

**Meeting Date:** Tuesday 10 August 2021  
**Location:** Online Audio Visual Meeting  
**Time:** 6.00pm

*Committee Meetings will be recorded on audio tape for minute-taking purposes as authorised by the Local Government Act 1993. Committee Meetings will also be webcast.*

**NOTICE OF BUSINESS**

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**1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - Works and Community Committee Meeting held on 8 June 2021**

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**Report prepared by:** Civic Services Manager**File No.:** CLM/21/1/2/2 - BP21/697

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**REPORT SUMMARY**

In accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice, a motion or discussion with respect to such minutes shall not be in order except with regard to their accuracy as a true record of the proceedings.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Minutes of the Works and Community Committee Meeting 5/21, held on 8 June 2021, be confirmed.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 1 MINUTES - Works and Community Committee Meeting - 8 June 2021

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**Works and Community Committee  
MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 5/21**

**Meeting Date:** Tuesday 8 June 2021  
**Location:** Council Chambers, Level 1A, 1 Pope Street, Ryde and Online  
**Time:** 6.03pm

**Councillors Present:** Councillors Purcell (Chairperson), Brown, Gordon and Pedersen.

**Councillors Present online via audio visual:** Councillors Clifton and Yedelian OAM.

**Apologies:** Nil.

**Leave of Absence:** Councillor Kim.

**Absent:** Councillor Maggio.

**Staff Present:** General Manager, Director – Customer and Community Services, Director – Corporate Services, Director – City Works, Manager – Communications and Engagement, Manager – Environment, Manager – Parks, Manager – Transport, Acting Manager – Corporate Governance, Senior Coordinator – Community Engagement, Senior Sustainability Coordinator – Transport and Environment, System Support Officer, Civic Services Manager and Executive Assistant to Mayor and Councillors.

**DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Councillor Purcell disclosed a Less than Significant Non-Pecuniary Interest in Item 6 – Resignation Arts Advisory Committee Member for the reason that he knows Margaret Mayger as a friend and Labor member, having campaigned with her at the 2017 Local Government elections.

Councillor Pedersen disclosed a Less than Significant Non-Pecuniary Interest in Item 6 – Resignation Arts Advisory Committee Member for the reason that she is a personal friend of the person resigning from the Arts Committee.

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**1 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES - Works and Community Committee Meeting held on 11 May 2021**

**RESOLUTION:** (Moved by Councillors Pedersen and Gordon)

That the Minutes of the Works and Community Committee Meeting 4/21, held on 11 May 2021, be confirmed.

**Record of Voting:**

For the Motion: Unanimous

Note: This is now a resolution of Council in accordance with the Committee's delegated powers.

**2 ITEMS PUT WITHOUT DEBATE**

**RESOLUTION:** (Moved by Councillors Gordon and Brown)

That the Committee adopt Item 6 on the Committee Agenda as per the recommendation in the report.

**Record of Voting:**

For the Motion: Unanimous

**6 RESIGNATION ARTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Note: Councillor Purcell disclosed a Less than Significant Non-Pecuniary Interest in this Item for the reason that he knows Margaret Mayger as a friend and Labor member, having campaigned with her at the 2017 Local Government elections.

Note: Councillor Pedersen disclosed a Less than Significant Non-Pecuniary Interest in this Item for the reason that she is a personal friend of the person resigning from the Arts Committee.

**RESOLUTION:** (Moved by Councillors Gordon and Brown)

- (a) That Council endorse the resignation of Ms Margaret Mayger from the Arts Advisory Committee.
- (b) That Council write to Ms Mayger to thank her for her participation on the Arts Advisory Committee.

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**Record of Voting:**

For the Motion: Unanimous

Note: This is now a resolution of Council in accordance with the Committee's delegated powers.

**3 FUTURE USE OF UNNAMED PARK ON LANE COVE ROAD**

**RECOMMENDATION:** (Moved by Councillors Gordon and Pedersen)

- (a) That Council proceeds with Option 1: Maintain the existing land classification and use of the Park with particular emphasis on planting out the land with trees as part of Council's commitment to tree canopy coverage.
- (b) That the General Manager prepare a report with appropriate funding for this project to be brought back to Works and Community at the earliest.
- (c) That Council writes to the strata committee of 1-15 Fontenoy Road, Macquarie Park informing them of this decision.

**Record of Voting:**

For the Motion: Unanimous

Note: This matter will be dealt with at the Council Meeting to be held on **29 JUNE 2021** as substantive changes were made to the published recommendation.

**4 EV CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE ON PUBLIC LAND POLICY AND GUIDELINES**

**RESOLUTION:** (Moved by Councillors Gordon and Pedersen)

- (a) That Council acknowledges the contribution of public EV charging infrastructure in the City towards supporting the uptake of electric vehicles.
- (b) That Council adopts the proposed Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure on Public Land Policy and associated Guidelines (**ATTACHMENTS 1 AND 2**) effective immediately with the exception of Part F on page 8 of the Guideline which is to be removed.

**Record of Voting:**

For the Motion: Unanimous

Note: This is now a resolution of Council in accordance with the Committee's delegated powers.

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**5 DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY**

**RESOLUTION:** (Moved by Councillors Pedersen and Gordon)

- (a) That Council endorse the Draft Communications and Engagement Policy and Strategy.
- (b) That the Draft Communications and Engagement Policy and Strategy be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days.
- (c) That should any objections be received during the exhibition they are to be reported to Council as soon as practicable; should there be no objections and/or minor changes to the Communications and Engagement Policy and Strategy documents, they will be finalised and adopted with Councillors advised via a CIB.

**Record of Voting:**

For the Motion: Unanimous

Note: This is now a resolution of Council in accordance with the Committee's delegated powers.

**6 RESIGNATION ARTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER**

Note: This Item was dealt with earlier in the meeting as detailed in these Minutes.

**7 SAFETY AT COULTER STREET CAR PARK**

**RESOLUTION:** (Moved by Councillors Pedersen and Gordon)

- (a) That bollards of recycled and recyclable materials, be installed in front of the accessible (disabled) parking spaces along Linsley Street, Gladesville.
- (b) That a review of all car parks in the Ryde LGA be undertaken to determine if similar treatments are required at other high pedestrian locations.
- (c) That a report be brought back to Council should approval for new funding be required for remedial measures.

**Record of Voting:**

For the Motion: Unanimous

Note: This is now a resolution of Council in accordance with the Committee's delegated powers.

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**8 TRAFFIC AND PARKING MATTERS APPROVED BY THE RYDE TRAFFIC COMMITTEE MEETING - MAY 2021**

**RESOLUTION:** (Moved by Councillors Pedersen and Gordon)

That Council endorses the following Ryde Traffic Committee recommendations:-

**(A) DOUGLAS STREET, PUTNEY – PARKING RESTRICTIONS**

That the following changes be made in Douglas Street, Putney:

- a) No Stopping signage be installed on both sides of Douglas Street along the side frontages of Nos 250 & 252 to where it intersects with Morrison Road, Putney.

**(B) GORDON CRESCENT, DENISTONE - PARKING RESTRICTIONS**

That the following changes be made in Gordon Crescent, Denistone:

- a) No Stopping signage be installed along the inner radius of the property boundary of 9 Gordon Crescent, Denistone where the 3m rule to double barrier lines is not met.

**(C) WINBOURNE STREET, WEST RYDE - PARKING RESTRICTIONS**

That the following changes be made in Winbourne Street, West Ryde:

- a) Converting some of the existing No Stopping zone to bus zone by extending the existing bus zone at the property frontages of Ermington Public School and Goodstart Early Learning in Winbourne Street, West Ryde.
- b) Extending the existing Kiss & Ride zone to the north of the property driveway of No: 10 Winbourne Street, West Ryde.

**(D) ROAD SAFETY UPDATE - ROAD SAFETY PROGRAMS**

- a) The Road Safety report be received and noted.

**(E) BUSACO ROAD, MARSFIELD - PARKING RESTRICTIONS**

The following changes be made in Busaco Road, Marsfield:

- a) The formed concrete area adjacent to the cul-de-sac on Busaco Road be signposted as a No Parking Area – Buses Excepted
- b) The layover area be delineated with RRPM's (reflector markers) to guide buses as they reverse into position.

**ITEM 1 (continued)**

**ATTACHMENT 1**

**(F) NEW LINK ROAD, NORTH RYDE - INTERSECTION UPGRADE**

- a) This item be deferred pending additional investigation be undertaken as to the ownership of Lucknow Road.

**(G) ROWE STREET, EASTWOOD - PROPOSED MOTORCYCLES ONLY ZONE**

The following parking changes be made in Rowe Street, Eastwood:

- a) A 4.1m Motorcycles Only parking zone be created between the two driveways of 290 and 288 Rowe Street, Eastwood.

**Record of Voting:**

For the Motion: Unanimous

Note: This is now a resolution of Council in accordance with the Committee's delegated powers.

**LATE REPORT**

**9 ORCHARD STREET, WEST RYDE – NEW BUS ZONE**

**RESOLUTION:** (Moved by Councillors Gordon and Pedersen)

- (a) That Council notes that the 500X bus service has been rerouted from its existing route from West Ryde Station to now use Ryedale Road, right into Terry Road and right into Orchard Street before it re-joins the existing route on Orchard Street east of Anzac Avenue.
- (b) That a new bus zone be created on the eastbound side of Orchard Street immediately west of Anzac Avenue to facilitate the rerouted bus service.

**Record of Voting:**

For the Motion: Unanimous

Note: This is now a resolution of Council in accordance with the Committee's delegated powers.

The meeting closed at 6.36pm.

CONFIRMED THIS 10TH DAY OF AUGUST 2021

Chairperson



## 2 ITEMS PUT WITHOUT DEBATE

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**Report prepared by:** Civic Services Manager

**File No.:** CLM/21/1/2/2 - BP21/698

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### REPORT SUMMARY

In accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice, the Committee can determine those matters on the Agenda that can be adopted without the need for any discussion.

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee determine the Items on the Agenda that will be adopted without any debate.

OR

That the Committee determine all Items on the Agenda.

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### 3 ADOPTION OF MAGDALA PARK MASTERPLAN

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**Report prepared by:** Open Space Planner

**File No.:** GRP/21/7 - BP21/349

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#### REPORT SUMMARY

Magdala Park ('the Park') is identified by Council in its *Integrated Open Space Plan* (2012) as a level 1 park in the Ryde LGA. It provides the residents of North Ryde and more broadly the City of Ryde, with open space facilities for a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities. The preparation of a Masterplan for Magdala Park is a medium-term priority in the *Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-2026*.

The community value and role of this Park is increasing due to the projected population growth in the City and particularly the high-density residential developments occurring in North Ryde and Macquarie Park.

Council is committed to optimising the sporting and recreational values of the Park whilst ensuring sustainable and environmental management of the Park into the future. The Masterplan sets out the vision for how this Park will be embellished over the next 20 years, to ensure sustainable and efficient use and that the Park meet the needs of the community and groups utilising the space.

This Masterplan provided in **ATTACHMENT 1 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, aims to increase sporting capacity via sports field optimisation to better meet the growing community needs and improves passive recreation opportunities including enhancement to the Great North Walk which traverses the site.

The draft Masterplan considered Stage 1 community consultation feedback (August 2020), reviewed site layout and optimised configuration of the sports fields. The design was further refined following Stage 2 community consultation feedback (March 2021). Further details on the consultation undertaken are outlined in the body of this report.

The Masterplan proposes a range of improvements for sporting, recreation and passive uses. This includes 1 x senior baseball diamond with dugouts, batting cages and pitching den, 4 x intermediate/junior baseball diamonds, 2 x senior football fields and mini-field for junior football, sports field lighting upgrades, a new amenities building, increased car park capacity, formalised pathway network, picnic shelters and a local level playground as per *The Children's Play Plan* (2019). The sports field optimisation in the Masterplan achieves an increase of 1 x senior football field and 1 x intermediate/junior baseball diamond.

**ITEM 3 (continued)**

The Masterplan also includes environmental improvements including increased tree canopy cover to approximately 33% of overall site (currently 16%), re-generation of degraded vegetation, protection of the mangroves, bio-buffer to capture nutrient run off between the sportsgrounds and the Lane Cove River. The Masterplan also includes track improvements for the section of the Great North Walk, a popular bush walking track from Sydney to Newcastle, that travels through the Magdala Park.

A recommendation of this report is to close a section of unformed the road reserve adjacent to the Magdala Rd turning circle (north-eastern section of the former Page Rd) and incorporate it into the Park. Additionally, the report recommends for Council to negotiate a land transfer of a small section of land adjacent to the Park that is currently maintained by Council. This section of parkland on the western boundary of the closed road is owned by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), as shown in the provided **ATTACHMENT 7 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**. This section of land is approximately 3,180m<sup>2</sup> in size and is grass expanse maintained by City of Ryde.

Council officers have had preliminary discussions with NPWS to transfer this section of land to Council for integration into Magdala Park. These changes will result in lower cost to implementation the masterplan, allow greater flexibility in the future development of the space for recreation and sporting purposes and maximise the areas where additional recreation or sporting opportunities can be realised. Council's Strategic Properties Team and Legal Counsel have been consulted in relation to these land matters.

The Masterplan Report includes a staging plan for the progressive implementation of the Masterplan. Implementation of the Masterplan is subject to Council's adoption of the final Masterplan and funding availability. Funding to implement the full Masterplan over its 20-year life will be sought through applications for grant funding opportunities and consideration in Council's annual business planning cycle.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- (a) That Council adopts the Magdala Park Masterplan and its vision for future park improvements, prepared by Place Design Group, dated May 2021.
- (b) That Council endorses the closure of the eastern section of the Magdala Road road reserve. This section of land, and the previously gazetted closed section of Page Rd, then be formally integrated into Magdala Park and delegating authority to the General Manager to do all things necessary to affect the road closure, including executing all necessary documentation.

**ITEM 3 (continued)**

- (c) That Council enters detailed discussions with National Parks and Wildlife Services for the land transfer (adjacent to Magdala Park as shown) and delegate authority to the General Manager complete all tasks to affect this land transfer and sub-division including executing all necessary documentation.
  
- (d) That Council write to thank all participants in the development of the Masterplan and inform them of this resolution.

**ATTACHMENTS – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**

- 1 Magdala Park Masterplan Report for Council adoption - May 2021
- 2 Magdala Park Masterplan for Council adoption - May 2021
- 3 Magdala Park Draft Masterplan - Stage 2 Consultation Report - April 2021
- 4 Magdala Park Draft Masterplan for Stage 2 Consultation - March 2021
- 5 Magdala Park Draft Masterplan - Stage 1 Consultation Report - September 2020
- 6 Magdala Park Road Reserve Closure Overlay - May 2021
- 7 Magdala Park Proposed Land Transfer from NPWS to CoR - May 2021
- 8 Magdala Park Existing Community Land Categorisation Overlay - May 2021
- 9 Magdala Park Proposed Community Land Categorisation Overlay - May 2021

Report Prepared By:

**Meredith Gray**  
**Open Space Planner**

Report Approved By:

**Michael Longworth**  
**Senior Coordinator - Park Planning**

**Simon James**  
**Manager - Parks**

**Wayne Rylands**  
**Director - City Works**

### ITEM 3 (continued)

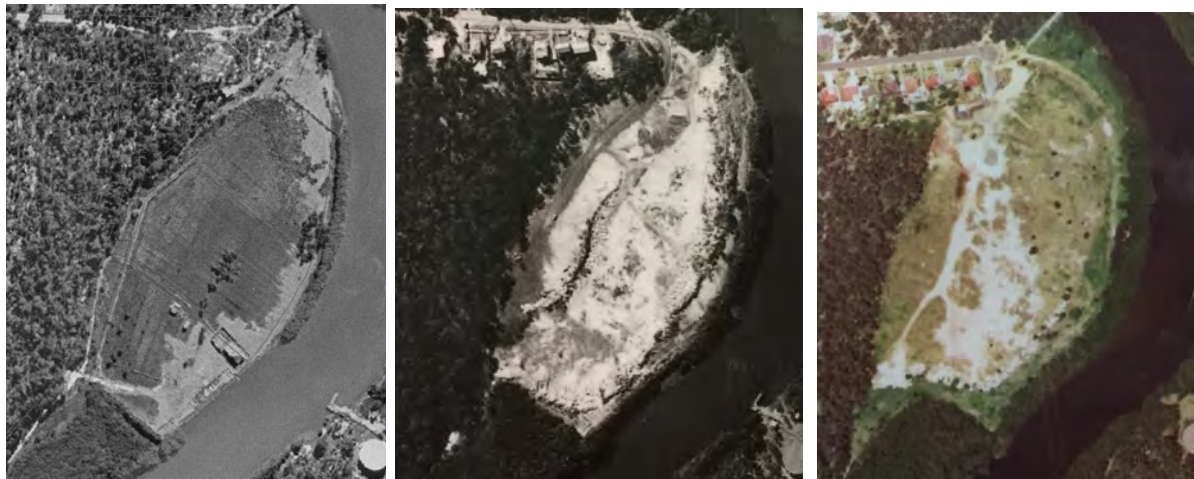
#### History

Portions of the land that now form Magdala Park were in private ownership from 1886. Prior to 1943, it appears the site contained a market garden with easy access to Lane Cove River.

