

Oulton Street Park

Park upgrade



Merri-bek
City Council

Consultation summary report

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December 2024

Revision B

Revision A: initial consultation summary: July 2024

Revision B: draft concept plan summary: December 2024



Oulton Street Park – park upgrade

Consultation summary report

December 2024

Oulton Street Park off Oulton Street in Fawkner is a small sized reserve, comprising of a playspace with a shade sail, seating, trees and open lawn areas. It has been assessed to be ready for a park upgrade according to Merri-bek City Council's Open Space and Playspace strategies.

This report provides a summary of the Oulton Street Park consultation.

1. Background

This report covers a summary of each consultation stage for the Oulton Street Park upgrade.

As mentioned on Conversations Merri-Bek webpage, the following elements of the reserve are not negotiable as part of this upgrade:

- The upgrade will only cover the reserve and playspace area, not the surrounding areas (e.g. roads, car parking, lighting, services etc)
- Sports grounds and their facilities will not be included
- Unless trees are dead or in decline, they will not be removed as part of the works
- The playspace footprint will need to remain under the existing shade sail area (as the shade sail will be retained)
- We cannot include large play elements (e.g. flying foxes or tower combination units) as there is limited space in the reserve and neighbouring properties are close by
- Some park infrastructure elements to be upgraded as part of the works
- We cannot include a public toilet in these works
- The final design must fit within the available budget.

Council's Open Space Design and Development unit are conducting three consultation phases with the local community for the Oulton Street Park upgrade, these being:

- **Initial consultation**

Council have asked the local community what they would like to see included in the upgrade of this park. This information can be used as input to develop the draft concept plan. This stage has now closed.

- **Draft Concept Plan Consultation**

Using results from the initial consultation, Council have developed a draft concept plan using the local community's initial input.

- **Revised/Final Concept Plan Consultation**

This final concept plan will reflect any modifications to the draft concept plan, incorporating the community's feedback where possible. This final concept plan will close the consultation process, prior to the team proceeding to detailed design.

Consultation timings

Initial consultation: 27 June – 25 July 2024 (completed)

Draft concept plan consultation: 1 – 29 November 2024

Revised/final concept plan issued: December 2024.

For both the initial and draft concept plan consultations, postcards are distributed to households within 0.5km of Oulton Street Park, advising residents that they can provide feedback using Council's website, <https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/oultion-street-park-fawkner>. Posters are also to be displayed near the playspace.

A similar poster approach will be undertaken for the revised/final concept plan. The final concept plan will be displayed on the website along with posters at site. Thereafter the Open Space Design and Development team can proceed to detailed design and then procurement. We will advise when construction will be starting and finishing, once we know.

2. Initial Consultation Feedback Findings

Council received 10 feedback responses to the initial consultation. This feedback has been organised into the following categories (not in order):

- **Seating and picnic areas**

Several respondents pointed out that there is not enough seating and picnic areas at Oulton Street Park and to improve accessibility. We agree that more seating is required and having a gathering space for people (with picnic settings) would be beneficial.

One person asked for a drinking fountain to be included. We can look at including one near the gathering space. We will also look at improving some sections of the existing footpath so more accessible.

- **Playspace**

Many respondents were happy about the park being upgraded and noted that the equipment was quite outdated.

One individual asked for trampolines, climbing equipment and play items to suit toddlers. We will look at including play equipment to support a range of ages including toddlers.

Another individual asked for accessible play. We can look at including a few accessible play items but the reserve is not large enough to support a full accessible playspace. Council is currently upgrading the larger playspace at CB Smith Reserve which will include an accessible playspace. This large park is less than a kilometre away from Oulton Street Park.

Another respondent mentioned including nature themes in the reserve and playspace to provide habitat and be engaging. This is something we can look at including.

- **Toilet**

One respondent mentioned having a toilet in the reserve would be useful. Oulton Street Park is not large enough to accommodate a toilet, nor is there adequate budget for this.

Inclusion of public toilets in public open space are subject to Council's public toilet policy and not generally part of a small park upgrade. Where they are included, it is where there are insufficient public toilets in the vicinity. There are toilets available at CB Smith Reserve and Bonwick Street shopping centre, which are less than 1km away.

- **Garden beds and plants**

A few people mentioned the need for garden beds with additional shrubs and trees.

One person asked for colourful flowers near the playspace to make the space more engaging. Another mentioned the need for drought tolerant plants and for native trees to provide additional shade and biodiversity. These elements we can address as part of the concept plan.

- **Reflexology path**

One individual asked for a reflexology path using embedded river pebbles. This is an interesting idea. We can look at using a mixture of different landscape materials to make the reserve more engaging.

