

Healesville Freeway Reserve

Concept Plan



Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Healesville Freeway Reserve Reference Group for their time and input in creating this plan and thank you to all community members who took part in the engagement that led to creating this document.

Author

Keith Longridge
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Port Phillip
609 Burwood Highway
Knoxfield VIC 3180

Photo credit

Front cover: iStock

© The State of Victoria Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning 2018



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence. You are free to re-use the work under that licence, on the condition that you credit the State of Victoria as author. The licence does not apply to any images, photographs or branding, including the Victorian Coat of Arms, the Victorian Government logo and the

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) logo. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

ISBN 978-1-76047-511-6 (pdf)

ISBN 978-1-76047-510-9 (print)

Disclaimer

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Accessibility

If you would like to receive this publication in an alternative format, please telephone the DELWP Customer Service Centre on 136186, email customer.service@delwp.vic.gov.au, or via the National Relay Service on 133 677 www.relayservice.com.au. This document is also available on the internet at www.delwp.vic.gov.au.

Table of Contents

Concept Plan 2

1.0 Context 2

- 1.1 Introduction 2*
- 1.2 Purpose of this Report 2*
- 1.3 Background 2*

2.0 Implementation 2

- 2.1 Divestment strategy 2*
- 2.2 Appointment of land manager 2*
- 2.3 Establishment funding 3*
- 2.4 Overview of the proposed park 3*

3.0 Biodiversity and environmental values 4

- 3.1 Forest/vegetation types 4*
- 3.2 Landscape values 4*

4.0 Recreational and community values 5

- 4.1 Community links to the park 5*
- 4.2 Local communities 6*
- 4.3 Recreational activities 6*
- 4.4 Educational values 6*
- 4.5 Commercial activities 6*
- 4.6 Neighbouring areas 7*

5.0 Cultural and heritage values 8

- 5.1 Cultural Heritage Assessment 8*

6.0 Economic and social values 8

- 6.1 Planning scheme zones 8*
- 6.2 Planning scheme interfaces 8*
- 6.2 Utilities and infrastructure 9*
- 6.4 Leases, licences and permissive occupancies 9*

7.0 Risks 10

- 7.1 Visitor behaviour 10*
- 7.2 Fire 10*
- 7.3 Weeds, pests and diseases 11*
- 7.4 Public safety 11*

8.0 Community engagement process and results 11

- 8.1 Basis for community engagement 11*
- 8.2 Proposed outcome 11*
- 8.3 The consultation process 11*
- 8.4 Summary of key stakeholder discussions 12*
- 8.5 Summary results of community engagement and consultation 12*

9.0 Conclusion 13

10.0 Recommendations 14

11.0 References 15

12.0 Appendices 15

Concept Plan

1.0 Context

1.1 Introduction

The Healesville Freeway Reserve (HFR) consists of 35 hectares of undeveloped land that runs for 3.5 kilometres from Springvale Road in Forest Hill to Boronia Road in Vermont. This report briefly outlines the background to the proposed transfer to the Crown of this land, the strategic justification, and the community engagement to identify opportunities and assess options to support the creation of a new linear park.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to identify the key opportunities and challenges in creating that new linear park.

1.3 Background

The reservation for the Healesville Freeway was incorporated into the Metropolitan Transport Plan in 1969 and originally extended from Riversdale Road, Box Hill South, to Maroondah Highway, Coldstream. Sections of the reservation at both ends of the route have since been released. The reservation is defined by a Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) with approximately 95% of the land within the reservation being owned by VicRoads.

In 2009 VicRoads completed a strategic review of the Healesville Freeway Reserve and determined that the reservation between Springvale Road in Forest Hill and Boronia Road in Vermont will not be required for future road purposes.

Subsequently VicRoads undertook a consultation structure planning process to investigate options for future use and development of the land.

During that process, Whitehorse City Council undertook a process of community consultation and developed an alternative vision as its input to the structure plan.

However, following strong community interest in keeping the land as public open space the government has committed to retain the land in public ownership for its future use as parkland. Transfer of this land to the Crown, its reservation for public purposes, and the appointment of a land manager will fulfil a 2014 state election commitment.

2.0 Implementation

2.1 Divestment strategy

In summary, VicRoads will surrender the land to the Crown in three tranches, namely:

Tranche 1: Immediately surrender the land available for surrender

Tranche 2: Later surrender titles when tenancy expires or when part surrender can be achieved

Tranche 3: VicRoads commences the process of selling certain residential properties and allocating the proceeds of the sales to fund the development of the shared bike/ pedestrian pathway.

2.2 Appointment of land manager

Given the location and size of the reserve, and their experience and expertise in managing other environmentally sensitive areas as well as public open space, Parks Victoria will be appointed land manager to oversee day-to-day operations. The land manager will not be appointed until all of the constituent land parcels have been surrendered to the Crown.



Figure 1: The vision for the park is a multi-use area.

2.3 Establishment funding

Prior to the allocation of sale proceeds to Parks Victoria from the sale of VicRoads properties, DELWP has provided funding for the following:

- a. To run a community engagement process and to develop this concept plan for the reserve.
- b. For basic maintenance of the reserve by DELWP, including fire management, until Parks Victoria is appointed land manager.

2.4 Overview of the proposed park

The area proposed for the park is located approximately 20 km east of the Melbourne CBD. (See Figure 2).

The proposed boundaries comprise a relatively regular rectilinear shape, and its longitudinal axis between Springvale Road in Forest Hill and Boronia Road in Vermont runs East-West for approximately 3.5 km. The topography is undulating.

At its eastern boundary the land adjoins a block of Crown land immediately west of the Dandenong Creek and the Yarra Valley Parklands. The remaining north, south and west boundaries adjoin suburban residential development.

The land is comprised of 35 individual land parcels totalling a little over 35Ha in area. Several local residential roads traverse the area North-South at regular intervals with additional court bowls and other truncated roads providing many public access points. Given the surrounding subdivision pattern, a range of tenures including residential and other leases, grazing and beautification licences and the extent and variation of fencing and other enclosures, the land appears as 'compartmentalised'.

In general, the vegetation and habitat of the Healesville Freeway Reserve has been disturbed to varying degrees and as a result the area is dominated by introduced vegetation. Nonetheless, the Bellbird Dell and Dandenong Creek reserves include remnant patches of vegetation that contain habitat of high ecological value to a range of fauna species. The proposed park has the potential to form an important component of a forested corridor extending to the Dandenong Valley Parklands. The potential corridor or 'bio-link' represents an avenue for the movement of wildlife, providing habitat continuity, and thus may be significant in maintaining population health for those species.

Likewise, in response to community demands, there is potential for the new linear park to connect the existing array of bike trails to the west of Springvale Road to the Dandenong Valley Parklands, Dandenong Creek Trail and the East Link Trail.

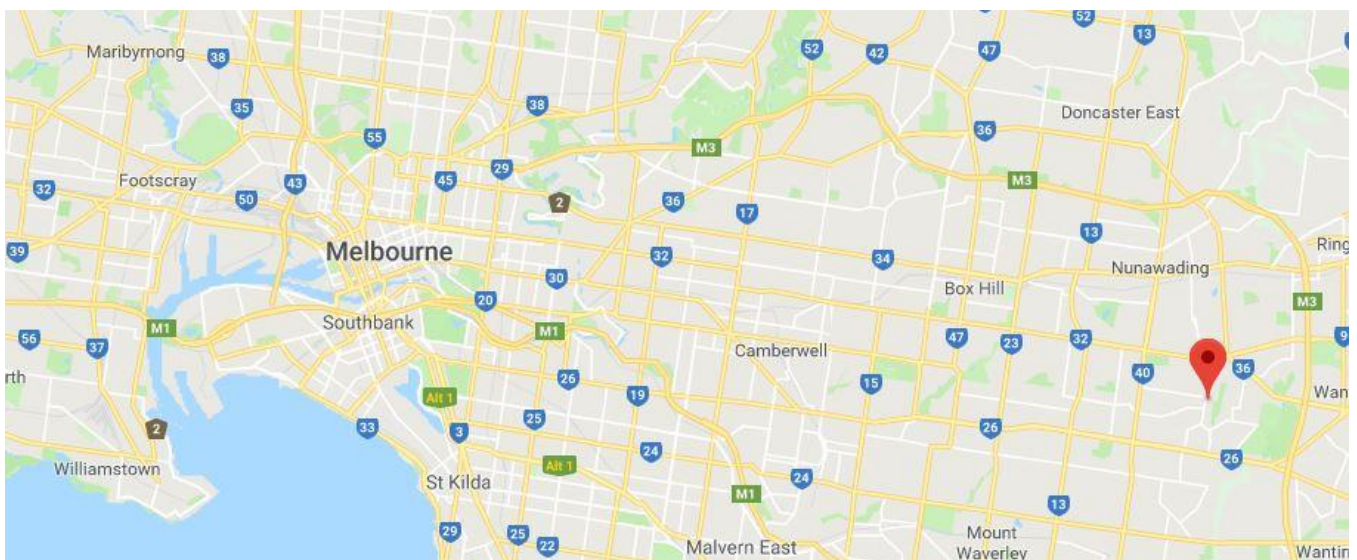


Figure 1: Red pointer marks the location of Healesville Freeway Reserve in relation to Melbourne CBD

3.0 Biodiversity and environmental values

3.1 Forest/vegetation types

Four unpublished flora and fauna assessments conducted over the previous 10-12 years were made available to the Project Reference Group (PRG) by VicRoads and Whitehorse City Council. The following is a summary of the more significant findings relating to the potential development of this portion of the Healesville Freeway Reserve as a new linear park.

The land in the Healesville Freeway Reserve is within the Gippsland Plain bioregion. Despite changes to the definition of some assessment classifications over that time, among other technical matters, there is considerable consensus that the majority of the native vegetation present, represents remnants of the endangered ecological vegetation class (EVC) Valley Heathy Forest (EVC 127); however, the reserve contains predominantly introduced vegetation.

A small area of Creek-line Herb-rich Woodland (EVC 164) remains in association with Bellbird Dell, while a remnant of Swampy Riparian Woodland (EVC 83) occurs adjacent to Dandenong Creek. Again, while the individual assessments were carried out over varying study areas and in different seasons, the assessments have identified up to 200 plant species including about 94 indigenous species.

As the terms suggest, habitat links or corridors join otherwise separate areas of native vegetation/ fauna habitat. This general area supports two main remnants of native vegetation, Bellbird Dell and the Dandenong Valley Parklands. Currently these two remnants are separated by approximately one kilometre of largely cleared land with scattered indigenous trees and smaller patches of native forest. Revegetation works between Bellbird Dell and Dandenong Creek has the potential to enhance the existing open space corridor between these two remnants. However, recommendations vary on the minimum effective width of such a bio-link.

3.2 Landscape values

The existing Healesville Freeway Reservation provides a diversity of outlooks to residents in the immediate vicinity. However, by the compartmentalised nature of the current uses, development and maintenance of the reserve, the

overall perspective as a visually connected linear reserve is not immediately apparent. For example, the perspective looking east from Springvale Road towards the reservation is onto the historic Strathdon House and Orchard.

Strathdon House is a significant place within the City of Whitehorse. It represents a rare surviving combination of house and orchard that prior to post war suburban development was a common element of the region of eastern Melbourne.

The City of Whitehorse is committed to conserving the significance of this property and during 2014 engaged consultants to prepare a Feasibility and Business case to guide the conservation and development of the site. That report noted that:

The Feasibility and Business Case is also timely given the commitment of the State government elected last November 2014 to preserve the Healesville Freeway Reserve between Springvale Road and Boronia Road which is no longer required for road purposes, as public open space. The site occupies a prime location at the west end of the reserve.¹

Significantly, the consultation undertaken for that report identified a strong community desire for a restored orchard and for public uses for the conserved Strathdon House:

Strathdon House and the site are well maintained, however, vegetation growth has meant that its visibility is not as good as it could be and this may impact its level of appreciation in the community generally. Equally, this project has also identified a huge potential for Strathdon in the future development of the former Healesville Freeway Reserve to become a gateway and key node in a broader urban space network that will eventually link central Melbourne with the Dandenong Ranges.²

At the rear of the property the ground falls away towards the eastern end where the parkland meets Davy Lane recreation reserve accentuating the panoramic view of the Dandenong ranges.

