

Draft for public comment



Department of Biodiversity,  
Conservation and Attractions



## MIDDLE SWAN

## LOCALITY PLAN

March 2022

Draft for public comment

Ngala kaaditj Whadjuk moort keyen kaadak nidja Boodja

We acknowledge the Whadjuk people as the original owners of this land

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## VISION

*A healthy river for all, to be enjoyed and shared, now and in the future.*

*The social benefits, environmental values and cultural significance of the river are respected.*

*Land use, design and development ensure that the river and its value to the community is protected and enhanced.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Swan Canning river system is a complex and dynamic natural landscape that extends beyond the river channel. A properly functioning river alters the position of its channels and foreshore, frequently spills over its banks and occasionally occupies its floodplain. The river should be understood as this larger natural system.

The Middle Swan Locality Plan guides adjacent land use, civic design, and development to ensure that the value of the river and its setting to the community is maintained. The Locality Plan brings together “on” and “off” water considerations to provide guidance for recreation, development, restoration and rehabilitation of the Swan and Canning rivers.

The Locality Plan is to be read in conjunction with *Corporate Policy XX – Planning for Localities along the Swan Canning Development Control Area*, which establishes key development principles to direct and inform development (including use of the land and water). These principles are supported by the below series of intended locality-specific development outcomes. The development principles and outcomes are to be demonstrated as part of any proposal.

The Locality Plan is adopted as policy to support the implementation of the *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* and is to be given due regard in relation to strategic and statutory planning that may affect the river.

The Locality Plan is supported by an Action Plan that aims to direct strategic planning and works in the locality. The actions, while not adopted as policy, should be delivered when opportunity presents. The Action Plan will be updated as needed. Delivery of the actions is subject to funding and resources.

The extent of the Middle Swan locality is identified in Figure 1. The development outcomes apply to land within and affecting (including visually) the Swan Canning development control area and includes public and private land.

## POLICY AREA

The Middle Swan locality extends from the Guildford Road Bridge to the Reid Highway crossing.