- **Lawn areas to be retained**

A few people mentioned how important it was for some lawn areas to be retained for passive recreation usage. We agree and will be retaining as many lawn areas as possible.

- **Lighting through the reserve**

One individual asked for better lighting in the reserve. As there are no light poles illuminating the footpath through the reserve, we can look at including a light pole, if there is sufficient budget.

Council's open space lighting policy only allows for illumination of paths, not playspaces or gathering spaces at night but it does support illuminating paths.

- **Fencing**

One person mentioned that the fencing at each end of the reserve was inadequate. We agree that the existing post and rail fencing is in poor condition and needs replacement. As both the local roads adjacent to this reserve are not major roads and the playspace is centrally positioned in the reserve (not near the roads), we will consider using large boulders or similar as natural barrier treatments, rather than tall fencing.

We will endeavour to address as many of these requirements as possible in the Oulton Street Park draft concept design.

3. Draft Concept Plan Consultation Feedback Findings

Council received 3 feedback responses to the draft concept plan. This feedback is summarised below.

All responses are in favour of the design and elements shown on the draft concept plan, including the play equipment, gathering space, furniture and drinking fountain.

- **Fencing**

One respondent mentioned about being wary of not having fencing at each park boundary. We are proposing to use large rocks as barrier treatments in place of the existing fencing as shown on the draft concept plan. This type of barrier treatment is longer lasting, more sustainable and provides a more appealing look. It would also work well in this area since both adjacent streets are local roads with less traffic so lower risk for children.

- **Gathering space shelter**

We have noted the request for a shelter over the gathering space and agree that this site can get hot in the summer. We will try to include a shelter though will need to assess if there is sufficient budget available to include. We will know more as we progress through design and quotations.

- **Enlarged shade sail**

Unfortunately we cannot increase the size of the shade sail as there is not sufficient budget for this. To enlarge a shade sail would require a new shade sail and its installation. We are planning to position as many of the proposed junior play items as possible to fit under this existing shade sail.

- **Basketball court**

There is insufficient space in this small reserve to include a basketball court, without loss of green space and the concerns of a ball landing into adjacent properties. The nearest basketball court is at Moomba Park, approximately 0.5km distance.

- **Toilet block**

One respondent mentioned having a toilet in the reserve would be useful. Oulton Street Park is not large enough or enough budget for a public toilet. Typically Council provide these in our larger parks and not generally part of a small park upgrade. There are toilets available at CB Smith Reserve and Bonwick Street shopping centre, which are less than 1km away. As a separate project Council's Building Projects team are also looking into providing a public toilet in Moomba Park (0.5km away).

- **Bike pump station**

This is a great idea though we are not sure whether it would receive much use at Oulton Street Park? It is certainly something worth including in our larger reserves, especially those near shared trails.

4. Revised/final Concept Plan

Using the feedback received, we have included a shelter as a provisional item on the final concept plan.

You can view this final concept plan in the Appendix.

5. Next Steps

The Open Space Design and Development team have now completed consultation and developed the final concept plan. We are now starting on detailed design and procurement. Construction will be planned thereafter.

The final concept plan will be displayed at site and on council's Conversations Merri-bek webpage.

6. Further information

Any questions can be directed to Council's Open Space Design & Development Unit via email openspace@merri-bek.vic.gov.au or by phoning 9240 111.

7. Appendix

Below is all feedback received from the community for each stage of consultation for the Oulton Street Park and images of the postcards and posters issued.

7a Initial Consultation



Figure 1: Postcards were issued to households within 0.5km of the reserve.

Below is feedback received for the Oulton Street Park for initial consultation:

Date Submitted	Screen Name	Description
18 July 2024	Tom	Given this is an ideal park for daily activities for local parents with children, my suggestion would be: Two or more picnic tables around the park. Proper fencing either side of the park so children are safer from cars. A path which goes around the park so children can ride bikes around the circuit, rather than a single end to end park. Ideally, toilets would be fantastic. I assume there will be more native planting, and some climbing plants up the trellis would be good, too.
8 July 2024	Hala.K33	The current play equipment is too old and needs updating, the park needs taps, water play, rock climbing for the older kids, some little trampolines
3 July 2024	Bobby	Would be great to get some smaller play equipment for toddlers, currently the slide is way too big, and the end of it is really high off the ground so will be unsafe for little ones to play on. That would be in addition to bigger kid play equipment. The shade sail is good and should keep some shade for sure.
2 July 2024	Aisha	Oulton Park is the nice park. I will suggest that there should be toilet and some more benches for outdoor picnic some colourful attractive play area for under 1 yr old. Different colour flowers on the sides of it will enhance its beauty
28 June 2024	Sunny	A mixture of drought tolerant and water table trees producing lots of shady areas north facing but also allowing sunny spots as well. Trees not to close to neighbours so that their sun isn't blocked out. I'd love to see some reflexology paths with different sized river pebbles installed. A black one which will be warm to walk on in winter and a white one for summer. They are beautiful and healthy. The adults can walk on them barefooted while watching their kids/grandkids play nearby. I love using them in Singapore and they have them everywhere over there. Also leave some empty lawn spaces for groups of people to do yoga, thai chi, etc.
28 June 2024	Rensar	It would be great along with native trees in this space to include rocks - perhaps a dry rock bed along the path to provide space for lizards. I'd love to see a wooden picnic table here so that along with the playground we can encourage outdoor eating and retreats for families and meeting spots. I would love to see nature incorporated into the playground as well like logs for climbing or sitting on.
27 June 2024	Fawkner local	There is great potential in this space for an accessible, updated playground. Something along the lines of Citadel Park Playground in Glenroy, Coburg Bush Reserve or Anderson Reserve in Coburg. A fenced play-space would be great for child safety.
27 June 2024	Lex	Merri-bek has lost its tree canopy cover due to rampant overdevelopment. Fawkner is a hot spot, but the right trees can lower summer temperatures by 10oC (yes 10oC!). The right trees for Oulton Street Park are preferably local or nearby drought - tolerant endemic and physically safe/strong trees which provide shade, fix carbon and enhance biodiversity. These include drooping she oak (Allocasuarina verticillata), lightwood (Acacia implexa), red box (Eucalyptus polyanthemos).and from slightly further afield such as bull mallee (Eucalyptus behriana), grey box (Eucalyptus microcarpa), white cypress pine (Callitris glauca) and eumong (Acacia stenophylla). Note: Merri-bek has been using the fabulous durable cypress pine timber in its playgrounds but let's plant some for the future as it is an endangered plant community...Prof Lex Thomson
27 June 2024	Fiona Scott	I used to use the park when I was young. I hardly see anyone use it now. Needs more play equipment that everyone can use, young old and mobility challenged. Better lighting and fencing. Signage as well. It's in a quiet street so we need to respect neighbours.

Date Submitted	Screen Name	Description
		We should also have access to drinking water and adequate shade and seating. It needs to be welcoming. Green spaces are valuable.
27 June 2024	loannisT11	It would be good that if the council avoided installing any forms of hostile architecture at the park, especially if new/more seating is going to be installed, and instead made sure the seating is accessible to all who use the park.

7b Draft Concept Plan Consultation

Oulton Street Park is getting a makeover!

We want to hear what you think



We are upgrading the playspace and park infrastructure at Oulton Street Park in Fawkner.

We have used your initial feedback to develop a draft concept plan and would like your feedback on the design.

Submit your feedback before 5pm Friday 29 November 2024.

Join the conversation

We want to hear what you think!
Scan the code or visit:



conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/parkupgrades

ہم آپ کے نزدیک ایک پارک کو بہتر بنا رہے ہیں۔ ہمیں آپ بتائیں کہ آپ اس میں کیا دیکھنا پسند کریں گے۔

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Figure 2: Postcards were issued to households within 0.5km of the reserve.

7c Draft Concept Plan Consultation Responses

Below is feedback received for Oulton Street Park during the Draft Concept Plan consultation:

Date Submitted	Description
01 November 2024	I think it's good just a bit wary about fencing due to small kids able to run on the road otherwise it's good
30 October 2024	The draft concept plan looks really great. We live on the corner of Anderson and Oulton Rds and would love to use this park more often. We think the shade sail could be made bigger, and having shade over the new gathering space would be really helpful too with the hot summers coming. Also a bubbler or some water tap would be great. My kids would also love a basketball hoop but that might not be possible in the space!
29 October 2024	It looks lovely. The in-ground trampoline, playground upgrades, water fountain and log-play areas all sound wonderful. The involvement of nature sounds really special. The only other thing would be a small toilet block and a secured bike pump station. But well done on a beautiful design for the space. Looking forward to seeing it come together.

7d Revised/final Concept Plan

FINAL CONCEPT PLAN

Council is upgrading the playspace and park infrastructure at Oulton Street Park, Fawkner. We have listened to your feedback to develop this final concept plan. We will now proceed to detailed design and procurement.

