



# Planning Guide

Best Practice

Open Space

in Higher Density

Developments

Project

02



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# Introduction

The City of Charles Sturt instigated and guided the Best Practice Open Space in Higher Density Developments Project to encourage appropriate planning for open space in higher density urban development areas by Local Government, including the City of Charles Sturt. The Project is a proactive response to the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide and aims to provide a practical resource for Local and State Government based on sound research and consideration of best practice.

The City of Charles Sturt Best Practice Open Space in Higher Density Developments Project involved developing Principles and Guidelines that can be used by Local and State Government and other stakeholders when planning for Transit Oriented Development's and other higher density development.

The key principle which relates to open space provision is shown on the adjacent page:

Further to the open space principle, the Principles and Guidelines recommend that:

- 12.5% of the development area should be provided as 'base open space'. This is referred to as Primary Open Space and should have a strong focus on recreation and connections. Generally the Primary Open Space will be accessible to the public but it could include communal open space.
- Additional open space (beyond the base 12.5%) will generally be required to contribute to the quality, function, lifestyle potential and viability of a higher density urban development. This open space is referred to as 'Contributory Open Space' and could include communal and private open space. The specific amount would be negotiated based on the population size and character, the character of the development and surrounding area, Council policies and other factors as outlined in the Principles and Guidelines. The Contributory Open Space could total around one hectare per 1,000 people or more.
- Advanced planning should be undertaken to indicate future open space requirements and principles for higher density urban development areas (amount, types, connections, indicative location etc). This planning is referred to as an Open Space Provision Framework.
- Detailed planning should occur prior to development, including a Precinct Plan and a Master Plan.

The Planning Guide aims to assist Local and State Government and developers to undertake or facilitate the advanced and detailed planning. The emphasis of the Planning Guide is on achieving a good provision of open space and quality lifestyle opportunities by planning for an appropriate amount, type, quality, location and connection of open space.

The Planning Guide only relates to planning for open space within a higher density urban development area, although in doing so, consideration is given to existing and potential open space in the surrounding areas.

The Planning Guide does not guide planning for sporting open space or community and sports hubs given sporting open space will generally be outside a higher density urban development area and a metropolitan wide and regional approach to planning will be required. A commitment by State and Local Government will be necessary to plan for sport and achieving this commitment and agreeing on an approach was beyond the scope of this Project.

The Planning Guide links to a 'Principles and Guidelines' report and a Report Summary and Recommendations report which includes definitions and information that could be relevant to the Planning Guide.

*“There should be a good provision of open space within higher density areas to compensate for reduced private open space, enhance the quality and function of the development and support an increase in open space use by the community”*



## The Planning Stages

In planning for higher density urban development areas three planning stages are suggested as follows:

### **Planning Stage 1 - Open Space Provision Framework:**

Determine the broad requirements and fundamental principles for open space specific to the development area, taking the existing provision (within and around the development area) and potential demands into consideration. This will provide a Framework for future planning.

**Planning Stage 2 – Open Space Precinct Plan:** Plan for base Primary Open Space (12.5%), including key parks, connections and plaza's once the transport nodes and destinations (recreation, social, commercial) are known. The emphasis should be on ensuring the main public open space is defined, available and appropriately located at the time of development.

**Planning Stage 3 – Open Space Master Plan:** Plan for Contributory Open Space including smaller parks, secondary connections, communal and private open space and open space for stormwater management to achieve a good provision of open space. The amount of additional open space required will depend on a number of factors including the character of the development area, the projected size of the population and the provision of open space in adjoining areas.

The 'open space principle' diagram on the following page explains the link between the different types of open space.

There could be opportunities to combine some of the planning stages, particularly where there is single ownership of the land or the planning is being undertaken by an overriding authority with planning expertise such as the Land Management Corporation.

The planning will ideally occur at an across regional level (involving more than one Local Council area) particularly where a development area is close to an adjoining Local Council area or a transit corridor incorporates more than one Local Council.

Each planning stage progressively builds and draws on the previous planning stage. The Stage 1 planning provides the broad strategic framework and the Stage 3 planning results in a detailed plan that defines specific requirements for open space and reflects the earlier strategic planning (Stages 1 and 2).

The timing of each planning stage and the stakeholders involved will vary for each urban development area and would need to be determined by the relevant Local Council and stakeholders at the time.

