

5.3 Event Infrastructure and Social Amenity

The Ballarat Open Space Strategy classified Victoria Park as a Regional Park however it is currently lacking the facilities and infrastructure to cater for large-scale events. Most of the existing facilities have been provided to service specific local users, such as sports groups, or low volumes of passing visitors and do not have the capability or flexibility required for larger events. There is limited water and power supply throughout the Park, further reducing the Parks' capacity to stage a variety of events.

The southwest corner of the Park is under-utilised, publicly inaccessible and a number of reports have been prepared detailing and assessing proposals for the Ballarat Agricultural and Pastoral Society to relocate the showgrounds to the Park. Community responses to this possibility have been varied and there is a need for more exploration as to how this might be incorporated into a multi-purpose event space for the Park that is available for local community use when not in use for a major event. Issues requiring further resolution include traffic management, fencing and integration with surrounding parkland.

Dog Use

The Ballarat Dog Obedience Club has been operating in Victoria Park, utilising the clubrooms and Oval 6 and 7 surrounds since 1977. During this time the Club has helped to educate over 4000 members in the proper care and control of their dogs and to promote a more responsible dog owning community. The existing clubrooms no longer meet the needs of the Club and are in poor condition. Plans for redevelopment of the clubrooms have been developed but require further development in liaison with the Club before being finalised.

Dog owners have traditionally used the area around Oval 11 and Lake No 2 as a 'dog off leash area' for many years. It is still well used by dog owners to regularly socialise with other dog owners and let their dogs run around off a leash. Unfortunately this has the potential to conflict and cause safety concerns with bike riders using the criterion circuit which adjoins and surrounds this area.

In 2014 all of Victoria Park was designated as a 'dogs off leash' park, with conditions and exemptions identified on signage at all major vehicle entry points. Further public education is still required to ensure responsible dog owners comply with their requirements in designated 'dogs off leash' Ballarat Parks.

The concept of providing a fenced dog park area within Victoria Park was raised during the community consultation process and considered in preparing the Master Plan. Although the concept received limited support, a fenced dog park area could potentially be incorporated into the Events area in the southern part of the Park where support infrastructure could be available, and where the visual impact of the fencing would not impact on the historically significant open parkland areas.

Key Issues:

- Existing facilities do not accommodate large-scale events.
- Lack of water and power supply reduces the Park's capacity to accommodate a variety of events and activities.
- Community concerns about access to designated events space and loss of park space.
- South-west corner of Park is currently degraded, under utilised and inaccessible.
- Facilities need to be improved and provided to a suitable level to service a regional scale park.
- Small scale events such as cycling criterion should be facilitated in such a way that part of the Park can be closed off with minimal disruption to other users.
- Traffic changes for events must be safe for other users and free of conflicts.



Photo of under utilised southwest corner

5.4 Facility Development

Most of the existing publicly accessible facilities are concentrated in the Lakes Precinct and the Sturt Street frontage on the northern boundary of the Park. These include picnic areas with picnic tables, BBQ's and shelters, play equipment, seating, and information signs. The amenities block on Sturt Street houses the only publicly accessible toilets in the Park and there is a need for the provision of more toilets, particularly to service the playing fields, picnic area and lakes further east (toward Eyre St). The existing clubrooms currently service the northeastern sports fields but are only able to be accessed by the three clubs using the building - the Dog Obedience Club, Soccer Club and Lucas Cricket Club.

The running circuit Vic Track is a well used, good quality path surface, however, there is a need for shorter loops to supplement this as the 5km track is too long for less able-bodied users. There is also a need for more frequent directional signage, drinking fountains and seating along this track. In general there is a lack of DDA compliant path connections within the Park (this is addressed in more detail later in this report).

An all abilities playground has been designed and approved for construction on the corner of Sturt Street and Cedar Avenue (west of entrance 3).

The central and southern parts of the Park has very little in the way of facilities (toilets and BBQ's) and this should be addressed through the development of the Master Plan.

Key Issues:

- Minimal co-use of facilities between clubs promotes unnecessary facility duplication.
- Current facilities do not cater for all users.
- There is a need for more toilets that are accessible to the general public.
- More furniture and shelter is required throughout the Park - seating, drinking fountains, BBQ etc.
- Existing clubroom facilities are in poor condition, not accessible to the general public and have poor functionality and amenity.



