

**T.W. Blake Renewal Concept Plan Draft - August 2016**
**- to be read in conjunction with the T.W. Blake Renewal Concept Plan at A3**

Plan Item #	Design Proposal Label	Design Proposal Description
1	Village Green	<p>The Village Green is the central focus of the reserve. It is a flexible open space for sports use (primarily cricket and soccer), for social use, for dog off leash exercise, and for informal recreation and events (e.g. markets, community open days, etc). The opportunities for social interactions are maintained, as the Village Green will be a place for meeting and building friendships.</p> <p>To provide a 'level' area on the western side of the Village Green, it is proposed to fill parts of this area using excavated material from the wetland corridor. (Currently, the western side comprises of an embankment which makes access difficult).</p> <p>The eastern side of the Village Green may need to be cut and could accommodate a 1.1ML underground water storage unit, part of the wetland/ bio-retention infrastructure that could also provide the reserve with an irrigation water supply.</p> <p>The size and land form of the Village Green will be confirmed during detailed design.</p>
2	Community Facility	<p>The community facility needs to be a flexible multi-purpose space. With an approximate first stage floor area of 600-850m<sup>2</sup>, the facility could accommodate a variety of uses. As a first stage there should be provision for change rooms, public toilets, social spaces, meeting rooms and office space.</p> <p>This corner location was selected as a 'gateway site', an optimal location providing good access from Gower Street and adjacent parking as well as connections to public transport. Importantly, this location provides good visual connection to the reserve, with ideal northern orientation for any activity on the Village Green.</p> <p>Future expansion to the east would allow for integration into the NURP development zone, thereby creating a larger community 'hub' in the future, which may incorporate private sector services and commercial / retail / recreational uses.</p> <p>It is important that the character of any built form creates a distinct aesthetic, informing the urban character of the reserve.</p>
3	Amphitheatre	<p>The amphitheatre is located to take advantage of the natural topography of the reserve, with excellent views to the north and east. This location also provides good access from Gower Street and adjacent parking, as well as strong visual connections and optimal orientation for viewing any activity on the Village Green.</p> <p>The amphitheatre can be a space for both organised and informal uses, with flexibility for a diversity of event type and scale. It will also provide an alternate 'venue' space to the community facility. Built form associated with the amphitheatre should reflect the aesthetic of the community facility and other structures, such as the amenities and shelters. All built form will then have a distinct quality, providing an identifiable character for the reserve.</p>

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4	<b>Wetland/ BioRetention (or similar) Water Management System</b>	<p>The need to incorporate flood mitigation measures in the reserve is identified in existing Council strategies (the Darebin Water Strategy, the Northland PAA Redevelopment IWCM Scheme).</p> <p>The proposal to develop a wetland corridor will 'future proof' the neighbourhood against flooding incidents.</p> <p>Importantly, the system will provide an urban ecosystem and habitat corridor, transforming the character of the reserve and providing a focus for play and recreation, and creating an inviting environment for picnics and BBQs.</p> <p>A future connection to Darebin Creek can be achieved by extending the wetland corridor via a linear reserve through the future NURP development to the east. The scale and extent of the system is indicative, as it will be subject to future detailed design based on flood modeling and provision of new stormwater infrastructure.</p>
5	<b>Landscape Character</b>	<p>The value of the reserve as a 'green oasis' will be preserved and enhanced through significant revegetation. Council's Urban Forest Strategy supports opportunities to green open space and streets in the Darebin municipality.</p> <p>Within the total reserve area of approximately 6.1 Ha, up to 3.5 Ha of this area can be revegetated with canopy tree planting, wetland planting, garden planting, street trees, and rain gardens (excludes the active recreation and open space areas, facilities and infrastructure).</p> <p>This significant benefits of this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ an enhanced landscape, providing a distinct character and added diversity to the landscape character of the reserve</li> <li>▪ increased environmental values and promoting bio diversity</li> <li>▪ a direct and cost effective means of changing the character and amenity of the reserve</li> <li>▪ opportunities for nature based play</li> <li>▪ increased amenity – shade, shelter, emotional responses</li> <li>▪ microclimate influences (i.e. reduced urban heat loads, reduced local temperatures)</li> <li>▪ increased potential for fauna activity.</li> </ul>
6	<b>Passive Open Space / Dog Off Leash</b>	<p>Provision of flexible open space allows for a mix of active and passive recreation uses, maximising usage of the reserve. Rather than a single sporting use there will be more effective multiuse activities, such as family and leisure activities, ball play, kite flying, casual sports, social 'pick-up games' sports, and walking areas.</p> <p>The reserve is currently a nominated dog off leash area and the draft concept proposes to maintain this status. Improvements for dog walkers will come via provision of more paths and connections. It is proposed that The Track be lit to extend walking times and contribute to personal safety and security. Additional seating, bins, and drinking fountains (with dog bowls) will also be provided.</p> <p>The introduction of new uses in the reserve will require that off leash areas are defined, as dogs will not be permitted in certain areas (Darebin City Council nominates these as 'environmentally sensitive areas', i.e. within 5 metres of any playspace or BBQ, shared trail, or within sporting areas during times of organised play).</p>

