

Project Scope - Cooper Street and Adelaide Street Reserves, Surry Hills

File No: X090905.001

Summary

This report outlines the proposed scope of works for the refurbishment of Cooper Street and Adelaide Street Reserves, Surry Hills. Cooper Street and Adelaide Street Reserves have been identified as a part of the small parks and playgrounds improvement program.

The project brief is to refurbish the parks by renewing the pavement area to Riley Street and Cooper Street frontages, improving access through the reserves for walking and bike riding, improving the planting and turf, retaining the existing mature trees and providing increased amenity through new park furniture, lighting, irrigation and drainage.

The Draft Concept Plan was on public exhibition from 29 April to 27 May 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 responses highlighted that an upgrade of this park would increase the current use of the park.

The proposal includes provision of a shared path for people walking and bike riding and the use of simple, durable materials that reflect the local neighbourhood character. The existing paths are proposed to be widened and resurfaced to increase accessibility. The upgraded suite of furniture and fittings include seating, bins with dog bag dispensers, drinking fountain, signage, lighting and light poles to main paths. Planted areas will be increased, and turf areas improved through the reserves. One small tree will be removed (and replaced) to enable the works.

This report recommends that Council endorse the proposed scope of works for the park refurbishment at Cooper Street and Adelaide Street Reserves, Surry Hills and increase the budget to cover the additional scope.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse the scope of improvements to Cooper Street and Adelaide Street Reserves, Surry Hills 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 equipment, and to generally provide appropriate facilities for local residents.
2. Cooper Street and Adelaide Street Reserves are local parks located at 5040 Cooper Street (Upper Cooper), 119-123 Cooper Street (Lower Cooper) and 48-50 Adelaide Street (Adelaide), Surry Hills. They are bounded by residential, office and childcare properties (refer to Attachment A). The combined site is approximately 1,349 square metres.
3. The land is owned by the City of Sydney.
4. Cooper Street and Adelaide Street Reserves were identified for an upgrade due to the park's overall condition.
5. All three Reserve areas are characterised as small parks.
 - (a) Upper Cooper Street Reserve is formed by a road closure, with a central paved plaza area that ramps/steps down westward and is dissected by retaining walls. The space is flanked by planting in garden beds consisting of groundcovers, shrubs and several mature trees. The reserve shares a border with SDN Childcare to the south, residential buildings to the east, Riley Street to the north Cooper Street to the South, and Lower Cooper Street Reserve to the southwest .
 - (b) Lower Cooper Street Reserve is a flat mostly turfed space which is bordered by paving. Two mature trees have suppressed any turf growth beneath. Brick paths are lifted by tree roots in several places. The adjoining SDN Childcare is to the east, office buildings to the west, residential buildings to the north over Cooper Street and Adelaide Street Reserve is to the south over Adelaide Place.
 - (c) Adelaide Street Reserve is the smallest of the spaces with patches of turf and planting intersected by brick paved paths. The three mature trees heavily shade the space and suppress turf growth beneath. It is bordered by residential buildings on the west, east beyond Little Riley Street and south beyond Adelaide Street.

Draft Concept Plan

6. A draft concept design was developed for the works and community consultation undertaken in April/May 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) improve the green space and retain the mature tree canopy;
 - (c) improve usability and functionality of the space by reviewing the structure of the landscape elements;
 - (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) shared path through Cooper Street Reserve as part of the Surry Hills to Central quiet way with improved sightlines for greater legibility and safety;
 - (b) extended footpaths and paths to create an accessible series of parks that seamlessly integrates with the surrounding streetscape;
 - (c) new retaining walls that sensitively address the steep level change along Cooper Street;
 - (d) expanded seating options to foster social interaction and relaxation;
 - (e) new suite of furniture including bins with dog bag dispensers, drinking fountain, signage;
 - (f) upgraded lighting to the main paths through the reserves; and
 - (g) new and upgraded amenity to improve park functionality include irrigation to the turf and storm water drainage.
9. The following tree management and planting is proposed as part of the park works:
- (a) one small *Lagerstroemia indica* (Crepe myrtle) tree with a 'low' Tree Retention Value will be removed to enable the regrading works required for the shared path. Given its small size, the removal will only result in a minor loss in canopy;
 - (b) one new shade tolerant 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) to maximise the usable green space, the paths that dissected the turf area in Lower Cooper Street Reserve have been omitted.
11. In response to community consultation the following will be further investigated during detailed design:
- (a) review the need for a sharps bin;
 - (b) review retaining wall extent and height adjacent to SDN childcare boundary;
 - (c) review light pole locations; and
 - (d) review existing and proposed planting species and layout.

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 in order to 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.
 - (a) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - this project is a central link in the Surry Hills to Central quiet way and will improve through site connections with greater accessibility of the paving and safety through better sightlines and new lighting
 - (b) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - this project will provide gathering spaces for all ages and abilities.

Organisational Impact

16. Upgrading the pavement, retaining walls, layout and lighting in Cooper Street and Adelaide Street Reserves 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 and retaining walls, 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 Surry Hills area where many people have limited access to outdoor areas within their own homes. The site is also used by nearby office 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.
20. The shared path which runs through Cooper Reserve forms part of the City's current local bike network. The upgrade to Cooper Street Reserve will improve the safety of the shared path by widening of the path and improving sight lines for people walking and riding.

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 Cooper Street and Adelaide Street Reserves, Surry Hills 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 provision included in the Draft Long Term Financial Plan as outlined, in the Confidential Attachment D.

Relevant Legislation

23. 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.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
27. State Environment Planning Policy (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021.
28. Sydney Local Environmental Plan 2012.
29. Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

30. Current Program Dates:

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| (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

31. 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.
32. 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

33. 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.
34. An early engagement notification letter/email was issued to residents. 18 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.
35. The public consultation involved the following:
- (a) Letters advertising the online feedback portal were distributed to the Surry Hills area. A total of 700 letters were distributed.
 - (b) A webpage on SydneyYourSay showing the plans from 29 April to 27 May 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 Saturday 18 May 2024, 10pm to 11.30am. 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 nine people attended the session.
 - (d) An online feedback form.

36. The Sydney Your Say page was visited 362 times during the consultation period. There were 42 submissions received during the consultation period. This included 5 submissions via email and 37 via the online feedback form.
37. 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 20 comments that showed overall support for the reserve upgrades.
 - (b) There were 9 requests to upgrade the turf under existing trees. The struggling turf under the existing trees will be replaced with planting. The remaining turf areas will be improved with an irrigation system.
 - (c) There were 5 requests for public art. Public art does not form part of the proposed project scope.
 - (d) There were 4 requests to install a needle bin. These comments were passed onto the City's Safe City team, who have advised they do weekly sweeps and will review appropriateness of a sharps bin in this area.
 - (e) There were 3 comments to retain the current layout out of the paths in Lower Cooper Street Reserve. The revised concept plan has omitted the additional paths dissecting the turf area. The existing footpath and paths are proposed to be widened and resurfaced where necessary to increase accessibility.
 - (f) There were 3 comments about including separation measures between people walking and riding in Cooper Street reserve to prevent collisions and slow down people riding. The current best practise is to not separate people walking and riding. The proposed wide and barrier free shared path has improved sightlines for greater legibility and safety. The proposed layout encourages bike riders to slow down and decreases the chance of collisions.

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