

# Community Facilities Planning Policy

Policy Number:	2016/05	Directorate:	Connected Communities
Approval by:	Council	Responsible Officer:	Manager Community Wellbeing
Approval Date:	22 November 2021	Version Number:	2
Review Date:	22 November 2024		

## 1. Purpose

This Policy outlines Council’s commitment to an integrated, evidence-based planning process for the planning, delivery and management of community facilities. The Community Facilities Planning Process, which is aligned with Council’s Building Asset Management Plan and Service Planning Policy, facilitates a more informed and robust planning process to assess, prioritise and deliver Council’s community facility projects that strengthen the link between asset management and service delivery.

The Policy also outlines Council’s commitment to the consideration of multipurpose use when planning new facilities, or upgrades or changes of use to existing Council facilities.

## 2. Context

Knox City Council owns approximately 258 community facilities, which provide a diverse range of services to the community. Council has a responsibility and a strategic objective to optimise the community benefit from its current and future community facilities.

The provision of community facilities is driven by the goals of the Knox Community and Council Plans. This plan aims to provide infrastructure to meet changing community needs by planning and delivering community facilities and infrastructure, including multi-use hubs.

Many of the community facilities owned by Council were purpose built for specific community services and are now ageing and offer limited flexibility to suit the changing needs of the Knox community. Demand for a diverse and adaptable range of community spaces is growing, driven by population increases and the increasingly diverse needs of ageing and socially and culturally diverse communities. Multipurpose use can address the growing challenge of meeting community expectations and changing needs for community facilities within a constrained financial environment by optimising use of Council facilities.

The Policy links to a number of other Council policies, plans and strategies. It provides an overarching framework to for the development of community facilities. The outcomes of the Community Facility Planning Process set out in 6.4 of this Policy will be informed by these policies, plans and strategies, including the Building Asset Management Plan (the BAMP), Community Access and Equity Implementation Plan, Service Plans, Pavilion Strategy, Master Plans and

any other relevant documents that sets out a strategic position in relation to community facilities. Figure 1 below shows how these documents work together.

Figure 1: Matrix of Council Policies, Strategies and Plans



### 3. Scope

This Policy applies to Council and all Council staff when undertaking planning for a new facility, upgrades to an existing facility, or a change of use of an existing facility.

The scope of this Policy includes, but is not limited to, Council owned facilities including sports pavilions, leisure centres, early years facilities, neighbourhood houses, community centres, community arts centres, senior citizens centres, community meeting spaces, public halls, and community owned facilities on Council land.

### 4. References

#### 4.1 Community & Council Plans – Key Directions

- Opportunity and innovation
- Neighbourhoods, housing and infrastructure
- Natural environment and sustainability
- Connection, resilience and wellbeing
- Civic engagement and integrity

#### 4.2 Relevant Legislation

- Local Government Act 2020
- Planning and Environment Act 1987
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- National Construction Code 2015
- Building Control Act 1981

#### 4.3 Charter of Human Rights

- This Policy has been assessed against and complies with the charter of Human Rights.

#### 4.4 Related Council Policies and Plans

- Election Period Policy
- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Sustainable Building and Infrastructure Policy 2019
- Community Engagement Policy 2021
- Asset Management Policy 2019
- Building Asset Management Plan 2019
- Knox Community Access and Equity Implementation Plan 2017-2022
- Knox Key Life Stages Plan 2017-2021
- Knox Pavilion Strategy 2021
- Public Toilet Implementation Plan 2017-2022
- Knox Open Space Plan 2012- 2022
- Knox Livable Streets Plan 2012-2022
- Knox Arts and Cultural Plan 2012-2022
- Guidelines for Developing Sports Facilities Policy 2019
- Modular Building Review
- Knox Planning Scheme
- Local Structure Plans

