

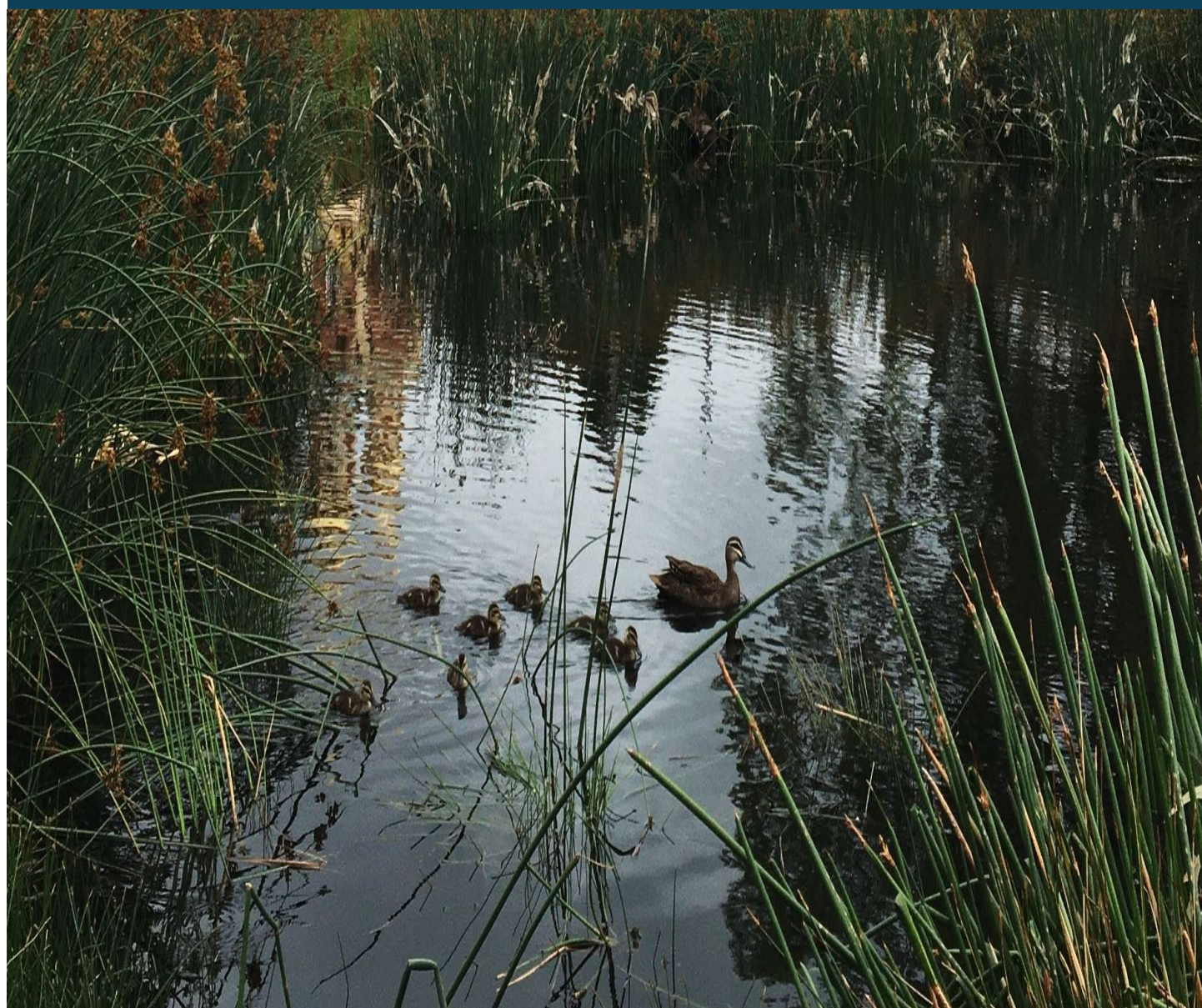


**Merri-bek**  
City Council

# Community Feedback Summary

## Gilpin Park – Swale and Wetland

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek.



