

**ITEM 3. OPEN SPACE SPORT AND RECREATION NEEDS STUDY 2016 – FINAL FOR ADOPTION****FILE NO: S127007****SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's adoption of the draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Study 2016 (the Study).

The Study provides a guide to the ongoing provision, use, and management of the City's open space, sports and recreation facility network, as well as broader recommendations from a district planning perspective.

Key issues arising from the draft Study that have informed the strategic directions include:

- increasing resident and workforce population has resulted in capacity and use pressures, particularly on larger parks, for active recreation;
- there is a need and opportunity to dedicate open space provision in the urban renewal currently under master-planning by UrbanGrowth NSW – Bays Precinct, Central to Eveleigh and Parramatta Road – to serve the new residential and worker populations that will be accommodated in these areas;
- open space provision will be critical to support high density living;
- the demographic profile of families with young children, young adults and older people are frequent park users;
- 72 per cent of the City's parks are less than 3000m<sup>2</sup>, which limits the range and diversity of activities able to be accommodated;
- the draft Sports Facilities Demand Study (Attachment G) recommends that by 2031, an additional 20 sports fields, 18 outdoor multi-purpose courts and 19 indoor multi-purpose courts will be required;
- larger open space will be required through planned dedications and an acquisition strategy to accommodate active sport; and
- a District planning approach for open space and sport facility planning is required. The shortage of available land, high use of current sports grounds and continuing pressure for more and better facilities cannot be met by one council or agency alone.

On 16 May 2016, Council approved the public exhibition of the Study.

The Study was placed on public exhibition from 17 May to 1 July 2016 (a period of six and a half weeks).

92 online feedback forms and 19 written submissions were received in response to the exhibition. A summary of the issues raised in the submissions received and the City's response is provided at Attachment A to this report.

The Study was positively received by the community, with broad support for the strategic directions and key actions proposed by the City. Through the feedback received during the public exhibition, the City gained a good understanding of the community's priorities for future open space, sports and recreation facilities. There was strong support for the capital expenditure program, multi-purpose facilities and District level planning.

The City received feedback from people who currently use open space, sports and recreation facilities, and from a broad range of people who live and/or work in the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA).

The draft Study has been reviewed and amended following consideration of external and internal feedback. The amended Study recommended for adoption, with additional text underlined in red and deleted text in ~~strike through~~, is provided at Attachments D to H to this report.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council adopt the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Study 2016 with amendments, as shown in Attachments D to H to the subject report; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make minor amendments to the adopted Study as required.

## ATTACHMENTS

**(Note – Hard copies of Attachments D to H will be circulated separately from the agenda paper in limited numbers. A copy will be available for inspection on Council's website and at the One Stop Shop and Neighbourhood Service Centres.)**

**Attachment A:** Summary of submissions and responses

**Attachment B:** Schedule of Amendments

**Attachment C:** Consultation Report

**Attachment D:** Volume 1 Draft Open Space Strategy (with amendments)

**Attachment E:** Volume 2 Draft Open Space Delivery Plan (with amendments)

**Attachment F:** Volume 3 Draft Background Research and Analysis (with amendments)

**Attachment G:** Volume 4 Draft Sports Facilities Demand Study (with amendments)

**Attachment H:** Volume 5 Draft Appendices

## BACKGROUND

1. On 27 April 2015, Council resolved to prepare an integrated Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Study to inform decision making about future open space, sport and recreation facility provision, use, distribution and management.

### Study Scope

2. The Study is focussed on public open space, sport and recreation facilities for which the City of Sydney has either ownership, Trustee management, or care control and management responsibility.
3. However, located within and adjacent to the City are public open space, sport and recreation facility assets managed by other authorities that have been taken into account to determine overall provision, community access and amenity.
4. It is noted that the City has no jurisdiction on the management of these assets, and any strategic directions in the draft Study that implicate these lands will need the concurrence of the managing authority.
5. Streetscapes in the form of footpath widenings and landscape treatments are an important part of the public domain, however open space areas less than 50 square metres are not considered by this Study in the quantum of available open space.

### Document Format

6. The Study document structure is as follows:
  - (a) Volume 1 – Draft Open Space Strategy;
  - (b) Volume 2 – Draft Open Space Delivery Plan;
  - (c) Volume 3 – Draft Background Research and Analysis;
  - (d) Volume 4 – Draft Sports Facilities Demand Study; and
  - (e) Volume 5 – Appendices.

