

Attachment B2

**Draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation
Needs Strategy 2026 – Volume 2, p74-125**

Accessibility

Why accessibility matters

Access to open space is often more important than overall provision levels.

Residents derive the greatest benefit from open space when it is conveniently located and easily reached by walking, cycling or public transport. In a highly urbanised environment such as the City of Sydney, the usability of open space is strongly influenced by its accessibility.

How far from home

Equitable access to public open space needs to be a key consideration, as the location of parks and recreation areas plays a key role in supporting health, wellbeing, and social connection.

Key factors affecting access

- Walking distance: How close residents and workers are to a park.
- Access barriers: Physical or social obstacles that limit use, such as busy roads or lack of safe crossings.

Distribution gaps

Analysis was undertaken to assess distribution of open space and identify areas not within reasonable walking distance of residents.

Access to a park

Figure 21 indicates that a substantial majority of residents have access to a park of any size (min 200m²) within a short walking distance (300- 400 metres -5 minute walk)

While coverage is not universal, park accessibility is generally high across the City, with notable gaps largely limited to parts of the south-western area around Botany Road and Ralph Street.

Access to a local park (200m² - 3000m²)

The mapping indicates that a substantial majority of residents have access to a local park within a short walking distance. While coverage is not universal, park accessibility is generally high across the City,

with notable gaps largely limited to parts of the south-western area around Botany Road and Ralph Street. Coverage is particularly strong in established residential neighbourhoods where local parks are distributed throughout the urban area.

Access to a neighbourhood park (3000m² - 5ha)

Most residential areas are located within a 600–800 metre walk of a neighbourhood park. The network is supported by an even distribution of parks across the City, supplemented by larger district parks and parks in adjoining local government areas, such as Camperdown Park and Camperdown Memorial Rest Park. Areas of lower accessibility are generally concentrated within industrial and urban renewal precincts in the south-west of the City.

Access to a district park (more than 5ha)

Access to district parks is supported by a combination of City-managed parks and regionally significant open spaces including Sydney Park, Moore Park, Centennial Park, The Domain and the Royal Botanic Garden. Coverage is strongest in the central, eastern and northern parts of the City. The gap identified in the south west is especially important given the expected high growth in this area.

Figure 21: All parks in 300-400m catchment

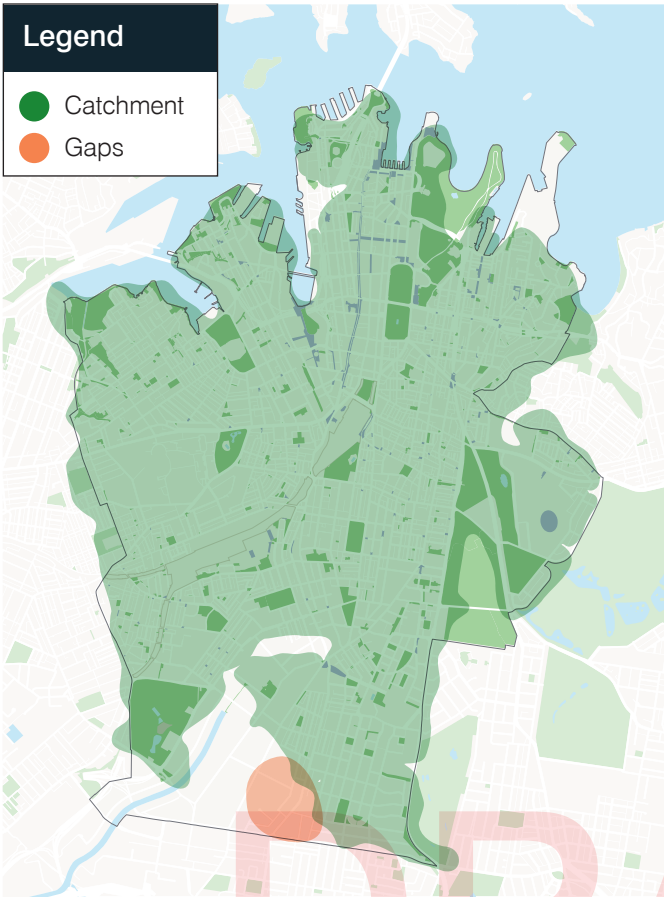


Figure 22: Local parks in 300-400m catchment

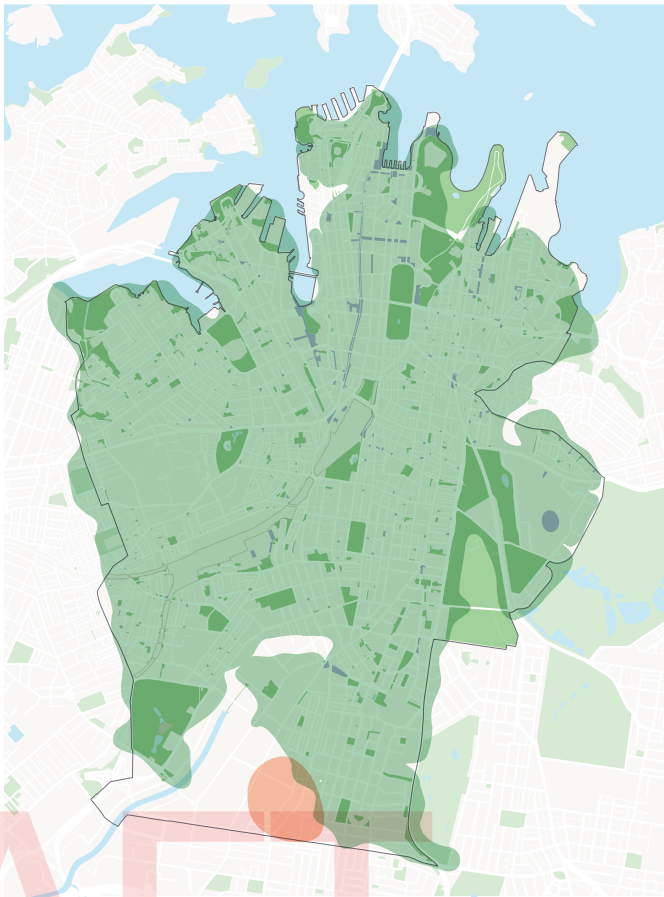


Figure 23: Neighbourhood parks 600-800m catchment

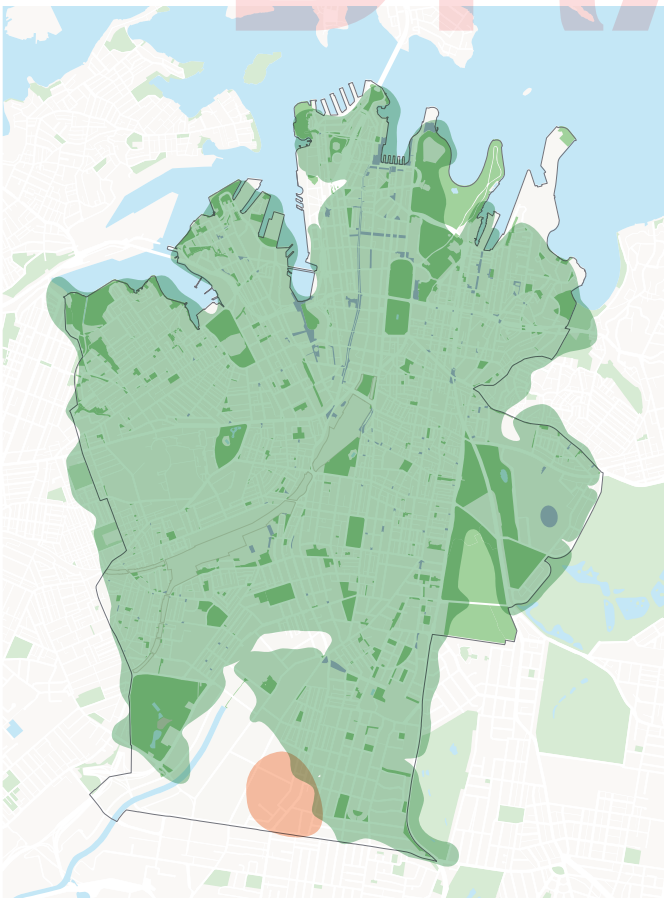
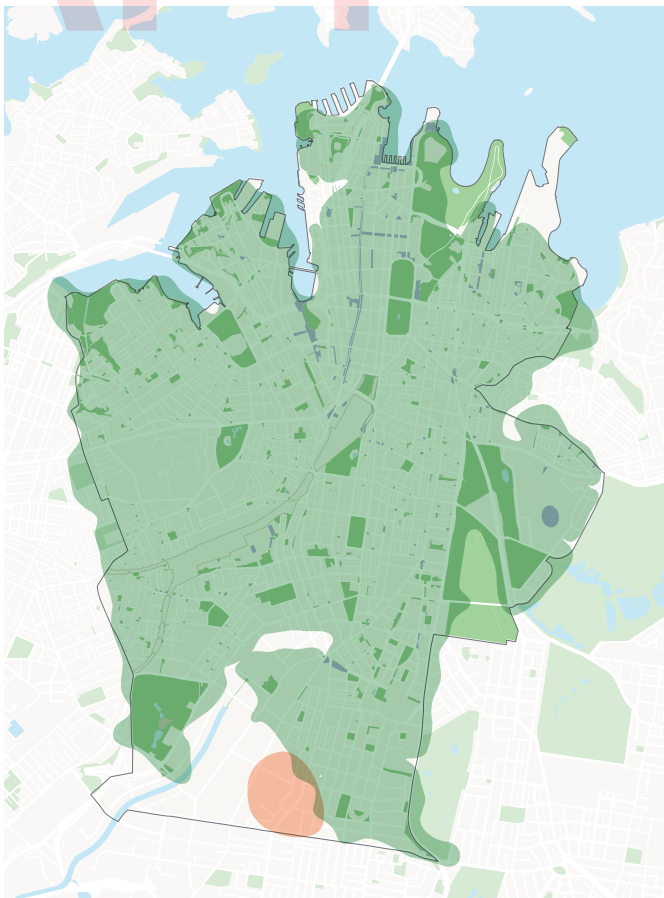


Figure 24: District parks 900-1200m catchment



Inclusive access

At the individual park level, layout, design, and maintenance practices are critical to ensuring accessibility and inclusive enjoyment for all users—particularly people with disabilities, older adults, and families with prams. As the City’s population ages, these considerations become increasingly important.

Compliance with the Australian Standards suite AS 1428 provides a framework for equitable access across public and private domains, aligning with the objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act. Beyond compliance, inclusive design fosters participation, wellbeing, and a sense of belonging in community life.

For people with disabilities and their carers, decisions to visit a park are often shaped by the availability and quality of amenities, including:

- Accessible pathway network
- Accessible toilets
- Comfortable seating
- Shade and shelter
- Smooth, well-connected pathways

These features not only support inclusive access but also benefit a wide range of users, such as families with prams, cyclists, and older adults.

Over the past decade, all park upgrades in the City have consistently incorporated universal access features—including toilet facilities, ramps, handrails, seating, and at least one on-grade entry point wherever gradients allow. This demonstrates the City’s ongoing commitment to inclusive design and equitable access.



City of Sydney’s Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2025–2029

The City’s Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan sets out objectives

directly relevant to open space and recreation, including:

- Improving access to public spaces and infrastructure to ensure usability by people with disability
- Creating more liveable communities through enhanced design and functionality of open spaces
- Providing equitable access to services, facilities, and recreational programs via inclusive design and accessible communication
- Celebrating diversity and visibility by showcasing stories and images of people with disability in public spaces and City communications
- Addressing non-visible and intersectional experiences of disability, ensuring planning considers a broad spectrum of needs.



Inclusive Tennis Festival
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Links

Why links matter

The effectiveness of an open space network is influenced not only by the quantity, quality and distribution of parks, but also by how well spaces are connected to one another.

Proximity alone does not guarantee meaningful access to open space. Providing convenient links through the street network and other measures is essential to enable residents to reach larger parks, recreation facilities and nature-based experiences, even when these lie beyond standard walking catchments.

From an environmental perspective, linkages contribute to urban greening outcomes and can strengthen connections between habitat areas, waterways and ecological corridors. Street upgrades and the expanded cycle network have strengthened connectivity, though several major barriers remain.

Barriers

While many residents in the City of Sydney live near a park, proximity alone does not ensure easy access. A park or recreation facility may be geographically close, however, barriers such as major roads, rail corridors, steep topography, or poor-quality crossings can disrupt these connections and limit accessibility.

Improving connections between destinations also creates valuable recreational routes, as walking, jogging and cycling are among the City’s most popular activities.

Key pedestrian crossing barriers will require future assessment include:

- connections at South Dowling Street to Moore Park South park
- busy state classified roads, topographic, railway reserve
- Chippendale - bounded by busy roads – needs safe accessible links to Victoria Park;
- Cowper Wharf Steps - pedestrian access to Garden Island Reserve.
- Alexandria Canal - key missing link between Coward Street and Campbell Road leaves a major gap that prevents a fully continuous regional cycling route and limits broader network integration.

