



Council's Alternate Approach for New Housing in the Inner West

APPENDIX 4

Social Infrastructure Needs Study – Summary Report

May 2025

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Inner West Housing Investigation Areas

Social Infrastructure Needs Study - Report

Inner West Council

April 2025

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Acknowledgement of Country

Inner West Council and Cred Consulting acknowledge and respect the Traditional Custodians of the unceded land upon which we work across the Inner West, the Gadigal and Wangal peoples. We honour their Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom has, and will, ensure the continuation of cultures and traditional practices. Even across all the layers of development, Country is still with us.



Table of contents

1. Executive summary	4
2. Introduction	6
3. Defining social infrastructure	8
4. Summary of social infrastructure needs	9
Ashfield-Croydon Housing Investigation Area	9
Dulwich Hill-Marrickville Housing Investigation Area	12
Leichhardt Area Housing Investigation Area	15
Tempe, St Peters and Sydenham Housing Investigation Area	16

1. Executive summary

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of local infrastructure required to support new residents in the Inner West LGA.

The following 16 key moves have been proposed in Council's masterplan on the evidence based of the Social Infrastructure Needs Studies.

1) New multipurpose community hub in Dulwich Hill

There is a benchmark need for a new district-level hub of approximately 3,200–3,700 sqm to include:

- 1,500–1,900 sq.m of hireable community spaces with a mix of small and large halls.
- 1,000 sq.m of cultural spaces with fit-for-purpose performance, community participation, and production areas.
- 700–800 sq.m of affordable spaces for not-for-profit and community service providers.
- 2,000 sq.m of civic space for events and markets in the Town Centre.

The redevelopment of Council-owned land at Seaview Street, Dulwich Hill, has been identified as a redevelopment opportunity site. Options to leverage private sector funding to assist with the delivery of new civic assets is recommended.

2) 6,000 sq.m of new open space along Iron Cove Canal in Ashfield & Croydon

Council seeks to enable land dedications to provide 6,000 sq.m of new open space along the Iron Cove Canal between the Ashfield Aquatic Centre to John Street, Ashfield.

Through a series of LEP Key Sites, a 10m land dedication along the eastern side of Iron Cove Canal will be facilitated to provide passive recreational spaces and a new biodiversity corridor. On the western side, a 6m dedication of land along Iron Cove Canal will better connect active transport connections from Etonville Parade, Croydon, to John Street, as envisioned by the Iron Cove Creek Masterplan adopted by Council in April 2024.

3) Upgrade of Ashfield Service Centre

There is a benchmark need for a multipurpose hub of approximately 1,500 sq.m in the Ashfield-Croydon area. This facility would include:

- 700–800 sq.m of cultural spaces for performance, production, and community participation spaces.
- 300 sq.m library space as an extension of Ashfield Library, incorporating study areas, co-working spaces, and a community lounge.
- 450–550 sq.m for affordable spaces dedicated to not-for-profit and community service providers.

Council will investigate the feasibility to upgrade the Ashfield Service Centre to become a regionally significant multicultural hub to provide additional community services in the Ashfield Town Centre.

4) Expansion of Lion Street Playground to Local Park, Croydon, and future embellishment of Pratten Park and Ashfield Park

Council proposes to expand Lion Street Playground to a new local level 0.3ha park and upgrade the existing playground area. Council's existing assets at Ashfield Park and Pratten Park will also require further investigation for targeted embellishments to help cater to growing population demands.

5) New civic spaces in Ashfield Town Centre

The future redevelopment of Ashfield Mall offers an opportunity to provide approximately 2,000 sq.m of new civic space through a Key Site mechanism in Council's housing masterplan.

6) New indoor sports centre for Ashfield/Croydon

There is an identified long-term need to provide a new indoor sports centre to support population growth in this area. Council will undertake future feasibility studies to determine how these demands are best catered for in this area. The following areas are identified as opportunity sites: Pratten Park, Ashfield Park, or

Centenary Park. It is noted that Pratten Park is identified as having the closest proximity to the proposed density around Ashfield Station. .

7) New aquatic facilities, southern areas of the LGA

There is a long-term need to plan for an additional aquatic facility in the southern half of the LGA to cater to future population demands. Council will undertake future feasibility studies to determine how these demands are best catered for in this area.

8) Multipurpose community hub in Leichhardt

A new community, cultural, and library hub is planned within the Leichhardt Precinct, which will help meet benchmark needs now and in the future. This hub should include an expansion of library floorspace and local-level cultural spaces.

The Council-owned land along Marion Street (including Marion St Car Park, Leichhardt Town Hall, and the Leichhardt Service Centre) should be considered as a key investigation area for this hub.

Explore options to leverage private sector contributions to assist with construction costs. The delivery of a civic spaces alongside this hub should also be considered.

9) Upgrade of St Peters Town Hall in St Peters

Inner West Council plans to upgrade and embellish the St Peters Town Hall to a district-level facility. This would help better meet needs for community spaces, and the enhancement

of library functions to enhance access and functionality for the incoming population. The potential to utilise the Commonwealth owned land adjacent to St Peters Town Hall for community uses is to be further explored, alongside future embellishment of Sydenham Green Park to better cater to community events.

10) Provision of an Aboriginal Community Centre

Council has identified the need for an Aboriginal Community Centre in the Inner West LGA. The co-location of this centre with other community services and/or within a park setting, is recommended.

