GREENING ALBERT PARK & MIDDLE PARK

URBAN FOREST PRECINCT PLAN

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Eucalyptus leucoxylon

Endemic Species of Bunurong and Wurundjeri Country.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Urban Forest Precinct Plan (UFPP) is to guide tree planting and biodiversity projects to achieve the targets and outcomes of the Urban Forest Strategy, creating a healthy, biodiverse and connected urban forest. This UFPP focuses on the Middle Park & Albert Park neighbourhood, one of nine neighbourhoods in the City of Port Phillip (CoPP).

This UFPP is developed by LatStudios and the City of Port Phillip, and incorporates analysis by Swinburne Institute of Technology Walk Quality research project. The Walk Quality project analyses current streetscape conditions and ways to improve pedestrian accessibility, safety and comfort. The research identifies streets that are used frequently and lacking in shade, making them high priority for urban forest canopy increase.

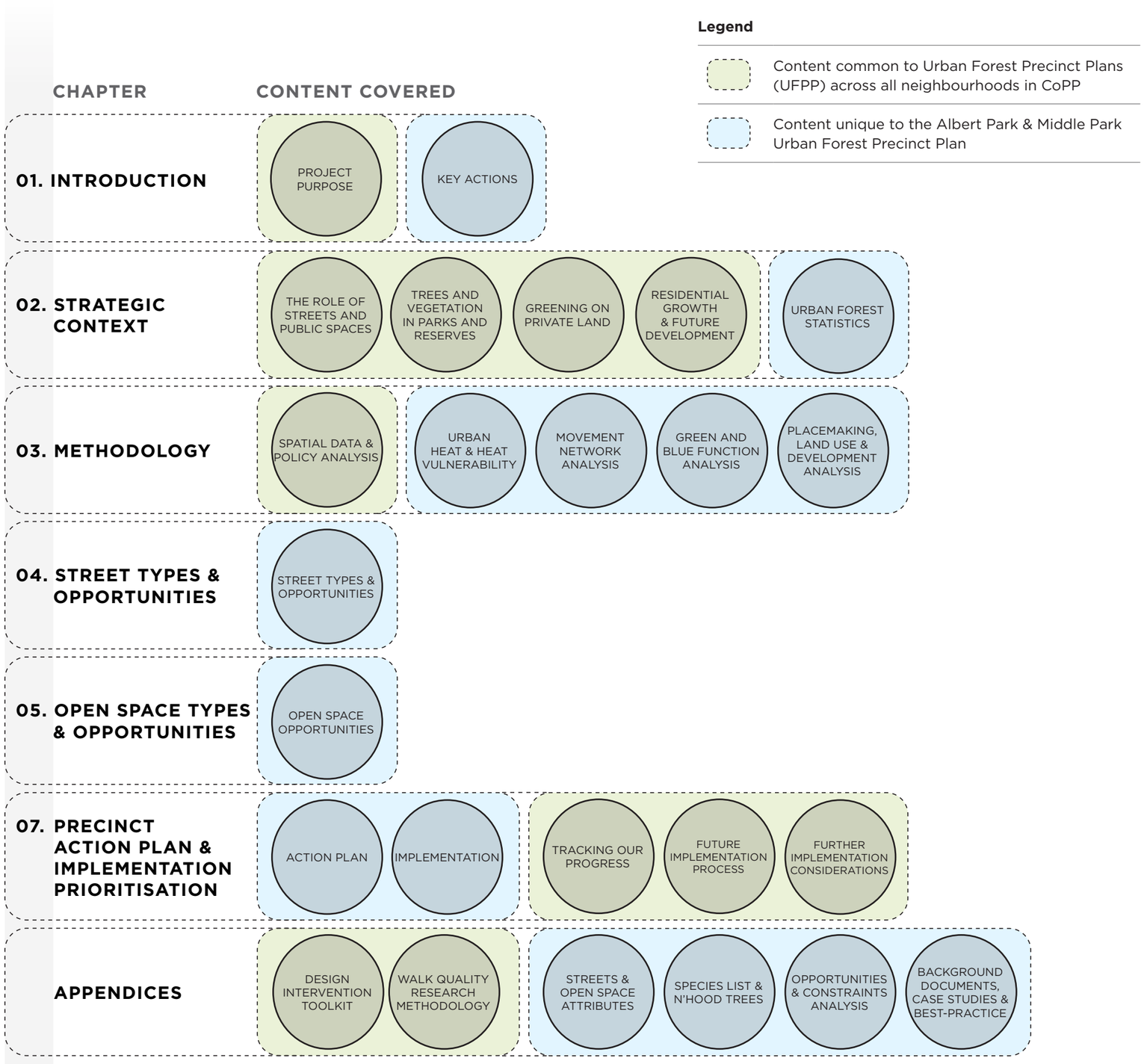
This UFPP for Middle Park & Albert Park provides guidance for greening interventions, responding to the neighbourhood's unique existing and future character, the objectives of the Urban Forest Strategy, and addresses other neighbourhood-specific urban forest challenges.

