CITY OF TEA TREE GULLY
Naturally Better

OPEN SPACE POLICY

1. PURPOSE

This policy describes the principles and framework that guides the provision, development and management of open spaces. The Policy seeks to maintain and enhance both the natural and built environments to benefit the community and the individual and collective health and wellbeing of our residents.

2. POLICY

2.1 Background

This policy guides the provision, development and management of open space and open space assets across the City, to achieve a balanced provision of quality open space and infrastructure that is well used and valued by the community and meets the current and future needs. The policy has clear line of sight to key strategic, statutory and operational documents. With a clearly defined framework that includes guiding principles, strategic open space lands, classification system, quality, experience and development standards.

Open Space is integral to the character of the City of Tea Tree Gully and contributes to the quality of lifestyle experienced by the community. Open space has substantial social, cultural, environmental and economic value and contributes to the health and wellbeing of all age groups. It supports physical activity, play, relaxation and helps facilitate social interaction opportunities.

The policy will assist Council to undertake considered reviews of open space and provision and improve the planning, design, delivery and management of open space in a consistent and considered manner to meet the current and future needs of the community.

2.2 Vision

Council will provide equitable access to inclusive and diverse open spaces that enhances the city's character, provide opportunities for active and passive recreation, social interaction and community engagement, and protect and enhance areas of cultural and environmental importance.

2.3 Strategic Alignment

The Open Space Policy provides a clear line of sight to the Strategic Plan, informing an Open Space strategy and the City Master plan through to statutory and operational plans. The hierarchy of documents linked to the Open Space Policy are provided below:



2.4 Open Space Framework

The Open Space Framework provides line of sight to strategic, statutory and operational plans, polices, service levels and manuals. The Framework supports the Open Space Policy by providing a model for how open space will be planned by setting benchmarks for open space provision, quality, design, protection and recreational use. It provides definitions for the open space functions and landscape characteristics, and the quality and experience standards, and will include development standards. Using the Open Space Framework, the Open Space Strategy will translate this policy into strategic priorities and plans that consider the current and future needs of the community.

2.4.1 Guiding Principles

Guides decision-making for the planning, design and management of open space and helps align goals, ensures consistency, prioritises actions and reflects community values. Serves as a benchmark for evaluating options and achieving strategic outcomes.

Strategic Land Review

Reviews existing open space land to identify areas of under / oversupply of open space to meet the current and future needs of the community

Classification System

Defines how open spaces are classified, and will link to an open space classification procedure. The hierarchy, function and landscape characteristics of each open space are clearly defined, and community benefits identified.

Provision Standards

Identifies the ideal quality, distribution and location of open spaces acting as a guide for community and investment planning and helps identify current and future needs.

Experience Standards

Define service level catchments and the provision of a range of open space experiences, to align with the approach adopted for playspaces as defined in the Open Space Asset Management Plan. Enables the development of a strategic approach to the planning and provision of open space experiences to provide equitable of access to a range of open space experiences for residents and guide informed decision making.

Development Standards

Sets the minimum requirements and guidelines for the design, construction and functionality of parks and public spaces to ensure that open spaces meet community expectations, are safe, accessible and support active and passive recreational activities

2.5 Planning Principles

Planning Principles relates to broader considerations that need to be considered and may impact open space planning and priorities.

2.5.1 Open space character

The City of Tea Tree Gully has a diverse and integrated open space network, including the natural landscape of the Hills Face Zone Mount Lofty Ranges to the east. Including rural areas, creek and green corridors, urban parks for active and passive recreation areas, precincts including the Tea Tree Gully Township and Modbury Precinct and functional open space for water management. These spaces provide ecological functions, recreational opportunities and amenity value, supporting and enhancing community wellbeing, biodiversity and sustainable urban form. Open space planning initiatives should enhance the open space character of the city.

