

SC8 Anniversary Trail at Camberwell High School

Abstract

The proposal to close the gap in the Anniversary Trail between Riversdale Road and Prospect Hill Road is strategically important and is a high priority as identified in the Borroondara Bicycle Strategy.

Options exist to complete the gap in the Anniversary Trail through an exchange of land with Camberwell High School via a lease agreement and changes to access arrangements to the western side of the East Camberwell Tennis Club.

The proposals involve redirecting the trail along the western boundary of the East Camberwell Tennis Club and along the western boundary of Camberwell High School for a total distance of 240m to provide a direct off road link.

Preliminary options are included as **Attachment 4** and **Attachment 5**.

One option involves the relocation of the existing car park to the western section of Riversdale Park as shown in **Attachment 4**. The other option involves removal of the car park from Riversdale Park as shown in **Attachment 5**.

This report discusses the background to the proposal and the different options, and seeks approval for community consultation to take place on the options to create the off road shared path.

Following consultation, if the shared path link is pursued, it is intended that external funding is sought for the cost of the project given its strategic importance and link to Victorian Government priorities.

Officers' recommendation

That the Services Special Committee resolve to endorse the options for redirecting the Anniversary Trail (as shown in Attachments 4 and 5 of the report) for the purpose of community consultation.

**Responsible director: Bruce Dobson
Environment & Infrastructure**

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for community consultation on two options to create an off road shared path between Riversdale Road and Prospect Hill Road.

2. Policy implications and relevance to council plan

The Boroondara Bicycle Strategy, adopted in September 2008, identified the need to close the gap in the Anniversary Trail between Prospect Hill Road and Riversdale Road in Camberwell, as a 'high' priority. It is also closely aligned with other key Council strategies including Our Boroondara and the Boroondara Health and Wellbeing Plan.

Balanced and integrated transport solutions that provide choice and equity align with Council's key themes set out in the 2013-17 Council Plan: Sustainable Environment, Enhanced Amenity, and Quality Facilities and Assets to meet our community's future needs.

3. Background

The Anniversary /Outer Circle Trail is an off road shared path that runs north-south for approximately 12km through the centre of Boroondara following the Alamein Railway Line to East Camberwell Station and then along the former Outer Circle Railway Line through to Kew.

The trail is essentially a recreational trail used by cyclists and pedestrians, including a large proportion of children, and carries in the order of 300 cyclists and 500 pedestrians during a typical weekday and 500 cyclists and 700 pedestrians during a typical weekend.

The trail is an off road trail except for a section between Riversdale Park and Prospect Hill Road where users are directed on road along Spencer Road and then Prospect Hill Road for a distance of 330m.

Completing this missing link in the Anniversary Trail is strategically important and has been designated as a 'high' priority within the adopted Boroondara Bicycle Strategy.

Spencer Road is a relatively narrow street at 7.1m which has limited scope for providing dedicated bicycle facilities due to its width and impact on residential parking.

Prospect Hill Road, although wider at 9.5m, carries significantly higher levels of traffic and the intersection of Prospect Hill Road/Spencer Road is an accident blackspot location.

The proposal involves redirecting the trail along the western boundary of the East Camberwell Tennis Club (the tennis club) and along the western boundary of Camberwell High School (the school) for a total distance of 240m to provide a direct off road link.

The existing and proposed route is included as **Attachment 1**.

Completion of this link would improve the level of safety for cyclists and pedestrians by avoiding the on road section and would allow for a continuous 12km off road path. Two bicycle casualty crashes are recorded at the Prospect Hill Road and Spencer Road intersection over the last 5 years (2008-2013 CrashStats).

The proposal was investigated in the late 1990's, however little progress was made at that time. In 2008, Council officers recommenced discussions with both the tennis club and the school.

Early in 2011, the school advised that it was prepared to reconsider the proposal but were interested in leasing a section of land from Council so that there would be no loss of open space to the school.

Officers approached the Victorian Government in 2011 with a view to making the school land available in the interests that the link would provide an area-wide community benefit. This approach was unsuccessful.

Subsequently, officers recommenced discussions with the school on a possible exchange lease of land with the following conditions:

- Exchange lease of land to be on equal value (not necessarily equal area).
- No significant trees to be impacted.
- Land to be used for open space.
- Low fence between Riversdale Park and the leased area to the school.

