Balam Balam Place, Brunswick.

Merri-bek City Council

Asset Plan

2025-2035

Assets for our community

Planning for the future

Information in your language

Italian	Italiano
Arabic	العربية
Greek	Ελληνικά
Urdu	اردو
Nepali	नेपाली
Turkish	Türkçe
Simplified Chinese	中文
Spanish	Español
Vietnamese	Tiếng Việt
Hindi	हिंदी

Acknowledgement of Country

Merri-bek City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Merri-bek. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.

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1. Our City at a Glance

Merri-bek is a vibrant and diverse community in Melbourne's north, experiencing steady population growth. It is proudly multicultural, with a rich mix of languages, cultures, and backgrounds that contribute to the unique character and inclusive spirit of the area.

The council area stretches from **Brunswick** in the south to **Fawkner** and **Gowanbrae** in the north. Our local economy is powered by **retail, healthcare, education, manufacturing**, and the **creative industries**.

Merri-bek City Council looks after over **$1.94 billion worth of community assets** that help make our neighbourhoods great places to live. These assets include roads, pathways, buildings and facilities (including libraries and aquatic centres), drainage and open space.

These assets support everything from getting around safely to spending time outdoors to accessing services and community spaces. Council is committed to managing these shared assets responsibly making sure they are safe, accessible, and ready to meet the needs of our growing and changing community.

In addition to these community assets, Council owns and manages fleet, equipment and miscellaneous assets which enable services to be provided to the community. The management of these assets are outside the scope of this plan.

2. Our Assets Story on a Page

Our assets are the things you can see or use when you're out and about in the municipality that play an integral role in supporting the effective delivery of services and public amenity. Heritage, new built and natural plus all the things that belong to all of us that help make life better and richer for each of us.

OUR ASSET STORY

$1.94 B

ASSETS

Transport Infrastructure

Buildings & Facilities

Stormwater Drainage

Parks & Open Space

Excludes Land

DELIVERING OUR KEY SERVICES

HEALTH CHECK

$ 40 M

PROJECTED AVERAGE ANNUAL RENEWAL ALLOCATION

ASSET VALUE PER CAPITA

$ 10k

Infrastructure value per head of population

ASSET HEALTH

62%

Number of assets managed by Council

ASSETS APPROACHING END OF SERVICE LIFE

3%

Value of assets that require regular significant maintenance or renewal

(Condition 4 & 5)

OUR FUTURE AHEAD

Growth

Demographic Change

Technology Shift

Ageing Infrastructure

Performance

Climate Change

	Community Services	Waste and Recycling	Parks and Recreation	Libraries and Learning	Infrastructure and Planning	Arts and Culture
Delivering our key services	Support for families, youth, older adults, and people with disabilities	Bin collection, hard rubbish, and recycling programs	Maintenance of parks, playgrounds, and leisure facilities	Access to library resources, digital tools, and community programs	Management of roads, footpaths, and urban development	Public art programs, galleries, and community cultural events

Our Assets

Transport Infrastructure	Stormwater Drainage	Open Space	Buildings & Facilities
$ 913M	$ 330M	$ 231M	$ 470M

Our Plan

Council to review/update

Long Term Decision Making

- Balancing community needs with responsible spending
- Optimising available funding to reduce long term risk
- Transparency in allocating funding to individual programs
- Prioritising New, Upgrade and Renewals with the focus on future needs

Financial Planning

- Average annual capital expenditure = $85 M
- Infrastructure value per capita = $10.4K
- - Infrastructure spend per capita = $455

Challenges and Opportunities

- Ageing infrastructure nearing end of life
- Rising community expectations and population growth
- Rate capping and limited external funding
- Opportunity to improve resilience, data accuracy, and performance-based decision making

Strategic Improvement Initiatives

- Deliberative Community Engagement
- Implementation of AMS for asset data and lifecycle management
- Standardised asset condition assessments across asset classes
- Integration of climate resilience, accessibility, and equity into asset planning
- Continuous improvement aligned with ISO 55000 and Local Government Act 2020

3. Introduction

3.1 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of this Asset Plan (the Asset Plan) is to provide a framework for Council's commitment to best practice asset management and provide principles for sound asset investment decision making.

The Asset Plan for Merri-bek City Council outlines a comprehensive strategy for managing public assets over the next decade and beyond, ensuring sustainable stewardship for current and future generations. It is intended to be a public facing document which informs the community on how Council will manage community assets to achieve the Council Plan objectives and Vision.

The plan details how we will optimise capital and maintenance requirements, balance new assets and growth with current infrastructure to deliver services in line with evolving community needs and expectations. Our aim is to support consistent, evidence-based decision-making, engage community and Council in asset management performance reporting, improve links between costs and levels of service, articulate our challenges and risks all of which will result in more informed community engagement and best use of Council assets in the interest of the community.

The Asset Plan addresses the challenges of balancing economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors within a constrained budget.

This asset plan also includes Council's assessment of the maturity of our approach to asset management, and provides an action plan to address gaps in our systems and processes where needed.

The Asset Plan provides expenditure forecasts that will guide future maintenance, renewal programs, and capital projects, impacting long-term financial planning and annual budgets.

Compliance with the Local Government Act

Council has prepared this Asset Plan in compliance with *Victoria's Local Government Act 2020* which requires all councils to prepare integrated, long-term, and transparent asset plans to achieve the best outcomes for the community with a 10 year horizon.

Council's Strategic Planning

Our Asset Plan is integrated within the broader Council planning framework. It aligns closely with:

- Community Vision: Reflecting our long term aspirations.
- Council Plan: Outlining short to medium term priorities.
- Financial Plan: Ensuring financial sustainability.

This alignment ensures that asset management decisions support our overall strategic objectives and are compliant with legislative requirements.

Council's Deliberative Engagement

In line with Council's Communication Engagement Policy, we will engage with our community in relation to decisions that affect asset and service delivery.

What is asset management?

A systematic process to guide the planning and design, creation and acquisition, maintenance and operations, renewal, and disposal and rationalisation of assets to balance available funds with community needs.

Why is asset management important?

Our community expects assets to be provided to a standard that ensures public safety, amenity and accessibility and to support the delivery of quality services and programs. Our community also expects that Council's asset when passed on to the next generation will be regarded as a positive legacy,

We need to balance delivering what our community needs and expects with what our community can afford.

Over time, our community needs and expectations are bound to change with demographics, climate and technology constantly evolving.

With a finite budget for investment in assets, a planned and measured approach to asset management is necessary to ensure a fair and fiscally prudent long-term financial plan.

3.2 Our Community and Population

Merri-bek City Council, located in Melbourne's inner-northern suburbs, encompasses a diverse and dynamic community. As of 30 June 2024, the estimated resident population was 191,747, reflecting steady growth over recent years. The area is characterised by its multiculturalism, with over one-third of residents born overseas and more than 140 languages spoken at home. The age distribution is relatively young, with a significant proportion of residents aged between 25 and 34 years. Looking ahead, the population is projected to reach approximately 222,733 by 2036, indicating a continued upward trend in growth.

Economically, Merri-bek boasts a robust and diverse local economy. The municipality's Gross Regional Product (GRP) stands at **$8.43 billion**, supported by **16,456** local businesses. Key employment sectors include health care and social assistance, retail, education, and manufacturing. The area provides **52,735** local jobs, with **110,518** employed residents, underscoring its role as a significant employment hub in the region.