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7	Picnic Areas/ Park Infrastructure	<p>A number of picnic areas are proposed, allowing choice of location for passive and active reserve users. To increase the amenity of the park and support the range of new activities, park infrastructure will be required including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ drinking fountains with dog bowls; water bottle refill stations at fitness stations and activity areas</li> <li>▪ park furniture, such as seating, picnic tables, bicycle rails, rubbish and recycle bins, and dog bag dispensers</li> <li>▪ BBQ's, as part of new picnic zones</li> <li>▪ signage – way finding, directional, use of the reserve</li> <li>▪ lighting to key zones, buildings and the Track pathway as the primary pedestrian route.</li> </ul>
General	Art Opportunities	<p>There are many opportunities to incorporate art into the reserve. Artwork may include individual commissioned pieces, or include artists in the detailed design process so that an artist's perspective is inherent in the reserve design. Examples of this may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ expression of cultural heritage</li> <li>▪ the forms, shapes, and colours included in the play space and skate area</li> <li>▪ the form of the wetland and boardwalks, and balustrades</li> <li>▪ the design of shelters and buildings</li> <li>▪ signage</li> <li>▪ custom furniture pieces.</li> </ul>
8	Amenities Building/ Shelters	<p>An amenities building is proposed on the Murray Road frontage of the reserve, providing public toilets/ change rooms/ storage and a shelter. This building may also serve as a marker for the reserve, as part of the Murray Road address. The character of this facility should be consistent with other built form in the reserve.</p> <p>Other shelters should be provided at key activity zones and picnic areas.</p>
9	Multi-Use Sports Precinct	<p>This space is aimed at supporting more intensive use of the reserve in the future, providing one 'footprint' for multiple recreation activities. As a flexible active area, it will provide opportunities for a variety of sports/ games. Half-court basketball and futsal may be primary uses, but line marking may also provide for downball and non-standard netball, tennis and volleyball.</p> <p>The variety of uses is intended to encourage intergenerational participation, providing opportunities for children, young people and adults to participate.</p> <p>The multi-use sports area has been located for its close connections to other recreation spaces, as well as proximity to public transport. Its proximity to Murray Road is to enable the precinct to benefit from the passive surveillance that an active road can provide.</p>