2.5.2 Climate adaptation and resilience

Long-term climate trends predicted for South Australia include warming average temperatures, reduced average annual rainfall and changes in rainfall intensity and seasonality. The impact of climate change within the City of Tea Tree Gully includes the future intensity and frequency of fires, storms, periods of drought and heatwaves. The severity of the impacts on open space will vary based on a number of factors including:

- the geographical location and environment i.e. established areas and corridors of open space, rural and natural areas, streetscapes and urban housing.
- extent of tree canopy cover and irrigated grass, dry land grass, hard and artificial surfaces
- proximity to permanent or ephemeral water and water bodies e.g. dams, lakes, creeks and wetlands

Council will actively manage its open space to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, by the following:

- whole of site planning and design including supporting the integration of water and biodiversity sensitive urban design principles
- increasing tree canopy coverage
- planting drought tolerant species in open space areas and corridors
- utilising recycled water where feasible
- using recycled, recyclable and sustainably sourced products and materials

2.5.3 Connectivity and accessibility

Open space enhances the health and wellbeing of the community through the provision of open spaces that provide opportunities for social connection, active and passive recreation and to connect with nature. The planning, design, delivery and management of open space shall be in accordance with the relevant service standards and apply universal design principles to provide more inclusive access to open space, whilst protecting areas of local, environmental and cultural significance, including but not limited to:

- areas of native remnant vegetation
- natural waterways
- areas of high biodiversity and habitat value
- native flora and fauna
- sites of cultural significance including Kaurna and European heritage

2.5.4 Cultural significance

The City of Tea Tree Gully has areas of cultural significance including that of the Kaurna people and European settlers and reflects the diverse historical and cultural fabric of the city. Areas of significance to the Kaurna people, including a number of Aboriginal heritage sites are protected by the Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988.

Wherever possible, the provision of open space and open space assets will embrace and respect all cultural heritage sites and cultures, whilst also taking the necessary steps to ensure that these sites are valued and protected.

2.5.5 Provision of open space experiences

Council recognises the importance of providing access to a broad range of open space experiences including formal and informal passive and active recreation opportunities to support and enhance the wellbeing of the community. Open space experience standards set a benchmark for providing a range of experiences across the city aligning with the relevant Open Space Service Standards

2.5.6 Sport and Recreation

The provision of a range of formal sport and recreation facilities are essential for the physical, social and economic health of our community. These facilities typically comprise sporting grounds and amenities often associated with clubroom amenities and infrastructure, aquatic centres and recreation (wet and dry facilities). The majority are located on regional and district open space.

Council's sportsgrounds and recreation sites should be maintained inline with the Quality Standards to ensure safe and sustainable long-term community usage. The upgrade of these sites is guided by current and future strategies, asset management plans and applies recreation planning principles.

Consideration of the current and future sport and recreation requirements and trends should be included in the provision of open space and open space assets. Engagement with the community and open space users should be undertaken to ensure community needs are met.

2.5.7 Biodiversity and Conservation

The City of Tea Tree Gully recognises the essential role that biodiversity has in creating a healthy, attractive and rich environment for our community and Council has the responsibility as custodian of public land to manage that land for the benefit of the community now and into the future. With significant areas of natural or undeveloped open space including environmentally valuable places, the conservation, biodiversity and revegetation of site improvements in such areas should focus on the revegetation and restoration of the natural environment.

The City of Tea Tree Gully is committed to protecting and enhancing biodiversity in open spaces including indigenous flora and fauna and ecological communities that have existed here since before European settlement. Council will actively work to restore biodiversity to the urban, suburban and rural parts of the City.

The use of biodiversity and conservation areas should be promoted to raise awareness of the value of these areas, however use must also be carefully controlled to ensure the areas are not adversely impacted and remain available into the future.