In response to ongoing growth and development, Merri-bek City Council has implemented strategic plans to guide sustainable urban development and economic prosperity. The Council's Economic Development Action Plan 2024–2027 outlines initiatives to support local businesses and attract investment. Additionally, the Council is engaging in urban revitalisation projects, such as the "Revitalising Coburg" initiative, aimed at transforming central Coburg into a vibrant, mixed-use precinct.

3.3 Our Assets

The assets owned and operated by our Council across four (4) asset portfolios totalling over **$1.94 Billion** in replacement costs as at 30th June 2024.

The mix of infrastructure is detailed in the diagram below as a percent of the total replacement value. These infrastructure assets support nearly every aspect of our day-to-day activities. They keep us safe, healthy, connected, and employed. Maintaining existing infrastructure is just as important as building new infrastructure.

The distribution of Council asset portfolio by asset category and replacement value is shown below.

$1.94 BILLION	Replacement Cost ($M)	Asset Health (% Remaining life)	Average Condition
Buildings and Facilities	$471	71%	1.48
Parks and Open Space	$ 231	42%	2.40
Stormwater Drainage	$330	59%	1.78
Transport Infrastructure	$913	64%	1.65
SUB-Total	$1,944	62%	1.70
Land	$1,611	Not applicable	Not applicable
TOTAL	$ 3,556		

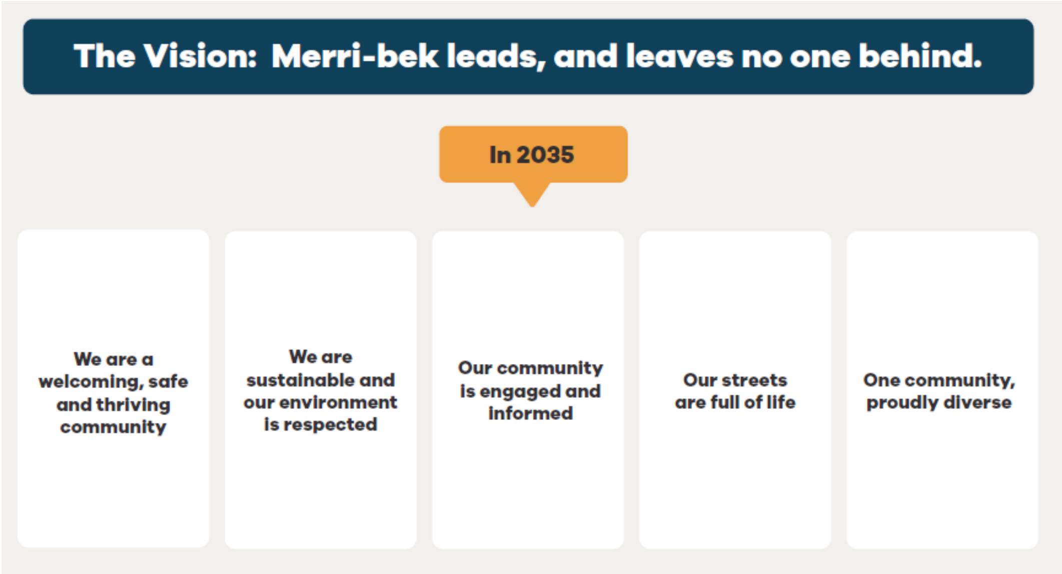
Notes:

1. ***Transportation consists of roads, kerbs, bridges, weirs, culverts, and pathways***
2. *Land itself is not a depreciable asset, as it does not deteriorate over time in the same way that built assets do. While the structures and improvements on land (e.g., buildings, roads, footpaths) are subject to depreciation and are accounted for within the relevant asset categories in this plan, the underlying land is excluded from depreciation calculations and hence does not form any further part of this plan.*
3. ***The above figures do not include any valuation of trees or other vegetation.***
4. ***Condition rating: 0 - excellent, 5 - aged***

4. Strategic Context

4.1 Strategic Alignment

Council adopted the following vision and objectives



The Asset Plan supports these objectives by ensuring that the management, renewal, and development of Council's assets are proactively planned and prioritised to deliver the infrastructure and services needed to realise these goals.

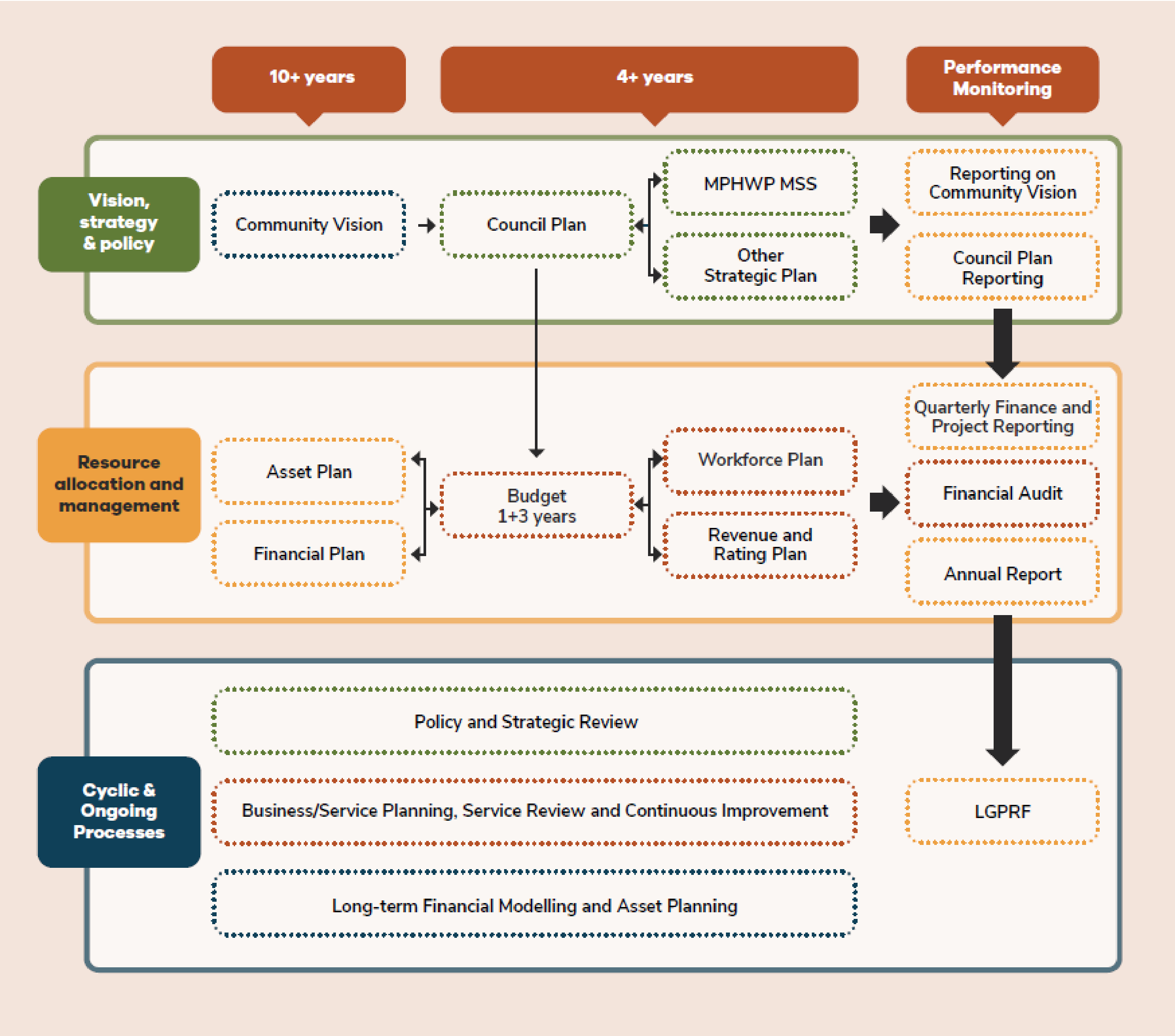
This integrated approach ensures that asset management is not undertaken in isolation but is embedded within Merri-bek's broader strategic direction. By aligning asset investment and service delivery with Council's long-term aspirations and immediate priorities, the Asset Plan plays a critical role in enabling Merri-bek to deliver sustainable, equitable, and resilient outcomes for its community, now and into the future.