Key linkage opportunities

- Green Avenues is a Sustainable Sydney 2050 initiative to enhance tree canopy, urban greening and active transport connections along key streets, including Park Street and Botany Road.
- Alexandria Canal – cycle and pedestrian connections.
- Glebe Island Bridge restoration for pedestrian and cycling.
- Connections from Chippendale to Prince Alfred Park facilitated by any future Central overstation development;
- Harbour foreshore - Blackwattle Bay and City West will provide ooportunities to extend public foreshore access.

Regional/metropolitan links

The opportunity to link parks extends beyond the City. The Sydney Green Grid identifies a metropolitan network of high quality open spaces and green corridors that connect town centres, transport hubs and residential areas across the city.

The Sydney Blue–Green Grid creates opportunities for the City of Sydney to coordinate local green infrastructure and connectivity so it integrates into the broader metropolitan blue–green network.

Blue Green opportunities for the City of Sydney include strengthening green corridor links along Alexandria Canal, enhancing harbour foreshore access, and improving walking and cycling connections to major regional open spaces such as Centennial Parklands and routes toward Botany Bay.



Figure 25: Open space links

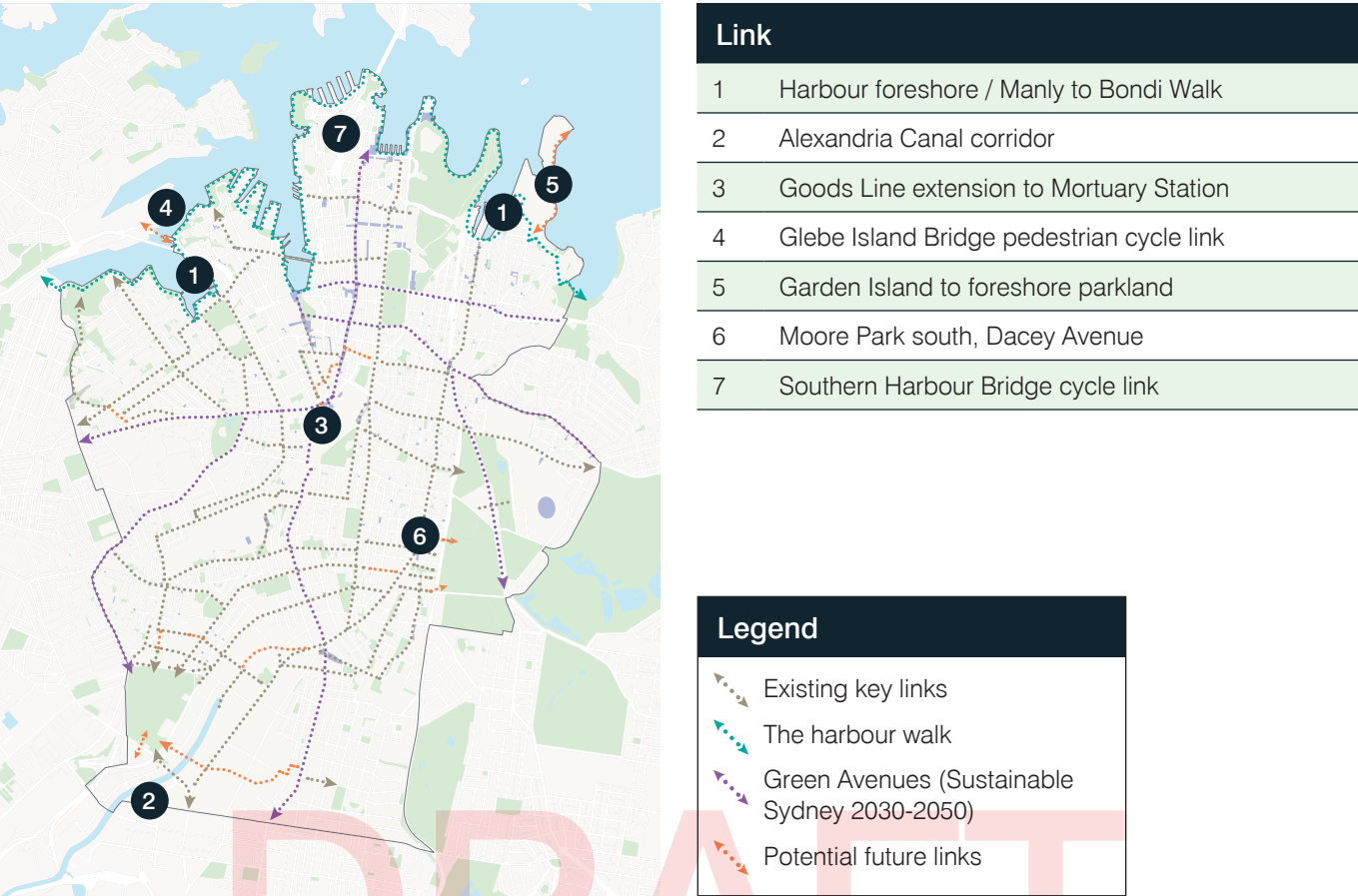


Figure 26: Open space barriers



Strengthening linkages between open spaces not only enhances access to parks and community facilities, but also encourages physical activity, enriches the visual character of the urban environment, and supports vital ecological functions such as wildlife corridors.

Distribution

Why distribution matters

The distribution of open space across the local government area influences both equity and access.

Even where city-wide provision appears adequate, uneven distribution can result in some neighbourhoods experiencing significantly lower levels of service.

This is particularly important in areas experiencing rapid population growth or increases in residential density.

The following graphs show how open space is distributed across villages and the range of settings available across the local area. Together, they paint a picture of how our open spaces support community life today—and where we can grow in the future.

Figure 27: Proportion of total open space area in each village (%)

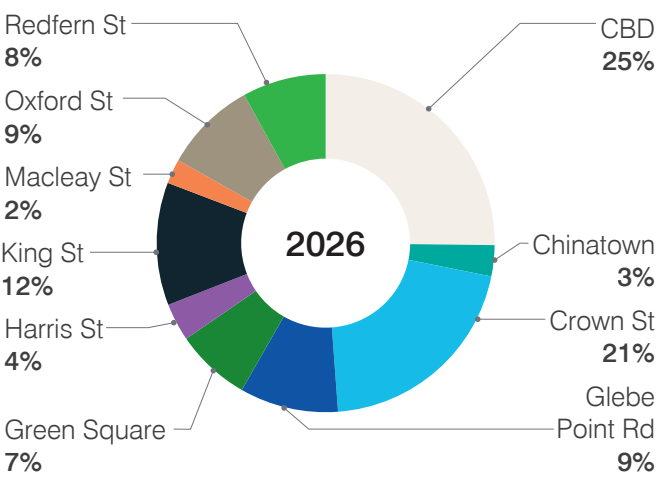


Figure 28: Proportion of total open space area in each village (Ha)