Existing public toilets on Sturt Street frontage



Existing club rooms



Existing playground and picnic area near lakes



Existing picnic shelter on Sturt Street frontage

5.5 Organised Sports and Clubs

Sports Ovals

The SED report identified the needs of all user groups in relation to current and potential organised sports and recreation within Victoria Park. The existing sports ovals (1-11) are currently primarily used for cricket and soccer by associated clubs and neighbouring schools. South of the clubrooms, ovals 6, 7 and 8 are also used by The Ballarat Dog Obedience Club for their activities. Ovals 12 and 13 are not currently used for regular sporting events.

Stakeholders have identified the poor condition of playing surfaces as a major issue. None of the ovals are currently irrigated. Cycling and walking groups require that paths and road surfaces be improved. The shared clubrooms are not flexible enough to accommodate varied user groups, do not have public toilets and are without female change rooms. Generally the sports activities are spread over a large area with a lack of provision of associated facilities. In addition, the sports fields cannot be utilised to their maximum potential due to both the physical limitations and management issues.

Criterion

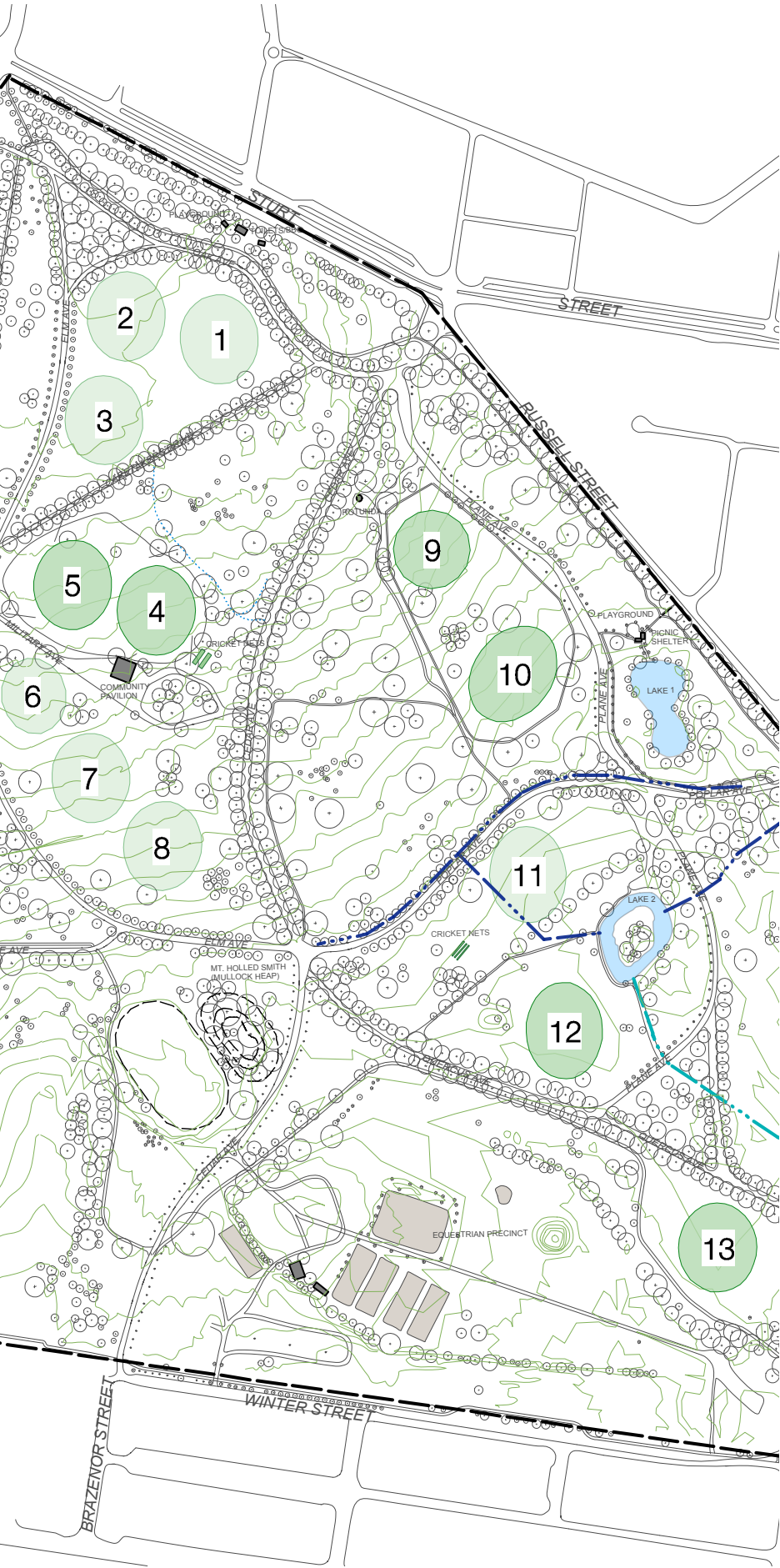
The Ballarat Sebastopol Cycling Club currently utilise a road circuit bordered by Plane Avenue to the west, Quercus Avenue to the south and Poplar Avenue to the north for criterium training and events through summer. Although the course is closed to vehicle traffic during use, it is in poor condition and has the potential to conflict with vehicle use and dog off leash areas adjoining the circuit near Poplar Avenue. There is also a lack of toilet and change facilities near the circuit which inhibits the clubs capacity to grow and promote both junior and women’s programmes.

