

ITEM 7. PLAN OF MANAGEMENT SYDNEY PARK 2014 – ADOPTION**FILE NO: S118237****SUMMARY**

On 9 December 2013, Council resolved to publicly exhibit a new plan of management for Sydney Park, the City's largest and regionally significant park, covering 41.6 hectares of community classified land, which outlines how Sydney Park will be used, managed and improved in the future (refer to Attachments A and B).

The Sydney Park draft Plan of Management (draft plan) reflects the City's 2006 Master Plan for Sydney Park, and related individual master plans. The draft plan provides a framework to further the Park's status through partnerships, projects and management to strengthen recreational amenity, reinforce cultural significance, encourage social diversity and support environmental leadership.

It aligns land management objectives (land categorisation) to precincts within the park to enable future roles for the park such as childcare, youth orientated recreation including a skating concept and lifelong learning.

The draft plan identifies significant opportunities within specific "focus" areas around the park. The unique attributes of these focus areas will be further explored and conceptually developed in a way that builds on the principles of sustainability, biodiversity, accessibility, recreational quality and lifelong learning.

The draft plan was exhibited and available for comment for 47 days, which was longer than the statutory 42 days. The public exhibition draft plan was widely notified to local residents, park users and other stakeholders, and generated 52 written submissions at its close on 7 March 2014. A community information session with senior staff and independently chaired public hearing held at Sydney Park was well attended.

The exhibited draft plan proposes amendments to the categorisation of community land adopted in the 2003 Plan of Management (the current plan). An independently chaired public hearing held during the draft plan's exhibition period informed the City's reasoning in its determination to propose the recategorisations, received questions and comments, and detailed the process for making submissions on the recategorisations.

The report prepared by the independent chair of the public hearing examines the submissions on recategorisations, considers objections to the recategorisations, and makes recommendations (refer to Attachment C).

This report considers all other submissions received on the exhibited draft plan and recommends endorsement of amendments to the draft plan in response to these submissions (refer to Attachment D).

This report recommends adoption of the draft plan of management, updated and amended to include all the recommendations from the independent report on recategorisations and recommendations arising from submissions received on the draft plan during the public exhibition (refer to Attachment E).

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council endorse the recommendations within the independent report by Parkland Planners, as shown at Attachment C to the subject report;
- (B) Council endorse the recommended amendments to the Sydney Park draft Plan of Management 2014 arising from submissions to the public exhibition of the plan, as shown at Attachment D to the subject report;
- (C) Council endorse the recategorisation of community land in the publicly exhibited draft plan of management as resolved for exhibition by Council on 9 December 2013, and shown in Attachment B to the subject report, on the basis that in each case the proposed category is suitable for the current and future permitted uses and allows for flexibility in delivery of services benefitting the community;
- (D) Council endorse the proposed amendments to the Sydney Park draft Plan of Management, which include the recommendations in clauses (A), (B) and (C) above and adopt the plan, as shown at Attachment E to the subject report, as the Sydney Park Plan of Management 2014; and
- (E) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make any minor amendments to the Sydney Park Plan of Management 2014 as adopted in Attachment E to the subject report to correct any drafting errors.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Resolution of Council – 9 December 2013

Attachment B: Information Relevant to Item 7.4 – Draft Plan of Management - Sydney Park – at Council 9 December 2013

Attachment C: Independent report – Parkland Planners

Attachment D: Schedule of submissions and proposed amendments

Attachment E: Amended Sydney Park draft Plan of Management 2014 (with amendments highlighted in red)

