



Hobsons Bay
CITY COUNCIL

Play Space Strategy 2013-2023

Executive Summary Report
May 2013

Introduction

The Hobsons Bay Play Space Strategy 2013-23 has been prepared to provide strategic direction for the provision and management of play spaces in Hobsons Bay for the next 10 years. The Play Space Strategy 2013-23 – Executive Summary contains:

1. Council's **Vision, Values and Principles** with respect to the provision and management of play spaces.
2. A set of **Design and Development Guidelines** that will assist with the future provision and renewal of play spaces.
3. A **Management Plan** to guide the future management of play spaces within Hobsons Bay.
4. A **10 Year Development Plan** for play space provision and renewal across Hobsons Bay.
5. An **Implementation Plan** detailing specific recommendations to help the Council achieve the Play Space Vision.

The strategy has been built on an assessment of all play spaces in Hobsons Bay, a review of relevant literature and stakeholder consultation. The findings from this research are contained in a suite of associated background reports and documents.

The Play Space Strategy 2013-23 replaces the Council's Playground Strategy (1999) and Skate Facilities Strategy (2001) and incorporates a plan for the establishment of fitness equipment and other informal sporting facilities in public open space.

The term 'play space' refers to playgrounds, skate and BMX facilities, fitness equipment and other informal sporting facilities such as multi-sport courts. The scope is limited to play spaces located on Council-owned or managed land.

There are a number of other spaces that provide play opportunities across Hobsons Bay, but are managed for a range of purposes, not specifically play, such as the foreshore, lakes, and river and creek corridors. The provision and management of these spaces will be considered further in the review of Council's Open Space Strategy (2005).

Hobsons Bay City Council manages 82 play spaces located in public open space across the municipality incorporating 81 playgrounds, 5 skate facilities, 1 BMX track, 1 suite of fitness equipment and 11 other informal sporting facilities.

The Council's role in planning, providing, maintaining and promoting opportunities for play is a highly valued service that will be guided by this strategy.

Why Play?

Play is linked to a child's well being and is a physical, intellectual, social and cultural undertaking that encourages social interaction. Play enhances children's emotional, cognitive, social and physical capacities. It develops the brain as well as the body, encourages creativity and flexibility and builds resilience. It engages decision making, imagination and exploration.

Play is inherent in a child's development. Children make time and space for play wherever they are and whatever they are doing to the extent that play is not so much an activity as a way of being. It could be said that where children are is where they play.

Increasingly research is indicating that the reduced time outdoors, the reduced opportunity for physically active play and the diminished contact with nature, is having a negative impact on our children's development, health and well being.

Article 31 of the United Nations Convention of the rights of the Child identifies the fundamental right to play, recreation and cultural activities. Play is a fundamental human right that is profound in its influence. This strategy will assist Hobsons Bay in acknowledging and assisting in its commitment to make provision for all within their community.



Vision, Values and Principles

Play Space Vision

Hobsons Bay City Council is committed to providing a diverse range of accessible, attractive, challenging and well maintained play spaces offering experiences to residents and visitors of all ages and abilities within a sustainable natural setting.

Values

Accessibility

Principles

Council will aim to:

- Provide opportunities for play within a 500m radius of all households.
- Apply universal design principles when planning play spaces.
- Ensure a continuous accessible path of travel to all play spaces.
- Situate play spaces to improve connectivity to pathways, public transport, roadways and other areas of open space.
- Integrate play into the fabric of the city streets to make experiences accessible to all and playfulness a state of being rather than an activity.

Quality

Council will aim to:

- Highlight the importance of the inclusion of natural elements in the built play setting and the engagement with surroundings.
- Provide attractive and well landscaped spaces by incorporating these elements into the design process.
- Ensure that spaces are developed so that they can be effectively maintained and managed to Council's standards.

Diversity

Council will aim to:

- Provide a diversity of play experiences and opportunities within each precinct.
- Provide graded challenges that offer entry level experiences that allow children to decide to extend their threshold of risk taking and skill development.
- Promote the idea that play can be facilitated through, not just equipment based constructions, but also through natural spaces, art installations, and playful interventions.

