

Appendix G: Open Space Toolkit and Action Plan

The Sydney Plan

August 2026
Version 1



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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Public open space is the foundation of liveable communities. It enables people to enjoy a wide range of recreational, social, and cultural activities, while also contributing to healthier, more connected and more resilient communities.

As Sydney continues to grow, and more residents live in denser housing types, making sure there is enough high quality public open space close to people's homes is critical. The 2026 Greater Sydney Outdoors Survey found that 63% of people would be happy to live in a higher-density housing area in the future, if it came with more accessible open spaces.

Open space policy is also required to address equity issues. Across Sydney, 62.2% homes are within 400 metres (m) of a 3,000 square metres (sqm) open space, but in some suburbs, the number of homes within 400m of a park drops well below 20%. Additionally, it is projected that by 2036, this provision will drop to 59.9% of dwellings within 400m of a 3,000sqm open space without additional open space.

Multiple government agencies and councils design, deliver and manage public open spaces across Sydney. As a result, there is no agreed understanding about the areas of greatest need and where effort and investment can be focused alongside new homes. Clear guidance and policy on open space provision creates certainty for local councils and developers, and better development outcomes.

1.2 Purpose of this appendix

To address policy gaps and growing demand for public open space, the Open Space Toolkit and Action Plan has been prepared to ensure the provision of public open spaces keep up with ongoing growth across the Sydney region.

The purpose of this document is to:

- identify areas of greatest open space need, and fastest population growth, to coordinate investment and effort in areas that need it most
- provide the evidence base supporting the new policies for open space provision set out in the Sydney Plan, and guidance for their implementation
- provide more information about the actions for open space planning set out in the Sydney Plan
- provide advice to inform:

- preparation of open space strategies and local strategic planning
- development and assessment of planning proposals to rezone land
- coordinated infrastructure planning and sequencing.

1.3 Relationship with other policies and guidance

This appendix applies to all land within the Sydney region. It is the primary reference document for councils and proponents undertaking open space planning as part of a rezoning process, or development of local strategies in the Sydney region. The Draft Greener Places Design Guide continues to apply in all other areas. Refer to the Greener Neighbourhoods Guide for tree canopy guidance, and any additional urban greening guidance and resources released as part of implementation of Action 8.2 of the Sydney Plan.

This appendix should be used in conjunction with the Department of Planning, Housing and infrastructure's (the Department) Connecting with Country framework.

The 2017 Sydney Green Grid work mapped over 50 Green Grid corridors that have formed the basis of local and state open space and access strategies and led to local delivery of projects over the last decade. This work will be superseded by new mapping, categorisation and prioritisation for delivery as set out in the Blue-Green Grid Framework (Appendix H).

2 Context, analysis and approach

Sydney is experiencing significant population growth, urban intensification and increased housing density occurring across both infill and greenfield areas. With more people living in more compact homes and neighbourhoods, planning for public open space must respond to an area's settlement patterns, densities, community needs, values and aspirations.

The planning and delivery of open space should be aligned with projected population and housing growth to ensure the current and future residents have equitable access to open space. According to the open space analysis undertaken by the Department, the existing rate of open space provision in Sydney is 42.2sqm/person. By 2036 this will reduce to 37.7sqm/person without intervention. Distribution is not equal, with more than 1.6 million people currently living in areas with less than 15 sqm of open space per person.

2.1 Stakeholder values and aspirations

Public open space plays a critical role in providing opportunities for connection with nature, outdoor recreation, and social gatherings. Communities have acknowledged the importance of access to sufficient and high-quality open space for maintaining liveability and community wellbeing. The Committee for Sydney's 2026 Life in Sydney survey found that 61% people agree that "easy access to nature" is an important factor in a city being liveable, up from 52% in 2025.

The Department undertakes a Greater Sydney Outdoors Survey, the most recent in 2025, to discover what Sydney residents love to do during their recreation time. The results inform how the Department can improve the planning of Sydney's recreation spaces, to enrich the lives of everyone who lives in and visits Sydney. The 2025 Survey found that, most Sydney residents (85%) agree that investment should be made in parks and waterways in densely populated urban areas, with just 4% who disagree.

Consultation undertaken in 2023 by the Department with key stakeholders in public open space provision found that there were inconsistent baselines used for public open space provision, unsuitable land was being used for public open space, poor quality and underperforming public open spaces were being delivered, and, planning for public open space could be ad hoc and uncoordinated.

2.2 Best practice open space policy approaches and policy gaps in NSW

NSW currently does not have a state-wide policy or benchmark for provision of open space. In the absence of up-to-date guidance, the former Growth Centres Development Code (2006) benchmark of 2.83 hectares (ha) of public open space per 1,000 people continues to be referenced. This

measure is not well suited to contemporary urban environments, particularly higher-density housing typologies. For development with a density ratio of 1.5:1 or greater, the open space requirement exceeds the site area.

A 400m walk to a local open space has been informally applied as a benchmark for access by industry, design and planning professionals and NSW Government. The Draft Greener Places Design Guide (2017) identified that people should be within maximum 5-minute or 400m walk of a local park, with minimal barriers, and this aligns with people's expectations for access.

A 400m walk to a local open space benchmark is also the foundation of open space policy in other cities (Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, New York, Vancouver, London). Many of these cities also specify minimum sizes for local open spaces as well, ranging from a minimum size of 0.4 ha in Adelaide up to 2 ha in London.

