

LILLYDALE LAKE MASTERPLAN - CONSIDERATION FOR ADOPTION

Report Author: Project Manager - Recreation Planning
Responsible Officer: Director Planning & Sustainable Futures
Ward(s) affected: Billanook; Melba

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the community feedback to the draft Lillydale Lake Park Master Plan (the draft Master Plan) that has been developed following extensive consultation with the local Lillydale residents, park user groups, Council's Advisory Groups, Box Hill Institute, Kinley Development, and the broader Yarra Ranges community. The draft Master Plan provides a 15-year strategic approach to improve recreation facilities at Lillydale Lake Park (the Lake) in response to identified community needs, opportunities and population growth projected in the area.

A program of community consultation was undertaken 26 April to 6 June 2023, with strong support received. Improvements recommended include an upgrade to the water access and viewing facilities, youth activity and exercise area, accessible seating and picnic spaces, informative Indigenous and historical signage, plus improved path connectivity with the Box Hill Institute and new Kinley Development. These have been updated into the Master Plan which is now recommended for consideration for Adoption.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Considers the findings of community consultation on the Draft Lillydale Lake Park Master Plan.***
- 2. Adopts the Lillydale Lake Park Master Plan 2024 – 2039 generally in accordance with Attachment 1.***
- 3. Write to submitters to advise them of the outcome of the Council Meeting.***

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

On 26 April 2023 Council resolved

That Council

1. *Approve the release of the Draft Lillydale Lake Master Plan for community consultation and engagement in May – June 2023 for a period of five weeks.*
2. *Note that consultation findings will be presented back at a future Council meeting.*

The motion was Carried unanimously.

This report provides a summary of the feedback received and community support that underpins the request for consideration by Council to adopt the Master Plan.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

Lillydale Lake Park is classified as a Level 1 Regional Park, located at 435 Swansea Road in Lilydale. The park is always open to the public and contains both active and passive recreation spaces and facilities, designed as a shared facility to suit everyone. Typically, the park has over one million visitations per year.

ABS Census projections based on 2021 figures identify an increase in the Lilydale population of 76.6 per cent (13,424 persons) by 2046 to 30,950. This includes 3,200 new dwellings (8,000 people approximately) in the former quarry site adjacent to the Lake.

Aligned with the Lilydale Major Activity Centre Structure Plan (August 2022), the draft Master Plan has been developed to provide strategic justification and direction for investment in improvements to cater for the anticipated growth in usage of the Lillydale Lake parklands.

Owned and managed by Yarra Ranges Council, Lillydale Lake Park is home to existing facilities and activities including: a Community Room and Council Depot, an all-abilities playspace, outdoor fitness station, walking, cycling and mountain bike tracks, fishing and jetties, barbecues and picnic shelters, sandy beach area, public toilets including a Changing Places unit, and designated areas for 'off-leash' dogs.

The strategic intent is for the Lillydale Lake Park to continue to play a major role as a community space for outdoor leisure and social recreation. Parking is already heavily utilised at peak times, hence improvements to active transport linkages is a key element to support the future expected increased usage of the Lillydale Lake site.

Scope

Community consultation was undertaken in late April to early June 2023 seeking feedback on the draft Master Plan. Data was also collected from the Yardstick Park User Survey in November 2023 relevant to the community use of Lillydale Lake Park.

Over the months since then officers have collated all feedback gathered in June and November and then reviewed and analysed the content to identify improvements to the Masterplan. Further follow up conversations were held where needed with key internal and external stakeholders to clarify these proposed edits and then the draft Master Plan documents have been subsequently updated and refined.

A comprehensive Gender Impact Assessment of the project and proposed improvements was also undertaken during this time which was very validating of the directions in the Masterplan.

Key findings from Community Consultation

In April to June 2023, extensive consultation was undertaken to seek feedback on the draft Master Plan from stakeholders and the community. Consultation included an online survey (410 contributions from 385 contributors), letterbox drop (600 residents), drop-in sessions (6), social media, email distribution by park activity groups, stakeholder correspondence, Lilydale Township Action Group meeting and Council Advisory Committee sessions (2).

The community consultation undertaken in 2023 has confirmed that the draft Master Plan reflects the community's current and future views and provides support for Council's consideration for adoption in April 2024.