This recreational zone at the western end of the reserve, between Springvale Road and Stanley Road, is dominated by introduced vegetation with a few scattered Eucalyptus trees.

1. Context Pty Ltd, Strathdon House: Feasibility and Business Case, (2015) vii.

2. Ibid.



Figure 3: The surrounding communities have had a strong connection to the corridor of land that contains the proposed park.

The road reserve north of Stanley Road contains a mature stand of remnant eucalypts.

There are a number of higher quality patches of native vegetation north of Gibbon Avenue and Moray Grove.

Between these patches and Terrara Road the reserve contains predominantly introduced vegetation.

East of Terrara Road to Bellbird Dell is characterised by a scattered indigenous overstorey with a lower quality understorey due to grazing and a lack of ecological management.

The Bellbird Dell section contains predominantly indigenous vegetation and is of 'high' or potentially 'very high' conservation significance.

The area between Bellbird Dell and Morack Road contains introduced vegetation dominated by exotic pasture grasses.

The majority of the vegetation between Morack Road and Boronia Road has been heavily modified due to grazing. Nonetheless the eastern section of the reserve immediately adjacent to Dandenong Creek supports remnant and planted trees and shrubs.

4.0 Recreational and community values

4.1 Community links to the park

The surrounding communities have had a strong connection to the corridor of land that contains the proposed park. Strathdon House represents a rare surviving example of the combination of house and orchard which demonstrates that, prior to post war suburban development; this was a common element of the region of eastern Melbourne.

Orcharding had been prominent in the Nunawading area since the early 1870s. Certainly, the area towards Springvale Road has been featured in aerial photographs from the 1930s and 1940s in historical reports, which show that this industry covered vast swathes of this part of Melbourne. There is a good understanding of the historical development of the properties from their establishment as commercial orchards through to the post war suburban development that is evident in the subdivision pattern today.

VicRoads, in 2009 determined that the reservation between Springvale Road in Forest Hill and Boronia Road in Vermont would not be required for future road purposes, and undertook community consultation in a structure planning process. The community based group, Friends of Healesville Freeway Reserve, among others, developed alternative proposals to retain the area as public open space.

Since 2013, the Friends group has been lobbying widely in support of that proposal, including in the lead up to the 2014 state election. The Friends group garnered wide community support for their proposal and featured prominently in local and metropolitan media.

4.2 Local communities

Residential communities located in close proximity to the proposed park include: Blackburn, Forest Hill, Burwood East, Vermont, Vermont South, Wantirna and Ringwood. People living in these communities value the area for a wide range of purposes, including the area's natural values, being able to walk, and in parts cycle, in a variety of natural settings, using the sports field, assigned off-lead and on-lead dog areas and gathering in informal community spaces.

While there are already many access points and connections between these local communities and the reserve, the community engagement activities highlighted that not all local residents are aware of the potential for the 3.5km length of the reserve to constitute a continuous or linear parkland.

There are already strong physical connections between the reserve and adjacent or nearby historical sites, institutions and neighbourhoods. For example, the previously mentioned Strathdon House, Emmaus College, Parkmore Primary School, Whitehorse Community Gardens, Bellbird Dell Advisory Committee, Nadrasca Community Farm, Vermont Secondary College, Terrara Pre School, among others.

More broadly, the reserve is important as a natural and semi-natural setting within the Whitehorse Local Government Area (LGA) and creates a significant 'green belt' for the highly developed residential communities adjacent.

4.3 Recreational activities

Healesville Freeway Reserve also serves the important function of a local park to about 2,800 residences within 400m walking distance of the

reserve. Given the average household size (persons per dwelling) in Victoria is 2.56 persons, that translates to over 7,000 persons living within walking distance of the reserve.³

The area is currently used by a wide range of individuals and groups for recreational activities. The proposed park is most popular for unstructured recreation, including walking for pleasure, nature observation, bushland conservation, cycling/ mountain bike riding, dog walking/ exercise and until recently, horse riding.

Structured recreation is essentially confined to community cricket and school sports activities by the three local schools.

Currently, there are no formalised recreational or sports facilities or picnicking areas within the reserve, save for a low standard junior sports field (cricket) constructed at grade with no irrigation or sub-surface drainage and some informal seating associated with the Bellbird Dell.

A more detailed summary of recreational activities currently undertaken in the reserve is reported in the community consultation strategy attached to this report, (see Appendix C).

4.4 Educational values

The proposed park has been used on an informal basis for environmental, sporting and other educational purposes. There are a number of schools and other institutions located nearby, namely Emmaus College, Parkmore Primary School, Vermont Secondary College. Nadrasca Community Farm leases a part of the reserve to the west of Terrara Road. Terrara Pre-school occupies a small part of the reserve adjacent to its facility located on Walbrook Drive, Vermont South.

4.5 Commercial activities

Currently there are no licensed commercial concessions operating within the reserve. Land at the western end of the reserve abutting Springvale Road, has previously been alienated from the reserve to support the development of the new Forest Hill Police Station.

Adjacent land had been licensed to 'Wobby's World', a commercial fun park for children that had operated over many years. That has ceased operating some years ago and VicRoads has spent

3. Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011 Census.

significant funds to ensure that the site is reinstated and decontaminated by safe asbestos removal and disposal prior to surrender to the Crown.

The other significant land parcel adjacent to the western end of the reserve is Strathdon House and Orchard. Together with the Forest Hill Police Station, these parcels abut Springvale Road to the west and the Healesville Freeway Reserve on their eastern boundaries. Whitehorse City Council owns the Strathdon House property and commissioned Context Pty Ltd to prepare a feasibility study and business case to guide the conservation and development of the site. A range of commercial development options has been identified and assessed.

Therefore Strathdon House and Orchard offers a natural and superlative opportunity to be developed as a gateway to the proposed park.

4.6 Neighbouring areas

The Whitehorse City Council owned Morack Public Golf Course, is located on the southern boundary of the reserve, at the eastern end. Part of the 18th tee is located on the reserve land and is occupied under licence. Informal access to the golf course for walkers and dog walkers is provided for local residents.

Low lying land fronting Livermore Crescent, immediately south of the reserve and immediately west of the golf course, known as Livermore Reserve, is undeveloped and effectively operates as a convenient open space connection between the two. This land is owned by Whitehorse City Council and also effectively operates as a flood retarding basin.

Nunawading Community Gardens were the first community gardens in Victoria. The Jolimont Road site is owned by Whitehorse City Council and is located adjacent to the Healesville Freeway Reserve, on the north side and to the east of Davy Lane Reserve. Vehicular access to the gardens is via Jolimont Road, and that also serves the Horticultural Centre, a conference, seminar and meeting facility. The Jolimont site was the original site established in 1977. The founding members created the gardens as they still exist today.

Campbell's Croft is located to the north of Boronia Road, at the eastern end of the reserve and forms part of the Dandenong Valley Parklands. One heritage place was identified within this site. Campbell's Croft is the site of a former house block from the 1850s. A driveway, levelled house block,

stands of exotic garden trees remain on the site and some artefacts can be found on the site. As this site is located within the buffer zone of the Healesville Freeway Reserve, there will be no heritage mitigation action required for development of the proposed park.

A Crown land parcel is located immediately to the east of the VR land parcels constituting the eastern end of the Healesville Freeway Reserve. That land parcel in turn abuts the Dandenong Valley Parklands incorporating the Dandenong Creek and the Dandenong Creek Trail. Therefore that Crown land parcel appears to form a logical inclusion in the proposed park to provide for a more direct and broader connection with the existing Dandenong Valley Parklands.

An area of land located on the east side of Dandenong Creek, south of Boronia Road, between the Dandenong Valley Parklands and the M3 Motorway (Eastlink) is managed by VicRoads. It is described as 'Koomba Park' but is actually north of the land known as Koomba Park. It is constituted of several land parcels, two owned by VicRoads and flanked by a Crown land parcel, (see Appendix A). It appears the land was set aside to facilitate the development of Eastlink and it currently supports a stand of pine trees. However, given its proximity to the proposed park and major roads, it may be advantageous to consider incorporating this area into the proposed park say, for alternative or overflow car parking.



Figure 3: The Morack Public Golf Course is located on the southern boundary of the reserve.

5.0 Cultural and heritage values

5.1 Cultural Heritage Assessment

While noting the historic Strathdon House and Orchard,⁴ a Cultural Heritage Assessment has been undertaken on the 35Ha section of the former Healesville Freeway Reserve between Springvale Road and Boronia Road by the Port Phillip Cultural Heritage Officer. A 100 metre buffer around the site was also assessed. This Cultural Heritage Assessment involved a desk top review of the DELWP mapping system, ACHRIS (Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Register and Information System), the Historical Features Register and the Heritage Register.

The results of these searches were:

- No Historical features were found at the site.
- One Heritage site was identified within the buffer area. Campbell's Croft is the site of a former house block from the 1850s. A driveway, levelled house block, strands of exotic garden trees remain on the site and some artefacts can be found on the site. As this site is located within the buffer zone there will be no heritage mitigation action required.
- A small section of the land is located within an area of Cultural Sensitivity, immediately adjacent to the Dandenong Creek. As a result any planned ground disturbance works would require further investigation by the Port Phillip Cultural Heritage Officer to ensure compliance with legislation and avoid possible damage to unregistered/ unknown sites.

6.0 Economic and social values

6.1 Planning scheme zones

Under the Whitehorse Planning Scheme, the Healesville Freeway Reserve is mostly zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ) and

General Residential Zone Schedule 5 (GRZ5), (see Appendix B).

At the western end of the reserve, on the southern boundary, the land parcel formerly occupied by Wobby's World is zoned GRZ5. The remainder from Springvale Road, including Strathdon House, is zoned PPRZ to an imaginary boundary drawn north-south at a point equidistant between Longbrae Crt and Teal Crt. From there, the zoning is GRZ5 eastwards to the rear of the properties fronting Terrara Road on the east side. Thence the zoning is PPRZ to the rear of the properties fronting Morack Road on the east side. The zoning reverts once more to GRZ5 for the remainder of the reserve to Boronia Road in Vermont.

There are two slivers of land zoned Neighbourhood Residential Zone Schedule 5 (NRZ5) at,

- a. On the southern boundary of the reserve, east of Terrara Road; and
- b. Largely being the area licensed to the Morack Golf Course.

The Healesville Freeway Reserve is subject to three planning scheme overlays, namely the Heritage Overlay (HO), the Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) and the Special Building Overlay (SBO).

There is one heritage place on the Healesville Freeway Reserve being HO 107, 'Greenways' at 142 Boronia Road Vermont, on the northern boundary, (see Appendix C).

There is a public acquisition overlay (PAO3) over the majority of the reserve, drawn in favour of The Roads Corporation (VicRoads), (see Appendix D).

There is a Special Building Overlay (SBO) basically over the creek line running north-south through the reserve in the Bellbird Dell, (see Appendix E).

6.2 Planning scheme interfaces

The proposed park is surrounded by established urban residential development, (see Appendix B).

West of Terrara Road and north of the reserve the zoning is General Residential Zone Schedule 1 (GRZ1). South of the reserve the zoning is Neighbourhood Residential Zone Schedule 5 (NRZ5).

East of Terrara Road and north of the reserve the zoning is Neighbourhood Residential Zone Schedule 2 (NRZ2), and generally Neighbourhood Residential Zone 3 (NRZ3) eastwards towards

4. See section 3.2.

Boronia Road. South of the reserve the zoning is Low Density Residential Zone

(LDRZ) between Terrara Road and the Bellbird Dell; immediately east of the Bellbird Dell the zoning is Neighbourhood Residential Zone Schedule 2 (NRZ2) and further east of the Dell the zoning is Neighbourhood Residential Zone Schedule 5 (NRZ5) towards the Dandenong Valley Parklands, (Koomba Park).

