

9.2. Mount Compass Recreational Vehicle Park - Development and Management Considerations

Moved Cr Bill Coomans seconded Cr Peter Oliver

That Council:

1. Receive and note the contents of the report titled 'Mount Compass Recreational Vehicle Park - Development and Management Considerations'.
2. Determine not to pursue the development of the Mount Compass RV Park at this time, and reconsider, on a reduced scale and potential adjacent land sale, as part of the Mount Compass Town Plan commencing in 2026.

The mover, Cr Bill Coomans with consent of the seconder, Cr Peter Oliver sought and was granted leave of the meeting to vary the motion:

(Motion as varied)

C377/11/25

That Council:

1. **Receive and note the contents of the report titled 'Mount Compass Recreational Vehicle Park - Development and Management Considerations'.**

2. Determine not to pursue the development of the Mount Compass RV Park at this time, and reconsider on a reduced scale.

CARRIED

9.2. Mount Compass Recreational Vehicle Park - Development and Management Considerations

Decision Report

Responsible Officer: Alan Harvey (General Manager Infrastructure)

Report Author: Shaun Smith (Civil and Traffic Engineer)

Previous Decisions: August 2024 - C24398, May 2025 - C161/05/25 and C162/05/25, September 2025 - C286/09/25

Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is to respond to Council's resolution (C286/09/25) requesting Administration to provide further detail on the process, costs, and considerations associated with Council directly developing and managing a Recreational Vehicle (RV) Park at Sam Court Reserve located at 28 Victor Harbor Road, Mount Compass.

Recommendation

That Council:

- 1. Receive and note the contents of the report titled 'Mount Compass Recreational Vehicle Park - Development and Management Considerations'.**
- 2. Determine not to pursue the development of the Mount Compass RV Park at this time, due to the overall cost of construction and management and competing priorities in the Strategic Delivery Plan 2025-2035.**

Background

As part of a Scoping Study Report that was presented to Council at the 19 August 2024 Council Meeting (C24398), all of Council's main townships were assessed to determine their suitability for RV Parking facilities and for potential RV Friendly Town accreditation.

Based on this report, the site at 28 Sam Court, Mount Compass (Sam Court Reserve) was selected as a potential location for an RV Park. (see Figure 1)



Figure 1: Aerial of Sam Court Reserve

Council resolved as part of the 19 August 2024 meeting (C24398) to undertake Community Engagement regarding the development of RV Parks within the townships which was undertaken from 7-29 November 2024. The detailed Community Engagement Report can be accessed [here](#).

The Community Engagement Outcomes were presented to Council at the meeting held on 19 May 2025 and Council resolved to conduct an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the development and management of an RV Park at Sam Court Reserve in Mount Compass (C162/05/25).

Council undertook an EOI process from 10 July to 8 August 2025 to help identify any business operators or community organisations that may be interested in developing and managing an RV Park at 28 Victor Harbor Road, Mount Compass (adjacent to Sam Court).

Despite targeted engagement and promotion, the EOI process yielded only one submission which was deemed non-conforming due to its reliance on Council funding. Council subsequently resolved in September 2025 not to proceed with the submission and requested Administration to provide a further report on the process, costs and consideration of Council internally developing and managing the RV Park (C286/09/25).

9.2. Mount Compass RV Park Expression of Interest Results

C286/09/25

Moved Cr Bill Coomans seconded Cr Michael Scott

That Council:

1. Receive and note the contents of the report titled 'Mount Compass Recreational Vehicle (RV) Park - Expression of Interest (EOI) Outcomes'.
2. Resolves not proceeding with the non-conforming EOI submission for the management of a RV Park within 28 Victor Harbor Road, Mount Compass adjacent to Sam Court and formally decline the offer.
3. Notes that Administration will provide a further report on the process, costs and consideration of Council developing and managing a RV Park within 28 Victor Harbor Road, Mount Compass adjacent to Sam Court.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Discussion

The development of the proposed RV Park at Sam Court Reserve would follow a structured and staged approach to ensure the site is functional, compliant with planning regulations and aligned with community expectations.

Development Process

Council would need to prepare and submit a Development Application to formalise the change in land use. This application would include site plans and supporting documentation to ensure compliance with planning regulations.

Upon Approval, the first stage of developing the RV Park would involve site preparation, which includes vegetation removal and grading of the site to create a level surface suitable for RV parking. Given the preference for natural surfaces among RV users, the parking area would be grassed but reinforced with mesh to ensure durability during wet conditions and prevent vehicles from becoming bogged.

Following site preparation, essential infrastructure would need to be installed. This includes connecting the site to potable water services to provide clean drinking water for users. Council would also need to install a dump point, which could be installed on-site next to the current toilets and connected into the Mount Compass Community Wastewater Management Scheme (CWMS). However, there would be some caveats associated with that in that the Mount Compass CWMS is at capacity and new connections won't be approved until capacity has been increased which is not expected to occur for 18-24 months.

