introduction

Cross Keys Reserve is located within the suburb of Essendon and is bounded by Woodland Street, Bridge Street, Cameron Road, a Council owned laneway and the Moonee Ponds Creek. The Reserve is approximately eight and a half hectares and is defined in the Moonee Valley Open Space Strategy as a Regional Park. The site is primarily for neighbourhood use but has broader regional catchment significance due to its location along the Moonee Ponds Linear Park. Its primary classification is ‘Sporting’ and secondary classifications are ‘Waterway’ and ‘Nature Conservation’. Woodland Street Grassland Area is being included within the overall site for the purposes of the Master Plan. The naming of the Reserve is related to its proximity to the Cross Keys Hotel which sits to the west of the Reserve.

Cross Keys Reserve has a rich history, including pre-European habitation. Areas such as this along the Moonee Ponds Creek prior to urbanisation would have been a sequence of vegetated water holes. Since urbanisation, modifications to the Moonee Ponds Creek and other drainage systems has led to a reduction in natural overland flow and water collection on the site. The construction of the Tullamarine Freeway and its associated drainage system has also created a physical barrier to the catchment.

While the Reserve is primarily sporting in nature, it also remains an important piece of open space for passive use. The site has a combination of active playing fields, green open space and a dogs off-leash area. The Moonee Ponds Creek Trail also passes alongside the Reserve and is used by a large number of recreational and commuter cyclists.

Moonee Valley City Council’s Open Space Strategy recommends to “Implement the existing Master Plan for this Reserve.” A Master Plan was developed in 2008 for the purpose of relocating Essendon Cricket Club from Windy Hill to Cross Keys Reserve. This move did not eventuate, hence a new Master Plan for Cross Keys Reserve was required to guide its design, development and management into the future.
history

The Wurundjeri people are the traditional owners of the land. They relied on the Maribyrnong River, Moonee Ponds Creek and Steele Creek for fishing, transport and food. Following colonisation, the Cross Keys Reserve area was used as grazing land.

The timeline below shows some historical events that have occurred at the site since post European settlement. Reference for this chronological history have been sourced from The Annals of Essendon by R.W Chalmers

1848 - The Cross Keys Hotel was built (it was one of only 16 properties along Pascoe Vale Road in 1872)

21 May 1928 - The Essendon Council has been appointed Committee of Management for the Cross Keys Reserve. An area of 4 acres, 2 roods and 35 perches at North Essendon (“The Argus”)

7 October 1933 - The Glenbervie Cricket Club, recently formed, played its first match in the North West Cricket Association. The Club was granted use of Cross Keys Reserve as its home ground (“The Annals of Essendon” Vol 2. 1925-1962)

6 May 1944 - Rev RL Mc Donald, President of the North Essendon Methodist Football Club, unveiled the 1943 Pennant won by his Club in the Methodist Association last year prior to the commencement of the 1944 Season at Cross Keys Reserve (“The Annals of Essendon” Vol 2. 1925-1962)

1950 and 60s - Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works (now called Melbourne Water) realigned and concreted the Moonee Ponds Creek in an attempt to stop flooding

2003 - ‘The Totems’ artworks by Glenn Romanis installed in Cross Keys Reserve, Travancore Park and Boeing Reserve


2008 - Cross Keys Reserve Master Plan 2008 adopted
planning overlays and land ownership

Land Subject to Inundation Overlay
This overlay identifies land which is subject to 1 in 100 year flood. This ensures that developments allow for the free passage of water and do not hinder flood levels or flow velocity.

Incorporated Plan Overlay
To coordinate the development along the Moonee Ponds Creek, its banks and surrounding environment To reserve the natural features and remnant vegetation of the Creek and prevent further deterioration of the creek and its environs.
To improve access to land adjacent to the creek and the creek itself, to enable the extension of the linear trail along the entire creek and developing links to other areas.

