

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY – PHASE 1 FEEDBACK

This report provides an overview of feedback received from Phase 1 of engagement for the park upgrade project for McCleery Reserve in Coburg, carried out during July and August 2024. We are sharing people's stories about their experience of the park and ideas presented for what they would like to see kept, improved or changed. All feedback that has been emailed or posted on the website during the present phase of engagement, is included as an Appendix in this report.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

This initial phase of feedback is important in giving us an understanding of how people feel about the reserve in its current state. It also provides direction on what's important to retain, improve or add as we start preparation of a Draft Concept Plan. Once drawn up in the next few months, the Draft Concept Plan will be shared with the community to provide comment on what is proposed at that time.

Phase 1 was carried out by distributing post cards by letter box to residents in the area, notifying of community consultation on the McCleery Reserve upgrade and inviting people to submit feedback through the website, by email or telephone. At the time of closing in early August, a total of 13 responses was received, with 13 households providing feedback.

The next phase to follow will be circulating the Draft Concept Plan to the community, which will be Phase 2 of engagement on the project. Once again this will be conducted via the Conversations Merri-bek website, receiving feedback on proposals for upgrading the reserve.

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Feedback from Phase 1 consultation is categorised into three types of response to McCleery Reserve as a place to visit, pass through or spend time:

- > Things people like
- > Things that people think can be improved
- > Things that people want included in the park

Things people like

- > I like the existing mature trees; the trees are gorgeous
- > The park is convenient for locals, used by all sorts of people with kids & dogs
- > Love this park (and definitely needs updating!)
- > Want to keep the beautiful green grass, space for games and picnics
- > Park has enough open space for ball games and other activities separate from playground
- > Love the house across the laneway that makes the park feel bigger, sunnier and safer, as well as the sense of community it promotes
- > Having the park as an on-leash dog area
- > I like the mural on wall of adjoining house, make it bigger

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW (cont'd)

Things that can be improved

- > Improve the play space, provide more toddler-friendly and play options for older kids
- > Increase area of play space and scale of play equipment
- > Ensure play equipment appeals to children and provides a good variety of play options
- > Introduce more planted areas, including more native trees and plants
- > Increase shaded areas, plant more trees for shade
- > Provide better access for people with pram/pusher, walking frame or other
- > Replace existing furniture with increase seating options
- > More attention to maintenance, such as in-ground pit that has been roped off for some time
- > Better solutions to managing access than the existing, old fencing and gates
- > Consider options to address effect of laneway house that has no fence
- > Make park more secure and safer for children, consider full fencing around perimeter
- > Encourage owners to keep dogs on leash in the park
- > More leniency towards owners having dogs off-leash when playground is quiet
- > Better separation of space for dogs and other activities such as children's play
- > Better provision of fenced areas for dogs including an off-leash area

Things that could be included

- > New play equipment that is toddler-friendly and provides play options for older kids
- > Planted areas that encourage imaginative play for children
- > Landscaping that includes garden beds, flowering plants, changes in ground level
- > Make a planted area around the park perimeter, help screen views of Munro Street
- > More trees to be planted as well as keeping existing trees
- > Leave grassy open space big enough for ball games, exercising
- > Make a rock garden with raised bridge over
- > Provide more shaded areas
- > Install a barbecue
- > Install a picnic shelter, install picnic settings with seats and tables
- > Provide more seating including bench seats, locate seats in shaded areas
- > Install a path network that provides access for a range of users such as pram/pusher, or just for people meandering through planted spaces
- > Install fencing and gates to surround the whole park perimeter
- > Create a separate fenced area for dogs to be off-leash
- > Increased signage and other means to reinforce dogs having to be on-leash
- > Introduce traffic calming and other features to increase safety in surrounding streets
- > Find a way to mask smell of nearby sewer vent pipe



NEXT STEPS

The response to the initial phase of engagement has been great. All the feedback we've received is welcome and is already proving helpful in guiding our early thinking on what needs to be kept, changed, improved or added as part of the concept design for upgrading McCleery Reserve.

The next phase to follow will be circulating the Draft Concept Plan to the community. This will be Phase 2 of engagement on the project, planned for release early in 2025.

Once again, Phase 2 engagement will be conducted by post card distribution and through the Conversations Merri-bek website, inviting feedback on proposals for upgrading of the reserve.

At that time, there will be explanation of what is proposed and the decision-making that went into items that may or may not be included in the Draft Concept Plan.

All feedback received in the next phase will be considered in a review of Draft proposals, before releasing the Final Concept Plan as we prepare for upgrading works to be carried out at McCleery Reserve, planned for completion in the second half of 2025.

Share your experience of McCleery Reserve
Gather

27 Jun 2024 - 1 Nov 2024

Description

Our local park requires the following upgrades: improved play equipment, more native trees and plants, additional walkways for pram access, and increased seating. These enhancements will greatly improve the usability and enjoyment of the park for all community members.

