

**ITEM 2. WATERLOO PARK OUTDOOR FITNESS HUB – ENDORSEMENT OF PROJECT SCOPE****FILE NO: S116371****SUMMARY**

This report outlines the scope of works and concept design for a proposed outdoor fitness hub at Waterloo Park, Waterloo.

Being physically active is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. Access to large, open, high quality and attractive open space can increase levels of physical exercise, and in turn, improve physical and mental health and the wellbeing of the community. Improved health can lead to reductions in chronic diseases and obesity.

In August 2015, Council endorsed the Park Fitness Equipment Plan which established a budget and program to deliver outdoor fitness equipment at 11 sites throughout the Local Government Area. Once the new facilities are delivered, all residents will be within a ten-minute walking distance (800 metre radius) of outdoor fitness equipment. Waterloo Park is nominated as the next site to be delivered under this plan.

The design for the Waterloo Park outdoor fitness hub has been developed in consultation with the community and is informed by the Park Fitness Equipment Plan. The design includes new static and dynamic fitness equipment for a wide range of users, fixing points for imported equipment and associated hard and soft landscaping. The design was placed on public exhibition in July 2017 with all feedback received from residents in support of the project.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is resolved that Council endorse the concept design and scope of works for the Waterloo Park outdoor fitness hub, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report, for progression to detailed design, documentation and tender for construction of the works.

**ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment A:** Outdoor Fitness Area Concept Design – Waterloo Park, Waterloo

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

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

**BACKGROUND**

1. The City's parks and open spaces provide for the diverse recreational needs of residents and visitors.
2. Being physically active is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle. Access to large, open, high quality and attractive open space can increase levels of physical exercise, and in turn, improve physical and mental health and the wellbeing of the community (Giles-Corti 2006, Planning Institute of Australia 2009). Improved health can lead to reductions in chronic diseases and obesity.
3. The City recognises the importance of providing accessible, safe, inclusive, needs-based facilities for fitness and physical exercise. The City encourages physical exercise through the provision of outdoor fitness equipment in parks. The City currently provides outdoor fitness equipment in nine parks.
4. The City's parks are heavily utilised for fitness and active recreation. High use leads to damage of park assets, including seating, trees and turf, where inadequate fitness facilities are provided.
5. On 27 April 2015, Council endorsed a Lord Mayoral Minute "Meeting Future Open Space, Recreation and Sporting Needs". The minute outlined the City's commitment to improving and expanding sporting facilities and open space for active recreation. It acknowledged the importance of active recreation in improving physical and mental health, self-esteem, personal development, social inclusion and connection, and recognised the challenge of addressing changing demographics and trends.
6. On 10 August 2015, Council endorsed the Park Fitness Equipment Plan which guides the delivery of 11 future fitness equipment projects to establish a comprehensive network across the Local Government Area. Waterloo Park is nominated as the third priority site in this plan. The fitness station at Turruwul Park (first priority site) was completed in October 2016. The second priority site (Alexandria Park, Alexandria) has been deferred to allow the City time to investigate opportunities to integrate with the upcoming redevelopment of the adjacent school.
7. In 2016, Council adopted the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Study. This study highlighted the importance of promoting physical activity and providing space for active recreation within the City's parks.
8. Waterloo Park is the next park to be delivered under the Park Fitness Equipment Plan.

**CONCEPT DESIGN**

9. The design for the Waterloo Park fitness hub (at Attachment A) has been informed by the Park Fitness Equipment Plan and community feedback and includes:
  - (a) seventeen pieces of new static fitness equipment including accessible equipment;
  - (b) a staircase for cardiovascular exercise;
  - (c) recycled brick paving consistent with the character of the surrounding area;
  - (d) fixing points to allow the use of imported equipment such as straps, ropes and harnesses;

- (e) new seating walls, benches, bubblers and signs;
  - (f) drainage improvements including a swale and new stormwater pits and pipes;
  - (g) protection of all existing trees; and
  - (h) rubber softfall to meet Australian Standards.
10. The design supports the objectives of the Outdoor Fitness Code of Conduct by providing equitable, safe, needs-based fitness facilities, which will mitigate impacts of fitness training.

