

ITEM 2. CITY FARM MASTER PLAN**FILE NO: S104613****SUMMARY**

On 15 September 2014, Council resolved to note the recommendations of the City Farm Business Plan, and endorse the development of a master plan to support the establishment and operation of the City Farm within Sydney Park, which would be reported back to Council for approval.

This report recommends that Council approve the City Farm Master Plan and proceed with implementing stage one of the City Farm in Sydney Park.

The WestConnex project will impact Sydney Park and at this stage there is insufficient information to determine the exact impacts on the City Farm. A possibility is that Barwon Park Road may be widened and, if this is the limit of works on this edge of the park, there would be minimal impact on the project.

The City Farm will be a not-for-profit social enterprise focused on sustainability, education and awareness of the importance of providing safe, affordable and accessible food. The benefits will reach well beyond the commercial value of the food itself to educational, cultural and social values for participants and the broader community.

Key elements from the business plan to be included in the City Farm are:

- production and supply of 4.5 tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetables per year from 1,000 square metres of crop areas and 100 fruit trees;
- composting and waste management demonstration programs;
- a weekly 30-stall farmers' market;
- 100 to 300 training and educational programs per year;
- 40 to 100 community volunteering shifts per week;
- partnership development and sponsorships;
- a farm kitchen teaching organic food preparation and cooking classes; and
- fortnightly animal husbandry programs.

Urban design specialists were engaged to develop a design concept and master plan for the City Farm. The design reflects the activities in the business plan and the community's ideas and aspirations gained through consultation events.

A consultation event was held on 21 March 2015 at Sydney Park to enable community members to view the draft design and understand how community feedback has shaped the design of the City Farm. Community members were also provided with information on the opportunities to be involved with the farm and sign up as a volunteer.

Feedback from the community is summarised below:

- extremely positive and well-received;
- the proposed layout, concepts, and design considerations are well supported;
- the main elements outlined in the business plan have been captured in the design;
- comments relating to general operations (which has been captured and will be considered in the detailed design and general operations); and
- social and harmonious interaction, accessibility, sustainable farming and land management are considered strong initiatives to be included in the farm development.

Further consultation is planned for the education, learning and program aspects of the City Farm.

It is proposed to proceed to detailed design, documentation, and engagement of contractors to commence construction of stage one of the City Farm in late 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council approve the:

- (A) City Farm Master Plan, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report; and
- (B) implementation of stage one of the City Farm in accordance with the City Farm Business Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: City Farm Master Plan

Attachment B: Community Consultation Materials

Attachment C: City Farm Concept Design Consultation Report

BACKGROUND

1. In November 2009, Council endorsed the principle of establishing a City Farm in the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA) and commissioned a feasibility study to investigate business models and potential sites.
2. On 7 November 2011, Council endorsed the City Farm Feasibility Study and its recommendation to jointly establish a City Farm at Sydney Park, St Peters and the Powerhouse Museum car park, Ultimo. Council also noted that a business plan would be prepared with the assistance of the Powerhouse Museum and the City Farm Advisory Group, which was established to oversee the development of the project.

City Farm Business Plan

3. On 15 September 2014, Council resolved to note the recommendations of the City Farm Business Plan and endorse the development of a master plan to support the establishment and operation of the City Farm within Sydney Park.
4. The business activities that will be provided by the City Farm have been reviewed against environmental, economic, social, cultural and governance factors. The business activities have been divided into primary and secondary business activities and include:
 - (a) production and supply of 4.5 tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetables per year from 1000 square metres of crop area and 100 fruit trees;
 - (b) composting and waste management demonstration programs;
 - (c) a weekly 30-stall farmers' market;
 - (d) 100 to 300 training and education programs;
 - (e) 40 to 100 community volunteering shifts per week;
 - (f) partnership development and sponsorships;
 - (g) a farm kitchen teaching organic food preparation and cooking classes; and
 - (h) fortnightly animal husbandry programs.
5. The City Farm Business Plan contains a detailed implementation program for both capital and operational activities. As reported to Council in September 2014, it is proposed that the City Farm project be implemented in stages, with the primary activities summarised below being delivered in stage one:
 - (a) development of the City Farm Master Plan;
 - (b) site establishment and construction of produce areas, orchard, composting and waste management facilities;
 - (c) implementation of organic farmers' market; and
 - (d) commencement of training and educational programs.

6. It is also proposed that any potential expansion of the City Farm be considered by Council following completion, and a review, of the stage one activities.