2.3 Current and recent rezoning projects and open space outcomes

In practice, many planning proposals and State led rezonings are achieving 15% open space provision on large sites.

There is inconsistency in the quality, usability and configuration of open space delivered through rezoning. Key issues arising on projects include fragmentation of open space, quantum of flood impacted open space as part of the overall offer and reliance on through site links to meet open space targets, and of course the flow-on maintenance cost impacts for councils. Guidance is required to inform the open space planning process undertaken with rezonings to improve outcomes and streamline negotiations between proponents and councils.

A review of state-led rezoning projects undertaken by the Department found that most projects are seeing homes within 400m of a local open space. Current projects also highlight the multiple approaches available to improve walkability, which include provision of new parks and improve permeability and access to existing parks.

2.4 Open space analysis

Understanding the current provision of public open space, and how accessible it is, helps identify where open space improvements are most needed and investment and effort should be focussed.

2.4.1 Methodology for open space access assessment

The Department has developed a new database that allows for analysis of walkability and provision per person. The database also includes projected population growth over the next 10 years. RE1 Zone (Public Recreation) has been used as the baseline for identifying public open space, as it provides a consistent measurable framework across Sydney. This approach results in some gaps,

particularly where regional open space, national parks and conservation land play a role in providing local recreation opportunities. The Department will be building a more comprehensive database to address these issues in the coming year (see Action 7.4).

Levels of open space provision per capita and access have been measured to define areas of open space need at the neighborhood (SA2) level, as shown in Table 1.

Areas with limited open space access and provision are areas where there is already a deficiency in public open space. Areas with moderate open space access and provision currently have adequate open space provision and walkability, however they are at risk of becoming deficiency areas with population growth. Areas with good open space access and provision enjoy above average levels of open space per capita and high levels of walkability.

Table 1: Categorisation of open space access assessment

Categories	Provision – sqm RE1 Zone open space / person	Walkability - % dwellings within 400m of a 3,000sqm+ park
Areas of limited open space access and provision	0 – 15sqm	0 – 50%
Areas of moderate open space access and provision	16 – 20sqm	51 – 70%
Areas of good open space access and provision	21 +sqm	70% +

2.4.2 Assessment of Sydney's open space needs

Across Sydney, there are different distributions of open space provision and access. People who live near public open space are more likely to use such spaces and gain the associated physical activity and mental and physical health benefits.

Figure 1 shows that areas with particularly low rates of open space per capita (less than 5 sqm/person) include many higher density parts of the inner city and the inner west including Darlinghurst, Chippendale, Haymarket, Zetland, Ultimo, Waterloo, Newtown, Petersham and Stanmore. There are also hotspots in Randwick, Eastlake and Kensington, Hurstville, Auburn, Campsie, Bankstown, Wahroonga and Strathfield.

Figure 2 shows that areas with particularly low walkability (less than 30% within 400m to open spaces over 3,000sqm) tend to be in outer growth areas such as Oran Park, Mount Annan and Picton, established areas in northern Sydney including Ryde, Pennant Hills and Wahroonga and parts of the Blue Mountains such as Wentworth Falls, Springwood and Blackheath.

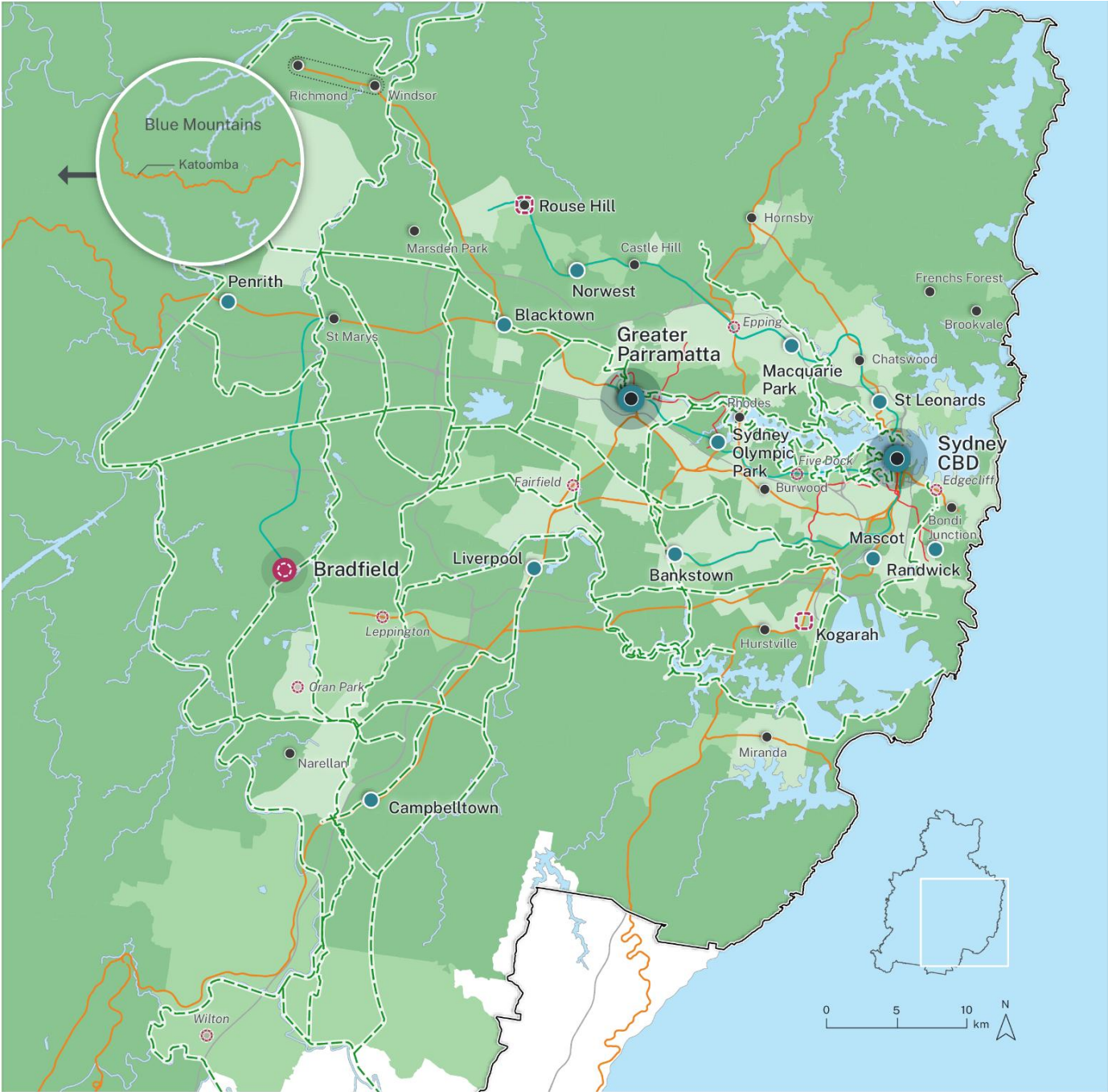
In growth areas this is partially explained by delivery of new open spaces being underway, while the Blue Mountains has access to expansive national parks, which are excluded from the calculation