Land Ownership
The site is divided into several different titles: Land owned by Moonee Valley City Council, Crown Land and Government Road.
Cross Keys Reserve is zoned Public Park Recreation Zone (PPRZ), the open space bordered by Woodlands Street, Reynard Street and CityLink is in the process of being re-zoned from Residential Zone 1 (RZ1) to Public Park Recreation Zone (PPRZ).

Cross Keys Reserve Master Plan
December 2016
Leisure Strategy 2013
The Leisure Strategy focuses on enabling, supporting and improving people’s capacity to be active socially, mentally and physically. This will involve many people and organisations, including community groups, clubs and commercial entities, working together to help achieve positive health and wellbeing outcomes for our community. The strategy includes goals that will guide us in our planning for leisure services, places and spaces. The goals are:

- Enable enhanced program and service delivery
- Optimise, develop or redevelop spaces and places for leisure activities to meet the needs of multiple users
- Encourage leisure participation across the whole community
- Ensure that people are informed about leisure opportunities
- Support both structured and casual leisure activities
- Support, facilitate and build effective partnerships

Open Space Strategy
Vision: A linked, sustainable and accessible system of quality open space well used by Moonee Valley’s diverse community, comprising the waterway corridors that are highly valued for their native habitat and recreational use, and a diverse range of other open space reserves across the City including historical gardens, large sporting reserves and a network of smaller vibrant open spaces.

Cross Keys Reserve is a Regional Open Space, with primary character classification of Sporting and Secondary Character Classification of Waterway, Nature Conservation. The recommendation in the Open Space Strategy is “Implement existing landscape master plan (including Woodlands Street Grassland Area)”

The anticipated length of stay and potential use of the reserve guides the type of facilities considered. As a Regional Park the following facilities are appropriate:

- Barbeques
- Car parking
- Club based indoor recreation and leisure facilities
- Club based outdoor recreation and leisure facilities, including sports fields, courts etc.
- Drinking taps
- Feature garden beds
- Informal sports facilities including tennis wall
- Basketball half court
- Cricket nets
- Large open grassed areas
- Lighting
- Paths – including shared
- Picnic shelters
- Playground – Large
- Public toilets
- Rubbish bins
- Seating
- Skate facilities

City Sustainability Policy
“In 2035, Moonee Valley will be a city of clean, green and beautiful, vibrant, diverse and sustainable community that people experience as friendly and safe to live in.” MV Next Generation 2035

Our lifestyles and cities are rapidly changing and our City Sustainability Policy takes the environmental knowledge we have gained over the past ten years, and brings it forward into the design and policy development for our community. For leadership in city sustainability, Council's strategies need to think long term, find big picture connections and lay the foundations for more specific strategies, actions and guidelines.

The policy provides guidance through four themes:
- Urban Ecology – Greening our City
- Living Locally – Designing our City Better
- Your Home and Workplace – Lessening the Impact
- Valuing our Resources – Ways to lessen our waste
existing conditions and opportunities

Buildings and Structures
The existing pavilion contains rooms for the sports clubs and the Essendon Gem and Lapidary Club. The pavilion does not meet Australian Standards and is currently the lowest rated in Moonee Valley City Council’s Pavilion Redevelopment Plan for functionality and condition. Portables are currently being used to act as a second change room. The existing public toilets are in poor condition and not well located. The site for the telecommunications tower has been leased into perpetuity. This infrastructure will remain in its current location for this Master Plan.

Opportunities
There is an opportunity to replace the existing pavilion with a new multi-use pavilion designed in accordance with Universal Design Principles. A new location for the pavilion would allow for a larger building with better pedestrian and vehicular access. Publicly accessible toilets would be included within the pavilion.