We would like to see more shade and tables.

Please remain equipment for toddlers as most park upgrades I.e Robinson reserve have upgraded to play equipment which are not toddler friendly. Please also keep the beautiful green grass.

This is a lovely little local park that would benefit from some native plantings, especially along the Munro St side to block out the road a bit more. More trees for shade and an upgrade to the play equipment for families would be great. It should remain an on leash park. There needs to be proper signage that it is an on leash dog park as lots of people seem to have their dogs off leash and it's dangerous for the children playing. I love the house that looks over the park and feel like it makes it safer. And the openness between the house (with no fence) and the park makes the park feel bigger and sunnier. I've never heard anyone say the house makes them feel awkward, only that it makes them feel safer.

A number of playgrounds in Merri-bek, including this one, are almost fully fenced but not entirely. This doesn't make much sense to me. Would be great to have fencing all the way around

It would be wonderful to see some speed bumps and pedestrian crossing on the surrounding roads. Most people visiting this park walk and the traffic is terrible along Munro Street and around the round about from every direction. Please make the roads safer so we can journey to and from this park safely with our children.

This park has enough open space to have a far more significant playground area for local children. The current footprint of the play equipment is far too small, and whilst the equipment could do with a refresh, the playground style shouldn't diverge too much from what we know children enjoy and love.

Merri-bek's has a mixed record when it comes to redevelopment of playgrounds, with some notable misses being Douglas Reserve in Brunswick (a series of climbing nets essentially that many children simply cannot use/arent interested in) as well as Garrong Park's first iteration (the rebuild is very good however).

Playgrounds of a similar scale and style done recently that could work for the McCleery Park space would be Service St and Bulleke Bek near Anstey Station.

No to a designated dog park, that is a waste of space, there are plenty of open spaces for dogs in the area, not to mention the dog park a few hundred metres away on the train line.

Please put proper fencing around the whole park, so that it's more suitable and safer for young children.

I would love to see options in this park for mixed use; a small covered BBQ area and some equipment for older kids- perhaps things that don't exist at bush reserve; monkey bars or an obstacle course or a pump track as well as the equipment for little ones. Keeping open space for games/picnics. Planting out the perimeter with natives is an awesome idea.

Love the idea suggested already that the odd little bit of grass across the alleyway be a small fenced dog area. This would suitably separate kids and off-leash dogs which are frequently in conflict now.

Fully fence the park, but keep it low and see-through like the current fence. I have never had or heard of issues with the neighbouring house - it's an inviting complement to the park. Don't fence it off with anything more than a low fence with through sight-lines.

Add some natural logs for balancing, a slide and swings are a must. Also some climbing equipment that can be used by bigger kids too.

Grassed areas should stay, but let's include some meandering gravel paths and garden beds to encourage wandering through the space.

Share your experience of McCleery Reserve
Gather

27 Jun 2024 - 1 Nov 2024

Description

Please ensure a good lawn area is kept as my young teens (as do many others) kick the footy / soccer ball there. Atm there's plenty of room for young children on the playground, and ample space for ball games away from the playground area.

Once inside the park, one feels sufficiently separated from the road for a small park, because of the transparent fence and the bordering mature trees so please keep these and also add additional perimeter landscaping (shrubs, flowers, rocks and logs) to enhance this buffer and allow for more imaginative play areas for children. If you included paths, these could double as a surface for children to learn to scoot or ride their bikes as many of us live in small places without backyards and rely on this park for that.

I'm shocked to hear that some people have a problem with the house to the north on the lane way that uses landscaping as their fence. To me, and to others I have spoken to, having this house and garden designed as it is without a huge fence promotes community as we get to share in the delight of their garden, say hello and importantly, it provides passive surveillance of the park and enables me to feel safer in this park into the early evening. If it was a solid fence, this would be a small enclosed park cornered in by solid fences, and I would feel very unsafe being here on dusk when it's a great time for kids to have that last play of the day before dinner and bed. To me the solid fence to the west is unwelcoming and makes the park feel like it has a 'back of house', and is an invitation for graffiti. Note, no one spends time along that fence but I often see people spending time along the northern fence having picnics close to the house which shares its garden with the park. Please do not put a tall fence here! It would be such a pity to lose this extension of the park and to lose the open, safe lane way.

Please retain or include swings as they are popular. Please keep grass, as those of us who live in a small place don't have any at home and it's nice for the children to watch dogs play. However, please consider safety around dogs.

Can replaced play equipment be suitable for children 2-8yrs? Please replace the ex. furniture and include more seating

Mostly, I hope local Wurundjeri communities are being consulted & prioritised.

