

Item 5.

Project Scope - Regent Street Reserve, Paddington

File No: X090896.001

Summary

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the refurbishment of Regent Street Reserve, Paddington. Regent Street Reserve has been identified as a part of the small parks and playgrounds improvement program.

The project brief is to refurbish the park by renewing the pathways, creating a consistent palette of materials, retaining and enhancing the existing sandstone walls, ensuring the success of the turf, improving the planting, retaining the existing mature trees and providing increased amenity through new park furniture, lighting and stormwater drainage.

The draft Concept Plan was on public exhibition from 13 March to 12 April 2024. 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 response highlighted that an upgrade of this park would increase the current use of the park.

The proposal includes resurfacing to create accessible paths using simple, durable materials that reflect the local neighbourhood character. The turf area will be consolidated and raised to focus pedestrian movement to use the improved path network and ensure the success of the space and create incidental seating opportunities on the new sandstone walls edges. The upgraded suite of furniture and fittings include benches, tables, bins with dog bag dispensers, drinking fountain, signage, lighting and light poles. Planting areas will be increased with the introduction of new shrubs, groundcovers and one tree. Two small trees will be removed to improve sightlines and increase safety.

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

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the scope of improvements to Regent Street Reserve, Paddington 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 improvement program. This program is for parks which need upgrade or enhancement works, the replacement of end-of-life products, and to generally provide appropriate facilities for local residents.
2. Regent Street Reserve is a local park located at 2A Regent Street, Paddington. It is bounded by residential and retail properties (refer to Attachment A). The site is approximately 838 square metres.
3. The land is owned by the City of Sydney.
4. Regent Street Reserve was identified for an upgrade due to the park's overall condition.
5. Regent Street Reserve is characterised as a small park formed by a road closure, with patches of turf intersected by tired concrete paver paths. The space is enclosed by planting in raised sandstone wall garden beds consisting of groundcovers, shrubs and over 30 mature trees. It is bordered by residential and retail buildings to the east and the old St Johns Church grounds, which is now retail, on the western side. Regent Street is to the south and Oxford Street to the north.

Draft Concept Plan

6. A draft concept design was developed for the works and community consultation undertaken in March and April 2024.
7. 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) expand the green space;
 - (c) improve usability and functionality of the space;
 - (d) improve sightlines and passive surveillance (visibility) to create an open and safe public space;
 - (e) provide a range of seating opportunities which encourage social interaction; and
 - (f) use simple, robust and high-quality materials which reflect the local neighbourhood character.
8. The proposal includes the following:
 - (a) consolidated and raised turf area that focusses the pedestrian movement to the improved paths and ensures the success of the space;
 - (b) new footpaths to create an accessible park that seamlessly integrates with the surrounding streetscape;
 - (c) expanded seating options including bench seats and wall tops forming incidental seating.
 - (d) new suite of furniture and fittings including tables, bins with dog bag dispensers, drinking fountain and signage; and

- (e) new and upgraded amenity to improve park functionality include irrigation to the turf, storm water drainage, lighting and light poles.
9. The following tree management and planting is proposed as part of the park works:
- (a) two small *Elaeocarpus reticulatus* (Blueberry Ash) trees with a low value will be removed to improve sightlines and increase safety. Given their size and location under an existing mature tree, the removal will not result in any loss of canopy;
 - (b) one new tree is proposed to offset the tree removal;
 - (c) refreshed and additional garden beds, incorporating new shrubs and groundcover plants, to breathe life into the landscape; and
 - (d) an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Tree Protection Plan has been prepared to inform the detailed design and ensure appropriate construction methodology.
10. In response to community consultation the following has been modified:
- (a) the number of trees proposed for removal has been reduced from four to two.
11. In response to community consultation the following will be further investigated during detailed design:
- (a) review the style and location of café tables and seats;
 - (b) review the garbage bin location; and
12. 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.
13. A Development Application (DA) will be lodged for the required soil remediation works in accordance with Part 4 of the Environmental Planning Assessment Act 1979. This is triggered by the location of the site in a heritage conservation area.
14. Contamination was detected in the soil during early site investigation works. A Remediation Action Plan will be prepared and adhered to during the construction works to fully remediate the site.

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 through site connections with greater accessibility of the paving and safety through better sightlines and new lighting.
- (d) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - this project will provide gathering spaces for all ages and abilities.

Organisational Impact

- 16. Upgrading the pavement and lighting in Regent Street Reserve will improve the quality and safety of the existing spaces and represents a mitigation of risk to the City. The assets will require ongoing maintenance.

Risks

- 17. Risks of not implementing the scope of these works include potential further failure of the paving surfaces, non-compliant lighting and risk to the community.
- 18. Risks of not implementing this scope of works could result in failure to meet community expectations.

Social / Cultural / Community

- 19. The site is an important open space within the Paddington area where many people have limited access to outdoor areas within their own homes. The site is also used by Oxford Street shoppers/workers during the daytime especially at lunchtime. Improving the amenity offering within the reserve represents an investment in this community, providing opportunities for people of different ages and abilities to use the reserve alongside each other.

Environmental

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

Financial Implications

- 21. The project budget for the delivery of the Regent Street Reserve, Paddington 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 and Lights, Poles and Electrical renewal provisions included in the Draft Long Term Financial Plan as outlined, in the Confidential Attachment D.

Relevant Legislation

22. 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.
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.
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 June 2024
 - (b) Detailed Design July 2024
 - (c) Tender Late 2024
 - (d) Construction start Early 2025
 - (e)** Completion Mid 2025

Options

30. Proceed with the progression of the improvement works as outlined in this subject report including relevant approvals, preparation of construction documentation and tender for construction.
31. Project does not proceed - this option is not recommended as the current condition of the reserve has several 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. 37 submissions were received during the period. The purpose of the early engagement was to seek input from the community about how they used the space and how the reserve could be improved.
34. The public consultation involved the following:
 - (a) Letters advertising the online feedback portal were distributed to the Paddington area. 495 letters were distributed.
 - (b) A webpage on SydneyYourSay showing the plans from 13 March to 12 April 2024. The page included an electronic copy of the concept design, survey and other key information about the consultation.
 - (c) A pop-up consultation feedback session was held in the reserve on Tuesday 26 March, 2024, 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 12 people attended the session.
 - (d) An online feedback form.
 - (e) Two signs were placed in the park with details about how to leave feedback online.
35. The Sydney Your Say page was visited 311 times during the consultation period. There were 23 submissions received during the consultation period. This included five submissions via email and 18 via the online feedback form.
36. 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. A summary and response to the key comments and suggestions are:
 - (a) There were five requests to retain the four small trees proposed for removal. The Concept Design has been revised to retain two of the four small trees. The other two small trees are proposed for removal, to improve sight lines and path connections from Regent Street into the reserve.
 - (b) There were five requests to upgrade the lighting in the reserve (current lighting is not sufficient). Park lighting will be upgraded as part of these works and will include post top lighting.

- (c) There were several comments on the style and location of the proposed furniture. The proposal includes a range of seating opportunities to encourage social interaction. Final products, quantities and location will be reviewed during the detailed design phase of the project.
- (d) Some people requested the slope of the raised turf area be reversed away from Oxford Street and towards Regent Street to make it safer for children playing in the reserve. The proposed lawn area is bound by low walls on three sides and is gently sloped toward Oxford Street to allow permeability into the reserve and for maintenance access. New garden beds will provide a buffer to Oxford Street.

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