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This document has been developed by Sunshine Coast Regional Council’s Regional Strategy and Planning Department (Social Policy Branch) for the purposes of seeking public comment.

Disclaimer
Information contained in this document is based on available information at the time of writing. All figures and diagrams are indicative only and should be referred to as such. This Discussion Paper deals with technical matters in a summary way only. Council or its officers accept no responsibility for any loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from acting in reliance upon any material contained in this Discussion Paper.

This document has been released by Sunshine Coast Regional Council for the purpose of community consultation to generate feedback and input from the community into the development of Council’s policy position and strategies.

This document does not represent the adopted view or policy position of the Sunshine Coast Regional Council.
Preamble
The Sunshine Coast Regional Council has identified its vision for the region to be “Australia’s most sustainable region – vibrant, green, diverse”. In this current Council term (up to 2012) and in partnership with the community, the new Council will begin the challenging task of delivering on its vision.

A key concept that must inform all decision making to deliver on that vision is that of “carrying capacity”, defined briefly as “the population that can be supported indefinitely by its supporting systems”. Over the page, you will find a discussion of all the elements that need to be considered in ensuring a sustainable carrying capacity for the region.

A key element in that task will be the production of a new planning scheme, with its capacity to provide for new development that meets our requirements for economic, environmental and social sustainability.

As the first step in beginning that process, Council has prepared a Statement of Proposals outlining the key directions for the new planning scheme as well as a number of draft policy documents for your comment as listed below. We would welcome your views on the policy directions outlined, and any omissions that should also be considered:

- **Affordable Living Discussion Paper** - Outlines Council’s proposed strategies to improve affordability on the Sunshine Coast.
- **Biodiversity Strategy** - Identifies Council’s strategies to protect and enhance biodiversity on the Sunshine Coast.
- **Canelands Discussion Paper** - Outlines Council’s intentions for the future use of Canelands on the Sunshine Coast.
- **Climate Change Strategy** - Outlines Council’s strategies to respond to climate change and peak oil on the Sunshine Coast.
- **Cultural Heritage Background Study** - Provides information as the basis for the preparation of a Cultural Heritage Strategy.
- **Flooding and Stormwater Management Discussion Paper** - Identifies Council’s intended principles for managing flooding and stormwater management.
- **Housing Needs Assessment Background Study** - Provides information on existing and future housing needs for the Sunshine Coast.
- **Open Space Discussion Paper** - Outlines a framework for the preparation of an open space strategy for the Sunshine Coast.
- **Rural Futures Background Study** - Identifies Council’s intentions for the use of rural lands.
- **Rural Planning Background Study** - Provides background information on rural areas and activities.
- **Statement of Proposals** - Outlines Council’s key intended directions for the new planning scheme.
- **Sustainable Transport Discussion Paper** - Provides a framework for the preparation of a Sustainable Transport Strategy.
- **Waterways and Coastal Foreshores Management Discussion Paper** - Outlines Council’s strategies for managing natural waterways, coastal foreshore areas and constructed waterbodies.
**Carrying Capacity:** the population that can be supported indefinitely by its supporting systems.

In ecological terms, the carrying capacity of an ecosystem is the size of the population that can be supported indefinitely upon the available resources and services of that ecosystem. Living within the limits of an ecosystem depends on three factors:

- the amount of resources available in the ecosystem,
- the size of the population, and
- the amount of resources each individual is consuming.

A simple example of carrying capacity is the number of people who could survive in a lifeboat after a shipwreck. Their survival depends on how much food and water they have, how much each person eats and drinks each day, and how many days they are afloat. If the lifeboat made it to an island, how long the people survived would depend upon the food and water supply on the island and how wisely they used it. A small desert island will support far fewer people than a large continent with abundant water and good soil for growing crops.

In this example, food and water are the natural capital of the island. Living within the carrying capacity means using those supplies no faster than they are replenished by the island’s environment: using the ‘interest’ income of the natural capital. A community that is living off the interest of its community capital is living within the carrying capacity. A community that is degrading or destroying the ecosystem on which it depends is using up its community capital and is living unsustainably.

Equally important to community sustainability is living within the carrying capacity of the community’s human, social and built capital. Carrying capacity is much harder to measure for these types of capital, but the basic concept is the same — are the different types of capital being used up faster than they are being replenished? For example:

- A community that allows its children to be poorly educated, undernourished, and poorly housed is eroding its human capital.

- A community that allows the quality of its social interactions to decline through lack of trust, respect, and tolerance is eroding its social capital.

- A community that allows its buildings, roads, parks, power facilities, water facilities, and waste processing capability to decay is eroding its built capital. Additionally, a community that is creating built capital without considering the future maintenance of that capital is setting itself up for eventual decay.

So, in the context of sustainability, carrying capacity is the size of the population that can be supported indefinitely upon the available resources and services of supporting natural, social, human, and built capital.

http://www.sustainablemeasures.com/Sustainability/KeyTermCarryingCap.html
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1 Introduction

The Sunshine Coast, with a population of 295,000 in 2006 is part of South East Queensland (SEQ) and is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia with a conservative annual growth rate of 2 to 3 per cent. The South East Queensland Regional Plan proposes that the population for the Sunshine Coast will reach 497,000 in 2031. It is also a significant tourist destination with 17 per cent of the regions income being derived from tourism.

A strong reason for this desirability and the area’s uniqueness lies in the regions diverse and accessible open space network. Our parks, beaches and foreshores, our mountain ranges and walking trails, our sportsfields and waterways all contribute to our unique quality of life.

The open space network is highly valued on the Sunshine Coast. Approximately 110,000 ha of the region is considered public or accessible open space. The network consists of significant iconic features such as the World Heritage listed Glass House Mountains and Pumicestone passage marine park to the south, the Blackall Range, the Coral Sea, and the UNESCO recognised Noosa Biosphere, including the Cooloola Section of the Great Sandy Region National Park to the north. Approximately 23,000 ha of this open space is controlled and managed by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council in the form of environment reserves, dunes and beaches, recreation parks, recreation trails, sports grounds, waterways & botanic gardens.

Our community’s character, identity and lifestyle is shaped by the open space network, its ongoing protection, enhancement and usage is critical to our future.

Urban expansion has a significant potential to impact on the existing open space network, primarily around the increased number of people using the available land, our ability to find additional land and the network’s capacity to provide adequately for the needs and expectations of our future community. Examples of this include increased pressure on our beach and dunal spaces and our coastal recreation parks, urban consolidation (higher density locations) reducing the amount of private open space, the cost of managing and maintaining an expanding network and the unknown effects and opportunities of climate change.

Planning for open space is an important role for all levels of government and the community to ensure the character, biodiversity and lifestyle on the Sunshine Coast is preserved and enhanced for future generations.

Our open space network sets our regional context and landscape framework. It reflects our character, our values and nourishes the active and creative lifestyle of the Sunshine Coast.

The open space of our region defines our unique character from the greater Brisbane areas to the south and embraces our towns and villages to provide their distinct character and identity.

To attain the Council Corporate vision “to be Australia’s most sustainable region, vibrant, green and diverse” planning for the protection and enhancement of this valuable network will be paramount and critical in achieving the vision.
For the purposes of this Discussion Paper the open space network being referred to is the Council and community managed network of recreational & community open space.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Open Space Discussion Paper is to provide to the community with the scope and context on which to base open space planning for the future. The Discussion Paper and feedback received during consultation will inform the development of the Open Space Strategy, a key planning document for the next 20 years.