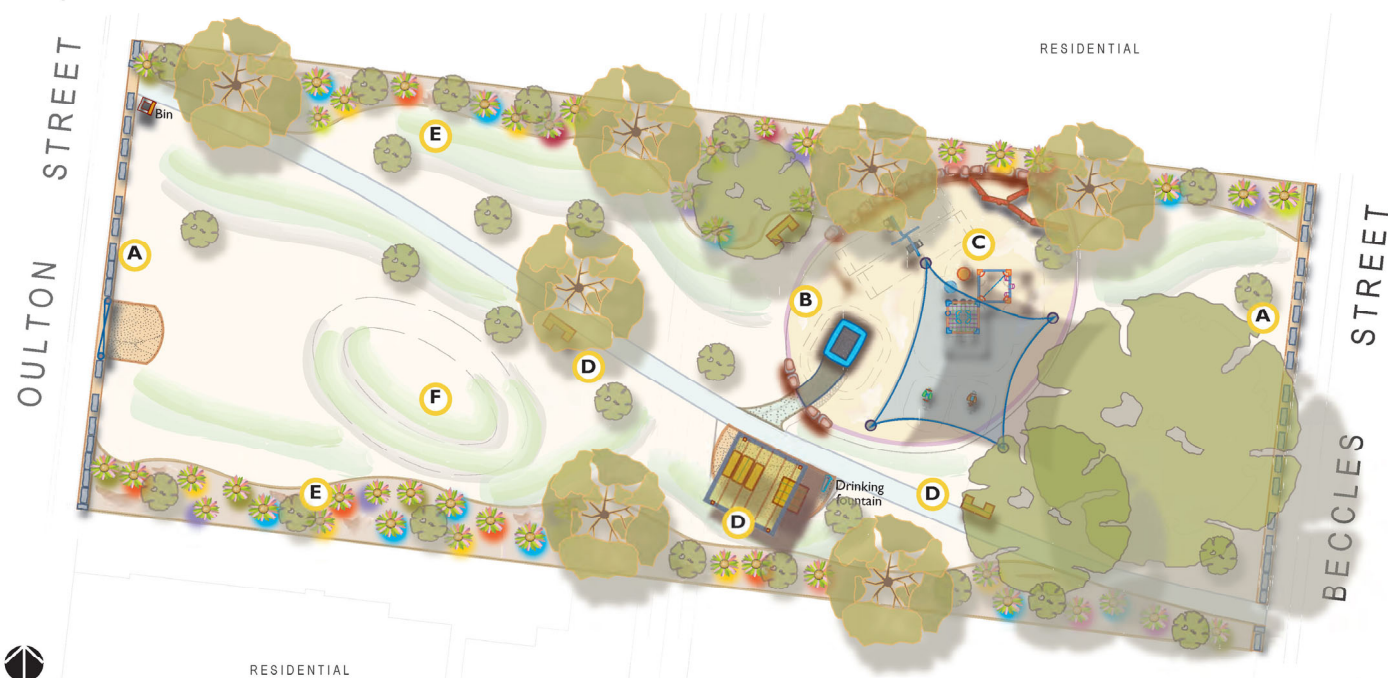
You can review this plan on:

<https://conversations.merri-bek.vic.gov.au/oulton-street-park-fawkner>

Proposed upgrades:

- New gathering space on gravel paving with platform seat, picnic setting and accessible drinking fountain. Waste bin relocated near park entry/exit. Shelter over picnic setting (provisional, subject to budget)
- Upgraded playspace aimed at junior to early teenage year olds (includes dynamic climbing unit, double swing with toddler seat and supported seat, in-ground trampoline with accessible matting from path, animal themed rockers). Rock and composite edging to retain the softfall mulch. The existing shade sail will be retained over part of the playspace
- Nature-based play area with large logs for natural cubby by playspace and garden bed
- Additional native trees and shrubs to provide shade and colour with widened and curved garden beds
- Gentle sloped grass mound for nature-based play and to provide interest
- Additional seating in reserve, existing to be retained.

We will also be removing the ageing existing fencing to replace it with large rocks as barrier treatment with pedestrian openings. A new maintenance gate will also be provided.



(Example images)



Rock barrier treatment in place of ageing fencing, with pedestrian openings. Replacement maintenance gate



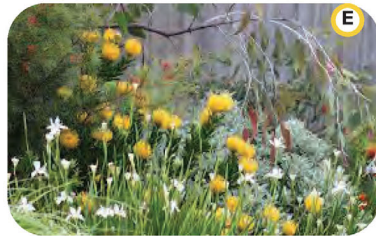
Nature-based play area with natural cubby using logs (by playspace and garden bed)



Gathering space area with platform seat, picnic setting and accessible drinking fountain. Additional backed seats provided in the reserve. Shelter - provisional item.



Upgraded playspace aimed at junior to young teenagers



Additional native flowering trees and shrubs in widened curved garden beds, to provide shade and interest



Gentle sloped grass mound for interest and nature-based play