11) Upgrade of Stanmore Library and Stanmore Reserve

Council has identified the need to replace the existing demountable buildings with a built-for purpose facility that integrates and embellishes Stanmore Reserve to provide indoor/outdoor learning, reading, and play space. The embellishment of the existing reserve is to investigate the how to better cater to community events, such as the provision of an amphitheatre space and surrounding improvements to the public domain.

12) Expansion of McNeilly Park, Marrickville

The expansion of McNeilly Park will expand and enhance the recreational uses and functions of the park, and also prevent the potential for future overshadowing as surrounding redevelopment occurs.

13) Calvert Street Car Park to be converted to a new park, Marrickville Town Centre

Council proposes to relocate the existing 35 public car spaces at Calvert Street car park as surrounding redevelopment occurs in Marrickville Town Centre. Once facilitated, this will allow the conversion of the existing car park to much needed open space in the Marrickville Town Centre.

14) Provision of a 1,000 sq.m pocket park, Marrickville Road

As a major active transport corridor between the Dulwich Hill and Marrickville Town Centres, an opportunity to provide a small open space area has been identified as a proposed Local Environmental Plan Key Site mechanism.

15) Land dedications, Dulwich Grove Precinct, Dulwich Hill

The Greenway Masterplan (2019) identified land dedications occurring within the Dulwich Grove Precinct, Dulwich Hill, to increase the width of recreational space from Hercules Creek. These land dedications are proposed to be facilitated via Local Environmental Plan Key Sites mechanisms.

16) Embellishment of Cooks River parklands and sporting uses

Council will explore future embellishment works in collaboration with Marrickville Golf, Sporting and Community Club, to improve the permeability of the golf course for recreational functions and activities that promote community participation and social cohesion. Infrastructure to assist with water quality and pollution reduction along the Cooks River will also be further explored.

2. Introduction

New housing policies by the NSW Government aim to increase the delivery of housing to meet targets set under the National Housing Accord. Of relevance, is the State Government's Transit Oriented Development (TOD) program and Low and Mid-rise Housing policies.

The housing growth anticipated by the housing reforms will place additional pressure on existing social infrastructure beyond that which was previously projected by Council's current planning framework. Inner West Council has prepared an alternate master plan to implement growth across the Inner West LGA as an alternative to the NSW Government policies. These housing investigation areas shown are shown in Figure 1.

Purpose of this assessment

In light of this, there is a need to understand the magnitude of the change and consider recommendations that ensure that social infrastructure provision remains sufficient to meet the needs of current and future residents. The purpose of this Needs Study is to consider social infrastructure:

- Compare existing provision to anticipated population growth and industry benchmarks.
- Provide input on how much additional infrastructure is required to service population growth.
- Provide recommendations on the prioritisation of social infrastructure projects.
- Highlight new opportunities that may arise as a result of the increased housing targets. An area like the Inner West, with high land values and limited available land, will require an innovative and pragmatic approach to delivering what is needed for the future community.