methodology. Analysis undertaken by the Department found almost 1.4 million people currently live in areas where less than 50% of dwellings are within 400m of a local open space (minimum size 3,000sqm).

Figure 3 presents analysis of access and provision of public open space. It identifies areas where there is currently limited access to public open space, with concentrations around eastern and central Sydney. Some of the fastest growing areas in Sydney, including parts of Bayside, Canterbury-Bankstown, Inner West, Parramatta, and Ryde LGAs, have some of highest open space need.

Housing growth should be prioritised in areas with good access to public open space, and in areas of limited access, all new developments will need to ensure they are planned to provide good access to open space for future residents.

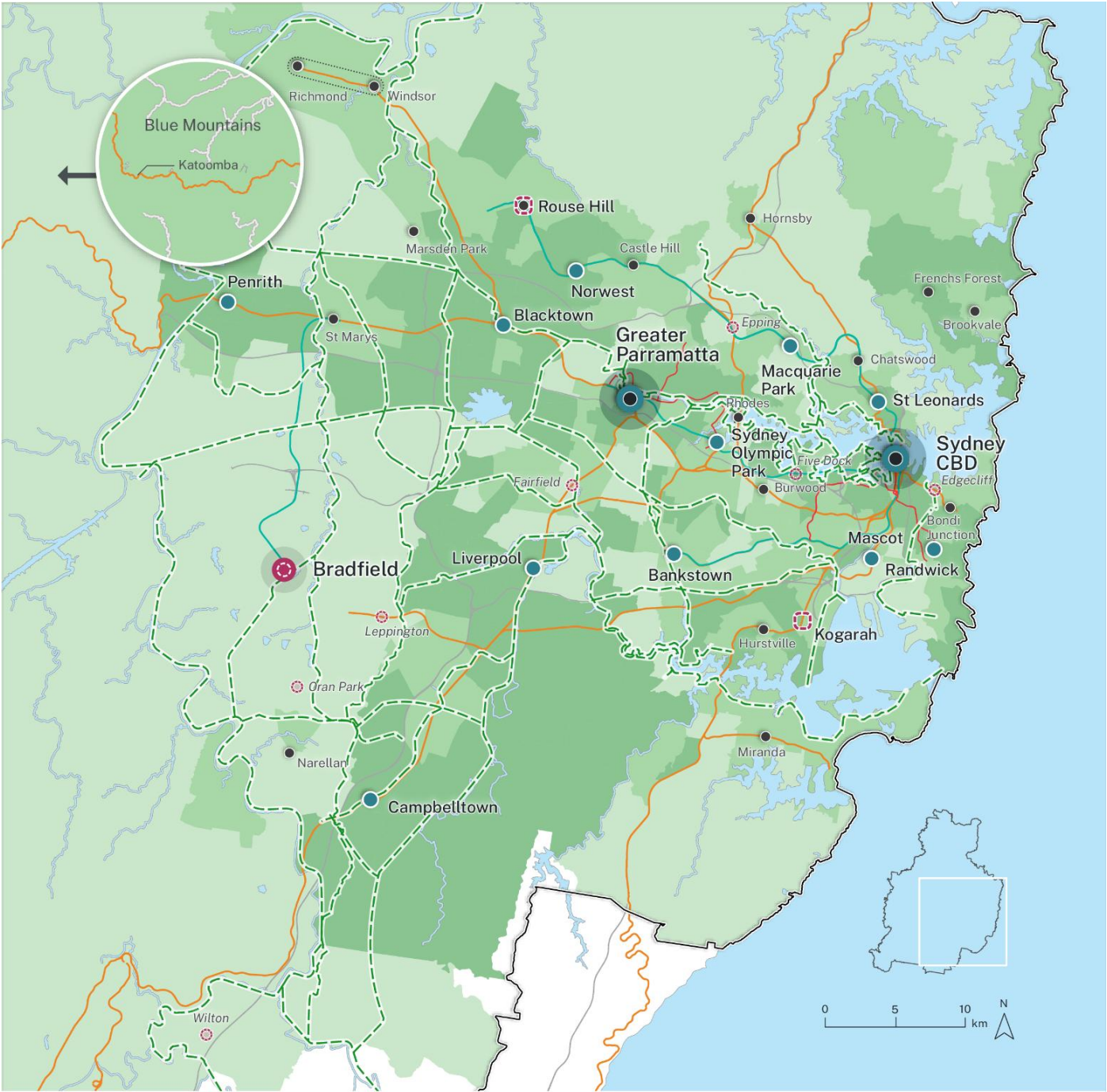
Figure 1: Open space per person



Open space per person by 2036