#### 4.4 Related Council Procedures

- Capital Works Process and Guidelines

## 5. Definitions

Asset	means a physical item that is owned or controlled by Council, and provides or contributes to the provision of services to the community.
BAMP (Building Asset Management Plan)	means Council’s plan to support evidence-based decision making regarding building lifecycles, using a Place-Asset-Service Framework.
Change of Use	means a use different to the current or former use.
Co-located Facility	means a facility in which two or more service providers are located, usually without integration of services, but involving shared premises and possibly some joint administrative or other services.
Community Facility	means buildings or other assets owned or managed by Council, that support community services or provide community benefit, including health, support services, education, arts and culture, information, community development, employment and training and active and passive recreation opportunities.
Council	means Knox City Council, whether constituted before or after the commencement of this Policy.
Council Staff	means any permanent, part-time, temporary or casual employee of Council; a contractor, agency or labour hire worker who provides services or undertakes work on behalf of Council,. For the purposes of this Policy it also includes a volunteer on a work/student placement with Council.
Integrated Facility	means a facility in which two or more service providers are located (as per co-location), but where services are integrated to provide a coordinated, one-stop-shop approach to service delivery.

Multipurpose Community Facility	means a community facility which provides a range of flexible, functional spaces that support access to services and participation in a range of active and passive lifestyle activities. This Policy uses the term multipurpose community facility as an umbrella term for all types of multipurpose use.
Multipurpose Community Hub	means a collection of facilities clustered together on the same or adjoining sites, which may or may not have interaction between facilities. Together, they create a focal point for community activity. A hub is often a base for outreach services to other smaller facilities and surrounding communities.
New Facility	means a newly obtained or constructed facility.
Place-Service-Asset Framework	means the system of assessing the performance of a facility across a range of areas which are split into three groups: ‘Place’ – the location of a facility, ‘Service’ – the standard of service delivery, and ‘Asset’ – the features of a building or space.
Upgrade	means capital works undertaken to improve the condition and/or functionality of a facility.

## 6. Council Policy

### 6.1 Multipurpose Community Facilities

Multipurpose community facilities offer an opportunity to maximise efficient land use, accessibility and convenience for users to achieve the greatest community benefit.

There are a number of different types of multipurpose facilities, including Multipurpose Community Facilities, Multipurpose Community Hubs, Co-Located Facilities and Integrated Facilities, as defined individually in Section 4 above. For simplicity, this Policy uses the term ‘multipurpose community facilities’ to encompass this range of facility types.

When planning for a new or upgraded facility, including a change of use, the potential for a multipurpose community facility must be considered. The following considerations are key components of successful multipurpose facilities and must be addressed as part of the Community Facility Planning Process for all projects:

- The site is strategically located for maximum community access;
- Aim to meet existing and future community needs;
- Opportunities for co-location, flexible use and/or integrated service provision;
- Provide connection to, and compatibility with, surrounding land uses;
- Provide best value for money in delivering community outcomes;
- Opportunities to house complementary services, functions and/or activities;
- Engagement with internal and external stakeholders to integrate planning and build partnerships; and
- Appropriate and effective governance in place.

The consideration of multipurpose community facilities must form part of a broader assessment of the proposed facility. It is recognised that multipurpose community facilities may not always be the optimum outcome, and discretion exists to allow the benefits of multipurpose use to be balanced against other demonstrated needs, such as user-specific requirements, site constraints or budget considerations.

### 6.2 Building Asset Management Plan

Council’s Building Asset Management Plan (the BAMP) seeks to improve the management of Council’s buildings through implementation and monitoring of specific and measure service levels that document the performance

expectations of buildings. The BAMP provides a set of evidence-based tools, frameworks and methodologies that assist Council staff in the implementation of the Community Facility Planning Process. Methodology in the BAMP that should be considered in the relevant stages of the Community Facility Planning Process include:

- Place-Service-Asset Framework;
- Level of Service Lens;
- Knox Facility Planning Tool;
- Sustainable Investment Scenarios; and
- Asset Hierarchy.

### 6.3 Community Facility Planning Principles

Eight key principles underpin the Community Facility Planning Process. These principles set out desirable outcomes that should be considered during the planning process. The principles represent key organisational values and planning philosophies that support the provision of services to the community.

#### 1. Wellbeing

Community facilities are accessible, enhance community networks and activity, provide connection, strengthen local identity and contribute to self-sufficiency.

#### 2. Equity and Opportunity

Community facilities encourage participation, enhance creativity, activity and healthy lifestyles, support gender equity and the diverse needs of all demographic groups within the community.

#### 3. Economic Benefit

Community facilities are designed to complement local businesses and services. They are affordable, technically and economically viable, provide security of tenure and are managed and operated to minimise duplication and costs.