This park is really convenient for locals, & used by all sorts of people with kids & dogs. The trees are gorgeous, it'd be great to keep them, as well as the playground, drink fountain, bin, & seating.

Fully fencing is important - transport related incidents are the #1 cause of death from preventable child injuries in Aus.

I'd love to see this park revamped in a way that allows both dogs & kids to use the space freely and safely. There aren't any fenced dog parks in walkable distance, which is why so many dog owners use the space. It's really important for it to be safe for kids, but not everyone is able to have kids & all families matter. And when people have both kids & dogs, it's understandable that they'd like to play together. Could a divider fence be used to create a playground space & a dog friendly space? Or could the odd little bit of grass across the alleyway be a small fenced dog area? Statistically dog bites in Aus are overwhelmingly by dogs known to them/in the child's home, and much rarer than transport related injuries. I've never seen any incidents between kids & dogs there, & always see dog owners checking in with parents/leashing dogs if a child arrives. I don't see any reason to penalise off leash dogs when the park is empty. Clearly locals need a space for dogs to run & sniff. The parks up near bush reserve aren't fenced/safe. Doggy bags in local parks would also be great for everyone.

In my chats with other locals, across the board everyone feels awkward about the adjacent house that doesn't have a fence/looks directly into the park. It feels like it's part of their property, & doesn't feel welcoming or like a place you can enjoy without feeling like an imposition. Could different fencing help?

More shrubs would be great for native birds, while keeping some lawn to run around on.

Love this park, and yes definitely needs some updating!

However, I would love the park to keep these things;

- Lawn space (albeit, an upgrade on the lawn), it's perfect for a kick of the footy, some cricket, kite flying. Not all parks these days have a space to just play and run around.
- Trees! there are so many big gums there that they should ALL stay
- Dog leash park, as mentioned this needs to stay and increase signage. You often see people with their non leashed dogs there

Please add:

- Fence the whole way around the park. Any access to Vincent or Munro Streets is not good for little kids as it's a high traffic area
- More benches/tables
- Better landscaping on the perimeter of the park

Less lawn. More native planting. Middle sized shrubs. Large rocks and logs. Natural textures and materials in playground. Better signage to alert people that dogs should be on leads within 15m of children's play spaces.

Share your experience of McCleery Reserve
Gather

27 Jun 2024 - 1 Nov 2024

Description

Be great to see more variety in the park's play equipment including perhaps some soft surface hills and more climbing opportunities. Even some water play or sensory equipment.

Definitely needs more seats with shade areas for picnics/eating. The current single park bench is inadequate.

Be great to see a variety of vegetation - there are some great trees, but some gardens with rocks/logs that kids can play in would be great. Particularly if the vegetation is able to screen the park more from the roads.

This park has potential to be neighbourhood defining, but its proximity to the "main" road makes it hard to safely get to - more signs and better crossing would make motorists more aware of the park and kids.

Currently a nice park for young kids, although the grass needs some work.

Need pedestrian crossings on Munro St. Dangerous to cross with kids.

A nice upgrade would be a bmx/scooter pump track so some older kids could enjoy the space more. Like all Coburg parks, they need toilets! Otherwise the patrons use the trees and fences.

Play equipment for a broader range of ages would be appreciated plus more seating. Open space for ball games/exercising works well and should be maintained. Clearer signage that this is an on-leash park would decrease negative interactions between small children and dogs. Pedestrian crossing and bike loops would encourage active travel to the park. Munro street is unsafe to cross with children

With families, kids and dogs encouraged to visit the McCleery Reserve, we are in desperate need of pedestrian crossings on Munro St. The sloping road invites cars to accelerate upwards and decelerate downwards at unnecessary speeds. Your last traffic count showed 15% of cars speeding on this street, so providing safety for all visitors to the park needs to be guaranteed as part of this upgrade project.

This is not really worth visiting as it is. Making garden spaces would be very welcome, not necessarily raised beds but just more vegetation than grass. A non dog park space would be appreciated, dogs / their owners tend to take over a space/ leave waste.

Build an off leash dog park

Fully fenced for safety as it is a busy road. More seats including shade.

Fully fencing the area will make it more safe for everyone to enjoy

Something more than just lawn would be great. Also more benches in the shade!

Making a raised bridge with plants and rock garden surrounding and underneath it.

A cute picnic area with tables, bins and a bbq or a covered area like a rotunda. More benches and a little walkway/path from the opening in the fence.

Potential to extend the mural on the fence and add more shrubbery like kangaroo paw flowers

Please keep dogs out of here! And something to mask the smell of near by sewerage pipe, it always stinks. Swings suitable for baby/toddler would be great. And big, square wooden benches are great for having a picnic when the ground is wet (similar to ones at Bulleke-Bek Park Playground). And any vegetation to block out busy Munro Street!