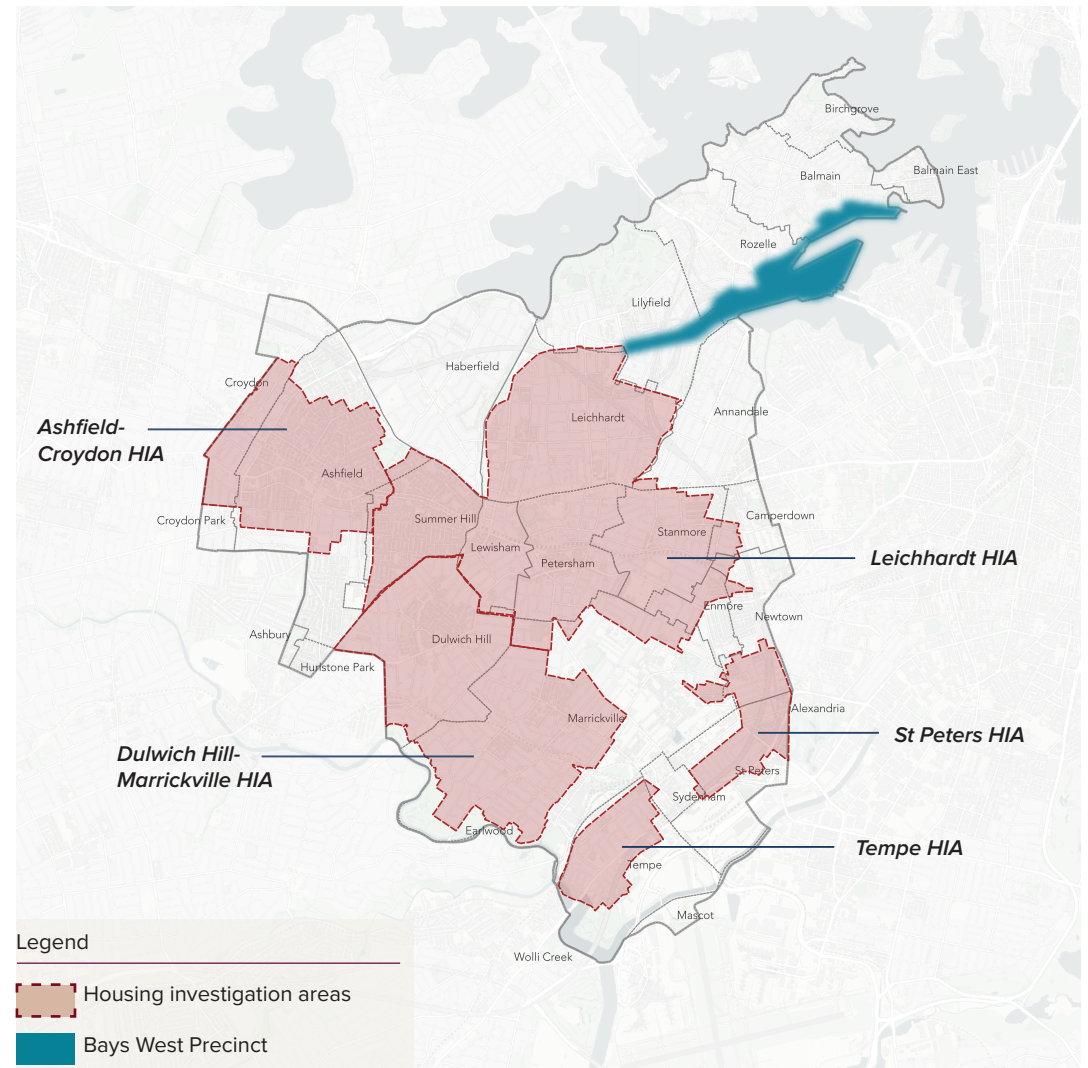


Figure 1 - Housing Investigation Areas context map

Methodology

A range of indicators have been applied to determine the social infrastructure needs and opportunities for the housing investigation areas (HIAs), as shown in Figure 1 including:

- Population growth and demographic drivers
- Strategic context
- Participation trends
- Community drivers (expressed need)
- Social infrastructure inventory and mapping
- Benchmarking, and
- Case studies and best practice.

The Inner West Social Infrastructure Needs Study applies two kinds of population-based benchmarks to determine current and future demand for social and cultural assets.

These are based on widely endorsed population-based benchmarks applied by local councils across NSW. Population-based benchmarks (also commonly referred to as provision standards) are a commonly used tool in estimating the demand for various types of community assets based on populations and catchments.

These are the same benchmarks as adopted in the Inner West Community Assets Needs Strategy 2021 and Inner West Recreational Needs Study 2021 Update.



Figure 2 - Cred's needs assessment methodology

3. Defining social infrastructure

3.1 What's in scope

Social infrastructure functions as part of a network connected by centres and public transport. For the purposes of this Study, social infrastructure includes the following:

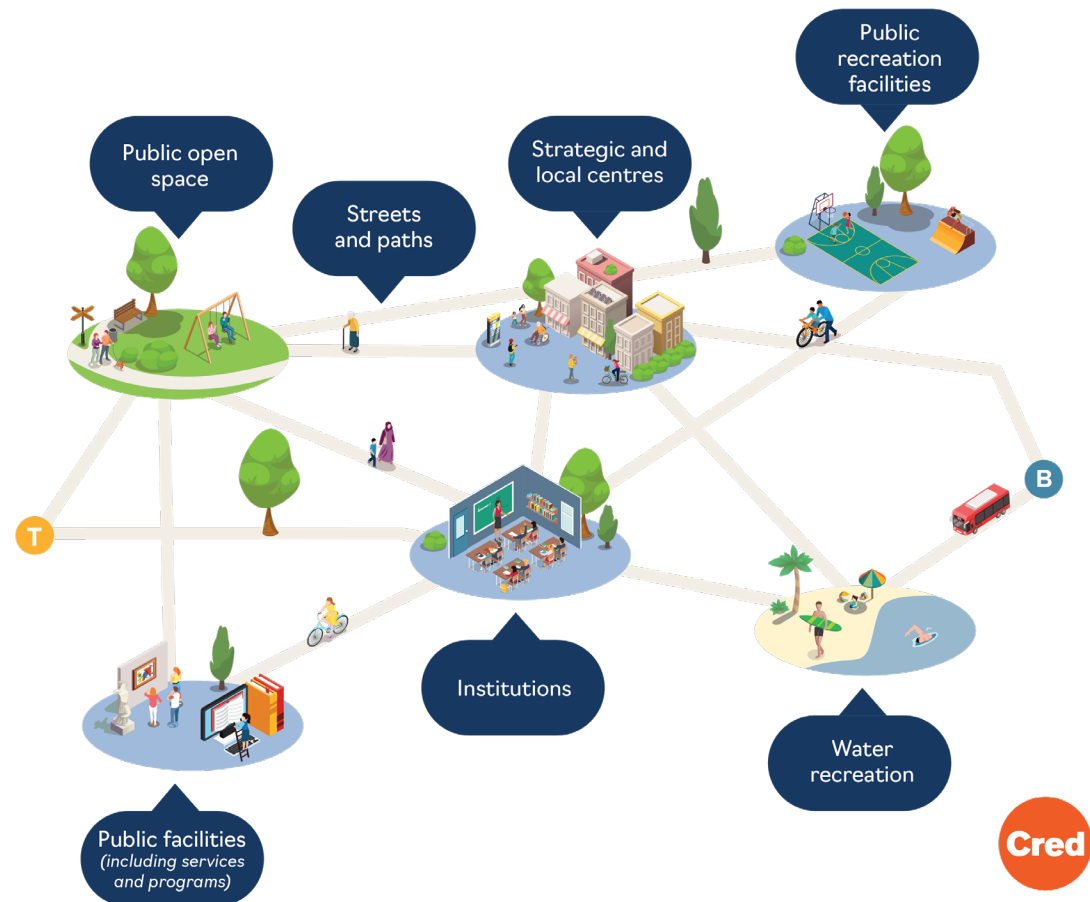
Community facilities

- Community centres
- Libraries
- Cultural facilities
- Childcare centres and services
- Aged care services
- Council owned affordable rental spaces for not for profit (NFP) and community service providers, and
- Emergency services infrastructure.

