

Project Scope - Douglas Street Park and Playground, Redfern

File No: X083852.002

Summary

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the park refurbishment at Douglas Street Playground, Redfern. Douglas Street Playground has been identified as part of the small parks and playgrounds improvement program.

The project brief is to refurbish the play area including replacement of end-of-life equipment and soft-fall, provide a range of play experiences, improve access into the park, improve sightlines into the park, improve the function of the existing turf areas, and provide additional seating and associated landscape improvements.

A draft concept plan was on exhibition from 17 October to 11 November 2022. A letter was distributed in the local area and the proposal was exhibited on the City's website. The proposed works are supported by the community and the responses indicated that an upgrade of the playground would increase current use of the park.

The proposal relocates the playground to the front of the park and increases space for park users. It includes the provision of a local scale playground that improves play opportunities for children aged one to 10, a new entry ramp into the park and a larger turf area. The proposal uses simple, robust materials that reflect the local neighbourhood character.

This report recommends that Council endorse the proposed scope of works for the park refurbishment at Douglas Street Playground, Redfern, and increase the budget to cover the additional scope.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the scope of improvements to the playground at Douglas Street Playground, Redfern as described in the subject report and shown in the Draft Concept Plan at 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.** Draft 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. Douglas Street Playground is a local park located on Douglas Street in Redfern. It is bounded by residential properties (refer to Attachment A). The site is approximately 480 square metres.
3. The land is owned by the City of Sydney.
4. Douglas Street Playground was identified for an upgrade due to the playground's overall condition, end-of-life play equipment and soft-fall surfacing.
5. The park is characterised as a small pocket playground, with a sandstone block terrace along Douglas Street behind a stand of palms and dense shrub planting, and several mature trees around the boundary providing shade to the playground.
6. The existing play equipment includes a small climbing tower with slide and a swing.
7. 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
8. A concept design was developed for the works and community consultation undertaken.
9. Following consultation, feedback from the community will be considered in the developed design.

Draft Concept Plan

10. The Draft 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 which improves the play opportunities for local children with a range of structured equipment, imaginative and nature play elements;
 - (c) increase the usable area and improve usability by consolidating and better arranging park elements;
 - (d) provide seating opportunities through the playground to encourage social interaction; and
 - (e) use simple, robust, high-quality materials which reflect the local neighbourhood character.

11. The proposal includes the following:
 - (a) relocation of the playground to the front of the park and increase the open grass area to the rear of the park;
 - (b) improved entry from Douglas Street, including a new entry ramp, new garden bed arrangement that reveals the existing sandstone terrace steps and improved sightlines into the park;
 - (c) a new play structure with slide, deck and platforms, swings, inground trampoline with hopscotch and a small nature play;
 - (d) the playground will include inclusive access to the play elements;
 - (e) more seats in the park adjacent to the playground and to the grass area;
 - (f) enhanced planting areas with new groundcover and low shrub planting; and
 - (g) new water bubbler.
12. In response to community consultation, the following will be further investigated during detailed design:
 - (a) a preference for low level plants rather than new trees to the park boundaries to encourage sunlight and maintain grass health and pruning lower branches of the large eucalyptus tree;
 - (b) play structure to be of an open design to not have hiding places; and
 - (c) address mosquitos in the park.
13. The following tree management and planting is proposed as part of the park works:
 - (a) remove four Cocus palms, including one multi-stemmed palm at the boundary along Douglas Street;
 - (b) remove two small Pencil Pine trees at the new ramped entry into the park; and
 - (c) the 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 program is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 3 - Public places for all - this project will provide an improved open space 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 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - this project will provide play and

Organisational Impact

16. Upgrading the playground will provide improved play experience and amenity for children and their carers. The replacement of play assets will mitigate risk to the City. The assets will require ongoing maintenance.

Risks

17. 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.
18. Risks of not implementing the scope of works could result in failure to meet community expectations.

Social / Cultural / Community

19. 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

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

Financial Implications

21. The project budget for the delivery of the Douglas Street Park and Playground 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.

22. Based on current estimates as detailed in Attachment D, it is anticipated that a future increase to project contingency may be required. 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

23. 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. Reference to Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993.
24. 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.
25. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
26. State Environment Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021.
27. Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012.
28. Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

29. Current program dates:

(a) Council approval of concept design	February 2023
(b) Detailed design	Early to Mid 2023
(c) Tender	Late 2023
(d) Construction	Early 2024
(e) Completion	Mid 2024

Options

30. Proceed with the progression of improvement works as outlined in this subject report including relevant approvals, preparation of construction documentation, tender and construction.
31. 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

32. 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.
33. An early engagement notification letter/email was issued to residents. Seventeen submissions were received during the period. The purpose of the early engagement was to seek input from the community about how they used the park and what they would like to see in the new design.
34. The public consultation involved the following:
 - (a) Letters advertising the online feedback portal were distributed to the Redfern area. 327 letters were distributed.
 - (b) A webpage on Sydney Your Say showing the plans from 7 October to 11 November 2022. The page included an electronic copy of the revised concept design, survey and other key information about the consultation.
 - (c) A pop-up consultation feedback session was held in the park on Tuesday 8 November. 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 SydneyYour Say website.
 - (d) An online feedback form was available.
 - (e) Two signs were placed in the park directing people online to leave their feedback.
35. There were three 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.
36. The proposal was supported by the community and the responses indicated that an upgrade to this park would increase the current use of the park. A summary and response to the key comments and suggestions are:
 - (a) support the relocation of the playground to increase the amount of grass area;
 - (b) support for making the entry access ramp wider; and
 - (c) support for the small nature play area.
37. There was some concern for new trees planted on the boundaries and overshadowing to the grass areas. Further detailed review of opportunities to new trees will be investigated in detailed design, taking into consideration existing tree canopies and overshadowing.
38. The play structure is to be of an open design to not have hiding places. This will continue to be developed through the detailed design and will look at components such as mesh panels.
39. The issues of mosquitos will be addressed. This will be further investigated in detailed design, reviewing any areas of standing water and planting opportunities.

40. There was a mixed response on the inclusion of a bin. The proposed scope does not include a bin.
41. Regarding upgrading the lighting so the park can be used at night: as the park does not contain a main path of travel or through link, no lighting is proposed.

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