

# Appendix C

## Public Open Space Reinvestment Project







**CLOUSTON** associates



**PENRITH CITY COUNCIL**

# **PUBLIC OPEN SPACE REINVESTMENT REPORT**

**FINAL REPORT**

**S14-0158 R-01 17/04/15**



Cover Image:  
Kestrel Crescent Reserve • Erskine Park

## PUBLIC OPEN SPACE REINVESTMENT REPORT



Client  
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Note: This document is Preliminary unless validated.





Ridgeview Crescent • Erskine Park



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Regulus Reserve • Erskine Park



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Consistent with national trends in changing recreation, Penrith City community's use of recreation and cultural facilities has continued to evolve. The need for quality recreation spaces to meet the needs of the City's diverse communities remains consistent however, particularly to address the accessibility needs of our ageing population.

In reviewing future community needs and the community lands for which Council is responsible, there may be opportunities to recycle those open space parcels which offer limited recreational use to the community. This process can generate funds for improving existing facilities, create new open space offers and/or allow for the reallocation of capital/ assets. Accordingly, this report will assist the delivery of Council's broader Public Open Space Reinvestment Project (the Project).

This Project provides opportunities to improve the amenity of our suburbs for Penrith communities, in line with emerging recreation trends and expectations and aims to ensure an equitable distribution of quality open space across the local government area.

These improvements to local open space could not be funded without improvements to the efficiencies of our current open space assets in the context of Council's current financial capacity.

CLOUSTON Associates has been engaged to design a framework to guide this review process. The purpose of this report is therefore to:

- establish a rigorous and transparent framework to identify those lands which do not meet community needs
- establish a best practice approach to determining whether those lands should be retained, improved or divested (in whole or in part).

It is important that both a site evaluation and contextual analysis of each suburb is undertaken to ensure strategic decisions can be made.





Columba Place Reserve • Erskine Park



## 1.PROJECT OBJECTIVES

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The objectives for the project, agreed to by the Project Control Group are to:

- Improve the quality of open space in the City's suburbs to better meet community needs
- Improve value for money
- Allocate funds to other City Shaping Council projects.

The methodology to complete this report included meetings with staff and managers from within Council, site visits and a desktop study of the Erskine Park suburb as a pilot area.

### PROJECT TASKS

The principal tasks undertaken to complete this report involve:

- Design of a replicable process which can be used to evaluate potential surplus open space across a range of suburbs
- Selection of a suite of principles that underpin the evaluation process
- Establishment of suitable best practice benchmarks that are relevant to the NSW context
- Provision of a citywide open space context
- Documentation of the physical geography, demographics and planning context of the pilot suburb (Erskine Park)

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community input and ownership is an essential component of this process. The early consultation for the project will be broad based; more specific consultation will be undertaken at later stages of the project. The community engagement element of the broader Public Reinvestment Project will be undertaken parallel to the framework proposed in this report.





Dilga Crescent Reserve • Erskine Park



## 2.BACKGROUND

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### DEFINITIONS AND VALUES OF OPEN SPACE

The Recreation and Open Space Planning Guidelines for Local Government (ROSPG) 2011 defines public open space as 'publicly owned land that accommodates recreation facilities and provides spaces for recreational activities'.

### BENEFITS OF LEISURE, RECREATION AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

The community benefit arising from public open space is summarised by the Healthy Spaces and Places project (Australian Institute of Planning 2009 ) which summarises a growing body of research into the benefits of regular recreation participation and the open spaces that offer that opportunity in four areas:

- Improved physical health and wellbeing – with reduced risk of lifestyle related diseases, higher survival rate of other diseases, improved quality of life and long term health, and, in young people and children healthy growth and development.
- Improved mental health – builds individual self-esteem and self-image, reduces stress, improves concentration and enhances memory and learning.
- Enhanced social outcomes – encourages social interaction and development of social skills, improves social networks and social capital, increases community cohesion and pride, safer communities
- Reduced healthcare costs – improved physical health and the building of stronger families and communities helps lower health-care costs, reduces the costs of social intervention and plays a role in reducing crime and social dysfunction (WA Department of Sport and Recreation, 2009).

Other benefits of open space include its role in protecting biodiversity, mitigating flood impacts, managing urban stormwater.

From all of this research it is evident that the size, diversity and accessibility of open space, particularly in a local context, is critical to any community enjoying these benefits to the full.

### STATUS OF OPEN SPACE IN PENRITH

As with many Councils Penrith's open space varies greatly in its size, diversity and accessibility, sometimes offering ideal recreation opportunities to the community in which it lies and sometimes being of such a small size and in such inaccessible locations as to be of very limited benefit to its community, either now or into the future.

In some localities open space is extensive and often duplicated, with limited usage and little discernible additional benefit to the community, but still requiring ongoing expenditure in maintenance.

Importantly, this does not mean that all of these spaces were inappropriately planned or designed at the outset. As the population changes and there are shifts in recreational trends so does the nature of the open space required for an evolving community.

There are a number of properties across the local government area which are classified as Community Land and which over the years Council has identified as being potentially surplus to Council and community needs. This process initially commenced with the People's Lifestyle Aspiration and Needs Study (PLANS) adopted by Council in 2004 and the Open Space Action Plan adopted in 2007.





Aquarius Crescent Reserve • Erskine Park

## 2.BACKGROUND

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### **UPDATING TO CURRENT BEST PRACTICE**

Given the gap in time since the initial identification of surplus lands and in light of changing benchmark best practice in such evaluation processes, it is important to confirm and review the current list in a contemporary context to ensure that existing recreation and community facilities remain 'fit for purpose'. This report provides that best practice review.

### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

Professional assessment is the critical first step in this evaluation process, but the outcomes will only be enduring, robust and 'owned' by the community if they are part of that process. Community consultation will therefore be undertaken prior to making any formal decisions about whether any of these small land parcels should be sold.





Warbler St Reserve • Erskine Park

### 3. PENRITH CITY CONTEXT

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#### POPULATION

The Penrith City local government area is one of the largest Councils in Metropolitan Sydney both geographically and by population, being home to more than 190,000 people in 2015. The number of dwellings in Penrith is projected to increase from 65,444 to 80,928 within 15 years from 2011, with an average household size falling from 2.85 to 2.72. These forecasts indicate the need to plan comprehensively for the city's open space to ensure that it will meet these significant future demands.

#### TRANSPORT, ACCESS AND BARRIERS

While Penrith is well connected to the Sydney CBD by rail, the most significant transport mode is by car with high volumes of traffic on the Great Western Highway and M4. According to the i.d. data provided by Council, the suburb of Erskine Park had the highest proportion of people who travelled to work by car in Penrith City in 2011, while the number of people who relied on public transport only amounted to 10% or less.

Council has been developing and upgrading walking and cycling paths in the City, especially along the Nepean River, but many residential estates lack any roadside footpaths. On road dedicated cycle paths are also absent in many suburbs.

The major east-west road and rail corridors act as significant barriers to north-south movement in the city, especially for walkers and cyclists. Due to the low residential densities and expansive area of the LGA the City has a relatively low level of walkability for pedestrians and accessibility for disadvantaged people within and between its residential estates. (See Fig 2.01)

#### OVERVIEW OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE

In terms of open space, Penrith City Council provides 427.5 hectares of parks (playgrounds), 340 hectares of sporting grounds, 235.3 hectares of community land for drainage and community use, and 275.4 hectares of natural areas (see Figure 2.02 Recreation and Leisure Facilities in Penrith City 2013).

Much of Penrith's open space is created from the extensive river and creek system which has shaped much of the landscape in this part of Western Sydney, with the largest extent of continuous open space bordering the Nepean River on the western side of the LGA, below the Blue Mountains escarpment. (See Fig 2.02)

Two major creek systems, South Creek and Ropes Creek on the eastern boundary of the LGA, converge at St Marys and form major regional open space corridors. A number of minor creeks that feed into the Nepean River and Ropes and South Creeks also form local green corridors. In the north of the City the major open spaces are largely comprised of extensive conservation lands, such as Agnes Banks and the Castlereagh Nature Reserve.

A large proportion of local and district open spaces is found in a broad east-west band from Ropes Creek in the east to Emu Plains in the west. These spaces are associated with various phases of urban development along the Great Western Highway and M4 Motorway corridors. One of the largest open spaces in Sydney is projected to be available to the community when the Penrith Lakes scheme is completed.



