

ITEM 4. GREEN SQUARE DRYING GREEN PARK – PROJECT SCOPE**FILE NO: S118375****SUMMARY**

On 7 May 2007, Council endorsed the engagement of consultancy services for design of the Green Square Town Centre Public Domain, comprising four unique local recreational areas including Green Square Plaza and Library, Drying Green Park and Matron Ruby Park.

This report seeks Council's endorsement of the project scope for Drying Green Park as a distinctive local park, which will contribute approximately 6,212 square metres of passive open space and respite adjoining the Green Square Plaza and Library, and provide visual connectivity to Matron Ruby Park within the former South Sydney Hospital site.

The proposed design will improve landscaping and street activation, providing a welcoming presence to the precinct and serve to extend the landscape character of Zetland Avenue and form a strong contrast to the paved, urban environment of the Green Square Library and Plaza.

Based on the community consultation, it is recommended that this scope form the basis for design development, documentation and tender for construction.

This report seeks Council's acknowledgement that the land for Drying Green Park will be formally recognised as public reserve by gazettal, but that an operational land classification will be maintained until establishment of the park and associated infrastructure, at which time the land will be re-classified as community and incorporated into a plan of management.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the project scope as described in the subject report and shown in Attachment B to the subject report, including the Design Advisory Panel's recommendations of 15 July 2014 and 5 August 2014, for the purpose of proceeding with design, documentation and tender for construction of the works for the Drying Green Park;
- (B) note the indicative costs and financial implications detailed in confidential Attachment C to this report; and
- (C) note that lands forming the future Drying Green Park will formally be recognised as public reserve by notification in the Government Gazette and will be re-classified as community land upon completion.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Proposed Draft Subdivision Plan of the Drying Green

Attachment B: Concept Design Summary

Attachment C: Financial Implications (Confidential)

(As Attachment C is confidential, it will be circulated separately from the agenda paper and to Councillors and relevant senior staff only.)

BACKGROUND

Site

1. Drying Green Park will comprise a rectangular shaped passive recreational area of approximately 6,212 square metres, bounded by long east-west boundaries providing excellent connectivity (see Attachment A).
2. The park will have a frontage to existing Portman Street (east) and proposed Zetland Avenue (north), Geddes Street (south) and Paul Street (west).
3. The project's objective is to develop a distinctive local park that will serve to extend the landscape character of Zetland Avenue and form a strong contrast to the paved, urban environment of the Green Square Library and Plaza.
4. The park's principle function is passive recreation and respite adjacent to the core of the Green Square Town Centre, providing connectivity and many opportunities for seating, informal small gatherings and informal play. Its grass lawns, garden beds, park trees and landscape features structures including barbecue / picnic facilities, shade structure and public art.
5. Drying Green Park has a target completion date of mid-2017 and will be developed in one stage, with construction scheduled to commence in mid-2016 following essential demolition, trunk drainage and remediation works affecting the site and surrounding land between March 2015 and June 2016.
6. The Park will be formed on land acquired by the City in commercial negotiations with Waverley Council in 2012, and through a Voluntary Planning Agreement with Urban Growth land to be transferred in November 2014. The recreational intent for these public reserve lands will formally be established by Government Gazette (see Attachment A).
7. To effectively manage the delivery of essential demolition, trunk drainage and remediation works and construction of the recreational space and associated infrastructure, the lands forming Drying Green Park and the Green Square Library and Public Plaza will maintain a temporary classification as operational to enable the preliminary site preparation and wider area infrastructure works to proceed with the development of the park.
8. The classification of the land to be transferred from Urban Growth is the subject of a concurrent report to the Corporate, Finance, Properties and Tenders Committee meeting on 1 December 2014, with Council having resolved in May 2013 to classify as operational the land acquired from Waverley Council.
9. On completion of Drying Green Park, a report will be prepared recommending the proposed reclassification from operational to community land.
10. Ongoing management of the uses and future community needs will be guided by a plan of management and land categorisation. This will be the subject of a further report to Council, including public exhibition of a draft plan of management and a public hearing on the proposed categorisation.

