

Sharing our spaces

The demand from different users of public spaces is increasing, along with growth in the number of people living, working and visiting our City. Council needs to manage the sharing of our public spaces to ensure we can respond to the community's diverse needs and make decisions that allocate spaces fairly across different and sometimes competing user groups.

What we want to achieve

Our public spaces are in demand from schools (primary and secondary), different sporting codes, recreation groups, personal trainers and commercial recreation providers. Together with residents and visitors to the City, they use our spaces for both formal and informal sports, dog walking, events (local and regional) and commerce (for example, cafes and markets), as well as for passive uses (such as socialising and relaxation). Some spaces, like Albert Park Reserve, have a metropolitan role, while others are primarily for local use - but all are in increasing demand.



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Increased sharing of our spaces, and designing flexible spaces and multipurpose facilities that can accommodate different uses at different times, must be part of Council's response to managing this demand.



Managing our spaces

The Public Space Strategy will include 'principles' for allocating spaces, to ensure decisions are fair and everyone in the community benefits. We will need to consider the specific needs of some users, such as fencing of spaces for dogs off-leash, without creating exclusive use or limiting the diversity of activities that each space can offer, such as allocating dogs off-leash at certain times rather than permanently.

What Council is already doing

- Planning for the **growing demand for different sports**, including more flexible facilities and innovative programming through working with other councils in the region.
- Preparing interim **policies for pressing allocation issues**; use by schools, sporting clubs and dog off-leash. These will help inform allocation principles to be included in the Strategy.
- Agreeing an annual calendar of events to **balance the needs of residents**, visitors and event providers, and prevent impacts from over-use of spaces.

What are the opportunities?

Ways we can manage the sharing of our public spaces include:



Designing multipurpose facilities (such as pavilions) that provide for a variety of users and activities at different times.



Integrating technology into public spaces, such as app-based booking systems, that offer flexible ways to allocate spaces.



Extending the usable hours of public spaces, such as through the use of synthetic or hybrid surfaces, and improved lighting.



Advocating for public access to government land that can function as open space, such as school ovals and spaces along rail lines, and under the West Gate Bridge.



What should be considered in developing the principles for allocating our public spaces to different users?

What would you like to see implemented in your neighbourhood and where?

Do you have other ideas?