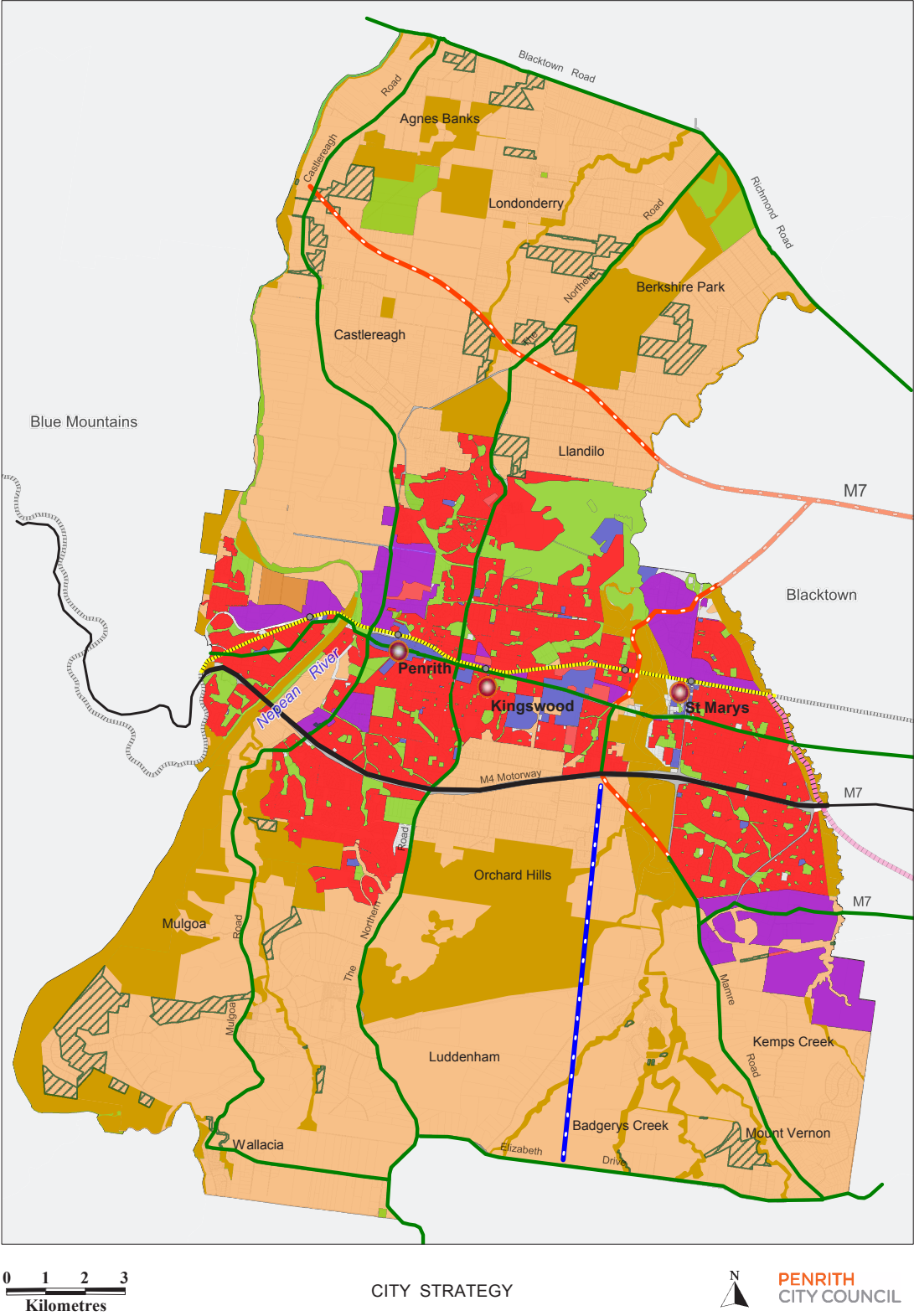


Figure 2.01: City Strategy. Source: City Strategy 2013



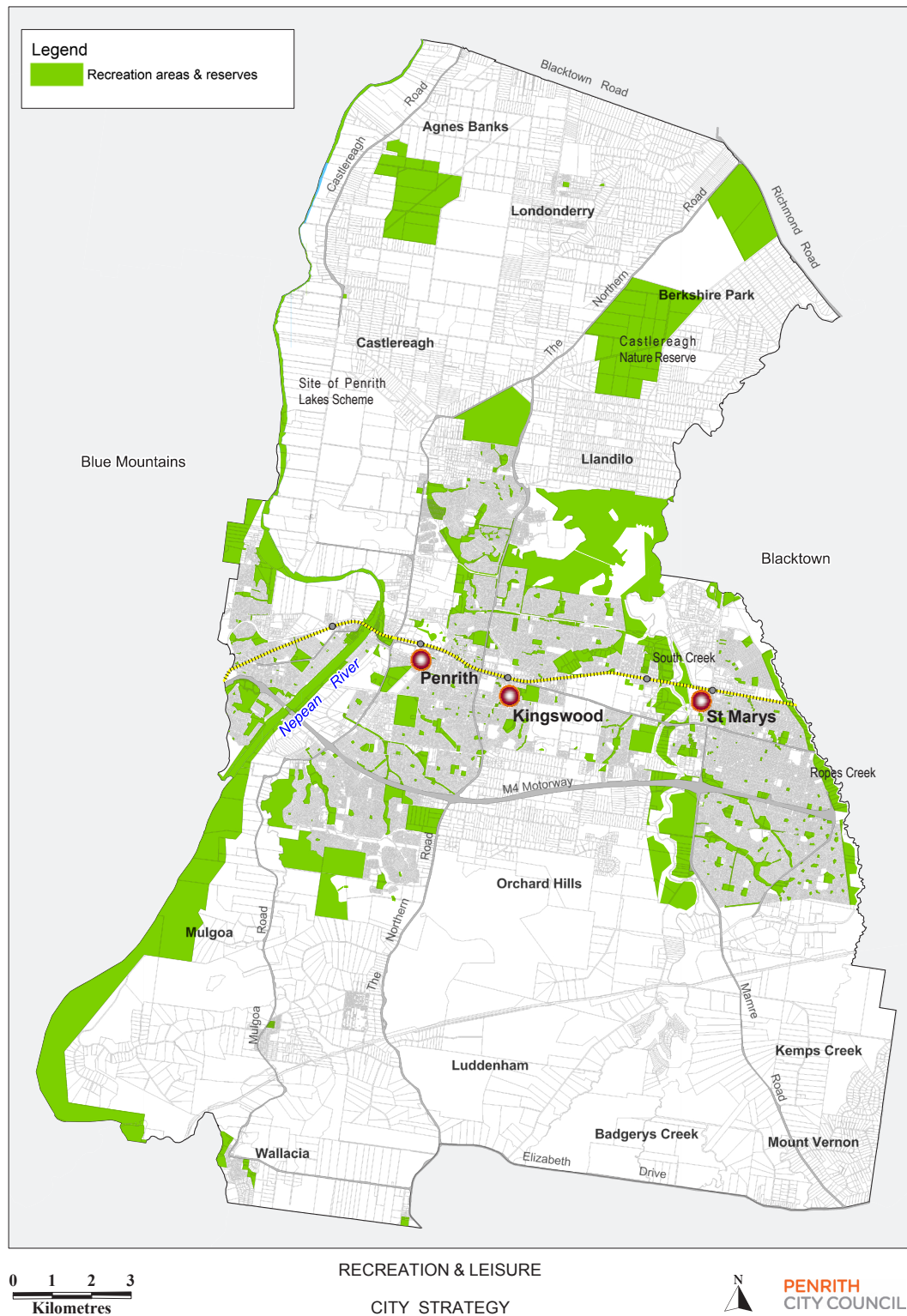


Figure 2.02: Recreation and Leisure Facilities in Penrith City. Source: City Strategy 2013

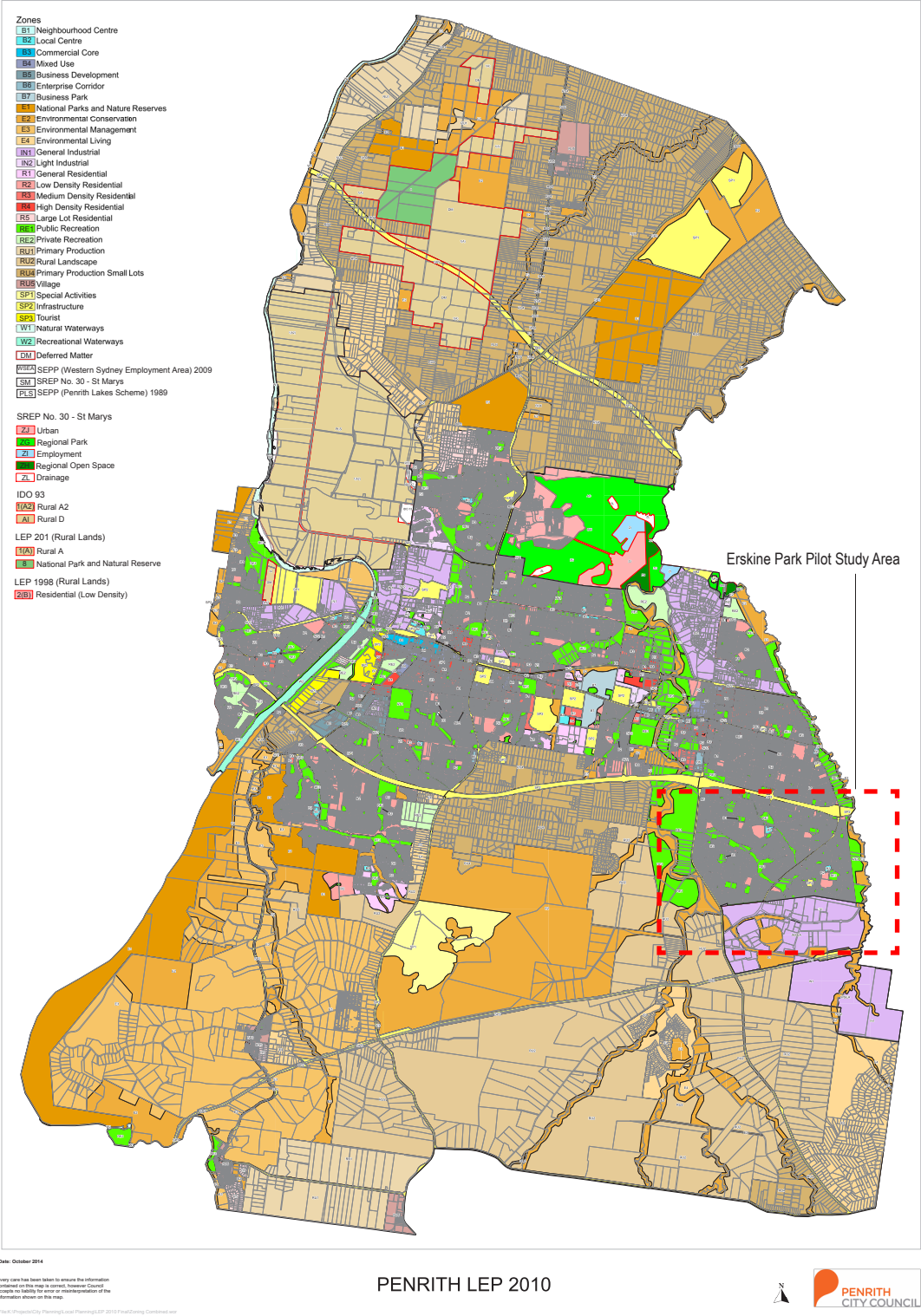


Figure 2.03: Penrith LEP 2010

### 3. PENRITH CITY CONTEXT

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#### **POLICY AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

State and local planning strategies, policies and plans have an impact on the planning principles and standards for the delivery of parks and open space across the City of Penrith and are useful in providing the metropolitan and local context to this report. A summary of relevant plans appears at the end of this document.

Particularly relevant to this review is the People's Lifestyle and Recreation Needs Study (PLANS) which was adopted by Council in 2004. PLANS Study found that the following were key issues confronting Penrith City:

- The need for access to quality and usable open space
- Provision of high quality passive and informal active recreation opportunities through improvements to the open space network
- Equitable and affordable access to community facilities and activities for all groups within the community
- Under use of passive parks and open space areas.

The PLANS study also led to the preparation of Development Contributions Plans for Local and District Open Space, which has funded upgrading of parks and recreation facilities across the City over the past 10 years.





Whipbird La Reserve • Erskine Park



## 4. REPORT APPROACH

A core objective of this report is to design a rigorous and logical framework which evaluates opportunities to improve open space in Penrith.

The initial process requires a spatial analysis of the distribution, provision and accessibility of local open space at a suburb wide level. The second phase involves the assessment of individual open space parcels using an evaluation criteria matrix. Recommendations are then developed based on the both the suburb analysis and the results of the individual parcel assessments.

In determining the adequacy of open space and recreation facilities in Penrith City, it is useful to compare current levels of provision with NSW or Commonwealth benchmarks. This issue is discussed below.

### BENCHMARKING OPEN SPACE PLANNING

Over recent years the planning of public open space, its distribution and recreation offer has moved progressively from a quantitative to qualitative approach. For many decades the default standard for open space provision in Australia was based on the longstanding 2.83 Ha/1000 persons. Most States in Australia now adopt an area-based standard for greenfield development sites, expressed as a percentage of the developable area (that is the areas of the site not limited by constraints such as easements or waterways) of a residential community. However, no over-arching national framework exists for open space planning and consequently each State has adopted its own approach.

In NSW two documents published in recent years by the State Government provide guidance on the planning and design of public open space for local government and developers. The core recommendations in these guidelines are summarised below.

#### Recreation and Open Space Planning Guidelines for Local Government (2010)

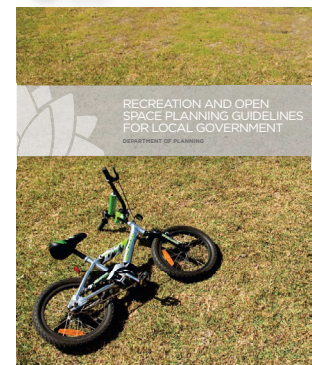
In 2010, the NSW Department of Planning (now Department of Planning and Environment) published open space planning guidelines entitled Recreation and Open Space Planning Guidelines for Local Government (ROSPG 2010).

In these guidelines catchment- based standard of open space provision has replaced the longstanding population density based standard. The guidelines also call attention to current trends which are influencing the planning and design of open space.

These include a wider diversity of both activities and participants; a broader range of usage periods; heightened concern for protecting the natural environment; increased awareness of the connections between physical activity, health and access to open space; and an increasing demand for quality, safety and universal access in recreation facilities.

Of particular relevance to this study are the following recommendations with respect to the quantitative aspects of open space provision:

- The quantum of land to be acquired for open space should be based on the percentage of the developable area - for Local and District open space, comprising 'Parks', 'Linear and Linkage' and 'Outdoor Sports', the default standard should be 9%



Recreation and Open Space Planning Guidelines for Local Government (ROSPG 2010)



Landcom Open Space Design Guidelines (LOSDG 2008)

## 4. REPORT APPROACH

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- Local parks for unstructured recreation are generally optimal at 0.5-2 Ha in size, whilst District parks are optimal between 2-5 ha
- Outdoor sports facilities are recommended to be 5 Ha at a local level and 5-10 Ha at a District level
- Residents should ideally have access to a Local park within 400m of their houses and a District park within 2 km

It is important to note that these are default standards and would be deemed to apply where no strategic analysis was undertaken to identify an alternative level of provision that could still be demonstrated to meet the community's recreational needs. As the ROSP guidelines point out, overreliance on such standards in lieu of a rigorous field analysis and consultative approach into the community needs may produce unsatisfactory results in terms of provision and the location of open space.