A signage and wayfinding strategy would also be developed to guide visitors to the RV Park and nearby amenities. This would include directional signage throughout the township and on-site information boards highlighting local businesses, eateries and essential services.

The site would be finalised with the installation of basic amenities such as bins, shelter, picnic tables and potentially BBQ facilities to enhance the visitor experience.

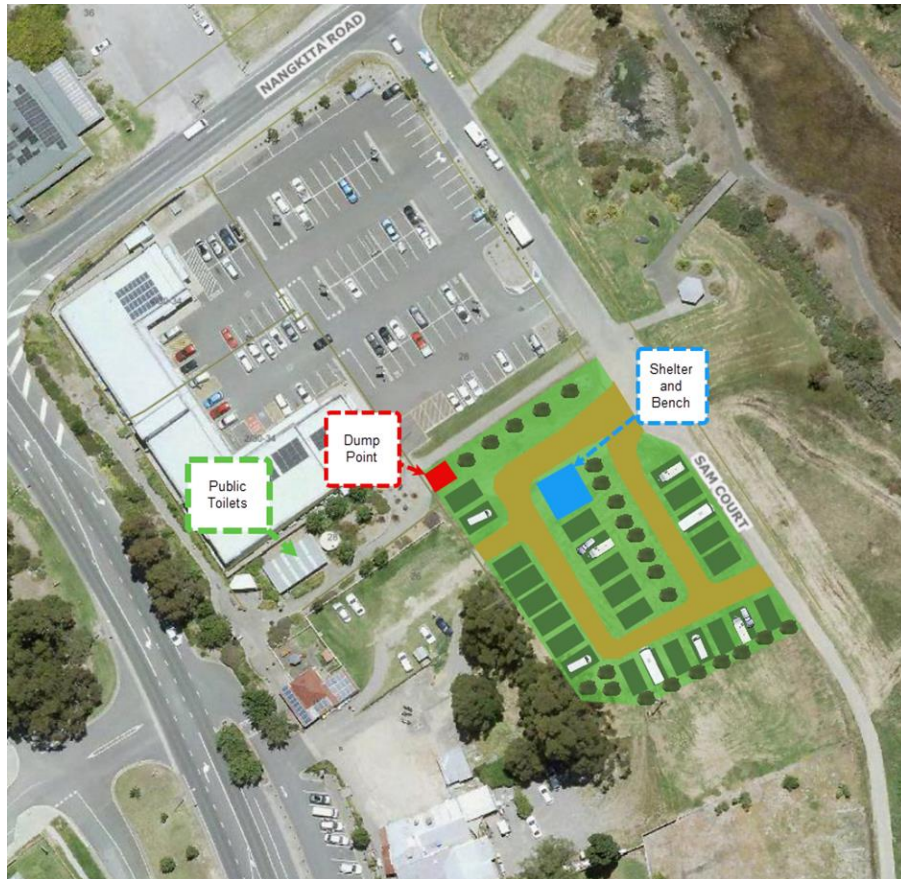


Figure 2: Concept layout for the RV Park

Management Options

Following development of the site, Council will need to determine the preferred management model for the RV Park in which two primary options are available:

1. Free of Charge Model

Users could be permitted to access the RV Park free of charge for short-term stays, typically up to 48 hours. Under this model, the site would operate without a booking system and would function on a first-come, first-served basis. While this approach offers simplicity and aligns with the expectations of many RV travellers, it would result in the highest financial impact to Council. Without any mechanism to recover operational costs, Council would be solely responsible for ongoing maintenance and upkeep. This mirrors the current situation at Frank Potts Reserve in Langhorne Creek, where Council receives no revenue to support the site's maintenance.

2. User Charge Model

If Council chooses to implement a user-pays model for the RV Park, there are two practical options for managing payments. The first option is to administer bookings in-house using an online system. Council currently holds a software licence for the platform 'SpaceToCo', which is well-suited for this purpose. This system would allow users to book their stay in advance, while also enabling Council staff to monitor usage and ensure the site does not exceed capacity on any given day. It provides a streamlined and transparent way to manage occupancy and collect fees.

Alternatively, Council could install a ticketing machine on-site. This would allow visitors to pay upon arrival and receive a printed ticket to display on their vehicle. Staff could then monitor compliance in a manner similar to paid parking arrangements.

A comparable system is in place at the RV Park in Kingston Southeast, where users pay \$20 for a two-night stay via a ticket machine. Those wishing to extend their visit are offered a 30% discount at the nearby Council-owned caravan park upon presentation of their RV Park ticket, encouraging longer stays while supporting local tourism. Noting that in the case of Mount Compass the nearest caravan park is privately owned so any discounting would be at the discretion of the caravan park operators and subject to a form of agreement with Council.