# Community feedback summary

## Gilpin Park – Swale and Wetland

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This report provides an overview of the community engagement activities and feedback received relating to the Concept plan for the Gilpin Park Swale and Wetland

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### About the project

Merri-bek City Council is committed to becoming a Water Sensitive City. Our Integrated Water Management (IWM) Strategy 2040 (Endorsed 2020) outlines outcomes for achieving healthy waterways and resilient and liveable landscapes. As part of this strategy and the five-year Action Plan we are exploring opportunities for cooling and greening across the City and treating stormwater where possible. Delivery of the IWM Strategy and the Action Plan includes the construction of large-scale stormwater harvesting systems (SWH) throughout Merri-bek.

As part of the plan for the Brunswick Central Parklands, we have developed a concept plan for improvements at Gilpin Park. The plan includes the construction of a wetland.

We are going to turn the current shallow drainage line in Gilpin Park into a vegetated swale. The swale will look like a dry creek bed with indigenous plants. Stormwater will flow through the swale into the wetland located at the western end.

In March 2023 we asked for your feedback on the concept plan. This document provides a summary of what we heard.

### Background

The concept plan for this project is informed by the wider consultation we did in 2020-21 on the Brunswick Central Parklands project.

During this consultation we heard that the community would like to see:



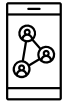
We incorporated this feedback into the concept plan, and we asked you to complete a short survey to tell us what you liked about the plan and if you had any concerns with the proposal.

The summary of your survey responses is included below.

## How we engaged



5000 letters sent to local addresses within a 500-meter radius of the project site.



1 Facebook advertisement promoting the survey, reaching 1813 people who live in and visit the area.

2 Facebook Events with details of the in-person pop up events.



2 in person pop-up events were held on site, Wednesday 1 March and Friday 3 March 2023



Conversations Merri-bek - Online Survey – 111 responses were received



Installation of posters on site with the concept plan, details of the 'pop-up' in-person sessions and contact details of a Council representative.

## Community feedback on the Concept plan

### Summary of online survey responses

We received a total of 111 responses to the online survey.

#### **1. We asked you to tell us how you use this area of Gilpin Park**

The responses indicate that the park supports a range of recreational uses.

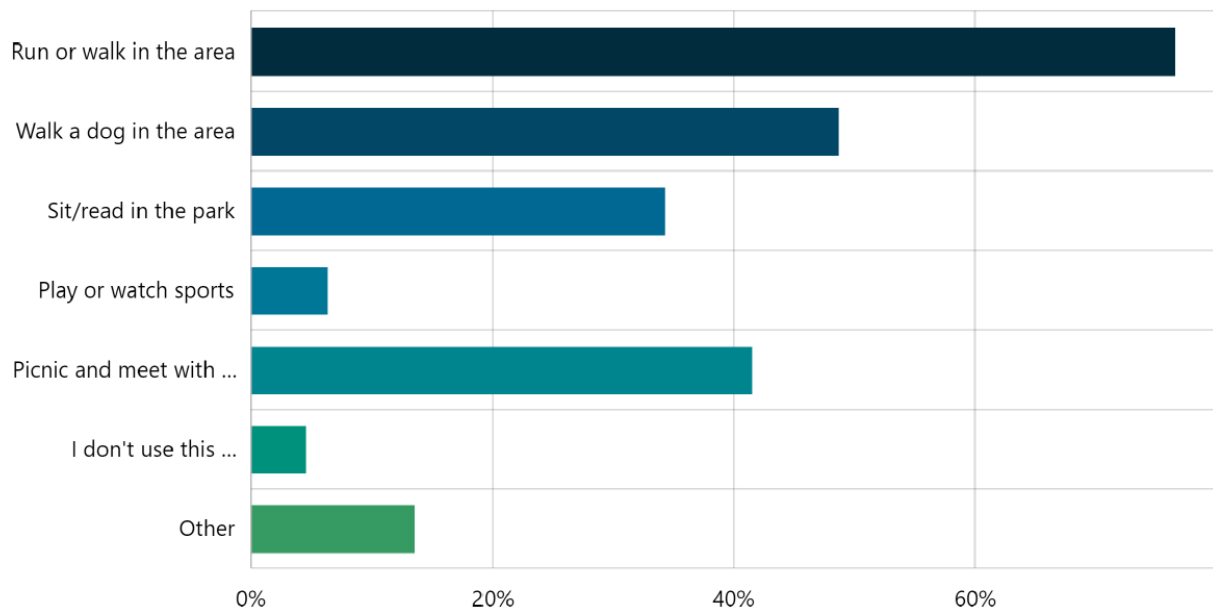
The top 4 ways you use Gilpin Park include:

- Run or walk in the area (85) (77%)
- Walk a dog in the area (54) (49%)
- Picnic and meet with friend (46) (41%)
- Sit/read park (38) (34%)

(This question allowed for the selection of more than 1 response.)