Further, while these metrics are intended to apply principally to greenfield developments, they also form a best practice approach to 'retrofitting' open space to meet the evolving needs of communities in established and growing or changing suburbs.

### **Landcom Open Space Design Guidelines (2008)**

With respect to the underpinning principles of high quality open space planning in NSW, the Landcom Open Space Design Guidelines (LOSDG 2008) provide a practical framework. The following is a brief overview of the eight principles that form the structure of those guidelines:

#### **Be Meaningful To Place And Community**

The planning and design of any setting should be responsive to its natural and cultural context, drawing on the site's particular physical geography, ecology, cultural heritage and aesthetic values to create a distinct sense of place.

#### **Be Multi-Functional And Adaptable**

Public open space often needs to be adaptable to a range of uses and users, and also to meeting changing recreational needs over time. While some setting types by their nature have more limited adaptability (eg bushland, rivers, escarpments etc), careful planning and design of most passive parklands and sports reserves will ensure that they can meet the needs of many users.

#### **Provide Diversity**

Our diverse communities have equally diverse recreational needs. While some parkland elements such as trees, paths, seating, shade and play are almost universal in their appeal to all ages, backgrounds and cultures, a diversity of opportunity ensures that most needs will be met.

#### **Encourage Social Interaction**

The principal reason that most people participate in any given recreation is social. It is therefore essential that every setting actively encourage, promote and cater for social

## 4.REPORT APPROACH

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interaction, both incidental (eg meeting a neighbour whilst out walking) and planned (eg a family gathering for a picnic or team sports).

### **Promote Health And Wellbeing**

A sense of wellbeing, physical and mental health is strongly tied to the accessibility of a high quality public domain. Places to meet people, to walk and run about, to have contact with nature or to take exercise are all contributors to community health.

### **Provide Equity And Accessibility**

Proximity and accessibility are key determinants of the use and enjoyment of parks and reserves. While the distribution of public open space in established communities is largely fixed, the opportunity to maximise accessibility to and within both old and new parks remains a major factor of equity.

### **Embody Environmental Sustainability**

Parks and open spaces can and should play a pivotal role in maintaining a healthy natural environment. Whether through the protection and extension of natural habitat, the conservation of natural resources or design for low embodied energy, there are many ways in which environmental sustainability can be enhanced through planning and design of open spaces.

### **Ensure Financial Sustainability**

The longevity of any open space and its continued enjoyment by visitors and community alike is dependent on planning and design that ensures its enduring financial sustainability. In recognising that maintenance budgets will fluctuate over time, the key to long term financial sustainability lies in the effective design of the site's layout, its orientation and functional relationships both within and adjoining the site.

## **APPLYING THE APPROACH**

For the purposes of this report the ROSPG 2010 and LOSD 2008 form the primary benchmarks for the evaluation of a suburb/locality-wide network of public open space and for individual open space parcel assessments.

The application of this approach is described below and while the process can be applied across the whole of the Council area, for the purposes of this report, which has a particular focus on local open space, the approach is described in the context of a suburb.

### **Suburb Wide Evaluation**

The initial phase requires a population and spatial analysis which documents the current and forecast population and the distribution, provision and accessibility of local space in a suburb or locality.

### **Population, Demography and Development**

The first step in analysing whether the local open space in a suburb is meeting - or can meet - the current and future recreational needs of the local community is to assess the size, distribution, demography and development profile of the suburb.

## 4. REPORT APPROACH

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Although the demographic profile of a suburb may have a direct bearing on the recreational facilities that might be required, it is the population change - either growing or falling, becoming denser or less dense - that have the most direct bearing on the level of open space provision required. Such analysis should also consider whether corresponding changes in the building type and density (ie loss of private open space through denser residential building type) may have a bearing on availability or ease of access to local open space.

### **Identifying the Quantity and Quality of Open Space Across a Suburb**

An evaluation of the size, shape, nature and diversity of the open space across the suburb is required to establish the degree to which there is an equity of recreational opportunity for all ages and backgrounds living in, or forecast to live in, the suburb.

This evaluation should take into account the natural values and setting diversity of local open space across the suburb. Diversity is important, so for instance, bushland is a crucial aspect of open space in a community, but where the majority of the suburb's open space is comprised of bushland the opportunities for informal kickabout or structured sport may be limited.

The ROSPG 2010 guidelines suggest a minimum 0.5 Ha for local open space, a significant part of which is preferably level, to optimise recreational uses. In practice however, not every local open space needs to be of this size to provide recreational value as, for instance, a smaller reserve might be located in a place that provides an important view or be sighted close to shops, being a popular meeting spot.

### **Identifying the Accessibility and Connectivity of Open Space within a Suburb**

A pedestrian catchment analysis should be conducted of the suburb's open spaces which maps levels of walkability and distribution of spaces. The ROSPG 2010 guidelines suggest a default catchment for local open space access should be a 400 metre (max 10 min walk) maximum walking distance from every residence (see Fig 3.04 for example).

Current best practice in establishing such access catchments employs a Pedshed analysis (Fig 5.02) which measures the real - not theoretical - walking catchment of a park based on measuring the 400 metres distance along the adjoining streets. This process should also identify real or perceived barriers to access (rail corridors, busy roads, steep topography etc).

The next step in this review evaluates the connectivity of open spaces in each suburb to examine the accessibility and levels of participation in recreational activities. This review of connectivity of open space should take into account including proximity to day-to-day destinations (such as shops, schools, work, public transport etc), presence or absence of dedicated footpaths and cycle paths both on and off streets, corridor connections (eg rivers, creeklines or bushland), proximity to district/regional level open space and street pattern (grid forms are generally the most pedestrian friendly and direct/open). In all cases a walkable and cycle friendly suburb will drive recreation participation .



## 4.REPORT APPROACH

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### GAP ANALYSIS

The foregoing evaluations provide an indication of where there may be gaps in provision or where there is a duplication of open space within a suburb. This Gap Analysis assists Council in determining a range of options to address the findings that might include one or several of the following within a suburb:

- acquiring new open space where a local shortfall is clearly demonstrated that cannot adequately be addressed by any of the following actions
- further embellishment of existing open space to increase its capacity and recreation offer
- divestment of duplicating open space (ie located within immediate proximity to another space offering a similar recreation opportunity)
- divestment of under-performing open space (eg poorly located, too small, too steep) that has no capacity to be enhanced to meet current or future needs
- improved access for walking and cycling to open space that might extend the effective catchment of a park or parks
- liaising with other recreation providers (schools, universities etc) to establish whether facilities can be shared to extend capacity.

Some of the above actions may be capable of being implemented in the short and medium term, while others such as acquisition may require longer term action or may need to be tied to development agreements in more densely populated and growing suburbs.

### INDIVIDUAL PARCEL EVALUATION

Once the suburb/locality-wide analysis has been completed, those individual reserves identified in that process as either duplicating nearby reserves, having poor pedestrian and cycle access or being of a size and nature with limited existing or potential recreation opportunity, should be evaluated on an individual parcel level.

Drawing on the eight LOSDG 2009 principles outlined above, a Criteria Matrix Form is derived (see Table 01) that sets a series of simple analysis considerations, permitting a scored evaluation for that parcel.

It is important to note that this evaluation is not solely based on the numerical result as a commentary for each score is also required to ensure that a qualitative assessment is included.

In the same vein, the scoring does not include a weighting for specific topics in the matrix as it is the comparative scores across a suburb and the integration with the suburb-wide analysis that are of more importance than defining specific score thresholds for divestment or retention.

It should also be noted that a specific total score for any given parcel does not automatically indicate that the parcel should be divested, but rather identifies that it should be shortlisted for more detailed review, including through the stakeholder consultation process.

SITE NAME/NO:	CRITERIA	SCORE OUT OF 5	COMMENTS (BY SITE)
1. BE MEANINGFUL TO PEOPLE AND PLACE			
Heritage	Listed site or with a cultural connection, event or personality (Aboriginal/non Aboriginal)		
Character/identity	Established landscape and recognisable local identity/significant views/public art		
Care and Management	Local community involved in park care/management		
2. BE MULTIFUNCTIONAL AND ADAPTABLE			
Shape and Size	Generally of regular-sided shape (when not part of corridor), ideally no less than 0.3 Ha		
Constraints	Largely free of constraints (flooding, bushfire, services)		
Adaptability	Adaptable to range of uses and users (includes a level open area)		
3. PROVIDE DIVERSITY			
Use	The park is evidently well used/enjoyed by a range of users suited to all, "from 8 to 80"		
Facilities	At least basically embellished (well located paths, seats, play areas, shelter, picnic areas, BBQs)		
Variety	Seasonal variation to planting, shade locations and profile		
4. ENCOURAGE SOCIAL INTERACTION			
Surveillance and Safety	Clear lines of sight and OPTED design principles		
Amenity	Offers shade, seating, natural socialising spaces		
Lighting	Well lit throughout with no areas that area dark or obscured		
5. PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLBEING			
Integration	Easily accessed by walking/cycling within the neighbourhood		
Connection	Offers circuits or links to other open space or trails		
Amenity	Adequate access to shade, prevalent breezes and solar access		
6. PROVIDE EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY			
Accessibility	All facilities within the park are universally accessible (play, paths, shaded seating, lookouts, toilets)		
Equity	Layout and facilities appeal to all ages and backgrounds		
Topography	Significant area of the park at less than 1:20 gradient for optimal accessibility		
7. EMBODY ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY			
Creeks and Stormwater	Natural creeks in sound condition and overland flows weed free		
Native Vegetation	Native/locally endemic species present and in sound condition		
Trees	Trees present and in sound condition		
8. ENSURE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY			
Site access	Site can be easily accessed by vehicles and workers		
Ease of maintenance	Spaces are readily maintained (e.g. edged lawns, grouped planting, ease of mowing)		
Facilities replacement	Cost effective embellishments (off the shelf, readily replaceable)		
Total	Total Score out of 120		

Table 01: Evaluation Criteria Matrix

## 4.REPORT APPROACH

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### **COMBINING THE FINDINGS**

The final step in the assessment is to review the combination of the suburb-wide and the parcel analysis in reaching conclusions and making recommendations.

It is important to note that the outcomes from the suburb-wide analysis may differ in their conclusions from the findings derived through individual parcel analysis. It is therefore critical that any recommendations for an individual parcel be based on the consideration of both processes.





Capella Reserve • Erskine Park



## 5. ERSKINE PARK PILOT

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Using the suburb of Erskine Park as a pilot for the process, principles can be established which may be applied across the City as part of the wider Public Open Space Reinvestment Project. In this section the evaluation process outlined in Section 4 is applied to the Erskine Park suburb.

### OVERVIEW OF THE SUBURB

Erskine Park has a land area of 837 hectares, comprising 2% of the total Penrith local government area. Erskine Park has a variety of distinct characteristics in its geography and demography, with a relatively stable but diverse population profile. The topography of the area ranges from gently undulating to flat with low hilltops providing uninterrupted views of the Blue Mountains to the west.

The predominant land use is low density residential (primarily detached dwellings complemented by a local shopping centre, schools and community centres including child care facilities). The suburb is almost fully developed, with only a handful of sites yet to be developed for dwellings.