Equity

Council will aim to:

- Provide a suite of play spaces across Hobsons Bay that caters for all ages, abilities and aspirations.
- Focus on areas of disadvantage in setting priorities for future works.
- Involve the community in the design process through targeted consultation.
- Ensure that people from traditionally low participation groups have an opportunity to have their say.

Safety

Council will aim to:

- Situate play spaces to improve passive surveillance.
- Construct and maintain play spaces in accordance with relevant Australian Standards.
- Design and maintain play spaces with a view to risk-benefit analysis ensuring safety as the highest priority.
- Provide quality facilities and unique experiences that attract more people to spaces increasing usage, social interaction and informal surveillance.
- Use strategic landscape treatments to provide a barrier where a high safety risk exists.
- Provide shade predominantly by tree planting.

Sustainability

Council will aim to:

- Apply environmentally sustainable design principles when planning play spaces.
- Promote and protect heritage and cultural components on site such as natural features.
- Provide play spaces that encourage people to connect with and enjoy the natural environment including the foreshore, lakes, and river and creek corridors.



Design and Development Guidelines

The Design and Development Guidelines will be applied as a framework to guide the future development of new play spaces and redevelopment of existing play spaces.

- Play Spaces will be classified according to a 2-tiered hierarchy: Local and Destination. Map 1 provides an overview of the provision of play spaces in Hobsons Bay according to this hierarchy.

Classification

Description

Local Play Space

- Small in scale with simple play opportunities targeting a specific age group and their carers.
- Provide basic facilities that cater for short duration and more frequent visits.
- Primarily service a 500 metre catchment.
- Local residents will primarily walk or ride to the play space.
- A diversity of local play spaces should be planned for within each precinct.
- Budget Estimate \$50-70,000.

Destination Play Space

- Larger in scale with a diversity of play opportunities for children of all ages and abilities.
- Provide facilities and amenities that cater for a large number of long duration visits.
- Provide facilities and amenities to meet the needs of parents and carers.
- Primarily service a 2 kilometre or precinct catchment.
- Parents, carers and older children will use local transport, their car, walk or ride to the play space.
- The budget allocation for these spaces will reflect their increased scope of provision and may well be developed in a staged manner over a period of years. Budget Estimate \$150,000 - \$500,000.

- Skate Parks and BMX Tracks cater for extended visits and require a level of access to and facilities / amenities provided for at Destination play spaces.
- Skate and BMX facilities must contain appropriate signage outlining the conditions of use. The provision of basic facilities (e.g. circuit) to cater for beginners, scooters, trikes etc may be considered when planning play spaces.
- Each precinct should have access to a multi-sport court. The establishment of new courts will generally only be considered at spaces which have, or are planned to have, access to facilities / amenities provided at Destination play spaces.
- The provision of fitness equipment may be considered when undertaking master planning of any public open space or foreshore area. The layout of fitness equipment should consist of one or a series of pods with multiple pieces of equipment connected to a short pathway circuit rather than single pieces of equipment scattered along a trail. Appropriate signage outlining the operation of equipment and conditions of use must be provided.

- Council will seek community involvement in the development of play spaces where the proposed works:
 - require a detailed design or planning process;
 - involve the review (i.e. removal) of a play space;
 - involve the creation of a new play space; or
 - involve an upgrade to a destination play space, skate or BMX facility.
- The following table provides an overview of the type of play features and amenities that will be considered for each classification of play space.

Play Features

	Destination	Local
Natural play elements	✓✓	✓
Play equipment	✓✓	✓✓
Sand or water play	✓	xx
Open areas (informal play)	✓✓	✓
Pathways - possible circuit	✓✓	✓
Other informal sporting facilities	✓	x