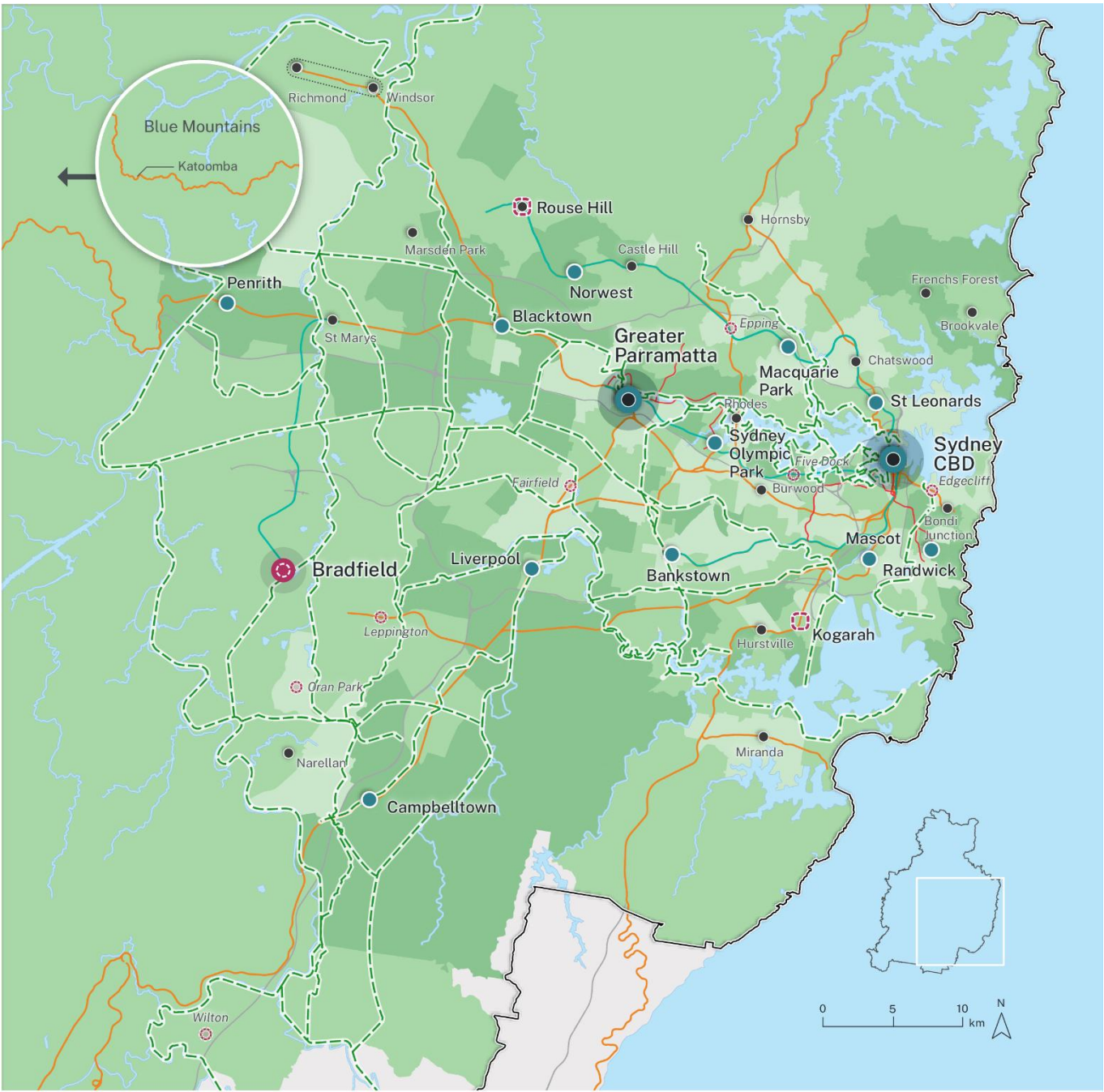
Figure 2: Walkability of open space



Walkability of open space by 2036



Figure 3: Open space access and provision



Open space access and provision by 2036

- Sydney region boundary
- Blue-Green Grid primary corridors
- Rail (shared and passenger lines)
- Metro
- Light rail
- Motorway (existing and committed)
- CBD
- Emerging CBD
- Major centre
- Emerging major centre
- Activity centre
- Emerging activity centre

OPEN SPACE ACCESS ASSESSMENT

- Areas of limited open space access and provision
- Areas of moderate open space access and provision
- Areas of good open space access and provision

2.5 The Department's approach to improving access to public open space

Without strategic planning and investment focused on improving access to public open space alongside growth, many parts of Sydney will decline in liveability. The Department aims to deliver more and better open space for all.

