

City of Sydney, Australia

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Winter 2006

'City of Historic Parks'



The city of Sydney is a perfect blend of civilizations and nature which give Sydney its unique character. It's a city where people pursue their careers and cultural interests, but routinely step back from it all to draw upon the environment as a source of relaxation, inspiration and adventure. The number of parks and open spaces within the city's limits help with this interaction.

Sydney Statistics

City Population: 137,758

City Area: 10 square miles

**Density Level: 21.072
people per acre**

Park Acreage: 934

**Park acreage per resi-
dents: 147 people to one
park acre**

**Governing bodies: City of
Sydney**

Landscape Context:

Situated along a deep harbor on the east coast of Australia. The summers are hot/humid and the winters are mild. Sydney has over 340 days of sunshine each year. This creates a perfect atmosphere for outdoor living.

Urban Context:

The city is served by several railway lines and many buses and ferries. Major features of the city include Sydney Harbour, Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Opera House, shopping centers, sport facilities, hospitals and residential developments. All of these elements brings in a diverse population of people.



Sydney Opera House

Fact:

Sydney was originally developed to be a penal colony to house the convicts from England.

Open Space History



Many parks in central downtown have strong ties with local residents.

Three of the biggest parks in this area were all used by the original settlers in the early 1800's

Most parks were originally private estates and had other purposes besides recreation.

Several parks in Sydney are known for their plant collections. The Royal Botanic Gardens in particular is a prime example.

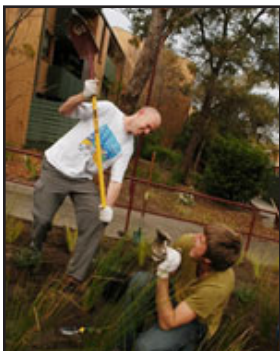


Today there are 248 parks, reserves and open spaces located within the City of Sydney covering 934 acres, roughly 14 % of Sydney's land coverage.

Open Space Goals

Fact:

Between 2004-2005 an estimated 1,127 street trees were planted. Twenty five percent of those trees were native species.



To incorporate parkland settings into the context of a continually evolving city.

To include ecological processes and principles into the parks design and open spaces.

For example with Sydney Olympic Park, city planners wanted to show the rest of the world how to handle a large sporting event with a sensitive ecological manner. This was achievable by constructing wetlands to handle the site runoff and "Green" buildings to house the athletes and officials.

As required by the Local Government Act of 1993, new park redevelopment plans are being made to restore and re-evaluate precious city open space.

Increase total tree canopy through tree plantings and management.

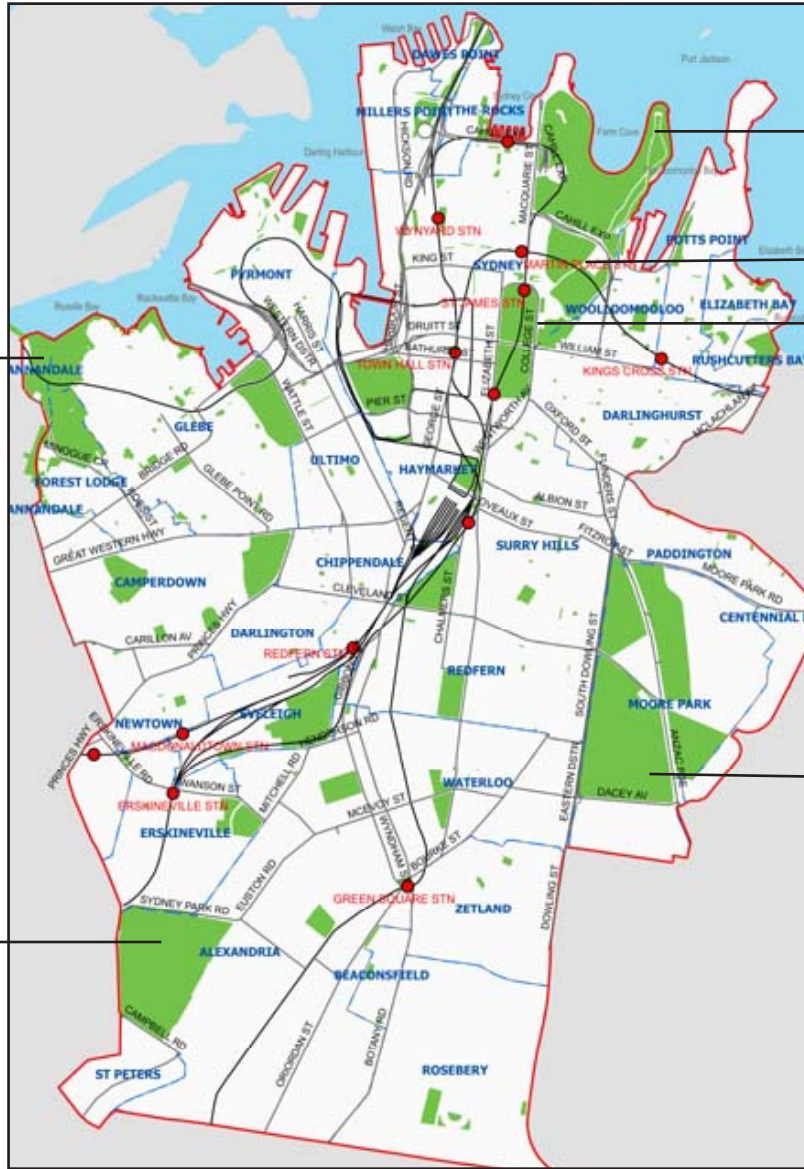
All of these goals are achievable through the neighborhood/city parks, recreation trails, wetland areas and reserves the city owns.

