

## 11. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

### 11.1 Explanation

“Open Space and Recreation” refers to the system of public and private land and facilities as well as coastal areas and waterways. These areas can have nature conservation, environmental, scientific, social, recreational, cultural, spiritual, scenic, health and economic benefit for the community, both now and in the future. It excludes entertainment areas such as cinemas and video game parlours. Outdoor Recreation includes sustainable nature based recreation and will be ecologically sustainable and accessible for enjoyment of local, district, regional, national and international visitors. It will involve land which is or ultimately may be in public ownership as part of the recreation and conservation resources of the Shire, or which may be in private ownership, but because of its recognised contribution to recreation, conservation, biodiversity or landscape and amenity should be managed and protected using various statutory or voluntary mechanisms.

Unless agricultural land is within these categories it is not included in this definition.

### 11.2 Key Issues

The key issues to which the planning strategy for open space and recreation within the Shire responds include:

- the need to provide equitable access to a diverse range of open space experiences for the community;
- the value of open space includes its contribution to available recreation opportunities, to conservation, environmental management and water cycle management, and to the economic resources of the community;
- the need to co-ordinate the planning, provision and management of open space;
- the number of regionally significant natural resources in Maroochy Shire offers a comprehensive range of recreational activities and facilities;
- the opportunity for multiple use of the Shire’s many recreational reserves, by land used for drainage purposes and by formed and unformed road reserves and esplanades;
- the importance of connectivity or creating linkages in the open space network;
- the need to provide land and facilities of an appropriate standard to minimise life cycle/maintenance costs while meeting community needs;
- the need to establish a sound basis for the funding of open space provision;
- the pace of growth in the Shire and the need to identify and protect opportunities to establish a functional open space network;

- the diverse physical settings, development patterns and community characteristics in the Shire; and
- the adequacy of the type and distribution of open space and recreational facilities in meeting community requirements.

### 11.3 Open Space and Recreation Strategy

The following outlines the elements of the planning strategy to be employed to address the above issues:

#### 11.3.1 Distinguishing the two layers of the open space system in the Shire.

- The first layer embodies the conservation and visual amenity elements that provide the Shire with its landscape character and ‘macro’ level open space structure. Sections 7.0 and 10.0 of the Strategic Plan, in particular, address the identification and preservation of these conservation and visual amenity elements; and
- The second layer identifies different types of open space at a settlement specific or ‘micro’ level. This recognises that the settlement areas framed by the ‘macro’ open space structure have different lifestyle preferences, different built forms, different levels of accessibility to recreation and leisure opportunities and different needs for open space and leisure.

#### 11.3.2 Identifying a coherent and inter connected physical system of open space which serves the following broad functions:

- conservation and environmental management, where land contains significant biological diversity values such as vegetation or habitat for fauna, or can support these (as corridors or buffers), or is necessary for the sustainable management and protection of all water resources;
- recreation, including organised sporting pursuits, for informal play, for walking or for simply ‘passing the time of day’ in pleasant relaxed surroundings;
- definition of a visual and landscape ‘character’ that adds to the amenity and visual appeal at both a Shire wide and local level; and
- links between areas providing the above functions.

#### 11.3.3 The classification of open space areas as regional, shirewide, district or local, where these ‘levels of significance’ are generally distinguished:

- for active or informal recreation reserves, and open space links, by the distance between them, or the number of people they serve (that is, there will be more local than district facilities and more district than shirewide facilities, and more shirewide facilities than regional); and for open space areas with conservation, environmental management or landscape and amenity values, by how important the values being protected are (for example, an area containing a plant species that is very rare and threatened in national terms would be of ‘regional’ significance, while a landscape backdrop to a small local park, providing amenity value to a neighbourhood, might be of only ‘local’ significance).

**11.3.4** Notwithstanding the general distinction between the levels of significance of the different types of open space, adoption of the following criteria for allocating local, district, shirewide and regional open space classifications.

- **Local open space** serves the population *living in* a neighbourhood, locality, planning area or township within the Shire.
- **District open space** serves the population *living in* a township, as well as a substantial section of the Shire or visitors from the remainder of the Shire or immediately adjoining local government areas, for a particular array of opportunities. District open spaces should vary in what they offer across a local government area, rather than duplicate each other. All residents should have good access (with safe provision of access routes) to one or more district open spaces within the Shire (in accessible locations) and a choice of uses across the array of sites provided.
- **Shirewide open space** serves the population of the planning scheme area. The spaces are envisaged to provide “headquarter facilities” for the major sports and other shirewide public recreation functions. They are preferably located within or adjacent to major urban areas. Shirewide open space also includes the recreation trails network.
- **Regional open space** serves or is significant to residents of the whole Shire, those from neighbouring local government areas, and potentially, those from South East Queensland, the rest of the State, other states and overseas. A regional open space may support *one* activity or a particular *range* of activities although multi-use is desirable.