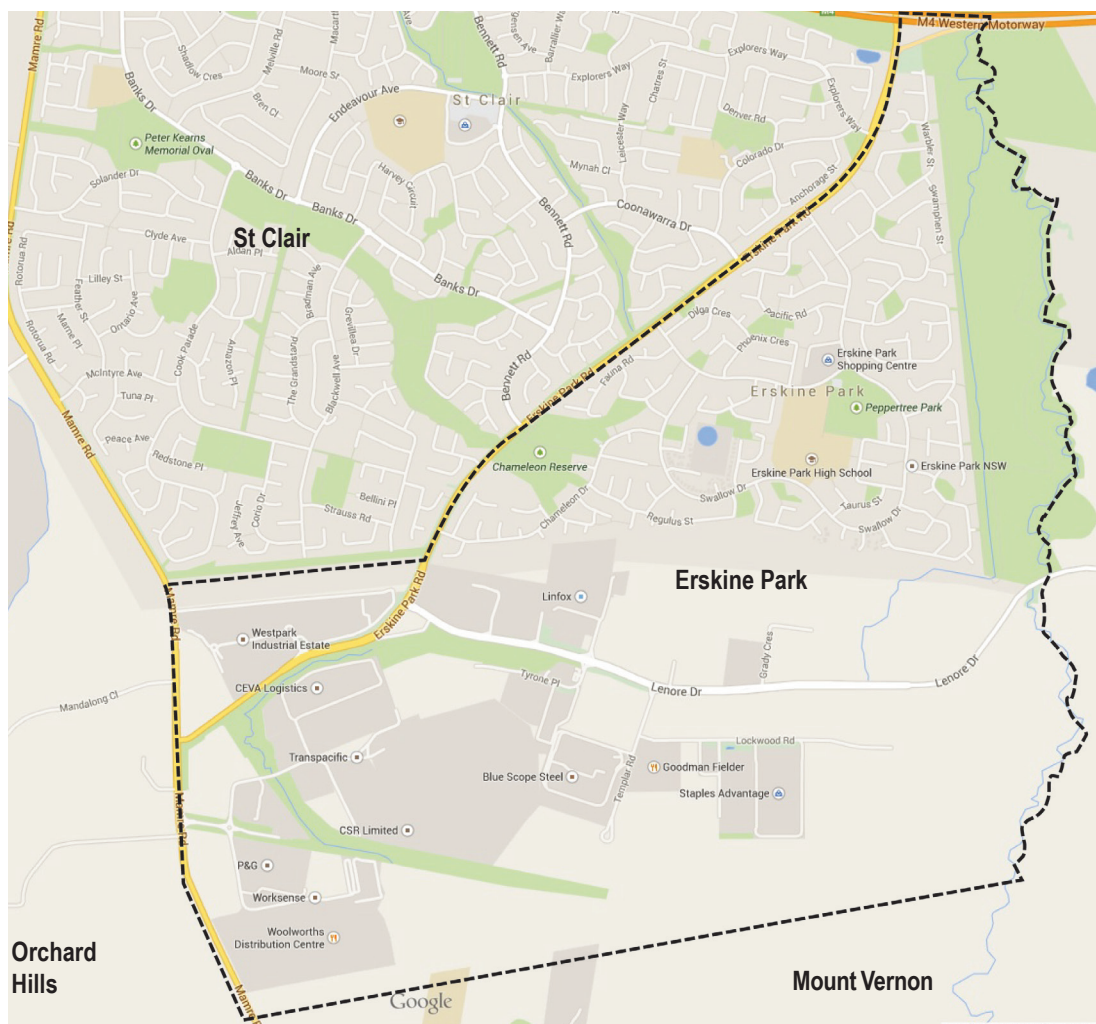
Community facilities located in Erskine Park comprise a community centre, community hall and child care centre, all centrally located opposite the shopping centre on Peppertree Drive. The nearest public library is located in St Clair, which is 1 – 2 kilometres from most residents' homes.

The street pattern is dominated by winding collector roads and cul-de-sacs. There are numerous narrow connecting paths between cul-de-sacs.

Major adjoining roads are significant barriers between Erskine Park and its surrounds. Erskine Park Road – and the speed at which traffic travels along it – divorces Erskine Park from neighbouring St Clair to the east. The M4 isolates the suburb from Colyton to the north. To the east, rural and riparian land and the M7 segregate the suburb from eastern Sydney, most notably the recreation assets of Prospect Reservoir and the Western Sydney Parklands.

To the south, Erskine Business Park (EBP) does not offer community or recreational facilities, with the exception of a cycleway along Lenore Drive which terminates within the business park. EBP is characterised by large warehousing and logistics developments, long connector roads and private access roads.

Ropes Creek is an expansive regional creek corridor, characterised by a chain of ponds waterway and Cumberland Plain vegetation, with very little embellishment but with significant potential for greater unstructured recreation.



Aerial Photo (above) and Erskine Park Suburb boundaries (below) • Erskine Park • Source: Google Map 2015



## 5. ERSKINE PARK PILOT

### POPULATION, DEMOGRAPHY AND DEVELOPMENT

Analysis of Erskine Park by demographer's i.d. Community Profile reveals:

- The Estimated Resident Population (ERP) of Erskine Park is expected to reach a peak of 6,646 by 2015 and then to decline slightly over the next 17 years. The expected annual growth rate for Erskine Park is -0.58% (from 2015) which is in contrast to a sustained increase expected across the LGA (of 1.8% p.a.)
- Age profiles for Erskine Park generally reflect patterns across Greater Sydney with the highest number of residents (24%) defined as 'Parents and Homebuilders' (35-49 year olds).
- The suburb does not reflect all regional trends in age structure – with 5% Empty Nesters/Retirees (9% across Greater Sydney) and 2% Seniors (7% across Greater Sydney); it also has a smaller 'Young Workforce' than Greater Sydney (11.5% versus 15%) but much higher numbers of youth (35% residents aged between 5-24 compared to 24% Greater Sydney).
- The median age in Erskine Park is 32 years and the average population density is 7.9 people per hectare (pph) which is higher than both Penrith City (4.4 pph) and Greater Sydney (3.5pph)

The population of Erskine Park is expected to decline slightly over the next decade but remain stable thereafter. As across Greater Sydney the population profile is generally one of an ageing community. Erskine Park however has significantly lower numbers of older residents and a much larger youth population than Greater Sydney.

Council's current planning controls reflect the low density housing environment anticipated in the area over the next 5 years. Future change is likely to entail very minor infill and redevelopment of existing housing stock.

### QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF OPEN SPACE ACROSS THE SUBURB

There is a total of 20 reserves in the suburb of Erskine Park (see Fig 5.01) comprised of :

- 2 larger local sports parks, being Chameleon Reserve and Peppertree Park. Peppertree Park is located adjacent to the shopping centre and school and accommodates sporting facilities and ball sports for structured recreation. Chameleon Reserve includes playing fields and netball courts, is located in a floodway, detention basin
- 18 smaller local parks ranging in size from 0.2 ha to 1.5 ha
- adjoining regional open space along the Ropes Creek corridor on the eastern boundary of the suburb owned by the State Government that is as yet unembellished with any recreation facilities.

Open space is relatively evenly distributed throughout the suburb. Most of the reserves in the suburb largely unembellished, with limited landscaping comprising turf and limited healthy native trees. Few reserves have any internal paths, seats, shelters or play facilities.

Erskine Park is distant from all of Penrith City's District level recreation facilities. These facilities include the Great River Walk (Nepean River), Jamison Park, Werrington Creek Park, Ripples and Kingsway Playing Field.





Capella Reserve • Erskine Park



## 5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

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The nearest District level facility (Ripples, located in St Marys) is more than 5 kilometres from Erskine Park, while Jamison Park and the Nepean River (with its Great River Walk) are between 11km and 13 km distant.

The absence of direct, affordable public transport (especially trains), further isolates Erskine residents from Penrith City's District level recreation facilities, especially residents without cars such as children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Aquatic facilities are also distant from residents via public transport, a relevant point given that Erskine Park is among the hottest suburbs in Sydney during summer months.

Although the Ropes Creek corridor is planned for extensive embellishment over the coming years, the initial focus is likely to be in the area further north at St Marys; accordingly it may be some years before the Erskine Park residents enjoy access to paths and other recreation facilities in the corridor adjoining their suburb.

### **Assessment Against ROSPG 2010 Default Provisions**

Erskine Park comprises a total land area of around 219 hectares, approximately 24.5 hectares of this land is zoned as public open space. The ROSP guidelines recommend approx. 9% for local open space. Erskine Park has approximately 11.2 % local open space.

The average level of provision based on the former population standard of 2.83 ha/1,000 persons (which would have applied at the time that Erskine Park was developed) equates to 18.9 hectares of open space being required. Erskine Park has in excess of 24.5 hectares of open space. With a population of 6,673 (2014), Council is presently delivering around 3.67 ha. /1,000 persons.

### **ACCESSIBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY**

The relatively high level of local open space provision and the mostly even distribution of that open space in the suburb means that most residents have ready access to open space (See Figure 5.01 for 200m walking catchment and Figure 5.02 for 400m walking catchment). This high level of access (in some case reserves are less than 100m apart) suggests some potential duplication of facilities.

Walking and cycling access in the suburb is however inconsistent. Figure 5.03 illustrates the existing network of on-street footpaths and cycleway connections. The majority of streets, excepting the major roads, have no dedicated footpaths, while the cycle links are mostly disjointed and offer no discernible network.

Figure 5.04 outlines some of the opportunities to develop a more connected network for cyclists and pedestrians both within and beyond the suburb that would greatly enhance access to open space and permit a rationalisation of some of the small reserves that lie close to other larger reserves.



