



MASTER PLAN

for

St James Park, Warrnambool



December 2010



Exotic vegetation in St James Park

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INTRODUCTION

Situated on the banks of the Merri River and one of the most recognised suspension bridges in South West Victoria, the Wollaston Bridge, St James Park is recognised as one of Warrnambool's iconic open space areas.

St James Park is 49000m² or 4.9ha of public space owned and managed by Warrnambool City Council (WCC). Parks of similar size include Albert Park and Brierly Park, both of which are approximately 1800m distance from St James Park. Its size, openness and locality near a river and established housing, means St James Park currently provides a variety of uses for the community and the environment.

The park is recognised as an informal park, with passive recreation serving as the community's highest use for the site. Upon site inspection it is quite clear St James Park is currently not meeting its full potential.

This Master Plan has been developed using findings from a community engagement process, advice from stakeholders and experts in their field, and guidance from Council staff and Councillors. The Plan identifies a 10 year vision fit to see St James Park reach its full potential as possibly a regional tourist attractor, meeting place for all members of the community and an environment asset which sets the standard for future open space developments.

PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THIS PLAN

The development of the Master Plan for St James included a number of methods of engagement with the community, WCC's Advisory Committees, Council staff and Councillors in the decision making process.

WCC conducted the first stage of community consultation in October 2009. The community responded well to the invitation to provide input on the vision for St James Park, with many formal submissions and over 100 people attending a "Listening Post" session on site at St James Park. The Listening Post provided people with the opportunity to talk to Councillors and Council staff on site about the issues and opportunities for the area. Further public submissions were invited by targeting nearby residents through letters in the post, advertisements in the Warrnambool Standard and the Warrnambool City Council website.

WCC engaged Andrew George Landscape Architect to develop a landscape master plan for St James Park. The landscape plan included in the draft St James Park Master Plan was developed and released for community comment in August 2010.

Using feedback provided through community consultation, the City Landscape and Advisory Committee and Councillors, a series of short term, medium term and long term action were developed.

HISTORY OF ST JAMES PARK

The same attributes that made the area surrounding St James Park favourable for Europeans to settle, would have no doubt been favoured by the people of the Gundidj Mara. While no known aboriginal artefacts have been uncovered in the St James Park area, it is assumed people of Gundidj Mara would have used the river and its surrounds.

Post European history is much more identifiable through the picturesque Wollaston Bridge, which has historical and social importance through its ties with Sir Walter Manifold and even the exotic vegetation which was obviously been inspired by the iconic bridge.

Wollaston Bridge is listed on the Victorian Heritage Register and the National Trust. It is arguably the best example of a cable suspension bridge to have been constructed in Victorian during the 19th century. "The Wollaston Bridge is a thirty metre long suspension bridge with a timber deck and superstructure suspended from steel cables anchored across four square tapered stone pillars to approach abutments. The pillars are constructed of stone and have cast iron caps with the steel cables passing over cast iron saddles within the pillars. The cables used in the suspension mechanism came from old Melbourne tram routes. The bridge has a timber balustrade independent of the structure." (Victorian Heritage Register)



Wollaston Bridge on the Merri River. Date of creation: Aug. 31, 1966. Reproduction rights owned by the State Library of Victoria

While the bridge is a regional attractor and well recognised for its heritage values with its picture appearing in many of Warrnambool's tourism promotional material, not much is publicly known about the history of St James Park. It is important to have a good understanding of the Park's history to enable an appropriate vision and plan to be developed which is fitting to its past and current uses. Below is a timeline of some events of the area.

- 1880 Sir Walter Manifold operates a punt across the Merri River.
- 1884 Sir Walter Manifold purchases the Wollaston Property.
- August 14th 1890 Wollaston Bridge was first opened. Constructed by Arthur Dudley Dobson, who also constructed the breakwater, the bridge replaced an earlier wooden bridge which had been reportedly washed away in a heavy flood. The bridge was privately funded by Manifold for a cost of 5,000 pounds.
- 1908 Sir Walter Manifold was elected to the Legislative Council for Western Province.
- After World War One the Wollaston Estate was divided up for soldier settlements, which later proved to be too small for farming.
- 1919 Sir Walter Manifold was elected president of the Council.
- 1920 Sir Walter Manifold knighted.
- 1927 Jackmans moved into the area using the area from Donovans Road to St James Park for a dairy farm.
- 1946 flood inundated flood plains of the Merri including the current site of St James Park.
- 1966 The Wollaston bridge was declared unsafe.
- 1967 a concrete bridge was built alongside the suspension bridge.
- 1967 Wollaston Bridge was re-decked and classified by the National Trust.
- 1967 Subdivision
- \$50,000 raised to refurbish the bridge in 1990.
- 2001 St James Park Flooded.
- 2010 St James Park Flooded.

While many people have played a major part in the history of St James Park, recent history has seen both Clive Bell and the late Alan Lane play a pivotal role in the planting of trees. Clive Bell still plays a vital role in the maintenance of such trees and should be commended.



Wollaston Bridge and party. Date of creation: Mar. 8, 1969. Reproduction rights owned by the State Library of Victoria

POLICY BACKGROUND

There is much policy support highlighting the community and environmental values of public open space on waterways like St James Park.

Council Policy

Community consultation conducted throughout the development of the Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2008-2013 (ESS) highlighted the importance of waterways to the public. As a result the ESS states as a key action and initiative to “Develop a series of management plans and master plans for all coastal wetland and river environments.

Other policies such as the Warrnambool Recreation Plan 2007-2017 states “Access to rivers is highly valued by the community” and to include “developing new or improving existing public open space.”

