Chapter 2.0
How we plan

2.1 The role of the recreation parks network

A regional perspective

The Sunshine Coast's recreation parks are an integral part of council's broader open space network, a network which aims to provide an interconnected green frame around and within the region's built form. This green frame is central as it connects us to the natural world and creates a sense of identity within our communities. Sitting within this green frame are a number of council networks and facilities, each with a specific function that contributes to the social, environmental and financial health of the region.

Recreation parks rarely sit in isolation from other council networks and public facilities. More often than not, parks are connected to an overlapping series of other council service networks (Figure 6: Open space networks). For these networks to function in an effective and sustainable manner, it is crucial that adjoining networks are identified whenever park planning is undertaken. Doing so will lead to shared outcomes that benefit the whole community and help to avoid future conflicts.

An example of this is the relationship between streetscapes and the recreation parks network. Resilience of the urban forest and delivery of an enjoyable user experience are enhanced by selecting trees for a park that are consistent with the trees currently planted in accordance with the SCC's Street Tree Master Plan 2018.

Warana

The Sunshine Coast region is comprised of a broad range of natural landscapes from the lush rainforests of the hinterland to the eucalypt forests of the foothills, across the wetlands and waterways of the coastal plains, through the wet and dry wallum and down to the coast. The natural landscapes are connected through habitats from the hinterland to the coast. These green links contain a range of unique biodiversity – plants, animals and microorganisms that are intrinsic to the character of the region.

In rural areas where existing natural habitats are often protected and managed as part of the conservation estate, like national parks and refuges, council environment reserves and voluntary conservation areas, recreation parks serve as a gateway to enjoying the region's biodiversity. Recreation parks are often co-located with council environment reserves, national parks and state forests. They provide a semi-natural setting where groups or individuals can use appropriate levels of built infrastructure while enjoying the natural beauty that surrounds them. To preserve the natural aesthetics of these settings it is very important that environmental values are considered and balanced with recreation opportunities.

Following these corridors down from the hinterland, along the riparian areas and down to the coastal wallum (the low-lying, swampy area just in from the coast that is home for many wildflowers), the landscape begins to exhibit more developed characteristics. In these urbanised areas recreation parks take on a more significant role in terms of access to local biodiversity and ecosystem services.

The vegetation in our parks, urban reserves and along our streetscapes combined with the vegetation on private property, make up what is commonly referred to as the urban forest. The urban forest provides several ecosystem services to our region:

- the purification of air and water
- shade and reduced surface temperatures
- opportunities to observe and interact with local biodiversity.

Park design and activities protect ecologically important areas and support local biodiversity where consistent with the primary function of the park. Remnant and established urban bushland and other spaces are enhanced and linked by recreation parks where possible and biodiversity values are maintained by avoiding vegetation clearing.

Parks planning activities must consider all existing and potential connections to the natural environment to strengthen our relationship to the natural environment and extend the green connections. The numerous physical and mental health benefits from exposure to nature, in urban and rural settings, means that incorporation of natural landscapes into park design is not just an exercise in aesthetic improvement, but also public health and wellbeing.

Parks are spaces where friends and families gather, where strong connections between people and place are often developed. These central gathering spaces should be connected to other community activity centres, such as schools and shopping precincts, via a network of green linkages and corridors that also encourage healthy and sustainable transport choices.

Recreation parks, in conjunction with street trees and footpath networks, play a vital role in encouraging active transport. The council's Integrated Transport Strategy has recognised the importance of integrated active transport as our region continues to grow and urbanise. Council has committed to prioritising new and upgraded infrastructure that supports active transport options. This infrastructure will assist council in meeting its transport mode split targets of 20% active transport (increased from 12% in 2020) and 10% passenger transport (increased from 3% in 2020). [16]

To achieve these mode split targets it is important that council considers the user experience for people who want to use active transport modes like walking and biking. By integrating a living infrastructure network comprised of our urban forest, street trees and open space networks with our transport network, council can encourage and support active transportation across the region, particularly in more urban areas. Living infrastructure provides numerous user benefits including shaded and cooler pathways, increased visual amenity and connections to local biodiversity. Green, living infrastructure has the potential to enhance even short trips into opportunities for people to experience wonder, enjoyment and a connection to place. Integration of external transport linkages with recreation parks creates interesting and functional urban environments that enhance the first and last sections of a commute. Active transport commuters are provided the opportunity to experience the uniqueness of the place in which we live through sensory benefits like the sights and sounds of local birdlife or the smells of flowering trees in bloom.

As we move forward it is important that recreation parks include technological elements that allow people to connect with information services, from innovative public engagement to the smart city framework.

2.2 Planning context

Regional snapshot

The Sunshine Coast is 53 kilometres north of Queensland's capital, Brisbane. Over the past decade the region has experienced population growth of 6500 people annually. The local government area that the SCC is responsible for covers around 2200 square kilometres, from its famous coastline to the panoramic hinterland. With the area's annual population growth expected to continue into the foreseeable future, significant planning and investment in urban development and supporting infrastructure is occurring. The desirable combination of a thriving business community, a healthy outdoor lifestyle and abundant natural assets characterises the opportunities within the Sunshine Coast.
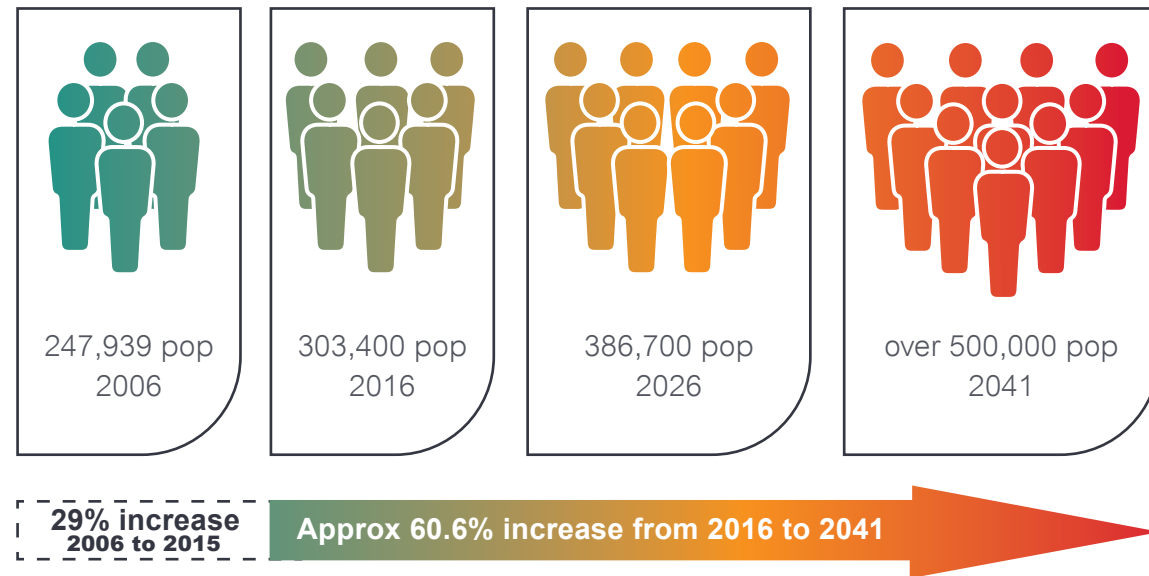
Environment

