Inverell Shire Council

public open space strategy

FINAL DRAFT

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SINCLAIR PARK
WELCOME

1 Introduction

Inverell Shire Council currently owns and manages a diverse range of public open space, which contributes to the Shire's positive rural life-style.

Council has an important role to ensure the Shire's public open space network is preserved and enhanced for current and future residents. However, ad-hoc planning and numerous requests from community organisations, user-groups and individuals regarding the use, management and upgrade of public open space has highlighted the need for this Public Open Space Strategy (the Strategy).

Inverell Shire Council is comprised of six townships:

- Inverell
- Gilgai
- Delungra
- Ashford
- Yetman
- Bonshaw.

Inverell is the Shire's main township. Home to approximately 95% of the Shire's population, the Strategy will only focus on the public open space within the Inverell Township.

Purpose of the Strategy

To ensure Council's public open space is planned and managed accordingly now and into the future, the Strategy provides Council with a framework to direct public open space planning and management in a co-ordinated and more effective manner.

The over-arching aim of the Strategy is to ensure that the public open spaces are sustainably managed to enhance the community's health, wellbeing and enjoyment.

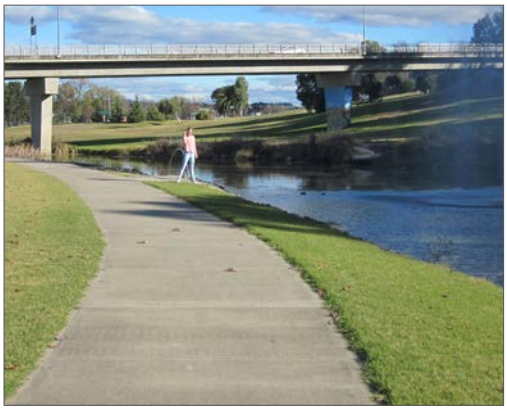
The Strategy seeks to:

- identify Council owned and managed public open space
- identify the current and projected sporting and recreation facility needs of Inverell's residents and visitors
- identify the requirements for provision of public open space opportunities throughout Inverell
- identify Council's role in the planning and delivery of services within the public open space
- identify potential opportunities to increase the utilisation of existing public open space
- make clear recommendations for the future open space planning and management for each park/reserve considering available resources and future sustainability.

How the Strategy was developed

The process used to develop the Strategy was based around focussed consultation to recognise the role that the open space, recreation and sport play within the Inverell community. An overview of Inverell's demographic profile was also conducted to understand the distribution and makeup of the population and identify any key determinants for recreation and sport participation. To gain further understanding of local and industry open space and recreation issues, existing Council strategies/plans and contemporary trends and influences on active and passive open space provision were also reviewed.

A comprehensive audit of the condition and supply of open space across Inverell was also conducted. Each open space was assessed against a suite of criteria to capture information on quality, access, safety, size and configuration, embellishments, constraints and opportunities.



What is public open space?

For the purpose of this Strategy, public open space is

'land that is readily and freely accessible to the wider community, regardless of size, design or physical features and is intended primarily for amenity, passive and/or active recreation purposes[1]'

The Strategy will focus on the existing Inverell Shire Council owned and managed public open space within the township of Inverell.

It is noted that there are other open spaces in Inverell including public streets and roads, schools and lands owned by other government entities. While these lands need to be referenced, it is not the intention of the Strategy to focus on their influence.

1 *Source: 2009 Healthy Spaces and Places & 2015 Heathy Active by Design*

Benefits of public open space

Public open space plays a vital role in sustaining the social and environmental qualities of the local and visiting community. Appropriately planned, developed and managed public open space provides numerous opportunities to improve the health and well-being of individuals and the community, as well as bringing people together to develop social networks and friendships. Public open space has the potential to boost the local economy by attracting tourists, investment and supporting local businesses by the means of sporting activities and community events.

Benefits to personal health

- improved health is available to individuals through participation in sport and recreation. Research has shown that quality access to public open space (specifically parks, sporting fields and their connectivity) increases physical activity frequency
- opportunities to develop physical, social and decision making skills through participation in sport and recreation
- participation in sport and physical activity can help individuals explore strategies for conflict resolution and reduce stress.

Benefits to communities

- public open space provision is essential for strengthening and maintaining a healthy community. Public open space can provide a focal point for community gathering, promote interaction and combat social isolation
- participation in sport and recreation can improve social cohesion, build cultural tolerance and support for seniors and people with a disability
- public open space can provide areas of high visual amenity and attractiveness
- public open space areas can be used to record and retain history through place names, commemorative buildings and memorials and preserved areas of cultural significance
- public open space can provide connectivity. Recreation paths along open space corridors can link residential areas with key community facilities.

Benefits to the environment

- public open space can help to maintain a sustainable environment by reducing water run-off and flooding-related problems, offsetting carbon emissions and filtering pollutants (trees)
- where public open space provides for quality active transport opportunities (e.g. cycle ways and walking paths/trails) and walking and cycling replace car trips, additional environmental benefits include reduced traffic congestion, reduced air pollution, reduced greenhouse emissions and reduced noise pollution
- daytime temperatures have been found to be up to 3°C cooler in large urban parks than the surrounding streets as a result of moisture released from trees
- public open spaces provide habitats that support ecosystems. Even highly maintained urban open spaces can be host to a range of mammals, insects, birds and aquatic plant life
- public open space, and in particular natural open space, can have high environmental values as this land may support species and ecosystems not reserved in national parks or other conservation reserves; they may support species and ecosystems that are of national or state significance; and may act as corridor linkages between larger areas of environmental value.

Benefits to the economy

- quality public open space can increase the value of nearby properties
- participation can reduce obesity and health care costs. Improved physical health and the building of stronger families and communities helps lower these costs
- quality public open space and leisure services can attract businesses, employees and tourists. In fact, research has shown that recreation, parks and open space are some of the most important factors when new business locations are considered
- many events are hosted in public open space areas - from small local community-based events, through to those of national and international importance.

2 Influences on public open space

Understanding the makeup, needs and physical activity characteristics of the local community, projected population change, trends in public open space planning and the local legislative context are all important factors that influence public open space usage, planning and design.

Legislative context

Policies, plans and strategies reflect community aspirations and expectations representing an important context to public open space planning. Therefore, the development of the Strategy needs to fit within their framework.

A review of a number of relevant Council documents has been undertaken to ensure an understanding of the overall context for the Strategy.

Documents considered include:

- 2009-2029 Community Strategic Plan
- 2017-2021 Delivery Plan
- 2017-2018 Operational Plan and Budget.

Council's vision "A community for all" highlights the value placed on the opportunities available at these community assets. Further, three of Council's five strategic destinations highlight Council's commitment to the open space network:

- A community that is healthy, educated and sustained (Destination Two)
- An environment that is protected and sustained (Destination Three)
- The community is served by sustainable services and infrastructure (Destination Five).

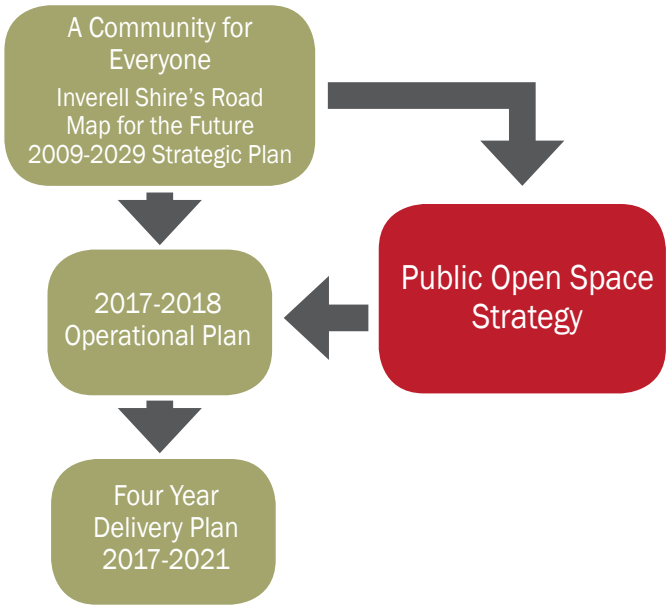


Figure 1: Placing the Strategy within the Planning Framework

The Strategy will assist in the accomplishment of a range of strategies and achievements included across the three corporate documents. These include:

- C.05 Create clean and attractive streets and public spaces
- C.07 Provide local opportunities for recreation, cultural and social activities
  - C.07.02 The Shire's recreational areas and facilities are contemporary and conducive to the communities' wellbeing
  - C.07.02.01 Contribute to the physical wellbeing of the community through the provision of active recreation areas
  - C.07.02.02 To provide landscaped areas, passive recreational facilities and playgrounds to promote a healthy lifestyle
- C.09 Create a strong sense of community identity
- C.10 Contribute to the health of the community by promoting healthy lifestyles and practices
- E.04 Conserve and rehabilitate core vegetation areas and manage major impacts on corridors and remnant bush land
- E.06 Protect and manage significant natural features and landscapes
- S.05 Attractive and vibrant town centres, local centres and community meeting places are provided
- S.07 Provide accessible and usable recreational facilities and services that meet the needs of the community
  - S.07.01 Recreational and leisure facilities and services meet community needs and are maintained to promote optimal utilisation
  - S.07.01.01 Facilitate joint use of the Shire's recreation and leisure facilities, sporting and open space facilities including co-location of programs
- S.09 Council's buildings, parks and open space assets are maintained to a standard fit for their contemporary purpose
- S.14 Increase the number of people walking and cycling, particularly for journeys within the community.

Community profile

The way in which a community uses the surrounding public open space and participates in recreation and sport activities is largely influenced by age. Understanding the spatial and demographic variations in communities, such as concentrations of older residents or youth, is fundamental to responding to, and planning for, the future provision of public open space.

Inverell has a population of 16,075 people, while the local government area has approximately 17,000 residents[2]. With a median age of 40 years, the Inverell community is older (and ageing), resulting in a greater demand for passive and informal recreation activities and opportunities. Access to playing fields and formal sport opportunities are not as important, with older people generally seeking walking, cycling and other low impact physical activities.

Despite the ageing population, just over a quarter (28%) of the community is aged under 20 years[3]. A younger population is more likely to seek both structured and unstructured recreation and physical activity pursuits, such as competitive and social sporting competitions. The significant proportion of people in these age cohorts (and their parents) will place pressure on Council to improve and maintain their sporting facilities, parks and playgrounds and provide affordable physical activity programs.

Inverell prides itself as being a dynamic and creative community that provides strong opportunities for residents to enjoy a quality lifestyle. Over half (56.7%) of the families in Inverell have children[3]. With the desire for younger people to participate in organised sport, recreation and/or physical activity (particularly young children and teenagers), some families may have to pay two or three membership fees, along with uniform costs. If membership costs continue to increase, sports may start to experience a decline in junior membership numbers as families can not afford to pay the fees and/or choose to limit participation.

It is important to note that the average family household in Inverell has a significantly lower weekly income than the State average[3]. This, combined with the high proportion of residents aged over 65 years, means that activity needs to be affordable to all to ensure equity and encourage opportunities to improve quality of life.

Inverell has a higher than average percentage of Indigenous people living in the area[3]. Participation in sport and recreation activities can help minimise some of the challenges confronting Indigenous youth and adults. Cross-cultural strategies that encourage and provide opportunities (e.g. resources and transportation) to participate in sport and recreation activities should be developed in partnership with Council, sporting groups and respected Indigenous community members.

Population growth

Minimal growth is predicted for Inverell. By 2031, the township's population is expected to reach approximately 17,000 people[2]. However, due to Inverell's central location and busy commercial centre, the local services will need to cater for the rise in employees and visitors that come from surrounding local government areas, some as far as southern Queensland.

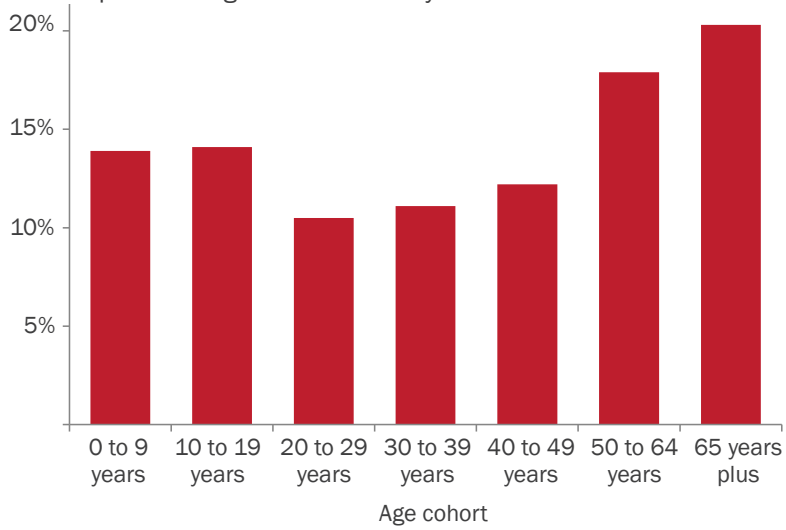


Figure 2: Current population distribution

2 *2015 Inverell Shire Council, Your Council (online)*
3 *2011 ABS Census QuickStats (online)*

Community participation

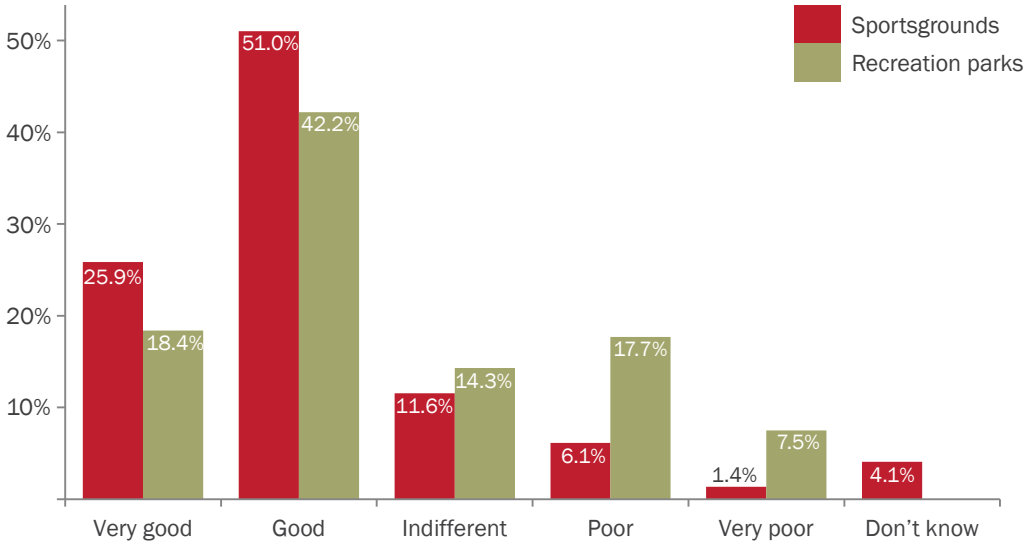
Residents within Inverell were encouraged to complete an online survey (hard copies were also made available at key Council buildings) about Inverell's public open space. Questions focused around the types of activities and frequency of participation, open space values, usage barriers and levels of satisfaction with the public open space network.

A summary of the results is provided below. A copy of the community survey and full results are provided in Appendix A.