The Urban Forest Strategy Objectives are:

1. Increased canopy cover on public and private land for a liveable, sustainable, equitable and vibrant city.
2. Cooler and greener city which is resilient to more extreme weather and changes in rainfall.
3. Our community is engaged, trees and plants are valued, and we build partnerships to green our urban environment across all land types.
4. A well-managed forest, including tree health and quality, pest and disease management, and succession planning for iconic species and locations.
5. A biodiverse urban forest with diverse species, healthy ecosystems and habitat.

This UFPP for Middle Park & Albert Park:

- Identifies tree planting opportunities to improve equity, including shade in areas with higher heat vulnerability along key walking and cycling routes, public transport stops and around activity centres.
- Identifies opportunities for biodiverse planting in streets and parks.
- Captures delivery options aligning with water sensitive urban design, traffic safety and footpath renewal programs and partnering with other land holders.
- Identifies where minor uplifts can occur to existing streetscapes by infill planting filling in gaps or gradually transitioning trees to a different species to improve canopy cover and biodiversity.
- Provides a summary of how Council can work with other land holders for a greener neighbourhood.
- Provides a priority implementation plan for the next 10 years.



01

INTRODUCTION

01.1

FOCUS AREAS

The suburbs of Albert Park & Middle Park form one of nine neighbourhoods within the City of Port Phillip (CoPP).

In 2023, the CoPP assessed tree canopy cover on both public and private land between 2012 and 2022. The study examined canopy cover on roads, public spaces, and private properties. Over the ten-year period, the analysis revealed a slight overall decline in tree canopy cover of 0.69%. Roads had a canopy cover of approximately 26%, significantly higher than the average for inner-city Melbourne. Most canopy growth came from the growth of existing street trees, while canopy levels in parks remained largely unchanged. However, tree removals on private land reduced overall canopy cover by 1.09%. Notably, more than half of the private land canopy resulted from new plantings during this period.

This study revealed that the Albert Park & Middle Park Neighbourhood has an overall canopy cover of 14% the fifth highest in the municipality.

Neighbourhood	Current Canopy Cover (2022)*
1 Elwood & Ripponlea	25%
2 Balaclava & St Kilda East	20%
3 St Kilda & St Kilda West	19%
4 St Kilda Road	16%
5 **Albert Park & Middle Park**	**14%**
6 South Melbourne	18%
7 Port Melbourne	16%
8 Montague	8%
9 Sandridge & Wirraway	8%

*Note that canopy cover excludes tree canopy within Albert Park. The canopy cover of Albert Park is 16%. For more information on canopy cover, see the City of Port Phillip's Tree Ledger Report (2012-2022).





Figure 01: Frank and Mary Crean Reserve, Middle Park,

01.2

PROJECT PURPOSE

URBAN FOREST STRATEGY (2024-2040)

In 2019, the hottest and driest year in Australia's recorded history, the City of Port Phillip (CoPP) declared a climate emergency. The most effective way to mitigate urban heat islands is through greening, that is planting trees and diverse vegetation. Greening provides additional benefits including improved biodiversity, health and well-being, reduced air and noise pollution and enhanced commercial areas all of which contribute to liveable, sustainable, equitable and vibrant neighbourhoods.