The Open Space Discussion Paper:

- describes the existing network;
- outlines the strengths and challenges facing the network;
- describes the legislative and policy for the open space framework;
- proposes a policy direction on which to base growth; and
- provide the framework for the preparation of the Open Space Strategy which will include:
  - Vision
  - Principles
  - Outcome areas
  - Policy direction & Desired Standards of Service, strategies and actions.
  - Implementation and resources plans
  - Evaluation and monitoring mechanisms
1.2 What is Open Space?

The South East Queensland Regional Plan 2009-2031 describes open space as:

“Open Space provides land and water areas of a range of sizes and types, that generally contrast with the predominantly built form and have nature conservation, environmental, scientific, social, recreational, cultural, spiritual, scenic, health or economic benefit for a community, both now and in the future”.

Open Space on the Sunshine Coast includes publicly accessible (State & Council) and privately owned and managed lands. The network is widespread and diverse ranging from large elements that dominate the landscape such as State forests, wetlands, mountains and escarpments, interurban & intra-urban breaks, bushland, rural land, beaches, waterways, scenic views and culturally significant places through to outdoor recreation parks, civic spaces, sportsgrounds, golf courses, recreation tracks and paths and the small landscaped amenity areas and residential spaces that provide a reminder of a more natural form in our higher density locations.

Figure 1.1 demonstrates the diversity of the open space network and indicates the focus of the Discussion Paper.

While much of the privately owned network is inaccessible to the general community it can be important in contributing to the overall value of the network through amenity, identity and character.

The total area of the Sunshine Coast is approximately 320,000 ha. Of this the open space component is approximately 110,000 ha. Approximately a third of the Sunshine Coast is open space (Refer to Appendix 1: Map of the open space network).

Approximately 23,000 ha of the open space network is directly controlled and managed by the Sunshine Coast Regional Council in the form of environment reserves, dunes and beaches, recreation parks, sports reserves, sports grounds, recreation trails, amenity reserves, streetscapes, waterways & botanic gardens. In addition Council, as a planning authority, has a key role in protecting the quality of significant open space areas such as National Parks and waterways by providing appropriate development process.
This Open Space Discussion Paper primarily addresses the Council and community managed network with a focus on open space that is recreational and community based and publicly accessible.

The Biodiversity Strategy will address the ecologically significant open space such as environment reserves and waterways managed by Council. For the balance of the open space network, held in private or State ownership, it is anticipated that the Open Space Strategy will provide input and advice as part of a collaborative and partnering approach.

Figure 1.1 The Open Space network by category
1.3 Benefits of Open Space

A quality open space network provides significant benefits to its community. It provides not only recreation and social opportunities; it contributes to the conservation of biodiversity and is the essence of our culture. Quality open space makes our urban and rural areas liveable; it supports the many ecological, economic, and community values that are essential for sustaining the Sunshine Coast as a place to live.

When considering open space, particularly in the urban context, it should be remembered that for most of our history, human beings have had a long and intimate relationship with the land. Much of how we value ourselves, our environment and our quality of life is linked to land and access to open space. Most people when reflecting on their own experiences will have some connection and positive reflection on open space in some form whether it is playing sports, picnics in the park, visiting the beach, playing at the creek, sketching the landscape or enjoying a walk under the trees.

The CSIRO Sustainability Network Update, 2003 states that “Urban greenspace is the cornerstone of healthy urban communities. There are numerous studies showing that greenspace plays a significant role in improving human health, reducing crime, increasing educational scores, boosting property values, and even stimulating commercial growth. There is also evidence that urban greenspace provides valuable ecosystem services such as; improving air quality, creating wildlife habitat, reducing stormwater runoff, and cooling the temperature of ‘heat islands’ in the cities”.

The diverse values of open space to the community are far ranging and complex; an increasing amount of research supports the benefits of open space to the community (urban and rural) as well as to individuals.

Open space also contributes significantly to our cultural development, recording the essence of our past and nourishing our creative and artistic abilities. Our parks, reserves and community spaces are our celebration spaces hosting festivals, events and social gatherings such as family picnics, Christmas carols and ceremonies.

These values are further explored through the following categories; recreation, social/community, health and well being, amenity, biodiversity, cultural heritage, economic and linkages.

Recreation

Open space has a key role in providing passive and active recreational opportunities to the community, including organised activities like sport and outdoor recreation. Recreation can be as simple as being in natural or semi natural areas or as strenuous as places to run, exercise and play. Open space networks are vitally important for recreation for all sections of the population irrespective of age, gender, cultural background, or socio economic status. It is evident that the role of quality open space is becoming increasingly important as more of us live in urbanised settings.

In urban settings, parks and reserves provide recreational space for our diverse community offering spaces for young people to perform, older persons to exercise, children to explore and families to gather.
Social/community
In a society that is increasingly isolated with smaller household sizes and increasing electronic entertainment and communications, quality open space plays an important role in fostering interaction and the development of community. It does this by providing spaces that range from appropriately designed streetscapes that support places to sit and meet, recreation parks that encourage residents to gather and talk, organised sporting and social activities and civic spaces for celebration. Our communities benefit from the sense of connection that well designed and located open space provides, especially where it interfaces with locations that draw and attract people. The open space network or public realm, is open to all residents regardless of gender, socio economic status or culture.

Health and wellbeing
Health care costs are a significant percentage of our State and national expenditure. This is expected to increase given the significant challenges presented by increased obesity and aging that our community is facing.

Research shows that when open spaces are attractive and accessible, people are more likely to engage in physical activity with obvious inherent health benefits. There is also increasing evidence that access to high quality open space that provides a form of escape from the urban form and opportunities to reconnect with natural processes is linked to improved mental health and well being.

Given this, it is very clear that investing in a quality open space network is vital for creating and maintaining a healthy and active community.

Amenity
Amenity, provided by our open space areas is, highly valued by the community. On a large scale amenity is provided by our significant features such as mountains, rural lands, forests and interurban breaks. While on a smaller scale it is provided by the “green” places found inside our urban areas.

High quality open space and urban design, especially in high density areas, in the form of gardens, buffers and streetscapes plays a significant role in maintaining quality of life and “liveability”. This is especially important as the regions population continues its trend toward increased urban based living (home, work, play) which has inherently less visual and physical access to green space. The role of trees in contributing to all aspects of urban amenity is especially significant for shade provision, a reduction of heat island effects, softening the urban form and providing an aesthetic quality that has a significant impact whether viewing from a footpath, a fourth storey window or simply sitting in a park. Often the trees and parks are the only consistent urban setting that can be protected from development enabling communities to protect their history and connections with the past.

Biodiversity
There is a substantial amount of land within the open space network that is acquired and managed primarily for biodiversity conservation on the Sunshine Coast. There is a role for supporting biodiversity, where appropriate, in the urban recreation and community open space network through sensitive design and management; this may be in the role of a bushland park or wetland reserve. The role of the entire open space network in sustaining our biodiversity is expected to become more valued into the future as urban activity increases.
Cultural heritage
Cultural heritage reflects the values we place on our character and identity. The open space network is significant in protecting, enhancing and celebrating in our regions unique indigenous and non-indigenous cultural heritage. Land allocation and management will have a significant impact on the continuity of our cultural landscape and culturally significant sites. Cultural heritage within the publicly accessible network provides opportunities for protection and celebration. (See Cultural Heritage Background Study)

Economic
Over the past 20 years the Sunshine Coast has been strongly dependent on tourism and the construction industry for employment and development.

The Sunshine Coast region derives $1.2 billion or 17 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from tourism annually.