The Planning Guide provides a guideline for undertaking each planning stage.



# Open Space Type

## Developer Provision



### Primary Open Space

- Open space delivered as part Developer provision
- Primary Open Space should have a strong focus on supporting lifestyle and include key parks and main connections.
- Primary Open Space could include communal open space if other public open space is located nearby and the council does not require all land to be publically accessible or wish to have management responsibility.
- Primary Open Space will generally represent around one hectare per 1,000 people in a high density development which is consistent with the 'up to 12.5%' of land currently required by legislation (Development Plan 1993).

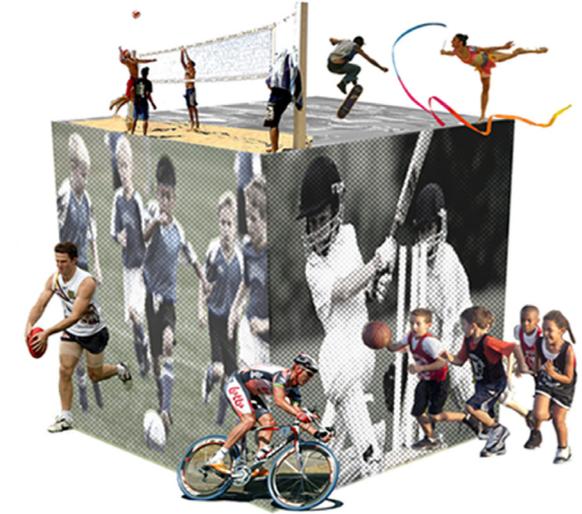
## Development Site



### Contributory Open Space

- Contributory Open Space will generally be required to contribute to the quality, function, natural value and viability of a development area.
- The amount of Contributory Open Space will depend on a range of factors including the population size, the development character, the need to strengthen biodiversity and habitat value, the potential for public realm, stormwater management requirements, council planning and policies, and the existing open space provision in the development area and surrounding area.
- An additional one hectare per 1,000 people or more of Contributory Open Space could be required.
- Communal and private open space could be considered as part of the provision.
- In some instances, existing open space that adjoins and directly links to a higher density development could be included.

## State or Local Provision



### State and Local Sports Provision

- Open Space for Sport (District level) should be located within 5 km of the development site
- An additional one hectare per 1,000 people or more of State and Local Sports Provision could be required.

## Stage 1 Planning: Open Space Provision Framework

The main purpose of the Open Space Provision Framework is to determine the fundamental open space principles and approach to open space provision in relation to the development area.

The planning will result in an Open Space Provision Framework that considers:

- The potential of existing open space and the provision of open space in the surrounding areas to give an indication of the amount of additional open space that could be required in the area.
- The principles associated with the types, character and location of open space specific to the development area, e.g. whether there should be a large central park or a spread of smaller parks, the types and location of connections required and the need for open space linked to nodes and destinations.

The Open Space Provision Framework could be undertaken as part of Structure Planning being facilitated by the State Government in accordance with the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide.

The following Steps aim to assist the Stage 1 planning for open space.

