



Colac Otway
SHIRE



Master Plan

Rex Norman Park



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planning



recreation
open space
and sport
specialists

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Background

Introduction

Rex Norman Park is currently one of the key hubs of the Gellibrand community. It plays host to markets, community events, rail station interpretive building and community house. Importantly, it is also the township's key picnic and play facility.

Growth in community requests for the Park combined with a number of ageing facilities presents an opportunity to reconsider the existing layout and uses of Rex Norman Park.

The aim of the master plan is to provide a realistic and achievable vision for the Park, where the needs and requirements of the user groups, community and Council are established and balanced. Importantly, the project will require a staged approach to development that provides for smooth implementation limiting impact on users. Ultimately, the report will guide community, Council and user group decision-making and resource allocation.

Through site analysis, background research and consultation, the project aims to provide optimal use of the Park for formal user groups and the wider community.

What is a master plan?

A master plan provides a vision for a site, identifying what it should look like and how it should function into the future. It establishes a strong and consistent direction, providing a framework for ongoing improvement. It considers the interrelationship between:

- current character and functionality of the landscape
- public expectations and needs
- emerging issues and trends
- the realities of the economic, social, environmental and legislative context of the time.

The result is a plan that balances needs across a range of often conflicting interests.

The master plan does not suggest that all elements of the plan should proceed immediately, or that Council nor the user groups should be responsible for all capital costs in respect of those items that are progressed. It is important to note that the intent of the master plan is to provide a framework for future development of the Park over an extended time period so that ad hoc improvements are avoided and community use and long-term viability are maximised. The master plan should be regularly monitored to ensure outcomes continue to meet community needs in the best possible way. Indeed, a number of proposed elements may require additional consultation and detailed design prior to construction.



Existing situation

Rex Norman Park is located at the northern end of the Gellibrand township (as highlighted in the map below).

The Park contains a number of different land parcels. Approximately 0.6ha of the central and southern sections of the Park is Council-owned. A similar sized portion of the Park is road reserve (and Vic Roads land) running along Old Beech Forest Road to the northern tip of the Park. A small section of land is also former freehold that has been bequeathed to the community for parkland.

The entire Park is zoned public parks and recreation zone (PPRZ). Council's Open Space Strategy (2011) designates the Park as township parkland.

It is important to note that the northern end of the Park (from the road intersection through to the powerlines) is designated as a Neighbourhood Safer Place for Gellibrand.

The Park is generally flat and enjoys high levels of passive surveillance having key roads (Colac-Lavers Hill Road and Old Beech Forest Road) running down each length of the Park. Residences along these roads also face into the Park.

Existing embellishments include:

- play node
- open kick-about space
- barbecue and shelter
- additional picnic facilities
- Community House
- former Gellibrand station building
- public art
- interpretive signage
- bus shelter
- amenities
- formal car parking.

Planning considerations

Colac Otway Shire Planning Scheme

Public Park and Recreation zone

As noted, Rex Norman Park is zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ).

The objectives of this zone are to:

- recognise areas for public recreation and open space
- protect and conserve areas of significance where appropriate
- provide for commercial uses where appropriate.

For the outdoor recreation developments included in the master plan, a permit (other than necessary building permits) is not likely to be required as identified in 36.02-1 (informal outdoor recreation).





Facility snapshot



Existing facilities

1. Open kick-about space (neighbourhood safer place (NSP))
2. Bus shelter
3. Shelter node (barbecue, two uncovered picnic tables, rainwater tank)
4. Railway themed public art
5. Formal landscaped entry
6. Formal landscaped entry
7. Community House (and vegetable garden)
8. Former Gellibrand station building
9. Playground
10. Amenities
- A. Country Fire Authority station
- B. Council depot



Site elements

Site characteristics

In essence, the Park is comprised of three nodes - an open space node at the northern end of the Park, a central building-focussed node and southern play node.

When the Park last underwent significant development, mounds were removed resulting in a flat surface with quality turf cover.

Buildings and improvements

In its current form, the Park is recognised for its wide range of buildings and embellishments:

- open shelter with barbecue, limited seating and benches
- Community House
- former Gellibrand Station building (and former carriage)
- play node (with aged elements)
- public art
- two picnic tables
- scattered timber benches
- amenities.

Lighting

A spotlight provides lighting in the central area of the Park. There are limited street lights in the nearby vicinity.

Parking

Sealed nose-in parking provides approximately eight spaces off Old Beech Forest Road. This side of the Park also has a pull-off area for buses (and is popular for motorhomes and caravans). A car parking 'shoulder' is also available on Colac-Lavers Hill Road from the northern end of the Park to the main central entrance.