There are four heritage places immediately adjacent to the Healesville Freeway Reserve, namely:

	Heritage place	Address
HO 113	‘Strathdon’	449-465 Springvale Road, Forest Hill
HO 80	‘Plumstead’	77 Terrara Road, Vermont
HO 63	‘Mirabooka’	30-34 Moore Road, Vermont
HO 62	‘Willowbank’	9 Moore Road, Vermont

6.2 Utilities and infrastructure

The Healesville Freeway Reserve having a linear East-West orientation is cut by two fully constructed collector roads, namely Morack Road and Terrara Road. The majority of known utilities servicing the surrounding residential development is located within these and adjacent road reserves. The road reserves contain 22KVA above ground power lines and underground water, gas, and sewer mains and telecommunications cables. Underground storm water drains are also located within the road reserves. Additional telecommunication assets are slung below the power lines on the electrical distribution poles.

An underground water main is known to traverse that part of the reserve between Moore Road on the North side and Livermore Close to the South. A fire hydrant upstand is located on that water main approximately midway in the reserve.

There are extensive and significant underground storm water drainage assets that remain largely unmapped or unregistered. Additionally, there are extensive berm drains diverting overland flows to underground stormwater drains that appear to ultimately discharge to natural drainage lines, e.g. Dandenong Creek and the creek running through

the Bellbird Dell, as well as the low flow drain constructed beneath it.

6.4 Leases, licences and permissive occupancies

Numerous occupancy agreements have come into being since the land was first reserved for road purposes by VicRoads in 1969. In relation to properties with residences, most occupancy agreements have been in the form of residential leases. All residential leases have now been terminated, except for the following:

- 71 Morack Road, Vermont;
- 79 Morack Road, Vermont;
- 34 Moore Road, Vermont; and
- 142 Boronia Road, Vermont.

The Minister has granted life tenancies to the occupiers of the two residences in Morack Road. In effect, No 71 Morack Road will become an inlier when the proposed park is declared. When vacated in the future, the second property will likely be sold on the open market and the proceeds made available to the land manager for development of park infrastructure.

The remaining residential tenancies in Moore Road and Boronia Road will continue on a month to month basis until required, in the knowledge that the lessees are grazing adjacent fenced paddocks that has the desirable effect of reducing the annual costs of grass slashing for the land owner.

Historically, Whitehorse City Council occupies the largest licensed areas, namely:

- Davy Lane Reserve (4.363 ha);
- Bellbird Dell (2.783 ha);
- A small area adjacent to the Terrara Pre School (0.027 ha);
- 45-59 Moore Road, Vermont (1.802 ha), including that partially occupied by the Morack Public Golf Course.

Nadrasca, a not-for-profit disability service organisation occupies an area of 3.5 ha at 82 Morack Road. The Nadrasca Community Farm provides training and other educational programs for people with disabilities.

People in the community who have a physical, intellectual or sensory disability can partner with and access local community groups, while people



Figure 4: A range of weed species have previously been identified in the ecological reports

from the local area benefit from the interaction with persons with a disability.⁵

A few very minor areas are effectively occupied as permissive occupancies. In due course these small odd lots may be offered for sale to the adjacent residents to regularise the park perimeter and improve management of the proposed park.

7.0 Risks

7.1 Visitor behaviour

Invariably, given its close proximity to developed residential communities, a number of damaging activities have recurred regularly within the proposed park. Off-road motor-biking has been a nuisance, but illegal rubbish dumping has been widespread. It is also understood that illegal tree removal and unauthorised firewood collection has occurred from time to time. Additionally, some illegal structures have been built and unauthorised access to unoccupied residences has been an issue.

5. The Community Farm, <<http://www.nadrasca.com.au/>> at 3 February 2017

However, management actions by both VicRoads and Whitehorse City Council over an extended period to control vehicle access has been very effective in reducing the adverse impacts of these activities. Further, informal surveillance by nearby residents and reserve users has also reduced the incidence of these undesirable behaviours.

7.2 Fire

There is no known history of wildfire in the Healesville Freeway Reserve although some buildings have been lost to fire. It is assumed that some minor fires have occurred in the reserve or in the adjacent parklands to warrant the provision of the water main and fire hydrant in the Moore Road area.

VicRoads has terminated the licences that have allowed grazing to date, excepting those residential tenancies mentioned at 6.4 above. Those former grazing areas will be incorporated into the grass maintenance regime, with the regular grass slashing undertaken principally as a fire hazard reduction measure.

Alternative land management practices may change once a new land manager is appointed in the future. However, while management practices may change in accordance with development objectives of the park, the statutory responsibility to adequately manage fire risk does not.

7.3 Weeds, pests and diseases

A range of weed species have previously been identified in the ecological reports commissioned at various times in the past by VicRoads and Whitehorse City Council. That information and a preliminary assessment by staff of the likely land manager, Parks Victoria, will guide the establishment land management practices when the land manager is appointed and the proposed park declared.

7.4 Public safety

Currently the Healesville Freeway Reserve is made up of 35 individual land parcels, traversed by local roads, footpaths and several drainage lines such as the creek running through the Bellbird Dell. Since many of these allotments are currently fenced for grazing and residential purposes, they can appear as 'compartmentalised', or not linked in any way. However, when consolidated, these lots can be viewed as a continuous open space corridor. So in its present form, Healesville Freeway Reserve poses no greater risks to the public than are common to most urban parks and reserves, such as slips, trips and falls for pedestrians, cyclists and other sports users.

However, once the park is declared, it is likely that the road crossings may form the greatest risks to users of a linear park. Therefore the development of safe road crossings will likely be an important challenge in the implementation phase of the proposed new park.

8.0 Community engagement process and results

8.1 Basis for community engagement

The purpose of the stakeholder and community engagement was to identify, with the project partners, local and broader communities, an integrated approach to the conservation of natural values, and the provision of recreational opportunities (facilities programs and services) in the former Healesville Freeway Reserve to enable its establishment as a linear park.

This project built on several years of community planning for environmental conservation and open

space provision so the creation of a concept plan will inform the development of an important community asset.

8.2 Proposed outcome

The concept plan seeks to provide the strategic justification for the development of an extensive and integrated array of valuable community recreation opportunities and allow communities west of Springvale Road, and to the north and south of the reserve, to access the extensive network of off-road shared trails in the Dandenong Valley Parklands.

8.3 The consultation process

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning sought to collaborate on the conduct of this investigative planning project to create a concept plan by cooperative endeavour to achieve mutually shared objectives. Therefore DELWP committed to work cooperatively with the project partners and other key stakeholders and to that end, a Project Reference Group (PRG) was formed, (see Appendix F), comprising representatives from the following:

Project Partners: DELWP, Vic Roads and Parks Victoria.

Other key stakeholders:

- Whitehorse City Council
- Office of Shaun Leane MLC
- Terrara Pre School
- Nadrasca Community Farm
- Vermont Secondary College
- Parkmore Primary School
- Emmaus College
- City of Whitehorse Bicycle Advisory Committee⁶
- Whitehorse Cyclists
- Friends of Healesville Freeway
- Blackburn & District Tree Preservation Society Inc
- Bellbird Dell Advisory Committee
- Concept 4 Preservation
- Lessees and licensees.

6. Now disbanded.

The role of the PRG was seen as an integral part of DELWP's commitment to partnering with the critically important stakeholders in this project. Therefore the reference group was responsible to help manage and coordinate the conduct of the project. Specifically the role of the PRG was:

1. To facilitate coordination of the process to identify appropriate uses and developments in the Healesville Freeway Reserve.
2. To act as advisor to DELWP; especially to review proposals, identify issues, provide feedback and guidance.
3. To facilitate the development of a comprehensive public consultation and engagement process.
4. To monitor the various phases of the project to ensure the resultant concept plan responds to the available evidence i.e. provides the strategic justification for the final recommendations.

8.4 Summary of key stakeholder discussions

Consultation with key stakeholders, including project partners, was undertaken on an individual basis and in a group meeting on 10 May 2016. The key stakeholders are listed at 8.3 above. In relation to park values and uses, participants provided a brief summary of their group's aspirations for the proposed new park, (see Appendix G). Participants also identified the current and wider park planning challenges, as follows:

- Council involvement (permits);⁷
- Best use of the land for community;
- Community inclusion;
- Rollout timeframe, especially shared use path;
- Protection of remnant vegetation (rehabilitation);
- Maintenance standards;
- Bird/wildlife protection (provision of water bodies);
- Good design/community safety;
- Fire risk;
- Weeds;

7. This refers to the extent that Council planning permits may be required for use and development

- Shared use path traversing Bellbird Dell;
- Shared use path design, (sealed compared with softer environmental design).

The group agreed that the current grazing and other licences should be terminated as soon as practicable, fences and other improvements removed to permit greater public access and so to demonstrate the connected, linear nature of the reserve.

In relation to proposed park boundaries, the (PRG) noted that the Minister has granted life tenancies to the current tenants of VR parcel Nos. 22 and 24, being 71 and 79 Morack Road, Vermont, respectively. Therefore the sale of VR parcel 24 or the demolition of the residence on VR parcel No. 22 would not be undertaken until the properties were vacated on the death of the current occupants.

A further matter discussed was the proposal to consider incorporating the parcel of crown land immediately east of VR parcel Nos. 33, 34 and 35 to provide direct connection across Dandenong Creek to the Dandenong Valley Parklands, (see Appendix A).

While it was not considered in detail during the consultation process, the name of the proposed park was raised in discussions. It was noted that Parks Victoria, as the land manager, will follow an established protocol to determine the name of the proposed park.

8.5 Summary results of community engagement and consultation

Understanding how the local community and other stakeholders might like to use the reserve was seen as an important first step in turning this former freeway reserve into a new linear park. In mid-2016, DELWP engaged CoDesign Studio to lead the development and delivery of community engagement activities to shape the future of the reserve.

Creative community engagement was sought to target a broad range of community groups and stakeholders to best understand how to create a well loved park, in particular identifying potential uses and understanding the function this park can play for this area. Thus a comprehensive engagement plan was developed in partnership with the PRG and DELWP officers. The engagement activities set out in that plan were undertaken between 10 September and 7 October 2016.

A complete analysis and detailed findings of that community engagement strategy are set out in full in the attached report, Healesville Freeway Reserve: Community Engagement Summary, (see Appendix H).

This report provides a summary of the key findings and outcomes from across the varied community engagement activities employed. This targeted approach ensured that a good cross section of community views was forthcoming. The report forms a key input to the concept plan for the new park as it transforms to Parks Victoria management. Nonetheless it is anticipated that further consultation will be required to inform future stages of the park's development.

In summary, and for ease of classification, four key themes emerged from analysis of the community feedback, namely:

- Access and trails;
- Nature and biodiversity;
- Activity and active spaces; and
- Community and gathering.

Overall, the community engagement process was very positive. For many, this engagement was important in confirming that the reserve would be retained as a new park.

9.0 Conclusion

Community and stakeholder feedback and submissions strongly support the concept of creating a new linear park based on the former Healesville Freeway Reservation, between Springvale Road in Forest Hill and Boronia Road in Vermont. There is great potential for the new linear park to connect with the Dandenong Valley Parklands, the Dandenong Creek Trail and the Eastlink Trail.



10.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- a. A new regional park of up to approximately 40 Ha be established based on the former Healesville Freeway Reserve, between Springvale Road in Forest Hill and Boronia Road in Vermont.
- b. The Crown land parcel to the east of VicRoads land parcels Nos. 33, 34 and 35, between the reserve and adjoining Dandenong Creek, be incorporated into the new park to provide for a broader and more direct connection to the Dandenong Valley Parklands.⁸
- c. Consideration be given to selling VicRoads land parcel No. 33, (142 Boronia Road, Vermont) in part or in full, to provide additional development funds to the new land manager.
- d. Consideration be given that the land parcels bounded by Boronia Road, Eastlink, Dandenong Creek and Koomba Park, be incorporated into the new park.⁹
- e. Noting that the Minister has granted life tenancies to the current tenants of VicRoads land parcels Nos. 22 and 24, being 71 and 79 Morack Road, Vermont, respectively. Therefore the sale of VicRoads land parcel No. 24 or the demolition of the residence on VicRoads land parcel No. 22 would not be undertaken until the properties were vacated.
- f. Once the park is created, the new land manager commence the preparation of a park establishment plan.