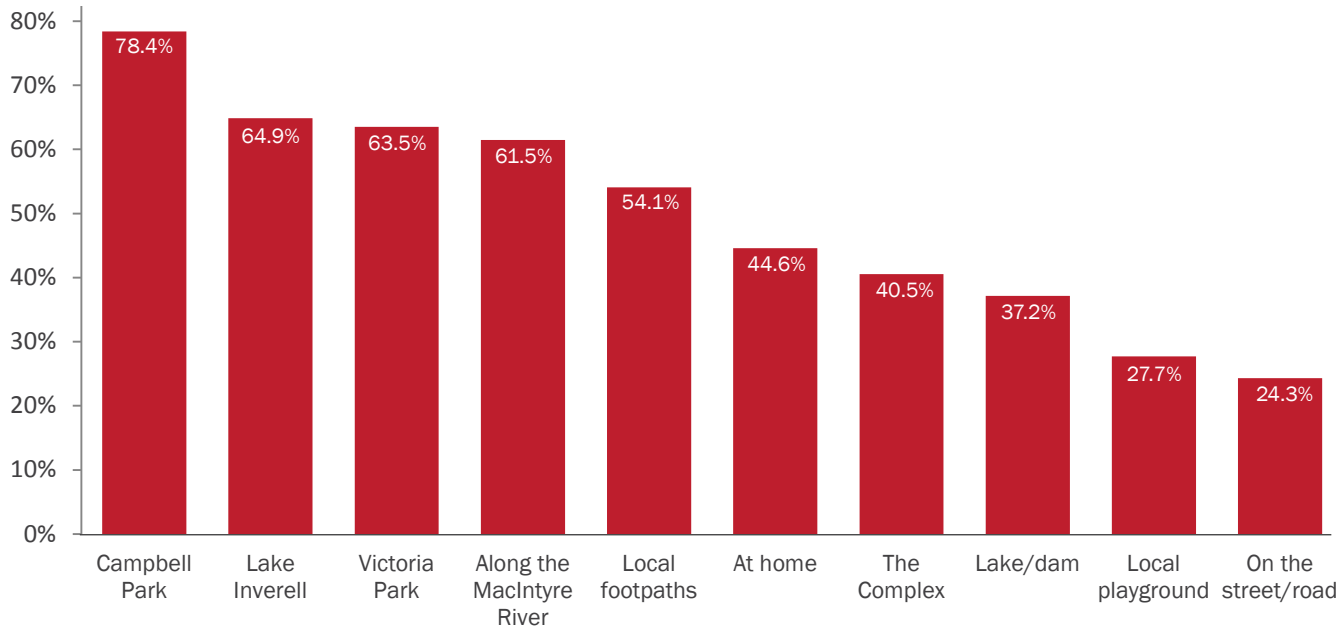
Participation and satisfaction with supporting infrastructure

Activity	Participation frequency	Satisfaction level with supporting infrastructure
Walking	☐ 46.4% of respondents go walking at least three times per week ☐ 15.0% of respondents walk rarely or never	☐ 69.0% are very satisfied or satisfied ☐ 1.4% are very dissatisfied
Cycling	☐ 44.7% of respondents never cycle ☐ only 5.3% cycle at least three times per week	☐ 34.6% are very satisfied or satisfied ☐ 17.3% are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied
Play and picnic in the park	☐ just over a third (35.0%) of respondents play in the park at least once a week ☐ 44.5% picnic in the park a couple of times a month ☐ only 9.3% of respondents never visit a park	☐ 35.7% are very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with the embellishments that support play opportunities ☐ only 9.3% are very satisfied ☐ 12.3% are very satisfied with picnic facilities ☐ 21.7% are very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with picnic facilities
Play (and train) sport at a sportsground	☐ 41.0% of respondents play and/or train at least once per week, 2.2% do everyday ☐ 47.8% of respondents rarely or never use the sportsgrounds	☐ 48.9% are very satisfied or satisfied ☐ sportsground received the lowest levels of dissatisfaction at only 10.1% (very and dissatisfied)
Use outdoor exercise equipment	☐ 78.2% of respondents rarely or never use the equipment ☐ only 3.0% use it three or more times per week.	☐ 54.7% were neutral ☐ 7.3% were very satisfied

Rating of public open spaces



Top 10 most popular pubic open spaces to recreate and/or play sport



Top 10 community values about public open space (in order)

1. They allow me to spend quality time with my family
2. The cleanliness and high level of maintenance
3. The views they provide to the river
4. Their appeal to the whole family
5. I feel safe when I visit
6. They provide me with a place to exercise
7. They provide me with a place to unwind/rest/relax
8. A place to take visitors
9. I can take my dog
10. They encourage social interaction with the community

Top 10 barriers to using public open space (in order)

1. There is a lack of toilets
2. There is a lack of picnic facilities (BBQs, picnic tables, etc.)
3. They are unclean
4. They are poorly maintained
5. There is a lack of lighting
6. There is a lack of variety
7. No, I have not experienced any barriers
8. They are too crowded
9. I can't take my dog
10. They don't appeal to me

Top 10 future public open space projects to fund over the next ten years (in order)*

1. New/upgraded playgrounds
2. Provision of places/facilities for young people
3. Improved picnicking facilities
4. Improved parks maintenance
5. New/upgraded cycle and walking paths
6. Increased supporting facilities including car parking and amenities
7. Improved pedestrian/cyclist connections between open spaces
8. Improved access to the Macintrye River
9. Improved quality of sports grounds/ovals/courts
10. Provision of places/facilities for seniors

**If the respondent was in charge of Council's budget*

Industry trends

Participation patterns in sport and recreation are changing at a community level. Factors such as a move toward non-organised structured sport, increased use of technology, and increased time pressures have all had a significant impact on how people recreate. Understanding these trends (and their impacts) is important as Council looks to develop strategies, programs and facilities to encourage people to engage in sport, recreation and leisure activities.

General trends

- Ageing society
  - greater emphasis on low impact physical activity
  - access to community infrastructure will require wider pathways, improved wheelchair/disabled access/ parking, more lighting, shaded seats for resting along pathways and wider hallways
  - increased use of mobility scooters as a favourable method of transportation.
- Lack of time
  - people don't have the time to commit to organised sport/social club as a regular member and/or volunteer
  - extended trading hours, shift work, increasing numbers in part-time and casual employment
  - participants are seeking facilities with flexible hours.
- Increasing costs
  - participation and hire costs are increasing due to rising costs of public liability insurance.
- Impacts of technology
  - traditional recreation providers are now competing against non-physical activities such as the internet and computer games
  - community facilities are becoming more modern in their services (e.g libraries now offer digital versions of books for tablets, education classes on social media).
- Commercial use of community infrastructure
  - increasing pressure for one-off events and regular (or fixed) ventures (e.g. cafes, cooking classes, Weight Watchers, zumba and boot camps)
  - associated legislative requirements.
- Reduced resources
  - resources and funding available to manage community infrastructure is reducing.

Sport and recreation trends

- Move towards informal recreation
  - organised sport national participation rates declining
  - preference for informal, non-organised activities.
- Nationalisation and diversification of sport
  - growth in non-traditional sports
  - modification of traditional sports (e.g. T20 cricket)
  - clear move toward year-round sport (lengthening seasons and providing 'off-season' alternatives)
  - anecdotally, a preference for participation indoors (e.g. basketball, netball and fitness).
- Joint initiatives on education land
  - agreements that lead to maximisation of sport and recreation facility use and investment.
- Edible landscapes
  - supporting and encouraging urban agriculture (e.g. community gardens).
- Multi-purpose open space
  - move away from single-purpose or dedicated facilities towards a cost and land use efficient model of multi-purpose facilities
  - flexible design to cater for a variety of user groups.

Park design trends

A successful park is one which is well used by the community. Park planning trends, with design examples are found at Appendix B. Key qualities in creating successful quality parks include:

- creating a sense of safety and security
  - parks that are located so that they can be seen from nearby houses, stores or activity areas
  - parks, their facilities and embellishments are open and visible
- creating an accessible and connected destination
  - parks that are accessible to and from other parks, and within the parks themselves, giving maximised opportunities for walking and cycling
  - footpaths that provide linkages to other open spaces and facilities
  - footpath treatments that are safe (for example at road crossings) and are accessible for prams and wheelchairs
- creating an attractive destination
  - parks that are well designed with landscaped open spaces
  - parks that have well shaded areas (naturally and artificially), especially over nodes and activity areas (playgrounds, benches etc.)
  - parks that are well maintained
- providing adequate facilities and range of activities
  - parks that provide good basic embellishments for comfort and recreation
  - parks that have a range of activities for park users
  - parks that have a range of infrastructure that allows participation for all ages and considers the needs of different groups (including the aged and those physically or mentally challenged)
- developing a sense of community
  - parks that provide spaces for events, gatherings and meetings
  - parks that have a sense of identity that create community awareness
  - parks that the community feel is theirs and that they can be proud of.

3 Public open space in Inverell

Inverell residents have access to a variety of open space experiences, ranging from the natural settings of Lake Inverell Reserve, passive walking paths and social events at Campbell Park, to premier sporting facilities such as Varley Oval. These public open spaces contribute to the town's positive rural lifestyle and helps attract visitors to Inverell.

There are approximately 37 parcels of public open spaces within Inverell, totalling approximately 202ha. This equates to 12.56ha of open space per 1,000 people, well above NSW standards of 2.83ha/1,000 people. In rural areas like Inverell where the main thrust of this Strategy is to enhance the existing public open space network, open space planning standards are used only as a starting reference point. Over-reliance on such standards in lieu of community consultation, surrounding community behaviour patterns and lifestyle requirements may produce unsatisfactory results in terms of rates of provision, location and usability of the public open space network.

It is therefore proposed that locally appropriate guidelines, instead of standards (hectares per 1,000 people), be the preferred planning tool in the provision of public open space in Inverell.

Classification framework

Understanding what constitutes different types of open space and function is considered essential to developing well designed, community-focused public open space networks. Various public open spaces possess different values, functions and settings. As such, public open space is usually classified according to its existing function (classification) and its role (hierarchy) within that function.

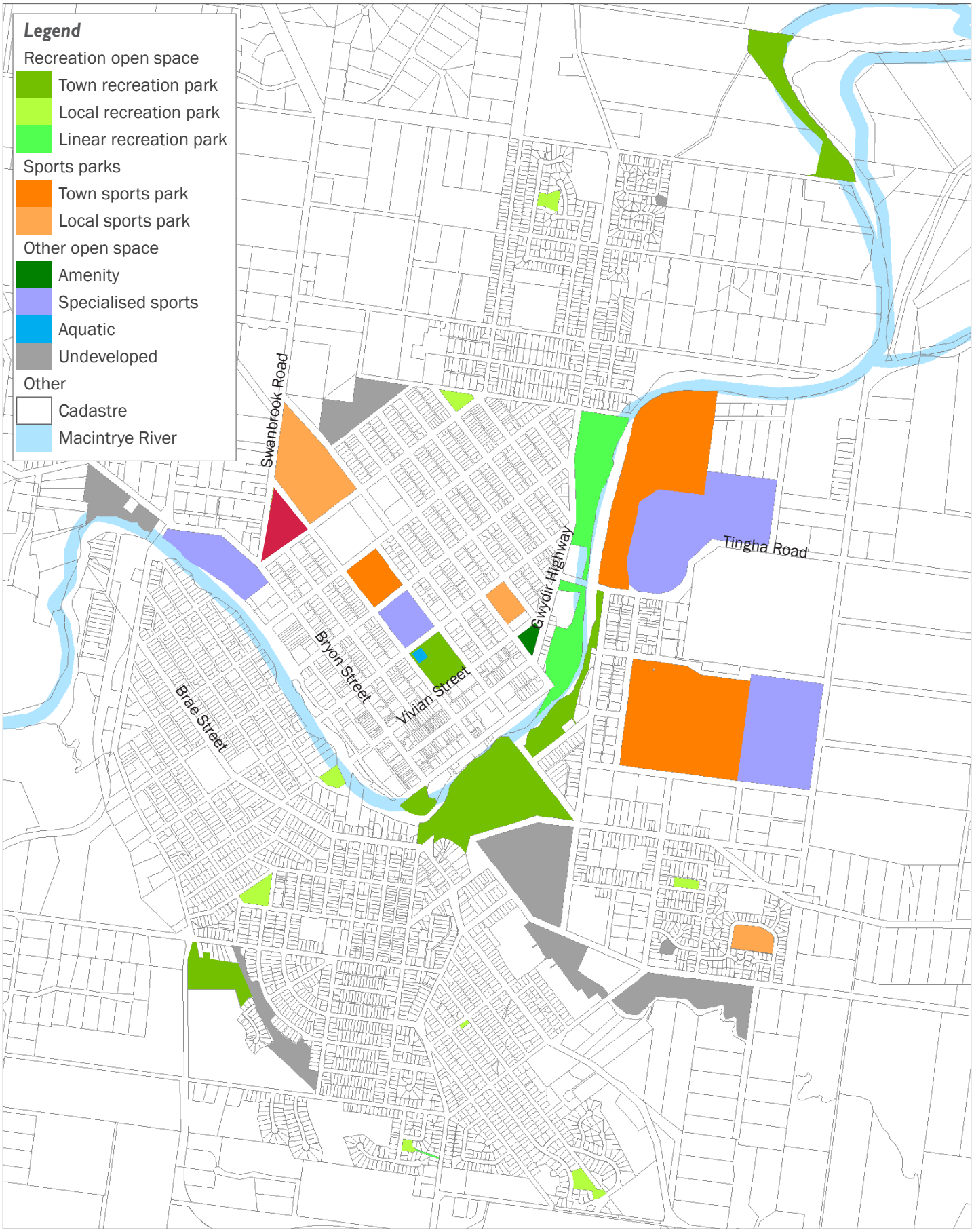
The framework applied to Inverell's public open space network consists of two central categories - classification and hierarchy:

- Classification (primary use and expected activities)
  - recreation parks
  - sports parks
  - other open space
- Hierarchy (service catchment, size and embellishments)
  - local
  - town.

With over 90% of the Shire's population living in Inverell, the total population does not warrant the demand for regional quality open spaces. Instead, it is proposed that Council produce and maintain a number of quality public open spaces with a variety of experiences thus creating 'an open space community for everyone'.

A public open space classification framework for Inverell has been provided in the adjoining table and shown spatially over the page. A suite of guiding principles and design and construction notes for each type of public open space is found in Appendix C.

	Hierarchy	Description
Recreation open space	Town recreation park *(e.g. Campbell Park)*	Larger sized parks that service whole communities by providing a range of facilities and activity spaces for recreation. Often well-known destinations for those people living within their catchment (and beyond), these parks have facilities to cater for large groups and will host a variety of play equipment, seating and picnic facilities, amenity lighting, paths and toilets. Ideally, town parks are located near, or are well-connected to social infrastructure such as schools, community centres, halls and activity centres.
	Local recreation park *(e.g. Bellevue Park)*	Likely to provide a green buffer and possible amenity mitigation against development, be planted with trees (where possible) and have a lower level of maintenance to a town park. Probably suitable for dog walking with reasonable pedestrian access and possibly providing a "green" link to other reserves or open space. A local park is likely to have only basic embellishments such as seats and bins. Play equipment will generally not be required but may be provided in some cases. Not all parks need to be 'developed' to provide benefits to the community - the simple provision of open space and a green buffer may justify the existence of the park.
	Linear recreation park *(e.g. Macintyre River Public Reserve)*	Linear parks provide opportunities for formal walking/cycling pathways and connectivity between residential streets, places of interest and the open space network. Popular routes are often embellished with bench seats at key interest points, signage, lighting, water bubblers, and in some instances, exercise equipment.
Sports parks	Town sports park *(e.g. The Complex)*	Theses venues are more than a sportsground, rather a facility. They have formally maintained fields/ovals and courts for a mixture of winter and/or summer sports. The fields/ovals and courts comply to State regulations for the sport codes using the parks. Town sports parks generally include spectator seating, canteen buildings and multiple amenities buildings catering for the range of sports at the park. Car parking will be extensive and the facility will be suitable to attract competition at a local and regional level (and possibly state level).
	Local sports park *(e.g. Brooks Oval)*	Local parks will have formal to semi-formal maintained sports ovals/fields for a mixture of winter and/or summer sports. The facilities will be of a good standard but may not have the required playing surface or ancillary infrastructure of a town sports level facility nor comply with State regulations for the sport. Informal recreation may be restricted to certain parts of the park. Toilets, changing facilities and car parking are likely to be available and some reserves may have sports club facilities. Clubs (or Council) may have installed floodlights to enable evening training.
Other open space	Amenity *(e.g. Sinclair Park)*	Open space generally created for their attractiveness and to add to or protect the character/ history of the area. Often highly landscaped parks such as entrance statements, monuments, memorials and lookouts.
	Specialised sports *(e.g. Varley Oval* and *Equestrian Centre)*	Parks provided for sporting activities where the nature of the activity precludes free, unrestricted access to members of the public. Also include equestrian/showground facilities with a range of facilities and supporting infrastructure that caters for a restricted range of activities. These facilities may not be maintained by Council, instead are under the trust of a local community group.
	Aquatic *(e.g. Inverell Memorial Swimming Pool)*	Aquatic facilities are publicly owned and managed swimming pools. These can either be outdoor (uncovered) facilities, indoor aquatic facilities or a mix of both. Aquatic facilities are very important community assets as they are often social meeting places as well as venues for sport and (swimming) education.
	Community garden	An area of open space that has been allocated to grow food. In some instances, a co-op may be formed to sell the produce.
	Undeveloped	Parcels of land with very minimal recreation value.


Legend
Recreation open space
Town recreation park
Local recreation park
Linear recreation park
Sports parks
Town sports park
Local sports park
Other open space
Amenity
Specialised sports
Aquatic
Undeveloped
Other
Cadastre
Macintrye River
Swanbrook Road
Bryon Street
Vivian Street
Brae Street
Gwydir Highway
Tingha Road

Vision

The vision sets the desired scene for the public open space network across Inverell. It reflects the community's aspirations and Council's corporate vision. The vision for the open space network for Inverell is to ensure that:

"Our public open spaces are fun, accessible safe places for people to enjoy, celebrate and be active in. Our parks create a community for everyone and offer a wide range of sport, play and picnicking opportunities that reflect our history, our lifestyle and our people"

The desired end result is to have a number of very high-quality town parks that are fairly distributed. These parks are attractive spaces that offer a number of park-related drawcards for residents. The high-quality, highly embellished and maintained town parks will alleviate the demand for smaller local recreation parks. Local, small recreation parks supplement the township parks. Currently, there are a large number of these parks across Inverell. The counter-balance of providing the high-quality town parks is that the embellishment and maintenance of local recreation parks can decrease. It is proposed that some of these parks will be downgraded to undeveloped park land (areas that are still accessible to the community) and others will be investigated for potential non-park related functions.

