02.1

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF STREETS & PUBLIC SPACES

Streets and public spaces serve a variety of interconnected roles that extend far beyond just facilitating movement. They contribute to the overall character and sense of place, hosting a wide range of activities, from commerce to leisure.

Streets are essential for providing infrastructure, such as power lines, stormwater and waste removal. In addition to human-centric infrastructure, streets play a crucial role in supporting biodiversity, green infrastructure, and sustainable water management.

Public spaces are publicly owned lands that are primarily set aside for the purposes of outdoor recreation, nature conservation, passive outdoor enjoyment and public gatherings. Public spaces contribute to quality of life and are essential to the urban environment. Alongside greening and urban cooling, open spaces are valued as places to socialise, relax and unwind, to be outdoors and connect with nature, to play sport and exercise. They are spaces for hosting festivals and events and are spaces which protect and interpret contemporary and historical cultural values, diversity and identity and give a sense of place. Open spaces are places to enjoy the natural environment and be in contact with nature, and they offer opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity and habitat values.

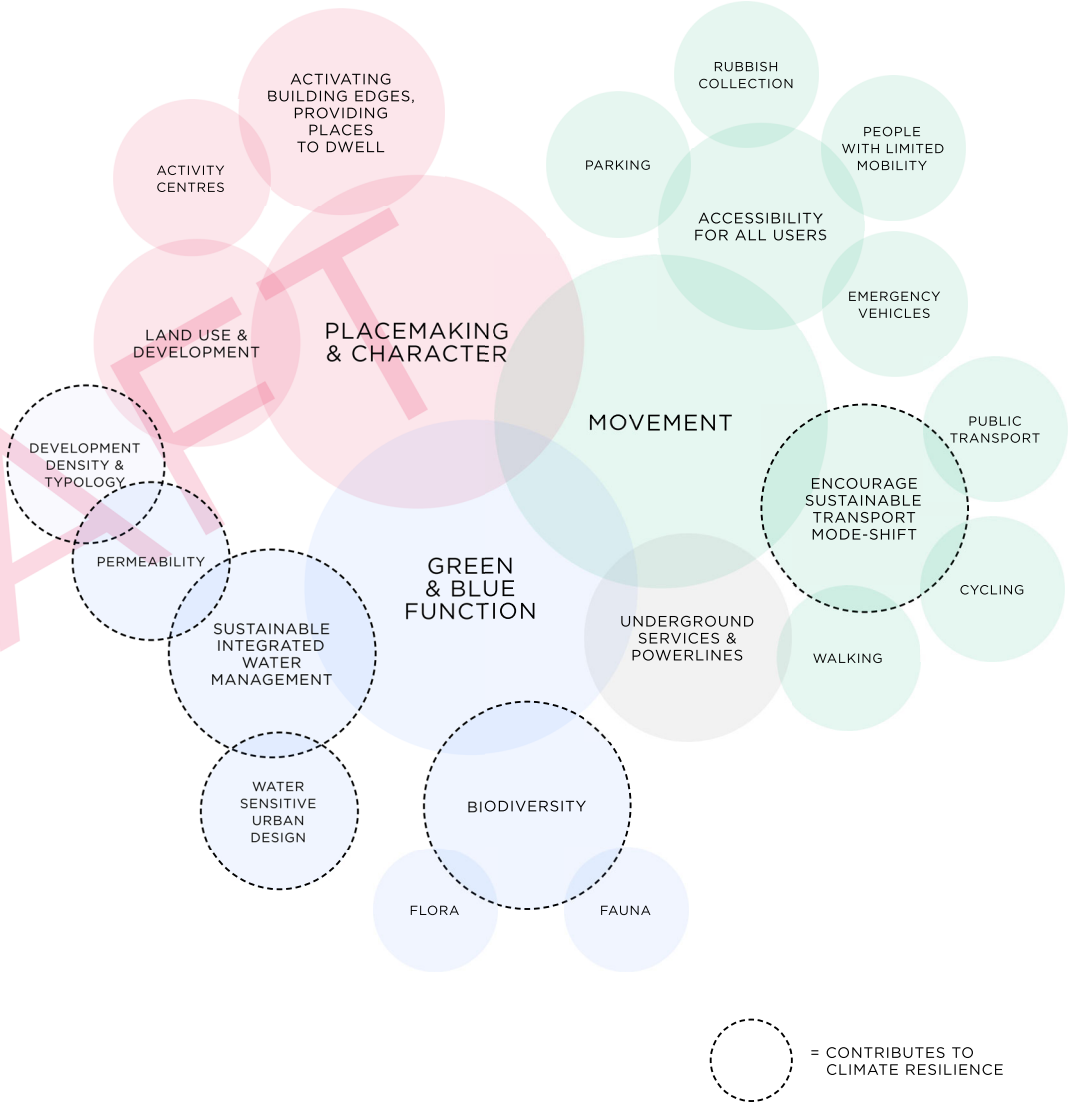
In order to deliver increased trees and vegetation, a mindful balance of the competing demands of streets and public spaces, including on street parking, with the numerous benefits of trees and biodiverse landscapes is essential.

Like other established neighbourhoods in Melbourne, streets and footpaths in Balaclava and St Kilda East can be narrow, and sometimes trees and powerpoles can restrict accessibility along footpaths. We can improve accessibility by considering tree placement during the design process and when undertaking tree replacement programs.

Trees can help to:

- Reduce stormwater run-off and improve water quality.
- Contribute to cooler urban environments by reducing surface temperatures.
- Improve local air and soil quality.
- Reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide.
- Provide wildlife habitats and pollination opportunities.
- Increase property values.
- Extend the life of street surfaces.
- Enhance or define the character of an area.
- Promote human well-being by strengthening the community's connection with nature.

These strategic roles and physical conditions help to inform increased canopy and biodiversity opportunities. See Appendix B for the full suite of opportunities and constraints analysis maps.



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