#### 4. Design and Sustainability

Community facilities are designed to support compatibility multipurpose, flexible spaces, respond to the surrounding social, natural and built environment, contribute to sustainability outcomes, and respect and celebrate the character and identity of local communities.

#### 5. Location

Community facilities are located to service diverse communities, and accessible to widest possible range of community members in convenient and central locations. These locations are to be well served by a range of transport, particularly public transport.

#### 6. Community Safety

Community facilities support the provision of safe and secure community places that enhance quality of life equity, law and order and stability.

#### 7. Partnership and Alliances

Community facilities are supported by collaborative arrangements and partnerships between government, education, industry, private sector and community.

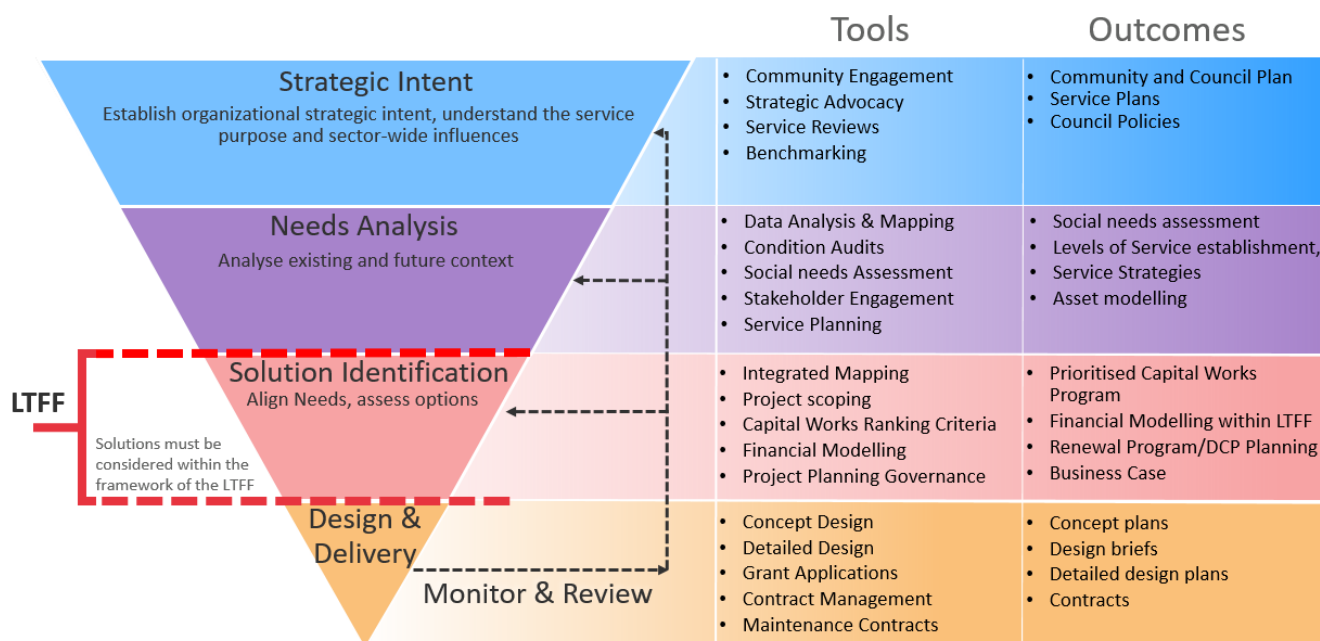
#### 8. Investment

Community facility planning considers a range of investment options, including public and private sector contributions, owning, co-owning, renting or sharing.

## 6.4 Community Facility Planning Process

The Community Facility Planning Process guides the overall method for the planning, development and management of new community facilities and for upgrades and/or a change of use of existing facilities. When reviewing or planning for a community facility, the Community Facility Planning Process, as shown in Figure 2 below, should be undertaken. It consists of five stages and the outcome of each stage will inform all subsequent stages. The potential for multipurpose community facilities must be considered as part of the Community Facility Planning Process (refer to 6.1 of this Policy).

Figure 2: Community Facility Planning Process



### 6.4.1 Stage 1: Strategic Intent

This Stage is about understanding the strategic drivers for the project and the wider influences and context. It should focus on the key influences across Council and in the sector that will impact on and inform the project. It should not be about a predetermined project outcome.