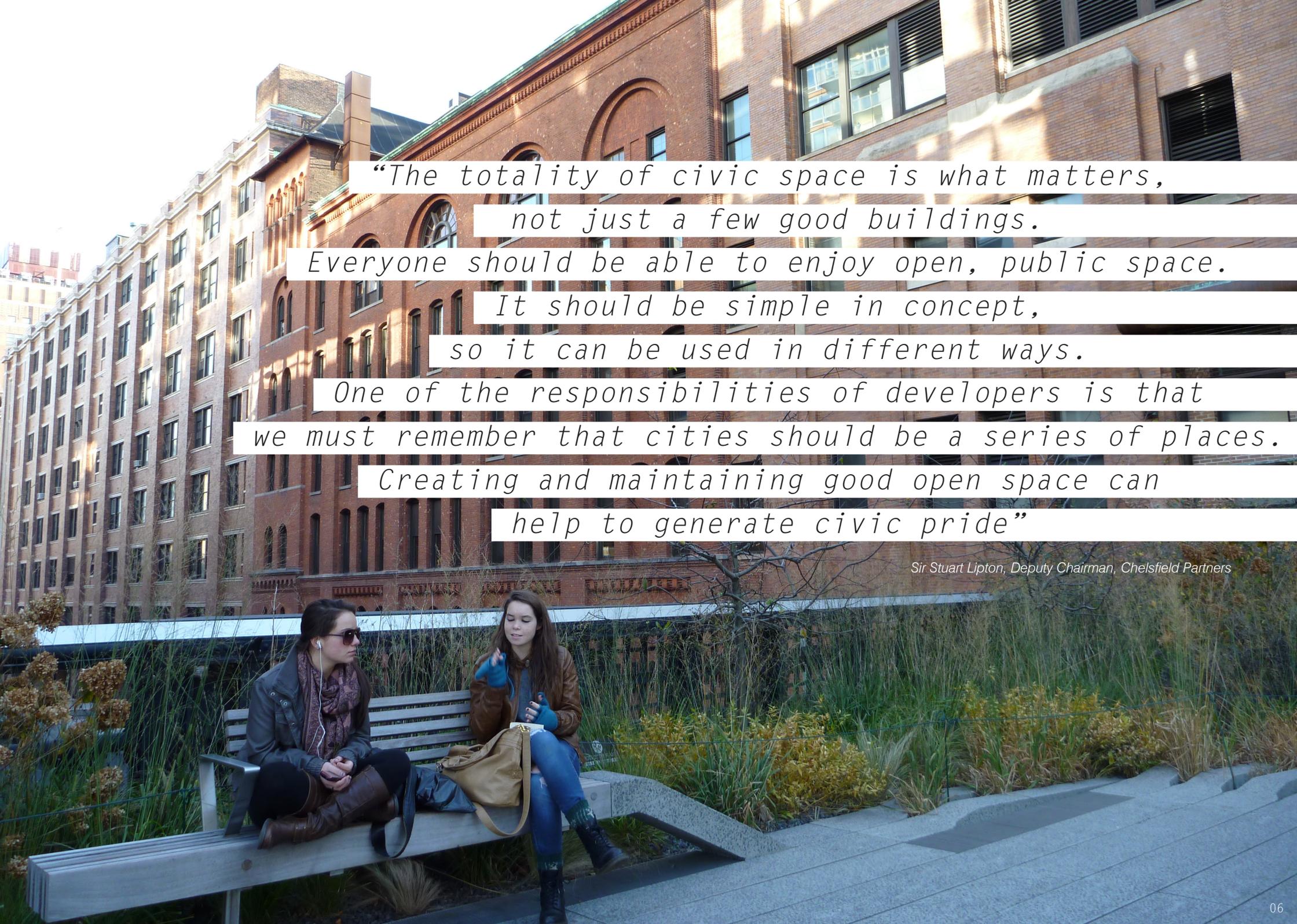
**STEP 1:** Consider the potential of the existing open space provision in the development area.

**STEP 2:** Consider the existing or proposed open space provision in the surrounding areas.

**STEP 3:** Broadly consider the potential fabric and character of the development area and region.

**STEP 4:** Determine the fundamental principles for open space provision.

Suggested approaches for each Planning Step are outlined below. Each Step will require consideration of any previous plans, documents or information held by Local and State Government and other stakeholders.



*“The totality of civic space is what matters,  
not just a few good buildings.  
Everyone should be able to enjoy open, public space.  
It should be simple in concept,  
so it can be used in different ways.  
One of the responsibilities of developers is that  
we must remember that cities should be a series of places.  
Creating and maintaining good open space can  
help to generate civic pride”*

*Sir Stuart Lipton, Deputy Chairman, Chelsfield Partners*

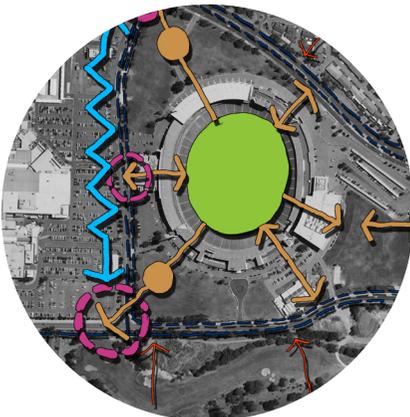
# Stage 1 Planning: Open Space Provision Framework

## STEP 1: Consider the potential of the existing open space provision in the development area.

1. How much open space is provided in the development area and how does this compare with the 12.5% legislative requirement?
2. What is the current use of the existing open space, including by residents in the surrounding areas?
3. How appropriate is the location, size, type and quality of the existing open space? Consider profile, access and potential usability.
4. Does any existing open space have a linear or habitat corridor connection that should be retained?
5. Does any existing open space have biodiversity or other environmental value that requires protection and may constrain usability for recreation?
6. If any existing open space has a sporting focus, what is the current capacity for additional use (giving consideration to existing use and demands)?
7. What is the potential destination focus of the existing open space (taking the size, location, character and potential link to future housing into consideration)?
8. Which existing open space parcels should be retained and what is the potential function of each parcel of open space?