In 1951, these land portions were transferred to the Minister for Lands and became Crown land. Overtime, various portions of land and sub-divisions were transferred to the Municipality of Ryde in 1958, 1961 and mid 1970's.

Prior to becoming a park, the site operated as East Ryde Garbage Depot from 1959 – 1970. Records suggest that it was used for sanitary depot, tipping and landfilling of uncontrolled, mixed or putrescible waste.

The former Page Road, which travels through Magdala Park, was officially closed via Government Gazette (4277) on 15 August 1980. The section that travels through the western side of the Park now forms part of Magdala Park.



*Images 1 - 3: 1943, 1965 and 1981 aerial images of Magdala Park*

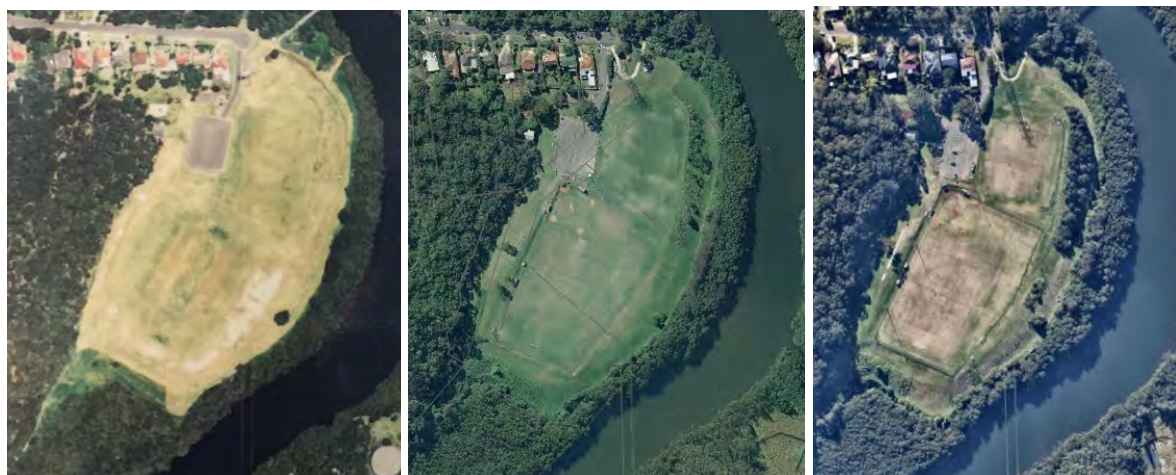
In 1981 Council resolved to construct sports fields in Magdala Park. This involved the spreading of approximately 140,000 cubic metres of fill (the equivalent of 20,000 single truckloads) over the site to a depth of 1.5m.

**ITEM 3 (continued)**



*Image 4: c1981 view to the west from Lane Cove, overlooking Magdala Park prior to sports field establishment*

Substantial site improvements took place throughout the 1980's including sports field and drainage works, landscaping, amenities building, car park, picnic facilities, playground and stormwater infrastructure.



*Images 5 - 7: 1989, 2010 and 2019 aerial images of Magdala Park*

Over the past 20-30 years, the Park itself has remained relatively unchanged. More recent park upgrades have included minor upgrade to amenities building and field improvements.

Sports field lighting was first installed in at Magdala Park in 2005 and upgraded in 2012 to allow night competition. The associated conditions of consent were also adjusted in 2014 and 2020 to better meet community needs.

Magdala Park does not have a previously adopted Masterplan in place.

**ITEM 3 (continued)**

**Local Context**

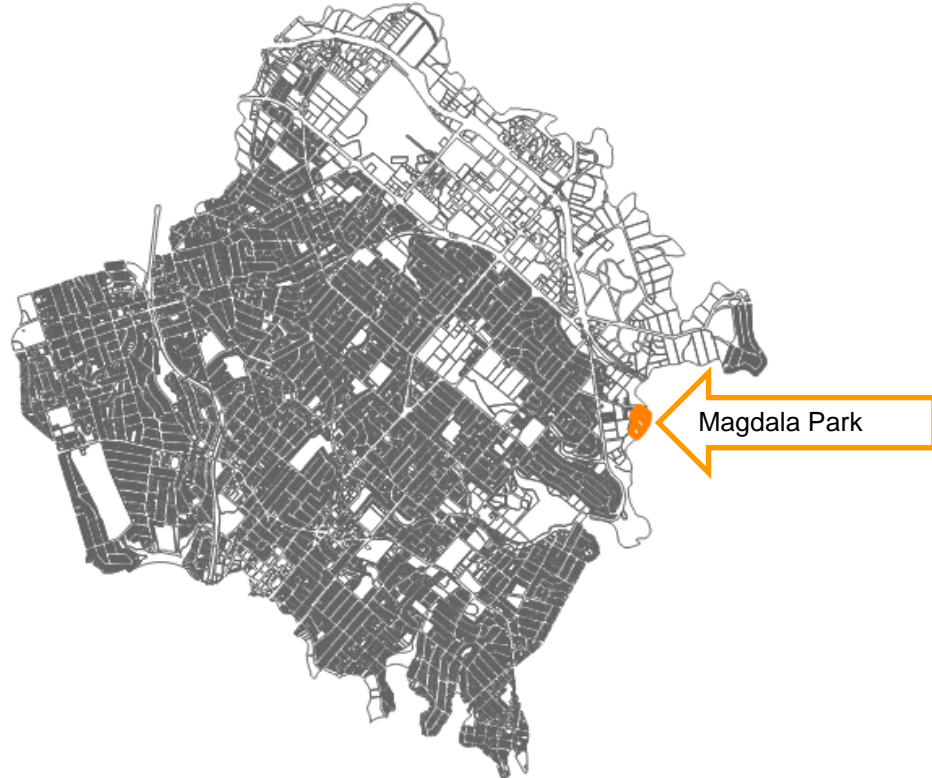


Image 8: Site Location – Magdala Park



Image 9: Site Location – Magdala Park (note: park also includes the section of gazetted closed road)

**ITEM 3 (continued)****Strategic Context**

The Masterplan for Magdala Park provided in **ATTACHMENT 1 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER** has been prepared in response to and with consideration to a number of City of Ryde’s strategic planning documents, including:

- *Greater Sydney Commission – North District Plan (2018)*
- *Integrated Open Space Plan (2012)*
- *Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-2026 (2017)*
- *Planning Ryde Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020)*
- *Children’s Play Implementation Plan (2019)*
- *NSW Everyone Can Play Guidelines (2019)*
- *Biodiversity Plan (2016)*

The City of Ryde is incorporated in the Greater Sydney Commission’s *North District Plan*. The Park is located to the south-east of Macquarie Park and North Ryde priority precincts. The number of residents living in North Ryde/East Ryde/Chatswood West (within City of Ryde) will grow to 16,763 by 2036. Nearby in Macquarie Park, the number of resident will grow to 27,350. Macquarie Park is Sydney’s second largest business district. It has witnessed the fastest growth in stand-alone employment of all major centres in Sydney over the last 20 years. This growth is expected to continue, with the worker population to grow to 79,000 by 2036. These factors will result in increasing community and worker demand on the Park and its’ sport and recreation facilities.

The *Integrated Open Space Plan (2012)* identifies Magdala Park as a Level 1 open space as it provides a variety of a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities for the residents of the City of Ryde and visitors to the City. It can accommodate community activities, organised sports and offer opportunities for cultural expression and environmental education. This Park provides unique recreation opportunities and landscape settings that are considered a regional attraction. This site has environmental and some cultural heritage values.

The preparation of the Masterplan is identified in as a medium-term priority in the *Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-2026*. The Masterplan has been informed by the actions and priorities identified in the *Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-2026*. The thematic priorities for the provision, management and planning for sport and recreation in the City of Ryde are:

1. Optimal use of sport and recreation facilities.
2. Access to sport and recreation facilities.
3. Diversity of facilities for participation and enjoyment.
4. Facilities that are fit for purpose.
5. Inclusive and accessible sport and recreation facilities.
6. Awareness of recreation facilities and programs.
7. Sustainable management of facilities and sports.



### ITEM 3 (continued)

The Masterplan also considered the actions identified in the *Children's Play Plan* (2019) which recommended the playground equipment is replaced and redesign to meet playground Design Framework for Local playground.

#### The Site

Magdala Park is 4.87 hectares in size and located within the suburb of North Ryde. It is comprised of five parcels of land plus a section of road which has been formally closed. The Park is bound to the north, south and west by Lane Cove National Park with the Lane Cove River forms the eastern boundary. A small number of low density residential dwellings are located to the north of the Park on Madgala Road.

Magdala Park is a regional sports park (*Integrated Open Space Plan 2012*) and currently provides the following community sport facilities:

- Field 1 - grass playing field with sport field lighting (1 x senior baseball diamonds, 1 x junior/intermediate baseball diamond and 1 x senior football field), baseball dug outs, fencing and spectator seating.
- Field 2 - grass playing field with floodlighting (2 x junior baseball diamonds and 1 x junior/mini soccer fields).
- Amenities building with 2 x team change rooms, umpire change room, canteen operated by sporting user groups and public toilets.

The sports fields are used for training, competition and school sport. The pre-existing sports field lighting permits evening use for training and competition purposes.

The Park includes existing passive recreation elements with a small local playground and a picnic shelter. The existing bitumen car park (entry from Magdala Road) provides parking for approximately 71 vehicles.

The increasing population density of the surrounding residential suburbs of North Ryde and Macquarie Park (City of Ryde LGA) and Lane Cove (Lane Cove Council LGA) is increasing the demand on the open spaces in the City of Ryde, including Magdala Park.

A section of the historic Great North Walk, a bushwalking/hiking track passes through Magdala Park. The Park provides linkages to other bush walking tracks in Lane Cove National Park (National Park and Wildlife Service), Buffalo Creek Reserve (Hunters Hill Council) and Field of Mars Reserve (City of Ryde). In its current form, the section of the Great North Walk track passing through the site lacks formal definition and wayfinding signage.

Whilst the Park consists of predominantly open grass fields, it does contain some sections of Coastal Sandstone Gully Forrest Forest and Estuarine Mangrove Forest. Magdala Park forms part of the catchment for the Lane Cove River which is immediately adjacent to the site.

### ITEM 3 (continued)

#### Masterplan – Consultation and Design Development

Council undertook a two-stage consultation process to inform the development of the Masterplan.

Stage 1 community consultation was held on 19 August – 30 August 2020. The purpose of the first stage of consultation was to allow residents and users of the park an opportunity to provide their feedback on the existing design of the parks and what their thoughts were for the future of the site. This consultation was promoted via flyer, letterbox drop (500m radius of park), park signage, local newspaper advertisement (38,000 print readership), stakeholder eNewsletter (76 emails distributed), Have Your Say webpage (1,614 page views) and Facebook ad (9,914 users reached). Due to COVID restrictions one-on-one phone sessions were provided in lieu of face-to-face drop in sessions. The consultation generated feedback via online interactive maps comments (217 comments from 107 respondents), 36 written submissions and 3 phone submissions.

During Stage 1 community consultation, written submissions were received from the following sporting user groups/associations:

- Five Dock Falcons Baseball Club,
- Football NSW,
- North Ryde RSL Baseball Club,
- North Ryde RSL Junior Baseball Club,
- North Ryde Soccer Club,
- North West Sydney Football,
- NSW Health Northern Sydney Local Health District,
- Ryde Baseball Club,
- Ryde Eastwood Baseball Club, and
- Ryde Hawks Baseball League.



Images 10 & 11: Stage 1 community consultation sign and Social Pin Point online feedback collection.

**ITEM 3 (continued)**

The Stage 1 community consultation report is provided in **ATTACHMENT 5 (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)**. A summary of how the draft Masterplan design was developed is as follows:-

<b>Stage 1 Community Consultation Feedback</b>	<b>Draft Masterplan for Stage 2 Consultation Response</b>
Magdala Park is a good sports field. Keep soccer at the park. Expand and upgrade the baseball facilities.	Included in draft Masterplan. Increased number of football fields included in design. Baseball fields expanded and upgraded with new pitching/batting, dugouts and spectator facilities.
Improved sports field drainage.	Included in draft Masterplan. All sports fields will be re-turfed with new drainage.
Include a synthetic field.	Not included in draft Masterplan due to the sites previous use as a garbage depot and associated elevated costs of construction compared to other sites. Refer to discussions further within this report.
New and upgraded pathways.	Included in draft Masterplan. New pathway network with new park entry, accessible paths, improved Great North Walk track and wayfinding signage in design.
Relocate and upgrade the amenities building (including canteen, storage, change rooms and other multi-use facilities) to improve safety and convenience.	Included in draft Masterplan. New and relocated amenities building in design.
Additional or improved seating.	Included in draft Masterplan. New tiered seating area, picnic shelters and spectator seating included in design
Additional or improved lighting.	Included in draft Masterplan. New lighting included on all sports fields and around the park.
Additional or improved shade areas.	Included in draft Masterplan. Additional tree plantings and large awning providing shade in amenities building design.

Stage 2 community consultation was held on 8 March – 28 March 2021. This stage of consultation allowed the community to review and provide feedback on the draft Masterplan. This consultation was promoted via flyer, letterbox drop (500m radius of park), park signage, local newspaper advertisements (38,000 print readership), stakeholder eNewsletter (213 emails distributed), Facebook (reach of 1,428) and Have Your Say webpage (363 page views). Due to COVID restrictions one-on-one phone sessions were provided in lieu of face-to-face drop in sessions. The consultation generated feedback via online interactive maps comments (151 comments from 68 respondents), 16 written submissions and 2 phone submissions.

**ITEM 3 (continued)**



Image 12: Draft Masterplan present to community during Stage 2 Community Consultation, provided in ATTACHMENT 4

**ITEM 3 (continued)**



Images 13 & 14: Stage 2 community consultation sign and Social Pin Point online feedback collection.

During Stage 2 community consultation, written submissions were received from the following sporting user groups/associations:

- Football NSW,
- North Ryde RSL Baseball Club,
- North Ryde Soccer Club,
- North Ryde Spirits Netball Club,
- North West Sydney Football, and
- Ryde Eastwood Baseball Club.

The Stage 2 community consultation report is provided in **ATTACHMENT 3 (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)**. A summary of how the Masterplan was updated is provided below:-

Stage 2 Community Consultation Feedback	Draft Masterplan for Council Adoption Response
Sports field reconfiguration well received for soccer and baseball.	Noted and retained in final Masterplan design.
Some suggestions for alternative field layouts and size	Baseball – investigation of 2 x primary baseball fields further investigated. Not deemed possible due to site/size constraints, other passive and sporting masterplan elements, environmental considerations (eg. mangrove protection), significant structural engineering and cost implications.  Football – field sizes revised in final Masterplan design in consultation with Football NSW. 1 x senior field 105m x 64m and 1 x senior field 100m x 56m.
Baseball dugouts, batting cages and bullpen were favoured	Noted and retained in final Masterplan design.
Requests for baseball scorer tables, soccer technical areas/team benches and fencing.	Included in final Masterplan design.

**ITEM 3 (continued)**

<b>Stage 2 Community Consultation Feedback</b>	<b>Draft Masterplan for Council Adoption Response</b>
Additional spectator seating and shading needed	Included in updated final Masterplan design.
Sports field lighting (small ball) needed	Noted and sports field lighting retained in final Masterplan design.
Upgraded amenities building needed, including meeting rooms, canteen, storage and changerooms	Noted and retained in final Masterplan design. Amenities building design to include changerooms, canteen and storage. For further investigation during detailed design.
Street parking and traffic issues, the expanded car park was favoured.	Noted and expanded car park retained in final Masterplan design.
Need for pathways within the park and connecting to Great North Walk	Noted and pathway/track improvements retained in final Masterplan design.
Need for pathway along Magdala Rd for pedestrian safety	Recommended in final Masterplan for future investigation by Council.
Playground favoured	Noted and playground retained in final Masterplan design with some minor amendment to accommodate the existing vegetation and adjoining resident requests.
Protection of surrounding environment	Noted and retained in final Masterplan design. Increased tree canopy onsite. Bio-buffer for nutrient capture from sports fields incorporated into design.
Community inclusiveness	Noted and retained in final Masterplan design.
Include netball courts	Not included in final Masterplan. Multi-court with netball ring included in Blenheim Park Masterplan for social netball. Sports Centre expansion with indoor courts included in ELS Hall Park Masterplan.
Access for kayaks	Not included in final Masterplan due to steep site topography, protection of mangroves and lack of suitable parking for loading/uploading. Lane Cove River Kayak club has a launching jetty nearby on the north-eastern side of the river (Rotary Field).

**Masterplan - Final Design**

The Masterplan, provided in **ATTACHMENTS 1 and 2 (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)**, and recommended for adoption in this report, will increase sporting capacity via sports field optimisation, sporting infrastructure, new amenities building and increased parking capacity to better meet the growing community needs. It achieves an increase of 1 x senior football field and 2 x junior/intermediate baseball fields. The Masterplan will improve passive recreation opportunities, enhance the Great North Walk which traverses the site, includes increased tree canopy coverage and other environmental improvements.

**ITEM 3 (continued)**



Image 15: Final Masterplan – Design present to Council for adoption, provided in **ATTACHMENT 2**.