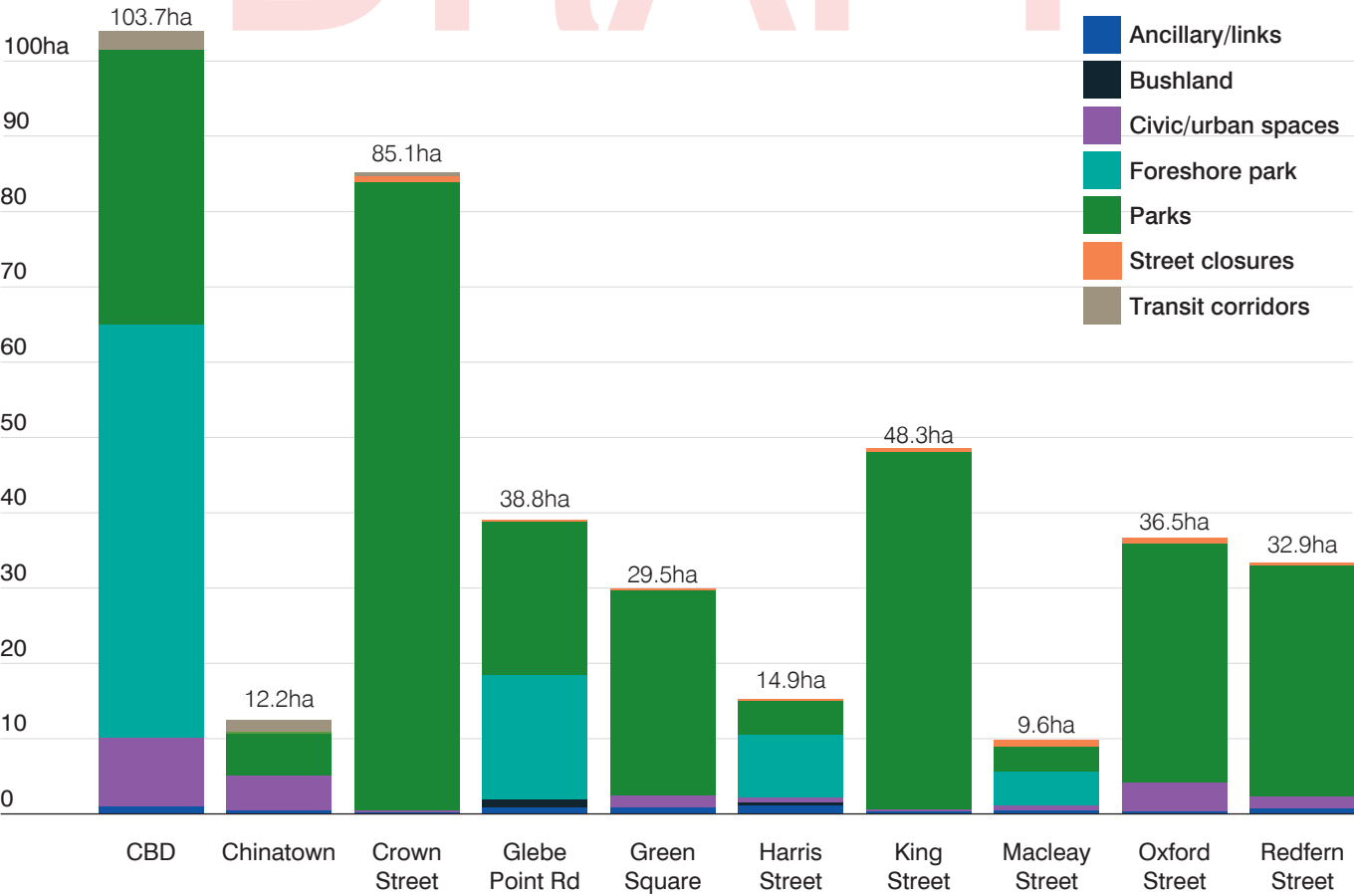


Figure 29: Open space provision in each village (Ha) City and other managed

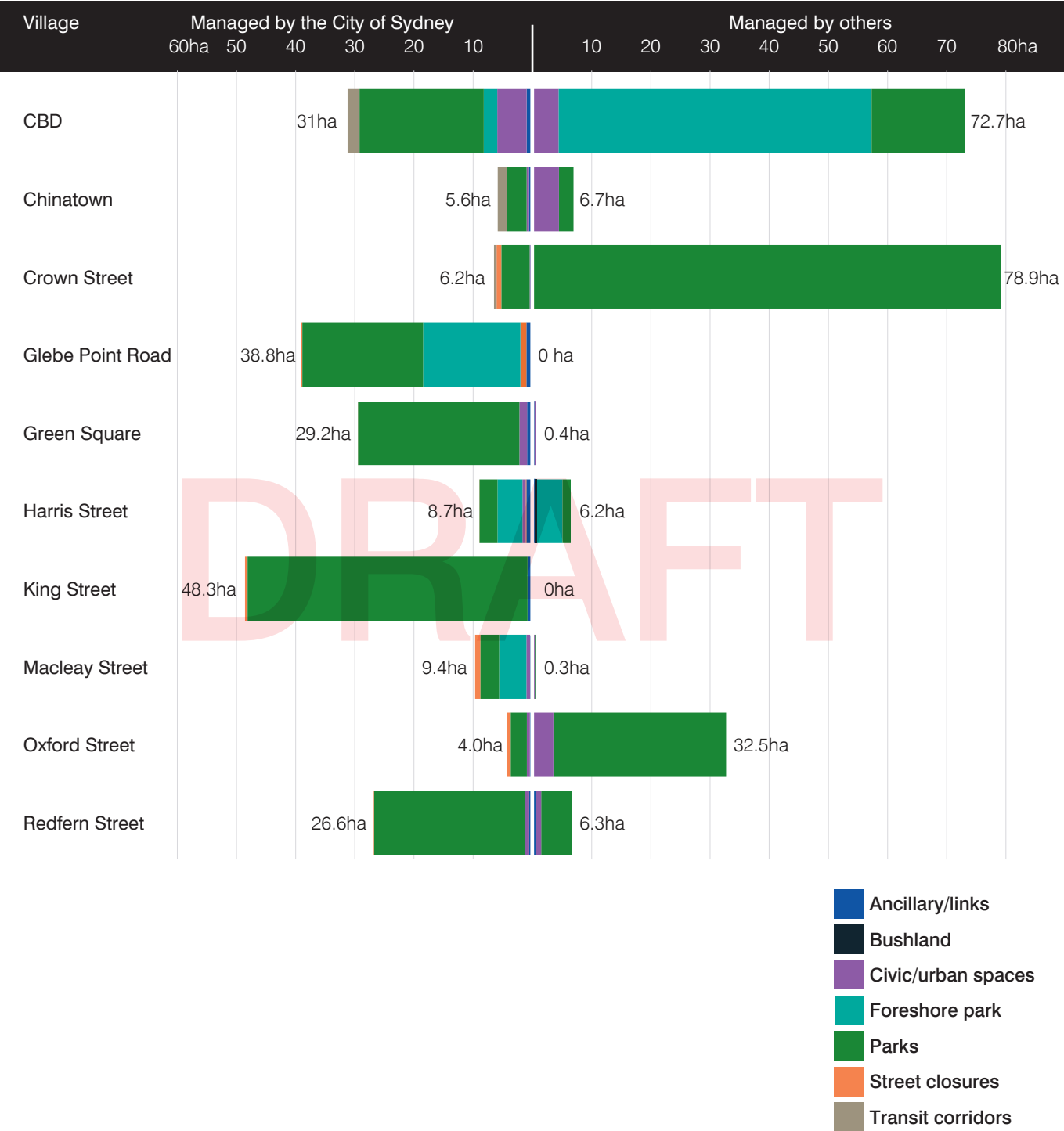
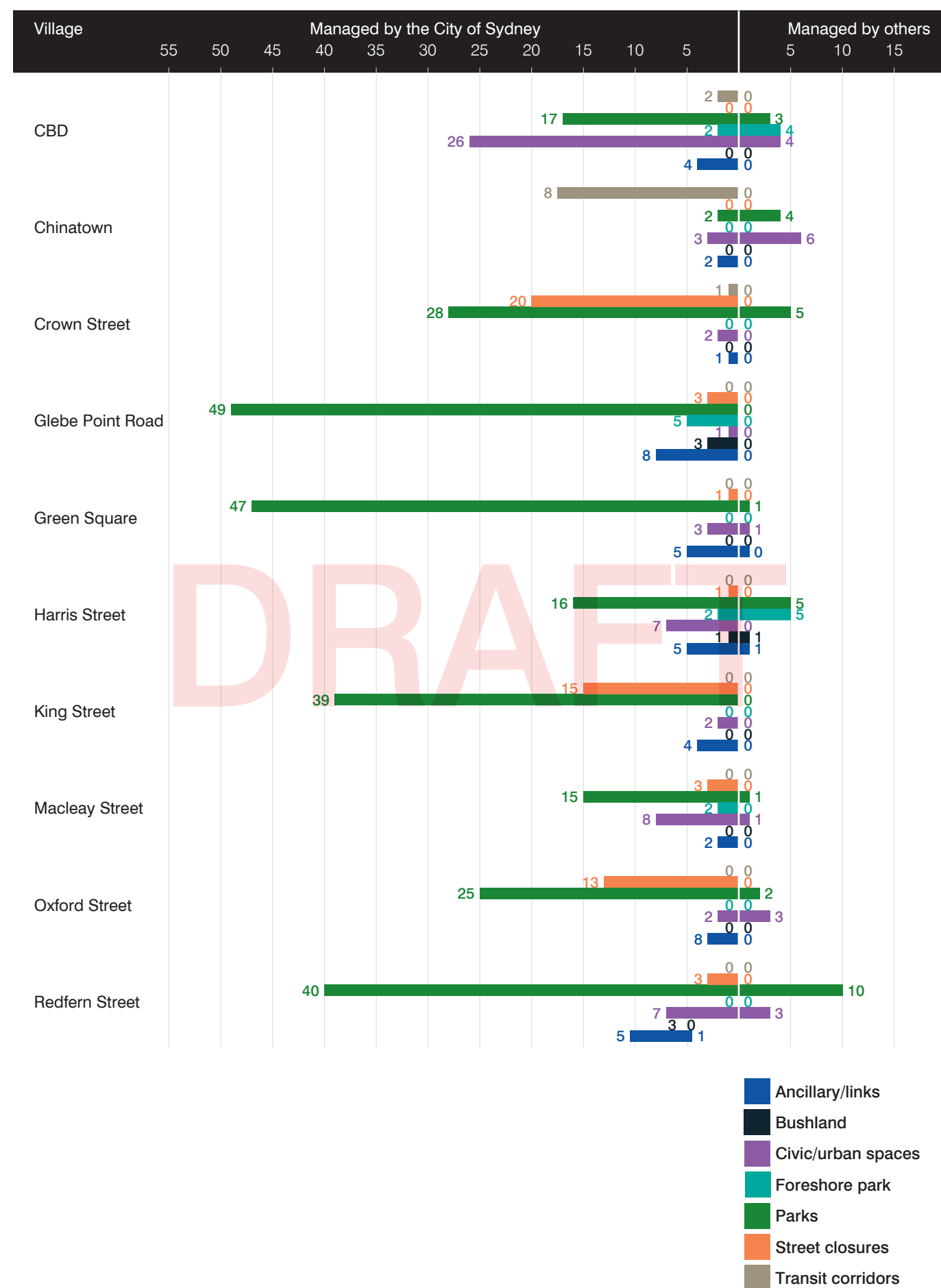


Figure 30: Open space provision in each village (number)



Park size

Why size matters

The size of open space is a significant factor influencing its functionality, capacity and ability to meet community needs. While small local and neighbourhood parks play an important role in providing local access to open space, larger parks are typically capable of supporting a broader range of recreational, environmental and social outcomes.

As population density increases, the role of larger parks becomes increasingly important. Larger spaces are generally more flexible, can accommodate a greater diversity of activities and are more capable of supporting growing numbers of users without compromising functionality or user experience.

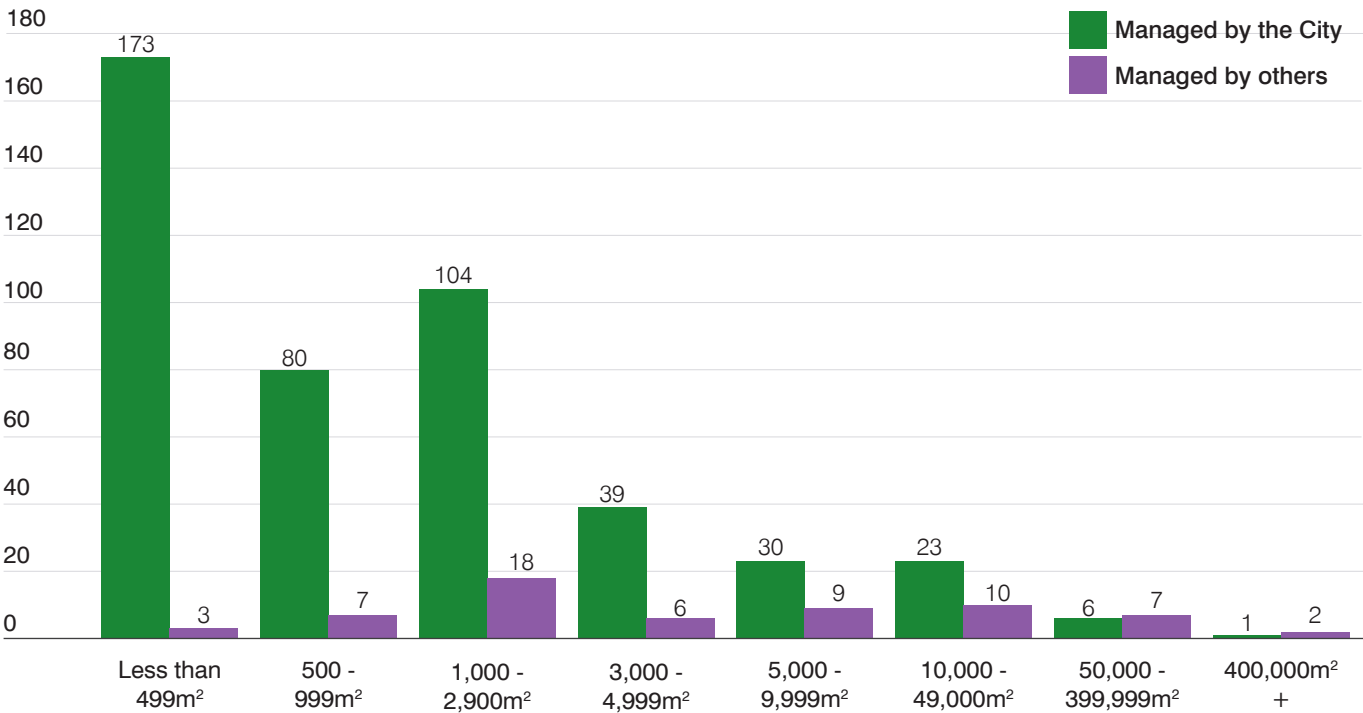
Assessment

Parks less than 3,000 m² make up the majority of park types by number (67%), but collectively account for only 7% of the City’s total open space area.

In contrast, larger parks comprise a smaller share of park types (32%) yet contribute a significantly greater proportion of parks (95%). Sydney Park—the City’s largest at 41 hectares—illustrates this point clearly, accounting for nearly 11% of the entire park area.

There is a shortfall in larger parks capable of supporting sport, active recreation, and broader community use, making their provision or expansion critical to meeting growing demand.

Figure 31: Number of parks by size



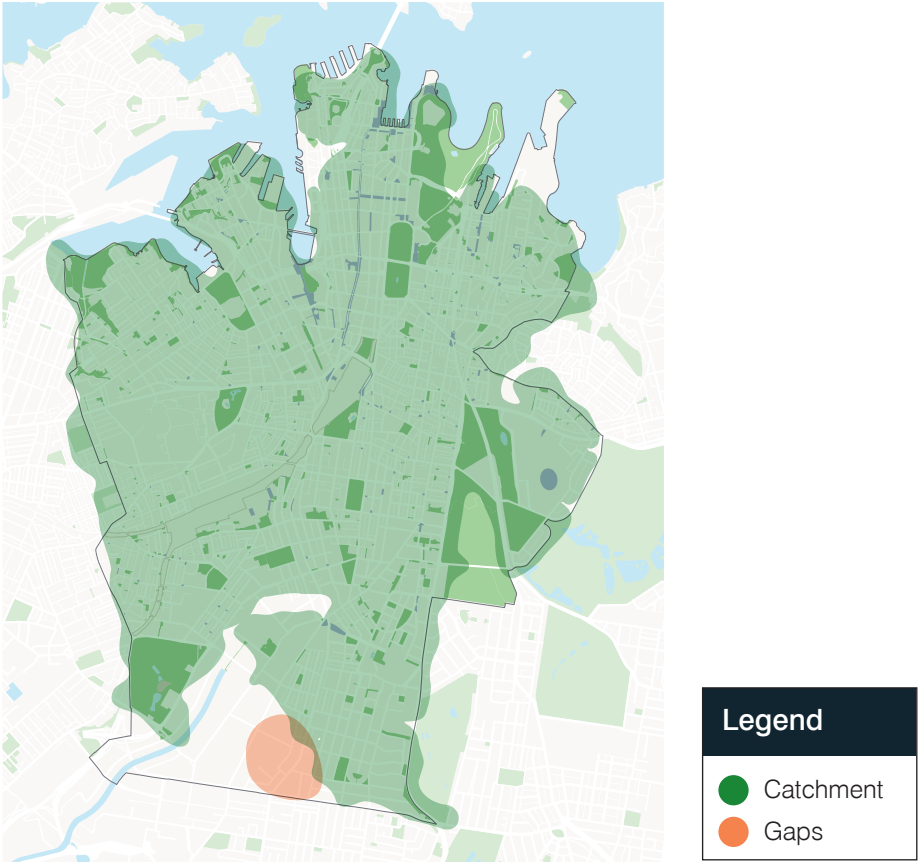
Valuable amenity

While the network is dominated by smaller parks, their broad distribution is a significant strength.

These parks ensure that most residents have convenient access to open space within a short walk of home, supporting everyday recreation, relaxation, social interaction and contact with nature.

In a high-density urban environment, small local parks function as important extensions of private living space, providing opportunities for regular outdoor activity and community connection close to where people live.

Figure 32: 300-400m catchment of parks less than 3000m² in size



Quality

Why quality matters

With limited options to dramatically increase open space provision is the importance of quality in public open space provision, not just quantity.

The quality of open space strongly influences how frequently parks are used and the benefits they provide to the community.

High-quality parks encourage visitation, support a broader range of activities and contribute positively to community wellbeing and place identity. Poor-quality spaces may be underutilised regardless of their size or locations.

While both are essential, the quality of parks and open spaces plays a decisive role in shaping visitor experiences and delivering meaningful community benefits.

High-quality public spaces that are safe, accessible, and visually appealing encourage active lifestyles, foster social interaction, and contribute to overall well-being.