The following key approaches are the programs, initiatives and gaps that the Department is prioritising to help improve open space provision, access and equity across Sydney.

The five key approaches are:

- getting more open space outcomes from public land
- creating more places to swim and be by the water
- every significant rezoning decision improves access and provides new open space
- prioritising, delivering and supporting local councils to deliver the Blue-Green Grid
- better open space data and monitoring progress.

2.5.1 Getting more open space outcomes from public land

The public land, both utilised and vacant, in Sydney offers a range of opportunities to unlock government land for use as public open space. It provides an opportunity for shared uses through unlocking additional open spaces for communities in locations such as schools and cemeteries, and when land is identified for divestment, to provide new public open space on suitable land.

Incorporating new public open space in rezonings of public land for housing delivery is another important way to improve provision and ensures that housing growth is supported by much needed spaces for recreation.

Repurposing vacant and underutilised government owned land for use as public open space can fill gaps in open space provision, especially in high density areas where new small parks are an important part of the open space network and a way of providing all dwellings with access to a public open space within 200m.

Early consideration of public open space needs will help align provision with a growing population and create the type of facilities that can bring the greatest community benefit. This is important for larger or regional open spaces that need to be secured into public ownership before development progresses.

In dense urban areas, where new open space is difficult and expensive to obtain, secondary open spaces can supplement the primary local open space network and improve access. The Department has identified the following priorities for investigation in the short-term:

- public use of school grounds

- walking trails and passive recreation in cemeteries.

The NSW Department of Education's Share our Schools program is an incredible success, with approximately 250 schools signed up to the program and being accessed by the public at various times outside of school hours. The program supports schools with security, maintenance and engagement with the community.

There may be opportunities to further invest in schools with existing public access arrangements that could increase the availability and quality of open space. This could be achieved through extended community access periods and the provision of supporting infrastructure, such as bubblers, planting and amenities. Prioritising access to school grounds as additional open space in suburbs with increasing planned housing growth will be a consideration of this program.

Public land that is being divested can be an effective way to provide new public open spaces, expanding existing public open spaces as well as incorporating new public open space in rezonings of public land for housing delivery, aligning housing growth with community infrastructure provision.

The NSW and Federal Governments have an ongoing pipeline of land being divested. Major landholdings, such as Defence sites, present significant opportunity to deliver new public open space, particularly in areas of most need.

The Department will look closely at sites in areas of Sydney where significant growth is planned, and open space provision is low, and test if provision of open space on sites coming to market can be achieved whilst still achieving other objectives for the people of NSW. The Office of Strategic Lands has committed to a program of land transfers to local councils to provide long term security of use as public open space and support recreation opportunities and conservation outcomes.

2.5.2 Creating more places to swim and be by the water

Sydney has a deep connection to water, valuing waterways as places for recreation, and there is demand for more clean, safe, natural swimming sites. Providing places to swim in inland waterways can encourage outdoor recreation, promote health and well-being, boost tourism and protect the environment, and help people cool down in hot weather. Designating parts of public open spaces as places to swim can also protect sensitive areas from damage.

Everyone in Sydney should be able to reach a freely accessible place to swim. The Department is setting an aspirational target that all Sydney residents, over time, will live within 10 kilometres (km) of a free place to swim in nature.

Sydney is getting hotter, and parts of western Sydney are forecast to experience more hot days in the future and are also located long distances from places to swim along the coastline. Identifying new opportunities for improving access to natural waterways in western Sydney is a priority.

The Places to Swim program is supporting the creation of great places for people to enjoy waterways, access recreational engagement with waterways and being around water. The

Department is working with agencies and councils to improve access to water and allow people to get in on or around water.

In partnership with Greater Sydney Parklands, state agencies and councils, the Department will continue to look at places to swim across Sydney region over the next year, with a focus on creating equity in western Sydney, and explore opportunities to improve access and amenity for swim sites.

2.5.3 Every significant rezoning decision improves access and provides new open space

Development precincts are an opportunity to make sure that housing growth is supported by provision of good quality open space, that is accessible to all residents. Policies are needed to ensure that every rezoning and investment decision improves open space access, and public investment focuses on land acquisition and delivery in areas of greatest open space need.

The Department's state-led rezoning program presents the opportunity for significant changes in terms of access to open space across Sydney. Rezoning in locations with good existing open space access will boost the percentage of homes within the benchmark 400m of a 3,000sqm or great local open space.

State-led rezoning projects might also deliver new open space. The Department will be looking closely at potential state-led rezoning projects to identify where they may result in new open space, with a focus on where state-government owned land is available for parks. This will be an important consideration, amongst others, in nominating projects to be rezoned by the Department.

The Department will release guidance for open space provision in state-led and precinct scale rezonings as part of the package of guidance for open space and local contributions planning, refer to Action 7.2 for more information.

Additionally, Attachment 1 of this appendix provides draft guidance rezoning of a large site (2 ha or greater) for residential or mixed uses should provide public open space equal to 15% of the site. This will be finalised in 2027.