BACKGROUND

1. The current plan of management for Sydney Park was adopted in 2003 as an amendment updating the 1982 plan of management and a review of the master plan (1989) that initially guided development of the whole Park.
2. In 2004, ownership of Sydney Park was transferred to the City of Sydney through the amalgamation of the former South Sydney City Council and, by mid-2005, much of the vision detailed in the 1989 master plan had largely been implemented.
3. Building upon the foundations of these previous plans, the City embarked on extensive community consultation to develop a new master plan founded on environmentally sustainable principles that would guide the park's maturity.
4. The City has made significant progress implementing projects scoped in its 2006 Master Plan, with further refinement through the City's Strategic 2030 objectives, individual concepts and master plans, including Sydney's largest stormwater harvesting system to create a sustainable water supply for Sydney Park and ensure the wetlands maintain a healthy ecosystem.
5. To reflect the park's current status and direct further growth, Council endorsed the public exhibition of the Sydney Park draft Plan of Management 2014 (draft plan) on 9 December 2013.
6. The draft plan provides a clear and transparent framework guiding the management of the City's largest park as a place of:
 - (a) protected cultural heritage;
 - (b) expanded recreation opportunities;
 - (c) strengthened environmental sustainability and ecology;
 - (d) increased community and cultural activity; and
 - (e) lifelong learning.
7. The draft plan gives objectives, details the City's actions to achieve these objectives and sets out the means to measure its performance in implementing the actions. It aligns with objectives of the City's Community Strategic Plan 2013 and values underpinning these objectives.
8. The draft plan identifies four areas within the park that will play an important part in further developing the park's roles in cultural heritage, lifelong learning, sustainability and biodiversity.
9. The focus areas are the:
 - (a) Brick Kilns (Bedford Brickworks) Precinct;
 - (b) Sydney Park Cycle Centre, children's bike circuit and adjoining carpark;
 - (c) Former Sandstone Depot and surrounds; and
 - (d) Barwon Park Road Depot and Nursery plus Southern Grassland.

Land Management Categories

10. Whilst the draft plan largely retains the land categories adopted in 2003 and the majority of Sydney Park is categorised as park, there were several changes proposed:
 - (a) The draft plan categorises the Brick Kilns precinct of Sydney Park as an area of cultural significance. The City is repairing the kilns to ensure this rare brickworks site is maintained and conserved for generations to come. Brick arch specialists are developing a comprehensive repairs and maintenance program for the kilns. This will help the entry and drainage of water in the brickworks and surrounding site. These works will ensure this cultural landmark is stabilised and maintained, with potential opportunities for adaptive re-use in the future.
 - (b) The draft plan proposes to extend the coverage of the general community use categorisation applied to the Sydney Park Cycling Centre and children's bicycle track to encompass the northern car park.
 - (c) Whilst the car park is an important supportive facility for the park, it may be reconfigured or modified in response to future concept plans for the childcare and City Farm to ensure a good relationship to parking and set down, with minimal impact on the park. The recategorisation of the car park and area along the southern edge of the car park as General Community Use provides greater flexibility for future configurations.
 - (d) The 2003 current plan of management applied the 'Park' category to the City's depot and nursery and the former sandstone depot along Euston Road, currently used by the City for storage. In both cases it is proposed to amend this land management category to 'General Community Use', which more suitably aligns with their respective intended functions.

Land Management - Contamination

11. The park's legacy contamination issues require ongoing management. The City is currently implementing a Leachate Management Action Plan, which will guide management of leachate into the future, including renewal of treatment systems. In its first phase, the site is currently undergoing extensive testing to develop a conceptual model to identify leachate generation and a migration pathway currently impacting the former sandstone depot along Euston Road. The future development of the Former Sandstone Depot at Euston Road, currently the site for the treatment plant, will be contingent on this Action Plan.

Cycling

12. Sydney Park forms part of a wider network of routes that connect people with home, work and recreation destinations. The park as a whole is used as a recreation cycling facility, particularly for families. For small children, the bike play track provides an opportunity to build confidence, cycling in a social setting. The park also hosts the Sydney Cycling Centre, which provides an array of cycling courses to all ages and abilities. The draft plan retains these roles and identifies opportunity to expand and improve facilities that can serve multiple learning objectives.

Childcare

13. The City has identified two suitable locations in the draft plan for a childcare facility in Sydney Park and this will be the subject of further scoping and community consultation. The draft plan supports an integrated approach to childcare facilities within the park, co-located with other facilities or programs to strengthen learning and recreation opportunities.
14. Any facility will be designed to complement other facilities and be sympathetic to the landscape, amenity, users and neighbours of Sydney Park. The community will be consulted as part of the design and approval process for any childcare centre.