Sports Fields
Cross Keys Reserve currently contains two cricket fields and one soccer field which are used throughout the year. The following clubs play at Cross Keys Reserve:
- Essendon Royals Soccer Club
- Essendon Cricket Club
- Strathmore Cricket Club
- Aberfeldie Cricket Club

Opportunities
There is an opportunity to re-configure the playing fields to maximise the number of games that can be played throughout the year. The re-configuration allows for two senior soccer fields, one senior cricket field and several smaller fields for lower grades and junior sport. Aligning soccer fields in an east-west direction reduces the possibility of stray balls crossing onto Woodland Street and associated footpaths. With this re-configuration there is an opportunity to reposition the pavilion location. There is an opportunity to upgrade and enhance sports field lighting to allow for evening training sessions. Safety fencing is required along Woodlands Street to prevent stray soccer balls from entering the road environment.
existing conditions and opportunities

Safety Fencing
The proximity of the proposed soccer fields to Woodland Street poses a risk to drivers and pedestrians. To mitigate this risk, a 12m high safety fence is proposed along the northern edge of the soccer fields. This will prevent soccer balls from being kicked onto Woodland Street. The fencing will be screen from the road through extensive plantings.

Cross Keys Reserve - proposed Woodland Street edge
existing conditions and opportunities

Pathways and pedestrian entrances
Cross Keys Reserve currently has limited internal pathways. The Moonee Ponds Creek Shared Path runs to the south and east of the Reserve and there are existing footpaths along adjacent roads. The Cycling and Walking Strategy contains recommendations for improved connections from Woodlands Street and Pascoe Vale Road to the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail and existing worn tracks highlight this need. The bridge across the Moonee Ponds Creek leads to residential areas beyond and this is a well used connection for access to the Strathmore train station. The pedestrian entrances into the Reserve are not well marked or accessible.

Opportunities
There is an opportunity to provide pathway connections within and to the Reserve. A circuit path around the perimeter of the Reserve would provide a designated route for walking and jogging. An internal network would also provide alternative routes to the shared path and define areas within the Reserve such as the dog off-leash zone. There is the opportunity to provide more recognisable and accessible pedestrian entrances into the Reserve.

Site hydrology, drainage and irrigation
Stormwater from local catchments flows to the north and south west of the Reserve. These drainage systems discharge into the Moonee Ponds Creek which runs to the south and east of the Reserve. The stormwater drainage system that runs along the northern edge of the Reserve is under capacity. This causes flooding in high rainfall events, resulting in damage to the Moonee Ponds Creek Trail and associated embankment.

Opportunities
There is an opportunity to divert some of the stormwater from the surrounding drainage systems into a small wetland. Diverting this stormwater would alleviate the need to upgrade the under-capacity drainage system along the northern edge of the Reserve. Incorporating a wetland or other stormwater bio-retention area, would enhance local biodiversity and protect the Moonee Ponds Creek by reducing the amount of pollutant entering the waterway.

There is an opportunity to install a rain garden in the south western corner of the Reserve which would capture stormwater from Cameron Road and Bridge Street and treat the water to remove pollutants prior to it entering the Moonee Ponds Creek.

The local storm water catchment (1.5Ha) is not large enough to harvest water for sports field irrigation.
existing conditions and opportunities

Vehicle access and circulation
There is currently one vehicular access point Cross Keys Reserve car park on the corner of Bridge Street and Cameron Road. There are current traffic congestion issues in Cameron Road due to width of the road. There is a laneway along the western edge of the Reserve that is accessed from Woodlands Street, this provides access to the Reserve carparking and also to the rear of the properties that adjoin the site to the west.

Opportunities
There is an opportunity to upgrade the laneway to allow safer and more efficient vehicle movement. This is possible through surface improvements, line-marking and provision of better site-lines at the entrance. The congestion issues along Cameron Road would be alleviated by the proposed relocation of car parking.

Car Parking
Cross Keys Reserve currently contains several car parking areas; one large car park on the corner of Bridge Street and Cameron Road accommodates approximately 49 cars. A smaller car park along the western edge of the Reserve accommodates approximately 28 cars. Parking within surrounding streets is also possible, such as along Woodland Street. There is informal car parking area on the corner of Bridge Street and Pascoe Vale Road.

