

ITEM 5. SYDNEY PARK NEW CHILDREN'S BIKE TRACK AND ASSOCIATED CYCLING CENTRE PRECINCT UPGRADE**FILE NO: S105330****SUMMARY**

On 15 September 2014, Council accepted a tender for the design and construction of a new childcare centre on the existing bike track at Sydney Park. In the preceding report to the Corporate, Finance Properties and Tenders Committee on 8 September 2014, it was noted that to facilitate this development, the cycle track would be relocated and the existing large shade structure reorientated.

This report outlines the concept design and public consultation for the new children's bike track and associated improvements and recommends a scope for implementation.

In addition to enabling an optimum location for the new childcare centre, the bike track and associated precinct works design will significantly enhance the facilities and supporting amenities for children's bike play.

The new bike track will be more inclusive and playful with a range of challenges for all abilities, from a learn-to-ride area to an adventure track for more confident riders. Promotion of a pedestrian route through the larger park is also proposed. Access and amenity in the precinct will be improved with new connecting pathways, landscaping, lighting, furniture, picnic settings and a new amenities building.

Community consultation was carried out in two stages, with feedback from the first public engagement used to inform the updated concept design on which further feedback has been more recently sought. There is broad support for the project and issues raised in the first engagement have been addressed in the updated proposal.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council endorse the project scope for the Sydney Park Cycling Centre Precinct upgrade, as described in the subject report and shown in Attachment A to the subject report, for the purpose of proceeding with seeking any relevant planning approvals, design, documentation and tender for construction.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Updated Concept design exhibition panels for Sydney Park Cycling Centre Precinct upgrade and associated works for the new children's bike track

Attachment B: Consultation Summary – June 2014

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

1. On 12 May 2014, Council adopted a new Sydney Park Plan of Management, which included the development of childcare facilities within specific areas of the park. One designated area encompassed the existing cycling centre, bike track and adjacent car park at Sydney Park Road.
2. On 15 September 2014, Council approved the tender for design and construction of childcare centres at Sydney Park, Alexandria, Huntley Street, Alexandria and The Crescent, Annandale.
3. The proposed location for the new childcare centre in Sydney Park is on the existing bike track to best utilise the adjacent existing car park for drop-off and pick-up and to minimise the impact on the parkland. In the Committee report associated with this tender, it was noted that the cycle track would need to be relocated and the large shade structure relocated nearby or reorientated to facilitate the child care development.
4. The existing bike track was designed and installed many years ago by NSW Police as a way to educate young children about road safety. It is very well patronised, but it was never designed for the way it is now used.
5. Previously known as the CARES Precinct, the existing bike track and its setting are in need of improvement and were already identified in the corporate plan for upgrade funding. The childcare development has presented an opportunity for a more substantial refresh of this popular recreation facility and its park setting.
6. The new bike track will be more inclusive and playful with a range of challenges for all abilities, from a learn-to-ride area to an adventure track for more confident riders. Promotion of a route through the larger park is also proposed.
7. Access and amenity in the precinct will be improved with new connecting pathways, landscaping, picnic settings and a new amenities building.
8. Formal education programs will continue at the Sydney Park Cycling Centre.

The Bike Track and Cycling Centre Precinct Concept Design

9. The proposed concept seeks to capture the popularity of the current facility in an updated design that significantly expands the range of experiences for children riding their bike in a social and playful way.
10. To optimise the design and size of the bike track, the large gymkhana (covered shade structure) is to be reorientated. It will remain conveniently situated for the formal education programs provided by the Sydney Park Cycling Centre, but set back from the bike track facility.
11. Similar in size to the existing bike track facility, the new bike track will feature wider pathways for increased capacity and more diverse routes, challenging children with curves, hills and bridge crossings. Imaginative play will be supported through fun inclusions, such as stop and go signals, post boxes, "tunnels" and water "refuelling" stations.
12. Playful pavement-marking is proposed on the gymkhana pavements to encourage the informal use by children when not being used for formal classes.

13. Landscape improvements are proposed to the bike track precinct including new access paths, picnic areas, trees and planting, lighting and a new amenities building. There are currently no amenities supporting the current bike track. These enhanced facilities will support the large and growing number of children and their friends and families enjoying an extended stay at the play facility.
14. The promotion of a 'Wetland Explorer' route will use existing paths, soon to be completed as part of the major stormwater harvesting project. A fun wayfinding map and a series of sign posted "stations" along the route will provide interpretive information about the wetlands, the local area or other interesting information on the park.
15. Installation of a signalised pedestrian crossing at Sydney Park Road (subject to Roads and Maritime Service's approval), and upgraded pedestrian entry into Sydney Park will link to newly completed Bamal Way, and the growing population of the Ashmore renewal precinct. For the local community, this will be a convenient way to access the park, cycling precinct and proposed childcare centre. This is anticipated to be installed in late 2015 pending approvals.
16. These core works as described above were identified in the concept design exhibition as part of the project. In addition, a suite of supporting works was indicated. These potential future works to surrounding areas could further enhance the precinct and more fully connect it to the larger parkland over time. These include:
 - (a) lawn areas, seating and track viewing terraces with open views to the proposed new bike track;
 - (b) additional picnic settings and a barbecue along a new circuit path;
 - (c) extension of circuit path to complete the Sydney Park Circuit;
 - (d) additional path connections from the car park into the park; and
 - (e) a mid-hill lookout with seating, shade trees and new gravel access path.