Whilst there was overall support for the Master Plan (89 per cent for adults, for children 56 per cent support with 34 per cent unsure). The findings have been documented in Attachment 3. The key themes for areas that mattered most to emerge from the survey comments and face-to face consultations include:

- Paths and path connectivity
 - Support for improved connectivity throughout the park and connections to surrounding shared paths and residential areas.
 - Requests for paths to be sealed (uniform surface, increase accessibility).
- Parking
 - Need for additional parking to cater for current peak times and anticipated increased usage.

- Toilets
 - Need for additional toilets.
 - Lack of cleanliness and maintenance of existing toilet facilities.
 - Need for family change facilities to support water play and other water-based activities.
- Activity Space
 - General support for the new youth activities area, in particular parkour/climbing, court space and new exercise equipment suitable for all ages and abilities.
- Playspace
 - Not suitable for wide range of children – misses the mark for pre-school and older children.
 - Request to provide/strengthen barriers to the lake and car park from the playspace.
- Park furniture
 - Call for more shade (shelters and/or trees), seating around the lake, picnic and BBQ facilities.
- Dog matters
 - The topic of dog faeces left on the path, personal safety and irresponsible owners was a regular topic of conversation and noted in survey responses.
 - Approximately 10 contributors of the 410 asked for fencing of the dog off leash area, two of these for personal safety, especially when owners are not placing their dogs on leash outside the designated areas.

Issues and suggestions regarding dogs raised through this consultation will be considered through the People and Dogs in Parks Plan currently being developed.

Community engagement is further discussed later in this report.

Master Plan Updates

The Background Report (now uploaded to the project webpage) has subsequently been updated to include:

- Updated strategic links to various policies and plans (pp 16–21).
- Consultation and Engagement Report (pp 34–59, including latest consultation results in Appendix 1 pp 44-58).

- Yardstick Park User Survey 2023 (pp 60–64).

Issues and opportunities identified in early draft development coupled with feedback on the draft plan have informed the latest version Lillydale Lake Park Master Plan (Attachment 1) presented for consideration and potential adoption.

A summarised version has been developed (Attachment 2) to improve ease of engagement for community.

It is important to note that overall feedback was highly supportive of the Master Plan, however, after listening to the things that mattered most the following changes were made to the recommendations:

- Include reference to collaboration with Lilydale Historical Society on heritage features.
- Include a feasibility study to identify a potential site to locate a toilet facility on the north or western side of the lake. Two sites to consider have been identified.
- Remove references to the upgrade of the boatshed, launch ramp and resurfacing of the Bellbird Park car park, as these were completed in 2023.
- Expand the proposed upgrade of the playspace to specifically mention applicability to wider range of ages, plus include areas for children with special needs e.g. quiet play.
- Investigate possibility to contain the playspace area by
 - Extending the rock wall between the playspace and lake and
 - Where feasible utilise planting and/or barriers to the car park.
- A few recommendations were reworded slightly to clarify intent.
- There has been a request by approximately 20 people (of 500+) to seal the paths to provide a more consistent and accessible surface, however at this point in time this is not considered feasible due to cost and desired character for the park.
- Additional content has also been added that explains in more detail the provisions for the Kinley development's works planned for the Melba Drain in accordance with their adopted plans.

The condition of the public toilets gained frequent comment throughout the consultation period. This ranged from building condition, lack of cleanliness, maintenance and/or provision of adequate supplies especially at peak times. Currently the upgrade of the toilets at Lillydale Lake falls outside of Council's 10-year Toilet Management Plan (2018-2028). The upgrade of the Lillydale Lake toilet facilities has been proposed in the Master Plan for design and construction soon

after in 2029-31, however this will be subject to further review of asset condition and any revision of the priorities of the Toilet Management Plan.

The update to the recommendations in the Master Plan has resulted in a slight decrease in the projected cost to implement the Lillydale Lake Park Master Plan from \$6,277,500 to \$6,112,500.

Options considered

Following the Community Engagement phase, Officers have considered the following options:

1. *Finalise the master plan*

In response to feedback from community and observed issues and opportunities in the area, the Master Plan will offer a coordinated suite of projects to improve amenity and value for community and respond to growing popularity of the park and projected increase in local population.

2. *Deliver projects ad-hoc*

While this brings some value to community, it can result in lost opportunities and inefficiencies through lack of coordination. This option is not recommended.

3. *No further upgrades at Lillydale Lake Park*

Officers are aware of issues and accessibility concerns that would continue to create barriers for community. The facility operates at capacity during peak times and without smart, efficient planning, the Lillydale Lake Park will struggle to meet with projected demand. Given the anticipated increase in community demand and regional profile of the park, this option is not recommended.