8. See section 4.6.

9. See Appendix A.

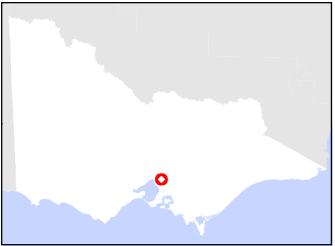
11.0 References

Biosis Research Pty Ltd, Assessment of the Healesville Freeway Reserve Easement (2006)
Biosis Research Pty Ltd, Healesville Freeway Reservation Flora and Fauna Assessment: Peer Review (2013)
Brett Lane & Associates, Flora and Fauna Assessment of the Healesville Freeway Reserve (2012)
Context Pty Ltd, Strathdon House: Feasibility and Business Case (2015)
Environmental Resources Management, Proposed Northern Arterial and Healesville Freeway Routes: Flora and Fauna Values (2005)

12.0 Appendices

Appendix A Land adjacent to Eastlink and Koomba Park
Appendix B Whitehorse Planning Scheme, Zones, Map 6
Appendix C Whitehorse Planning Scheme, Heritage Overlay, Map 6 Appendix D Whitehorse Planning Scheme, Public Acquisition Overlay, Map 6 Appendix E Whitehorse Planning Scheme, Special Building Overlay, Map 6 Appendix F Membership of the project reference group
Appendix G Key stakeholders' park values and uses
Appendix H Community Engagement Report

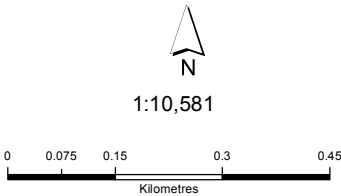
Healesville Freeway Reserve



<Locality Map if required>

Legend

- VicRoads Land
- Crown Land
- Main Road (Sealed)
- Local Road
- 2wd
- 4wd
- Foot Tk



Disclaimer
This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its employees do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purpose and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.

Accessibility
If you would like to receive this publication in an accessible format such as large print or black and white please telephone 136 186, or email customer.service@delwp.vic.gov.au. Deaf, hearing impaired or speech impaired? Call us via the National Relay Service on 133 677 or visit www.relayservice.com.au

Additional information
Spatial data is sourced from the Victorian Spatial Data Library (VSDL).
Map produced by <branch> March 2017
Copyright © The State of Victoria,
Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, 2017

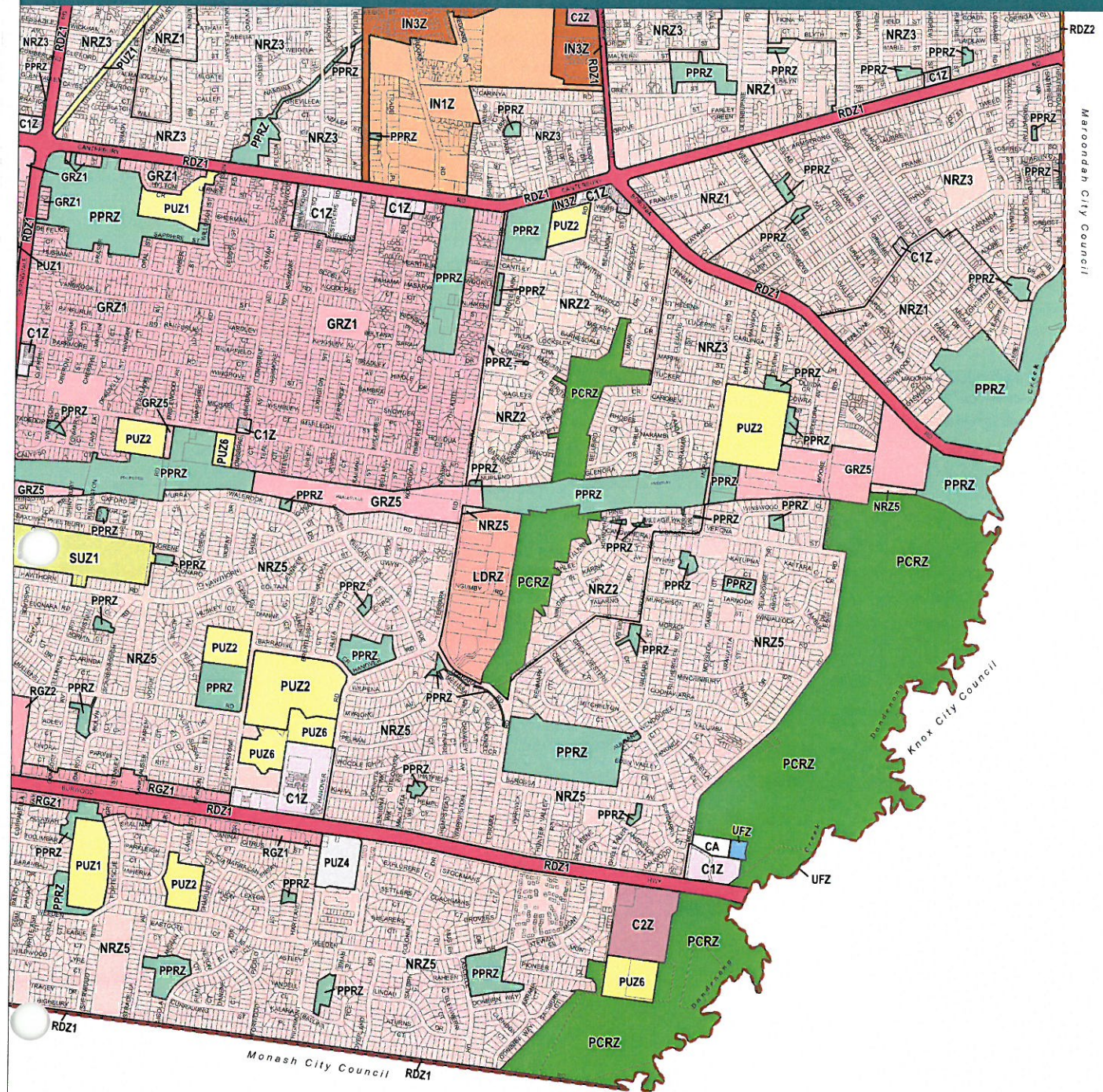
PROJECTION: Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Projection
DATUM: Horizontal: Geocentric Datum of Australia (GDA)
Vertical: Australian Height Datum (AHD)
GRID: Grid Interval 1000 metres
Map Grid of Australia 1994 (MGA94) Zone 54/55

APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B

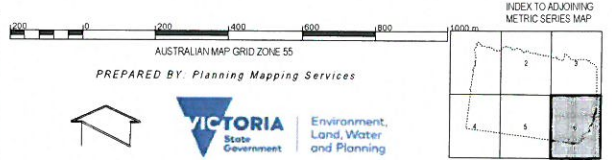
WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME - LOCAL PROVISION



This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968, State of Victoria.

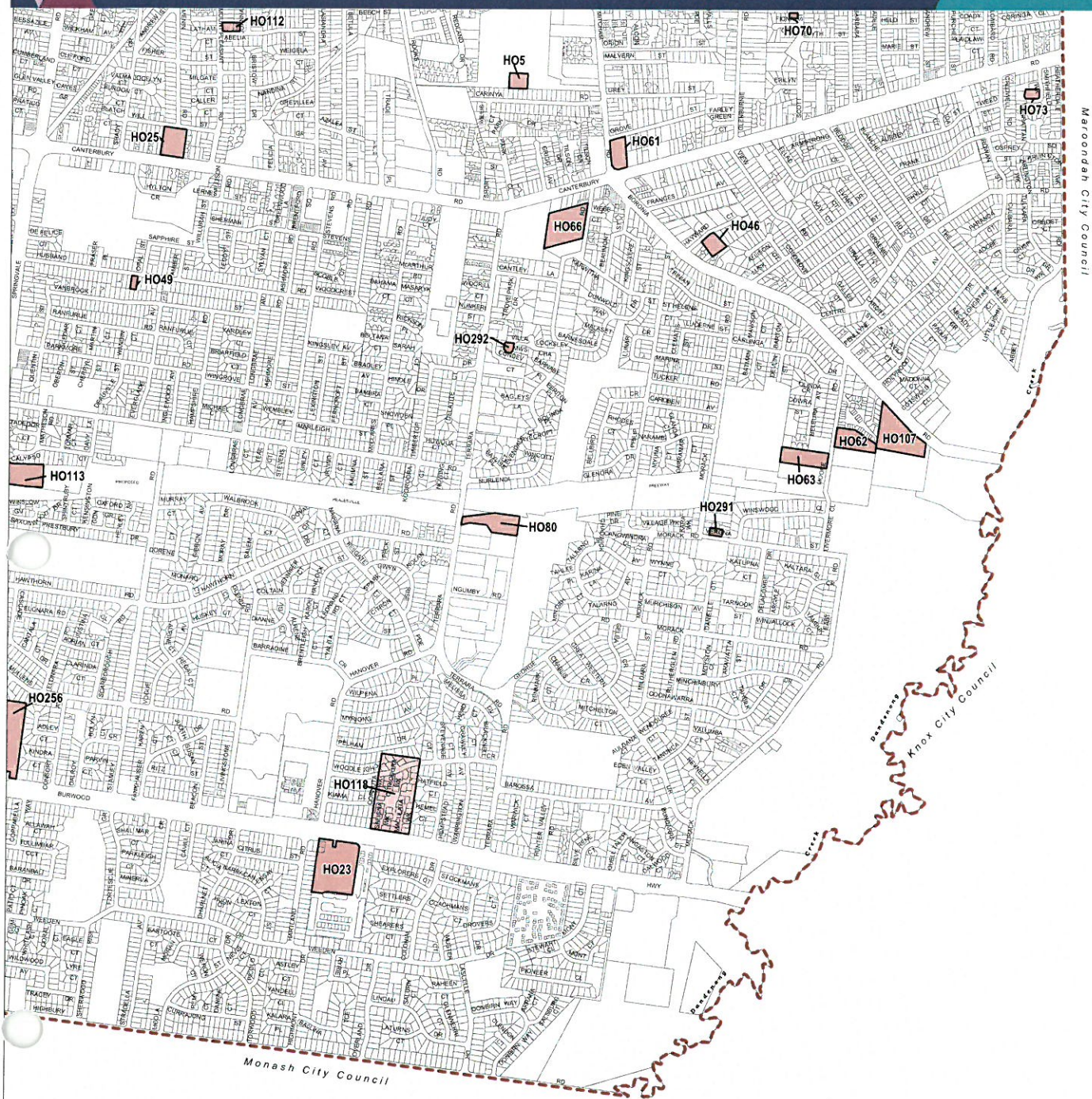
This map should be read in conjunction with additional Planning Overlay Maps (if applicable) as indicated on the INDEX TO MAPS.

Commercial	Public Use Zone - Local Government	Low Density Residential Zone	Special Purpose
C1Z Commercial 1 Zone	PUZ1	LDZ1	SPZ1 Special Use Zone - Schedule 1
C2Z Commercial 2 Zone	PUZ2	LDZ2	SPZ2 Urban Floorplate Zone
Industrial	Public Use Zone - Service And Utility	Neighbourhood Residential Zone - Schedule 1	Commonwealth Land
I1Z Industrial 1 Zone	PUZ3	NRZ1	CLZ Commonwealth Land Not Controlled By Planning Scheme
I2Z Industrial 2 Zone	PUZ4	NRZ2	
Public Land	Public Use Zone - Transport	Neighbourhood Residential Zone - Schedule 2	
PLZ1 Public Conservation And Resource Zone	PUZ5	NRZ3	
PLZ2 Public Park And Recreation Zone	PUZ6	NRZ4	
PLZ3 Public Use Zone - Education		NRZ5	
		Neighbourhood Residential Zone - Schedule 3	
		NRZ6	
		Neighbourhood Residential Zone - Schedule 4	
		NRZ7	
		Neighbourhood Residential Zone - Schedule 5	
		NRZ8	
		Residential Growth Zone - Schedule 1	
		RGZ1	
		Residential Growth Zone - Schedule 2	
		RGZ2	



APPENDIX C

WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME - LOCAL PROVISION



This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act. © State of Victoria.