4.2 Integrated Planning

Under the Local Government Act (Victoria) 2020, Council is legislatively required to establish a suite of Strategic Management Plans, which guide Council's future planning, asset management and financial sustainability.

The Council Plan, Asset Plan, and Financial Plan are integrated under the Victorian Local Government Act 2020 to ensure that strategic objectives, service delivery, and long-term infrastructure investment are aligned and financially sustainable, supporting informed decision-making that meets both current and future community needs. This integration supports long-term decision making by ensuring that asset maintenance, renewal, and investment are planned in line with available funding and community priorities, enabling Council to manage resources responsibly and deliver services effectively.

An overview of these strategic management plans and how they support their delivery is shown below.


10+ years
4+ years
Performance Monitoring
Vision, strategy & policy
Community Vision
Council Plan
MPHWP MSS
Other Strategic Plan
Reporting on Community Vision
Council Plan Reporting
Resource allocation and management
Asset Plan
Financial Plan
Budget 1+3 years
Workforce Plan
Revenue and Rating Plan
Quarterly Finance and Project Reporting
Financial Audit
Annual Report
Cyclic & Ongoing Processes
Policy and Strategic Review
Business/Service Planning, Service Review and Continuous Improvement
Long-term Financial Modelling and Asset Planning
LGPRF

Strategic Planning Document	Role	Horizon & Review Cycle
Community Vision	Our community's aspirations and priorities for the future of Merri-bek City Council	10 Years
Council Plan	Details the Objectives and Goals to aim for to achieve the Community Vision with a 4-year delivery focus	4 years
Asset Management Policy	Sets the principles for consistent and appropriate asset management practices, processes and systems across the portfolio and sets the strategic intent for the sustainable management of Council's assets	Current practice and 4 Yearly Review
Asset Plan (this document)	Details the Strategic Actions and Asset Management Indicators that provide for Deliberative Community Engagement in line with the Victorian 2020 regulation.	10 years of scenario planning with engaged Review - sign off by Council every 4 years
Financial Plan	Council's Financial Plan detailing the Capital Works Plan, Income and Funding Sources and Local Government Financial metrics.	10 years outlook and Annual Review
Workforce Plan	Outlines how we will manage our resources and budgets to deliver projects	4 years
Annual Business Plan + Budget	Outlines how we will manage our resources and budgets to deliver projects	1-2 years
Individual Asset Class Plans	For each major class – Transport, Buildings, Open Space and Stormwater Drainage, it details the funding need for maintenance and capital for a range of service levels	10-20 years and with a comprehensive update every re-valuation cycle.

4.3 Asset Management Planning

Council takes a lifecycle management approach to asset management planning, considering the resourcing requirements to operate, maintain, rehabilitate and renew assets to meet service level requirements and asset useful life expectancy.

Taking a lifecycle approach ensures we get the best possible return on our asset spending. This considers the costs of an asset over its useful life that is from the time a new asset is built or acquired to the time it is replaced or disposed of.
This approach allows us to get the most out of our assets by meeting required levels of service in the most cost effective way.

Council's Asset management practices are also governed internally by the Asset Management Policy, the Asset Plan and supporting documents, strategies. The whole process is supported by enablers such as technology, data, processes and people and is informed by key corporate and strategic documents. Council's Asset Management Framework is outlined below.

4.4 Lifecycle approach to asset management

1. Planning and design

When identifying asset requirements that meet service delivery needs over the long term, whole-of-life costs and other factors such as affordability, equity, accessibility, maintainability and the environment are considered.

2. Creation and acquisition

Before constructing, expanding, upgrading or acquiring a new asset, alternative service delivery solutions are considered such as leasing or strategic partnerships. Any new build should align to an endorsed management plan or strategy and is supported by a life cycle cost that informs the Financial Plan for long term maintenance and renewal needs.

3. Maintenance and operations

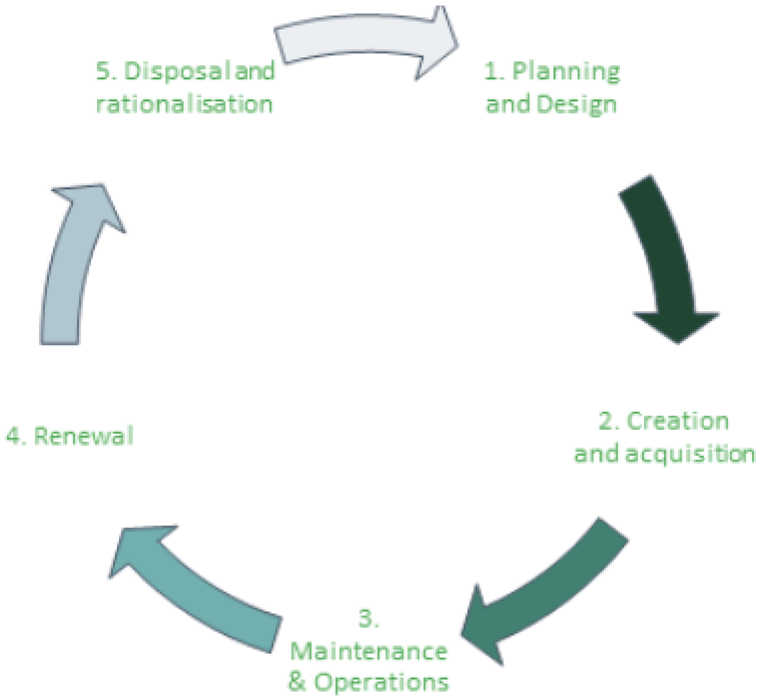
Each asset's operations are monitored consistently over its useful life. A program of planned condition assessments, maintenance and servicing is undertaken to minimise ongoing costs and the risk of asset failure and to ensure the asset remains operational, safe and compliant, and meets current maintenance levels of service.

4. Renewal and Upgrade

Existing assets are replaced as they approach their intervention state– that is, they no longer support the required level of service delivery. Prioritisation of such works is based on criticality of the service and associated assets.

5. Disposal and rationalisation

Where an asset no longer directly supports the required level of service delivery, decommissioning or rationalisation of the asset to reduce lifecycle costs is considered as part of long-term financial planning.



5. Our Community's Role

We are committed to engaging with our community and ensuring transparency in our decision-making by providing opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect asset and service delivery.

In compliance with the Local Government Act 2020, we seek feedback from the community at key points in the decision-making process to ensure we provide services and assets that are sustainable and available for future generations.