Recommended option and justification

The decision to proceed with the draft Master Plan was strongly supported by the community. The outcomes of the community engagement and key recommendations are detailed below. Of the 385 contributors to the survey, 89 per cent supported the proposed changes recommended in the Plan. When considering the children and young people in their care, 55.5 per cent felt the proposed improvements would meet their children's needs, 10 per cent did not and the remainder unsure.

The response has given officers the confidence that this draft master plan is delivering on what the community have told us was important to them now and into the future. The next step will be a well-considered design approach to any future projects and maximise efficiencies through coordinated and integrated solutions.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Projects identified in the Lillydale Lake Master Plan are estimated to cost \$6,112,500 over the 15-year lifespan of the Master Plan if fully delivered. Through face-to-face consultations and messaging in the draft Master Plan documents, it was made clear to interested public that there was not allocated budget, and that proposed improvements were subject to competitive funding applications.

The implementation does not currently have any allocated budget. Recommended improvements are reliant on funding from Public Open Space funding, renewal and co-funding sourced via grant applications, and where applicable contributions from community groups and organisations that would have direct benefit from the improvements. Advocacy for external funding has been strengthened by the evidence-based research and consultation undertaken to develop the (approved) Master Plan.

A Cost Plan has been developed to show estimated costs and a potential funding model, summarised in the Table below.

Draft Lillydale Lake Park Master Plan Cost Projections		Potential Funding Contributions		
Activity Area	Estimated Cost	Council	State / Federal Government Grants*	Other**
General Improvements	\$145,000	90,000	55,000	
A - Northwest Precinct	\$1,049,500	517,000	332,500	200,000
B - Northeast Precinct	\$3,365,500	1,765,500	1,595,000	5,000
C- Southwest Precinct	\$894,500	441,000	306,000	147,500
D - Southeast Precinct	\$658,000	470,500	187,500	
TOTAL	\$6,112,500	\$3,284,000	\$2,476,000	\$352,500

* Government grants to be sought to co-fund projects

** Where applicable, contributions to be sought from groups and organisations that would directly benefit from the improvements.

Council contribution is anticipated to come mainly from Public Open Space funding and the balance from Asset New and Improved Reserve funds. Where appropriate small cost items such as furniture, crossing points and signage, may be delivered through established capital works and/or operational programs.

An Asset Maintenance Plan will be developed to identify maintenance costs attributable to the new items proposed in the draft Master Plan, assuming they are supported by the community and Council.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

This report contributes to the following strategic objective(s) in the Council Plan:

- Connected and Healthy Communities
 - Communities are safe, resilient, healthy, inclusive and socially well connected. Quality services are accessible to everyone.
- Quality Infrastructure and Liveable Places
 - Quality facilities and infrastructure meets current and future needs. Places are well planned hubs of activity that foster wellbeing, creativity, and innovation.
 - Action 2: Develop and implement a strategic approach for activating and providing functional and affordable community assets and spaces that are welcoming to all and support the wellbeing and connectedness of the community.
 - Action 9: Plan, facilitate and develop urban renewal projects, including Lilydale Revitalisation project, Kinley re-development and Level Crossing Removal to facilitate the revitalisation of Lilydale. Ensuring alignment with Council's place making objectives of encouraging a vibrant, attractive, sustainable, healthy, and connected community.

The provision of improved facilities at Lilydale Lake Park will deliver facilities and infrastructure that meets the growing and diverse needs of our expanding community. The draft Master Plan is closely aligned with the strategic objectives of the Lilydale Revitalisation program of initiatives, including the expansion of the Lilydale Boatshed in 2022-2023.

Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025

- Increase active living.
- Improve mental wellbeing and social connection.

New and improved facilities will contribute to improved health and wellbeing with increased opportunities to socialise and exercise.

Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2013 - 2023

The Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2013-2023 sets out directions for creating healthy and active environments and services in Yarra Ranges and provides a framework to guide future development and management of Council's recreation reserves, parks and community spaces, including Lillydale Lake Park.

Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy 2013-2023

Through the Equity, Access and Inclusion Strategy, Council recognises that inclusion for people with a disability in all aspects of community life is a human right that also brings many social, cultural and economic benefits for the wider community. It further states as one of the goals that Council buildings and infrastructure are accessible to everyone in our community. Improvements to the amenities, shelters and increased ease of mobility through the Lillydale Lake parklands is a key deliverable of this draft Master Plan and will promote broader Reserve use by people living with disability.