The car parks are often used by commuters who use Strathmore train station. There are issues associated with limited passive surveillance within the existing car parks.

Opportunities
There is an opportunity to relocate car parking in association with the proposed pavilion location. The relocated car park would be accessed via Woodland Street and would be sealed and line marked to maximise efficiency. The proposed location would encourage more passive surveillance. Shade trees and Water Sensitive Urban Design would be incorporated into the car park design. There is an opportunity to provide additional car parking along Bridge Street in association with pathways and plantings. The informal car park on the corner of Pascoe Vale Road and Bridge Street is to be removed due to safety issues and converted to a seating area with shade trees.
existing conditions and opportunities

Public Art
The sculpture in Cross Keys Reserve is one of three sculptures that are placed along the Moonee Ponds Creek by Indigenous artist Glenn Romanis. All three are considered one single work titled ‘The Totems’. They were commissioned in 2003 and made from River Red Gum sourced from the Murray River. The other two sculptures are in Boeing Reserve and Travancore Park.

The sculptures along the creek tell a story of the history of the waterway. The sculpture in Cross Keys Reserve resembles a spear and pays homage to the Aboriginal occupation of the land. The work in Boeing Reserve represents the natural land before human occupation and resembles a young plant breaking through the soil. The sculpture in Travancore Park resembles cogs which reflect the industry associated with the area and European occupation.

Opportunities
The sculpture in Cross Keys Reserve receives annual maintenance. It now requires renovation to repair areas of damage to ensure that it remains resilient into the future. There is an opportunity to incorporate the sculpture into the surrounding landscape through plantings and surface treatments.

Dog Off-Leash Area
The eastern end of Cross Keys Reserve is designated as a dog off-leash area. The local law states that dogs are to be kept under effective control at all times and are to be kept on a leash within 15m of shared paths. When sports games are being played, dog owners are expected to keep their dogs under effective control and prevent them running onto the playing field areas. The dog off-leash area is marked with two signs at each end of the off-leash zone.

Opportunities
Cross Keys Reserve is popular for dog walkers and the off-leash area will be maintained. There is an opportunity for additional amenities such as dog drinking bowls, more bins for dog waste disposal and pathways to delineate the off-leash areas which will assist with navigation and the local law requirements.
existing conditions and opportunities

Play Spaces, Picnic Areas and Exercise Stations
Cross Keys Reserve does not currently contain a playspace, picnic areas, circuit pathway or outdoor fitness stations.

The Moonee Valley City Council Playspace Plan recommends incorporating a playspace into the Reserve that provides play opportunities for children of all ages and also natural play opportunities. The Leisure Strategy encourages leisure activities for all, including facilities for outdoor exercise and passive leisure.

Opportunities

There is an opportunity to provide a playspace for local families as well as for those using the Moonee Ponds Creek shared trail and visiting the Reserve for sport. The proposed playspace would be located at the southern end of the Reserve and would include play opportunities for children of all ages, including a basketball half court. It would also include natural play opportunities and reference the Totem artwork and the creek environment.

There is an opportunity to provide two picnic areas. One at the southern end of the site in close proximity to the Moonee Ponds Creek shared trail. The other at the northern section of the Reserve. The picnic areas would include shelters, tables and drinking fountains.

There is an opportunity to provide the community with an exercise circuit around the Reserve including exercise stations for people who want to increase their fitness levels in an open and social setting.

There is an opportunity to provide seating throughout the Reserve both in shaded and in sunny locations. The seating will be located along pathways to provide resting points, either singularly or in arrangements that encourage social interaction.

There is an opportunity to provide litter bins at key locations around the Reserve such as at the playspace, near the pavilion and in the dog off-leash zone along with dog waste bags.