## CURRENT STATUS

### Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facility Provision

7. The City owns or manages approximately 189 hectares of public open space and, when combined with the public open space that is managed by other authorities, there is a total of approximately 386 hectares. This represents 14.8 per cent of the total land area in the City LGA.
8. The City also maintains 90 playgrounds, 21 tennis courts, 13 outdoor courts, 13 playing fields, eight indoor recreation centres, five aquatic centres, six fitness gyms and four skate facilities. Other agencies also provide a range of recreation and sporting facilities, which are important to overall supply for the City's residents, workers and visitors.

**Improvements to the Network**

9. The City of Sydney has undertaken a major capital works program with over \$270 million spent over the last 10 years across its open space, sport and recreation facility network, resulting in substantial improvements, quality and capacity and connectivity to better meet the growing and changing community demand.

**STUDY METHODOLOGY**

10. To prepare the Study, the following work was undertaken:
  - (a) assessment of the City's progress and achievements in developing and managing its open space, sport and recreation facility network;
  - (b) assessment of population growth, distribution, density and demographic profile on future open space and recreation facility provision;
  - (c) assessment of current recreation and open space trends and participation patterns in meeting current and likely future recreation needs;
  - (d) meetings and surveys with key stakeholders, including community groups and sporting associations, to inform the draft Sports Facilities Demand Study;
  - (e) review of current City of Sydney and State Government plans and strategies to assess strategic context and implications for open space and recreation provision;
  - (f) review of the current and proposed provision, distribution, diversity, quality and accessibility of open space and recreation facilities at a City LGA and regional level, and provide assessment on gaps and shortfalls;
  - (g) assessment of opportunities provided by urban renewal areas to deliver open space and recreation facilities;
  - (h) directions developed for a strategic approach to open space acquisition based on identified recreation need and geographic demand; and
  - (i) preparation of the Sports Facilities Demand Study 2015 (Attachment G) to review sports field and court provision, utilisation and needs within the City LGA, as well as assessment of provision in adjoining local government areas to provide a sub-regional perspective on provision, use and future demand.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND OUTCOMES**

11. The Study sets out the following nine strategic directions to guide the ongoing provision, use, and management of the City's open space, sport and recreation facility network.

### More Open Space for a Growing Population

12. Volume 2 – Draft Open Space Delivery Plan (Attachment E) outlines various mechanisms and directions to increase open space provision. Key outcomes include:
  - (a) development of land acquisition criteria to ensure that land acquired or dedicated for open space meets identified priorities and will be suitable for the intended use;
  - (b) priority given to acquisition of open space large enough to accommodate field sports;
  - (c) targeted acquisition to address shortfalls in local open space provision in Alexandria, Camperdown and East Sydney to ensure all residents are at a minimum within 400 metres walk of a local park; and
  - (d) including new open space by other agencies, it is projected that an additional 36.3 hectares could be added to the open space network. This total includes 5.3 hectares allocated in the City's Draft Contributions Plan for open space acquisition, 21 hectares of open space under planning or clearly articulated in the City's planning controls for dedication, and 9.9 hectares of provision identified in various planning controls or strategic documents that will require certain development scenarios and financial assessment to provide certainty of delivery. These projections do not include additional open space to be provided from urban development projects currently undertaken by State Government (Central to Eveleigh, Bays Precinct and Parramatta Road) as UrbanGrowth NSW has not yet committed to firm population projections and associated open space demand.
13. Details on individual site assessments that have been identified for potential acquisition were included in a Confidential Attachment to the report to the 9 May 2016 meeting of the Environment Committee.
14. In addition, the draft Open Space Delivery Plan also provides open space provision and linkage recommendations for the urban development areas of Central to Eveleigh, Bays Precinct and Parramatta Road that are currently being planned by UrbanGrowth NSW.
15. A substantial component of future parks capital works program is devoted to the delivery of new parks and public spaces including Harold Park, Gunyama Park, Drying Green Park, Matron Ruby Grant Park Green Square Library Plaza and Wimbo Park expansion.
16. New public space in the City Centre will be achieved through voluntary planning agreements and dedications. The Study reconfirms the *Sustainable Sydney 2030* direction to provide a new Town Hall Square.
17. Other recommended directions to provide more open space is to increase community access and use of currently restricted open space areas such as at Wentworth Park and Moore Park Golf Course, extend and increase the size and capacity of existing parks for sport and recreation, and partnership opportunities with other landowners and agencies, such as schools, to increase community access to open space and sports fields.