1. Tell us how you use this space. Select all that apply to you.

Multi Choice | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 111 (100%)



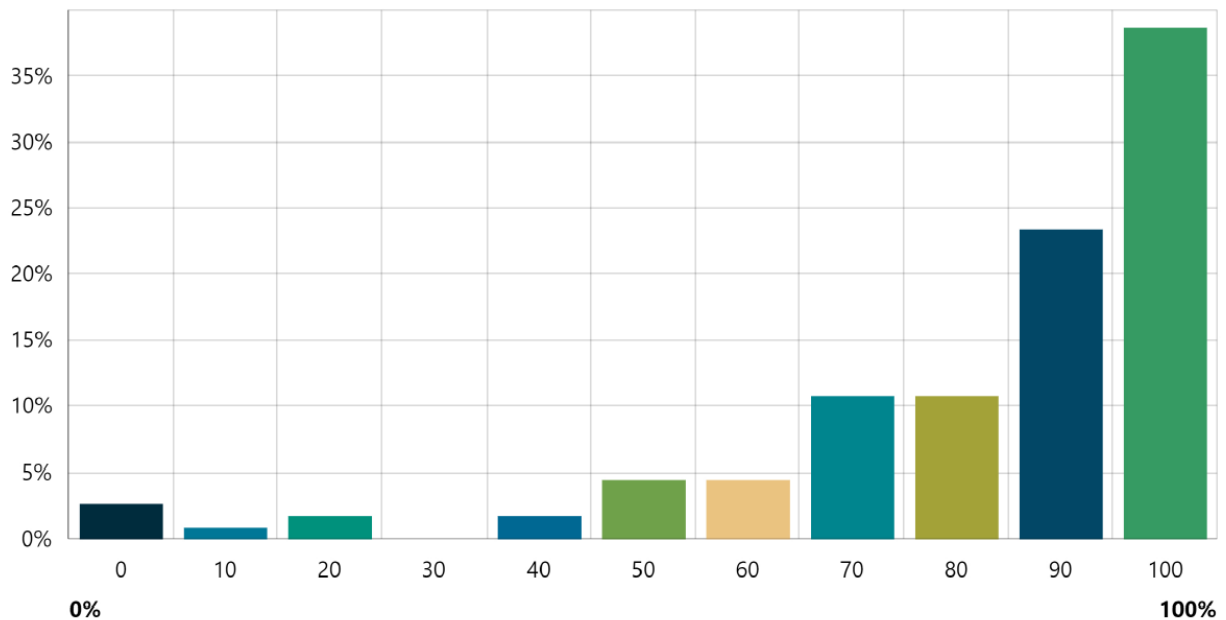
2. We asked you to rate the proposed concept plan.

There was a high level of support shown for the concept plan.

The plan received an average rating of 82%.

2. How do you rate the proposed concept plan? Required

Slider | Skipped: 0 | Answered: 111 (100%)





### **3. We asked what you most liked about the proposed plan.**

The survey indicated support for all elements of the concept plan. The top 3 responses included:

- Sustainability and biodiversity elements of the plan (33%)
- The wetland (28%)
- The indigenous planting (15%)

### **4. We asked if you have any concerns with the proposed concept plan**

We received a broad range of detailed feedback. Common themes included:

- Both concern and support for access and management of dogs around the wetland
- Establishment and protection of Habitat and Biodiversity
- Water safety for children
- Mosquitos around water
- Management of water quality (soil contamination/ stagnation)
- Open Space Maintenance (current and ongoing)
- Reduced open space without infrastructure

We have responded to key concerns in our Frequently Asked Questions. See Appendix on page 7.

## **Other feedback received**

In addition to the feedback collected via Conversations Merri-bek, 10 emails were received.

