

**ITEM 9. SMALL PARK UPGRADE – ELIZABETH MCCRAE PLAYGROUND****FILE NO: S084390****SUMMARY**

This report outlines the proposed scope for the renewal of Elizabeth McCrae Playground.

As part of the ongoing small parks and playgrounds improvement program, Elizabeth McCrae Playground, located at 39-45 Kepos Street, Redfern has been identified for renewal.

Following initial consultation, a revised concept plan was presented to the community on-site on 15 November 2015 and exhibited on the City's website. 16 responses were received on the revised concept for Elizabeth McCrae Playground. Community feedback was generally in support of the proposal.

The concept design for Elizabeth McCrae Playground includes upgrading of playground equipment, upgrading of park facilities and general landscape improvements.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that Council endorse the scope of work for improvements to Elizabeth McCrae Playground, as described in the subject report and shown in the revised concept design at Attachment C the subject report, for progression to design development and preparation of construction documentation.

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment A:** Location Plan

**Attachment B:** Elizabeth McCrae Playground – Community Consultation Presentation  
Initial Concept Design

**Attachment C:** Elizabeth McCrae Playground – Community Consultation Presentation  
Revised Concept Design

**Attachment D:** Financial Implications (Confidential)

**(As Attachment D is confidential, it will be circulated separately from the Agenda Paper and to Councillors and relevant senior staff only.)**

**BACKGROUND**

1. The City has an ongoing small parks and playgrounds improvement program for parks that are in need of significant enhancement works to provide up-to-date and appropriate facilities for local residents. Over 34 small parks have been completed since 2007.
2. Elizabeth McCrae Playground has been nominated for upgrade because it has basic park amenities and old play equipment that does not meet current standards.
3. Elizabeth McCrae Playground was occupied by glass work factories from 1905 to 1933. In 1933, the building was leased to Cinesound Studios. The land was vacant from 1947 until acquired by the council and transformed into a park in around 1952-53.
4. Elizabeth McCrae Playground is a local park in Kepos Street, Redfern. The park is approximately 480 square metres and characterised by mature exotic and native tree plantings, open grass areas, a basketball hoop and a basic playground including swings and a slide. The space is fenced and surrounded with a low evergreen hedge. Local residents leave children's toys and tricycles in the park for communal use.
5. The project will provide equipment that conforms to Australian Safety Standards and increase the range of play opportunities within the park. Consideration has been given to the provision of play equipment in surrounding parks to ensure a coordinated network of facilities that caters for a broad range of park users and age groups.

**CONCEPT DESIGN**

6. The concept design phase of the project has set the overall layout and form of proposed playground and open space improvements. The key design principles are:
  - (a) enhance the existing park character;
  - (b) design an imaginative play space that encourages play by children across a broad range of ages and abilities to interact with the natural environment and be physically active;
  - (c) refurbish park furniture and facilities, with simple, robust and high quality materials;
  - (d) increase useable lawn areas and native habitat plantings;
  - (e) maintain sightlines and passive surveillance to create open and safe space; and
  - (f) improve accessibility and permeability.
7. Proposed works include the provision of a neighbourhood children's playground, new path, furniture, planting and signage in order to provide a high quality public open space. The basketball court has been removed to allow for an expanded play space consolidated in the southern section of the park. This takes advantage of the shade trees, and maximises the open lawn area for unstructured play in the sunnier northern half of the park.

8. The key elements include:
  - (a) new playground equipment for young children (five years and under);
  - (b) retained park walls and gates;
  - (c) a renewed lawn area;
  - (d) four new deciduous trees to provide winter sun and summer shade;
  - (e) two new swings and a sand pit;
  - (f) an extended shade structure;
  - (g) additional seating under the shade; and
  - (h) a new drinking fountain.

### **Accessibility**

9. The design provides a new accessible route into and through the park.

### **Tree Management**

10. A review of the existing trees has been undertaken with the City's Arborist. The following tree management is proposed as part of the works:
  - (a) the retention of four existing trees in the park;
  - (b) the relocation of two young trees: one Ginko (*Ginkgo biloba*) relocated within the park and one Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) relocated to a suitable large park;
  - (c) the planting of four new deciduous trees along the northern boundary; and
  - (d) the planting of new shrubs and ground covers throughout the park.

### **COMMUNITY CONSULTATION OUTCOMES**

11. The concept design for the upgrade of Elizabeth McCrae Playground was first exhibited from 21 August to 11 September 2015. In response to community feedback, the design was revised to cater specifically for children aged five and under. The need for more shade, a larger rejuvenated lawn area, and additional seating were also prioritised.
12. The revised concept design was on exhibition from 3 to 17 November 2015. Eighteen submissions were received, with the majority supporting the re-design of the park for young children. Submissions were also positive about the increased shade, trees and shrubs.
13. Eight submissions did not support the removal of the basketball court.

**Consultation Process**

14. The first public exhibition for the concept design involved:
  - (a) a letter was sent to 2,640 local residents about the project inviting them to attend the drop-in session on 5 September 2015;
  - (b) a webpage on SydneyYourSay showed plans for consultation from 21 August to 11 September 2015. 93 individual users viewed the page and 19 users downloaded the plans;
  - (c) a community drop-in session was held on Saturday, 5 September 2015 attended by 20 local residents; and
  - (d) displays of the initial design were available at the One Stop Shop in Town Hall House and at the Redfern Community Centre from 21 August to 11 September 2015.
  