Alternative sites for a purpose built criterium circuit and associated infrastructure within Ballarat are also currently being investigated. If an alternative site is identified and supported the criterium circuit may no longer be required in Victoria Park in the longer term.

Key Issues:

- Oval surfaces in poor condition and not irrigated.
- Not all of the ovals are in use despite heavy demand.
- Demand for upgrades to cricket and soccer ovals.
- Schools would invest in upgrades to sports ovals and associated facilities.
- Existing sports pavilion does not have female change rooms.
- Existing pavilion toilets are not publicly accessible.
- Cricket nets located in grasslands and near the clubrooms are in poor condition and not well located for practical use.
- Public toilets are required closer to ovals and lakes for practical use.
- Amenities building required closer to Eyre St.
- Criterium course in poor condition and conflicts with do of leash area.
- Poor traffic conditions where criterium course intersects with roads and paths of movement.

Existing Ovals Plans



Existing sportsfield used for cricket



Existing cricket nets near club rooms

5.6 Traffic and Vehicle Management

Sealed Roads

The Park currently has a number of vehicular roads running through it, the majority of which are asphalt sealed. Most of the roads were part of the original park plan and are two way curved avenues with a gravel shoulder and avenue tree plantings, some of which are significant established trees and others which have been more recently replanted. Pine Avenue, Military Drive and the southern extension of Cedar Avenue are more recent additions to the road network.

Unsealed Roads

The section of Plane Avenue between Cedar Ave and Poplar Avenue is unsealed gravel as are the Lake 2 car park and access roads, the car park and loop access at the clubrooms on Military Drive, and smaller loops at the rotunda and opposite Lake 1. The gravel areas lack clearly defined edges and are uneven with potholes and puddles.

Entrances

There are five vehicular entrances to the Park; Gate 1 at Gillies Street and Oak Avenue, Gate 2 at the intersection of Sturt and Russell Streets, Gate 3 at Russell and Eyre St, Gate 4 at Winter St and Cedar Avenue and 5 at Gillies Street and Pine Avenue. Each entry has way-finding signage and gates that are generally open day and night and are used to restrict entry when required for events. There is currently no vehicle access to the south-east and south-west corners of the Park and the Equestrian Area on Winter St is fenced and only accessible to Pony Club users.

Intersections, Traffic Controls & Safety

There are no speed signs or traffic slowing measures within the Park and vehicle speeds within the Park present a safety risk to both pedestrians and drivers. Intersections within the Park are unsigned and there is a lack of delineation between vehicle and pedestrian paths which increases the risk to safety.

Car Parking

Generally there is sufficient car parking opportunities throughout the Park, conveniently located to service the higher use areas such as the active edge along Sturt Street and the clubrooms and sports ovals either side of Military Drive.

In other areas throughout the Park where sufficient parking is not provided, parkland has been co-opted causing significant degradation to the land. Most notable instances of this occur near the rotunda at the parks north, behind the clubrooms at the end of Military Drive and throughout the lakes precinct.

The provision of suitable car parking should be included when considering future works that will encourage greater levels of use. This must be a considered approach which does not jeopardise the Park's character.

Key Issues:

- Unsafe entry / problem points for traffic flow - Gillies / Oak Ave entry (Gate 1), Sturt / Russell St Entry (Gate 2), Gillies St / Pine Avenue Entry (Gate 5).
- Unsafe intersections within Park particularly the central intersection - Oak Ave / Cedar Ave / Elm Ave / Poplar Ave.
- Condition of road surfaces and shoulders in need of improvement, including sealing gravel roads and car parks which are currently very uneven.
- Traffic speeds are a problem and measures to slow traffic need to be undertaken to increase safety of pedestrians and drivers.
- Unrestricted vehicle access to grassed areas needs to be reduced and Council is currently implementing timber post and rail barriers.
- Safer pedestrian crossing points are required and the interface between pedestrians and cars improved.
- Insufficient car parking in areas and vehicle access to the Parks interior.