## KEY IMPLICATIONS

### Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

11. *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.
12. This proposal is aligned with the following *Sustainable Sydney 2030* strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies - The proposal is expected to increase the positive activation of Waterloo Park by adding to the existing recreation facilities at the park (playground and basketball half-court), and also encourage a broader range of users.
  - (b) Direction 8 - Housing for a Diverse Population – Waterloo has some of the most diverse residents in the Local Government Area in age, ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds. The City's provision of outdoor recreation facilities within the area provides opportunities for a wide range of residents to develop social networks and healthier lifestyles by encouraging physical activity.
  - (c) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design – New park fitness equipment facilities will improve the quality of the City's parks and open space network by providing activation for community use. Design excellence will be promoted in the design of new facilities to contribute to beautiful City parks.

### Organisational Impact

13. The proposal will not have any significant organisational impact. New facilities will be monitored and maintained through current operational procedures and resources. New equipment will be regularly inspected and maintained under existing contracts to ensure compliance with Australian Standards.

### Risks

14. A design risk assessment will be completed as part of the detailed design works along with the necessary planning, regulatory, environmental and construction approvals.

15. The proposal has been discussed with the Redfern Police and also the City's Safe City team to identify any site-specific risks. The outdoor fitness hub is expected to increase daytime activation of the site by encouraging more visitors to engage in recreational activities at Waterloo Park.
16. The site is bordered by a driveway and access stairs to McEvoy Street on property owned by Housing NSW. The City and Redfern Police are currently working with this organisation to advocate for lighting and safety improvements in the area.

**Social / Cultural / Community**

17. Increased participation in physical exercise and fitness pursuits has been found to improve the mental and physical health of the community.
18. Fitness equipment in parks encourages social interaction between diverse park users which can further encourage and motivate the community to continue using facilities.

**Environmental**

19. By providing opportunities to improve the fitness of nearby residents, these residents may also be more inclined to use active transport in the area.
20. Tree protection measures have been incorporated into the design with all existing trees retained.

**Economic**

21. On a broad scale, improvements to public health within the Waterloo community through an increase in physical activity may potentially reduce economic impacts to public healthcare.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

22. There are sufficient funds to deliver the project in the Fitness Stations in Larger Parks Program Budget (2017/18), subject to the approval of the Quarter One report.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

23. Attachment B 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.
24. Local Government Act 1993 – relevant to the use of community lands for recreational activities and for procurement.
25. Playground Australian Standards will be used to guide design of equipment and fitness station hubs to ensure they are safe and fit for purpose.
26. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (Part 4 and 5). A planner will review the scope of works to assess consent requirements for the project under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

**CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES**

27. The proposed timeframes for the site design and construction are:
- (a) Council endorsement of the concept design – November 2017.
  - (b) Tender – November 2017.
  - (c) Construction – February 2018 to April 2018.

**OPTIONS**

28. Proceeding with the project would respond to feedback received from the community and deliver on the objectives of the Park Fitness Equipment Plan and Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Study.
29. Council could defer or cancel this project, however this would not respond to feedback received from the community and would delay the delivery of the City's Open Space objectives.

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

30. Intercept surveys at eight parks proposed for future outdoor fitness equipment (including Waterloo Park) were conducted over a two-week period in March 2015. The objective of the surveys was to seek park user feedback in regards to outdoor fitness equipment during the formulation of the Park Fitness Equipment Plan. There were 28 participants in the survey conducted at Waterloo Park and the key findings are summarised below:
- (a) Eighty-six per cent of these participants regarded Waterloo Park as a suitable site.
  - (b) In response to design ideas for an outdoor fitness equipment area, 57 per cent preferred static equipment and 54 per cent preferred for the equipment to be located in a central hub. Ninety-seven per cent requested a bubbler, 89 per cent requested shade and 79 per cent requested seating.
31. This feedback was incorporated into the design for community consultation by locating static outdoor fitness equipment in a central hub split over terraces to respond to typography and including seating terraces, near large shade trees. A bubbler has also been provided in the design.
32. A consultation letter was sent to 2,670 local residents and businesses in June 2017 informing them of the project and where to view the concept design on 'Sydney Your Say.'
33. Five responses were received, all in support of the project. Feedback received from residents noted that the site would increase activation of the area, that they intended to use the equipment (this included respondents with children) and that the site needed upgrading.

34. One resident also requested a fenced, off-leash area for dogs, and another requested a tennis 'hit up' wall similar to the installation at Turruwul Park. Due to the sloping typography of the site and proximity to trees, the area does not have additional space for a tennis hit up area or a fenced, off-leash dog area.

**DAVID RIORDAN**

Director City Operations

James Lawton, A/Parks Programs Manager

Jacqui Brooks, Parks Assets and Services Manager