The Merri River Restoration Strategy details various sites along the River in the Warrnambool municipality in need of enhancement to improve environmental values. Key actions identified for St James Park include:

- “Car parking area should be delineated to reduce spreading erosion caused by vehicles.
- Large willows/poplars should be removed from riverbank downstream of bridge.
- Weeds need to be cleared from the riverbank.
- Investigate the placement of native wood snags into the river at its bend far away from the bridge. Platypuses have been recorded within this reach of the river.
- Wide bank area between the waterline and footway should be revegetated as per plan for corresponding riverbank zone in Stadium Block, varying vegetation to reconcile views of the river with taller riparian vegetation.
- The drain running across the park to be planted to encourage amphibious wetland fauna in the wetter months and filter stormwater prior to entering the river.
- Plant around bridge to reduce erosion & withstand heavy traffic. A narrow path could be left between plantings to minimize harm to vegetation while they are establishing.”

The Council Plan 2009-2013 again reaffirms Council’s position that waterways and areas of public open space adjoining them are of high importance. Stated in section 2.04 is the need to “Protect, enhance and improve access to our coastal reserves and waterways,” with relevant Strategic Indicators including to “Actively pursue improvement to the health of our river and wetlands systems.” Section 2.06 of the Plan further states to “Create natural and open space environments in Warrnambool,” with relevant strategic indicators to:

- “Prepare master plans for residential growth areas that focus on quality open space for residents.
- Develop government, corporate and philanthropic partnerships to enhance the environment and public open space.”

Council's Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) further highlight's the Merri River's importance to the City stating it ".....provides aesthetic value to parts of Warrnambool and is linked to a number of wetlands that have high environmental values....."

The issues of flooding are further explained in the MSS and relate to St James Park "The flood plains of the inland waterways affect large areas of land throughout the city and surrounding rural areas. Flood plains provide temporary flood storages as well as acting as nutrient sinks. Flood plains progressively fill and empty as the flood peak travels downstream. The proper management of flood plains protects the natural environment and properties located in areas subject to inundation."

The MSS states as environmental objectives:

- "To maintain and enhance the ecological health of the region's water resources and waterways.
- To reduce sediment and nutrients entering waterways.
- To improve stormwater quality.
- To minimise stormwater run-off in urban and rural areas.
- To ensure that waste disposal systems for residential, industrial and commercial purposes are not detrimental to the environment.
- To encourage the restoration of degraded land, particularly stream frontages, floodplains and riparian areas.
- To ensure adequate buffers are provided between waterways and new development.
- To improve public access to rivers.
- To preserve, protect and rehabilitate riverine, wetland and floodplain riparian and instream native vegetation.

The MSS states as an environmental strategies to:

- Require revegetation along river frontages and floodplains using original Ecological Vegetation Classes (EVC) species, with the inclusion of understorey species.
- Control urban run-off to protect and enhance waterways.
- Exclude inappropriate development from degraded river banks and adjacent land areas.
- Discourage ribbon development along waterways.
- Minimise native vegetation removal along waterways.
- Ensure a net gain of native vegetation along waterways.
- Establish a substantial public reserve on either side of the Hopkins and Merri Rivers, Russells Creek and the South Warrnambool Wetlands
- Utilise open spaces to act as floodways."

Other Policy

Some relevant policies from other agencies include the GHCMA Regional Catchment Strategy 2003-2007 and the Draft Wester Region Sustainable Water Strategy 2010 recognise the degraded state of the Merri River and with recommended actions relating to improved environmental flows and reduction of nutrient enrichment caused by farming practices and urban stormwater.

COMMUNITY VALUES

Throughout the development of this Plan it became quite clear the community values of St James Park were quite broad and sometimes different. This is not unexpected as the site is a unique area of public space considering the historical Wollaston Bridge, the natural assets of the Merri River and the aesthetic appeal of this large area of space. These assets obviously influence the values which the community perceive as being most important.

To generalise community feedback provided, the Park is valued for the informal uses it allows, with the cultural ties of the Wollaston Bridge rating very high on the list. The community have shown in the past, through the raising of \$50,000 to refurbish the bridge in 1990, and successfully applying to have the Bridge listed on the National Trust, that the Bridge is highly significant.

The exotic vegetation planted in the Park has thematic ties to the bridge and European settlement and was again highlighted by the community as an attribute of the area. Other public spaces around Warrnambool, with the exception of the Botanical Gardens, lack this exotic plant diversity.

The community values the natural environmental assets of the area also, with many comments about birdlife and the platypus that inhabit the river.

Youth facilities were also highly valued, with the BMX track located nearby, path network and the river providing sites of importance for recreational activities.

As previously mentioned, the nearest parks of similar size are Albert Park and Brierly Park, which are approximately 1800m distance. The community value the large size of the Park and the role it plays in providing people with the opportunity to experience connectivity with nature, a place for informal recreational activities and feel a sense of exclusion from suburbia. It is fair to assume St James Park would be performing a more valuable role to the community of North Warrnambool, with the Park within 400m of the Turner Estate, Donavans Road, St James Crescent and Dooley St.

To summarise the above, the 3 main community values for the St James Park are:

- Cultural values of Wollaston Bridge and exotic vegetation and ties with Sir Walter Manifold.
- Natural assets of the Merri River.
- Size of the Park and the informal activities it encourages.

Please see Appendix 1 – Community Engagement Report, which details community feedback.

ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

The location of St James Park on the Merri River presents many environmental values. The area is well known for its birdlife, fish and even platypus which inhabit the area. The Merri River is relatively short river, approximately 50km in length. Much of the Merri River has been cleared of native riparian vegetation, protection and enhancement of native vegetation was seen as a priority by many of the community. There is a small successful native revegetation area on the river bank in the west of the Park. *Azolla filiculoides*, commonly referred to as Azolla is one of many aquatic native plants which perform a valuable environmental role in the Merri River.