A vibrant tourism industry and the desirability of the Sunshine Coast to live and work, is reliant on the quality of our open space and the continued access to high quality experiences on our beaches, parks, sporting fields, mountains and trails. It is worth noting that while construction and growth have contributed to our local economy, it is often the growth that has one of the greatest impacts on the open space network and the existing natural areas. Balancing and diversifying our economy into our future will be vital. In addition there are significant opportunities for development and employment linked to the sport and recreation industries, which is a natural fit for the Sunshine Coast’s climate and lifestyle.

Creative and artistic
Our open space, our rivers, mountains, beaches and landscape are motivation for many forms of artistic expression whether this is canvas, film, sculpture, song or writing. The open space network nourishes our communities’ creative endeavours. The integration of artistic expression and cultural knowledge is often interpreted and celebrated in the publically accessible open space network.

Linkages and connection
Linking and connecting our communities through the provision of attractive spaces to walk, cycle or ride for health and recreation or by providing visual connection, the open space network plays a critical role.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) in 2007 identified walking as the most popular form of physical activity in Australia so it stands to reason that a strong, well managed trail and path networks in attractive settings that connects open space, points of interest, residential and community facilities is an important component of both the urban and non-urban form. These elements are important for creating liveable and comfortable places that encourage public participation and, where appropriately located and designed significantly help activate the remainder of the open space.
2 What is our open space network on the Sunshine Coast?

Open space within the Sunshine Coast has been categorised by its primary function for the purpose of planning and management:

- Recreational & community open space that provides for recreational opportunity, natural experiences, social opportunities and physical & mental wellbeing, especially for those living in urban settings. This is the network that is the primary focus of the Open Space Discussion Paper;

- Ecologically significant open space that supports and strengthens the Sunshine Coasts ecological functions such as environmental reserves, waterways and biodiversity networks; This is the network primarily focussed on by the Biodiversity Strategy; and

- Agricultural open space that provides for food and commodity production and contributes to the amenity and cultural character of the Sunshine Coast.

The open space network is a complex and highly regarded network. While a primary function has been identified for each category or open space type, there are many secondary and common values shared across the network such as cultural, amenity, ecological protection, biodiversity, recreation etc. The relative importance of these values varies depending on the site specific characterisation – size, location, history etc.

Each of these functional elements of the open space network can be further grouped by its tenure and management arrangements:

- Council and community controlled and managed (eg recreation parks and freehold sports grounds);

- Federal and State controlled and managed (eg State forests, public schools); and

- Privately managed open space (eg golf courses, farms etc).

For the purposes of this Discussion Paper the open space network being referred to is the Council and community managed network of recreational & community open space. The policy direction will also provide a number of strategies for the broader network where there is a strong relationship required to achieve the desired outcomes of the strategy (eg access to waterways and beaches, the relationship between private residential areas and public open space etc).
2.1 Sunshine Coast Open Space Network by type and management

The type and management tenure is outlined below to provide a better understanding of the breadth and scope of open space on the Sunshine Coast.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Parks</td>
<td>Open space provided or primarily used by the community for informal recreation, social, cultural and leisure activities and which may provide for other complimentary values (e.g. landscape amenity or conservation). Includes: Civic space (precinct) uses. It can often include land designated as road reserves.</td>
<td>Council/community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botanic Gardens</td>
<td>Open space provided for or primarily used to display and document living collections of local flora (can be exotic) and associated landscapes for education, informal recreation, social, cultural and leisure activities and horticultural, botanical and ecological research.</td>
<td>Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Tracks and pathways</td>
<td>Recreation tracks, trails and linkages (eg the Coastal Pathway) are provided for the primary purpose of recreational activity. These networks often traverse through a range of land tenures. These places have a different intent to the pedestrian and cycle networks collocated with roads infrastructure, which exists primarily to expedite modes of movement.</td>
<td>Partly Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Ground/ Parks</td>
<td>Open space provided or primarily used for formal sporting and recreational activities and which may be used in other instances for informal recreation, social, cultural and leisure activities. Includes: sporting fields and courts, multi-use sports facilities, community swimming pools and showgrounds.</td>
<td>Council/community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape and Amenity (Buffer)</td>
<td>Open Space provided or primarily used for landscape, amenity and/or a buffer function which may also be used by the community for informal recreation, social, cultural and leisure activities as a secondary function. Includes: landscape gardens, amenity reserves and streetscapes in road reserves. It can also include interurban breaks.</td>
<td>Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unallocated Open Space</td>
<td>Land reserved for a future open space purpose whose function has not been determined and/or not developed or actively managed for a specific open space objective.</td>
<td>Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beach and Dunal Systems</td>
<td>Beach and dunal systems primarily used for coastal conservation, dunal protection, beach access and foreshore recreation purposes.</td>
<td>Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Reserves</td>
<td>Open space provided or primarily used to conserve biodiversity and ecosystem processes, connect or protect natural environment and cultural heritage values and which may provide for nature based recreation, social, cultural and leisure activities compatible with those values. This can include land designated as road reserve or as nature refuges.</td>
<td>Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riparian Corridors</td>
<td>Land corridors abutting waterways (rivers, streams and canals) primarily under council ownership or trusteeship (including land classified as road reserves). Its primary purpose is to link and conserve biodiversity and ecosystem processes, physically protect the edge of waterways from undue physical damage, maintain or improve water quality and catchment conservation values</td>
<td>Council/State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utility</td>
<td>This is the open space component of other land areas primarily used to cater for other local government and State functions or utilities and which may provide for other complimentary values (e.g. amenity, informal recreation or conservation). Includes: cemeteries, waste management, sewerage treatment facilities, airports, water cycle management, access corridors,</td>
<td>Council/State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Use</td>
<td>State or privately owned and managed educational institutions. These facilities generally include sizable open space areas which may currently or have the potential to contribute towards the public open space network.</td>
<td>State / Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEQ Water – Associated Land</td>
<td>Associated land surrounding bulk water storage which primarily acts as a water catchment area. This land also provides significant opportunities for outdoor recreation and associated social, cultural and leisure activities.</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Recreation Trails</td>
<td>State owned and controlled recreation trails which generally exist in State Forest Estate and Conservation estate. Apart from maintenance access these tracks provide for a range of recreational activities such as walking, horse riding and mountain biking.</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Camping areas</td>
<td>State owned and controlled camping reserves which generally exist in State Forest Estate and Conservation estate.</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unallocated State Land</td>
<td>Land owned by the State which has no specific function allocated.</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Estate</td>
<td>Open space owned and managed by the State where the permanent or primary function is conservation, however the Conservation estate may also contain recreation trails. Includes: National Parks, Conservation Parks and Forest Reserves.</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterways</td>
<td>Natural and constructed waterways (rivers, streams, canals). Waterways primary purpose is to maintain river processes and function; however these may also support a variety of community purposes including water quality, transportation recreation and/or visual amenity.</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Reserve</td>
<td>Open space owned and managed by the State (or an appointed entity) for particular resource purposes which has high conservation values that are intended to be protected or sustainably managed.</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Forest Estate</td>
<td>Open space owned and managed by the State (or an appointed entity) for forestry and associated purposes. Primarily used for timber production, these areas contribute to a range of open space categories including amenity (interurban breaks), recreation tracks and camping grounds.</td>
<td>State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Purpose Sports</td>
<td>Privately or State owned open space land provided or primarily used for the playing or practicing of specific or single purpose sporting activities. Includes: golf courses, bowls clubs, water-ski park, motocross and pistol shooting etc.</td>
<td>Council State Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential space</td>
<td>Private residential land surrounding domestic, retail or industrial buildings.</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation covenant agreement land</td>
<td>Privately owned open space set aside for biodiversity conservation purposes.</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cane lands/rural lands</td>
<td>Land set aside for agricultural production</td>
<td>Private</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 What our open space looks like on the Sunshine Coast.