Accessibility

17. The City of Sydney Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2014-2017 was adopted in by Council on 28 July 2014. The City is committed to making its services and amenities accessible and 'barrier-free' to all residents, workers and visitors.
18. The design provides new accessible routes from the car park to this precinct for the first time, and will implement a further section of the park circuit – the major circulation route in the master plan for Sydney Park, which, upon completion, will be a two kilometre looping link to all the park's major areas.
19. Pathways, picnic settings and amenities will be designed for accessibility.

Tree Management

20. A review of the existing trees will be undertaken with the City's Arborist during the design development stage of the project. The following tree management will be proposed as part of the works:
- (a) the retention of all but four small existing eucalypt trees to facilitate the construction of the new bike track;
 - (b) the planting of approximately 40 new trees in the bike track area and along the new circuit path; and
 - (c) the planting of new shrubs and ground covers to create a border to the new bike tracks and to Sydney Park Road.

Community Consultation to date

21. The first stage of community consultation was carried out between 10 and 22 June 2014. An initial scheme was prepared, showing a new bike track facility relocated to the north-west section of the park, close to the existing all abilities playground. The following community engagement activities were conducted:
- (a) a letter was sent to 2,100 residents and business owners within the surrounding area announcing the consultation and the ways in which people could have their say. The distribution area included parts of the Marrickville Local Government Area immediately surrounding Sydney Park;
 - (b) a drop-in session was held on 14 June 2014 at the existing children's bike track in Sydney Park. Community members were able to view the designs, discuss the project with the design team and fill out survey forms;
 - (c) a webpage dedicated to the consultation was created on sydneyyoursay.com.au displaying the consultation material and a survey form for those wishing to make a submission;
 - (d) the concept design was displayed at the One Stop Shop in Town Hall House and at the Redfern Neighbourhood Service Centre;
 - (e) intercept surveys were conducted at a range of times and days in the park; and
 - (f) community members were able to make written submissions.
22. A total of 145 people participated in the intercept survey and 25 submissions were received. Key issues are summarised below and further detailed in Attachment B:

General park usage

- (a) Sydney Park is a well-loved park for residents of the inner west, with most survey participants visiting frequently and staying for at least an hour at a time. A wide range of park users were surveyed and dog walking and children's activities were the most popular reasons for trips to the park;
- (b) participants said that the playground and having a safe place to learn to ride were high priorities for children using the park. Providing a place for children to meet up with friends and socialise was also seen as important;

Design elements

- (c) all of the bike design elements were well received by survey participants, with over two thirds rating each element as 'good' or 'excellent';
- (d) the highest rated were the Adventure Challenge Concept and the Wetlands Explorer;
- (e) for survey participants, the highest ranking priority for redesign of the bike track was that it should be a safe environment for children learning to ride;
- (f) also popular were a bike track that caters for different skill levels, and good facilities including shade, seating and toilets nearby;
- (g) those who made submissions felt it was important that the new bike track be located in a secure park area. A larger bike track and the inclusion of traffic lights and road rules were also a priority;
- (h) the most significant concern about the project was the mix of small children and dogs, and that the bike track would reduce the amount of open space available within the park; and

Other comments

- (i) survey participants were asked which general improvements they would like to see in Sydney Park. Improvements to the toilets were the most popular, followed by more shaded areas, improved parking and seating.
23. In response to this consultation feedback, a revised location was developed closer to the existing location, and an updated concept plan prepared.
24. Community consultation for the updated concept plan was carried out between 31 October and 14 November 2014. The following engagement activities were conducted:
- (a) a letter was sent to 2,400 residents and business owners within the surrounding area announcing the consultation and the ways in which people could have their say;
 - (b) a webpage dedicated to the consultation was created on sydneyoursay.com.au displaying the consultation material and a survey form for those wishing to make a submission;
 - (c) the concept design was displayed at the One Stop Shop in Town Hall House and at the Redfern Neighbourhood Service Centre;
 - (d) six notification posters were placed around Sydney Park informing park users of the consultation and directing them to Sydney Your Say; and
 - (e) community members were able to make written submissions.
25. Key issues are summarised below:

Design elements

- (a) that a perimeter fence be installed to separate the bike track from the road;

- (b) a wide path to connect the bike track with the car park;
- (c) shade be provided on the new track as well as the proposed seating areas surrounding the track;
- (d) also popular were a bike track that caters for different skill levels, and good facilities including shade, seating and toilets nearby;
- (e) a larger bike track and the inclusion of traffic lights and road rules were also a priority;

