The Yarra Bend Park Trails Strategy Master Plan is approved for implementation. Its purpose is to direct park management in developing and maintaining an extensive trail network that both meets visitors needs and protects environmental values. A Concept Plan for the Trails Strategy was released in March 2000 for public consideration and comment. The submissions received have been considered in developing this Master Plan.

Copies of the Master Plan can be obtained from:

♀  Parks Victoria
Yarra Bend Park Office
Yarra Bend Road
Fairfield   VIC   3078

For further information on this Plan please contact:

♀  Parks Victoria Information Centre
☎ 13 1963

♀  www.parkweb.vic.gov.au
Acknowledgments

This report has been jointly prepared by Janet Rice of Context Pty Ltd and Parks Victoria staff, with input from Yvette Yeates of Context Pty Ltd, and David Dreadon and Bruce Echberg of Urban Initiatives Pty Ltd.

We are grateful to the public for the comments received on the Concept Plan, and the input received from the Trails Strategy Reference Group during the development of the Concept Plan. The collective input has significantly shaped the final Master Plan.
Chairperson’s Foreword

The Trails Strategy Master Plan for Yarra Bend Park provides strategic direction for the future management of the extensive trail network within Yarra Bend Park. The plan fulfils a key park-wide strategy which was identified in the Yarra Bend Park Strategy Plan in 1999.

Yarra Bend Park is a valuable asset to all Melburnians and visitors to Melbourne. The trail network provides diverse opportunities for visitors to experience the park’s bushland setting and includes links between popular attractions and the broader trail networks of Melbourne.

The preparation of the plan included a comprehensive consultation process with visitors and interest groups. The involvement of a Trails Reference Group ensured that the different views of users was understood and contributed to the development of the plan.

I wish to acknowledge the significant contributions of Context Pty Ltd, Urban Initiatives Pty Ltd, Parks Victoria staff, and the many interested visitors who contributed to the development of the plan.

The staged implementation of the plan will be a key focus for the Yarra Bend Park Trust and Parks Victoria over the next ten years. Works and programs will provide benefits for visitors as well as ensuring the protection of the park’s environmental values for future generations to enjoy.

Cr Royce Keirl (Snr) JP
Chairperson
Yarra Bend Park Trust
April 2001
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Executive Summary

Yarra Bend Park is located 6km from Melbourne amongst densely populated inner suburbs. The park serves both local and regional open space needs with more than 1.6 million visits being made to the park each year.

This Master Plan sets out a strategy for the development and management of the trails in the park. It builds upon the Concept Plan which was released for public comment in early 2000 and provides more detailed specifications and priorities for the proposed works. The Concept Plan is also available on request as an additional reference for the Master Plan.

Trails in Yarra Bend Park

The trails network within Yarra Bend Park consists of:
- sealed all weather paths (asphalt or concrete)
- constructed gravel/ Lilydale toppings paths
- main dirt trails
- secondary or informal dirt trails

The sealed paths including the Main Yarra Trail and the gravel paths, are used by walkers, including people walking dogs, joggers, cyclists, people in wheelchairs and other users such as in-line skaters, skateboards and scooters.

Secondary or informal dirt trails are trails that have been formed by use, and are not maintained by Park management.

Key Issues

The following points are key issues addressed in the Master Plan:
1. modifications to the trail network and trail usage to reduce environmental impact of existing trails and trail use
2. reducing and ideally eliminating trail proliferation
3. addressing conflicting uses of trails
4. reducing risk to park visitors

Environmental Impact of Formed Trails

The formed trails and use of these trails in Yarra Bend Park have the following types of environmental impact:
- erosion and run off. Largely restricted to the unconstructed trails, this is a function of wet conditions, and trails which have not been constructed to withstand such use
- edge trampling. This occurs where the path is muddy, wet or in poor condition; where there is an obstruction of the path or where the path is too narrow to allow path users to easily pass each other
- user impacts on flora and fauna, including noise and other disturbance, dogs disturbing birds and animals, and dog faeces

Improved trail construction is the main tool that will be used to overcome these trail impacts.

This Plan accepts the use of some designated dirt trails in the park for mountain bike riding as a legitimate use, where such use does not compromise the park’s environmental values or the safety of other users.

Because of generally unstable soil conditions most of the dirt trails in the park will be managed as walker only trails.

There are four dirt trails in the park where soil conditions allow the use by mountain bikes. These trails will be managed as shared use trails.

Secondary Trails

Most of the secondary dirt trails in the park will be closed and revegetated. Some are to be retained and upgraded.
User Needs and User Conflicts

There are four key issues relating to user conflicts. These are:

1. conflicts between users wanting to appreciate the ‘quiet enjoyment’ of a bushland environment and other louder users
2. conflicts between cyclists (including mountain bikers) moving quickly on the trails in the park and other slower, more relaxed trail users
3. conflicts on the dirt trails between mountain bikers and other trail users, particularly those who perceive mountain bikes to be out of place and intrusive upon a natural environment
4. conflicts between dogs, their owners, and other trail users, particularly dogs off-leash in the vicinity of trails

These conflicts will be addressed by:
- the involvement of all trail users in the development of a Code of Conduct for trail use
- the upgrading of some trails, promotion of some less well used trails as desirable routes, and development of other focal points away from Studley Park
- greater awareness and understanding by users of other users’ needs, and the legitimacy of their needs on a shared trail
- physical cues such as signage or fencing associated with shared trails to help guide behaviour
- some trail upgrades to better manage areas of particular risk where these risks cannot be lessened by the above strategies
- allowing mountain bikes on some dirt trails, with the following conditions:
  - trail works in strategic places to manage risks of collisions
  - development of a trail standard for shared use dirt trails
- most trails will remain walkers only
- encouragement of all trail users to be involved in trail maintenance work

Changes to the trail network

Details of proposed changes to the trail network are provided in Section 4.