Our recreation and community open space on the Sunshine Coast consists of the following categories:

- Recreation Parks 773 ha
- Botanic Gardens 89 ha
- Recreational Trail (Council) 381 ha
- Sportgrounds/Parks 628 ha
- Landscape and Amenity 197 ha
- Unallocated Open Space 240 ha
- Beach and Dunal systems 354 ha
- Riparian corridors 591 ha
- Waterway 11,148 ha
- Specific Purpose Sports 1,480 ha

Other
- Environmental Reserves 5,600 ha
- Conservation Estate 59,735 ha
- State Forest Estate 28,420 ha

Council currently manages over:

- 890 Recreational Parks
- 90 Sportgrounds/Parks
- 20+ Recreation Trails

Localities of Interest

Mapping of the open space network at a Sunshine Coast level and a localised level is contained in Appendix 2 of the Discussion Paper. It contains an overview of the Sunshine Coast and the 44 areas referred to as “Localities of Interest”.

Appendix 3 (as a separate attachment) provides a localised review of the Recreation Parks, Sportgrounds, Recreation trails and landscape & amenity qualities for each “Locality of Interest”. Comments and feedback on specific issues by “Localities of Interest” is encouraged.

Level of Council management over the open space network

Council’s level of control over the open space network and mechanisms to ensure that strategic outcomes are achieved vary considerably depending on land tenure and management intent. While Council can exercise considerable control and management over the network (Council owned land or land Council manages as Trustee), Council will still have a number of constraints (eg the terms of the Trust title for freehold land and the purpose of a Trustee Reserve for State Land).
On State controlled land our management is limited to agreements (such as Memorandums of Understanding, Conservation Park joint management arrangements etc) and submissions regarding proposed changes to land use through the appropriate processes.

On privately owned land Council can manage open space outcomes through regulation (eg Local Law 19), Planning instruments and land management instruments such as statutory covenants, easements and voluntary agreements such as Land for Wildlife.

The focus of the Open Space Discussion Paper is the land whose primary function is recreation and community purpose.

Figure 2.2

2.3 How do we plan for open space?

Given the value of the open space network to the Sunshine Coast's social, environmental and economic health and the significant pressures provided by residential and tourist growth, we need to ensure that planning for the network is undertaken through a managed approach. Delivery of an open space network that ensures that community values, level of provision and experience of the user is maintained and possibly enhanced requires a whole of organisation approach, that combines strategic planning, infrastructure management, community services, governance and finance working toward a common outcome.

From a strategic planning perspective, a measurement for planning future network provision, referred to as a Desired Standard of Service (DSS), is utilised. The DSS articulates and reflects the level of service that the community aspires to.

The DSS is an articulation of what we want to achieve by category, location, quality, catchment, provision of land, infrastructure and facilities.
The Desired Standard of Service clearly states:

**Categories** – Describes the reserves type by primary function (to enable diversity).

**Location** – Where the open space is to be located in order to best achieve the values it has to fulfil and proximity to users.

**Quality** – This describes the physical properties of the land (dimensions, slope, drainage, road frontage etc). It should inform how the open space looks, feels and works.

**Catchment** – The distance people travel to use the park and the size of the reserve to meet demand.

**Provision ratio** – The amount of land per head of population eg 5ha per 1,000 persons.

**Facilities** – As a tool to plan landscape Infrastructure located on the land to achieve best use.

### 2.4 How do we compare to other regions?

Utilising the provision ratio per head of population, a comparison table below details how the Sunshine Coast’s open space provision compares to other major areas on the east coast of Australia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Current Open Space provision</th>
<th>Open Space types represented</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine Coast</td>
<td>5.3ha/1000</td>
<td>Recreation Parks, Sports grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brisbane</td>
<td>4ha/1000 people</td>
<td>Recreation Parks, Sports grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville</td>
<td>5.5 ha/1000 people</td>
<td>Recreation Parks, Sports grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Coast</td>
<td>5.1 ha/1000</td>
<td>Recreation Parks, Sports grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney (City)</td>
<td>2.36 ha/1000 people</td>
<td>Recreation Parks, Sports grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne (City)</td>
<td>7.38 ha/1000 people</td>
<td>Recreation Parks, Sports grounds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 The Sunshine Coast open space network strengths and challenges

There are numerous features and circumstances unique to each community’s open space network. These can be positive or negative and reflect the quality of the network, the region’s culture and economic activity and the physical circumstances.

The key strengths and challenges discussed provide a snapshot of significant issues facing the Sunshine Coast at this point in time and will be used to inform planning and management of open space now and into the future.

The regions natural beauty and diversity

One of the region’s key strengths is that it is well endowed with a range of beautiful natural assets ranging from beaches, rivers and lakes, remnants of natural vegetation to mountain ranges and dramatic isolated peaks.

The region's open space network is a dramatic point of difference to the highly urbanised form of Brisbane immediately to the south, making the Sunshine Coast a popular tourist and residential destination.

In January 2009 the Sunshine Coast Visitor Survey found that of the top ten reasons for visiting the region the following six reasons figured strongly:

- 89.6% To relax and rejuvenate;
- 60.2% To enjoy peace and quiet of an uncrowded destination;
- 55.9% To experience nature;
- 52.4% To be active and adventurous;
- 40.5% To get off the beaten track; and
- 32.9% To experience local culture and heritage.

It can be reasonably argued that these top six reasons listed are strongly dependent on a quality open space network.

The Sunshine Coast has been historically gifted with a legacy of high quality open space. As the population increases and the urban footprint expands, we must be able to continue to provide a network that is capable of living up to this reputation into the future if we are to retain the economic and lifestyle benefits it currently provides.

Maintaining the separation of the interurban break in the south from urban growth and development will be critical in retaining the distinct and unique character of the Sunshine Coast.

Identifying our natural and cultural heritage assets and protecting them will be vital to our future. In addition the green spaces – interurban breaks, provide the defining character of many of our communities, protecting and maintaining these corridors will be a challenge.
Our cultural heritage
The Sunshine Coast has a diverse, rich and ongoing indigenous cultural heritage that is very much part of our open space, as well as significant and diverse reminders of our European past with rural lands, the former Cobb & Co. transport corridor and the cane rail network, which also have strong relationships with the open space network and its future planning (see Cultural Heritage Background Study).

An active community that values and uses our open space
Our community utilise the region’s recreation and community open space areas well and are actively engaged in using open space year round for a diverse and varied range of activities. Our visitors also enjoy access to a range of recreational settings as part of their holiday experience. While a highly valued network is a considerable strength there are challenges in continuing to provide access opportunities and improving utilisation. Initial assessment of our network has shown areas of high demand such as at Coolum, Alexandra Headland and Mooloolaba are over used and under resourced.

Urban Growth
The predicted population growth and increased density is having a number of impacts on the open space such as additional usage pressure on existing parks, beaches and waterways. Parks in high density areas, especially with a trend toward smaller lots reflected in the SEQ Regional Plan of a minimum net yield of 15 dwellings per ha, will place more demand on the open space.

Little is known or planned for to respond to higher density living. Sports reserves are also under pressure to provide more facilities for existing sporting codes with increasing membership and extended playing seasons.

Increasing land values and high urban density pose a significant challenge to providing sufficient quality open space land for the future.