City Farm

15. The City Farm is a community vision to promote the role of agriculture and sustainable farming practices in urban communities. With a focus on sustainability, urban ecology and biodiversity, the draft plan leverages opportunities to integrate the core functions of a City Farm into the park to strengthen the park's core values.
16. The City Farm concept at Sydney Park could include an organic farmers' market, a cropping area, orchard; and facilities to support sustainability workshops and educational programs.
17. The development of a business case for the City Farm concept, including the establishment costs, operational management framework and on-going financial commitments, is recognised as the next step for this program. The business case is key to informing the development and implementation of City Farm and will be the subject of a future report to Council.

PUBLIC EXHIBITION

18. The communications strategy was to ensure maximum exposure of the draft plan to reach all users and interest groups including, and supported by:
 - (a) a notification letter of the public exhibition, information session and public hearing to 9,300 addresses across Erskineville, Newtown and Marrickville;
 - (b) a public exhibition page on the City's website;
 - (c) hard copies of the draft plan at the City's Neighbourhood Service Centres;
 - (d) public notices in The Sydney Morning Herald on 21 January 2014 and Sydney Your Say advert in the Inner West Courier on 5 February 2014;
 - (e) signage in prominent locations around the park;
 - (f) direct stakeholders email notifications; and
 - (g) a community information session.
19. The draft plan was publicly exhibited for 47 days commencing on 20 January 2014 and closing on 7 March 2014.

20. A community information session was held at the Sydney Park Pavilion (rear of Alan Davidson Oval) on 12 February 2014, providing an opportunity for the community to:
- (a) ask questions about the draft plan of management, the park's values, roles and objectives, management precincts and focus areas, together with the City's actions to implement its objectives;
 - (b) review the community consultation that has been undertaken for projects including the City Farm, urban ecology and stormwater harvesting and re-use;
 - (c) discuss with senior staff the City's progress over the last 10 years and the influence Sustainable Sydney 2030 has had on major current projects; and
 - (d) learn more about future proposals for managing the park's legacy issues such as leachate management, the stabilisation of the Bedford Brickworks Area and the City's commitment to lifelong learning through City Farm, childcare and urban ecology.
21. The communications plan resulted in:
- (a) 52 attendees at the information session;
 - (b) 34 attendees at the public hearing on the proposed recategorisation;
 - (c) 52 submissions on the draft plan; and
 - (d) 843 visits to 'The Sydney Your Say' site with 85 downloads of the draft plan and 12 submissions through the Sydney Your Say site.

PUBLIC EXHIBITION FEEDBACK

22. The response to the draft plan was generally in support of the City's actions to pursue the principal objectives for Sydney Park.
23. Of the 52 submissions, there were 88 individual responses with 'Cycling' the most frequently raised issue, receiving 15 responses or a 17 per cent share. This was followed by 'City Farm' with 14 responses and 'Facilities' with 13 responses.
24. The key issues raised include:
- (a) provision of dedicated cycling paths;
 - (b) introduction of a water play area for dogs;
 - (c) increased barbecue/picnic areas;
 - (d) establishing bike hire facilities;
 - (e) improving pedestrian accessibility into the park; and
 - (f) identification of ongoing or outstanding maintenance issues.

25. There was a high level of support for:
 - (a) the City Farm;
 - (b) the City's recognition of the 'Brick Kilns' precinct cultural contribution and future use;
 - (c) skate/BMX facilities; and
 - (d) proposed recategorisation of some community land.
26. There was a high level of understanding of the City's strategies to facilitate its objectives, such as childcare and the City Farm, and the requirement for flexibility to meet these needs and mitigate legacy issues and topographical challenges to provide functional facilities with quality amenity.
27. A number of submissions focused on correcting factual statements, or challenging the City's view/assessment, for example, the City's condition quality rating of facilities/structures.
28. Submissions on the proposed recategorisation of community land are addressed and detailed independently through the report prepared by Parkland Planners (refer to Attachment C).
29. All other submissions are categorised in Attachment D to this report and include the City's response to the submission and as are relevant to the draft plan of management recommends amendments for endorsement. For clarity, the recommendations in Attachment D are incorporated into the Amended Sydney Park draft Plan of Management 2014 at Attachment E (with all amendments highlighted in red).