To improve urban greening across the municipality, the City of Port Phillip (CoPP) released its second Urban Forest Strategy in 2024 (2024–2040), setting the following vision: *In the City of Port Phillip, urban greening is healthy and abundant, biodiversity is valued and supported, and nature connects the community.*

The Urban Forest Strategy contains five objectives:

1. Objective 1: Increased canopy cover on public and private land for a liveable, sustainable, equitable and vibrant city.
2. Objective 2: Cooler and greener city which is resilient to more extreme weather and changes in rainfall.
3. Objective 3: Our community is engaged, trees and plants are valued, and we build partnerships to green our urban environment across all land types.
4. Objective 4: A well-managed forest, including tree health and quality, pest and disease management, and succession planning for iconic species and locations.
5. Objective 5: A biodiverse urban forest with diverse species, healthy ecosystems and habitat.

As part of the Urban Forest Strategy, CoPP has set a target to achieve 30% canopy cover on streets and a minimum of 40% canopy cover in public spaces (excluding sports field areas) by 2040, along with an increase in biodiverse planting and permeable surfaces.

GREENING BALACLAVA & ST KILDA EAST, URBAN FOREST PRECINCT PLAN (2025)

The Greening Balaclava & St Kilda East Urban Forest Precinct Plan (UFPP) was developed to guide tree planting and biodiversity projects to achieve the Urban Forest Strategy's targets and to develop a healthy, biodiverse and connected urban forest. The UFPP focussed on Balaclava and St Kilda East, providing a template for the future UFPP's in the remaining eight neighbourhoods of the municipality.

The UFPP outlined four key actions to achieve the Urban Forest Strategy's objectives and targets for Balaclava and St Kilda East, which can be applied to other neighbourhoods within CoPP.

①	**Designing new streets for greening and shade**
②	**Enhancing and maintaining existing streetscapes**
③	**Increasing canopy and biodiversity in parks and open space**
④	**Greening beyond council land through partnerships and advocacy**

The previous precinct plan focuses on actions achievable in public spaces, streets, and parks, and where we can improve equity by:

- Prioritising tree canopy in key pedestrian areas to enhance comfort, particularly for those relying on public or community transport and for children along key school walking routes.
- Ensuring our neighbourhoods have cool, shady areas in parks and reserves. With good management, including tree and vegetation planting and access to drinking water, these areas can become cool refuges during hot weather, providing pockets of high canopy cover that help cool surrounding areas.
- Implementing targeted interventions in areas with high heat vulnerability. These interventions should be tailored to specific locations and could include additional street trees, rain gardens, or the introduction of more permeable surfaces and planting.

01.3

KEY ACTIONS

GREENING ALBERT PARK & MIDDLE PARK, URBAN FOREST PRECINCT PLANS (2025-2026)

The new UFPP for Middle Park & Albert Park will build on the work of the previous UFPP; Greening Balaclava and St Kilda East. The background research and analysis has found that the four key actions remain relevant, however the foreshore context and it associated environmental and heritage attributes requires additional precinct-specific actions. Together they are:

①	**Designing new streets for greening and shade**
②	**Enhancing and maintaining existing streetscapes**
③	**Increasing canopy and biodiversity in parks and open space**
④	**Greening beyond council land through partnerships and advocacy**
❺	**Canopy that can withstand foreshore conditions**
❻	**New canopy planting to address significant heritage conditions**
❼	**Proposed canopy trees, including replacement species and staged transformations to address issues of disease and site specific challenges**

Some of the issues along the iconic precinct foreshore include:

- Strategic species choices and planting programs to foreshore areas.
- A sensitive approach to heritage trees and broader heritage overlays.

Some streets will require greater interventions to achieve optimal canopy and biodiversity outcomes.

Following the adoption of this UFPP, the next phase will involve detailed designs for priority streets, applying appropriate greening interventions. This will involve further community engagement.

Initiatives such as tree planting programs will fill in any gaps and work with residents on streets where we can slowly transition the species to improve canopy cover and resilience. Partnerships with other agencies will enable Council to increase shade and promote biodiverse planting.