**11.3.5** Applying three key principles relating to equity of opportunity, access and diversity to guide the distribution, level of provision and quality of open space to meet community needs and expectations at a settlement or micro level.

*(i) Ensuring equity of opportunity for all residents regardless of age, ability, interests, and economic circumstances*

This principle directs that no resident will suffer disadvantage in terms of open space opportunities because of personal circumstances or because of technical or administrative barriers

*(ii) Ensuring access*

No resident will suffer disadvantage in terms of open space opportunities because of the location, character, design or cost of using open spaces

*(iii) Ensuring Diversity*

A range of open spaces will be provided such that an array of settings can be used and a range of experiences and benefits can be gained from them by the community

**11.3.6** The implementation of an equitable and effective system for funding, designing, developing and managing open space, having regard to a range of guiding principles as follows.

- *Giving priority consideration to the protection of the intrinsic and natural attributes of the environment; honouring national and international commitments; ensuring environmental sustainability and monitoring and responding to use impacts*

Environmental sustainability and the protection of the intrinsic and natural attributes of the environment will be given precedence of consideration over other forms of open space use.

- *Protecting the community’s cultural heritage*

Action to develop open space will only be taken if the community’s cultural heritage is protected or not degraded.

- *Being relevant to community needs and reflective of culture and cultural change*

Actions will only be taken after an appropriate assessment of the needs of the community and an assessment of cultural change and the projected needs of future generations.

- *Devising an appropriate plan for funding open space*

Open space will be funded according to the applicable infrastructure charging instrument, covering the levying of infrastructure charges or contributions on development.

- *Optimising the benefits offered by existing resources*

The use and capacity of existing resources will be fully developed before additional resources are provided.

- *Maintaining and enhancing the built environment*

Open space acquisition, development and management will contribute to the quality of the built environment.

- *Seeking operational viability and net community benefits*

Open spaces will only be acquired and developed if they have the capacity to achieve operational objectives and provide net community benefits given the financial investment.

- *Protecting existing provision*  
A net reduction in open space provision levels should not be permitted without compensatory enhancement of another site or sites to a standard and at a location which are acceptable to the community.
- *Pursuing integration and consolidation of provision*  
Open space provision will be enhanced through actions designed to integrate and consolidate existing and additional future provision.
- *Treating property and owners with equity and respect; providing appropriate compensation; ensuring investment certainty*  
All property will be treated with respect; property owners will be treated equitably regarding the acquisition, management and funding of open space; compensation will be paid for demonstrable loss by property owners in accordance with relevant legislative requirements; action will be taken to maintain investment certainty with respect to open space.
- *Seeking roles for private providers*  
The roles and opportunities offered through private providers of open space will be recognised and incorporated into open space planning, acquisition, development and management.
- *Integrated planning*  
Open space acquisition, development and management will be treated as an integral part of local, district, shirewide and regional planning and infrastructure provision

## 11.4 Preferred Dominant Land Use

### 11.4.1 Recreation

The preferred dominant land use of 'Recreation' has been attributed to existing and proposed major recreational facilities recognising their potential for establishment and/or expansion, and the need to protect the resource from the encroachment of incompatible land uses. It is intended that the extension of the existing recreational use or the establishment of an appropriate new recreational use as well as a range of ancillary uses are likely to be permitted, having regard to its impact on existing land uses in the surrounding area.

The recreation preferred dominant land use does not include many other important elements of the open space network, particularly those of a shirewide, district or local level significance or whose predominant function is other than recreation. While these exist within other designations on the Strategic Plan Map, the objectives and implementation strategies set out in this section will apply equally to them.

## 11.5 Objectives and Implementation Measures

### 11.5.1 To Develop an Open Space Network which Performs a Range of Functions, Meets Community Needs and is in Keeping with its Setting

Open space can fulfil a number of functions including conservation and environmental management, definition of a landscape and visual character and structure and provision for passive and active recreation. Its utility is maximised when it is provided as a coherent and interconnected network.

Areas of open space serve different catchments. They may perform any of the above functions, at a regional, shirewide, district or local level of significance.

At the local level, it is generally intended to promote the provision of larger spaces to offer flexibility in function as community needs change over time and to minimise maintenance costs. In addition, linkages between open space areas of all types are seen as a critical part of the system. Roads and other linear reserves can be utilised to fulfil this function.