Climate change
Changed weather patterns, sea level rise and increasing storm events all have a potential impact on the future viability of our open space, especially those parks and reserves immediately adjacent to the coastline and in low lying areas. The potential loss of beaches, foreshores and floodplains for active recreation will increase pressure on the balance of remaining open space requiring planning to consider these impacts. Our network also provides significant opportunities to support initiatives to help manage the impacts of climate change. Careful consideration is required in the development of open space to explore opportunities to mitigate the impacts of climate change (eg use of street trees to mitigate heat island effects and reduce energy consumption).

Changing community expectations
Changing community profiles such as an aging population, expectations of new residents, and an increasing awareness of the opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles, place increasing demand on accessible public open space provision now and into the future, especially as backyard sizes decrease. The open space network needs to have the physical and organisational capacity to respond to changes in demand arising from ageing, health issues and trends in use. Flexibility, diversity, quality urban design and well located and appropriately sized places such as civic spaces and streetscapes will be required to provide the full range of opportunities that may be anticipated.
Transport and mobility
As our community focuses on becoming more sustainable in our travel behaviour, linkages and pathways provide vital opportunities to link home, work and play. There is also an expectation of delivering quality open space experiences ‘close to home’ especially for elderly and disabled members of the community. A well designed and located open space network can help increase mobility and reduce car dependency on the Sunshine Coast. (see Sustainable Transport Strategy).

Economic viability
Our open space is an important part of the economy of the Sunshine Coast. It is a strong reason for tourist visitation and for the people wishing to move to the coast for lifestyle reasons. It provides economic opportunities for businesses such as boat hire, markets, surf schools and events such as the Carols by Candlelight, the Coolum kite festival or for national sporting events, all of which have flow on effects into our economy.

How we accommodate these activities while maintaining a quality experience and balance commercial use and public use, is one of the challenges to be addressed.

Outdoor Recreation
Considerable pressure is placed on the open space network due to increasing demand for more outdoor recreation opportunities. The Outdoor Recreation Demand Study (1998) identifies the Sunshine Coast as an important outdoor recreation provider to South East Queensland. It is expected that the open space strategy will have a key role in guiding the partnership with the State in the provision of quality recreational and community open space for the future Sunshine Coast community.
**Network funding**

Availability of suitable land close to areas of increasing population density and associated costs will present significant challenges in ensuring appropriate open space provision into the future. In addition rapid growth places considerable strain on Council’s capital and operational areas and the organisation’s capacity to maintain existing or increased maintenance standards.

Unlike hard infrastructure such as water pipes or road surfaces routine open space maintenance is required from day one of construction. The open space annual growth rate of approximately 3 per cent does not necessarily equate to a corresponding increase in operational and capital renewal funding. The rate of growth over the last ten years has exacerbated this issue and new approaches to management are required. One of the challenges will be to maintain an appropriate level of service to the community, delivering the services to the areas where they achieve the greatest community benefit, achieving a balance between land and infrastructure and managing whole of life costs.

A critical issue for Council will be the level of service provided, the type of infrastructure required to achieve this and what we can afford.

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**Case Study**

We can sometimes take the cost of our park infrastructure for granted and may expect that every park should contain a barbecue. For example:-

A barbecue in a local park may cost approximately $15,000 to purchase and install. Over its 10 year life it will cost approximately $15,000 every year to maintain (inspections, energy consumption, cleaning and repair) before it needs to be removed at the end of its life and disposed of at a cost of approximately $1,000.

The total cost of having the barbecue in the park over 10 years for the community is not the one off $15,000 – it is $166,000.

The cost of infrastructure, both capital and whole of life is needed to help Council and the community make choices about infrastructure and the services.

Now if we consider that there are approximately 890 recreation parks on the Sunshine Coast and each has a barbecue (whether used or not) this equals nearly $148 million dollars over 10 years or $14.8 million every year for barbecues alone.

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**Land tenure**

A significant amount of the open space network is owned and managed by the State Government or private landowners. Long term strategies and partnerships will be critical for the management and protection of the current and future network provision.

A significant amount of the open space network controlled by Council is held as freehold by Council; there is still a large percentage that is owned by the State and held in Trust by Council with its use, subject to the Land Act, 1994, which is managed for the primary purpose of its designation. There is also a large area of our most popular and heavily used high profile parks valued by the community for recreation and community uses that are, in
fact, designated as road reserve or for other purposes. Given the potential issues this creates for the provision of a secure network for our current and future communities, it is considered important to review the land tenure of our open space to ensure its long-term sustainability and protection.

4 Policy context - what guides our open space network?

The Open Space land provided and managed for recreation and community activities is one of the most highly valued assets managed by Government for the community, however its representation and protection in legislation is not as strong as the protection for the biodiversity or cultural heritage elements of the network.

4.1 International

There are two main international conventions that have an influence on open space planning namely:

- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12 particularly with relation to providing space and opportunities for children to play and recreate; and
- the Burra Charter (IOCOMOS) which guides management of culturally significant sites.

4.2 Federal and State Government Policies and Legislation

Many and varied Federal and State acts may influence the way an area of open space is used and managed. These are included in Appendix 4 for information.

4.3 State and Regional Plans and Strategies

South East Queensland Regional Plan (SEQRP) 2009 – 2031

The South East Queensland Regional Plan has some clear values identified that the open space network is expected to achieve. With regard to open space, the plan aims to:

*Provide an integrated, high quality and accessible regional open space network to cater for a range of community and environmental needs.*

The Vision for open space within the SEQ Regional Plan is:

- The community has access to a range of quality, open space, recreational opportunities;
- Communities are safe, healthy, accessible and inclusive; and
- Ecologically and culturally significant landscapes are valued, celebrated, protected and enhanced.
The South East Queensland Regional Plan identifies two key outcome areas;

3.4 Community Greenspace network

**Principle**
Provide an integrated, high-quality, regional community greenspace network to cater for a range of community and environmental needs.

**Policies**
3.4.1 Expand and develop the capacity of the existing regional community greenspace network to meet current and future community needs.
3.4.2 Retain State and Local Government managed lands, including unformed roads, stock routes, waterways, cemeteries, caravan parks, camping sites, utility corridors and community purpose reserves for potential inclusion in the regional community greenspace network.

**Programs**
3.4.3 Develop and implement the *South East Queensland Greenspace Strategy* to help meet the *Toward Q2: Tomorrow’s Queensland* statewide target to protect 50 per cent more land for public recreation.
3.4.4 Define, identify and map a preferred future regional community greenspace network, including new regional parks, regional trails and corridors, especially in areas accessible by public transport within 25 km of the City.
3.4.5 Investigate the potential to integrate regional carbon sink and environmental offset programs with the development of the regional community greenspace network.
3.4.6 Facilitate collaborative provision and management of the regional community greenspace network by State agencies, local governments, the community sector, private landholders and private enterprises.

8.4 Urban Greenspace

**Principle**
Provide an integrated, high-quality, urban community greenspace network to cater for community and environmental needs in development areas and existing communities.

**Policies**
8.4.1 Identify and respond to community needs for urban community greenspace, generated as a result of urban development, especially in activity centres and areas of higher density residential development.
8.4.2 Ensure urban community greenspace is integrated into the urban structure of development areas to provide for land use efficiencies and long-term sustainability.
8.4.3 Integrate planning and delivery of urban community greenspace networks with regional landscape areas and the regional community greenspace network.
8.4.4 Facilitate adequate and timely provision of urban community greenspace through appropriate infrastructure charging and other mechanisms.
Programs

8.4.5 Establish partnerships between urban community greenspace providers across governments, business and the community.
8.4.6 Identify new standards of service based on quality of experience, functions, diversity of settings, and connectivity of urban community greenspace networks.
8.4.7 Identify and improve links between urban community greenspace networks in adjacent local government areas.