Our stakeholders

- The community
- The Council
- User groups
- Community groups

5.1 Community Workshop Details

Council hosted three sessions with the deliberative panel throughout February 2025. Details of each workshop can be found in the table below:

Session	Location	Agenda	Objectives
Session 1 20/02/2025	Coburg Town Hall	• Welcome and introductions • Overview of deliberative process • Council's role and planning process • Q&A with Council staff	• Build understanding of Council's functions • Introduce the deliberative process • Connect panel members and staff
Session 2 22/02/2025	Coburg Town Hall	• Review Council Plan and Community Vision • Explore key values and aspirations • Discuss community priorities for 2035	• Understand current and future community needs • Identify shared values and vision for Merri-bek • Begin developing community priorities
Session 3 23/02/2025	Coburg Town Hall	• Refine Community Vision and Priorities • Prepare presentations • Present advice to Councillors	• Finalise recommendations • Present vision and priorities to Council • Promote community ownership and input

5.2 Council's community engagement principles

These guiding principles are applied at key points in our asset management planning process in line with our commitment to a best practice contemporary approach to community engagement.

1. We will enable the community to provide meaningful input into decision-making.
2. We will be clear about the objectives of engagement and the opportunities to influence decision-making.
3. We will be respectful of all community members including residents, True Custodians, Council officers and Councillors.
4. We will provide accurate, timely and accessible information.
5. We will provide inclusive engagement opportunities for all community members, including those considered hard to reach.
6. We will provide multiple opportunities for the community to participate.
7. We will consider the needs and interests of all people in the decision-making process.
8. We will inform the community of the final decision and how their input was considered.

9. We will review and evaluate the effectiveness of the community engagement.
10. We will plan, resource and report on our engagement processes properly.

5.3 How we engage with our community

Merri-bek City Council is committed to inclusive, transparent, and ongoing community engagement. Engagement is guided by our Community Engagement Policy and the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020, including deliberative processes that inform strategic plans such as the Council Plan, Financial Plan, and Asset Plan.

We use a wide range of engagement methods to reach people across all ages, backgrounds, and abilities, including:

- **In-person activities** such as pop-ups, workshops, and focus groups
- **Online platforms**, especially Conversations Merri-bek, where residents can complete surveys, post ideas, or participate in discussions
- **Translated materials** and targeted outreach to priority groups such as multicultural communities, older adults, young people, people with disability, and the LGBTIQA+ community
- **Community Panels**, including youth and adult representatives, to provide in-depth input into key strategies
- **Advisory committees and champion networks** that support ongoing dialogue between Council and the community

This inclusive approach ensures our asset planning reflects the community's needs, values, and aspirations helping us deliver infrastructure that supports a safe, vibrant, and sustainable city for all.

5.4 What did the Community tell us

Merri-bek City Council has engaged extensively with the community between 2020 and 2025 through workshops, surveys, pop-ups, and online engagement. Many residents contributed to shaping Council's priorities, including through the deliberative panel workshops held in February 2025.

Participants reflected the diverse makeup of Merri-bek, including people from all suburbs, cultural backgrounds, age groups, and abilities. Engagement activities were inclusive and accessible, with translated materials and targeted outreach to underrepresented groups.

The key themes emerging from the consultation include:

- Maintaining and renewing infrastructure such as roads, footpaths, and public spaces
- Enhancing access to safe, inclusive and well-maintained community facilities
- Increasing investment in sustainable transport options and improved accessibility
- Prioritising green and open spaces, tree canopy, and climate resilience
- Ensuring transparency in decision-making and equitable access to information and services

This feedback has informed Council's strategic planning and underscores the importance of investing in community assets that are safe, sustainable, and responsive to future needs.

6. How We Manage Our Assets

6.1 Our Assets Support Our Services

Council provides a range of important and valued services to support the community to be a place for all. t

Our assets are valuable and tangible physical elements within the region that are essential for delivering these services effectively and enhancing public well-being. These assets, both heritage and new, built and natural, belong to all our communities and contribute to provide opportunities for current and future generations to work, live, play and thrive in a safe and habitable environment. Over time, these assets degrade through natural wear and tear, malicious damage or obsolescence. Balancing our ratepayer dollars to ensure these assets are maintained to their fullest potential is integral to our long-term financial sustainability.

Why is asset management important?

Our community expects assets to be provided to a standard that ensures public safety, amenity and accessibility and to support the delivery of quality services and programs.

We need to balance delivering what our community needs, what our community expects and what our community can afford.

Over time, our community needs and expectations are bound to change with demographics, climate and technology constantly evolving.

With a finite budget for investment in assets, a planned and measured approach to asset management is necessary to ensure a fair and fiscally prudent long-term financial plan.

What assets are covered in this plan?

For the purposes of this Asset Plan 'assets' refers to the portfolio of public assets that Council is responsible for managing. To make it easier for our community to understand what these assets are, we have grouped them according to their services they provide and the functions they belong to in the table below.

Transport Infrastructure	Stormwater Drainage	Open Space	Buildings & Facilities
The infrastructure needed for movement, within or beyond our city and as part of our day-to-day activities, whether by vehicle or bike or as a pedestrian.	The infrastructure we need to direct stormwater run-off, mitigate flooding and improve water quality in line with EPA standards.	The locations and environments we frequent while enjoying the natural surroundings or engaging in recreational and leisure activities.	The locations and areas we utilise when accessing community services or participating in recreational, cultural, or social activities.
Includes roads and streets, bridges, footpaths, trails, roundabouts, speed humps and traffic management devices	Includes swales, drains and pipes, pits, sedimentation ponds, dams, wetlands, gross pollutant traps and water-sensitive urban design elements.	Includes parks and gardens (trees,flower beds, fences, gates), playgrounds, waterways, sports fields, public furniture and amenity assets (seats, barbecues, pergolas, shade sails)	Includes town halls, leisure and aquatic centres, sports pavilions, stadiums, libraries, community centres, maternal health and other buildings that house community services, public toilets and shelters.

6.2 How Our Assets Support Community Needs

Our assets exist to support the delivery of Council services and public amenities that, in turn, support our community's social and economic needs.

When making decisions about renewal or maintenance of our assets and/or prioritising our new asset investments, we always undertake life cycle analysis and what the appropriate levels of service for an asset prior to setting budgets.

6.3 Prioritisation of Works

Asset management decisions are informed by a set of guiding principles that reflect community expectations and the intended function of each asset.

In practice, service delivery is shaped by the following factors:

- Availability – The extent to which the service can be accessed when required
- Quality – The performance or condition of the asset in delivering its intended function
- Risk – The likelihood and consequence of asset failure or service interruption
- Accessibility – The ability for all community members to use the asset or service
- Comfort – The general user experience and satisfaction with the service

These considerations help guide decisions about how assets are maintained, renewed, or upgraded. For example, assets that support high levels of community use or critical services are typically prioritised for more regular maintenance and earlier renewal. Conversely, assets that support lower-priority services may be managed to a lower standard where appropriate.

This framework helps ensure that available budgets are directed where they provide the most benefit to the community and where risks can be most effectively managed.

6.4 Our Asset Response to Gender Impacts Assessment (GIA)

Merri-bek City Council is committed to advancing gender equality across its policies, programs, and services. In line with the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic), the Council undertakes Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) to ensure that decisions consider the needs and experiences of people of all genders and promote fair, inclusive outcomes.

Council's commitment to gender equity is embedded in its planning, workforce practices, and service delivery. Through the implementation of the Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2025, Merri-bek is actively working to remove barriers to participation, enhance workforce diversity, and foster a culture of respect and inclusion.

Gender considerations are integrated into strategic planning processes, including asset management, to ensure that public infrastructure and services are accessible, safe, and equitable for everyone in the community. Ongoing community engagement, supported by advisory structures such as the Gender Equality Reference Group, helps to inform and strengthen the Council's approach to gender equality across all areas of work.

By embedding GIAs into its decision-making and continually reviewing progress, Merri-bek aims to build a more equitable and inclusive city for current and future generations.