City Farm Master Plan

7. Urban design specialists Jane Irwin Landscape Architecture were engaged to develop a design concept and master plan for the City Farm. One of the key design objectives for the project is to integrate the farm activities within the park and to complement existing park uses.
8. The design reflects the activities identified in the business plan and the community's ideas and aspirations gained through consultation events (refer Attachment A).
9. The south-west corner of Sydney Park is the proposed location for the City Farm and offers plenty of sun, shelter, good drainage and access to the Sydney Park stormwater harvesting network. This is a lesser-used section of the park and will activate the space.
10. In the stage one development, educational activities will initially use the Alan Davidson Oval pavilion, outdoor spaces in the farm and parkland, and a small training space in the farm's operational area. The weekly farmers markets will use the existing shade area next to the Sydney Cycle Centre on Sydney Park Road.
11. An independent agronomist was engaged to advise on placement of the farm, cropping practices, and to provide advice to maximise food production opportunities for the farm.
12. Raised planting areas will be used to ensure produce is fresh and fit for use. Further soil analysis will determine the best ways to use the land and to identify complementary food crops.
13. The design has considered existing site elements and has been integrated within the fabric of Sydney Park. Pathways have been designed to maximise the use of existing path networks, encourage interaction with the farm, and allow for integration with existing operational space near Sydney Park.
14. Placement of the farm in the proposed location allows for connectivity to the existing Council depot space and minimises the need for built elements in the park.
15. The design acknowledges and reflects existing programs within Sydney Park. Drainage and water movement will link to the wetlands and the water harvesting scheme will be used for irrigation.
16. The design encourages connections with native revegetation and habitat plantings. It allows for connections to existing park plant materials for both cultural and culinary purposes.
17. Key principles for the layout and function of the City Farm have been based on existing sustainable agriculture theories and practices (e.g. permaculture).

18. A primary and secondary orchard space will contribute to food production, frame the layout and increase tree canopy cover in this section of Sydney Park. There are a small number of young trees that will need to be removed or transplanted to accommodate the City Farm. These trees will be replaced and overall canopy cover will increase in the park.
19. The design proposes the use of a variety of plants, including native species, to maintain community interest and to showcase what is not normally found in a home garden.
20. A series of native beehives and a native bee hotel are proposed within the design. This will see stingless bees and other insects encouraged for pollination of plants within the farm and also the wider parks space.
21. A space for a chicken hutch has been proposed, with detailed design to evaluate feasibility and accommodation requirements within the broader park setting.
22. Design elements have allowed for integration of cultural elements, gathering and meeting spaces, outdoor food preparation space, and a place to cook, and consume food produced on the farm. The outdoor kitchen area will be used for teaching food preparation and cooking techniques.
23. Composting and areas for managing waste reduction and re-use have been allocated and will contribute to the overall sustainability of the farm.
24. There will be different places for learning and practicing farm skills on the site, including a flexible learning space, shaped like a flower. There will be a building located within the Sydney Park depot to store equipment needed for the farm and host small education classes. Low fencing will provide boundaries for the cropping areas and will be publicly accessible.
25. Cultural aspects (e.g. bush tucker plants, earth oven) and inclusion have been considered in the master planning phase. The design allows for flexibility in utilisation of the spaces and promotes social interaction.
26. Precedents have been identified in similar urban settings. Battery Park, Manhattan provides an example of a successful urban farm of similar scale and composition, and has been developed on remediated land, similar to Sydney Park.

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. The City Farm Master Plan is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 1 - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City – the City Farm will include innovative environmental technologies and attract tourism;
 - (b) Direction 2 provides a road map for the City to become A Leading Environmental Performer – the City Farm will demonstrate best practice environmental design and practices, as well as the City’s commitment to a sustainable environment;

- (c) Direction 5 - A Lively and Engaging City Centre – the City Farm will provide opportunities for community participation and engagement;
- (d) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – the City Farm will rely on a high level of community engagement and ownership, including volunteer programs and community representatives on the City Farm Management Committee;
- (e) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City – the City Farm will provide a focal point for cultural and educational activities and events;
- (f) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design – the City Farm will showcase sustainable designs that are suitable for an urban environment such as growing food on balconies, composting and worm farming facilities and the latest energy and water saving technologies; and
- (g) Direction 10 - Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships – the City Farm will involve a range of community partnerships and provide an opportunity for residents to engage in social, cultural and environmental programs.

Greening Sydney Plan

28. The City Farm Master Plan supports the strategies of the Greening Sydney Plan, which outlines the City's objectives for the physical greening of the city. The Greening Sydney Plan proposes actions such as the City Farm to *Empower Community Greening* as a key focus area.