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10	Skate Precinct	<p>The provision of a skate supports the historic demand for a skate park in Preston East. A regional scale skate precinct, with opportunities for different styles of skating and bike riding, will meet the needs of a future dense population, and provide opportunities for intergenerational use and participation.</p> <p>The skate precinct has been located for its close connections to other recreation spaces, as well as proximity to public transport. Its proximity to Murray Road is to enable the facility to benefit from the passive surveillance that an active road can provide.</p>
11	Play Space	<p>This large play space is proposed to provide diversity and play choice, supporting the differing recreational needs of a dense future population, with opportunities for intergenerational use (children, youth, younger adults) and participation. A mix of active and passive play spaces will promote imagination, spontaneity, freedom and wellbeing.</p> <p>The play space will combine natural elements and planting, with play elements encouraging nature based play and creativity in experiencing a variety of uses and environments.</p> <p>Equipment for a range of ages may include slides and/or a flying fox on a spiral mound, climbing nets, swings, and motion pieces. Nature based play experiences may include digging patches, logs and rocks, and sensory gardens. Incorporating a splash pad as a focus for play, will be a major draw card for the play area.</p>
12	The Track	<p>The original Harness Racing Track is proposed to be retained in its current location, providing a perimeter track for walking, cycling and children's bike riding. Retaining the Track not only maintains a connection with the history of the reserve, but maintains one of the key use elements in the reserve.</p> <p>Upgrades and minor modifications to the Track will be required to drainage and cross falls with some adjustments to the width also required to reinstate its original geometry. The existing railing fence will be removed as will the horse stalls.</p>
13	Outdoor Gym / Fitness Stations	<p>Fitness stations around The Track will provide more opportunities for active recreation for all ages and abilities in the reserve. Onsite equipment provides free outdoor alternatives to gyms, and are activities not reliant on personal equipment.</p>
14	Murray Road	<p>Murray Road is a declared arterial road, managed by Vic Roads. The section fronting the reserve carries considerable traffic, feeding into and out of Northland, and providing an important east-west crossing of Darebin Creek.</p> <p>The road is 5–6 lanes wide in front of the reserve. Pedestrian crossing points are provided at Albert Street and the Northland car park entrance, however, are not direct links to the reserve. Proposals for greening and enhancing the section of Murray Road in front of the reserve include reducing the width, with streetscape improvements via tree planting and a central grassed median.</p> <p>On the reserve side, the footpath can be widened and brought into the reserve, changing the experience for pedestrians from 'road side' to 'park'. Parallel parking can be introduced inside the bicycle lane, with tree planting and WSUD measures.</p> <p>Any opportunities for enhancing Murray Road will require further consultation with Vic Roads.</p>
15	Off Street Parking	<p>Consideration should be given to providing some off-street parking along Murray Road to serve the northern play and recreation spaces. Parking could also be included as part of the future light rail corridor, in lieu of on-street parking on Murray Road.</p>

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16	Gower Street	<p>Gower Street is the preferred access point for vehicles, as it is 'quieter' than Murray Road, carries less traffic, and has only one lane of traffic in each direction. There are existing bicycle lanes and parking lanes on both sides of Gower Street.</p> <p>Gower Street is currently used as the main access to the reserve and most reserve users park here, so the patterns of existing use will be maintained.</p> <p>Provision of 90 degree car parking on Gower Street, as a change from the existing parallel parking, will increase parking numbers. Tree planting and WSUD rain gardens can be incorporated into the parking area. The bicycle lane could be relocated in front of the parking area, to avoid conflict between bike users and reversing vehicles.</p>
17	Future Light Rail Corridor	<p>The rail corridor is a future proposal within the NURP development to facilitate movement via public transport as a preference to private car use.</p> <p>There is potential for the corridor to be integrated with the reserve open space and the community precinct so that it is perceived as a 'seamless' green corridor or plaza space.</p>
General	Sustainability and Technology	<p>In planning for the future, development of the reserve needs to embrace principles for sustainable use as well as current technologies in anticipation of future trends.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to provision of the following as part of the amenities and infrastructure to be developed at the reserve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ electronic media (e.g. signage, event screens, play elements, and site apps)</li> <li>▪ recycling; re-use schemes</li> <li>▪ WIFI/ charging stations</li> <li>▪ bike share/ hire scheme</li> <li>▪ low energy use lighting; solar powered lighting</li> <li>▪ ESD initiatives included in buildings</li> <li>▪ recycled water infrastructure for building usage and irrigation</li> <li>▪ rainwater water run-off harvesting, re-use and storage</li> <li>▪ warm season, drought resistant turf species; use of synthetic grass surfaces</li> <li>▪ plant selection suitable for location, local environment.</li> </ul>

**Note:** For detailed needs and impact analysis and design rationale please see the *T.W. Blake Renewal Concept Plan Draft Report V5 - September 2016*.