Child and Youth Strategy 2014-2024

The Child and Youth Strategy has the vision that Yarra Ranges will be a place where every child and young person will be able to thrive, reach their potential and actively participate in decision making. Outcome 2 has the most relevance to this draft Master Plan, recommending that "Adequate Infrastructure exists to meet the needs of children, young people and their families."

RELEVANT LAW

Gender Equity Act 2020 – This master plan is considered to have a direct and significant impact on the Yarra Ranges community, so a gender impact assessment has been undertaken as part of this work. (Attachment 4).

Throughout the extensive consultation and development of the Lillydale Lake Park Master Plan, the identified needs of community members of all ages, gender and cultural backgrounds were taken into consideration. The resultant recommendations of the Lillydale Lake Park Master Plan have a community wide application benefiting the diverse community and aligned with the equality objectives of Council and the *Gender Equality Act (2020)*.

The draft Master Plan has been developed from a whole of community perspective including consideration of equitable opportunities for use of the reserve by women, men, and gender diverse people. Underpinning the recommendations is the objective to provide a reserve that encourages people of all ages, abilities, gender preference and cultural background with a space that is safe, welcoming and has the potential to improve individual health and wellbeing.

During the development of the draft Master Plan, it was noted that other than cycling and walking, there was a lack of activities suited to youth, in particular girls.

Population forecasts indicate a steady growth of young people to 2046. The 0-to-17-year cohort is expected to increase by 69 per cent (3710 to 6274 persons). This is second only to nearby Mooroolbark with a projected 6,305 persons in this age bracket. Combined, the youth in these two suburbs are predicted to constitute 31.5 per cent of the Yarra Ranges persons under 17 years by 2046.

The largest increase in females between 2021 and 2031 is forecast to be in the ages 35 to 39 group, (parents and homebuilders), with an expected increase by 410 and account for 7.6 per cent of the total females.

The draft plan proposes the development of the current exercise area to also include recreation options suited to all genders, such as a multi-purpose court area with spectator seating, parkour/climbing, hangout areas and potentially a DJ unit. A further shelter seating area is proposed near the new mountain bike track. The intention is to make these welcoming spaces for young people to 'chill out' and feel more comfortable to join in the activities. During school times especially, when not in use by young people, these areas including updated exercise equipment will be available for all ages and abilities to use.

Lillydale Lake already offers facilities applicable for the broad community spectrum including high needs amenities. Upgrades and new options plan to improve on visitation experience for existing and new visitors.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

Enhancement of social and recreation facilities at Lillydale Lake will support the anticipated increase in local population and tourism in the area. Local small businesses (food vans and main street shops) already benefit from visitations to the lake. Economic benefits will naturally increase with visitations.

In the past, the feasibility of a permanent food outlet/café has been investigated but not considered viable. With the projected increase in local population and subsequent visitations, the draft Master Plan proposes a new feasibility study to revisit the café idea. Early community consultation has raised this as a desirable service at the Lake. Recently roadside traders have been engaged through workshops to understand the issues and opportunities of conducting their businesses, including at Lillydale Lake.

The construction phase of park improvements is expected to contribute to the local economy through employment opportunities and as a source of materials and equipment.

Social Implications

There are strong links to social and community impacts resulting from the development and improvement of local reserves such as the Lillydale Lake area, which include:

1. Enhanced community access to infrastructure that encourages alternative health and wellbeing outcomes
2. Revitalisation of local communities
3. Reduction of social isolation
4. Increased visitor footprint
5. Increased female participation in active recreation.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy identifies high levels of obesity, dementia, and poor mental health as significant issues for our community. Provision of walking and cycling opportunities are important contributors to improved health.

The inclusion of a multi-purpose court and Parkour equipment will encourage a variety of social ball games and physical challenges for children and youth.

Environmental Implications

A highly valued aspect of the Lillydale Lake Park is the opportunity to walk, exercise or just sit and take in the view, watch the children play or enjoy a variety of water activities on offer. This emphasis on active transport seeks to reduce dependence on car-based transport, reducing carbon emissions and improving health.

The preservation, enhancement, and accessibility for people of all ages and abilities is a key driver for improvement underpinning recommendations, particularly through the area.

Opportunity exists to create an Indigenous arboretum to trial various tree species for drought tolerance that can be replicated elsewhere in the Yarra Ranges. This emphasis on resilient landscape solutions supports resilience and adaptation in a changing climate.