Public open space and recreation facilities

- Public open spaces including public parks and recreation areas.
- Sports & recreation facilities including:
 - Sporting fields
 - Indoor sports centre
 - Aquatic facility
 - Skate facility
 - Outdoor fitness station, and
 - Playspaces.

Figure 3 - Social infrastructure network graphic (Source: Cred Consulting)



4. Summary of social infrastructure needs

The following sections outline additional social infrastructure needs to support this growth. While these may not be directly delivered within the areas identified for change under Council's masterplan or through this process, understanding these needs is essential for proactive planning that facilitates their future provision.



Ashfield Civic Centre (Photo source: ALJ Engineers)

Ashfield-Croydon Housing Investigation Area

New multipurpose community and cultural hub

There is a benchmark need for a multipurpose hub of approximately 1,500 sq.m in the Ashfield-Croydon area. This facility would include:

- 700–800 sq.m of cultural spaces for performance, production, and community participation spaces.
- 300 sq.m library space as an extension of Ashfield Library, incorporating study areas, co-working spaces, and a community lounge.
- 450–550 sq.m for affordable spaces dedicated to not-for-profit and community service providers.

Council response

Council's proposed masterplan seeks to enable planning provisions that would allow for a larger built form at Ashfield Service Centre. Subject to future feasibility studies, the provision of additional floorspace for community uses is to be further investigated at Ashfield Service Centre, alongside the intent to retain an embellish the existing provision of civic space along Liverpool Street.

2 to 3 ha of new public open spaces with informal recreation facilities

The Ashfield-Croydon HIA currently faces significant gaps in public open space access, particularly for areas over 0.3 to 0.5 ha in size.

Given land costs and development constraints, delivering large new open space may be challenging. To maximise community benefit and ensure strategic investment, prioritise four to five new open spaces to address access gaps as a first action:

- 1 large public open space of at least 1 ha
- 3-4 public open spaces of at least 0.5 ha each, supported by pocket parks and green links where possible.

Figure 4 identifies the recommended areas for the prioritisation of new open space. These recommendations seek to leverage new open space along the Iron Cove Creek Corridor, new civic space in Ashfield Town Centre, the expansion of an existing reserve at Lions Street and future embellishments and upgrades to Ashfield Park and Pratten Park.

Council has provided a response to each recommended area about how these recommendations have been incorporated into the masterplan studies.