## STEP 2: Consider the existing or proposed open space provision in the surrounding areas.

1. What public open space is provided in the surrounding areas and what is the potential value of the open space to the development area (from a recreation, social and environmental perspective)? Consider whether there is an oversupply or an under supply based on the existing population size and in relation to 12.5% of the land area. Also consider the role and hierarchy of the open space and the potential to service the development area population.
2. Is there any State Government or private open space that could be of value to the future development area, e.g. schools or universities that are surplus to needs and could be retrofitted as open space?
3. How accessible and usable is the surrounding open space to the future development area population? Are there any constraints to access (main roads, railway line, distance to residents etc)?
4. If any existing open space in the surrounding areas has a sporting focus (including a school), what is the current capacity for additional use (giving consideration to existing use and future demands in the District)?
5. Consider whether the surrounding areas are lacking district or other 'destination' open space and whether there is a need and potential for the development area to provide the destination (e.g. the potential to link a park or connection to commercial, transport or community components within the development area).



**STEP 3: Broadly consider the potential fabric and character of the development area and region.**

1. What is the shape and size of the development area and what is the appropriate spread of open space. Consider whether there is need for a central park (e.g. if the development area has a consistent radius) or a spread of key parks (e.g. if the development is long and narrow such as along a transit route).
2. What is the character and fabric of the region and how will this influence the character and role of open space in the development area?
3. What is the potential built form character in the development area and how can the open space enhance the development (taking potential building height, spread and area into consideration)?
4. Are there any features that should be protected or have high value as open space, including:
  - Natural areas, biodiversity, natural corridors
  - Viewing areas
  - Heritage features
  - Landscape features (trees and unique landscapes)
  - Watercourses, including culverts that could be transformed to open space
  - Deep soil zones (corridors)

**STEP 4: Determine the fundamental principles for open space provision.**

Taking the Step 1, 2 and 3 findings into consideration:

1. Consider the types and hierarchy of open space that could be required, e.g. large parks, smaller parks, connections, streetscapes, natural settings.
2. Consider the general location principles (central large park, spread of smaller parks etc).
3. Consider the connection principles, e.g. which main roads or facilities should have an open space connection, the need for connections between open space parcels, the need for connections to open space in surrounding areas etc.
4. Develop principles relating to the potential fabric and character of the development, e.g. the need to connect open space to transport nodes or commercial centres, the need to retain cultural features, the required link between key open space and transport nodes and commercial centres etc.
5. Develop an Open Space Provision Framework document that clearly outlines the principles and potential approach to open space provision, including the need to rezone land or consider land acquisition. The document should include mapping and sketches.

# Principles to Consider in the Open Space Provision Framework

Some general principles to consider as part of the Open Space Provision Framework process are provided below.

- Consider the impact of open space provision on the planning of the development and overall urban form.
- Ensure a realistic balance between open space provision and development potential.
- Open space provision should assist in delivering continuity across the development site.
- It is critical to deliver quality streets that provide a connection between the urban forms and open spaces.
- Focus on open spaces that support community integration and activity and avoid vehicular dominated environments.
- Consider open space opportunities within all aspects of the development.
- Open space must create destinations. Parks and reserves should create places that people want to go to, not simply somewhere to pass time. There is a need for greater active engagement with the community.
- Consider the potential to plan for destinations within the development site and establish open space networks that increase access to and the provision of destinations.
- Maintain linkages and connections to enhance access to destinations.
- Ensure that open space provision facilitates or delivers opportunities for activity.
- Ensure that the purpose of open space is identified and planned for.
- Consider the value of open space and ensure there is adequate provision.
- Consider opportunities for providing valued and good quality open space that reflects open space needs.
- Understand the context of the site, the destinations and requirements in order to develop principles to be used in the future planning of the site.
- Be mindful that communities typically take three years to settle and unify. Consider how open space, programs and the public realm facilitate this through place making.