2.5.4 Prioritising, delivering and supporting local councils to deliver the Blue-Green Grid

Delivering the Blue-Green Grid requires a clear approach to prioritisation and a targeted set of responses that require state government leadership and coordination. To date, there has not been a coordinated approach to Blue-Green Grid implementation.

The approach to prioritising, delivering and supporting local councils to deliver the Blue-Green Grid is included in the Blue-Green Grid Framework at Appendix H of the Sydney Plan. The Framework includes:

- **corridor categorisation:** the corridors categories for Sydney based on their function and establishes a starting point for discussions around delivery responsibilities

- **corridor prioritisation:** a methodology for prioritising corridors for development and ensure investment is also targeted at areas of open space need.

New Blue-Green Grid detailed guidance will be developed that will provide guidance to local councils and developers on Blue-Green Grid implementation, refer to Action 7.1 for more information.

2.5.5 Better open space data and monitoring progress

Improving access to public open space takes time and demonstrating progress against agreed criteria informs better strategic planning outcomes and ongoing investment decisions. Annual reporting on open space provision against benchmarks will be undertaken to effectively monitor progress of implementing the Open Space Action Plan.

Every year, the department will report on progress against 4 benchmarks for open space:

- percentage of dwellings within 400m of a local open space (minimum size 3,000sqm)
- percentage of dwellings within 2km of a continuous 30-minute walking loop
- percentage of dwellings within 10km of a place to swim
- net change in public open space provision.

Effective monitoring relies on accurate and up to date data on open space and places to swim. An updated open spaces and places to swim database will be developed in consultation with local councils to support ongoing monitoring and evaluation (refer to Action 7.4).

3 Toolkit

The open space toolkit identifies a series of considerations for open space planning for use by proponents, NSW Government and councils on planning proposals and state led rezonings that are greater than 2ha. These considerations should also be used to guide local strategic planning.

This toolkit will be updated once the package of guidance for open space and local contributions planning is finalised (Action 7.2). It will act as interim guidance until the updates are finalised.

3.1 Considerations for open space planning

3.1.1 Types of open space

For the purposes of planning for public open space, three different types of open space have been identified.

Public open space

Public open space is defined as:

Land that is deliberately planned and designed to meet the recreational needs of communities and is freely accessible at all times for recreation purposes. It includes parks and gardens, plazas and squares, sports fields and courts and green corridors.

Public open space typically includes land zoned RE1 Public Recreation. However, not all publicly accessible open spaces are zoned RE1. Inconsistencies in zoning of public open spaces as RE1 may occur due to landownership, lot sizes or informal land use agreements.

Public open space can occur in other land use zones, especially in new development areas where land zoning sometimes lags behind master planning. In existing urban areas, historic or legacy zonings prevail over current use of land as public open space.

Public open space is supported by complementary and incidental open space, which can play an important role in connecting and enhancing the overall open space network.

Complementary open space

Complementary open spaces support the public open space network, and although their primary purpose is other than recreation they provide a broader public benefit.

Zones that are considered complementary open spaces include:

- C1 – National Parks and Nature Reserves
- C2 – Environmental Conservation

- C3 – Environmental Management.

Secondary open space

Secondary open spaces often have access limitations or constraints on use but can be very useful in complementing the primary public open space network, particularly where competition for land is high. When managed well, these spaces can add greenery, improve connectivity, support informal activity and contribute to delivering the Blue-Green Grid. Incidental spaces can include:

- drainage corridors, utility easements and transport corridors
- flood prone land lower than the 1:20 design flood level
- road verges and car parks
- land on school grounds
- land connected to community facilities (e.g. churches)
- privately owned land (i.e. forecourts and rooftops)
- user pays only sporting facilities (i.e. golf courses and rooftops)
- cemeteries and memorial parks.

As public access could be restricted at any time and there can be constraints on use, secondary open space is not considered as public open space provision requirements of large sites.

Blue-Green Grid

The Blue-Green Grid is an interconnected network of open spaces that links centres, transport hubs, waterways, and key residential and employment areas. It includes parks and reserves, waterways and wetlands, beaches and foreshores, and other open-space assets connected through the public realm, creek corridors, paths, cycleways and transport routes.

The Blue-Green Grid is an essential part of open space accessibility. It improves the accessibility to open spaces and has significant outcomes for biodiversity, resilience and water quality, and catchment health.

Networking public open space through the Blue-Green Grid can enhance accessibility and useability while conserving biodiversity and the functions of green infrastructure. The Blue-Green Grid provides complementary open spaces and opportunities for long walks. Opportunities to improve access to the Blue-Green Grid should be considered.

The Blue-Green Grid Framework (Appendix H) provides a framework for considering local projects for State investment.

3.1.2 Hierarchy and walkability

Public open space needs to be well-distributed and delivered at a range of scales for it to be effective. A hierarchy of open space ensures that everyone has reasonable and equal access to the

wide variety of recreation opportunities that these spaces provide. Walking catchments for each scale of open space ensure that people have access to local opportunities for informal sport, play and recreation close to their homes, as well as access to larger district opportunities for formal sport and community events within a broader area.

Regional open spaces offer an array of recreational and cultural offerings and attract visitors from across the region or city. Regional parks are typically not considered as part of public open space in developments and are often developed and managed by state agencies, trusts, local governments and other public bodies.

Table 2 outlines public open space hierarchy and walkability guidance for the different types of open space and provides direction on appropriate walking catchments for each.

