

# **Whitehorse Open Space Strategy**

## **Open Space Contributions Program**

**Prepared for Whitehorse City Council**  
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# 1. Introduction

The Whitehorse Open Space Strategy has been prepared to provide Whitehorse City Council guidance on its public open space program to 2021. The Strategy is based on a review of existing open space reserves, community consultation about open space use, review of Victorian Government and Council strategies that influence open space planning, and an analysis of the recreational and population trends that will affect open space use in the future.

The Strategy is tailored to the local circumstances in Whitehorse. It will be used by Council to set open space priorities, determine annual budgets and capital works programs, and it will also guide Council when obtaining land for additional open space.

A key component of the Strategy is review of Council's open space contributions program. Open space contributions are levied by Council as a condition of subdivision approvals. They are based on a percentage of site land value and may be in the form of land or cash. The purpose of the review is to determine whether the existing contribution rates set out in Clause 52.01 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme are appropriate for the next 15 years. The review concluded that the existing schedule of contribution rates as contained in the planning scheme should be replaced.

This paper provides background information and explains the method used to establish the recommended contribution rates for amendment of Clause 52.01 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme. The paper should be read in conjunction with the *Whitehorse Open Space Strategy*.

## **Use of Clause 52.01**

It is recommended that Council continue to use the schedule to Clause 52.01 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme to levy open space contributions.

## **Municipal Rate**

The recommended open space contributions rates to be adopted:

- Strategic sites (these are larger redevelopment sites identified in the Open Space Strategy or subsequently by State Government or Council): *minimum* 4% subject to negotiation of the development plan
- All other sites: 4%.

## **Land for New Open Space Reserves**

The Open Space Strategy (Section 5.6) identifies the areas in the City of Whitehorse where new open space is required and therefore where land may be sought as a contribution. Elsewhere, a cash contribution is preferred to land. Refer also to **Appendix B**.

The Open Space Strategy (Table 4-2) sets out the criteria for acceptable land parcels. Refer also to **Appendix C**.

Where Council requests a land contribution and the developer offers an open space parcel or link that does not meet the minimum land area criteria, then Council can:

- request or negotiate a larger land area as part of the project approval where the minimum contribution rate applies; or

- add to the developer's land to create a viable open space parcel or link.

Council can add to the developer's land in a number of ways. Council can seek to purchase additional land from the developer by using contribution funds already collected, other Council funds or a combination of both. Council may choose to convert adjoining public land where it is available for this purpose. It is noted that use of other Council funds or Council land will represent a contribution on behalf of the existing population

## 2. Whitehorse Open Space Strategy

### 2.1 Purpose and Scope of the Strategy

The Whitehorse Open Space Strategy contains an overall vision to

*Continue to provide a diverse linked network of open space with people of all ages recreating, socialising and enjoying the outdoor space, and bushland reserves brimming with indigenous flora and fauna.*

The specific principles and aims used to develop the Strategy include:

#### **Accessible**

*The open space network is accessible to the diverse Whitehorse community including all ages, abilities, gender and cultural background*

#### **Diverse**

*A wide variety of reserve types, sizes and character make up the open space network providing the community with a diversity of spaces to visit*

#### **Equitable**

*The Whitehorse community has safe and easy walking access to open space*

#### **Connected**

*Provide habitat, landscape and spatial links between major open space reserves on both public and private land*

#### **Adaptable**

*Open space and its facilities are flexible and adapt to meet changing community needs*

#### **Sustainable**

*Open space is well managed and maintained to meet community expectation, available funding, enhances biodiversity and achieves an ecological balance in its design*

#### **Social**

*Open space provides the Whitehorse community with a meeting place that is accessible and safe for all*

#### **Recreational**

*Open space encourages the community to keep fit and improve their health and wellbeing*

#### **Cultural**

*Open space design reflects and celebrates the contemporary and historical indigenous and non-indigenous cultural values.*

The Open Space Strategy sets out how the above vision, principles and aims should be delivered over the next planning period. It provides direction about what the city's open space network should look like and how it should function by the year 2021. It supports yearly Council decisions about funding and budget

priorities that will be matched to the well-researched set of longer term goals contained in the Strategy.

The City of Whitehorse currently spends some \$1.63 million annually on open space capital works not including any land costs. The annual capital works expenditure is not anticipated to grow (other than normal inflationary growth) during the 15 year planning period for the Open Space Strategy. This funding will be supplemented by open space contributions collected from new development.

## **2.2 Strategy Components Supporting Open Space Contributions**

The Open Space Strategy supports open space contributions from development in the following ways:

- The Strategy is based on analysis of the population change anticipated in Whitehorse over the life of the Strategy (intensification of residential and non-residential development), including the size, distribution and characteristics of this population. This is linked to Victorian Government and Council housing studies, demographic forecasts, Council's strategic planning for Activity Centres and policies for normal or minimal growth in existing residential neighbourhoods.
- The Strategy recommends expansion and improvements to the open space network based on an analysis of the relative population change that will occur in different parts of the municipality, e.g. through Activity Centre development, conversion of non-residential land to mixed use or residential development, intensification of higher density residential areas (most of which are included in Activity Centre boundaries) and continuing, dispersed redevelopment in other parts of the municipality.
- The location, standard and size of existing open space and the facilities offered in them has been considered in terms of existing and new populations.
- The Strategy provides a costed program to add open space reserves and links (including capital works development) to deliver the distribution of open space adopted in the Strategy, and to upgrade existing reserves and open space links. The Strategy program is broken down for each post code within the municipality.
- The implications of setting a rate on Council's housing policies and attracting development to preferred development sites or areas has been considered.
- The Strategy provides the basis for establishing a new contribution rate schedule. It identifies how open space contributions should be collected and spent, including where a land contribution may be sought from development.