CURRENT USES OF THE PARK

St James Park is best described as an informal park. Informal parks are spaces which have been developed to provide opportunities for passive recreation. Generally informal parks make a significant contribution to the environmental values and amenity of an area (CGC 2001).

The predominant uses of the Park identified through community consultation include:

- Recreational walking and riding of bicycles.
- Walking the dog as the area is a designated off lead area.
- Fishing.
- Informal recreational activities such as swimming, kicking a football, cricket, kite flying etc.
- Taking in the scenery of Wollaston Bridge, river and exotic vegetation.

Open space areas such as parks are often classed into hierarchies. These generally include:

- Local Parks – which are generally small and cater primarily for residents to an immediate area.
- Neighbourhood Parks – which are relatively small but larger than Local Parks, offer limited recreational opportunities to the community of an area.
- Municipal Parks – which are medium to large in size, providing recreational and leisure opportunities to residents primarily from within the municipality.
- Regional Parks – high profile parks that attract users from within and beyond the municipality which cater for a broad cross-section of ages by offering a large range of recreational opportunities or specialised facilities.

Using these classifications and recognising the size, informal uses and environmental values, St James Park may be classed as a Municipal Park.

CURRENT ISSUES OF THE PARK

St James Park is boarded by private properties to the south and the east, Wollaston Road to the north and the Merri River to the west. Having private properties adjoin public open space is not an ideal situation in modern day planning. It creates issues of the public feeling reluctant to use areas bordering private properties as they are unsure of where private land finishes and public land starts. People often feel unsafe walking in these areas with less active eyes providing surveillance through the lack of passing pedestrian and motorised traffic.

Members of the public expressed concerns about access issues on the eastern and southern boundaries, with a lack of directional information and infrastructure to encourage access and use of the whole park.

The open drain which services stormwater from Mortlake Road and Dooley Street was raised as an issue for limiting the use, as it clearly dissects the Park. The state of the drain was also raised as unsightly and in need of improvement for not only aesthetically reasons but to also improve stormwater quality.

The Glenelg Hopkins Regional Catchment Strategy River Health Strategy 2003-2007 highlights willows and nutrient enrichment from superphosphate and urban stormwater runoff impact heavily on the health of the river.

There are current issues of colonisation of the park, where adjoining residents have stacked wood, parked trailers and regularly accessed back yards via the Park. This creates safety issues with vehicles driving on the Park, which is illegal under the Road Management Act. The colonisation issues add to the confusion of where public and private land starts.

There are many environmental weeds present on the banks of the Merri River, with Arum Lily *Zantedeschia aethiopica*, Blue Periwinkle *Vinca major* and Willow *Salix species* just some of the weed species which threaten native vegetation along the bank of the Merri. Willows do impact on river areas by dominating river bank areas and excluding native species. The impact of willows on the Merri conflicts somewhat with comments from the community about the importance of the exotic vegetation on the south side of the Park its ties to the Wollaston Bridge and European influence on the area. Figure 1 shows some of the environmental weed species present at St James Park.

Figure 1: Common Environmental Weed Species at St James Park

Common Name	Botanical Name
Mirror Bush	<i>Coprosma repens</i>
Stinging nettle	<i>Urtica urens</i>
Hemlock	<i>Conium maculatum</i>
Cape Ivy	<i>Delairea odorata</i>
Willow	<i>Salix species</i>
Blue Perri Winkle	<i>Vinca major</i>
Agapanthus	<i>Agapanthus praecox</i>
Italian buckthorn	<i>Rhamnus alaternus</i>
Boxthorn	<i>Lycium ferocissimum</i>
Sand rocket	<i>Diplotaxis tenuifolia</i>
Fennel	<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i>
Arum Lily	<i>Zantedeschia aethiopica</i>

Community expressed concerns about the risks of weeds spreading and general lack of maintenance of the Park. The issue of Algae, particularly Azolla which blankets the river, was raised as an issue.



Azolla on the Merri River

St James Park is in a flood zone, which means the area is subject to a 1 in 100 year flood event. A flood event, which may be considered a 1 in 20 year flood event, occurred during the consultation process in August 2010 and again reaffirmed the flood issues and importance of the Park to provide environmental services in times of flood.

Like many of the City's open space areas illegal rubbish dumping is an issue. Even on the day when the Listening Post was conducted, approximately 3m of rubbish was dumped at the Park. Rubbish dumping across the City comes at a significant cost to Council.

Lack of lighting and general sentiment of feeling unsafe was highlighted as significant issues. This is perhaps compounded again by the issues of private properties adjoining the Park and the lack of passing motor and pedestrian surveillance that goes with it.

The community raised issues relating to the Wollaston Bridge, feeling that the bridge has lacked the attention and funding deserving of National Trust listed asset. Summary of issues include:

- St James Park is in a Flood Zone and subject to 1 in 100 and 1 in 20 year flood events.
- Weeds on the river bank and general lack of maintenance of the river bank.
- Illegal car use on the Park.
- Lack of lighting on the path network.
- An open stormwater drain dissects the Park.
- Current condition of the Bridge.

Flood event in St James Park in August 2010.



VISION FOR ST JAMES PARK

A vision has been developed drawing from relevant policies and consultation. It is hoped the vision and subsequent actions will guide the Park's rejuvenation to reach its full potential.

St James Park is an iconic public space which showcases the areas historical values, enhances the natural environment and builds on community spirit for Warrnambool.