Major Open Space Components

Fact:
In Sydney, 91 per cent of people live within a 5 to 10 minute walk of some kind of open space.

Bicentennial Park (1988)

Sydney Park



Royal Botanic Garden (1831)

The Domain (1830)

Hyde Park (1792)

Centennial Park (1888)

Moore Park (1869)

www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

Neighborhood Parks:
There is an abundance of neighborhood parks throughout the city's limits.

Corridor Parks: There are none currently, but several are now being planned in for the northwest downtown area.

Recent Development:
In 1996-2001 the city grew by 26% thanks in part to the Sydney Olympic Games. Because of this increase in population more parks are being developed.

Funding/ Planning Mechanism

Fact:

Funding by the numbers between 1995-2000:

\$90 million spent on insuring more green space in and around Sydney

\$6 million spent to help councils improve their park plans, through the Metropolitan Green Space Program

\$12 million spent through government partnerships

All of the parks and open spaces planning/maintenance are over seen by an Environment & Heritage Committee.

Open space funding comes from grants, trusts, funding allocations and local governments.

Since 1990, over \$13.5 million has been provided in grants to local government to increase access to and improve the quality of open space in Sydney

The spaces comprising of the Royal Botanic Gardens, The Domain and Centennial Parklands, are managed separately by Trusts established and administered by the NSW Government. All other spaces are maintained by the city of Sydney.

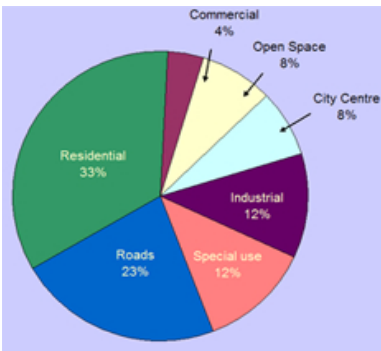
Community Groups: Within the city there are well over 20 advocacy groups that tackle a variety of issues ranging from urban ecology to open space planning. These groups are critical in helping with funding of open space projects.

Issues:

With such a large population boom in the past 10 years, city planners are working hard trying to accomadate more people moving in and because of this, the development of open spaces are being overlooked in some areas.

In early 2003 many community groups were not pleased with how the City of Sydney was developing it land. So a petition was started to fight the cities take on open space planning.

Just recently a new open space ruling was pasted. Council planners have a "generally accepted" ratio for open space of 300 square feet per person. Census data collected in August 2001 shows that the actual ratio at that time was only 150 square feet a person.



Landuse as of June 2004



Photo of a successful promenade along Darling Harbor adjacent to downtown Sydney.

Today in terms of park space the ratio is; city resident to park acre: 147 people to one park acre (296 square feet per person).

Having access to the harbor is another major issue facing the local community, as access to the harbor remains very limited, and the government is selling off the land to commerical developers.

Again through public outcry, the City of Sydney has recently bought a portion of land in the northwest part of downtown (Pymont District) to allow the construction of a waterfront park.