Open space contributions are an important funding source but the Open Space Strategy recognises there are limitations and requirements in relation to their collection and the way they can be spent. For example, open space contributions cannot be levied to pay for historical open space deficiencies for people already living or working in Whitehorse. The monies received must be

spent on open space land purchase or capital works related to the needs of the new population on whose behalf they were collected. These limitations and requirements have been considered in preparing the Strategy.

The Strategy provides a strategic framework for open space provisions over the next 15 years and its recommendations have been prepared to meet the needs of both the existing and future population. A proportion of the cost for implementing these recommendations will be met by open space contributions (where new open space or capital improvements will serve new population) and the remainder by other sources of funding including Council revenue.

### **2.3 Implications of Population Change**

The City of Whitehorse has a well developed network of open space. However, this open space is not evenly distributed throughout the municipality. Even though large open space reserves do exist, they are not always located where the greatest urban change is expected to occur in future. There is often a lack of open space, or the smaller open space reserves are reaching (or have reached) full capacity, in areas where future growth is anticipated in line with Council's Housing Study (City of Whitehorse, 2003), the Eastern Regional Housing Statement (Eastern Regional Housing Working Group, 2005), Structure Plans, Urban Design Frameworks and the Whitehorse Municipal Strategic Statement.

The Open Space Strategy plans for the needs of this new population. An objective in the Strategy is to provide at least small, local, public open space within reasonable walking distance of residents. This is based on best practice, patterns of open space use in Whitehorse as determined by the community survey and the physical constraints of providing new open space in densely developed urban areas (especially in the western part of the municipality). The Strategy surveys and other research indicate greater use of open space for passive recreation, which has influenced the type of open space proposed.

The Strategy identifies capital works to serve the public open space needs of new population. This includes improvements to existing open space and development of new open space. Where additional public reserves are to be established, the minimum amount of land to be acquired and its approximate location is specified in the Strategy.

As discussed above, the Strategy differentiates between existing deficiencies and open space planning for future population growth. Projects have been costed for Council's forward budget planning and a proportion of cost assigned to new residents based on planning for their open space needs (refer to **Section 4.4.4**).

## 2.4 Strategy Outcomes and Implementation

The Open Space Strategy seeks to improve the public open space network in the City of Whitehorse so that it will continue to meet the needs of its local population. Strategy outcomes are wide-ranging and can be summarised as follows:

- Improve the links between open space reserves, using existing open space, land owned by Council and other public authorities, and by obtaining additional land through a land contribution or land purchase.
- Improve access to and use of existing reserves and maintain existing highly valued reserves, through masterplanning and implementation, diversifying park infrastructure and upgrading the small, local reserves.
- Build on the diversity which is a key strength of the Whitehorse open space system, to encourage use by a broad cross-section of the community and by involving the community in preparation of masterplans.
- Provide adequate open space to meet existing and future population needs, through improvements to existing reserves, creation of new open space in identified locations; improved links between reserves, and collection of open space contributions.
- Improve the habitat corridor links and values of the existing linear open space system of Whitehorse, on both public and adjoining private land.
- Improve the environmental sustainability of open space management and maintenance practices, through adopting new approaches outlined in the Strategy.
- Reduce conflicts between different recreational users in open space by improving facilities and signage in reserves.

The Open Space Strategy will be implemented through the following program actions:

- obtain land or convert existing public land for new open space reserves or open space links;
- master planning for reserves;
- develop and upgrade open space;
- facility design and construction;
- minor infrastructure purchase;
- maintenance programs; and
- liaise with Parks Victoria, VicRoads, Melbourne Water, local schools and surrounding municipalities for potential agreements/partnerships.

The Strategy will be funded primarily from the rate base. Other sources of funding will include grants, co-funding from other levels of government and open space contributions. Relevant asset management and financial actions include:

- include capital works projects in Council's rolling Capital Asset Management Plan;
- annual budget and expenditure reporting;
- apply for external funding;

- collect and expend open space contributions; and
- annually monitor and report on Strategy implementation.

The rate at which projects are implemented using open space contribution funds may vary from year to year (and potentially over the life of the Open Space Strategy) based on the rate of population change and thus the amount of contributions collected, the ability of Council to match funding from other sources and program resources within the Council.

### 3. Reviewing the Current Open Space Contribution Rate

#### 3.1 Current Contributions Program

Clause 52.01 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme already establishes a mandatory contribution for open space when subdivision occurs. The schedule contains the following table of rates:

**Table 1. Existing open space contribution rates**

Type or location of subdivision	Amount of contribution for public open space
The subdivision of land that creates:	
1 additional lot	none specified
2 additional lots	2%
3 additional lots	3%
4 additional lots	4%
5 or more additional lots	5%

The Whitehorse Planning Scheme already has a mandatory open space contribution requirement. The advantage of having a mandatory contribution is that developers are aware ahead of time what the contribution will be, the amount cannot be appealed to VCAT and Council has more certainty about the amount of monies likely to be raised from year to year. A mandatory contribution allows Council to plan its public open space program strategically with reference to the needs of a changing population. With adoption of the Open Space Strategy, developers should be satisfied that Council will use its open space contributions to meet the needs of new populations. In adopting the Strategy, Council is committing itself to a 15-year financial plan for expansion and improvements to the open space network

The current contributions rate schedule as shown in **Table 1** was adopted by Council in 2001 (Amendment C34) and reflected prevailing contributions practice at the time. The sliding scale currently used by Whitehorse originated with the VicCode 2 residential development code that operated in Victoria during the 1990s. It is based on the assumption that the higher the density of development, the more pressure is placed on existing open space and there is likely to be a greater need to provide additional open space.