Local guiding principles

Following from the vision, the following principles are seen as the fundamental components that help guide, design and plan for the provision of a quality open space network across Inverell.

- ☐ people have diversity and choice within the open space network leading to a variety of vibrant opportunities
- ☐ the parks are attractive and desirable places for people to enjoy regardless of their age and ability
- ☐ quality open space is favoured over quantity of open space
- ☐ innovation and creativity are encouraged within the Shire's public open space network
- ☐ social interaction and physical activity is encouraged through regular activation of public open space
- ☐ community safety principles are incorporated into open space planning and design
- ☐ multiple-use of open space is encouraged to provide cost effective options for Council to maintain while still providing community health and well-being benefits
- ☐ consideration of different social and demographic profiles is given to the location, design and enhancement of the open space, now and in the future
- ☐ a network that considers the character of places and spaces and incorporates these themes into open space design.

4 Public open space assessment

In order to assess the Inverell public open space network, Inverell has been divided into precincts based on historical residential development patterns. The demographic make-up of precincts, generally, reflects the age of developments, with the newer areas consisting of younger families, while elderly residents are more common place throughout Inverell's original residential areas.

Legend

Recreation open space
- Town recreation park
- Local recreation park
- Linear recreation park

Sports parks
- Town sports park
- Local sports park

Other open space
- Amenity
- Specialised sports
- Aquatic
- Community garden
- Undeveloped

Other
- Cadastre
- Macintrye River

Inverell has been divided into five precincts:

1. Central business district (CBD)
2. Belgravia
3. Ross Hill
4. Albion Hill
5. Southern Inverell.

It is hoped that each precinct contain a range of activities. These include:

- ☐ play opportunities and differing play experiences for people of all ages, including:
  - toddlers
  - small children
  - older children
  - youth
  - adults
- ☐ nature-based play
- ☐ adventure play
- ☐ sports facilities - formal and informal
- ☐ active and passive recreation areas
- ☐ picnicking facilities for small, medium and large groups
- ☐ footpaths - connections
- ☐ public toilets
- ☐ shaded areas
- ☐ car parking (maybe adjacent to park or shared with neighbouring land uses)
- ☐ bins, seats and water bubblers
- ☐ signage
- ☐ landscaping
- ☐ dog off-leash areas (fenced and unfenced)
- ☐ walking tracks and circuits (using parkland where appropriate)
- ☐ areas suitable to host community events
- ☐ areas suitable to host private events (weddings, birthday parties)
- ☐ programs and activities in parks (commercial and community based), these should consider:
  - tai chi
  - yoga
  - boot camps
  - running
  - school holiday activities.

1 Central Business District

As the central business district for Inverell, the precinct contains the majority of Inverell's business' and community/ visitor services. While only a small percentage of residents live within the precinct, workers and visitors need somewhere outdoors to relax, recreate and explore.

There are seven parcels (approximately 24.17ha) of public open space located within the precinct.

The precinct's public open space network is highly accessible with all residents and workers being within 500m (walkable distance) of the network. The tourist information centre is located at the end of Byron Street and with informative way finding signage, visitors to Inverell are within an easy walk of the Shire's key public open spaces (Varley Oval, Victoria Park and Campbell Park).

Overall, the precinct has a variety of play opportunities, however, many of the play experiences only cater to toddlers and small children. The WWII Remembrance Way Riverwalk is a popular recreation walk along the Macintyre River linking Kamilaroi Oval to Lake Inverell Reserve. As part of Victoria Park, the Inverell Swimming Pool is also located within this precinct.

Campbell Park

Town Recreation Park *1.17ha*

Campbell Park is one of Inverell's premier recreation parks.

The park's ideal location along the Macintyre River and its proximity to the town centre and the tourist information centre make it a popular destination for locals and visitors. Forming part of WWII Remembrance Way Riverwalk, Campbell Park was identified during community consultation as the most popular place for Inverell residents to recreate (78.4% of survey respondents).

The presence of large shady trees, rotunda, picnic facilities, toilets, grassed terraced seating and turfed areas allows Campbell Park to hold numerous civic events, celebrations and markets throughout the year. Further, the solar lighting along the pathway provides a safe pedestrian experience.

The Park has a small playground (relatively new) and exercise equipment. However, the equipment has been described as 'boring' and 'lacking in variety'. Safety concerns about their position within the park and their proximity to Captain Cook Drive has also raised concern among some parents. Consultation with Council staff identified that a new playground is proposed for the park.

Some residents had safety concerns about the toilet facilities, being described as 'dark and dangerous' and 'of poor quality for a destination park'.

Recommendations

Campbell Park will continue to offer recreation value to residents and visitors. It is highly used and due to its location this is expected to continue in the future.

The following recommendations are made:

- ☐ consult the local community to ensure their input into the design and embellishments of the new proposed park features
  - consider a theme that represents Inverell, so that the community feels pride and ownership over it
  - add play elements suitable for toddlers, youth and adults
  - construct a barrier between the road and proposed playground (e.g. fencing or preferably natural plantings)
- ☐ remove the toilet block at the end of its useful life (or earlier as resources allow) and replace with an open style unisex toilet block to increase casual surveillance and reduce safety concerns
- ☐ insert directional and distance signage to inform users of nearby destinations and distance to them.

Community Garden

Community Garden *2.66ha*

The community garden offers a range of leased plots, monthly local farmers' markets/produce swap and education events. The facility also hosts regular visits from local community groups (e.g. Family Day Care and autism groups).

However, the existing site is now required to facilitate Council road infrastructure works.

Recommendations

- ☐ continue to work closely with the community garden management committee in relocating the Community Gardens to a more appropriate site on the corner of Swanbrook Road and Ross Street.

WWII Remembrance Way Riverwalk

Asset within the public open space network

Winding five kilometres along the Macintyre River, The WWII Remembrance Way Riverwalk stretches from Kamilaroi Oval to Lake Inverell Reserve (Albion Hill precinct), connecting numerous parcels of public open space.

Ranked the fourth most popular public open space to recreate in (page 7), the Riverwalk is regularly used by local residents and visitors for low impact recreation activities (walking and cycling).

The lack of lighting along the Riverwalk was identified as a safety concern by residents. Signage identifying points of interest along and off the path were also lacking/nonexistent.

Recommendations

- ☐ install a network of solar lights along the Riverwalk
- ☐ promote the Reserve as a dog off leash exercise area
- ☐ place bench seats along the Riverwalk at regular intervals (approximately 1 to 1.5km spread)
- ☐ install directional and distance signage along the Riverwalk.

Inverell Tennis Courts

Town Sports Park *3.29ha*

With a total of 21 courts (6 synthetic and 15 clay) the facility is categorised as a Tier One clay complex by Tennis NSW. All of the synthetic and two clay courts are lit, allowing night time use.

Currently on a 99 year lease, the Inverell Tennis Club has approximately 200 registered members and uses the facility three nights each week and Saturdays for competition. Coaching classes are conducted every afternoon, Monday to Friday,while local schools use the courts Tuesday and Wednesday.

The courts are open to the public, with an honesty system in place for court hire fees.

Other features of the Courts include:

- a gas BBQ area
- open and covered seating
- an ageing clubhouse
- large informal gravel car park with plenty of grass overflow parking.

Currently, the courts are well equipped to host regional events, however, to attract more tournaments to Inverell, the Inverell Tennis Club has plans to replace the existing clay courts with Italian Clay, build a new clubhouse, light all the courts and fence the facility (costing approximately $1.5 million). Consultation identified that they have the support of Tennis Australia, Tennis NSW and Tennis QLD.

In the short term, items such as shaded grandstands, umpire chairs and player areas are required. Court signage also needs to be improved to be more consistent and clear.

Recommendations

- Council to work in partnership with Inverell Tennis Club to jointly fund or assist in preparing funding applications for the short term items
- Council to work in partnership with Inverell Tennis Club investigate the feasibility and need of the Club's larger scale future plans.

Kamilaroi Oval

Specialised Sports Park *6.73ha*

Kamilaroi Oval is not Council public open space as it is owned by the NSW Department of Education. However, due to its key role in the delivery of sporting activities within Inverell it has been discussed in this Strategy.

Facilities

The Oval includes two full-size rectangular fields with additional areas for smaller fields. One of the full-size fields is lit for training purposes.

Ancillary facilities include a clubhouse, amenities and storage shed. Sealed on-street parking is available along Ashford Road.

Usage

Kamilaroi Oval is currently home to all junior rugby league and senior rugby league training and is busy most mid-week nights during the winter sporting season.

Junior touch has recently relocated its competition from the Complex to Kamilaroi Oval. The Department is offering the venue at a far reduced rate than Council's fees at the Complex. Additionally, with a merger between rugby league and touch at a national-level, there appears to be a better fit with junior touch basing its operations at the same venue as junior rugby league in Inverell.

Recommendations

- pursue a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Education regarding continued community use of the Oval (and ongoing management strategies)
- if the land is ever available for purchase, Council should consider acquisition for sport and recreation purposes

Varley Oval

Specialised Sports Park *3.27ha*

Varley Oval is the premier single-field sporting facility within Inverell. However, as public access to the facility is limited, it is not considered public open space and has been classified as a specialised sports park (as opposed to a town sports park).

Facilities

Varley Oval has a quality turf surface with match standard lighting (for large ball sports) and picket fence. A turf wicket block is also located at the Oval. A 3-net cricket practice facility is located in the southern corner of the facility. Athletics field event areas include a shot put circle, discus circle and double width long/triple jump pit with turf approaches.

Recent upgrades at Varley Oval have resulted in a range of high quality ancillary facilities:

- two-storey pavilion with viewing deck area
- amenities building
- two serveries
- storage shed and digital scoreboard
- moveable grandstand seating
- grassed tiered seating
- sealed car parks (both within and outside the perimeter fence)
- feature paved entry
- feature entry gates and signage.

Usage

Varley Oval is used for a range of formal sport training and fixtures. It hosts:

- AFL - one match each fortnight, training one night each week
- athletics - range of local school carnivals and district school carnivals, little athletics competition one afternoon each week, infrequent zone little athletics carnivals
- cricket - midweek junior cricket and weekly fixtures
- rugby league - one match each fortnight, irregular school matches.

Issues and considerations

- Limited use - While the Oval hosts a range of sports, it is not heavily used. Clubs report that the fees for sportsfield light use are high and, thus, a number prefer to train at venues such as Kamilaroi Oval.
- Access - As a locked venue, gaining access for both formal training and social training (e.g. athletics practice or informal use of the cricket practice nets) is problematic.
- Poor athletics venue - Despite a quality grass cover and attractive ancillary facilities, Varley Oval is not a suitable venue for athletics. The track is too circular and is not full length, there are limited areas for shot put and discus and the long/triple jump area is poorly located with approaches that are too short.
- Not ideal for rectangular sports - As an oval, the facility is a quality venue for AFL and cricket. However, for rugby league, the playing field is quite a long distance from the spectator areas (especially considering the pavilion is set back some distance from the oval boundary).
- Lack of cover and seating for spectators - despite being a premier venue that hosts sports events during the cold winter months and extreme hot summer months, their is a lack of cover (and seating) for spectators. Potentially, the space available in front of the pavilion could be developed as a covered seating area.

Recommendations

- relocate athletics to an alternate purpose-built facility (e.g. Sports Complex)
- investigate opportunities to provide covered spectator areas. (Potentially, the area directly in front of the pavilion may be redeveloped with tiered seating and a skillion roof).

Victoria Park

Town Recreation Park *3.28ha*

Located on Vivian Street, Victoria Park is a developed and well used park, ranking third as the most popular public open space to recreate (63.5% of survey respondents). The Inverell Memorial Swimming Pool and Inverell WWI Cenotaph are located in the northern corner of the park (opposite the Inverell RSM Club). Services are held at the WWI Cenotaph on ANZAC and Remembrance Day.

Formalised entries are in each corner of the park, connected by feature paving. A continuous link around and through the park provides looped opportunities.

The park features a large kick-about area and a number of covered picnic areas which are heavily used on the weekend and during school holidays.

A good sized, fenced playground and liberty swing is located towards the south of the park, along Vivian Street. Recent additions to the playground include an all abilities carousel and play area that is wheelchair friendly. However, consultation and site audits identified that the playground lacked a variety of experiences and generally catered for toddlers/young children only.

Despite the park's popularity, the development of the playground appears ad-hoc. A number of community members believe the park is under utilised and should be better planned to offer more experiences for a variety of age groups.

Recently, a new, larger toilet block has been constructed to meet the growing usage of the park.

Recommendations

Victoria Park will continue to be a popular destination park. However, forward planning could significantly enhance the number of experiences offered and create a high quality recreation park.

- ☐ develop a Master Plan for the park
  - cease any further development on the park until the Master Plan has been approved and endorsed
  - add play elements suitable for toddlers, youth and adults
- ☐ develop a policy that allows people to reserve/book a covered picnic shelter for exclusive use for a specified time period for a small fee. Investigate if the person in charge of booking sports grounds or customer service has the capacity to take ownership of the policy/process.

2 Belgravia

Belgravia precinct is located directly south-east of the CBD precinct and is primarily residential. Inverell Public School is also located in the precinct.

There are five parcels of public open space in the precinct (totalling approximately 21.94ha). Whilst residents in the precinct are within 500m of a parcel of public open space, just over half are not within a walkable distance to an embellished (contains play equipment) parcel of public open space. However, it is not recommended that Council try and remedy this shortfall, as anecdotal evidence suggests that they would prefer to visit Victoria Park, approximately 1km away, rather than their local park.

Macintrye River Public Reserve is part of the WWII Remembrance Way and is the only official dog off-leash park in Inverell.

Brooks Oval

Local Sports Park *1.62ha*

Brooks Oval is a single oval/field sports park with a synthetic cricket wicket. It includes a small amenities building and two shelters. The Oval has somewhat poor quality turf and is used infrequently for junior and senior cricket matches.

The construction of raised garden boxes has reduced the width of the available field space and the development of new cricket fields at Cameron Park may result in only junior fixtures (if any) being played at Brooks Oval.

Recommendations

- ☐ liaise closely with the Cricket Association to ascertain demand for Brooks Oval as a cricket venue once Cameron Park is fully operational
- ☐ if Brooks Oval is not required for cricket purposes, consider rationalisation.

Sinclair Park

Amenity Park *0.70ha*

Sinclair Park is a triangular shaped park located on the corners of Glen Innes Road, Henderson and Vivian Streets. The park is considered the main memorial park of Inverell and is home to the Inverell and District Bicentennial Memorial and the Scottish Memorial Cairn.

Picnic facilities and toilets are located along Henderson Street, making the park a popular resting spot for those passing through.

Recommendations

- ☐ continue to maintain the Park reflective of its stature as a key amenity park containing memorials.

Inverell Rugby Grounds

Town Sports Park *9.84ha*

Unlike other parcels of open space in Inverell, Inverell Rugby Grounds is under a 99 year lease with Council. However, due to its key role in the delivery of sporting activities within Inverell it has been discussed in this Strategy.

Facilities

The Ground includes two full-size rectangular fields with potential for expansion. One and a half of the full-size fields are lit for training purposes.

Ancillary facilities include a clubhouse, amenities, storage shed, fenced playground, commentator's stand and a caretaker's residence. A sealed car park is available off Ross Street.

A fence around the perimeter of the Ground allows the Club to charge a gate fee on game days.

Usage

Inverell Rugby Ground is home to the Inverell Highlanders and is busy two nights each week for training and weekends during the winter sporting season.

Recommendations

- ☐ Council should consider assisting the club in seeking funding applications for:
  - lighting upgrades to playing standard (and associated electrical power upgrades)
  - covered spectator area.

Macintyre River Public Reserve

Linear Recreation Park *4.67ha*

Macintyre River Public Reserve in a large, relatively undeveloped linear parcel of public open space located along the river.

Part of WWII Remembrance Way Riverwalk, the Reserve is a popular place for residents to recreate, offering passive walking and cycling opportunities. The section of the Reserve between the river and WWII Remembrance Way is a dedicated dog off leash exercise area.

Site audits identified a lack of supporting embellishments along the Riverwalk, particularly lighting and bench seats. The lack of lighting in Inverell's public open space was identified as a common concern among residents.

Recommendations

- ☐ install a network of solar lights along the Riverwalk
- ☐ promote the Reserve as a dog off leash exercise area
- ☐ investigate the feasibility of adding a number of dog agility infrastructure items in the Reserve
- ☐ place bench seats along the Riverwalk at regular intervals (approximately 1 to 1.5km spread)
- ☐ install directional and distance signage along the Riverwalk.

Ross Street Reserve

Undeveloped Public Open Space *5.11ha*

An undeveloped parcel of public open space, Ross Street Reserve adds no recreation value to the public open space network.