PRINCIPLES

The following principles have been used to underpin the development of the Master Plan and its actions. The principles were developed based on open space planning principles and the feedback provided in the community forums.

- The historical values of the Wollaston Bridge are to be maintained and enhanced and are to influence future landscape treatments.
- Conserve, protect and enhance the environmental values.
- Build on the strong community ownership of the Park.
- Provide safety and accessibility for all to optimise full use.
- The Park is flood prone, and alterations to the Park should take this into consideration.
- Partnerships with other organisations and community are strengthened to deliver the Parks potential.
- The Park will build on and retain informal uses.

FUTURE USES

While having private properties adjoining the park brings certain issues, in this case it has resulted in a strong community ownership of the Park. This community ownership is shown by the adjoining residents taking it upon themselves to maintain certain areas of the Park, this is something park managers strive to achieve around the globe. Any future development of the Park must retain and build on the strong community ownership which exists.

Colonisation and vehicles driving on the Park are confronting issues which affect how other members of the public utilise the park. It creates a certain sense of exclusion whereby people are unsure what is private space and what public space. This often results in large areas of the Park not being utilised by the public. This can be overcome by using a combination of education and infrastructure to inform adjoining property owners of illegal activities such as driving on public open space and encouraging use of all of the park through treatments such as networking pathways to promote access to areas to clearly disseminate to the public these are areas are public space and to be used. Meeting a balance of retaining community ownership and including informal users of the Park to achieve a common vision is a major objective of this master plan.

Any future uses suggested for St James Park is limited by the fact the Park is in a flood zone and subject to 1 in 100 year and 1 in 20 year flood events. This is partly the reason why the Park should remain for the purpose of informal uses. The open drain which currently dissects the Park, is an ideal

site to show case water sensitive urban design to improve stormwater water quality before it drains into the Merri River. This may include the creation of a wetland and meandering and revegetation of the open with indigenous plants to improve aesthetics and stormwater quality.

WCC also wishes to involve local community members, schools, businesses and philanthropics in the ongoing development and maintenance of the Park as much as possible. This may be achieved through the development of a Friends group to not only formalise current tasks undertaken by surrounding residents but to involve the broader community in rehabilitation of the Park, particularly areas of the river bank, which is quite achievable. Building on other environmental initiatives conducted by the Warrnambool Coastcare and Landcare Group and Making A Difference for the Merri in the City. The Friends group may wish assist in the revegetation of the river bank with indigenous species.

The Wollaston Bridge is a key feature of the Park. Should a Friends group be established, this group may help gain funding for future maintenance and enhancement, with advice from Heritage Victoria, the National Trust and WCC.

Infrastructure improvements suggested include improved connection to the path network, up-lighting at the bridge, facilities to utilise the river such as a floating jetty, seating and creation of areas for passive recreation. The Park is well used by dog walkers as an off leash area, people have expressed they would like to keep the area as an off leash area. The closest accessible playgrounds at Pointing Drive and Iona Avenue are approximately 800m in radius from St James Park, there is strong justification to provide a playground in the park.

Future developments should encourage new informal uses and new forms of passive recreation in usable areas. Comments were provided on the need to include activities for youth throughout the consultation, with opportunities to meet the needs from this demographic considering the removal of the YMCA in the past and the proposed future removal of the BMX track. Opportunities exist to incorporate activities for youth in the playground area, street furniture and a proposed jetty.

There was much support for improving native vegetation on the river bank with mixed responses of the exotic vegetation in the Park. In accordance with relevant legislation Council will remove and control weeds on the river bank, this includes Willows. Exotic vegetation will remain in the other sections of the Park as it has common themes with the historical values. Indigenous vegetation will be replanted along the river bank as a long term approach to improve the health of the Merri River.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following implementation plan provides an overview of actions and projects to be implemented in the Park over the coming ten years. Actions are proposed to be implemented in the short term (1-3 years), medium term (4-6 years) and long term (7-10).

Each action/project has been assigned to a category of either “management”, “maintenance”, “safety”, “access” or “enhancement”. The categories summarise the type of action that is proposed. The priorities identify the timeline for proposed implementation.

ACTION/PROJECT	CATEGORY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
COMMUNITY			
Establish a Friends group to work in partnership with Council and to oversee the implementation of this Master Plan.	Management	High	Short term
Work with Making A Difference for the Merri Group, other community groups, schools and businesses to invoke community spirit and join actions on rehabilitation of the banks of the Merri River and the Park.	Management/ Enhancement	High	Short term
Develop community revegetation days.	Management	High	Short term
Continue for the area to be an off leash area for dogs.	Management	High	Short term
Further investigate possibilities for the western section taking into account flood issues such as a market garden or community garden	Enhancement	Medium	Short term
Investigate philanthropic funding, sponsorship and opportunities for bequest arrangements to fund infrastructure such as seating, signage and other items recommended.	Enhancement	Medium	Medium term
Investigate opportunities to acknowledge community contributions to the Park, particularly for Alan Lane and Clive Bell.	Enhancement	High	Short term
INFRASTRUCTURE			
Construct a floating jetty and launch for kayaks and canoes subject to external funding	Enhancement	Medium	Medium term
WCC conduct appropriate regular maintenance on Wollaston Bridge in accordance with heritage advice.	Management	High	Short term /ongoing
Investigate opportunities to enhance the bridge to include lighting such as up-lights	Enhancement	medium	Long term
WCC establish a regular maintenance schedule for management of the Park.	Maintenance	High	Short term
Establish a car park to not detract from the amenity of Wollaston the bridge, while providing access for all.	Enhancement/ Safety/Access	Medium	Medium term
Provide a bike rack in the car park.	Enhancement	Medium	Medium term