The sliding scale developed for VicCode 2 was not based on a detailed investigation of open space demand and supply, but it is still commonly used as a default mechanism and appears in some municipal planning schemes because it provides an easy solution for assessing the levy. It is a scale and methodology which has no real credence before VCAT. However, because the levy is mandatory, it cannot be appealed, and therefore VCAT is not in a position to comment on the adequacy of Whitehorse's schedule. The schedule appears to be acceptable to local developers.

The relevant provisions allow Council to request the contribution as a land contribution, a cash contribution or a combination of both. Following completion of the previous Open Space Strategy in 1996, Council resolved to emphasise cash contributions instead of land contributions from developers. The contribution is assessed when a subdivision is approved and is based on the

percentage of land value of the development site in accordance with the schedule to Clause 52.01.

From the 2001-2002 FY to the 2005-2006 FY, Council collected an average of around \$800,000 annually in cash contributions.

Some of the factors affecting the amount of funds collected include:

- Currently 2 lot subdivisions (one additional lot) are exempt from contributions. The numbers of 2 lot subdivisions across Whitehorse for the years 2003-2005 were 122 in 2003, 137 in 2004 and 123 in 2005. Suburbs with consistently high numbers of these subdivisions (more than 10 per year) included Blackburn, Burwood, Mitcham and Nunawading, followed by Box Hill North and Box Hill South. A rate for a 2 lot subdivision can be included in an amended contributions schedule, however Council would only be able to collect a contribution when, in accordance with Clause 52.01, Council were to form a view that for the particular subdivision the land is likely to be further subdivided.
- Whitehorse is attracting retirement village and student housing. These types of developments are not necessarily subdivided. Anecdotally, there also appears to be a more limited trend to not subdividing townhouse and similar residential developments. Because Clause 52.01 is triggered by application for subdivision, these properties are not subject to the open space contribution. The open space contributions schedule is not capable of capturing these types of developments into Council's contributions program.

### **3.2 Reasons in Favour of Reviewing the Current Rate**

There is a strong expectation that contributions arrangements will be based on a strategic study and analysis of municipal open space – including identification and costing of projects, equitable allocation of costs between current and future populations, and a relationship between where monies are collected and where they are spent.

As discussed above, the current contributions schedule is outdated and does not now relate to a strategically-based open space program. An amended schedule would help to align the system of contributions with the open space strategic analysis of Whitehorse's existing and future open space network.

It is important to ensure that a fair share of funding is collected from new development so that Council can deliver open space that responds to the needs of the new population. The method used to prepare the Open Space Strategy achieves this. The Strategy associates the degree and location of future population growth with demand for open space. The recommended contributions rate schedule is based on this analysis and will be valid across the municipality. The Strategy also identifies those areas of the municipality where additional open spaces will be needed in response to population change and therefore where a land contribution may be required. The Strategy therefore supports an amendment to Clause 52.01 of the Whitehorse Planning Scheme and this in turn encourages Council to amend the contributions schedule with a high degree of confidence.

## 4. Open Space Contribution Method

### 4.1 Overview

The method used to calculate the open space contribution rate is based on the tests used to levy a contribution under the Subdivision Act 1988. These are included at Section 18(1A) of the Act:

- (1A) The Council may only make a public open space requirement if it considers that, as a result of the subdivision, there will be a need for more open space, having regard to—
- (a) the existing and proposed use or development of the land;
  - (b) any likelihood that existing open space will be more intensively used after than before the subdivision;
  - (c) any existing or likely population density in the area of the subdivision and the effect of the subdivision on this;
  - (d) whether there are existing places of public resort or recreation in the neighbourhood of the subdivision, and the adequacy of these;
  - (e) how much of the land in the subdivision is likely to be used for places of resort and recreation for lot owners;
  - (f) any policies of the Council concerning the provision of places of public resort and recreation.

The detailed analysis in the Open Space Strategy identifies the areas of Whitehorse where there is adequate provision of open space to meet existing needs and those areas where there is a lack of open space due to historical patterns of development. In addition, the Strategy uses population and dwelling forecasts and Council plans to determine where change will drive demand for new open space reserves and links, or upgrades of the existing reserves. This is consistent with the Municipal Strategic Statement and longer term planning for implementation of Melbourne 2030 in the City of Whitehorse.

The Strategy conclusions and recommendations are based on a 15-year planning period, using population and dwelling forecasts to 2021, which have been prepared by i.d. consulting for Whitehorse to the post code level, and the structure planning for the larger activity centres. Overall, the Strategy highlights a number of areas and works for Council to provide additional open space, provide links between open space areas and investigate change to the use of some reserves to make them more appropriate for the local and broader community including the future community. The Strategy preparation was careful not to attribute to the new population the open space developments needed to make up historical deficiencies.

Activity Centres are locations where business and residential use will intensify. Core commercial areas have not traditionally housed residential populations and they may currently lack open space. In these areas, expanded public open space and improvements to existing open space is recommended to meet the need created by new workers and residents. Open space contributions will be necessary to fund part of these projects.