01.4
KEY ACTIONS - EXPLAINED

1 Designing New Streets for Greening and Shade

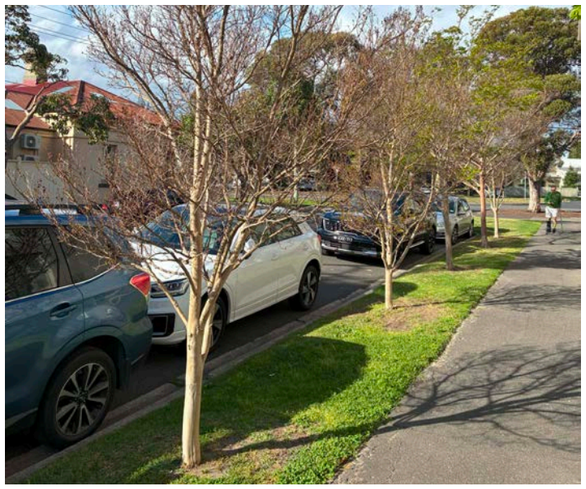
Integrate tree planting and biodiversity into new or redesigned streetscapes to maximise canopy cover, pedestrian comfort, and climate resilience, prioritising key pedestrian areas and areas with high heat vulnerability.



- New street projects and street upgrades can improve tree canopy and biodiversity by changing layouts, like adjusting parking and planting trees in the road, adding central medians or kerb outstands. See the Intervention Toolkit in Appendix B for design options to maximise planting opportunities in constrained streets.
- Streetscape integration projects can align tree planting with transport, safety and urban design upgrades.

2 Enhancing and Maintaining Existing Streetscapes

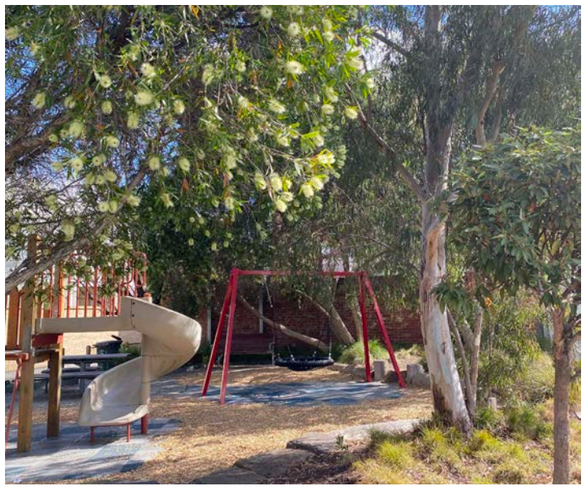
Improve the health, diversity, and canopy cover of existing street trees through proactive maintenance, infill planting, and species transition.



- Infill planting of new street trees in vacant street spaces is a simple and affordable way to boost canopy cover.
- Some tree species are not providing enough shade and several are not suited to future climate conditions. Gradually replacing these trees with more suitable species, as they reach the end of their life, will help create a more resilient and climate-ready urban forest while maintaining canopy cover.
- Improvements to early tree establishment will help trees flourish, but some trees planted over the past decade have failed to thrive and will be identified for gradual replacement with ongoing tree audits and infill planting efforts.
- Council has ‘business as usual’ programs to uplift park and streetscape planting, implement water sensitive urban design to improve storm water quality, and install street modifications, such as speed bumps, to improve safety. These programs create opportunities for planting, improving canopy and biodiversity throughout the neighbourhood. Combining programs will result in multiple benefits and cost savings.

3 Increasing Canopy and Biodiversity in Parks and Open Space

Achieve 40% canopy cover in public open spaces and enhance biodiversity through targeted planting and community partnerships.



- Council will continue to support and expand community greening initiatives to increase canopy and greening in streetscapes and open spaces.
- Succession planting and biodiversity improvements to garden beds in parks and streetscapes will be delivered.
- Canopy cover and biodiversity planting, in keping with local character will continue to be incorporated into open space renewal projects.

4 Greening Beyond Council Land through Partnerships and Advocacy

Expand the urban forest by working with other landholders and agencies to green non-Council land and improve shade at public transport stops.



- Comfortable public transport stops with shelter from sun and wind improves public transport access for everyone. Targeted tree planting near public transport stops will improve shade and shelter. Where trees cannot be planted, we will partner to trial alternative solutions, such as Yarra Tram’s urban arbours.
- Canopy and biodiversity improvements throughout the neighbourhood will require collaborative working with State Government, neighbouring Councils, VicTrack along the rail line and Parks Victoria in Albert Park. Council will continue to seek partnerships with landholders to improve greening outcomes across the precinct.

