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New swim spots for Parramatta River

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Swimmers will be able to take a dip at three more spots along the Parramatta River under a plan to boost the waterway's health and protect it from surging residential development in Sydney's west.

But bathers face a wait of more than six years before they can swim at riverside areas marked for upgrades at Bayview Park in Concord, McIlwaine Park at Rhodes East and Putney Park.

The ambition to open the proposed sites by 2025 was outlined in the Parramatta River Masterplan, released yesterday.

The locations would join existing swimming spots along the river at Cabarita Park beach, Chiswick Baths, Dawn Fraser Baths in Balmain and Lake Parramatta.

"It's a plan to have the water quality in the Parramatta River so good, you can swim in it," Parramatta River Catchment Group chairman, Mark Drury, said.

Nine other sites will be considered as future swimming spots.

The idea was inspired by over-

seas river projects, including the Copenhagen Harbour Baths and the Badeschiff floating public pool on Berlin's Spree River.

Parramatta River's catchment area is home to about 750,000 people and is covered by 11 local councils, all of which have backed the plan with the state government.

High-density housing across the catchment was predicted to jump 64 per cent in six years, alongside a 58 per cent rise in medium-density housing, the report said.

Western Sydney University water quality expert Ian Wright said the river was still "really sick".

"It's got a whole lot of legacy and current problems. I'd give the river a six out of 10," he said.

He said chemicals from the area's industrial past were "like the ghosts of the river", while "massive" development meant sewage bacteria was a problem.

The plan is open for public consultation until November.