

The FRA is pleased to provide a response to the Draft Yarra Open Space Strategy to be considered by Council on 1 September 2020. This response follows from the FRA's submissions dated 18<sup>th</sup> March 2018 and 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 on this topic.

Our early March 2020 response to the Open Space Strategy was in essence that the 'open space' definition used is too narrow and therefore can only identify in a suburb like Fitzroy, and more generally across much of the City, limited opportunities to provide 'open space' given population and built form densities.

In a post-COVID-19 world (with its need for social distancing) the need to provide more public space in the short term will be a high priority. Council authorized the second round of community consultation at its meeting of 17 December 2019. The survey instruments and design were shaped by the 2018 consultation which was pre-COVID-19, and new thinking is required for strategies (and the monitoring for opportunities) that have a shorter lifespan.

The FRA offer the following points at this time:

- a) A review period of 15 years is too long for an evolving and important issue with time-sensitive opportunities, particularly as the pandemic situation continues to change. A long-term strategy is desirable but that given the issue it is best to have a two (or three) year rolling update.
- b) The strategy addresses the need for a reasonable developer contribution rate of 10% (across all residential, commercial and industrial sub-divisions). That is excellent. This proposed planning scheme amendment should proceed even if the strategy is not adopted.
- c) The Consultation Report (Appendix B) notes the top residential reason to visit open space within walking distance is dog walking. This point is not expressed clearly in the Agenda provided.
- d) The strategy does not address Council Resolution 9.1 as moved on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2020 by Councillor Fristacky (seconded by Councillor Stone) highlighting the need for more fenced dog off-leash areas *in all suburbs*, outdoor exercise and outdoor basketball [and netball] rings. The FRA recommends these points (and more) be addressed prior to adoption.

- e) The report documents highlight the strong need for fenced dog off-leash areas. In Fitzroy 40% of residents value the need for dog exercise (Page A4, Appendix B) and fenced dog off-leash areas are valued by Fitzroy residents (Page A148, Appendix B). The strategy does not address the need for fenced dog off-leash areas at all in Fitzroy, nor indeed adequately across Yarra.
- f) Local children, and those from the John Street Early Childhood Co-op use the fenced Frank King Park regularly. The strategy suggests Council investigate extending the park to the road. That could increase the likelihood of children getting hit by cars. 47% of residents in Fitzroy value open space for children to play but the strategy appears to not address this need adequately. More fencing is required around Children's parks and play areas.
- g) Appendix B (Page A7) notes 22% of residents were unable to access open space with 41% of that cohort noting distance was the primary issue. This is even more significant given that most resident respondents live in houses (39% rather than apartments (20%). Looking at the map of Yarra (Page A16 of Appendix B) the deficiency of greened spaces for Fitzroy and Collingwood is very evident and the strategy does not address that adequately. The writer is a former Gore Street resident. Near Gore & Johnston Streets green space within walking distance is not readily accessible.
- h) The report documents note the failure of the Peel Street (Collingwood) pocket park (with conflict between user groups) and failed surface treatment (Page A3 of Appendix B). The strategy does not identify what to do about that site (or the costs), nor explicitly how to manage that learning for future pocket parks.
- i) There is no discussion in the strategy of greening laneways.
- j) The report doesn't address the issues of Bike Paths versus Pedestrian Walkways and the current conflicts with shared use. This is highlighted in the Edinburgh Gardens where cyclists are noted (Page A4) to speed near children. No actions are detailed in the strategy to address this issue.
- k) The strategy does not indicate the measures required for public spaces in heritage overlays, nor within the World Heritage Environs Area.
- l) The strategy does not identify the costs required to implement the recommendations. The FRA has is concerned that the strategy (once improved) could become unbudgeted and unreviewed shelf-ware.

Given the points above the FRA recommends councillors **not** adopt the Draft Yarra Open Space Strategy. The FRA recommends:

1. That a request to amend the Yarra Planning Scheme (to increase the developer contribution rate across residential, industrial and commercial subdivisions) come to the Council Meeting of 15 September 2020.

2. That management consider a review cycle of not more than three years for a Public Open Space Strategy within the context of a long-term expressed policies and vision.
3. That an urgently needed COVID-19 relevant public open space strategy be considered at a future Council Meeting within the next four months. Such a strategy needs to address Council Resolution 9.1 of 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

Thank you for your time,

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Chair, Fitzroy Residents Association

31 August 2020