

Project Scope - Ross Street Playground Upgrade, Glebe

File No: X018887.003

Summary

This report outlines the proposed scope for the renewal of the Ross Street Playground located on the corner of Ross Street and Charles Street, Glebe. This playground has been identified for renewal as part of the City's ongoing small parks and playgrounds improvement program.

Currently Ross Street Playground includes a small, aging playground area with pine bark mulch, sloping and flat turf areas, rocky outcrops and mature trees. The playground and turf areas are fully enclosed with a low chain wire fence.

The design has been refined in consultation with the local community and will retain all of the playground's trees, improve accessibility and expand the play opportunities within the site. Aging playground equipment will be replaced with new climbing structures, a slide, cubby house and timber platforms to utilise the site's existing sloping embankments. Swings and interactive equipment will be also be provided on flat areas with rubber softfall.

To cater for visitors who do not use the playground, a lawn area with shaded seating will be provided away from the playground equipment retaining the current arrangement of the site.

Following a four week consultation period held over April 2019, the City received 23 responses including 20 submissions in support of the concept design. Many responses requested an additional gate be added to the proposal, which has been incorporated into the design.

Construction is scheduled to occur from December 2019 until April 2020.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the concept design for the renewal of Ross Street Playground, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report, for progression to detailed design, documentation and tender for construction of the works; and
- (B) note the estimated project forecast as outlined in Confidential Attachment B to the subject report

Attachments

Attachment A. Concept Design

Attachment B. Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. The City has an ongoing small parks and playgrounds asset renewal program to identify and resource works to ensure parks and playgrounds are 'fit for purpose.'
2. Ross Street Playground was identified for renewal between 2018 and 2020 as part of this program. The current playground is in poor asset condition and nearing the end of its useful life.
3. The City classifies Ross Street Playground as a pocket park. Pocket parks primarily service the local neighbourhood and are not envisaged to be a 'destination.' This has guided the scope and budget of the renewal works to be more of a modest upgrade compared to the scope of 'destination' parks such as the nearby Harold Park Playground.
4. Ross Street Playground covers an area of approximately 840 square metres and is defined by a perimeter chain wire fence to all sides. Within the fencing is a small and underutilised playground with old playground equipment and bark chip mulch, turf embankments, a number of semi-mature trees and sections of sandstone walling. A small number of neighbouring residents use a section of the footpath to the rear of the site to access as a shared driveway. A layback for this driveway is provided on Minogue Crescent. This access will be retained as part of the renewal works.
5. The design of the renewal works aim to improve the quality and amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood by creating a welcoming, safe and engaging play space within Ross Street Playground. The playground equipment has been designed to cater for primary school aged children.

6. Specifically the design aims to:
 - (a) improve access from Ross Street and Charles Street;
 - (b) replace the aging equipment with new and higher quality playground equipment utilising the existing embankments including climbing structures, a slide, cubby house and timber platforms. Swings and interactive equipment are provided on flat areas with softfall to meet Australian Standards;
 - (c) install a water bubbler;
 - (d) improve circulation by adding accessible paved pathways within the site and providing an additional entrance to connect to the adjacent school;
 - (e) renew the fencing and add hedging to screen the Ross Street traffic;
 - (f) provide shaded areas to sit and relax;
 - (g) retain all of the trees; and
 - (h) plant more shrubs, grasses and an additional tree to attract native wildlife.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

7. 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 project is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 2 provides a road map for the City to become A Leading Environmental Performer - the design will retain all of the current trees and utilise them for shade and play opportunities. The underlying theme of the design is to bring natural elements into the play space and new planting will provide an opportunity to increase biodiversity within the site.
 - (b) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies - local pocket parks and playgrounds provide a unique focal point for local social and recreational activities. The new playground equipment will expand the recreational offering of the playground and enhance the liveability of the surrounding area for existing and future residents. Local parks and playgrounds also provide opportunities for local communities to interact, creating a sense of place and inclusivity.
 - (c) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design - the City's principles for sustainable design have guided the design brief for the renewal works and has sought to utilise natural and recycled elements. These principles will also be embedded in the construction contract.