Table 2: Public open space hierarchy and guidance for catchments

Type	Size*	Description and walking catchment
Small	0.15 – 0.3 ha	Small spaces providing flexible opportunities for greenery and recreation in dense urban areas. Catchment: 200m walking distance (2-3 minutes)
Local	0.3 – 5 ha	Local community spaces supporting passive recreation and informal sports. Catchment: 400m walking distance (5 minutes)
District	5– 15 ha	Mid-sized spaces offering a mix of facilities for sports, play and community events for the wider neighbourhood. Catchment: 1.6km walking distance (15-20 minutes)
Regional	15 + ha	Major destinations offering multi-recreation opportunities, cultural activities and natural experiences on large scale. Catchment: 20 minutes by active or public transport / 5-10km (to be reviewed as part of the new Regional Open Space Study to be undertaken in the coming years)

*The size ranges for district and regional parks are indicative. Some district parks that provide unique offerings and attract a district level of usage are smaller than 5 ha, as do some regional parks that attract metropolitan level of usage that are smaller than 15 ha.

3.2 Interim Sydney-based benchmarks for provision of, and access to open space

All new development has a role to play in making sure Sydney is liveable and benchmarks are a way to ensure all new development are providing enough open space that is accessible to residents.

Precincts and large site rezonings are present good opportunities for improved or additional open space in line with the below benchmarks.

Where a planning proposal is inconsistent with the benchmarks, those inconsistencies need to be justified in accordance with the strategic outcomes of the Sydney Plan.

Guidance for the application of these benchmarks to large scale rezonings, and specific advice on when they apply will be developed in the coming months, in consultation with stakeholders as part of the preparation of the package of guidance (Action 7.2). These benchmarks will be updated when finalised and will be formal requirements for rezonings from the date of commencement.

3.2.1 Precinct-scale master planning and rezonings

A precinct is where there is fragmented land ownership of a whole precinct or centre and the rezoning is led by council or state government.

The following are interim benchmarks that should be applied to precinct scale rezoning projects, and to local strategic planning, such as open space planning:

- 95% existing and planned residents should be within 400m (5-minute walk) of a local park of 3,000sqm or greater
- in medium- and high-density areas, residents should be within 200m of an open space (minimum size 1,500sqm)
- no reduction in the total area of public open space.

3.2.2 Large site planning proposals

A large site planning proposal is where the area is greater than 2ha and there is one landowner, or landowner consortium, and is proponent led.

Planning proposals for large sites with a significant increase in mixed use or residential capacity, should demonstrate how they are consistent with the following interim public open space benchmarks:

- residents should be within 400m (5-minute walk) of a local park of 3,000sqm or greater
- in high-density areas, residents should be within 200m of an open space (in existing centres where acquisition and delivery of new spaces is difficult, smaller pocket parks, or secondary open spaces might be part of the solution in ensuring access with 200m)
- 15% of the effective development area to be provided as public open space.

Attachment 1 has been developed to provide guidance for the application of these interim benchmarks for rezoning projects for sites of 2 ha or more.

4 Action Plan

4.1 Overview

The Sydney Plan establishes that there is a need to improve access to local open space, align investment with growth and that access to regional open space and active recreation opportunities is important for liveability in Sydney. To better understand provision, gaps and track effectiveness of policy changes, the Department has identified the following actions that will be delivered over the next few years.

4.2 Actions

Action 7.1: Develop detailed guidance to support implementation of the Blue-Green Grid

Timeframe

2027-29

Why

The detail guidance for the Blue-Green Grid will support councils, proponents and state government agencies in planning and delivering Blue-Green Grid. The guidance is required for the following reasons:

- to identify common barriers, solutions and ways forward for councils in delivering the Blue-Green Grid
- to provide design and practical guidance for councils and agencies in identifying, planning, delivering and maintaining corridors
- to allow for further development of the data and mapping to support the Sydney Blue-Green Grid, including the mapping of environmental and climate change adaptation opportunities
- develop a better understanding of Aboriginal Outcomes, perspectives and priorities for the network.

How

Prioritisation of the corridors through the Sydney Plan is a key step in speeding up delivery. The Department is in the process of setting up an approach to governance and delivery, including:

- establishing how councils, agencies and industry can work with the Blue-Green Grid Committee
- roles and responsibilities in NSW Government for delivering the Blue-Green Grid

- information on how stakeholders can get involved in these processes.

The Department will prepare Blue-Green Grid detailed guidance, likely in the form of a manual to support the planning and implementation the Blue-Green Grid projects including:

- corridor design guidance and case studies
- mapping of environmental opportunity, including the identification of corridors that present opportunities for increased canopy, cooling and biodiversity. With a focus on opportunities to improve water quality and water catchment health, supporting Sydney Water's ongoing programs
- an audit of existing, funded, planned corridor access improvements and key barriers for access. This will help to identify missing pieces and where interventions will support much larger connections
- consideration of areas of cultural significance and cultural management practices and assessment of environmental opportunities across the Blue-Green Grid
- guidance and pathways for developers to work collaboratively with the Department and councils where a corridor is located on its land that being considered in a planning proposal or development application, in the absence of detailed planning for that corridor
- guidance for how councils can work with the Department on updates to the Blue-Green Grid corridor maps, categorisation and prioritisation over time and implementation of projects
- other issues that councils and industry identify as barriers for implementation
- progressing the priority corridor identification and implementation as identified in the Blue-Green Grid Framework (Appendix H).