### ITEM 3 (continued)

#### Sportsground Configuration

Magdala Park is a multi-sport venue and currently includes the following sportsground configurations:

- Baseball: 1 x senior, 1 x intermediate/junior and 2 x junior diamonds.
- Football: 1 x senior and 1 x junior/mini fields

The Masterplan seeks to increasing the total area of the sportsgrounds onsite. This will be primarily achieved by infilling and retaining works on the eastern and southern side of existing sports fields. The field expansion will occur in an area where there is currently an embankment which is difficult to maintain due to the steep topography. The Masterplan will continue to be a multi-sport venue and will include the following sportsground configurations/infrastructure:

- Baseball: 1 x senior diamond (100m arc);  
4 x intermediate/junior diamonds (60m arc); and  
2 x batting cages and 1 x pitching den.
- Football: 2 x senior fields (105m x 64m + 100m x 56m); and  
1 x junior/mini fields (50m x 70m).
- Other: Flexibility for other sports that may emerge into the future.

#### Sports Field Lighting

Sports field lighting at Magdala Park was first installed in 2005 and upgraded in 2012 to allow night competition. The associated conditions of consent were also adjusted in 2014 and 2020 to better meet the community needs.

The Masterplan recommends that all sports fields will have sports field lighting suitable for training and competition purposes for sports including baseball and football. Stage 1 and 2 consultations indicated community support for sports field lighting and the lighting improvements identified in the Masterplan. Pole locations on the Masterplan are indicative and subject to detailed lighting design. The increased number of fields in combination with sports field lighting improvements will enable Council to better meet the growing community needs and contribute towards closing the current and future shortfall in sports grounds in the City of Ryde.

Council may be required to prepare and submit a DA for the sports field lighting recommended in the Masterplan. This will include obtaining an independent *Statement of Environmental Effects* report which will review and provide site specific recommendations relating to matters such as lighting, traffic, acoustics and the environment. The community will be provided with the opportunity to provide further feedback during the DA process.



### **ITEM 3 (continued)**

#### **Sports Field Playing Surface**

Prior to the adoption of the *Synthetic Surface Action Plan*, a Council resolution in December 2015 identified 6 x sports fields for conversion to synthetic at Christie Park, ELS Hall Park, Meadowbank Park and Magdala Park (5<sup>th</sup> preference).

The *Synthetic Surface Action Plan (2016 - 2026)* was subsequently developed and adopted by Council in July 2017. The preliminary assessment within this Plan stated Magdala Park Field 1 “*not recommended due to issues associated with former use as a tip site*”. Magdala Park Field 2 & 3 were excluded from consideration for the reasons of “*Too small. Former landfill.*”

The inclusion of a synthetic sports field at Magdala Park was investigated during the preparation of the Masterplan. As the Park is on a former fill site, previous geotechnical investigations indicate fill depths up to 28.8m, which may result in compromised stability across the broader site. Deep excavation of large areas of the site and disturbance of historic landfill should be avoided.

An opinion of probable cost was obtained from an independent Quantity Surveyor to assess the cost of converting the existing sports fields at Magdala Park to a synthetic playing surface. This demonstrated that a conversion to synthetic would be cost prohibitive due to the structural engineering work required due to the sites previous use as a garbage tip. Council can obtain a significantly better cost benefit outcome from synthetic field/s at alternative and more suitable site/s. These alternative sites will be further investigated during the review of Council's *Synthetic Sports Surfaces Action Plan* in 2021/22.

The conversion of Magdala Park to synthetic turf may also compromise the multi-purpose nature of the Park. Synthetic fields could preclude baseball and other sports that may emerge into the future.

Due to the reasons listed above, the Masterplan does not propose any conversion of sports fields at Magdala Park to a synthetic playing surface.

#### **Sportsground Allocations**

The Masterplan seeks to achieve increase sporting capacity and field availability. Once constructed, the allocation of sportsgrounds will be re-assessed to meet sporting demand with consideration to the *Sportsground Allocation Policy*.

To enable the delivery of the Gannan Park Masterplan (construction 2022 – 2023), Magdala Park will be used primarily for winter baseball weekend competition from the 2023 winter season.

### **ITEM 3 (continued)**

#### **Amenities Building**

The existing amenities building was constructed in the 1980's. It is aging infrastructure, does not meet Council's accessibility and building compliance requirements and is disassociated from the sporting fields. The public toilets have poor sight lines and through Stage 1 consultation the community raised that they have safety concerns about the current building design. The existing building is also located within the Bushfire Vegetation Category 1 area.

The Masterplan includes a new amenities building which has been re-positioned with geotechnical and bushfire considerations. The building will include 4 x changerooms, umpire room, canteen and a large awning/forecourt for spectators and social space.

#### **Great North Walk**

The historic Great North Walk was created in 1988 as part of the Bicentenary celebrations. It is a 250km hiking track which connects central Sydney with the Hunter Valley and Newcastle. A short section of the Great North Walk passes through the Magdala Park. The track route enters/exits the site from the Lane Cove National Park (south-western corner of Magdala Park) and the Clifford Love Bridge across the Lane Cove River (on the north-eastern corner of Magdala Park). The track and section of the Great North Walk which passes through the site currently lacks formal definition, acknowledgement and wayfinding signage.

The Masterplan proposes a strengthening of the Great North Walk which traverses the site with substantial track improvements, wayfinding and interpretative signage. This as an opportunity to celebrate, acknowledge and promote the significance of the Great North Walk in the City of Ryde. Other Masterplan improvements such as new amenities building (with public toilets) and picnic shelters for rest stops will provide public benefit to walkers on the Great North Walk.

Council has liaised with Crown Lands – NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, who are the appointed managers of the Great North Walk. Crown Lands confirmed that the Great North Walk does not have a masterplan in place and are not whetted into a precise track alignment. The route of the Great North Walk has been adjusted in various locations since its creation. Crown Lands advised they are supportive of track upgrades and wayfinding signage improvements for the Great North Walk, as proposed by the Magdala Park Masterplan.

Magdala Park also provides linkages to other bush walking tracks which connect to Lane Cove National Park (National Park and Wildlife Service), Buffalo Creek Reserve (Hunters Hill Council) and Field of Mars Reserve (City of Ryde).

### **ITEM 3 (continued)**

#### **Onsite Car Parking**

Magdala Park currently has an asphalt car park with 71 spaces. The Masterplan includes car park re-configuration and expansion to provide approximately 118 spaces, including accessible parking. The design aims to improve vehicle circulation onsite and meet the increased parking demand associated with the increased sports field capacity. The design also includes trees in the car park to increase tree canopy cover, reduce urban heat island impacts, provide shade, WSUD outcomes for water runoff and provide a more natural aesthetic for the surrounding residents. The expansion of parking is to support the increased number of sporting uses and will be informed by documents informing planning approvals for sports field lighting works.

#### **Pedestrian and Cycle Considerations**

The Masterplan recommends the strengthening of active transport options to the site. Currently there is no footpath on Magdala Rd (east of Pittwater Rd). Community feedback from Stage 1 and 2 consultation indicated concerns for pedestrian safety and that pedestrians currently walk on the road as there is no footpath. The Masterplan recommends that Council gives consideration to the provision of a path along Magdala Rd. This would also enhance the interconnectivity between the site and the shared user paths on Pittwater Rd and Epping Rd. The Masterplan includes bicycle parking onsite.

#### **Environmental Considerations**

Whilst the Park consists of predominantly open grass fields, it does contain some small sections of Coastal Sandstone Gully Forrest Forest and Estuarine Mangrove Forest. Within the *Ryde Biodiversity Plan* (2016) Magdala Park is an identified reserve within the Lane Cove River Corridor which provides important regional biodiversity connectivity. Magdala Park is identified as having a moderate conservation priority, conservation significance value and threat value. Currently the riparian corridor is degraded with weed incursions.

The Masterplan supports the intent of the *Ryde Biodiversity Plan* (2016) and has been prepared with consideration to the proximity to the Lane Cove River and National Park. The Masterplan seeks to increase tree canopy cover to 33% of the overall site (increase of 17% from existing), re-plant the riparian corridor (canopy trees, mid-story and understory native vegetation) and protect the Estuarine Mangroves. A bio-buffer will be included between the sportsgrounds and the Lane Cove River to assist with nutrient capture from the sportsgrounds. A filtered water station has also been included to reduce litter and single use plastic.

### ITEM 3 (continued)



Image 16: Current tree canopy coverage on existing site (16.1%) and  
Image 17: Increased tree canopy coverage in Masterplan (33.2%), from **ATTACHMENT 1**

### Geotechnical Considerations

Magdala Park is a former landfill site with previous geotechnical reports showing fill depths up to 28.8m. The fill depths across the site has influenced siting of the new amenities building in the Masterplan design. As a new larger structure, the amenities building has been located where the footings are in an area of minimal fill depth.

Further geotechnical reports and associated testing will be commissioned as required during detailed design and construction phases.

### Bush Fire Considerations

Magdala Park is within the 100m bushfire prone vegetation buffer, similar to Christie Park and Pidding Park. The adjacent National Park is Bushfire Vegetation Category 1.

The existing amenities building falls within an area that is identified as Bushfire Vegetation Category 1. The new amenities building in the Masterplan has been repositioned so that it falls outside the area that is defined as Bushfire Vegetation Category 1. The suitable building materiality will be considered during detailed design and will include the necessary bushfire assessment.

### Utilities/Services Considerations

There are existing high-power electricity transmission lines which traversing the site overhead and travel in a north-east to south-west direction. These lines are supported by a large stanchion positioned on the north-eastern side of the Park.

On the northern boundary of the Park, Sydney Water has a small parcel of land containing a pumping station which is accessed via Magdala Park.

### ITEM 3 (continued)

The presence of these utilities has been considered during the preparation of the Masterplan. The Masterplan does not propose any significant changes which will adversely impact on function or access to these utilities. The necessary approvals and checks will be undertaken in during detailed design and construction phases.

### Land Classifications and Categorisations

Existing land categorisation is shown below and provided in **ATTACHMENT 8 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**. A recommendation of this report is to formally classify any new additional parcels of land and/or previously unclassified land as “Community Land”. Additional recommendation for Council to undertake public hearing in accordance with Section 40A and 47G of the *Local Government Act 1993*, to assign categorisation to new lands and/or re-categorisation of parts of Magdala Park to bring these into alignment with the Masterplan, as shown below and as provided in **ATTACHMENT 9 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**. The public hearing and a report back to Council will be conducted prior to the implementation of the adopted Masterplan.

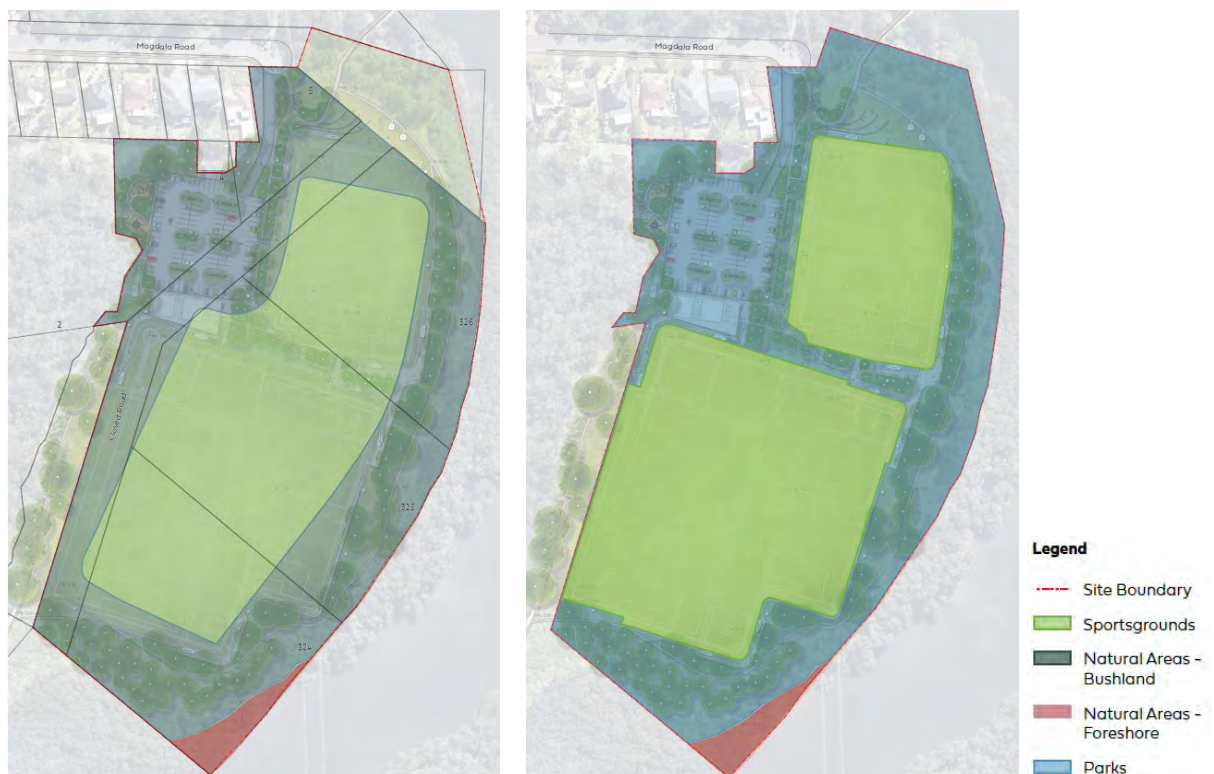


Image 18: Magdala Park – Existing Land Categorisation overlay on Masterplan, as provide in **ATTACHMENT 8**.  
Image 19: Magdala Park – Proposed Land Categorisation to align with Masterplan, as provide in **ATTACHMENT 9**.

### ITEM 3 (continued)

#### Closed Road and Road Reserve

The former Page Road, which travels through Magdala Park, was officially closed via Government Gazette (4277) on 15 August 1980. The section that travels through the western side of the Park now forms part of Magdala Park.

A recommendation of this report is to close a section of the road reserve adjacent to the Magdala Rd turning circle as outlined in **ATTACHMENT 6 (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)**. This closure will formally integrate this section of land (immediately to the north of the Park) and the previously closed section of Page Road into Magdala Park.

It is recommended this land be classified as “*Community Land*” and categorised in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*. This will ensure the land is managed appropriately in conjunction with the applicable *Generic Plans of Management*.



Image 20: Former Page Rd (closed) on western boundary of Magdala Park, and the northern section of road reserve recommended for closure, provided in **ATTACHMENT 6**.

Image 21: View to the north-east. Northern section of road reserve recommended for closure and integration into Magdala Park.

#### Land Parcel Transfer from NPWS

A section of parkland on the western boundary of the closed road is owned by National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), as shown in **ATTACHMENT 7 (UNDER SEPARATE COVER)**. This section of land is approximately 3,180m<sup>2</sup> in size and is grass expanse maintained by City of Ryde. Council officers have had preliminary discussions with NPWS to transfer this section of land to Council for integration into Magdala Park.

### ITEM 3 (continued)



Image 20: Parcel of land Council seeking transfer from NPWS, provided in **ATTACHMENT 7**.

Image 21: View to the south-west. Parcel of land Council seeking transfer from NPWS for integration into Magdala Park

A recommendation of this report is for Council to enter into formal discussions with NPWS to do all things necessary to affect this land transfer and formally integrate this section of land (immediately to the west of the Park) into Magdala Park.

The Masterplan sets the spatial layout for Magdala Park within the existing site boundaries. However, should the transfer of the additional land from NPWS occur, adjustments can be made during detailed design to incorporate the lot. This would not be a significant departure from the layout in the Masterplan. It may provide potential opportunity to shift the sporting fields further west which may reduce some of the retaining works and associated construction costs.

### Land Zoning

Magdala Park is zoned “RE1 Public Recreation” in the *Ryde Local Environmental Plan 2014*.

The NPWS land parcel, as shown in **ATTACHMENT 7 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, is zoned “E1 National Parks and Nature Reserve”. Should the land transfer from NPWS occur, the current zoning of “E1 National Parks and Nature Reserve” is not appropriate for the additional land proposed for inclusion in Magdala Park. A recommendation of this report is to enter into formal discussions with NPWS to seek land transfer and subsequently re-zone the land to “RE1 Public Recreation” via a Planning Proposal, to achieve consistency with the use of Magdala Park.

**ITEM 3 (continued)**

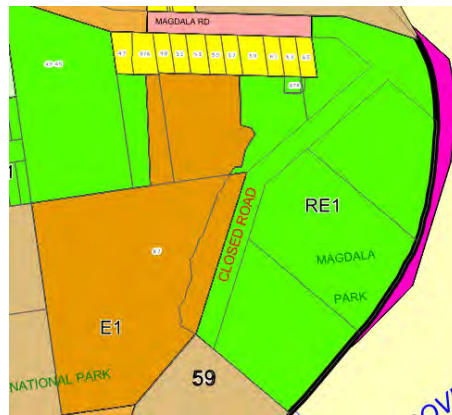


Image 22: Current zoning of Magdala Park and NPWS land as per Ryde Local Environmental Plan 2014.

**Staging and Implementation**

The Masterplan Report includes a staging plan for progressive implementation of the Masterplan over 4 stages. Implementation of the Masterplan is subject to Council’s adoption of the Masterplan, community land categorisation/re-categorisation process to align with the adopted Masterplan and the availability of funds.



Image 23: Masterplan Staging Plan as provided in ATTACHMENT 1.