Key changes include:
- construction of a gravel path to provide an east-west link from the Roseneath Street entrance on the Merri Creek Valley, past the Park Office to the existing trail alongside the fly fishing pool above the Yarra River Valley
- Main Yarra Trail: construction of a ramp at Chandler Highway to provide an alternative to the stairs, and realigning the Main Yarra Trail down the slope between Yarra Boulevard and the Pipe Bridge, opposite Fairfield Boathouse
- extension of the existing gravel path network near Deep Rock to provide a circuit
- the intensive trail network down Yellow Gum Ridge is to be closed off due to severe erosion problems and destruction of the vegetation cover. A single dirt trail will be retained to provide a link from Yarra Boulevard to the river. The area will be fenced to discourage access to the surrounding revegetation area
- a single main dirt trail is to be provided through the middle of parkland surrounded by the looped road in the Studley Point Loop Road Management Area in an effort to reduce further damage to significant remnant vegetation. This trail will also provide a link in a circuit that includes viewing points of the city skyline and Dights Falls

Communication and Community Information

The plan outlines:
- development of a Code of Conduct involving all key user groups
- the involvement of the Reference Group in implementing the Trails Strategy
- preparation of materials promoting the trail network and particular trails
education and promotion of responsible trail use, aimed at creating attitudinal and behavioural change amongst users where required

Other Recommendations

- Enforcement of the Yarra Bend Park Regulations in relation to trail use
- Monitoring of trail use and trail use impacts

_Dirt trail through the Yellow Gum Ridge gully_
1. Introduction

Yarra Bend Park provides a unique mix of 260 hectares of natural bushland, open space, sporting fields and recreation areas, and a winding river in the inner Melbourne area. The park serves both local and regional open space needs with more than 1.6 million visits being made to the park each year. The vegetation in the park is of regional and statewide significance.

When the park was originally established under the *Kew and Heidelberg Lands Act 1933*, the key objective was to create an area that was to be “permanently reserved as a site for a public park and recreation and granted to Trustees upon trust for such purposes”.

The park has evolved in response to the changing needs of users and the general community. The precinct plays an important role in providing recreational, cultural, environmental, social and tourism opportunities to the local community and the broader population of Melbourne, as well as local and overseas tourists.

The park is administered by the Yarra Bend Park Trust, made up of Councillors from the Cities of Yarra, Boroondara and Darebin and four appointees of the State Government. In April 1997, Parks Victoria entered into a Management Services Agreement to manage Yarra Bend Park in partnership with the Yarra Bend Park Trust.

1.1 Environmental features

Yarra Bend Park is unique due to its important and significant locally and regionally diverse vegetation communities situated in the heart of an inner urban city.

The Yarra River is the main focus of the park. It is along the river valley that the robust basalt plains soils and the fragile silurian mudstone soils meet and form dramatic landscapes that offer diverse ecological communities as well as pockets of seclusion from the urban environment.

Diverse ecological communities in close proximity with each other include the Western Plains Grassland Community, which is listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. Other significant flora communities include the regionally rare Rocky Chenopod Shrubland and Yellow Box-Yellow Gum Valley Forests, in addition to intact remnants of Plains Grassy Woodland.

One hundred and seventeen significant flora species have been identified, of which 68 have local importance and 49 have regional importance. Several species are listed as Australian Rare and Threatened Species and Victorian Rare and Threatened Species in addition to being listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*.

The Yarra River and Merri Creek corridors provide important linkages to a network of local, regional, national, and international habitats. Yarra Bend Park is habitat for several migratory bird species listed under Japanese and Chinese Migratory Bird Agreements. Several observed bird and fish species have been listed under the *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988* or are recognised to be vulnerable or rare. Several other fauna species which have been listed by the Department of Natural Resources and Environment as rare or threatened.

For a more detailed description of the park’s environmental features refer to the *Yarra Bend Park Environmental Action Plan 2000*.

1.2 Strategic Framework

The Yarra Bend Park Strategy Plan 1999 was developed in consultation with the community and provides the strategic direction for management of the park over a five year period. The Strategy Plan is aligned with the recently completed Environmental Action Plan 2000 and the 1998 Draft Cultural
Significance and Conservation Plan for the park.

Park planning accepts the following values that have been established as a basis for strategic directions.

Environmental Values
- Yarra Bend Park is a vital link in the fauna corridors of the Yarra and Merri Creek Valleys
- Approximately 100 hectares of the park is covered by indigenous vegetation of varied quality and contains 117 significant flora species
- It provides habitat for 193 fauna species, including some registered under international agreements and / or the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988

Visitor Values
- The park offers a diverse and extensive bushland within 6 kilometres of the city centre
- It offers a wide range of facilities catering for a diverse array of formal and informal activities

Landscape Values
- The deep and winding river valley, 12 km long within the park, provides opportunities for seclusion and a sense of isolation from the urban surrounds

Cultural Heritage Values
- The park's rich cultural history, both Koori and European, is a significant element of the park
- It is the largest remaining area of natural bushland within inner Melbourne

The vision of the Strategy Plan states: “Yarra Bend Park will be known throughout Melbourne as the bushland park in the city. It will sustain a diverse environment and play an important habitat role in the Yarra corridor. Its variety of landscape and natural elements, with the river as its central focus, accommodates a range of leisure pursuits from bushland seclusion and isolation, to recreation and organised sports. Interpreting the park’s rich cultural history and environmental importance will add to the many reasons people will return to this regional parkland.”

1.3 Trails Strategy Master Plan

The Yarra Bend Park Strategy Plan identified the need for a review of the trail networks in the park. The existing trail networks have weak interconnectivity and trail quality and styles are inconsistent.

Many of the minor trails in the park have been established through use, rather than being formally constructed. This has resulted in erosion and trail deterioration in many places. Some areas of the park now have an excessive number of trails.

As visitor numbers have increased and the use of the paths have diversified these problems have worsened.

This Master Plan sets out a strategy for the development and management of the trails in the park. It builds upon the Concept Plan which was released for public comment in early 2000 and provides more detailed specifications and priorities for the proposed works.

The overall aim of the Trails Strategy is to have a Master Plan for all trails in the park that is consistent with the objectives of the Yarra Bend Park Trust, Parks Victoria and the community. These objectives include
- protecting the natural environment of the park
- protecting the cultural heritage of the park
- ensuring the safety of all Park visitors
- meeting visitor needs

More specific objectives of the trails strategy are to:
- incorporate environmental impact principles into all recommendations
• address the issue of risk management for all trails by making recommendations that ensure the safety of all Park visitors

• incorporate visitor needs into recommendations

• consult with the community and incorporate issues raised into the plan

• address the issue of non-conforming and conflicting uses, particularly mountain bike riding in bushland areas, dog walking/ cyclist conflicts and speeding cyclists on all trails

• produce a communication and education program for mountain bike riding in bushland areas

• address the issue of disabled access

• produce a prioritised works program and project specifications

1.4 Trails in Yarra Bend Park

Existing Trails Network

The trails network within Yarra Bend Park consists of

• sealed all weather paths

• constructed gravel/ Lilydale toppings paths

• main dirt trails

• secondary or informal dirt trails

The sealed paths, including the Main Yarra Trail, are used by walkers (including people walking dogs), joggers, cyclists, people in wheelchairs and other users such as in-line skaters, skateboards and scooters. The Lilydale toppings and gravel trails are used primarily by walkers and cyclists.