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ACTION/PROJECT	CATEGORY	PRIORITY	TIMEFRAME
INFRASTRUCTURE continued			
Continue the network of shared pathway to enable full use of the park for all.	Enhancement	High	Medium term
Provide multiuse facilities that, meet the needs of the youth and other users, which are aesthetically suitable and matching with the surrounding environment.	Enhancement	Medium	Medium term
Deter motor vehicle and motor bike access into the Park through landscaping and the use of a posts and chain to allow access in emergency situations and for the Friends of St James Park.	Access	High	Short term
Install directional signage, with areas indicating off-lead areas for dogs and environmental education messages (e.g. asking people to take rubbish home with them and pick up after their dog and information on the role of native species in waterways).	Enhancement/ Management	High	Short term
Install signs with information on the history of the Park, Wollaston Bridge, settlement in the area and the environment.	Enhancement	High	Short term
VEGETATION			
Retain grassed area as informal open space and resow weedy grass areas.	Maintenance	High	Short term
Develop program to remove/kill willows and other weed species on the banks of the Merri River. Include a staged approach to remove willows near Wollaston Road. Willows to the East and South are proposed to stay. <i>Eucalyptus ovata</i> - Swamp Gum is a recommended species to aid drainage in wet soil.	Maintenance	High	Short term
Plant appropriate plant species and retain healthy existing vegetation for habitat, natural beauty and shelter in the park.	Maintenance	High	Ongoing
Conduct revegetation using indigenous plant species particularly around the river's riparian fringe in accordance with the ecological vegetation class. Consider low growing species near the path and car park along with well spaced overstorey to retain views of the bridge and river.	Enhancement	High	Short term
Plant appropriate street trees along Wollaston Road to consider the historical values of Wollaston bridge and the general streetscape.	Enhancement	High	Short term
Maintain existing exotic vegetation on the Eastern and Southern boundary to tie into the post settlement theme created.	Maintenance	High	Ongoing
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT			
Use water sensitive urban design to improve water quality before it reaches the Merri River.	Enhancement	Medium	Medium term
Establish a wetland to capture and treat stormwater.	Enhancement	Medium	Long term
Plant the open drain with appropriate indigenous vegetation to filter stormwater and improve habitat for wildlife	Enhancement	Medium	Medium term

EXISTING CONDITIONS St James Park



P1 View to Historic Wollaston Bridge & Wollaston Rd Bridge

Historic Wollaston Bridge

Merri River

Rail Trail concrete path



P2 Gravel car park / Historic Wollaston Bridge



P3 View from Historic Wollaston Bridge



P4 Drainage line & Historic Wollaston Bridge



Walking the dog in St James Park



P5 Panorama from gravel car park



P6 Residential interface with St James Park
Wollaston Road Bridge

Drainage line outlet point
Gravel car park

P1
Concrete path
Informal vehicle track to residential properties
Mature deciduous trees

Residential buffer tree plantings

Residential

Informal car parking

Drainage line inlet point from urban stormwater

Mixed deciduous trees



Project St James Park Warrnambool		
Title Existing Conditions		
Scale/Sheet 1:1000@ A1	Date Oct 2009	
Project Number 341	File/Drawing Number 341 LC1	Revision -

DEFINITIONS

Restricted Weed - This category includes weeds that are a serious threat to primary production, crown land, the environment or community health in another State or Territory of Australia they have the potential to spread into or within Victoria, and pose an unacceptable risk of spreading in this State or to other parts of Australia if they were to be sold or traded in Victoria. Trade in these weeds, and materials containing them, are prohibited.

[www.dpi.vic.gov.au/DPI/nrenfa.nsf/LinkView/CF7CCDB4DB0F7386CA2573F700210DE52B72296A5108C4FFCA25734F0009F96F/\\$file/New%20Landholder%20-%20Weeds.pdf](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au/DPI/nrenfa.nsf/LinkView/CF7CCDB4DB0F7386CA2573F700210DE52B72296A5108C4FFCA25734F0009F96F/$file/New%20Landholder%20-%20Weeds.pdf)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Council acknowledges the contributions of the Warrnambool Historical Society and the residents of Warrnambool that assisted in the development of this Master Plan. Council looks forward to an ongoing relationship with these groups to achieve the vision for St James Park.

APPENDX 1

Community Engagement Report

Project title: Master Plan for St James Park

Consultation dates: October 29th – mid November 2009

Scope: St James Park “Listening Post” and “Have Your Say” submission

1. Purpose

To give community members, park users and residents the opportunity to have input into the development of the Master Plan for St James Park.

2. Format

The community was invited to submit written responses and attend a listening post session at St James Park to develop a shared vision and future actions. This was done through advertising in the Warrnambool Standard and approximately 1000 letters being sent to surrounding residents. The Listening Post involved Councillors and Council staff setting up a marquee, blank paper to write and even draw suggestions for the site. This was well attended with over 100 people identifying issues and opportunities for the Park. Many written submissions were also provide by mail and email from people who were unable to attend the Listening Post over a three week period.

3. Outcomes

Below are comments provided through the community engagement process. Comments have been broken down into environmental, social and economic sub headings. Please note some comments may apply to more than one sub heading.