In asset management planning, our gender equity considerations include:

- Designing public spaces, buildings, and infrastructure to be safe, accessible, and inclusive for all genders and abilities.

- Applying Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) to major asset projects and service planning, in line with the Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic).
- Supporting equitable access to community, recreation, and cultural facilities across Merri-bek's diverse population.
- Addressing barriers to participation through inclusive design, location, service delivery and crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED).
- Engaging with the community to understand diverse needs and reflect these in asset priorities and investment decisions.

7. The State of Our Assets

Merri-bek City Council delivers a wide range of services that rely on a diverse and significant portfolio of physical assets. Understanding the current condition, service performance, costs, and risks associated with these assets is essential to ensure we can plan, prioritise, and invest responsibly to meet the needs of our growing and diverse community.

To support more effective management, assets are grouped into asset classes based on their characteristics, usage, and service requirements. Assets within each class are assessed on a regular cycle—typically every 3 to 5 years—to determine their condition, that is their remaining useful life These condition assessments help identify which assets require renewal to function effectively.

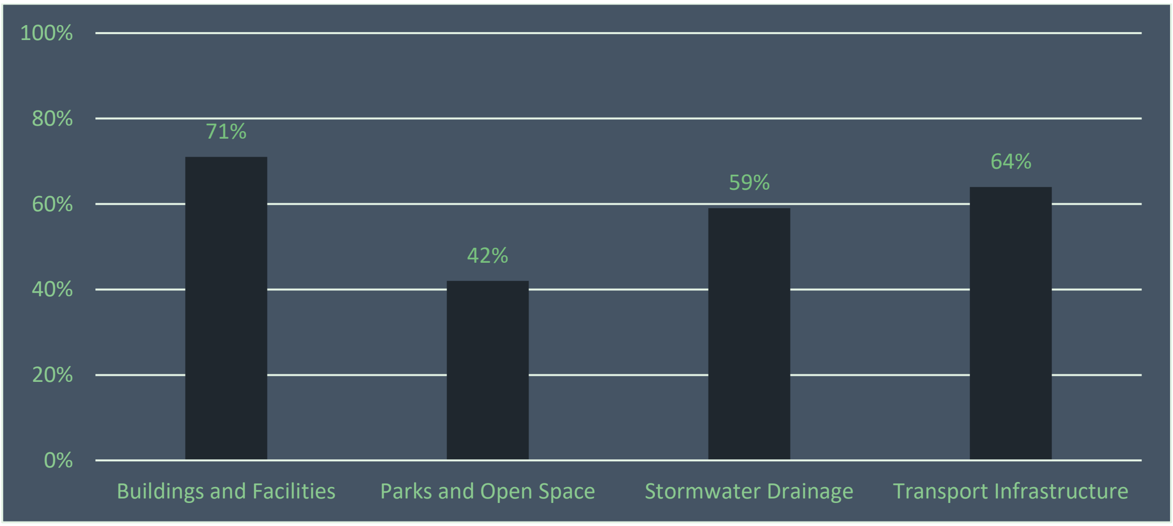
Underground drainage assets, however, present unique challenges. Because they cannot be readily inspected, their condition is typically estimated based on their age. Renewal of these assets is therefore prioritised based on performance indicators such as capacity, failure rates, spot checks using pipe cameras, or service complaints.

This Asset Plan provides a high-level overview of the current state of Council's assets and their long-term sustainability. More detailed information, including service levels, intervention thresholds, condition monitoring, and future financial sustainability considerations, is available in individual Asset Management Plans for each class.

When assessing asset performance, Council not only considers the current condition but also adopts a long-term perspective to protect asset value, maintain service delivery, and minimise the financial burden on future generations.

This section presents the projected performance of Merri-bek's $1.94 billion asset portfolio over the next 10 years.

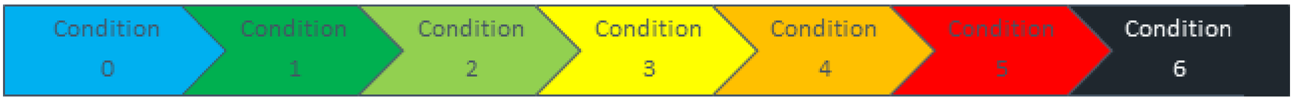
Asset Health is a measure of the remaining useful life of the asset portfolio. The figure below displays the current asset health by asset class.



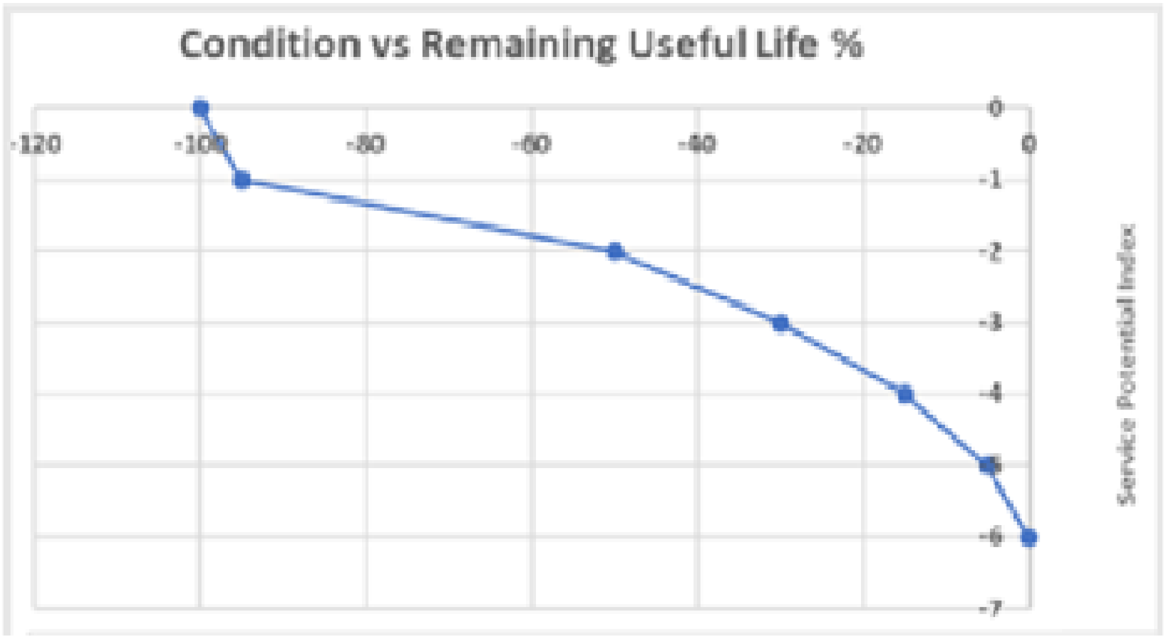
Asset Health (% Remaining life) by Asset Class as at 30th June 2024

Further commentary on the Asset Health of Council's Parks and Open Space Assets is provided in Section 9.4.

