

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY | PHASE 2 FEEDBACK

We carried out Phase 2 of engagement for the park upgrade project at Joe Mallia Reserve in Oak Park, during April and May 2024. After hearing what people told us what they wanted to see in the upgrade of the park in Phase 1, we shared the Draft Concept Plan that we prepared. We have heard your thoughts on proposals shown in the draft plan and those are summarised in this report. All feedback that has been emailed or posted on the website during the present phase of engagement, is included as an Appendix at the end this document.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Phase 1 was carried out by distributing post cards by letter box to residents in the area in early September 2023. With those post cards, we were notifying the community of the proposed Joe Mallia Reserve upgrade and inviting people to submit feedback through the website, by email or telephone. We then reported on all feedback received and provided the Phase 1 Engagement Summary document.

We notified the community about the Draft Concept Plan as part of Phase 2 Engagement on the Joe Mallia Reserve Upgrade, in April 2024. Once again that was notified through post cards to residents and feedback recorded through our Conversations website. Now we are recording our responses to feedback on the proposals for upgrading the reserve that are shown in the Draft Concept Plan.

ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Feedback from Phase 2 consultation is considered in 3 ways:

- > **What We Heard** The things people said to us about the proposed changes
- > **Our Response** Our thoughts on what we heard people say
- > **What We Will Do** The actions we will take on what we have decided to do

What We Heard

- > People told us they think the changes will be an improvement on the existing park.
- > People told us they like the planned garden beds.
- > People said they would prefer to see local indigenous plants that provide habitat and attract beneficial insects.
- > People told us they like the extra seating being provided.
- > Some people wanted to see more than just two individual seats provided, others said they prefer another seat rather than a picnic setting.

What We Heard (cont'd)

- > Some people told us that providing a picnic setting wasn't appropriate for this reserve, some thought it could be disruptive.
- > Some people said that locating seats or picnic setting under the Oak tree might be a problem as the tree has Heritage protection.
- > People told us a litter bin needs to be provided, especially if there will be a picnic setting installed.
- > People told us some activities for children should be provided. Some wanted to see play equipment, others suggested something "kid friendly". Others suggested a chess board provides no play value for children.
- > Some expressed concern about overhanging tree branches being a nuisance to neighbours.

Our Response

- > Planting in garden beds will be mostly native varieties that are indigenous to the area. All planting will be selected for proven strong growth and ability to withstand hot weather and prolonged dry periods in garden beds that have no irrigation.
- > We agree that a litter bin needs to be installed at the reserve. The proposed location will consider accessibility for people to dispose of rubbish as they are leaving the reserve and ease of maintenance for emptying the bin.
- > We agree that having extra seats in the reserve is desirable. This needs to be balanced against how much clear space is left available in the lawn area, especially for children to run and play. The allocation of seats in the Draft Concept Plan is the two benches with the picnic setting under the Oak tree and a further "rest seat" with a back and arm rests that is under the Peppercorn tree at the front of the park. Having a rest seat that has back support and arm rests favours older and less mobile park visitors. It provides a more comfortable seating option, plus it is easier sitting down and getting out of the seat with assistance of the arm rests.
- > The picnic setting we propose comprises a long bench seat on either side of the table, which is also of a "bench" type. The picnic setting is a single unit that is fixed in place on a concrete slab. That type of picnic setting was shown in the Merri-bek Conversations website for this park upgrade project. You can see a photograph of this when you click on the glowing-coloured icon that is under the Oak tree on the Concept Plan.
- > The Heritage provisions for protection of large established trees in the reserve do not disallow passive recreation uses in their vicinity. Neither are those protections intended to prevent any park improvements in the vicinity of the trees, including the large Oak tree. The changes proposed, such as placement of the picnic setting, were included in the Draft Concept Plan after consulting with a qualified Arborist. Arborist approval has been given for what is proposed.

Our Response (cont'd)

- > In accordance with those Heritage provisions, we have submitted all details relating to the proposed upgrading works for Urban Planning review, and these have been given approval to proceed.
- > Council has no plans at this time to create a playground at Joe Mallia Reserve.
- > Children will find play value in all sorts of places, running and hiding, climbing trees, jumping on and off park furniture, as well as using their imagination to invent their own little worlds.
- > Some children might use the chess board in the picnic table to bring their own set of draughts and play Checkers, or they might collect things like small stones or seed pods and play some other sort of game on the table. Some kids are very interested in playing chess (my older brother taught me to play when I was an 8-year-old) and there are children who compete internationally.
- > The mature park trees are subject to routine maintenance including formative pruning to trim low hanging or damaged branches. That includes the large Oak tree and other established trees that are covered by Heritage protection. It is usual practice for additional care and attention to be given to our park trees at the time of carrying out a park upgrade such as this project for Joe Mallia Reserve.