### ITEM 3 (continued)

#### Financial Considerations

There is no financial implication to Council for the adoption of this report.

An opinion of probable costs has been prepared by an independent Quantity Surveyor giving consideration to the staged delivery of the Masterplan. Total Masterplan implementation costs for all four stages is estimated as \$18.36M (exc. GST) inclusive of contingencies, preliminaries and professional fees.

Funding for the four stages of Masterplan implementation will occur through seeking grant funding opportunities and considered during Council's business planning cycle.

Future external grant funding opportunities will be investigated and may include NSW Government Community Building Partnership program, NSW Office of Sport, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Australian Government Stronger Community grants, Crown Lands (for Great North Walk), environment/water grants and potential grants/contributions from sporting user groups.

#### Conclusion

For the reasons outlined in this report, it is recommended to Council to adopt the Magdala Park Masterplan, prepared by Place Design Group, dated May 2021 provided in **ATTACHMENT 1 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**.

This Masterplan seeks to increase sporting capacity via sports field optimisation to better meet the growing community needs and assist Council to close the gap in the current and the projected shortfall in sports fields. The sports field optimisation in the Masterplan will result in 1 x new senior football field and 1 x new intermediate/junior baseball diamond.

The Magdala Park Masterplan proposes a range of significant improvements for sporting, recreation and passive uses. It will include new sports fields with lighting, amenities building, batting/pitching cages, local playground, picnic shelters, increased parking capacity, formalisation of the pathway network, enhancement to the Great North Walk and environmental improvements.

The Masterplan and the recommended closure of the road reserve, as shown in **ATTACHMENT 6 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, and the future potential land transfer from National Parks and Wildlife Service, as shown in **ATTACHMENT 7 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, will increase the availability of passive and active recreational assets for community use. It will allow greater flexibility in the future development of the space for recreation and sporting purposes and maximise the areas where additional recreation or sporting opportunities can be realised.

**ITEM 3 (continued)**

Pending Council's resolution of the recommendations within this report, the necessary legislative planning processes will be undertaken when funding is identified for Masterplan implementation. It is therefore not currently anticipated that Masterplan implementation is likely to commence within the next 3-5 years.

Funding to implement the full Masterplan over its 20-year life will be sought through applications for grant funding opportunities, future Section 7.11 Plan updates and Council's annual business planning cycle.

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#### 4 ADOPTION OF FIELD OF MARS RESERVE MASTERPLAN AND PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF DRAFT PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

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**Report prepared by:** Open Space Planner

**File No.:** GRP/21/7 - BP21/368

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##### REPORT SUMMARY

The Field of Mars Reserve (“the Reserve”) is the largest remnant bushland reserve under the care, control and management of the City of Ryde. It is identified in Council’s *Integrated Open Space Plan* (2012) as a level 1 park in the Ryde LGA. At approximately 50 hectares in size, it is the City of Ryde’s largest single provision of open space. The Reserve currently contributes approximately 14% of the City of Ryde’s total open space provision. The Reserve consists of a combination of Council owned Community Land and Crown Land managed by CoR. The *Crown Land Management Act 2016* requires new Plans of Management for parks/reserves that contained Crown Land.

The current Plan of Management for the site was adopted by Council in 2009 and therefore it was timely to update the document to ensure it met the contemporary needs of the community and Council. A Master Plan for the site had not previously been prepared by Council. The biodiversity, community value and role of this Reserve is significant, especially with the increasing residential density occurring in the surrounding suburbs. The *Ryde Biodiversity Plan* (2016), identifies the Field of Mars Reserve as having very high conservation priority, high conservation significance value and a high threat value. The Reserve contains threatened ecological communities and with additional designated protection as a “*Wildlife Refuge*” and a “*Category 1 Wildlife Protection Area*”.

The site primarily consists of Natural Area (bushland) and contains sections of Buffalo Creek and Strangers Creek, walking tracks, Visitors Centre/amenities building, picnic area and car park. Although the Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre is positioned within Reserve, this parcel of land and education centre facility is not owned or managed by Council – it is operated by the NSW Department of Education. The Reserve’s gazetted purpose, and thus the remit for City of Ryde’s care, control and management responsibility is for “*Public recreation and promotion of the study and preservation of native flora and fauna.*”

The draft Masterplan and draft Plan of Management – Action Lists considered Stage 1 community consultation feedback (October/November 2020). The Masterplan Report was further refined, and draft Plan of Management developed with consideration to Stage 2 community consultation feedback (April/May 2021). Further details on the consultation undertaken are outlined in the body of this report.

## ITEM 4 (continued)

### Masterplan

Council is committed to protecting the biodiversity and recreation values of the Reserve, providing environmental education opportunities and ensuring sustainable and environmental management of the Reserve into the future. The Masterplan, provided in **ATTACHMENT 1 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, sets out the vision for how this Park will be protected, upgraded and improved over the next 20 years.

The Masterplan does not propose any significant changes to the Field of Mars Reserve. It includes several protection measures and a range of enhancements to improve biodiversity, accessibility and environmental education opportunities. This includes improvements to the track network, accessible pathways, amenities and picnic shelters, delineation of open space zones to encourage social/recreation activities outside of natural areas, signage, entry and arrival experience.

The Masterplan also includes environmental improvements such as increased tree canopy cover, re-generation of degraded vegetation, re-vegetation areas and bio-buffer to capture nutrient run off between the cemetery and the Reserve. The Masterplan also seeks to strengthen the connection with the surrounding walking track network and encourages water quality improvements in the surrounding catchment areas.

An implementation plan is detailed in the Masterplan Report for the progressive implementation of the Masterplan. Implementation of the improvements detailed in the Masterplan is subject to Council's adoption and funding availability. Funding to implement the full Masterplan will be sought through applications for grant funding and Council's annual business planning cycle.

### Plan of Management

The Plan of Management, provided in **ATTACHMENT 2 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, identifies objective, targets and strategies to protect and guide the future maintenance and management of this Reserve, in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*, *Crown Land Management Act 2016* and *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

The Field of Mars Reserve Plan of Management (FoMRPoM) provides a strategic planning and sustainable management framework for the Community and Crown lands that form Field of Mars Reserve. It reaffirms Reserve's role in providing for a range of education, recreation and natural areas to the residents of Ryde and aids the conservation of the natural, cultural and indigenous resources.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

Management actions recommended within FoMRPoM are to meet current and future demands of Park users and aim to improve the manner in which the Reserve is managed, respond to the needs of the community, satisfy management objectives, clarify and formalise lease and licensing opportunities and reinforce the values of the Field of Mars Reserve.

In accordance with the requirements of the NSW *Crown Lands Management Act 2016*, Native Title advice on the areas of Crown Land covered by the FoMRPoM has been obtained. Therefore, this report recommends the FoMRPoM be referred to the Minister of Lands and Forestry for approval to be placed on Public Exhibition in accordance with the requirements of the *Crown Land Management Act 2016*. Should Council adopt the Masterplan, a re-categorisation process will occur during the exhibition of the FoMRPoM to align the land categorisations with the Masterplan design. Following this Public Exhibition, a report will be prepared outlining Council's response to feedback received, with a recommendation to formally adopt the FoMRPoM.

A recommendation of this report is that Council advocates to continue to have care control and management of Lot 7011 DP 1069836 for its current use of environmental conservation, the lot is currently Zoned E2. The draft Masterplan has this area identified as an important bush regeneration/rehabilitation zone. The Northern Metropolitan Cemeteries Crown Land Manager, who are responsible for the management of Field of Mars Cemetery, have expressed an interest in integrating this parcel of land for cemetery use. An additional recommendation is the formal closing of Wellington Rd road reserve and integrate this lot into the broader reserve. Council's Strategic Properties Team and Legal Counsel have been consulted on these land matters.

The Field of Mars Reserve provides vital biodiversity connectivity within the City of Ryde and beyond. Both of the above-mentioned recommendations will further strengthen the regionally and locally significant biodiversity corridors.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- (a) That Council adopts Field of Mars Reserve Masterplan Report, as prepared by City of Ryde and Gondwana Consulting dated July 2021.
- (b) That Council refer the draft Field of Mars Reserve Plan of Management, dated July 2021 to the Minister for Lands and Forestry for approval to place on public exhibition as per the requirements of the *Crown Lands Management Act 2016*.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

- (c) That once approval is obtained from the Minister, the document be placed on exhibition and a public hearing be undertaken for the proposed land recategorisations, with submissions received for a period of 42 days and a report be brought back to Council following this process.
- (d) That Council approves the closure of the Wellington Rd road reserve, as detailed in the Field of Mars Master Plan, and that all associated administrative processes be undertaken with delegating authority given to the General Manager to undertake all tasks necessary to affect this closure and executing all the required documentation.
- (e) The Council continues to advocate for the continued care, control and management of Lot 7011 DP 1069836, for the use of environmental conservation purposes as per its current E2 zoning.
- (f) That Council write to thank the residents that participated in the development of the Masterplan and Plan of Management and inform them of this resolution.

**ATTACHMENTS – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**

- 1 Field of Mars Reserve Masterplan Report for adoption by Council (July 2021)
- 2 Field of Mars Reserve Draft Plan of Management for Referral to Minister (July 2021)
- 3 Field of Mars Reserve Draft Masterplan Report for Stage 2 Community Consultation (April 2021)
- 4 Field of Mars Reserve Draft Plan of Management - Action Lists for Stage 2 Community Consultation (April 2021)
- 5 Field of Mars Reserve Masterplan and Plan of Management - Stage 1 Community Consultation Report (November 2020)
- 6 Field of Mars Reserve Masterplan and Plan of Management - Stage 2 Community Consultation Report (May 2021)
- 7 Field of Mars Reserve - Map of Wellington Rd road reserve recommended for closure

Report Prepared By:

**Meredith Gray**  
**Open Space Planner**

Report Approved By:

**Simon James**  
**Manager - Parks**

**Wayne Rylands**  
**Director - City Works**

## ITEM 4 (continued)

### History of Field of Mars Reserve (the Reserve)

The traditional custodians of the land are the Wallumedegal clan of the Darug tribe. The Wallumedegal clan would have used the natural resources of the area, fishing and surviving on a diet of shellfish, birds, small game and edible native plants. Archaeological evidence indicates indigenous activities and practices took place within the Field of Mars Reserve.

The Field of Mars Common (extending from Gladesville to Beecroft) was established in 1804 by Governor King for stock breeding by early settlers. Timber for building, shingles, firewood and charcoal was transported by the Lane Cove River. In 1887 85 acres that became known as the Field of Mars Reserve (R.4785) was set apart for public recreation. In 1889 the Municipal Council at Ryde were appointed as Trustees of the Reserve. In 1920, 1924, 1926 and 1967, parts of the Reserve were removed and added to the adjoining Cemetery.

In the early 1900's the Reserve was a remote and undeveloped patch of bush. Timber cutters were active during the Depression years. Locals used the Reserve for recreation including swimming and fishing. Squatter type dwellings and shacks sprang up. Other uses has included a rifle range and for Army target practice and training purposes.

In the 1950s, the Reserve was used as a rubbish depot until 1959 for not putrescible garbage on the banks of Buffalo and Strangers Creeks. In 1965 a major tip/reclamation site for putrescible garbage was proposed in the Reserve. Community objection to this proposal gained momentum with the (East Ward) Anti-Tip Action Committee formed and the Ryde-Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society formed in 1966. In 1966 Council selected another site and resolved to developed the Reserve as a flora and fauna sanctuary.



*Image 1, 2 & 3: 1943, 1961 & 1975 aerial photographs of the Reserve.*

#### ITEM 4 (continued)

Between 1972 – 1974 additional land parcels were added the Reserve for public recreation and placed under Council's care, control and management. The Visitors Centre/Amenities Building opened in 1972. A draft Plan of Management was created by the Ryde Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society in 1975, which was adopted by Council and National Parks and Wildlife in 1977. The Buffalo Creek Plan of Management was prepared in 1996. The current Field of Mars Reserve Plan of Management was adopted by Council in 2009.

The Reserve was proclaimed as a Wildlife Refuge in 1975 and became a Category 1 Wildlife Protection Area in 2019. The Reserve purpose was altered in 1975 for “Public recreation and promotion of the study and preservation of native flora and fauna”. The establishment of a State School at the Reserve was formalised in 1988.



Images 4, 5 & 6: 1982, 1995 & 2010 aerial photograph of the Reserve.

#### Strategic Context

The Field of Mars Reserve Masterplan, provided in **ATTACHMENT 1 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, and Field of Mars Reserve Plan of Management, provided in **ATTACHMENT 2 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, have been prepared in response to and with consideration to a number of strategic planning documents, including:

- *Greater Sydney Commission Our Greater Sydney 2056 North District Plan (2018)*
- *City of Ryde Biodiversity Plan (2016)*
- *City of Ryde Integrated Open Space Plan (2012)*
- *City of Ryde Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-2026 (2017)*
- *Planning Ryde Local Strategic Planning Statement (2020)*
- *City of Ryde Resilience Plan 2030 (2020)*
- *Ryde Local Environment Plan (2014)*
- *Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Parramatta, Ryde Bushfire Risk Management Committee Bush Fire Risk Management Plan 2019 – 2024 (2021 - draft pending endorsement)*



**ITEM 4 (continued)**

The City of Ryde is incorporated in the Greater Sydney Commission's *Our Greater Sydney 2056 - North District Plan*. This plan identifies a number of Planning Priorities which are applicable to the Field of Mars Reserve Masterplan and Plan of Management including:

- *N15: Protecting and improving the health and enjoyment of Sydney Harbour and the District's waterways.*
- *N16: Protecting and enhancing bushland and biodiversity.*
- *N17: Protecting and enhancing scenic and cultural landscapes.*
- *N19: Increasing urban tree canopy cover and delivering Green Grid connections.*
- *N20: Delivering high quality open space.*
- *N22: Adapting to the impacts of urban and natural hazards and climate change.*

The *Ryde Biodiversity Plan* (2016), identifies the Field of Mars Reserve as having very high conservation priority, high conservation significance value and a high threat value. The Reserve contains threatened ecological communities. The Field of Mars Reserve provides significant biodiversity connectivity as it forms part of the Buffalo Creek Regional Biodiversity corridor, the Lane Cove River Regional Biodiversity Corridor and the Strangers Creek Local Biodiversity corridor. There are multiple Bushcare groups as well as Bushcare contractors who operate at Bushcare sites within the Reserve. The Masterplan and Plan of Management provide the strategic directions, priorities and recommendations for biodiversity management, protection, environmental enhancement and community education initiatives. The development of these plans have been in accordance with the City of Ryde's *Biodiversity Plan* (2016).

The *Integrated Open Space Plan* (2012) (IOSP) identifies Field of Mars Reserve as a Level 1 open space. A significant part of the City's open space is accounted for in natural areas (eg. Field of Mars Reserve), which is of regional significance. The Field of Mars Reserve is the largest at 50 Ha, providing the biggest single contribution to City of Ryde's open space provision. The IOSP give recognition to the significance of the Field of Mars Reserve:-

- *"Field of Mars Reserve is first and foremost a bushland open space there are cleared areas, particularly close to Pittwater Road that would meet passive recreation needs without compromise to its integrity."*

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

- *“Field of Mars Reserve is an important link to the Lane Cove National Park through Buffalo Creek, Stranger’s Creek and the Great North Walk and covers an area of over 49 Ha. Due to its topography of ridges and gullies and the different soils and aspects, the plant communities found there are both rich and diverse with over 300 species of plants from communities which include salt marsh, wet and dry sclerophyll forest.”*
- *“The Field of Mars Reserve is one of the most significant areas for passive recreation in the City and consequently, trails have been constructed through it, recently incorporating a universally accessible raised boardwalk to encourage a more leisurely and manageable approach of walking in the bush. These additional facilities include the 2.5 kilometres long Kunzea Walk which follows Buffalo Creek as a continuation of the Great North Walk.”*
- *“addressing flooding climate change with minimal necessary built form (river walls) and through long term planning (eg. facility relocation, extending flood capacity and retention of creeks through natural reprofiling. Key reserves in terms of flood impact include Meadowbank Park, lower section of Field of Mars and various other parks on the Lane Cove River and Parramatta River foreshores.”*
- *“major road barriers and steep topography limit access to the Field of Mars Reserve.”*

The *Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-2026 (2017)* recognises the Natural Area in the Reserve as areas of unique ecological value that are maintained with minimal human intervention and are protected because of their significant ecological value for the Ryde Community. Recreation activities include bushwalking, running, Bushcare programs and bird watching. The Masterplan has been informed by the actions and priorities identified in the *Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-2026*. This includes Field of Mars Reserve being a high priority location to *“design open spaces that support passive recreation to ensure access of people of all abilities. Create picnic areas that allow for adequate movement space for people who use wheelchairs, crutches, motor scooters or walkers etc”*.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

**Local Context**

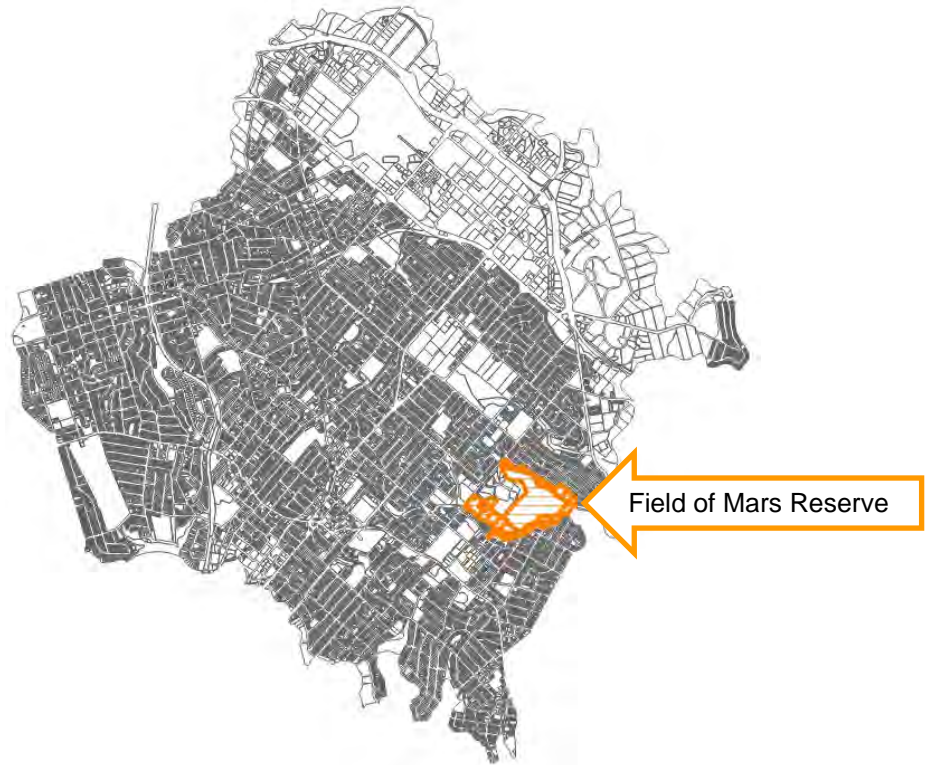


Image 7: Site Location: Field of Mars Reserve



Image 8: Site Overview: Field of Mars Reserve.