The school has indicated an interest in an area in the northern pocket of Riversdale Park between the eastern boundary of the tennis club and the existing school boundary. This area of land generally sees little utilisation by the community other than for pedestrian access to the school grounds.

The area for the path and the equivalent area that the school is interested in is included as **Attachment 2**.

The tennis club facilities are on Council land and Council has had a long standing lease with the club. The lease has expired and is currently in overholding.

The leased area to the tennis club is included as **Attachment 3**.

4. Outline of key issues/options

Lease agreement

The shared path would require 1121 sqm of school land to complete and 826 sqm of land adjacent to the tennis club. The school is interested in an equivalent area of 1121 sqm as part of a lease agreement.

Advice received through Property Services on the two parcels of land indicates that given the many similarities of the land including that they are both:

- public use zoned
- similar land areas
- same location
- still irregularly shaped

there will be little difference in value between the parcels of land.

A potential exchange of lease of land for the two parcels would involve a term of 10 years less one day, with an option to renew for a similar term.

School key issues

The school is prepared to consider the proposal and has raised the following issues:

- Loss of open space to the school and the need for an equal exchange of land.
- Risks associated with having a soccer pitch adjacent to the shared path and the treatment of the boundary.
- Fencing to the west side of the school tennis courts.

The school has recently indicated that the land of interest to it would retain much of its grassed area with the inclusion of fitness stations, similar to facilities in Koonung Creek Reserve and H A Smith Reserve. Out of school hours, the land would be accessible for use by the community as is currently the case for the existing school grounds.

Tennis club key issues

The tennis club has raised the following matters with Council officers in discussions regarding the proposal:

- A reduction in the comfort and amenity of patrons accessing courts and for spectators along the western side of the courts. The club currently has sole access to this area.
- Safety at the court entrances with a shared path in place.
- Security of the club and controlling access to courts.
- The need to maintain and potentially improve spectator seating.
- A perceived need for more parking for club users and those visiting the adjacent playground and illegal parking within the park.
- The lack of a rebound wall for training and warming up.
- Fencing between the tennis club building and the shared path.
- The lease with the club would need to be altered in the event that the shared path proceeds.

The club has specifically requested the provision of a rebound wall in lieu of the loss in privacy and amenity resulting from the shared path.

General issues

Other general issues include:

- Safety issues with the existing access road where it currently crosses the shared path.
- Safety issues with the existing access road as it caters for both vehicles and pedestrians and is not wide enough for two way traffic.
- The location of the vehicle access to Riversdale Road which is located directly at the intersection of Riversdale Road and Spencer Road.
- Perceived loss of park space although this is commensurate with the space required to complete the shared path.
- Loss of some vegetation with the proposed trail corridor on the west side of the tennis club (two trees) and within the school grounds (three trees). One ornamental plum tree would also be removed within the possible leased area to the school.
- Approval is required from Yarra Valley Water as there is a sewer easement along the corridor.
- Rear gate access to properties along Spencer Road that currently access school grounds and the tennis club.
- Maintenance of rear fencing and vegetation along the western boundary.
- Mixed use of the path comprising pedestrians including school aged children, bicycle users and tennis club patrons.

Preliminary options

Two preliminary options have been developed that aim to provide a balanced outcome. The options aim to address the issues detailed above including safety at the existing conflict point between the shared path and the access road.

One option involves the relocation of the existing car park to the western section of Riversdale Park as shown in **Attachment 4**. The other option involves removal of the car park from Riversdale Park as shown in **Attachment 5**.

Key features of both options include:

- Results in a commensurate land exchange with the school.
- Provides for a boundary fence and planting that reduces the risk of interaction between soccer activity and cyclists and pedestrians along the shared path.
- Provides a rebound wall facility for use by the tennis club, the school and the community.
- Provides for gated security access to the western side of the tennis courts.
- Provides for additional seating to the western side of the tennis club.
- Creates buffer zones between tennis court entries and the shared path.
- Removes an existing concrete path and provides a new pedestrian path in line with pedestrian desire lines to the eastern side of the tennis club.

- Addresses the pedestrian vehicle safety issues associated with the existing access road, including the access issues at Riversdale Road. The existing access road would be retained for pedestrian use only.
- Addresses safety issues with the existing access road where it crosses the shared path.
- Provides for lighting for the new section of path.