Areas to address include:

- Identify the driver for project, e.g. specific funding opportunity, service review, community request, needs assessment or strategy plan, or local area based plan;
- Identify the key organisational values and strategies that will impact on and inform the project;
- Review asset management planning frameworks and tools as set out in the BAMP;
- Review service planning outcomes to identify any that will impact on and inform the project;
- Establish the boundaries of the project, including what is and isn't included within its scope;
- Identify Council's role in the process, such as land owner, facility providers, service provider, or partner;
- Confirm non-negotiable aspects of the project, such as budget, resources and timing constraints;
- Identify budget (capital, renewal, maintenance or operational) and/or likely funding model, including need for grant applications to be lodged;
- Assign responsibility for each project stage to the relevant department and confirm process for approving progress to the next stage, such as a cross-department working group;
- Seek input relating to community access and equity for everyone, in particular, for including strategic requirements for a diverse range of groups including First Nations populations, multicultural

communities, LGBTIQ+ communities, people with disabilities and their families, parents and carers and their families, and seniors;

- Establish key decision-making points, and who the decision-makers are;
- Establish the applicable hierarchy level; local, municipal or regional, and the impact this will have on future stages;
- Identify what skills are required for each stage of the project and whether these are available in-house, or if external consultants are required;
- Agree on project deliverables and timeframes for each stage and deliverable, e.g. project scope, needs analysis, community engagement plan, development of options, and costings; and
- Identify any other specific issues which will impact on understanding the strategic intent and establishing the project parameters.

The outcome of this Stage is a documented understanding of strategic intent and drivers of the project, including agreed project goals, hierarchy level, deliverables, tasks, budget constraints and delivery timeframes. This will define the project through to its completion and provide a structure for making decisions about the project in future stages.

#### **6.4.2 Stage 2: Needs Analysis**

A Needs Analysis uses research, data analysis and stakeholder consultation to determine what the project needs to deliver to meet existing and future demand. The Needs Analysis is critical to inform the development of options in Stage 3.

Areas for consideration include:

- Policy context
  - Review relevant organisational strategies, policies and plans, plus any external documents that may have a bearing on the project.
- Demand assessment
  - Identify existing and projected user groups, age cohorts and other demand factors, such as First Nations populations, multicultural communities, LGBTIQ+ communities, people with disabilities and their families, parents and carers and their families, and seniors.
  - Develop a gap analysis by comparing existing provision with need to identify where service and infrastructure requires improvement.
- Site/facility audit
  - Undertake a facility audit and/or condition report, including an assessment of fitness for purpose and ease of access for people with disabilities and their families, parents and carers and their families, and seniors.
  - Consider property-related matters such as ownership, management arrangements, planning restrictions, etc.
  - Identify any cultural heritage issues or local cultural elements, such as First Nations heritage or public art linked to the site and/or existing facility.
- Location assessment
  - Consider locational aspects, including accessibility to primary catchment, ease of access by public transport, parking and access to activity centres, open space, pedestrian/cycle networks and other community spaces.
  - Consider community safety issues at the site and surrounding areas, including access to and from the site.
  - Consider connection to, and compatibility with, surrounding land uses.
- Stakeholder consultation
  - Develop a community engagement plan which identifies key internal and external stakeholders and consultation activities.
  - Assess consultation outcomes to help define user needs.

- Review any relevant previous consultation that may inform the assessment.
- Multipurpose use
  - Consider opportunities for multipurpose, co-located or integrated use.
  - Consider opportunities to house complementary services, functions and/or activities.
- Gender impact assessment
  - Undertake a gender impact assessment to comply with and respond to the requirements of the Gender Equality Act 2020

By combining this information, the future demand for the service/facility can be established. The outcomes of this Stage include:

- Understanding the policy context of the service/facility;
- Understanding the population and community profiles which influences demand now and into the future;
- Gap analysis of existing service/facility;
- Audit of service and facility/site;
- Locational assessment of site suitability; and
- Understanding of the needs and priorities of stakeholders.

The demand assessment for the service and facility should reflect all of the above outcomes.

### 6.4.3 Stage 3: Solution Identification

When the needs analysis has been completed, a solution must be identified which balances its outcomes with a range of other factors, including, functional space requirements, financial constraints, governance models and timing.