Green Open Space Need

11. The City of Sydney Local Government Area has access to approximately 380 hectares of regional and local open space. The City's parks provide crucial recreational opportunities for a large, and growing, population of visitors and workers.
12. The proposed Drying Green Park in Green Square Town Centre will provide over 6,200 square metres of open space and will make a positive contribution to the town centre's amenity and the City's portfolio of green open space.

Project Overview

13. Design work commenced on Drying Green Park in October 2013, with McGregor Coxall being the consultant engaged.
14. The Green Square Drying Green Park will:
 - (a) provide a restful village green for passive recreation and respite adjacent to the core of the town centre. It will provide for through connections, many opportunities for seating, informal small gatherings, informal play, public amenities, and water sensitive urban design for education and engagement;
 - (b) provide for desire lines from the Park to the plaza and other key locations in the town centre;
 - (c) maximise seating in the areas expected to receive winter sun and provide shaded areas for seating in summer;
 - (d) ensure trees do not cast permanent shadows over available areas of direct sunlight or on adjacent residential buildings;
 - (e) improve the public domain, including local safety;
 - (f) increase environmental sustainability by improving the water quality flowing to Botany Bay; and
 - (g) incorporate best-practice water sensitive urban design appropriate for a local park for community education and engagement.

Project Scope

15. The proposed project scope includes:
 - (a) undertaking design development that builds upon the 2008 concept design and reflects the changed design conditions;
 - (b) incorporating a public amenities building and outdoor barbecue / picnic area;
 - (c) open space for passive uses with many opportunities for seating;
 - (d) co-ordination of the design with the Green Square Town Centre Essential Infrastructure team; and
 - (e) design documentation and construction for works to deliver a compliant park.

Design Advisory Panel

16. The concept design was presented to the Design Advisory Panel on two occasions (see Attachment B).
17. The first presentation was on 18 March 2014. The Panel noted the overall approach and recommended that the design be developed further to address the following issues:
 - (a) develop an overall strategy around the uses within the park;
 - (b) test the heights and levels of the landscape to achieve the desired sense of enclosure whilst retaining views;
 - (c) investigate minimising built elements in the park;
 - (d) investigate minimising the use of barriers and fences;
 - (e) ensure a balance between the accessible and non-accessible spaces – usable space in the park should be maximised;
 - (f) investigate light as opposed to white materials;
 - (g) accommodate a more densely planted tree canopy and co-ordinate spacing and species selection between this site, the Library Plaza and the surrounding street trees; and
 - (h) accommodate seating at the edge of the park, particularly on Zetland Avenue, and explore greater permeability of the park through subtle links across the water body on the north side.
18. The second presentation was on 17 July 2014. The Panel noted the revised design and responses to the Panel's previous advice of 18 March 2014 for resolving the design issues previously raised.
19. The Panel commended the scheme and recommended the following:
 - (a) investigate the options for the seating along Zetland Avenue to be considered as part of a larger precinct wide strategy;
 - (b) investigate the use of precast concrete for the edge of the 'urban terraces' and 'lawn bleachers' in keeping with the materiality of the rest of the park; and
 - (c) investigate the provision of public amenities such as children's playgrounds, barbecue facilities and toilets as part of a larger precinct wide strategy.

20. On 5 August 2014, the Design Advisory Panel was presented with a briefing on the Green Square Town Centre public domain coordination. The Panel discussed the options that were previously presented for the location of parking and street trees adjacent to the Drying Green Park and made the following comments in relating to the development of the public domain plan:
- (a) the Panel recommended that continuous street tree planting be provided beside the park, and that parking arrangements are secondary to achieving a continuous tree canopy; and
 - (b) the Panel noted that the Zetland Avenue trees compete with the proposed palms at the park edge and recommended that the park design development address this issue within the park.
21. The above feedback from the Panel will inform design development going forward.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

22. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This project is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 2 - A Leading Environmental Performer – this project will provide water sensitive urban design infrastructure, which will significantly contribute to the City's stormwater water pollutant reduction objective;
 - (b) Direction 5 - A Lively, Engaging City Centre – this project will strengthen the city's public domain identity and create more places for meeting, resting and leisure;
 - (c) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – this project will provide much needed green open space to Green Square, an integral part of providing accessible community-level social infrastructure;
 - (d) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City – through public art, the project will support cultural activity, participation and integration as well as confirm the City's commitment to cultural leadership and strengthening cultural partnerships; and
 - (e) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design – this project will promote design excellence and contribute to the sustainability of Green Square. It will contribute to improving the city's streets and open spaces, and enhance their role for pedestrians and in public life.

