

Item 5.

Project Scope - Wattle Lane Park Playground / McKee Street Reserve Upgrade

File No: X083832

Summary

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the park refurbishment at Wattle Lane Park Playground/ McKee Street Reserve, Ultimo. McKee Street Reserve has been identified as part of the small parks and playgrounds improvement program.

The project brief is to refurbish the play area including the replacement of end-of-life equipment and soft-fall as required, provide a range of play experiences, improve access into and through the park, improve the function of the existing turf areas, and provide additional seating and associated landscape improvements. The existing community garden will also be upgraded with new raised planting beds and additional composting bins.

The Draft Concept Plan was on public exhibition from 9 November to 7 December 2022. A letter was distributed in the local area and the proposal was exhibited on the City's website. The City's project team met with the community garden group and attended a pop up in the park on the 22 November 2022. The proposal was well supported by the community and the responses highlighted that an upgrade to this park would increase the current use of the park.

The proposal relocates the community garden further north of the Reserve and relocates the lawn to the southern end closer to the playground. The upgrade includes provision of a local scale play space which improves the play opportunities for children aged one to 10, a larger plaza area, picnic area and barbeque, a range of seating opportunities which encourage social interaction and use simple and robust materials which reflect the local neighbourhood character.

This report recommends that Council endorse the proposed scope of works for the park refurbishment at Wattle Lane Park Playground/McKee Street Reserve, Ultimo and increase the budget to cover the additional scope.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the scope of improvements to the playground and the community garden at McKee Street Reserve, Ultimo as described in the subject report and shown in the Revised Concept Plan as Attachment B to the subject report, for progression to relevant approvals, preparation of construction documentation, tender and construction; and
- (B) approve the additional funds required to deliver the project as outlined in Confidential Attachment D to the subject report.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Location Plan and Site Photos
- Attachment B.** Revised Concept Plan
- Attachment C.** Engagement Report
- Attachment D.** Financial Implications (Confidential)

Background

1. The City has an ongoing small parks and playgrounds improvement program. This program is for parks which need upgrade or enhancement works, the replacement of end-of-life equipment, and to generally provide appropriate facilities for local residents.
2. McKee Street Reserve is a local park located between Wattle Lane and McKee Street in Ultimo. It is bound by residential, student accommodation and the Magic Pudding Child Care Centre (refer to Attachment A). The site is approximately 1,097 square metres.
3. The land is owned by the City of Sydney.
4. The reserve is characterised as a small pocket park playground and community garden, with paved frontage along McKee Street, retaining wall and a set of stairs along Wattle Lane frontage. The reserve is framed by mature trees that provide shade to the community garden and playground.
5. The existing play equipment includes a climbing tower with slide, a fireman's pole, hanging bars, a rocker and spinner. It is well shaded with the adjacent mature trees and additional shade sail.
6. Consideration has been given to the provision of play equipment existing in surrounding parks within a 500 metre radius of this site, to ensure a coordinated network of facilities that caters for a broad range of park users, noting the adjacent childcare centre frequently uses the playground out of hours.

Draft Concept Plan

7. Initial discussions with the community garden group and local residents were held on site. From these discussions a concept design was developed, and community consultation undertaken.
8. Following consultation, feedback from the community has been incorporated into the design.
9. The concept design sets the overall layout. The key principles are:
 - (a) provide an accessible, welcoming and safe park for the community and visitors;
 - (b) provide a local scale play space that improves the play opportunities for local children with a range of structured equipment and imaginative play elements;
 - (c) increase the usable area and improve usability by consolidating and better arranging park elements;
 - (d) upgrade and improve accessibility around the community garden, providing additional composting facilities;
 - (e) provide a range of seating opportunities and relocate the barbeque to encourage social interaction;
 - (f) upgrade the existing lighting to the reserve and address the failing boundary fence and brick retaining wall to Wattle Lane;

- (g) provide improved access opportunities from Wattle Lane into the reserve to improve safety; and
 - (h) use simple, robust, high-quality materials which reflect the local neighbourhood character.
10. The proposal includes the following:
- (a) upgrade the playground and community garden area and provide a new open plaza 'space' and lawn area to the south of the site;
 - (b) a new play structure with slide, deck and platforms, swings, and small nature play;
 - (c) the playground will include inclusive access to the play elements;
 - (d) more seats in the plaza and new barbeque;
 - (e) new perimeter seating and enhanced planting areas with new groundcover and low shrub planting;
 - (f) existing feature bubbler will be removed and replaced with a new accessible water bubbler and refurbished bin;
 - (g) new raised community garden planters and composting bins, retention of the community garden signage; and
 - (h) reconstruct failed retaining walls to the western boundary (Wattle Lane).
11. In response to the community consultation, the following has been amended and included in the revised concept and will be further investigated in the detailed design as noted in Attachment C:
- (a) removal of the stair upgrades to the north of Wattle Lane and the inclusion of additional seating;
 - (b) retention of the existing stairs; and
 - (c) relocation of the barbeque closer into the plaza space.
12. Additionally, the following will be investigated for inclusion in the scope:
- (a) improvements to stormwater to assist with standing water and mosquitos in the reserve.
13. The following tree management and planting is proposed as part of the park works:
- (a) remove five trees, two suppressed Casuarinas on the northern boundary, one heavily suppressed Eucalypt sp, (1) Acacia sp. with partial root plate failure and one Jacaranda sp. with photometric lean. Retain and protect all other existing trees; and
 - (b) preparation of an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan to inform the detailed design and ensure appropriate construction methodology