Some projects, especially larger projects, may require different options and/or concept plans to be developed for consideration. Others may develop one option based on a set of key functional requirements that will determine the detailed design. This Stage may benefit from further stakeholder consultation, particularly with those previously involved in Stage 2.

The development of options should seek to:

- Identify the best location/site options, if this has not been pre-determined;
- Undertake detailed site assessments, including flora and fauna assessments, site surveys service locations, geotechnical assessments, Cultural Heritage Management Plans, preliminary assessment of planning requirements, preliminary authority advice;
- Identify and prioritise key functional requirements (land, facility, floor space, capacity) to meet the outcomes of the needs analysis;
- Identify required service standards, including Green Star accreditation;
- Ensure location requirements (parking provision, public transport access, building/planning permits) can be met;
- Consider opportunities to embed Principles of Safe Design and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design to enhance community safety;
- Assess options for multipurpose use of the proposed spaces, including co-located and/or integrated facility (this may require adjusting the key functional requirements);
- Undertake gender impact assessment for each option;
- Consider opportunities for the preferred option to share programming with other user groups;
- Consider access and equity requirements, particularly in relation to culturally safe spaces for First Nations communities and equity and accessibility for multicultural communities, LGBTIQ+ communities, people with disabilities and their families, parents and carers and their families and seniors;
- Identify management models to suit the facility and service;



- Where alternative options are presented, identify pros and cons of each option in achieving the outcomes of the needs analysis;
- Where a concept plan is developed, explain how the design meets the outcomes and key functional requirements;
- Consider scope for further expansion or conversion of the facility to meet future needs (if required);
- Establish a financial framework to support the delivery of the project, including cost estimates, ongoing running costs, grant opportunities and other external funding sources;
- Examine options for expanding or reducing scope of project to meet funding considerations; and
- Present project for consideration as part of Council's budgetary processes, including ranking against relevant Capital Works Program assessment criteria.

This Stage will result in the development of key functional requirements and identify a preferred facility option and management model. Information should be documented to guide the decision of which option to progress with, and to support and justify the project through Council's Capital Works Budget process.

#### **6.4.4 Stage 4: Design and Delivery**

Information gathered throughout the preceding stages will provide the essential information to support the design and delivery stage.

Designs are often developed by external architectural and urban design consultants, who will be required to work to a project scope to deliver a design that meets the key functional requirements whilst taking into account relevant factors such as site constraints and planning requirements. The following should be considered as part of the design process:

- Alignment with the strategic intent of the project and key functional requirements;
- Optimisation of connections with neighbouring public space;
- Reflecting and contributing to the character and identity of the local community;
- Potential to integrate with adjoining uses;
- Potential for future expansion and/or change of use to meet developing community needs over time;
- Reduce potential impact where there are noise, environmental, land use or other sensitivities;
- Adequate and accessible parking arrangements;
- Opportunities to facilitate cultural expression, including First Nations heritage elements;
- Statutory approvals, including building and planning permit requirements, and the impact these may have on the delivery of the project;
- Compliance with relevant legislation;
- Compliance with Council's Sustainable Buildings Policy, Public Art Policy, Community Access and Equity Implementation Plan and other relevant policies; and
- Application of Principles of Safe Design, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design and Healthy Active by Design principles.

The governance of the facility needs to be considered at this stage to ensure it will be effectively and appropriately managed to achieve intended outcomes and maximise community benefit. Consideration should be given to the following:

- Optimum service delivery model;
- Optimum management model to achieve the desired service delivery;
- Ongoing maintenance and management costs;
- Opportunities to maximise efficiencies where there is integrated service provision;
- Fee structures for facility use;
- Monitoring and assessment of the facility and service provision; and
- Establishing partnerships with relevant external bodies.

The outcomes of Stage 4 are project scopes and specifications, detailed design, budgetary approvals, establishment of a management model, facility constructions, and the commencement of service delivery.