2.5.8 Urban Consolidation

The City of Tea Tree Gully developed rapidly over a 40-year period with large scale greenfield developments spreading across the City between 1960s – 90s. Most greenfield land supply has been exhausted and housing supply is now mostly delivered through urban consolidation where existing sites are re-developed with infill housing. This will continue as the State Government is planning through its Regional Planning program to accommodate population growth of up to 670,000 people and 315,000 additional homes across the Greater Adelaide region by 2051. Council acknowledges that high quality open space provides a number of key benefits in areas undergoing urban consolidation. High quality open space can:

- help attract investment
- Increase the quality and design of the infill housing
- create a more attractive and liveable environment for new residents
- reduce social isolation through providing safe, well designed and are well connected areas to walk, run, cycle, sit and play.
- increase social interaction and community well being
- help develop a sense of place

With a reduction in allotment sizes, resulting from increasing housing densities, we recognise that there is a shift in the way in which public open space is viewed, valued and utilised by the community. The City of Tea Tree Gully is committed to providing quality and accessible open spaces to all residents, and will consider the impacts of urban consolidation and increased population densities when assessing the provision, design, development and maintenance of open spaces in areas experiencing high levels of urban consolidation.

2.5.9 Service Levels

Open space and open space assets shall be planned, provided and maintained in accordance Open Space Quality Standards and Maintenance Service Levels. This is to improve consistency in the provision (the amount and type of land provided), development (the range, quality and quantity of assets and experiences) and maintenance (the frequency interventions and response times) levels across all open spaces for the benefit of the community and residents over time.

The development of the Open Space Strategy will consider the current and future needs of the community and apply best practice standards and guidelines to ensure compliance with any legislative requirements. Where gaps between the provision, development or maintenance of open space are identified, action plans and forward programs will be developed to address any identified gap(s).

2.6 Open Space Classification

The Open Space Classification system identifies the hierarchy, core function and key landscape characteristics of open space. The system provides a clear approach to the classification of open space, enabling more effective open space planning for the future provision, management and maintenance of open space.

- Hierarchy
- Function
- Landscape Characteristics

2.6.1 Open Space Hierarchy

The open space hierarchy is the highest level in open space classification and aligns with the playspace hierarchy adopted in the Open Space Asset Management Plan:

- Regional
- District
- Neighbourhood
- Local

The table below summarised the catchment, length of stay, open space types and open space experiences in each level of the hierarchy.

	Regional	District	Neighbourhood	Local
Catchment	10km	2-5km	1-2km	500m
Length of Stay	2+hours	2+hours	1-2hours	Up to 1 hour
Open Space Types	• Large open space incorporating a wide range of sport, leisure and recreation activities • Can accommodate simultaneous users and large numbers of people	• Large open space incorporating a wide range of recreation activities that can occur simultaneously • Attracts a wide range of user groups	• Open space large enough to incorporate variety of recreation activities that can occur simultaneously • Attracts a range of user groups located predominantly within the neighbourhood precinct	• Open space suitable for daily recreational and leisure use, including walking a dog or playing in a playspace • Attracts residents living in close proximity to the open space
Open Space Experiences	• Space is suitable to accommodate large community events for example Civic Park Carols, Muddy Hands Festival, Summer Garden Festival, Touch a Truck • A large sports precinct with multiple sports facilities, ie more than 3 ovals / fields / courts / club / community facility including lighting for evening play and training	• A large open space which can support small community events for example a market • A large district level playspace for weekend of longer visits including BBQ's and toilets • A sports park with multiple ovals / fields / courts including lighting for evening play and training.	• A large open space which can accommodate multiple users • A neighbourhood level playspace. Toilets and BBQ's are limited to neighbourhood playspaces located within green corridors • A sports park with a single oval/field or small amount of courts (unlit)	• A small to medium quiet open space which can support a relatively small number of uses • A local level playspace, with an irrigated grass kick about space located under established tree canopy

2.6.2 Open Space Functions

Open Space Function is the core or predominant function for the open space with only one function applied to each open space area. Functions are defined in the Open Space strategy and include:

- Active Recreation (Formal/Sport)
- Informal Active and Passive Recreation
- River and Creek Corridors
- Green Corridors / Buffers
- Natural Areas
- Water Management
- Conservation Areas
- Civic, Cultural and/or Heritage
- Other

2.6.3 Landscape Characteristics

The Landscape Characteristics of an open space are defined as the physical, natural, and human-made elements that contribute to its overall identity, functionality and aesthetic appeal. These characteristics may influence how the space is used, perceived, and valued by the community. Landscape characteristics are defined in the Open Space strategy and include:

- Irrigated sports
- Non-irrigated sports
- Informal Recreation
- Treed Parkland
- Formal Gardens
- State / Local Heritage
- Natural Areas / Biodiversity
- Riparian Areas (river/creek)
- Road Corridors
- Wetlands
- Detention and Retention Basins
- Lakes / Dams / Reservoirs
- Cemeteries
- Culturally Significant
- Dog Parks
- Community Gardens
- Undeveloped / Landfill

2.7 Open Space Quality Standards

Open space quality standards are assigned to an open space classification to guide the provision and development of open space and define the maintenance requirements of the site. The quality standards are:

- Premium
- High
- Moderate
- Basic

The application of the quality standards against the Landscape Characteristics of an open space are defined in the Open Space strategy.

2.8 Open Space Experience Standards

Open Space Experience Standards define service level catchments for the provision of a range of open space experiences, aligning with the playspace classifications in the Open Space Asset Management Plan.

- Regional
- District
- Neighbourhood
- Local

Open Space Experience Standards enable the development of a strategic approach to the planning and provision of open space experiences that form the basis for providing more equitable access to a range of open space experiences for residents and enable informed decision making. Open space experiences may include:

- Playspaces
- Skate parks
- Unsealed BMX tracks
- Sealed BMX tracks
- Sporting facilities
- Community Courts
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Sporting goals
- Off-leash dog parks
- Sealed walking trails
- Unsealed walking trails
- Picnic facilities
- Event spaces
- Community gardens
- Natural areas

2.9 Reporting

A report will be provided to Council on an annual basis detailing requests received for improvements or additions to open space including location, details of the request and action taken.

3. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy the following definitions apply:

Active open space

Land that is set aside for the primary purpose of formal and informal outdoor sports.

City Design Manual

The manual is a comprehensive technical guide informing for planning, budgeting, designing, delivering and managing public infrastructure. The standard and quality of assets aligns with the Open Space Quality Standards.

Community Land Management Plans

As defined under the Local Government Act 1999, refer Section 4. Legislative Framework - Community Land Management Plans

Greenfield
Undeveloped or non-productive land that have yet to have urban development.

Natural environments
Land, water, biodiversity or flora and fauna that preserves the characteristics of the natural landscapes native to the area.

Open space
Land that is set aside for public recreation, parklands or similar purposes including active and passive open spaces.

Informal Active and Passive open space
Land that is set aside for parks, gardens, linear corridors, conservation bushlands, natural reserves, public squares, dog parks and community gardens that are made available for passive recreation, play and unstructured physical activity.

Nature play
A place that provides opportunities to engage with the natural environment, elements and materials in a sustainable and meaningful way. Enabling exploration, creativity, problem solving and risk taking while enhancing imaginative and sensory play experiences to improve social and emotional wellbeing.

Placemaking
A multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of public spaces. Placemaking capitalises on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating public spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and well-being.

Playspace
A place that is designated primarily for play and may include structured or unstructured play elements including nature play.

Structured play
A site with a set of rules with specific play objectives. This can include organised sports such as soccer, football, tag and or other structured activities.

Unstructured play
A site with no formalised play objectives. This can include playing with loose parts, informal games, grass kickabout spaces, nature play and other forms of unstructured activities.

Urban consolidation
The process of increasing the density of housing in established residential areas.

Whole of site
A coordinated approach to capture the whole of a site when considering renewal, upgrades or management or maintenance applied to all relevant sites related Council assets.

4. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

4.1 Legislation

There is no legislative requirement for council to have a policy relating to the provision, development, maintenance or management of Open Space.

The following legislation applies to this Policy:

Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988

The Aboriginal Heritage Act 1988 provides for the protection and preservation of Aboriginal heritage. Consideration of this Act must be undertaken when working on or near an Aboriginal Site, as defined by the Act, to ensure protection and preservation of Aboriginal heritage.