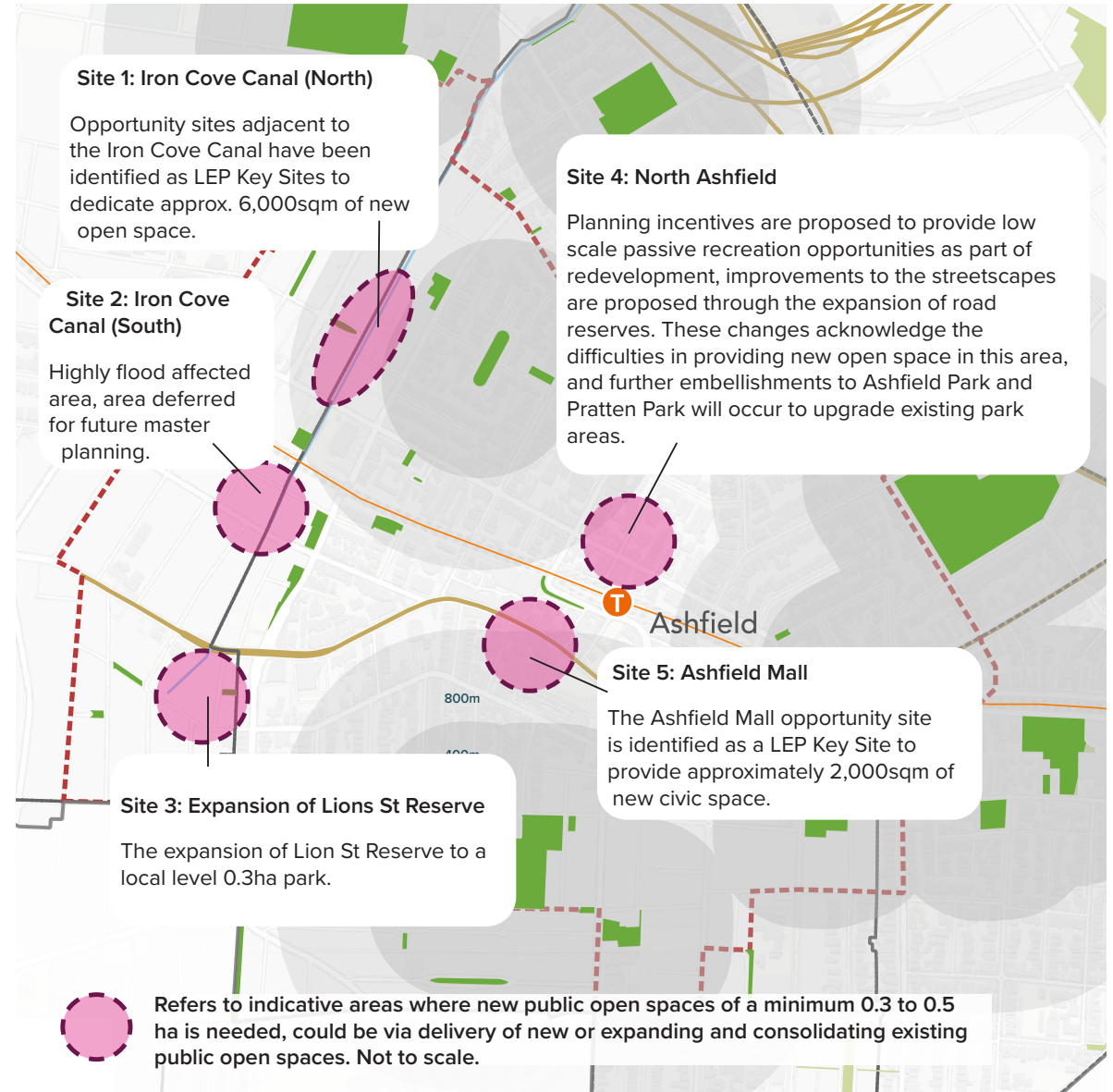


Figure 4 - Illustrative diagrams showing indicative locations where new public open spaces are needed to address access gaps for areas larger than 0.3 to 0.5 ha within a 400m distance.

Council response

Council seeks to leverage opportunities to provide new public domain improvements as redevelopment occurs. There are two mechanisms for the delivery of these public benefits:

1. Key sites mechanisms: Key sites identify sites which will get an uplift in built form controls only if the associated public benefit as stipulated in the Local Environmental Plan will be delivered on the site.

2. Public realm incentive mechanisms: Under this delivery mechanism, certain sites mapped will be awarded additional uplift if the identified public benefit is delivered to Council at no cost, this includes new through site links for active transport connections.

In addition to the above, Council has identified land for acquisition or dedication to expand Lion Street Reserve for recreational purposes, and to expand road corridor widths to facilitate public domain enhancements in areas where the provision of new open space is highly constrained.

The upgrade and embellishment of existing parks, such as Pratten Park and Ashfield Park, will also occur to support future population growth.

Additional sports fields and partnerships

To meet future population growth, in the Ashfield-Croydon HIA there is a long term benchmark need for four to five new sports fields.

Due to high land costs and limited space, Council could explore partnerships with local educational institutions to allow community access to school sports fields during non-school hours in exchange for maintenance and upgrades. Consider locating additional sports fields within a 2km radius of the HIA if land within the HIA is unavailable. There are additional opportunities to investigate converting appropriate sports grounds to synthetic turf to increase their capacity.

Council response

The upgrade of existing sporting ovals to accommodate future population demands will be prioritise by Council. Advocacy to the State Government for the provision of new sporting fields or upgrades to existing will be made. It is a priority for Council to establish shared-use arrangements with educational establishments (both public and private schools) over the medium term.

New indoor sports centre

The growth in the HIA indicates a benchmark need for an indoor sports centre, with this need becoming increasingly critical as the population grows.

To address this, there is an opportunity to integrate indoor courts into the upper levels of mixed-use developments or the construction of a new facility within or adjacent to an existing park, such as Pratten Park, Ashfield Park, or Centenary Park.

Council response

This is a long-term benchmarked need that will be further investigated by Council and subject to future feasibility testing. Pratten Park has the closest proximity to the proposed density around Ashfield Station and would directly cater to future population demand.

Advocate for childcare centres and residential aged care

With a growing young family population, there will be benchmark need for childcare services:

- Long day care: 400–500 places
- OSHC (Out of school hours care): 450–550 places

Additionally, there will be a benchmark need for 30–40 residential aged care beds. Advocate for the delivery of new childcare centres and aged care options, potentially by expanding existing facilities or developing new ones.

Council response

The land use permissibilities will enable the private sector to cater to these future demands.

Dulwich Hill-Marrickville Housing Investigation Area

New multipurpose community and cultural hub in Dulwich Hill

While Marrickville Library is a strong community anchor, there is a need for an additional hub located in Dulwich Hill to meet the needs of the growing population. There is a benchmark need for a new district-level hub of approximately 3,200–3,700 sq.m to include:

- 1,500–1,900 sq.m of hireable community spaces with a mix of small and large halls.
- 1,000 sq.m of cultural spaces with fit-for-purpose performance, community participation, and production areas,
- 700–800 sq.m of affordable spaces for not-for-profit and community service providers.
- 2,000 sq.m of new civic space for community events and markets.

Delivering this as a consolidated hub would optimise accessibility, activation, staffing, and maintenance. This could be delivered as part of mixed-use developments. However, priority should be to have street presence and access.

Council response

The redevelopment of Council-owned land at Seaview St, Dulwich Hill, has been identified as an opportunity site. Council seeks to insert LEP Key Site provisions that will facilitate a new multipurpose community hub and 2,000 sq.m of new civic space in the Dulwich Hill Town Centre.