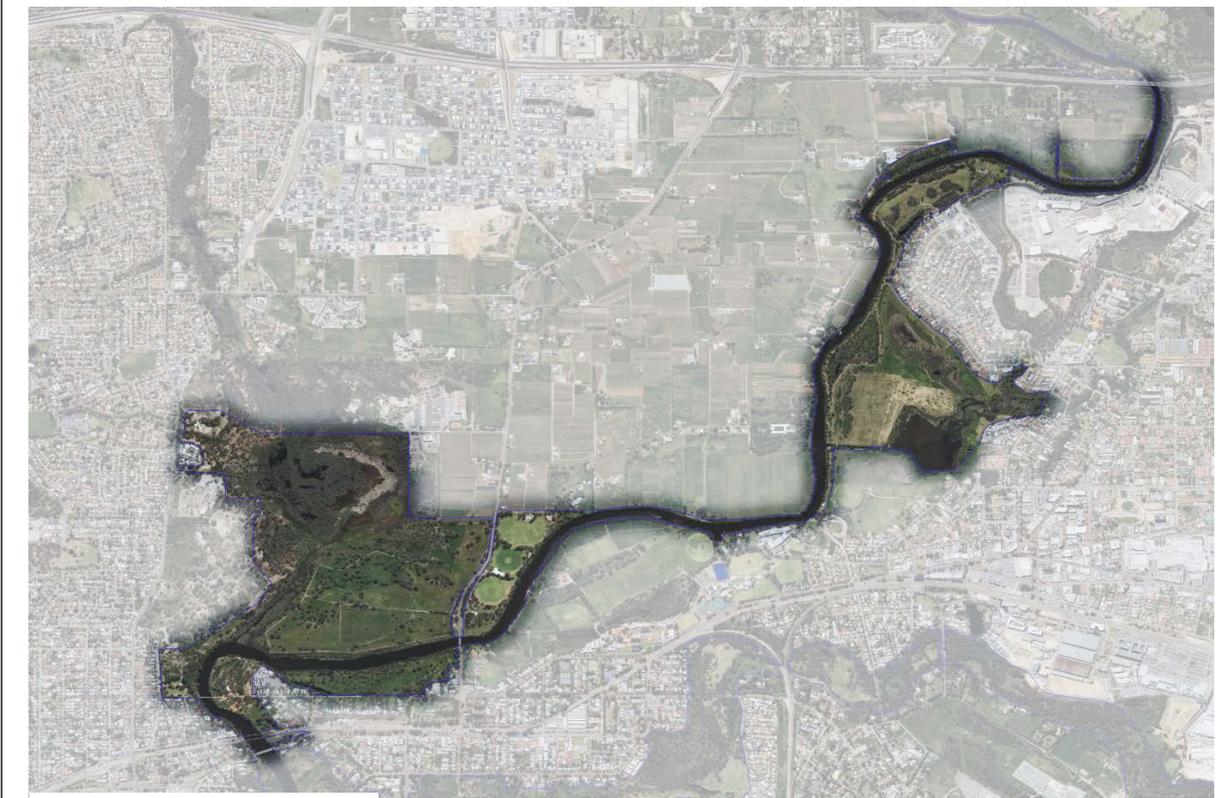


Figure 1: Middle Swan Locality

The river channel is relatively narrow and has several tributaries draining from the surrounding lands, notably Bennett Brook and Blackadder Creek. Fringing riparian vegetation is mainly rushes, paperbarks and sheoaks, with occasional stands of flooded gum. The surrounding landform includes steep embankments around Success Hill and Midland Brick and flat floodplains at Viveash and Caversham.

Historical land use has resulted in a very narrow extent of fringing vegetation along the banks of the river. Although degraded in some places, with no transition between the riparian zone and the adjoining land uses, the native vegetation is an important element of the natural landscape character of the river.

Residential development, including medium density housing at Woodbridge and urban infilling at Viveash, contributes suburban landscape character elements. However, development is generally set back from the river. There is a distinctive built heritage landscape at Guildford Historic Town. The old townsite has many nineteenth century houses and heritage buildings. Many of the old buildings occur within the floodplain, which has remnant mature flooded gums and riparian vegetation. The floodplain understorey often consists of exotic pasture grasses, creating an open parkland element adjacent to the Swan River.

Caversham is an extensive area of rural landscape character. Vineyards are a prominent feature and are a significant contributor to the tourism and commercial value of the Swan Valley. The vineyards, orchards, large blocks, rural fences and farm buildings create the local rural landscape identity. Properties that are immediately adjacent to the Swan River have a narrow strip of remnant riparian vegetation. The rural landscape character provides some significant views, particularly the panoramic view of Woodbridge House and vineyards and the natural landscape at the confluence of Bennett Brook and the Swan River.

There are several historic buildings along the foreshore, as well as tourist facilities and wineries that contribute to the landscape of the area. Public access to the river and foreshore is not continuous due to historic land use, the landform and private properties extending into the floodplain or to the edge of the Swan River embankments. Public active and passive recreation areas include Success Hill, Fish Market and Lilac Hill Reserves and the Swan Riverside Regional Park. There is also a designated bare-foot water ski area in the river at Lilac Hill.

## DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

### SOCIAL BENEFITS

#### *Maintaining the River System and its Setting as a Community Resource*

- 5.1 Planning and decision making is to contribute to securing a continuous public foreshore reserve throughout this locality.
- 5.2 Ensure that increases in density and subdivisions incorporate adequate foreshore and public open space reserves. Encourage the alignment of public open space abutting the foreshore reserve.

#### *Securing Public Access to the River System*

- 5.3 Provide a safe and accessible public open space network. Pathways within the floodplain are to be at-grade, acknowledging that they may be inundated, and set back from the river's edge to create space for soft foreshore treatments and restoring riparian vegetation.
- 5.4 Account for the terrain, environmental values and landscape amenity of the foreshore reserve when providing public access.
  - i. The design is to respond to the site and local context;
  - ii. In some areas an informal path is preferred due to the topography or environmental sensitivities, such as some areas adjacent to Anzac Terrace and River Street (Bassendean); and
  - iii. Access to the water may not always be practical or ecologically appropriate.

#### *Maintaining a Sense of Place*

- 5.5 Preserve the natural landscape riparian elements, such as flat floodplains, wetlands, silty banks and raised embankments, including by ensuring adjoining land uses are set back from the river's edge and do not visually dominate the foreshore or river.
- 5.6 Conserve the history and cultural heritage of the Swan Valley through protection of its unique natural landscape and rural character.
- 5.7 With permission, use Whadjuk Noongar place names across the locality.

#### *Providing Opportunities for Water Transport*

- 5.8 Water transport in this locality is to be leisure and tourism focused, rather than commuter, using low-wash, low-speed and shallow-draft vessels.

## ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES

### *Increasing Climate Resilience*

- 5.9 Adapt current foreshore use, infrastructure and management to allow for the river's natural 'flood retreat cycle' to occur. Ensure buildings around the foreshore are appropriately setback and other infrastructure within the reserve is designed to accommodate some inundation.
- 5.10 Retain and enhance existing vegetation, particularly large trees, and increase canopy coverage to combat the urban heat island effect. Encourage the planting of local native trees within urban areas.
- 5.11 Foreshore revegetation projects should consider the predicted changes in salinity of the river and select local native species accordingly.