The main dirt trails are those dirt trails that are maintained by park management and are considered to be part of the trails network. These trails were originally established for (and by) walkers, but over the last decade they have also been increasingly used by mountain bikers. Park management have attempted to close two stretches of these trails to mountain bikes, and installed ‘No cycling’ signs. These signs were generally removed shortly after installation. Mountain biking on the remainder of the main dirt trails has been tolerated, but not encouraged by Park management.

Secondary or informal dirt trails are trails that have been formed by use, and are not maintained by Park management. Map 1 (see Appendices) shows a map of the existing Yarra Bend Park trails.
Trail closure measures at Wurundjeri Spur
2. Development of the Trails Strategy

Introduction

Work began on the development of the Trails Strategy in July 1999.

The process for the Trails Strategy has involved 4 key stages. These were:

- research and analysis
- community involvement in the development of the Trails Strategy Concept Plan
- presentation of the Trails Strategy Concept Plan and invitation for public comment
- development of the Trails Strategy Master Plan.

2.1 Research and Analysis

An audit and condition report of the existing trails in the park was prepared as baseline information. The map of existing trails is shown on Map 1 (see Appendices).

Additional research undertaken for the development of this Concept Plan included a literature review of the environmental impact of mountain bike riding in Australia and overseas.

2.3 Community involvement in the development of the Trails Strategy

Community consultation, involvement and awareness have been integral to the development of the Trails Strategy. The strategy’s success relies on community awareness of the issues and acceptance of actions occurring as part of the strategy.

Community involvement in the formation of the Yarra Bend Park Trails Strategy Plan was extensive and continued over a 10 month period.

A wide variety of methods were used to notify and inform the community of the proposed Trails Strategy. These included:

Announcing the Strategy

- approximately 600 brochures and surveys were distributed throughout the community, including to bike shops, Friends groups, community centres, community groups, schools and kindergartens
- information located on Parks Victoria’s website
- distribution of information via email lists
- posters displayed in the park
- advertisements in local newspapers

Development of the Concept Plan

- analysis of 73 survey responses received and the community workshop attended by 39 people
- establishment of a reference group of 20 diverse members. Members represented the full range of trail user groups, other authorities, and visitors with specific interests. The group held 3 meetings prior to the release of the Concept Plan

Release of the Concept Plan

The Concept Plan was available for public comment for a period of 4 weeks prior to Friday 28 April 2000. Mechanisms used to help make the community aware of the Concept Plan included:

- a brochure summarising the Concept Plan and inviting submissions was sent to a comprehensive list of stakeholders including all people who had previous input or involvement
- advertisements in local newspapers
- announcement letter and flyer sent
- media release to local newspapers and resultant press coverage
- announcement on Parks Victoria’s website including downloadable copy of the Concept Plan
- posters displayed in the park
Twenty-eight submissions on the Concept Plan were received. All information and comments received on the Concept Plan, and the comments of reference group members, contributed to the development of this Master Plan.

2.4 Development of the Master Plan

This Master Plan outlines the future plans for trails in the park, based on the proposals presented in the Concept Plan and subsequent modifications due to issues raised during the consultation period, further analysis by Parks Victoria and the consultants undertaking the study, and geotechnical studies of specific trail locations.

This report also outlines details of trail construction techniques for the various categories of trails, and a works program which outlines priorities for the proposed works.

Implementation is scheduled to take place over a ten year period. Some immediate priority works, including upgrade works to enable the reopening of the trail between Andrews Reserve and Studley Park Road, were completed prior to the release of this plan.

The steps on the Main Yarra Trail at Chandler Highway
3 Key issues

Key objectives of the Master Plan are to:
- protect the park’s natural values. This is an over-riding aim of the Master Plan. All changes to the trail network will either improve or have no detrimental impact on the natural values of the park.
- provide a range of enjoyable visitor experiences using the trail network.
- reduce risks to park visitors

The Master Plan will work toward achieving these objectives by
- reducing the environmental impact of existing trails and trail use by:
  - better management and maintenance of trails
  - reducing and aiming to eliminate trail proliferation
- addressing conflicting uses of the trails
- addressing public risk issues regarding condition and usage of trails

These issues are discussed in detail in sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Concept Plan and are summarised below.

3.1 Environmental impacts of trails and trail use

3.1.1 Environmental impacts of trails

Sealed, gravel and main dirt trails
Formed trails and their use have the following types of environmental impact in the park:
- erosion and run-off
- edge trampling and compaction
- other user impacts on flora and fauna including noise, dogs disturbing birds and animals and dog faeces
- other user impacts on flora and fauna

Most of the environmental impacts of trails in the park are related to the dirt trails. The establishment of the sealed trails would have had a significant environmental impact, but since their formation environmental impact is minimal. The wide gravel trails also generally have minimal environmental impact.

The impacts of cycling on formed dirt trails vary according to the types of soil and the types of cycling being undertaken.

Research indicates that bikes have around the same level of impact as walkers where trails have been well placed and designed, either don’t have steep downhill sections or have efficient erosion prevention measures on steep slopes, and where bikes are ridden under control without skidding.

However, bikes can have greater impacts if the soils are erosion prone, on moderate to steep slopes, where trails have not been designed for mountain bike riding, and/or where skidding occurs.

Yarra Bend Park’s fragile soils and geographic characteristics mean that many of the existing trails are not suitable for mountain bike riding and there is limited ability to construct trails suitable for mountain biking.

The Trails Concept Plan details a number of sensitive sites in the park where mountain bike riding is not appropriate due to the fragile soils and the potential for a significant impact on flora.

Secondary Dirt Trails

The secondary dirt trails in the park are trails that have been formed by park users over time.

The formation of trails by park users is a significant environmental problem for two reasons. Firstly, most of the environmental damage from any trail occurs when it is being formed. Secondly, the environmental impact of a trail in the park can be magnified significantly when it is formed without regard to suitability of terrain or to the environmental values of the site. The trail may be prone to erosion, or it may disturb significant flora. Its existence can result in other trails being formed nearby, both connecting with it, and in parallel with it if sections of the original trail...
are in poor condition (which is likely if it has been formed on inappropriate terrain).

Secondary Dirt Trails
Most of the secondary dirt trails in the park will be closed and revegetated. Some will be retained and upgraded.

Other environmental impacts of trail users
The other impacts of trail users are largely issues that are best addressed through communication and education. The development of a Code of Conduct for trail users within the first year of the plan being released will address these issues. (See Section 6).