**ITEM 4 (continued)****The Site**

The Field of Mars Reserve is the largest remnant bushland reserve under the care, control and management of the City of Ryde covering approximately 50 hectares. In its current form, the Reserve is comprised of a collection of forty-three parcels of land under a combination of Council, Crown and NSW Government ownership.

The Reserve is located in the suburbs of East Ryde, Gladesville and Ryde. It is bounded by Pittwater Rd, Kennedy St, Westminster Rd, Higginbotham Rd, Pidding Rd, Cressy Rd, Kellaway St, Finch Ave and Moncrieff Dr. The Reserve is predominantly surrounded by low density residential dwellings, with a small pocket of industrial land and bus depot located to the south-west of the site.

The Reserve forms part of a wider open space system and habitat corridor network which includes, to the west the Field of Mars Cemetery and linkage parks such as Pidding, Barton and Burrows Parks and to the east, the Lane Cove National Park (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service) and Buffalo Creek Reserve (Hunters Hill Council).

Buffalo Creek and Strangers Creek both traverse the site and converge on the north-eastern side of the Reserve, before flowing into the nearby Lane Cove River, a major tributary to the Parramatta River.

The Reserve primarily consists of large tracts of natural area (bushland). Built form includes a network of walking tracks and creek crossing points, a small picnic area with shelters, small pockets of green space for passive recreation (eg. picnics), a Visitors Centre/amenities building (with public toilets), bitumen car park (31 spaces + 1 accessible space) and a bus turning area. The Reserve has 14 different site entry points, with the main entry off Pittwater Rd. Stormwater devices (eg. trash rack and gross pollutant trap) are located onsite to improve water quality.

The Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre is located within the Reserve. This facility includes indoor class rooms, office area, toilets and a small outdoor teaching area. The lot that the Education Centre building is located on is owned by Department of Education and is not under Council's care, control or management. Therefore, the parcel of land on which it is based and the Education Centre building is excluded from Masterplan and Plan of Management. However, the surrounding context and their use of the Reserve for educational purposes has been appropriately considered.

The Reserve is a Wildlife Refuge and Wildlife Protection Area, where dogs, cats and cycling activities are prohibited onsite. Lighting within the Reserve is kept to a minimum to act as a protection measure for nocturnal wildlife.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

The Reserve is listed as an item of “*National and State significance*” under the *Ryde Local Environmental Plan No.105 (Heritage)*.

**Masterplan and Plan of Management Development – Design and Consultation**

In September 2020 Council engaged *Gondwana Consulting* as natural area subject matter experts to prepare the Masterplan and Plan of Management.

Council’s Community Engagement team conducted Stage 1 and Stage 2 Community Consultations to inform the preparation and refinement of the Masterplan and Plan of Management.

Stage 1 community consultation was held in 12 October – 1 November 2021. The purpose of the first stage of consultation was to allow residents and users of the Reserve an opportunity to provide their feedback on the existing design and management of the Reserve and what their thoughts were for the future of the site. This consultation was promoted via flyer, letterbox drop (500m radius of the Reserve), park signage, local newspaper advertisement (38,000 readership), stakeholder eNewsletter (92 emails distributed), Facebook (reach of 7,109), Have Your Say webpage (367 page views) and Council eNewsletters (distribution 5,834). Due to COVID restrictions no face-to-face drop in sessions were held, however, community members could register for a one-on-one phone call with a member of the project team. The consultation generated feedback by online survey (219 respondents), written submissions (12 emails) and phone submissions (3 phone sessions).

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

The Stage 1 Community Consultation Report is provided in **ATTACHMENT 5 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**. The feedback received during this first stage helped to inform the preparation of a draft Masterplan and draft Plan of Management (PoM). During Stage 1 Community Consultation the community told us they would like to see:-

Stage 1 Feedback	Council Response	
	Draft Masterplan	Draft Plan of Management
Improved/additional signs/information	Included	Included
Improved access to/from the Reserve		
Maintain/upgrade boardwalks and trails		
More seating / picnic areas		
Water management / quality / clear waterways	WSUD principals included.	Included
Improved facilities (toilet, café)	Review condition and functionality of Visitors Centre / Amenities Building for future consideration.	
	Café not included. Visitors Centre offers complimentary tea/coffee.	
Wildlife / habitat / nature protection	Included	Included
Protected area / no development		
Bush regeneration		
Weed management		
Managed bush fire risks	Refer to Plan of Management	Included
Regulated area		
Keep dogs / cats / bikes out		
Feral animal control		
Activities/events		
Volunteering		

Stage 2 Community Consultation was held in 26 April - 9 May 2021. This stage of consultation allowed the community to review and provide feedback on the draft Masterplan, provided in **ATTACHMENT 3 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, and draft Plan of Management - Action Lists, provided in **ATTACHMENT 4 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**. This consultation was promoted via flyer, letterbox drop (500m radius of the Reserve), park signage, local newspaper advertisement (38,000 readership), stakeholder eNewsletter (200 emails distributed), Facebook (reach of 9,061), Have Your Say webpage (285 page views) and Council eNewsletters (distribution 5,891). An onsite drop in session was held (15 attendees). The consultation generated feedback by online survey (76 respondents), written submissions (10 emails) and drop in session comments.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

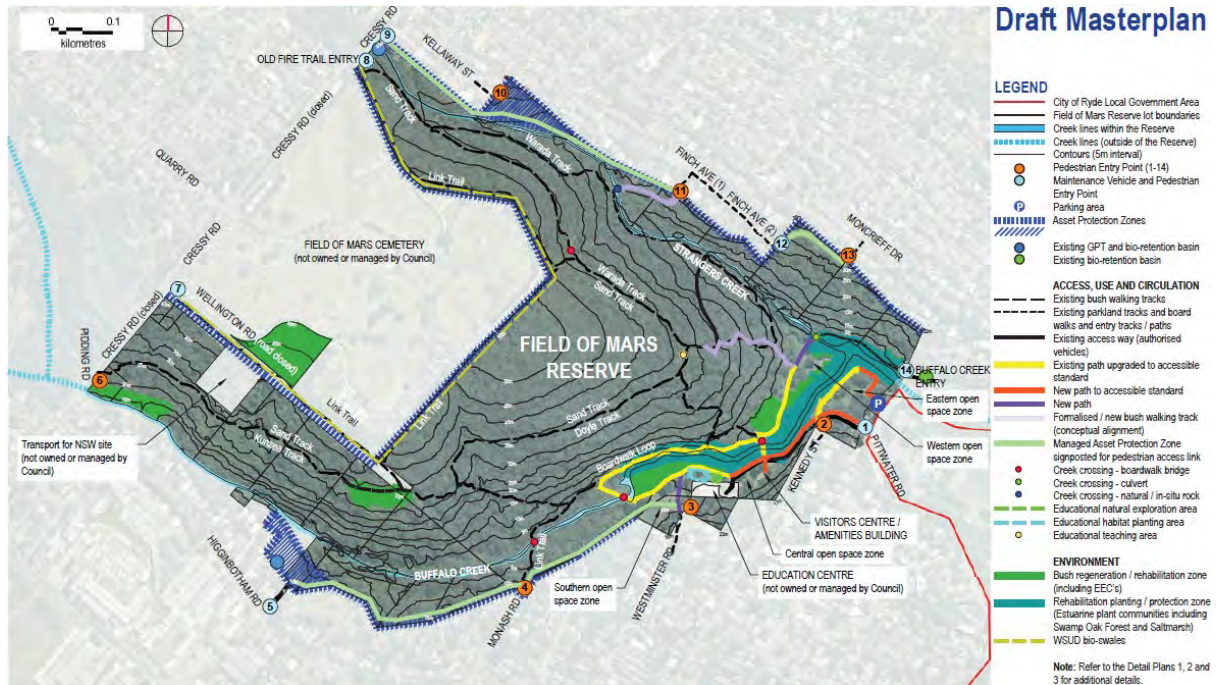


Image 9: Draft Masterplan presented during Stage 2 Community Consultation, provided in ATTACHMENT 3



Images 10 & 11: Stage 2 Community Consultation drop in session & Park signage.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

The Stage 2 Community Consultation Report is provided in **ATTACHMENT 6 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**. The Masterplan and Plan of Management responds to the community’s feedback in the following ways:-

Stage 2 – draft Masterplan:

During Stage 2 Community consultation the community provided the following levels of support for the recommendations proposed by the draft Masterplan:-

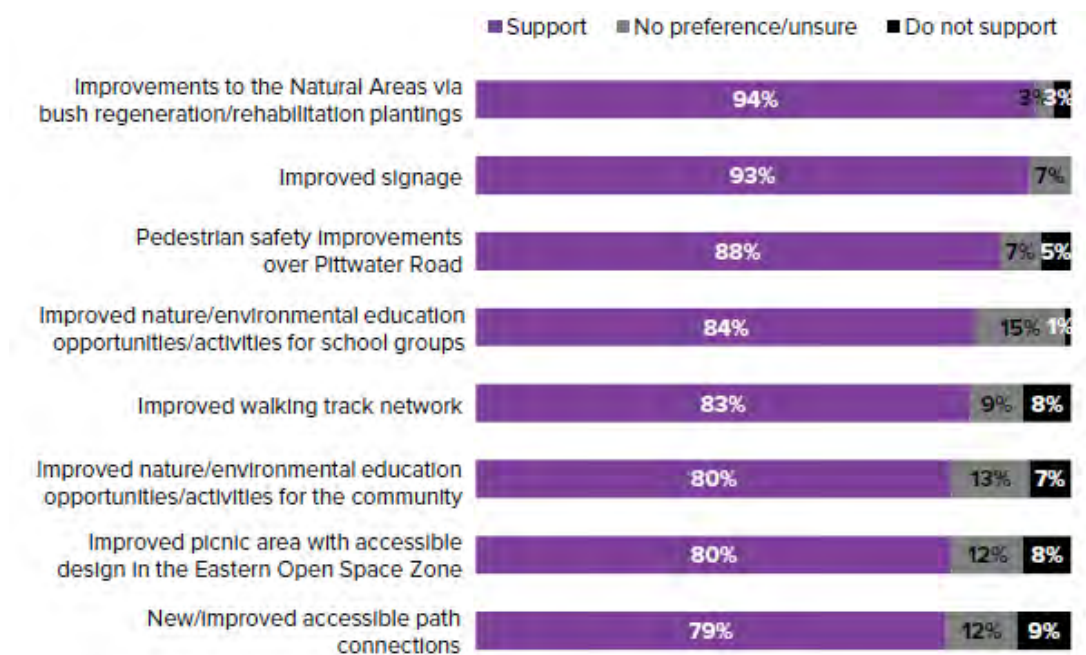


Image 12: Excerpt from Stage 2 Community Consultation Report, provided in **ATTACHMENT 6**.



**ITEM 4 (continued)**

Stage 2 draft Masterplan Ideas/Suggestions/Comments	Council Response in draft Masterplan for Council adoption
Keep natural/with character/minimise changes	No change. Included in draft Masterplan
Maintain/upgrade tracks/boardwalk/access	No change. Included in draft Masterplan
Pedestrian crossings/bridge/access	No change. Included in draft Masterplan
Bush habitat regeneration/protection	No change. Included in draft Masterplan and draft Plan of Management
Additional signage & signage/education	No change. Included in draft Masterplan and draft Plan of Management
Weed management	No change. Included in draft Masterplan and draft Plan of Management
Litter management	No change. Included in draft Masterplan and draft Plan of Management
Consultation with community groups	Refer to draft Plan of Management.
Bus access/parking	No change. Included in draft Masterplan and draft Plan of Management
Designate as dog off leash	Not included. Field of Mars Reserve is a designated Wildlife Protection Area
Regulate/too many dogs	No change. Included in draft Masterplan and draft Plan of Management
Drainage at walking tracks/entrances	No change. Drainage and track upgrades included in draft Masterplan.
Low impact activities/picnics	No change. Included in draft Masterplan and restricted to designated open space zones.
More bush regeneration	No change. Included in draft Masterplan and draft Plan of Management
More emphasis/lacks vision	No change.
Removal of proposes paths	Draft Masterplan updated. Some minor path adjustments made in the vicinity of the southern open space zone.
Managed burning	No change. Included in draft Plan of Management and considered in the preparation of the draft Masterplan.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

Stage 2 – draft Plan of Management:

During Stage 2 Community consultation the community felt the following areas were adequately addressed in the proposed draft Plan of Management – Action List:-

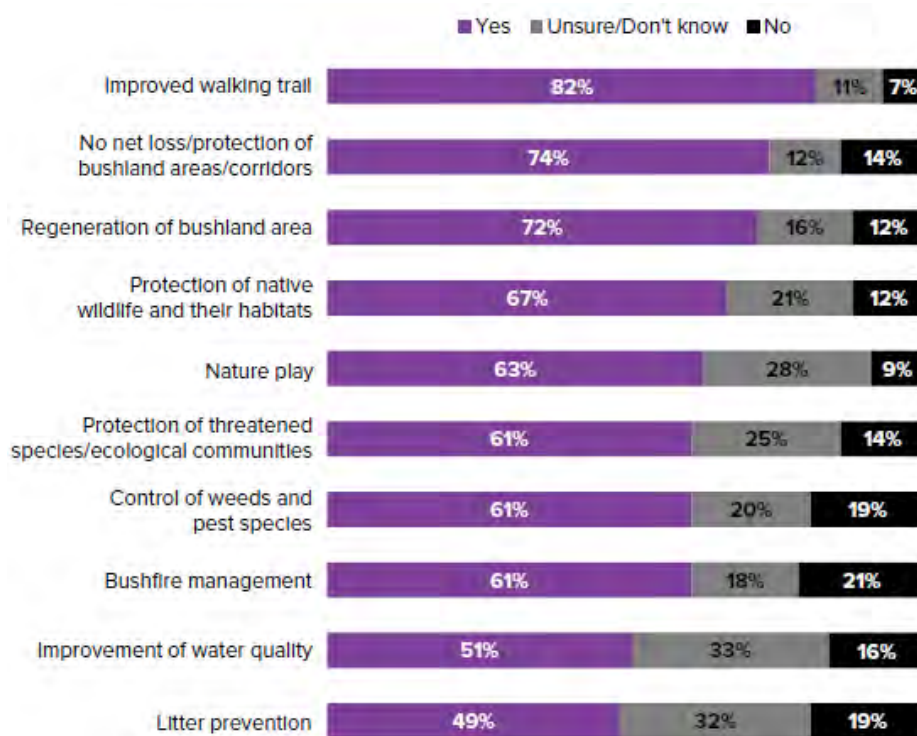


Image 13: Excerpt from Stage 2 Community Consultation Report, provided in ATTACHMENT 6.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

Stage 2 draft Plan of Management – Action list. Ideas/Suggestions/Comments	Council Response in draft Plan of Management for Minister
Bushfire Management	No change. Included in Plan of Management.
Protect environment/flora/fauna	No change. Included in Plan of Management.
Resourcing and implementation	No change. Included in Plan of Management.
Water quality and litter	No change. Included in Plan of Management.
Increase size of Reserve/Natural Areas	No change. Included in Plan of Management.
Pest management	No change. Included in Plan of Management.
Regulation of illegal activities	No change. Included in Plan of Management.
Signage	No change. Included in Plan of Management and Masterplan.
Use of recycled material (eg. seating)	No change. For consideration during detailed design and following procurement processes.
Weed management	No change. Included in Plan of Management
Naming of tracks	Plan of Management updated.
Heritage recognition	No change. Included in Plan of Management and Masterplan.
Categorisation of area	Land categorisation review and public hearing for proposed land re-categorisations of parts of Field of Mars Reserve (if required) to be undertaken to ensure consistency with Masterplan once adopted.
Consultation with groups	Included in Plan of Management with minor update for greater clarification.