Recommendations

- ☐ continue to maintain the Reserve as an undeveloped parcel of public open space

3 Ross Hill

Across the river from the central business district, the Ross Hill precinct has the largest number of residents. Inverell High School and Ross Hill Public School are also located in the area. Despite having the largest residential population, the precinct has only 6.90ha of public open space, spread across six embellished recreation parks (11.05ha if the Public Garden and Recreation Space is included, currently undeveloped). Two of the parks, Gordon Street and Pat Naughton Memorial, are embellished to the standard of a quality local recreation park. Bellevue Park is in a prime location, opposite a local corner shop, church and childcare centre, however it offers limited recreation opportunities. Ross Hill Reserve has environments significance and is a popular destination for outdoor recreation activities.

Due to the distribution of public open space within the precinct, the residents in the top north-eastern corner of the precinct (highlighted in pink on the map below) are not within 500m of any public open space.

Future growth is predicted along the western side of the precinct.

Bellevue Park

Local Recreation Park *1.13ha*

Also known as Wade Street Park, Bellevue Park is a large triangular shaped park located in the middle of Brown, Rose and Wade Streets.

Across the street from the Park is Wade Street Mini Mart, Inverell Baptist Church, Little Sprouts daycare centre and Ross Hill Public School (approximately 200m). Given the Park's close proximity to these facilities, it has recently received an upgrade to provide opportunities for activation and increased usage. New embellishments include covered play node, two covered picnic tables and a toilet block (relocated form Victoria Park).

Recommendations

- ☐ continue to develop the Park as an over embellished local recreation park. Focus the play equipment for children aged under 12 years. Embellishments may include:
  - quality learn to ride area
- ☐ develop safe connections from Ross Hill Public School to the Park.

Gordon Street Park

Local Recreation Park *0.86ha*

The Park is a tidy local recreation park with a variety of play embellishments, bench seat and plenty of shade (natural and artificial).

Future growth is predicted behind the Park, along Vincent Place, with a number of houses already built. As an alternative to building a new local recreation park, simple upgrades to Gordon Street Park will be able to cater for the growth.

Recommendations

- ☐ upgrade the Park to an over embellished local recreation park to cater for the needs of any future development along Vincent Place and Coolibah Drive
- ☐ build a recreation path linking the Park to the new estate. The path should further link the south-western corner of the Park to the play equipment.

Inverell Apex Park

Local Recreation Park *0.08ha*

Inverell Apex Park is a small fenced local recreation park located on the corner of Carlyle and Froude Streets. The Park provides views of over southern Inverell and features a basketball hoop, a set of swings, two bench seats and a picnic table. The majority of the Park is covered by natural shade.

There is no demand to further embellish the Park due to its proximity to Gordon Street Park and Lions Park (approximately 1km away) which already have established playgrounds.

Recommendations

- ☐ continue to maintain the Park as a local recreation park.

Pat Naughton Memorial Park

Local Recreation Park *0.25ha*

Consultation with Council identified that the Park was well used and respected by the local residents. With a variety of play equipment, half basketball court and large kick-about area, the Park caters for a number of age groups. The surrounding mature trees and shade sail over the playground provide shade coverage.

A drainage corridor behind the Park, connecting to the Gwydir Highway, creates a recreation link through to the Park.

Recommendations

- ☐ monitor the usage of the wood fire BBQ
  - low usage - remove the BBQ and convert concrete slab into a hand ball court
  - high usage - place picnic tables in the Park
- ☐ formalise the link between the Park and the Gwydir Highway
- ☐ trial the installation of temporary football posts/soccer goals in the kick-about area

May Street Lookout Park

Local Recreation Park *0.65ha*

May Street Lookout Park is located at the end of a no through road. While the Park is somewhat hidden from the street, it offers expansive views across the Macintyre River, CBD and countryside beyond.

Since 2012, the Park has been developed and maintained by the Inverell East Rotary Club (in consultation with Council). Existing facilities include a formalised car park with fencing, two picnic shelters, path linking the car park and one of the shelters and rubble drain. Additionally, the Club has undertaken significant weed clearing and tree planting.

With reticulated water now available at the site, additional development is possible.

Recommendations

Further activation of the Park is achievable. Future suggestions include:

- ☐ through directional signage, advertise the Park and its views over Inverell. The Park is located approximately 1km from Campbell Park
- ☐ installing irrigation
- ☐ shade tree planting
- ☐ constructing a feature entry garden
- ☐ constructing a passive nature play recreation area
- ☐ constructing a viewing platform with directional and interpretive signage
- ☐ providing a sealed path from the top of the Park to the river's edge
  - if the steps/path are developed, promote the physical benefits of the steps to the community and health professionals, particularly personal trainers[1]
- ☐ formalising the path along the western bank of the Macintyre River and developing a loop connecting Campbell Park, the Gwydir Highway, Brae Street, May Street and the Park, down the steps to the Macintyre River, along the western bank recreation path, across the footbridge and back towards Campbell Park.

Proposed loop connecting May Street Park to Campbell Park

1 *the steps at Kangaroo Point Cliffs in Brisbane are a very popular destination for fitness groups and residents to participate in physical activity.*

Ross Hill Reserve

Town Recreation Park *3.93ha*

Ross Hill Reserve is a public woodland regarded as an Endangered Ecological Community. The Reserve is under the ongoing care of Friends of Ross Hill Reserve, a dedicated group under GWYMAC Landcare.

Home to a diverse range of plant and wildlife species, the Reserve is a popular place for low impact recreation activities, such as:

- ☐ bushwalking
- ☐ nature appreciation
- ☐ birdwatching.

Previous work in the Reserve includes:

- ☐ low impact walking trails
- ☐ species identification signage.

Recommendations

- ☐ Council to continue to work with Friends of Ross Hill Reserve to ensure the Reserve to ensure the ongoing care and rehabilitation of the site
- ☐ Council to work with Inverell Tourism to ensure the Reserve is being promoted as a 'destination place' in Inverell
- ☐ investigate the environmental feasibility of installing picnic facilities (tables and chairs, bench seats), paths, solar lighting and toilets at the Reserve
- ☐ establish the Reserve as a site for education purposes (ecology and natural systems) and investigate partnerships with local schools and the development of outdoor classroom facilities.

Public Garden and Recreation Space

Undeveloped Public Open Space *4.14ha*

An undeveloped parcel of public open space, Public Garden and Recreation Space adds no recreation value to the public open space network.

Recommendations

- ☐ continue to maintain the Reserve as an undeveloped parcel of public open space.

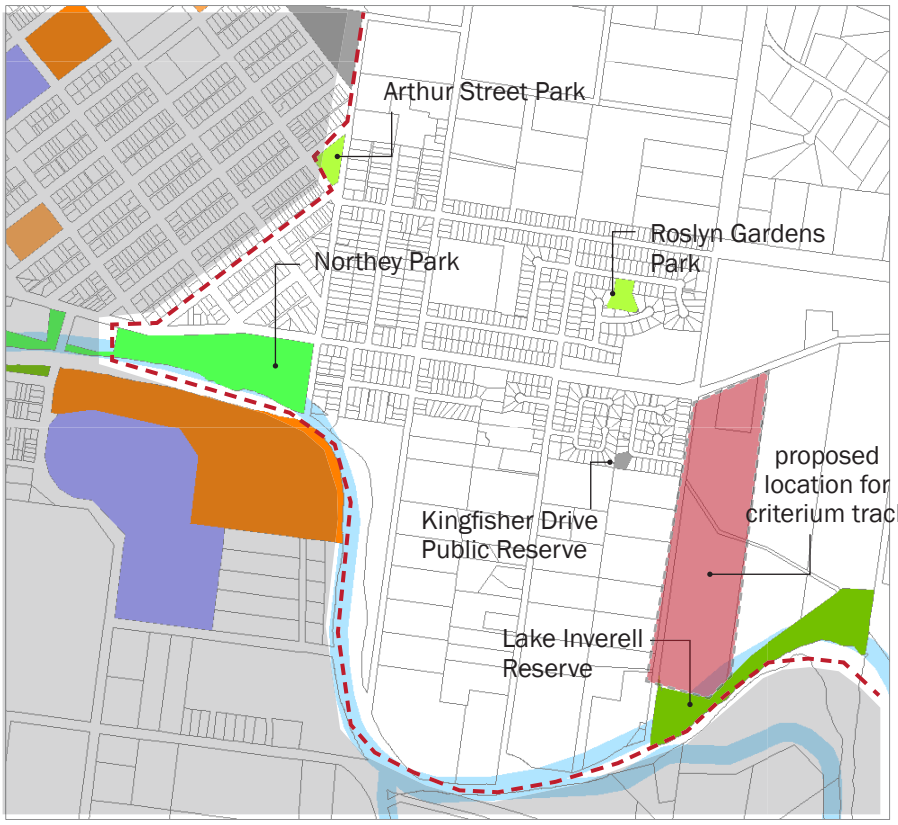
4 Albion Hill

The average size of the residential properties in the Albion Hill precinct varies depending which side of the Gwydir Highway one lives. Those living on the northern side have an average lot size of approximately 700m^2, while lots on the southern side are around 2ha. The size of one's backyard has the potential to influence how public open space is used.

The northern section of the precinct has two recreation parks, both run down and embellished to a minimal standard. Due to their distribution within the northern area, all residents are within 500m of public open space. Despite Lake Inverell being 1.5km away, the residents within this area still need access to a basic local recreation park and upgrades are required to achieve this.

Pockets of residents within the southern section are not within 500m of public open space. As many of these residents live on parcels of land bigger than a local recreation park, there is no need to develop a local recreation park. Also, Lake Inverell Reserve is less than 1km away.

Altogether there is a total of 16.55ha of open space within this precinct. Discussions arose during consultation about the construction of an outdoor criterium track (available for public use) on the parcel of land north of Lake Inverell Reserve. The proposed location is ideal considering the popularity of Lake Inverell Reserve and the off-road recreation/cycle path that links Lake Inverell to the central business district.



Arthur Street Park

Local Recreation Park *0.72ha*

Arthur Street Park is a large triangular park with limited play and picnic embellishments and a large kick-about area. The Park is regularly used by locals for informal car parking.

Located along a popular recreation path that connects the Park to two local schools and the hospital the Park is in a desirable location.

With numerous sporting parks close by, and the surrounding demographics, there is little need for a large kick-about area.

Recommendations

- ☐ sub-divide the lot
  - keep the current embellished corner of the Park (corner of Clive and Arthur Streets) as public open space
- ☐ investigate the sale of the remaining land for residential purposes
  - the land will need to be converted from community to operational before Council can sell it
  - funds from the sale should go towards upgrading the existing public parks network, ideally Lake Inverell Reserve as it is within the Albion Hill precinct. If this process is undertaken, Council needs to ensure that the community and local residents are made aware of this.
- ☐ upgrade the existing play equipment in the Park.

Kingfisher Drive Public Reserve

Undeveloped *0.21ha*

Currently undeveloped, there is no demand to develop this Reserve into a formalised local recreation park.

Recommendations

- ☐ investigate the sale of the land for residential purposes
  - the land will need to be converted from community to operational before Council can sell it
  - funds from the sale should go towards upgrading the existing public parks network, ideally Lake Inverell Reserve as it is within the Albion Hill precinct. If this process is undertaken, Council needs to ensure that the community and local residents are made aware of this.

Northey Park

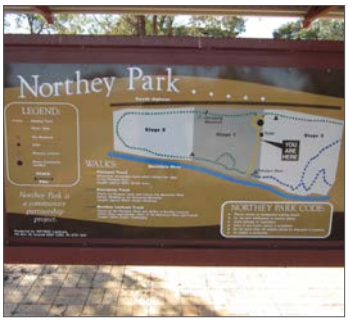
Linear Recreation Park *8.34ha*

Northey Park is a bushland-style park located along the MacIntyre River. Since 1995, a core group of volunteers has converted this former gravel pit into an attractive vegetated habitat.

The Park also includes a network of walking trails, lookouts, interpretive signage and amenities.

Recommendations

- ☐ re-establish the link between John Northey Lookout and Platypus Rest Lookout
- ☐ establish a future management and maintenance approach for when the volunteers currently undertaking these works cease to operate.



Roslyn Gardens Park

Local Recreation Park *0.64ha*

Roslyn Gardens Park is the only local recreation park servicing the residents north of the Gwydir Highway in the Albion Hill precinct. Despite this, the Park is significantly undeveloped and consists only of a run-down half basketball court.

The Park is relatively large in size, with three access points.

Recommendations

- ☐ remove the existing basketball facility
- ☐ upgrade the Park to a proper local recreation park
  - consult with the surrounding community to identify an appropriate use for the Park and to ensure it meets the needs of the surrounding demographic
  - option to relocate the playground from Lake Inverell Reserve here, if Council chooses to build a new playground there.

Lake Inverell Reserve

Town Recreation Park *6.64ha*

Formed due to the damming of the Macintyre River, Lake Inverell Reserve has become a popular destination for locals and visitors.

A popular place for barbecues, walking, bird watching, fishing and other non-powered water recreation activities, the Reserve offers, and has the infrastructure to support a number of experiences for users. Residents identified the Reserve as the second most popular place to recreate, after Campbell Park.

The off road recreation path along the Macintyre River and Gwydir Highway that connects the CBD to the Reserve (approximately 4km) provides a safe and moderate bike ride. The Reserve also hosts the Lakeside walking track and further connections into Barayamal National Park.

The Reserve's popularity has triggered a demand for more picnic facilities, particularly BBQs, and a more challenging playground that caters for a variety of age groups.

A local kayak tour group paddle the River and Lake on a regular basis. Almost 2,000 people annually are taken on formal tours at the Lake. Additionally, during the Joeys Mini World Cup, kayaking tours are provided at the Lake.

Recommendations

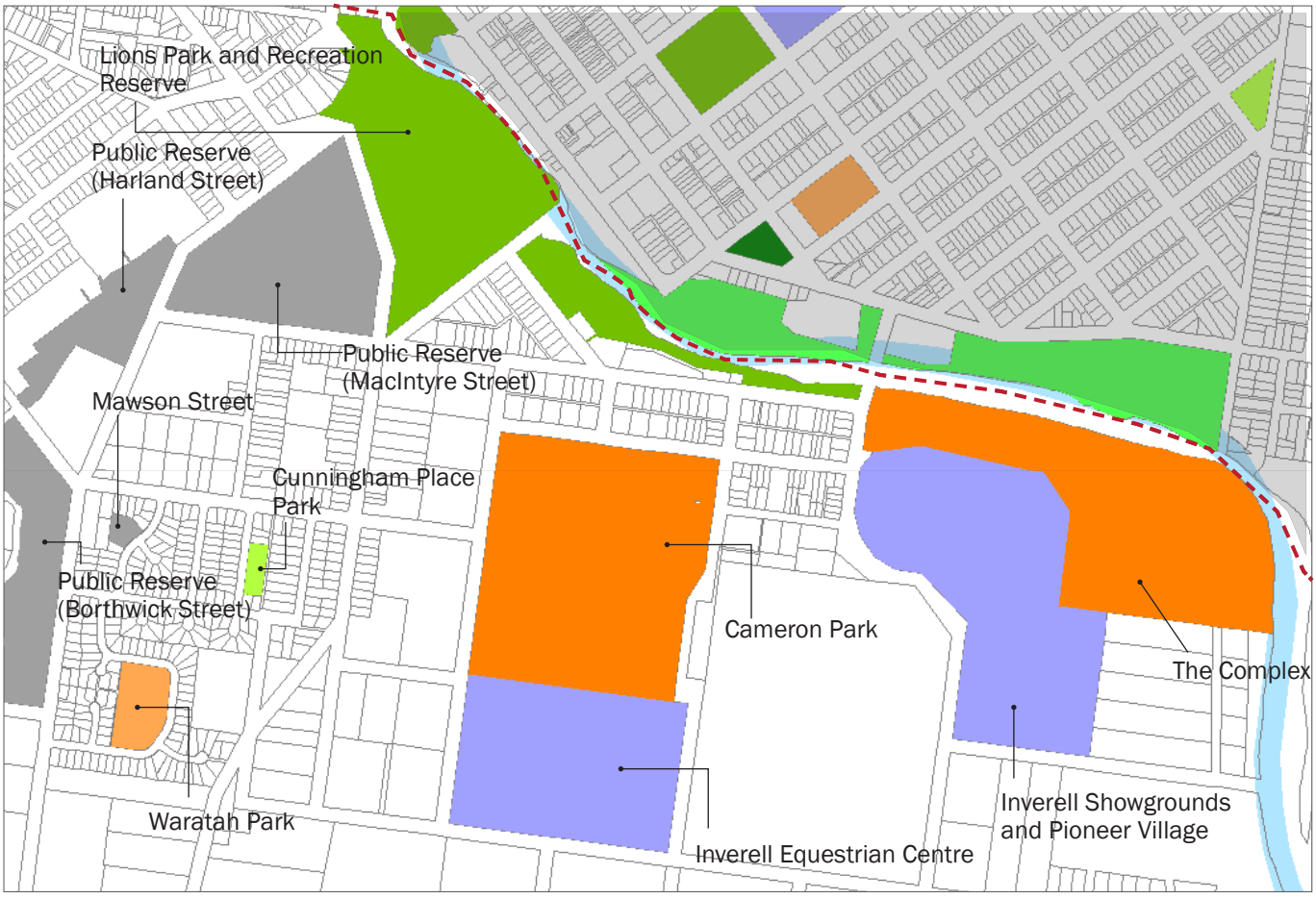
- ☐ construct a simple craft launching facility at the Lake to ensure safe and easy access for users
- ☐ provide additional seating near to the water's edge
- ☐ investigate the impact of clearing the reeds and rushes from the area directly below the recreation node in order to establish a safe swimming zone
- ☐ investigate the feasibility of bunk cabins and supporting infrastructure (amenities and camp kitchen) to attract groups/schools to the area
- ☐ master plan a 'natural' more challenging playground to be built
  - consult the local community to ensure their input into the design and embellishment of the new proposed park features
  - consider a theme that represents Inverell, so that the community feels pride and ownership over it
  - add play elements suitable for toddlers, youth and adults.
- ☐ remove the existing playground and relocate it to Roslyn Gardens Park.