As shown in the two options, a back to back rebound wall facility could potentially be half accommodated within the land area to be exchanged with the school and half accommodated within Riverdale Park. As a result, the school, the tennis club and the community would have access to at least one half of this facility at all times.

Outside school hours, community use of both sides of the rebound wall would be available.

The proposed option in **Attachment 4** involves the relocation of the car park. The following points provide a summary of the arrangement with regard to the change in vehicular access and parking conditions:

- Safety improved at the existing conflict point between the shared path and the access road.
- Safety improved with vehicles removed from the footpath which is currently also used as an access road.
- Retains car parking within close proximity to the tennis club and playground.
- Does not address functional/aesthetic impact of parking within the park.
- Requires small retaining walls at west end to achieve suitable car parking gradients.
- Some visual impact for residents along Spencer Road.
- Some impact on existing trees.
- Cost of relocating the car park.

The proposed option in **Attachment 5** involves the removal of the car park from Riversdale Park. The following points provide a summary of the arrangement with regard to the change in vehicular access and parking conditions:

- Safety improved at the existing conflict point between the shared path and the access road.
- Safety improved with vehicles removed from the footpath which is currently also used as an access road.
- Addresses functional/aesthetic impact of parking within the park.
- No impact on existing trees.
- No visual impact for residents along Spencer Road.
- Cost of removing the car park.
- Parking on Riversdale Road and Spencer Road less convenient for tennis club and playground patrons.
- Some parking impact on Spencer Road and Riversdale Road.
- Possible concerns with tennis club patrons and park users needing to park on Riversdale Road and exit their vehicles on a main road in addition to safety concerns with users walking through the park during the evening.

The car park accommodates 17 parking spaces and vehicles overflow on grass areas during peak times despite parking surveys highlighting a significant level of available on-street parking.

If the car park were to be removed, the practical impact is that tennis club patrons and people that drive to the adjacent playground would need to walk in the order of 130 metres from their vehicles if parked along Riversdale Road. There are 29 spaces on the north side of Riversdale Road and 23 on the south side. Surveys on a typical weekday and Saturday at the peak, have identified approximately 42 available on street parking spaces on both sides of Riversdale Road during the week (24 on the north side abutting the park) and 38 spaces on a Saturday (24 on the north side).

Parking overflow in Spencer Road is also possible and it may be necessary to introduce parking restrictions to regulate and maintain parking availability for residents and their visitors.

The possibility of changes to the car park has been flagged in earlier discussions with the tennis club who are not supportive of this change.

There is a risk that removing the car park would discourage broader park use, including the playground. This has not yet been tested with playground and park users, and could be tested through consultation with the two options being presented to the community for feedback.

5. Consultation/communication

The school and tennis club have been involved in preliminary discussions.

It is intended that both options be presented to the community for comment.

6. Financial and resource implications

Detailed design for the shared path link has not commenced, however the estimated project cost to construct the shared path and additional facilities is in the order of \$400,000 - \$500,000, depending on the option ultimately determined.

It is intended that external funding be pursued as the link is strategically important and closely aligned with other State Government strategies. The State Government through VicRoads has previously expressed an interest in the link.

The lease term for the land exchange with the school would be 10 years less 1 day at which time the lease would be renegotiated.

A new lease would also need to be entered into with the tennis club.

7. Governance issues

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

The officers responsible for this report have no direct or indirect interests requiring disclosure.

8. Social and environmental issues

With the focus on sustainability, completing the missing link in a key pedestrian bicycle trail will be beneficial in encouraging use of walking and cycling, particularly for recreational cyclists and children who are not confident nor wish to ride on the road.

Strategically, completing the missing link will provide a continuous off road path for the benefit of the community extending for a distance of 12 km from Ashburton to Kew.

9. Conclusion

The missing link in the Anniversary Trail is strategically important and is a high priority in Council's Bicycle Strategy and closely aligned with other key Council strategies.

In terms of completing the missing link, a commensurate exchange of land through a lease agreement is required between the school and Council.

Two options have been developed that provide a balanced outcome whilst achieving the objective of completing the gap in the Anniversary Trail. The options include improvements to amenity and adjacent facilities.