The region includes extensive waterways and wetlands, mountain ranges, and 60 kilometres of coastline. Within the Sunshine Coast's subtropical climate there are 75 different regional ecosystems which are home to 2600 plant species and 850 animal species. [17]

Population

In 2020, the 303,400 residents of the Sunshine Coast occupy 127,000 dwellings, primarily within established urban centres along the coast. The population's median age, 43 years, is six years older than the state's median. The most common age group is between 45 to 49 years old. [18]

Economy

The SCC area represents Queensland's second strongest regional economy, generating $17 billion in GDP each year. [19] It is a major urban and economic centre. The key industries of healthcare and social assistance, construction and retail, provide more than 40% of all jobs in the region. [20] Tourism is another crucial economic driver. Landmarks like Australia Zoo attract visitors from all over the world and beaches and parks bring day-trippers from across South East Queensland. Each year more than 8 million visitor nights are recorded, demonstrating the high volume of tourists staying overnight in the region. [21]

247,939 pop 2006

303,400 pop 2016

386,700 pop 2026

over 500,000 pop 2041

29% increase 2006 to 2015

Approx 60.6% increase from 2016 to 2041

Source: Forecast.id, 2018

Figure 3: Population growth for the region

	Number of parks
Recreation parks	**501**
Local parks	398
District parks	88
Council-wide parks	15
Civic parks	**5**
Linear parks	**129**
Amenity reserves	**495**
Landscape corridors	**84**
Total number of parks	**1,214**

Barbecues		**Shelters**	
Total	312 (304)	Total	960 (797)
Playgrounds		**Skate Parks**	
Total	362 (355)	Total	30 (29)
Dog parks (fenced)		**Basketball courts**	
Total	14 (14)	Total	71 (69)
Exercise equipment		**Showers**	
Total	50 (50)	Total	166 (143)
Public amenities		**Beach access points**	
Total	190	Total	263

* Current as at February 2021. All information provided is subject to change. Figures included do not take into consideration which council branch maintains these assets
*(Parks and Gardens assets only)

Legend (map):
- Coastal areas
- Hinterland areas
- Bruce Highway
- Heavy Rail corridor

2.3 Parks hierarchy

Introduction

Council's recreation parks network is large and diverse, encompassing over 1,000 hectares of land distributed across the region. The network includes parks that are big, little, busy, quiet, on the hinterland and across the beaches.

Each type of park has a specific role to play in the broader recreation parks network. Council uses a hierarchy of recreation park categories, established in the ELS, to identify the function or role of each parcel of designated parkland. This guides decision making about the types of activities and infrastructure provided, ensuring an equitable distribution of recreational opportunities across the region.

Detailed Desired Standards of Service

The following section of the RPP outlines the detailed Desired Standards of Service (DSS) for a typical recreation park in each level of the parks hierarchy. These standards are intended to complement the desired standards found in the ELS (park size, provision rate, location, accessibility etc.) by providing additional detail on the levels of infrastructure required to support park role and function. Most of the parks in each hierarchy category should include the characteristics and levels of infrastructure   described here.

There will be circumstances where a park's location, setting and local character requires variation from these standards. These variations should only be considered if they assist in achieving network goals and can be delivered in accordance with the principles outlined in this plan.
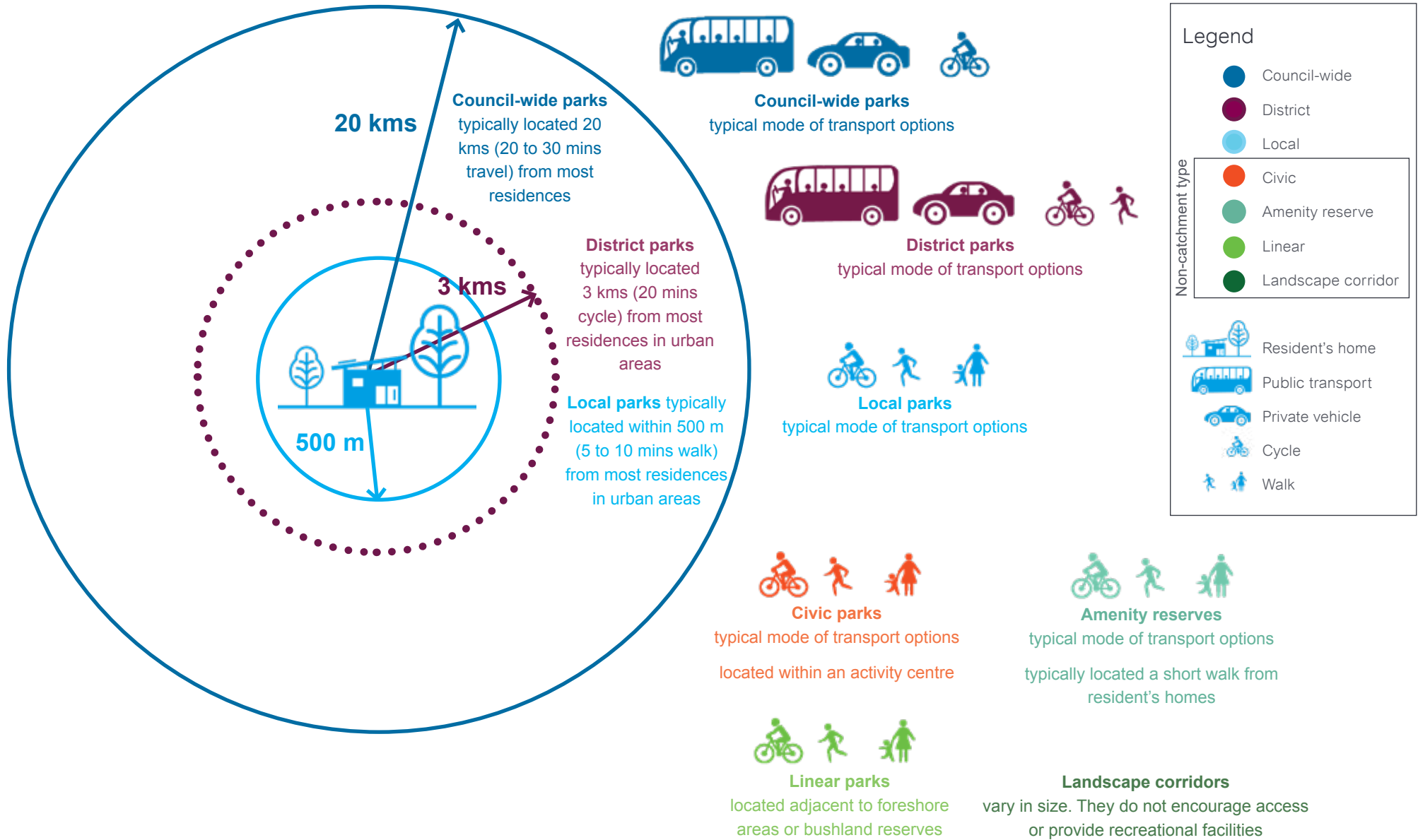
Council-wide parks
typically located 20 kms (20 to 30 mins travel) from most residences