**Better Parks, Sport and Recreation Facilities**

18. With limited opportunity to dramatically increase the quantity of available open space to keep pace with anticipated population growth, qualitative improvements are central considerations, with significant increases in capacity, quality, diversity, useability and accessibility able to be achieved through better planning and design of the existing network. Key outcomes include:
- (a) over \$400 million allocated to parks, sport and recreation facilities in the City's 10 Year Capital Works Program;
  - (b) upgrades planned for Hyde Park, Victoria Park and Observatory Hill Park. Recommended programming of improvements to Alexandria Park and Waterloo Park/Oval;
  - (c) ongoing rollout of small parks renewal program;
  - (d) capacity improvements to sports fields through use of synthetic surfaces to increase available hours for use; and
  - (e) improvements to support facilities such as signage, park furniture and accessible toilets.

**Improve the Provision and Diversity of Sport and Recreation Experiences**

19. The direction will be to provide an appropriate range and distribution of recreation and sporting opportunities to address identified needs and demand. Key outcomes include:
- (a) the limited amount of open space available means that flexibility and multi-purpose use need to be a key principle when planning sport and recreation facilities;
  - (b) five new sports fields are estimated to be provided consisting of Gunyama Park, Green Square; Perry Park, Alexandria, and two to three fields through Section 94 open space acquisition plan funding;
  - (c) one non-standard size sports field at Federal Park, Annandale;
  - (d) three casual active recreation spaces proposed for Garraway Park, Green Square; McPherson Park, Ashmore Estate; and Harold Park, Forest Lodge;
  - (e) develop partnerships with schools and other agencies to increase public access to sport field facilities;
  - (f) two indoor and two outdoor courts at Perry Park, Alexandria;
  - (g) provision of half/non-standard size courts in new and upgraded park projects when feasible;
  - (h) new aquatic centre at Green Square;
  - (i) new district level playground at Federal Park;
  - (j) recommendation to assess feasibility to provide City Centre play space;

- (k) additional skate facilities at Federal Park, Sydney Park and Green Square; and
- (l) increasing diversity of recreation facilities such as outdoor gyms, walking paths, chess boards and amenity to support companion animal exercise.

### **Access to Sport and Recreation in the City will be Inclusive and Accessible for All**

20. Inclusion and accessibility will be a priority through a focus on physical access, the provision of inclusive experiences and information in appropriate formats. Key outcomes include:
- (a) inclusive district level play facilities at Federal Park and Gunyama Park; and
  - (b) development of network in accordance with the draft Public Domain Access Policy that is currently under development.

### **Linking the Network**

21. The City's Liveable Green Network and, at a wider sub-regional level, the State Government's Sydney Green Grid, will make walking and cycling a viable option to access the open space, sport and recreation network, as well as be part of a greater recreation fitness network.
22. Improving access to open space, sport and recreation facilities will alleviate open space deficits by providing better connections and crossing points to create a large catchment area.
23. Key outcomes include:
- (a) Liveable Green Network Implementation Program to facilitate links along Alexandra Canal and harbour foreshore;
  - (b) advocate for UrbanGrowth NSW to provide linkages in Central to Eveleigh;
  - (c) support and collaboration to implement Sydney Green Grid linkages; and
  - (d) advocate for pedestrian link to Garden Island parkland.

### **Involving the Community**

24. Involving the community includes both the continuance of the City's extensive consultation processes when developing the open space, sport and recreation network, as well as promoting and programming activities to encourage participation and use of the network. This includes the use of parks for events that promote social interaction and a sense of community.
25. Key outcomes include:
- (a) delivering parks and open space that meets the needs and reflects the aspirations of the local community;
  - (b) ongoing support for community gardens network and bushcare volunteer programs; and
  - (c) development of City Farm at Sydney Park.

**Recreation will be Environmentally Sustainable**

26. To meet the City's environmental targets, infrastructure to increase the environmental performance and sustainability of the network will be an ongoing feature of the open space, sport and recreation facility improvements.
27. Water is the main resource used in maintaining open space and facilities. Use of potable water will continue to be reduced and alternative sources identified and utilised. Key outcomes include:
  - (a) sustainable water management projects at Harold Park, Hyde Park, Sydney Park, Drying Green Park and Gunyama Park;
  - (b) continue energy use reduction initiatives through ongoing rollout of the park LED lighting program;
  - (c) feasibility planning and design of renewable and low carbon energy supply for the City's aquatic facilities;
  - (d) promotion of environmental education at Sydney Park City Farm; and
  - (e) continue to increase biodiversity through implementation of Bush Restoration Implementation Plan.