Issues indentified

Environmental

- Two eucalypts recently planted on the road will block the view of the Wollaston Bridge.
- Consider flood issues with any future development, only recently was there water across Wollaston Road.
- Maintenance of river banks is required to reduce fire risks to the bridge and regular maintenance of weeds and the open drain is needed.
- Good drainage to allow for passive recreation.
- Snakes to be considered with current vegetation, this needs to be controlled and maintained better to reduce risks.
- Don't remove weeping willows near river, they remind us of St James Park London.
- Regular clean up of the bridge and surrounding area is needed to reduce weed growth and illegal rubbish dumped X 2.
- Mosquitoes in the open drain.
- Willows are an environmental weed and threaten the Merri River.
- Concerned about the density of future tree plantings and attracting unwanted activity.
- Plantings were done to suck up water, must be considered in any future development
- Neighborhood safety is a concern with a recent stint of burglaries.

- Algae on the Merri River is a problem for 9 months of the year, it's unsightly and shows the river's poor health.
- The river has a rock bottom which must be considered with any future projects such as jetties.
- If motor boats are allowed platypus must be considered as there are good numbers of platypuses that inhabit above the weir.

Social

- Footpath adjoining Wollaston Road continues through to the bridge and other path.
- Previous work of Mr. Alan Lane's Japanese plantation brought to fruition and recognise contribution.
- Safety issues of kids jumping off the bridge X 4.
- Decking damage on the bridge.
- Current lack of lighting along the path and even Wollaston Road X 3.
- Some kind of post and rail fencing to deter illegal car activity on the river banks.
- Need to know if the BMX track is being removed to allow for future youth activities to be included in this plan/process. Currently the youth are using Centro as a result of lack of facilities in the area for the youth.
- The Park is currently being used as a driveway to access back properties and other areas of the park, raising safety concerns for Park users.
- 1946 flood was at the level of the bottom of the red caps on the bridge.

Economic

- Bridge is not promoted enough for tourism.
- BBQs and other big developments will attract illegal and unwanted activity such as underage drinking X 4, it was also suggested playgrounds perform the same role.
- Don't remove the BMX track, it is well utilised as a social and sporting arena by young people and provides easy access within city area X 2.
- Public toilets are not needed, residents were asked previously.

Opportunities suggested

Environmental

- Revegetate the river bank with native species and remove weeds including willows.
- Retain the open feeling to the park.
- Redesign the open drain and install a wetland for stormwater treatment, improved habitat for wildlife, improve aesthetics and usability of the land X 5.
- Street trees along Wollaston Road.
- Planting of more trees and control of cars driving on the "Park" (Not access to private properties).
- More trees.
- Formal designated car park with shade trees.
- Indigenous species to be replanted on the river bank.
- Maintenance of exotic trees such as the cutting off of lower branches.
- Extension of the culvert from the road in place of the open drain to improve usage and aesthetics.
- Taper of the open drain to allow for better management.

- An arboretum to be developed, not being done anymore.
- An area for people to plant trees to offset their carbon emissions.
- A few more extra trees in favour of natives.
- A dog droppings composting point.
- Appropriate native species planted along river.
- Keep area tidier.
- Passionate about preservation and enjoy observing platypus and birdlife X 2.
- Staged removal of the willows in the park (river bank willows addressed above)
 - First year remove willows along the river bank,
 - Remove willows running parallel to Wollaston Road when street trees are established.

Social

- No alcohol after 10pm.
- Choose an appropriate site for a floating jetty and kayak launch.
- Area for passive recreation and dogs off lead.
- Seating for elderly/disabled walkers and at appropriate view points installed X 2.
- Further promote the heritage values of the bridge through better signage and use of infrastructure such as up-lights and link with exotic vegetation and themes.
- Keep as a dog free area and enlarge to include all of St James Park.
- Lighting around the footpath, solar lights near the bridge.
- Boat access off the Queens Road due to height in bank and plenty of Council land for a carpark.
- More information provided about the history of the bridge and surrounding area, families to be identified.
- Continue to allow off leash dog exercising.
- Path plans for the continuation to surrounding areas.
- Formalisation of the car park to include connecting the concrete paths near Wollaston Road (currently gravel is causing some issues).
- Great spot for wedding photos.
- Another recreational facility, such as a skate park or dog walking.
- Planting of the banks of the drain.
- Fishing platform/launch area for canoe or kayaks (not near the bend as previously proposed).
- Retain existing car access to properties to allow for maintenance and access to properties if flooding occurs.
- Keep the openness of the area when revegetating.
- A gravel path, boardwalk through out the park .
- Sealing of the car park.
- Seating for a lunch area, seating walkers and a spot on the bend to view the bridge and a BBQ for families.
- Restrict extra plantings to maintain an open feel to the area.
- More vegetation which consists of a combination of natives and non natives, including date palms and oaks.
- Provide an exercise circuit with signage and instructions.
- A feature garden area with roses, sculptures, water features.
- Carparking to encourage more use.
- Include a cricket pitch or general recreation area on the western lot.
- Surveillance lighting and cameras to improve neighbourhood safety.
- Different areas of gardens, walks and information about gardens.