Throughout the preparation of the draft Masterplan and draft Plan of Management Council officers have maintained regular and open dialogue with key stakeholder groups. This has included presentations at the Field of Mars Consultative Committee and Bushland and Environment Advisory Committee meetings and meetings with the Ryde Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society, Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and Field of Mars Cemetery/Northern Metropolitan Cemeteries Land Manager.

**Final Masterplan**

The Masterplan, provided in **ATTACHMENT 1 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, and recommended for adoption in this report, includes bushland protection measures and a range of enhancements to improve biodiversity, accessibility and environmental education opportunities. This includes improvements to the track network, accessible pathways, accessible toilet, accessible picnic shelters, delineation of open space zones to encourage social/recreation activities outside of natural areas, signage as well as enhanced entry, arrival and onsite wayfinding experience.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

The Masterplan also includes environmental improvements such as re-vegetation areas, re-generation of degraded vegetation, increased tree canopy cover and bio-buffer to capture nutrient run off between the cemetery and the Reserve. The Masterplan also seeks to strengthen the connection with the surrounding walking track network and encourages water quality improvements in the surrounding catchment areas.

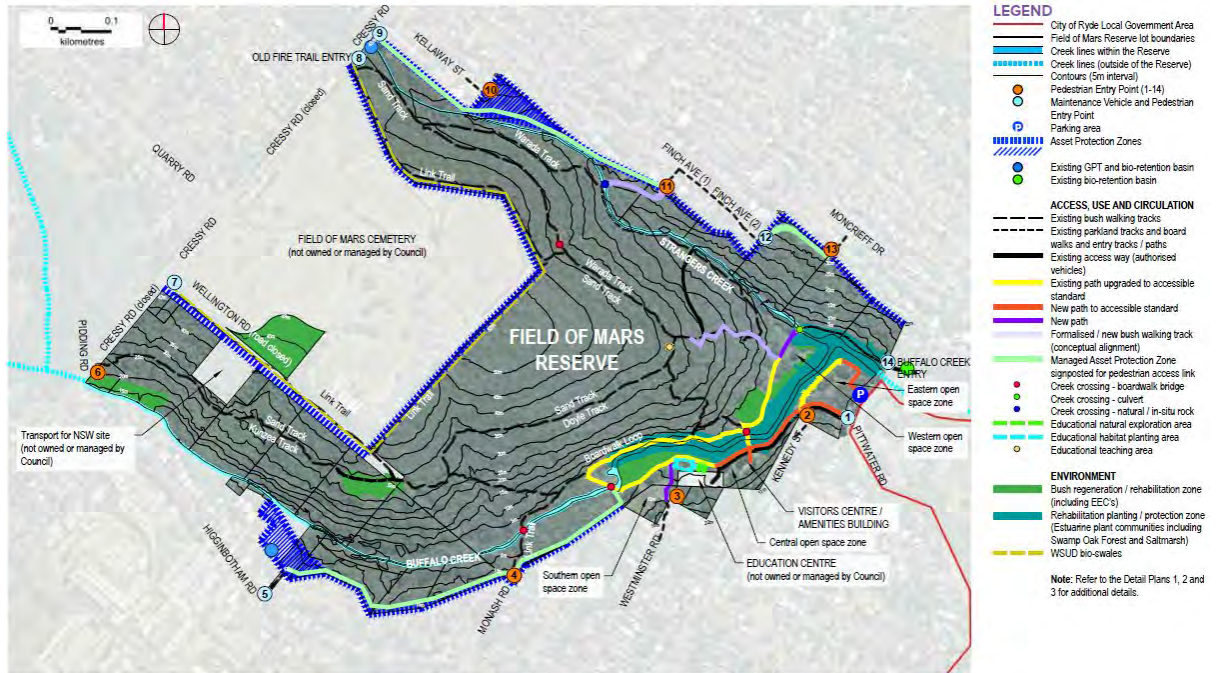


Image 14: Final Masterplan for adoption by Council, provided in **ATTACHMENT 1**.

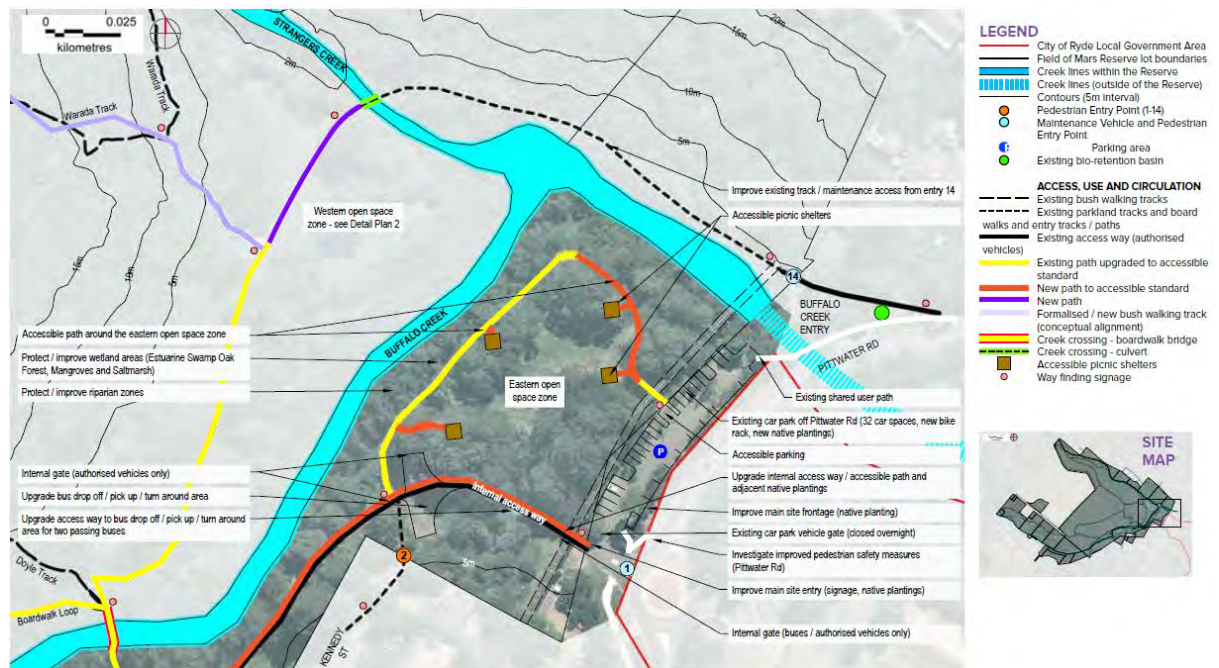


Image 15: Final Masterplan Detailed Plan for Eastern Open Space Zone for adoption by Council, provided in **ATTACHMENT 1**.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

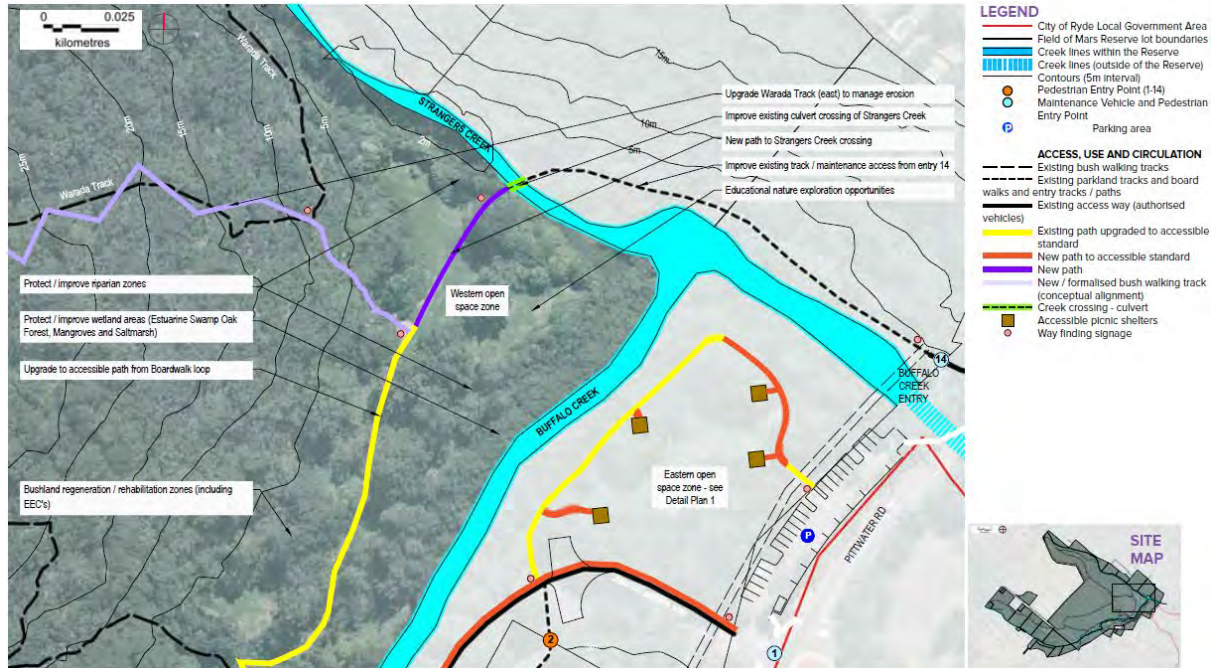


Image 16: Final Masterplan Detailed Plan for Western Open Space Zone for adoption by Council, provided in ATTACHMENT 1.

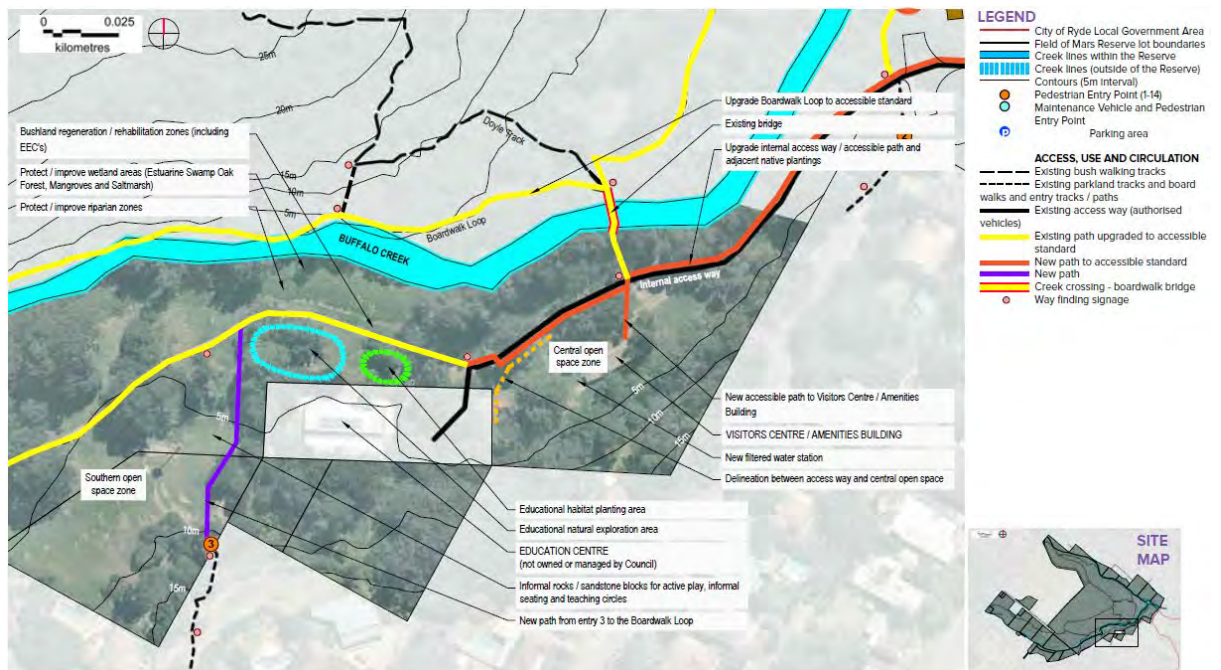


Image 17: Final Masterplan Detailed Plan for Central and Southern Open Space Zone for adoption by Council, provided in ATTACHMENT 1.

**ITEM 4 (continued)****Wildlife Refuge, Wildlife Protection Area and Reserve Purpose.**

In May 1975, the Field of Mars Reserve was proclaimed as a “*Wildlife Refuge*” under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*. This status helps to protect biodiversity, conserve wildlife and native plants.

Furthermore, in August 2019 Council resolved for the Reserve to be designated as a “*Category 1 Wildlife Protection Area*” under the *NSW Companion Animal Act 1998*. This prohibits cats and dogs in the Reserve at any time and aims to reduce their detrimental impact on native wildlife.

From 1887, the original purpose of the Reserve was gazetted as being for “Public Recreation”. In June 1975 the original purpose of the Reserve was revoked and altered via Government gazette to be for “*Public recreation and promotion of the study and preservation of native flora and fauna.*”

These designations have been considered and incorporated in the Masterplan and the Plan of Management.

**Visitors Centre / Amenities Building**

This building was originally constructed in 1972 and the toilets were upgraded more recently in 2009. It contains a meeting room, kitchenette, storage and public toilet facilities (male, female and accessible). The toilets are open during daylight hours only. The Visitors Centre has variable opening hours and operated on a voluntary basis by the Ryde Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society (RHHFFPS). They provide visitors to the Reserve with environmental information, site advice and walking maps. Visitor logs are kept, occasional guided walks held, and passive surveillance provided via their onsite presence.

This facility is aging infrastructure and does not currently comply with Council's accessibility requirements. The Masterplan recommends a new accessible path from the internal accessway and accessible toilet upgrade as a high priority. It is also recommended that Council give future consideration to investigate/review the condition and improved functionality of the existing building for greater community environmental education purposes. Consideration to be given to land stability, flooding, climate change impacts and other environmental improvements.

The Visitors Centre/amenities building is a Council asset but is operated exclusively by volunteers by the RHHFFPS, without any formal agreement in place. The Plan of Management recommends a use agreement is developed and formalised.

## ITEM 4 (continued)

### Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre

The establishment of a State School under the *Education and Public Instruction Act 1987* at the Field of Mars Reserve was formalised via government gazette in February 1988.

Since this time, the NSW Department of Education has operated the Field of Mars Environmental Education Centre. They conduct environmental education programs for primary and secondary school groups via bookings. The land parcel that the Education Centre building is located on is owned by the Department of Education and is not under Council's care, control or management. However, their infield teaching/learning and lunch breaks are conducted in areas which are under Council's care, control and management. Council maintains a positive rapport with the Educational Centre staff and works with them to facilitate educational opportunities within the Reserve.

The Education Centre is a Department of Education asset and is operated by paid Department of Education staff, without any formal agreement in place with Council. The Plan of Management recommends that a memorandum of understanding is developed and formalised for their regular use and infield teaching in the Reserve.

### Walking Tracks and Paths

The Field of Mars Reserve has an established network of tracks for walking and bushwalking that are popular with Reserve users. Stage 1 Community Consultation indicated that walking/jogging was the most popular activity in the Reserve (77% of survey respondents).

The Field of Mars Reserve provides important linkages to other local and regional track networks, such as Buffalo Creek (Ryde Park, Burrows Park, Laurel Park to Field of Mars Reserve), Lane Cove National Park (National Park and Wildlife Service), Buffalo Creek Reserve (Hunters Hill Council) and the historic Great North Walk (Sydney to Newcastle).



Image 18: Excerpt from the Stage 1 Community Consultation Report, provided in ATTACHMENT 5.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

The track network consists of the Boardwalk Loop, Doyle Track, Kunzea Track, Sand Track and Warada Track, as shown in the following map.