This map should be read in conjunction with additional Planning Overlay Maps (if applicable) as indicated on the INDEX TO MAPS.

Overlays
Heritage Overlay

----- Municipal Boundary

Scale: 1:10,000

AUSTRALIAN MAP GRID ZONE 55

PREPARED BY: Planning Mapping Services



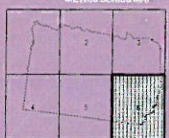
Printed: 30/09/2015

AMENDMENT C172 PART 2

VICTORIA
State Government

Environment,
Land, Water
and Planning

INDEX TO ADJOINING
MAPS

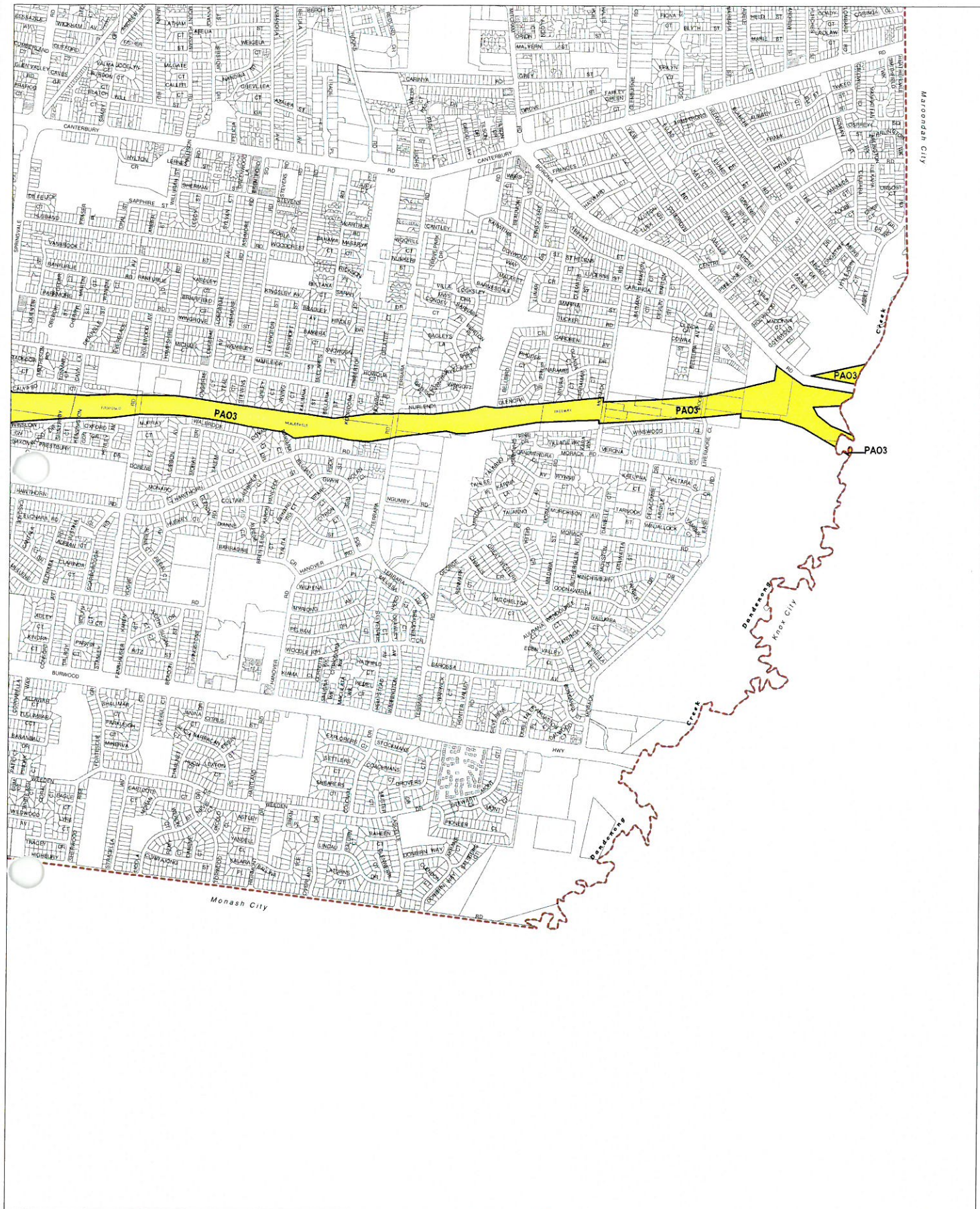


HERITAGE OVERLAY

MAP No 6HO

APPENDIX D

WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME - LOCAL PROVISION



This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act. © State of Victoria.

This map should be read in conjunction with additional Planning Overlay Maps (if applicable) as indicated on the INDEX TO MAPS.

Overlays

Public Acquisition Overlay 3

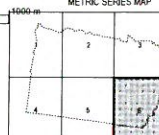
AUSTRALIAN MAP GRID ZONE 55



Printed 2/5/2012

AMENDMENT C146

INDEX TO ADJOINING METRIC SERIES MAP



PUBLIC ACQUISITION OVERLAY

MAP No 6PAO

APPENDIX E

WHITEHORSE PLANNING SCHEME - LOCAL PROVISION



See MAROONDAH PLANNING SCHEME

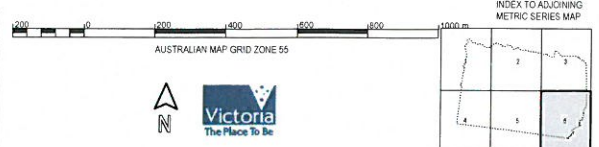
See KNOX PLANNING SCHEME

See MONASH PLANNING SCHEME

This publication is copyright. No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968. State of Victoria.

This map should be read in conjunction with additional Planning Overlay Maps (if applicable) as indicated on the index to this map.

Overlays
Special Building Overlay



Printed 5/6/2007

AMENDMENT C4 PT.1

SPECIAL BUILDING OVERLAY

MAP No 6SBO

APPENDIX F

HEALESVILLE FREEWAY RESERVE PROJECT REFERENCE GROUP KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Organisation	Representatives	Position Title
DELWP	Kelly Crosthwaite* Chris Padovani Rod Anderson* Keith Longridge	Regional Director, Port Phillip Region Regional Manager, Land Planning & Approvals Branch A/ Regional Manager, Land Planning & Approvals Branch Project Manager
Vic Roads	Lee Dobson Don Baker	Manager, Property Portfolio Management Property Leasing & Land Manager
Parks Victoria	Lisa Gaydon Brendan Sullivan* Rebecca Carland* Philip Ross	Statewide Leader Urban Park Planning Area Chief Ranger A/ District Manager N-E Melbourne District District Manager N-E Melbourne District
Shaun Leane MP office	Shaun Leane MLA Kirsten Vernon* Peter Harris*	Member for Eastern Metropolitan Electorate Officer Electorate Officer
Whitehorse City Council	Cr Raylene Carr Cr Bill Bennett Allison Egan*	Councillor for Morack Ward Councillor for Morack Ward Coordinator Strategic Planning
Terrara Pre School	Marie Chiodo	President Committee of Management
Nadrasca Community Farm	Gus Koedyk Raeoni Turner Chris Bourke*	Executive Director General Manager Community Chief Operating Officer
Vermont Secondary	Tony Jacobs	Principal

College	Mike Stevens	Vice Principal
Bellbird Dell Advisory Committee	Anne Makhijani Roger Vass	Secretary Member
Parkmore Primary School	Saraid Doherty	Principal
Emmaus College	Tony Hirst	Principal
City of Whitehorse Bicycle Advisory Committee	David Berry	A/ Chairperson
Whitehorse Cyclists	Michael Hassett Elaine Hopper	President Member
Friends of Healesville Freeway Committee	Anne Makhijani Lindsay Cowling	Convenor Member
Blackburn & District Tree Preservation Society Inc	David Berry Mary Crouch	A/ President Member
Concept 4 Preservation	Philip Horner Erika Duncan	Member Member
Residents/ licensees	Ian Lockyer	

(*) Denotes substitute representative

APPENDIX G

Healesville Freeway Reserve Linear Park: Key Stakeholders Inception Meeting 10 May 2016

Agenda Topic: Status Report, DELWP:

Participants provided a brief summary of their group's aspirations:

Blackburn & District Tree Preservation Society Inc

- Natural environment;
- Remnant patches of vegetation to preserve and enhance (on borders of patches);
- Bellbird Dell well managed;
- See it as Bio link from Dandenong Creek to city.

Whitehorse City Council

- Bio link and vegetation interests;
- Status of the parcel of land to the east, abutting Koomba Park; (This is confirmed as crown land. KL)
- Road crossings and safety;
- How relates to Old Strathdon Orchard;
- Sporting reserves – lots of existing demand;
- Bellbird Dell, the council maintains, so interested in partnership with Parks Victoria;
- Land parcels like the tee of the 18th hole at the golf course of interest.

Whitehorse Cyclists

- Quality sealed shared use path, but also other quieter paths.

Concept 4 Preservation

- Recreation;
- See full of people in nature;
- Linkages important e.g. to commute (so road safety important).

Terrara Pre-school

- Pre-school managed by a company;
- Would like bush environment for the youngsters to explore, (KL noted that similar aspirations were identified by the principal of the Parkmore Primary School and extended to include opportunities for environmental education);
- Another playground, currently only one swing.

Bellbird Dell Committee of Management and Friends of the Healesville Freeway Reserve

- Retain land for community use;
- Protect important vegetation;
- Connectivity for fauna;
- Community use (playgrounds, food forest etc.).

Nadrasca

- Aspire to further develop farm for clients;
- Community hub.

Vermont Secondary College

- Wildlife corridor;
- Bike track etc.;
- More young people in the area and more walking and riding to school;
- Community playing fields.

City of Whitehorse Bicycle Advisory Committee

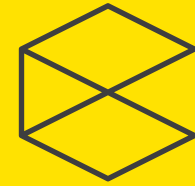
- Liveability more than provision of services, includes mental health and removing isolation;
- Should we test if Parks Victoria should be the land manager or a management committee?

APPENDIX H

HEALESVILLE FREEWAY RESERVE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

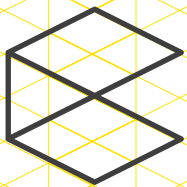
December 2016



CO
DESIGN
STUDIO



Prepared for: DELWP
Final issue_ 15 Dec. 2016
Cover Image:
Trail through the Bellbird Dell Reserve
Credit R Voss, 2015



CO
DESIGN
STUDIO

ACN 145 546 103 ABN 69 145 546 103
A 15 Easey Street, Collingwood, VIC 3066
T +61 (3) 9417 0020
W codesignstudio.com.au
IG @codesignstudio

CONTENTS

01.	INTRODUCTION	5
02.	ENGAGEMENT APPROACH	6
03	WHO WE REACHED	7
04.	WHAT WE HEARD	9
05.	NEXT STEPS	16
06.	APPENDIX	20

INTRODUCTION



01. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In 2016, the Victorian State Government committed to retaining the **Healesville Freeway Reserve** (HFR) as a unique, 3.5km tract of land between Springvale Road in Forest Hill and Boronia Road in Vermont, as public open space.

To support the transition of the former freeway reserve into a new linear park and to guide this engagement process, a Project Reference Group (PRG) has been established comprising of key stakeholders to provide input and guidance. We thank them for their assistance in the consultation process to date, for their time, knowledge and continued efforts to engage their community.

A list of the group's members is included at the end of this report in *Appendix 2*.

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Understanding how the local community and other stakeholders might like to use the reserve was seen as an important first step in turning this space into a new linear park.

In mid 2016, the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) engaged CoDesign Studio (CoDesign) to lead the development and delivery of community engagement activities to shape the future of the reserve.

Creative community engagement was sought to target a broad range of community groups and stakeholders to best understand how to create a well loved park, in particular identifying potential uses and understanding the function this park can play for this area.

An engagement plan was developed in partnership with the PRG and DELWP. Between **10 September and 7 October, 2016** the engagement activities set out in the plan were delivered.