- Sculptures and public art.
- Formation of a St James Park friends group.
- Plots for vegetable or herb gardens, community garden or areas for church or underprivileged groups to grow food. Lease arrangements could be developed
- Target teenage years for the western section.
- Food forests, to include fruit trees where anyone can take the fruit. It should be intermingled with natural species and other understorey for food security reasons with opportunities to reduce food miles and promote a permaculture perspective.
- Purchase private land between east and west section.
- Develop a lease agreement or buy land to the west of the former YMCA to continue the bike path along the Merri River.
- Develop an enclosed area for dogs, similar to what is being done in Sydney and Brisbane, this would include water, bins and generally encourage dogs to run off lead and socialize in a secure area.
- Basketball/netball spot in the western section, may also include a skate park X 2
- A "Reflexology Path" which is a stone/pebble path which is being done in Brisbane and Asian countries to promote the health benefits through stimulation of feet walking on the round pebbles.
- Toilets needed.
- Better stormwater management to improve water quality entering the Merri River from the open drain.
- Trees planted to be tall trunk species on the east side of the path for shade and wind protection.
- Seating for walkers to rest and improve the views.
- Bins at each end of the path.
- Water drinking fountain for humans and pets.
- Floating Jetty and launch for kayaks.
- Footy oval/sports field for western area for "multi purpose facility."
- Selected native species to replace willows as they can perform the same role for water uptake and also provide habitat and food for wildlife.
- Make the area more appealing with planting of more natives.
- Long term plan for path network extension on the river.
- A special mention was made that the area was always damp which is more reason to establish a wetland and plant natives.
- Improved signage explaining the history of the bridge.
- Removal of all the willows in a staged approach.
- Ramp for boats and kayaks, Motor boat access, limited to small boats such as "tinnies."
- Recognise area is used for swimming and include a diving board to stop kids jumping off the bridge.
- Path connection to Grange Road subdivision and the weir.
- Continue to allow the area to be a great area for families, but also include recognition of the area for national and international tourists considering the bridge.
- Installation of playground equipment and fencing for children more picnic areas and willow trees.
- Cut the grass more often and regularly, it doesn't need to be a lawn-like finish but close enough to be safe for walking and discourage snakes.
- Access for all, down ball wall, ground games such as hopscotch and other games painted on a surface.
- An art space, to encourage artists, photographers, musicians and other groups such as environmental groups to meet and display their skills.

Economic

- Utilise the western site near the BMX for a market garden or for local food production to reduce food miles.
- Promote the Bridge as a regional attractor to Great Ocean Road tourists X 2

There were comments to leave it the way it is, these include:

- Worried about noise associated with large gatherings of youths consuming alcohol.
- Can already enjoy the area without any more development.
- Doubt any changes will improve the park at all.
- Currently free to all with no restrictions.
- Currently cheap to maintain with just mowing.
- Improvements should not undermine the existing atmosphere of space and being in touch with the natural attractions.
- Prefer to see the existing trees remain, as they already provide an attractive variety of types and colour.
- Security issues are considered when planting trees, shrubs or bushes.
- Any formalised hard stand, kerbing, painted spaces in a car park would undermine the “plus of the area’s natural appeal, an informal tidy parking area would be sufficient and fit in best.
- Any BBQ would attract rubbish, discarded bottles, vermin and probably vandalism and spoil the peaceful atmosphere and potential increase in cleaning and maintenance costs.
- No need for play ground equipment as it is already provided at Ponting Drive.

Community Engagement Report continued

Project title: Master Plan for St James Park

Consultation dates: August 2010

Scope: Release of the Draft Master Plan for St James Park for comment.

To give the community the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposals presented in the Draft Master Plan for St James Park.

1. Format

The community was invited to provide feedback on the Draft Master Plan for St James Park through advertising in the Warrnambool Standard and local radio. The Landscape Plan was sent to approximately 1000 residents, with further information provided on how to obtain a copy of the Draft Master Plan. The Draft Master Plan was uploaded on Council's website, with other electronic media used including Facebook and Twitter, hard copies were available from Council's offices in Liebig Street. Below is a summary of written submissions which were provided by mail and email.

2. Outcomes

Comments have been broken down "Proposed Actions Supported" and "Proposed Actions Not Supported."

Proposed Actions Support

5 x Support extension of the shared path network along the river heading west and improved walkways throughout park.

5 x Support the park to remain an off leash area with appropriate signage.

4 x Support benches needed for informal use and the dog walkers.

4 x Support introducing measures to reduce rear access to properties and the use of shrubs and bushes to deter illegal vehicle activity.

3 x Support retention of the southern and eastern tree planting and don't support removal of willows in the park except if old.

3 x Support infrastructure for canoe and kayak launching and fishing.

2 x Protect current platypus population by not promoting power boat use.

2 x Suggestion to have a community garden due to the distance to the Albert park site.

2 x Support of the Friends of St James Park, and willing to be involved.

2 x Support improving the drain and establishing a wetland.

2 x Support playground.

Proposed Actions Support continued

2 x Support for the flora and fauna and use of native plant species especially considering the flood which should be adaptable to such conditions.

2 x Support more trees in the Park.

2 x Support the need for facilities for youth considering the proposed closure of the BMX and the closure of the YMCA which housed Basketball, Volleyball, Badminton, Gym, Karate etc.

Support replacement of willows with other native species that will allow the uptake of water logging.

Support for the historical content in the plan.

Support playground, cricket pitch, basketball court and bike paths for children as a high priority.

Support treatment of the drain as long as it doesn't attract mosquitoes.

Support change for the park.

Support retaining the open feeling of the park.

Need to resow the grass to reduce weed over the park.

Traffic and safety is a concern with heavy trucks using the road and vehicles exceeding speed limit.

Support car park, quality and accessibility.

Support improving signage of Wollaston Bridge.

Consideration for infrastructure to dive into the river.

Need to include drain in Council's regular inspection program.

Reinvest sale of the YMCA into the St James Park area for maintenance and retaining current facilities.

Support maintaining bridge area.

Support general improvement of St James Park.

Propose the installation of lighting for safety.

Propose to change name of St James Park to that of an aboriginal elder to recognise community leadership and recognition.

Weedy understorey is an issue.

Proposed Actions Not Support

2 x Don't support BBQs.

2 x Don't support basketball court and/or its location as it is too close to residential areas.

2 x Disagree with restricting vehicle access, propose occasional access to rear of properties for flood reasons.