5 Southern Inverell

Located south of the CBD, the Southern Inverell precinct has an abundance of public open space (approximately 128.51ha, half of which is sporting parks). Home to Inverell's main public sporting facility - The Complex, and Cameron Park, the precinct offers numerous sporting opportunities.

Despite the large amount of open space, the precinct has limited play opportunities. Waratah and Lions Parks have playgrounds, however, Lions Park is in significant need of an upgrade. The precinct however, has a lot of potential to provide a variety of recreation opportunities to the community. Activating the southern banks of the Macintyre River and master planning Lions Park and Recreation Reserve will make Southern Inverell a popular recreation destination for residents and visitors.

The precinct also has a number of undeveloped parcels of open space (Crown Land on Borthwick Street and Public Reserve on MacIntyre and Harland Streets). As there is no demand for additional 'embellished' open space, it is recommended that Council leave these parcels as undeveloped.



The Complex

Town Sports Park *21.15ha*

The Sporting Complex (the Complex) is Inverell's largest multi-field facility. In addition to formal sports, the facility is open to the public for recreation pursuits. The Complex forms a large community precinct with the adjoining Showgrounds.

Facilities

The Complex is arranged as three smaller 'precincts'.

- The lower fields area along the river is the equivalent of three full-size lit rectangular fields. The fields are only in fair condition as they are undulating and not irrigated. An amenities block and small servery are located in this area
- A synthetic hockey field with clubhouse is located to the east of the lower fields in a fully fenced facility. A two-storey storage facility is located between the lower fields and hockey facility
- The upper fields have a quality turf surface the equivalent of approximately five full-size rectangular fields. One of the fields is lit to training standard. Two turf cricket wicket blocks are located in this area. A canteen/amenities facility and large covered area are located in the far north-west corner of this area, while an amenities building is located toward the south-east. Additionally, eight bitumen netball courts (and grass courts area) are located on the eastern side of this area. The courts are serviced by limited lighting and a clubhouse.

Usage

The Complex is used for a range of training and fixtures, including:

- football (junior) - training one afternoon/evening each week, Saturday morning fixtures
- football (senior) - training three afternoons/evenings each week, weekend fixtures on a home-and-away basis
- netball - training up to four times each week and fixtures on Saturdays
- touch - senior touch fixtures two afternoon/evenings each week during the summer sporting season
- the Complex also hosts coaching and development squads, events and carnivals (such as the Joeys Mini World Cup and small schools football carnival)
- AFL - training occurs two times each week. With the facility also used as an alternate match venue when Varley Oval is unavailable
- rugby league - training occurs two evenings each week.

Recent (and planned) upgrades

- Lower fields - the surface on these fields was poor (with many humps and hollows). The fields have now been levelled and irrigation has been installed
- Limited lighting - limited lighting on the upper fields and netball courts has caused difficulties with scheduling training and provision of evening matches. Extensive lighting is planned for construction throughout 2017
- Limited spectator areas - transportable tiered seating will be provided to allow comfortable areas for spectators
- Limited covered areas - given the extreme weather conditions often experienced in Inverell, a covered (indoor) area was recently constructed for participants, spectators and officials. Additionally, change room upgrades and the development of a second storey on the clubhouse will be finalised in 2017

Recommendations

- relocate athletics from Varley Oval to the Sporting Complex and establish a suitable home for the sport.

FEMALE

Lions Park and Recreation Reserve

Town Recreation Park *20.11ha*

Lions Park and Recreation Reserve is a large, relatively undeveloped park located along the Macintyre River.

Activity areas

Lions Park and Recreation Reserve is composed of six different 'precincts':

- The northern point of the Park, most commonly referred to as Lions Park has a fenced playground, covered BBQ area, covered picnic tables and a toilet. A footbridge connects the Park to the Recreation Reserve across Spring Gully Creek
- Skate Park - There are limited picnic facilities such as bench seats for parents to supervise the younger children, or water bubblers. The only picnic table is towards the back of the skate park, hidden behind a mound.

  Due to the lack of formal parking, cars have been known to park very close to the edge of the skate park creating safety issues.
- Disused baseball diamond - the Park contains a run down baseball facility. The backnet, player dugouts and spectator seating still remain
- BMX track - run down BMX track with jumps is located behind the baseball diamond
- Informal golf driving range along the Macintyre River
- informal/undeveloped recreation area along the River towards The Complex.

Issues and considerations

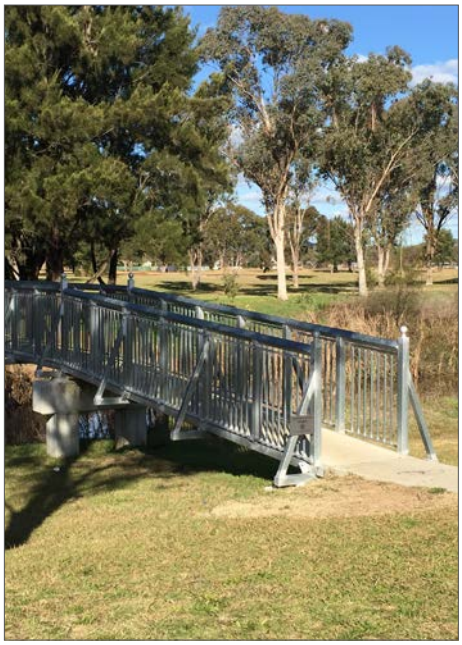
- lack of:
  - off-road connectivity to the Reserve
  - picnic embellishments
  - formalised parking
  - bollards preventing vehicle access
  - signage.
- local vehicles use the Reserve as a short-cut to nearby residential areas
- the baseball diamond and BMX track are run down and appear largely unused.

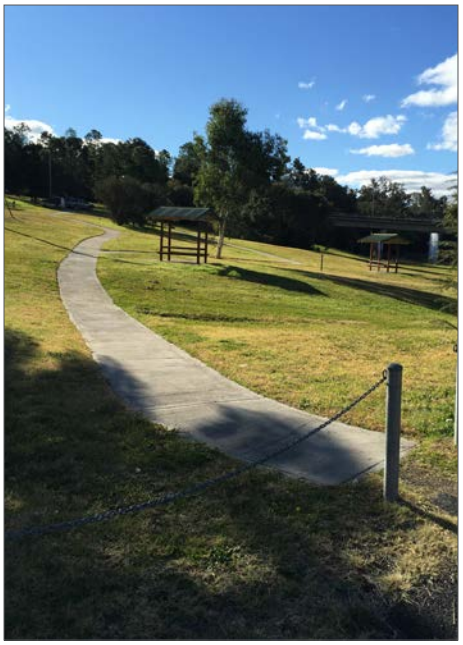
Recommendations

Due to the Reserve's size, location, and minimal development, there is opportunity to redevelop the Reserve as a key destination place.

- develop a master plan for the Reserve
  - decommission/remove the baseball diamond and supporting infrastructure (the safety fence could be reused as a throw cage if little athletics is to relocate to The Complex)
  - redesign the BMX track and make it more user friendly for a variety of age groups and skill levels
  - develop a large adventure style playground between the skate park and BMX track
  - formalise parking
  - embellish the Reserve with covered BBQs, picnic tables and bench seats, water bubblers, bins, lights and open unisex toilets
  - fence the perimeter of the Reserve (log bollards) to prohibit unauthorised vehicle movement
  - establish a fenced dog off-leash park
  - include way finding signage
- retain the golf driving range (potential to provide a formalised road to the area to increase usage)
- build a recreation corridor along the Macintyre River that connects with WWII Remembrance Way to create a circuit
  - ensure there are connections up to the adventure playground/skate park/BMX track precinct.

Inverell
BMX TRACK





GOLF
DRIVING
RANGE
This area has been designated for use as a Golf Driving Range.
The use of the range is subject to following.
Rules of Use
you.

Cameron Park

Town Sports Park *24.4ha*

Cameron Park has recently been redeveloped as one of the key homes for cricket.

Facilities

Development at Cameron Park includes:

- ☐ two ovals with synthetic concrete cricket wickets
- ☐ four rectangular fields (as overlays)
- ☐ 2-net cricket practice facility
- ☐ amenities block, change rooms and canteen
- ☐ covered playground
- ☐ off-street car parking
- ☐ fencing.

Usage

Cameron Park will be heavily used throughout the summer sporting season. It will host two junior cricket matches each Saturday morning and two senior matches on Saturday afternoons.

Additionally, Cameron Park will become one of the preferred practice venues for local teams and is likely to attract use at least three afternoons each week.

The Park will be attractive for rectangular field sports and carnivals (e.g. Mini World Cup) and is also likely to attract regular use for school matches and trials.

Issues and considerations

- ☐ as a completely redeveloped venue, Cameron Park is expected to attract significant use for formal sport.

Recommendations

- ☐ the development of the two cricket fields at Cameron Park may result in Brooks Oval being suitable for rationalisation.

Cunningham Place Park

Local Recreation Park *0.44ha*

A relatively large parcel of land, the Park is currently classified as a local recreation park.

Embellished with a swing set and two bins, the Park offers little recreation value.

Cunningham Place Park is located approximately 500m from Waratah Park. Adjoining the Linking Together Youth Centre, this park offers a variety of play and sporting opportunities and is a more desirable place to recreated and socialise.

As such, there is no need to further upgrade the Park.

Recommendations

- ☐ investigate the sale of the land for residential purposes
  - the land will need to be converted from community to operational before Council can sell it
  - funds from the sale should go towards upgrading the existing public parks network within the Southern Inverell precinct. If this process is undertaken, Council needs to ensure that the community and local residents are made aware of this.

Inverell Equestrian Centre

Specialised Sports Park *15.28ha*

The Inverell Equestrian Centre is the main equestrian facility in the Shire. However, as the facility caters for specific types of users and can not easily be used by other sporting codes, the Centre is classified as Specialised Open Space.

A relatively new facility, the Centre has a clubhouse with two shaded grandstands. As the number of members grows, there is increasing demand to build stables or yards to keep the horses between events.

Recommendations

- ☐ Council to work in partnership with the Inverell Equestrian Council to help fund the development of stables or yards and the construction of a cover over the main arena.

Mawson Street Park

Undeveloped *0.36ha*

The Park is undeveloped and has no recreation value.

Mawson Street Park is located approximately 500m from Waratah Park. Adjoining the Linking Together Youth Centre, this park offers a variety of play and sporting opportunities and is a more desirable place to recreate and socialise.

As such, there is no need to upgrade the Park to a local recreation park.

Recommendations

- ☐ investigate the sale of the land for residential purposes
  - the land will need to be converted from community to operational before Council can sell it
  - funds from the sale should go towards upgrading the existing public parks network within the Southern Inverell precinct. If this process is undertaken, Council needs to ensure that the community and local residents are made aware of this.

Waratah Park

Local Recreation Park *1.50ha*

Local Sports Park *0.40ha*

The main park in Southern Inverell, Waratah Park offers both passive and active recreation opportunities.

The northern section of the Park is developed to cater for rugby league and cricket. Additional work may be required to ensure the ground is up to playing standards. Cricket have had discussions with the Sports Council to use the Park for its junior cricket competition.

A large playground, toilet block, covered picnic shelters, full size basketball court (under lights) and a rebound wall are found at the southern end of the Park.

Located next to the Linking Together Youth Centre, Waratah Park is a popular destination for local youth. With some simple upgrades and the addition of additional shade structures the Park would become an ideal location for the Youth Centre to hold events and run programs for the local youth.

Path lighting (powered through a hybrid solar and wind turbine system) has recently been installed to enhance perceptions of safety.

Recommendations

- ☐ extra tree planting/landscaping throughout the Park and around the perimeter to create additional shade, especially if the Park is to be used for junior cricket competitions
- ☐ increase the height of the rebound wall to make it more usable
- ☐ redevelop the basketball court as a rage-cage to create greater versatility
- ☐ in partnership with the Youth Centre:
  - develop a section of the Park as a community garden
  - run free 'come and play' sports days.

5 Strategic options

Connectivity

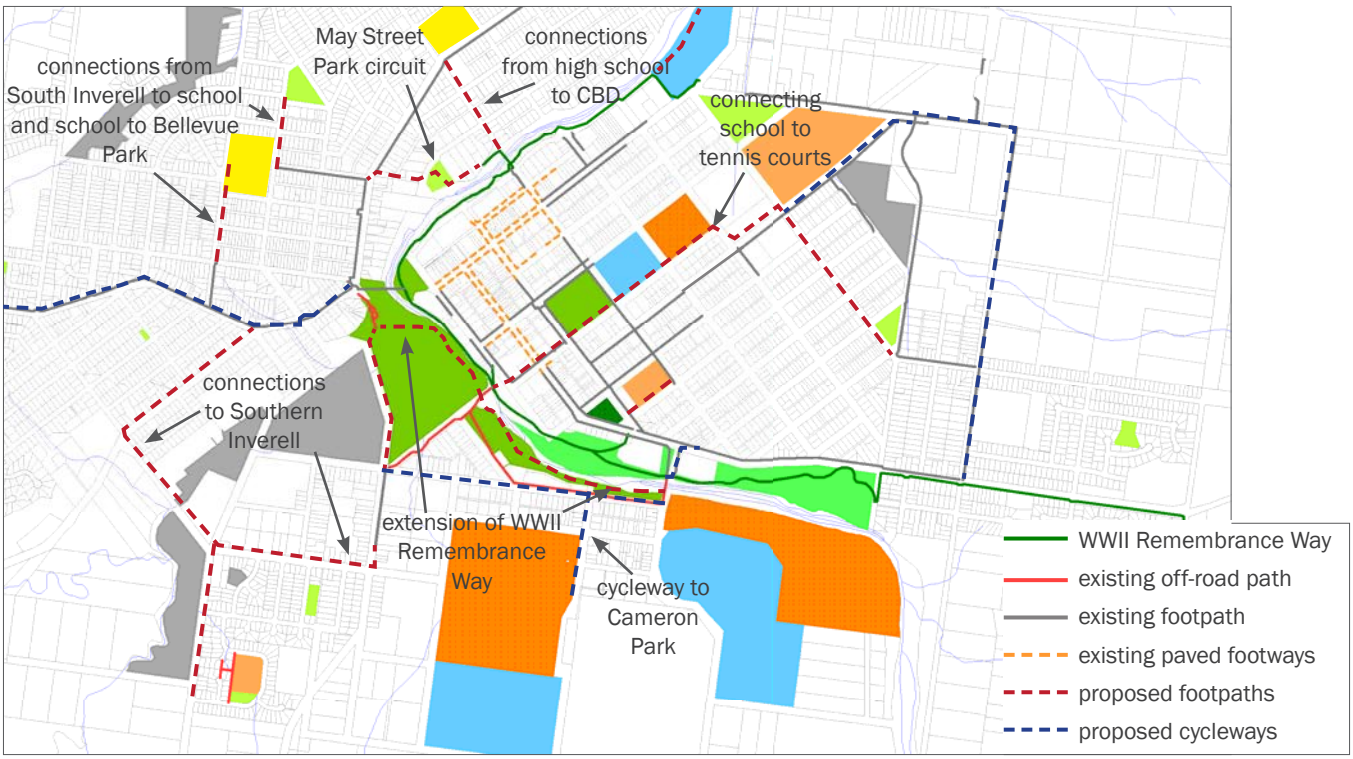
An ideal public open space network includes linear recreation corridors that connect the public parks and key destinations. Designing and maintaining connectivity of public open space will maximise the value of the network for recreation and sport. Providing the physical connections between areas ensures maximum utility, enhances opportunities to participate, and encourages integration between neighbourhoods and the efficient use of community resources.

Approximately 70% of the residents that completed the community survey walked at least once a week. Inverell's central business district is highly walkable. Most of the footways (property boundary to road kerb) are entirely paved allowing the safe and easy movement of pedestrians, and where allowed, cyclists. There are also numerous opportunities for those within the CBD to access the Macintyre River and WWII Remembrance Way. However, once residents cross the Macintyre River or head east past Rivers Street, there are very few off road connections to public open spaces and key destinations (e.g. education facilities).