Quality assessment and assurance

Key factors influencing park quality include:

- Design excellence – ensuring spaces are functional, inclusive, and visually engaging
- Consistent maintenance – keeping facilities clean, safe, and welcoming
- Effective management – balancing usability, safety, comfort, and sustainability

Completed capital works

The City has undertaken a significant capital works program across its open space network, resulting in substantial improvements and increased recreational capacity to meet growing and changing community needs.

- Figure XXX illustrates the distribution of projects delivered since 2004-2015 and 2016 -2026
- While most projects have been delivered through the City’s capital works program, a number have

also been undertaken by developers and handed over to the City of Sydney.

- In addition there have been parks managed by other agencies management undergone upgrades particularly at Darling Harbour.

Ten year capital works plan

Looking ahead, over \$XXXX million has been allocated to future open space improvements in the City’s 10-year capital works program.

Planned works include:

- renewal of existing assets
- new parks
- new facilities

Determinants of quality

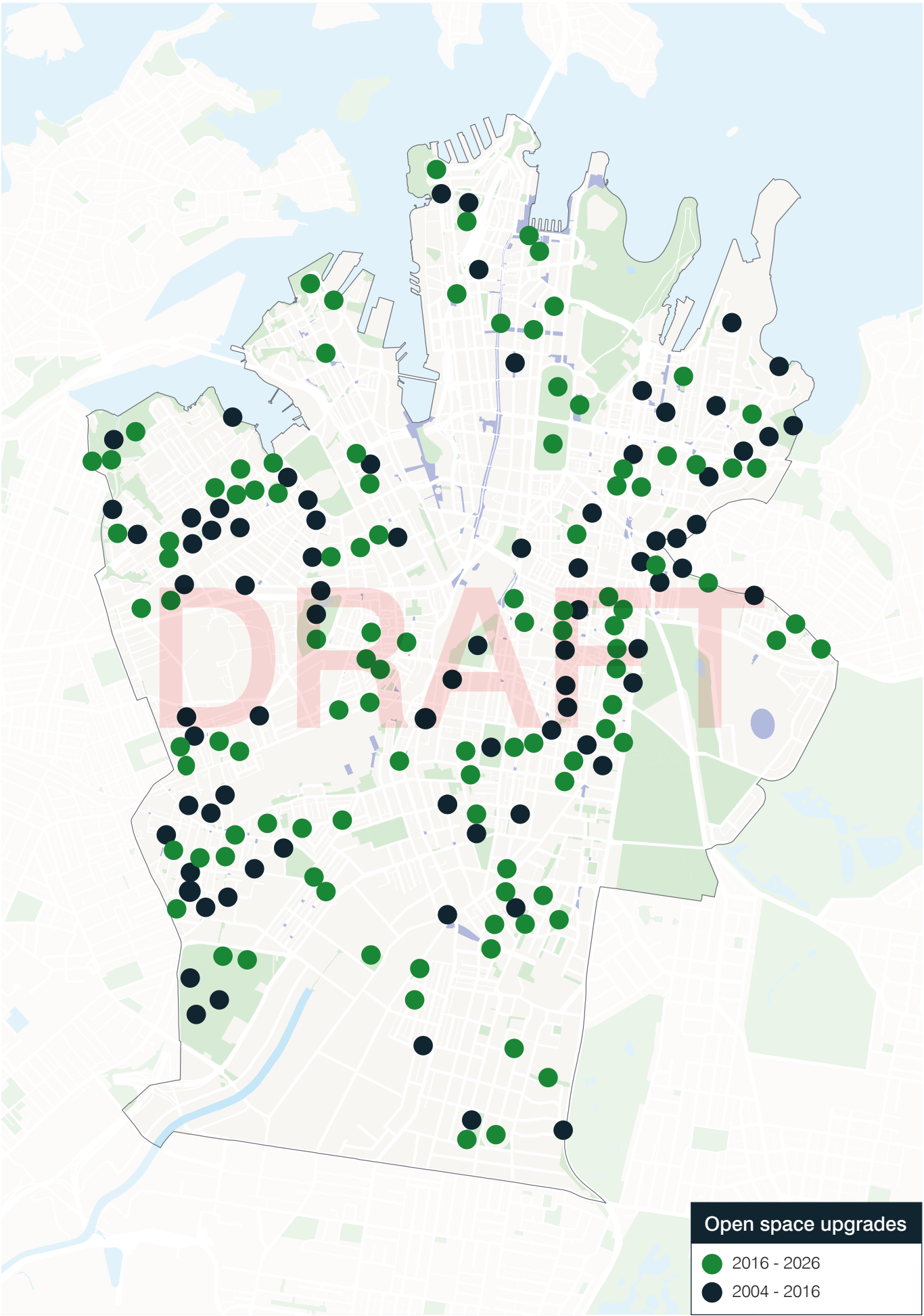
Open space quality is measured by:

- How well facilities age and perform over time
- Frequency and diversity of community use
- Community perceptions, captured through park user in-field surveys

These assessments provide valuable insights into how effectively open spaces meet community expectations and guide future improvements.

The City’s capital works program has significantly enhanced the quality, usability, and sustainability of the open space network that better serve the needs of the community. Since 2016:

- 31 new parks and spaces
- 110 park improvement projects



Summary

The City of Sydney benefits from a diverse, highly valued and generally well-performing open space network that supports recreation, community wellbeing, environmental sustainability and urban liveability.

Significant investment over recent decades has improved the quality, accessibility and functionality of parks and public spaces throughout our area.

However, continued population growth, increasing residential density and changing community expectations are placing increasing pressure on the network. While the overall system continues to perform strongly, future provision will need to respond to growing demand within a highly constrained urban environment.

The assessment identified eight key findings:

1. The network provides a strong foundation

The City contains a diverse range of neighbourhood parks, district parks, civic spaces, waterfront reserves, sporting facilities and green links that collectively provide opportunities for recreation, social interaction, active transport and connection with nature.

The network delivers significant community benefits and represents one of the City's most important public assets.

2. Open space provision per resident is declining

Although additional open space has been delivered and more parks are planned, population growth is occurring at a faster rate than open space acquisition.

As a result, open space provision per resident is expected to continue declining over time.

This trend reinforces the importance of protecting existing open space and identifying opportunities for future acquisition wherever possible.

3. Access is generally good, but local gaps remain

Access is generally good, but local gaps remain. Most residents have access to open space within walking distance of their home. However, access to larger district and regional parks varies across the local government area.

Several villages experience lower levels of provision and are expected to face increasing pressure as population growth continues.

Addressing local access gaps will remain an important consideration in future planning and investment decisions.

4. Larger parks are increasingly important

The open space network contains a large number of smaller parks which play an essential role in supporting everyday recreation and community life. However, larger parks are increasingly important because they:

- accommodate a broader range of recreation opportunities.
- support larger numbers of users.
- provide greater environmental benefits.
- offer opportunities for organised and informal recreation.

Future planning should prioritise the protection, expansion and creation of larger multifunctional open spaces wherever opportunities arise.

5. Quality is a major strength of the network

The quality of the City's parks and public spaces is generally high and is a significant contributor to overall network performance.

Well-designed and well-maintained parks help maximise community benefit, support higher levels of use and improve the capacity of the network to accommodate growing demand.

Continued investment in renewal, upgrades and maintenance will be essential to maintaining these outcomes.

6. Future growth will increase pressure on the network

Population growth, increasing density, changing recreation patterns and climate change will continue to place pressure on existing open space. Future planning will need to focus on both increasing supply and improving the performance of existing assets.

Given the limited availability of land, future success will depend on a combination of:

- Strategic acquisition.
- Park expansion.
- Improved connectivity.
- Use of street space
- Enhanced park functionality.
- Partnerships and shared-use opportunities.

7. Partnerships will be critical

The City cannot meet future recreation demand through municipal assets alone. A significant proportion of open space and recreation infrastructure is owned or managed by State Government agencies, schools, universities and private providers. Partnerships will become an increasingly important mechanism for delivering recreation.

8. Optimisation will become increasingly important

The City's future needs cannot be addressed solely through acquiring additional land or constructing new facilities. The network must also become more efficient, adaptable and capable of accommodating increased demand. Maximising the value of existing assets will be one of the most important strategies available to the City.

Assessment summary

Overall, the City's open space network is performing well and provides substantial recreational, environmental and social benefits. However, maintaining these outcomes in the future will both providing open space to strategically managing, enhancing and optimising the entire network.

The following section examines future open space needs, identifies areas of greatest demand and outlines opportunities to protect, expand and strengthen the open space network to support Sydney's growth over the coming decades.



Pirrama Park
Photo: Paul Patterson / City of Sydney

Part 3

Future open space provision plan

- Meeting the needs of a growing city
- Future priorities
- Opportunities for future open space

DRAFT

Meeting the needs of a growing city

The challenges identified in the 2016 Study remain highly relevant today and have been further intensified by projected population growth and increasing urban density. These pressures are driving greater demand across all levels of the open space network, with large parks experiencing a significant rise in use for both active recreation and community gatherings.

Even smaller parks that provide convenient access for large populations experience intense levels of use, as evidenced by ongoing turf wear.

As the population continues to grow, additional open space will be essential to support recreation, social interaction, and community well-being.

The City’s approach to increasing public open space

As Sydney’s population continues to grow, additional open space will be required. However, land supply is constrained, and acquisition costs increasingly expensive.

The City’s strategy focuses on both acquiring new land and maximising the value of existing public land. This includes:

Land acquisition and dedications

Securing new sites to expand the open space network.

Improvement and embellishment

Applying better design to existing parks and open spaces to unlock their full potential.

Streets as public space

Transforming streets into vibrant, accessible public spaces and linkages to parks and recreation.

Rethinking open space current uses

to increase flexibility and availability for diverse recreational needs.

Improving access

strengthening connections to existing open spaces to expand catchment areas and link neighbourhoods to large parks.

Multi-purpose uses

co-locating and integrating diverse, complementary recreation activities to maximise the utility of limited space.

Partnerships

collaborating with government agencies, schools, universitiesprivate landowners, and community organisations to enable shared access and co-investment opportunities.

Sub-regional planning

coordinating open space strategies across local government boundaries to ensure cohesive and equitable provision.

Future open space provision

What is planned?

Table 6 and 7 illustrates the spatial distribution of these sites, which are either:

- planned for dedication for open space through planning controls
- already owned by the City or other public agencies for future open space use or
- associated with infrastructure and urban renewal projects earmarked for public space

These sites have progressed to a stage—through master planning, approved development applications, landscape concept planning, or confirmed City or other government ownership where there is a reasonable level of certainty that they will be delivered as open space in the future.

Approximately 22 hectares of future open space is planned for delivery, comprising 14.5 hectares to be managed by the City and 8.32 hectares managed by other agencies.

A further 20ha park conversion area associated with Moore Park South with be delivered by Greater Sydney Parklands.

- 22.7ha new open space*
- 20ha park conversion (Moore Park south)
- over 20 new parks and spaces