Terms/ abbreviations:

HFR: Healesville Freeway Reserve
PRG: Project Reference Group
CDS: CoDesign Studio
DELWP: Department of Environment,
Land, Water and Planning
The Dell: Bellbird Dell Reserve

ABOUT THE ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the key findings and outcomes from across the varied community engagement activities undertaken. It forms a key input to the establishment plan for the new park as it transitions to Parks Victoria management. It is anticipated that further consultation will be required to inform future stages of the parks development.

Four key themes emerged from analysis of the community feedback, set out below. These themes provide a quick summary of the community's initial thoughts on the main purposes for the new park in this location.

-  **Access and trails**
-  **Nature and biodiversity**
-  **Activity and active spaces**
-  **Community and gathering**

These themes (and associated symbols) are used throughout the document as a way to frame and make sense of the feedback.

Figure 1 (previous page) Talking to local community members at a Pop Up engagement, Vermont South Library, October 2016

02. ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

To reach a broad spectrum of the community and gather overarching feedback about what should be the **main functions and uses** of the proposed new park, CoDesign worked with DELWP and the PRG to develop a targeted engagement plan to reach key stakeholders and groups in the local community.

The planned engagement activities and tools aimed to gather a general understanding of community views to inform the establishment stage of this project. As such, they were framed around broad ideas rather than detailed design.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation process was underpinned by a clear purpose and directed towards the understanding of the following:

- > Collect local knowledge about the existing site and current uses
- > Identifying a broad sense of purpose of the proposed park
- > Generating ideas for uses of the new park
- > Raising awareness about the extent and possible uses for the future park
- > Identify and mobilise active current and potential user groups.

The engagement activities were designed to provide a range of ways to be informed and have a say about the establishment of the park. They included:

- > **Pop up engagements**
at local shopping centres and libraries
- > **Community drop in session**
at Vermont Secondary College
- > **One on one sessions**
with key user groups at the reserve
- > **Online consultation webpage**,
including a consultation survey
- > **Reply paid 'have a say' post cards**
delivered to residences in the area surrounding the reserve
- > **Local area signage**
about the project and ways to have a say

The face-to-face local consultation sessions drew on a range of techniques to make having a say easy and simple for all ages, including **mapping ideas for the park and voting on park activities.** (Fig. 2-3)

Analysis of the responses from the community about the consultation and feedback provided is summarised in the following sections.



Figure 2 Internal Stakeholder engagement visioning session cards



Figure 3 Engagement session on site. 'One Big Idea' stickers

03. WHO WE REACHED

PARTICIPANT NUMBERS

Through the various engagement activities, we had approximately **620 direct participants** and reached over **2,100 people***.

Overall:

- > **Approximately 340** community members participated in one of our pop-up and drop in sessions. We received over **700 post-it comments** and more than **160 dotmocracy votes**.
- > We sent out **2,500+** postcards to local residents to provide a link to the website and survey (42 written responses were also received).
- > Online, we had **600+ visits** with **281 reading and downloading information** and **157 completed surveys**.

DEMOGRAPHICS

- > **Online, 58%** of survey respondents were male and **42%**, female. Overall, the majority of participants were in older age brackets with **64% over the age of 45**.
- > At our pop-up and **drop in sessions**, we mostly met with **locals** who lived near or adjacent to the reserve, who have historically had the greater interest and interaction with planning for the reserve. These were generally **older couples or families with young children**. We also met with a number of key stakeholders such as bicycle groups, dog walking groups and 'friends of' groups.

* figures are based on an overall calculation of the online and drop in/ 1:1 participation and conversations.

Breakdown of participants (age and gender based on online survey responses).

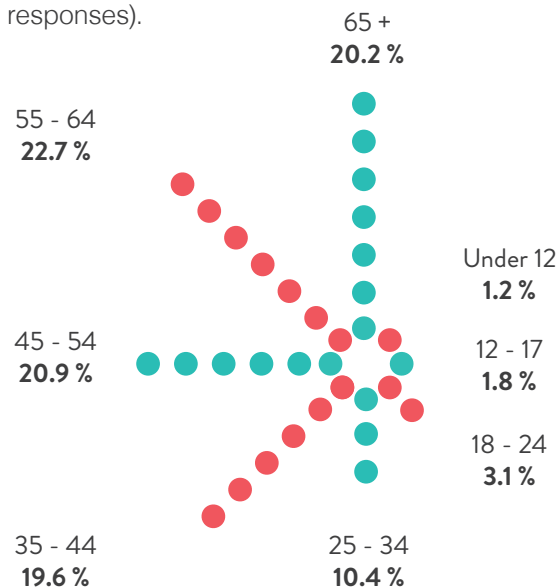


Figure 4 Breakdown of online survey participants by age

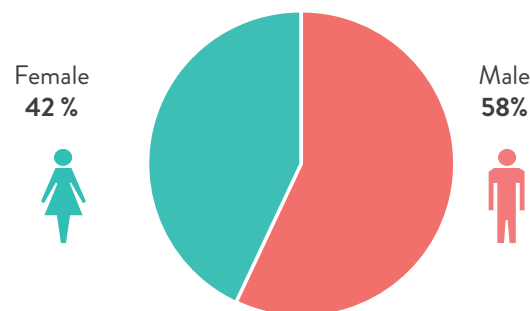


Figure 5 Breakdown of online survey participants by gender

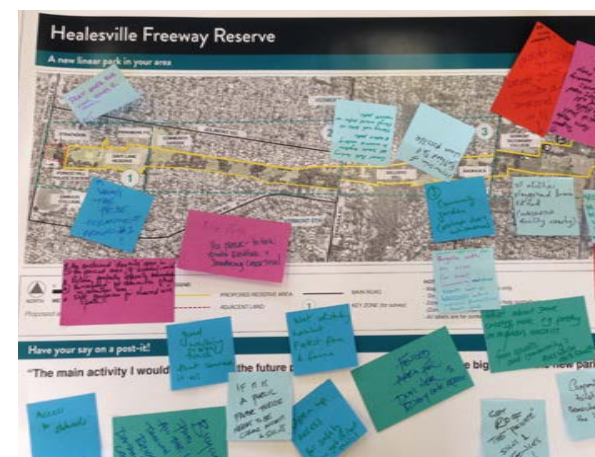


Figure 6 Drop in engagement at Vermont Secondary College

WHAT WE HEARD



04. WHAT WE HEARD

Overall the response to the consultation process was very positive. Respondents were pleased to see the area put aside as a future park. For many, this engagement was **important in confirming that the reserve would be retained as a new park.**

GENERAL REFLECTIONS

- > Overall, people were relieved and glad that the reserve would be retained. As many were still absorbing this information, they did not have a clear view of what they wanted from the space.
- > Due to some sections having existing private use or limited public access, many people found it difficult to provide input about future uses or conceptualise the reserve as a whole, as they were not familiar with these sections.
- > By opening up access to the reserve and terminating leases and licenses (including removing fences and gates) ideas are more likely to emerge.
- > Further consultation is needed as the community becomes more familiar with the full extent of conditions within the reserve.
- > Opportunities exist to explore local groups having a role in using/managing some area(s) of the future park (e.g. Bell Bird Dell, Nadrasca, schools).
- > The history and previous uses of the site may also be of importance. Whilst some aspects (such as horses) have been removed, people thought about their presence with fondness.

CURRENT USE

Use and location

We asked participants to tell us about their current use of the reserve.

Survey respondents most commonly frequent the reserve **weekly (38%)** (figure 7). This is reflective of many participants living close to/adjacent the reserve:

- > “I live directly next to the reserve, and walk my dog there most days”
- > “It’s great for our kids. We are so lucky to have a fence that backs on to the reserve)
(Quotes from one on one conversations)

Those that currently visit, most commonly make use of **Bellbird Dell Reserve (37%)** (figure 8).

It was evident from the consultation process that many people are unaware of the full extent of the reserve. Through conversations, many noted that they had ‘heard of’ the Bellbird Dell or Davy Lane Reserve, but did not realise these spaces linked up to a much longer (3.5 km) tract of land.

Frequency of use over the last 12 months

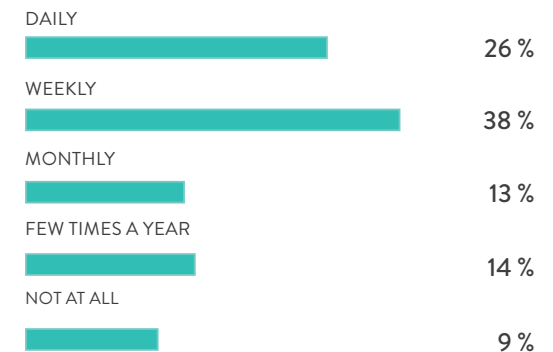


Figure 7 Frequency of use (%) based on online survey data.

Key use ‘zones’ during previous visits



Figure 8 (above) Use zones (%) based on online survey data

FUTURE PURPOSE AND USE

When asked if there were specific areas where new activities should be placed in the reserve, **over 75%** (*online survey*) responded that they should be located **'across the entire reserve'**.

This highlights the need to create key connections and uses that run the **full length** of the reserve, and further consultation to understand uses for particular areas in more detail.

Overall, we heard the following general comments:

- > A shared path for cyclists and pedestrians with removal of redundant fencing and gates for clear and safe access.
- > The path should connect along the length of the reserve with the Dell and link Springvale Road with Dandenong Creek Trail. Some people suggested more 'natural' materials whilst others wanted a solid and structured path.
- > Dedicated spaces for dogs (on/off lead) are important in shared use spaces.
- > Where possible, biodiversity should be encouraged and natural areas expanded
- > Main open areas should be retained for play, structured active sports and associated facilities and or other active spaces (such as green gyms)
- > There exists opportunities to incorporate education, community facilities, cafés and other amenity.
- > Lighting, toilets and parking were also important to respondents in and around the reserve.

These general comments feed into the four key themes continued on the next page.

SURVEY RESPONSE:

What should the main purpose of the park be?

Respondents to this question saw the reserve's purpose as a key place for community social gathering, as well as a place to enjoy and appreciate nature.

- > “We come here to [the Dell] to look for birds with the kids”
- > “This is a special place where we can connect with nature”
- > “It’s a great place to meet, but we’d love more picnic areas, BBQs and shelter”

What are the main activities you'd like to see in the new linear park?

Overwhelmingly, we heard that the most significant new activities that people would like to do were:

- > Going for walks (23%)
- > Enjoying and being part of nature (21%)

From our pop up and drop in sessions, we compiled the post-it feedback to produce the word cloud opposite (fig 9) which helps to represent (by size value) the important activities participants saw as part of the future linear park.



Figure 9 'Word cloud' representing key ideas based on post-it feedback from the synthesised workshop sessions

DOT-MOCRACY FEEDBACK

During the consultation, people could provide feedback by **dot-mocracy voting**, which involves sticking votes on images representing activities they would like to see in the future park. This type of activity was particularly popular with children at the consultation sessions.

The results of this voting are shown below.

The top five most popular images are shown on the right, highlighting a strong preference for **nature and trails**, which aligns to the response from the overall community feedback detailed overleaf.

Top five dot-mocracy responses



Figure 10 Dot Mocracy (voting) boards. Activities participants would like to see

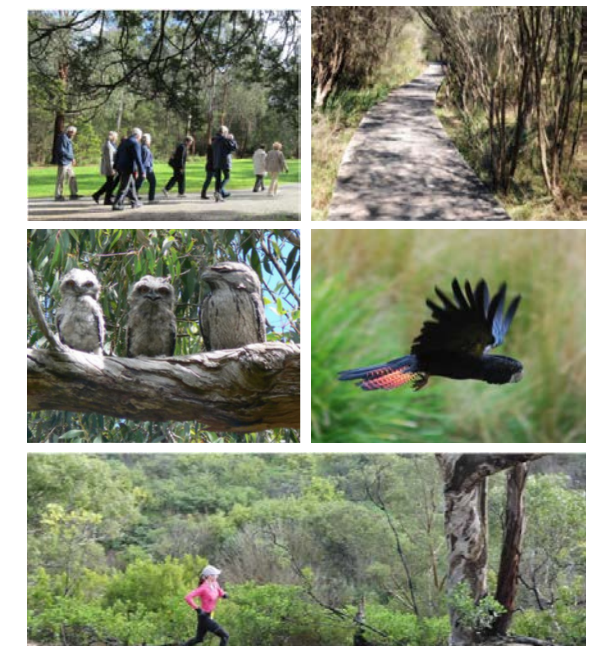


Figure 11 Top 5 dot-mocracy images selected

FUTURE PURPOSE AND USE

The key themes emerging from the analysis of community feedback are set out right.