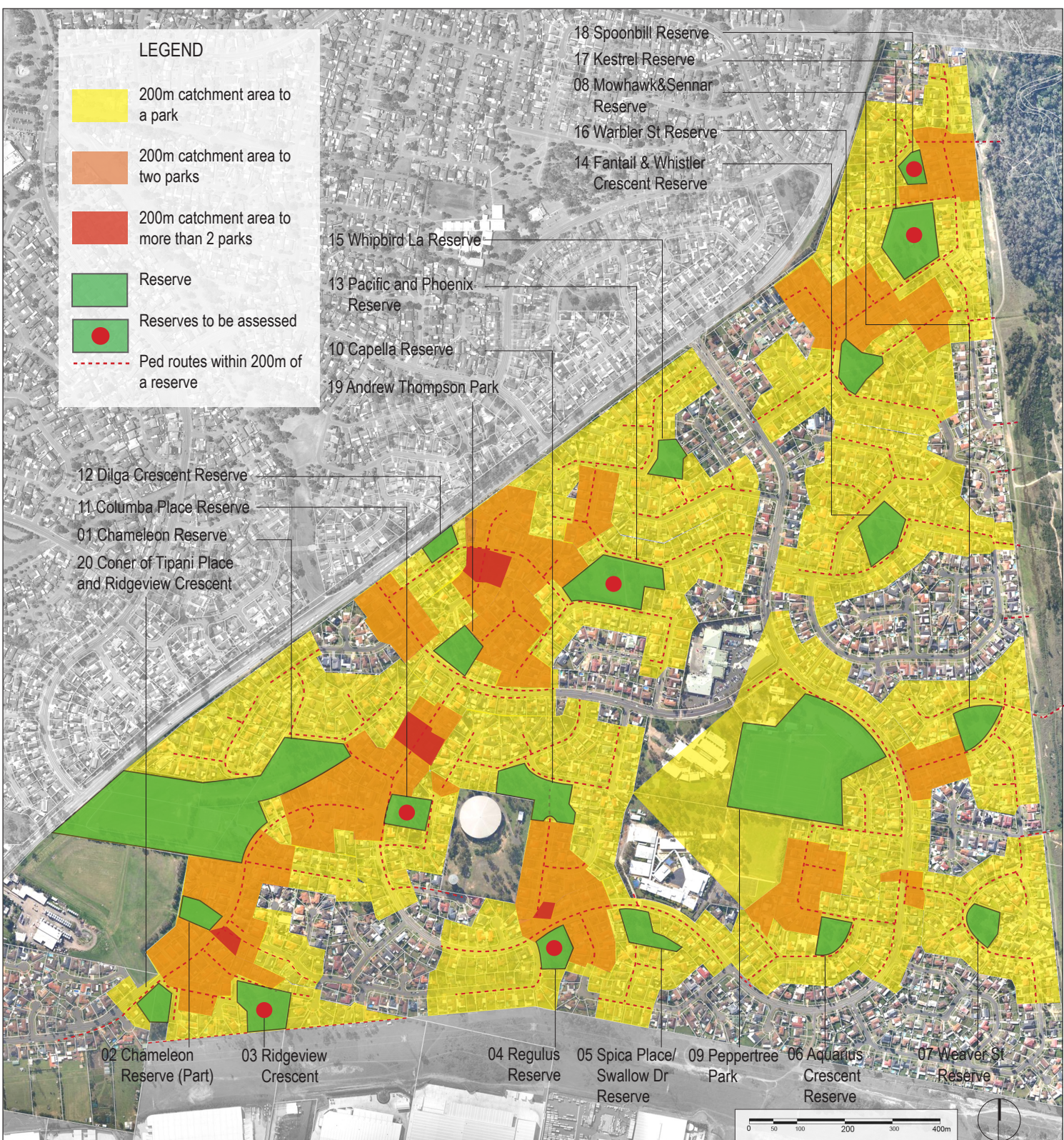


Figure 5.01: 200m Walking Catchment to a Park • Erskine Park



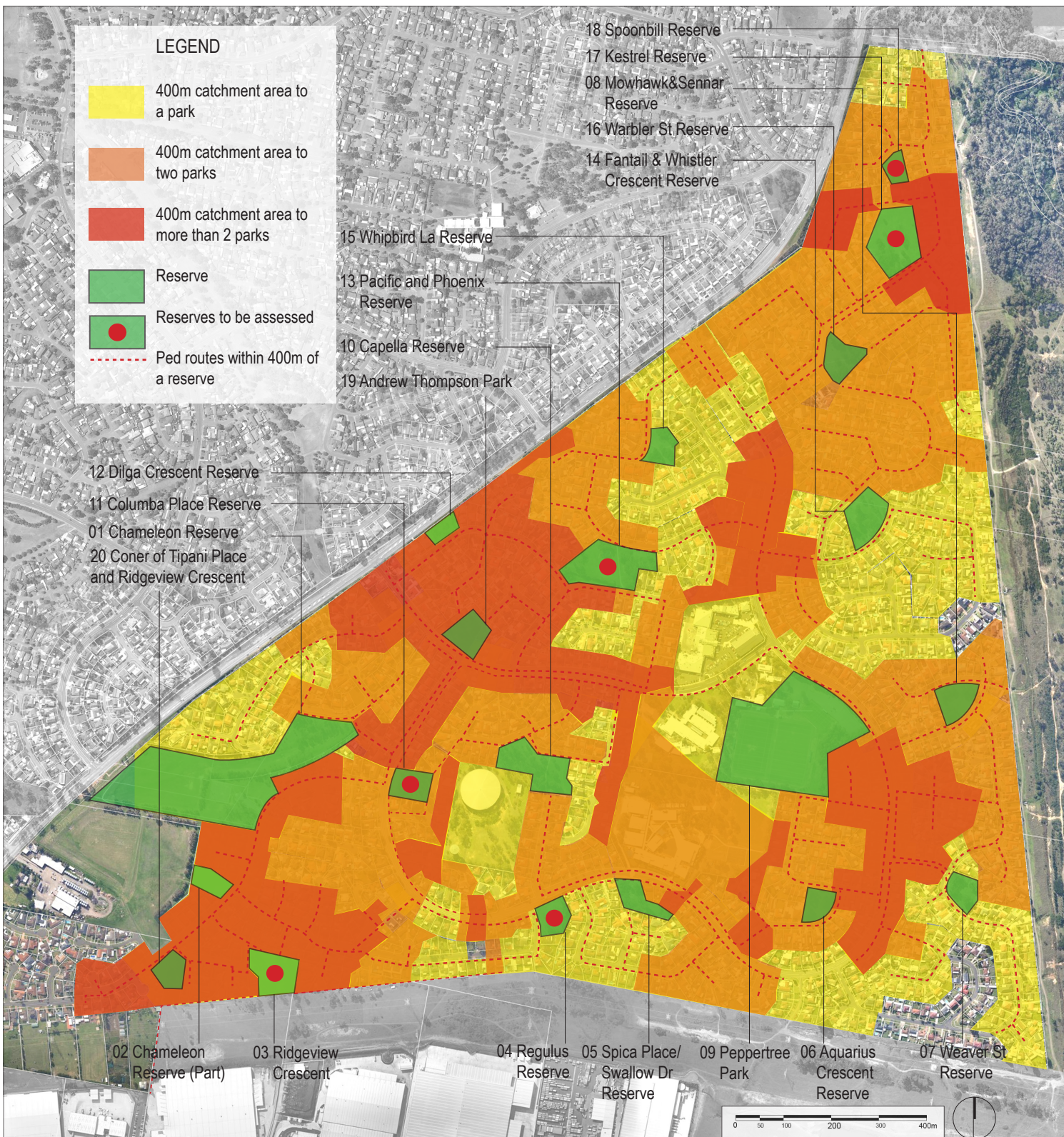


Figure 5.02: 400m Walking Catchment to a Park • Erskine Park





Figure 5.03 Existing Accessibility and Connectivity • Erskine Park



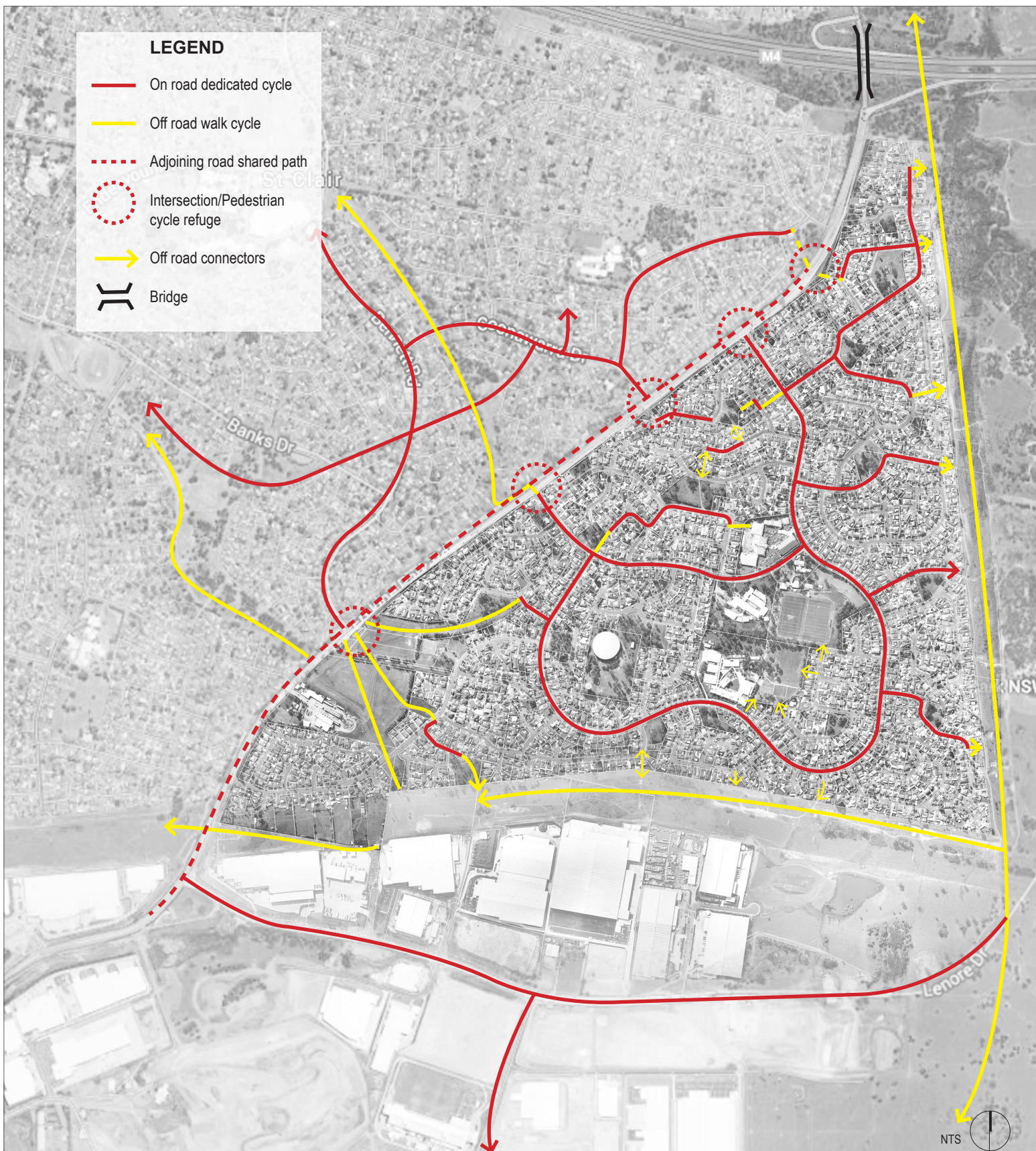


Figure 5.04: Opportunities for Improved Walking and Cycling Access • Erskine Park

## 5. ERSKINE PARK PILOT

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### GAP ANALYSIS

The foregoing suburb-wide analysis highlights a number of important findings, including that:

- the population of the suburb is relatively stable, the zoning does not predict any significant change in development type or density and the population is forecast to decline slightly over the next decade, before stabilising
- With a large youth population in the suburb and the LGA more broadly, there is demand for improved recreation choice for this age group in particular
- as the local population ages, any improvements planned to the existing parks or open space network in Erskine Park should be based on 'trans generational design' or 'lifespan design' to promote equitable access, sustainability and cost effectiveness.
- the quantum of open space in the suburb substantially exceeds the default provisions of the ROSPG and the former population based standard
- there is a relatively high level of potential duplication in open space in some parts of the suburb with similar parks at very close proximity
- the majority of the reserves are largely unembellished, offering little invitation to potential users, with significant focus applied to structured recreation (sports) rather than unstructured recreation facilities
- the extensive cul-de-sac street system of the suburb reduces direct access to destinations on foot or by bicycle, limiting the usability and accessibility of many reserves. Consequently, the suburb is not walk and cycle friendly
- the location of Erskine Park on the City's eastern boundary and the distance of the suburb from district and regional open space facilities in the City, when combined with barriers to cycle and walking access created by Erskine Park Road, lends a focus on the importance to the community of high quality local open space within the suburb

### SUBURB-WIDE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The gap analysis suggests a number of recommendations to improve local open space in Erskine park at a suburb-wide level; it is therefore recommended that:

- focusing on improvements for the existing population given the small projected fall in population
- evaluating several of the identified small reserve parcels that are evidently duplicating. Funds raised from the disposal of such assets should be invested in the upgrade of existing reserves
- embellishing a number of the parks that are presently under-embellished
- improving cycle and walking access - especially on street - around the suburb (eg improved road crossings for pedestrians and cyclists on Erskine Park Road will permit improved access to the green corridors of St Clair and beyond)
- preparing local path links to be connected to the Ropes Creek corridor, in expectation that this will be a major recreation resource in the future for Erskine Park residents



## 5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

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### ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL PARCELS

Erskine Park has twenty reserves. Council requested that six of these randomly selected reserves be assessed against the proposed evaluation criteria to provide an indication of their site specific merits. These six reserves comprise:

- Spoonbill Reserve (1a Spoonbill St)
- Columba Place Reserve (24a Swallow Drive)
- Ridgeview Crescent Reserve (6 Ridgeview Crescent)
- Regulus Reserve (73 Swallow Drive)
- Kestrel Reserve – part (2a Kestrel Crescent)
- Pacific and Phoenix Reserve – part (27a Pacific Crescent)

The following pages provide a summary of the evaluation of these six reserves using the methodology outlined in Section 4 and detailed in the parcel scoresheet in Table 01.

The maximum total score of the evaluation, at 120, is considered to reflect the optimal open space. However, it is not necessary to gain a high overall score to indicate that the open space should be retained. The sub-criteria are also essential in determining whether the open space is valuable in certain areas.

It is also important to note that no one local park is likely to reflect all of these principles – indeed diversity is important – but rather in considering the totality of these characteristics an assessment can be made as to whether a local park is likely – or not – to be meeting the recreation and leisure needs of its community and offering value for money from Council.

Finally, for each site a recommendation is made either for retention, consolidation or disposal of reserves. A number permutations exist around these options:

- Retention and if/where appropriate, further embellishment
- Partial disposal, retaining the core of the reserve but disposing of corners or extensions of the reserve that do not add value
- Partial disposal, retaining only sufficient space to ensure a generous public thoroughfare
- disposal of the entire reserve, reinvesting the funds generated in embellishing local reserves

Subject to the characteristics and value of any space to be disposed off, such land may either be offered for sale on the open market or offered for sale to owners of adjoining properties.