Other locations for urban redevelopment are larger redevelopment/strategic sites, higher density residential areas and through natural residential infill. In areas where provision of existing open space is limited, this development will

generate some or most of the need for additional open space, and therefore contributions will be needed towards the provision of land and associated facility provision. In other areas with adequate open space, expansion and improvements to open space facilities are recommended to accommodate the requirements of new workers and residents, and contributions will be needed to assist funding of these projects. Where land is obtained through contribution or purchase, it will become part of the municipal open space network.

The Open Space Strategy identifies post code locations where public open space will need to be acquired and developed or upgraded in future to respond to changing population numbers and open space use trends (demographic change).

In determining a contribution rate, costs have been allocated to new population based on the public open space needs of that population. 'New population' costs have been distributed to all new development through a municipal rate which balances a strict user pays approach with a broader range of policy objectives contained in Melbourne 2030 and the Whitehorse Planning Scheme.

Collected contributions will be allocated to projects based on the Open Space Strategy's implementation priorities. The speed at which projects are implemented will depend in part on the rate of urban change over the 15-year planning period. The Strategy uses Victorian Government and Council strategic documents to establish where urban redevelopment is most likely to occur and the population growth that will be associated with that development. Even if these projections change over time, the Strategy provides a robust framework that can accommodate these changes.

## **4.2 What is Included in the Rate**

The proposed open space contribution rate represents the benefit to new residents of future capital works projects in Whitehorse's public open space network, including

- Upgrade existing open space reserves and open space links; and
- create and develop new reserves and open space links.

The proportion of cost allocated to new population for each project (% of project cost) has been quantified based on:

- a combination of the anticipated population change (quantity and demographic) in the post code area compared to the existing user population; and
- the degree to which the project responds to the needs of new residents.

## **4.3 Rate Calculation Method**

The calculation of a Clause 52.01 rate follows the same process as those for a contribution under the Subdivision Act 1988. The percentage of land or land value levied should be consistent with the costs to provide open space for new residents. These costs include obtaining and developing additional land for open space (including the value of land contributions) and capital works to upgrade existing open space.

An Excel spread sheet was used to enter the relevant data and to calculate the percentage (%) rate of land value that would raise the funds required to meet the open space costs for new population. The details of the data collection are discussed below. The calculation spread sheet is shown in **Appendix A** (first page).

All calculations use 2006 dollars without discounting as there is no provision for changing the % rate in the Clause 52.01 schedule once a rate is included in the planning scheme. Construction costs and land values are expected to rise during the 15-year Strategy period, but it was not possible to determine whether these would rise at a roughly equal rate over this time.

The final contribution rate of 4% allows for a small underestimation of project costs compared to funds collected. Qualifying the 4% contribution rate as a minimum rate for strategic sites (most of which are in Activity Centres) will allow Council the flexibility to negotiate a higher contribution with land owners and developers while protecting the minimum requirement.

## **4.4 Data Used in the Rate Calculation**

### **4.4.1 Estimated Land Area to be Developed**

An estimate of the land area likely to be redeveloped due to anticipated population growth was prepared for each Strategy post code area. This figure is based on population/dwelling density forecasts to the post code level prepared by i.d. consulting for Council (available on the Council's web site). The forecasts are linked to Council's Housing Strategy and the Municipal Strategic Statement. Numbers of dwellings and average land area per dwelling for each post code area were supplied by Council's planning staff. Some changes are anticipated over time with respect to the exact location of development within each suburb, but the population forecasts to 2021 are sound and allow for these variations. The land areas for each dwelling depended on the anticipated location of dwelling construction, eg. Activity Centre, strategic site, higher density or natural change area. The figures supplied by Council are for the period to 2021 and correlate with those included in the i.d. consulting forecasts and the principal Melbourne 2030 housing implementation document for this region, the Eastern Regional Housing Statement. Refer to **Appendix A** for details of the estimated land area to be developed in each post code area.

### **4.4.2 Average Residential Land Value**

An average residential land value 'per square metre' was calculated for each post code area by Council's valuation staff. Average values were calculated by capturing property data from the Council's valuations data base (2006 valuations), including lot size and assessed land value for each property. Refer to **Appendix A** for details of average square metre residential land values in each post code area.

### **4.4.3 Total Estimated Land Value - Land Area To Be Developed**

This was calculated by multiplying the Estimated Land Area to be Developed in each post code area by the 'per square metre' Average Residential Land Value for the area.

#### 4.4.4 Open Space Costs for New Population

Project costs were calculated (2006 dollars) based on projects contained in the Open Space Strategy. These include the costs to obtain land and develop new public open space reserves and open space links, and capital works improvements in existing open space and open space links.

Locations where new public open space will be needed are based on a gap analysis for existing and future populations. This involved identifying areas of the municipality where open space is not available now, or will not be available in the future, within a 400 metre walking distance (and without crossing major roads or other barriers). As a result of this analysis, the need to obtain additional open space is limited to only some of the Strategy post code areas (where the need for new reserves or links is identified). New reserves are to be created primarily in areas where urban redevelopment is the driver.

Land costs were calculated using average 2006 'per square metre' residential land values for the relevant Strategy post code area. The proposed size of the new open space and average land value of the location determined the cost. Land contributions will need to meet the guidelines for new open space reserves and contributions by developers included in the Strategy. These criteria are provided in **Appendix C**.

All capital works projects listed for completion by 2021 are costed. Costings use average park construction rates for 2006 developed in consultation with Council and based on recent park construction costs. Where recent Landscape Masterplans have been prepared with costings, these are used.