Council-wide parks
typical mode of transport options

District parks
typically located 3 kms (20 mins cycle) from most residences in urban areas

District parks
typical mode of transport options

Local parks typically located within 500 m (5 to 10 mins walk) from most residences in urban areas

Local parks
typical mode of transport options

Civic parks
typical mode of transport options
located within an activity centre

Amenity reserves
typical mode of transport options
typically located a short walk from resident's homes

Linear parks
located adjacent to foreshore areas or bushland reserves

Landscape corridors
vary in size. They do not encourage access or provide recreational facilities

Legend

- Council-wide
- District
- Local

Non-catchment type
- Civic
- Amenity reserve
- Linear
- Landscape corridor

- Resident's home
- Public transport
- Private vehicle
- Cycle
- Walk

Figure 4: Park location and accessibility catchments (as described in the ELS)

Page 28 photograph: Cotton Tree Park

Council-wide recreation parks – the showcase

Council-wide recreation parks are important spaces where the Sunshine Coast community comes together to celebrate. These regional parks show off the best of the Sunshine Coast, drawing visitors from the across the region and beyond.

Council-wide recreation parks are large parks that cater for large numbers of people. These parks provide specialised attractions and functions that are unique to the location. Visitors to these parks are likely to travel by car or public transport, with increasing use of active transport, as this network develops. These parks provide a wide range of experiences and opportunities that encourage longer visits. The central and accessible locations of these parks combined with unique and spectacular features and large amounts of supporting infrastructure, make council-wide parks the most suitable spaces for major events and celebrations that promote the liveability of the region.

Existing vegetation and landscape features are retained and incorporated into the design of council-wide parks, with a mix of softscape and built infrastructure provided to support functions and amenity. Multiple passive and active recreation opportunities are often supported with viewing platforms and boardwalks provided to showcase the unique scenic beauty of surrounding areas. There are undercover areas for picnicking and barbecuing and purpose-built areas for weddings or other celebrations. Innovative play spaces are provided that cater for many different ages and abilities. There are areas that can accommodate large sporting, music or other events as well as spaces for smaller performances. Public art

and interpretive infrastructure encourage enjoyment, interaction and education within council-wide parks.

Some council-wide parks experience extremely high levels of visitation at specific times of the year, like Kings Beach during the Caloundra Music Festival, while others have a more consistent level of use throughout the year like the Mooloolaba Esplanade. Built infrastructure in these parks is fit for purpose and able to support expected levels of use and the accompanying wear and tear. Examples of this infrastructure include a higher level of hard surfacing, efficient irrigation, signage and barrier controls. Infrastructure that supports longer visits includes ample car parking, bus let-down areas, larger amenity blocks and approved commercial ventures.

While most council-wide recreation parks have high levels of built infrastructure there are a few truly unique exceptions. Mary Cairncross Park has limited built infrastructure to ensure minimal impact on the pristine natural environment of the Mary Cairncross Scenic and Environmental Reserve.

Functional space guidelines for council-wide parks

- Minimum park area, 10-20 hectares.
- Minimum park area must remain free from all encumbrances including easements, environmental buffers, stormwater management devices and overland flow paths.

- Park must be designed to host large organised events.
  - concessionary hardstand area(s) (5m x 8m) for food and coffee vans and events with access to water and power.
- Area must provide a range of varying scale, form and function that cater to users of all ages and abilities from across the region.
- Area should represent proportional targets for spaces:
  - Active open space, 30% – 50%
    - 1 large kick and throw area (50m x 70m)
    - 2 small kick and throw areas (30m x 40m) which may be used for alternative active recreation elements if required
    - active recreation elements, for example hardcourts, fitness areas and dog exercise areas
  - Social spaces, 10% – 30%
    - for example, shelters, barbecues, community gardens and play spaces, to be provided in designated nodes
  - Vegetated areas, 10% – 20%
    - includes tree coverage and landscaping
    - planting style to suit setting, local landscape and character
  - Car park and internal trails, 5%
  - Stormwater management, maximum 5% (including vegetation)
    - must not impact park function
    - where possible, stormwater treatment facilities should be integrated with planted areas.

Table 1: Council-wide recreation parks embellishment requirements

Type of embellishment	Council-wide park requirement / number
Animals	
Dog off leash parks	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function
Furniture	
Barbecues	Yes – 1 double plate barbecue / 2 shelters
Bicycle rails	Yes – 4 bike parking spaces / ha
Bins (waste)	Yes – 1 waste bin / 2 shelters
Bins (recycle)	Yes – 1 recycling bin / 2 shelters (where serviceable)
Drinking fountains	Yes – 1 / playground (max 3)
Taps – public access	Yes – 1 / barbecue area (servicing multiple)
Taps – maintenance	Yes – 1 min
Stand-alone seat / picnic table and bench	Yes – 2 seats / ha, min 2 / playground
Showers	Optional – where adjoining beach/water access
Barriers	
Bollards	Yes – along non-fenced perimeter boundaries. Trees and vegetation preferred
Fences and gates (vehicle access / pedestrian access)	Optional – where required
Pedestrian infrastructure	
Internal path	Yes – sealed paths, dual use (pedestrian and bicycle)
Connection path	Yes – sealed path (link to external networks)
Planting	
Trees	Yes – native and non-native shade trees
Natural shade coverage	40% coverage of pathways at tree maturity; 50% coverage of activity areas (playgrounds, exercise etc)
Landscape planting (garden beds, turf, re-vegetation)	Yes - planting style to suit local landscape and character
Community gardens	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function