15. The second public exhibition for the revised concept design involved:
  - (a) a letter was sent to 2,640 local residents about the revised plans inviting them to attend the drop-in session on 15 November 2015;
  - (b) A webpage on SydneyYourSay showed revised plans for consultation from 3 to 17 November 2015. 145 individual users viewed the page and 24 users downloaded the revised plans;
  - (c) a community drop-in session was held on Sunday, 15 November 2015 attended by 15 local residents;
  - (d) displays of the revised design were available at the One Stop Shop in Town Hall House and at the Redfern Community Centre from 3 to 17 November 2015; and
  - (e) an on-site meeting at Elizabeth McCrae Playground with the owners of 47 Kepos Street, Redfern. Their property is adjacent to the playground and the revised plan and how it impacts their property was discussed.

**Submissions on Initial Concept Design**

16. Overall, 26 submissions were received on the initial concept design. A letter was sent directly to the Lord Mayor from a local resident, supported by a petition signed by 37 residents.
  
17. Key feedback included:
  - (a) four submissions supported the creation of extra shaded areas within the park, both from trees and shade cover,
  - (b) three submissions asked for the shaded areas to be increased;
  - (c) the refurbishment of the basketball court was supported in three submissions;
  - (d) eight submissions supported the creation of large open play grass area;

- (e) eleven submissions were concerned the play equipment is not suitable for the age group using the park. The submissions mentioned the park is predominately used by parents with toddler aged children (one to four years of age) and they are worried the planned equipment is too advanced for this age group;
- (f) eight submissions asked for the retention of the current swings or the installation of more. Park users would also like individual swings and not the proposed bucket swing;
- (g) two park users asked for the amount of undercover seating to be increased; and
- (h) there were also individual requests for exercise equipment for adults, more grass areas and less hard surfaces, and new drinking fountains.

### **Submissions on Revised Concept Design**

18. Overall, 16 submissions were received on the revised concept design via SydneyYourSay and at the drop-in session.
19. Key feedback included:
  - (a) ten submissions supported the design, including extra shaded areas within the park, both from trees and shade structure, design and play equipment to suit under five age group, increased lawn area, wooden decking area and the planting of additional trees and native shrubs;
  - (b) support for the engagement process, with three people thanking the City for considering the feedback gathered in the first consultation period;
  - (c) eight submissions were not supportive of the removal of the basketball zone, with six people stating the basketball zone is currently used by their older children. Three questioned the City's plans for basketball facilities in other local parks;
  - (d) three submissions questioned where children aged five to nine could play; and
  - (e) one request was made for nest boxes for native birds and animals.

### **Response to Community Feedback**

20. A review on the provision of basketball courts and hoops in the southern part of the CBD has been undertaken and shows that the area is well serviced by them. The nearest basket hoop court is at Redfern Oval located 800 metres (approximately 10 minutes' walk) from Elizabeth McCrae Playground, and a ball basket has recently been installed at Chelsea Street Playground as part of the park upgrade works.
21. Design for improvements at Shannon Reserve will shortly commence, providing another opportunity to review the best role for this park in serving the needs of the community's youth.

22. The Elizabeth McCrae Playground and park can be used by children older than five years, but focuses on younger children and toddlers. The newly completed Chelsea Street Playground, which is approximately 400 metres (or about 5 minutes' walk) away, has been designed with the input of the local primary school children and focuses on older children (five to 12 years).
23. The request for nesting boxes has been forwarded to the City's Urban Ecology Coordinator to consider alignment with the City's Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan.
24. The focus of Elizabeth McCrae Playground is to provide play opportunities for young children and to maximise the lawn area for passive recreation. Due to the size of the park, an outdoor fitness equipment will conflict with these activities.

## KEY IMPLICATIONS

### Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

25. *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 direction 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.
26. The City of Sydney Open Spaces and Recreational Needs Study 2007 establishes the provision and target age of all playgrounds within the Local Government Area. Elizabeth McCrae Playground is identified as neighbourhood scale playground that:
  - (a) caters for short length stays (30 minutes to one hour);
  - (b) is easily accessed by the local community (250 metre radius or 5 minutes' walk); and
  - (c) provides a basic range of equipment and play themes for children.

### Organisational Impact

27. The upgrade will provide improved facilities and a more usable public open space. These higher value assets will require ongoing maintenance.

### Social / Cultural / Community

28. The project will provide updated facilities that are conducive to use by all in the local community, and the general landscape upgrade will improve amenity.

**Environmental**

29. The upgrade of Elizabeth McCrae Playground includes a range of environmentally sustainable elements to improve the environmental performance of the park. The key elements include:
- (a) reuse of park furniture and building materials;
  - (b) retaining the boundary walls and gates; and
  - (c) additional tree and shrub planting.

**Economic**

30. The improved playground and park facilities are likely to attract local residents, which may assist the viability of local businesses, such as the nearby cafes and stores, by encouraging greater locally based activity.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

31. There are sufficient funds allocated to this project within the capital works budget 2015/16 and future years forward estimates.
32. The project budget and cost estimate for the upgrade is presented in detail in confidential Attachment D.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

33. Attachment D contains confidential information which, if disclosed, would 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.
34. Following Council endorsement, an external planner will assess the proposed works under Part 5 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. An Environmental Impact Assessment will be carried out to ensure that all environmental impacts have been identified, assessed and, where required, action is identified to manage impacts.
35. The shade structure in Elizabeth McCrae Playground will require development consent under Part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

**CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

36. The proposed program for the project is:
- (a) Project Documentation December 2015 – February 2016;
  - (b) Construction Tender February – April 2016; and
  - (c) Construction Period May – August 2016.

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

37. Prior to the commencement of construction, the local community will be notified by letterbox drop, and neighbouring properties will be door-knocked and provided with an updated program of works.

**AMIT CHANAN**

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