5 Canopy That Can Withstand Foreshore Conditions

Provide strategic species choices and planting programs to foreshore areas that enable trees to thrive in challenging coastal environments.



- The Albert and Middle Park foreshore areas are iconic, and planning for forward tree planting and succession is critical to maintain shade and neighbourhood and character. Coastal environments are challenging for urban trees with exposure to strong winds, salt spray, high temperatures, and sandy, low-nutrient soils.
- Council will continue to trial a range of tree species to identify those best suited to the challenging conditions along the residential edges of Beaconsfield Parade and Beach Road, ensuring long-term canopy health and resilience.

6 New Canopy Planting to Address Significant Heritage Conditions

Integrate new canopy planting into streetscapes and open spaces with sensitive or significant heritage contexts, enhancing canopy cover while respecting and reinforcing the area's historic character and visual integrity.



- Council will continue to develop management plans to make species selections that are sympathetic to significant heritage conditions in parks, gardens and streetscapes.

7 Proposed canopy trees, including replacement species and staged transformations to address issues of disease and site specific challenges

Incorporates suitable replacement species and phased planting transitions to manage disease risks, respond to site-specific constraints, and ensure long-term canopy health and resilience.



- Preserve and enhance native dune vegetation and biodiversity along the foreshore.
- Increase shade and canopy cover along the foreshore by prioritising plantings in high-use areas such as footpaths, playgrounds, BBQ zones, seating, and picnic spaces.
- Manage access to sensitive dune systems and migratory shorebird feeding and roosting sites around Cowderoy Street outlet, through landscaping and educational signage.
- Initiate banksia rehabilitation along foreshore according to best tree management, biodiversity and climate ready practices to address poor health, growth and loss of trees.

02

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

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 that 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.

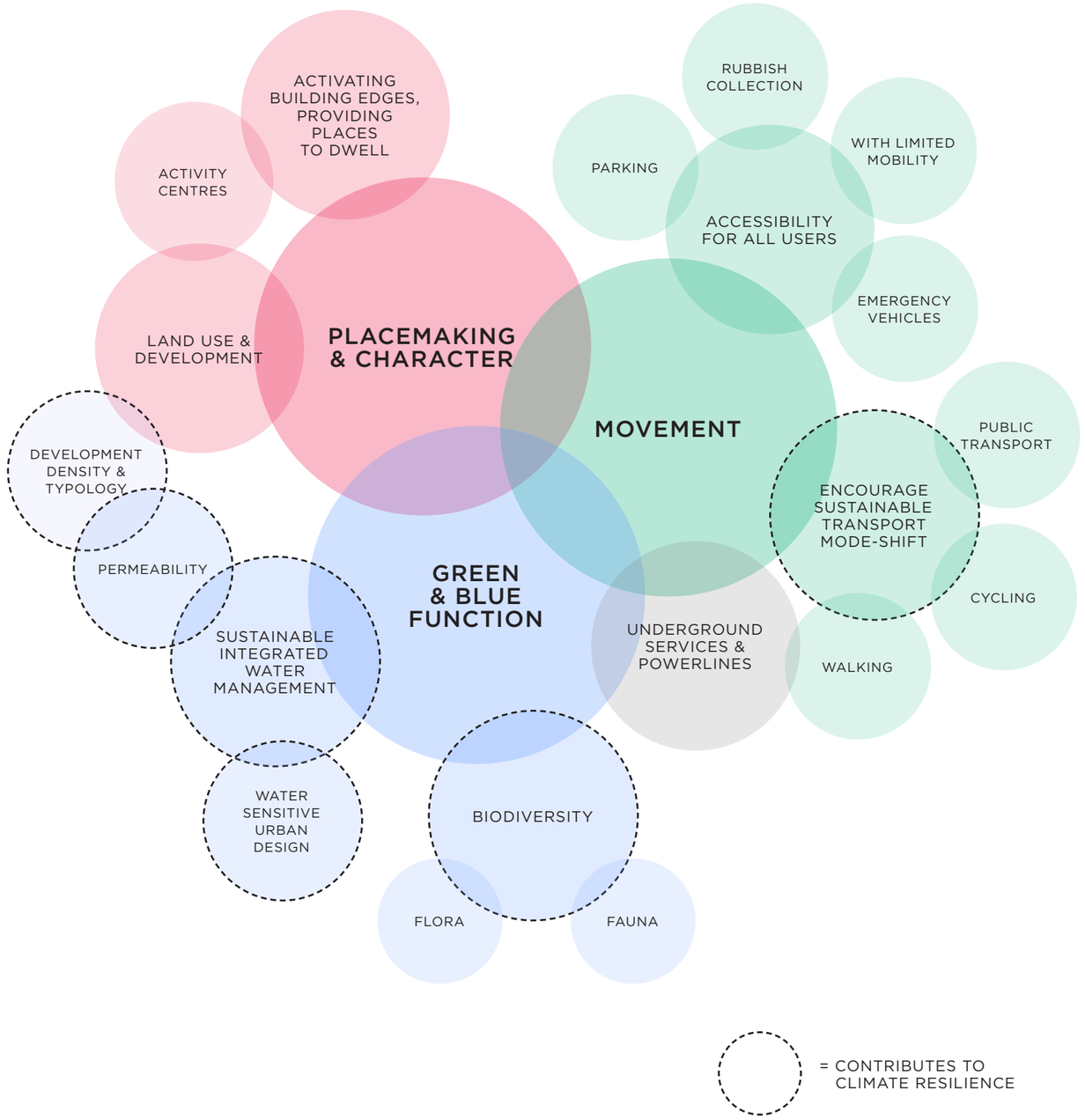
In order to deliver increased trees and vegetation, a mindful balance of the competing demands of streets and public spaces, including on street parking, with the numerous benefits of trees and biodiverse landscapes is essential.