The condition for all asset classes is reported using a 0 to 6 rating system as shown below:

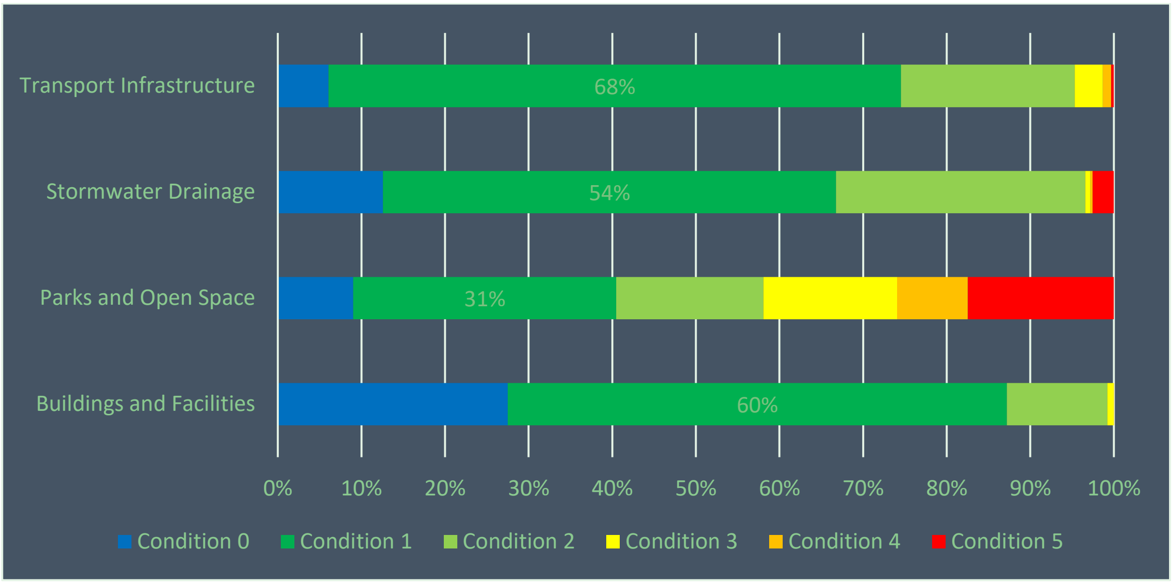


- Condition 0 – as new
- Condition 1 – very good, requiring minimal maintenance
- Condition 2 – good, requiring some maintenance
- Condition 3 – moderate, requiring increased maintenance
- Condition 4 – fair, requiring regular maintenance
- Condition 5 – aged, requiring significant maintenance
- Condition 6 – not functional



Asset Condition Assessment Rating

Within each asset class, there is a distribution of assets from a new to an aged condition. The current distribution is illustrated in the figure below:



**No assets in condition 6*

Condition distribution as percent of replacement cost as at 30th June 2024

8 . Funding for the Future

To ensure responsible and sustainable stewardship of our assets, we are committed to balancing our community's needs and aspirations with what is affordable for ratepayers.

Making decisions about funding our assets requires ongoing balancing of service levels, risk and the need to adequately maintain and renew assets. Our aim is to achieve long-term asset sustainability.

8.1 Integration with the Financial Plan

Merri-bek City Council's Asset Plan is developed in alignment with Council's long-term Financial Plan to ensure responsible management of community resources. Forecasts for asset renewal, maintenance, and new investment are embedded within financial planning to support sustainable service delivery. This coordinated approach enables Council to balance infrastructure needs with available funding, plan for future demand, and minimise financial risks. By integrating asset management and financial strategies, Merri-bek can maintain the value and performance of its asset portfolio while ensuring decisions today do not compromise the wellbeing of future generations.

8.2 Our asset investment strategies

Merri-bek City Council takes a strategic and long-term approach to managing and investing in community assets. Our investment decisions are guided by the need to provide sustainable, inclusive, and high-quality infrastructure that supports service delivery and meets the evolving needs of our growing and diverse community. Asset investment is closely linked to financial planning, risk management, and community engagement to ensure resources are used effectively and responsibly.

Council's asset investment approach is underpinned by the following principles:

- Sustainable development through environmentally responsible design and construction practices.
- Financial sustainability by aligning asset investment with the 10-Year Financial Plan and future service needs.
- Community-driven priorities shaped through engagement and consultation with Merri-bek's diverse community.
- Strategic property management to maximise the long-term value and use of Council-owned land and buildings.
- Lifecycle and risk-based planning to optimise asset performance, manage risks, and extend asset life.

8.3 Asset investment categories

For the purposes of this Asset Plan, our asset spending is categorised in a way that helps us to plan our budgets and track how we spend our money on assets and services.

Expenditure Type	Asset Management Activity	Description
Recurrent	Maintenance	Scheduled work to keep assets operating at the required level of service, or reactive work to repair defects and ensure that assets meet their service life and don't require early renewal.
	Operations	Recurrent expenditure that is required to use an asset such as utility costs, audit and inspection programs, cleaning or fees paid to other organisations.
Capital	Renewal	Works on assets that are at the end of life that restore their ability to deliver or facilitate the delivery of the desired service
	Upgrade	Works that increase the quality of the existing service that can be delivered through an existing asset.
	New	Works that generate an asset that can provide a service that does not currently exist.

8.4 Lifecycle investment profile

A detailed breakdown of what we expect to spend on each asset function over the next 10 years is outlined within individual asset class profiles under section 9 – Asset Class Detail. The table below summarises the adopted 10-year expenditure by asset class for 2025-2035:

Asset Class	Renewal $,000	Upgrade/New* $,000	Maintenance $,000	Total $,000
Transport Infrastructure	171,408	34,529	59,868	265,805
Buildings & Facilities	168,611	95,921	40,759	305,291
Stormwater Drainage	23,717	58,323	3,809	85,849
Parks & Recreation	49,818	49,833	97,903	197,554
Total Over 10 Years	**413,554**	**238,606**	**202,339**	**854,499**

**Includes major projects funding*

9. Asset Class Detail

9.1 Transport Infrastructure

What assets are included?

Sealed roads, unsealed roads, footpaths, kerbs and car parks.

What does our work involve?

Recurrent	Renewal	Upgrade and Growth
• Maintenance and repairs to roads such as patching potholes, crack sealing and path grinding • Operational servicing such as street sweeping, vegetation management and weed spraying	• Resurfacing of existing roads • Road reconstruction or major patching of road failures • Replacement of sections of existing pathways to an equivalent standard	• New constructed and gifted assets by developers • Road safety improvements such as installation of crash barriers, intersection upgrades, etc. • Traffic calming treatments such as construction of roundabouts, installation of speed humps, etc • Extension of existing pathway network to address gaps in connectivity • Network improvements to better cater for cyclists

How is funding prioritised?

This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our Transport assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on future asset condition.

How much do we plan to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure 2025-2035:

Projected Expenditure ($,000)											
Expenditure Type	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**	**Total**
Maintenance	5,419	5,536	5,656	5,780	5,907	6,038	6,172	6,310	6,452	6,598	**59,868**
Renewal	23,405	14,462	15,666	17,224	17,369	16,464	16,560	16,65	16,752	16,849	**171,408**
Upgrade/New	5,610	3,230	3,080	5,041	2,871	2,905	2,922	2,939	2,956	2,973	**34,529**
Total	**34,434**	**23,228**	**24,402**	**28,045**	**26,147**	**25,407**	**25,654**	**25,905**	**26,160**	**26,420**	**265,805**

**Includes major projects funding*

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Increased freight task	Climate change	Legislation and compliance
• The increased demand on local roads and their connections with State government and Collector roads due to population growth and increased dwelling density	• The increased deterioration of our road network due to an increased number of heavy vehicles and increased gross loadings	• The lack of availability of sustainable transport options, including public transport • The increased risk of damage to our transport assets due to more frequent and more extreme weather events • The need to consider resilience in the design and construction of new assets	• The need to ensure compliance with the *Road Traffic Act 1961* • The need to meet the requirements of our Road Management Plan • The need to ensure clarity on which roads we are responsible for

- Upcoming major projects for Transport are available for viewing in Council's Annual Budget document,

9.2 Buildings & Facilities

What assets are included?

