

## **Project Scope – Small Parks Upgrade - Womerah Gardens, Darlinghurst**

**File No: X019561.003**

### **Summary**

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the upgrade of Womerah Gardens, located at 25A Womerah Avenue Darlinghurst. Womerah Gardens has been identified for renewal as part of the small parks and playgrounds improvement program.

Concept plans were presented to the community between 29 March and 26 April 2019 and exhibited on the City's website. Community feedback was broadly in support of the proposal, with community suggestions incorporated into the concept where possible. This includes a change in maintenance of existing hedges, additional planting, a review of park signage and provision of bin bags for dog walkers.

The proposals for Womerah Gardens include wall rectification works, improved access and circulation through and within the park. As well as, renewed turf, planting across the site and provision of a variety of additional seating opportunities.

### **Recommendation**

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the scope of work for improvements to Womerah Gardens as described in the subject report and shown in the concept design as Attachment B to the subject report, for progression to preparation of construction documentation, tender and construction, and;
- (B) note the estimated project forecast as outlined in Confidential Attachment C to the subject report

### **Attachments**

- Attachment A.** Location Plan
- Attachment B.** Consultation Concept Plan
- Attachment C.** Financial Implications (Confidential)

## Background

1. The City has an ongoing small parks and playgrounds improvement program for parks that are in need of upgrade or enhancement works, replacement of end of life play equipment, and to provide appropriate facilities for local residents.
2. Womerah Gardens was identified for an upgrade due to the park's overall condition, including the rectification of an existing low brick retaining wall to the park's eastern boundary affected by adjacent tree roots.
3. Womerah Gardens is a local park located on a triangular piece of land between Womerah Avenue and Craighend Street, Darlinghurst. The gardens were constructed after several terrace houses were removed for the construction of the Kings Cross tunnel in the late 1960's
4. The park is approximately 937 square metres and is characterised by a formal circular lawn area sunken into a bowl shape and large planting areas to the northern side as a buffer to the Kings Cross tunnel. There are two entries from Womerah Avenue and Craighend Street with paved areas and some seating
5. Currently there is no path access between the two paved areas, and the western entry is narrow with poor sight lines. Materials consist of brick paving, brick edging, sandstone walls and a timber park seats.
6. The planting palette consists of an eclectic mix of exotic and native species of varying success. A large Camphor Laurel tree, *Cinnamomum camphora* at the eastern side of the park provides significant amenity and shade. A significant number of small Golden Robinia trees, *Robinia pseudoacacia 'frisla'* are in failing condition.
7. The park is a well-used local green space on a popular pedestrian route between south Darlinghurst and Kings Cross and Kings Cross station. It is popular with dog owners. There is no formal play equipment.
8. The concept design sets the overall layout and proposes a number of minor works to improve park access, circulation, safety landscape quality and amenity. The proposals include:
  - (a) repair and replace cracked walls, stairs and mitigate trip hazards;
  - (b) widen the main western entry and provide additional seating to improve accessibility sightlines and amenity. Minor regrading and new handrails to stairs for accessibility compliance;
  - (c) upgrade the eastern plaza area, with repaired paving, steps and walls with new seating. Provide a new linking brick path to provide an on grade connection between the east and west areas to consolidating the park as a unified space. Provide additional seating adjacent to the lawn area;
  - (d) reduce the slopes of the lawn area to increase the useable green space. Returf where required;
  - (e) new understorey planting throughout of more robust planting, including increased habitat planting to enhance the park biodiversity
  - (f) new stone edging for the garden beds and sloped areas to contain mulch run off;

- (g) provide a variety of seating opportunities (sun/shade) that encourages social interaction;
  - (h) a water bubbler with dog bowl;
  - (i) re-use, recycle and refurbish elements and materials. New materials to be simple, robust and of high quality reflecting the local neighbourhood character; and
  - (j) meet the requirements of the City of Sydney Design Codes and Australian Standards.
9. There are currently 19 Trees within the park and the trees vary in size and condition. On both street edges surrounding the park there are additional 14 street tree plantings.
10. The following tree management and planting is proposed as part of the park works:
- (a) the removal of seven Golden Robinia (*Robinia pseudoacacia 'Frisia'*) within the park which are deemed to be in failing condition;
  - (b) the planting of seven replacement trees (small-medium deciduous trees, species to be confirmed during design development); and
  - (c) the planting of new shrubs and ground covers throughout the garden.