The pop-up events in Gilpin Park were attended by approximately 30 people.

The questions and themes which came through in the emails and in person discussions were consistent with the frequently asked questions and common themes discussed in the survey.

## **Feature comments**

"I am excited by the prospects of the wetlands and indigenous plantings attracting birdlife and wildlife."

"I have concerns about the dog beach interfering with the ability of the pond/swale to provide suitable habitat."

"I really support Merri-bek carrying out these WSUD interventions in the parks."

"I like the use of previously created water courses, reducing disruptions to present plantings. If there is sufficient density in some plantings this will advantage the smaller birds, such as the White-plumed honeyeaters, against the dominant Noisy minors and Rainbow lorikeets. Better use of storm water is always welcome and running it through a wetland that will help clean it before it gets to the Moonee Ponds creek is a fab idea and will advantage the trees already planted. I look forward to seeing it come together and grow."

"Why does the beach area have to be a dog beach? Gilpin Park already has an enclosed dog space - what about people who don't have/don't like dogs?"

"I just think it's neat. I live very close by, use the park regularly and I'm excited for it to feel more naturey and hopefully solve some of the stagnant water issues over the past little while. Looking forward to more trees and plants and for the sustainability aspects. Good plan. If there was a way to volunteer to plant trees, that'd be cool"

"There is an informal dirt track at the southern end of the park which traces up and down some of the small hill. It might look like erosion, but this is a great place to introduce young kids to mountain biking, in a safe environment. Please keep it!"



Image - Jones Park Wetland, Brunswick East

## Next steps

Following community consultation, the detailed design is underway. Once the design is finalised, we will apply for internal and external funding.

Construction will commence once funding approval has been granted. We anticipate this will be between 2024-2026.

To stay informed visit <https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/gilpin-park-swale-and-wetland>, and click the +Follow button.

**+ FOLLOW**

# Appendix

## Frequently Asked Questions – Gilpin Park Swale and Wetland

### 1. How did this project come about?

Merri-bek City Council is committed to becoming a Water Sensitive City.

Our **Integrated Water Management Strategy 2040 (Endorsed 2020)** outlines outcomes for achieving healthy waterways and resilient and liveable landscapes.

As part of this strategy and the five-year Action Plan we are exploring opportunities for cooling and greening across the City and treating stormwater where possible.

The concept design for Gilpin Park has been informed by consultation undertaken in 2020-2021 for the Brunswick Central Parklands Masterplan project.

During this consultation we heard from the community that the community would like to see:

- more trees
- more shade
- more nature and diversity
- improved habitat for wildlife

For more details on what we heard, you can view the Brunswick Central Parklands Consultation Summaries in the Document Library

### 2. What is a swale?

Swales are linear, depressed channels that collect and transfer stormwater. They can be lined with grasses or more densely planted and landscaped. Swales can carry stormwater and screen and remove gross pollutants, such as litter and coarse sediment.

### 3. What is a wetland?

There are 2 types of wetlands, natural wetlands, and constructed wetlands.

Natural wetlands are ecosystems that are either permanently or seasonally saturated in water, creating habitats for aquatic plants and conditions that promote the development of hydric (wetland) soils.

Constructed wetlands are a series of shallow, densely planted, man-made ponds that help filter water through physical and biological processes. They provide a natural way to treat and remove pollutants from stormwater before it enters our creeks, rivers, and oceans.

The Gilpin Park wetland is a constructed wetland and will include a series of shallow ponds of water surrounded by native plants and rocks. Constructed wetlands can help to clean stormwater, provide homes for wildlife like local native frogs, insects and birds and contribute to urban cooling and the landscape character of the area.

### 4. How will the Gilpin Park wetland work?

We are going to turn the current shallow drainage line in Gilpin Park into a natural swale.

The swale will flow into a wetland located at the western end.

Stormwater will be redirected from Pearson Street into the wetland. This will help us create a permanent water body that will support a variety of water plants, as well as provide a home for frogs, fish, and bugs.

## **5. Where will the water come from?**

Stormwater from a 3.3 hectare area to the west of Gilpin Park will be diverted to the swales and wetland system through an underground pipe.

The diverted stormwater will flow through a meandering swale into a shallow vegetated area of the wetland where pollution (from roads and roofs) is removed through physical and biological processes.