City of Sydney Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Study 2016

8. The Study provides a series of directions and recommendations for future planning, provision, development and management of public open space and recreation facilities within the City of Sydney.

9. The strategy notes the need to improve the quality and capacity of our open space to cater for a growing population through the:
 - (a) provision of new and improved recreational facilities and amenities to encourage social interaction;
 - (b) improved layout, legibility and circulation in public spaces to increase safety;
 - (c) achievement of greater aesthetic appeal; and
 - (d) promotion of quality park facilities to support the increased density within the City, encourage healthy lifestyles and support local ecology.

Organisational Impact

10. 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

11. The Head Design Consultant will prepare a Design Safety Assessment to identify and minimise any risks provided by the new playground by ensuring the equipment and surrounding soft fall areas can be safely used, maintained and managed. The playground will also be certified in regards to relevant Australian Standards by an independent certifier during the design stage.

Social / Cultural / Community

12. The renewed playground will provide more play opportunities for the community and cater to a wider age range of users of the playground. Seating areas may also encourage local community interactions.

Environmental

13. The design retains all of the existing trees within the site and provides new tree and shrub planting as part of the City's 2030 Objectives for increasing tree canopy cover, promoting Biodiversity and supporting Urban Ecology.

Budget Implications

14. The concept design for the renewal works has been quantified and costed and is forecast for delivery within the endorsed project budget. The budget for Ross Street Playground was endorsed by Council as part of the 10 Year Parks Renewal Capital Works Program in June 2018.

15. Confidential Attachment B outlines the endorsed budget and financial forecast for the project.

Relevant Legislation

16. Local Government Act 1993 – relevant to the use of community lands for recreational activities and for procurement
17. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (Part 4 and 5) - an external planning consultancy will review the scope of works to assess consent requirements for the project under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
18. Attachment B contains confidential commercial information of the City which, if disclosed, would confer a commercial advantage on a person whom Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business with.
19. 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

20. The proposed timeframes for the site design and construction are:
 - (a) Council endorsement of the concept design and scope – June 2019;
 - (b) Completion of detailed design and procurement for construction – November 2019;
 - (c) Construction - December 2019 to April 2020. As the playground is adjacent to a primary school, works over the holiday period are expected to be less disruptive during this time.

Options

21. Proceeding with the project would respond to feedback received from the community and deliver on the objectives of the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Study
22. Council could defer or cancel this project, however this would not respond to feedback received from the community, and would lead to poor asset management outcomes. As the playground is currently in poor condition, delaying or deferring this project could lead to increased maintenance and repair costs to manage risks. Over time this could require the City to remove the playground equipment resulting in reduced amenity for the area.

Public Consultation

23. The City sought feedback from local residents on the proposed Concept Design from 29 March 2019 to 29 April 2019. Responses were sought by sending letters to 321 residences, providing a consultation page and survey on the City's website and by installing signage in the park.
24. 23 responses were collected by the City's survey and by direct submissions received from residents, including 20 in overall support of the design, two objections to an un-gated entrance nominated in the design and one response which did not address the design.
25. The responses in support provided enthusiastic comments in regards to the City's intention to renew the playground.
26. The two objections to the new un-gated entrance on Charles Street have been addressed by adding a gate to this entrance. Nine supporters of the overall concept design also requested for this new entrance to be gated.
27. There were also a wide range of requests from residents nominating particular playground equipment to cater for the age group of their own dependants mentioned in their submission. The intention of the City's renewal of this playground is to provide play activities for the majority of users who fall within the age range of the adjacent primary school. As the playground equipment nominated in the Concept Design has been designed to cater for these users, further changes are not being made to the playground equipment. Within a five minute walk from Ross Street Playground are both Harold Park Playground and May Pitt playground which can offer play opportunities for wider age groups.
28. Four responses raised concerns regarding the presence of dogs within Ross Street Playground. The existing playground signage currently prohibits dogs from this site and this signage will be retained in the playground renewal. Rangers actively monitor parks such as Ross Street Playground for compliance with rules and bylaws stated on park signage.

DAVID RIORDAN

Director City Services

James Lawton, Project Manager

Joel Johnson, Manager City Greening and Leisure