Organisational Impact

23. The project will create additional assets, which will require ongoing maintenance. These include a new amenities block and outdoor barbecue area with a shade structure, new pavements, trees, mass planting, street furniture, street lights and public art elements.

Risks

24. Risks associated with the proposal have been considered throughout the concept design and consultation phase. These include safety (in particular park safety for visitors / users of the park), environmental impacts (remediation works) as well as community concerns.

Social / Cultural / Community

25. This project is part of the City's commitment to green open space. It will provide recreational opportunity for a large, and growing, population of visitors and workers to the Green Square Town Centre. The proposed Drying Green Park will make a significant contribution to the City's portfolio of green open space. The design provides opportunities for informal, community interaction in the park and adjoining streets.

Environmental

26. The proposal includes environmentally sustainable design elements to support the City's Sustainable Sydney 2030 vision for achieving high quality sustainable outcomes on all new capital works developments. This will include passive irrigation of garden beds and tree pits, increased tree canopy and landscaping in adjoining streets and low energy lights.
27. The proposed wetland concept is consistent with the City's Green Square Town Centre Public Domain Design - Water Sensitive Urban Design Strategy. Specifically, it meets the following targets:
 - (a) water conservation – utilising alternative water sources to meet non-potable demands;
 - (b) stormwater pollution from external catchments – treatment of stormwater from the external catchment to make improvements to water quality in Sheas Creek and Alexandra Canal; and
 - (c) integration of stormwater treatment into the landscape so as to create functional landscapes.
28. The concept is also consistent with the City's Sustainable Sydney 2030 and Decentralised Water Master Plan targets to reduce stormwater pollutants and potable water consumption by 2030.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

29. Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW) and State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007.
30. Local Government Act 1993 (NSW).
31. Attachment C contains confidential information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business. Discussion of the matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest because it would compromise Council's ability to negotiate fairly and commercially to achieve the best outcome for its ratepayers.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

32. Current program dates are:
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| (a) Exhibit Review of Environmental Factors | February 2015; |
| (b) Determination of Review of Environmental Factors | April 2015; |
| (c) Commence Construction Documentation | April 2015; |
| (d) Construction Tender | late 2015; |
| (e) Commence Construction | early 2016; and |
| (f) Open Park | late 2017 |

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

33. The concept design for Drying Green Park was placed on public exhibition for a four week period from 3 September 2014. Other Green Square projects were also concurrently placed on exhibition, including public domain and open space plans for the former South Sydney Hospital site and strategic plans for proposed open spaces across the entire urban renewal area. The exhibition period provided opportunity for the community to learn about the City's Green Square projects.
34. Over 18,000 properties were notified via letter. The plans were placed on the City's consultation website, Sydney Your Say, and displayed at the Green Square Neighbourhood Service Centre (The Tote). Members of the community were also invited to participate in the 'Have your Say Day' in Green Square on 20 September 2014 at the local markets, where they were able to view the plans and speak directly to City staff. Over 350 community members attended this event and over 8,000 visitors were recorded on the City's consultation website, across all Green Square projects.
35. During this consultation, the community was asked for feedback on the concept design. Strong interest was raised about the City's plans to provide quality open spaces throughout the Green Square urban renewal area. Even though there were only four formal submissions, throughout the campaign community reactions to the City's plans were positive. Key responses to the design included the need for a large scale park in the precinct to accommodate the large number of residents moving in, the park's connection to the Green Square Town Centre and the need to ensure the park's design allows for a range of uses and age groups. All comments will be taken into consideration during the next phase of planning for this project.
36. The following engagement activities will take place to inform the community about the next phase of the project:
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|--------------------------------------|
| (a) Sydney Your Say website update; |
| (b) a project update letter; and |
| (c) update notice board in The Tote. |

37. Statutory notification periods and public exhibition will be undertaken as part of any required planning approvals process.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

38. There are sufficient funds allocated for proceeding with the recommended scope. Current cost estimates and financial implications are included in confidential Attachment C.

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