PUBLIC HEARING – AMENDMENT TO CATEGORISATION OF COMMUNITY LAND

30. The exhibited draft plan proposes amendments to the categorisation of specific areas of community land adopted in the 2003 Plan of Management (the current plan).
31. An independently chaired public hearing held during the draft plan's exhibition period informed the City's reasoning in its determination to propose the recategorisations, received questions and comments and detailed the process for making submissions on the recategorisations.
32. The public hearing was presided over by Sandy Hoy, Principal of Parkland Planners, and attended by 34 people.
33. Submissions received, both verbal and written, are largely supportive of the draft plan of management's proposed amendments to the adopted categorisation. Most submissions sought additional clarity on proposed uses and alignment to the objectives of a category.

Objections to recategorisation

34. Two submissions objected to the recategorisation of community land.
35. The first submission objected to the re-categorisation of the former depot on Euston Road from 'Park' to 'General Community Use'.

36. Parkland Planners' conclusion:
- (a) The former Council Depot/Stone Yard on Euston Road is no longer used as an active depot for cutting and storing sandstone. The key features of the site are hardstand, industrial plant (water treatment) and warehousing. The buildings are currently partially occupied by the City of Sydney for storage and by a not-for-profit tenant holding over from a short term occupation. Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) has acquired an interest along the frontage of Euston Road, which includes a portion of the buildings.
 - (b) The former Euston Road depot site was not appropriately categorised as Park in the adopted Plan of Management 2003, because the recent and current uses are not consistent with the guidelines or core objectives of the Park category
 - (c) Additionally, Council has indicated likely demolition of this former depot as necessary to expand passive recreational opportunities and potential future community facilities. The potential future use of this area and surrounds for community purposes for which facilities are required, is not consistent with the guidelines and core objectives of the Park category.
 - (d) The City proposes to recategorise the former Euston Road depot site and the surrounding area to the north and west from Park to General Community Use in the Draft Plan of Management 2014 to allow both passive recreational uses and a range of community uses on the site, for example, a skate facility, childcare, possible adaptive re-use of the warehouse buildings and recreation space
 - (e) This area would also be well suited as an alternative location for uses associated with the land categorised as General Community Use in the Sydney Park Cycling Centre Precinct and car park (i.e. City Farm or Lifelong Learning), which includes childcare, cycling, sustainability and ecology.
 - (f) As this site is the lowest point in Sydney Park, future use of this area will need to take into account the outcomes of the leachate management study and stormwater management works.
 - (g) The spatial extent of the proposed General Community Use category reflects the area required for the potential community uses, such as childcare, and for leachate/stormwater management infrastructure, and would allow flexibility for future location and configuration of these uses on the site.
 - (h) The boundaries of the proposed area also take into account the slopes and planting on the western and northern edges of the defined area, which separate the proposed General Community Use area from the remainder of Sydney Park and, as such, does not intrude into other park use areas.
 - (i) The General Community Use category is the most appropriate category of community land for the current and proposed future uses on and around the former Euston Road depot site.
37. The second submission states that the areas proposed for the City Farm should be categorised as 'General Community Use' and not the 'Park' management category.

38. Parkland Planners' conclusion:
- (a) The submission states that the City Farm should be categorised as General Community Use and not Park, while going on to state that growing of fruit and vegetables could perhaps occur in the "The Green" area, which is categorised as Park.
 - (b) The City Farm need not be located wholly in either of the Park or General Community Use categories. Community gardens and orchards are consistent with the guidelines and core objectives of the Park category of community land, while substantial buildings and structures are more appropriate for the General Community Use category.
 - (c) This would not preclude low-key City Farm structures being located in the Park category, for example.

Report Recommendations

39. The Principal of Parkland Planners recommends that the proposed recategorisation of community land in the Sydney Park draft Plan of Management 2014 be adopted, because there is no compelling reason to change any proposed recategorisation.
40. The further recommendations of Parkland Planners include:
- (a) noting the verbal and written submissions made in Section 2;
 - (b) adopting the proposed recategorisation of community land in the Sydney Park Draft Plan of Management because they are considered appropriate for the intended future uses of Sydney park, and there is no compelling reason to change any proposed recategorisation;
 - (c) replacing the reasons for categorising land in Sydney Park in various categories as given in Table 4.2 of the draft plan with the more detailed reasons in Table 1.1 of this report to aid community understanding of the reasons for the recategorisation; and
 - (d) including additional desirable uses under the 'Future Purpose' Heading in Table 7.1 of the Draft Plan of Management to include passive uses associated with City Farm concepts that would be suitable within the 'Park' category without having to re-exhibit the draft plan, as this would not require any alteration to the categories that were publicly exhibited.
41. The recommendations are included in the amended draft plan of management at Attachment E (with amendments highlighted in red).