Type of embellishment	Council-wide park requirement / number
Play, sport and activities	
Exercise equipment	Optional – multi – generational exercise activities
Play spaces (playgrounds, natural activity areas)	Yes – 1000m2 with equipment and landform. Must be shaded by trees and / temporary shade sails
Skate park	Optional – refer SCC Skate and BMX plan
Informal sports and games (fields and courts, outdoor games, children's bicycle track)	Yes – range of multi-generational sports and games, multi-purpose courts allowed
Kick and throw area	Yes – 1 large area (50m x 70m) and 2 small areas (30m x 40m). Flat and well drained
Event spaces	Yes – min 1
Signs, art and memorials	
Signage	Yes – naming, directional, interpretive, regulatory
Public art	Optional – durable pieces that provide opportunity for interaction
Primary public access points	Yes – min 2 highly visible and well-signed entrances
Structures and parking	
Parking (on-site)	Yes – 10 spaces / ha, bus set down required
Shade sails	Yes - temporary measure while trees mature
Public amenities (toilets)	Yes – min 1
Shelters	Yes – 1 shelter / 1.5ha
Utilities and smart technology	
Irrigation	Optional – as required and approved by council, high activity areas only, not entire park
Serviced site	Yes
Lighting	Yes – as required to meet CPTED principles - key pedestrian linkages, shelters, toilet blocks and car parks not serviced by ambient light from adjacent roadways
Other	
see RPP – Technical Guidelines – Appendix B – Table: 41 / DSS for open space in the SC Environment and Liveablilty Strategy 2017 (ELS)	

District parks – the community playground

District recreation parks attract residents and visitors from the local community and surrounding suburbs and provide a variety of spaces, settings and facilities. These parks will vary in appearance across the region, ranging from spaces that look like large local parks to highly utilised, multifunctional parks that approach council-wide standards.

The larger size of district parks allows for innovative spaces that cater to a wider range of community needs. District parks support neighbourhood amenity and provide opportunities for residents and visitors to connect with nature and each other. These parks support community gatherings by providing built infrastructure that encourages longer visits by diverse groups of users. District park design incorporates local landscape and heritage values into layouts that provide the community with vibrant and interesting locations to gather and celebrate away from the hustle and bustle of the region's coastal parks.

District parks play a key role in rural areas by providing gathering spaces and supporting community cohesion for people who may not see each other on a regular basis. These parks serve an economic function in rural areas by facilitating economic activities such as markets and providing a place for travellers to rest and relax while experiencing the local environment. Properly integrated with the existing public realm, including town centres and primary streetscapes, these parks support local businesses by encouraging exploration of the township by visitors.

District parks retain existing vegetation and landscape features and provide appropriate amounts of shade-bearing vegetation with linkages to local vegetation corridors and the street tree network. This living infrastructure also provides opportunities to observe local flora and fauna. Additionally, district parks provide an appropriate location for vegetation-related activities such as community gardens, sensory gardens and other unique botanical experiences.

There are several district parks across the network that intentionally maintain low levels of built infrastructure to allow for connection to nature and other passive recreation opportunities. These types of parks include Coochin Park in Dicky Beach, Dunethin Rock Recreation Area near Yandina.

Recreation opportunities within district parks should reflect the broader catchment they serve. Where possible, built form and recreation infrastructure within these parks should be multi-generational and cater to diverse abilities. These facilities should be provided across a variety of activity nodes, with each node providing a cluster of activities that are suitable for the people using the equipment and those who are caring for them. For example, when providing playground equipment, it is important that a naturally shaded bench, table or suitable landscape feature is also provided to accommodate carers.

Longer duration visits to district parks are supported by infrastructure such as public amenity blocks and on-site car parking. When appropriate, council can approve small-scale commercial activities to support and enhance user enjoyment.

Functional space guidelines for district parks

- Minimum park area, 3 hectares.
- Minimum park area must remain free from all encumbrances including easements, environmental buffers, stormwater management devices and overland flow paths.
- Park must provide a range of varying scale, form and function that cater to users of diverse ages and abilities from surrounding neighbourhoods.
- Area should represent proportional targets for spaces:
  - Active open space, 40% – 60%
    - 1 large kick and throw area (50m x 70m)
    - active recreation elements including hardcourts, fitness areas and dog exercise areas
  - Social spaces, 10% – 20%
    - for example, shelters, barbecues, community gardens and play spaces, to be provided in designated nodes
  - Vegetated areas, 10% – 20%
    - includes tree coverage and landscaping
    - planting style to suit local landscape and character
  - Car park and internal pathways, 10%
  - Stormwater management, maximum 5% (including vegetation)
    - must not impact park function
    - where possible, stormwater treatment facilities should be integrated with planted areas.

Table 2: District parks embellishment requirements

Type of embellishment	District park requirement / number
Animals	
Dog off leash parks	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function
Furniture	
Barbecues	Yes – 1 double plate barbecues / 2 shelters
Bicycle rails	Yes – 4 bike parking spaces / ha
Bins (waste)	Yes – 1 waste bin / 2 shelters
Bins (recycle)	Yes – 1 recycling bin / 2 shelters (where serviceable)
Drinking fountains	Yes – 1 / playground (max 2)
Taps – public access	Yes – 1 / barbecue area (servicing multiple)
Taps – maintenance	Yes – 1
Stand-alone seat / picnic table and bench	Yes – 2 seats / ha, min 2 / playground
Showers	Optional – where adjoining beach/water access
Barriers	
Bollards	Yes – along non-fenced perimeter boundaries. Trees and vegetation preferred
Fences and gates (vehicle access / pedestrian access)	Optional – where required
Pedestrian infrastructure	
Internal path	Yes – sealed paths, dual use (pedestrian and bicycle)
Connection path	Yes – sealed path (link to external networks)
Planting	
Trees	Yes – native and non-native shade trees
Natural shade coverage	40% coverage of pathways at tree maturity; 50% coverage of activity areas (playgrounds, exercise etc)
Landscape planting (garden beds, turf, re-vegetation)	Yes - planting style to suit local landscape and character
Community gardens	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function