Access, linkages and connectivity

Entry and access

While much of the Park is protected from inappropriate vehicle access with timber bollards, spaces between plantings at the northern end of the Park allow limited (appropriate) vehicle access (e.g. to ensure that people with a disability can gain access to the existing shelter and picnic tables).

Linkages and connectivity

The Park forms a key link along the Old Beechy Rail Trail. The trail runs along the western side of Colac-Lavers Hill Road.

Additionally, the south-western end of the Park leads users to the commercial node and Otways Tourist Park. Finally, a gravel path link runs along the eastern side of the Council depot to link with the community garden walk.

Shade

There is limited natural shade within the Park. Indeed, the play node and two picnic tables are completely without any protection.

Built shade is provided by the large central shelter and bus shelter.

Signage

The Park includes a number of attractive interpretive signs describing the Old Beechy Rail Trail. However, there is no directional signage indicating the location of the trail. Additionally, there is limited directional signage detailing the key features within the Park (e.g. Community House, former Gellibrand Station building and amenities) nor acknowledgement of the traditional owners.





Opportunities and constraints

Key opportunities and constraints for Rex Norman Park have been established through background research, consideration of existing opportunities and consultation with Council, community and user groups. A range of consultation options have been undertaken including face-to-face interviews in the Park, phone interviews, community drop-in session in the Park, youth-focussed discussions in the Park and surveys distributed to every Gellibrand household.

Theme	Opportunities/Constraints	Desired Outcomes/Design Drivers
Users		
Population considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Population decreases are predicted for Gellibrand (id. the population experts, 2014) <input type="checkbox"/> Significant aging in the community. Between 2011 and 2031, the number of young people (0 to 14yrs) is expected to decrease from 52 to approximately 44, while the number of older people (65+yrs) is projected to increase from 74 to 134 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure facility investment within the Park, reflects community demand <input type="checkbox"/> Consider the development of recreation opportunities attractive to older people (e.g. walking, exercise classes, picnicking and other community activities) <input type="checkbox"/> Include the development of opportunities for younger people that can also be attractive to a wide range of the community (e.g. hit-up wall, basketball/netball hoop, multi-age play and activity node, skate node)
Survey outcomes (25 responses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 59% visit the Park at least weekly <input type="checkbox"/> key Park values - open space, playground, picnic facilities, central location <input type="checkbox"/> key changes/upgrades - additional shade, challenging play, seats and tables, skate facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consider opportunities for additional shaded picnic and play <input type="checkbox"/> Investigate feasible skate development
Movement		
Entry and circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The Park is clearly visible from two key roads <input type="checkbox"/> The amenities are somewhat hidden <input type="checkbox"/> The Park requires a feature park naming sign and interpretive signage explaining the Park name <input type="checkbox"/> Directional signage is required to the location of the Old Beechy Rail Trail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Install suitable directional signage to the amenities, Old Beechy Rail Trail, car and bus parking and other key locations within the Park <input type="checkbox"/> Install Park naming and interpretive signage <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the NSP signage remains clearly visible <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure suitable vehicle access is retained for events
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A small formalised off-street car park (8 spaces) is located on Old Beech Forest Road. This area is particularly busy before and after school <input type="checkbox"/> The wide shoulder on Colac-Lavers Hill Road provides additional parking opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Extend the nose-in car parking area and the bus pull off zone to create a safer environment
Pedestrian network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> A gravel pedestrian path links the Park with the commercial node and extends across to the bus shelter. An additional path radiates from the central building area to the amenities and beyond to link with the community garden walk at Link Street <input type="checkbox"/> There are no path loops within the Park <input type="checkbox"/> Youth tend to walk through the grassed area of the Park between the bus shelter and commercial area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Construct a network of gravel paths to provide clear links and looped opportunities (this will require a reconfiguration of the existing drainage swales in the northern section of the Park)
Fencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The existing bollards provide a clear border for much of the Park perimeter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Investigate relocation of the depot entry road off Old Beech Forest Road. This will allow the south-east corner of the Park to be re-established 'within' the Park through perimeter bollards (and removal of the bollards delineating the existing depot entry) <input type="checkbox"/> Extend bollards around the remaining perimeter (construct within the new gravel paths)
Buildings and structures		
Community House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> This building is centrally located and provides a focus for formal activity in the Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Undertake necessary repairs and maintenance as required
Former Gellibrand Station building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> This building provides interesting interpretive cultural and historic value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Undertake maintenance (e.g. repair the recycled brick entry surface, ensure awning posts are suitably fixed, necessary ongoing carriage maintenance) <input type="checkbox"/> Install a railway sleeper picnic table on a raised gravel bed directly to the north of the building (railway sleepers to have originated from the former rail line)