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## Stage 2 Planning: Open Space Precinct Plan

The main purpose of the Open Space Precinct Plan is to ensure that key parks, connections and other key parcels of open space are identified and to ensure the base provision of open space (Primary Open Space) is planned for prior to development. This planning would occur once the nodes, destinations and key features of the development area are known (transport, commercial, development character).

The open space planned for in the Open Space Precinct Plan should include:

- District Parks (unless a District or Regional Park is in an adjoining area nearby)
- Neighbourhood Parks
- Key Plaza's
- Key Open Space Connections

The Precinct Planning will draw and build on the Open Space Provision Framework (i.e. the Stage 1 planning).

The Open Space Precinct Plan could become part of the Precinct Planning that is being facilitated by the State Government in accordance with the 30 Year Plan for Greater Adelaide.

The following Steps aim to assist the Precinct Plan approach.

**STEP 1:** Consider the principles and recommendations in the Open Space Provision Framework.

**STEP 2:** Consider the proposed design, features and character of the development area.

**STEP 3:** Assess the potential character of the future population and the related social and open space needs.

**STEP 4:** Determine the opportunities and requirements for the Primary Open Space.

Each Step will require consideration of previous plans, documents or information held by Local and State Government and other stakeholders.

**STEP 1: Consider the principles and recommendations in the Open Space Provision Framework.**

1. Use the principles and recommendations in the Open Space Provision Framework to guide the Open Space Precinct Plan.

**STEP 2: Consider the proposed design, features and character of the development area.**

1. Define the transport nodes and commercial centres within the development area and consider the implications for open space (potential connections etc).
2. Consider the proposed height and position of the built form and how open space can enhance the development and provide activity nodes for residents and workers.
3. Consider the proposed road network and how open space can best fit with the roads (linking to distributor roads, ensuring the open space is good profile and accessible, including boulevards along main routes etc).
4. Consider other key features and destinations within the development area and how open space could link to or benefit these features.
5. Consider the need for the development area to compensate for a lack of open space types in the wider area, e.g. if there is a lack of playing fields for sport in the District there may need to be good sized open areas suitable for casual ball games or outdoor courts.
6. Consider stormwater management requirements through stormwater management planning.

**STEP 3: Assess the potential character of the future population and the related social and open space needs.**

1. Determine the existing and projected population size of the development area and consider the potential requirements for open space based on hectares per 1,000 people (using 2 hectares per 1,000 people as an optimal amount of recreation open space).
2. Assess the projected demographic character of the development area (providing data is available such as age, family type, culture and income) and consider the implications for recreation, sport and open space demand.
3. Consider trends regarding physical activity and open space use, e.g. active ageing, play, community gardens, and assess the implications for open space.
4. Undertake an initial social needs analysis and consider the implications for open space, recreation, sport and the environment.
5. Assess the open space types and facilities required to meet future community needs.

**STEP 4: Determine the opportunities and requirements for the Primary Open Space.**

1. Consider the appropriate location and size of key parks and plaza's, taking hierarchy, catchment, site features and the open space criteria into consideration (e.g. ensuring people are within 2km of a District Park and 500 metres of a neighbourhood park). Ensure the parks are good profile, accessible and usable and that there is a good link between the parks and higher density housing.
2. Consider the appropriate location and width of key corridors ensuring there are good pedestrian and cycle connections to:
  - Existing linear networks
  - Transport nodes
  - Commercial centres
  - Community facilities
  - Key parks and plaza's (particularly district and regional)
3. Define the proposed role and potential development of each parcel of open space.



## Open Space Criteria for Open Space Precinct Plan

The following criteria should be used to assist the Open Space Precinct Plan process. The criteria reflect best practice research and are consistent with the City of Charles Sturt Development Plan.