The combined findings and recommendations, drawing together this parcel analysis with the suburb-wide assessment is provided in Section 7.

5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

NO.18 SPOONBILL RESERVE



SITE DETAILS

- 1a Spoonbill Street
- About 0.2 ha

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The site is located next to Spoonbill Street and is accessible only from its northern side. There are a few existing trees that

EVALUATION

Criteria Topic	Score
Meaningful to place and people.....	03/15
Multi-functional and adaptable.....	08/15
Provide diversity.....	01/15
Encourage social interaction.....	02/15
Promote health and wellbeing.....	04/15
Provide equity and accessibility.....	10/15
Embody environmental sustainability.....	05/15
Ensure financial sustainability.....	07/15
Total.....	40/120

CONCLUSION

The park is at the end of a cul de sac and therefore access is relatively limited, although there is a path connection to Erskine Park Road to the west. The park has little evident use, is of less than optimal size and does not offer casual surveillance. The native trees on site are significant in size and in sound condition, but there is no shrub planting at all.

RECOMMENDATION

Given the above and the close proximity of Kestrel Reserve which is larger, better connected and more adaptable to current and future recreation needs, consideration should be given to selling this block for a residence and the revenue raised used to embellish Kestrel Reserve or local pedestrian/cycle connections.

If the reserve is sold for residential uses it would be advisable to gain the advice of an arborist on the quality and significance of the native trees and how/if they should be retained and/or offset planting be carried out in nearby reserves or streets.



## 5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

### NO.17 KESTREL RESERVE



#### SITE DETAILS

- 2a Kestrel Crescent
- About 1.2 ha

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Kestrel Reserve is located between Kestrel Crescent and Warbler Street, and is fenced by rows of houses to its east and west. It is a large expansive parcel of open space in Erskine Park, with a number of canopy trees and several items of contemporary play equipment. There is only one paved pedestrian path along its eastern edge (which is a driveway for dwellings).

#### EVALUATION

Criteria Topic	Score
Meaningful to place and people.....	04/15
Multi-functional and adaptable.....	11/15
Provide diversity.....	04/15
Encourage social interaction.....	07/15
Promote health and wellbeing.....	08/15
Provide equity and accessibility.....	09/15
Embody environmental sustainability.....	05/15
Ensure financial sustainability.....	09/15
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>57/120</b>

#### CONCLUSION

This is a large well positioned reserve, with good access to adjoining residential streets, a relatively level and adaptable layout. Embellishment by play is patchily laid out and the park lacks structure or immediate appeal. Shade is limited, tree and shrub planting likewise.

#### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this park be retained and embellished with a clearer layout provided by paths and planting.

5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

NO.13 PACIFIC AND PHOENIX RESERVE



SITE DETAILS

- 27a Phoenix Crescent
- About 1.3 ha

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

A paved footpath traverses Pacific and Phoenix Reserve, connecting the northern and southern entries to the park. A fence runs along the rest of its boundaries. 10-12 remnant Eucalyptus are located next to Phoenix Crescent and remnant Eucalyptuses are located in two groups along the footpath. There are play equipment in the middle of the park shaded by existing trees. Perimeter plantings along the Phoenix Crescent boundary have the effect of screening the park, limiting the passive surveillance and park invitation.

EVALUATION

Criteria Topic	Score
Meaningful to place and people.....	04/15
Multi-functional and adaptable.....	09/15
Provide diversity.....	05/15
Encourage social interaction.....	08/15
Promote health and wellbeing.....	09/15
Provide equity and accessibility.....	10/15
Embody environmental sustainability.....	05/15
Ensure financial sustainability.....	09/15
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>59/120</b>

CONCLUSION

It is a well vegetated, largely irregular shaped open space characterised by a delightful children’s playground and clusters of medium sized hedges. Although there is only one footpath connecting both boundaries of this reserve, there are no major constraints found on site. The site provides a sense of safety thanks to its permeability and existing street lights.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the park be largely retained with the option to divest sections on the eastern and western boundaries which have limited utility and funds raised to upgrade the park to create a regular space.



## 5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

### NO.11 COLUMBA PLACE RESERVE



#### SITE DETAILS

- Lot Number 57058
- 24a Swallow Drive
- About 0.5 ha

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Columba Place Reserve is extensively vegetated with a good aspect to the west. It can be easily accessed from both adjoining streets and the reserve provides shady areas and open and appealing views northwards and southwards including towards the Blue Mountains. The Reserve is located on a slope with a footpath along Swallow Drive. It is accessible from both Swallow Drive and Columba Place however it lacks any connecting pedestrian ways. Several seats are located through the park surrounded by groups of canopy trees.

#### EVALUATION

Criteria Topic	Score
Meaningful to place and people.....	05/15
Multi-functional and adaptable.....	07/15
Provide diversity.....	04/15
Encourage social interaction.....	08/15
Promote health and wellbeing.....	08/15
Provide equity and accessibility.....	07/15
Embody environmental sustainability.....	05/15
Ensure financial sustainability.....	08/15
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>52/120</b>

#### CONCLUSION

Columba place reserve requires additional layers of vegetation and designed outdoor furniture. It can be easily accessed from both adjoining streets. One of the shortfalls of this place is the poorly turfed ground and its lack in visual appeal. Among the shortfalls of this reserve is the absence of any space definition or shrub layer and limited street furniture from which to sit and enjoy the views.

#### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this park be retained and embellished with additional paths, more defined spaces, more shade and a seating area at the view location and enhanced entry treatment.

5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

NO.04 REGULUS RESERVE



SITE DETAILS

- Lot Number 48660
- 73 Swallow Drive
- About 0.65 ha

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Regulus Reserve is a large open space with numerous trees in varying condition. It is accessible from Swallow Drive and Regulus Street. The park contains no footpaths or other amenities. A bus stop shelter is located to the north of the park which is the only shaded area around the site. The slope of the site limits its recreational use. The site is also located within 100 metres of Spica Reserve.

EVALUATION

Criteria Topic	Score
Meaningful to place and people.....	04/15
Multi-functional and adaptable.....	07/15
Provide diversity.....	03/15
Encourage social interaction.....	05/15
Promote health and wellbeing.....	06/15
Provide equity and accessibility.....	03/15
Embody environmental sustainability.....	04/15
Ensure financial sustainability.....	05/15
Total.....	37/120

CONCLUSION

This reserve is generally problematic in terms of its sloped landform, trees in poor condition, lack of furniture and views, and its isolated location compared to other open spaces. However it also has several noteworthy merits, such as its large size, compound shape and adjacency to two roads.

RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the above evaluation, taken in concert with the reserve's proximity to another reserve that has greater recreational capacity, it is proposed that this reserve be divested.



## 5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

### NO.03 RIDGEVIEW CRESCENT RESERVE



#### SITE DETAILS

- Ridgeview Crescent
- About 0.65 ha

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION

A set of play equipment and seats are located at one of the two entries of the Ridgeview Crescent Reserve, without any canopy trees around. The site is fenced by low rise fences and only accessible from the two entries located on east and west. People with disability may have difficulties accessing the park as the only footpath is blocked by part of the fence.

#### EVALUATION

Criteria Topic	Score
Meaningful to place and people.....	06/15
Multi-functional and adaptable.....	11/15
Provide diversity.....	07/15
Encourage social interaction.....	09/15
Promote health and wellbeing.....	10/15
Provide equity and accessibility.....	07/15
Embody environmental sustainability.....	05/15
Ensure financial sustainability.....	07/15
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>62/120</b>

#### CONCLUSION

Overall this site is in sound condition except for its inaccessibility. A number of trees have been planted in the centre of the park, providing shade. Furthermore, there are nice views towards the southern end of the park.

#### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that this park be retained and embellished with more convenient accessibilities and integral facilities.

## 5. ERSKINE PARK PILOT

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### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This report has involved the development of a rigorous and transparent process for evaluating public open space in the city to establish a) its level of performance and b) to ascertain the extent to which open space that is under-performing (and with little or no capacity to better meet community needs) might be consolidated or rationalised; the funds to be reinvested in local open space. To that end a pilot study area, Erskine was evaluated in detail. Key conclusions from the evaluation process applied to Erskine Park include:

- the importance of reviewing the performance of the spaces systemically (suburb-wide) before evaluating each site, leading to a more rigorous conclusion on retention or disposal decisions
- a high level of duplication of open space in Erskine Park with insufficient embellishment of many reserves to adequately meet community needs
- a poor walking and cycling environment in Erskine Park, which if improved would permit some rationalisation of reserves, whilst also improving recreation opportunity for the local community.

The following recommendations have been drawn from these considerations.

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Erskine Park recreation reinvestment project presents opportunities for significant improvements to the amenity and leisure options available to the community. By delivering recreation infrastructure which is “fit for purpose” and financially sustainable Council can ensure that we more closely satisfy the needs of the majority of residents.

Rather than focusing recreation reinvestment exclusively on individual parks as a series of isolated places, a more coherent approach would seek to connect these places, with the connections as important as the individual reserves, with street based ‘infrastructure’ such as pathways, bus shelters, lighting and street trees.

Recreation reinvestment principles could seek to deliver additional infrastructure which:

- Is highly visible and highly functional
- Maximises utility and focuses on community hubs or creates new community networks
- Reinforces Penrith City’s strengths (e.g. views from hilltops parks, linkage possibilities through floodways, enhance access to the expansive Ropes Creek Reserve, etc)
- Maximises the number and range of residents who can access the facilities
- Delivers projects which improve the active transport options and benefit those without car access such as schoolchildren, elderly and people with disabilities.
- Focuses on sites where we can “borrow amenity” from the view and the setting, stretching the perceived value of our investment.
- Focuses works along bus routes, where they can be more accessible to users and be viewed by those on buses (seeing the reinvestment at work).



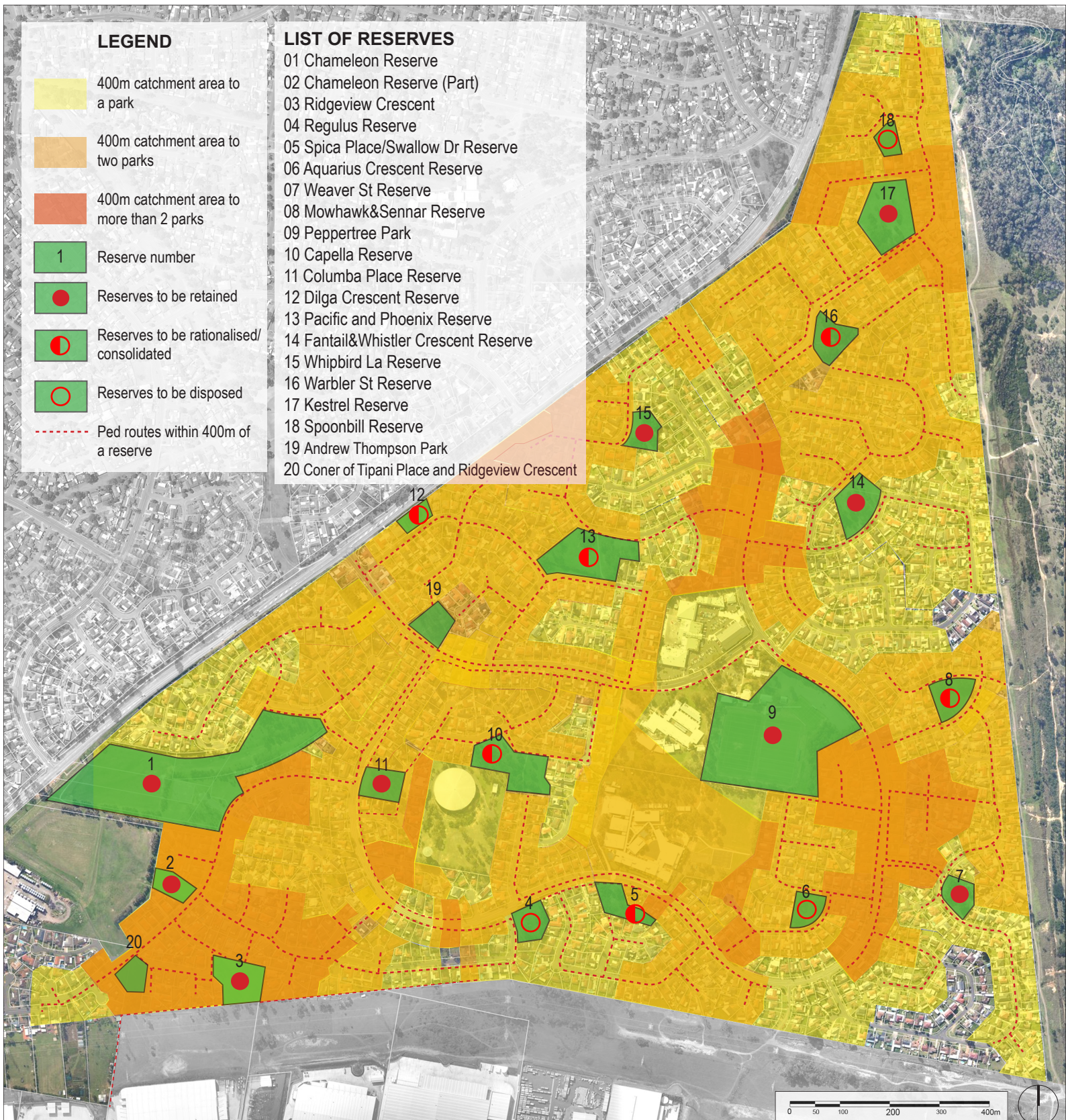


Figure 7.01: Retention, Consolidation and Rationalisation Options • Erskine Park



## 5. ERSKINE PARK PILOT

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### SITE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Erskine Park suburb the following are the key recommendations, as illustrated in Fig 7.01 overleaf:

- sale of three reserves in total (Nos 4,6 and 18)
- partial sale of seven parcels to better consolidate the remaining space in each reserve (Nos 5,8,10,12,13 and 16) the funds to go directly to embellishment (see Figure 7.01 overleaf for suggested components of partial disposal for each reserve)
- improvement of on-street and off-street walking and cycling in the suburb (see Figure 3.06) to enhance access to and between reserves and day-to-day destinations

For the other reserves assessed in the suburbs of Colyton, North St Marys, South Penrith, Emu Plains and Cambridge Park the recommendations are to:

- carry out a suburb-wide assessment in each suburb to confirm/amend the following recommendations
- sale of five of the six parcels (excepting Devon Park), funds raised to be used for local embellishment as detailed in Section 6.

Detailed recommendations for each reserve evaluated can be found in Sections 5 and 6, and details of partial disposals in Erskine Park are illustrated in Appendix 2.

### NEXT STEPS

In progressing this study towards implementation it is recommended that Council:

- designate a number of staff to undertake independent scoring assessment of each site (i.e. 3 to 4 staff from different departments independently score and then compare evaluations)
- prepare a stakeholder engagement plan for communicating this process for the pilot study area of Erskine Park
- undertake a similar suburb based analysis for the five other suburbs named with a view to informing the Brief for the pending Penrith Open Space and Recreation Plan
- prepare an implementation plan in accordance with statutory requirements.

Finally, in the broader context of current and future development across the Penrith Council area it will be important to develop a financial plan for open space acquisitions and disposals that identifies the balance of revenue and expenditure.

Importantly also, that plan will need to consider the source of funding for those actions, be that through Section 94 contributions, grants, general revenue, developer agreements or other sources.



## 5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

### RESERVE DISPOSAL DETAILS



Spica Place/Swallow Dr Reserve



Reserves to be partially disposed



Areas to be disposed



Mowhawk & Sennar Reserve



Reserves to be partially disposed



Areas to be disposed

Reserves to be Rationalised/Consolidated • Erskine Park



5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

RESERVE DISPOSAL DETAILS



Capella Reserve

 Reserves to be partially disposed  Areas to be disposed



Dilga Crescent Reserve

 Reserves to be partially disposed  Areas to be disposed

Reserves to be Rationalised/Consolidated • Erskine Park



## 5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

## RESERVE DISPOSAL DETAILS



Pacific and Phoenix Reserve



Reserves to be partially disposed

d

Areas to be disposed



Warbler St Reserve



### Reserves to be partially disposed

10

### Areas to be disposed



5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

RESERVE DISPOSAL DETAILS



Spoonbill Reserve

 Reserves to be disposed



Aquarius Crescent Reserve

 Reserves to be disposed



## 5.ERSKINE PARK PILOT

### RESERVE DISPOSAL DETAILS



Regulus Reserve

○ Reserves to be disposed



Spica Place • Erskine Park



## 6. OTHER SUBURB SELECTIONS

In addition to assessment of the six sites in the pilot suburb of Erskine Park, Council has requested that the following reserves also be evaluated for this study. These sites were chosen as they have been identified for investigation as being potentially surplus to Council and the community needs. Those reserves are:

- 18-20 Parkin Road/ 19 Freeman Street, Colyton
- 16a Bentley Road, Colyton
- 9 and 9a Anzac Street, North St Marys
- 151 Parker Street (2 lots), South Penrith
- 28a Sheppard Street, Emu Plains
- 2-26 Cambridge Street (20 Devon Street), Cambridge Park

A similar site evaluation process was carried out for each of these sites, as adopted for the Pilot study area of Erskine Park. The individual site evaluations are shown in the following pages. While the assessment of these sites did not entail a suburb-wide overview, the analysis did consider the immediate context of the reserves, identifying where the nearest local reserves were located and assessing general accessibility and connectivity.

### SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHER SUBURBS

The following is a summary of the recommendations for each of the sites in light of this evaluation process:

- 18-20 Parkin Road/19 Freeman Street: the reserve essentially comprises a through block parcel, with little recreational potential. Recommended to sell the parcel and use some of the funds to improve the nearby Kevin Maley Reserve.
- 16a Bentley Road: this is an isolated corner site with access only on its southwestern corner. It is recommended that the site be either sold in total or the majority is sold and a small space on the southwestern corner be embellished as a small local meeting space with a shade tree and seats.
- 9 and 9a Anzac Street: this a linear, angled parcel with a small street frontage only. It lies within 60 metres of another better located reserve. It is recommended that the parcel be sold and funds be used to embellish the reserve on the corner of Willow Rd and Wattle Ave.
- 151 Parker Street (2 lots): this is a narrow single lot on a busy road, with limited access and recreational value. It is recommended that the site be sold and the funds used to upgrade the nearby Baronesa Park.
- 28a Sheppard Street: this is a single corner lot with limited recreational value. The location is with in easy walking distance of Emu Park to the south, Regatta Park to the north and the riverside walk to the east. It is recommended that the site be sold and funds used for an upgrade of unstructured recreation facilities at Emu Park.
- 2-26 Cambridge Street (20 Devon Street): this is a substantial sized park that also acts as a green corridor to the west. While there are also other reserves in the locality (Lincoln Road and Steamroller Park) it is recommended that this park be retained and embellished.

To complete this evaluation rigorously it is recommended that the same suburb-wide assessment be carried out for these reserves as has been adopted for Erskine Park.

## 6.OTHER SUBURB SELECTIONS

### PARKIN RD/FREEMAN ST RESERVE, COLYTON



#### SITE DETAILS

- 18-20 Parkin Road/ 19 Freeman St
- About 0.19 ha

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION

This is a very narrow small reserve with two entry points which create a connection between Parkin Road and Freeman St. There are currently no paths that traverses the site and a single large tree is present. The entry on Freeman St is bounded by bollards whilst the entry on Parkin Road is open. The adjoining road also widens to create potential parking spaces along the site on Parkin Road.

#### EVALUATION

Criteria Topic	Score
Meaningful to place and people.....	03/15
Multi-functional and adaptable.....	07/15
Provide diversity.....	02/15
Encourage social interaction.....	03/15
Promote health and wellbeing.....	03/15
Provide equity and accessibility.....	07/15
Embody environmental sustainability.....	03/15
Ensure financial sustainability.....	06/15
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>34/120</b>

#### CONCLUSION

It is evident that this small open space is neither used by people nor does it provide any significant natural values or recreation potential. It is located close to streets but there are no connecting footpaths within. The space lacks visual character and can potentially be considered for other purposes.

#### RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of this above evaluation taken in concert with the reserves context within the suburb it is proposed to sell the parcel and use some part of those of the funds raised to improve a nearby reserve such as Kevin Maley Reserve.



## 6. OTHER SUBURB SELECTIONS

### BENTLEY RD RESERVE, COLYTON



#### SITE DETAILS

- 16 Bentley Road
- About 0.12 ha

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The site has a single entry point along Bentley Rd that is demarcated by a row of bollards. Fences from its adjacent residential plots form the borders of the rest of the site. A single set of swings and a single tree is present on site. The whole site is covered in grass except for the area surrounding the swing, which has a loose mulch ground cover.

#### EVALUATION

Criteria Topic	Score
Meaningful to place and people.....	03/15
Multi-functional and adaptable.....	03/15
Provide diversity.....	03/15
Encourage social interaction.....	03/15
Promote health and wellbeing.....	03/15
Provide equity and accessibility.....	07/15
Embody environmental sustainability.....	02/15
Ensure financial sustainability.....	04/15
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>28/120</b>

#### CONCLUSION

This reserve is located within an enclosed space surrounded by neighbourhoods (with very limited casual surveillance) and fenced by a line of bollards. It is only accessible from one side of the park and is not ideal for universal access. This site is well turfed but has scored low amongst the various criteria ranging from accessibility to environmental services.

#### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the site be either sold in total or the majority is sold and a small space on the southwestern corner be embellished as a small local meeting space with a shade tree and seats.

6.OTHER SUBURB SELECTIONS

ANZAC ST RESERVE, ST MARYS



SITE DETAILS

- 9 and 9a Anzac St
- About 0.34 ha

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

This is a moderately large irregularly shaped open space with seven large trees scattered around and a utility pole in the centre. The park has a public frontage to Anzac St obscured from street views, obscuring views and compromising public safety in this reserve. At least 13 residential houses share an edge with the boundaries of the site but few overview the park. This park is also very close to Willows Road/Wattle Avenue Reserve.

EVALUATION

Criteria Topic	Score
Meaningful to place and people.....	03/15
Multi-functional and adaptable.....	04/15
Provide diversity.....	03/15
Encourage social interaction.....	04/15
Promote health and wellbeing.....	04/15
Provide equity and accessibility.....	05/15
Embody environmental sustainability.....	04/15
Ensure financial sustainability.....	05/15
Total.....	32/120

CONCLUSION

Overall, this reserve provides no evident benefits to its community. The moderately large open space has limited vegetation and no recreation facilities or paths. The site sits on a gentle slope. It is accessible from the adjoining street but currently is not ideal for universal access due to the absence of footpaths. There is only one street light adjoining the park.

RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of this above evaluation taken in concert with the reserves, proximity to another more accessible park, it is proposed to be disposed of in total, and the funds to be used to embellish the reserve on the corner of Willow Rd and Wattle Avenue Reserve.



## 6. OTHER SUBURB SELECTIONS

### PARKER ST RESERVE, SOUTH PENRITH



#### SITE DETAILS

- 151 Parker St (2 lots)
- About 0.4 ha

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION

This regularly shaped open space has a number of trees planted along the edges. A paved pedestrian path runs along the eastern edge of the site along the busy Parker St. The south and west edges of the site have fences about 2 metres or less in height and a number of large eucalypts. The northern edge of the site adjoins a property with relatively low or no fences and contains large shrubs on its boundary. There are no pathways for either pedestrians or people with disabilities.

#### EVALUATION

Criteria Topic	Score
Meaningful to place and people.....	04/15
Multi-functional and adaptable.....	06/15
Provide diversity.....	07/15
Encourage social interaction.....	06/15
Promote health and wellbeing.....	07/15
Provide equity and accessibility.....	06/15
Embody environmental sustainability.....	05/15
Ensure financial sustainability.....	07/15
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>48/120</b>

#### CONCLUSION

The locational constraints of this reserve, such as its location on a busy, noisy road, and its narrow form limits its recreation opportunity.

#### RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of this above evaluation taken in concert with the reserves context within the suburb it is proposed to be disposed of in full, and the funds should be used to upgrade a nearby reserve such as Baronessa Park.

6.OTHER SUBURB SELECTIONS

SHEPPARD ST RESERVE, EMU PLAINS



SITE DETAILS

- 28a Sheppard St
- About 0.08 ha

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

This very small, but well kept open space has a paved pedestrian path along Francis Ave. There are no paths along its Sheppard Rd edge but retail shops are located on the other side of the road. Small street trees line the edges of the road. Fences run along the two sides adjoining houses, with certain segments open towards the driveways of the houses. A bus station is also within near vicinity across the road. There are no facilities in the reserve and no shade is present. There is also no evidence that the space is regularly used for recreation.

EVALUATION

Criteria Topic	Score
Meaningful to place and people.....	03/15
Multi-functional and adaptable.....	02/15
Provide diversity.....	01/15
Encourage social interaction.....	07/15
Promote health and wellbeing.....	05/15
Provide equity and accessibility.....	05/15
Embody environmental sustainability.....	01/15
Ensure financial sustainability.....	07/15
Total.....	31/120

CONCLUSION

This is a small and narrow open space located on the corner of two streets. A well paved footpath runs along Francis Avenue but has limited access to inner parts of the park. The size and shape of the park make its recreational uses limited.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the site be sold and funds used for an upgrade of unstructured recreation facilities at Emu Park, or potentially in providing a small corner meeting space adjoining the shops opposite. The same might apply for the similarly shaped open space on the other side of the street.



## 6. OTHER SUBURB SELECTIONS

### DEVON PARK, CAMBRIDGE PARK



#### SITE DETAILS

- 2-26 Cambridge St (20 Devon St)
- About 3 ha

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Devon Park is a relatively large site with a significant number of mature trees that provide shade. There are multiple street frontages and access points to the space, creating an east-west connection between Wrench St and Sandringham Ave, and a north-south connection between Cambridge St and Epping Pl. Currently, a footpath traverses the site from Cambridge St to Devon Road and along the Cambridge Street boundary. The site can also be accessed from Balmoral Dr. The reserve acts as an overland flow path and a connecting local corridor. The reserve has no embellishments to enhance its appeal to users.

#### EVALUATION

Criteria Topic	Score
Meaningful to place and people.....	05/15
Multi-functional and adaptable.....	09/15
Provide diversity.....	06/15
Encourage social interaction.....	07/15
Promote health and wellbeing.....	12/15
Provide equity and accessibility.....	08/15
Embody environmental sustainability.....	06/15
Ensure financial sustainability.....	07/15
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>60/120</b>

#### CONCLUSION

In general, this large reserve is well vegetated and accessible from multiple entry points. Most trees are in sound condition but few shrubs can be found. Street lights provide a sense of safety at night but other facilities might be required for further improvements. This is an important thoroughfare and acts as a potential contributor to urban forest in the locality.

#### RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the above evaluation and given the site's existing role as an overland flowpath, as also its opportunity to be enhanced as a through route and recreation area, it is proposed to be retained and embellished, with a clearer definition of spaces.





Spica Place. • Erskine Park



## 7. APPENDIX

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### APPENDIX 1: POLICY AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

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- A Plan for Growing Sydney (2014)
- Subregional Planning

##### LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT

- Community Plan, Delivery Program (2013-2017)
- Penrith Local Environmental Plan 2010 (Amendment 4)
- Erskine Park Residential S94 Plan
- Penrith City Strategy (2013)
- The People's Lifestyle and Recreation Needs Study (PLANS) (2004)
- Open Space Action Plan (2007)
- Erskine Park Needs Analysis (2010)

##### OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS:

- Penrith Urban Study and Strategy (2011)
- Draft Reclassification List And Updated Draft Reclassification List (2014)
- Map Of Open Spaces (2014)
- Map Of Water Courses (2014)
- Proposed Zoning Map for LEP 2010 (2010)
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### **POLICY AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

State and local planning strategies, policies and plans have an impact on the planning principles and standards for the delivery parks and open space across the City of Penrith and are useful in providing the metropolitan and local context to this report.

### **STATE GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION**

Several key pieces of State government legislation influence the provision of open space and recreation opportunities in Penrith City as follows.

#### **Local Government Act 1993**

The Local Government Act 1993 requires Councils to identify, classify and manage land that it owns. Public land that is classified as community land generally includes parks and other open spaces. Under the Act, Councils are required to prepare Plans of Management for community land. Penrith City Council has prepared Plans of Management for all its community land, mainly parks, reserves and bushland areas. Councils are also required to categorise community land as either natural area (foreshore, watercourse, wetland, bush land), sports ground, park, area of cultural significance, or general community use.

Under the Act, Councils are also required to prepare an annual State of Environment report, in which information on open space, recreation and natural resources is usually presented.

#### **Local Government Amendment (Planning & Reporting) Bill 2009**

In June 2009 the Department for Local Government introduced to Parliament the Local Government Amendment (Planning and Reporting) Bill. The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) package proposes to change the way in which local government is required to conduct their corporate planning. Councils are now required to prepare a Community Strategic Plan to identify the community's main priorities and expectations for the future and to plan strategies to achieve these goals.

#### **Crown Lands Act 1989**

The Crown Lands Act 1989 governs the planning, management and use of Crown land, including reservation or dedication for a public purpose such as Public Recreation, and leasing and licensing. The Department of Lands is responsible for management of the Crown reserve system throughout NSW. There is some Crown land in the Penrith Local Government area which is under the care, control and management of Penrith City Council.

In summary, the principles of Crown land management are that, as appropriate:

- environmental protection principles be observed
- natural resources be conserved wherever possible
- public use and enjoyment, and multiple use be encouraged
- the land and its resources be sustained in perpetuity, and
- it be occupied, sold, or otherwise dealt with consistent with these principles.



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### **Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979**

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 provide the basis for preparing land-use planning instruments, including State Environmental Planning Policies, Regional Environmental Plans, and Local Environmental Plans. The EPA Act also sets out processes for development and building approvals of developments on public and private land in Parts 4 and 5 of the Act. The EPA Act enables Councils and other planning authorities to levy developers for a land, monetary or in-kind contribution towards the costs of providing community infrastructure.

### **STRATEGIC PLANS AND POLICIES**

#### **NSW State Plan: A new direction for NSW 2021**

The State Plan should inform the development of goals and objectives in regional and local open space and recreation planning. NSW 2021 is the Government's 10 year plan to guide policy and budget decision making. In conjunction with the NSW Budget, this Plan sets priorities for action and guides resource allocation. One of the five strategies in the plan most relevant to this project is to Strengthen our local environment and communities. This Plan sets the target of increasing participation in sport, recreational, arts and cultural activities in Sydney from 2010 to 2016 by 10%.

#### **A Plan for Growing Sydney (2014)**

A Plan for Growing Sydney (2014) is a major planning initiative of the Department of Planning to meet the challenges associated with increasing population and development in the Sydney metropolitan region. The Plan highlights the importance of open space for Sydney to improve the quality of green spaces and create an interconnected network of open spaces and parks, tree-lined streets, bushland reserves, riparian walking tracks and National Parks and encourage innovative uses of these spaces – from bushland renewal to outdoor theatres and stimulating children's playgrounds.

Penrith is included as part of the West Subregion, a region whose role includes providing distinctive rural landscapes, extensive agricultural and resource lands, and large areas of native bushland, national parks and reserves. A priority for the West Subregion is to protect the natural environment and promote its sustainability and resilience.

In this Plan, Penrith City is identified as being Regional City Centre and the Penrith Health and Education Precinct is identified as a specialised centre.

### **Subregional Planning**

The Department of Planning, Environment and Infrastructure have advised that Subregional Delivery Plans will be developed through state and local government working collaboratively with the community and stakeholders to determine the specific needs of the community in terms of housing, jobs, public spaces, community facilities, transport options, schools and hospitals.

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### LOCAL PLANNING CONTEXT

Numerous strategic planning documents, local plans and policies guide planning, provision and management of open space in Penrith. A summary of these plans are below:

#### Community Plan, Delivery Program (2013-2017)

These documents outline Council's actions and projects to be carried out for our community. They are shaped by our community having their say on their future. Together the documents provide an integrated strategic planning framework to deliver the best outcomes for our community's short, medium and long-term future.

Identifying surplus land is a task within the Operational Plan and Delivery Program for 2014-15 under Outcome 7 – "We have confidence in our Council" and Strategy 7.2 – "Ensure our finances and assets are sustainable and services are delivered efficiently".

This project also sits within a broader Council initiative, the Capacity Review, which aims to prepare Council for the future and respond to the Office of Local Government's Fit for the Future agenda.

#### Penrith Local Environmental Plan 2010 (Amendment 4)

A local environmental plan (LEP) is a legal document prepared by Council and approved by the State Government to regulate land use and development. LEPs guide planning decisions for local governments. LEPs guide planning decisions for local governments. The plan allows Council to regulate the ways in which all land both private and public may be used and protected through zoning and development controls. LEPs are also used to reserve land for open space, schools, transport or other public purposes.

#### Erskine Park Residential S94 Plan

This Plan funded the delivery of local recreation infrastructure in Erskine Park and was rescinded in August 2013. Given that all the open space land acquired in Erskine Park was funded through s94, any funds generated from their sale would require to be reinvested in Erskine Park

#### Penrith City Strategy (2013)

The Penrith City Strategy seeks to help build a sustainable future for the City and our community, by providing a summary the key issues facing Council over the next 10-20 years, and outlines how Council will respond to these issues. The issues and policy responses in the Penrith City Strategy inform the Community Plan and Council's 4 year Delivery Program. There are some issues (such as public transport) on which Council can advocate, inform and influence, but are not within Council's direct control. The Penrith City Strategy defines Council's role for each of the issues.

#### The People's Lifestyle and Recreation Needs Study (PLANS) (2004)

The People's Lifestyle and Recreation Needs Study (PLANS) project commenced in 2002 and was adopted in 2004. This study aimed to assess the adequacy of recreational, cultural and other facilities and services and develop new strategies for their provision based on an assessment of community needs and aspirations. The PLANS study led to the preparation of Development Contributions Plans for Local and District Open Space, which funded upgrading of parks and recreation facilities across the City over the past



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10 years. The study identified key issues confronting Penrith City which remain relevant today. These include:

- The need for access to quality and usable open space
- Provision of high quality passive and informal active recreation opportunities through improvements to the open space network
- Equitable and affordable access to community facilities and activities for all groups within the community
- Changing population profile
- Changing recreational and cultural participation patterns
- Under use of passive parks and open space areas.

### **Open Space Action Plan (2007)**

The Open Space Action Plan (OSAP) responded to the PLANS study. The OSAP details the planning principles, standards and processes that apply to open space provision within the City of Penrith.

### **Erskine Park Needs Analysis (2010)**

The aim of the Erskine Park Needs Analysis was to identify the strengths of the Erskine Park community and to identify possible works to improve services and community life in that suburb where possible. The most frequently expressed needs and interests of Erskine Park residents included improving existing playground facilities, street lighting and shade shelters at bus stops.

### **Other documents considered during preparation of this study include:**

- Penrith Urban Study and Strategy (2011)

Council's Urban Study and Urban Strategy cover the City's residential areas (existing and proposed) and local and neighbourhood centres. These documents provided a strategic framework to inform management of future growth in the City's existing and proposed urban areas, and the needs of changing communities, to meet the housing targets, policy and planning directions set by the State Government's Metropolitan Strategy and draft North West Regional Strategy. These documents are now incorporated into Council's City Strategy and have guided preparation of planning controls for Stage 2 of Council's City-wide Local Environmental Plan.

- Draft Reclassification List And Updated Draft Reclassification List (2014)
- Map Of Open Spaces (2014)
- Map Of Water Courses (2014)
- Proposed Zoning Map for LEP 2010 (2010)
- Council report (2009) : Proposal To Close Parcel Of Land Located Between Reddington Avenue and Diamantina Close, St Clair (2009)
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