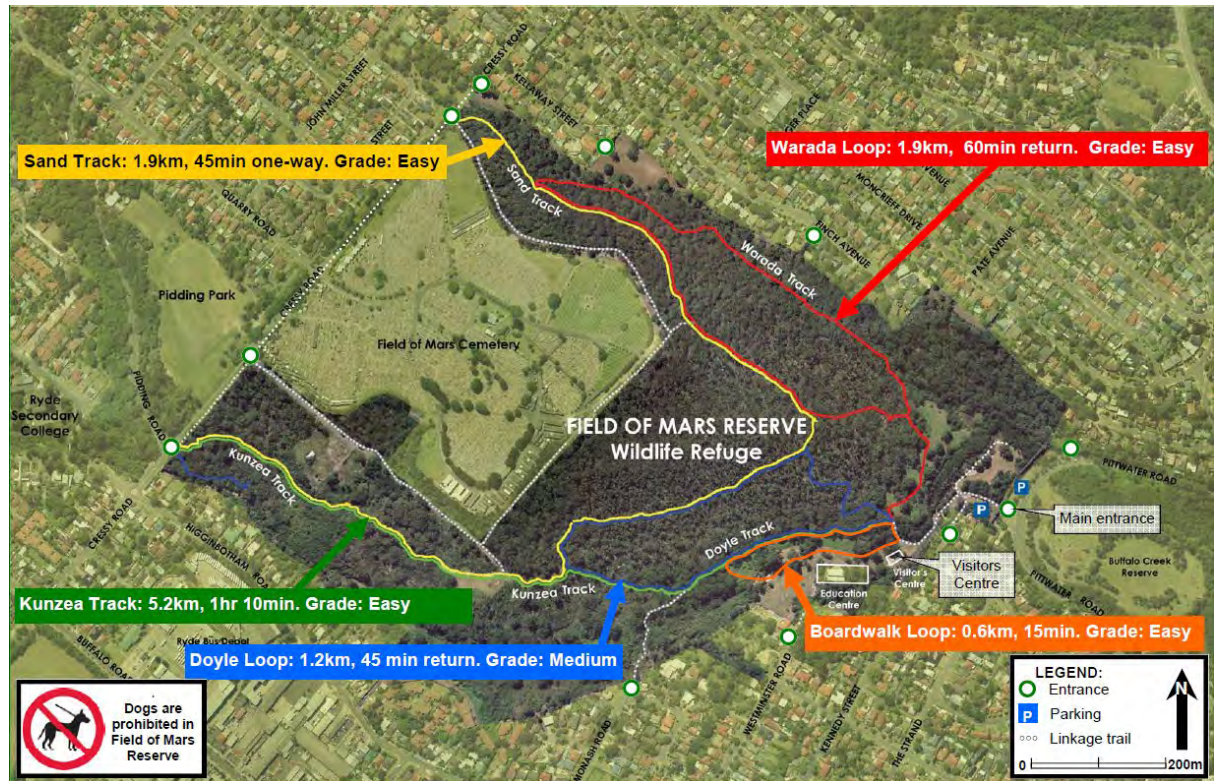


Image 19: Existing walking track network which will be further enhanced by the Masterplan and Plan of Management

Stage 1 Community Consultation indicated that Boardwalk was the most popular track (71% of respondents), with the remaining tracks also receiving a good level of use (54% - 65% of respondents).

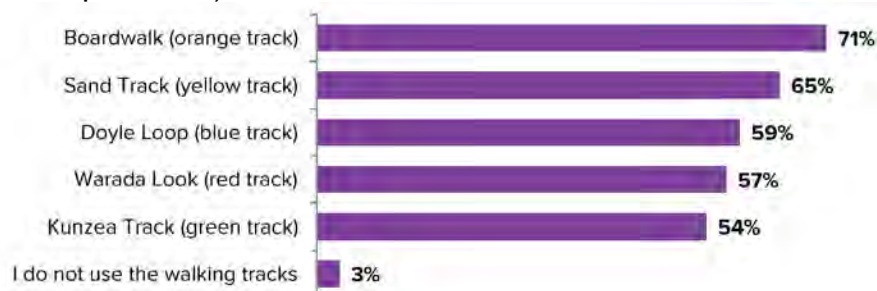


Image 20: Excerpt from the Stage 1 Community Consultation Report, provided in ATTACHMENT 5.

Stage 2 Community Consultation indicated that the community were supportive of the improved walking track network (83% of respondents), new/improved accessible path connections (79% of respondents) and improved signage (93% of respondents) as proposed in the Masterplan. The community believed the improved walking trails were adequately addressed in the draft Plan of Management – Action Lists (82% of respondents).



**ITEM 4 (continued)**

The Masterplan and Plan of Management seeks to establish a consistent walking trail hierarchy across the site to be consistent to the *User Guide to the Australia Walking Track Grading Sydney* and the applicable Australian Standards. A track audit is recommended with track upgrades to be implemented progressively. An accessible path network will be created linking the car park, eastern open space zone, Visitors Centre/amenities building, Education Centre, boardwalk and western open space zone. These track/path improvements will be further complimented by the development of a signage strategy and installation of entry, wayfinding, track head and interpretive signage. The Masterplan also proposes a strengthening of the connectivity to the interconnecting walking routes in the surrounding area.

**Pedestrian, Cycle and Traffic Management Considerations**

The Reserve has 14 pedestrian entry points which link into the walking track network. The main entry (entry 1) is from Pittwater Rd and the remaining entry points (entries 2 – 14) are from local surrounding streets. Stage 1 Community Consultation indicated walking/running was the most popular method of travel to the Reserve (58% of respondents). The Masterplan and Plan of Management recommends access, entry and signage upgrades to all entry points. The arrival experience at the main site entry, site frontage (Pittwater Rd) and internal access way will be improved with place making elements such as definition native plantings and signage.

While cycling is prohibited within the Reserve, cycling as an active transport option to travel to the Reserve is encouraged. The Masterplan recommends secure bicycle parking racks at entry points positioned on/near regional cycling routes.

The Reserve currently has an asphalt car park with 31 spaces + 1 accessible space (entry off Pittwater Rd). Stage 1 Community Consultation indicated car was a common method of travel to the Reserve (42% of respondents). The Masterplan proposes the car park is retained in a similar configuration with some minor updates for accessible parking.

Many of the school groups attending the Education Centre arrive/depart by charter bus (entry off Pittwater Rd). The Masterplan and Plan of Management recommend improvements to the bus drop off/pick up and turning circle. Alternative bus layover area (off-site) in close proximity to the Reserve is to be investigated.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

The main site entry (round-about on Pittwater Rd) is an identified traffic black spot. Community feedback from park users and key stakeholders have cited this traffic intersection and pedestrian crossing point as a safety concern, and to a lesser extent the intersection at Higginbotham Rd and Pidding Rd. Stage 2 Community Consultation indicated a strong level of community support for the pedestrian safety improvements over Pittwater Rd (88% of respondents). The Masterplan and Plan of Management recommend investigations for pedestrian safety improvements and strengthen walking connectivity:-

- Across Pittwater Rd (near entry 1) between Field of Mars Reserve, Buffalo Creek Reserve (Hunters Hill Council) and onwards to the Lane Cove National Park.
- Cressy Rd (near entries 6 and 7) and along Buffalo Creek to Burrows Park and Ryde Park.
- Cressy Rd (near entries 8 and 9).

The internal access way is to become dual use; for service vehicles access and to provide for an accessible connection. The Masterplan and Plan of Management identify vehicle access to internal access way to be restricted to authorised vehicles only (eg. maintenance and emergency purposes). This is a safety and protection measure for pedestrians of all abilities and wildlife protection. Access way gates to be upgraded to key and remote electronic operation recommended for consideration.

**Climate Change and Resilience Considerations**Bushfire Management Considerations

The Field of Mars Reserve is identified as bushfire prone land. The majority of the Reserve is Bushfire Vegetation Category 1, with the remainder of the site being either Bushfire Vegetation Category 2 or within the 100m bushfire prone vegetation buffer. The Education Centre, Visitors Centre/amenities building and picnic area are within the vegetation buffer. The Education Centre is a “special fire protection asset” with a high risk level rating. The Visitors Centre/amenities building is a “special fire protection asset” with a medium risk level rating.

The lands immediately surrounding the Reserve (residential and cemetery) are predominantly within the 100m bushfire prone vegetation buffer, with some smaller areas of Bushfire Vegetation Category 1 and 2. The residential areas to the north and south of the Reserve are “residential assets” with a very high risk level rating. The cemetery is a “cultural asset” with a high risk level rating.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

The Masterplan and Plan of Management has been prepared in accordance with the *Hunters Hill, Lane Cove, Parramatta, Ryde Bush Fire Management Plan 2019 – 2016* (draft 2021 pending RFS endorsement), *Fire Brigades Act 1989*, *Rural Fires Act 1997* and the *NSW Rural Fire Service Standards for Asset Protection Zones*.

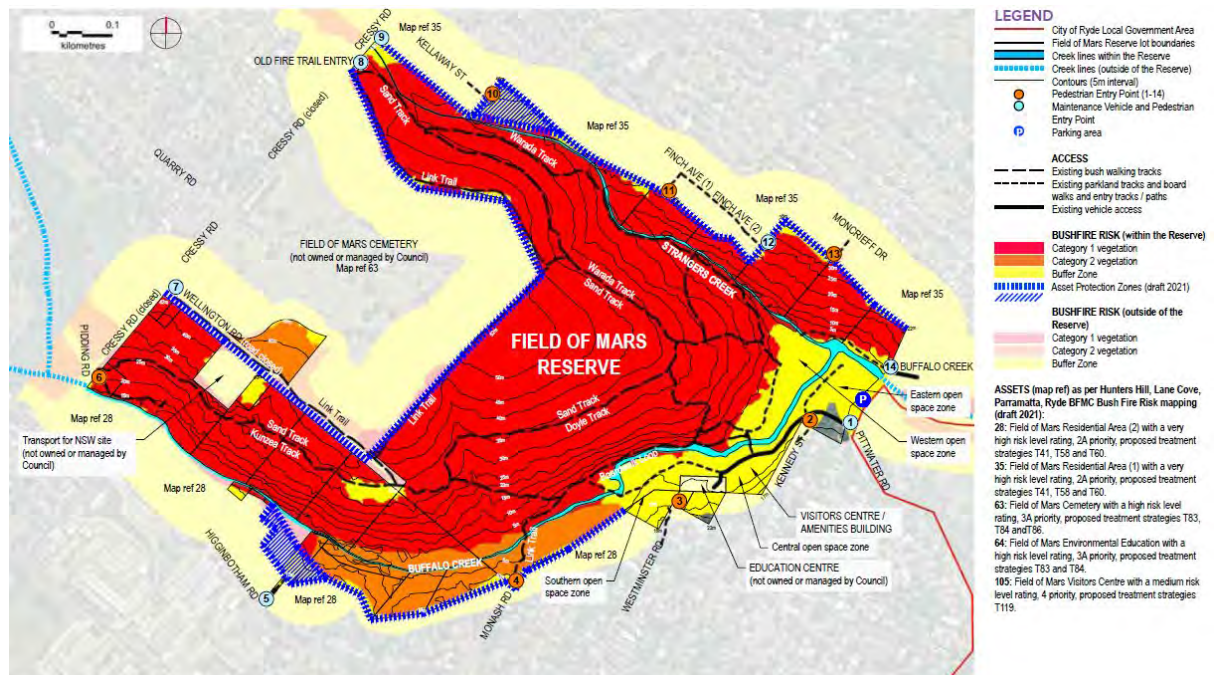


Image 21: Bushfire analysis as per Field of Mars Reserve Masterplan, provided in ATTACHMENT 1.

A range of treatment strategies have been identified for the Reserve, including manage fuel loads, maintenance of asset protection zones (APZs), community education and hazard reduction – mechanical and/or prescribed action. These treatment strategies and actions have been incorporated into the Plan of Management. The Plan of Management includes the provision for approved hazard reduction burns in consultation with relevant agencies, such as NSW Rural Fire Service and Fire and Rescue NSW. The Plan of Management also includes the provision to close the Reserve and cessation of management activities during Total Fire Ban Days.

Stage 1 Community Consultation survey indicated the lack of fire was one of the biggest threats to the Reserve (12% of respondents) and bushfire management was one of the important areas for future management of the Reserve (11% of respondents). A number of open text comments and written submissions raised bushfire management as a concern.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

Stage 2 Community Consultation indicated that the majority of community believed bushfire management was adequately addressed in the Plan of Management – Action Lists (61% of respondents). A number of open text comments, written submissions and drop in session comments raised bushfire management including managed burns.

Flooding, Stormwater, Sea Level and Climate Change Considerations

The Masterplan and Plan of Management supports the intent of the *Biodiversity Plan (2016)* and the *Ryde Resilience Plan 2030 (2020)*. Both documents contain a range of recommendations and actions to management or mitigate the impacts to these factors.

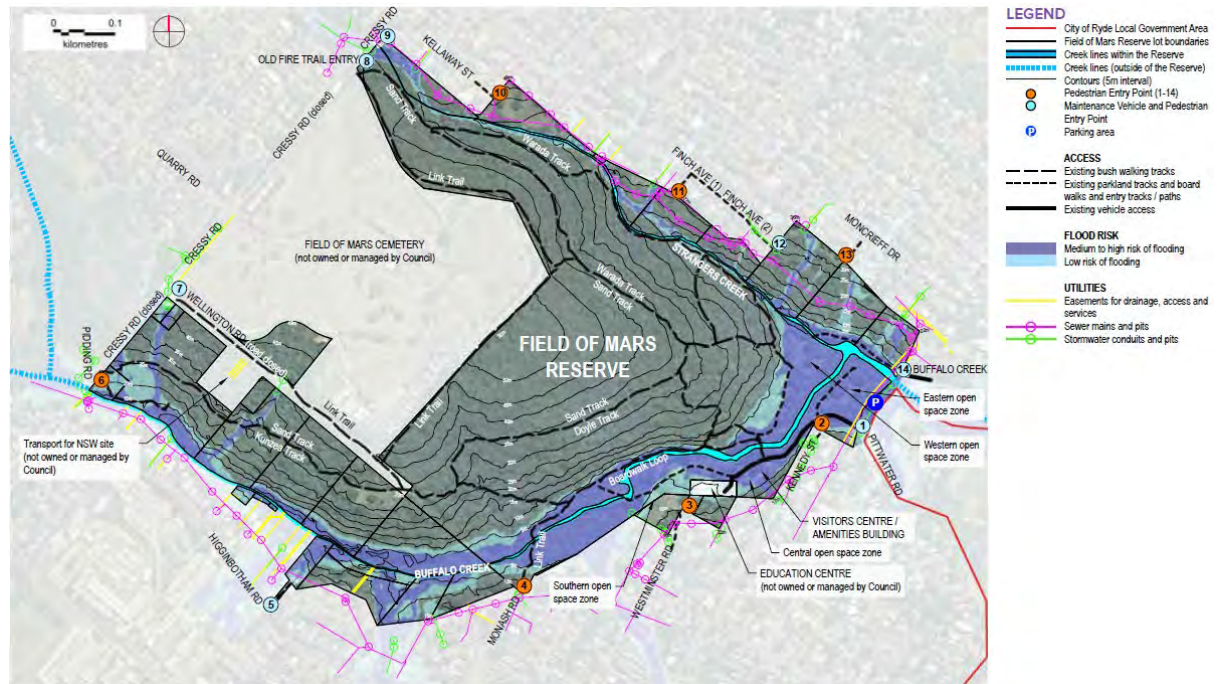


Image 22: Flood and stormwater analysis as per Field of Mars Reserve Masterplan, provided in ATTACHMENT 1.

## ITEM 4 (continued)

### Land Management – Zoning

Within the *Ryde Local Environment Plan (2014)* the Field of Mars Reserve is predominantly zoned as “E2 – Environmental Conservation” with some areas of “RE1 – Public Recreation” as shown in the following map.

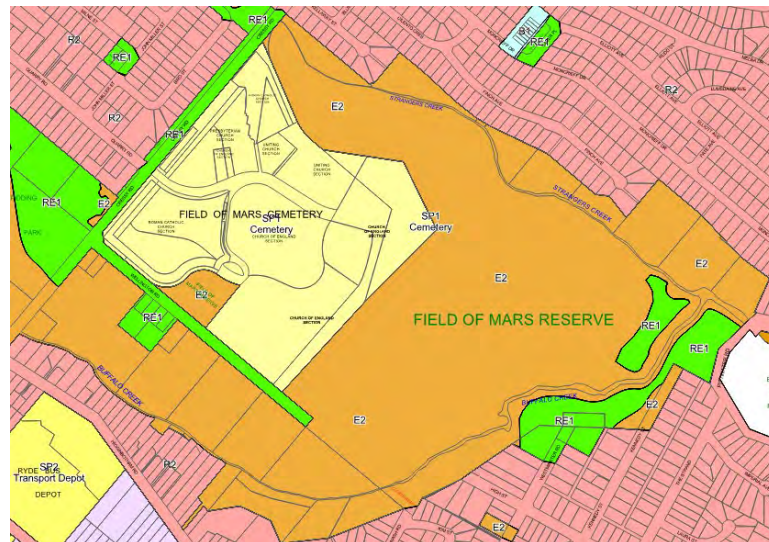


Image 23: Current zoning of the Field of Mars Reserve as per Ryde Local Environmental Plan 2014.

Should the closure of Wellington Rd occur and the transfer of the land parcels adjoining Wellington Rd from Department of Planning, Industry & Environment occur; the current zoning of “RE1 Public Recreation” is not the most appropriate zoning for this future inclusion in the Reserve as “Natural Area - Bushland”. A recommendation of this report is to re-zone the land to “E2 – Environmental Conservation” via a Planning Proposal, to achieve consistency with the use of the Field of Mars Reserve. Refer to the “*Land Management – Closure of Wellington Rd*” and “*Land Management – Future land transfer from NSW Government*” sections in following pages.

### Land Management - Community Land Categorisations

Under the former *Crown Lands Act (1989)* and within the 2009 Plan of Management, the parcels of Crown Land were not required to be assigned land categorisations. However, when the current *Crown Land Management Act 2016* came into effect in 2018, Council as the appointed Crown Land Manager, were required to assign community land categorisations to the parcels of Crown Land in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*.

#### ITEM 4 (continued)

The vast majority of the Reserve is categorised as “Natural Area – Bushland” with smaller areas of “Park”, “Natural Areas – Wetlands” and “Natural Areas – Watercourse” and some minor areas of “General Community Use” and “Natural Areas - Escarpment” as shown in the following map.