As mentioned previously, the WWII Remembrance Way walk is very popular with residents and visitors. Considering the walk runs behind many of the motels, hotels and caravan parks there is opportunity to extend the walk to the southern side of the Macintyre River and along Lions Park and Recreation Reserve and create a link. Signage along the path could further activate the surrounding public open spaces (e.g. golf driving range, skate park and BMX track).

A quarter of survey respondents indicated that they would build or upgrade the existing footpaths/cycle ways (26.35%), while 22.94% want improved connections between the public open spaces. Acknowledging that is it not feasible nor realistic for every street to have a footpath, Council should identify key routes that people use to walk/cycle to the CBD, Macintyre River and other key destinations and investigate the development of shared paths along these routes.

In the interim, a number of new footpaths are recommended in an attempt to improve connections between suburbs, education facilities and public open space (below), the majority of these are consistent with the Inverell Bike Plan (2014) . Enhancing these connections will increase Inverell's open space and recreation opportunities including active living/physical activity (through walking and cycling), improved amenity and increased livability.



Activation of open space

The outdoors is becoming the 'new gym'. Throughout the study, it has been observed that participation in informal recreation and physical activity is strong among the residents of Inverell.

Council has embraced the community's desire to participate in outdoor recreation activities by activating the key recreation parks within Inverell. Events that Council currently runs include:

- Sapphire City Markets
- Movies in the park
- Christmas carols
- Australia Day celebrations.

A number of councils are trialling programs such as 'Fun and Games', where not-for-profit organisations, community groups, charities and young people can hire a range of toys and activities to play with in the park. Some have chosen not to implement a hire charge with the exception of a small deposit, refundable on the safe return of the equipment. While others lease the equipment at a small cost. An example of the Fun and Games equipment includes:

- giant connect 4
- giant snakes and ladders
- large plastic chess pieces
- belly bumpers
- 1m diameter soccer ball and goal posts.

Council could consider implementing a program like this as a fun and inclusive way to get people out and active in the recreation parks and sporting parks (when they are not being used by clubs).

Gold Coast City Council (QLD) are award winners and the leaders in the provision of active living programs and initiatives. They provide a range of free (170) or low cost activities weekly across the City as a way of activating their parks and the community. They also offer a variety of programs for parents where children are included or welcome. While it is acknowledged that the Inverell Shire Council does not have the resources nor external funding to support a program such as this, the ideas and concepts behind many of their programs could be considered if Council develops an active living/park activation program (philosophy).

As people become more time constrained and the costs involved to participate in organised sports continues to increase, people will start to look for more casual forms of traditional sports. With an already active community, Council should embrace this and in partnership with local sporting clubs, Council could develop a program that allow individuals to participate in traditional sporting activities in a 'drop in drop out' environment. The program would require no weekly commitment or up front fees from individuals. Originally, Council should aim to offer support (both financial and personnel) and promotion of the drop in drop out activity to make it easier on the clubs, with the clubs eventually taking ownership of the program.

Activating Inverell's public open space provides many benefits to the community and Council. In addition to the health benefits of keeping the community active, the community becomes aware of what is available and what Council is providing them and start to develop a sense of ownership and pride over Inverell's parks. Having people in Council's parks increases the casual surveillance of the park, thus reducing the opportunity for vandalism. However, to maintain and enhance such a program, additional staffing resources are required.

Commercial use of open space

Recreation and sporting parks are in high demand for commercial activities, particularly by fitness trainers. Councils all over Australia are constantly debating whether to charge these types of groups for using public land to conduct their commercial business.

Fitness training is one of the strongest growing types of physical activity. The increasing numbers of fitness trainers choosing to use recreation and sporting parks for their activities has resulted in:

- equity of access issues – potential conflict with displaced users, management of demand, domination and monopolisation of areas and exploitation of public land by commercial operators
- impact on the asset – trainers of larger groups are causing wear-and-tear to recreational facilities
- facility management – scheduling of regular, seasonal and reactive maintenance
- public liability concerns – trainers with insufficient qualifications or insurance.

Councils have an obligation to preserve recreation and sporting parks for the community but they are increasingly recognising that in many circumstances, commercial use of a park can enhance its use and provide a benefit to the community. As such, many councils have identified the need to support and regulate the use of their public open space for health and recreational pursuits by organised or commercial fitness groups/trainers by developing strategic policies around the commercial use of parks.

Guiding principles

In order to assess whether a commercial use is appropriate and not in conflict with the primary purpose of the land, many councils have established guiding principles to assess the broader community benefits of the commercial activity. Some of the guiding principles include:

- community use takes precedence - the commercial activity cannot conflict with or cannot be accommodated without detriment to the primary purpose of the land
- alignment with council's vision - the use and its purpose must align with council's vision and strategic direction as articulated in their community strategic plan
- community benefit - the commercial use must provide benefits to the community
- limited impact - the commercial use must not unduly impact on the primary users of the community land, local residents or businesses, council assets and maintenance
- permit-based approval - the individual/organisation conducting the activity is eligible for a permit. Approval is only granted when the applicant meets certain criteria. It is important to note, permits do not grant exclusive use of community land.

Many councils across New South Wales and Australia are implementing a permit-based approach when dealing with organised or commercial fitness groups and personal trainer

Permit-based approach

The types of permits available to fitness providers varies between councils, but they are generally influenced by or include:

- a small, but non-refundable application fee to apply for the permit
- permit duration
  - seasonal (summer or winter)
  - annual
- number of attendees
  - eg. 10 or less attendees per session - no charge
  - eg. more than 10 attendees - charge
- popularity of the desired recreation and sports park
  - district parks are more expensive
  - local parks are free or minimum cost.

Considerations for Inverell Council:

- ☐ the outcomes of supporting the use of public open space for such activities is a more active population and increased activation of Council's parks, both highly positive
- ☐ Council does not have the resources to monitor the behaviour of individual providers and thus adherence to the permit will likely be complaint-driven
- ☐ the use of a simple (preferably one page, and available on-line), consistent permit ensures equity between all providers of such activities without a large drain on Council resources
- ☐ the conditions of commercial use of public open space, included in the permit, will be subject to the satisfaction of Council's General Manager
- ☐ some specific parks/reserves may be considered by staff and elected members as not suitable for such activity (e.g. feature or neighbourhood parks)

6 Recommendations

The Inverell community has access to a wide range of sport, recreation and physical activity options across the open space network. From small local parks to large feature parks; from local level sports facilities to premier venues; from simple linear walkways to river-side destination parks - recreation and sporting opportunities exist for residents and visitors. Unfortunately, the existing network does not cater to the needs of Inverell's youth, with many parks lacking a variety of challenging play opportunities. Additionally, there are well-established parks that require upgrades to continue to meet community demand.

This public open space strategy is an opportunity for Council to maintain and build upon Inverell's existing public open space network. There are recommendations throughout this Strategy that relate to specific parks within Inverell, these are listed in this section, after 'over-arching recommendations'. Some of the recommendations will be more challenging than others. Implementation of the recommendations will require strong leadership, appropriate resources from Council and a commitment to making some difficult decisions.

There are a number of over-arching recommendations that should also be considered.

Overarching recommendations

Reference	Recommendation	Justification
1	Review the recommendations for each open space parcel and adopt the Strategy	
2	Incorporate the recommendations into Council's capital and operational works plans	*to ensure a cost is applied and the upgrades are budgeted for*
3	Review the outcomes of the Strategy every five years	*a review ensures the document remains a current working document and meets the changing needs of the community*
4	Develop and implement a strategy for the installation of informative and/or directional signage within the open space network	*there is a lack of signage, particularly along WWII Remembrance Way, that informs users of the distance they have travelled and where particular areas of interest are off the walk*
5	Encourage commercial activity in public open spaces	*to promote and activate Council's public open space network*
6	Develop a policy position on boot camps/personal trainers regarding the use of public open space	*there is currently no policy in place regarding the use of public open space for commercial activity. Council needs to develop a position on this, particularly due to the increasing concerns around public liability*
7	Develop a Park Improvements Policy	*parks are being upgraded by numerous organisations in the Shire and this practice needs to be controlled and monitored by Council to ensure improvements are occurring in appropriate parks and with approved infrastructure (e.g. playground equipment)*
8	Develop Master Plans for The Complex and Victoria Park	*ad-hoc development is currently occurring, the master plans will provide Council with direction, prioritise future funding and ensure all users needs are being met*

Reference	Recommendation	Justification
9	Apply to RMS for funding to prepare a Bike/Pedestrian and Mobility Plan	*Inverell is identified as a key regional centre in the New England North West Regional Transport Plan. An objective of this Plan is to 'support the implementation of better facilities for walking and cycling... Council has opportunities to seek support for new links through government funding mechanisms'. Developing a Bike Plan will assist Council in future funding applications*
10	Streamline the process of maintenance and infrastructure requests	*clubs are going directly to the maintenance team instead of through Council. The time between lodging the request and action taken is too long according to clubs*
11	Develop a criteria/check list to ensure park designs reflect park planning trends and park typology design principles	*this will help ensure the park assets are located in the most suitable locations within parks*
12	Undertake a detailed asset condition audit of existing park infrastructure. In particular, the toilets, picnicking facilities, seats and play equipment.	*this will help Council identify any major safety risks, record the likely remaining useful life of assets and plan maintenance of facilities. Additionally, the detailed audit will be able to be used as baseline data in future reviews of the park specific recommendations.*
13	Ensure parks operational staff have input into the design of park features and furniture	*park operational staff often have the most knowledge regarding use of certain play infrastructure and what park furniture is more sturdy and easy to maintain. Involving them early in the design stage will reduce ongoing asset and ground maintenance costs*
14	Encourage community involvement in the detailed design of the town level recreation parks	*the process will ensure that the infrastructure meets the needs of the surrounding residents. As they were part of the design, the residents with feel a sense of ownership and pride over the park*
15	Develop and deliver an affordable physical activity program (using external providers and partnerships) in parks across Inverell for the following target groups: ☐ the elderly ☐ indigenous ☐ parents/carers with children under 5	*these groups often have high levels of physical inactivity, may suffer from social isolation, limited financial resources and limited care (e.g. child minding). Offering free or low cost activities targeted at their needs will not only have physical health benefits but social/mental heath benefits for participants*
16	Develop and deliver physical activity and school holiday programs with a focus on 'come and try' Using external providers and partnerships (especially sports clubs and fitness providers) activities could include 'come and try' programs such as: ☐ learning to use Council's outdoor exercise equipment ☐ try a new sport for a day ☐ learn new tricks at the skate park (and BMX track if upgraded) ☐ learn to play golf in Lions Park and Recreation Reserve ☐ how to paddle a canoe on Lake Inverell etc.	*Not only will these activities activate the parks, but they will introduce people to new activities and exercises*

Reference	Recommendation	Justification
17	Review the existing undeveloped Council-owned land or land controlled by Council as trustee and consider alternative uses, such as: ☐ disposal by sale ☐ relinquishing trusteeship ☐ rehabilitate to natural bushland	*Council has a large amount of undeveloped open space with no recreation value that requires ongoing maintenance resources*
18	Budget for and recruit a full or part time Sport and Recreation/Physical Activity Officer (or similar)	*to ensure Council provides a range of physical activity programs and opportunities across Inverell. Sporting clubs will also have a main contact person within Council. The officer would also work closely with the parks maintenance team regarding the design of park upgrades and maintenance requests/schedules.*
19	Actively seek external grants to fund the capital works, especially for the town recreation parks	*Council can not solely rely on the allocated parks budget and developer contributions*
20	Develop templates to assist clubs prepare feasibility studies and business plans	*if the clubs have these plans in place, it makes it easier for them to apply for funding from external sources, making them less reliant on Council*
21	Develop an education program for sports clubs (in partnership with the Sports Council) that informs clubs of: ☐ facility development processes required in relation to grant funding ☐ sporting and community groups of available funding programs and grant funding opportunities	*to provide clubs with the opportunity to apply for their own funding and ensure the clubs have the best possible opportunity at succeeding in their application and meeting funding deadlines*

Park specific recommendations

Council is currently in the process of upgrading some of its public open spaces, however, it is recommended that Council cease these plans and instead use the park planning process (recommendations 11, 13 and 14) that take into account local trends, community needs and park typology design guidelines. As an alternative, it is recommended that Council focus on a number of key park specific recommendations.

These key park specific recommendations include:

- ☐ Develop a master plan for Victoria Park and the Sporting Complex
  - – both sites are being developed ad-hoc. The master plans will allow Council and users/community to develop an overall plan for the site. This will also assist Council and clubs when applying for funding grants.
- ☐ Develop a master plan for Lions Park and Recreation Reserve with the vision to begin construction once the master plan is adopted by Council
- ☐ Investigate the feasibility of developing a criterium track.

The commencement of these priority projects will enable Council to plan and deliver quality township recreation and sports parks that the community will be proud off and want to visit.

Other park specific recommendations are listed below alphabetically by park name. The corresponding page number has also been provided for further park descriptions and images.

Park name	Recommendation	Page number
Arthur Street Park	☐ sub-divide the lot – keep the current embellished corner of the Park (corner of Clive and Arthur Streets) as public open space ☐ investigate the sale of the remaining land for residential purposes – the land will need to be converted from community to operational before Council can sell it – funds from the sale should go towards upgrading the existing public parks network, ideally Lake Inverell Reserve as it is within the Albion Hill precinct. If this process is undertaken, Council needs to ensure that the community and local residents are made aware of this ☐ upgrade the existing play equipment in the Park.	30
Bellevue Park	☐ continue to develop the Park as an over embellished local recreation park. Focus the play equipment for children aged under 12 years. Embellishments may include: – quality learn to ride area ☐ develop safe connections from Ross Hill Public School to the Park.	25
Brooks Oval	☐ liaise closely with the Cricket Association to ascertain demand for Brooks Oval as a cricket venue once Cameron Park is fully operational ☐ if Brooks Oval is not required for cricket purposes, consider rationalisation.	22
Cameron Park	☐ the development of the two cricket fields at Cameron Park may result in Brooks Oval being suitable for rationalisation.	38

Park name	Recommendation	Page number
Campbell Park	☐ consult the local community to ensure their input into the design and embellishments of the new proposed park features – consider a theme that represents Inverell, so that the community feels pride and ownership over it – add play elements suitable for toddlers, youth and adults – construct a barrier between the road and proposed playground (e.g. fencing or preferably natural plantings) ☐ remove the toilet block at the end of its useful life (or earlier as resources allow) and replace with an open style unisex toilet block to increase casual surveillance and reduce safety concerns ☐ insert directional and distance signage to inform users of nearby destinations and distance to them.	16
Community Garden	☐ continue to work closely with the community garden management committee in relocating the Community Gardens to a more appropriate site on the corner of Swanbrook Road and Ross Street.	17
Cunningham Place Park	☐ investigate the sale of the land for residential purposes: – the land will need to be converted from community to operational before Council can sell it – funds from the sale will go towards upgrading the existing public parks network within the Southern Inverell precinct. If this process is undertaken, Council needs to ensure that the community and local residents are made aware of this.	38
Gordon Street Park	☐ upgrade the Park to an over embellished local recreation park to cater for the needs of any future development along Vincent Place and Coolibah Drive ☐ build a recreation path linking the Park to the new estate. The path should further link the south-western corner of the Park to the play equipment.	25
Inverell Tennis Courts	☐ work in partnership with Inverell Tennis Club to jointly fund or assist in preparing funding applications for the short term items ☐ work in partnership with Inverell Tennis Club investigate the feasibility and need of the Club's larger scale future plans.	18
Kamilaroi Oval	☐ pursue a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Education regarding continued community use of the Oval (and ongoing management strategies) ☐ if the land is ever available for purchase, consider acquisition for sport and recreation purposes.	18
Kingfisher Drive Public Reserve	☐ investigate the sale of the land for residential purposes: – the land will need to be converted from community to operational before Council can sell it – funds from the sale should go towards upgrading the existing public parks network within the Southern Inverell precinct. If this process is undertaken, Council needs to ensure that the community and local residents are made aware of this.	30