Planting / Landscape

Shade planting	✓✓	✓✓
Variety of surface treatments	✓✓	✓
Concrete edging	✓✓	✓

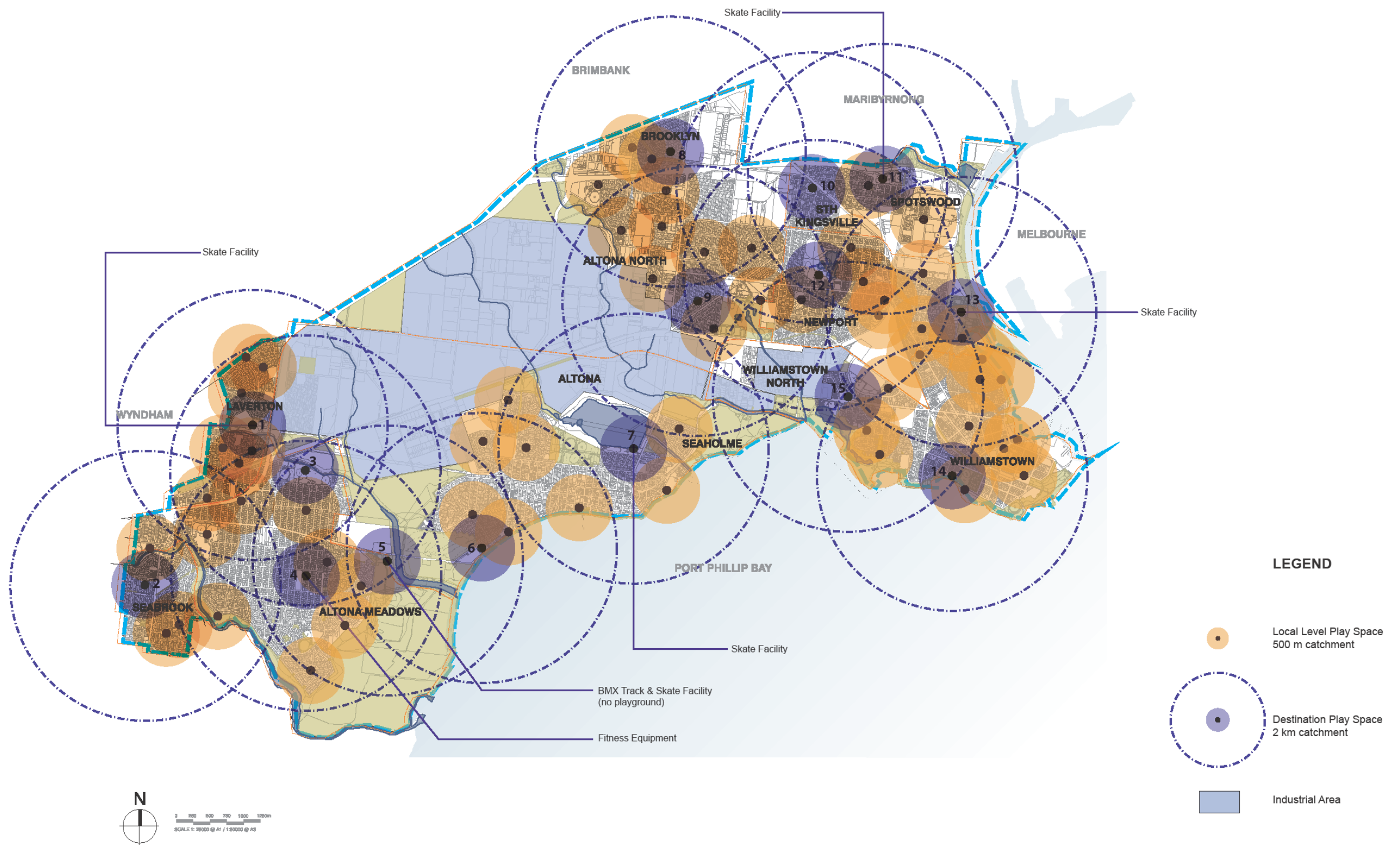
Access

Provision for a range of ages and abilities	✓✓	✓
Shared pedestrian/bike pathways	✓✓	✓
Pathways – linkages to play space	✓✓	✓✓
Pathways - linkages to other open space	✓✓	✓
Car parking - on road	✓✓	✓
Car parking - off road	✓	x
Signage -way finding	✓✓	✓