While total project costs for each post code as shown in **Appendix A** appear to be very precise, they are in fact broad estimates based on the cost or value of land (where relevant) and assumed project elements. In many cases these project elements are yet to be finalised pending preparation of or revisions to Landscape Masterplans and Concept Plans. However, it was decided not to round estimates used in the Excel spread sheet so that rounding errors were not introduced in calculating the contribution rate.

A proportion of each project cost is allocated to new population based on its location, with reference to the anticipated population increase in that Strategy post code area, the need generated by new population and the benefit delivered to new residents. Surrey Hills and Vermont are forecast to lose population, however there will be additions to the dwelling stock and demographic change with the new population. Therefore contributions are allocated to new development in these suburbs, albeit at a low percentage allocation of total open space costs.

For post code suburbs where new open space is required, land costs are a component of the open space costs for new population shown in **Appendix A**. Where new open space is not required, capital works are equal to the open space costs for new population shown in **Appendix A**.

## 4.5 Total Funds to be Collected through Contributions

The capital works costed in this Strategy are approximately \$24.2 million over 15 years (\$1.6 million annual average) and land purchases total almost \$20.8 million (almost \$1.4 million annual average). **Table 2** shows the total open space costs and the allocation of costs for both new and existing populations.

A fair allocation of both land and capital works to new population differs for each project but totals about \$24.1 million across the municipality or \$1.6 million average per year. This is considerably more than Council is currently collecting in open space contributions, at an average of \$800,000 per annum. The new contribution rate is intended to boost the annual collection of contribution monies to remedy the current shortfall, by more accurately reflecting the cost to Council of providing for the open space needs of the new population.

Council will contribute the remaining costs of implementing the Strategy on behalf of the existing population. These costs total approximately \$20.9 million over the 15-year period or about \$1.4 million per year. They are significantly less when only considering capital works, \$15.4 million in total or \$1 million average per year.

**Table 2** provides a guide to Council when preparing its annual budgets. The budget should maintain the percentages shown for each funding source and especially over the 15-year life of the Strategy.

**Table 2. Proposed open space funding 2007-2021**

Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2007-2021					
Council Funding of the 15-Year Public Open Space Program					
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]
Funding Requirement for Open Space Land and Capital Works	Council Contributions On Behalf Of The Existing Population	%	Open Space Contributions On Behalf Of The New Population	%	Total Funds To Be Allocated To The Open Space Program
<b>Funding for Land</b>					
Total over 15 years:	\$5,483,360	26%	\$15,307,040	74%	\$20,790,400
Average per year over 15 years:	\$365,557	26%	\$1,020,469	74%	\$1,386,027
<b>Funding for Capital Works</b>					
Total over 15 years:	\$15,434,267	62%	\$8,840,900	38%	\$24,275,167
Average per year over 15 years:	\$1,028,951	62%	\$589,393	38%	\$1,618,344
<b>Total Funding</b>					
Total over 15 years:	\$20,917,627	46%	\$24,147,940	54%	\$45,065,567
Average per year over 15 years:	\$1,394,508	46%	\$1,609,863	54%	\$3,004,371

## **5. Administration of Open Space Contributions Program**

### **5.1 Administration under the Subdivision Act and Planning Scheme**

It is recommended that the Council include the new schedule of rates in the Whitehorse Planning Scheme, in the schedule to Clause 52.01. Until a planning scheme amendment is gazetted, the Council will continue to levy an open space contribution based on the existing schedule (**Table 1**).

When a land contribution is sought, it will be important for Council and developers to liaise before development/subdivision proposals are prepared and submitted, to ensure that applications reflect the Council's needs and minimum criteria as set out in the Open Space Strategy. Use of Council's GIS or other system to flag where open space and links are required will assist this process.

### **5.2 Council Administration**

Separate Council functional areas are involved with contributions levied by the City of Whitehorse. It is important that staff from these areas work together to coordinate different aspects of Council's open space program. It is expected that through preparation of the Open Space Strategy, there is an increased ownership and understanding of the contributions system amongst Council staff.

The open space contributions program includes:

- The contribution levy and timing of collection as established by Council's planning office.
- The collection of contributions and administration as undertaken by corporate services.
- Annual expenditure decisions by Councillors, Executive team, Arts and Recreation Development Department and other Council staff.
- Project implementation with a lead role by the Arts and Recreation Development Department of Council and ParksWide overseeing on ground works.

Open space capital works projects will be included in Council's Asset Management Plan and annual budget allocations will be supplemented with contributions levies. For land purchase, monies will be held until a suitable site is located and sufficient funds are available.

Monies collected by Council are already accounted for separately to general revenue and are allocated yearly to open space projects by the Finance Department. Strict accountability is maintained, to ensure the funds are spent for capital works relating to 'resort and recreation' (as required by the Subdivision Act 1988) as opposed to ongoing maintenance of open space or funding of non-open space infrastructure. With adoption of the Open Space Strategy, the Arts and Recreation Development Department will be expected to take a more active role in the particular use of funds for open space projects.

Annual monitoring of the Strategy should take place with the lead role taken by the Arts and Recreation Development Department. That review should include the open space contributions program.

### 5.3 Information Collection

In order to provide meaningful annual reporting, the accounting system should record the following information for open space contributions levied and spent:

Information to be Recorded When a Contribution is Levied

- Post code
- Project address
- Applicant name and address
- Planning permit reference number and financial year
- Number of dwelling units
- Contribution type (land and/or cash)
- Contribution purpose (land purchase, improvements)
- Land value
- Contribution rate (% of land value)
- Dollar contribution
- Date requested
- Date paid/land transfer to Council

Information should be entered so that it can later be retrieved using a geographic search (GIS system).

