

Relevant Information for Council

FILE: X006324 **DATE:** 18 February 2022

TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Amit Chanan, Director City Projects and Property

THROUGH: Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 7.4 – Synthetic Sportsfield Program

Alternative Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) note the progress of the Synthetics Sportsfield Program; and
- (B) does not proceed with the proposal for synthetic sports fields at Turruwul Park or at Waterloo Oval;
- (C) approve the transfer of funds to the Sportsfield Development Program as set out in Confidential Attachment B to the subject report;
- (D) approve the development of concept designs for multi-purpose ~~synthetic~~ sports fields at Mandible Street, Alexandria;
- (E) ***note the NSW Government's commitment to facilitating the return of Wentworth Park as public open space in the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy (Action 9); and***
- (F) ***note that the City is developing a masterplan for the whole of Wentworth Park as a basis for further discussion with the NSW Government, given the current lease with Wentworth Park Greyhounds expires in 2027.***

(Additions shown in ***bold italics***, deletions shown in ~~strikethrough~~).

Background

At the meeting of the Environment Committee on 14 February 2022, further information was sought on the following:

New Information/Research Available on Synthetic Turf in Australia

In 2021 the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) commissioned Ethos Urban to undertake a preliminary study into the social, environmental, and economic impacts, benefits, and limitations of using synthetic turf as a replacement for natural grass in public open spaces across NSW.

The NSW Government is currently preparing Guidelines on the use of synthetic surfaces in public open space. These guidelines will be informed by further investigation by the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer.

A Progress report was released by the NSW Government Chief Scientist and Engineer on 8 February 2022. The report indicates that the focus to date has been on information gathering, categorising thematic areas of interest, prioritising issues for review, identifying data requirements and sources. The Final Report is expected to be delivered in mid-2022.

When available the City will ensure that recommendations from this review will be incorporated into any future projects.

Design and Management Measures Being Implemented

Individual fields are subject to a site-specific design and environmental assessment process to address the risk of synthetic field materials migrating into surrounding soil areas and into the wider stormwater system.

A range of different strategies are being implemented to manage these risks including:

- (a) Installation of concrete dish drains and / or a raised edge to the field to reduce the probability of materials migrating from the field of play;
- (b) All field drains to have filters installed to capture any materials before they enter the stormwater outlets; and
- (c) Regular maintenance of the field of play and surrounding areas to reduce the level of migration off the field.
- (d) Soft landscaping around the fields, including maximising opportunities to increase tree canopy in the surrounding area.

Meeting the requirements for additional playable hours in the City

The Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Study (2016) forecast the need to increase capacity by up to 20 turf fields by 2030 (16,000 playable hours).

Four strategies were identified to meet this target:

- (a) Increase capacity of existing sports field sites;
- (b) Build new sports field on existing City of Sydney sites;
- (c) Partner with other land owners to provide for public use; and

- (d) Purchase land and construct.

In 2017, the City approved a sports field upgrade programme in its 10 Year Capital Works Plan to upgrade and construct a number of sports fields across the City. A key strategy of the programme was to introduce multiuse synthetic grass fields as they provide a far higher usage capacity than traditional grass fields.

Significant progress has been made to date including:

- (a) Construction of a new synthetic playing field at Gunyama Park, Zetland - completed late 2020;
- (b) Partnership with the Department of Education to construct a new multi-purpose synthetic field at Alexandria Park Community School - forecast for completion mid 2022;
- (c) Detailed design and documentation for construction of a new compact sized multipurpose synthetic sports field at The Crescent, Annandale - forecast for completion mid 2023; and
- (d) Detailed design and documentation for construction of a new synthetic playing field at Perry Park, Alexandria - forecast for completion early 2024.

These projects will collectively increase playable hours by an additional 11,000+ hours.

The following sites have been identified as having capacity to accommodate additional sports fields which will potentially enable the City to meet the playable hours target:

- (e) Mandible Street Recreational Precinct

The City has acquired four properties located at Mandible Street, Alexandria (41, 25, 33-39 and 30). Together with a partial closure of Mandible Street, these properties have the potential to create a passive and recreational sporting precinct including a full sized playing field and a compact / practice field.

Concept designs for the Mandible Street Recreational Precinct will be developed and considered by Council. It is anticipated that this will occur no earlier than 2024.

- (f) Wentworth Park

On 21 October 2019 Council resolved to undertake a masterplan for Wentworth Park to use as a basis for discussion with the NSW Government and the community on how to best manage this important park.

The Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy published by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment in December 2020 commits to facilitating the return of Wentworth Park to the community as public open space (Action 9). The strategy notes that a working group with government agencies and stakeholders will be established to assist in identifying a suitable alternative site for greyhound racing.

The City has commenced development of a masterplan for the whole of the Wentworth Park site and options for additional playing field/s are being developed.

Memo from Amit Chanan, Director City Projects and Property

Prepared by: Marcia Morley, Senior Manager Development and Strategy
Scott Young, Development Manager

Approved

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P.M. Barone', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

MONICA BARONE
Chief Executive Officer