

## **ASSET SUSTAINABILITY**

### **6.1. Open Space Strategy**

**Prepared by:** Damon Sydes, Technical Officer Environment

**Meeting Date:** Thursday, February 23, 2023

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#### **Executive Summary:**

Council resolved at its November 2022 Local Government meeting to adopt the strategic goals of an Open Space Strategy, these being:

- Develop a holistic long term strategy for the provision of Open Space by Council in our region,
- Explore further opportunities for partnerships with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, State Schools and other open space providers,
- Develop a hierarchy of Council-managed open space consistent with LGIP and Recreation and Natural Asset plans,
- Allocate a Level of Service to guide service levels and outcomes,
- Provide improved facilities at identified regional and district parks, whilst assessing over-supply of open space, local and village parks,
- Achieve targeted savings of 5% by refining operations and maintenance costs; and

Council endorsed the release of the draft Open Space Classification and Service Level document for community consultation for a period of five weeks. The intent was to seek feedback on the proposed park hierarchy, levels of service and embellishments for park type as part of a staged approach in developing an Open Space Strategy to guide the future management of the Cassowary Coast parks and reserves network.

The draft document was subsequently released for consultation on 5 December 2022 through to 9 January 2023 with feedback sought on the proposed open space classifications, levels of service and levels of potential embellishment. Consultation was undertaken through Council's YourSay online platform, supported by social media posts and traditional advertising including radio and print. Council received 38 contributions during the consultation period.

Feedback was positive with generally a high level of agreeance on all categories and definitions.

#### **Recommendation:**

##### **"That Council:**

1. **note the consultation report (attached) and thank the community for their input;**
  2. **adopt the Open Space Strategy – Classification and Service Level Guide (attached) to inform further strategy development; and**
  3. **request the CEO provide draft classification and service levels for the Council-controlled open spaces to the public through an appropriate consultation process."**
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#### **Background:**

Council resolved at its November 2022 Local Government meeting to adopt the strategic goals of an Open Space Strategy, these being

- Develop a holistic long term strategy for the provision of Open Space by Council in our region,
- Explore further opportunities for partnerships with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, State Schools and other open space providers,
- Develop a hierarchy of council managed open space consistent with LGIP and Recreation and Natural asset plans,
- Allocate a Level of Service to guide service levels and outcomes,
- Provide improved facilities at identified regional and district parks, whilst assessing oversupply of open space, local and village parks,
- Achieve targeted savings of 5% by refining operations and maintenance costs; and

And endorse the release of the draft Open Space Classification and Service Level document for community consultation for a period of five weeks.

The draft Open Space Classification and Service Level document was released for public consultation on 5 December 2022 until 9 January 2023 with feedback sought on the proposed Open space classifications, levels of service and levels of potential embellishment. This consultation was undertaken through Council's YourSay online platform, supported by social media posts and traditional advertising including radio and print. Council received 38 contributions during the five week consultation period. The feedback was positive with a general high level of agreeance on all categories and definitions.

Overall 68% of respondents were in support of definitions, with 5% not in agreeance. The remaining 26% either did not specify or were unclear in response.

Some comments made included: agreeance of all definitions except village, consideration of boat ramps under open space, support for more bushland, foreshore and regional spaces. Additional general comments included inclusion of verges in open spaces, recognition of hybrid spaces and a wish for Council to increase or improve open space maintenance, and a focus on revegetation of underutilised areas.

Feedback on level of service star rating indicated 60% of respondents were in support of this approach with some questions on whether maintenance was holistic. Some suggestions included using a 1 - 5 categorisation rather than star rating as 1 star is generally considered poor service rather than basic maintenance.

Feedback on the level of embellishments was supportive of minimal infrastructure in open space areas, and a potential focus on restoration of underutilised open areas. Feedback on local parks and village parks suggested this category could be combined, with local parks to have same level of embellishments as village parks. Comments regarding increased shade through landscaping and use of concrete pathways or boardwalks rather than gravel pathways were received. Feedback on village, district and regional parks level of embellishment was supported by over 67% of respondents with continued commentary on provision of shade through landscaping, inclusion of bins and potential over embellishment if full list of items was achieved. Over 70% of respondents were supportive of bushland reserve levels of embellishments with some requests for bins and toilets at trailheads.

**In response to consultation it is recommended that:**

- The local park and village park categories are not combined – this could lead to future over embellishment of local parks or a decreased service and embellishment levels for potential village parks. These categories have been separated to reflect the spatial arrangement of Cassowary Coast communities and combining categories would reduce flexibility and lead to poorer community outcomes.
- The level of service "Star Rating" is amended to a 1 - 5 rating to be clearer that Level 1 areas are basic service standard, not poor service as may be inferred.
- The development of a verge policy is progressed to clarify areas for inclusion/exclusion of maintained open space network.

**Next steps to progress Cassowary Coast Open Space Strategy include:**

- Undertake benchmarking of current provision versus future needs based on supported classifications, Local Government Infrastructure Plan standards and projected population;
- Utilising the agreed classifications and service levels to refine the spatial layer of the Open Space network in order to seek further public input on location and extent of all parks areas.

**Intended future actions**

- Refine asset replacement and investment program based on supported function and hierarchy;
- Adjust Level of Service based on agreed Park Hierarchy and identification of key amenity areas;

- Development of a style guide to improve consistency of Park and Recreation assets across the region

## **Link to Corporate Plan:**

## **INFRASTRUCTURE - OUR BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

### **What we want to see by 2025**

Regional infrastructure that delivers levels of service supported by the community and is financially sustainable.

### **Strategic Objectives**

- I3 Sustainable asset management to effectively deliver services in a consistent and financially sustainable manner representing value to the community
- I6 Integrated planning to support current and future needs of the region

### **Consultation:**

It is proposed significant and targeted consultation is undertaken once proposed classification benchmarking and mapping is finalised.

### **Legal Implications (Statutory basis, legal risks):**

Nil

### **Human Rights Act 2019 - Considerations**

The *Human Rights Act 2019* provides that it is unlawful for a public agency to act or make a decision in a way that is not compatible with human rights, or to fail to give proper consideration to a human right. This necessitates understanding the human rights that are protected. When making decisions or taking actions, consideration needs to be given to how that may impact on a person's human rights. Where there is a restriction on a person's human rights the restriction must be no greater than is justifiable to protect the rights of others or the community at large.

The contents of this report do not infringe upon the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

### **Policy Implications:**

CCRC Asset Management Policy  
CCRC Asset Management Strategy  
CCRC Disposal Policy

### **Risk Implications (Corporate, Operational, Project risks):**

Nil

### **Financial & Resource Implications:**

Targeted savings of 5% by of operational costs

### **Report authorised by:**

David Goodman, Director Infrastructure Services

### **Supporting Documents:**

1. Stakeholder Engagement Public Consultation Report - Open Space Classification & Service Level - v2 (002)
2. Open Space Strategy – Open Space Classifications and Service Level Guide - Final 15.02.2023