Implementing a user-pays model would enable Council to recover operational costs associated with maintaining the site. Pricing could be set to achieve cost neutrality at a minimum, ensuring the RV Park remains financially sustainable while continuing to provide value to visitors. The initial capital costs to establish the park would need to be borne by Council.

As each model presents different financial and operational implications. Council will need to select the approach that best aligns with its strategic goals, budgetary constraints, and community expectations.

Implementation and Management Costs

The estimated capital implementation costs of setting up an RV Park that could accommodate approximately 20 RVs is outlined below:

Item	Cost
Site Design and Development	\$15,000
Development Approval	\$2,000
Site Preparation and Vegetation Removal (includes removal of 200mm of top soil and replacement material)	\$100,000
Grass Reinforcement, Surfacing and Plantings	\$60,000
Potable Water Connection	\$20,000
Bins, BBQ and Solar Shelter	\$60,000
Signage and Wayfinding	\$3,000
Dump Point Installation	\$25,000
CWMS Headworks Connection Fee	\$50,000
Contingency and Project Management	\$25,000
Total Estimated Cost	\$360,000

This cost estimate reflects the need for extensive site preparation due to the existing boggy ground conditions, which require the removal of a significant portion of topsoil and replacement with suitable rubble fill. The depth of topsoil removal has been conservatively estimated at 200mm, though this would be refined during detailed design if the project proceeds.

If Council were to reduce the scope and size of the RV Park by halving the number of RV spaces to 10 and removing the BBQ and solar shelter amenities, the estimated cost would decrease to approximately \$225,000.

Estimated annual operational management costs:

Item	Cost
Depreciation, maintenance, increased ablutions servicing, waste management, administration, management (i.e. site manager) and monitoring.	\$140,000#
Dump point CWMS service charge	\$5,500*
Total Estimated Cost	\$145,500

#This cost excludes an element of Council labour and consideration would be needed around current resourcing capacity of Council's Field Services, Community Safety and Customer Experience Departments.

*For the dump point, the annual service charge would be applied by Alexandrina Wastewater (AWW) with the wastewater being classified as trade waste and an agreement being required between Council and AWW. If the agreement was breached (e.g. such as through disposal of unapproved materials by third parties), Council may be liable for cost recovery penalties. AWW's involvement would also be limited in that they would not manage the dump point's ongoing operation or respond to issues like blockages. As a result, Council should anticipate additional maintenance costs of approximately \$5,000 per year on top of this service fee.

Example recovery model for annual management cost:

Fee (per night)	No. of sites	Days	Occupancy rate	Income
\$15	30	365	90%	\$147,825

Noting that this only recovers management costs and does not cover interest rates or reduction of the principal value on the capital investment.

According to data taken from the Australian Trade and Investment Commission - Tourism Research Australia website for the year ending December 2024 the average occupancy rate of caravan, camping and cabin sites was 59%.

Budgets and funding

Currently, Council has not allocated funding for the design or development of an RV Park at Sam Court Reserve. Therefore, any decision to proceed with the project would need to be considered a budget adjustment or as part of future budget planning alongside other competing priorities. The *draft A2040 Strategic Delivery Plan 2025-2035* (Item 9.6), which is considered within this same agenda, does not contain a priority action that considers this project. This means that this project has not been considered in any of Council's informing strategies, plans or masterplans.

It should also be noted that if this project were to be completed, the remaining undeveloped land within the parcel would then be considered as a candidate for the land sale program, this would be considered as a separate process to the RV Park development.

Recommendation

Given the cost to set up and run an RV Park, which is also not currently a priority action within the draft Strategic Delivery Plan and has no ongoing funding with the adopted [Long-Term Financial Plan 2025-35](#) (LTFP) , it is recommend that Council does not proceed with this undertaking.

Future consideration

Council will be commencing its Mount Compass Town Plan in 2026, in accordance with the approved [Annual Community Plan 2025-26](#). This project will provide the community with an opportunity to further consider a RV Park within the township.

Financial Implications

In accordance with Alexandrina Council's Adopted Budget and LTFP, the financial implications of adopting this report would be considered low as the recommendation proposes no further action on this initiative.

If Council does choose to proceed with this proposal, then there will be significant impacts on the adopted LTFP and may require the deferral of other Strategic Delivery Plan Priority Actions and current Annual Community Plan projects. This is assessed as being a high financial risk.

Risk Implications

In accordance with Alexandrina Council's Risk Assessment Matrix, the risk of adopting this recommendation is considered Low as the recommendation is for no further action.

Attachments

Nil