Over 42ha increase in accessible public parkland

* City of Sydney and other agencies

Figure 33: Future open space planned for and confirmed

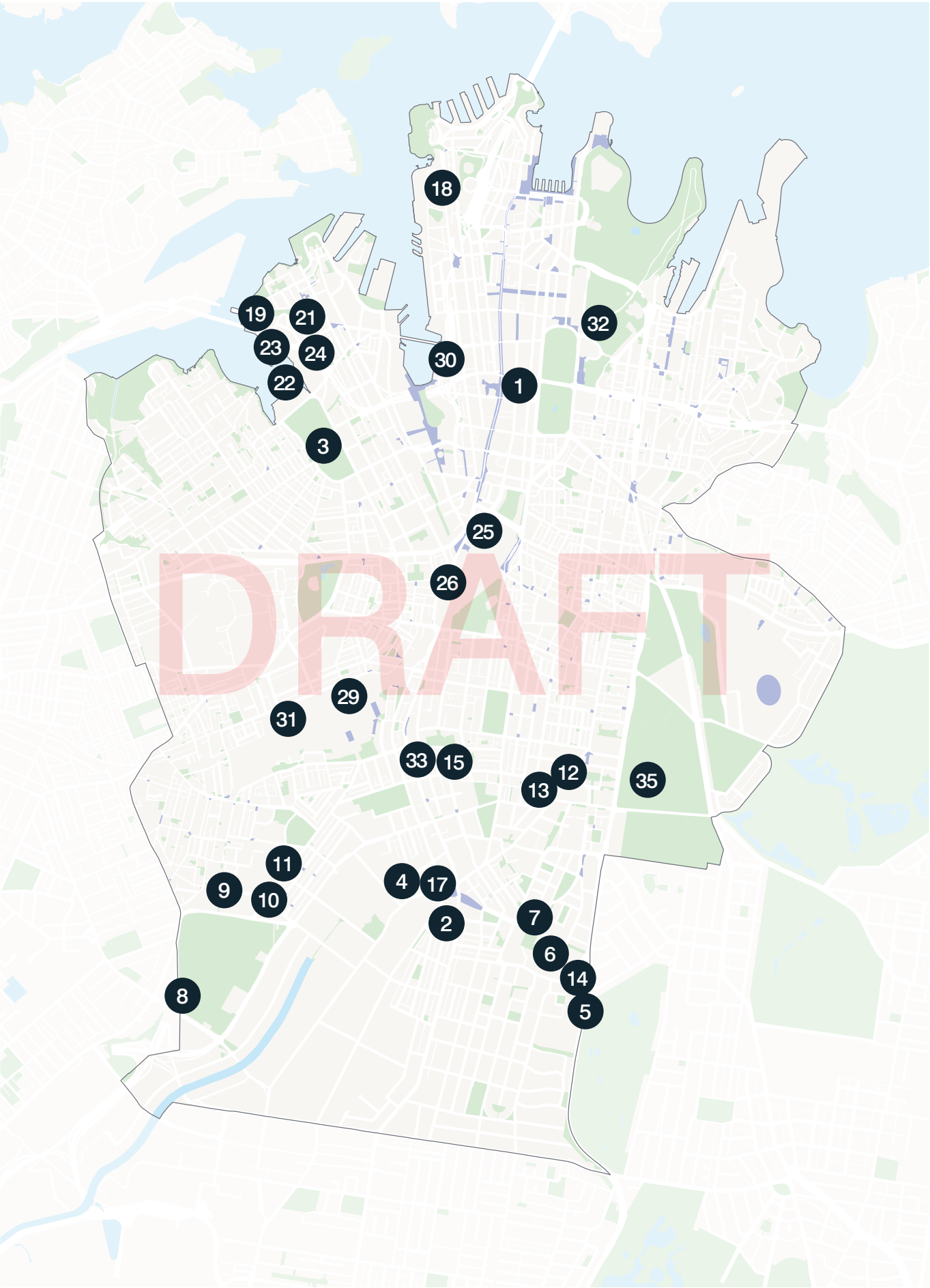


Table 6: Future open space managed by the City

Future open space managed by the City		Village	Setting	Area (m²)
1	Town Hall Square	CBD & Harbour	Civic	4,657
2	22 O'Riordan Street	Green Sq & City Sth	Park	7,397
3	Wentworth Park	Glebe Point Road	Park extension	38,115
4	North Alexandria Employment Lands - Mandible Street Sports Precinct	Green Sq & City Sth	Park	22,989
5	Green Square - Garraway Park Stage 2	Green Sq & City Sth	Park	4,851
6	Green Square - Gunyama Park - Stage 2	Green Sq & City Sth	Park	6,389
7	Green Square - Woolwash Park extension	Green Sq & City Sth	Park extension	856
8	Sydney Park Nursery park conversion	King Street	Park extension	10,305
9	Ashmore Estate - Carter Park	King Street	Park	556
10	Ashmore Estate - Kooka Walk	King Street	Ancillary/ Link	7,396
11	Ashmore Estate - McPherson Park	King Street	Park	7,655
12	Dank Street South - Central Park	Green Sq & City Sth	Park	2,799
13	Dank Street South - Small Park	Green Sq & City Sth	Park	1,510
14	Green Square - Mulgu Park	Green Sq & City Sth	Park	3,027
15	Waterloo Estate South - Main park	Redfern Street	Park	22,575
16	Waterloo Estate South - Small park	Redfern Street	Park	1,466
17	North Alexandria Employment Lands - Green Link	Green Sq & City Sth	Ancillary/ Link	1,992
Total				144,535

Table 7: Future open space managed by others

Future open space managed by others		Village	Setting	Area (m²)
18	Barangaroo Central Park	CBD & Harbour	Foreshore park	18,506
19	Blackwattle Bay - Bank Street Open Space	Harris Street	Foreshore Park	11,447
20	Blackwattle Bay - Local Park	Glebe Point Road	Foreshore Park	3,129
21	Blackwattle Bay - Miller Street Reserve	Harris Street	Park	1,339
22	Blackwattle Bay - Urban Park	Glebe Point Road	Foreshore Park	6,733
23	Blackwattle Bay - Waterfront Promenade	Harris Street	Ancillary/ Link	5,145
24	Blackwattle Bay - Waterside Park	Harris Street	Foreshore Park	6,670
25	Central Station - Central Square	Chinatown & CBD South	Civic	7,310
26	Central Station - Mortuary Station Gardens	Redfern Street	Park	6,706
27	Dank Street South - Plaza	Green Sq & City Sth	Civic	5,021
28	North Alexandria Employment Lands - Local Park	Green Sq & City Sth	Park	1,183
29	North Eveleigh - parks	Redfern Street	Park	TBA

Table 8: (Continued)

Future open space managed by others		Village	Setting	Area (m²)
30	Darling Harbour podium park	CBD & Harbour	Park	TBA
31	North Eveleigh - Western Park	Redfern Street	Park	4,839
32	Queen Elizabeth II Square	CBD & Harbour	Civic	3,465
33	Waterloo Metro Qtr - Cope Street Plaza (completed)	Redfern Street	Civic	1,024
34	Waterloo Metro Qtr - Raglan Street Plaza (completed)	Redfern Street	Civic	684
Total				83,201

Existing green space to community park		Village	Setting	Area (m²)
35	Moore Park South -park conversion	Crown Street	Park	200,000



Aerial view of Green Square and Moore Park South
Photo: Lucinda Varney / City of Sydney

Future priorities

Beyond planned and projected open space dedications, additional opportunities may arise through targeted City land acquisitions voluntary planning agreements or partnership opportunities.

Key principles for open space acquisition and dedications

All land acquired or dedicated for open space must be fit for purpose, with properties assessed against acquisition criteria to confirm their suitability and ability to meet identified recreation and open space needs (see Land Capability Assessment).

Properties adjoining City-owned parks will be assessed for their potential to:

- increase parkland
- improve recreational diversity
- boost capacity for active uses
- consolidate fragmented spaces or remove encroachments

Acquisition priorities

Over the past decade, acquisition has focused on expanding active recreation—sports fields, indoor facilities, and outdoor courts. Looking forward recommended priorities are:

Addressing distribution gaps

Prioritise acquisitions in areas with identified distribution gaps to improve equitable 5minute walk access for a resident to a park or to meet growing demand in high density area through new or expanded existing parks.

Large parks for community recreation

The current network is dominated by small parks, limiting recreational opportunities. The City will prioritise acquiring large sites suitable for a wide mix of community uses, particularly in areas with distribution gaps and high-density populations. Figure XX identifies current open space distribution gaps.

Expansion of existing open space

Strategic expansion of current parks can significantly improve their capacity and function. Expansions that create parks of 3,000 m² or more can substantially enhance local open space quality.

Sportsfields and active recreation

There is a shortfall of open space suitable for organised sport and casual active recreation.

- Acquisition of sites for sports fields will be driven by opportunity rather than distribution alone, with the aim of increasing the overall supply of active recreation space. Site assessments must consider local context, including potential amenity impacts where fields adjoin residential areas. Opportunities that enable close co-location with existing fields are preferred, as they improve programming and management efficiency.

Acquisition for open space linkages

- Improving connectivity is essential for a functional open space network. Most linkages will come from enhanced pedestrian and cycling routes along streets, but strategic acquisitions or dedications such as in the Alexandria Canal Precinct can provide safe, convenient off-street connections.
- Linking parks and recreation facilities strengthens access to individual parks and to the wider network.

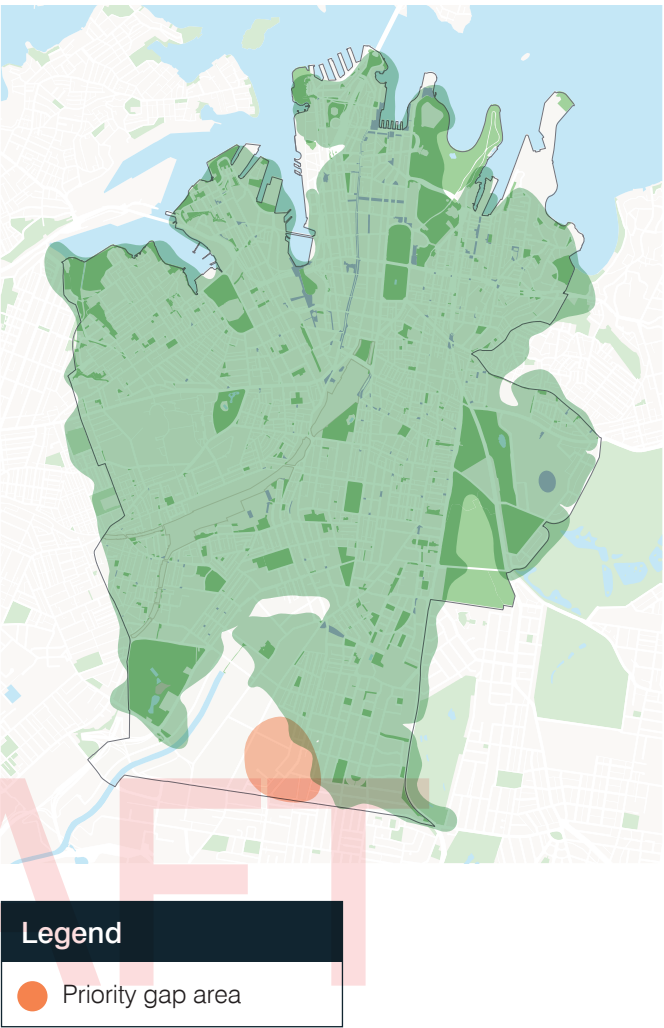
Distribution gaps

Catchment mapping based on the Sydney Plan benchmark of access to open space within a 300 to 400 metre walk shows that most residential areas in the City are well served by parks and open space. The existing network provides broad coverage across the local government area, supporting everyday recreation, relaxation and social activity close to where people live.

The primary gap in access is located in the south-western part of the City. While much of this area consists of industrial and commercial land uses, reducing demand for nearby open space, some residential communities along Botany Road and around Ralph Street have comparatively limited access to parks within the preferred walking catchment. As residential development and population growth continue in these areas, opportunities to improve local access to open space should be explored.

The analysis also demonstrates that access to open space is influenced not only by proximity, but by the size and function of parks. Residents in some parts of the City benefit from convenient access to major destination parks, including Sydney Park, Moore Park and the Glebe Foreshore, which provide a broader range of recreation opportunities and serve catchments extending beyond the local area. Parks outside the City boundary, such as Camperdown Park and Camperdown Memorial Rest Park, also contribute to the open space network and are important for residents in the City's western neighbourhood.

Figure 34: Catchment area for all parks within 300-400m



Access to a district parks

Access to district-scale parks (more than 5ha) within the City is supported by a combination of Council-managed open spaces and a number of significant regional parks managed by other agencies. Large parks including Sydney Park, Moore Park, Centennial Park, The Domain and the Royal Botanic Garden provide important opportunities for recreation, sport, social activities and contact with nature, serving residents from across the City and the broader metropolitan area.

The catchment mapping indicates that access to district parks is generally strongest in the central, eastern and northern parts of the City, reflecting the presence of these major regional open spaces. However, there is a relative gap in access to large district parks in the southern part of the LGA.

Addressing this gap through the provision of new district parks is likely to be challenging given the limited availability of large land parcels and the high cost of land acquisition in established urban areas. As a result expansion of existing parks, acquisition opportunities when feasible, improving access to existing parks represent most practical strategy for meeting future needs.

Acquisition criteria and rationale

Land capability assessment

In the future opportunities may arise for either acquisition or dedication of land for public open space.

It is essential that land acquired or dedicated for open space purposes must be appropriate for its intended use and capable of meeting identified priorities.

Potential properties should be screened against the following acquisition criteria to confirm viability and ensure they address open space and recreation needs.

- suitability of land -appropriate size, location, and physical characteristics for intended recreational or ecological functions - refer to the following Table XX acquisition criteria and priorities
- accessibility -proximity to residential areas, transport, and existing open space networks.
- environmental value -potential to support biodiversity, urban cooling, or ecological restoration.
- financial and risk considerations -assessment of acquisition costs, ownership status, contamination risks, and development feasibility.
- community benefit -capacity to meet identified gaps, provide equitable access, and support diverse recreational needs.