<b>Open Space</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Comments/ Rationale</b>
Planning for Parks in General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least 1 hectare per 1,000 people should be allocated towards usable recreation parks (a mixture of district, neighbourhood and local with 1-2 parks per 1,000 people depending on their size and hierarchy).</li> <li>Residents in higher density areas should be within 250 metres of a usable recreation park.</li> </ul>	<p>Recreation parks will provide a focus for community activity and compensate for the lower amount of private open space.</p> <p>Best practice research has found that residents require parks that are in close proximity (due to the potential regular use and constraints of higher density living).</p>
Planning for a District Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents in higher density developments should be within 2 km of a District Park.</li> <li>The park should be at least 3ha in size.</li> <li>Where there is a population of 5,000 people there should generally be a District Park with good access to transport corridors and nodes.</li> <li>The district park should be located and designed to provide a destination focus for the development area and the surrounding district, e.g. high profile, easy access, high quality and a range of unique and functional facility components.</li> </ul>	<p>A large District Park may need to be planned for if open space is lacking in the surrounding areas and there is need for an open space and recreation destination.</p> <p>A District Park may be appropriate to complement a commercial or community node within the development area.</p>
Planning for Neighbourhood Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents should be within 500m of a neighbourhood park.</li> <li>The park/s should be at least 0.5ha in size and ideally up to 1 hectare.</li> <li>The park/s should be located and designed to provide a destination focus for the development area, e.g. good profile, easy access, very good quality, unique features.</li> <li>Neighbourhood parks should have a good connection to housing, with housing facing parks rather than backyards around the park.</li> <li>Neighbourhood parks should be linked to distributor roads rather than main roads (to be accessible and to ensure a link to the housing).</li> </ul>	<p>If a District Park is not required (due to provision in the wider area) there would ideally be one or two neighbourhood parks that are a good size (at least 1ha) and very good quality to provide a destination point.</p>

Open Space	Criteria	Comments/ Rationale
Planning for a Plaza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plaza's should be connected to commercial, community or transport nodes.</li> <li>The size of a plaza could vary depending on the character of the commercial and community space whilst ensuring sufficient space for congregation and activity.</li> <li>The plaza character and size should complement the setting and surrounds.</li> <li>There should be good walking and cycle connections to plaza's.</li> </ul>	<p>A Plaza space will generally have a commercial focus with links to cafes, retail and other components. Some plaza's could be quite small and intimate while others could be large and high profile depending on the setting.</p>
Planning for Key Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher density developments should contribute to achieving and strengthening existing linear networks.</li> <li>Key connections should be established to link people to places, nodes, activity opportunities (transport, main roads, commercial centres, recreation areas).</li> <li>Key connections should be established to protect or develop habitat corridors.</li> </ul>	<p>The key connections should provide links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Between transport and commercial nodes</li> <li>Between transport nodes and higher density development areas</li> <li>To major parcels of open space</li> <li>To existing linear networks in the wider area</li> </ul>

## Stage 3 Planning - Open Space Master Plan



The main purpose of the Open Space Master Plan is to identify the need for additional parks and open space connections (Contributory Open Space) to reflect the proposed population size, ensure liveable and appealing development areas, meet the local needs of future populations and address any specific development requirements such as stormwater management.

The Open Space Master Plan will need to consider the suggested open space principles and provision identified in the Open Space Provision Framework and Open Space Precinct Plan and determine the specific additional open space requirements.

The Open Space Master Plan will draw and build on the Open Space Provision Framework (stage 1 planning) and the Open Space Precinct Plan (Stage 2 planning).

The Open Space Master Plan could become part of the development Master Planning that is often undertaken by developers or other stakeholders.



The following Steps aim to assist the Open Space Master Plan process for open space.

**STEP 1:** Consider the open space requirements identified in the Open Space Provision Framework and Open Space Precinct Plan.

**STEP 2:** Undertake a detailed population and social needs analysis.

**STEP 3:** Consider the desired approach to communal and private open space.

**STEP 4:** Identify the need for additional parks (local, communal).

**STEP 5:** Identify the need for secondary connections and boulevards.

**STEP 6:** Identify the need for open space to address stormwater management or utilities.

**STEP 7:** Develop a final Open Space Master Plan for the development area.

Suggested approaches for each Planning Step are outlined on the following pages. Each Step will require consideration of previous plans, documents or information held by Local and State Government and other stakeholders.

**STEP 1: Consider the open space requirements identified in the Open Space Precinct Plan.**

1. Locate the Primary Open Space identified in the Open Space Precinct Plan on a map.
2. Consider the potential for housing and other development around the open space. The proposed open space should be used to influence the character of the development rather than the development controlling the open space provision.
3. Consider how the building development can complement and reinforce the proposed role of each parcel of open space.
4. Consider how the proposed Precinct Plan open space will influence further requirements for open space e.g. potential connections to that open space.