Examples of possible playspace opportunities
Examples of possible outdoor exercise station opportunities
existing conditions and opportunities

**Vegetation and Urban Ecology**

Cross Keys Reserve currently consists of open sports fields, perimeter plantings of tall trees and escarpment plantings along the Moonee Ponds Creek. The species are predominantly native to Australia with a number of exotic trees in the north west corner. The Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek have undertaken revegetation along the creek embankments.

**Opportunities**

There is an opportunity to strengthen the plantings throughout the park to define spaces, provide more shade for users, provide more habitat for local fauna and improve local biodiversity. There is an opportunity to create an urban forest by planting more trees and understorey plantings throughout the Reserve. Fruit trees and other edible vegetation could be incorporated to increase local food production.

At the eastern end of the Reserve there is an opportunity to capture local stormwater and collect it in a series of vegetated ponds or small wetlands. The purpose of these ponds would be to reduce the instances of flooding (refer Site hydrology, drainage and irrigation), reduce pollutant entering the Moonee Ponds Creek and to increase local biodiversity. As part of this environment mid-storey plantings could provide more habitat and visual interest for park users.

“There are a range of benefits that have been shown to come from incorporating natural ecological systems and processes into park designs. For example, WSUD can provide habitat, filter, slow and reduce the quantity of stormwater and recharge the groundwater. .......The provision of trees and vegetation ameliorates the local climate, reducing the urban heat island effect and providing shady meeting and gathering places for local people. Birds and other wildlife can be encouraged to flourish and spaces can be created to enable children and adults to engage in nature through recreation and play.”

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**Cross Keys Reserve - proposed vegetation areas**

Local species of birds that could benefit from the collection and treatment of stormwater on site using natural processes

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**Existing sportsfield with tall trees bordering the Reserve to the north**

**Example of small wetland (image Tom Biebighauser)**

**Example of opportunity to increase mid-storey plantings at eastern end of site**
1. Reconstructed two-way laneway. Bicycle access, including relevant line marking, shared zone signage and speed limit, to be incorporated. Stay Clear zone at Woodland Street (subject to VicRoads approval) including relocation of services as required.

2. New pavilion designed to universal design principles including paved area for spectator viewing.

3. New carpark with asphalt surface with water runoff directed to passively irrigate trees.

4. New carpark with asphalt surface with water runoff directed to passively irrigate avenue of trees.

5. New pocket park with mature feature trees and seating.

6. New shared path linking to path along Moonee Ponds Creek. Reduce steepness with earthworks and grading. Provide secondary path that is less steep for better pedestrian accessibility. Provide new crossing point across Cameron Road. At this location there is an opportunity for a rain-garden to collect water runoff from road before entering creek. Provide wayfinding signage.

7. New picnic area with shelter, picnic tables, drinking fountain, and rubbish bin. Incorporate adjoining carved timber seating and art totem into gravel area and additional planting and create link to playground.

8. New playground that encourages children of all ages and abilities to participate in play. Incorporate natural elements including logs for climbing and balancing, rocks for seating and stepping stones and sculptural elements. Provide variety of equipment including swings, spinners, climbing net and combination unit. Provide seating in shade.

9. Basketball court with adjoining seating and shade for viewing both basketball and soccer field.

10. Existing communications tower infrastructure to remain.

11. Outdoor fitness stations.

12. New picnic shelter with seating and drinking fountain including tap for filling bottles.

13. Investigate possibilities to capture and treat storm water from adjoining streets to prevent localized flooding. This could include installation of small wetlands. Pathways with seating would provide an opportunity to experience the natural setting and bird-life the wetlands would attract.

14. New path connecting existing Reynard Street to shared path along Moonee Ponds Creek.

15. Enhance bushland planting through re-vegetation and erosion control.

16. Urban Ecology Park at Woodland Street grassland area. Predominantly existing eucalyptus canopy with native grass. Incorporate existing trees into mulched beds with logs and rocks, which will also act as barriers to vehicle access. Planting of additional trees and native ground-cover planting. Maintain clear mid-storey for visual permeability. Encourage nature play. Install generous gravel circulation path with seating in shaded areas.