Type of embellishment	District park requirement / number
Play, sport and activities	
Exercise equipment	Optional – multi – generational exercise activities
Play spaces (playgrounds, natural activity areas)	Yes – 500m2 with equipment and landform. Must be shaded by vegetation and / temporary shade sails
Skate park	Optional – refer SCC Skate and BMX plan
Informal sports and games (fields and courts, outdoor games, children's bicycle track)	Yes – range of multi-generational sports and games
Kick and throw area	Yes – 1 large area (50m x 70m). Flat and well drained
Event spaces	Optional – where space allows
Signs, art and memorials	
Signage	Yes – naming, directional, interpretive, regulatory
Public art	Optional – durable pieces that provide opportunity for interaction
Primary public access points	Yes – min 2 highly visible and well-signed entrances
Structures and parking	
Parking (on-site)	Yes – 5 spaces / ha
Shade sails	Yes - temporary measure while trees mature
Public amenities (toilets)	Yes – 1 (standard design) toilet block
Shelters	Yes – 1 shelter / 1.5ha
Utilities and smart technology	
Irrigation	Optional – as required and approved by council, high activity areas only, not entire park
Serviced site	Yes
Lighting	Yes – as required to meet CPTED principles - key pedestrian linkages, shelters, toilet blocks and car parks not serviced by ambient light from adjacent roadways
Other	
	see RPP – Technical Guidelines – Appendix B – Table: 41 / DSS for open space in the SC Environment and Liveablilty Strategy 2017 (ELS)

Local parks – the extended backyard

Local recreation parks are smaller parks that are located a short walk from home for people in the surrounding local community and cater for frequent visits. In urban areas, local recreation parks provide supplementary open space that complements residential backyards and enriches the surrounding landscape providing visual amenity and 'green relief' from the surrounding built environment. In rural areas, particularly those areas where neighbours might live kilometres from each other, local parks also provide complementary open space, facilitating a sense of community and social cohesion.

Local parks provide a number of functions that benefit the community in which they are located. These functions are similar to those of larger, vegetated residential backyards: they allow for an easily accessible connection to the outdoors and a place to meet, play, rest and recuperate.

Local parks offer opportunities for neighbourhood residents to meet and socialise in a safe and healthy setting. Built form, material selections and planting design in local parks reflect the landscape and character of the surrounding area and support connections between people and place.

Local parks provide opportunities for people to observe and appreciate nature and can provide important habitat linkages for flora and fauna. The living infrastructure within these parks play an important role in mitigating the urban heat island effect by reducing ambient temperatures through the provision of vegetated shade. Existing vegetation and landscape features are retained and incorporated into the design of local parks.

Activities in these spaces also include opportunities for social gathering, and a limited range of informal active recreation uses. Local park design reflects the specific needs of user groups located within the local catchment. The needs of an older community are different to a community comprised of young families. Therefore, reference to demographic and cultural needs is required.

Built form and recreation infrastructure within local parks should be clustered in a single activity node, allowing for maximised use of open areas for activities such as kicking a football, playing backyard cricket or passive recreation. Whenever possible, this activity node should be naturally shaded. The type of facilities in the park should complement those in nearby parks, thereby increasing the range of facilities available to nearby residents. Local parks do not provide facilities like public amenities and on-site car parking that service people travelling more than walking distance. Those types of facilities are more appropriately located in district parks which have sufficient space and are intended for users from a larger catchment.

As most users access local parks via active transport modes, it is important that local parks are connected to naturally shaded pathways and trails that extend to and from community facilities and the surrounding area. Internal connections provide linkages to the key activity node in the park and allow for equitable access by all users. Pathways that provide walking links, cycling links or shortcuts also provide connections that support the region's active transport network.

Functional space guidelines for local parks

- Minimum park area, 0.5 hectares.
- Minimum park area must remain free from all encumbrances including easements, environmental buffers, stormwater management devices and overland flow paths.
- Park must provide active and passive recreational spaces that cater to users of diverse ages and abilities from the local area.
- Area should represent proportional targets for spaces:
  - Active open space, 50% – 70%
    - 1 small kick and throw area (30m x 20m)
    - active recreation elements including hardcourts, fitness areas and dog exercise areas may be provided if they do not compromise kick and throw area
  - Social spaces, 10% – 20%
    - including shaded seating and play spaces, to be provided in a designated node
  - Vegetated areas, 10% – 20%
    - includes tree coverage and landscaping
    - planting style to suit local landscape and character
  - Stormwater management, maximum 5% (including vegetation)
    - must not impact park function
    - where possible, stormwater treatment facilities should be integrated with planted areas.

Table 3: Local parks embellishment requirements

Type of embellishment	Local park requirement / number
Animals	
Dog off leash parks	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function
Furniture	
Barbecues	No
Bicycle rails	Optional – 4 bike parking spaces / ha
Bins (waste)	Optional – where applicable / required near play space)
Bins (recycle)	Optional – where serviceable
Drinking fountains	Optional – where play spaces are provided
Taps – public access	Optional – where required
Taps – maintenance	Optional – where required
Stand-alone seat / picnic table and bench	Yes – 2 seats / ha, min 2 / playground
Showers	Optional – where adjoining beach/water access
Barriers	
Bollards	Yes – along non-fenced perimeter boundaries. Trees and vegetation preferred
Fences and gates (vehicle access / pedestrian access)	Optional – where required
Pedestrian infrastructure	
Internal path	Yes – sealed paths
Connection path	Optional – sealed path (link to external networks)
Planting	
Trees	Yes – native and non-native shade trees
Natural shade coverage	40% coverage of pathways at tree maturity; 50% coverage of activity areas (playgrounds, exercise etc)
Landscape planting (garden beds, turf, re-vegetation)	Yes – planting style to suit local landscape and character
Community gardens	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function

Type of embellishment	Local park requirement / number
Play, sport and activities	
Exercise equipment	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function
Play spaces (playgrounds, natural activity areas)	Optional – 300m2 with equipment and landform. Must be shaded by vegetation and / temporary shade sails
Skate park	No
Informal sports and games (fields and courts, outdoor games, children's bicycle track)	Optional - where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function
Kick and throw area	Yes – 30m x 20m. Flat and well drained
Event spaces	No
Signs, art and memorials	
Signage	Optional – directional, regulatory
Public art	No
Primary public access points	Yes – min 1 highly visible entrance
Structures and parking	
Parking (on-site)	No
Shade sails	Optional – temporary measure while trees mature
Public amenities (toilets)	No
Shelters	Yes – max 2 shelters
Utilities and smart technology	
Irrigation	No
Serviced site	Optional – where required
Lighting	No
Other	
see RPP – Technical Guidelines – Appendix B – Table: 41 / DSS for open space in the SC Environment and Liveablilty Strategy 2017 (ELS)	

Civic parks –
the meeting place

Civic recreation parks are vibrant urban parks such as plazas or town squares in the heart of an activity centre. These parks are designed for frequent and high-level use by residents, visitors and workers who use the space to socialise and engage in civic activities and community events. Civic parks also provide opportunities to rest, physically and mentally, and seek relief from the surrounding built form.