14. A Review of Environmental Factors (REF) will be lodged for the works in accordance with the Environmental Planning Assessment Act 1979 and the State Environment Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

15. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. 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 directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 3 - Public places for all - This project will provide an improved open space and streetscape which meets the needs of a variety of users and provides opportunities for social interaction.
 - (b) Direction 4 - Design excellence and sustainable development - This project is part of a wider program of renewal of local small parks and reserves across the city. It will provide an improved quality of open space.
 - (c) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - This project will improve the streetscape and amenity of the area, encouraging walking and active recreation.
 - (d) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - This project will provide public play and gathering spaces for all ages and abilities.

Organisational Impact

16. Upgrading the playground will provide improved play experience and amenity for children and their carers. The replacement of the play assets will mitigate risk to the City. The assets will require ongoing maintenance.
17. Upgrading the footpath pavement in the park and on McKee Street will improve the quality of these existing pavements and will mitigate risk to the City. The assets will require ongoing maintenance.

Risks

18. Risks of not implementing the scope of these works include potential failure of play infrastructure and risk to the community. Daily inspections are carried out by the City as per the standard parks and playground maintenance operations.
19. Risks of not implementing this scope of works could result in failure to meet community expectations.

Social / Cultural / Community

20. Improving the amenity and play offering within the park represents an investment in this community, providing opportunities for people of different ages and abilities to use the park alongside each other.

Environmental

21. Protection and enhancement of the existing planting and trees through this work is in line with the Urban Ecology Strategic Action Plan.

Financial Implications

22. The project budget for the delivery of the Wattle Lane Playground/McKee Street Reserve upgrade is detailed in Confidential Attachment D. There are insufficient funds allocated to the project to deliver the increased scope. Additional funds have been sought from the Open Space renewal provision included in the Long Term Financial Plan as outlined in Confidential Attachment D. Additional funds have been sought as part of the Q2 review which is the subject of a separate paper in the February Council reporting cycle.
23. The design development phase of the project will confirm project costings in additional detail. Construction cost estimates will be confirmed by a Quantity Surveyor prior to tender.

Relevant Legislation

24. Local Government Act 1993 - Section 10A provides that a council may close to the public so much of its meeting as comprises the discussion of information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
25. Attachment D to the subject report contains confidential information which, if disclosed, would confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business.
26. 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.
27. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
28. State Environment Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021.
29. Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012.
30. Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

31. Current Program Dates:
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| (a) Council approval of Concept Design | February 2023 |
| (b) Detailed Design | May 2023 |
| (c) Tender | September 2023 |
| (d) Construction start | Early 2024 |
| (e) Completion | Mid 2024 |

Options

32. Proceed with the progression of the improvement works as outlined in this subject report including relevant approvals, preparation of construction documentation, tender and construction.
33. Project does not proceed - this option is not recommended as the current condition of the playground has a number of associated risk and compliance issues.

Public Consultation

34. Community consultation was undertaken as a two-part process; early engagement (pre-consultation) and public consultation/exhibition. For a detailed description of the consultation process and findings refer to Attachment C.
35. An early engagement notification letter/email was issued to residents. Thirteen submissions were received during the period. The purpose of the early engagement was to seek input from the community about how they used the playground and how the reserve could be improved.
36. The public consultation involved the following:
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| (a) Letters advertising the online feedback portal were distributed in the local area. 165 letters were distributed. |
| (b) A webpage on Sydney Your Say showing the plans invited feedback from 9 November to 7 December 2022. The page included an electronic copy of the revised concept design, and other general information about the upgrade. |
| (c) A pop-up consultation feedback session was held in the reserve on Tuesday 22 November from 4pm to 5.30pm. Council staff were available to answer questions and obtain feedback about the proposed concept plan. Respondents were also encouraged to view the plans and provide feedback on the Sydney Your Say website. Approximately eight people attended the session. |

- (d) An online feedback form was made available.
 - (e) Two signs were placed in the park directing people online to leave their feedback.
37. There were seven submissions received during the consultation period. The Sydney Your Say page was visited 107 times during the consultation period. This included submissions via email and the online feedback form.
38. The proposal was well supported by the community and the responses highlighted that an upgrade to this park would increase the current use of the park.

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