawn area between the turf practice nets and the synthetic practice nets.
14. New pedestrian entry with way-finding directional signage highlighting new circuit path. dogs on lead. Gates to be open except for game days.
15. Provide a new circuit path around oval along the top of spectator mound. Provide new seating under shade of existing trees. Incorporate existing trees into mulched beds and add new canopy trees to provide additional shade.
16. Liaise with Office of Housing (DHHS) create new connections from the Holmes street housing complex to Bill Lawry oval and/or Oldis Garden.
17. Remove all bushy vegetation along south boundary and plant more canopy trees. Place emphasis on maintaining clear views through reserve for improved passive surveillance by adjoining residents. Install new chain-mesh perimeter fence, and repair retaining wall in conjunction with DHHS.
18. Provide new path to connect oval and adjoining parkland. Demolish existing timber sleeper wall and chain-mesh fence. Re-grade slopes incorporating local basalt rocks to create a more natural planted edge that relates to the escarpment landscape of the Merri Creek. (Provide retaining walls only where absolutely required). Install new black PVC perimeter fence, with gates that can be closed on game days.
19. Enhance area as a new pocket park with indigenous theme - including indigenous planting, seating and shade trees, way-finding signage, indigenous Australian historical information and an art element to create interest.
20. Renew the Heidelberg Road park entrance with new indigenous and decorative planting – emphasising the natural basalt escarpment feature. Improve park access from Heidelberg Road with new diagonal path across existing rock face. Explore options to improve cycling access at this entrance to the park.
21. In partnership with Yarra Council, advocate to VicRoads for a safer crossing over Heidelberg Road to TH Westfield Reserve.
22. Retain and protect existing Cypress Trees and incorporate into new mulched beds. In longer term incrementally replace with indigenous Sheoaks, as Cypress Trees decline. Provide logs, timber carvings and rocks as informal seating and as balance beams. Enhance escarpment landscape experience; including new raised lookout sympathetic to the steep cliff and rock escarpment.



Implementing the Master Plan

Implementation of the Bill Lawry and Oldis Master Plan will occur over several years and depend on Council Budget. The following section identifies a preferred plan for staging the delivery of the master plan. This list has been determined by other Council strategies and the understanding the community priorities identified during the community consultation phases.

Staging of projects		
Both Sites / Ongoing	Oldis Gardens	Bill Lawry Oval
<p>Plant more trees and plants and investigate opportunities for new and successional planting of native species.</p> <p>Undertake a Tree Audit to understand the condition and health of existing trees. Work with a landscape architecture to create a 'Plant Palette' for both site.</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$100,000-\$130,000 over the life of BLOG</i></p>	<p>1. Improved paths, but in particular a new connection to East Street.</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: East street link - \$25,00-\$30,000, Remainder - \$80,000 to \$100,000 Works to include demolition of existing concrete, and install of new surface.</i></p>	<p>1. Upgrade fencing around Bill Lawry Oval to improve public access</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$30,000-\$40,000 Works to include demolition, install of equipment and landscaping</i></p>
<p>Install new signage</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$4,000-\$6,000</i></p>	<p>2. Remove as much fencing as possible to improve interface between the sporting ground and Oldis gardens and Westgarth Street.</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$100,000-\$130,000 over the life of BLOG Works to include demolition and infill landscaping.</i></p>	<p>2. Pavilion upgrade – investigate opportunities to remove internal fencing.</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: to be determined by separate process</i></p>
<p>Community committee to help maintain/improve the park</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$2,000 (to provide plants/support for group)</i></p>	<p>3. Green exercise in Oldis Gardens</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$8,000- \$12,000 Works to include demolition, install of equipment and landscaping</i></p>	<p>3. Investigate opportunities to new entrance to Bill Lawry to include better signage and interface between the two sites.</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$100,000 Works to include demolition of fencing, excavation earthworks, new fencing</i></p>
<p>Provide additional end-of trip cycling facilities for both sites</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$1,000</i></p>	<p>4. New picnic, BBQ facilities drinking fountain</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$50,000 - \$70,000 Works to include demolition, new equipment, landscaping.</i></p>	<p>4. Improve public access Public toilet access.</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$100,000 Works to include demolition of fencing, excavation earthworks, new fencing</i></p>
<p>Provide a new connection between Oldis Gardens and Bill Lawry Oval to improve public access and integration of both sites.</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$100,000 Works to include demolition of fencing, excavation earthworks, new fencing</i></p>	<p>5. Upgrade of the landscaping, fencing and around Jika Jika facility</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$8,000- \$12,000 Works to include demolition, install of equipment and landscaping</i></p>	<p>5. Advocate for a safe crossing over Heidelberg Road</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$15,000-20,000 Works to include traffic assessments and modelling to support advocacy to VicRoads</i></p>
<p>Improve maintenance of the landscape areas</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate (\$13,000-\$16,000) each year.</i></p>	<p>6. New lawns in Oldis Gardens</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$15,000-20,000</i></p>	<p>6. Upgrade Sporting facilities and Spectator areas.</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: to be determined by separate process</i></p>
	<p>7. Enhance existing playspace with additional equipment</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$30,000-\$40,000 Works to include demolition, install of equipment and landscaping</i></p>	<p>7. New gravel path around oval.</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$100,000 Works to include demolition of fencing, excavation earthworks, new fencing</i></p>
	<p>8. Enhance existing basketball court with additional line-marking for multisports.</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$5,000-\$7,000</i></p>	<p>8. New Platform viewing Area and native landscaping</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$60,000-90,000 Works to include demolition of fencing, excavation earthworks, new fencing</i></p>
	<p>9. Renewing the heritage features of the park</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$40,000</i></p>	<p>9. Enhance area a new pocket park with indigenous theme</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$60,000-90,000 Works to include demolition of, excavation earthworks, new equipment</i></p>
		<p>10. Renew the Heidelberg Road park entrance with new indigenous and decorative planting.</p> <p><i>Budget Estimate: \$60,000-90,000 Works to include demolition of, excavation earthworks, new landscape features-</i></p>