In order of priority these are:

1. ACCESS AND TRAILS,
2. NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY,
3. ACTIVITY AND ACTIVITY SPACES,
4. COMMUNITY AND GATHERING.

The weighted priority of this analysis is based on a synthesis of the key consultation feedback
(shown in figures 12 and 13 overleaf).

The four themes should underpin our early understanding of community needs in establishing this new park.



1

ACCESS AND TRAILS

The most common feedback responded to a linear connecting pathway for all users. This included improved access and:

- > Pathways: for walking and cycling
- > Access: clear, safe and open- (i.e. removal of redundant fences) and accessible for everyone.
- > Shared and connecting path network

"There should be a path with dedicated lanes for bikes and pedestrians through the reserve"



3

ACTIVITIES AND ACTIVE SPACES

The incorporation of dogs in the reserve and the need to have active spaces amongst the natural areas was important to many stakeholders.

- > Open sports areas/ovals/ green gyms
- > Playgrounds and play spaces
- > Off-lead and on lead assigned dog areas

"Off-lead areas should be considered in existing open areas"



2

NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY

Participants also highlighted the key importance of the reserve as a natural and significant asset considering:

- > Native flora and fauna
- > Potential of reforestation and 'no development' focus.
- > Bird watching
- > The retention/ addition of water

"More native plants and natural ponds [waterways]"



4

COMMUNITY AND GATHERING

Increased community spaces and areas to gather, share and learn, was an important final theme.

- > Picnic areas and open spaces
- > Community gardens and opportunities for community partnerships
- > Improved facilities (such as lighting and toilets)
- > Cafés (especially at access points)

"The Nadrasca cafe could have a cooking school selling produce gardened in the reserve"

(Quotes from participants are taken from post-it note feedback and one on one conversations)

See supporting charts to these four themes overleaf

DETAILED DATA SUMMARY

Data consolidated to produce recommended four themes (on previous page) is shown in the two charts.

Figure 12 represents the Online Survey Question 4 responses to 'What activities would you like to do in the new park.

Top four answers:

- > Walks
- > Nature
- > Cycling
- > Dog walking

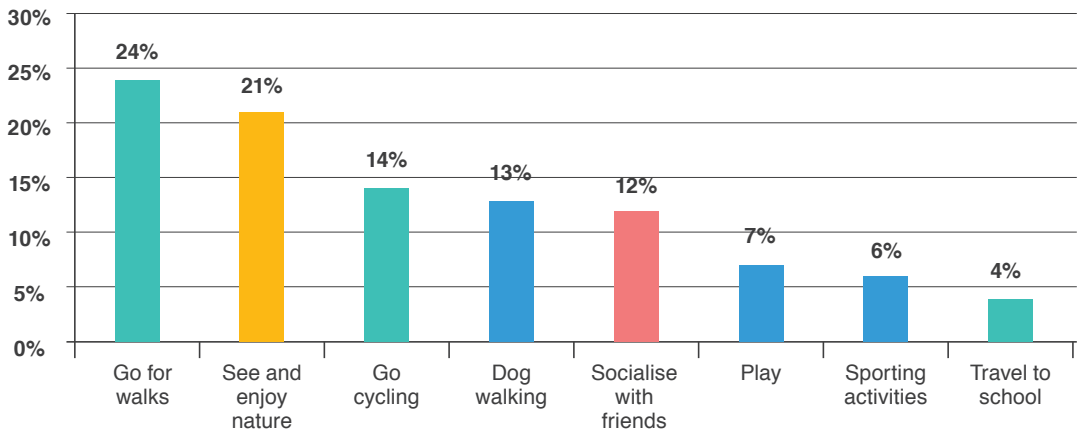


Figure 12 Graphed Response to Online Survey Question 4

Figure 13 represents response percentages to open questions/ open comments from the overall analysis.

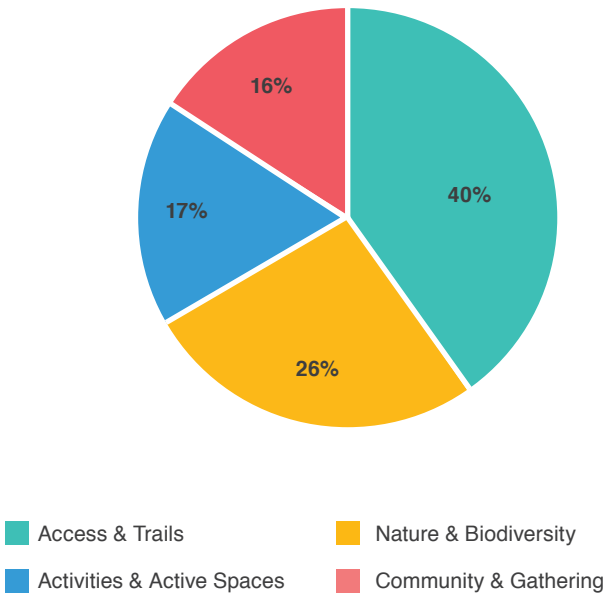
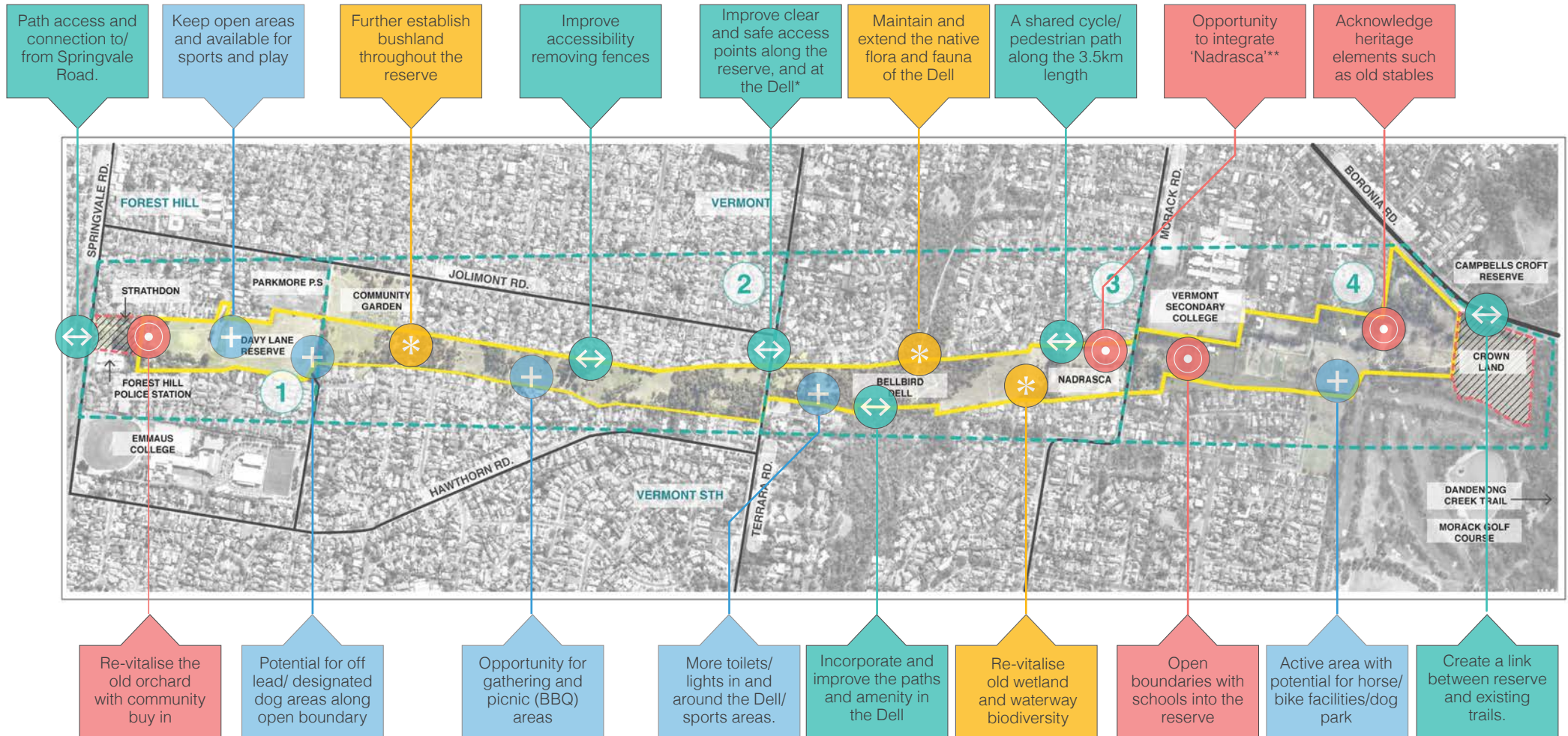


Figure 13 Responses to Open Questions/Comments

MAPPED FEEDBACK

The map below, indicates some key location specific feedback, based on the more general response from participants at drop-in and pop up sessions and in the survey feedback.

This base map used was developed as part of the consultation material with four zones used as a way to help break up the reserve and help users locate feedback where appropriate.



Note: This map is illustrative only. Points are not exact and may apply to more than one indicated area/ across the reserve entire. This list is not exhaustive and is intended as a summary of key location specific feedback only.

** access point across all major roads and linking sections into the reserve.*

*** Some suggestions included a cafe, a cooking school, educational aspects.*

Figure 14 Location Specific Feedback

NEXT STEPS



05. NEXT STEPS

The table below (and continued overleaf) represents a summary of opportunities based around the four themes. Some higher level 'next steps' to help facilitate these opportunities are also provided.





THEME	OPPORTUNITIES BASED ON WHAT WE HEARD	NEXT STEPS/ FUTURE ENGAGEMENT
 ACCESS AND TRAILS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > A dedicated shared path through the entire length of the reserve for cyclists and pedestrians > Clear and safe access points into/out of the reserve > Removal of redundant fencing/gates to create a seamless linear park > Connections between the reserve and beyond linking to Springvale Road and the Dandenong Creek Trail > Potential for a link over Boronia Road linking cyclists and pedestrians > Clear and consistent signage and way-finding throughout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Consult on best access/ entry exit points with the community > Continue the proposed removal of fencing and gates to create seamless linear park. > Remove outdated and redundant signs > Consider design options for further consultation around access and future trails (e.g. mapping out trails for user testing)
 NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Further enhance and establish flora and fauna throughout the reserve > Increase biodiversity and potential for wildlife corridors > Maintain and enhance native flora and fauna seen in the Dell. Introduce these into other parts of the reserve where possible. > Consider re-establishing old waterway/ wetlands and ponds > Maintain existing trees (even if exotic species) > Advertise and promote the unique natural assets of the reserve to the broader community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Consult with Parks Victoria and friends of groups. > Consider community working bees to help introduce further flora and fauna into the reserve > Consider methods of advertising/ introducing the broader community to experience this unique natural asset (through methods such as workshops, planting days, other events or community led activities)

Table continued overleaf

'Next Steps' table continued...