3.2 User Needs and User Conflicts

3.2.1 User needs and user conflicts
User needs in the park can be summarised as:

- natural bushland walking and nature observation experiences
- protection of the parks environmental and cultural values
- cycling routes for both recreational and commuter use
- appropriate dog walking routes and areas – both “on and off leash”
- high quality mountain bike riding experiences
- trails suitable for low-risk, ‘easy-walking’
- trails suitable for large groups
- trails suitable for disabled access
- minimal conflict with other park users
- a secure environment
- a reduction of unnecessary and unexpected risks during experiences of the park

The key challenge that the Master Plan addresses is to meet these user needs as far as possible without compromising the environmental values of the park or the safety of visitors, and without trading off one group’s needs against those of another group.

Conflicts between users can be considered as being of one of four types:
1. conflicts between users wanting to appreciate the ‘quiet enjoyment’ of a bushland environment and other louder users
2. conflicts between cyclists (including mountain bikers) wishing to move efficiently and quickly along the sealed and gravel trails in the park and other slower, more relaxed trail users
3. conflicts between mountain bikers on the dirt trails with other trail users, and other users who perceive mountain bikes to be out of place and intrusive to a natural environment
4. conflicts between dog owners and their dogs, particularly dogs off-leash and other trail users

3.2.2 Meeting User Needs and overcoming user conflicts

Most user needs are being met to a large degree in the park and can continue to be met without significant changes to the trails network.

Two user needs have been controversial during the development of this Plan. These are the use of the park for people walking dogs off-leash and use of the dirt trails in the park for mountain bike riding.

This Master Plan does not address the issue of dogs off-leash. It reflects the existing policy of the Yarra Bend Park Strategy Plan of zoning the park into “on and off-leash zones”. The implementation of this policy is separate to this Master Plan. The Trail Master Plan does however reinforce specific aspects of the Dog Policy including no dogs permitted off leash within 5 metres of the Main Yarra Trail or other sealed trails in the park.

This Plan accepts the use of some designated dirt trails in the park for mountain bike riding as a legitimate use. However dirt trails available for mountain biking are limited due to the unstable soil conditions in many areas throughout the park. This Master Plan attempts to accommodate mountain biking where such use doesn’t compromise the park’s environmental values or the safety of other users.

This approach is different from other parks in Victoria. In most other parks, mountain bikes are generally banned completely from all narrow dirt trails. Mountain bikes are however permitted on vehicle trails (ie. 4WD trails) within many parks.

This approach has been taken for a number of reasons:

- use of the dirt trails in the park is highly valued by mountain bike riders
- there are some narrow dirt trails in the park which are not steep and have stable soils where responsible mountain bike riding would not appear to result in adverse environmental impacts
- allowing mountain bike riding in locations where environmentally acceptable and with minimal risks to other users facilitates the development of a productive relationship between mountain bike riders and the park management. This will increase the ability to communicate with mountain bike riders and enforce appropriate behaviour and to exclude riding from environmentally sensitive areas or where there are obvious risks to users or conflicts with other users that cannot otherwise be overcome

3.2.2 Meeting User Needs and overcoming user conflicts

Disabled access

A number of the trail upgrades being proposed will improve disabled access. These include:
- Golf Course Loop Road riverside trail formalisation (in sections not already completed)
- Fairlea trail from Yarra Bend Road to Fly Casting Pool area
- Merri Creek Valley trail from Yarra Bend Road to Main Yarra Trail

Existing trails which provide for disabled access include:
- Heidelberg Road to Kanes Bridge adjacent to Yarra Bend Road
- Burnet Trail at Studley Park Lower Bushland
- trails within the Studley Park picnic area
- Main Yarra Trail along Merri Creek Valley Escarpment
- footpath along Yarra Boulevard

3.2.3 Overcoming User Conflicts

Strategies to reduce conflicts between trail users include:
- the involvement of trails users in the development of a Code of Conduct for trail use. See Section 6 for details of what will be covered in the code. The code will then be promoted to all trail users
- clear communication of permitted trail use and restrictions, potential hazards, trail characteristics and opportunities through appropriate non-obtrusive signage
- upgrading of some trails, promotion of some less frequently used trails as desirable routes and development of other focal points away from Studley Park (See Section 4 for recommended changes to the trail network)
- greater awareness and understanding by users of other users’ needs, and the legitimacy of their needs on a shared trail (See Section 6 for communication and education strategies designed to address this issue)
- physical cues on shared trails to help guide behaviour
- some trail upgrades to better manage areas of particular risk if these risks cannot be lessened by the above strategies. (See Section 4 for recommended changes to the trail network which address this issue)
- designating most dirt trails as ‘walkers only’
- designating some dirt trails as shared –use nature trails where mountain bike riding would be permitted with conditions set out in signage and the Code of Conduct. These would specify that a fundamental use of the trail is nature appreciation
- maintaining ‘on and off-leash’ dog zones in the park and maintaining all sealed trails as ‘on-leash’ zones

Dirt trail between Dickinson Reserve and Andrews Reserve Compliance

The major strategies to minimise detrimental impacts and conflicts between users and impacts on the environment will be through education and communication with all trail users.

It is inevitable however, that enforcement will also be required in cases where education and communication is not completely successful. Authorised Ranger staff may issue infringement notices to deal with offenders in such cases. There will be an amnesty period following the introduction of trail signage to enable users to become aware of opportunities and restrictions.
4. Changes to the trails network

4.1 Introduction

The discussion in the previous sections leads to three broad strategies to reconcile the diverse expectations and needs of visitors and to manage the environmental impacts of trails and trail use. These three strategies are:

1. upgrade existing trails
2. closure of smaller secondary trails
3. permitting mountain bike use on selected dirt trails

Upgrade Existing Trails

An upgrade of existing trails is required to accommodate the increasing intensity and diversity of use, and to control erosion problems. The aim of the trail upgrades is to reduce trail side erosion, protect vegetation, and enhance the landscape experience. Upgraded trails will be in keeping with the character of trail and surrounding environment.

There are no significant problems with the formally constructed asphalt and gravel paths (apart from some longitudinal cracks in the Main Yarra Trail along the top of the Merri Creek escarpment). Upgrades to these trails are limited to improving their legibility of signs, and planting to assist with the definition of sight lines along trails. Dirt trails will require most upgrade works. A significant amount of environmental damage has been caused as a result of poor or inadequate trail construction and maintenance or unplanned trail formation.

The consultation process undertaken for this Plan indicates that there is significant support within the community for keeping these narrow dirt trails as they are. However, Yarra Bend Park is an intensively used park in inner Melbourne. Some upgrades of these trails are unavoidable in order to minimise serious environmental and public safety risks. Construction techniques will result in more heavy-duty constructed trails. These trails will however still be dirt trails that blend into the bushland environment. (See Section 5).