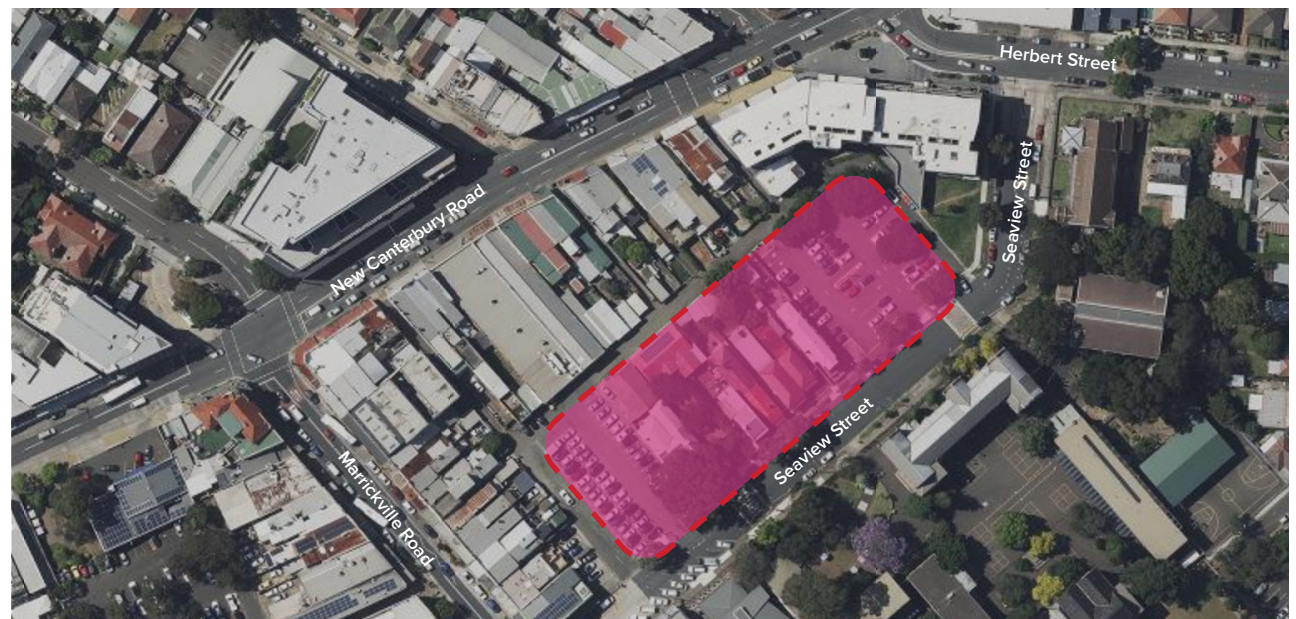


Figure 5 - Seaview Street sites highlighted as an opportunity site

1.5 to 2 ha of new public open spaces with informal recreation facilities

Dulwich Hill-Marrickville HIA has some gaps in public open space access, particularly for areas over 0.3 to 0.5 ha in size. Current provision is above the LGA standard at 17.3 sq.m per person, but without additional open spaces, this will drop to 9.1–9.8 sq.m per person under future growth scenarios.

Given land costs and development constraints, delivering the benchmark need of large quantities of open space are challenging. To maximise community benefit and ensure strategic investment, prioritise three to four new open spaces to address access gaps as a first action:

- Provide one 1 ha public open space and two to three strategically located public open spaces of at least 0.5 ha in areas where access gaps exist, supplemented by pocket parks and green links where feasible.
- Prioritise one to two all-ages, high-quality playspaces and an outdoor fitness station in new or upgraded open spaces to support active recreation.

Design these spaces as destination parks with a variety of recreational activities to maximise community benefit. Desired locations are shown in Figure 6.

Council response

High land costs and a lack of vacant land are a significant constraint in achieving desired outcomes. Council has identified opportunity locations for new civic and open space as outlined in Figure 6. Further to these sites, Council also seeks to achieve the land dedications foreshadowed by the Greenway Masterplan (2019) along Hercules Street, Dulwich Hill, via LEP Key Sites mechanisms, in collaboration with Marrickville Golf, Sporting and Community Hub, seek to better utilise