THEME	OPPORTUNITIES BASE ON WHAT WE HEARD	NEXT STEPS / FUTURE ENGAGEMENT
 <p>ACTIVITIES AND ACTIVE SPACES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Establish sports zones in existing open areas (such as Davy Lane Reserve) > Establish off-lead dog areas in appropriate areas with additional signage > Establish on-lead dog areas in appropriate areas with additional signage > Establish play areas for children. Significant opportunity for 'natural play' areas throughout the reserve > Consider active trails for a variety of uses (such as riding circuits/ green gyms) > Utilise smaller open spaces for meditative activities such as yoga/ tai-chi > Consider lighting at high use areas (e.g. sports fields and entries) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Establish relationships with sporting groups/ associations to consult on needs and facilities > Consider design options and locations for play areas, consult on types of play opportunities > Consult further with dog walking groups (WoOFDAA)/ other dog groups to establish a dog friendly plan for the reserve > Remove redundant signage > Create new signage (or big/bold banners) to advertise useable areas
 <p>COMMUNITY AND GATHERING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Opportunity to incorporate existing schools/ kindergartens by opening access. > Establish gathering, relaxing, sitting areas and sharing facilities throughout with seating/picnic/BBQ facilities as appropriate. > Consider the heritage elements in and around the reserve (such as the Robin Boyd designed House, old stables, historic orchard, etc.) > Opportunity to expand Council community gardens, or develop others into the reserve > Revitalise old heritage orchard as a community asset. Reintroduce productive trees (e.g. fruits/ olives, etc) > Partner with Nadrasca/ other organisations to establish educational activities > Consider opening backyards onto the reserve > Grow the 'Friends of' groups and create further awareness around the development of the reserve > Cafes incorporated into the reserve connecting with trails > Consideration of toilets and water fountains at high use locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Talk to abutting residents and schools to develop a shared use plan between public and private land use. > Consider a transition process + educational/social benefits to using the reserve > Establish a heritage plan for consultation > Work with community groups, 'Friends of' groups and PRG to develop an activation plan to maintain excitement around the developing future linear park. E.g. minor openings, events, other community led activities.

06. CONCLUSIONS

The consultation activities to date have performed an important function in:

- > Communicating with the local community and interested stakeholders that the reserve will be retained as public open space
- > Helping the community to conceptualise the reserve in its entirety as a 3.5km long linear park
- > Understanding initial community views about the function and key activities the future park should support. This information will underpin the establishment of the park (general themes as well as location specific uses and functions)

It is also clear that continued consultation and engagement with a broad ranging community is still required to create a well-loved park for this area, as developments occur.

As the community's understanding grows about the full extent and opportunities offered by the park, there will be potential to build on and deepen the engagement, and encourage more ideas and more detailed suggestions moving forward.

In final discussions with the PRG in preparing this report, we asked participants to suggest 'what worked well' and 'what could be improved' in any future engagement. Key ideas included:

- > Continue to reach a broader audience to increase awareness
- > Walks/specific site activities to continue to build momentum and generate excitement
- > Provide an indicative project timeline
- > Consult further on more detailed designs once drafted.

The PRG acknowledged that the handover of land and design processes will take time. With this in mind, there exists opportunities to maintain interest and increase awareness of the new park through community-led initiatives such as:

- > Interim celebrations/ events
- > Temporary openings/ guided walks
- > Educational programs
- > Interaction with abutting organisations and schools
- > Potential interim signage

The unique features of the local area and the supportive community are exciting aspects of the project ahead.

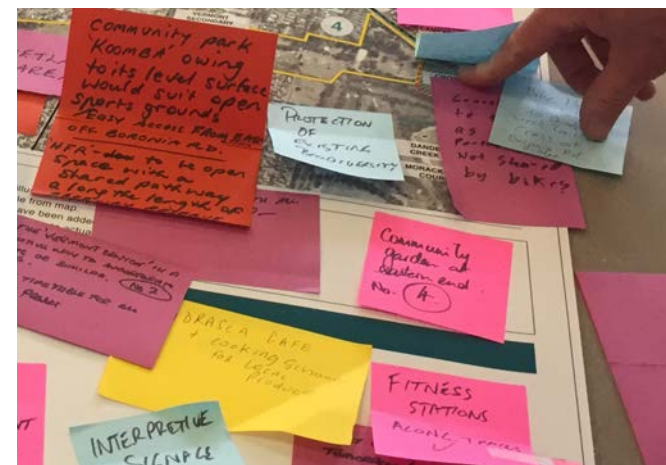


Figure 15 Mapping feedback

APPENDIX



07. APPENDIX

ATTACHED FEEDBACK AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

1. *Engagement Documents*

- 1.1 Post card
- 1.2 Online Platform
- 1.3 A4 Flyer
- 1.4 Dot mocracy (voting) boards
- 1.5 Interactive mapping

(See images overleaf)

2. *Project Reference Group*

The Project Reference Group has been a key player in helping shape and assist with the various engagement activities. We acknowledge their continued support for this ongoing project.

Listing of group members overleaf

2. Project Reference Group

DELWP

Kelly Crosthwaite* - Regional Director, Port Phillip Region

Chris Padovani – Regional Manager, Land Planning & Approvals Branch

Rod Anderson* – A/ Regional Manager, Land Planning & Approvals Branch

Keith Longridge – Project Manager

Vic Roads

Lee Dobson – Manager, Land and Property

Don Baker – Property Leasing & Land Manager

Parks Victoria

Lisa Gaydon – Statewide Leader Urban Park Planning

Brendan Sullivan * – Area Chief Ranger

Rebecca Carland * – A/ District Manager N-E Melbourne District

Philip Ross – District Manager N-E Melbourne District

Shaun Leane MP office

Shaun Leane MP - Member for Eastern Metropolitan Region

Kirsten Vernon * -.Electorate Officer

Peter Harris * - Electorate Officer

Whitehorse City Council

Cr Raylene Carr - Councillor for Morack Ward

Cr Bill Bennett - Councillor for Morack Ward

Allison Egan * - Assistant Manager Strategic Planning

Terrara Pre School

Marie Chiodo - President Committee of Management

Nadrasca Community Farm

Gus Koedyk - Executive Director

Raeoni Turner.-General Manager Community

Chris Bourke * - Chief Operating Officer

Vermont Secondary College

Tony Jacobs - Principal

Mike Stevens - Vice Principal

Bellbird Dell Advisory Committee

Anne Makhijani - Secretary

Roger Vass - Member

Parkmore Primary School

Saraid Doherty - Principal

Emmaus College

Tony Hirst - Principal

City of Whitehorse Bicycle Advisory Committee

David Berry - A/ Chairperson

Whitehorse Cyclists

Michael Hassett - Member/ Advocacy sub committee

Elaine Hopper - Member/ Advocacy sub committee

Friends of Healesville Freeway Committee

Anne Makhijani - Convenor

Lindsay Cowling - Member

Blackburn & District Tree Preservation Society Inc.

David Berry - A/ President

Mary Crouch - Member

Concept 4 Preservation

Philip Horner - Member

Erika Duncan - Member

Residents/ licensees

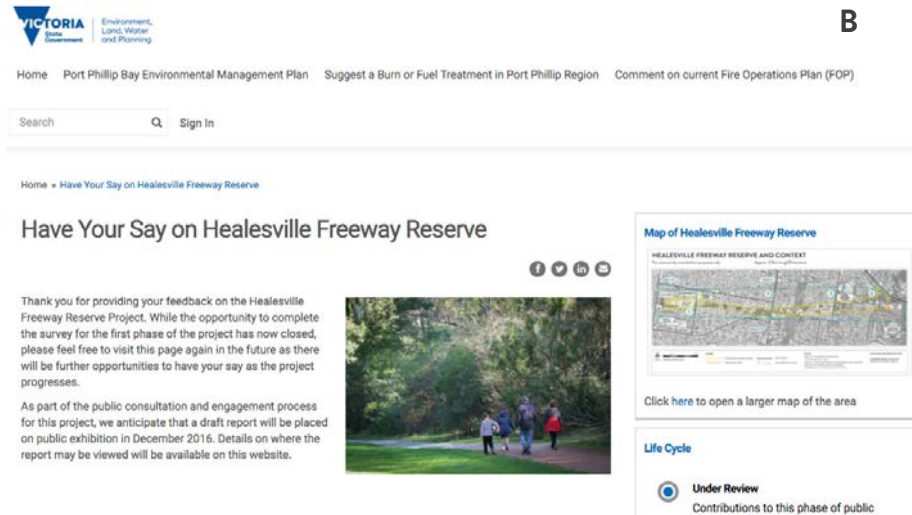
Ian Lockyer

(*) Denotes substitute representative

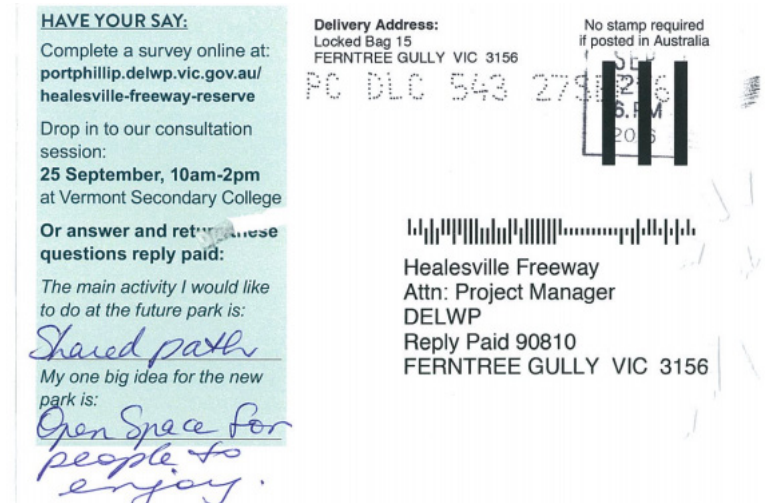
Engagement tools (from appendix 1 listing)

The following images detail some of the engagement tools employed to undertake the HFR consultation.

A



B



C

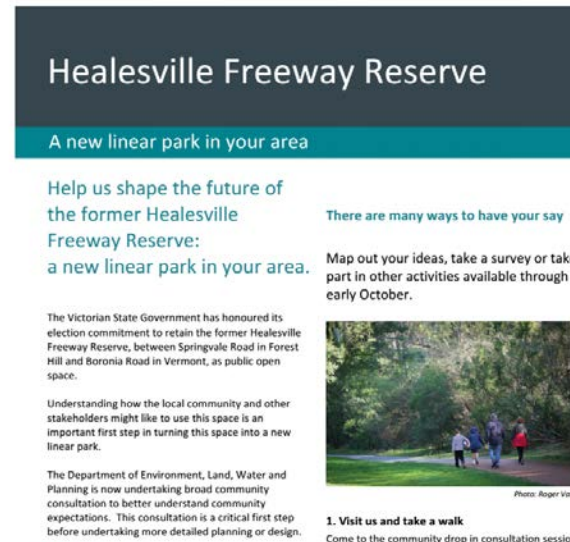


Figure 16 A (top left) Reply Paid Postcard
B (above) Online platform
C (left) Hand out A4 shop flyer

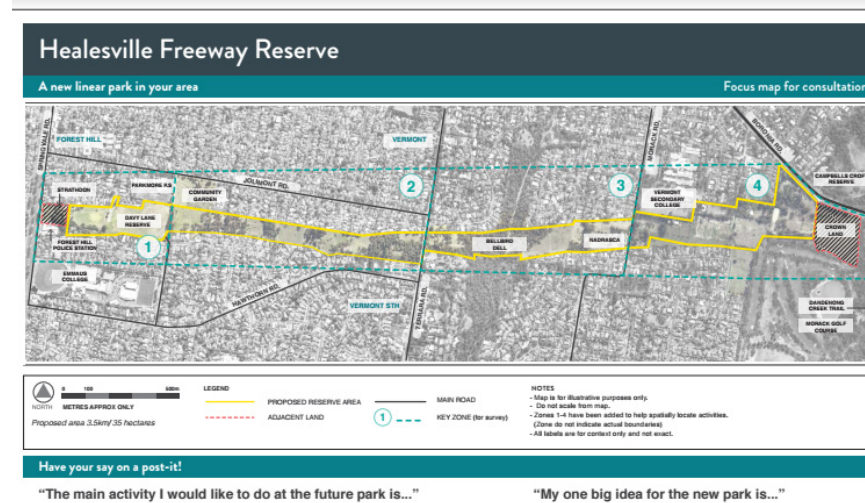


Figure 17 A- Dot-mocracy voting
B- Interactive mapping



CO
DESIGN
STUDIO

ACN 145 546 103 ABN 69 145 546 103
A 15 Easey Street, Collingwood, VIC 3066
T +61 (3) 9417 0020
W codesignstudio.com.au
IG TW @codesignstudio