Organisational Impact

29. Experienced professional staff will be employed by the City to implement, develop and grow the City Farm's business activities. This will include the coordination and management of volunteers and education classes. Provision has been made in the 2014/15 and draft 2015/16 operational budget for two positions to undertake this role, with support from existing resources.
30. The business plan proposes transitioning the City Farm to a community management framework responsible to Council at the end of year five.

Risks

31. A risk assessment was conducted on the City Farm Business Plan. This was informed by a workshop conducted by the City's Risk and Assurance Unit with the City Farm Advisory Group.
32. The risk assessment process did not identify any unacceptable risks that could not be mitigated by appropriate controls and actions.
33. A design risk assessment will be completed as part of the detailed design works along with the necessary planning, regulatory, environmental, and construction approvals.
34. The WestConnex project will impact Sydney Park and, at this stage, there is insufficient information to determine the exact impacts on the City Farm. A possibility is that Barwon Park Road may be widened and, if this is the limit of works on this edge of the park, there would be minimal impact on the project.

Social / Cultural / Community

35. The development of a City Farm will provide a number of social, cultural and community benefits by providing a vibrant and creative meeting place for recreational and cultural activities, events and educational programs.
36. City Farms and urban agriculture are receiving increasing attention worldwide. City Farms can play a real role in addressing food security issues by producing affordable and accessible local fresh produce for disadvantaged households, and educating people about sustainable food production and preparation.
37. Support for the City Farm has come from leading educational institutions and peak agricultural bodies such as the Powerhouse Museum, University of Sydney, University of New South Wales and the Royal Agricultural Society
38. The Powerhouse Museum is committed to supporting the project and potentially contributing to educational programs, however, this support may not eventuate if the Powerhouse Museum is relocated to Parramatta.
39. Activities to promote the farm and engage with the community have seen interest from local social groups and not-for-profit organisations interested in sharing skills and resources in activating the City Farm.

Environmental

40. Developing a City Farm will showcase initiatives for sustainable living and provide a number of environmental, educational and community opportunities for residents, businesses and visitors. The master plan has included the following key environmental initiatives:
 - (a) composting facilities to reduce waste to landfill and CO2 emissions;
 - (b) space for developing community capacity for local food production and farmers' markets, which will reduce the environmental impacts of producing, transporting and distributing fresh food;
 - (c) demonstration areas and use of the natural landform to maximise water use efficiency and promote the importance of water as a resource for growing food, as well as showcasing water conservation, harvesting and bio-filtration of overland flows from the farm;
 - (d) educational spaces to showcase renewable energy options such as photovoltaic systems and wind-generated power;
 - (e) interacting with the surrounding landscape and supporting existing bushland and habitat renewal activities;
 - (f) ecological benefits for the farm and the remainder of Sydney Park through the use of native stingless bee hives and insect hotels to increase pollination of farm crops and bushland plantings;
 - (g) utilising existing built elements, hard stand, and depot spaces to minimise loss of green space for the development of the farm operational areas;

- (h) providing options for the efficient use and re-use of resources by using recycled materials. The outdoor education space will allow for interactive displays and workshops on recycling and re-using materials for art and other projects, and the development of the farm will encourage community participation in the safe and practical aspects of construction;
- (i) providing demonstration and cropping space suitable for sustainable farming practices and interactive displays for workshops on native and habitat gardens, weeds and feral animals, food gardens for small spaces and capturing and treating stormwater; and
- (j) providing the City of Sydney's first sustainable farming space to promote food production practices and provide linkages to farming and agricultural communities.

Economic

- 41. The City Farm will play an important role in providing safe, affordable and accessible food. The benefits reach well beyond the commercial value of the food itself to educational, cultural and social values for participants and the broader community.
- 42. The design team was made aware of budget considerations and has proposed the use of materials and practices in the design to maximise the capital outlay.
- 43. The master plan provides the elements for the City Farm to:
 - (a) seek to work with local social enterprises, similar to the Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies (CERES) city farm in Melbourne;
 - (b) provide opportunities for smaller sustainability focused entities to partner and conduct activities at the City Farm site (e.g. Seed Savers);
 - (c) sell fresh produce grown on the farm directly to a consistent number of community members through a community supported agriculture model. This model guarantees the supply of fresh produce through an advanced payment system; and
 - (d) seek to engage in supply contracts with local cafes and restaurants providing fresh seasonal produce to local businesses.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