Closure of Smaller Secondary Trails

Many of the smaller secondary dirt trails will be closed. Most of these secondary trails have been formed through informal trail proliferation, are damaging significant vegetation and the use of these trails is causing erosion.

Permitting Mountain Bike Use on Selected Dirt Trails

A new trail standard and a Code of Conduct for use of these trails will be developed to help reduce risks and user conflicts between walkers and cyclists sharing the narrow dirt trails.

In general, trail users do not want to see the trails significantly widened. It is also noted that while a narrow path does not allow easy passing it does have a significant role in keeping the speed of mountain bikes low.

The determination of trails on which mountain bike riding should be permitted has been determined primarily by environmental and risk factors, and secondly by the desire to have a mix of trail usage throughout the park.

Mountain bike riding will not be permitted on trails that are liable to erosion problems with bike use, or where the trail works required to allow safe shared use would damage significant vegetation. Mountain bike riding will only be permitted on designated trails in bushland areas.

The dirt trails where mountain bike riding will be permitted are:

- The trail through the Ropes Course and under the Freeway in zone 3B, Riverview Management Area
- A trail in the gully just below Yellow Gum Ridge in Zone 7B, Studley Park Lower Bushland
- A single main dirt trail in the centre of the Loop Road, continuing down the ridgeline behind the historic marker and the trail
from the Loop Road to the Dights Falls look-out in zone 7D, Studley Park Loop Road Management Area

- Access trail to Trig Point in Zone 5, Talbot Management Area (see Map 3 in Appendices)

In addition, sealed and gravel trails are available for shared use to link with some of the above trails.

The trail between Andrews Reserve and Studley Park Road (Zone 8) has recently been upgraded to allow access for walkers only. Advice from geotechnical engineers and contractors during upgrade works to this trail revealed that fragile soil conditions and steep slope, combined with unstable mudstone outcrops, will make it difficult for the trail to accommodate shared use. User groups will be involved in further discussions regarding future works on this trail over the next 12 months.

In most cases it is not the full length of trails that are environmentally sensitive. However it is recommended to restrict mountain bike use from a longer stretch of trail in order to have appropriate entry and exit points to the trail, and to link up with other shared use trails. It also provides a buffer zone for the environmentally sensitive sections of trail. The small stretch of riverside trail at Deep Rock will remain available for shared use until the gravel path is extended to link the Main Yarra Trail with the existing gravel trail near the car parking area. The riverside trail will become walkers only on completion of these works.

Excluding bikes from many areas will provide sufficient bike free trails in the park, able to be accessed by walkers concerned about sharing trails with mountain bikes.

4.2 Details of recommended trail changes in each management zone

The Park Management Zones are shown on Map 3. The existing trail network is shown on Map 1 and the proposed trail network is shown on Map 2.

Zone 2
2A Westfield / 2B Merri Creek Escarpment / 2C Fairlea Management Areas

This mixed landscape zone has a good existing trail network with satisfactory links to the surrounding residential and recreational areas.

- planting and barriers to the embankment around the bluestone steps at Westfield Reserve
- construction of a gravel path to provide an east-west link from the Roseneath Street entrance on the Merri Creek Valley, past the Park Office to the existing trail alongside the fly fishing pool above the Yarra River valley

Zone 3
River Bend Management Area

Relatively minor changes to the existing trail network will be undertaken in this zone.

Zone 3A Deep Rock

- the existing gravel path network will be extended to provide a circuit linking from the car parking area to the Koori Garden area. The gravel path will pass near the Deep Rock Swimming Club monument as a way of increasing the profile of this organisation’s role in protecting significant cultural features in Yarra Bend Park. The new path will be located clear of the plantings recently completed in the area
- the dirt trail along the Yarra River is to be upgraded, ensuring adequate drainage of the trail surface is provided to avoid trail widening around wet and muddy patches. This trail will be a shared trail until the gravel path is built. After this it will become a walkers only path

Zone 3B River View

- highlight access to the wetland area in front of the works depot, and strengthen existing links with the general trail network, and circuits
clarify access to the trail down to the Yarra River and restrict access to the golf course

provide access points for dogs to the river for swimming, and reduce the number of informal trails along the river bank edges in an attempt to minimise erosion of the bank (especially in light of the current program to remove exotic species)

the trail through the Ropes Course and under the Freeway to be shared use

Zone 4
Golf Course Management Area

No changes – access for golfers only (no dogs or bikes permitted)

Zone 5
Trig Point Management Area

A number of issues have been identified in this area, with consequent problems arising from poor access links, fragile soils, and pressures on significant vegetation.

- Chandler Highway – construction of sealed path around the existing steps up to Yarra Boulevard to provide an easier and more direct route. Planting around base of bridge to provide sight lines directing cyclists along the formal path – and not on to the dirt ‘walkers only’ trail along the river edge
- Main Yarra Trail – create an alternate sealed route along an existing wide gravel trail. This trail starts from approximately 300m west of the Chandler Hwy steps and gently slopes down towards the Pipe Bridge. Existing Main Yarra Trail along Wurundjeri Spur will remain as an alternative

- restriction of access by closing several tracks from Yarra Boulevard in order to control erosion
- lower dirt trail along Yarra River to be closed (it is currently impassable due to landslips)
- mountain bike trails on the south-west slope below Yarra Boulevard to be closed/removed, and access to the area restricted to two ‘walkers only’ trails
- Trig Point – formal dirt trail constructed to provide links with trails on lower slopes, to control access across the fragile embankment, and to provide access to views across to the central city and northern suburbs

Other than the Trig Point trail, the dirt trails in this zone are to be designated ‘walkers only’ due to:

- the presence of narrow steep sections in the gorge area
- sections of the trail being erosion prone because of frequent flooding and bank breakaways
- the paths cut through environmentally significant grassland and rocky outcrop shrubland communities

Parks Victoria will propose to Melbourne Water that it consider installing an additional lane over the Pipe Bridge. This would
provide cycle and walker access without fear of collisions. Improved signage on the bridge will also be proposed.

Zone 6  Willsmere Management Area
6A Hairpin Bend / 6B Wills Street Willsmere / 6C Bellbird

The main changes in this area are proposed for the Hairpin Bend area below Yarra Boulevard.