The Department will support ongoing discussions about securing land for public uses and long-term strategies for ownership with practical advice about how to preserve opportunities on private land in a potential staged approach.

Action 7.2: Prepare a package of guidance for open space and local contributions planning by councils

Timeframe

2027

Why

Councils are seeking leadership from the Department, to improve consistency and efficiency of processes, in the following key areas:

- benchmarks for local open space planning, particularly for justifying the quantum of open space funded through local infrastructure contributions plans

- policy support for negotiating more usable, less-fragmented, more resilient and functional open spaces through proponent led rezoning projects for large sites.

Preparation of tailored public open space benchmarks at local government level are required that respond to existing and planned urban typologies and anticipated growth to improve equity in provision across the Sydney region over time.

The new 400m open space access benchmark will go some way to supporting local open space planning. In some circumstances, a per capita rate for open space is also required for local infrastructure contributions and open space planning.

Additional guidance and benchmarks are needed to support councils with challenges in securing land for open space and ongoing maintenance costs.

How

The Department will prepare, consult on and finalise a package of guidance that will include:

- Sydney-based benchmarks for provision of, and access to open space in precinct scale rezonings and large sites
- a review of current benchmarks, including and consideration of councils' needs, challenges and aspirations
- additional open space provision benchmarks by local government area
- guidance and advice for application into local open space strategies and to inform local infrastructure contribution plans
- guidance on how to assess rezoning proposals to rezone land from RE1 Zone to another use to support no net loss of public open space
- guidance on design quality principles for public open space that starts with Country and addresses provision, access and quality.

Consultation will be undertaken with agencies, councils and other relevant stakeholders.

This appendix will be updated when this action is finalised and will be formal requirements for rezonings from the date of commencement.

Action 7.3: Finalise draft guidance to support open space provision on large sites

Timeframe

2027

Why

Large scale rezonings provide significant opportunities for the renewal or addition of public open space. Clear guidance is needed to support planning proposals in providing open space that is fit for purpose, appropriately located, and feasible to deliver and maintain.

How

The Department will consult with state government agencies, councils and industry to finalise the Draft Guidance in Attachment 1 of this appendix. This will include consultation on:

- public open space provision requirements
- treatment of flood prone land and other constrained land
- considerations for determining 'fit for purpose' land
- where flexibility in application is required.

Attachment 1 of this appendix will be updated once the Guidance is finalised.

Action 7.4: Prepare a comprehensive open space and places to swim database for Sydney to understand access and identify gaps for future projects

Timeframe

2027

Why

Good information about provision of open space and access to different types of open space and places to swim including Blue-Green Grid, will ensure that NSW Government understands gaps in provision, and policy and investment can be targeted to improve equity over time.

How

A regularly updated and comprehensive database will capture:

- new open space provision over time
- land that is used for open space that is not zoned RE1 – Public Recreation
- access to places to swim and where water quality supports new swim opportunities

- regional open space and primary Blue-Green Grid corridors
- active recreation assets.

Development of the database will include extensive engagement with local councils to create an accurate dataset. This database will be used to inform open space provision reporting alongside future reviews of the Sydney Plan.

Over time this information will be used to expand and update existing open space and water benchmarks.

Attachment 1 - Draft Guidance to support open space provision on large sites

Table 3: Draft Guidance: open space provision on large sites

Open Space requirement	Effective Development Area (EDA) definition	Distribution of open space
For all precinct developments over 2ha: - Provide a minimum of 15% of effective development area, as unconstrained land zoned for public recreation (RE1 zone). This is applicable to all housing types, such as lower density through to higher density housing. Considerations: - All public open spaces must be freely and publicly accessible at all times, and available for use at all times - Through site links should not be considered to contribute more than 10% of public open space provision - Flood prone land and accessible bushland should not contribute more than 20% of the public open space.	This is the area of land within a project site available for development that is used as the basis for calculating public open space requirements. Inclusions: - Local roads, streets and car parks - Local hospitals, community centres and facilities - Residential zoning (R1–R4) - Large lot residential (R5) - Commercial zoning (B1–B8) - Industrial zoning (IN1–IN4) - Tourist facilities (including SP3). Exclusions: - Public Recreation (RE1) - Environmental and bushland zones that are publicly accessible and can be used for public recreation (C2–C3) - Private Recreation (RE2) - Infrastructure or facilities zoned SP1 or SP2 (i.e. roads, motorways, rail corridors, drainage corridors, schools, universities).	Concentrate provision of public open space as larger public open space provides greater value and increased variety in recreational opportunities. - For development sites smaller than 5 ha: one public open space as large as comfortably possible within the site should be provided - For sites between 5–25 ha: 75–100% of the proposed public open space provision should be incorporated into a single main local public open space - For development sites greater than 25 ha: the main local public open space should be provided at a minimum 2 ha.

Fit for purpose

The following are design standards for new small or local open spaces proposed to be provided through a rezoning on a large site.

Table 4: Considerations to determine fit for purpose land

Consideration	Benchmark
Shape	Minimum width of 40m. Minimum 12-15m width for small public open spaces that are no longer than 100m.
Solar access	Minimum 50% of the space receives 4 hours of sunlight between 9am and 3pm at all times of the year.
Pedestrian access	Must be easily accessible for pedestrians.
Street frontages	Minimum 50% of the perimeter to have street frontage.
Slope	Minimum 1:20 for 80% site area and 1:6 for the remaining area.