Facilities / Amenities

Public toilets	✓✓	x
Lighting	✓	x
Artworks/sculptures	✓	x
Fencing	x	x
Seating	✓✓	✓✓
Picnic tables	✓✓	✓
Rubbish bin	✓✓	✓
Bike racks	✓✓	✓
Barbecues	✓	x
Shade structure/shelter	✓✓	x
Drinking fountain	✓✓	x

✓✓ = must have ✓ = might have x = should not have xx = must not have



10 Year Development Plan

Map 2 details recommendation for the future development of play spaces in Hobsons Bay over the next 10 years. The recommendations have been prioritised into 3 priority levels: high, medium and low which will guide the order in which they will be implemented.

- High - Priorities for implementation in the first 5 years.
- Medium - Priorities for implementation in years 6-10.
- Low - Priorities for consideration in a future review of the strategy.

The following criteria have helped determine priorities:

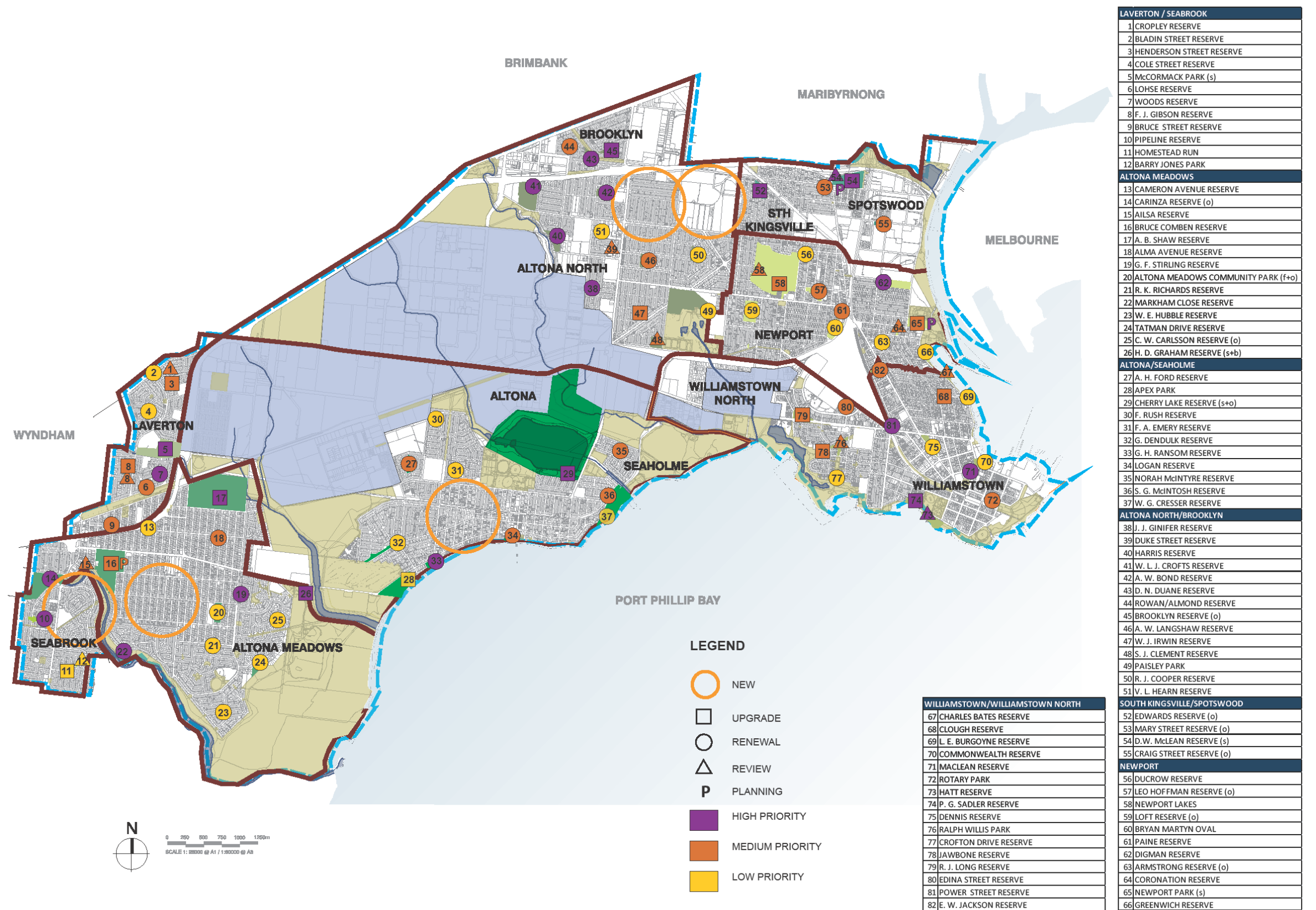
- Quality rating, based on the site assessments conducted.
- Age of the infrastructure, with a 15 year life cycle applied to play spaces.
- Identified community demand and use.
- Category of works, with renewals and upgrades given priority.
- Existing risk management or maintenance issues.
- Spaces located in areas of disadvantage are a priority.
- Gaps in existing provision and any identified over / under supply.