Community Land Management Plans

Under the Local Government Act 1999, Local Government land is defined as land owned by a council or under a council's care, control and management. 'Land' defined by the Local Government Act 1999 (Section 4(1) – Interpretation) includes any building, structure or improvement on the land including land covered by water.

All local government land (except roads) is classified as community land unless excluded by a formal resolution of Council, e.g. at the time of acquisition. Council may revoke the community land classification by a Council resolution with the revocation requiring the approval of the relevant minister.

A Community Land Management Plan (CLMP) is a document that is prepared in consultation with the community within a Council area. CLMPs provide the framework and direction for the use of community land as well as the restrictions and limitations.

Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016

An Act to provide for matters that are relevant to the use, development and management of land and buildings, including by providing a planning system to regulate development within the State, rules with respect to the design, construction and use of buildings, and other initiatives to facilitate the development of infrastructure, facilities and environments that will benefit the community.

Any open space contributions made through this Act must take into consideration the Open Space Policy for the provision, development and maintenance of open space.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)

Consideration of this act must be taken for the provision, development and maintenance of Open Space.

The objects of this Act are:

a) to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the ground of disability in the areas of:
    i. work, accommodation, education, access to premises, clubs and sport; and
    ii. the provision of goods, facilities, services and land; and
    iii. existing laws; and
    iv. the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs; and
b) to ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and

c) to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

Landscape South Australia Act 2019
An Act to promote sustainable and integrated management of the State's landscapes, to make provision for the protection of the State's natural resources, and for other purposes.

Local Government Act 1999
Consideration of the Local Government Act 1999 should be undertaken in the provision, development and management of open space. Specifically, Chapter 11 – Land of the act provides requirements for the management of local government land and roads.

Native Title (South Australia) Act 1994
In 2018, the final determination in response to the Kaurna Native Title Claim over land including land within the City of Tea Tree Gully was extinguished, indicating that there is no native title over any Crown Land in Council's care, control and management. Consideration of the Native Title (South Australia) Act 1994 should be undertaken in accord with due diligence practices to maintain awareness of obligations under native title and Aboriginal heritage frameworks.

4.2 Other references

Other reference documents exist for the provision, development and management of open space. Council and external documents should be considered where applicable, as detailed.

Council's documents including:

- Open Space Asset Management Plan
- Open Space Review Framework
- Open Space strategy
- Strategic Plan 2030
- Community Land Management Plans
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020-2024
- Modbury Heights Precinct Plan
- Tea Tree Gully Township Precinct Plan
- Holden Hill Neighbourhood Plan
- Resilient East - Regional Climate Change Adaptation Plan
- City Wide Main Roads & Gateways Plan
- Maintenance Service Levels
- Asset Management Policy
- Boundary Fence Management Policy
- Cemeteries Management Policy
- Community Engagement Public Consultation Policy
- Disposal of Land and Assets and Acquisition of Land Policy
- Easements Management Policy
- Financial Sustainability Policy
- Footpath Policy
- Land Division Infrastructure and Open Space Management Policy
- Leases and Licences to Sporting and Community Organisations Policy
- Memorial Management Policy
- Modbury Precinct Activation Policy

- Procurement Policy
- Public Art Policy
- Public Lighting Policy
- Public Toilets Policy
- Recycled Water Management Policy
- Signage and Entrance Statement Policy
- Sports Field Floodlighting Policy
- Tree Management Policy

External documents including:

- Green Adelaide Plans
  - Regional Landscape Plan 2021-26
  - Urban Greening Strategy for Metropolitan Adelaide 2025 to 2030
- Infrastructure SA – 20-year State Infrastructure Strategy 2025
- Greater Adelaide Regional Plan
- Office for Recreation and Sport (SA) Strategic Plan
- National Construction Code
- River Torrens Linear Park Strategic Integrated Asset Management Plan – 2017
- Adelaide Mount Lofty Ranges Bushfire Management Area Plan – July, 2016
- Relevant Australian & International Standards
- State Planning Policies
- Australian Government National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy
- World Health Organisation – Urban green spaces and health – A review of evidence