## 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. This plan is aligned with the following strategic direction and objectives:
- (a) Direction 4: A City for walking and cycling – this project provides local recreational activities and encourages residents to walk and cycle to local parks.
  - (b) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design - this project will provide improved open space infrastructure for the public supporting a variety of user groups in an improved landscape setting.

### Organisational Impact

12. The upgrade works will provide improved passive recreation facilities. The rectification of both the wall and paths of failed assets represent a removal/mitigation of risk to the City. The assets will require ongoing maintenance.

### Risks

13. Risks to not implementing the scope of these works is potential failure of infrastructure and risk to the community.

### Social / Cultural / Community

14. The project will provide improved passive recreation facilities that can be used by all members of the local community, encouraging healthy activity and social interaction.

**Environmental**

15. The upgrade of Womerah Gardens includes a range of environmentally sustainable elements to improve the environmental performance of the park. The key elements include:
  - (a) re-use of park furniture where appropriate; and
  - (b) supplementary planting of low-water use plants.

**Budget Implications**

16. There are sufficient funds in the current year capital budget and future year forward estimate. Current cost estimates and financial implications are detailed in Confidential Attachment C.

**Relevant Legislation**

17. Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) - under the Act, a council's charter is to provide adequate, equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community and to ensure that those services and facilities are managed efficiently and effectively.
18. Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) - the City has a responsibility to ensure, as far as practicable, that people with disabilities have the same rights to access services and facilities.
19. Companion Animals Act 1998 No 87 (NSW) - Division 1 Section 13 - Responsibilities while dog in public place.
20. Attachment C to the subject report contains confidential commercial information which, if disclosed, would:
  - (a) confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business; and
  - (b) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.
21. 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

### 22. Current Program Dates

- Community Consultation April 2019
- Council Approval of Concept Design June 2019
- Complete Final Design July 2019
- Tender July-November 2019
- Construction January 2020-July 2020

## Options

23. No action taken - this option is not recommended as the existing park has a number of associated risks and compliance issues with regard to access.
24. Improvement works to be undertaken in accordance with the asset renewal brief and as recommended in this subject report.

## Public Consultation

25. Consultation was undertaken as a two part process; pre-consultation and public consultation/exhibition.
26. Pre-consultation notification letter/email was issued to the following local stakeholders to notify them of the project and provide a link to a pre-consultation survey.
- (a) Darlinghurst Residents' Action Group. No submissions were received.
27. The concept design was on exhibition from 29 March to 26 April 2019. Eight submissions were received, including four via Survey Monkey and four via Sydney your Say email address, with the majority in support of the proposed works.
- (a) The public consultation/exhibition involved the following: A letter sent to 110 local residents about the concept design and inviting them to provide feedback;
- (b) Stakeholder email sent to key stakeholders, inviting them to give feedback on the proposal. The email was sent to:
- (i) Darlinghurst Residents' Action Group. No submissions were received.
- (c) A webpage on SydneyYourSay showing the plans for consultation from 29 March to 26 April 2019. Seventy four individual users viewed the page and thirty one users downloaded the plans.
- (d) Two Have your Say A2 panels were installed in the park notifying park users of the proposed works, providing contact details of the Design Manager and a web address to the SydneyYourSay page;

28. Key feedback included:
- (a) Proposed concept design including path works, provision of seating, upgraded lawn area was well supported across most submissions;
  - (b) Three submissions requested consideration of the noise associated with the traffic on Craigend Street as part of the works suggestions included change in maintenance of the hedge on Craigend Street, additional planting and a physical noise barrier
  - (c) Three submissions requested works be completed at Arthur Reserve including new planting and modification to the existing water feature;
  - (d) One submission had concern over the removal of the Golden Robinia trees;
  - (e) Two submissions proposed provision of play opportunities for children including playground and skate park;
  - (f) One submission highlighted need for provision for dog walkers including regulatory signage and bin bags;
  - (g) One submission highlighted the need for further historical interpretation to be incorporated into the signage
29. In response to this consultation the following is proposed to be incorporated into the proposed works:
- (a) change in maintenance to the hedge on Craigend Street to allow plants to maximise height;
  - (b) additional tree planting where appropriate;
  - (c) review of park signage to include additional heritage interpretation
  - (d) provision of bin bags on the proposed bins;
  - (e) In response to the requested works at Arthur Reserve, the asset condition of the reserve is considered good so is not currently scheduled for works in the next five years.

**AMIT CHANAN**

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