Green Square

Photo: Abril Felman / City of Sydney

Table 9: Land suitability criteria for open space acquisitions and dedications

Criteria	Provision	Notes
Size / dimension suitable for intended recreation uses	Sports fields (Full field) – 120 x 75m field dimension – Allow 20,000 to 25,000m²	The upper end of the minimum size range is preferred, as it supports a wider variety of open-space uses and amenities.
	Sports fields (Half field) – 68 x 50m field dimension – Allow 5,000 to 8,000m²	
	Local parks – Preference is to be given to new local parks with a minimum area that ranges between 3,000 and 5,000m², unless the acquisition expands an adjoining open-space parcel to create a larger, more functional park.	Areas should be large enough to provide a sense of openness and enable the creation of meaningful green spaces.
	Existing open space expansion – Preference for sites that adjoin existing, heavily used open-space areas. The acquisition should relieve use pressures while extending or diversifying the recreational opportunities available.	
	Linkages – Acquisitions should create connections between open-space areas that support a diverse range of recreational opportunities. – Linkages and access corridors must have a minimum width of 10m. – These linkages are intended to facilitate access and movement, and their provision does not replace the requirement to deliver adequate open-space and recreational opportunities within the overall network	For sports fields, larger sites are encouraged to support flexible, multi-purpose layouts rather than facilities tailored to a single sporting code.
Site shape and orientation	Sports fields – Land should preferably be of a regular shape—such as square or rectangular—to maximise flexibility for active recreation and to accommodate sports fields. A north–south orientation is preferred to support optimal field layout and usability	
	Local parks – Land should preferably be a regular shape—such as square or rectangular—to maximise flexibility and ensure the creation of functional, usable open space.	
	Existing open space expansion – Land should be a regular shape—such as square or rectangular—and should adjoin existing open space to create a contiguous area that maximises recreational use and development opportunities.	
	Linkages – Linear spaces area acceptable	
Site boundary	Sports fields, local parks and existing open space expansion – Sites should be clearly identifiable as public open space. – A minimum of 50% street frontage is required, increasing to 100% in new development areas. – Corner frontages are preferred, as they enhance visibility, reinforce the site's identity as a public place, and improve passive surveillance and overall safety.	
	Linkages – Active edges along the link are preferred to enhance visibility and support effective passive surveillance.	
Site gradient	– Site gradients should generally be flat, fit-for-purpose, and be able to accommodate access for people of all abilities. – The maximum acceptable slope sports fields, local parks and park expansion is 1:20	

Table 9: (Continued)

Criteria	Provision	Notes
Comfort/ amenity/ micro-climate	– Site should provide good solar access and incorporate measures that reduce wind exposure and traffic noise. – At least 50% of the park area should receive a minimum of three hours of direct sunlight during mid-winter. – The site should have the capacity to deliver a visually attractive, comfortable, and enjoyable environment for users.	
Access to users/ population	– Sites must provide for safe and convenient access. Land not separated from catchment by physical barriers, such as busy roads.	
	Sports fields – The location of sports fields does not need to meet proximity benchmarks for all residents; however, achieving an approximate 2 km distribution across the community is considered optimal.	
	Local parks – All residents should be located less than a ten-minute walk (approximately 250- 300m) of local open space.	
Accessibility	The location and park landscape should maximise accessibility and support safe, independent use by people with mobility impairments.	
Connectivity	Sites should be located along key pedestrian and cycling routes and provide opportunities to connect with adjoining open-space areas.	
Assessment of potential negative amenity impacts arising from intended use	– Suitability of co-locating a park with adjacent land-uses needs to be considered, including but not limited to noise and lighting impacts generated by sport field and park use. – Ecology of the site and impacts to existing ecologies must also be considered.	
Land quality and tenure	Sites should not be constrained by onerous / cost prohibitive contaminated land restrictions, property easements and/ or strata titles.	Assessing the land quality will minimise development and maintenance costs and ensure long term flexibility in use of the park.

Opportunities to increase open space provision

Beyond land acquisition

In addition to acquiring and dedicating new land to expand the open space network, meaningful gains in availability, capacity, recreational diversity, and accessibility can be achieved by making better use of existing public land.

Streets as public space

Reimagining streets for recreation and community use presents an underutilised opportunity to expand public space by enabling greening and social activity, prioritising pedestrians and cyclists, and improving access to parks.

This is achieved through measures such as footpath widening, street closures, shared zone conversion, and traffic-calming interventions.

The City’s 2050 projects demonstrate the long-term potential of streets as public space. Initiatives such as Green Streets along Botany Road and Park Street, together with the transformation of George Street into a pedestrian-focused boulevard, reallocate road space to greening, walking, cycling, and social activity. These projects illustrate how streets can function as linear public spaces that support recreation, climate resilience, and stronger connections across the open space network.

Enhancing and unlocking existing spaces is critical to increasing capacity, improving amenity, and meeting the needs of a growing community.

Rethinking existing open space functions

Transforming green areas that currently offer limited public access into community recreation space can significantly expand the size and usefulness of the park network.

Through sustained City advocacy, significant open space gains have been secured at Moore Park South through the reallocation of golf course land to community parkland, and at Wentworth Park through the conversion of the former greyhound track area to support broader public recreation and sporting use.

The State Government has confirmed its commitment to progressing the implementation of these proposals.

The removal of event car parking from grassed areas in Moore Park East unlocks the potential to establish higher-quality parkland and community facilities, significantly enhancing the park’s usability and recreational value.

Design review

Some parks and public spaces are constrained by legacy design, outdated infrastructure, or limited capacity to support diverse activities. A structured design review allows these spaces to be reassessed against contemporary community needs and best-practice design, enabling targeted upgrades that improve functionality, inclusivity, and usability without the cost of land acquisition.

Partnerships/shared use

Meeting more diverse recreation demands and providing additional open space and facilities requires new relationships and partnerships.

Seeking agreements with educational or other institutions to expand available open space resources for community use after hours/ weekends could create “win-win” partnerships with a school having use of an improved recreation facility and the community having access to an additional recreation offer.

The City has successfully delivered shared-use arrangements at Alexandria Community School and Green Square Primary School, enabling school open spaces to support broader community recreation outside school hours.

Protecting what we have

Existing open space is a finite and highly valued community resource that must be protected from incremental loss. Open space is sometimes assumed to be the most expedient land option for infrastructure or other development; however, strong protection mechanisms, appropriate zoning, and ongoing vigilance are essential to ensure these spaces are retained for public benefit.

Potential sites for future open space

A range of additional sites across the City have potential to contribute to future open space provision.

These include land already in public ownership, sites subject to future redevelopment or master planning, and areas where potential open space dedications have been identified through planning controls and strategic documents. (Figure XX)

Realisation of these opportunities is subject to a number of considerations, including:

- advocacy to relevant agencies
- development scenarios and planning dedication outcomes
- landowner negotiations and partnership arrangements
- financial feasibility and risk assessment including contaminated land investigations and remediation requirements
- design development feasibility testing and planning approvals.

These steps are required to provide greater certainty regarding the feasibility, timing, and delivery of future open space outcomes.

1. City centre public domain

The City Centre Public Domain Plan has expanded open space through projects such as the pedestrianisation of George Street and the creation of new public spaces in Chinatown and Haymarket. Future opportunities identified in the City North Public Domain Plan include new civic spaces around Hunter Street linked to the Sydney Metro, leveraging major infrastructure and redevelopment investment.

2. Darlinghurst Courthouse

The site is identified as a 2050 project opportunity, with potential to be reimaged as public open space and integrated with the Taylor Square public domain, subject to future operational and land use requirements.

3. WestConnex St Peters Interchange

Residual land associated with the WestConnex project presents a significant opportunity to expand the City’s open space network. Originally identified for around five hectares of new parkland, these sites could increase tree canopy, enhance biodiversity and urban cooling, and provide additional recreation space for a growing population.

4. Victoria Barracks, Paddington

The site represents a significant long-term opportunity, subject to future Federal Government decisions. The 15-hectare heritage-listed site includes historic buildings, a playing field and a former parade ground. Renewal proposals should retain the playing field for community use.

5. Moore’s Wharf

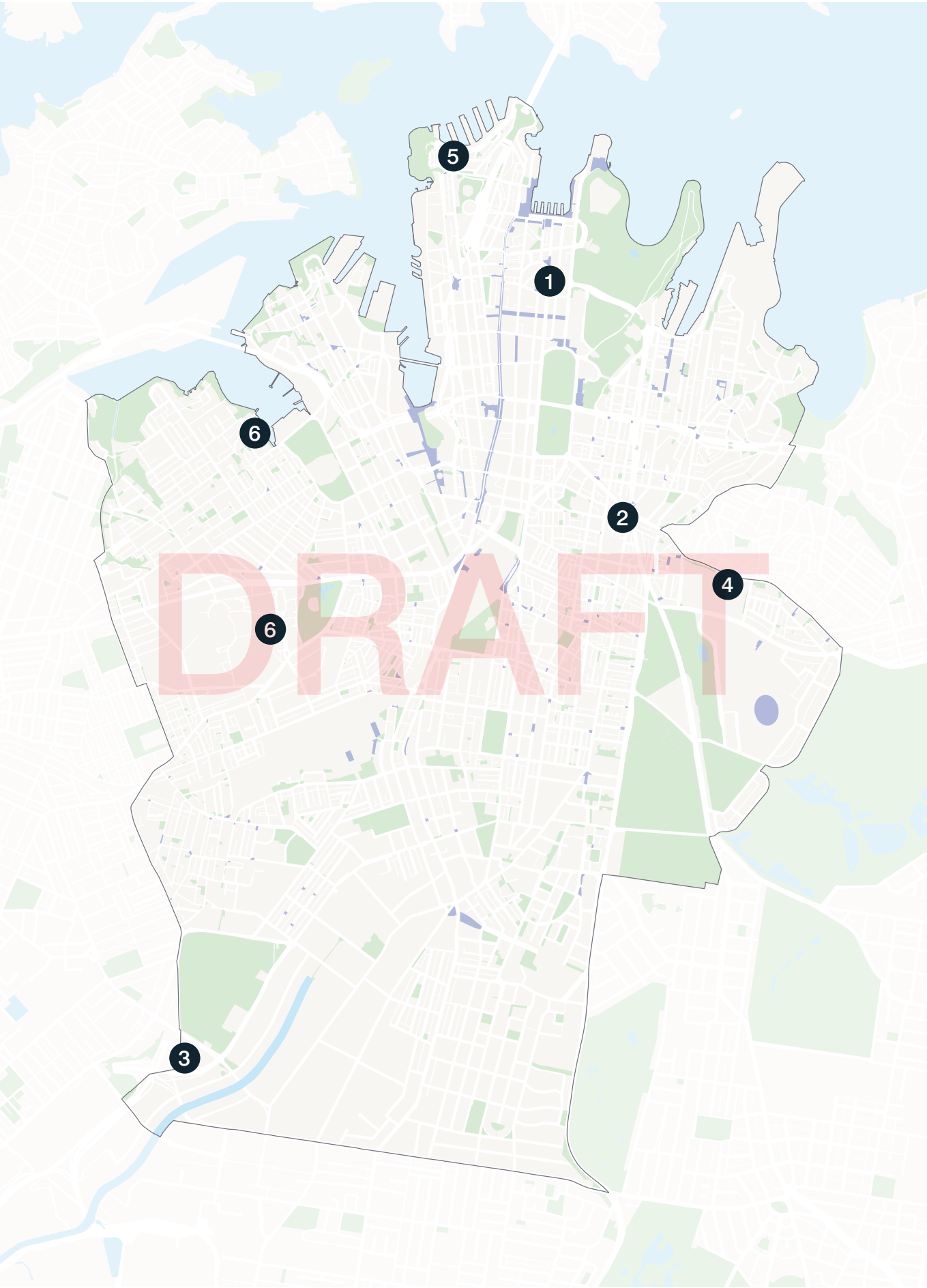
There is an opportunity to expand public space at Marrinawi Cove by repurposing part of the adjacent Moore’s Wharf car park to improve waterfront access and swimming amenity, subject to feasibility and ongoing port operations..

6. Education campuses

Educational campuses should be considered as potential contributors to the local open space network. While these sites are not public open space, shared use agreements can facilitate community access to sporting fields, courts and other outdoor recreation facilities outside operational hours.

Successful implementation at Alexandria Park Community School and Green Square Public School demonstrates the potential for educational land to supplement local open space provision. Similar opportunities should be explored with major educational institutions, including The University of Sydney and Sydney Secondary College, to improve recreational access and optimise the use of existing land assets.

Figure 35: Future open space opportunities



Streets as public spaces

Well-designed streets support more than movement, functioning as vibrant public spaces for social interaction, recreation and civic life.



As the largest share of public space in cities, streets can be reimagined as shared spaces for walking, running cycling, sitting, and play, and as green corridors linking parks and neighbourhoods.

This reflects a shift toward viewing the entire public domain — streets, parks, public spaces, and foreshores — as an interconnected recreational network rather than isolated amenities. Such an approach promotes active lifestyles, strengthens climate resilience, and fosters social inclusion.

Case study: George Street

George Street is central to the transformation of Sydney’s city centre. The delivery of light rail has realised a long held vision for a pedestrian focused boulevard, shifting the street from a traffic dominated corridor to a vibrant public space and public transport spine. Progressive public domain improvements to complement light rail including widened footpaths, extensive tree planting, new seating and civic spaces created from street closures are increasing space for public life. On completion, more than 15,000m² of former roadway will be reclaimed as new places for public life.

Busy George Street
Photo: Will Jones / City of Sydney

Moore Park South

The NSW Government will transform 20 hectares of Moore Park Golf Course into a new public park, right next to one of Sydney’s most densely populated areas.



This park will meet the needs of rapidly growing communities while retaining a minimum 9-hole public golf course.

A \$50 million investment has been committed to establish the park and reconfigure the golf course over the next three years, starting mid-2026 when the current operating agreement ends.

The City of Sydney has long advocated for this change. The idea was included in *Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050: Continuing the Vision* under the Green City initiative to unlock Crown Land for broader community recreation.