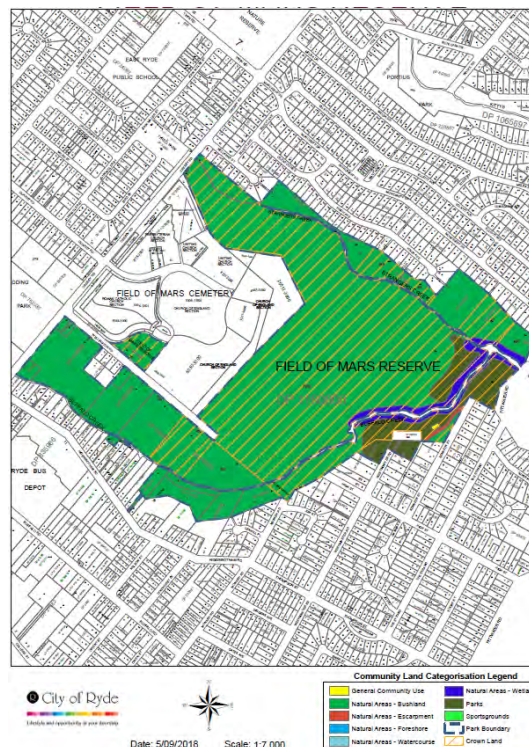


Image 24: Current Community Land Categorisations (2018)

Should Council adopt the Field of Mars Reserve Masterplan, a re-categorisation process will occur during the exhibition of the Plan of Management to align the land categorisations with the Masterplan. A public hearing will be conducted by an independent facilitator in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*. After the public hearing and public exhibition processes have been completed, the recommended land re-categorisations and Plan of Management will be reported to Council for adoption.

#### Land Management – Land adjoining Field of Mars Cemetery

The Field of Mars Cemetery (not owned or managed by Council) is located to the west of the Reserve. The cemetery is bound on three sides by the Reserve.

The Masterplan recommends a bioswale is constructed in the Reserve surrounding the cemetery boundary. This measure aims to detain the nutrient runoff from the cemetery, which due to the topography, flows into the Field of Mars Reserve. This will produce improved environmental outcomes and strengthen the biodiversity value of the adjoining Natural Area.

#### ITEM 4 (continued)

Within the Plan of Management, a framework for regular and ongoing consultation and communication with the Field of Mars Cemetery, as a major adjoining land manager, has been identified. This aims to address and manage any environmental or boundary management matters between the cemetery and the Reserve.

A recommendation of this report is that Council retains Lot 7011 DP 1069836 as “Natural Area – Bushland” within the Field of Mars Reserve and under Council’s care, control and management. The Masterplan identifies this area as an important bush regeneration/rehabilitation zone. The Northern Metropolitan Cemeteries Crown Land Manager, who were responsible for the Field of Mars Cemetery prior to their amalgamation into One Crown, have expressed an interest in integrating this parcel of land into the Cemetery for burial purposes. This would result in a net loss of bushland/natural area and contravene Council’s resolution from 11 November 2020 which stipulated there will be no loss of bushland or natural area in the implementation of the City of Ryde’s *Open Space Future Provision Strategy (2020)*.

A recommendation of this report is to clarify Council’s position on the matter and to continue to further the Reserve’s purpose within the lot.



Image 25: Lot 7011 DP 1069836 to be retained as “Natural Area – Bushland” within the Field of Mars Reserve and under Council’s care, control and management. Identified in Masterplan as bush regeneration/rehabilitation zone.

## ITEM 4 (continued)

### Land Management – Closure of Wellington Road

In 1974 some planning processes were undertaken with the view of closing Wellington Road. This section of road reserve travels between the Field of Mars Reserve and the Field of Mars Cemetery. It is located on the south-western area of the Reserve.

A recommendation of this report is to close the unformed Wellington Rd road reserve, as shown in **ATTACHMENT 7 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, and formally integrate this section of land into the Field of Mars Reserve. It is recommended this land be classified as “Community Land” and categorised as “Natural Area – Bushland” in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*; and rezoned to “E2 Environmental Conservation” within the *Ryde Local Environment Plan*. The Plan of Management to be updated as appropriate to ensure this land is managed appropriately. This will contribute to increasing Council’s open space provision, the amount of Natural Areas and the total size of the Reserve.

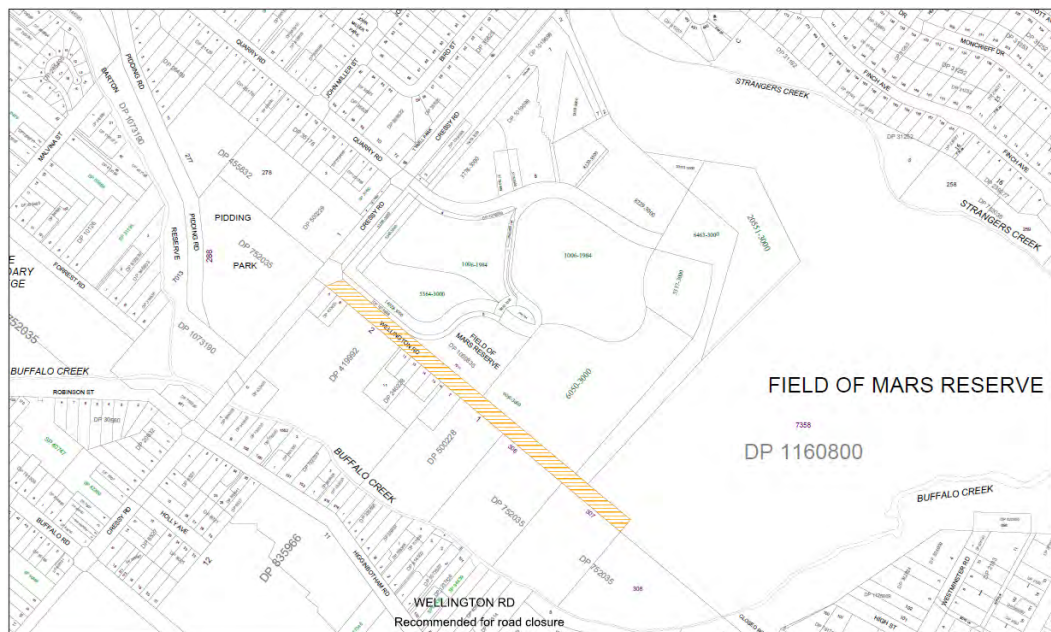


Image 26: Wellington Rd road reserve recommended for closure and integration into the Field of Mars Reserve, provided in **ATTACHMENT 7**.



**ITEM 4 (continued)**

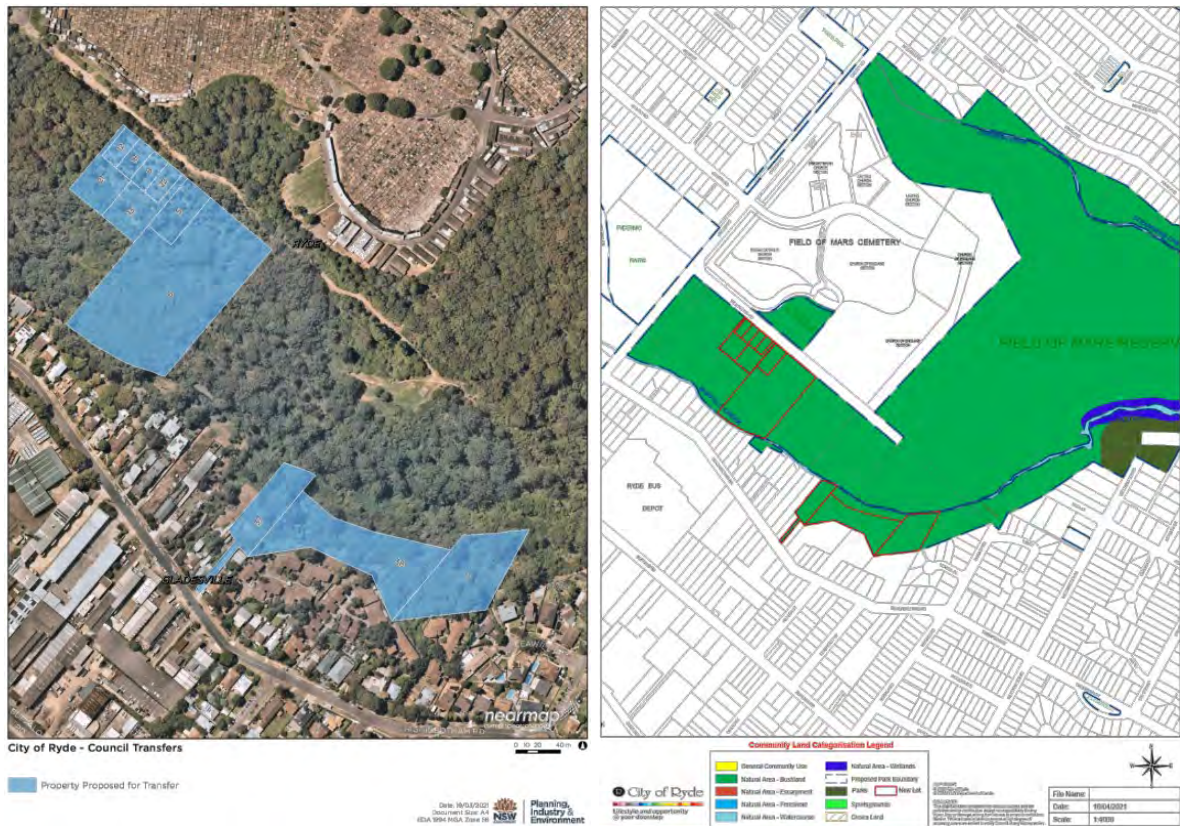


*Image 27: View to the south-east of the Wellington Rd road reserve recommended for closure and integration into the Field of Mars Reserve.*

**Land Management – Future land transfer from NSW Government**

In May 2021 Council resolved to undertake the necessary processes to negotiate land transfer of land parcels from NSW Department of Planning, Industry & Environment to City of Ryde, primarily for Open Space and Environmental Conservation purposes. This transfer is set to comprise of 51 parcels of land across the Ryde LGA, of which there are a number of parcels off Wellington Rd and off Higginbotham Rd, as shown in the maps below. These negotiations are yet to be finalised, but it is anticipated these lots will be formally integrated into the Field of Mars Reserve and incorporated into the Plan of Management following transfer.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**



Images 28 and 29: Land parcels off Wellington Rd and Higginbotham Rd Identified for transfer to City of Ryde for integration into the Field of Mars Reserve.

**Masterplan - Project Implementation**

An Implementation Plan has been prepared for the Masterplan and contained within the final Masterplan Report. This Masterplan will be progressively implemented over a number of years. All required planning approvals and statement of environmental effects (where required) will be completed prior to construction of the various Masterplan elements. Construction will be in accordance with relevant Australian Standards. The implementation of these stages will be considered during the business planning cycle. Implementation of the Masterplan is subject to Council’s adoption of the Masterplan, community land categorisation/re-categorisation process to align with the adopted Masterplan and the availability of funds.

**Masterplan - Financial Considerations**

A Cost Estimate has been prepared by the consultant, who are natural area subject matter experts, giving consideration to the progressive and prioritised implementation of the Masterplan. The total costs for capital improvements identified in the Masterplan over a 20-year period is estimated at \$5.23M (exc. GST) inclusive of contingencies, preliminaries and professional fees.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

Some funding for Masterplan implementation priorities will be sourced from grant funding opportunities, considered during Council's business planning cycle and adjustments will be made as appropriate through Council's annual business planning cycle.

Future external grant funding opportunities will be investigated and may include NSW Government Community Building Partnership program, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, Australian Government Stronger Community grants, environment/water/waste grants and potential grants/contributions from community groups.

**Plan of Management**

The current Field of Mars Reserve Plan of Management was adopted in 2009. Plans of Management are generally updated approximately every 10 years. A Plan of Management guides the management of particular categories or specific areas of community land that are within the direct ownership of Council, or in the control and management of Council. The *Crown Land Management Act 2016* commenced in 2018 and required Crown Land Managers (ie. Council) to create new Plans for parks/reserves that contained Crown Land.

The Field of Mars Reserve Plan of Management (FoMRPoM), provided in **ATTACHMENT 2 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, has been prepared to guide the ongoing and future management of the park in response to the needs and values of the City of Ryde community and the park users. Due to the specific nature and significance of the Field of Mars Reserve, Council has developed a specific Plan of Management for this Reserve.

The Field of Mars Reserve consists of a combination of Community Land and Crown Land and must therefore be managed in accordance with *Local Government Act 1993* and *Crown Lands Management Act 2016*.

The *Local Government Act 1993* states that all community lands are required to be covered by a Plan of Management and must identify:

- the category of the land
- objectives and outcomes for the land
- the means by which Council proposes to achieve objectives and outcomes
- the way by which Council proposes to assess its performance and
- expressly authorises any leases, licences or other estates.

The land categorisations of the Field of Mars Reserve is detailed in the section above. The FoMRPoM has been prepared based on the Core Objectives for these categorisations as specified in the *Local Government Act 1993*.

**ITEM 4 (continued)****Plan of Management – Native Title Advice**

As per the *Crown Land Management Act 2016*, Council is required to engage a qualified 'Native Title Manager' to oversee and approve dealings and actions that may affect native title. Native Title Managers must have training or qualifications that have been approved by the Minister. Council, as Crown Land Managers, must obtain the written advice of at least one Native Title Manager where it grants certain interests in the land, including leases, licences, easements, mortgages, covenants and other restrictions on use. Council engaged *Lands Advisory Services Pty Ltd*, to provide Native Title advice for the draft FoMRPoM.

**Plan of Management - Public Exhibition**

The *Crown Land Management Act 2016* requires Plans of Management involving Crown Land to be referred to the NSW Department of Industry to seek Ministerial approval for public exhibition. The recommendations contained in this report seek a Council resolution to make this referral to the Minister.

Following the receipt of Ministerial approval, and under the requirements of the abovementioned legislation, the period for the public exhibition of the draft FoMRPoM is 28 days with a further 14 days allowed for comments to be received. During this period, a re-categorisation public hearing will also be held. At the end of this period, the submissions will be reviewed.

The community will be notified of this public exhibition via Council's website, Libraries, Customer Service areas, stakeholder emails, advertisements, Council eNewsletter and park signage. During the exhibition period, a copy of the draft FoMRPoM will also be provided to the convenors of relevant advisory committees for their review and input.

If the submissions are of a minor nature, then changes will be made and the Plan will then be returned to Council for adoption. If there are major issues identified through the community consultation, then officers will determine how to appropriately manage these prior to reporting to Council for final adoption.

**Financial Implications**

Adoption of this report has no financial implications for Council. All actions required to recategorise the land is allowed for in Council's existing allocated budget.

Once the Plan of Management has been approved and adopted, any identified priorities and recommendations with financial impacts will be incorporated into operational costs, Masterplan implementation and/or subject to Council's future budget planning processes.

**ITEM 4 (continued)****Conclusion**

For the reasons outlined in this report, it is recommended to Council to adopt the Field of Mars Reserve Masterplan, prepared by City of Ryde and Gondwana Consulting, dated July 2021 provided in **ATTACHMENT 1 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**.

The Masterplan includes a number of protection measures and a range of enhancements to improve biodiversity, accessibility and environmental education opportunities. It recommends improvements to the track network, accessible pathways, accessible toilet, accessible picnic shelters, delineation of open space zones to encourage social/recreation activities outside of natural areas, signage, entry and arrival experience. The Masterplan also includes environmental improvements including increased tree canopy cover, re-generation of degraded vegetation, re-vegetation areas and bio-buffer to capture nutrient run off between the cemetery and the Reserve. The Masterplan also seeks to strengthen the connection with the surrounding walking track network and encourages water quality improvements in the surrounding catchment areas.

The Masterplan and the recommended closure of the Wellington Road road reserve, as shown in **ATTACHMENT 7 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, retention of Lot 7011 DP1069836 and the future land transfers from NSW Government will realise a positive increase in the City of Ryde's open space provision and the amount of the Natural Area in the LGA.

Pending Council's resolution of the recommendations within this report, the necessary legislative planning processes will be undertaken.

Funding to implement the full Masterplan over its 20-year life will be sought through applications for grant funding opportunities and through Council's annual business planning cycle.

For the reasons outlined in this report, it is recommended to Council to refer the Field of Mars Reserve Plan of Management, provided in **ATTACHMENT 2 – CIRCULATED UNDER SEPARATE COVER**, to the Minister for Lands and Forestry for approval to place on public exhibition.

A subsequent report will be brought back to Council after the public exhibition of the Plan of Management and the public hearing for any proposed land categorisation/re-categorisation of any new land parcels to be added to the Reserve and/or parts of the existing Reserve.

**ITEM 4 (continued)**

Council is committed to protecting the biodiversity and recreation values of the Reserve, providing environmental education opportunities and ensuring sustainable and environmental management of the Reserve into the future.

The Masterplan and the Plan of Management for the Field of Mars Reserve seek to retain the character of the Reserve and provide improvements for public and environmental benefit. These documents will enable the necessary management practices to ensure the Reserve is protected and managed appropriately for current and future generations of City of Ryde residents. It will further re-affirm the status of the Field of Mars Reserve as the largest and most significant remnant bushland reserve under the care, control and management of the City of Ryde.