### *Protecting the Natural Environment*

- 5.12 Ensure land use and development in the Swan Valley enhances the natural environment of the Swan River catchment, protects native vegetation, wetlands and waterways and appropriately manages soils and water resources.
- 5.13 Protect the natural landform surrounding the river from earthworks (including filling of the floodplain), clearing and other intrusions that may impact on the function and character of the river.
- 5.14 Soft foreshore stabilisation approaches should be used in this locality. Any incidental rock material used for foreshore stabilisation is to be laterite.
- 5.15 Retain all remaining Guildford and Swan complex vegetation and preserve local natural areas.

### *Protecting Fringing Vegetation*

- 5.16 Protect existing fringing vegetation, including trees on the riverside of development.
- 5.17 Restore local native riparian vegetation so it appears as a green band when viewed from the river, particularly near Success Hill, Bennett Brook and Viveash floodplain and where weeds, pasture grasses and extensive historical clearing have degraded the riparian floodplain vegetation.

### *Creating and Maintaining Foreshore Reserves*

- 5.18 The width of an existing foreshore reserve may be required to be increased to allow for safe public access at the top of a slope or maintenance access, to retain fringing vegetation or a landscape feature, create a sense of place or provide for a visual buffer.

### *Minimising Dredging and Channel Disturbance*

- 5.19 Protect and maintain the natural function and form of the river channel, including protecting riverbanks in their natural state.
- 5.20 The river channel is relatively narrow, and any new jetties are to be community use, fixed structures that abut or align with the riverbank, and do not require dredging.

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### *Implementing Responsible Drainage Management Practices*

- 5.21 Maintain and restore natural hydrology, such as maintaining natural groundwater springs (such as at Success Hill), perched water flows to the river and seasonal flooding of floodplains and wetlands.
- 5.22 Implement water sensitive urban design, with the aim of incorporating at-source stormwater systems and overland flow through vegetated systems within the catchment.

### *Applying Appropriate Water Management Practices*

- 5.23 Development and land use intensification in unsewered areas is to be supported by a wastewater management plan that demonstrates no new sources of nutrients to the river.
- 5.24 Implement nutrient and irrigation industry best practice for active playing surfaces in proximity to the river, particularly where depth to the groundwater zone is less than 1 metre, including Lilac Hill Playing Fields. Establish buffers of native vegetation between the waterway and active recreation areas. New sporting grounds are to be located outside of the foreshore reserve.

### *Rehabilitating the River System*

- 5.25 Revegetate riverbanks with native species and undertake succession planting. Encourage the establishment of a minimum 30-metre-wide vegetated riverbank corridor on each side of the channel.

## **CULTURAL AND NATURAL HERITAGE**

### *Conserving the Cultural and Natural Heritage of the River System and its Setting*

- 5.26 Enhance connections to the river foreshore, such as through wayfinding, from the Guildford town centre to acknowledge its historic connection.
- 5.27 Protect places of cultural significance, including sites on the Aboriginal Heritage Places register and the Heritage Council State Register of Heritage Places.

## **DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT**

### *Promoting Sensitive Design and Built Form to Complement the River Landscape*

- 5.28 Do not support private development or subdivision of land within the floodway.
- 5.29 Maintain appropriate built form by:
  - i. Ensuring that development complements the valley landform.
  - ii. Ensuring that development complements the historic landscape qualities of the river at Guildford.

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- iii. Protecting and maintaining the heritage buildings and infrastructure that are important landscape elements of the Swan River, particularly at Guildford, Woodbridge House and Caversham.
- iv. Ensuring that new development is adequately set back from the foreshore so that waterlines and ridgelines are the dominant visual element of the river.
- v. Protecting riverbank vegetation and enhancing the green band of vegetation that abuts the channel.
- vi. Addressing foundation stability within the lot so that it does not contribute to global instability of the riverbank, particularly between the Guildford rail bridge and Success Hill.
- vii. Ensuring construction methods minimise disturbance of slopes, including cut/fill and use of retaining walls. Geotechnical reports may be required to accompany development applications.

5.30 Ensure development is appropriately located, designed, scaled and landscaped and existing vegetation retained to enhance the unique landscape character of the Swan Valley.

*Creating Linkages and Greenways*

5.31 Restore tributaries and drainage lines and promote biodiversity and habitat complexity through planting local native over, middle and understorey species.