Moore Park borders Green Square, one of Australia’s densest residential precincts. By 2040, up to 80,000 additional residents will live within

2km in Zetland, Redfern, and Waterloo. Expanding parkland here is a vital response to population growth and community needs.

In established urban areas, where opportunities to acquire land for new parks are limited, making better use of existing green space is an important strategy for meeting community needs. Repurposing green space can expand access to recreation, support health and wellbeing outcomes, and improve equitable access to nature while maximising the value of scarce land resources. The proposed conversion of Moore Park South illustrates how existing open space assets can be adapted to respond to changing community needs and growing demand for publicly accessible recreation space.

Moore Park
Photo: ??? / City of Sydney

Summary

The City’s future open space needs cannot be met through acquisition alone.

While delivering new parks will remain important, future success will depend on a balanced approach that combines:

Strategic acquisition

Opportunities to acquire large new open spaces are increasingly limited by urban development and land values. Future acquisition efforts should focus on addressing distribution gaps, securing land for active recreation, expanding existing parks, and improving access to open space in growth areas.

Park expansion and renewal

Expanding and improving existing parks will be critical to meeting future demand. Enhancing the quality, functionality and capacity of current open spaces can often deliver significant community benefits where new land acquisition is not feasible..

Improved connectivity

Strengthening connections between parks, recreation facilities and open space destinations will improve accessibility and help residents access a broader range of recreation opportunities. Walking, cycling and green corridor connections are important components of the future network.

Streets as public space

As opportunities for new parkland become increasingly constrained, streets represent one of the City’s most significant opportunities to expand public space. Reallocating street space for walking, cycling, greening and public life can increase recreation opportunities and strengthen connections across the open space network.

Partnerships and shared-use opportunities

Partnerships with state agencies, schools, universities and other landowners will play an increasingly important role in meeting future open space and recreation needs. Shared-use arrangements can expand community access to land and facilities that would otherwise be unavailable.

Protecting existing open space

Protecting existing public open space from incremental loss remains a fundamental priority. As population growth increases reliance on parks and recreation spaces, retaining and enhancing the current network is as important as delivering new open space opportunities.



Shared court at Green Square Primary School
Photo: ??? / City of Sydney



Two boys playing soccer at Perry Park
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Part 4

Sport and recreation analysis

- Introduction
- Existing provision
- Facility utilisation
- Facility assessment

DRAFT

Introduction

The City’s open space and recreation network supports a wide range of activities enjoyed by residents, workers and visitors. These include providing opportunities for physical activity, sport, informal recreation, social connection and community participation.

The network includes sports fields, aquatic facilities, indoor and outdoor courts, playgrounds, fitness infrastructure, walking and cycling networks, youth recreation facilities and spaces for companion animals.

As the City continues to grow and evolve, recreation infrastructure must respond to increasing demand, changing participation patterns and the challenges associated with delivering facilities in a highly urbanised environment.

While many facilities are already highly utilised, opportunities for expansion are limited by land availability, competing land uses and rising development pressures.

The purpose of this section is to assess the performance of the City’s recreation network and identify future priorities for investment, renewal and provision.

Recreation planning challenges

Population growth, increasing residential density and employment growth will continue to increase demand for recreation opportunities across the City. In higher-density environments, public recreation infrastructure performs an increasingly important role by providing opportunities that are often unavailable within private dwellings.

Key recreation planning challenges include:

- Growing demand for facilities ;
- limited opportunities for major new infrastructure.;
- high utilisation of existing facilities.;
- changing participation preferences;
- providing equitable access across the City.;
- responding to climate change ; and
- maintaining affordability and accessibility.

What this means for recreation planning

The City’s recreation network must respond to changing patterns of participation while accommodating growth within a constrained urban environment. Future planning should focus on:

Increasing capacity

Maximise the performance and utilisation of existing recreation infrastructure through upgrades, renewal and improved management.

Supporting informal recreation

Recognise the growing importance of walking, cycling, fitness and self-directed recreation.

Providing flexible, adaptable infrastructure

Ensure facilities can adapt to changing recreation trends and accommodate multiple activities.

Delivering inclusive recreation

Provide opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and cultural backgrounds.

Strengthening partnerships

Leverage schools, universities, state agencies and private providers to expand recreation opportunities.

Planning for climate resilience

Ensure facilities remain comfortable, accessible and functional under future climate conditions.



City of Sydney Sports Facilities Demand Study 2016

The 2016 Sports Facilities Demand Study assessed current and future needs for sports facilities across the City of

Sydney and provided a framework to guide strategic planning for provision, access, and management.

Key findings

1. High demand versus limited supply

Demand for sports facilities significantly exceeds supply, driven by a young, active population (18–39 years) and high residential density, with 95% of residents living in medium to high-density housing.

2. Limited land availability

Competing land uses and constraints—including heritage, biodiversity, and informal recreation—restrict the amount of land available for sport.

3. Projected growth

By 2031, the Study estimated the City will require:

- 20 additional sports fields
- 18 outdoor multi-purpose courts
- Four tennis complexes (each with four courts - total 16 courts)
- 11 indoor multi-purpose courts

4. Equity and inclusion

Facilities must better cater to women and girls, culturally diverse communities, people with disabilities, youth, and seniors to ensure equitable access and participation.

5. District-level planning

A coordinated approach across districts is essential to meet demand, share resources, and respond effectively to land constraints.

Strategic directions

The Study recommended the following directions to address demand and improve provision:

- Optimise existing spaces through better design, scheduling, and management.
- Create multi-purpose facilities that serve diverse

recreational and sporting needs.

- Improve access and equity in facility bookings, design, and programming.
- Collaborate across agencies to deliver shared outcomes and maximise efficiency.

Response

Since 2016, the City has focused on improving the provision and amenity of sports facilities.

Improvements include:

- 1 new aquatic facility - Gunyama Aquatic Centre;
- full replacement of Prince Alfred Park Pool
- Perry Park indoor recreation centre - 4 indoor courts
- Huntley Street Recreation Centre - 4 indoor courts
- 4 new sports fields
- existing field and amenity improvements
- outdoor door gym rollout program
- 3 additional full size outdoor courts
- additional practise half courts across the network
- partnerships with schools to increase provision of playing fields, outdoor courts and indoor courts
- street and cycle improvement to encourage recreational walking , running and cycling across our city

Other state agency providers, including Place Management and Greater Sydney Parklands, have also increased the supply of playing fields, courts, playgrounds and other facilities across their networks, improving the overall availability and accessibility of recreational facilities.

Private providers have also expanded the range and diversity of recreational activities in response to changing trends and demand, including indoor courts for badminton, padel and pickleball, boxing and martial arts facilities, and activities such as indoor rock climbing.



Perry Park indoor recreation centre
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney



Gunyama Park sportsfield
Photo: Jessica Lindsay / City of Sydney



Prince Alfred Park Pool
Photo: Abril Felman / City of Sydney

Existing provision

The City contains a diverse network of recreation infrastructure that supports sport, fitness, play and informal recreation. Provision is delivered through a combination of City-owned assets and facilities managed by government agencies, educational institutions and private operators.

Provision distribution

The distribution of recreation facilities varies across the City, reflecting historical development patterns, available land and differing community needs.

Some villages contain major recreation destinations and regional facilities, while others rely on smaller neighbourhood-scale infrastructure.

Regional recreation assets

Several facilities serve catchments extending beyond the local government area and play a regional role in meeting recreation demand.

These facilities are particularly important given the limited availability of land for future recreation infrastructure.

Key nearby facilities include:

- Centennial Parklands (Greater Sydney Parklands)
- Hefferon Park (Randwick City Council)
- Tempe Park (Inner West Council)

Recreation providers

Recreation opportunities are delivered by a range of providers, including:

- City of Sydney
- NSW Government agencies
- Schools and universities
- Sporting organisations
- Community groups
- Private operators

Partnerships between these providers will be increasingly important in meeting future demand.

The private sector plays a vital role in the provision of sport and recreation facilities. Private operators can be agile and responsive to emerging trends in fitness and recreation, and promote markets as well as offering extended operating hours.

Private providers

Facilities include gyms, courts, wellness centres, or more niche offerings, such as indoor climbing walls, indoor golf driving ranges, indoor ski simulators and trampoline parks.

Whether it's the rise of high-intensity interval training (HIIT), the growing popularity of pickleball, badminton or wellness programs, private businesses are well-positioned to adapt quickly and tailor their services to meet evolving consumer demand.

Private providers deliver a broad array of sport and recreation activities across the City's local government area and neighbouring suburbs. Their services complement public provision, expanding access and offering communities a wider and more diverse range of opportunities.

	Managed by the City	Managed by others
Aquatic facilities	6 facilities	3 facilities 1 harbour swimming location
Cricket and baseball	5 cricket pitches 14 practice wickets	8 cricket pitches (Moore Park)
Outdoor courts	16 full size (various formats) 11 half size / practice rings	17 full size (various formats) 2 half courts
Outdoor fitness stations and gyms	15	7
Playgrounds	107	7
Indoor courts (multipurpose/basketball)	13	12
Skate park destinations and moments	3 destination locations 2 skate moments	1
Sports fields and ovals	17 – 13 turf fields and ovals – 4 synthetic fields	19 – 18 turf fields and ovals – 1 synthetic fields
Tennis courts	18 courts 4 hotshot courts	35 courts

Refer to Part 4 Volume 2 for further details on distribution of various recreation facilities.

Facility utilisation

The City of Sydney’s outdoor sporting facilities are highly utilised due to their quality, diverse offerings, convenient locations, and accessible booking systems.

Utilisation and demand

The City’s sports and recreation network supports a diverse range of users including schools, universities, sporting clubs, community organisations, social recreation providers and individual participants.

Across the sportsfield network alone, facilities support approximately 35 education organisations and more than 60 community sport and recreation organisations, representing a broad cross-section of local and regional users. Major user groups include football (soccer), cricket, rugby league, AFL, rugby union, hockey, touch football, ultimate frisbee, Gaelic football, softball and social sport providers.

The education sector represents a significant component of demand, comprising approximately 17 primary schools, 14 secondary schools and four tertiary education providers, reflecting the important role City facilities play in supporting school sport, physical education and community participation pathways.

Assessing demand

Demand is best understood through peak occupancy and booking pressure rather than average annual utilisation rates.

While overall utilisation statistics provide useful context, they can mask the periods when facilities experience the greatest demand and capacity constraints. For most sporting facilities, participation is heavily concentrated during weekday evenings and weekends when people are available outside work and school commitments.

Importantly, lower utilisation during summer months, school terms breaks, or weekday daytime periods should not be interpreted as evidence of surplus capacity. These periods are generally not substitutable for the highly sought-after timeslots that clubs, associations and casual users prefer. As a result, facilities can appear to have spare capacity when viewed across the entire year, while still experiencing significant unmet demand during peak periods.

Accordingly, assessments of sportsfield, indoor court and recreation facility provision should place greater emphasis on peak-period occupancy, booking requests, waitlists, competition growth constraints and the ability of venues to accommodate users at preferred times. These indicators provide a more realistic measure of service levels and future infrastructure requirements than average utilisation figures alone.

Turf fields over 30 hours of bookings per field



Synthetic fields 40-60 hours weekly booked use



Wentworth Park over 4,000 Oztag players weekly summer competition



Over 1.9 million visits annually at aquatic facilities



Perry Park indoor recreation peak time 90% utilisation



- Utilisation statistics for various facilities (left to right)
- Turruwul Park sportsfield
Photo: Paul Patterson / City of Sydney
 - The Crescent sportsfield
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney
 - Football competition on Perry Park synthetic sportsfield
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney
 - Andrew Boy Charlton Pool
Photo: Will Jones / City of Sydney
 - Volleyball players at Perry Park Recreation Centre
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Sportsfields

Demand for sportsfield access remains strongly concentrated during preferred participation periods, particularly weekday evenings and weekends. While average annual utilisation varies across facilities and seasons, peak-time utilisation demonstrates ongoing capacity pressures across the network.

Synthetic sportsfields experience particularly strong winter demand. Peak occupancy across Gunyama, Getiela and Perry Park averaged approximately 78–81 per cent during Winter 2025, indicating that most available evening and weekend capacity is already in use. Peak occupancy decreases during summer, ranging from 33–54 per cent, although Perry Park maintains comparatively strong year-round demand.

The City’s natural turf fields also experience strong seasonal demand. During winter, major turf fields such as Wentworth Park, Reg Bartley Oval, Alexandria Oval and Jubilee Oval typically accommodate between 30 and 44 hours of organised bookings per week, reflecting strong demand from winter sporting codes.

Summer utilisation reduces but remains significant, particularly at Wentworth Park, which maintains strong year-round use. These patterns indicate that demand for field space remains high across both synthetic and natural turf facilities.

The City has also experienced increasing demand for synthetic field allocations. The 2025 seasonal allocation process for Perry Park and Getiela received a record 25 applications, with 20 organisations ultimately allocated access. Successful applicants included schools, football clubs, Gaelic football and ultimate frisbee organisations.

Allocation priorities focused on junior participation, women and girls’ sport, diversity and inclusion. This process resulted in almost half of all winter bookings being allocated to children’s sport and a substantial increase in allocations supporting women and girls.