- the existing dirt trail to be upgraded to reduce problems caused by poor drainage, and to accommodate increasing intensity of use. This riverside trail is proposed to be for walkers only
- a gravel path to be constructed alongside the entry road to the Bellbird Picnic Area to provide a link with the Wills Street/Willsmere area above Yarra Boulevard
- Southern access to the Bellbird Picnic Area from Yarra Boulevard will be restricted to walkers only to address the problems associated with the steep steps

Zone 7  Studley Park Management Area

Zone 7A  Studley Park Boathouse

- Complement the existing sealed path with two or more gravel paths; one near each end of the carpark - linking to Yarra Boulevard
- Measures proposed to encourage use of these formal trails rather than the secondary dirt trails include an intensive planting program along existing dirt trails, barrier fences, information signs, and education programs

Zone 7B  Studley Park Lower Bushland

- Close and revegetate the extensive trail network running along and down Yellow Gum Ridge which has caused significant erosion, compaction of soils and loss of vegetation. A dirt trail just below Yellow Gum Ridge in the gully is to be upgraded for shared use to provide links from Yarra Boulevard to the river and will be constructed to discourage high speed bike riding
- These trails will be fenced to discourage access to the surrounding revegetation area
- The dirt trail alongside the river will be classified as ‘walkers only’. The trail extends outside the park boundary onto a strip of unreserved Crown Land. The future management of this section of unreserved Crown Land is currently being reviewed by Parks Victoria and the Department of Natural Resources and Environment
Zone 7C  Studley Park Upper Bushland

Existing trail between Yarra Boulevard and Studley Park Road

- The informal mountain bike obstacle course is to be removed from this area to prevent continuing environmental degradation
- The link from Studley Park Road to Yarra Boulevard and The Yarra River/Studley Park Boat House to be clarified through improved trails

Zone 7D  Studley Point Loop Road

- Access to Galatea Point will continue to be limited to walkers only
- A single main dirt trail will be provided to the centre of the Loop Road in order to reduce further damage to significant remnant vegetation. This trail will also provide a link in a circuit that takes in viewing points of the city skyline, the park, and Dights Falls. Surrounding areas will be fenced to allow revegetated areas to become established
- A single fenced trail to be maintained behind the historic marker (Memorial Cairn) connecting the Loop Road trail to the riverflats at Studley Point. This trail will follow an alignment to the west of the eroded ridgeline
- The trail from the Loop Road to the Dights Falls look-out to be upgraded to cater for intensive use and to provide an easier walking surface

Zone 8
Lower Yarra Management Area
8A Par 3 Golf Course / 8B Andrews Reserve / 8C Dickinson Reserve

The general strategy for this area is to improve the existing riverside dirt trails, and...
to close the informal dirt trail networks that are serving as mountain bike routes.

- The river-side dirt trail from Dickinson Reserve through to Andrews Reserve is to be walkers only, due to significant vegetation close to the trail and steep sections and sharp bends on narrow sections of trail.

- The riverside path from Andrews Reserve to Studley Park Road has been upgraded to eliminate obvious risks to walkers. The upgrade maintains the existing character and experience of the trail in its bushland setting, with a more robust construction. Advice from geotechnical engineers and contractors during upgrade works to this trail revealed that fragile soil conditions and steep slope, combined with unstable mudstone outcrops, will make it difficult for the trail to accommodate shared use. User groups will be involved in further discussions regarding future works on this trail over the next 12 months.

A number of informal trail networks and links throughout this zone will be closed and revegetated.

- A dirt path will be established around Andrews Reserve to complete the link around the river edge.

- The pathways leading from Yarra Boulevard to the Andrews Reserve/Studley Point Loop Road (including stepped pathway) will be closed and the areas revegetated.

New fencing and signage at Andrews Reserve clearly marks start of riverside trail to Studley Park Road bridge.
5 Works Plan