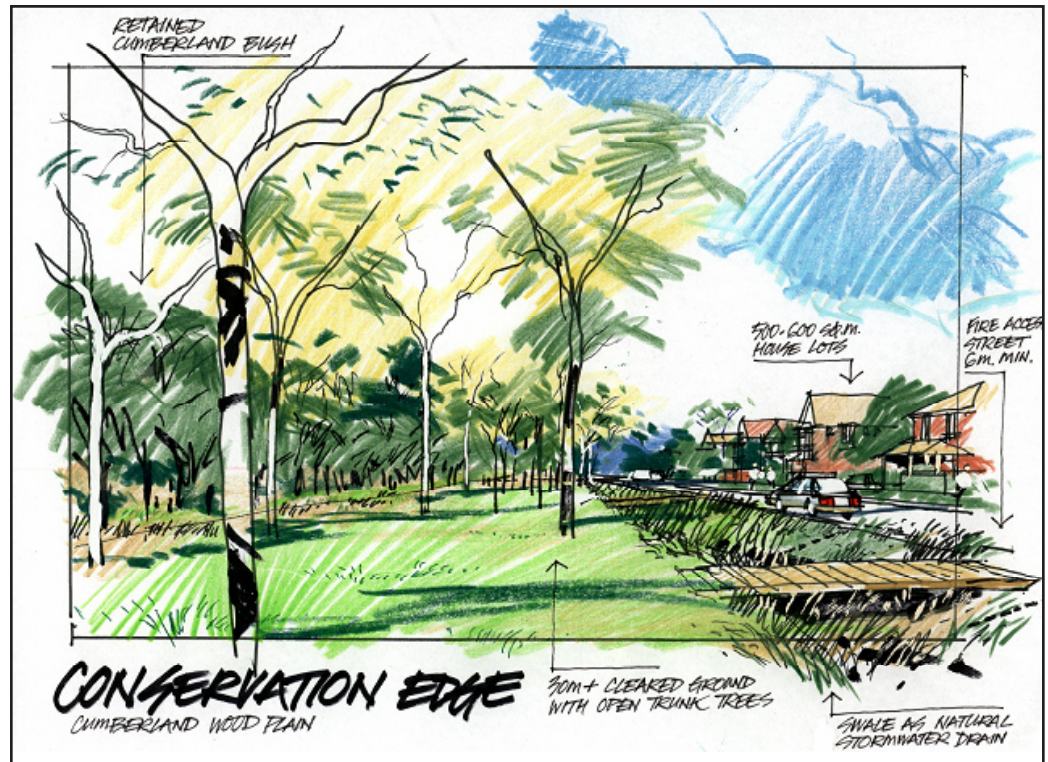
Major Open Space Programs

Fact:
For Sydney's official development plan, the city believes it is important to have consultations with the community in order to make the plan work effectively. This is achievable through public meetings, forums and presentations.

Sydney Spaces Program for the City of Sydney - Over the past decades downtown Sydney was quite of pedestrian traffic. A program was then developed in 1996 to tackle this issue. This plan focuses on enhancing the public domain and protecting the city's heritage.

Open Space Plan of Management - The City of Sydney recently began developing an open space plan for the expanded Local Government Area (LGA). The plan will provide consistent and practical guidelines for the effective short and long term management of Council's entire open space system, which includes more than 400 sites.

Sydney Metropolitan Strategy - To guide growth and change in the Sydney Metropolitan area over the next 30 years. Addresses issues such as transportation, housing, and open space systems.



Sketch from the Sydney Metropolitan Strategy Plan

Lessons Learned



Through community advocacy it show how local residents can have a say in the development of their city and change how open areas are incorporated into an overall plan.

The city recognizes these groups, by setting up cultural grants and sponsorship programs to help with funding.

The city strongly believes that there needs to be diversity of spaces within the city to create an enjoyable living environment for both the local community and even visitors.

The City of Sydney shows that through careful planning and management of parks that they can be successful for well over 200 years.

Resources:

General information on the City of Sydney

www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au

- Environment
- Parks and Open Space
- Community Groups
- Land Use/ City Improvements
- Development
- Community Profile

Advocacy Group

www.pyrmontpoint.net

Open space programs:

Sydney Metropolitan Strategy

www.metrostrategy.nsw.gov.au

Government information

www.parliment.nsw.gov.au