Maroochy Shire has a range of settlement types, including rural and rural residential areas, small towns in the 'rail' corridor, on the Blackall Range and elsewhere in the hinterland, and larger urban settlements at Buderim, Nambour and on the coastal plains. Open space provision in these different settlement areas may reflect different needs and preferences, and different landscape and amenity values.

Consultation with the communities in these different settlement areas, combined with the application of normative standards of provision, have been utilised to identify an open space system consisting of a range of open space projects.

### Implementation

- (1) The Priority Infrastructure Plan sets out in detail the intended classification, distribution and level of provision for different elements of the open space system. The applicable infrastructure charging instrument sets out the intended means of funding these elements.
- (2) Provisions have also been incorporated into the Code for Reconfiguring Lots to provide guidance for the contribution of land in lieu of paying all or part of the applicable infrastructure charge.
- (3) Council's Open Space Strategy contains additional elements, covering open space design and management, which also provide guidance for the development of the open space network and for establishing the appropriate role and setting of particular open space projects.

### **11.5.2 To Protect Natural Features and Resources which Establish the Visual and Landscape Structure and Provide Important Recreational Resources**

Elements of the open space system which define the visual and landscape structure of the Shire include its topographic features, vegetation and habitat areas, and linkages between these and the foreshores and river corridors.

While this array of significant natural resources have undisputed ecological values, they also have considerable aesthetic values, provide recreational opportunities, impact on quality of life and providing an indispensable asset for the economy of the Sunshine Coast. As such, these resources must be protected. Some protection is already afforded through public ownership and management plans that provide for recreational needs and protect the environmental qualities of these areas. However, a number of these resources are also being encroached on by urban development or other activity which has the potential to undermine the aesthetic qualities and range of recreational experiences which may otherwise be offered by these resources.

Beach, foreshore and river areas are important natural recreational resources of the Shire and unless required to be protected to secure their integrity or are required to be protected under coastal management plans, the public areas should be made accessible to people.

#### **Implementation**

- (1) Development on land on the periphery of natural resources which provide landscape values and/ or recreational opportunities will be subject to management regimes which seek to prevent the natural resource from being compromised.
- (2) Development on land adjacent to natural resources will be assessed having regard to the recreational potential the resources embody to ensure that future conflicts are minimised and the recreation potential is not undermined.
- (3) Wherever practical natural recreation resources will be secured in public ownership.
- (4) Beach, foreshore and river areas in public ownership shall be made accessible to the people where their environmental values are not compromised or endangered.

### **11.5.3 To Protect Existing Open Space and Recreational Facilities**

Existing open space areas are important community resources and form the basis of the intended future system at local, district and regional levels. Large sporting fields and other recreational facilities are shown on the strategic plan map. These large facilities may create impacts on surrounding areas as a result of noise, lighting and traffic, albeit for generally limited periods of time.

It is important to recognise existing facilities, to plan for their continued development and to protect them from potential conflict with incompatible uses.

#### **Implementation**

- (1) Development on land near existing open space areas and recreational facilities may be subject to conditions relating to such matters as buffering and setbacks of certain activities, particularly where the land is being developed for predominantly residential purposes.
- (2) Development on land near existing open space areas and recreational facilities will be assessed having regard to activities or proposed activities in or at these areas and facilities, to ensure that any future conflicts are minimised.

### **11.5.4 To Secure Centrally Located Civic Spaces Providing a Community Focus and Serving Community Needs**

Considerable emphasis is given to the desire for greater community focus in urban development, to be achieved in part through the provision of central focus points from regional to neighbourhood levels of planning. Central to this provision will be the provision of highly visible and accessible civic spaces located in conjunction with retail and commercial development and other public buildings, serving a range of civic and recreational functions. These spaces may only be small in size, but may be intensively utilised and serve a number of community functions appropriate to the size of the community it serves.

#### **Implementation**

- (1) In development proposals including proposals for retail and commercial development and other centrally located facilities, regard may be given to the community need for civic spaces. The size, shape and character of the civic space, is to have regard to the role, intended character and Statements of Desired Precinct Key Character Elements (in Volume 3) of the centre, including Local centres, that the space is intended to enhance.
- (2) Civic spaces should be made accessible to surrounding public facilities and amenities, including recreation facilities and open space, schools, public transport and shops, with appropriate pedestrian, bicycle and other linkages and connections.

- (3) Civic spaces should be designed so as to be highly visible, accessible, safe and provide adequate seating, shade structures and recreational equipment to serve the needs of the community.