2 x Flood issue along with one in 2001 means infrastructure must be reduced .

Disagree with stormwater treatment due to smell and mosquitoes.

Market garden site won't work due to flood.

Don't support the large car park.

Plan contradicts connectivity and value for its informal use by promoting as a regional attractor.

Disagree with any alterations considering the recent flood.

Relocate youth area to old YMCA site.

Don't support youth activity areas due to vandalism and graffiti issues.

Don't support the many infrastructure items suggested as it takes away the informal use.

Concerned of the risk of the hoon element when enhancing park.

Bocce has been tried elsewhere with not much success.

Don't support the use of natives due to apparent fire risk and limb dropping.

APPENDICES 2

Revegetation – Riverbank

Native Species

Botanical Name	Common Name	Description
Trees and Shrubs		
<i>Acacia mearnssi</i>	Black Wattle	Erect spreading tree 7-10m high widespread and common in open forest on hillsides.
<i>Acacia melanoxylon</i>	Blackwood	Tall tree 8-30m high; found in wetter of Southern Australia, especially along river systems.
<i>Eucalyptus ovata</i>	Swamp Gum	Tall bushy tree to 30m high; found in many environments along Eastern Australia; koala habitat.
<i>Melaleuca squarrosa</i>	Scented Paperbark	Shrub or small tree to 12m high; widely distributed in Victoria, in health & open forest, in damp places.
<i>Banksia marginata</i>	Silver Banksia	Shrub or small tree 2-10m high; widespread from coast to mountains and further inland.
<i>Acacia verticillata</i>	Prickly Moses	Spreading prickly shrub 1-3m high; found in health and open forest, often in moist sandy situations.
<i>Bursaria spinosa</i>	Sweet Bursaria	Large shrub to 5m high; widespread along East coast from Queensland to South Australia.
Native Grass and Low Growing		
<i>Danthoria penkillata</i>	Slender Wallaby Grass	Grass; food for seed eaters.
<i>Danthoria procera</i>	Tall Wallaby Grass	Grass; food for seed eaters.
<i>Danthoria setacea</i>	Bristly Wallaby Grass	Grass; food for seed eaters.
<i>Micorlaena stipordes</i>		Grass; food for seed eaters.
<i>Poa labillardieri</i>	Tussock Grass	Grass; food for seed eaters.
<i>Poa poliformis</i>	Tussock Grass	Grass; food for seed eaters.
<i>Dianella spp.</i>	Flax Lily	Rush; habitat for amphibians and insects.
<i>Isolepis nodosa</i>	Knobby Club Rush	Rush; habitat for amphibians and insects.
<i>Lomandra longifolia</i>	Spinay Headed Mat Rush	Rush; habitat for amphibians and insects.
<i>Kunzea pomifera</i>	Muntriea	Ground cover, habitat for amphibians
<i>Kennedia prostrate</i>	Running Postman	Ground cover, habitat for amphibians
<i>Patersonia occidentalis</i>	Long Purple Flag	Australian iris to 55cm high; beautiful purple flowers.
<i>Daviesia breviflora</i>	Leafless Bitter-Pea	Small erect shrub to 1.5m high; local & colourful
<i>Daviesia latifolia</i>	Hop bitter-Pea	Small erect shrub to 1.75m high; local & colourful
<i>Melaleuca gibbosa</i>	Slender Honey Myrtle	Open shrub to 2m high; likes moist conditions
<i>Dianella revolute</i>	Spreading Flax Lily	Rush; habitat for amphibians & insects
<i>Kennedia prostrata</i>	Running Postman	Ground cover; habitat for amphibians
<i>Patersonia occidentalis</i>	Long Purple Flag	Australian iris to 55cm high; beautiful purple flowers

The plant species list was developed using recommended species from the WCC Merri River Restoration Strategy, GHCMA Merri River Estuary Plan and the Ecological Vegetation Class prescribed for the area by DSE.

APPENDICES 3

Revegetation – Park land

Exotic and Native Species

Botanical Name	Common Name	Supply Size	Approximate Mature Size (HxW)
Deciduous Parkland Trees			
<i>Acer rubrum</i> 'Autum Flame'	Autumn Flame Maple	Semi Advanced	9 x 6m
<i>Acer rubrum</i> 'October Glory'	October Glory Maple	Semi Advanced	9 x 6m
<i>Acer freemanii</i> 'Autumn Blaze'	Autumn Blaze Maple	Semi Advanced	9 x 6m
<i>Acer platanoides</i> 'Crimson Sentry'	Crimson Sentry Maple	Semi Advanced	7 x 5m
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	Ginkgo Tree	Semi Advanced	8 x 5m
<i>Pyrus Chanticleer</i>	Chanticleer Ornamental Pear	Semi Advanced	8 x 6m
<i>Quercus coccinea</i>	Scarlet Oak	Semi Advanced	9 x 6m
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> 'Frisia'	Golden Robinia	Semi Advanced	7 x 5m
Native Trees (Native Tree Planting to Park)			
<i>Agonis Flexuosa</i> 'After Dark'	After Dark Willow Myrtle	Semi Advanced	4 x 3m
<i>Angophora costata</i>	Smooth Barked Apple	Semi Advanced	12 x 6m
<i>Banksia integrifolia</i>	Coastal Banksia	Semi Advanced	8 x 6m
<i>Eucalyptus mannifera</i> 'Little Spotty'	Little Spotty Gum	Semi Advanced	6 x 4m
<i>Eucalyptus melliodora</i>	Yellow Box	Semi Advanced	10 x 6m
<i>Tristaniopsis laurina</i>	Water Gum	Semi Advanced	7 x 6m