**STEP 2: Undertake a detailed population and social needs analysis.**

1. Determine or further clarify the future population size and character.
2. Further assess recreation trends and potential requirements.
3. Undertake a demand analysis based on state and national participation data (Australian Bureau of Statistics and Australian Sports Commission ERASS) and other participation data.
4. Undertake a detailed social needs analysis and consider the implications for open space, recreation, sport, community facilities and the environment.
5. Determine potential open space and facility requirements.

NOTE: It may be possible to undertake this step as part of the Open Space Precinct Planning if the projected population data

is available at that time.

**STEP 3: Consider the desired approach to communal and private open space.**

1. Determine the desired character of the development and whether there should be good sized communal and private open space in addition to the public open space planned for in the Open Space Precinct Plan.
2. Define the location and size of proposed parcels of communal or private open space. Map this communal or private open space so that gaps in provision can be identified.

**STEP 4: Identify the need for additional parks (local, communal).**

1. Assess the spread of parks proposed in the Open Space Precinct Plan plus the proposed provision of communal and private open space.
2. Consider whether there is a need for any local parks or additional communal open space to ensure all residents will be within 250m of a usable park space. A local park should be at least 0.2 hectares in size.
3. Identify and map the potential locations of any local parks taking road patterns and links to open space connections into consideration. A local park could be part of a greenway connection.

**STEP 5: Identify the need for secondary connections and boulevards.**

1. Identify potential secondary connections to link residents to open space and enable good people movement around the development area. The secondary connections could be along boulevards and greenways and should aim to achieve a 'walkable community' with strong connections to open space, transport and commercial components.

**STEP 6: Identify the need for open space to address stormwater management or utilities.**

1. Consider the landform and the drainage and stormwater management implications.
2. Identify land parcels suitable for stormwater management and other utilities. Some of these land parcels could be within the local parks identified in Step 4 or secondary connections identified in Step 5. Stormwater could also be incorporated within key parks identified in the Open Space Precinct Plan, but the land allocated for stormwater shall be additional to the base provision of 12.5%. In addition, key parks should not be impacted on by utilities or easements.

**STEP 7: Develop a final Open Space Master Plan for the development area.**

1. Present the proposed open space within a Master Plan concept (including the Open Space Provision Framework, Open Space Precinct Plan and Open Space Master Plan recommendations).
2. Define the proposed role of each parcel of proposed open space.
3. Recommend the level of development of each parcel of open space using the Principles and Guidelines developed in the City of Charles Sturt Best Practice Open Space in Higher Density Developments Project.
4. Recommend the suggested character of residential and other development around the open space (as part of the Open Space Master Plan).

A photograph of a modern urban courtyard. In the foreground, there is a paved path with a geometric pattern, surrounded by lush green plants. In the background, a multi-story building with a balcony and windows is visible. The scene is well-lit, suggesting a sunny day.

*“There has to be a unifying plan, and we must be as hard-boiled as the speculator in framing it.*

*We must identify what cannot be saved, what can and should be saved, and tackle the job as though there will be no reprieve”*

*William Whyte, The Last Landscape (1968)*

## Criteria for Open Space Master Plan

The following additional criteria should be used to assist planning for local parks in accordance with the Charles Sturt Development Plan and best practice research (along with the Open Space Precinct Plan criteria).

<b>Open Space</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Comments/ Rationale</b>
Planning for a Local Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents should be within 250 metres of a park and a Local Park should be established to address any gaps in the provision.</li> <li>A local park should be at least 0.2ha in size.</li> <li>A local park should be accessible and good quality.</li> <li>A local park could be part of an open space connection (linear park) provided the space is usable and can be developed for recreation activity.</li> </ul>	Local parks should aim to address any gaps in provision created by the location of neighbourhood and district parks and the character of the development area.
Planning for Stormwater Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sensitively integrate stormwater management within open space with the aim to achieve functional and appealing spaces whilst managing stormwater runoff.</li> <li>Design stormwater management to have minimal impact on the use of open space.</li> <li>Open space with a stormwater management focus should not represent more than 20% of the total public open space.</li> </ul>	The use and function of open space in higher density areas should not be impacted on by stormwater management or other utilities due to the high value of the open space.