There are a number of State planning documents that will have a direct bearing on open space planning and they are outline below.

Queensland Governments Active Trails Strategy
This strategy identifies a number of key signature trails in SEQ Queensland and within the Sunshine Coast Region.

Toward Q2 – Tomorrows Queensland
Green Queensland - Land conservation; and 2020 target: Protect 50 per cent more land for nature conservation and public recreation by 2020.

4.4 Local Government

The Sunshine Coast Regional Council Corporate Plan 2009 – 2014 (Corporate Plan) articulates the Sunshine Coasts vision and eight themes that directly relate to open space planning.

“The Sunshine Coast as Australia’s most sustainable region – vibrant, green diverse”

- Robust economy;
- Ecological sustainability;
- Innovation and creativity;
- Health and well being;
- Social cohesion;
- Acceptability and connectedness;
- Managing growth; and
- Great governance.

Ecological sustainability:
2.4.1 Develop and implement a coastal management strategy; and
2.4.2 Maintain and improve the quality of beaches, waterways, lakes, rivers, canals and wetlands.
Innovation and creativity:
3.3.1 Assess the region’s cultural facilities and activities, research future needs and develop an arts and cultural strategy.

Health and wellbeing:
4.2.2 Encourage healthy and balanced lifestyles; and
4.2.3 Promote physical activity and recreation.

Social cohesion:
5.1.5 Provide equitable access to council’s facilities, services and access ways;
5.3.1 Support community programs and infrastructure that encourage interaction, contribute to place making and a sense of community; and
5.3.3 Support community and neighbourhood celebrations, events and local festivals.

Accessibility and connectedness:
6.4.1 Continue to develop public areas that are easily accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

Managing growth:
7.3.1 Encourage developers to use place making techniques and embrace high quality urban design in the provision of parks, open spaces and local facilities;
7.3.2 Ensure council developments and projects are well designed, landscaped and have aesthetic appeal;
7.3.3 Develop and implement a public arts strategy to animate public spaces;
7.3.4 Develop and implement master plans for centres and towns to preserve and enhance their character;
7.4.3 Ensure the provision of parks, open space and community infrastructure consistent with identified local and regional needs; and
7.5.1 Determine the types and levels of services provided by council.

Great governance:
8.2.3 Implement a business approach that focuses on maximising opportunities, managing risks and improving quality of service;
8.3.1 Develop long term financial plans and indicators to achieve optimum use of resources and alignment to strategic priorities; and
8.6.2 Establish a community engagement framework to gather community feedback, build relationships and allow input into council decision making.

A range of policies relating to the planning and provision of the open space network had been drafted, developed or adopted in part by the Noosa, Maroochy & Caloundra Councils. In summary these policies addressed; open space planning, planning scheme provisions for open space, infrastructure policy for open space, recreation trails strategies, sport and recreation strategies, social plans, cultural heritage registers, landscape design standards, public tree policies, bicycle and pedestrian policies, playground strategies and skate & BMX strategies.
5 Strategic framework for the future

The Open Space Discussion Paper is a key strategic paper within the social “people” component of the Corporate Plan. The Discussion Paper recognises the open space in the Sunshine Coast is a major contributor to achieving the Sunshine Coast Vision.
The Open Space Discussion Paper and the feedback from the community engagement phase will directly inform the preparation of the Open Space Strategy. The Open Space Strategy will plan and deliver the open space network for the next 10 to 20 years on the Sunshine Coast.

The Open Space Discussion Paper outlines the draft policy direction for comment, including:

- A Draft Vision;
- Desired outcomes and objectives;
- Guiding principles; and
- Strategies to achieve outcomes.

5.1 Draft Vision

The open space network will be a defining characteristic of the Sunshine Coast region:

“Vibrant, green, diverse – a network of parks, reserves, trails and celebration spaces creating the soul of the Sunshine Coast”.

5.2 Outcome areas

To achieve this vision we will strive to create an open space network that achieves eight desired outcomes:

1. Responds to growth & change
2. Connects and links the community
3. Protects and promotes biodiversity
4. Celebrates and protects heritage and identity
5. Is affordable and sustainable
6. Supports vitality, diversity and creativity
7. Promotes healthy lifestyles
8. Encourages involvement and partnerships

These outcome areas are underpinned by a set of guiding principles and apply to all open space policy, planning, programs, projects and advocacy strategies and actions. All principles are considered of equal importance and if in conflict site specific decisions will need to be made in consultation with stakeholders and community and resolve a position.

The guiding principles will ensure a consistent approach to the implementation of policy, programs and projects across the Sunshine Coast.
5.3 Guiding Principles

The guiding principles to support the vision are set out below:

**Protect existing provision**
Strategy decisions will aim to ensure all existing open space provision and level of service is protected through planning, design and management outcomes particularly with regard to net level of public accessibility that is acceptable to the community.

**Activated open space**
Provision of opportunities that promote and motivate active participation in sport and recreation activity and increase the level of use and public ownership of the recreationally based open space network for all sections of the community.

**Provide a Diversity of Settings and Opportunities**
Provide a range of open space types, experiences and settings that is respectful of and responsive to the needs and values of the community and the changing population. Importantly, a diverse range of opportunities will be provided in both urban and rural to escape the urban form and experience more natural environments.

**Flexibility and Sustainability**
Land provision, management and design retains flexibility and diversity to accommodate future demand and changing needs. The network needs to balance the needs of residents and tourists. Effective community based measurements are reflected in the management and evolution of the open space network.

**Emphasis on sustainable landscapes**
Open space elements will be appropriately selected, designed, managed and renewed to effectively achieve their desired outcomes (eg. biodiversity, aesthetics, water efficiency etc) while minimising whole of life costs to improve overall service and financial sustainability.

**Community Involvement and partnership**
Community involvement, education and feedback will be required and regularly undertaken for establishing values and the development phases of the open space network. A strong partnership approach will be encouraged with the Community Groups managing Council controlled land.

**Safety and Comfort**
Safety and comfort (real and perceived) of all residents and the provision of an environment that is attractive and inviting will be integral to the planning, development and maintenance of the open space network. This will consider a range of measures including appropriate locations, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and programs that activate and improve community access to open space.

**Accessibility and Proximity**
To ensure equal access and opportunity to all residents in terms of open space opportunities because of the location, character, design or cost of using open spaces or because of personal circumstances, technical or administrative barriers.
The majority of open space and community facility land is located, designed and managed to be accessible to the whole community (including those with special access needs and regardless of age, ability, interests, and economic circumstances) by public transport, road networks, and bicycle/pedestrian links.

**Financial Viability**
The open space network will be managed to meet the standards and values expected by the community within the resources available to Council and the community. Commercial use of open space will be balanced with community need, demand and suitability in mind.

### 5.4 Objectives and Proposed Strategies

To strive towards the vision and desired outcomes a range of objectives and strategies are detailed below for discussion.