Like other established neighbourhoods in Melbourne, streets and footpaths in Albert Park & Middle Park can be narrow, and sometimes trees and power poles 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 the appendices for the full suite of opportunities and constraints analysis maps.



02.2

ALBERT PARK & MIDDLE PARK

The established bay side suburbs of Albert Park & Middle Park are predominantly residential neighbourhoods characterised by the Port Phillip Bay foreshore interface, heritage housing and a leafy fine grain street network that supports active travel connections.

Albert Park and Middle Park share a similar heritage residential fabric; Victorian and Edwardian terraces, Federation houses, and inter-war apartments. Along the internal residential streets, interfacing with 20th-century terraces are generous landscaped verges and mature trees. According to City of Port Phillip's 'Greening Port Phillip - Street Tree Planting Program 2017-2022', Middle Park and Albert Park together show street tree canopy coverage above the municipal average, despite a park canopy coverage that is lower than average.

The key assets of the foreshore and open space network support mature planting and shade providing trees. Planting along the foreshore prioritises coastal species such as palms compared the more dense forest canopy in the residential streets. Council record mapping shows that overall canopy coverage has dropped slightly since 2012, in particular within the private land tree canopy. The consistent street grid across this precinct is intersected by a network of access laneways connecting the rear of this low-scale built form. These narrow streets are limited in providing street tree canopy, however they regularly feed into wider boulevards, many with street tree avenues (e.g. Kerferd Rd, St Vincent Rd).

Strong leaf canopy and consistent planting, along these streets connects into some of the precincts larger destination open spaces. These include Gasworks Arts Park, Pickles Street Foreshore and Albert Park Lake — a major open space defining the suburb's edge and identity. Trees within Albert Park include planes, elms, and mature eucalypts. Although Albert Park contributes to a higher than average open space percentage than other precincts, Council does not manage the open space. To Albert Park's southern edge is the unique strip of urban forest along Canterbury Road, a softened landscape buffer between the road corridor and Albert Park.

Neighbourhood Canopy Cover

Overall Canopy Cover: 14%

Street Canopy Cover: 26%

Public Space Canopy Cover: 10%

Private Land Canopy Cover: 9%



Figure 03: Pickles Street Foreshore, Albert Park



Figure 02: H.R Johnson Reserve, Middle Park



Figure 04: Boyd Street, Albert Park



Figure 05: Kerferd Road, Albert Park



Figure 06: Bridport Street, Albert Park