Theme	Opportunities/Constraints	Desired Outcomes/Design Drivers
Central shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> This structure forms a central focus for gathering <input type="checkbox"/> The barbecue and internal uprights limit the range and scope of available uses <input type="checkbox"/> The 'walls' on the north-east and south-east corners limit views across the Park (particularly to the play node and amenities) <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of external powerpoints in the shelter results in the need for extension leads for events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Through detailed design, consider options to 'open' sections of the shelter <input type="checkbox"/> Relocate the water tank to the picnic node <input type="checkbox"/> Install at least two separate powerpoints within the shelter
Bus shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The bus shelter currently has no seating and can be relocated north to reflect the extended bus pull-off area (and allow room for the development of exercise equipment, basketball area and hit-up wall) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Redevelop the bus shelter with seating and timber walls to reflect the rustic character of the central shelter
Open space		
Community-level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The Park is a key community recreation open space for the Gellibrand community. Additionally, it is also the Neighbourhood Safer Place location (place of last resort during a bushfire) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure future development of the Park reflects its status as a key recreation venue but is also cognisant of the impacts that the Neighbourhood Safer Place designation has on future development
Recreation spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity exists to develop a range of recreation elements that more closely reflect the desires of the community and provide avenues for community cohesion and development (across the ages) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a play node that incorporates options such as climbing, balancing and crawling elements. Establish swings and spinning/movement elements. Ensure development is reflective of the Gellibrand community - theme with natural products such as timber and stone. Consider options to relocate some of the existing elements for toddler play. Include bike racks with the new development <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a skate space (developed incrementally) <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a new picnic node with four shelters and covered barbecue area (investigate options to relocate and upgrade the existing barbecue). Include an outdoor sink, bin and relocated tank <input type="checkbox"/> Develop an outdoor exercise equipment node <input type="checkbox"/> Construct a hit-up wall and basketball area <input type="checkbox"/> Construct a community pizza oven (after assessing public safety considerations) <input type="checkbox"/> Retain the open space kick-about area
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The timber edging along the gravel area is beginning to fail <input type="checkbox"/> The landscaping at the central entry is not inviting <input type="checkbox"/> The existing perimeter plantings at the northern end of the Park will require modification/removal in coming years for the site to continue to comply with CFA and Council NSP assessment criteria <input type="checkbox"/> The central and southern sections of the Park have very limited natural shade <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity to establish an edible fruit tree grove <input type="checkbox"/> A number of inappropriate/undesirable trees are located within the Park <input type="checkbox"/> A number of areas within the Park become boggy during periods of wet weather <input type="checkbox"/> The existing bins are regularly filled (and over-filled) by household and camping-related rubbish <input type="checkbox"/> The overhead powerlines detract from the visual amenity of the Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Replace the timber edging with rail track from the former rail line <input type="checkbox"/> Restore the feature landscaping at the central entry and replicate this style at the new south-west entry <input type="checkbox"/> Establish suitable perimeter plantings that provide a visual border for the northern section of the Park <input type="checkbox"/> Plant suitable shade trees (potentially deciduous) in and around the new play and picnic nodes and along the new path leading to the SW corner of the Park <input type="checkbox"/> Establish a fruit tree avenue leading into the Park from the south-west corner. (Suitable maintenance arrangements and program to be established prior) <input type="checkbox"/> Remove the failing blackwoods near the amenities <input type="checkbox"/> Remove the blackwood tree that hinders access to and from the CFA building <input type="checkbox"/> Additional sub-surface drainage to mitigate ponding in low lying areas (including constructing a swale from the rear of the CFA building to the nearby drainage pit) <input type="checkbox"/> Relocate the bin near the former station building to the new picnic node. Investigate the feasibility of bins with small openings <input type="checkbox"/> If opportunity arises, investigate transferring the powerlines to underground



A vibrant community vision

Master plan

The master plan has been developed by considering all consultation, appropriate strategic contexts and previous research. Overall, it provides an ideal opportunity to enhance the capacity of the facility to meet the recreation needs of residents and visitors.

The master plan sits well within the existing open space network - providing options for all and complementing the existing facilities.

The master plan integrates a number of the existing site features with a range of new elements and embellishments. The provision of quality recreation facilities and a more attractive environment will encourage use from the community and with the range of facilities and programs available, all age groups can find activities to enjoy.