After the water is filtered through the wetland system, the treated stormwater will be piped back into the Pearson Street drainage system which connects to the Moonee Ponds Creek.

## **6. What are the benefits of the proposed wetlands?**

Healthier waterways

Swales and wetlands:

- provide natural treatment of urban stormwater runoff before it enters the local creek (water quality treatment)
- slow down stormwater run-off, reducing environmental damage and impacts on our creeks and rivers during rain events
- increase the capacity of the floodplain to hold stormwater runoff during storms. This helps to relieve pressure on the creek and reduce erosion, however will not eliminate flooding during exceptional storm/rain events

Water security

The wetlands can provide enough water for the existing plants in the reserve, reducing the dependency on potable water supply for irrigation to maintain the parklands.

Habitat for native and endangered wildlife

- Wetlands provide a safe haven for a range of aquatic wildlife and many other animals such as bugs, insects, invertebrates, frogs, waterbirds, and reptiles.
- Wetlands and swales enhance diversity of local flora (plants) to improve local biodiversity

Improved Open Space

- Improvements to the presentation and character of your local parkland.
- Wetlands and swales provide natural cooling mechanisms, contributing to reducing urban heat impacts across the city.

Recreational opportunities

- The swale and wetland system complements the existing recreational uses of Gilpin Reserve with nature discovery, nature play and a Dog Beach.



## **7. Is it safe?**

Public safety is critical in any wetland design and forms part of the overall investigation and design phases of the project. The design is in accordance with Melbourne Water's Wetland Design Guidelines which incorporate Victorian safety requirements such as:

- All deep pool zones within the wetland will be heavily planted with a fringing buffer of plants to limit access
- The banks of these areas also incorporate 'safety benching' wide terraced banks that gradually step down from the top of the wetland to the floor.
- Where open water is close to the shared path, permanent fencing will be installed.
- The complete perimeter of the wetland is covered with mass planting that will discourage entry; provide wildlife protection and still allow visual enjoyment.

## **8. Will it attract Mosquitoes?**

The curves, shallows and deep pools in the wetland are specially designed to allow water to gradually move through the system, without creating stagnant areas for water to sit. This is important to ensure mosquito larvae cannot breed. Also, by calming the speed of water through the system, this will encourage natural mosquito predators, such as frogs.

There will also be a solar powered pump which will circulate the water through the system, improving the health of the water and discouraging mosquitos.

## **9. What about Maintenance?**

Maintenance of the system will be included as part of the package. Our officers will be on site to ensure the wetland is working as designed, the plants are establishing well, weeds are removed, and wildlife and water is in balance.

## **10. Can I still walk my dog at Gilpin Park?**

Yes. Dogs will still be welcome at Gilpin Park.

Temporary fencing will be used to keep dogs out of the wetland while the plants and vegetation establish.

Dense planting buffers and wire fencing will be used to secure a section of the wetland for habitat, preventing access for dogs to the primary habitat area. At the main pool, we will create dog beach area, where dogs can interact with water.

### **11. What is a dog beach?**

The dog beach is intended to allow opportunities for dogs to interact with some water in the park. The design of the wetland, with dense planting buffers, will discourage dogs from accessing the full wetland area.

The off-leash conditions will continue to apply in this area of the park. If dogs are not under effective control as required by Council's local laws, those dogs are not allowed to be off leash, including at the dog beach. These conditions are in place to protect other people and animals in shared public space.

Visit [Conditions for using off-leash dog areas](#) for more information.

### **12. Will the design impact the playground?**

The planned wetland and swale works do not extend into the existing playground and undercover barbecue area.

These dedicated recreational spaces in the park will not be changed by the swale and wetland, and in line with current off-leash conditions, dogs are also required to be on a leash within 15m of the playground and barbecue area (when in use).

### **13. Will it be safe for children?**

The design of the wetland will be in line with Melbourne Water's design guidelines. These guidelines include safety measures for public space. Shallow ponding depths, gentle batter slopes and dense vegetation along the edges of the water will create safe edges and reduce risks of children entering the water.

Wetland designs must comply with the Melbourne Water Safety in Design Audit to ensure that projects are undertaken in accordance with the Melbourne Water Safety in Design Management Procedure.