- 44. The City Farm Business Plan reported to Council in September 2014 outlines the capital costs for construction of the project and the financial requirements for its operation.
- 45. Provision has been made for capital expenditure of \$470,000 for stage one works. \$750,000 has been allocated for future works to develop stages two and three. Operational expenditure of \$85,000 is allocated in the 2014/15 and \$350,000 in the draft 2015/16 budget to complete stage one of the City farm and commence operations in early 2016. The capital costs for stage one have been reviewed and confirmed by an independent quantity surveyor.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

46. Local Government Act 1993 – relevant to the use of Sydney Park as community land. The City Farm is a permitted use under the Sydney Park Plan of Management.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

47. The proposed timeframes for the implementation of the City Farm are:
- (a) Endorsement of City Farm Master Plan – May 2015;
 - (b) Detailed design stage one – May to August 2015;
 - (c) Tendering and Procurement – September to November 2015;
 - (d) Construction stage one – December 2015 to June 2016; and
 - (e) Commence operations – July 2016.
48. The City Farm requires a tender to be approved by Council later this year before construction works can commence on site.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

49. The City Farm Feasibility Study included three community consultation and stakeholder workshops to develop and consider ideas and aspirations from key stakeholders.
50. The City Farm Advisory Group has been consulted in the development of the key business activities and operations of the City Farm.
51. The Sydney City Farm Community Group has been consulted on the City Farm Business Plan and endorse the approach taken.
52. The City Farm has also been informed by the 10-week temporary Summer Garden project held at Sydney Park from January to March 2013. The Summer Garden generated strong community engagement, with 70 volunteers donating 850 hours to sustain the operations and weekend workshop events attracting over 500 participants, demonstrating the community's support and anticipation for the future City Farm.
53. The City has been keeping interested community members (650) up to date on progress of the City Farm through a newsletter mailing list, and the Sydney City Farm Community Group has also been distributing information to its 1,500 members.
54. The City consulted with the community on the development of the City Farm Master Plan in Sydney Park over a four-week period from 13 March 2015. This included:
- (a) an on-site consultation day;
 - (b) targeted internal and external stakeholder workshops; and
 - (c) public exhibition of plans on the City's "Sydney Your Say" website.

55. During the consultation period from 13 March to 13 April 2015, engagement was undertaken with stakeholders, such as the Sydney City Farm Community Group, and invitations for feedback sent to various community groups, the Powerhouse Museum, the Royal Agricultural Society, and the Green Living Centre.
56. Community members were notified through a postcard letterbox drop, display advertisement and the City's digital channels. The consultation included promotions through social media and was estimated to reach more than 46, people through Facebook with over 1,200 'Likes'.
57. As part of the ongoing community consultation, an event was held on Saturday, 21 March 2015 at Sydney Park to enable community members to:
 - (a) view the draft design for City Farm;
 - (b) understand how community feedback has shaped the design of City Farm;
 - (c) provide feedback on the draft design; and
 - (d) provide input into the brand identity and name of the farm through a visual and interactive mood board activity.
58. A series of activities were also held for the community to enjoy and engage with sustainable practices including a Native Bee Workshop, bush tucker and indigenous plant talk, and a walk through of the City Farm site with the design team. Community members were also provided with information on the opportunities to be involved with the farm and sign up as a volunteer.
59. The response to the City Farm concept design and overall proposal for a City Farm was overwhelmingly positive, with community members keen for the farm to be established and asking when it would be ready for operations and community involvement. The community wanted to see food production, community involvement and volunteering, education and activities for children, lifelong learning and adult education, sustainable practice and design excellence.
60. More than 200 people attended the event on Saturday, 21 March 2015 and participated in the demonstrations, tours and feedback activities.
61. 72 people completed feedback forms on the concept design (40 at the Community Day on 21 March and 32 online submissions at SydneyYourSay.com.au). A summary of outcomes from the community day and online consultation relating to the design can be found at Attachment C. Two email submissions were also received.
62. During the period from 16 March to 13 April 2015, the City Farm page on SydneyYourSay <http://sydneyyoursay.com.au/city-farm> was accessed by 1,046 visitors. Of these, 363 accessed key documents on the page, and 32 completed feedback forms.
63. Further consultation is planned for the education, learning and program aspects of the City Farm.
64. Design suggestions will be considered by the project team and design team in the next phase of design development.

65. Operational matters will be addressed through the project manager and key staff as part of operational planning for the City Farm.
66. A short video of the event, photographs and the consultation outcomes will be made available on SydneyYourSay.com.au.
67. Community members will be kept updated on the progress of the City Farm in 2015 through a City Farm email newsletter.

GARRY HARDING

Director City Operations

Joel Johnson, Manager City Greening and Leisure
Fred Tilden, Parks Services Manager
Belinda Thackeray, City Farm Project Manager