Manager: Jim Hondrakis, Traffic and Transport

Report officer: Hywel Rowlands, Strategic Transport Planner, Traffic and Transport

Locality Plan

Attachment 1



Attachment 1



www.boroondara.vic.gov.au

Anniversary Trail at Camberwell High School

Attachment 2



Attachment 2



www.boroondara.vic.gov.au

EAST CAMBERWELL TENNIS CLUB LEASE AREA

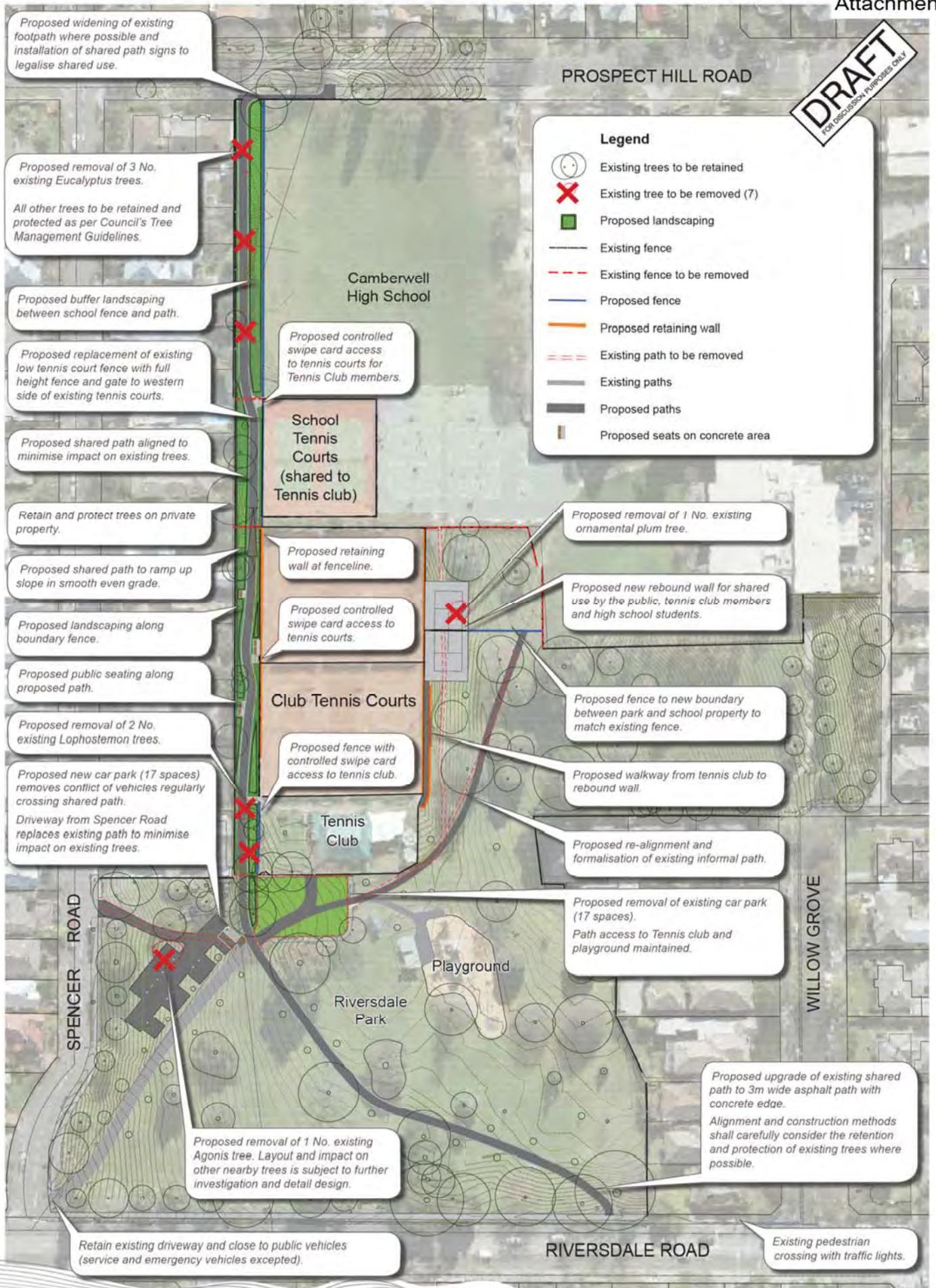
Attachment 3



Attachment 3

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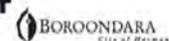
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FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY



Anniversary Trail Gap - Attachment 4

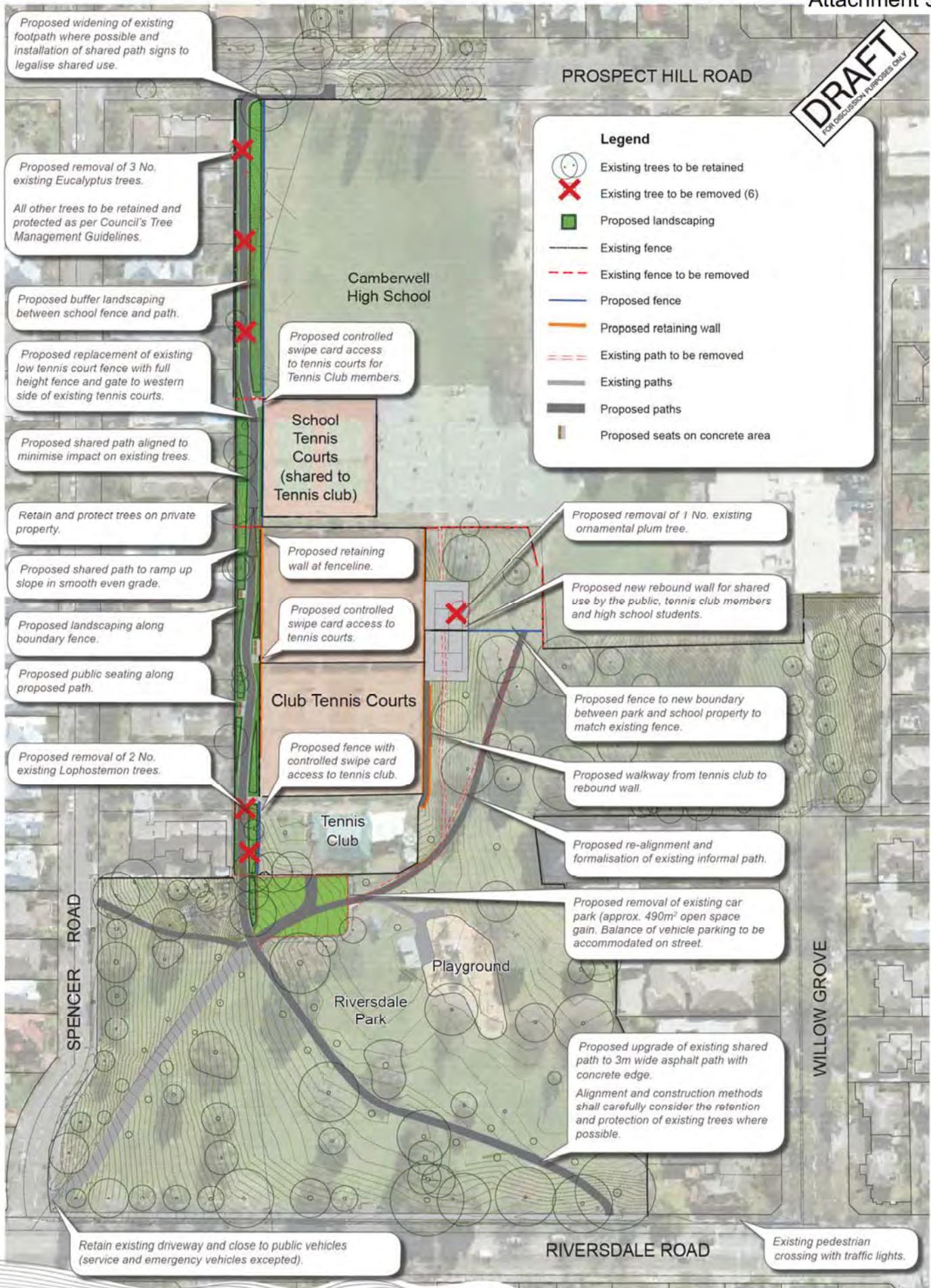
Draft concept plan for proposed shared path and associated works

April 2015



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Anniversary Trail Gap - Attachment 5

Draft concept plan for proposed shared path and associated works

April 2015



Drawing No: 100154-SK- L-55-1