Buildings, structures,stadiums and facilities..

What does our work involve?

Recurrent	Renewal	Upgrade and Growth
• Minor repairs to building components due to failure, vandalism, etc. • Unblocking drains, service checks, carpet repairs, etc. • Safety, compliance, and condition inspections	• Major structural repairs • Replacement of roof or wall cladding • Replacement of bathrooms and kitchens	• Building extensions • Sustainability improvements (e.g. PV systems, water harvesting and reuse systems, etc.) • Construction of a new building to cater for increased or changing demand • Replacement of amenities with DDA compliance and to meet raised community requirements

How is funding prioritised?

This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our Buildings assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on future asset condition.

How much do we plan to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure 2025-2035:

Projected Expenditure ($,000)											
Expenditure Type	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	Total
Maintenance	3,793	3,852	3,913	3,975	4,038	4,103	4,169	4,236	4,305	4,376	**40,759**
Renewal	4,886	7,389	11,675	31,765	26,920	17,337	19,524	17,194	15,802	16,118	**168,611**
Upgrade/ New	3,430	4,505	10,686	12,089	7,895	11,558	13,016	11,463	10,535	10,746	**95,921**
Total	**12,109**	**15,746**	**26,274**	**47,829**	**38,853**	**32,998**	**36,709**	**32,893**	**30,642**	**31,240**	**305,291**

**Includes major projects funding*

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Financial	Climate change	Legislation and compliance
• The need to improve access for all genders and abilities and other underrepresented communities • The need to meet diverse and often competing community demands and expectations for facilities	• The need to maximise the use of existing facilities and to manage assets that are surplus to needs • The unplanned maintenance liabilities associated with facilities that community groups are no longer able to manage	• The increased risk of damage to our buildings and facilities due to more frequent and more extreme weather events • The challenge of ensuring we meet our target of net zero	• The need to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation such as in relation to accessibility, fire safety, occupational health and safety, etc. • The need to ensure buildings are provided in line with the National Construction Code.

*Refer Recreation Infrastructure Plan

Upcoming major projects for Buildings are available for viewing in Council's Annual Budget document.

9.3 Stormwater Infrastructure

Council to review/update

What assets are included?

Retaining basins, bio-retention ponds, pipes, pits and box culverts.

What does our work involve?

Recurrent	Renewal	Upgrade and Growth
• Pit cleaning • Pipe cleansing and removal of debris, sediment, etc. • Removal of litter from Gross Pollutant Traps • Programmed inspections	• Replacement of pits and pipes • Periodic renewal of sediment from bio-retention ponds	• Replacement of pipes with a higher hydraulic capacity • Extension of the stormwater drainage network • Installation of stormwater quality improvement devices, such as rain gardens, litter traps, etc. • Stormwater harvesting initiatives

How is funding prioritised?

This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our stormwater assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on future asset condition.

How much do we plan to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure 2025-2035:

Projected Expenditure ($,000)											
Expenditure Type	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	Total
Maintenance	354	360	367	372	378	384	390	396	402	408	**3,809**
Renewal	3,138	2,200	1,911	2,412	2,822	2,116	2,180	2,245	2,312	2,382	**23,717**
Upgrade/ New	8,471	8,300	6,577	10,415	3,698	4,938	3,973	3,979	3,984	3,988	**58,323**
Total	**11,963**	**10,860**	**8,855**	**13,199**	**6,898**	**7,438**	**6,543**	**6,620**	**6,698**	**6,778**	**85,849**

**Includes major projects funding*

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Development density	Ageing infrastructure	Climate change	Environmental sustainability
• The need to upgrade the capacity of our existing drainage network to mitigate flooding due to increased volumes of stormwater run-off caused by continued urban consolidation • The need to implement stormwater quality improvement initiatives to protect receiving waterways affected by continued urban consolidation	• The need to upgrade some of our older drainage assets that are currently under capacity to improve flood immunity • The need to deal with more frequent and extreme flooding events • The ability to fund the timely renewal and upgrade of drainage assets that are in poor condition	• The projected reduction in current level of service with respect to flood protection and accessibility due to more frequent and more extreme weather events that lead to more flooding	• The increased need to provide infrastructure for the capture, treatment and reuse of stormwater to enable us to make use of stormwater run-off as a sustainable resource

Upcoming major projects for Drainage are available for viewing in Council's Annual Budget document.

9.4 Open Space

Council to review/update

What assets are included?

Playgrounds, play equipment, sportsgrounds, park furniture, fences, lighting, irrigation and other assets typically found within open space areas.

What does our work involve?

Recurrent	Renewal	Upgrade and Growth
• Hazard/defect inspections • Mowing, vegetation/weed control • Garden bed maintenance • Litter collection and cleaning • Graffiti removal	• Replacement of playground equipment • Replacement of park furniture • Rejuvenation or replacement of entire playing courts or sports fields to an equivalent standard	• Playing court extension • Replacement of playground equipment to a higher standard • Development of a new park or reserve

How is funding prioritised?

This funding allocation is informed by strategic modelling analysis that predicts the deterioration of our Open Space assets and the impact of various renewal funding scenarios on future asset condition. Council also purchases appropriate sites to create more open space, and installing new open space assets as part of its Parks Close to Home Program.

As noted in Section 4, the overall health of Council's Parks and Open Space assets is currently rated at 42%, which is significantly lower than the health ratings of other infrastructure asset groups. This lower rating is, in part, due to the nature of these assets—being exposed to outdoor conditions and typically having shorter life expectancies compared to other infrastructure types.

While they may show signs of ageing sooner, it is important to recognise that these assets exist in generally low-stress environments. They are often located within well-maintained landscapes, surrounded by mature trees, lush vegetation, scenic views, and expansive open areas. These positive contextual features, however, are not reflected in the asset health assessment.

Despite the 42% health rating, the assets remain functional and do not present any risk to public safety. The community continues to use and enjoy these spaces, demonstrating an ongoing acceptance of the condition of these assets within their broader natural setting.

How much do we plan to spend over the next 10 years?

Projected expenditure 2025-2035:

Projected Expenditure ($,000)											
Expenditure Type	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35	Total
Maintenance	8,706	8,880	9,123	9,365	9,620	9,883	10,154	10,433	10,721	11,017	**97,903**
Renewal	6,350	4,057	7,974	4,667	2,670	4,583	4,555	6,305	4,327	4,327	**49,818**
Upgrade/ New	7,674	7,770	8,042	7,510	3,610	5,601	5,568	7,707	5,289	5,289	**49,833**
Total	**22,730**	**20,707**	**25,139**	**21,542**	**15,900**	**20,067**	**20,277**	**24,445**	**20,337**	**20,633**	**197,554**

**Includes major projects funding*

What are the future challenges and opportunities?