5.32 Create ecological linkages along the Swan River, Bennett Brook and Blackadder Creek and between areas of local bushland and the waterway.

*Activating the Foreshores*

5.33 Activation in foreshore areas impacted by the floodway should be temporary, such as pop-up facilities and events with self-contained servicing. Minor community amenities that can be inundated, such as nature-play, picnic facilities and pathways, may be accepted within the floodway.

5.34 Where appropriate, enhance the use of the river for kayaking and canoeing. Jetty design should consider the incorporation of launching or short-term tie-up facilities for kayaks and canoes.

5.35 Enhance passive recreation at existing park nodes by providing public facilities that enhance the community's enjoyment of and connection to the river environment, with a focus on nature-based activities. May consider temporary food trucks/café vans at Success Hill Reserve and Woodbridge Riverside Park.

5.36 Provide opportunities to learn about river ecology, conservation, history and heritage, including through art, interpretation, signage, nature-based play and nature-based tourism.

## ACTION PLAN

Action	Timing (years) 0-2, 2-5, 5+	Key agencies (in addition to DBCA)	Notes
5.37 Undertake infill sewer connection, preferencing lots within 100 metres of a waterway, including along River Street, Bassendean.	5+	WC	Undertake strategically and as part of related proposals
5.38 Undertake long-term planning to increase the provision and width of the foreshore Parks and Recreation reserve in this locality, particularly where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. There is currently no provision of Parks and Recreation reserve;</li> <li>ii. The existing reserve is narrow and constrained;</li> <li>iii. The characteristics of the land or qualities of the area should be reflected;</li> <li>iv. It is currently difficult to provide public access, maintenance access or other public use, such as allowing access at the top of an embankment if other locations are not feasible;</li> <li>v. The natural functions of the river should be accommodated;</li> <li>vi. A buffer should be established between the adjoining land use and waterway, such as a buffer to playing fields, agriculture, horticulture or industrial activities, to minimise sediment, nutrient and organic matter inputs;</li> <li>vii. The existing reserve does not allow establishment of a minimum 30-metre-wide vegetated riverbank corridor;</li> <li>viii. There is remnant vegetation or a Bush Forever area;</li> <li>ix. There is a tributary that connects to the Swan River, such as Bennett Brook and Blackadder Creek;</li> <li>x. There are opportunities to create a natural landscape character between the Swan River and suburban and rural land uses, such as</li> </ul>	5+	CoS, ToB, DPLH	Consider as part of strategic planning

	at Caversham, Bassendean and Eden Hill, and between Reg Bond Park and Reid Highway bridge; and			
	xi. There are freehold lots contained entirely within the FPM 1 in 100 (1%) annual exceedance probability floodway.			
5.39	Incorporate an interpretation node to recognise cultural heritage values at Helena River/Guildford/Success Hill, as identified in <i>Marli Riverpark: An Interpretation Plan for the Swan and Canning Riverpark</i> .	5+	CoS, ToB	To form part of foreshore improvement works in these locations
5.40	Investigate options for establishing a designated trail along the Swan River foreshore, such as expanding the Swan Valley cycle trail or the Swan and Canning Riverpark Iconic Trails Project.	5+	CoS, DPLH, DoT, TWA	Consider as part of strategic planning
5.41	Investigate options for enhanced or additional public kayak/canoe launching facilities or beach river access points.	2-5	CoS	
5.42	Prioritise development and implementation of a program to establish a minimum 30-metre-wide revegetated riverbank corridor using local native species to improve long term environmental and amenity outcomes. The Swan River is a major ecological linkage in the Swan Valley.	2-5	CoS, DPLH	Consider as part of strategic planning or relevant proposals
5.43	Work with landowners to improve land management practices to minimise nutrient and non-nutrient contaminant inputs into the river, with a particular focus on rural pursuits within the FPM 1 in 100 (1%) annual exceedance probability floodway.	5+	CoS, DWER, DPIRD	
5.44	Increase the width of the riparian zone on the lower reaches of Bennett Brook through staged weed removal and revegetation with a diverse mix of native species.	2-5	CoS, DPLH	
5.45	Implement the recommendations of the <i>Tributary Foreshore Assessment: Bennett Brook</i> (DBCA, 2019), including the suggested revegetation species list.	5+	CoS, ToB, DWER, DPLH	

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**CoS** City of Swan

**DBCA** Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

**DoT** Department of Transport

**DPIRD** Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development

**DPLH** Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage

**DWER** Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

**ToB** Town of Bassendean

**TWA** Tourism Western Australia

**WC** Water Corporation