#### **6.4.5 Stage 5: Monitor and Review**

Following the commencement of service delivery, this Stage will assess operation and usage to ensure the facility has met the needs identified in the initial stages, that service provider and user expectations are being met, and identify any key learnings as a result of the process. The level of monitoring and review should be aligned with the scale of development. Developments with more complex management structures should be considered for ongoing reviews over a longer period of time, while simpler projects and services may only require a one-off review. Monitoring and review should be carried out by designated officers in the project working group in consultation with stakeholders, and include the following:

- Assess utilisation, user satisfaction and operational benchmarks against agreed performance standards to ascertain if expectations are being met;
- Analyse cost effectiveness of the delivery method;
- Review the planning process, including whether the outcomes of each stage of the Community Facilities Planning Process were taken into account;
- Alignment with the BAMP;
- Analyse whether the project resulted in any increase in multipurpose use or opportunities for future multipurpose use; and
- Identify key learnings that could inform future Council community facility planning processes.

#### **6.4.6 Resources and Tools**

There are a range of resources which can be used to support and inform the stages of the Community Facility Planning Process. These include internal Council documents as well as State Government plans, legislation, and building standards. The Policies, Strategies and Tools Resource List at Attachment 1 provides a list of resources that can be used to inform the outcomes of each stage.

## **7. Administrative Updates**

From time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this Policy. Where an update does not materially alter this policy, such a change may be made administratively. Examples of minor administrative changes include changes to names of Council departments or positions, change to names of Federal or State Government departments or a minor amendment to legislation that does not have material impact. Where any change or update may materially change the intent of this policy, it must be considered by Council.

## Attachment 1: Policies, Strategies and Tools Resource List

Area	Policy/Strategy	Applicable Stage				
Organisational and Governance	Knox Vision	1	2	3		
	Knox Community and Council Plan	1	2	3		
	Knox Key Life Stages Plan	1	2	3		
	Knox Planning Scheme	1	2	3		
	Community Engagement Policy	1	2	3		
State/Federal Government	Plan Melbourne 2013		2			
	State Government policies/regulations		2			
	Australian Standards		2			
	Building/Planning Requirements		2			
Issue and Service	Community Facilities Planning Policy	1	2	3	4	5
	Community Access and Equity Implementation Plan	1	2	3	4	5
	Service Plans	1	2	3	4	
	Open Space Plan	1	2	3	4	
	Play Space Plan	1	2	3	4	
	Pavilion Strategy	1	2	3	4	
	Guidelines for Developing Sports Facilities	1	2	3	4	
	Modular Building Review	1	2	3	4	
	Arts and Cultural Plan	1	2	3	4	
	Public Art Policy	1	2	3	4	
	Climate Response Plan (draft)	1	2	3		
	Tennis Facilities Strategic Plan Report	1	2	3		
	Healthy Ageing Profile	1	2	3		
	Knox Housing Strategy	1	2	3		
	Bridge Asset Management Plan	1	2	3		
	Carpark Asset Management Plan	1	2	3		
	Drainage Asset Management Plan	1	2	3		
	Playground Asset Management Plan	1	2	3		
	Road Asset Management Plan	1	2	3		
	Public Toilet Implementation Plan	1	2	3		
Integrated Transport Plan	1	2	3			
Knox Urban Design Framework	1	2	3			
Area Based	Feasibility Studies (place based)	1	2	3		
	Structure Plans	1	2	3		
	Master Plans	1	2	3		
	Liveable Streets Plan	1	2	3		
Facility Based	Building Asset Management Plan	1	2	3	4	5
	Graffiti Management Policy				4	
	Sustainable Buildings Policy		2		4	
	Feasibility Studies (facility based)		2	3		
	Facility audits and condition reports		2			
	Council Facility Advocate	1	2	3	4	5
	Occupancy Agreement	1	2			5

Other	Other Council/Agency reports	1			
	Regional reports	1			
	Legislation and Regulations	1	2	3	4
	Property titles		2		
	Funding guidelines	1	2	3	
	Capital works guidelines and ranking criteria			3	
	Healthy Active by Design			3	4
	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design			3	4
	Building Code of Australia	1	2	3	4
Data Sources	Facility utilisation		2		
	GIS/Social mapping		2		
	Demographics/community profiles		2		

## Tools

## Examples

### Socio-Economic and Community

[Community Profile \(.id\)](#)

[Social Atlas \(.id\)](#)

[Population Forecast \(.id\)](#)

[Housing Monitor \(.id\)](#)

[Economic Profile \(.id\)](#)

[Economy, Jobs and Business Insights \(Remplan\)](#)

### Mapping

[GIS](#)