Changing population	Open space provision	Participation trends	Environmental sustainability
• As population density rises, particularly in activity centres and infill developments, demand for accessible and high-quality open space has intensified. Smaller private open spaces (e.g., courtyards or balconies) place greater reliance on public open space to meet residents' recreation, wellbeing, and social needs. • Increased development funds which allow the creation of new or upgraded open spaces that cater to a wider demographic enhances community cohesion and supports health and wellbeing across all ages and backgrounds	• In many parts of the city, acquiring new land for parks is prohibitively expensive or physically unfeasible due to built form and private ownership; some neighbourhoods are underserved, with limited open space within safe walking distance, while others enjoy better access and larger reserves • Repurposing underutilised road reserves, drainage corridors, or railway easements into pocket parks or linear greenways can improve access.	• The traditional park user has changed — people increasingly engage in informal recreation such as yoga, dog walking, or group fitness rather than structured sports, placing new types of demands on space • Designing parks with adaptable zones (e.g., moveable furniture, open lawns, shaded courts) accommodates a broader range of activities. • Demand for more inclusive, accessible, gender-responsive, and culturally appropriate spaces. Requiring GIAs, DDA compliance to meet diversity needs.	• Enhancing tree canopy cover, integrating raingardens and wetlands, and promoting native planting improves microclimate, reduces heat, and supports biodiversity. • Implementing environmentally sensitive maintenance regimes (e.g., reducing mowing frequency, using recycled water) can lower costs and environmental impact. • Community expectations for environmentally sustainable spaces (e.g. zero waste events, composting toilets).

Upcoming major projects for Recreation & Open Space are available for viewing in Council's Annual Budget document.

10. Monitoring and Improvement Plan

Asset planning is not a set and forget process. It needs to be flexible to ensure our assets and levels of service are responsive to changes in population and demographics and the ongoing challenge of climate change, can capitalise on emerging trends and opportunities, and continue to meet agreed requirements as priorities change over time.

Asset Plan reviews and updates

This Asset Plan will be formally reviewed and updated every four years in line with the new Council term to provide opportunities for the new Council to make any required changes.

Intermediary reviews may be undertaken to provide the opportunity to reflect improvements achieved, major financial decisions made, the consideration of any relevant external factors, or changes to long-term capital works programs to ensure it is responsive to our available financial resources over time.

Reporting

Our Asset Management Plans have a life of four years in line with the council election cycle. They are fully reviewed and updated within two years of each council election. They are also reviewed during the annual budget planning process and updated to recognise any material changes in service levels or resources available to provide those services as a result of budget decisions.

Reporting on service levels and other performance measures is undertaken as part of our Annual Report.

Continuous Improvement

We acknowledge that significant annual expenditure is required to manage and maintain our existing infrastructure. This highlights the importance of maintaining high-level skills and practices to ensure services are delivered economically and sustainably and Council is committed to continuously working to improve our knowledge, skills and operational practices in line with sector-wide best practice.

The financial analysis and projections in this Asset Plan are based on existing data, processes, systems, and standards. Council is committed to identifying ways to achieve a more robust evidence base and analysis and to improving our practices to achieve this. One of the keys to this will be engaging with our community to establish optimised service levels that are affordable over the long term.

APPENDIX 1: LONG TERM INVESTMENT PLAN

Renewal Expenditure based on Proposed LTFP										
Projected Renewal Expenditure ($,000)										
Asset Class	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**
Transport Infrastructure	23,405	14,462	15,666	17,224	17,369	16,464	16,560	16,656	16,752	16,849
Building & Facilities	4,886	7,389	11,675	31,765	26,920	17,337	19,524	17,194	15,802	16,118
Stormwater Infrastructure	3,138	2,200	1,911	2,412	2,822	2,116	2,180	2,245	2,312	2,382
Parks & Recreation	6,350	4,057	7,974	4,667	2,670	4,583	4,555	6,305	4,327	4,327
Total	**37,779**	**28,108**	**37,226**	**56,068**	**49,781**	**40,500**	**42,819**	**42,400**	**39,193**	**39,676**

Upgrade & New Expenditure based on Proposed LTFP										
Projected Renewal Expenditure ($,000)										
Asset Class	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**
Transport Infrastructure	5,610	3,230	3,080	5,041	2,871	2,905	2,922	2,939	2,956	2,973
Building & Facilities	3,430	4,505	10,686	12,089	7,895	11,558	13,016	11,463	10,535	10,746
Stormwater Drainage	8,471	8,300	6,577	10,415	3,698	4,938	3,973	3,979	3,984	3,988
Parks & Recreation	7,674	7,770	8,042	7,510	3,610	5,601	5,568	7,707	5,289	5,289
Total	**25,185**	**23,805**	**28,385**	**35,055**	**18,074**	**25,002**	**25,479**	**26,088**	**22,764**	**22,996**

Maintenance Expenditure based on Proposed LTFP										
Projected Renewal Expenditure ($,000)										
Asset Class	**2025-26**	**2026-27**	**2027-28**	**2028-29**	**2029-30**	**2030-31**	**2031-32**	**2032-33**	**2033-34**	**2034-35**
Transport Infrastructure	5,419	5,536	5,656	5,780	5,907	6,038	6,172	6,310	6,452	6,598
Building & Facilities	3,793	3,852	3,913	3,975	4,038	4,103	4,169	4,236	4,305	4,376
Stormwater Drainage	354	360	367	372	378	384	390	396	402	408
Parks & Recreation	8,706	8,880	9,123	9,365	9,620	9,883	10,154	10,433	10,721	11,017
Total	**18,272**	**18,628**	**19,059**	**19,492**	**19,943**	**20,408**	**20,885**	**21,375**	**21,880**	**22,399**

Addressing Climate Change through Upgrade and New Expenditure

A significant portion of Council's annual upgrade and new asset expenditure is dedicated to addressing the impacts of climate change. This investment focuses on building resilience and reducing emissions across several key areas:

- Drainage infrastructure: Upgrades include increasing pipe sizes and expanding the underground drainage network to manage higher flood levels associated with more intense and frequent rainfall events.
- Aquatic centre efficiency: Works are being undertaken to reduce Council's reliance on gas heating at aquatic centres, transitioning to more sustainable energy solutions.
- Sustainable building design: New buildings and major upgrades incorporate climate-resilient design features such as solar panels, thermal insulation, passive heating/cooling, and environmentally responsible materials.

The table below outlines the amount of the annual upgrade and new asset expenditure that is directly attributed to climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

	Expenditure on Climate Change Initiatives Included in Long Term Investment Plan ($,000)									
	2025-2026	**2026-2027**	**2027-2028**	**2028-2029**	**2029-2030**	**2030-2031**	**2031-2032**	**2032-2033**	**2033-2034**	**2034-2035**
Climate Change Initiatives	6,879	5,836	6,308	9,104	4,494	5,739	5,653	5,354	5,179	5,231

APPENDIX 2: KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS

Terminology	Description
Infrastructure Assets	Stationary systems forming a network and serving whole communities where the system as a whole is intended to be maintained indefinitely by continuing replacement and refurbishment of its components, e.g. roads, facilities, footpaths, drains, parks.
Capital Expenditure	Expenditure for new infrastructure and for the renewal or upgrade of existing assets that enhances the service potential of the assets.
Maintenance	Expenditure that is incurred to ensure that the asset continues to provide its pre-determined service capacity and quality and achieves its expected useful life. Maintenance expenditure is of a regular and ongoing nature.
Long Term Financial Plan	A Financial Plan based on a Service Level Target that produces a year-by-year forecast of the investment needed in capital renewals, capital upgrades, new infrastructure and ongoing maintenance.
Lifecycle Indicator	Planned 10-year LTFP / Desired 10-year LTFP costs (maintenance, renewal, upgrade and new expenditure for desired service level). Recommended target = 85-115%.
Asset Health	Asset Health refers to the remaining life expectancy and serviceability of the asset portfolio
Intervention Level	A physical state of an asset defined by its condition, capacity or functionality at which Council will determine a treatment action.
Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)	A requirement under Victoria's Gender Equality Act 2020, a GIA assesses how a policy, program or service may affect people of different genders to ensure equitable, inclusive outcomes in public decision-making.

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