Other comments

- (f) a skate park be included in any new works for the park; and
 - (g) the new circuit track should be built first, so that there continues to be bike access for riders through the park from the village green area to Sydney Park Road/Mitchell Road during the construction of the childcare centre.
26. In response to stakeholder and community feedback, the updated concept plan addresses key issues raised in the consultation process as detailed below:
- (a) the revised location of the bike track in the updated proposal reduces the conflict between park users by locating the facility further away from the already busy playground kiosk and green;
 - (b) the new location maintains the existing green open space adjacent to the playground and locates the facility to avoid further concentration of demand on the western car parking area;
 - (c) the inclusion of toilets in the new location will avoid further concentration of demand on the playground toilets;
 - (d) the Loop Track route has been deleted in response to concerns for conflict between young bike riders and other park users, particularly around the kiosk area;
 - (e) the new bike track design will develop children's riding skills so they become confident riders. It will do this in a very social and playful way by providing multiple routes and graded challenges, as well as imaginative and interactive play elements to simulate real life situations, such as stop and go signals, post boxes, tunnels and intersections;
 - (f) the inclusion of buffer planting, fencing and low walls to define the play spaces from circulation areas, and create a physical barrier for protection from the busy road;
 - (g) space has been maximised through a compact design to ensure best use of the available level area, and making the adjacent green grass slopes available for supervision and relaxation nearby;
 - (h) the new bike track will be designed with wider tracks, multiple routes and no kerbs providing the same useable area as the existing track, but a more diverse environment with different experiences;

- (i) the project will be delivered in stages and pedestrian and bike riders access to the existing car parking at the Sydney Park Cycling Centre Precinct will be managed through the construction process; and
- (j) a skate park is not part of this project scope and will be considered separately.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

27. *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 report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design – the project will provide new open space infrastructure for the public, supporting family recreation activity in an improved landscape setting.

Organisational Impact

28. The new children's bike track and associated facilities will require ongoing maintenance. These include new bike tracks, signage, new paths, seating, lighting, new toilets, new trees and landscape planting.

Social / Cultural / Community

29. The Sydney Park Cycling Centre precinct upgrade and associated works for the new children's bike track provides well designed facilities located close to supporting amenities to foster children's health and development through play.

Environmental

30. The Sydney Park Cycling Centre precinct upgrade and associated works for the new children's bike track includes a range of measures to improve the environmental performance of the park. The key elements are:
- (a) additional tree and shrub planting;
 - (b) water sensitive urban design inclusions; and
 - (c) encouraging children's engagement with the park's ecosystems and water treatment function through the Wetland Explorer route.

Economic

31. The new facilities are likely to attract more users to the park, which may assist the viability of local businesses, such as the nearby cafes and stores. The facility will add to the area's attraction for families.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

32. A Quantity Surveyor has prepared an estimate based on the concept design. The current estimate indicates a shortfall in funding for the core scope of work for the Sydney Park Cycling Centre Precinct upgrade as outlined in confidential Attachment C.
33. An indicative estimate for implementation of all future supporting works to the precinct has also been prepared and is included in confidential Attachment C.
34. Additional funds will be requested as part of the development of the 2015/16 budget and future year forward estimate.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

35. 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.
36. Following Council endorsement, an external planner will be engaged to assess the proposed works under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (Part 4 and 5). An Environmental Impact Assessment will be carried out to ensure that all environmental impacts have been identified, assessed and, where required, appropriate mitigations determined. Some of the proposed works may not require planning approval, and may be exempt development. The amenities building may require consent.
37. Local Government Act 1993 for construction procurement.
38. Roads Act 1993 and City of Sydney Act 1988 for road related approvals.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES / STAGES

39. The project will be delivered in stages to minimise downtime on the use of the gymkhana and bike track and to allow commencement of the childcare construction works as per current program. The stages are:
 - (a) Stage 1 – relocation of shade structure;
 - (b) Stage 2 – early works for bike track and precinct upgrade (including civil works, stormwater, conduits, simple pavements and structures);
 - (c) Stage 3 – remaining works for bike track (furnishing of the bike track, complex ground finishes and structures etc.);
 - (d) Stage 4 – precinct landscaping; and
 - (e) Stage 5 – new toilet.
40. A small section of the existing track will be impacted by the relocation of the cycling centre shade structure. However, the balance of the track will remain operational during this stage of construction, and continue to operate up until the childcare related works commence.

41. Some landscaping works to the precinct will continue through to the completion of the childcare centre.
42. The key dates for the bike track project are:

Project component	Key dates
Stage 1 – relocation of shade structure commences	November 2014 to January 2015
Stage 2 – early works construction	January to March 2015
Stage 3 – remaining bike track works construction	March to June 2015
Stage 4 – precinct landscaping construction	June to November 2015
Stage 5 – Toilet Construction	Late 2015/early 2016 subject to Development Approvals

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

43. A report from the community consultation undertaken in June 2014 is included at Attachment B. It contains a summary of issues and suggestions raised by the community.
44. Further updates on the project, including construction notification, will be provided through the following channels:
- (a) updates on the sydneyoursay.com.au and City of Sydney webpages;
 - (b) notifications sent to local residents, business owners and people who have made submissions on the concept design; and
 - (c) during construction, on-site updates will be displayed.

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