The lake itself and associated functional wetlands are a critical element within the broader management of stormwater and improved water quality downstream in the Yarra/Birrarung. The natural landscape aspects of the park play an important habitat role for wildlife, and the emphasis on activity and health foster improved low carbon transport behaviours.

Increased tree planting offers carbon capture, while the increased canopy cover and the cooling effect of the lake's water body will contribute to an improved ambient temperature during peak heat periods, reducing urban heat island effects.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Extensive community consultation seeking feedback on the draft Lillydale Lake Park Master Plan took place between 6 April – 6 June 2023. The following methods of engagement were employed to ensure opportunities for the broadest range of ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds typical of the Lillydale and visiting population:

- Online survey (385 contributors)
- Letterbox drop (600 residents)
- Activity provider and participant group information distribution (7)
- Drop-in sessions (5): Lillydale Lake (3), Box Hill Institute, Montrose Festival
- Lillydale Township Action Group meeting
- Disability Advisory Group
- Health and Wellbeing Advisory Group
- Project Reference Group (officers representing numerous Council departments)
- Box Hill Institute, Melbourne Water, Kinley Development.

Additional user satisfaction data for Lillydale Lake (25 surveys) has been gleaned from the Yardstick Parks User Survey 2023.

A snapshot of the consultation results is captured in Attachment 7, with full details in the Background Report (Attachment 1, Appendix 1 and 2 pp42 – 64).

Of the proposed changes the items respondents said they would use most included:

- Accessible paths, picnic shelters, seating and barbecue facilities (65%)
- Path and trail connections (54%)
- Wetlands viewing areas / lookouts (54%).

Children and youth typically use the playspace and waterplay, walk, socialise and ride bikes. For an improved experience there was strong support for:

- Updates to the playspace more inclusive of the very young and older children
- The activity space (social, parkour and ball play opportunities)
- Path improvements for bikes and scooters.

Overall, the Lillydale Lake Park Draft Master Plan has received strong support:

- Of the 385 contributors to the survey, 89 per cent supported the proposed changes recommended in the Plan.
- When considering the children and young people in their care (585 children aged 0-18 years), 55.5 per cent felt the proposed improvements would meet their children's needs, 10 per cent did not and the remainder 35 per cent unsure.

- 89 per cent of respondents felt that the proposed changes would improve accessibility.

The draft Master Plan has been refined and the Background Report updated and associated documents included to provide a package for Council's consideration. The documentation supports the current proposed adoption of the Lillydale Lake Park Master Plan.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Extensive collaboration has been undertaken throughout Council in the development of the draft Master Plan. Box Hill Institute, Melbourne Water and Kinley Development were also key stakeholders engaged in the development stages.

Melbourne Water is a referral body at this site. Their ongoing involvement, support, and approval (where required), for initiatives proposed will be critical for improvements to be undertaken.

The recent funding for the boatshed extension through Lilydale Revitalisation Program is an example of the collaboration and support relationship that exists.

Ongoing collaboration with Box Hill Institute will underpin the proposed interface improvements and new connections to the Kinley Estate through the education land.

Opportunity may arise through implementation of the draft Master Plan to identify and implement innovative ways to view/experience the wetlands. Also, the proposed inclusion of Parkour equipment is a new and innovative option for 'no cost' exercise equipment for youth and active adults in Yarra Ranges.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Concern has been raised regarding the risk of over-development of the Lillydale Lake Park. The draft Master Plan proposes modest improvements to existing infrastructure plus minor vegetation and social infrastructure to improve the quality of the visitation experience for community members of all ages and abilities, yet avoids over-embellishment.

Proposed expenditure (\$6,112,500) over the 15-year lifespan of the Master Plan reflects the modest improvements required to redevelop infrastructure that supports the water activities that are unique to the area and the social activities aligned with this popular destination. A review of the community hall will be explored separately through a wider Social Infrastructure assessment and may recommend future redevelopment of this facility. Any associated costs would be in addition to the draft Master Plan scope.

Parking is heavily utilised at the lake. The proposed improvements to path connections to the Kinley Estate and major trails promotes active transport rather than increasing pressure on the car park area. Education and signage will be important in spreading the parking demand to alternate areas around the lake precinct.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

1. Draft Master Plan February 2024 for adoption
2. Master Plan Summary
3. Consultation Summary Report