<p>| Outcome area 1: Responds to growth and change | Objective: The open space network is able to adequately cater for the Sunshine Coast’s increasing population and changing needs. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop and endorse key mechanisms such as Desired Standards of Service, open space policy and programs, informed by community input that:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• consider higher usage levels of existing open space;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• recognise intensification of the regions population density and subsequent changing use of open space;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• consider the impacts of a reduction in lot size of residential land on the open space networks;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• locate relevant open space where the community receives maximum benefit;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• will provide the agreed level of service to the community for appropriate open space categories;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• provides equal access to all members of the community; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• addresses inequities in current service provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a strategic property and partnering program that provides for the growing open space demand for the region in a timely manner and delivers the agreed level of service for the community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a strategic approach for all categories of the open space network to coordinate and inform infrastructure timing and level of provision to keep pace with growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and negotiate infrastructure agreements to ensure adequate levels of service are provided to new and emerging communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor the impact of increasing usage on the existing network and available space. eg car park expansion, commercial activities etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop mechanisms to measure the performance of the above strategies for ensuring that present and future communities on the Sunshine Coast have the same opportunities to experience the same or greater level of service from the network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor demographic and industry trends to ensure that the open space network is responsive to the needs of residents and visitors to the Sunshine Coast.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Outcome area 2: Connects and links the community

**Objective:**
The open space network is clearly visible and physically accessible both within and between our existing and proposed future communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop a recreation trails and pathway network for the Sunshine Coast region that reflects the features of a successful trail, considers the range of trail users (eg walking, mountain bikes &amp; horseriding) and trail settings (urban and non-urban); and locates trails so that it connects and activates our open space network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan a trail network that links our various communities and connects residents to their heritage and the natural environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a diverse range of safe, well managed and maintained trails (including urban pathways, canoe trails, rural tracks) to cater for the numerous user groups (eg canoeing, horse riding, walking, cycling).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide each Sunshine Coast community with an equitable level of access to recreation trails and pathway experiences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate open space recreation trails and pathway objectives with other Council network planning mechanisms such as transportation, biodiversity and waterways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure linkages to key recreation areas such as beaches and rivers are appropriately planned, developed, managed, maintained and enhanced where required to balance growth in demand with protection of our biodiversity and waterways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strive to ensure the importance of a well-connected open space network is reflected in the strategic outcomes of State and local transportation infrastructure plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate with objectives articulated in the ‘Affordable Living’ Discussion Paper to promote self contained communities and supportive environments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outcome area 3: Protects and promotes biodiversity

**Objective:**
Achieve the outcomes of the biodiversity strategy in the open space network.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrate objectives of relevant strategies that incorporate biodiversity outcomes eg the Biodiversity Strategy and Coastal Management Plan Waterways and Foreshores to ensure a consistent approach to managing the open space network.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure public access is considered in the planning and management of ecologically significant areas that protects the asset and increases community respect and understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explore opportunities to encourage community access to ecologically significant areas that enhances protection and understanding without compromising the primary function of conservation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the benefits of co-locating recreation and community purpose open space with ecologically significant corridors and reserves where appropriate to increase benefits to both open space types (biodiversity resilience, increased amenity etc).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome area 4: Celebrates and protects heritage and identity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurture and improve the amenity of urban spaces in a sustainable manner that will retain and celebrate the unique character of the Sunshine Coast.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and reflect the value of inter-urban and intra-urban breaks as part of the open space network and develop or contribute appropriate measures to protect and manage them as part of a coordinated and cohesive approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and reflect the value of substantial landscape features (such as the Noosa, Maroochy and Mooloolah rivers) and inter-urban and intra-urban breaks to our identity and the open space network and develop or contribute appropriate measures to protect and manage as part of a coordinated and cohesive approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognise and reflect the value of significant landscape features as part of the open space network and develop appropriate mechanisms to protect and manage this highly valued natural resource (eg the Glasshouse Mountains Cultural Landscape and the Noosa Biosphere).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognise and reflect the importance and contribution of the localised amenity component of the open space network (amenity reserves, streetscapes, street trees, roof gardens and garden walls) toward the quality of life and experience of our residents and visitors and develop appropriate mechanisms to guide planning and management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and celebrate (where appropriate) local indigenous and non-indigenous heritage spaces within the open space network and work with the community for their long term protection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide an open space network that presents the community with vibrant and diverse experiences in settings, which have a strong sense of place, and strengthens identity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create civic spaces that encourage celebration and community interaction that also reflects on the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcome area 5: Is affordable and sustainable</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Strategies

Protect the viability and functionality of our current Open Space network provision giving consideration to the:
- impacts of climate change;
- competing land uses;
- ongoing whole of life costs;
- communities expectation to access public open space;
- competing demands by recreational, commercial and other users; and
- realistic levels of embellishment/facilities that can be maintained with the resources available.

Foster an understanding of the economic benefits of the open space network to the Sunshine Coast community that balances these benefits with accessibility and quality of user experience.

Continue to provide open space as a physically accessible network for all community needs.

To improve network affordability and sustainability consider mechanisms that:
- measure and record the development and performance of the open space network;
- define and protect the values given by the community to specific open space areas;
- define the overall performance of the network at any point in time (eg community survey);
- provide financial reporting for each category of the open space network;
- provide improved performance in delivering a sustainable open space network to the community through identifying whole of life costs in all proposals;
- assist the community in developing infrastructure and services that support and enhance the open space network;
- improves partnership with community and State to deliver better open space outcomes;
- ensures land and infrastructure contributions to the public open space network are in accordance with standards and guidelines to ensure affordability and sustainability;
- Considers reduction in levels of embellishments to improve the ongoing affordability/operational costs in consultation with the community; and
- Develop appropriate planning that supports ‘affordable living’ and self contained communities through projects such as community gardens, volunteer participation and stewardship programs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome area 6: Supports vitality, diversity and creativity</th>
<th>Objective: An open space network that provides a diverse range of opportunities to the community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrate local creativity and artistic expression in our network to enhance experiences and learning on the Sunshine Coast.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the values of services provided by the open space network to our community and how they contribute to our vitality, diversity and creativity.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensure a diverse range of settings and experiences to be enjoyed by all members of the community through short and long term planning and management.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community involvement in design and development of parks reserves sports ground to ensure strong ownership and community vitality.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome area 7: Promotes healthy lifestyles</th>
<th>Objective: The open space network accommodates a diverse range of high quality active and passive sporting and recreation opportunities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Create spaces that are inviting, accessible, safe and motivate people by providing opportunity for physical activity for all.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promote the diverse range of active and passive sporting and recreational opportunities available within Councils open space network.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review quality of open space infrastructure and facilities (such as play spaces, shelters, barbecues etc) to ensure they are providing appropriate service to the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand and evaluate the benefits of a vibrant open space network in improving the communities overall health.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide a network of paths and trails that stimulate and motivate walking and cycling as a preferred mode of transport and activity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider opportunities in network planning that create spaces and opportunities for exercise and fitness.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Outcome area 8: Encourages involvement and partnerships

Objective: An open space network that has a strong connection and level of ownership by the community

Strategies

Understand our community’s values and expectations of the open space network and what it provides to the region, and continue to involve community in planning and delivery.

Create partnerships with the key stakeholders such as the State Government on Q2 targets to ensure cohesive outcomes that contribute to a quality open space network.

Engage with the community to develop performance measures for the open space network that reflect community expectations and values.

Integrate with other Council planning strategies and operational processes to achieve outcomes expected by the community.

Increase where appropriate community involvement in management of the open space network (at an operational/site level and at a policy/management level).

Strengthen and support community involvement in management of recreation parks, sportsgrounds and other key elements of the open space network.

Develop partnerships with sporting clubs for appropriate development and management of facilities and grounds.
6 Where to from here?

The purpose of the Open Space Discussion Paper is to provide the community with an opportunity to provide guidance and feedback to inform a key strategic policy – the Open Space Strategy.

The process detailed below outlines the next phase of planning and demonstrates the importance of this key policy document. The Open Space Strategy will inform and drive planning and funding decisions across the open space network for the next 10-20 years.