The following table outlines proposed works to be undertaken over the next 10 years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Works</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2A Westfield</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail containment</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Next to bluestone steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Carpark to information shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2B Merri Creek Valley &amp; Escarpment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new trail</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Adjacent to former Soccer Ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Raising toppings trail where water is pooling along Yarra Bend Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Dogs; Intersections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2C Fairlea</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new trail</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Along Eastern Freeway boundary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Toppings path just below Fly Fishing Pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Pooling of water – Pipe Bridge area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Dogs; Intersections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3A Deep Rock</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail closure</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Behind information shelter up to Eastern Freeway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Trail improvement works - erosion control</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Riparian impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Walkers only (following completion of alternative trail)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new surfacing</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Cleaver Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new trail</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Adjacent to Deep Rock oval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Water pooling on riverside area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Safety barriers</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ripples on Main Yarra Trail at Merri Creek crossing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>At Main Yarra Trail - Merri Creek crossing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3B River View</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Fencing - Trail closure</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Trail from Ropes Course to Pumphouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail closure</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Trail from Ropes Course to Pumphouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail containment</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>North east point of management area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Trail improvement works - erosion control</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Drain at Ropes Course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail closure</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Trail from Ropes Course to Pumphouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ropes Course trail; “Golf Course Patrons Only” signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new surfacing</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Ropes Course trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Works</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Improve entry area near Depot; prevent access to Golf Course</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3C Golf Course Loop Road**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Env</th>
<th>Trail improvement works - erosion control</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Drainage at top of Galatea Point lookout path</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new surfacing</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Riverside trail - currently earthen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new trail</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Inside the Loop as shown on Map 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Toppings path down to river from Galatea Point lookout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Asphalt paths down to Kane’s Bridge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4 Golf Course**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Env</th>
<th>Revegetation - Trail closure</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Southern boundary of Golf Course - low plantings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Southern boundary of Golf Course - risk of balls hitting walkers / cyclists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**5 Trig Point**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Env</th>
<th>Fencing - Trail closure</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>To prevent trail proliferation adjacent to Chandler Hwy bridge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Fencing - Trail containment</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>For various paths in vicinity of Pipe Bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail closure</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Close Riverside trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail containment</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Associated with fencing and in other areas to stop potential trails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Trail improvement works - erosion control</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Between Yarra Boulevard, paths heading directly down towards river – use of brush on ground etc.; Also drainage at edges of asphalt path and earthen paths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail closure</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Close Riverside trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new surfacing</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Existing wide gravel trail running down Yarra Boulevard to Pipe Bridge turned into alternative to Main Yarra Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new trail</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ramp adjacent to Chandler Hwy steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new trail</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Trig Point trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>North-South riverside trail, works to surface</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Trail edge at Pipe Bridge; Hairpin Bend to Eastern Freeway (lower)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>To be raised with Pipe Bridge management authority (Melbourne Water)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Safety barriers</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Intersection of easement path with existing Main Yarra Trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Safety barriers</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Safety fencing at sweeping bend of Yarra Boulevard at Trig Pt, on the upper side of road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6A Hairpin Bend**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Env</th>
<th>Revegetation - Trail closure</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Just south of hairpin; Dairy site down west to Yarra Boulevard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Trail improvement works - erosion control</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Continuation of boxthorn removal program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Trail improvement works - erosion control</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Not on trail, but up bank at gully near Eastern Fwy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Riverside path in Triple Wetland area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Gully near Eastern Fwy bridge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6B Wills St / Willsmere**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Works</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Kew Cottages / Willsmere junction entry into Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>6C Bellbird</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail closure</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Lower path heading north from Bellbird jetty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail containment</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Riverside trail heading upstream from Bellbird picnic area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new trail</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Path adjacent to Bellbird road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Bottom of bluestone steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Safety barriers</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Handrail along bluestone steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>7B Studley Park Lower Bushland</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Fencing - Trail closure</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Yellow Gum Ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Fencing - Trail containment</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Yellow Gum Ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail closure</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Yellow Gum Ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail containment</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Yellow Gum Ridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Trail improvement works - erosion control</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Yellow Gum Ridge gully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail closure</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Yellow Gum Ridge gully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Yellow Gum Ridge gully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Dip just upstream from the end of Burnet trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Yellow Gum Ridge gully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Intersection with Burnet trail; signage associated with non-YBP land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Safety barriers</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Yellow Gum Ridge gully switchback(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>7A Studley Park Boathouse</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail closure</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Along Yarra Boulevard down to picnic area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail containment</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Area above carpark towards Yarra Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new surfacing</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Paths from Yarra Boulevard down to picnic area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>7C Studley Park Upper Bushland</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Fencing - Trail closure</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Bottom of narrow winding trail that ends at junction of Caritas Christi Lookout trail and Yarra Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail closure</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Narrow winding trail that ends at junction of Caritas Christi Lookout trail and Yarra Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail containment</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Trail improvement works - erosion control</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Stop erosion down narrow winding trail that ends at junction of Caritas Christi Lookout trail and Yarra Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail closure</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Top of narrow winding trail that ends at junction of Caritas Christi Lookout trail and Yarra Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new surfacing</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Coupled with erosion control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Caritas Christi paths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Safety barriers</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Yarra Boulevard crossing (in liaison with VicRoads)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>7D Studley Point Loop Road</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Works</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Fencing - Trail closure</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Walkers only trail near Studley Park Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Fencing - Trail closure</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Within road loop, on ridge - dependant on success of revegetation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Fencing - Trail containment</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Junction of road and ridge west of Cairn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail closure</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>In road loop ridge area, and various sites downslope of road; walkers only trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail containment</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Trail improvement works - erosion control</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Junction of road and ridge west of Cairn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new surfacing</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Trail through middle of loop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Trail down to bridge area from Loop; Dights Falls Lookout area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Inside old dam area, directly downstream of Dights falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Safety barriers</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>East of Cairn area opening; inside old dam downstream of Dights falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Junction of road and ridge west of Cairn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**8A Par 3 Golf Course**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Works</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Fencing - Trail containment</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Entry point to Andrews Reserve to Studley Park Road at both ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail closure</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Trail Yarra Boulevard to river, west from the junction of the Slip Rd / Yarra Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail containment</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Throughout Andrews Reserve to Studley Park Road trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Trail improvement works - erosion control</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Stabilise areas along Andrews Reserve to Studley Park Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Yarra Boulevard to back of Par 3 workshed, then back to Studley Park Road; Andrews Reserve to Studley Park Road path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Problem areas of Andrews Reserve to Studley Park Road; midway steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Andrews Reserve to Studley Park Road path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Safety barriers</td>
<td>Temporary</td>
<td>Closure of Andrews Reserve to Studley Park Road until risk mitigation works</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Safety barriers</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Handrails / safety railing on Andrews Reserve to Studley Park Road path</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**8B Andrews Reserve**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Works</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Fencing - Trail closure</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>If revegetation doesn't work fencing another option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail closure</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Various downhill trails between Yarra Boulevard to riverside trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Revegetation - Trail containment</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Revegetation where elm suckers &amp; saplings being removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Changeover signage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - new surfacing</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Trail from bridge to Andrews Reserve to Studley Park Road path; including a link to Dickinson Reserve trail; end of steps down from Yarra Boulevard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Pooling of water along Dickinson Reserve path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Gate at the Yarra Boulevard top at Andrews Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Safety barriers</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Edge of bridge Nth side; Crossing to Collins Bridge Oval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Signage about Dickinson Reserve end of path being rough terrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Works</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Env</td>
<td>Trail improvement works - erosion control</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>Lillydale toppings area leading south, control required at start of toppings paths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vis</td>
<td>Signage - Trail classification</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Trail improvement - maintenance</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>End of Riverside trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Signage</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>End of Riverside trail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td>Safety barriers</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Additional railing at the start of the riverside path at Dickinson Reserve end</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stabilisation matting on Andrews Reserve to Studley Park Road trail
5.1 Techniques for Trail Construction, Maintenance, and Closures

Techniques for trail construction and maintenance will be guided by existing standards, guidelines and practices. In particular, works will be guided by Parks Victoria’s extensive references relating to trail and track management. Innovations in trail management by other agencies will also be considered and implemented where appropriate.

Techniques will take into account the local conditions (including geology, drainage, and vegetation), existing use and user expectations, future impacts, and environmental and cultural values.

Techniques and materials selected will endeavour to blend in with the surrounding environment to be as unobtrusive as possible.

5.2 Funding for Implementation of Trail Works and Programs

Funding will be allocated for the staged implementation of the works program in accordance with targeted priorities.

Items requiring significant capital funding, such as the construction of a sealed pathway to bypass the existing steps near the Chandler Highway, will be included in funding bids within the Parks Victoria Capital Program and relevant agency grant programs.

An ongoing maintenance program for trails will be funded in each years recurrent budget.

Main Yarra Trail at Wurundjeri Spur
6 Communication and education program

6.1 Introduction

It is recognised that most visitors and trail users demonstrate appropriate behaviour and are considerate to other visitors and the park environment.

The aims of a communication and education program for trail use in Yarra Bend Park are to:

- provide relevant and appropriate information about the park, the Trails Strategy and about desired behaviours in the park
- build on this information base to change attitudes where necessary so that there is acceptance of what is appropriate management of the park and what is desired behaviour
- change user behaviour so that it is
  - more environmentally sensitive
  - more sensitive to other users’ needs and desires
  - risk averse

To do this, the Program will:

1. identify desired appropriate and inappropriate behaviours in the park
2. identify existing attitudes and behaviours in the park
3. determine target groups to which attitudinal and behavioural change programs will be aimed towards
4. identify barriers to appropriate behaviour
5. determine the most effective messages and media to communicate acceptable attitudes and behaviour
6. pilot strategies with a small segments of selected target groups and revise as appropriate
7. evaluate the impact of the program once it has been implemented

The following actions form key elements of the community education program. These elements will be revised and reviewed as the program is more thoroughly developed.