**Looking After Our Parks and Sport and Recreation Facilities**

28. This direction highlights the importance of consolidating the capital works program, with a commitment to ongoing maintenance and asset management to maintain quality and amenity into the future.
29. Key outcomes include continuous improvement in asset management, maintenance service levels, tree management and ongoing commitment to quality benchmarking programs and user surveys.

**Beyond the Boundary**

30. Planning aligned to the Greater Sydney Commission six planning Districts is required to strategically identify, plan, develop and manage open space, sport and recreation opportunities.
31. The City is located in the Central District along with Inner West, Botany, Canada Bay, Strathfield, Burwood, Randwick, Waverley and Woollahra Councils.
32. While the City is a key provider of open space, sport and recreation facilities, it is not the only provider, and it will require effective partnering with relevant stakeholders at a Central District level to maximise the opportunities to provide facilities to meet a growing community need.
33. Key outcomes include:
  - (a) advocate and collaborate to undertake co-ordinated strategic Central District planning to develop a clear hierarchy of open space, sport and recreation facilities, and extend the range and diversity of facilities available to the community; and



- (b) advocate and support the Sydney Green Grid to deliver Central District linkages to open space, sport and recreation facilities, as well as deliver a recreation asset for walking and cycling.

## KEY IMPLICATIONS

### Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030

34. *Sustainable Sydney 2030* is a vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This Study is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
- (a) Direction 1 - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City – the quality and quantity of open space and recreation facilities has a direct link to community health and wellbeing, and plays a role in the amenities available to global corporates and their decisions to locate in Sydney.
  - (b) Direction 2 - A Leading Environmental Performer – open space and recreation facility network includes design and infrastructure considerations that contribute to the City's environmental targets for water, energy as well as incorporating biodiversity provisions.
  - (c) Direction 4 - A City for Walking and Cycling – the Liveable Green Network will provide links to encourage walking and cycling to parks and recreation facilities, as well as amenity to enjoy walking and cycling for recreation and leisure.
  - (d) Direction 5 - A Lively and Engaging City Centre – improvements to City Centre public spaces, including provision of a new city square, will facilitate activation and use over a longer span of hours.
  - (e) Direction 6 - Vibrant Local Communities and Economies – community health and wellbeing is linked to the quality of the public domain, parks, open space and recreation facilities. These facilities help address core health issues such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes and mental health, as well as social cohesion to support local communities and economies.
  - (f) Direction 7 - A Cultural and Creative City – the open space network is an important venue for cultural events and creative expression.
  - (g) Direction 9 - Sustainable Development, Renewal and Design – the open space network is a key component in supporting density in a sustainable manner.
  - (h) Direction 10 - Implementation through Effective Governance and Partnerships – the Study identifies that while the City is a key provider of open space and active recreation facilities, it is not the only provider, and it will require effective partnering with a range of stakeholders to maximise the opportunities to provide facilities to meet a growing community need.

### Social / Cultural / Community

35. The open space network and participation in sport has key benefits to the community, including improved physical and mental health, increased self-esteem, personal development, social inclusion and connectedness.

**Environmental**

36. The provision of additional sport and recreation facilities has the potential to increase greenhouse gas emissions; however these may be mitigated and offset through environmentally sustainable design and systems being implemented by the City to manage and reduce their impacts.

**Economic**

37. The provision of open space and sport and recreation facilities will deliver community health and wellbeing benefits, which provide direct economic benefit to the national health system.
38. The provision of sports facilities also provides local economic benefit through sports and leisure jobs, and expenditure related to supporting sports training, competition, participation and maintenance of facilities.

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

39. The proposed capital works projects indicated in the Study are either contained within current works program project budgets or require consideration for future works programs.
40. Programming, asset management and maintenance of the open space and recreation facility network will require ongoing consideration and appropriate resource allocation in operational budgets.
41. The Study is co-ordinated with the City's Section 94 Developer Contributions Plan, with estimated open space acquisitions matched to expected funding from the Plan.