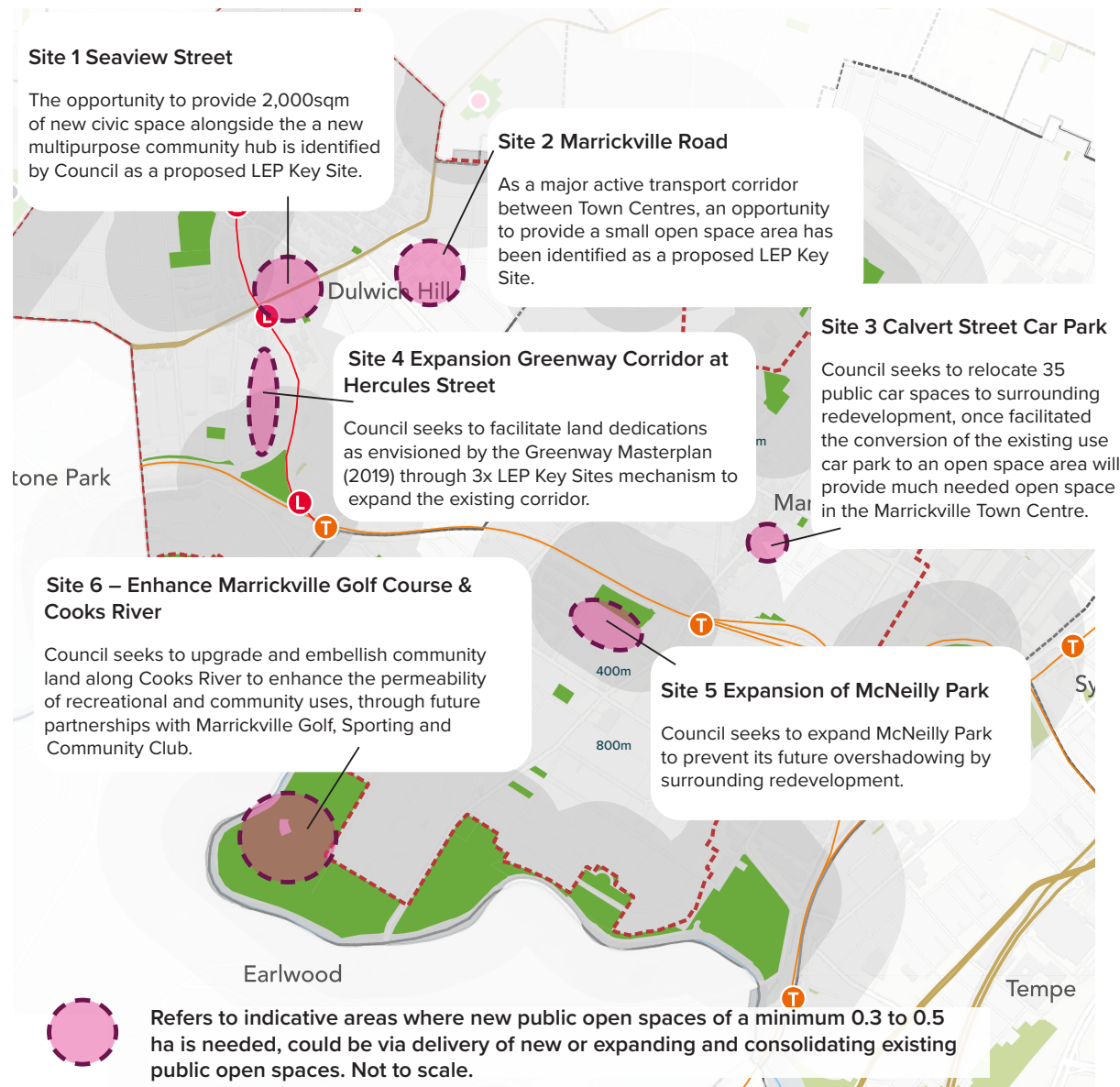


Figure 6 - Illustrative diagrams showing indicative locations where new public open spaces are needed to address access gaps for areas larger than 0.3 to 0.5 ha within a 400m distance, or opportunities for expansion.

community and recreational functions along the Cooks River, and Council will also further investigate the potential to utilise airspace above rail corridors.

Additional sports fields and partnerships

To support the growing population, the HIA has a benchmark need for six to eight new sports fields. Given high land costs and limited available space, Council could pursue partnerships with local schools to allow community access to school sports fields during non-school hours, in exchange for maintenance and upgrades. If land within the HIA is unavailable, consider identifying sites within a 2km radius.

Council response

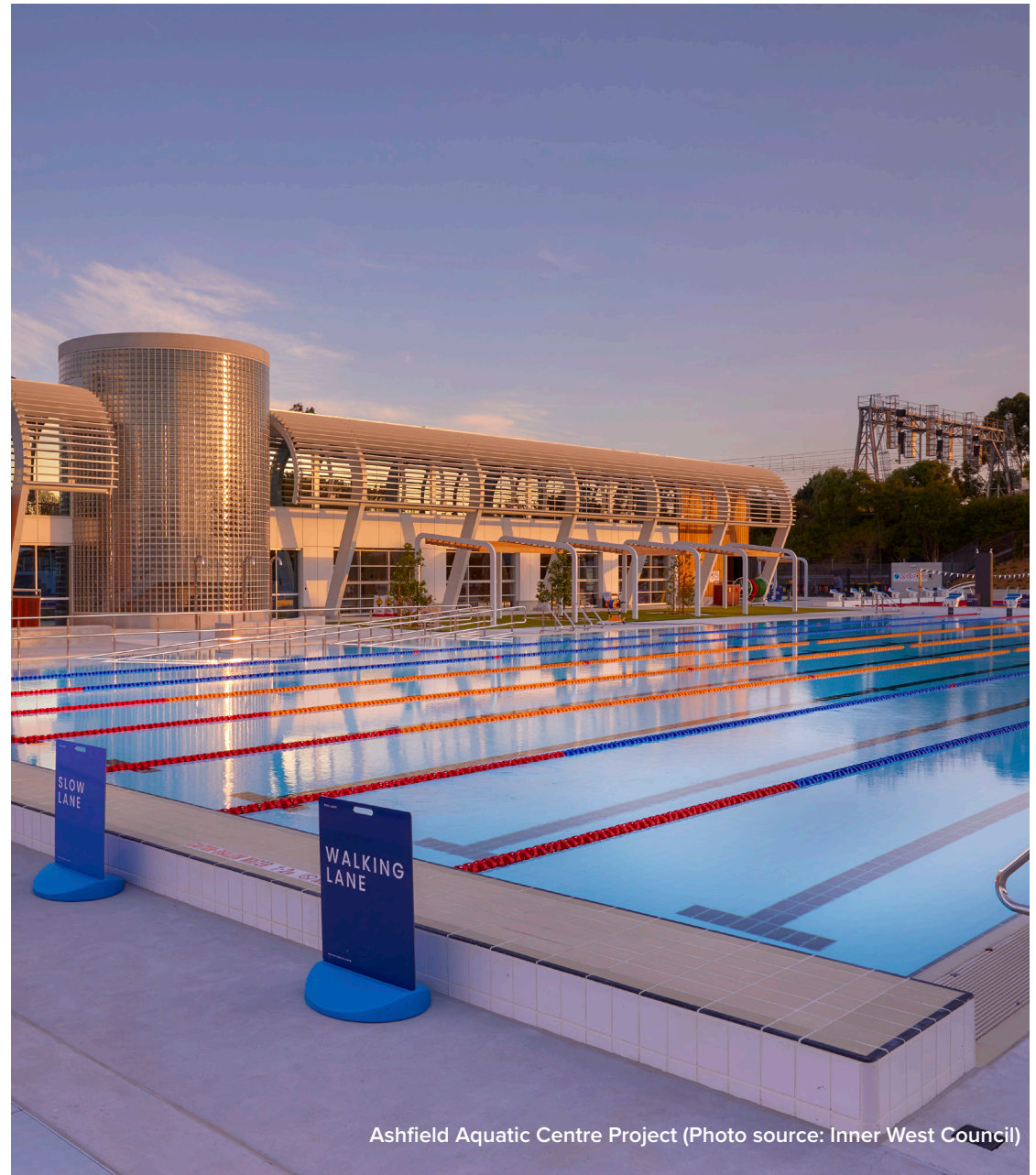
The upgrade of existing sporting ovals to accommodate future population demands will be prioritise by Council. Advocacy to the State Government for the provision of new sporting fields or upgrades to existing will be made. It is a priority for Council to establish shared-use arrangements with educational establishments (both public and private schools) over the medium term.