6.2 Potential target groups

Different information and behavioural change programs will be required for different use groups. Identified target user groups include:

- mountain bike riders (including groups) on dirt paths and potentially off-trail
- commuter cyclists on shared pathways
- recreational/ training cyclists (including groups) on shared pathways
- family and other low speed cyclists on shared pathways
- people walking dogs
- school groups
- picnic and family groups
- bushwalking and other community groups
- naturalist groups
- joggers
- individuals, couples etc visiting for ‘quiet enjoyment’

An initial task of the program will be to identify and prioritise attitudes and behaviours of these target groups which require educational effort.
6.3 Information

Information about the park and the Trails Strategy will be targeted to specific user groups. This information will be in the form of brochures and signage. Issues to be covered include:

- park values (e.g. environmental, heritage, recreational values)
- park management mechanisms (e.g. Master Plan, Code of Conduct)
- value and importance of park management to enhance the environment, optimise enjoyment, and reduce risk for all park users
- details of the Master Plan (e.g. erosion control works, trail upgrades, fencing, revegetation, signs, zoning of trails)
- works program and staging
- opportunities for involvement in park activities
- behaviours which are environmentally sensitive, socially appropriate and low risk
- the desirability of these behaviours
- potential of using less busy parts of the park

Code of Conduct

A key piece of information to be prepared and distributed will be the Code of Conduct for trail use in the park. The Code of Conduct will summarise what is expected appropriate behaviour in the park.

It will be developed with the Trails Reference Group, which consists of representatives of Park users.

The types of behaviour that it will cover will include:

- keeping to trails
- keeping left on trails or being willing to move left for others to pass
- not damaging or picking plants
- quiet in sensitive places and keeping noise down when others are nearby
- not littering
- picking up others litter
- participate in park activities such as plantings, clean-ups, research projects

In addition, for all cyclists (including mountain bike riders):
- giving way to walkers and moving at a speed that enables this to occur
- not travelling past walkers at high speed

for mountain bike riders:
- riding in control, not skidding etc
- only riding on trails open to mountain bike use
- riding at a slow enough speed on narrow trails to enable giving way to walkers

for dog walkers:
- keep dogs on leash in on leash zones
- be in effective control of dogs in off-leash zones
- clean up dog droppings

Development of the code will involve raising issues such as

- cyclists understanding the fear that some walkers have about fast moving cyclists even where cyclists know there is little, if any, danger of a collision
- understanding by walkers of the legitimacy of cyclists travelling at high speed as a feature of cycling as an effective and sustainable method of transport
- the need for cyclists to announce their presence (such as ringing bell), and slow down and yield to walkers
- the need for path users to keep to the left
- an appreciation that a shared trail will mean that conditions are unlikely to be optimum for all users at all times. Some give and take by all is required

Target media

A comprehensive communications plan for the park will include potential media for reaching target user groups. Media will include:

- in-Park information
targeted publications
mass media
Internet

6.4 Changing attitudes

Changing Attitudes
In addition to provision of information, the following actions will be undertaken to work towards changing attitudes (where necessary) about appropriate behaviour in the park:

- involvement of user groups in the development of the Code of Conduct
- involvement of user groups in trail construction and modification
- gaining support for the Trails Strategy from respected organisations – eg. statewide or peak groups
- gaining support for the Code of Conduct from respected organisations
- provision of appropriate information using appropriate media to the wider community about the Master Plan and the Code of Conduct

6.5 Changing behaviour

Before determining in more detail exactly what action should be undertaken to attempt to change particular behaviours it will be important to identify what barriers exist that are deterring desired behaviours.

This identification will most effectively occur in discussions with the user groups.

Possible barriers are:

- lack of knowledge about the impacts of inappropriate behaviour
- perceived lack of alternatives to inappropriate behaviour
- perception that the inappropriate behaviour is reasonable and acceptable to most of the community

Action to change behaviour (where necessary) will include:

- appropriate targeted information
- ‘ownership’ of the Trails Strategy through activities such as
  - involvement of reference group at key periods, with representation of all user groups
  - group and individual involvement in activities such as trail maintenance, construction and closure, and revegetation programs
  - action learning and research involving park users – eg. impact of behaviours on environment and other park users; monitoring of user numbers; monitoring of erosion; flora and fauna surveys
- prompts, eg.
  - signs
  - physical aspects of the trails – eg rough surfaces, narrow trails to prompt low speeds
  - Ranger presence

Asphalt trail from Yarra Boulevard into the Studley Park Boathouse picnic area

- commitment
  - agreement from key groups that they will promote the trails strategy and Code of Conduct
- individual agreement to Code of Conduct (with perhaps some incentive to do so)

- developing community profile
  - public awareness of community partnerships
7.0 Monitoring and Review

Regular monitoring and review of this Plan is crucial to its success. Monitoring of the strategies and review of their implementation allows the plan to be a document that can be reviewed to reflect changed conditions and needs.

To ensure the continuing relevance of the plan therefore, the following will occur:

- an annual review of the plan will be conducted which will involve members of the Trails Reference Group. The review will include:
  - adherence to the Code of Conduct
  - effectiveness of on-ground works
  - user behaviour and conflicts

- regular environmental assessments of trail use impacts

- ongoing monitoring of visitor use numbers and patterns

- regular feedback and review with trail users
Appendices

Map 1 - Existing Trail Network

Map 2 - Proposed Trail Network

Map 3 - Management Zones
Yarra Bend Park
EXISTING TRAIL NETWORK

LEGEND
- Sealed paths (asphalt)
- Gravel paths
- Main dirt trails
- Secondary dirt trails

LOCATIONS KEY
1. Chandler Steps
2. Yarra Gorge
3. Wurundjeri Spur
4. Pipe Bridge
5. Willsmere Escarpment
6. Hairpin Bend
7. Yellow Gum Ridge
8. Yarra Lookout
9. Merri Lookout
10. Deep Rock
11. Boulevard Loop
12. Lower Yarra Escarpment

Map 1
Existing Trail Network

YARRA BEND PARK TRAIL STRATEGY
April 2001
Urban Initiatives Pty. Ltd.
Landscape Architects & Urban Design Consultants