Priorities may change over time (subject to Council's budget) depending on available funding and changes in use and demand.

Each site has been assigned a category according to the type of development works to be undertaken.

- New - the creation of a new asset that did not previously exist.
- Renewal - the substantial replacement of an asset or a significant asset component to its original size and capacity.
- Review – consider the removal of an asset where an oversupply of play spaces exists within a precinct.
- Upgrade - the improvement of an asset beyond its original size or capacity.





(s) SKATE PARK (b) BMX TRACK (f) FITNESS EQUIPMENT (o) OTHER FACILITIES

Management Plan

The following recommendations are made regarding the future management of play spaces in Hobsons Bay over the next 5 years. These will be further scoped to ascertain resource and priority implications:

1. Establish a specialist Playground Maintenance Unit, within the Parks Department, responsible for inspecting and maintaining playgrounds.
2. Review existing playground maintenance preferred supplier contracts.
3. Provide training on all aspects of play space design to Council staff involved with the design, development and delivery of play spaces.
4. Provide training on aspects of maintaining nature based play spaces to Council staff involved with the maintenance of these spaces.
5. Better utilise existing IT systems to manage play space assets.
6. Commence an extended maintenance program of works to improve the quality of existing play spaces.
7. Conduct skate clinics at additional sites in the summer school holiday periods to encourage participation and cater for existing demand.
8. Conduct a series of skate clinics specifically targeting participants from traditionally low participation groups i.e. people with a disability, females, CALD backgrounds etc.
9. Trial BMX clinics in the summer school holiday period to encourage participation.
10. Establish links with existing BMX Club's to increase utilisation of the BMX track.
11. Establish a fees and charges and access policy for personal trainers / fitness groups utilising public open space for commercial purposes. Identify sites suitable for use by personal trainers / fitness groups and actively promote these spaces and licensing requirements.
12. Actively promote play spaces and their features to all residents.



Implementation Plan

The following recommendations will assist the Council in implementing the Play Space Strategy:

1. The Recreation Department will be responsible for the implementation of the Play Space Strategy.
2. Undertake an annual review and evaluation of the Play Space Development Plan to ensure consistency with the overall vision and changing community needs.
3. Continue to seek external funding to assist with the implementation of the strategy, where appropriate.
4. Commence an extended program of works to establish and improve pathway connections to existing play spaces.
5. Undertake an audit of shade provision at all of Council's play spaces to inform Council's tree planting program.
6. When reviewing a play space community involvement should be sought.
7. Ensure that if a play space is removed that the area is converted back to passive open space and a nearby play space is upgraded.
8. Investigate opportunities to establish new play spaces where there is an identified gap in provision.
9. Fund the works identified in the development plan by referring the following table to Council's draft capital works program:

Item	Year (\$'000)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Playgrounds	\$280	\$200	\$200	\$220	\$220	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400
Skate & BMX Facilities		\$70	\$50	\$250	\$100	\$100				
Multi-Sport Courts	\$45	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$20	\$20	\$20

10. Establish a business case where the implementation of a recommendation contained in this strategy will require additional operational or capital funding.



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