New aquatic facility

There is a long-term benchmark demand to provide a new aquatic facility in the southern half of the Inner West LGA. This could be delivered either through a new facility or by expanding the planned facility to increase pool capacity.

Council response

The provision of new aquatic facilities will be a significant investment by Council and subject to thorough future feasibility studies over the short-term to medium term to determine the final location and built form.



Ashfield Aquatic Centre Project (Photo source: Inner West Council)

Childcare centres and residential aged care

With an increasing number of young families, there will be a benchmark need for childcare services:

- Long day care: 700–800 places
- OSHC (Out of school hours care): 700–850 places

There will also be a benchmark need for around 40 residential aged care beds. Advocate for new childcare centres and aged care facilities by either expanding existing facilities or developing new ones. Council could explore expanding capacity and service of the five Council-run childcare centres.

Council response

The land use permissibilities will enable the private sector to cater to these future demands. Council will also undertake future demand analysis for its child care services to determine if upgrades to existing services are required.

Leichhardt Area Housing Investigation Area

New multipurpose library, community and cultural hub in Leichhardt

The area is currently home to the Leichhardt Library offering 1,350 sqm of library floorspace, and Stanmore Library as a branch library service.

The Inner West Local Infrastructure Contributions Works Schedule identifies the planned provision of 433 sqm of new library floorspace as part of a multipurpose hub in the Leichhardt Precinct, and includes the planned upgrade of Stanmore Library to a built-for-purpose facility over the long term.

Benchmarking indicates that there is a need for additional local-level community and cultural spaces of ~200sqm of affordable rental floorspace for not-for-profit (NFP) and community service providers. The planned provision of new library space is sufficient to cater to future population demand anticipated in this area.

Council response

The ability to expand Leichhardt Library is constrained within its current location. The relocation of Leichhardt library services is preferred to improve access and visibility of its civic functions onto the main street, and to enable its expansion to serve a flagship library function for the catchment area; to be supported by the future upgrades to the Stanmore library as a branch library service, and Stanmore Reserve as a space capable of hosting community events.

The provision of additional floorspace for other community and cultural purposes could also be facilitated through the construction of a new multipurpose community hub. The Council-owned land at Marion St car park provides an opportunity site to consolidate multiple civic functions in a centralised location and will be further investigated by Council over the long term.

New public open spaces with informal recreation facilities

This study area has the lowest provision of existing open space per person at only 7.6 sq.m per person. Proximity analysis from sizeable open spaces indicate a need for two new open spaces of 0.3ha or more to maintain existing provision levels, and 3 additional sports fields and 4 multipurpose courts by 2041, as is already provided for in the Inner West Local Infrastructure Contribution Plan 2023.

The highly constrained nature of the inner metropolitan area is acknowledged as being challenging to achieve, and so the embellishment of existing spaces and connections to existing parks is recommended.

Council response

The future provision of two new sporting fields at Rozelle Parkland, the upgrade of Leichhardt Park Ovals, and establishing shared-use arrangements with educational establishments to utilise recreational facilities in the future, as included in the Inner West Local Infrastructure Contributions Plan 2023, is anticipated to be sufficient to cater to future sporting demands. Council has planned works that outlines several further open space opportunities in the areas including the completion of the Greenway Corridor, park embellishments within existing parks, the conversion of the car park use at 2 Hay Street, Leichhardt, to open space, and further planned land acquisitions of a combined area of approximately 0.1ha.

Tempe, St Peters and Sydenham Housing Investigation Area

Upgrade of St Peters Town Hall

Tempe, St Peters and Sydenham is currently home to the St Peters/Sydenham Library located within the St Peters Town Hall. It serves a branch library service to the flagship Marrickville Library. Benchmarking indicates the need to provide over 200sqm of additional library space alongside 50sqm of cultural floorspace in Tempe.

The Inner West Local Infrastructure Contribution Plan 2023 identifies the planned works to upgrade St Peters Town Hall to a district level facility, and the provision of a new community spaces as part of a new cultural indigenous centre in proximity to this area.

Council response

The planned future upgrades to St Peters Town Hall seek to embellish the existing facility to and provide district-level functions. The expansion of library floorspace is likely constrained at this location, however the potential to utilise adjacent Commonwealth land for community uses will be further explored. If unable to provide additional floorspace, digital enhancements and the investigation of mobile library services may provide a suitable alternative for this area.

Council further identifies the potential for Sydenham Green to better cater to community events through future embellishments. The provision of a future Aboriginal Community Hub is the south of the LGA is identified, however, opportunities for the provision of this facility across the LGA will be examined to determine the best fit for the community.



St Peters Town Hall (Photo source: Inner West Council)

Cred
CONSULTING

02 9357 2476

info@credconsulting.com.au

www.credconsulting.com.au

ABN 57 620 957 815