

Mclvor Reserve Master Plan

A summary of changes

Mclvor Reserve is a municipal open space covering an area of approximately 18.5 hectares in Yarraville that caters for structured club-based sport and informal recreation use. When not otherwise booked, the sports fields also provide a significant area of open space for passive recreation that are well utilised by the community for a variety of pursuits from dog walking to fitness training.

In 2021, Council commenced the process of developing a new Master Plan that reflects both the current and future needs of users to ensure the Reserve remains a welcoming and inclusive place for the community. This process has included two rounds of comprehensive engagement with neighbours, residents, users and the community generally.

Community Engagement

Across all engagement activities a total of 4,017 comments were received from 753 respondents across a variety of engagement activities seeking feedback on more than two dozen proposed improvements. Many aspects of the draft Master Plan were well received by these respondents, particularly the need for public toilets, more activation spaces, more lighting, shade, seating and improved drainage for the dog park and sports fields.

The potential impact on green space, trees and the existing dog park were the main issues raised, along with traffic and other concerns associated with an increased use of the Reserve flagged by close neighbours specifically. Overall much of the feedback centred around support or otherwise for the inclusion of an indoor sports facility on the Reserve. While there was general acknowledgement of the need for such a facility within the municipality, there were ongoing concerns around the impacts on the environment if one was to be built at Mclvor Reserve.

The Master Plan, endorsed by Council on 29 March 2023, reflects technical investigations and specialist advice and includes additional actions and revisions addressing specific concerns raised during engagement. It also confirms the inclusion of an indoor sports facility as part of a balanced outcome that responds to a variety of community needs.

Key areas of change

Indoor sports facility

- The building footprint for a proposed indoor sports facility has been reduced to remain outside the area leased to the Yarraville Footscray Bowling Club.
- It will be positioned partially on the existing Hawkhurst Street car park to minimise impact on green space.
- The building, including the vehicle drop-off zone, will occupy approximately 0.6 hectares of open space, which represents 3.3% of the entire 18.5 hectares that makes up the Reserve.

Dog park

- The impact on the existing dog park has been adjusted from 50% to 17.6%, providing a dog park of approximately 7,500 sqm
- The dog off-lead area will be reconstructed and upgraded with new features including new grass, drainage and irrigation, dog-agility elements, water fountains, shade, and improved access to public toilets.
- An additional 6,000 sqm of open space outside the new outfield fence on the baseball field will be designated as an off-dog lead area, with a new path, turf, landscaping, irrigation and drainage to make it more useable and accessible, to offset the 1,600 sqm reduction in the existing dog park.
- The fences at the rear of the baseball batting cage and at the Benbow Street end of the proposed linear bushland trail have been removed to open the area up and support through traffic.
- Users will be engaged through design development around these upgrades.

Amenities

- The playground is staying in its current location so it is not separated from the open sports field area by a car park.
- More trees, park benches, and shade shelters will be provided.

Key areas of change

Parking

- Parking on the northern side of Benbow Street, and the proposed extension of the Hawkhurst Street car park have been removed.
- The connection between the soccer club and hockey club car park will be formalised, with no changes to parking adjacent to the existing pavilion.
- Overflow parking opportunities have been identified along the western side of Gent Street, if required.

Traffic

- A new signalised intersection and pedestrian crossing will be established at the intersection of Francis and Roberts streets and the new McIvor Road, which will be the main access point to the Reserve.
- A shared path network will also be created from the signalised intersection in the north-western corner to Fogarty Avenue and the Federation Trail in the south-eastern corner to encourage more cycling and walking access.

Trees

- Of the 625 existing trees, the estimated number impacted has been reduced from 163 to 114 including 81 from the indoor facility building footprint and a further 33 from other changes within the Reserve.
- For every tree removed, two will be replanted, where appropriate this will be like for like with species to enhance habitat, climate suitability and canopy resilience, delivering a minimum net increase of 114 trees in the Reserve.

Other sports upgrades

- The Yarraville Footscray Bowls Club remains as a stand-alone entity, with no changes to the existing space.
- The baseball diamond also remains in where it is, with upgrades to the playing field, dugouts, and scorer's box.
- Floodlights at the hockey centre will be upgraded to senior competition standard, with minor changes to the location of the soccer goal storage.

Next steps

Schematic and detailed design generally takes up to two years to complete. As part of this process, Council's Environmental Sustainable Design Policy will inform any buildings on the site and water sensitive urban design features will also be explored for all buildings and car parks, along with opportunities to reuse water on-site and improve the quality of stormwater entering Stony Creek.

State and Federal government funding will also be required to deliver the project.

Conclusion

An extensive and thorough engagement process was undertaken over a ten month period collecting a wealth of feedback, which, along with technical investigations and specialist advice, has informed the development of the Master Plan.

Its purpose is to provide a clear strategic direction that enables Council to advocate for funding to support the implementation of a range of improvements to support a variety of recreational pursuits for a growing population expected to reach 155,000 residents by 2051.

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