5. STRATEGIC PLAN/POLICY

5.1 Strategic Plan

The following strategic objectives in Council's Strategic Plan 2030 are the most relevant to this report:

Aspiration	Comments
Our Community	
Our programs, events and services are accessible, inclusive and adaptable to meet community needs	*The provision of accessible, inclusive and adaptable open spaces and assets that support the utilisation of open spaces for programs, events and services*
Diversity is welcomed and celebrated	*Open spaces that reflect, celebrate and meet the needs of the diverse community within the City of Tea Tree Gully*
People feel a sense of belonging, inclusion and connection	*Developing places and spaces that are accessible and safe and are reflective of our community's needs and they have been offered the opportunity to provide input on develops a sense ownership and community and a connection to place as the community can see their feedback and needs reflected in the landscape.*
The safety and wellbeing of our community is a priority	*Application of the principals of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) in the planning design, delivery and maintenance of open spaces*
Our Economy	
Our centres are vibrant with Modbury Precinct as the region's key activity centre	*The upgrade of and continual investment in open space asset and the increase in the maintenance service levels*

Aspiration	Comments
	provided looks to contribute to the ongoing revitalisation of the precinct.
Our Environment	
Biodiversity, green spaces and tree canopy are valued, enhanced and protected	*The Open Space Policy is very clear on its intention to protect and enhance the natural environment as well as developing the value of these places through promotion and carefully considered and managed access. Trees play a key role in the cooling of our environment. Increasing tree canopy cover is a key aim when developing parks, tree screens and streetscapes. Tree planting in locations such as these increases the usability of a space whilst also providing tangible environmental benefits. Tree planting locations should consider and not be to the detriment of the current or potential future use open spaces for recreational use.*
We practice the responsible and sustainable use of resources	*Procurement practices incorporate the use of recycled and sustainably produced materials and products*
We are resilient to extreme weather events, bushfires and environmental risks	*The effects of climate change on all open space is a key consideration of this policy. New developments should be designed to withstand these effects and existing and established spaces should be maintained and managed to build resilience to cope with the forecasted effects.*
Our Places	
Our public places are attractive, adaptable and fit for purpose	*This is achieved through the provision of accessible, inclusive and adaptable open spaces and assets that ensure our public spaces are attractive, adaptable and fit for purpose.*
Our neighbourhoods are well planned, safe, connected and accessible with a focus on active methods of travel	*Connectivity between and through open spaces is imperative to provide key connections for pedestrians and cyclists and maximise use and opportunity for active and passive recreation.*
Our Leadership	
Our service provision is sustainable and adaptable	*Quality and Experience Standards seek to ensure that the provision of assets is equitable where possible, sustainable and adaptable.*
Our engagement is meaningful and we keep our community informed about Council initiatives	*Community engagement and communication plays a key role in development and management of highly valued open spaces. Direct engagement with the community is required to ensure major developments are supported by community and are reflective of their needs.*
Our planning and decision making is evidence based, consistent and focused on outcomes for the future	*Planning of open space must be reviewed to ensure the quality and experience standards, maintenance service levels meets the current and future needs of the community. Decision making with regard to open space shall be informed through council policy, asset management plans, the review of service standards and rigorous and thorough investigations, community need (both current and future), and community support determined through community engagement.*

5.2 Organisation Plan

Our Strategic Plan is supported by an Organisation Plan which focuses on five key themes of customer care, learning & growth, future capability and sustainable operations.

6. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

This Policy will be implemented by the Chief Executive Officer or relevant General Manager and managed in accordance with Council's scheme of delegations.

Record number	D25/31063
Responsible Manager	Manager City Strategy
Other key internal stakeholders	General Manager Strategy & Finance General Manager City Operations General Manager Community Services Manager Health & Recreation Services Manager Community Connections Manager Technical & Engineering Services Manager Field Services Team Leader Biodiversity & Pest Management
Last reviewed	26 August 2025
Adoption reference	Council
Resolution number	855
Previous review dates	13/6/20, 12/12/17
Legal requirement	N/A
Due date next review	2027
Delegations	