These parks are located within an activity centre in a prominent and central location with a high level of pedestrian activity. They are often physically connected to civic services, like libraries and town halls, and are visually connected to the community through the use of culturally significant infrastructure and prominent vegetation. Civic parks are located on multiple public transport links and are connected to the pedestrian and bicycle networks or recreation trails. While typically small in size compared to other recreation park types, these parks are big in the hearts of those who visit them.

As civic parks are a reflection of the community in which they are located, it is essential that they mirror the landscape and character of the community. Existing vegetation and landscape features are retained and incorporated into design with built infrastructure and formal landscaping established to provide amenity and support civic function. Fit for purpose event spaces are often provided to support community events. These parks should provide safe and enjoyable spaces where people have the opportunity to interact or sit quietly and enjoy a view. Civic parks should contain naturally shaded benches or landscape features that provide relief from the strong Queensland sun.

Functional space guidelines for civic parks

- In principle or major centres minimum park area, 0.5 hectares.
- In district centres or below minimum park area, 0.1 hectares.
- Area must remain free from all encumbrances including easements, environmental buffers, stormwater management devices and overland flow paths.
- Park must be designed for frequent, high-level use.
- Area includes increased levels of hardstand to cater for community events.
- Area includes adequate natural shade provided to maximise user comfort and safety.
- Park incorporates a planting style that suits local landscape and character.
  - Stormwater management must not impact park function.
    - Where possible, stormwater treatment facilities should be integrated with planted areas.

Table 4: Civic parks embellishment requirements

Type of embellishment	Civic park requirement / number
Animals	
Dog off leash parks	No
Furniture	
Barbecues	No
Bicycle rails	Yes – min 4 bike parking spaces
Bins (waste)	Yes – 1 waste bin / .25 ha
Bins (recycle)	Yes – 1 recycling bin / .25 ha (where serviceable)
Drinking fountains	Yes – 1
Taps – public access	Optional – where required
Taps – maintenance	Optional – where required
Stand-alone seat / picnic table and bench	Yes – min 4 seats / ha, min 2 / playground
Showers	No
Barriers	
Bollards	Yes – along non-fenced perimeter boundaries. Trees and vegetation preferred
Fences and gates (vehicle access / pedestrian access)	Optional – where required
Pedestrian infrastructure	
Internal path	Yes – sealed paths
Connection path	Optional – sealed path (link to external networks)
Planting	
Trees	Yes – native and non-native shade trees
Natural shade coverage	40% coverage of pathways at tree maturity; 50% coverage of activity areas
Landscape planting (garden beds, turf, re-vegetation)	Yes - planting style to suit local landscape and character
Community gardens	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function
Play, sport and activities	
Exercise equipment	No

Type of embellishment	Civic park requirement / number
Play spaces (playgrounds, natural activity areas)	Optional – where provision does not compromise park function. Must be shaded by vegetation and / temporary shade sails
Skate park	No
Informal sports and games (fields and courts, outdoor games, children's bicycle track)	Optional – multi-use space (games), informal sports not allowed (basketball, cricket etc)
Kick and throw area	No
Event spaces	Optional – where space allows
Signs, art and memorials	
Signage	Yes – naming, directional, interpretive, regulatory
Public art	Optional – durable pieces that provide opportunity for interaction
Primary public access points	Yes – min 2 highly visible and well-signed entrances
Structures and parking	
Parking (on-site)	No
Shade sails	Optional – where natural or built architectural shade is not sufficient
Public amenities (toilets)	Yes – 1 (standard design) toilet block
Shelters	Yes – max 2 shelters
Utilities and smart technology	
Irrigation	Optional – as required and approved by council, high activity areas only, not entire park
Serviced site	Yes
Lighting	Yes – As required to meet CPTED principles - key pedestrian linkages, shelters, toilet blocks and car parks not serviced by ambient light from adjacent roadways
Other	

see RPP – Technical Guidelines – Appendix B – Table: 41 / DSS for open space in the SC Environment and Liveablilty Strategy 2017 (ELS)

Amenity reserves – the quiet space

Amenity reserves are small land parcels, gardens and streetscapes that provide physical and visual relief from the built form of the surrounding area. These spaces provide an important amenity function for the community by catering for short and frequent visits a short walk from home. Mature vegetation in these spaces provide habitat for local flora and fauna, making these parks an excellent place to sit and listen to the birds or watch butterflies dance amongst the flower gardens. In keeping with the quiet and relaxing function of these spaces, amenity reserves do not support high levels of built infrastructure. In most cases, these parks will contain a pathway connecting to external networks and a few naturally shaded benches.

Functional space guidelines for amenity reserves

- Minimum park area, 0.2 hectares.
- Minimum park area must remain free from all encumbrances including easements, environmental buffers, stormwater management devices and overland flow paths.
- Park is appropriately sized to sustainably support mature trees while providing adequate buffers to adjoining properties.
- Adequate natural shade is provided to maximises user comfort and safety.
  - Existing trees are retained and new trees are planted at strategic locations to contribute to amenity.
- Park incorporates a planting style that suits local landscape and character.
- Stormwater management must not impact park function.
  - Where possible, stormwater treatment facilities should be integrated with planted areas.