The Strategy development process

- Background Study
- Discussion Paper
- Draft Strategy
- Final Strategy
- IMPLEMENTATION
- Planning Scheme
- Asset Management
- Operations Programs & Projects
- Capital Works & Land Program
- Local Laws
- Partnerships and Advocacy

Monitoring and Review
7 Conclusion

The key policy directions of the Open Space Discussion Paper are detailed below, your thoughts and comments on the Discussion Paper will help inform the next phase of planning for open space on the Sunshine Coast.

- Recognise and celebrate the role of open space in our Sunshine Coast lifestyle, character and identity.

- Ensure that equitable and adequate provision of recreation parks, sports grounds and reserves are planned and provided to meet the demands of our expanding urban form.

- Strengthen the green civic hearts and green interurban breaks to recognise the distinct character and identity of our diverse communities and towns.

- Celebrate the unique natural assets and landscape character of the Sunshine Coast and protect and enhance the open space network.

- Plan and develop an open space network that promotes and encourages active and healthy lifestyles for our residents and visitors.

- Protect the naturalness of our open space network to provide relief from the increasing urban density of the region.

- Understand the opportunities the open space network provides to mitigate the impacts and the fragility of the network from climate change.

- Rationalise usage of existing open space to improve access and usability to conserve land and resources.

- Ensure all residents now and in the future have access to a range of interesting and diverse opportunities in the open space network.

- Protect and utilise the open space network to contribute to the Council’s vision of Australia’s most sustainable region – green, diverse and vibrant.

- Develop sustainable financial mechanisms and partnerships for ongoing operational costs.

Thank you for participating in this important phase of policy development.

Please complete the feedback sheet by 7 December 2009.
8 Glossary of terms

Biodiversity
The variety of all life-forms including the different plants, animals and micro-organisms and the ecosystems they form.

CPTED
Crime prevention through environmental design.

Desired Standards of Service (DSS)
Planning mechanisms that guide land provision for the open space network. Only a small amount is eligible to draw infrastructure charges.

Ecologically Important Areas
Areas important as:
- Core habitats for native flora and fauna communities, including remnant endangered regional ecosystems;
- Complementary natural habitats that assist flora and fauna movement, and support the function, integrity and viability of core natural habitats; or
- Natural areas that contribute to the maintenance of ecological processes and the provision of ecosystem services.

Embellishment
The range of embellishments provided in parks/reserves will depend on its intended function and hierarchy. Examples of embellishments are; site preparation (levelling/grassing etc), access (roads, paths), landscaping (gardens etc), infrastructure and facility inclusions/improvements (playground equipment etc).

Greenspace
Publicly accessible open space.

Infrastructure
The transport, water cycle management, energy generation, open space, social systems and facilities that support the growth of the region.

Level of service
The quantified level of service the community receives from each element of the open space network based on the quality of land characteristic, land provision, location, infrastructure and community programs.

Recreation Park
A use of premises for free recreation and enjoyment by the public which is used infrequently for events. The term includes the provision of facilities for parks users such as kiosks, shelters, play equipment, car parking are as public conveniences and the like on the same site.

Recreational open space
Those categories of the open space network that are primarily managed for recreational and social activities eg Recreation Parks, Sportsgrounds, Recreation tracks and pathways.

Structure Planning Underway
These locations are currently being planned for by Council for future development. This planning will determine layout, services and networks that will service the community into the future.
**Urban Footprint**

The Urban Footprint Regional Land Use category shown in the SEQ regional plan which identifies land to provide for the region’s urban development needs to 2026 and which defines the limits to urban development.

**Waterway**

Any element of a watercourse (including the bed and banks). The terms include waterways identified on a Planning Area Overlay Map as being subject to the Natural Waterways and Wetlands Overlay.

**Whole of Life Costs**

The cost of providing a service to the community that includes construction, operating, maintenance and renewal costs.
9 References

Barnett, G; Cork, S; Kelly, G; Young, M; Nancarrow, B; Wilson, Coops, N; May 2003. Exploring research needs in the field of “urban health”. CSIRO SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK UPDATE – No 26E.

South East Queensland Regional Plan, 2009 – Department of Infrastructure & Planning, Queensland Government.

South East Queensland Outdoor Recreation Demand Study, 1998 – Department of Natural resources and Department of Emergency Services.
Appendix 1 Map of Open Space Network
Appendix 2 ‘Localities of Interest’
Appendix 3 Open space by ‘Localities of Interest’

Appendix 3 is available on Council’s website www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au or contact Council’s customer service centre 5475 7272.

Appendix 4 Legislation & Strategies

LEGISLATION & STRATEGIES

General
- Ozone Protection Strategy 1989
- National Koala Conservation Strategy 1998
- National Greenhouse Strategy 1998
- Wetlands Policy of the Commonwealth Government of Australia
- Health Act 1937
- Fisheries Management Act 1991
- Environmental Protection Act 1994
- Fisheries Act 1994
- National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development 1992
- Natural Resources Management (Financial Assistance) Act 1992
- National Forest Policy Statement 1992
- Biological Control Act 1987
- Vegetation Management Act 1999
- Integrated Planning Act 1997
- Plant Protection Act 1989
- Local Government Act 1993
- Mineral Resources Act 1989
- Water Act 2000
- Land Act 1994
- Soil Conservation Act 1986
- Recreation Areas Management Act 2006
- Local Government Act 2009
- National Framework for Management and Monitoring of Australia’s Native Vegetation 1999
- SPP 1/97: Conservation of Koalas in the Koala Coast
- SPP 2/02: Planning and Managing Development Involving Acid Sulphate Soils
- SPP 1/03: Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Flood, Bushfire and Landslide
- Draft SPP Protection of Extractive Resources
- State Interest Planning Policies (air quality, cultural heritage, nature conservation, noise management, Qld waters, State forests, timber reserves and waste management)
- Biodiscovery Act 2003
- Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990
• Forestry Act 1959
• Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002
• State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971
• Transport Infrastructure Act 1994
• Transport Operations (Marine Pollution) Act 1995

Biodiversity
• Australia’s Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2010-2020 consultation draft
• Inter-governmental Agreement on the Environment 1992
• National Local Government Biodiversity Strategy 1999
• National Weeds Strategy 1999
• National Objectives and Targets for Biodiversity Conservation 2001
• Nature Conservation Act 1992
• National Reserve System Program and the Interim Biogeographical Regionalisation of Australia
• National Strategy for the Conservation of Australia’s Biological Diversity 1996
• Draft Conservation of Australian Species and Ecological Communities Threatened with Extinction
• Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Cultural Heritage
• Australian Natural Heritage Charter 1999 and the Burra Charter 1999
• Natural Heritage Trust 2002
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984
• Natural Heritage Trust Act 1997
• Australian Heritage Commission Act 1975
• Australian Heritage Council Act 2003
• Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003
• Native Title Act 1993
• Native Title (Queensland) Act 1993
• Queensland Heritage Act 1992

Recreation Parks
• Article 31 of the United Nations The Charter for the rights of the Child

Sporting Reserves
• Weapons regulation 1996
• South East Queensland Regional Trail Bikes Strategy
• SUNROC Recreational Facilities Strategy
Beach & foreshore
- Coastal Protection and Management Act 1995
- Marine Parks Act 1982
- State Coastal Management Plan

Botanic Gardens
- Botanic Gardens Conservation Strategy 1989 (endorsed by IUCN, WWF, FAO, UNEP, and UNESCO)
- International Agenda for Botanic Gardens in Conservation (2000)

Recreation trails
- Regional Trails Strategy
- SEQ Forests Agreement
- Quarantine Act 1908
- States Grants (Nature Conservation) Act 1974