Roadside marker that has been hit by vehicle

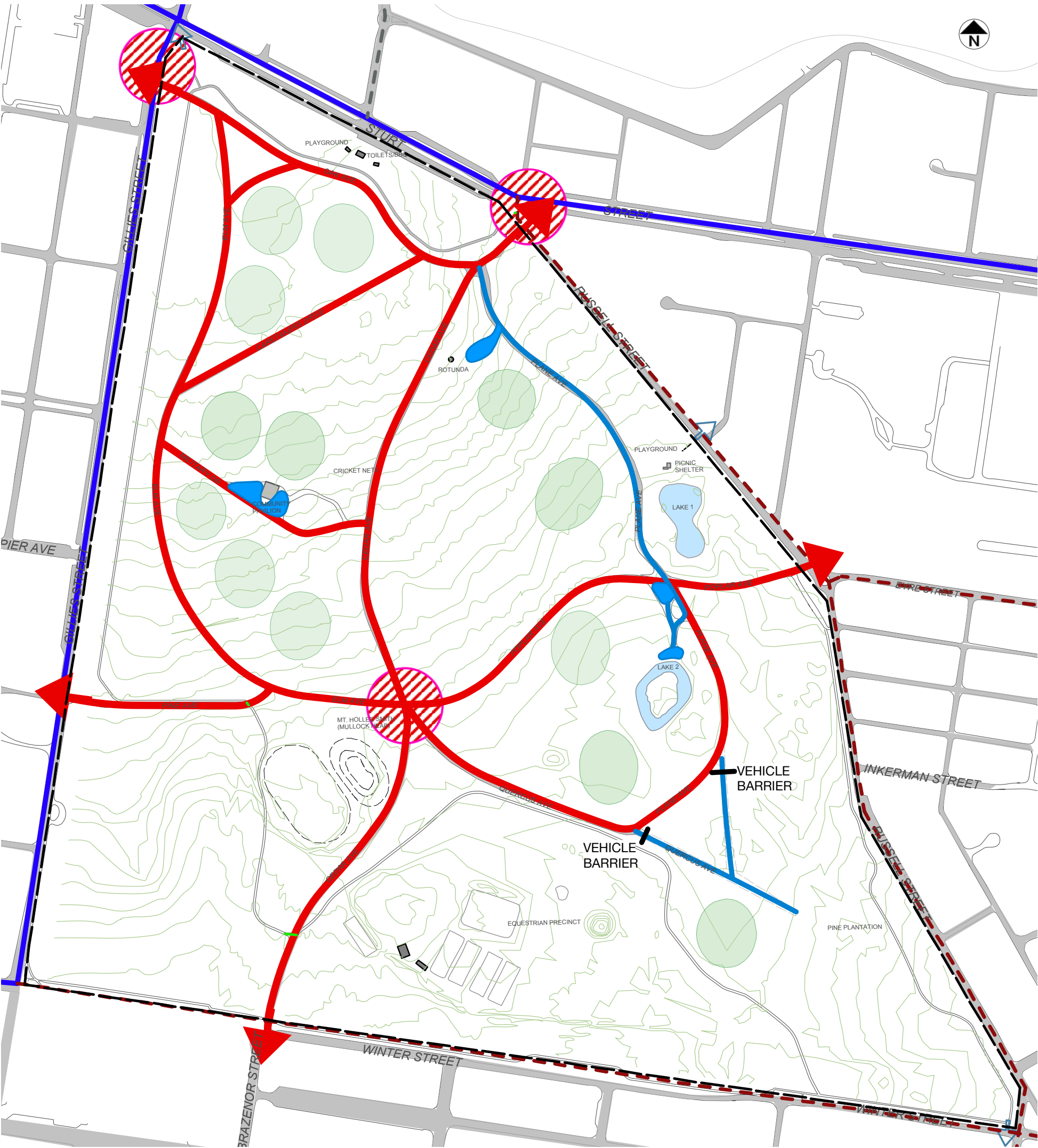


Example of uncontrolled vehicle movement



Unsealed car park

Existing Traffic Conditions Plan



KEY

VEHICLE CIRCULATION

- INTERNAL ROAD - PAVED
- INTERNAL ROAD - GRAVEL
- GRAVEL CAR PARK
- COLLECTOR ROAD
- ARTERIAL ROAD
- PROBLEM INTERSECTION