Expenditure Information to be Recorded by Project

- Post code
- Location (eg. name of reserve)
- Budget line item reference number and financial year
- Expenditure purpose (land purchase, improvements)
- Project dollar value
- Dollar value of funds from contributions fund

### 5.4 Annual Reporting

Annual collation of information for open space contributions should be possible using the information collection described above.

Annual Reporting by Strategy post code area

- Contributions collected during the current financial year with some comment on the overall distribution of collections
- Contributions spent during the current financial year with some comment on the overall the distribution or allocation of expenditure
- Proportion of total open space program budget attributed to contributions
- Contributions held in reserve fund
- Anticipated expenditure for the following financial year (once the annual budget is finalised)

Purpose of Annual Reporting

- Meet external reporting requirements (eg. Annual Report).
- Ensure those projects for which funds are collected are completed as scheduled
- Evaluate the use and mix of possible funding sources
- Ensure that funds collected are spent in the appropriate location (location nexus)
- Determine whether the rate of contribution collected continues to be appropriate or needs review

- Provide a basis for preparing an open space component of any future Development Contributions Plan

## APPENDIX A. Open Space Contribution Rate Calculation

Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2007-2021						
Open Space Contribution Rate Calculation						
[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]	[6]	[7]
Suburb Post Code Location	Estimated Land Area To Be Developed hectares	Average Residential Land Value \$/sq metre	Total Estimated Land Value - Land Area To Be Developed \$	Open Space Costs for New Population \$	Calculated Open Space Contribution Rate %	Average Per Annum Contributions Over 15 Years \$
Blackburn	10.69	\$438	\$46,834,793	\$895,260		\$59,684
Blackburn North	6.45	\$420	\$27,090,000	\$67,500		\$4,500
Blackburn South	7.43	\$411	\$30,537,300	\$85,050		\$5,670
Box Hill	21.91	\$471	\$103,211,172	\$3,105,715		\$207,048
Box Hill North	6.64	\$430	\$28,552,000	\$338,625		\$22,575
Box Hill South	5.53	\$434	\$24,017,560	\$1,721,825		\$114,788
Burwood	5.60	\$449	\$25,140,273	\$3,141,420		\$209,428
Burwood East	17.41	\$421	\$73,308,730	\$3,505,800		\$233,720
Forest Hill	7.25	\$386	\$27,969,560	\$82,550		\$5,503
Mitcham	19.13	\$325	\$62,168,031	\$1,264,700		\$84,313
Mont Albert	6.77	\$621	\$42,010,650	\$2,258,920		\$150,595
Mont Albert North	3.26	\$467	\$15,224,200	\$222,375		\$14,825
Nunawading	13.39	\$349	\$46,734,590	\$4,410,200		\$294,013
Surrey Hills	2.33	\$616	\$14,352,800	\$2,139,200		\$142,613
Vermont	2.70	\$337	\$9,099,000	\$116,900		\$7,793
Vermont South	17.13	\$354	\$60,640,200	\$791,900		\$52,793
<b>Municipal Total</b>	<b>153.62</b>		<b>\$636,890,859</b>	<b>\$24,147,940</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>\$1,609,863</b>

- Notes:
- [2] Refer to Appendix A, Residential Lot Distribution and Estimated Land Area To Be Developed.
  - [3] Supplied by Council based on 2006 valuations.
  - [4] = [2] x [3]
  - [5] refer to Appendix A, Project Costs and Cost Allocation.
  - [6] = [5] / [4] x100
  - [7] = [5] / 15

**Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2007-2021**

**Project Costs and Cost Allocation**

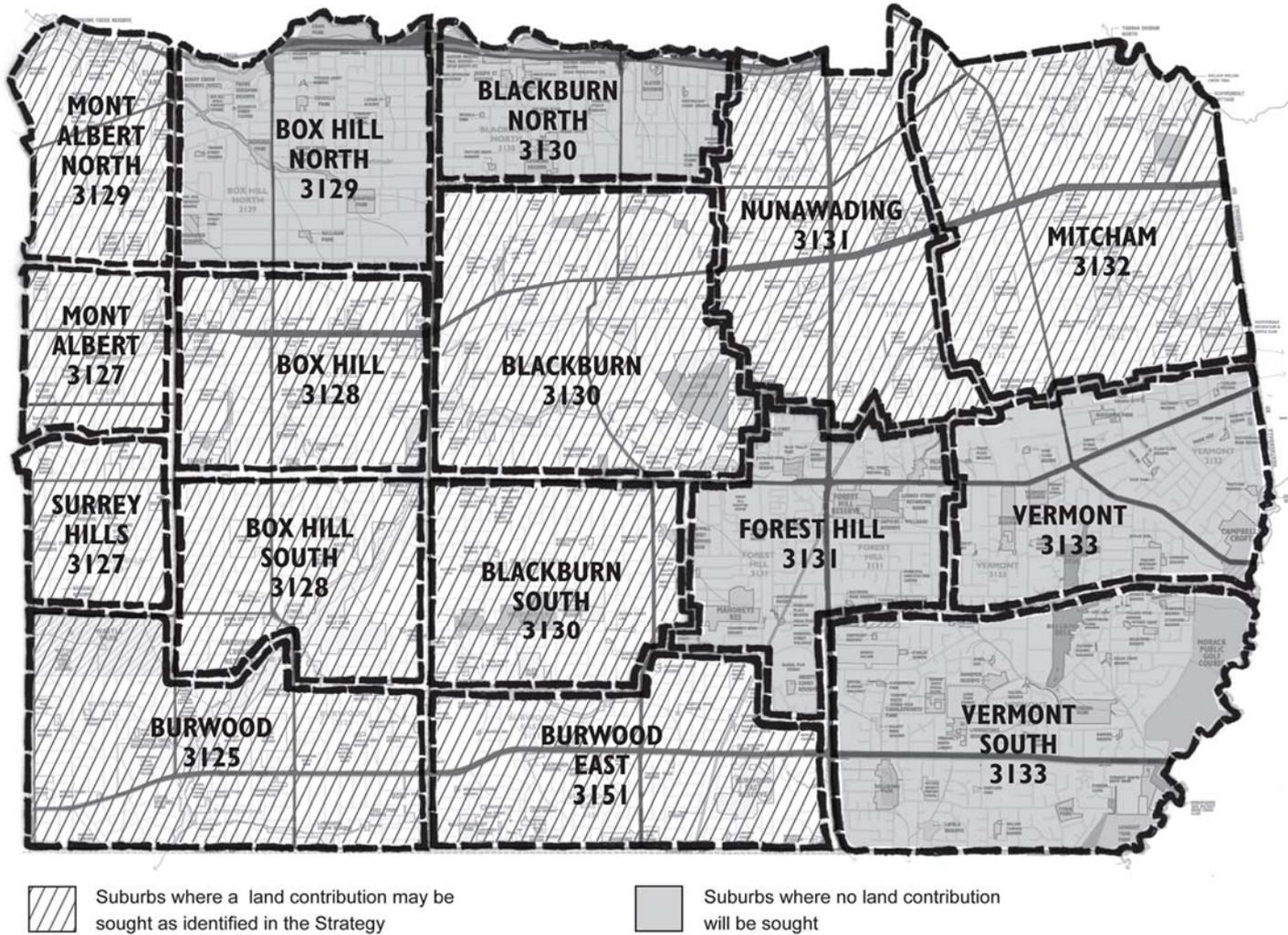
	[1]	[2]	[3]	[4]	[5]
Suburb Post Code Location	Costs For Existing Population \$	Costs for New Population \$	Total Project Costs \$	Average Annual Costs Over 15 Years For New Population \$	Calculated Open Space Contribution Rate %
Blackburn	\$1,440,940	\$895,260	\$2,336,200	\$59,684	
Blackburn North	\$382,500	\$67,500	\$450,000	\$4,500	
Blackburn South	\$481,950	\$85,050	\$567,000	\$5,670	
Box Hill	\$1,255,485	\$3,105,715	\$4,361,200	\$207,048	
Box Hill North	\$1,233,875	\$338,625	\$1,572,500	\$22,575	
Box Hill South	\$2,979,142	\$1,721,825	\$4,700,967	\$114,788	
Burwood	\$1,447,380	\$3,141,420	\$4,588,800	\$209,428	
Burwood East	\$880,400	\$3,505,800	\$4,386,200	\$233,720	
Forest Hill	\$234,450	\$82,550	\$317,000	\$5,503	
Mitcham	\$2,077,800	\$1,264,700	\$3,342,500	\$84,313	
Mont Albert	\$1,663,880	\$2,258,920	\$3,922,800	\$150,595	
Mont Albert North	\$1,260,125	\$222,375	\$1,482,500	\$14,825	
Nunawading	\$1,119,500	\$4,410,200	\$5,529,700	\$294,013	
Surrey Hills	\$2,639,000	\$2,139,200	\$4,778,200	\$142,613	
Vermont	\$852,100	\$116,900	\$969,000	\$7,793	
Vermont South	\$969,100	\$791,900	\$1,761,000	\$52,793	
<b>Municipal Total</b>	<b>\$20,917,627</b>	<b>\$24,147,940</b>	<b>\$45,065,567</b>	<b>\$1,609,863</b>	<b>3.8</b>

**Whitehorse Open Space Strategy 2007-2021**  
**Residential Lot Distribution and Estimated Land Area To Be Developed**

		Activity Centres / Strategic Redevelopment Sites					Balance of Suburb					
[1]	[2]	[3]	[3a]	[4]	[5]	[5a]	[6]	[6a]	[7]	[8]	[8a]	[9]
Suburb Post Code Location	Total Additional Residential Lots no.	Additional Residential Lots no.	% Total Additional Residential Lots %	Average Lot Size sq metres	Estimated Land Area To Be Developed hectares	% Total Estimated Land Area To Be Developed %	Additional Residential Lots no.	% Total Additional Residential Lots %	Average Lot Size sq metres	Estimated Land Area To Be Developed hectares	% Total Estimated Land Area To Be Developed %	Total Estimated Land Area To Be Developed hectares
Blackburn	423	190	45%	225	4.28	40%	233	55%	375	6.41	60%	10.69
Blackburn North	231	0	0%	N/A	0	0%	231	100%	375	6.45	100%	6.45
Blackburn South	288	0	0%	N/A	0	0%	288	100%	375	7.43	100%	7.43
Box Hill	1,058	476	45%	120	5.71	26%	582	55%	375	16.20	74%	21.91
Box Hill North	236	0	0%	N/A	0	0%	236	100%	375	6.64	100%	6.64
Box Hill South	208	42	20%	150	0.62	11%	166	80%	375	4.91	89%	5.53
Burwood	229	103	45%	194	2.00	36%	126	55%	375	3.60	64%	5.60
Burwood East	797	359	45%	200	7.17	41%	438	55%	375	10.24	59%	17.41
Forest Hill	301	60	20%	300	1.81	25%	241	80%	375	5.44	75%	7.25
Mitcham	675	304	45%	263	7.99	42%	371	55%	375	11.14	58%	19.13
Mont Albert	257	51	20%	250	1.29	19%	206	80%	375	5.48	81%	6.77
Mont Albert North	117	0	0%	N/A	0	0%	117	100%	375	3.26	100%	3.26
Nunawading	579	261	45%	200	5.21	39%	318	55%	375	8.18	61%	13.39
Surrey Hills	87	0	0%	N/A	0	0%	87	100%	375	2.33	100%	2.33
Vermont	97	0	0%	N/A	0	0%	97	100%	375	2.70	100%	2.70
Vermont South	580	116	20%	300	3.48	20%	464	80%	375	13.65	80%	17.13
<b>Municipal Total</b>	<b>6,163</b>	<b>1,962</b>	<b>32%</b>		<b>39.56</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>4,201</b>	<b>67%</b>		<b>114.06</b>	<b>74%</b>	<b>153.62</b>