What We Will Do

- > We will install a litter bin at the reserve. The proposed location is at the top of the entry ramp, beside the edge of new garden bed.
- > We will install a picnic setting under the shade of the large Oak tree. The picnic table will have a chess/draughts board set in the tabletop.
- > We will provide an extra seat by refurbishing the existing old style park seat and re-installing this onto the concrete pad to be situated near its current location under the Peppercorn at the front of the park. The proposed new rest seat will be situated in the lawn area beside the new path. This provides one seating location that is not in full shade, with an outlook clear of overhanging branches. This will provide a total of four seating positions, including the two benches with the picnic setting. People will be able to stretch out along any of the bench seating, taking a nap if you like. Lying flat on the rest seat will depend on your own height.
- > We will arrange formative pruning of all established trees in the reserve. Careful pruning of all mature trees will be scheduled to occur prior to or around the time of upgrading works, to commence in the second half of this year.



NEXT STEPS

What will happen now is that we are sharing the Final Concept Plan with the community. That Plan shows the changes we are making in response to things people told us they would like to see provided or not included in the upgrading of Joe Mallia Reserve.

Our reasons for making final decisions are explained in this document, detailed under Our Response, above.

The Final Concept Plan for Joe Mallia Reserve is posted on the Conversations Merri-bek website and we are inviting people to share their thoughts on what is now proposed for the park upgrading works.

We will continue to receive feedback on the Final Concept Plan as we prepare for upgrading works to be carried out at Joe Mallia Reserve. Those works are planned to begin in August and be completed by October 2024.

APPENDIX to Joe Mallia Feedback Summary

Joe Mallia Reserve Draft Concept Plan: Feedback Summary 9 May 2024

Title/Question: Share your thoughts
Tool Type: Form
Activity ID: 969
Report Date Range: 14 Apr 2024 - 13 May 2024
Date Exported: 13 May 2024 10:39 am
Exported By: AndrewBlight

Contribution ID	Date Submitted	What do you think of the draft concept plan?
52407	Apr 30, 2024, 08:47 PM	It will be an improvement on the existing park. I hope the garden beds are planted with local indigenous plants that attract beneficial insects and provide important habitat.
52345	Apr 25, 2024, 04:56 PM	I live near Joe Malia reserve, and go there a lot, and I think it would be a great addition if there was some sort of interesting play equipment such as swings or a slide, and would overall encourage more people to come there.
52342	Apr 25, 2024, 10:14 AM	I don't see any plans for a waste bin. If you are thinking of adding a picnic area, I would suggest this would be a vital addition. Tree pruning would need to be done with neighbouring properties in mind given the overhanging branches into other properties.
52323	Apr 23, 2024, 02:32 PM	I think there could be even more seating options but why the hostile architecture? The lives of the homeless are hard enough - can we remove the armrests please!
52309	Apr 22, 2024, 12:15 PM	I read that you were including a chess set? Honestly, don't bother, who plays chess? It'd be better to install something kid friendly. Kids don't play chess.
52307	Apr 22, 2024, 11:45 AM	I think the garden beds and new rest seat are a fantastic idea this park is used for a reflective park by most people. As a neighbour to this park I would suggest the picnic table if in fact this still happens (which prefer a bench not a table) is not put on the area that is protecting the heritage listed tree and if you do put a picnic table here please also provide a rubbish bin for those people who used the park so that we do not end up with a park full of trash. instead of a picnic table why not put another bench seat here so that people can enjoy reflective time under the oak tree.. Hopefully with this renewed update to the park it is then maintained regularly..

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52299 Apr 21, 2024, 05:57 PM

This park is used mainly for quiet reflection. Why would you put a picnic seat in the area which is protecting a heritage listed tree? Also if you are putting a picnic set please provide a trash receptacle in the park otherwise people will either leave the rubbish in the park or put their trash in the neighbours bin. Place the picnic set on the grass area not on the mulch area it's not safe for kids to play on..would rather there not be a picnic set would prefer another Benches for reflecting on..

52292 Apr 21, 2024, 12:29 PM

As a close resident from my daily observations the park is a lovely serene space used mainly by people to sit relax and enjoy some down time over development would destroy their quiet time..children enjoy playing there also.i think just a few more seats would be a great idea so that those who use the park both young and old can still have a place to relax