Table 5: Amenity reserves embellishment requirements

Type of embellishment	Amenity reserve requirement / number
Animals	
Dog off leash parks	Optional – unfenced only, where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function
Furniture	
Barbecues	No
Bicycle rails	No
Bins (waste)	Optional
Bins (recycle)	Optional – where serviceable
Drinking fountains	No
Taps – public access	Optional – where required
Taps – maintenance	Optional – where required
Stand-alone seat / picnic table and bench	Yes – min 2
Showers	No
Barriers	
Bollards	Yes – along non-fenced perimeter boundaries. Trees and vegetation preferred
Fences and gates (vehicle access / pedestrian access)	No – fences Optional – vehicle access gate where required
Pedestrian infrastructure	
Internal path	Optional – sealed paths
Connection path	Optional – sealed path (link to external networks)
Planting	
Trees	Yes – native and non-native shade trees
Natural shade coverage	40% coverage of pathways at tree maturity
Landscape planting (garden beds, turf, re-vegetation)	Yes – planting style to suit local landscape and character
Community gardens	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function

Type of embellishment	Amenity reserve requirement / number
Play, sport and activities	
Exercise equipment	No
Play spaces (playgrounds, natural activity areas)	No
Skate park	No
Informal sports and games (fields and courts, outdoor games, children's bicycle track)	No
Kick and throw area	No
Event spaces	No
Signs, art and memorials	
Signage	Optional – regulatory where required
Public art	No
Primary public access points	Yes – min 1 highly visible entrance
Structures and parking	
Parking (on-site)	No
Shade sails	No
Public amenities (toilets)	No
Shelters	No
Utilities and smart technology	
Irrigation	Optional – as required and approved by council, high activity areas only, not entire park
Serviced site	No
Lighting	No
Other	
see RPP – Technical Guidelines – Appendix B – Table: 41 / DSS for open space in the SC Environment and Liveablilty Strategy 2017 (ELS)	

Linear parks – the connecting space

Linear parks and esplanades are long, narrow green corridors that often connect other open space functions and key features and facilities. Their linear shape is generally due to the nature of adjoining landscape features such as foreshores, waterways and bushland reserves, a relationship that makes these types of parks very popular with residents and tourists who wish to enjoy some of the best natural attributes that the Sunshine Coast provides. Due to their constrained size and popular locations, these parks see a very high level of use that requires resilient and durable supporting infrastructure.

Linear parks provide a range of passive and active recreation opportunities and promote healthy transport choices, like walking and biking, in a naturally shaded environment. Infrastructure in these parks is responsive to local landscape and character with existing vegetation retained and enhanced by built form, infrastructure and planting design that reflect the natural and cultural values of the immediate area. Viewsheds in linear parks are identified and protected by balancing the retention of existing vegetation with the promotion of passive recreation opportunities that embrace scenic amenity.

Recreation opportunities and supporting built infrastructure in linear parks are informed by the narrow width of the park. In order for these parks to function properly as connectors, it is important to consider impacts on movement patterns, whether that be an individual wandering slowly through the park or a jogger utilising the pathway network. Recreation facilities are to be located in breakout points along the path system that do not impede continuous movement across the park.

Pathways are an essential element of linear parks, however, these pathways accommodate a wide range of users like on-leash dog exercise, jogging, and cycling by adults and children of all ages and abilities.

Functional space guidelines for linear parks

- Distinctive qualities of the landscape character, formal and natural, are strengthened through material selection, built form and planting design.
- Park incorporates a planting style that suits local landscape and character.
- Area has adequate natural shade to maximise user comfort and safety.
- Existing trees are retained and new trees are planted at strategic locations to contribute to amenity.
- Play spaces and fitness nodes may be included close to pathways.
- Key viewpoints are identified and protected.
- Interpretive signage elements are provided as cultural and environmental features.
- Stormwater management must not impact park function.
  - Where possible, stormwater treatment facilities should be integrated with planted areas.

Table 6: Linear parks embellishment requirements

Type of embellishment	Linear park requirement / number
Animals	
Dog off leash parks	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function
Furniture	
Barbecues	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function
Bicycle rails	No
Bins (waste)	Optional – where play spaces are provided
Bins (recycle)	Optional – where play spaces are provided (where serviceable)
Drinking fountains	Optional – where play spaces are provided
Taps – public access	Optional – where required
Taps – maintenance	Optional – where required
Stand-alone seat / picnic table and bench	Yes – 2 seats / ha
Showers	Optional – where adjoining beach/water access
Barriers	
Bollards	Yes – along non-fenced perimeter boundaries. Trees and vegetation preferred
Fences and gates (vehicle access / pedestrian access)	Optional – where required
Pedestrian infrastructure	
Internal path	Yes – sealed paths, dual use (pedestrian and bicycle)
Connection path	Yes – connection to external trails and tracks provided
Planting	
Trees	Yes – native and non-native shade trees
Natural shade coverage	40% coverage of pathways at tree maturity; 50% coverage of activity areas (playgrounds, exercise etc)
Landscape planting (garden beds, turf, re-vegetation)	Yes - planting style to suit local landscape and character
Community gardens	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function

Type of embellishment	Linear park requirement / number
Play, sport and activities	
Exercise equipment	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function
Play spaces (playgrounds, natural activity areas)	Optional – where need is demonstrated and where provision does not compromise park function. Must be shaded by vegetation and / temporary shade sails
Skate park	No
Informal sports and games (fields and courts, outdoor games, children's bicycle track)	Yes – where provision does not compromise park function
Kick and throw area	Yes – 30m x 10m or similar size. Flat and well drained
Event spaces	No
Signs, art and memorials	
Signage	Yes – directional, interpretive, regulatory
Public art	Optional – incorporated with appropriate infrastructure
Primary public access points	Yes – multiple public access points as required
Structures and parking	
Parking (on-site)	No
Shade sails	Optional – temporary over playspaces as trees mature
Public amenities (toilets)	No
Shelters	No
Utilities and smart technology	
Irrigation	Optional – as required and approved by council, high activity areas only, not entire park
Serviced site	Optional – where required
Lighting	Optional – as required to meet CPTED principles - key pedestrian linkages, shelters, toilet blocks and car parks not serviced by ambient light from adjacent roadways
Other	
see RPP – Technical Guidelines – Appendix B – Table: 41 / DSS for open space in the SC Environment and Liveablilty Strategy 2017 (ELS)	

Landscape corridors – the buffer

Landscape corridors are typically long and narrow strips of land that provide a vegetated buffer between different land uses. These spaces are provided and maintained by council to contribute to the ecological services and natural amenity of the region. Landscape corridors are another key type of green infrastructure provided and maintained by council. They do not encourage pedestrian access or provide recreational facilities but provide ecosystem services to the community like air purification, stormwater filtration and reduction of ambient air temperature. Landscape corridors retain natural vegetation where appropriate and provide biodiversity linkages that connect nature to the urban built form. Landscape corridors provide natural amenity and support enhanced connectivity, functionality and integration of the natural and built environments.

Functional space guidelines for landscape corridors

- Park is appropriately sized to sustainably support mature trees while providing adequate buffers to adjoining properties.
- Park incorporates a planting style setting, that suits local landscape and character.
  - Natural vegetation is to be retained where appropriate.
- Stormwater management must not impact park function.
  - Where possible, stormwater treatment facilities should be integrated with planted areas.
- Must provide suitable maintenance access and fire break.