Vision

The short- to medium-term vision for Rex Norman Park is:

to further embed a quality community recreation hub that provides opportunities for formal functions and events, and a wide range of engaging recreation options for both residents and visitors.



Rex Norman Park - Concept layout

1. Feature park signage
 2. Gravel path network with bollards
 3. Open space kick-about and event area
 4. Re-established entry landscaping
 5. Maintained station building, carriage and picnic table
 6. Upgraded shelter
 7. Maintained community house and community garden
 8. Pizza oven (electric)
 9. Feature timber benches
 10. Relocated bus shelter
 11. Hit-up wall and basketball area
 12. Toddler play node
 13. Exercise equipment
 14. Play node
 15. 2 picnic shelters, covered barbecue, outdoor sink, rainwater tank and drinking fountain
 16. 2 picnic shelters
 17. Formal avenue of fruit trees
 18. Bus pull-off extension
 19. Car park extension
 20. Water outlet relocation
 21. Skate space
 22. Skate space extension
 23. Amenities extension
 24. Feature entry landscaping
 25. Timber bench seats
- A. Country Fire Authority station
B. Council depot



Staged implementation and indicative costing

The cost of the development of the master plan is beyond the Council's and the community's ability to fund in the short-term. Thus, this section provides an initial project breakdown for consideration and discussion and proposes a staged budgeting approach.

The information provided is designed as a flexible guide—changes in user priorities or earlier opportunities for funding may alter staging. The adjoining table summarises indicative costs (and do not include legal fees or GST).

Stage 1 (short-term)

- construct the new picnic node (four picnic shelters, relocated/upgraded barbecue, outdoor sink, tank, drinking fountain and relocated bin)
- establish the new play node
- establish simple fixed exercise equipment
- refurbish the main shelter (investigate opportunities to 'open' up the shelter through detailed design, relocate the existing tank to the picnic node, install powerpoints)
- plant feature shade trees (and remove blackwood trees near amenities and in the south-west corner of the Park)
- re-establish entry landscaping
- install signage (directional, park naming feature signage and park name interpretive (include acknowledgement of traditional owners))
- install railway sleeper picnic table
- replace timber edging with railway track edging (commence in short-term)

Stage 2 (medium-term)

- investigate closing the depot road entry off Old Beech Forest Road and relocating the water point
- commence development of the skate space (stage 1)
- construct the hit-up wall and basketball area
- commence the gravel path network (and associated drainage swale redevelopment) and bollard construction
- extend the bollards around the south-east perimeter of the Park
- redevelop the bus shelter
- install additional timber bench seats

Stage 3 (long-term)

- if future demand requires, extend the amenities building
- develop future stages of the skate space
- undertake car park and bus pull-off changes along Old Beech Forest Road
- develop the pizza oven
- establish fruit trees, feature entry and gravel path (ensure suitable drainage options are considered)

Stage	Ref. no.	Area	Description	Cost
1	15, 16	Picnic node	Construct 4 timber picnic shelters, relocate the barbecue and tank	60,000
	12, 14	Activity node	Establish play node	35,000
	13	Activity node	Install fixed exercise equipment	15,000
	6	Shelter	Refurbish	1,000
	n/a	Landscaping	Plant feature shade trees	3,000
	4	Landscaping	Re-establish feature entry	1,000
	1	Signage	Directional, feature park name, interpretive	8,500
	n/a	Landscaping	Replace timber edging	2,000
	5	Building node	Construct railway sleeper picnic table	2,000
	9	Landscaping	Construct feature timber bench seating	4,000
Stage 1			Sub-total (with rounding)	131,500
2	20	Depot	Close entry road and relocate water point	3,000
	21	Activity node	Construct skate space (stage 1)	50,000
	11	Activity node	Construct hit-up wall and basketball area	15,000
	2	Paths	Commence gravel path network and bollards	50,000
	n/a	Fencing	Extend bollards (SE corner)	3,000
	10	Shelter	Redevelop the bus shelter	5,000
	25	Landscaping	Install timber bench seats	4,000
	Stage 2			Sub-total (with rounding)
3	23	Amenities	Extend the amenities building	50,000
	22	Activity node	Future skate space extension	50,000
	18, 19	Parking	Car park extension and bus pull-off	45,000
	8	Picnic node	Construct a pizza oven	8,000
	17	Landscaping	Establish fruit trees, feature entry and gravel path (path cost has been incorporated in the Park-wide project in Stage 2)	3,000
Stage 3			Sub-total (with rounding)	156,000
Sub-total				417,500
			Contingency and sundry site works (10%)	41,750
			Sub-total	459,250
			Escalation (2%)	9,185
TOTAL rounded (exc GST)				468,400



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