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

42. Some of the projects and actions detailed in the draft plan are budgeted in the current financial year through the operational and capital works budgets in the City's Corporate Plan.
43. The objectives and actions detailed in the draft plan will be funded, prioritised and assessed annually against the current Corporate Plan's operational and capital works program.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

44. The following sections of the Local Government Act 1993 (LGA) and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 (LGR) are relevant in respect of the process to adopt this draft plan:
- (a) Section 36 of the LGA requires every council to prepare a plan of management for community land.
 - (b) Section 38 of the LGA requires a draft plan of management to be publicly exhibited.
 - (c) Section 40A of the LGA requires Council to hold a public hearing in respect of a proposed plan of management (including a plan of management that amends another plan of management) if the proposed plan would have the effect of categorising, or altering the categorisation of, community land under section 36(4) of the LGA.
 - (i) The draft plan of management proposes to alter the categorisation of community land within the Park.
 - (d) Section 47(G) of the LGA requires that, not later than four days after it has received a report from the person presiding at the public hearing as to the result of the hearing, the council must make a copy of the report available for inspection by the public at a location within the area of the council.
 - (i) The public hearing report was made available on the City's website and at each of the City's Neighbourhood Service Centres.
 - (e) Section 114 of the LGR applies if a council prepares a draft plan of management, and the council receives any submission, made in accordance with the LGA, concerning that draft plan that makes any objection to a categorisation of land under the draft plan and a council adopts the plan of management without amending the categorisation that gave rise to the objection.
 - (i) This report recommends Council adopt the plan of management without amending the proposed recategorisations that gave rise to the two objections.
 - (f) If section 114 of the LGR applies, the resolution by which the council adopts the plan of management must state the council's reasons for categorising the relevant land in the manner that gave rise to the objection.
 - (i) This report includes in the recommendations to Council the reasons for the categorisation of the relevant land in the manner that gave rise to the objection.

- (g) Section 36D(i) of the LGA applies in respect of community land comprising 'an area of cultural significance' and requires that, upon giving public notice under section 38 of the LGA, Council must send a copy of the draft plan of management to the Director-General of National Parks and Wildlife and incorporate any matter specified by the Director-General of National Parks and Wildlife in relation to the land or the relevant part.
- (i) Following the notification of public exhibition of the draft plan, the City issued a copy of the draft plan to the Director-General of National Parks and Wildlife. As at the time of preparing this report, the Director General has not required any specific matter to be incorporated into the draft plan.

Review of the draft Plan of Management and 2006 Master Plan

- 45. The draft plan will be reviewed regularly against the key performance indicators.
- 46. The 2006 Master Plan remains relevant for the immediate future, and it is recommended that a full review of the draft Sydney Park Plan of Management should be undertaken in five to seven years.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 47. The community has had a long history of active engagement and participation with Sydney Park, from pioneering the early tree-planting activities to present day recreational activities, environmental and cultural events.
- 48. This draft plan draws upon extensive public consultation including:
 - (a) 2005 consultation for the Sydney Park Master Plan 2006;
 - (b) Recreational and Open Space Needs Study 2007;
 - (c) Sustainable Sydney 2030 from 2005 to adoption in 2008;
 - (d) annual Sydney Park Surveys 2007-2013; and
 - (e) City Farm, Urban Ecology Action Plan and Water Harvesting/Re-Use.
- 49. Since 2011, the City has consulted extensively with the community on specific projects including City Farm, Stormwater Harvesting and Re-use and Urban Ecology. Outcomes and community values emerging from these consultations have been considered in developing the draft plan, and will continue to inform the values, directions and strategies from projects through development and implementation.

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