Gunyama Park synthetic field
Photo: Chris Southwood / City of Sydney

Figure 36: Average weekly turf field bookings (hours)

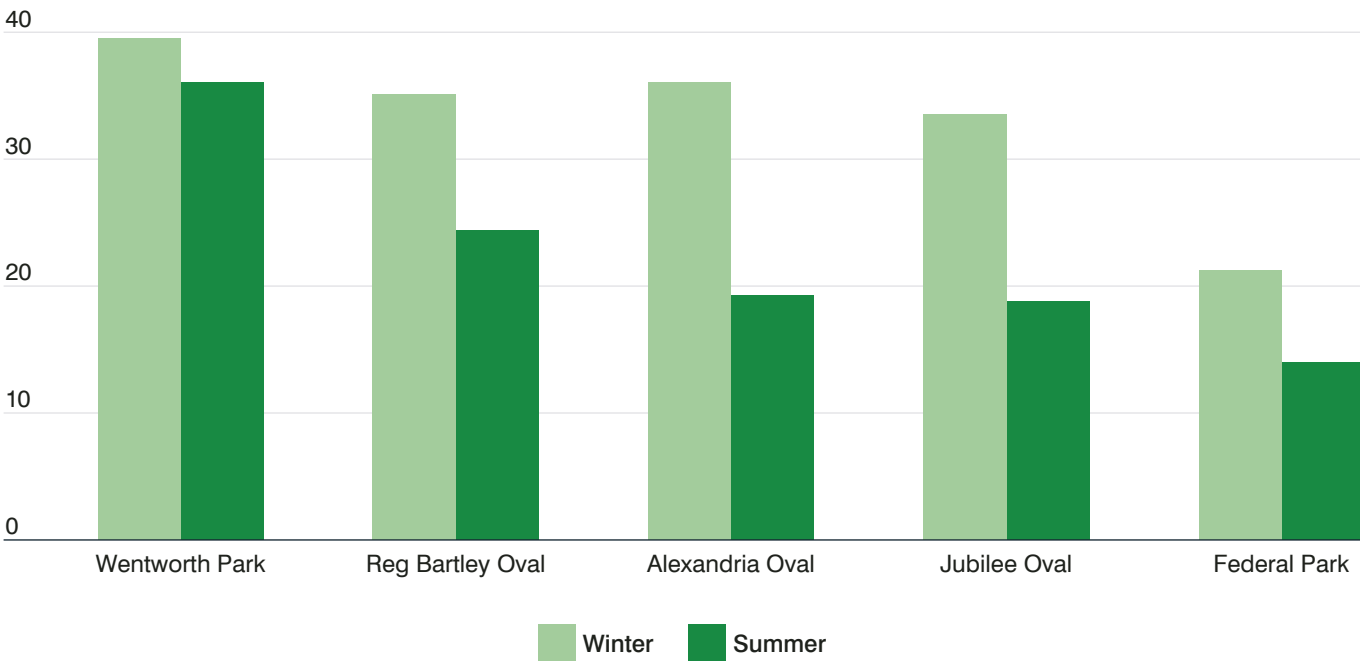
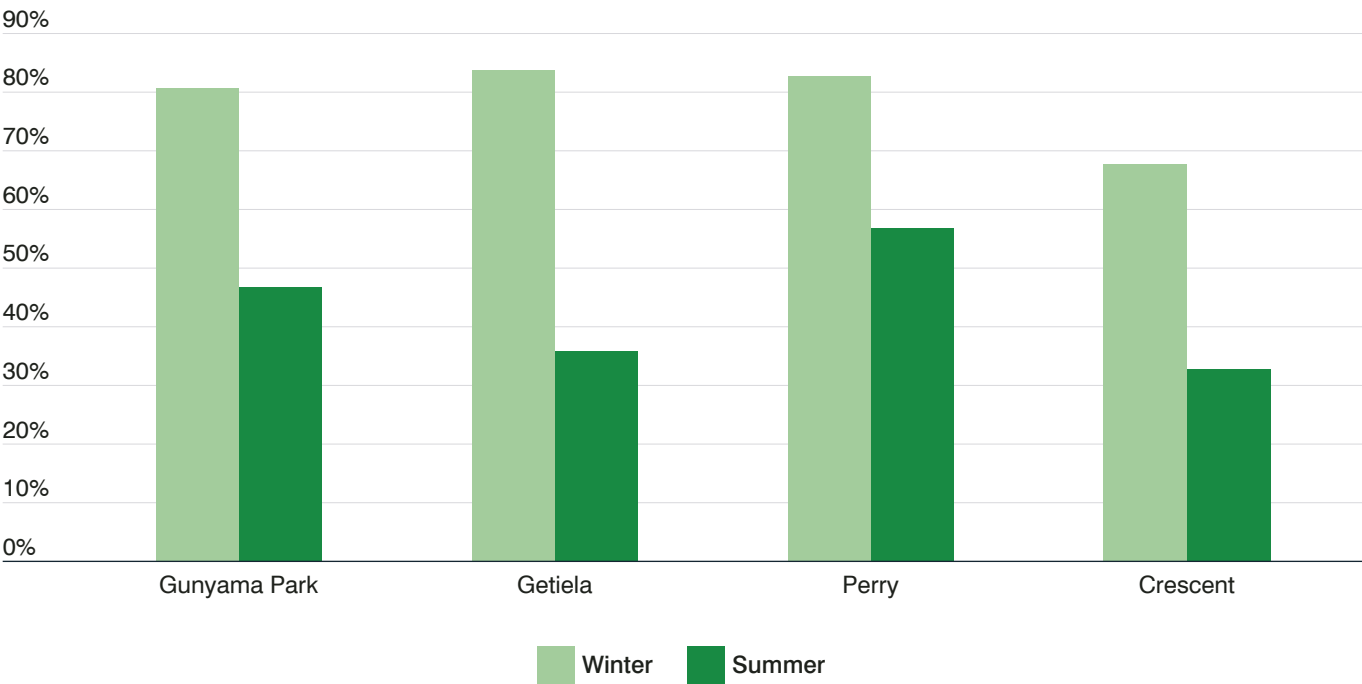


Figure 37: Synthetic field peak time utilisation in 2025



Indoor recreation

The City’s indoor recreation facilities support a broad mix of organised sport, social recreation, fitness, physical activity programs and community participation. Key venues include KGV Recreation Centre, Perry Park Recreation Centre, Ultimo Community Centre, Maybanke Centre and Peter Forsythe Auditorium.

The City’s indoor recreation facilities that provide multi-purpose courts, gyms and space for exercises program like yoga.

Indoor recreation facilities exhibit varying levels of utilisation across the network. Peter Forsythe Auditorium (90%), KGV Recreation Centre (89%) and the indoor courts at Perry Park Recreation Centre (approximately 90% peak occupancy) are operating at very high utilisation levels, indicating strong demand and limited spare booking capacity during preferred times.

Aquatics

The City’s aquatic centres are among the most heavily used recreation assets in the portfolio, attracting approximately 1.93 million visits annually. This level of visitation highlights the significant role aquatic facilities play in supporting health, wellbeing, recreation and physical activity across the community.

Aquatic facilities serve a diverse range of users, including learn-to-swim participants, lap swimmers, fitness and rehabilitation users, school groups, families, recreational swimmers and aquatic sport participants. These facilities provide participation opportunities across all ages, abilities and life stages.

The scale of visitation demonstrates the importance of aquatic facilities as key pieces of community infrastructure. With almost 1.93 million visits annually, the aquatic portfolio supports a level of participation significantly greater than any individual sportsfield or recreation facility and makes a substantial contribution to public health, wellbeing and active recreation outcomes across the local government area.

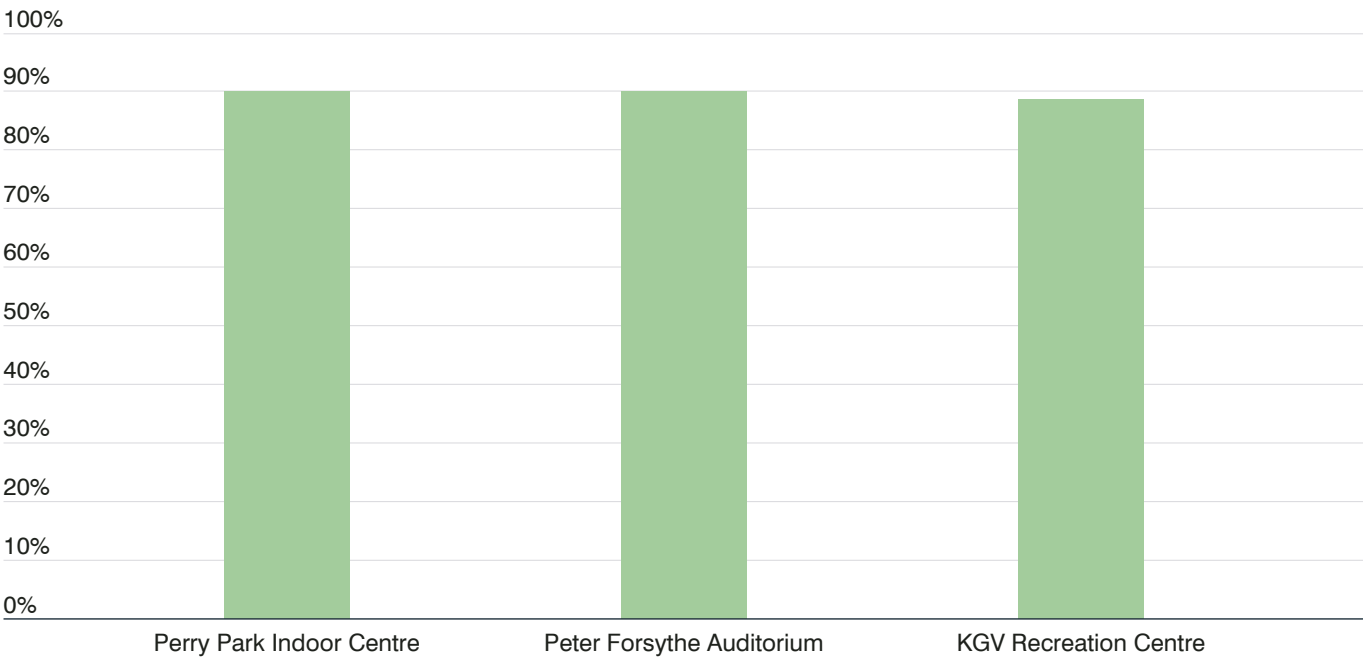
What this means for planning

The City's recreation network is performing strongly and supporting high levels of participation across a diverse range of activities. However, many facilities are already operating at or near capacity in peak times, and future population growth will place increasing pressure on sports fields, aquatic facilities, courts and other recreation infrastructure.

Meeting future demand will require a focus on:

- optimising existing assets;
- prioritising investment in high-demand facilities;
- supporting informal recreation;
- delivering flexible and multi-purpose infrastructure; and
- strengthening partnerships and shared-use arrangements

Figure 38: Peak utilisation of indoor recreation centres (%)



High school students playing basketball at Perry Park
Photo: Katherine Griffiths / City of Sydney

Recreation and sport facility needs assessment

The City's recreation network comprises a diverse range of facilities that collectively support organised sport, informal recreation, physical activity, social interaction and community wellbeing. These facilities serve residents, workers, students and visitors, and accommodate a broad spectrum of activities ranging from organised competition and training through to casual recreation and everyday exercise.

While recreation participation is increasingly diverse, different facility types perform distinct roles within the network and experience varying levels of demand, utilisation and capacity pressure.

Understanding how individual facility types are performing is therefore an important step in identifying current gaps, future needs and investment priorities.

Population-based recreation and sport provision ratios are only one factor in assessing need. They provide a useful high-level indicator but must be balanced with local context, demand patterns, accessibility, land availability, and facility performance to determine appropriate provision.

Assessing future demand

The City of Sydney Open Space and Recreation Needs Study (2016) established quantitative benchmarks based on resident and worker population for sportsfields, indoor courts and outdoor courts.

When assessed against both existing supply and planned future facilities, the metrics show that unmet demand will persist.

However per head provision metrics is just one factor of consideration. A multi-factor approach is recommended, recognising that demand is influenced by:

- Current utilisation and capacity of existing facilities
- Population growth and demographic change;
- Changes in sports participation and recreation trends;
- Distribution and accessibility of facilities;
- Quality and functionality of existing infrastructure;
- School and private sector facility availability; and
- Emerging sports and modified forms of play

The following assessment examines the City's key recreation infrastructure categories. these include:

- sports fields and ovals
- aquatic facilities
- outdoor court facilities
- indoor court and recreation facilities
- playgrounds
- outdoor fitness stations
- skate and bike facilities
- youth
- paddle craft
- walking and cycle infrastructure
- companion animals
- athletics
- cricket
- events
- Other facilities

While recreation participation is increasingly diverse, different facility types perform distinct roles within the network and experience varying levels of demand, utilisation and capacity pressure. Understanding how individual facility types are performing is therefore an important step in identifying current gaps, future needs and investment priorities.