Park name	Recommendation	Page number
Lake Inverell Reserve	☐ construct a simple craft launching facility at the Lake to ensure safe and easy access for users ☐ provide additional seating near to the water's edge ☐ investigate the impact of clearing the reeds and rushes from the area directly below the recreation node in order to establish a safe swimming zone ☐ investigate the feasibility of bunk cabins and supporting infrastructure (amenities and camp kitchen) to attract groups/schools to the area ☐ master plan a 'natural' more challenging playground to be built – consult the local community to ensure their input into the design and embellishment of the new proposed park features – consider a theme that represents Inverell, so that the community feels pride and ownership over it – add play elements suitable for toddlers, youth and adults. ☐ remove the existing playground and relocate it to Roslyn Gardens Park.	32
Lions Park and Recreation Reserve	☐ develop a master plan for the Reserve – decommission/remove the baseball diamond and supporting infrastructure (the safety fence could be reused as a throw cage if little athletics is to relocate to The Complex) – redesign the BMX track and make it more user friendly for a variety of age groups and skill levels – develop a large adventure style playground between the skate park and BMX track – formalise parking – embellish the Reserve with covered BBQs, picnic tables and bench seats, water bubblers, bins, lights and open unisex toilets – fence the perimeter of the Reserve (log bollards) to prohibit unauthorised vehicle movement – establish a fenced dog off-leash park – include way finding signage ☐ retain the golf driving range (potential to provide a formalised road to the area to increase usage) ☐ build a recreation corridor along the Macintyre River that connects with WWII Remembrance Way to create a circuit – ensure there are connections up to the adventure playground/skate park/BMX track precinct.	36
Macintyre River Public Reserve	☐ install a network of solar lights along the path ☐ promote the Reserve as a dog off leash exercise area ☐ investigate the feasibility of adding a number of dog agility infrastructure items in the Reserve ☐ place bench seats along the path at regular intervals (approximately 1 to 1.5km spread) ☐ install directional and distance signage along the path.	23

Park name	Recommendation	Page number
Mawson Street Park	☐ investigate the sale of the land for residential purposes – the land will need to be converted from community to operational before Council can sell it – funds from the sale should go towards upgrading the existing public parks network within the Southern Inverell precinct. If this process is undertaken, Council needs to ensure that the community and local residents are made aware of this.	39
May Street Park	☐ through directional signage, advertise the Park and its views over Inverell. The Park is located approximately 1km from Campbell Park ☐ installing irrigation ☐ shade tree planting ☐ constructing a feature entry garden ☐ constructing a passive nature play recreation area ☐ constructing a viewing platform with directional and interpretive signage ☐ providing a sealed path from the top of the Park to the river's edge ☐ formalising the path along the western bank of the Macintyre River and developing a loop connecting Campbell Park, the Gwydir Highway, Brae Street, May Street and the Park, down the steps to the Macintyre River, along the western bank recreation path, across the footbridge and back towards Campbell Park.	27
Northey Park	☐ re-establish the link between John Northey Lookout and Platypus Rest Lookout ☐ establish a future management and maintenance approach for when the volunteers currently undertaking these works cease to operate.	31
Pat Naughton Memorial Park	☐ monitor the usage of the wood fire BBQ – low usage - remove the BBQ and convert concrete slab into a hand ball court – high usage - place picnic tables in the Park ☐ formalise the link between the Park and the Gwydir Highway ☐ trial the installation of temporary football posts/soccer goals in the kick-about area.	26
Roslyn Garden Park	☐ remove the existing basketball facility ☐ upgrade the Park to a proper local recreation park – consult with the surrounding community to identify an appropriate use for the Park and to ensure it meets the needs of the surrounding demographic – option to relocate the playground from Lake Inverell Reserve here, if Council chooses to build a new playground there.	31
Ross Hill Reserve	☐ continue to work with Friends of Ross Hill Reserve to ensure the Reserve to ensure the ongoing care and rehabilitation of the site ☐ work with Inverell Tourism to ensure the Reserve is being promoted as a 'destination place' in Inverell ☐ investigate the environmental feasibility of installing picnic facilities (tables and chairs, bench seats), paths, solar lighting and toilets at the Reserve ☐ establish the Reserve as a site for education purposes (ecology and natural systems) and investigate partnerships with local schools and the development of outdoor classroom facilities.	28
The Complex	☐ relocate athletics from Varley Oval to the Sporting Complex and establish a suitable home for the sport.	34

Park name	Recommendation	Page number
Varley Oval	☐ relocate athletics to an alternate purpose-built facility (e.g. Sporting Complex) ☐ investigate opportunities to provide covered spectator areas. (Potentially, the area directly in front of the pavilion may be redeveloped with tiered seating and a skillion roof).	19
Victoria Park	☐ develop a Master Plan for the park – cease any further development on the park until the Master Plan has been approved and endorsed – add play elements suitable for toddlers, youth and adults ☐ develop a policy that allows people to reserve/book a covered picnic shelter for exclusive use for a specified time period for a small fee ☐ replace the existing toilet facilities with an open style unisex toilet block to increase casual surveillance.	20
Waratah Park	☐ extra tree planting/landscaping throughout the Park and around the perimeter to create additional shade, especially if the Park is to be used for junior cricket competitions ☐ increase the height of the rebound wall to make it more usable ☐ redevelop the basketball court as a rage-cage to create greater versatility ☐ in partnership with the Youth Centre: – develop a section of the Park as a community garden – run free 'come and play' sports days.	40

Appendices

A Community survey results

B Park design trends

C Public open space typologies

D Issues paper key findings

E Public open space audit

A Community survey & results

Inverell Public Open Space Strategy Community Survey

In acknowledging the value that parks and reserves contribute to a positive life-style, Inverell Shire Council has resolved to prepare a Public Open Space Strategy.

The Strategy will provide Council with an over arching frame-work to direct public open space planning and management in a co-ordinated, sustainable and effective manner. It will also assist the community in understanding the current intentions, and in some cases, what the future intentions are for parks and reserves in Inverell.

This is your opportunity to have your say and let Council know what you think of the current open space network and what you would like to see in the future.

Question 1

How often do you participate in the following activities in Inverell's open space? (please tick below)

	Everyday	5 or more days	3 to 4 days a week	1 to 2 days a week	Couple of times a month	Rarely	Never
Walking	17.14%	10.71%	18.57%	23.57%	15.00%	11.43%	3.57%
Cycling	2.27%	0.00%	3.03%	8.33%	15.15%	26.52%	44.70%
Play in the park	1.43%	2.86%	11.43%	19.29%	31.43%	24.29%	9.29%
Picnic in the park	1.46%	2.19%	2.92%	8.76%	44.53%	34.31%	5.84%
Play (and train) for sport at a sportsground	2.24%	4.48%	9.70%	24.63%	11.19%	19.40%	28.36%
Use outdoor exercise equipment	1.50%	0.75%	0.75%	6.77%	12.03%	43.61%	34.59%

Question 2

How satisfied are you with the infrastructure that supports these activities? (please tick below)

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Walking	23.94%	45.07%	18.31%	11.27%	1.41%
Cycling	12.78%	21.80%	48.12%	12.78%	4.51%
Play in the park	9.29%	32.14%	22.86%	28.57%	7.14%
Picnic in the park	12.32%	35.51%	30.43%	19.57%	2.17%
Play (and train) for sport at a sportsground	12.23%	36.69%	41.01%	8.63%	1.44%
Use outdoor exercise equipment	7.30%	24.82%	54.74%	10.95%	2.19%

Question 3

At which open spaces or facilities do you recreate and/or play sport? Please select all those that apply.

78.4%	Campbell Park	22.3%	Varley Oval	44.6%	At home
5.4%	Community Garden	6.8%	Brooks Park	54.1%	Local footpaths
64.9%	Lake Inverell	8.1%	Cameron Park	37.2%	Lake/dam
63.5%	Victoria Park	14.2%	Inverell Rugby Ground	24.3%	On the street/road
2.0%	Waratah Park	6.1%	Inverell Tennis Courts	27.7%	Local playground
10.1%	Skate park	12.8%	Showgrounds/Equestrian Centre	14.9%	Private property
40.5%	The Complex	61.5%	Along the Macintrye River	18.2%	School grounds
Other (please specify):					

Question 4

What do you value about open space and recreation facilities within Inverell? Please tick all that apply.

29.0%	The diversity of playgrounds and equipment	58.0%	They allow me to spend quality time with my family
23.2%	The high quality facilities provided	42.0%	I feel safe when I visit
32.6%	They are close to my home	38.4%	They provide me with a place to unwind/rest/relax
42.0%	The views they provide to the river	39.9%	They provide me with a place to exercise
42.8%	The cleanliness and high level of maintenance	37.0%	I can take my dog
42.0%	Their appeal to the whole family	35.5%	A place to spend time with friends
34.8%	The range of sporting fields/courts/facilities provided	37.7%	A place to take visitors
35.5%	They encourage social interaction with the community	11.6%	They provide accessibility features that I require
11.6%	I can meet new people there	Other:	

Question 5

Have you experienced any barriers to using open space and recreation facilities within Inverell? Please tick all that apply.

14.5%	No, I have not experienced any barriers	42.8%	There is a lack of toilets
41.3%	There is a lack of picnic facilities (BBQs, picnic tables, etc.)	4.3%	They don't cater for my mobility needs
14.5%	They are too crowded	35.5%	They are unclean
32.6%	They are poorly maintained	5.8%	They don't appeal to me
29.7%	There is a lack of lighting	25.4%	There is a lack of variety
4.3%	There is a lack of car parking	11.6%	I can't take my dog
Other (please specify):			

Question 6

How would you rate the overall quality of sporting reserves and facilities within Inverell? (i.e. courts, fields and ovals for active sport and recreation)

25.9%	Very good	11.6%	Indifferent	1.4%	Very poor
51.0%	Good	6.1%	Poor	4.1%	Don't know

Question 7

How would you rate the overall quality of parks within Inverell? (i.e. playgrounds, picnic areas, informal parks and spaces for passive recreation)

18.4%	Very good	14.3%	Indifferent	7.5%	Very poor
42.2%	Good	17.7%	Poor	0.0%	Don't know

Question 8

If you were in charge of Inverell Shire Council, what would be your TOP THREE open space projects that you would fund over the next 10 years?

52.7%	New/upgraded playgrounds	23.0%	More sports grounds/ovals/courts
18.9%	Improved access to the Macintrye River	5.4%	Improved quality of sports grounds/ovals/courts
24.3%	Increased supporting facilities including car parking and amenities	16.9%	Improved pedestrian/cyclist connections between open spaces
37.8%	Provision of places/facilities for young people	26.4%	New/upgraded cycle and walking paths
12.2%	Provision of places/facilities for seniors	30.4%	Improved parks maintenance
30.4%	Improved picnicking facilities	4.7%	New/upgraded horse and equestrian facilities
2.0%	Don't know/no response	Other:	

Gender

16.1%	Male
83.9%	Female

What is your age group

7.5%	0 - 17 years	17.0%	50 - 64 years
10.2%	18 - 24 years	2.0%	65 - 74 years
62.6%	25 - 49 years	0.7%	75 years and over

Do you have children (under 18)?

74.3%	Yes
25.7%	No

Thank you for completing the survey. Your time and effort is really appreciated. Once completed, can you please return the survey to Council,

144 Otho Street, Inverell.

Alternatively return the survey to:

ROSS Planning

Reply Paid 5660

Manly 4179

Park design trends

Sense of safety and security

A safe, comfortable and attractive park is a successful park. Recent research has shown that residents who perceived their neighbourhoods and spaces as safe were more likely to be regularly physically active, than those who perceived their neighbourhood as unsafe.

Safe parks are those that can be seen from other areas and are visible from the street. Facilities such as amenities and play areas are also open and visible. Good parks have trees that provide shade, yet have clear trunks to allow for visibility through the park. Shrubs and other visual obstructions are located in places that do no block sightlines in, out and around the park.

Lighting in certain areas within a park (pathways, amenities and shelters) also creates a sense of safety.

Accessible, connected destinations

People will frequent places that are easy to see and easy to get to and from. Walking has become the preferred physical activity for people and, therefore, path systems that provide safe and convenient connectivity between places are crucial.

A successful public space has good connections, both visual and physical, to its surroundings. The path system should be easy to understand for a first time user.

Nodes (clustered activity areas) should also be well connected within the actual park itself. Internal paths should cater for all people, including those with limited abilities. Routes should be visually clear and connected for ease of wayfinding and direction. Well designed signs and maps in appropriate locations provide information and direction for users.

Attractive destinations

Successful parks provide for both comfort and interaction. They have adequate provision and a good range of park embellishments (including adequate seating in convenient locations) and have a good image.

These parks are safe places that are clean, well maintained, tidy and free of litter and graffiti.

People are drawn in by what they can see from the street, such as activity nodes, shade and greenery. Some of these “drawcards” should be highly visible and within close proximity to the street.

Range of facilities and activities

Providing activities within parks gives people of various ages and abilities, a reason to come to the park and use the space. These activities should provide for a range of demographics, including young, elderly, physically or mentally challenged, as well as for those that wish to relax, watch, meet people, gather or be active. The parks design should be flexible enough to allow for a wide range of activities.

Parks should also provide basic elements such as shade, pathways, adequately spaced benches, recreation node/s, water bubblers, bike racks and signage. Ramps, accessible amenities, and safe pedestrian crossings are also basic elements that attract a wider demographic of users.

Good parks have a range of park precincts as well as recreation nodes that comprise clustered activities, such as picnic and play areas. Recreation nodes are surrounded by green (grass, trees and shrubs) to create an oasis, while sandy areas are kept to a minimum, to reduce heat. Benches are placed under shade and are located to overlook activities and points of interest.

Sense of community

Places that people connect with often evoke a sense of pride and place among a community. If a community or group feels that they have ownership and belong to a place, they will invariably look after and utilise it.

Parks should provide facilities that encourage social interaction with friends, family or even providing an opportunity to interact with new people. The facilities should allow for potentially high usage and accommodate for group gatherings.

Activities such as skate parks, dog parks and gathering areas are examples of spaces that provide good places for communities.

Parks should be programmed to encourage community engagement and events. This can include exercise or activity programs (e.g. boot camps) to increase community physical activity. Apart from physical activity programs, open spaces can also be programmed for events (e.g. community festivals) and more regular activities such as markets.

Involving people can also develop a sense of community. This can be conducted through community events such as tree planting days or “adopt a spot” schemes.

Public open space typologies

Local recreation park

Description and park Intent

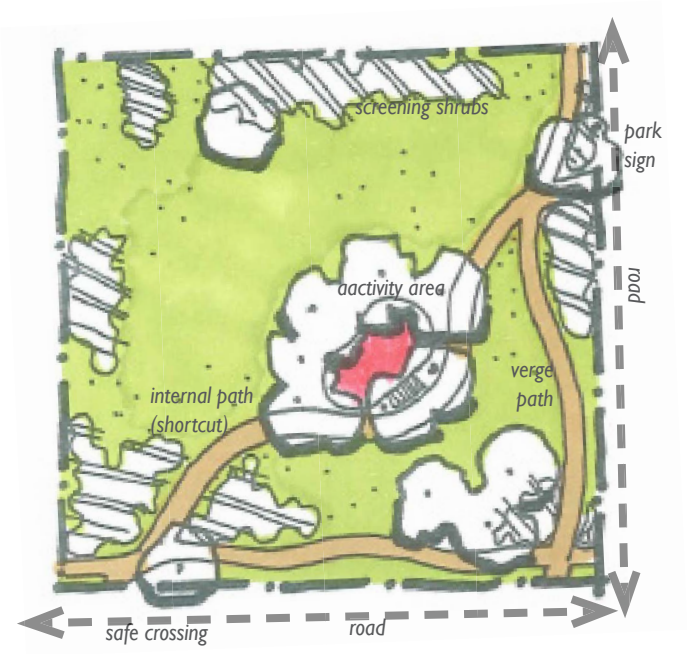
Local recreation parks provide a limited range of recreational opportunities for local residents. These parks contain minimal infrastructure for recreational use, however, if well-positioned can offer community benefits.

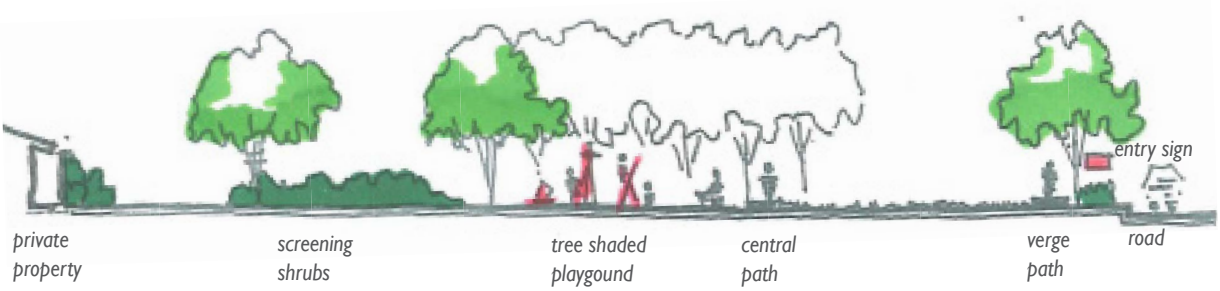
Local recreation parks are intended to be small parks that offer residents a supplementary open space to complement their backyards. They are likely to attract users from a small catchment area and generally cater for short visits by very small groups.