Table 7: Landscape corridors embellishment requirements

Type of embellishment	Landscape corridor requirement / number
Animals	
Dog off leash parks	No
Furniture	
Barbecues	No
Bicycle rails	No
Bins (waste)	No
Bins (recycle)	No
Drinking fountains	No
Taps – public access	No
Taps – maintenance	Optional – where required
Stand-alone seat / picnic table and bench	No
Showers	No
Barriers	
Bollards	Yes – along non-fenced perimeter boundaries. Trees and vegetation preferred
Fences and gates (vehicle access / pedestrian access)	No – fences Optional – vehicle access gate where required
Pedestrian infrastructure	
Internal path	No – sealed paths
Connection path	No – sealed path (link to external networks)
Planting	
Trees	Yes – native shade trees only
Natural shade coverage	N/A – no recreational activities provided
Landscape planting (garden beds, turf, re-vegetation)	Yes – planting style to suit local landscape and character
Community gardens	No

Type of embellishment	Landscape corridor requirement / number
Play, sport and activities	
Exercise equipment	No
Play spaces (playgrounds, natural activity areas)	No
Skate park	No
Informal sports and games (fields and courts, outdoor games, children's bicycle track)	No
Kick and throw area	No
Event spaces	No
Signs, art and memorials	
Signage	Optional – regulatory where required
Public art	No
Primary public access points	No
Structures and parking	
Parking (on-site)	No
Shade sails	No
Public amenities (toilets)	No
Shelters	No
Utilities and smart technology	
Irrigation	No
Serviced site	No
Lighting	No
Other	

see RPP – Technical Guidelines – Appendix B – Table: 41 / DSS for open space in the SC Environment and Liveablilty Strategy 2017 (ELS)

2.4 Catchments

Planning catchments

Due to the size and complexity of the Sunshine Coast's open space network, council has established a Network Blueprint, based on smaller geographic areas, which provides guidance for future planning and includes broad recommendations based on detailed assessments.

The RPP has been developed using the planning catchments from council's Network Blueprint, as described in the ELS. The Network Blueprint has been prepared based on three planning catchments:

- Council-wide – recreation parks, sports grounds, specific purpose sports, recreation trails and the inter and intra urban separation areas ('green spaces') that provide a range of diverse experiences for users from across the region.

- District – recreation parks, sports grounds and recreation trails that provide recreational opportunities at a district level. There are six districts that currently service 30,000 to 80,000 people each:

  - Urban A   – Rural 1
  - Urban B   – Rural 2
  - Urban C
  - Urban D

- Local – recreation parks, recreation trails, linear parks and other open spaces that provide recreation opportunities and visual relief from the built form are planned for based on the 31 'Localities of Interest' (LOI) within the Sunshine Coast.

Additional information regarding planning catchments can be found in the RPP – Technical Guidelines.

Coolum area

2.5 Park settings

The main characteristics of the surrounding environment in which a recreation park is located is known as its setting. Sunshine Coast recreation parks are provided in a variety of settings, ranging from highly developed urban settings to natural or semi-natural settings in the hinterland.

The design of recreation parks and the amount of infrastructure within them should directly respond to the setting in which the park is located. This is a crucial element in connecting people to place, as recreation parks should reflect the environmental and social values of the communities in which they are located.

Sunshine Coast recreation parks occur in the   following settings:

- **Natural** – natural landscape (native or exotic) where there are no built structures and limited recreation access. Usually located some distance from urban areas, includes conservation and ecological reserves.
- **Semi-natural** – a very natural landscape may have a few built structures, including signage, access, natural paths and car parks.
- **Semi-developed** – a landscape that consists of natural and built structures which often adjoins urban areas and provides a range of facilities for recreational and social activities.
- **Developed** – a landscape consisting of mostly built structures for recreational and social activity with some natural assets like trees, lawns and gardens.
- **Urban** – a landscape within a city, town or other densely populated area that is characterised by a highly developed built form.
- **Rural** – a landscape occurring in the countryside that is characterised by a sparsely developed built form.

The detailed Desired Standards of Service for each park type provides guidance on the types and levels of infrastructure to support functions in a typical park. There will be circumstances where a park's location and setting require deviation from these standards. It is council's intention to provide a level of flexibility that allows for a design response that reflects park settings.

For example, a district park in a developed, urban area might have higher levels of built infrastructure to match the surrounding built form. A district park in semi-natural, rural location might have a lower level of built infrastructure in keeping with the expansive surrounding landscape.

There may be circumstances where a recreation park located in an urban setting has lower levels of built infrastructure, particularly when the primary function of that park is to provide relief to the urban built-form. Also, certain rural parks may require higher levels of embellishment, particularly those in rural activity centres.

An assessment of the park's surrounding environment, local character, and primary park function will assist with determining if variation from the detailed Desired Standards of Service is required.

Figure 5: Park settings

2.6 Relationship to other council networks

Open space network

Recreation parks are only one part of council's broader open space network. The Sunshine Coast's open space areas have been grouped into sub-networks based on their primary use, to assist with their planning, development and management. In addition to recreation parks, council's open space network includes the following sub-networks:

- Landscape sub-network
- Sport sub-network
- Environmental and coastal sub-network
- Other open space areas (caravan parks, drainage reserves etc).

Other council networks related to parks

- Integrated transport network
- Flooding and stormwater network.
- Social infrastructure network
  - schools
  - universities
  - libraries
  - hospitals
  - emergency service facilities
  - showgrounds
  - major outdoor events spaces
  - indoor sport facilities
  - recreation facilities.

Network overlaps

It is essential to recognise that these networks do not operate in isolation. Figure 6: Open space networks demonstrates the relationship between the different areas of the open space network. There are a number of services that council aims to provide that occur in the overlapping space between recreation parks and other uses. It is therefore essential that planning for recreation parks considers the other existing and planned networks that occur around, and sometimes within, parks. Recognising this context allows integrated and sustainable decisions to be made that meet multiple outcomes and reduce the amount of required infrastructure through co-location of services.

Landscape

Landscape and character

Connectivity – green fingers, sustainable transport

Recreation parks

Sport

Informal sports – basketball / netball Difficult to locate sports, Integrated sport /recreation facilities, skate / BMX

Other open space

Stormwater management

Waterways – recreational access (parking, amenities)

Beaches and foreshores – access (parking, amenities)

Nature play – full spectrum from playgrounds to underdeveloped recreation

Recreational trail network

Environment and coastal

Figure 6: Open space networks