- Notes:
- [2] Sourced from i.d. consulting population and dwelling forecasts prepared for Whitehorse City Council.
  - [3] Based on distribution of forecast dwelling lots between Activity Centres / Strategic Redevelopment Sites and Natural / Minimal Change areas (as defined in the Whitehorse Housing Study) in the Balance of Suburb. Where there is opportunity for substantial change, the split is 55% - 45%. This is consistent with the Eastern Regional Housing Statement. Where there is only redevelopment site opportunity for major change, the split is 20% - 80%. Where there is neither, new dwelling lots are assigned to the Balance of Suburb.
  - [4] Average lot size for each suburb (Activity Centres / Strategic Redevelopment Sites) based on densities for Substantial Change areas (Whitehorse Housing Study).
  - [5] = [3] x [4]
  - [6] Same as for [3].
  - [7] Based on the average lot size of the majority of new lots created between 2001 - 2006.
  - [8] = [6] x [7]
  - [9] = [5] + [8]

## APPENDIX B. Areas Where a Land Contribution May be Sought



## APPENDIX C. Criteria for Land Contributions

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Accessibility</b>	Physical access into the site including the inherent topography, and ability to make the site safe and accessible to people with limited mobility or with a disability. (Note - refer also to Transport, Visibility, Condition and Location in this list of Criteria for other access related issues).
<b>Adjoining land use</b>	The influence of adjoining land use on the ecological, social and cultural value of the open space.
<b>Amenity</b>	Visual and passive amenity values relates to the influence open space has on the liveability of neighbourhoods, providing visual relief from built form, and the break open space provides from noise levels associated with traffic and other urban land use activities and adequate levels of sunlight (at least 5 hours a day).
<b>Council Policies</b>	The land is subject to other planning processes and policies that may be consistent or inconsistent with all or part of the site becoming public open space.
<b>Condition</b>	The existing physical condition of the land which may have inherent issues such as contamination or weed infestation which have a significant financial or safety implications for Council if the land becomes public open space.
<b>Ecological</b>	Includes the site's existing biodiversity values and the sites potential to contribute to the protection and enhancement of these values, along with a site's contribution to existing or future habitat corridors.
<b>Equity</b>	All residents in the municipality should have reasonable access to public open space.
<b>Financial (land purchase)</b>	The cost to Council in obtaining the land as open space.
<b>Heritage character</b>	Indigenous and non-indigenous values that could be enhanced and protected in the open space. These values will also influence the future use and design of the open space.
<b>Landscape character</b>	Its contribution to the character and attractiveness of the neighbourhood.
<b>Location/Linkages</b>	The sites contribution to the wider open space network including forming open space corridor links. This includes consideration of the other strategic planning projects in Council for future expansion of the residential population, and where it is appropriate to provide connections.
<b>Ongoing maintenance &amp; management</b>	The ongoing cost and responsibility for Council to maintain and manage the land.
<b>Ownership</b>	Where the land is already in public ownership there is more potential for Council to negotiate to obtain the land without the need for purchase. Where the land is privately owned there are methods for acquiring the land through open space contributions.
<b>Recreation</b>	The potential for the site to accommodate a range of formal and informal recreational uses. These can include organised sports, play, sitting, walking, jogging, exercising, informal games, picnicking and dog walking.
<b>Services/Easements</b>	Extent of other services which may restrict access including water supply, power supply, flood mitigation and drainage.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Size</b>	<p>The minimum size for the site to meet its intended purpose, on its own or in combination with adjoining land. Refer to minimum size parcels for each type of open space as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional open space, unlimited</li> <li>• Municipal open space, minimum 3 hectares</li> <li>• Neighbourhood open space, minimum 1 hectare</li> <li>• Local open space, minimum 0.26 hectare (up to 0.99 hectare)</li> <li>• Small Local open space, 0.03 hectares (up to 0.25 hectare)</li> <li>• Linking space, minimum 5 metres wide</li> </ul>
<b>Transport</b>	<p>The range of transport options for residents to access the site including proximity to public transport, linear shared trails and major roads.</p>
<b>Visibility</b>	<p>The site's visual prominence to maximise its use and contribution to the broader community. Generally land which has at two access points, and local roads to two sides.</p>

Source: Whitehorse Open Space Strategy, 2007, Table 4.2.