Design considerations

Below is a list of elements that should be considered when designing/developing a local recreation park:

- ☐ park is to be located in residential area
- ☐ park is to be easy for residents to walk to
- ☐ recreation facilities to be clustered in one activity area, ideally located under natural shade (where possible)
- ☐ activity area could include facilities such as:
  - basic toddler play (spring toy, slide and swing)
  - rebound wall
  - dog off-leash area with basic dog agility equipment (such as ramps and totem poles)
  - multi-functional gazebos (may encourage small group to play cards in the park regularly)
  - small path circuit with basic, static, exercise equipment
  - flat kick-a-bout area
  - link to surrounding footpath (if relevant)
- ☐ picnic and seats to be located where they can oversee the activity area (under a shade tree where possible), along the internal path
- ☐ it should be easy to see the majority of the park from adjacent properties or from the road
- ☐ internal paths to connect to on-road verge pathway system and connect to the key activity area in the park. If the park can act as a short cut for pedestrians it may also encourage them to stop and utilise these local park facilities
- ☐ embellishments in the parks complement those in nearby parks (increasing the range of facilities available to nearby residents)
- ☐ design and embellishments of parks reflect the demographic desires of the local catchment (it is common for local parks to have the same infrastructure, often pitched at toddlers and young children. The needs of an older community is different to that of young families)
- ☐ landscape edge treatments in the form of screening shrubs will improve the aesthetics of the park, soften the edges and provide some buffering to nearby residents.


screening shrubs
park sign
road
activity area
verge path
internal path (shortcut)
safe crossing
road


entry sign
private property
screening shrubs
tree shaded playgound
central path
verge path
road

Town recreation park

Park description and intent

Town parks are major recreation parks that offer a wide variety of opportunities to a broad cross-section of Inverell's population and visitors. These parks are generally large in size, embellished for recreation and/or sport, well known amongst residents and are major destinations/drawcards.

Town parks offer sport and recreation opportunities for all age groups. People are usually content spending several (4+) hours in these parks. Town recreation parks also offer unique experiences, they are places used to host large community events such as carols in the park, Australia Day celebrations and other festivals. Town recreation parks offer exciting and no cost activities for residents and visitors.

Ideally, town parks are co-located with other valued community infrastructure and community-based land uses. This includes co-location with or near:

- ☐ sports parks and sports facilities
- ☐ schools and education providers
- ☐ retail activities (shops)
- ☐ community service providers such as child care centres, scout dens/girl guide huts, health and well-being providers and so on
- ☐ natural areas that offer scenic amenity value.

These parks should be well-connected to the local residents by footpaths but should also have car parking facilities and internal paths so people of all-abilities are able to access much of the parkland area.

potential connection to natural area such as waterways

topographical assets, such as hills, promoted

some undeveloped spaces should exist, these include treed areas

natural areas provide different opportunities such as natural play activities

Design and build

Below is a list of elements that should be considered when designing/developing a town recreation park.

- ☐ town parks should have master plans prepared. This is likely to include a long-term vision that can take many years to activate (potentially 10-15 years). The master plan should be staged so that it can be rolled out as demand is generated (and as resources allow)
- ☐ community input into the design of the park should occur (at master plan stage and as changes occur), this is important as the community will have specific thoughts and concerns regarding this level of park
- ☐ design must consider all age groups, people of all abilities and eosinocyte
- ☐ detailed design is often required for specific elements
- ☐ multiple activity nodes may exist, however, these nodes will be unique and not replicated within the park and will add to the overall quality and attractiveness of the park (complementary areas that also contrast other park opportunities)
- ☐ potential to have some low key commercial activity such as kiosks, cafes, museums
- ☐ potential to have an array of buildings that offer some community service such as a nursery offering free street trees, environmental education centres, community training rooms, libraries etc.
- ☐ park to be located where people can access easily
- ☐ park should preferably have a variety of settings within the park, from natural areas to a highly-embellishment activity area
- ☐ incorporate a high-level of landscape design, this could extend to including botanic gardens
- ☐ consider including a special drawcard element such as a zoo or nature centre
- ☐ have some undeveloped areas
- ☐ include interpretive signage, not only about the park but also of the local area (for residents and tourists)
- ☐ embellishments could be themed, for example a park with an aviation theme if it is ideally located to see the arrival and departing flights
- ☐ parks to be close to public transport, where possible
- ☐ amenities to be near road and active area for surveillance
- ☐ pathways link areas within the park and externally
- ☐ off-road car parking is required, however, could be located near the road (or nose-in parking at the road) to minimise its visual impact (and cost of development) on the recreation function of the park
- ☐ significant activity areas could include such facilities (in addition to those listed in the local and district recreation park typologies) as:
  - free water-play
  - large skate facilities
  - large climbing structures
  - rock climbing equipment
  - variety of pathways and circuits, potentially with different treatments to help the user to navigate throughout the site
  - all abilities play is essential
  - liberty swing (this should be sensitively integrated into the playground as not to become an “elephant in the room” but rather a part of the play theme and design)
  - amphitheatre
  - lookouts
  - specialised equipment
- ☐ non-standard embellishments to consider are:
  - gazebos for larger groups (20+ people)
  - areas for weddings or private park celebrations
  - toilets located near the key activity area (depending on the size of the park and the topography of the land there may be need for multiple toilet blocks). Additionally, the siting of toilet blocks should maximise their visibility from highly-used areas (play areas where active surveillance can occur) and from the road (where passive surveillance can occur)
  - clusters of picnic facilities.

activity nodes are located near picnic areas

large picnic structures under shade trees

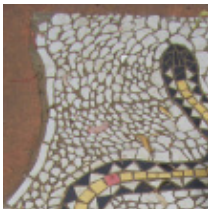
pedestrian links are important, both internally and externally to the park

formal car parking areas allow for people to choose a range of ways of getting to the park

Directory

fenced dog off leash
skate park/
youth precinct
formal off-road
car park
toilets
amphitheatre
and stage
grass
mounds
playground and
picnic shelters
meeting pavilion
connecting paths along desire lines

formal
off-road
car park
amenities
exercise equipment
on loop circuit
playground and
picnic shelters
natural water play
opportunities on creek
knoll and
lookout
landscape treatments to edge



LARGE DOG
AREA
SMALL DOG
AREA

Sports parks

Description and park intent

Sports parks should comfortably host regional (or potentially state) competitions. Factors such as quality of playing surface, amenities and canteen availability and lighting standards (where lights are provided) need to be considered.

Design considerations

Below is a list of elements that should be considered when designing/developing regional sports parks:

- ☐ internal path network to allow for connections within and to land adjacent to the park (i.e. pathway system should tie into the street path system). Paths to allow for all-access commuting
- ☐ maximise trees and natural shade around fields
- ☐ long benches and spectator areas should be placed under shady trees where possible. Shaded spectator grass mounds can also provide good viewing areas in addition to built grandstands
- ☐ hard surfaces should be minimised by developing the minimum number of sealed parking bays, and providing turf/ unsealed shady overflow parking (for bigger games)
- ☐ internal road and parking layout to accommodate bus parking, drop off and turn around
- ☐ orientation and location of sports lighting (seek advice from sports bodies for regulations). Consideration to be made regarding noise and light spillage with regards to its impact on surrounding land use
- ☐ field and court orientation to be north/south (or as close to as possible)
- ☐ provision of ample storage. This should be located near the clubhouse and should form one single large shed or preferably be combined into clubhouse design to reduce built structures within open space
- ☐ clubhouse to be of significant size and offer flexibility in design to cater for a range of uses (consider beyond those sports anticipated to use the site). Clubhouse to be located on western side, on halfway line, of main field where possible. Internal spaces to include:
  - storage
  - canteen
  - multiple change rooms
  - canteen
  - offices
  - versatile function/activity space
  - gym
  - medical rooms
- ☐ recreation/activity area to consider the users of sports when designing node typology (eg play for spectators/children or activities that could be used for training (exercise circuit)). These should ideally be clustered together and located under natural shade (where possible)
- ☐ potential complementary commercial opportunities could be considered at park (e.g. physiotherapy, personal trainers, sports house etc.)
- ☐ provision of adequate signage especially within large, multiple use regional sports parks (e.g. directional and information signs)
- ☐ create additional landscape amenities such as entry planting, feature landscaping, or earth mounds to increase visual amenity.

Issues paper key findings*

A network to be proud of

Wide range of opportunities

While it is somewhat common for councils to spruik the importance of a quality open space network throughout their key corporate documents, on-ground inspections often show misalignment between objectives and actual outcomes. However, excitingly, this does not appear to be the case in Inverell.

The community has access to a wide range of sport, recreation and physical activity options across the open space network. From small local parks to large feature parks; from local level sports facilities to premier venues; from simple linear walkways to highly embellished river-side destination parks - opportunities exist for residents and visitors.

Quality maintenance

Also reflecting the importance of open space in Council's corporate vision is the high levels of maintenance across the network. Council's staff clearly take pride in the presentation of the facilities and it is clearly evident. This passion shows not only in the most obvious areas (quality turf, maintained garden beds) but also in the smaller items such as edging, cleanliness of barbecues, paths with little to no cracking and lifting and ponds free from leaves and litter.

Well-distributed

Most sections of the Inverell community have access to a nearby local park within an appropriate walking distance. While the sporting facilities and higher-level feature parks tend to be located toward the central and southern areas of town, they remain readily accessible for most residents. Additionally, it is not an uncommon practice for councils to plan for sporting facilities and higher-level parks such that residents may need to drive.

An active community

Given the quality range of opportunities combined with the high levels of maintenance, it is not surprising that the community is drawn to the open space network. This results in facilities that are well-used and an active community. Inspections highlight many individuals and groups exercising; families walking, cycling and pushing prams; youth playing on playgrounds and the skate park; while others enjoy the attractive outlooks and serenity.

Room for further improvement

While Council deserves to be commended on the quality of the open space network, a small number of areas for potential improvement have been noted.

Opportunities for rationalisation

There appear to be a number of facilities within parks that are no longer required. For instance, the softball and bmx facilities within the Lions Park and Recreation Reserve appear to attract very limited use yet remain a maintenance burden.

Similarly, there are a number of small undeveloped local parks that do not offer recreation opportunities and are located near to developed parks (e.g. Kingfisher Drive Public Reserve). These could be considered for disposal.

Opportunities for upgrade

There are a number of well-located parks that are currently undeveloped and limit recreation opportunities for nearby residents. Potential upgrades may be considered for parks such as Roslyn Gardens Park, Arthur Street Park and Bellevue Park.

Additionally, there are well-established parks that require upgrades to continue to meet community demand. For example, the play opportunities within Victoria Park need to be re-visited to ensure a well laid-out range of options, additional ancillary facilities are required at the skate facility (e.g. seating, tables and access to drinking water), while potential development of a simple non-motorised boat launching facility at Lake Inverell may be investigated.

Opportunities for change

While most of the sporting users within Inverell are at well-established venues, potential exists to consider alternate opportunities in order to further enhance sporting opportunities.

For example, the athletics facilities at Varley Oval are limited - the track is the wrong dimensions and there are limited spaces for field event areas. Additionally, summer season sporting clashes with cricket are problematic. It may be possible to develop a long-term quality home for athletics at the Complex.

** The Issues Paper was put together during the early stages of the project (early 2015).*

Opportunities for new development

Potential exists for a small number of significant new facility initiatives to be explored.

While there are a number of parks providing simple climb, slide and spin play options and Victoria Park also provides a small climbing net, Inverell appears to lack a challenging adventure-style play facility. Such a facility may include a range of elements such as flying foxes, tunnels, climbing walls and nets, mounds, bike activity track and rebound wall. With possible removal of the softball facilities and bmx track, opportunity may exist to develop a play facility of this nature in Lions Park and Recreation Reserve and providing links to the skate park.

The town centre of Inverell is well serviced with footpaths, some wide enough to allow shared use with cyclists. However, there is a limited network of footpaths providing safe, off road connections in and out of town.

Due to the low traffic volumes along many of the residential streets within Inverell, there is no need for footpaths along every street. However, shared paths are required along popular routes that link key destinations (e.g. schools, town and open space).

Connections identified during the audit that need attention include:

- the bridge crossing on Tingha Road. The existing footpath is too narrow to allow safe sharing between cyclists and pedestrians. Due to the NSW road laws which state that cyclists over the age of 12 years old are not permitted to use the footpaths, the road is also too narrow for the safe shared use of cyclists and vehicles
- Mitchell Crescent to Lions Park- connecting south Inverell to town
- widening of paths around schools and Victoria Park.

Inverell has a well-established cycling community. However, a lack of safe cycling areas (particularly for junior riders) is limiting growth in the sport. It is considered that the development of a criterium track would reignite the sport and provide a suitable pathway for junior riders. Opportunity exists to develop a criterium track in the reserve and easement area directly to the north of the Lake Inverell recreation area. Given the existing car parking, amenities and shelters in this area, the proposed development could be focused on the cycling track (rather than also require the construction of additional ancillary facilities).

Public open space audit

Precinct	Lot and Plan	Park name	Size (ha)	Classification	Hierarchy
CBD	1/DP115029 1/83/DP758536 2/83/DP758536 3/83/DP758536	Campbell Park	1.17	Recreation	Township
	7313/DP1135965	Community Garden	2.66	Other Open Space	Community Garden
	1/19/DP758536 701/DP94911	Inverell Tennis Courts	3.29	Sport	Township
	1/DP34330	Kamilaroi Oval	6.73	Other Sport	Specialised
	20/DP1145322	Varley Oval	3.27	Other Sport	Specialised
	85/DP1151983 1/DP758536 2/DP758536	Victoria Park	3.28	Recreation	Township
	5/DP1152736 5/DP1158253 4/DP732326 5/DP774220 7/DP22439 334/DP1533 5-7/DP22439 12-21/DP820296 360/DP1533 QST/DP200993 4/DP828076 5/DP832848	Macintyre River Public Reserve (Captain Cook Drive - From Campbell Park to Kamilaroi Oval)	3.78	Recreation	Linear
Belgravia	3/71/758536	Brooks Oval	1.62	Sport	Local
	7313/DP1135965	Inverell Rugby Ground	9.84	Sport	Local
	5/DP1152029	Macintyre River Public Reserve (Campbell Street to Glen Innes Road)	4.67	Recreation	Linear
	1/DP1151943	Sinclair Park	0.70	Recreation	Amenity
	290-292/DP753287	Ross Street Reserve	5.11	Other Open Space	Undeveloped

Precinct	Lot and Plan	Park name	Size (ha)	Classification	Hierarchy
Ross Hill	1/8/DP18001 2/8/DP18001 3/8/DP18001 4/8/DP18001 5/8/DP18001 6/8/DP18001 7/8/DP18001	Bellevue Park	1.13	Recreation	Local
	23/DP804869	Gordon Street Park	0.86	Recreation	Local
	20/DP21233	Inverell Apex Park	0.08	Recreation	Local
	18/1/DP4298 273/DP1533	May Street Park	0.65	Recreation	Local
	27/DP258046	Pat Naughton Memorial Park	0.25	Recreation	Local
	Part of 2/DP1169924	Ross Hill Reserve	3.92	Recreation	Town
	14/1/DP22620 12/2/DP22620 10/6/DP22620	Public garden and recreation space	4.14	Other Open Space	Undeveloped
Albion Hill	50/DP1140899	Arthur Street Park	0.72	Recreation	Local
	44/DP1082574	Kingfisher Drive Public Reserve	0.21	Other Open Space	Undeveloped
	Part of 1/DP1101540 1/DP188692	Lake Inverell Reserve	6.64	Recreation	Township
	7/DP1152029	Northey Park	8.34	Recreation	Linear
	28/DP248160 15/DP260819 18/DP260819	Roslyn Gardens Park	0.64	Recreation	Local

Precinct	Lot and Plan	Park name	Size (ha)	Classification	Hierarchy
Southern Inverell	1-5/58/DP979847 1/DP1140913 1-6/55/DP979847 7052/DP1002469 634-635/DP822723	Cameron Park	24.41	Sport	Township
	368-369/DP753287	Crown Land (Borthwick Street)	7.58	Other Open Space	Undeveloped
	64/DP243105	Cunningham Place Park	0.44	Recreation	Local
	7315/DP1137135	Inverell Equestrian Centre	15.28	Other Sport	Specialised
	7051/DP94910 283, 287, 293, 294, 601 & 615/ DP753287	Inverell Showgrounds	14.60	Other Sport	Specialised
	555-566/DP753287 2-4/DP1152029 1/DP1139900 632/DP822711	Lions Park and Recreation Reserve	20.11	Recreation	Township
	160/DP255434	Mawson Street Park	0.36	Other Open Space	Undeveloped
	614/DP753287 600/DP753287 7316/DP1135950	Pioneer Village	6.98	Other Sport	Specialised
	2/DP1139900 567-587/DP753287	Public reserve (MacIntyre Street)	11.65	Other Open Space	Undeveloped
	2/DP635056	Public Reserve (Harland Street)	4.06	Other Open Space	Undeveloped
	1/DP1155201 538/DP1156201 7041/DP94909 6/DP1152029	Sporting Complex	21.15	Sport	Township
	296/DP705962	Waratah Park	1.89	Sport	Local
Outside of Inverell Town	520/DP753287	McIlveen Park and Lookout	3.29	Recreation	Local

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