Design an Urban Greenspace

We need to focus on building higher density housing within our current urban footprint in order to protect the environment. However, this doesn't mean our cities should be wall-to-wall buildings, with no greenery. Urban greenspaces are a very important part of good urban planning. They support biodiversity as well as human health and wellbeing.

Different types of urban greenspace provide different benefits for people and the environment, but they are all important.

You have been tasked with revitalising an old site into a thriving urban greenspace in Canberra. The site is 30m x 15m (about the size of a basketball court), and is situated in an urban area with a mix of medium and high-density dwellings. At present, it's a dusty piece of land with some patchy introduced grass.

First, choose what kind of greenspace you want to create.

Here are some ideas:

A community veggie garden

An urban micro-forest

A small park with amenities for young families

A native habitat patch

To help with your design, consider the features listed below. Which are important for the type of greenspace you want to create?

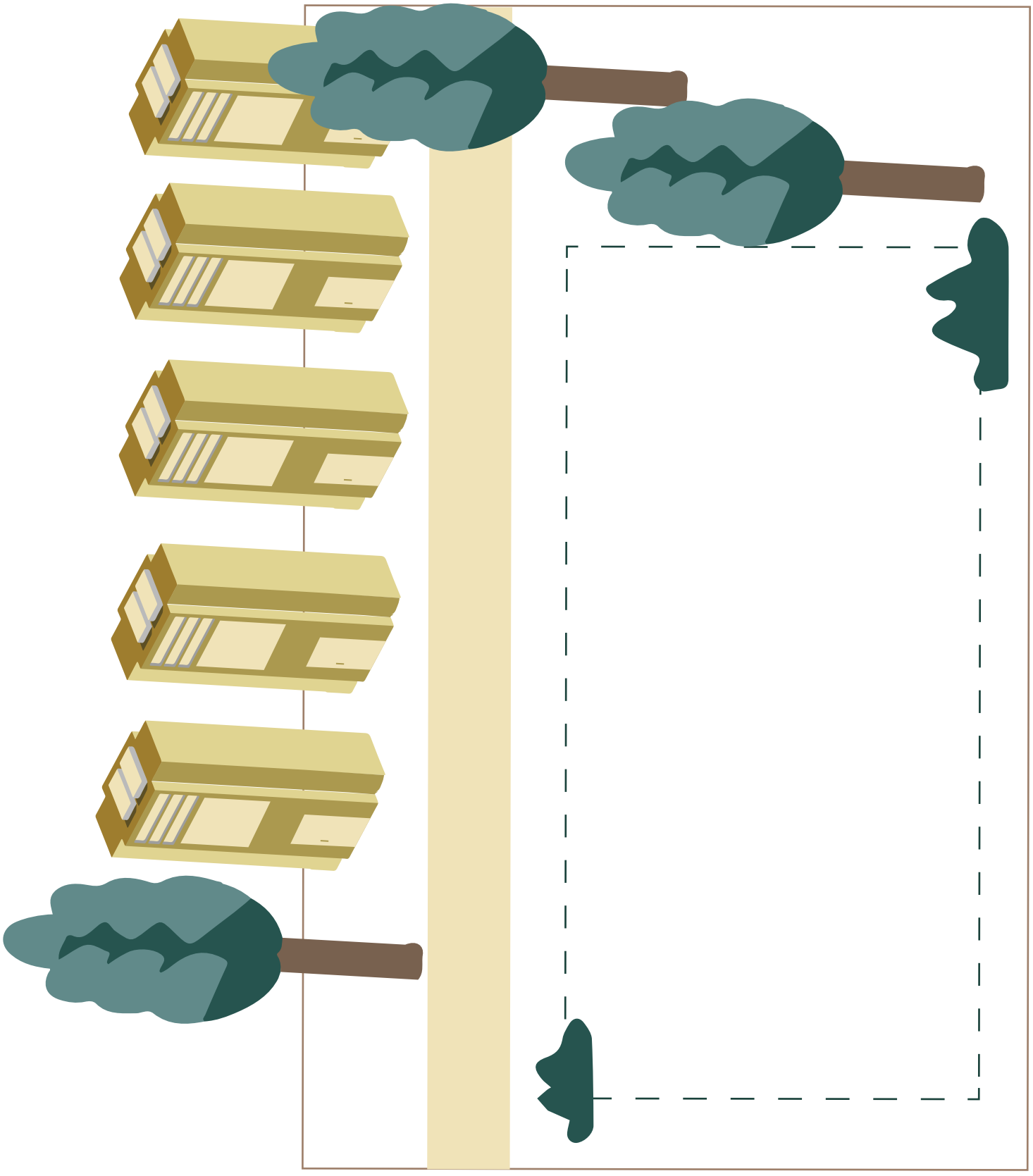
- Urban cooling (e.g. shading, water)
- Habitat for wildlife (e.g. native plants and trees)
- Wildlife corridors (e.g. connected areas of native vegetation)
- Water retention (e.g. ponds and rain gardens)
- Community connection (e.g. picnic areas)
- Opportunities for exercise and play (e.g. playgrounds, walking paths)

You don't need to include them all — for example, a playground may be an important feature of a park for young families, but could detract from the space if its primary purpose is to be a native habitat patch. Think carefully though: can you strategically combine any features to enhance benefits for both people and the environment?

For inspiration, check out this design for the Watson Community Micro-forest:

Source: Edwina Robinson, The Climate Factory

Draw on the template below to create your new greenspace, then answer the questions on the following page.



1. Why did you choose this type of greenspace for the given location?

2. What benefits will your urban greenspace provide for the environment, the community, or both?

3. What are the main things to consider when trying to balance infill development and urban greenspace?