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

42. Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 – relevant to the City of Sydney Section 94 Developer Contributions Plan to partially fund the provision of new facilities.
43. Local Government Act 1993 – relevant to the Council's Charter to engage in long-term strategic planning on behalf of the local community to provide equitable and appropriate services and facilities for the community and to ensure that those services and facilities are managed efficiently and effectively.

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

44. The Draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Study 2016 was placed on public exhibition from 17 May to 1 July 2016.
45. Notification of the public exhibition was advertised in the local press publications and documents were made available on the Sydney Your Say website and promoted through the City's social media and online engagement channels. Hard copies of the documents were available at the Neighbourhood Service Centres and Town Hall House One Stop Shop.
46. The Sydney Your Say webpage provided feedback and survey forms, submission forms, videos showcasing community engagement on parks and open space, and news stories that captured key components of the Study.

47. The purpose of the engagement was to seek community and stakeholder feedback on the Study and, specifically, to gauge the level of support for the proposed strategic directions, some key actions and the proposed capital expenditure.
48. A key aspect of the engagement was also to explain the current challenges the City is facing around providing open space and recreation facilities in the context of increasing population and density in the City LGA and surrounding areas, and the City's proposed directions and solutions for addressing these priorities and challenges.
49. Letters notifying of the exhibition and inviting comments were sent to key state government, community and sports and recreation organisations as well Central District councils.
50. The project team has consulted with Central District councils on the Study's recommendations, and has formed a working group to continue dialogue and collaboration on open space, sport and recreation planning for the Central District.
51. The Sports Facilities Demand Study involved consultation with a range of stakeholders, including surveys and interviews with sporting groups and associations, recreation facility managers and operators, disability groups, adjoining councils in the Central District, schools and City staff.
52. At the City Talks Design by Mitchell J Silver, New York City Parks Commissioner, held on 17 May 2016, the draft Study and public exhibition was promoted.
53. There was good response to the public exhibition, including more than 1,200 visits to the Sydney Your Say webpage, 728 document downloads, 92 completed feedback form, six separate online submissions and 12 issues raised in the online feedback forms. A further 12 submissions were received by email or post.
54. The Study was positively received by the community, with broad support for the strategic directions and key actions proposed by the City. Through the feedback received during the public exhibition, the City gained a good understanding of the community's priorities for future open space, sports and recreation facilities. There was strong support for the capital expenditure program, multi-purpose facilities and sub-regional planning.
55. The City received feedback from people who currently used open space, sports and recreation facilities, and from a broad range of people who lived and/or worked in the City of Sydney.
56. A Consultation Report containing further detail on the consultation process and online survey results is provided at Attachment C.
57. Submissions were widely supportive of the City's strategic directions and proposed capital works expenditure over the next 10 years. From the online survey, support was particularly expressed for the following key strategic directions in the Study:
  - (a) Direction 2 – Better Parks, Sport and Recreation Facilities;
  - (b) Direction 1 – More Open Space for a Growing Population; and
  - (c) Direction 3 – Improve the Provision and diversity of Sport and Recreation Experiences.

58. Key areas of concern expressed by submissions and the City's response are summarised below:

| Area of Concern   | City's Response  |
|---|--|
| High density development and open space provision                         | Volume 2 Open Space Delivery Plan (Attachment E) provides future directions for increasing open space provision, with an estimated 36 hectares to be added over the next 10-15 years. Additional open space planning recommendations are provided for the Bays Precinct, Central to Eveleigh and Parramatta Road corridor. |
| Provision of sports fields and courts to address current and future needs | The Study has identified the shortfall in sports field and court provision. Sports fields/active recreation use will be a priority for future land acquisition.  |
| Provision of skate facilities   | Skate facilities are currently proposed for Federal Park, Glebe, Sydney Park and Mandible Street, Green Square.  |
| Provision of a synthetic field for Glebe Hockey Club                      | The draft Study does not have recommendations relating to particular sports clubs or field sport codes. The Study however recognises the need to increase sports field provision through supply of new fields or use of synthetic surfaces to improve capacity and hours of use of existing fields.                        |

59. The submissions have been summarised and responded to in Attachment A.
60. A proposed amended version of the Study is provided in Attachments D to H. Additional text is shown underlined in red and deleted text in ~~striketrough~~. A schedule of proposed amendments to the Study is provided in Attachment B.
61. The proposed changes are minor, for the clarification of the draft and the correction of typos and graphics. It is considered that these amendments do not substantially change the strategic directions of the Plan and, therefore, re-exhibition is not warranted.

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