17. New pedestrian crossing across Reynard Street.

18. New practice nets with retractable nets for cricket and soccer practice.

19. New low fence along north side of soccer pitch to prevent balls being kicked onto the road. Elsewhere along Woodland Street edge, incorporate logs and rocks into mulched beds in combination with trees to continue to reduce cars from reserve, helping create a less formal bushland edge.

20. New 12m high fence to prevent soccer balls going onto road.

21. Replace existing fence with new low fence, and continue along oval adjoining proposed wetland.
Information Gathering
As part of the development of the Cross Keys Reserve Draft Master Plan, three rounds of community consultation were undertaken. The first round was to gather information from the local community about what they wanted to see in the Reserve in the future. There was a Saturday morning session in the reserve on 12 September 2015 where local residents were invited to talk about their ideas and raise any concerns they had about the reserve in its current state and for the future. For those who couldn’t attend, a feedback form and reply paid envelope was provided as part of their invitation. Residents could also call or email their feedback to Council. A summary of the consultation feedback is below. This feedback was used to develop the draft Master Plan.

The comments and issues that were gathered fell under the following headings:
- Access and Connectivity
- Car Parking
- Character
- Landscaping
- Playspaces
- Recreation and Activities
- Park Amenities
- Dogs
- Management and Maintenance

Draft Master Plan consultation
Consultation was undertaken to give the community an opportunity to view the draft Master Plan and provide feedback. A community session was run in the reserve on Saturday 13 February 2016.

Feedback received was reviewed and given that there were some significant changes requested, an updated draft Master Plan was sent out to the community for comment as the third round of consultation. The changes requested included moving the cricket oval closer to the pavilion, which meant reorientating the senior soccer fields and required the inclusion of a high safety fence along Woodland Street to stop errant balls hitting cars and pedestrians. The other main change was to keep the entrance and exit to the car park from Woodland Street to prevent an increase of cars in Cameron Road. The final Master Plan reflects the feedback received.

External Stakeholders
- Clubs:
  - Essendon Cricket Club
  - Essendon Royals Soccer Club
  - Strathmore Cricket Club
  - Aberfeldie Cricket Club
  - Essendon Gem & Lapidary Club
- Friends:
  - Friends of Moonee Ponds Creek
  - Friends of Five Mile Creek
- Local Residents
- Local businesses:
  - McCanns Plumbing Supplies
  - Nongkhai Thai Restaurant
  - Cross Keys Hotel
- Moreland City Council
- Melbourne Water

Internal Working Group
- Venta Slizys - Open Space and Urban Design
- Liz Chapman - Open Space and Urban Design
- Penny Ball - Environment and Climate Change
- Michelle Gooding - Parks and Conservation
- Andrew Carey - Sport and Recreation
- Anna Psarras - Traffic and Transport
- Kosta Smirnis - Engineering
- Chris Morris - Sustainable Transport

Help shape the future of Cross Keys Reserve
Council is developing a master plan to help shape the future of Cross Keys Reserve.

Cross Keys Reserve Draft Master Plan
Have your say
Moonee Valley City Council is seeking feedback on the draft Master Plan for Cross Keys Reserve which includes a new pavilion, playground, pathways and more trees.

To view the draft design in more detail visit mvcc.vic.gov.au or call our Urban Design team on 9243 8888.
implementation

Based on the current facility upgrade needs and feedback received from the community, the following implementation plan has been developed. The master plan implementation will occur over a period of approximately ten years and will be subject to budgetary considerations and possible external funding opportunities. The purpose of master plans for open spaces such as Cross Keys Reserve is to provide a guiding document that can carefully guide any future development that may occur within the Reserve.

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